

Demography

Demographic Development and Demographic Security in Georgia

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ABSTRACT. The history of Georgian demographic development is rather rich and interesting. Since ancient time, politically and economically strong Georgia with its population and demographic behavior was always among the powerful and demographically well-developed countries of the world. That fact is confirmed in a number of Georgian and foreign sources of history and literature. Today, from the economical point of view, Georgia is considered to be a developing country but demographically it is among the developed countries. Modern problems of demographic development of Georgia should be considered against the background of the demographic processes going on in the world, the more so, given its specific geo-political position, Georgia might easily be involved in the conflict processes going on in the region or in the neighborhood, or even in the global processes of migration. Along with low birth rate and deformed age structure, it might aggravate the crisis of demographic processes in the country. In order to avoid all this it is necessary to work out a sensible conception of national security and to carry out proper state policy of demography based on it. © 2016 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: demographic development, migration processes, depopulation, demographic security

Politically and economically strong Georgia with its population and demographic behavior was always among the powerful and demographically well-developed countries of the world for a long historical period. Paradoxically, although today Georgia is considered to be a developing country from the economical point of view, it is among the well-developed countries from the demographical point of view.

Compared to other countries there was always better conditions for reproduction and settlement on the territory of Georgia. Actually, since the Mesolithic

period all the landscape zones of Georgia were exploited by a man [1,2].

The territory of modern Georgia must have been widely settled by Paleolithic humans. First of all, it is evidenced by the fact that the monuments of the Lower Paleolithic period discovered on the territory of Georgia belong to the Acheulean and Mousterian cultures. There are over 400 Paleolithic monuments in Georgia. Of them 280 are dated by Lower Paleolithic era. They cover quite a big territory of the Black Sea coastline, the Rioni-Kvirila river basin, Shida-Kartli,

Kvemo-Kartli and Javakheti mountains and Ior-Alazani river basin. According to the location of those monuments, it can be concluded that as early as the Lower Paleolithic period, in the days of Acheulean and Mousterian cultures, people were settled throughout the whole territory of Georgia. They lived even in the mountains exploiting all the landscape zones. They had dwellings in caves or in an "open" air. As it was mentioned, this process was conditioned by the extremely favorable weather conditions, rich animal world and eatable plants as well as the great amount of raw materials for stone tools and natural shelters [1].

With respect to population and settlement, the demographic history of Georgia of the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods is also of interest. Archaeological findings, the topography of ancient settlements and other scientific data give ground to conclude that in that period the settled society of Georgia was already formed and the main economic fields of agriculture and cattle breeding were well-developed. The same period created economic basis for separation of a family from the tribe. The process of the tribe segmentation into families was followed by formation of a village community.

Accelerated social development and progress, demographic development of population was followed by a new qualitative state of the country leading to Bronze Age first and then to an Iron Age. Family, children and reproduction became very important in Bronze Age. Reproduction of people was given special attention and even the state policy began to concern about the problems related to it.

A significant stage in demographic development of Georgia is connected to the culture of the Kura-Araxes river basin and Trialeti. In that period some migration processes took place in the South Caucasus, namely in Georgia, but no ethnic movements were observed. Essentially, it was conditioned by the life-style of local population and the pattern of its development.

Unfortunately, there are no exact data on the quan-

tity of Georgia's population of that period, though there are known some significant sources. In "Phaedo" by the greatest Greek philosopher Plato, another greatest thinker Socrates says: "I believe that the earth is very large and that we who dwell between the pillars of Hercules and the river Phasis live in a small part of it." The quotation is of interest for us because Socrates names the borders of the settled cultural world of that time to be between the river Phasis (Rioni), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the two huge Pillars built by the Greek national hero Hercules, on both sides of the narrow Strait of Gibraltar, in the far edge beyond which flew the river and the ocean [2,3].

Ancient data on Gorgian tribes are also found in Argonautica by Apollonius of Rhodes containing significant information about the places of settlement of Georgian tribes and about their approximate quantity. They provide so detailed description of some episodes that the scientists consider the myth to be based on real things [2, 4]. Some ancient information about the settlement of Georgian ancestors is found in the History written by Herodotus in 430 B.C. Herodotus mentions the Georgian tribes of Chalybes, Colchis, Sasper, Tibareni, Mosinici, Mari. Unfortunately, Herodotus does not clearly describe the borders of the settlements of Georgian tribes, though from his History it is clear that Georgian tribes lived on the Black Sea Coast and near to it.

Significant information about the settlement of Georgian tribes are found in "Anabasis" by a well-known Greek writer Xenophon. Various information about the settlement and number of Georgian tribes is provided in the works of other writers as well [2].

There are lots of interesting materials about Meskhetian tribe. Unfortunately, we do not know exact number of population that time, but according to the existing material it can be definitely concluded that the Meskhetian tribe must have been quite numerous.

Talking about the people living in the territory of Georgia, and generally, about demographic develop-

ment of Georgian tribes and the quantity of population, it should be taken into account that the area settled by Georgian tribes was one of the regions, where the modern human being was formed. Such regions were few in those days. Therefore, in ancient time a significant part of the world population supposedly lived in the area where Georgian tribes lived.

Since the lower Paleolithic period a continuous chain of progressive development of different cultures and, accordingly, ethnic unities is observed on the modern territory of Georgia and on the vast territory to its south as well as in the south and south-east of the Black Sea [2,5].

Georgia is one of the countries, where the *Homo Sapiens* was formed. It is an indisputable fact that in ancient time since the beginning of Georgian civilization up to the beginning of the new era (and afterwards) the territory of Georgia was settled by autonomous population. In the long period of the primitive era the continuous physical and cultural existence of population in Georgia is confirmed by the data of archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, ethnography and folklore. In those ancient days there was a great displacement of people and intensive migration processes on the territory of Georgia. Nevertheless, no ethnic conflicts were observed there. There was a continuous settlement of people on the whole territory of Georgia, and since the Lower Paleolithic era there was a slow but continuous process of population reproduction.

Generally, it is not easy to define the number of people living in certain periods of Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. The same can be said about the population of Georgia. However, we can try approximately to calculate the population number in different stages of their development.

By the end of the Acheulean culture in the Lower Paleolithic era approximately 15-20 thousand people must have been living in Georgia, and by the end of the Mousterian cultures in the Lower Paleolithic era about 30 thousand people.

In the Upper Paleolithic, Mesolithic and especially in Neolithic periods the number of population greatly increased. With account of the supposed processes going on in every field of social life of the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods such as origination of rural settlement etc. the population of Georgia must have been at least from 60 to 100 thousand since the beginning of the 10th c. B.C. to early 3rd millennium, i.e., in the Upper Paleolith and partially in Mesolith (for 30 thousand years) the number of population increased by one individual per year, while in Mesolith and Neolith (for 7 thousand years) by 6 people [2].

In Bronze and Iron Ages the population growth was greater. Supposedly, at the beginning of the first millennium BC population of Georgia seriously grew reaching 400 thousand. Annual growth was about 150 people. At the beginning of a new millennium about 700 thousand people must have been living in Georgia with annual increase of 300 people. Such a conclusion is based on the information kept in the Greek written sources and according to the high level of social life of that period. A new stage of demographic development and population reproduction began since Anno Domini. Huge material is kept in Georgian historical sources and literature about the population of the country at different stages. Those works contain lots of materials invaluable for studying population and its social, economic and political history but they do not contain sufficient information, with some exceptions, to define the exact number and composition of population for each period of history [6, 7].

The Problems of Demographic Development in Modern Georgia

In our opinion, it is difficult to analyze demographic problems of any country, including Georgia, without analyzing demographic processes going on in the world or in the region, where the given country is located. Thus, we will not be able to provide a full analysis of the complex and acute demographic processes going on in Georgia, unless we consider them

against the background of the most serious demographic processes of the world and the region.

Today the UN declared demographic danger to be among the five greatest threats (war, economic, energetic, environmental and demographic threats). In particular, a new global threat, the demographic threat, is a disastrous increase of global population. Situation becomes more aggravated and specific given the fact that 97% of population growth falls on developing countries with only 3% on developed countries. According to the forecasts, such a disproportion will become greater in future. The scale of global migration processes are of a great concern. In addition, such a "migration tsunami" does not come from the Europe or the USA. On the contrary, people from Asia, Africa and Latin America immigrate to Europe or the USA. It is worth noting that very often the immigrants ignore the cultural values of local people, do not want to assimilate with them and try to create their own subcultures and even contrcultures. All this and the low birth rate cause great problems to the demographic security of those countries [8].

Because of specific geopolitical position of Georgia, the complex political and often conflict processes going on in the region or in the neighbourhood might cause spontaneous or deliberately planned and organized invasion of immigrants in the country. Due to serious demographic situation, especially the low birth rate and increasingly high level of aging will make demographic processes more disastrous in the country.

Since 1992 the net coefficient of reproduction cannot provide regeneration indicating introduction of a new type of reduced reproduction of population. Besides, from 1992 to 2015 the official negative saldo of external migration of population was 1, 005, 200, while according to expert evaluation it was 1, 279, 700 causing the reduction of Georgian population. According to official statistics, by the 1st of January 2016 the population of Georgia reduced by 1, 738, 000 men compared to 1992 and made 3, 730, 000, while according to expert evaluation it

made 3, 756, 000 [8, 14, 15].

Today, Georgia with its demographic development is in a transitional period of reproduction. Given the regularities of reproduction modern stage is characterized by birth rate reduction and mortality increase, which will be followed by transition to the newest stage of reproduction, i.e. to depopulation.

Evaluation of modern demographic situation and the analysis of demographic policy suggests that if such a situation continues, by 2030 we will have the tendency of birth rate reduction (general reduction of birth rate coefficient), mortality increase, reduction of population under 15, growth of demographic aging of 65-year old people and over.

Demographic wave has and will always have a great influence on the demographic development of Georgia. In particular, due to sudden fall of the birth rate in 1990s, the number of women of maternal age will decrease by 28-30% in 2020 compared to 1990s (average maternal age is 27.5 year), and as it is forecasted, according to the net coefficient of the population reproduction for 2030, the number of women of maternal age will decrease by 15% in 2055-2060 compared to 2030. It is difficult to anticipate the number of children for that period, but if we take into consideration that some of those women might stay unmarried or childless, in 2050 the reproduction potential of Georgia with respect to demographic security might be worse than today.

With respect to worsening the demographic development of the country, situation is more serious in the regions. Today, natural growth of population is observed only in the south Georgia and Shida-Kartli districts, while the other regions suffer depopulation.

The Conceptions of Demographic Security

The newest type of population reproduction, depopulation, is a regular demographic process, and the shorter it is the safer the existence of the coun-

try or the nation. Therefore, in order to prevent depopulation the government must come to proper conclusions and develop and carry out social and demographic policy based on the sensible conception of demographic security.

General goal of the conception of demographic security is:

- Prevention of the anticipated depopulation throughout the country and stabilization of the population growth by means of rationalization of migration.

Based on the general goal, principal objectives should be:

- Stabilization of birth rate to the level of extensive reproduction of population by stimulating families for having children.
- Reduction of mortality in population, especially in mothers and babies by means of improving health level, including reproduction health.
- Decrease of the demographic aging rate and

increase of the anticipated duration of life.

- Marriage stimulation and formation of sustainable families.

Up to 2030 the policy of demographic security of Georgia should be carried out as follows:

1. To carry out legal and institutional reforms of the target programs of social and demographic security policy;
2. To carry out scientific researches and timely correction of the programs according to the results of monitoring;
3. To take proper measures for formulation of the desirable demographic climate, for formulation of appropriate public opinion;
4. To update the information base
5. To prepare the proper specialists
6. To improve the family law, tax law, housing law, health laws, educational law, social security and labour laws and in general, to improve the existing laws of demography of Georgia.

დემოგრაფია

საქართველოს დემოგრაფიული განვითარება და დემოგრაფიული უსაფრთხოება

ვ. ლორთქიფანიძე

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წმიდა ანდრია პირველწოდებულის საქართველოს საპატრიარქოს ქართული უნივერსიტეტი; საქართველოს დემოგრაფია ასოციაცია, თბილისი*

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საქართველოს დემოგრაფიული განვითარების ისტორია უაღრესად მდიდარი და საინტერესოა აქვს. უძველესი დროიდან, პოლიტიკურად და ეკონომიკურად ძლიერი საქართველო მოსახლეობის რაოდენობისა და მისი დემოგრაფიული ქცევის მიხედვით ყოველთვის განეკუთვნებოდა მსოფლიოს უძლიერეს და დემოგრაფიულად განვითარებულ სახელმწიფოთა რიცხვს. ამას ადასტურებს

მრავალრიცხოვანი – როგორც ქართული, ასევე უცხოური ისტორიული და ლიტერატურული წყაროები. დღესაც, საქართველო ეკონომიკური თვალსაზრისით განვითარებადი ქვეყნების, ხოლო დემოგრაფიული თვალსაზრისით განვითარებული ქვეყნების რიცხვს მიეკუთვნება. საქართველოს თანამედროვე დემოგრაფიული განვითარების პრობლემები უნდა განვიხილოთ მხოლოდ მსოფლიოში მიმდინარე დემოგრაფიული პროცესების ფონზე, მათი გათვალისწინებით. მით უფრო, რომ განსაკუთრებული გეოპოლიტიკური მდებარეობის გამო, დღეს საქართველო, რეგიონსა თუ უშუალოდ სამეზობლოში მიმდინარე რთული პოლიტიკური, ხშირად მწვავე კონფლიქტური პროცესების გამო, ადვილად შესაძლებელია, აღმოჩნდეს განვითარებულ მოვლენებში ჩართული, თუნდაც გლობალური მიგრაციული პროცესების მონაწილე. დაბალ შობადობასა და დეფორმირებულ ასაკობრივ სტრუქტურასთან ერთად, ამან შეიძლება კიდევ უფრო დაამძიმოს ქვეყნის ისედაც კრიზისული დემოგრაფიული პროცესები. ყოველივე ამის თავიდან ასაცილებლად, აუცილებელია ქვეყნის გააზრებული ეროვნული უსაფრთხოების კონცეფციის შემუშავება და მის ბაზაზე სათანადო სახელმწიფო დემოგრაფიული პოლიტიკის გატარება.

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