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Does current demographic policy in Russia impact on fertility of different educational groups?

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Abstract

This article is devoted to investigation current demographic policy in Russia impact on fertility of different educational groups. Authors use qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data for this analysis come from the Gender and Generation Survey in Russia (2004, 2007, 2011 waves). Semi-structured interview method (Moscow, 2010) was used to assess the cognitive and emotional aspects of fertility behaviour (to give birth the next child). One of the important results of this study that Russian population could not be satisfied with current demographic policy. Moreover, higher educated people have stronger demand for family-work measures to reach desired family size. People with higher education estimate influence of existing measures lower as a whole, but influence of potential measures (directed on combination of career and parenthood) the estimated higher.

Introduction

Modern Russia is a country with highly educated population and below-replacement fertility. According to census data 2010 educational structure of female population was changed dramatically for the second half of XX century. F.e., in cohorts born in 1940 and younger graduated and postgraduated education rate was 118%, college education rate was 200%, primary school education rate was 312%, and without education was 30%. But in cohort born in 1966-1970 there were 310%, 429%, 6%, and 3% correspondingly.

From 1930th cohorts Russian population did not reach the replacement level of fertility. For three decades (from 1930th cohort to 1960th one) total fertility rate decreased from 2,01 to 1,67 (0,35 child per woman). Increasing of TFR for 1950th cohorts, probably, was connected with the pronatalist policy of the middle of the 1980th, when women of this cohort were “main” reproductive ages and risk of second and third births was higher². Another cause of this fluctuation is returning to general fertility trend after “weak” war cohorts.

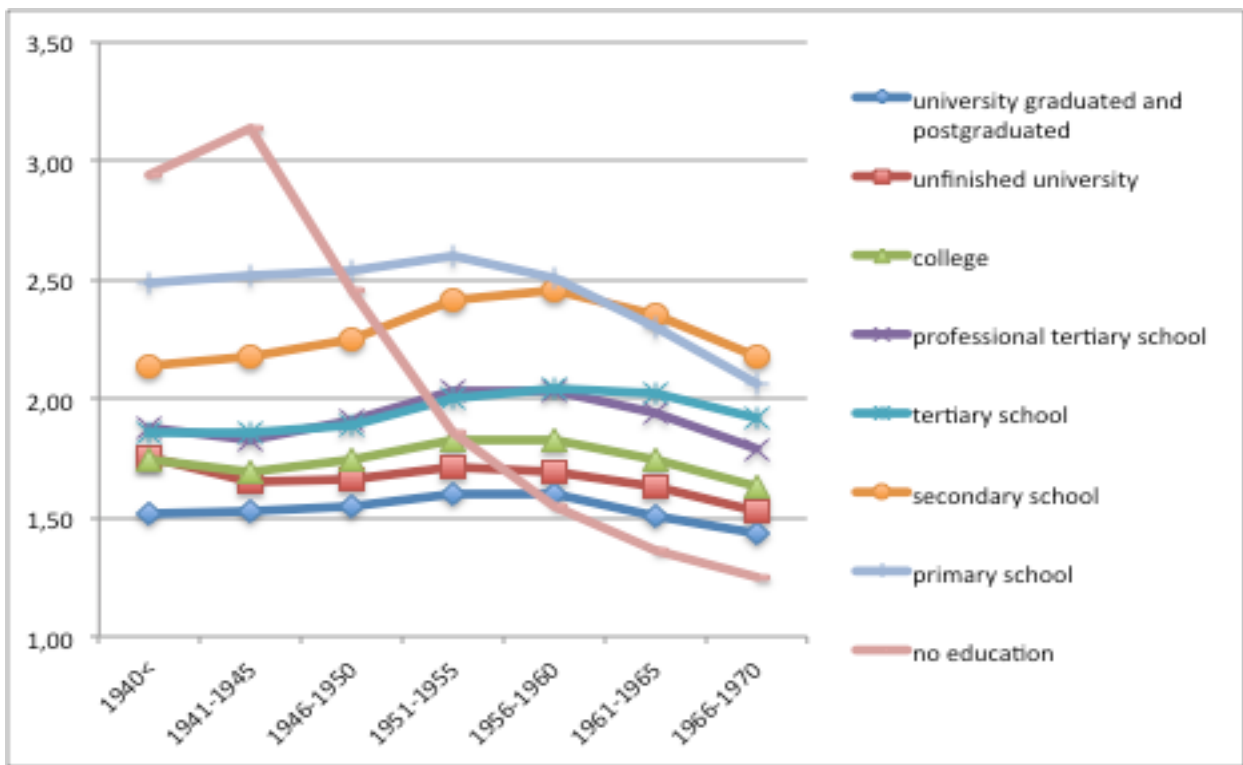
Analyzing changes in cohort fertility by 2010 (we consider cohorts born from years before 1940 (women were over 70 years in 2010) to 1966-70 (women were 40-44 years in 2010)³) we faced with the following story: all tendencies of fertility – decreasing, convergence, ageing of one to majority of socio-demographic groups⁴. Figure 1 shows cohort TFRs for women with different levels of education. On the background tendency of the fertility declining there is the closing in fertility level to educational groups.

Figure 1:
Cohorts total fertility rates by educational level

² Some Russian demographers recognize significant period effect of the policy 1980th (Elizarov 2005: 29) and forecast positive cohort effect of this policy. Another demographers suppose that the policy 1980th did not have positive effect on cohort fertility level, but it led only to shifts of births timing (Klupt 1988: 51-58; Demographic modernization... 2006:173).

³ For long period (from 1970th) we have type fertility in Russia when the proportion of all births which take place to women aged under 40 years no less than 98,6%.

⁴ Kalabikhina, 2013, p2.



Source: Russian Census 2010

The difference between TFR for women with higher education (graduated and post-graduated ones) and TFR for women with primary school level of education and no education for 1941-1945 cohort was 1 child per woman, but for 1961-1965 cohort – 0,24 child per woman.

Many researches devoted to revealing of dependence between an educational level and fertility, show that highly educated women have smaller number of children (for Hungary (Aassve, Billari 2006), Czechia (Klasen, Launov 2003), Ukraine (Perelli-Harris 2008), Romania (Muresan, Hoem 2010) etc.). However there are also evidences for the opposite connection (Great Britain, the United States and Norway and in other western countries). Some researchers haven't found out presence of statistically significant connection between education and number of children (Monstad et al. 2008).

As a whole, there are reasons to believe that cultural and institutional development of country influence the effect of education on fertility. A number of measures can be directed on decreasing direct and indirect costs of upbringing of children. While increasing woman's educational level her time-costs of upbringing children grow, efficiency of measures at labour market and in social services for children will be higher in comparison with efficiency of financial measures.

It has been revealed that among women with a low educational level the availability of child-care services makes smaller impact on probability of a birth of the second child, than it makes for women with higher education (Bavel, Rozanska-Putek 2010). The effect of pronatalist labour policy also varies on educational groups of the population. Flexible and partial employment are more often used by low educated and low qualified women. Whereas introduction of father leaves for child-care finds the greatest response in egalitarian families – as a rule, these are spouses with a high educational level.

Nevertheless modern pronatalist policy in Russia does not include measures related to balance family-work. The main focus is on substantive policy benefits. The old benefits were raised, a new one-time lump (“maternity capital”, about 12 thousand dollars) was introduced. We could propose that Russian population could not be satisfied with current demographic policy. Moreover, higher educated people have stronger demand for family-work measures to reach desired family size.

Theoretical background

Following the concepts of “feminist paradox” (Chesnais 1996, 1998) and “gender equity in fertility transition” (McDonald 2000) we propose that gender factor is the key and complex factor of the most of demographic changes. "Gender revolution" has occurred as a result of mass female education, growing up opportunities to prevent unwanted pregnancy, involvement in paid employment and distribution facilities to the personal career as part of a personal biography (Goldin 2006).

To analyze changes in demographic development under the influence of the factor of gender equality, we have developed the concept of “gender transition”, describing stages of these changes. One of the main idea is that gender equality⁵ factor complex influences demographic development (dynamics of fertility, sex difference in mortality, qualitative changes in migration flows) (Kalabikhina 2009). “Gender transition” (transition to gender equality it is consecutive in different spheres of live) has claims for universality, contains the stages of transition. At the first stage gender equality starts to get into public institutes, on the second one there is a considerable backlog household institutes from public concerning development of gender equality, on the third one household institutes "catch up" with the public ones in gender development⁶.

⁵ We define “gender equality” concept as equality of the rights, possibilities and self-values of the identification of men and women (and their roles).

⁶ McDonald (2000) cold these institutes as individual-oriented and family-oriented institutions.

Education effect of fertility is determined by stage of demographic transition (Cleland 2002). The first stage of “gender transition” is characterized by equity development in public sphere that is involving of women at the first-second levels of education (and in sphere of paid employment). Fertility decreases to reproductive level or it is a little above. The second stage that is adaptation to developing equality in a public institutes (involving at the third level of education and proceeding growth of level of female participation in paid employment) and preserved patriarchy household institutes. It leads to decrease in fertility below reproductive level, postpone births, «child free» phenomenon. The price of woman’s time is growing. The insufficiency of gender equality in time use and homework distribution become the important factors in dynamics of reproduction of the population on this stage. The third stage of “gender transition” (when equality development in household sphere catching up equality development in public sphere) could increase fertility through more fully realization of reproductive attitudes.

Policy of harmonization work and life or gender-oriented policy as a rule leads to higher possibility of second birth in below-replacement fertility countries (Olah 1998; Adsera 2006; McDonald 2006). More highly educated men and women are ahead of implementing a model of gender equality and family-work balance in their lives.

Data and methodology

To investigate current demographic policy in Russia impact on fertility of different educational groups we use qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative data for this analysis come from the Gender and Generation Survey in Russia. Its first wave has taken place in 2004, the second one – in 2007, the third wave has been spent by summer of 2011. The object was the adult population of the Russian Federation at the age of 18-79 years (in 2004), 18-82 years (in 2007), 18-86 years (2011). Each of waves covers about 11 thousand respondents from 32 regions of Russia.

The qualitative study (May 2010, Moscow and Moscow region, semi-structured interviews) was conducted on the impact of policies on fertility decision. We have interviewed 71 respondents. All respondents are either already had children (born between January 1, 2008 to the present), or were going to become parents in the near future (pregnancy 5-9 months). Thus, characteristics such as "the observed number of children" and “desired family size” refer to the respondents already have

at least one child. Our respondents were 20-40 ages old and about 2/3 of them have higher education⁷.

Considerable attention has been paid to the effect that the opinion on demographic policy impact and real demographic policy impact - this is not the same thing. Attempts were made to track the level of cognitive and emotional reactions of respondents. In our study semi-structured interview method was used to assess the performance aspects of behaviour (how many children have you and what are the birth intervals; family planning details; whether measures of demographic policy were used, etc.), the cognitive aspect (what you know about family planning, what is the demographic policy, what you know about measures of demographic policy, etc.) and emotional aspects. The latter aspect has been studied by indirect information (when the respondents make emotion responding to questions or when the respondents remember policy attitudes responding to non-policy questions)⁸. Emotions and information about the respondent's real attitudes to demographic policy monitored during the entire interview.

Quantitative findings

GGs-Russia-2007 allows to carry out the analysis of the attitude of the population to offered measures of a demographic policy and their possible influence on the future fertility at several levels, studying:

- 1) «the general attitude to a policy» — estimations of influence of separate policy measures on fertility in the country as a whole;
- 2) «influence of a policy on personal plans»;
- 3) «character of changes in personal fertility behaviour» — following to former plans, shift of a calendar of births, increase in number of births;
- 4) «influence of others, besides accepted, policy measures on personal plans» — estimations of influence which the policy connected with support of employment of working mothers could render on fertility plans of working mothers, if they are installed.

⁷ According to census 2002, among 20-40-year-old 41% of Muscovites have higher education. In our 2010 study it was 70%.

⁸ All three aspects of behaviour can not to be coincided. Often, understanding the actual behaviour (rather than the words about the action) is impossible without assessing the emotional aspects of behaviour. In psychology, affective aspects of behaviour are evaluated by specific psychological methods (interviews, observation, experiment). A popular method of assessing the affective aspects of behaviour in other sciences - a method of semantic differential. In population studies in Russia for the first time this method was used in the study of the reproductive attitudes of Muscovites with two children in 1978 (Antonov 1980). Methods for studying cognitive processes are very diverse: verbal protocols, expert or computer coding behaviour, sorting, fixed latency, focus groups, experiments (Sudman et al. 1996).

In table 3 distribution «the general attitude to a policy» estimates from differently educated men and women is presented. First of all, the strongest influence on fertility will render increase in the size of monetary payments during paid child-care leave or before achievement of age of 1,5 years (for non-working mothers). Estimations of “maternity capital”, privileges and subsidies for payment housing go the following. Direct interrelation between an educational level of the respondent and his/her estimation of family policy measures was not find out. It is possible to notice that women with higher education in comparison with other women are inclined to estimate less positively all newly introduced measures except for granting of paid leave for child-care for other members of a family. Among men the most positive estimations are given by those who have received an initial professional educational level or higher education.

Table 3:

Estimations from respondents of different educational groups to a set of family policy measures: «fertility level will be essentially affected», %

		the “maternity capital”	increase in the size of payments during paid child-care leave	increase in the size of childcare allowances till 1,5 years	the patrimonial certificate	subsidies for childcare services	paid childcare leaves for other members of a family
Men	Below secondary general	23,0	23,6	25,3	15,4	18,0	18,0
	Secondary general	25,2	25,8	27,9	20,8	22,1	24,1
	Primary professional	25,2	24,6	26,2	19,3	22,3	22,1
	Secondary professional	20,2	20,2	22,1	15,9	16,4	17,4
	Higher education	21,0	22,2	24,2	16,7	20,3	18,9
Women	Below secondary general	25,3	23,5	25,1	16,1	19,2	19,5
	Secondary general	25,6	27,3	28,5	20,6	24,4	24,2
	Primary professional	24,6	24,6	25,7	18,6	21,1	21,6
	Secondary professional	24,6	26,6	27,7	18,3	22,6	22,9
	Higher education	20,4	23,9	25,0	16,9	19,6	20,8

source: GGS-Russia-2007

Character of changes in personal fertility behaviour was studied on the basis of answers to the following question: «As these measures about which we spoke above, will affect your own

behaviour?». Table 4 shows that men with a high educational level estimate influence of family policy measures on the personal plans more positively. Among them about 11% respondents notice that they will get more children, than planned. Whereas among men with the lowest educational level there are only 5%. As to women among them it is not observed direct dependence between an educational level and readiness to react to stimulation of fertility. Women with professional education estimate their reaction to the family policy as the lowest one.

Table 4:

Influence of family policy measures on personal plans of men and women with a different educational level, row %

		Will get as much children, as wanted before, but earlier, than planned	Probably, will get more children, than planned	Will definitely get more children, than planned	Won't affect in any way: will follow former intentions
Men	Below secondary general	8,6	4,9	0,0	86,4
	Secondary general	16,2	5,8	0,0	77,9
	Primary professional	9,1	7,6	0,9	82,3
	Secondary professional	8,5	8,0	0,0	83,5
	Higher education	10,0	9,4	1,6	79,0
Women	Below secondary general	7,3	12,1	1,2	79,4
	Secondary general	12,1	8,7	1,2	78,0
	Primary professional	10,6	5,1	0,2	84,1
	Secondary professional	8,1	5,2	1,1	85,5
	Higher education	11,7	8,9	1,1	78,4

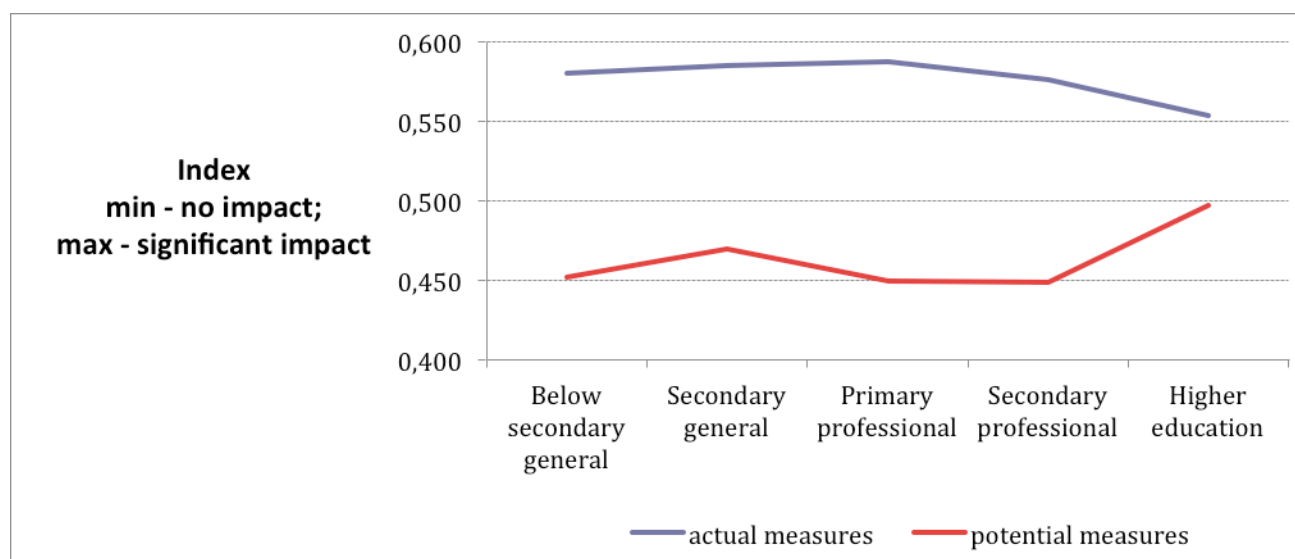
Source: GGS-Russia-2007

Besides listed above questions in GGS-Russia-2007 the question on how the measures could affect personal fertility plans, facilitating to women with children combination of child upbringing and paid employment, was asked. Estimations of the importance of separate measures both in two blocks have appeared are highly coordinated among themselves, so the total index generalizing the attitude to a similar policy direction on the whole (Figure 2) has been constructed.

The analysis of average values of an index in a cut of educational groups of respondents has shown that those family policy measures which are undertaken last years in Russia are most optimistically estimated by men and women with secondary and professional education. However the potential measures focused on female employment, find the response at those people who have graduated. An estimation of influence on personal fertility plans here is considerable higher, and differences between averages by educational groups are statistically significant.

Figure 2:

Estimation of actual and potential family policy measures influence on personal plans of respondents of different educational groups



Source: GGS-Russia 2007

The third wave spent in the summer of 2011, has allowed to analyze the dynamics of opinions of the population for the past 4 years of family policy realization, and also to trace actual realization of respondents' fertility plans.

Table 5 shows that the higher an educational level of the respondent, the lower he/she estimates the degree in which the family policy has affected its personal fertility behaviour. Only about 10% of respondents with higher education have noted, that the birth of the child after 2007 has been to some extent caused by new measures of families support. Thus for persons with incomplete secondary education this share exceeds 25%. It can be connected to the fact that these measures have mainly financial character. For persons with higher education, as it has been shown above, the measures weakening the conflict between employment on a labour market and parenthood are more priority. Respondents marked that they gave birth of the child which before did not plan, more often than displacement of a calendar of births («have given birth earlier, than planned»).

Table 5:

Estimation of influence of family policy measures on actual fertility behaviour, %

	How you consider, whether introduction of new family policy measures has affected your decision to give birth to the child in 2007 and later?		
	Yes, gave birth to the child earlier, than planned before	Yes, gave birth to the child whom before didn't plan	No, gave birth as well as planned
Below secondary general	8,8	17,5	73,7
Secondary general	9,1	10,6	80,3
Primary professional	8,7	15,8	75,5

Secondary professional	2,3	12,0	85,7
Higher education	3,1	6,7	90,2
Total	4,9	10,7	84,3

Source: GGS-Russia-2011

Let's address to the panel data for 2007-2011 (Table 6). On the average on the whole sample for last 4 years of 12,8% of respondents have given birth to the first child, 7,4% - to the second one and 1,7% - to the third one . In a cut of educational groups the share of births varies slightly. However the first and second children more often born by respondents with primary professional (14,2 % and 8,5 %) or with higher education (14,2 % and 8,0 % accordingly).

More detailed analysis with respondents' estimation of family policy impact on fertility shows that the higher an educational level is, the more homogeneous fertility in a group. For childless respondents with a low educational level direct dependence between an estimation of family policy impact and a number of births in group is found out, in other cases such dependence isn't present.

Table 6:

Share of births during the 2007-2011 in a cut of number of children in 2007, an educational level of the respondent and an estimation of influence of a demographic policy, % from the answered

Number of children in 2007	Level of education in 2007	Expected in 2007 family policy impact on fertility		
		low	average	high
No children	Below secondary general	3,4	13,3	15,5
	Secondary general	6,3	8,8	16,5
	Primary professional	13,2	13,5	14,3
	Secondary professional	17,2	11,1	7,9
	Higher education	13,0	14,6	14,1
	Total	11,5	12,6	13,7
1 child	Below secondary general	4,9	8,3	5,5
	Secondary general	5,6	3,3	8,0
	Primary professional	5,2	11,9	8,2
	Secondary professional	6,4	8,1	6,9
	Higher education	8,0	7,7	8,6
	Total	6,4	8,2	7,6
The analysis of births of higher order is unavailable because of insufficient number of cases				

Source: GGS-Russia-panel (2011-2007)

Qualitative findings

One of the main conclusions of the study is that the majority of respondents (90%) expressed a high level of distrust and negative attitudes towards current demographic policy and its ability to influence the birth rate (cognitive level).

"Count on state support in our country - this is absurd", "You do not. It is not able to influence, because it is stupid measures", "This is politics, I think this is simply an empty word".

About maternity capital: *"No! For Moscow, it's not such a big amount! It is not measure. It is a price of 3-4 square meters area of appartement", "What is 300 thousand rubles, if the apartment in Moscow costs 7 million rubles. This is ridiculous".*

"There are some benefits, but I do not consider them significant. We took advantage of them. But I would not say that these payments as an influence on the demographic decision. This is a nice bonus, but you learn about it actually, when giving birth, and this is not a criterion for any".

But we could conclude that not less than a quarter (1/4) of respondents are under current policies' influence the birth of a child (emotional level). We had have contradictory between cognitive and emotional levels. Respondents interested in politics and participate in it, analyse the usefulness of the measures, say that demographic policy can influence others, recognize the changing demographic climate and living conditions, including, linking these changes with demographic policy.

The discrepancy between the cognitive and emotional level in the evaluation of population policies of modern Russians may be due to several reasons First, the current demographic policy is still very young, and it takes time for the mass population learn and understand the measures and policy objectives, but also shaped its attitude to it on a rational level. To develop positive relations policy must be coherent, long-term, developing (new measures should be added every 3-5 years), with good feedback (taking into account the views of different groups of preferred measures) and information support. Second, we should consider the context (the mood of the respondents). In particular, any disagreement with government policy is the general attitude of the population. This disagreement may be due to both the historical factor (the recent change of political system, the period of critical reflection on the relationship between population and political elite), and socio-political factor¹⁰ (an expression of social protest through the negation of all policies and government programs and actions, and not through civilized democratic ways).

¹⁰ Some people's reaction on the state population census in 2010 could be the argument of socio-political factor's supporting. Refuse to participate in census was form of social protest in framework of weak possibilities to do it in another forms. According to the head of the Federal State Statistics Service Alexander Surinov, more than 1 million 200 thousand Russians have refused to participate in the national census in October 2010: "Most of the refusal was

Tenth of respondents in the interview admitted that the current demographic policy still indirectly influenced their decision about the child's birth. Half of the respondents say that demographic policy can influence the decision of the birth of a second or third child, as evidenced by the positive statements of the respondents: *"we have it (demographic policy measures) in mind when planning their next birth"*; *"it can influence and help"*. ¼ of the respondents conducted by the demographic policy, most of them likely had an impact. In particular, there are statements about the changes that have occurred, respondents associated these changes with demographic policy: *"Living conditions are better"*, *"The changes in attitude towards having children in the community it's nice"*, *"It may impact on many people"*, *"We have fashion for the children, especially in Moscow"*.

We didn't catch significant differences in ever born children, knowleges about and attitudes to demographic policy between respondents with various level of education. Respondents with higher education have more clear attitudes to family planning (most people believe that it is necessary to plan the birth of children, but half of them have not did it). Moreover, very good climate in the family are characterized by exceptionally respondents with higher education, and poor climate in the family are characterized by exceptionally respondents with secondary education. Bad family climat could be the reason to stop childbearing.

The most popular measures of demographic policy are in the framework of family-work balance policy. *"For me, it would be important if offered any help, not money, but help in the device in kindergarten or assistance with vouchers, to rest somewhere"*, *"A stable job, flexible time for job that are the best measures"*, *"Intangible ways are also important. Need to normal school, kindergartens, child should has possibilities to receive good (high) education"*.

As far as demographic policy development concerns, the State should pay attention in the framework of demographic policy to special group that is to the working women with higher education. Their contribution to growth of the number of births may be the greatest (according to different studies they have the biggest gap between number of children which were born and expected number of children). But for that the state should put more effort to reduce the conflict between female (parental) employment and motherhood (parenthood), ensuring the implementation of labour legislation and developing the system of preschool institutions. Nevertheless current demographic policy stresses material supporting. Most of our respondents named the cash benefits like *"funny"*, even maternity capital has a *"disrepute"*. Thus, respondents' attitudes towards current demographic policy rather negative. However, in the course of the study were identified such

motivated by considerations of a religious nature, and also the citizens tried to express his social protest by this way".

circumstantial evidence and statements which suggest that on an emotional level (more than on a cognitive level) carried out demographic policy may affect a particular part of the respondents.

Conclusion

The analysis allowed to make a number of conclusions. First, people with higher education estimate influence of existing measures lower as a whole, but influence of potential measures (directed on combination of career and parenthood) the estimated higher. During the last years estimations of a family policy became more positive, especially among persons with secondary and professional education. Second, according to respondents' opinions, introduction of new family policy measures has affected every sixth childbearing after 2007. This influence was stronger among persons with low educational level and it was weaker among persons with higher education. We could conclude that there is a potential demand for demographic policy among people with high education. But it should be another type of policy like gender-oriented or family-work balance policy to influence actual birth.

The majority of respondents from qualitative study have generally negative attitude toward the current state demographic policy. However, many of them are aware of the economic measures, a quarter of respondents reported on using policy measures and may even include these measures in making decisions about the child's birth. Many respondents do not associate certain measures with the term "demographic policy". The majority of respondents in this study believe that the demographic policy has no positive impact on the decision to the child's birth at a cognitive level, but a large proportion of respondents' answer permit us conclude that the demographic policy has a positive impact at an emotional level (that may affect actual birth). Demand for measures of gender-oriented policy is also very strong among qualitative respondents, especially with higher education.

At last, a share of actual births during the period 2007-2011 varies on educational groups a little. It was expected result in low fertility country. Rather high share of births among persons with higher education only is caused by action of present pronatalist measures in insignificant degree.

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