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Perspectivas de los jóvenes sobre la responsabilidad social del Estado al abordar la crisis demográfica*

Egor Marin¹, Nazdezhda Osmachko²

¹The Maritime State University named after Admiral G. I. Nevelskoy, Vladivostok, Russia; Far Eastern Federal University, Vladivostok, Russia. E-mail: egmarin@mymail.academy; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2444-4094>.

²Far Eastern Federal University, Vladivostok, Russia. E-mail: nazdezhda.osmachko@mymail.academy; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1604-8768>.

Resumen. Este artículo examina cómo los jóvenes perciben la responsabilidad social del Estado en el contexto de la actual crisis demográfica rusa. A partir de entrevistas cualitativas con estudiantes universitarios de Vladivostok, el estudio destaca las expectativas sociales, los valores y las experiencias cotidianas que moldean las actitudes de los jóvenes hacia la planificación familiar, la paternidad y el apoyo estatal. Muchos encuestados consideran que las políticas demográficas actuales son insuficientes o están mal alineadas con sus realidades, y señalan, en cambio, la importancia de una mayor presencia del Estado en áreas como el empleo juvenil, la salud mental, la educación y la inclusión social. La investigación identifica una demanda generalizada para que el Estado vaya más allá de la asistencia financiera y promueva un apoyo estructural más profundo. Los encuestados también destacaron la importancia de las estrategias culturales y educativas, como la educación parental y la promoción de valores sociales que fomenten el respeto, la empatía y la solidaridad intergeneracional. Estos elementos se consideran esenciales para formar actitudes reproductivas positivas y fortalecer la confianza cívica. Al analizar la intersección de las políticas públicas, las expectativas cívicas y el comportamiento reproductivo, el estudio revela cómo los jóvenes imaginan un Estado socialmente responsable: uno que escucha a la ciudadanía, protege a los grupos vulnerables y cocrea las condiciones necesarias para una vida plena y la formación de una familia estable. Los resultados ofrecen valiosas perspectivas para diseñar enfoques más holísticos en el trabajo social y la planificación demográfica.

Palabras clave: responsabilidad social, crisis demográfica, políticas públicas, apoyo familiar, confianza cívica.

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Youth perspectives on state social responsibility in addressing demographic crisis

Abstract. This article examines how young people perceive the social responsibility of the state in the context of Russia's ongoing demographic crisis. Drawing from qualitative interviews with university students in Vladivostok, the study highlights the social expectations, values, and everyday experiences that shape youth attitudes toward family planning, parenthood, and state support. While economic incentives such as maternity capital and housing programs are acknowledged, participants consistently emphasize the need for broader social foundations, including job security, accessible housing, public trust, and a sense of future stability. Many respondents view current demographic policies as insufficient or poorly aligned with their lived realities, pointing instead to the importance of a stronger state presence in areas such as youth employment, mental health, education, and social inclusion. The research identifies a widespread demand for the state to move beyond financial assistance toward deeper structural support that promotes dignity, equality, and long-term wellbeing for young families. Respondents also stressed the importance of cultural and educational strategies, including parenting education and the promotion of social values that encourage respect, empathy, and intergenerational solidarity. These elements are regarded as essential for shaping positive reproductive attitudes and strengthening civic trust. By analyzing the intersection of public policy, civic expectations, and reproductive behavior, the study reveals how young people imagine a socially responsible state—one that listens to citizens, protects vulnerable groups, and co-creates conditions necessary for a meaningful life and stable family formation. The results offer valuable insights for designing more holistic approaches in social work and demographic planning.

Key words: social responsibility, demographic crisis, public policy, family support, civic trust.

INTRODUCTION

The demographic situation in each country continues to be a focus of both public institutions and the scientific community, as its stability directly affects the social stability, economic development, and strategic security of the country (Jamanbalayeva et al., 2024). Over the past two decades, Russia has been implementing a comprehensive demographic policy, including economic and social measures to support the birth rate, such as maternity capital, preferential mortgages, and subsidy and benefit programs. Yet, despite the scale of the implemented programs, the expected breakthrough effect has not been achieved: fertility rates remain unstable, although in some periods, certain measures aimed at stimulating birth rates have been found successful.

Recent studies suggest that financial incentives alone are not enough for an effective demographic policy – it is crucial to consider the social functions of the state (Muratalieva et al., 2024) and the level of its social responsibility (Letova, 2022) as perceived by society, especially young people as potential parents (Marin et al., 2025). Amidst the growing economic and geopolitical instability, a sense of social security and confidence in the future becomes a key factor affecting the reproductive attitudes of young people (Eflova et al., 2025; Marin, 2025). It has been pro-

posed that the reason for such behavior could be the high level of responsibility of the younger generation and their desire to first provide decent conditions for the family, such as education, stable work, and housing, before deciding on having children (Levashov and Novozhenina, 2022; Arutiunian, 2013).

Other studies also emphasize the importance of the symbolic and value aspects of social policy: trust in the state, ideas about its role in the life of citizens, and the focus on traditional family values are as important as payments and benefits (Rastorguev, 2022; Petukhov, 2020). Young people associate an effective demographic policy with social justice, predictability, and value coherence between society and the state (Letova, 2024).

In this context, it becomes especially relevant to study the views of Russian youth on the social responsibility of the state in the demographic sphere. This topic is especially important in regions with acute demographic challenges, such as the Far East, where population outflow and population ageing are still problems. An analysis of the values and economic and social expectations of young people will give a deeper understanding of the barriers and conditions affecting the decisions to create a family and have children.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to establish the opinions of young people on the social responsibility of the state and on its functions in overcoming the demographic crisis. The focus lay on the perception of the effectiveness of state social policy, the combination of economic, moral, and value reasons to support the birth rate, as well as young people's wishes regarding social work mechanisms and state participation in the development of demographic policy measures.

METHODS

The design of the study was determined by the need to investigate young people's perception of the social responsibility of the state and their assessment of the effectiveness of the state's demographic policy. Particular attention was paid to understanding the social functions of the state through the lens of social work and state support mechanisms aimed at overcoming the demographic crisis. The study focused on identifying the opinions and proposals of young people regarding priority areas of social policy, reflecting both the economic and value-normative expectations of citizens.

Research methods and instruments: the study utilized a set of methods and techniques:

- theoretical analysis of relevant literature;
- focused interviews;
- content analysis and semantic analysis of qualitative data.

The empirical basis for the study was young people represented by students and graduates of higher educational institutions in the city of Vladivostok. The sample consisted of 50 students of the Far Eastern Federal University of various profiles who were employed and aged between 18 and 26.

The conducted empirical study revealed the attitudes of young people to the key strategies of the Russian state to protect national interests (such as solving the demographic problem, supporting traditional values, restricting abortion, mitigating the consequences of military-political conflicts, etc.).

The processing of the obtained data included several stages: (1) preparing the data for analysis – recording and transcribing the interviews; (2) qualitative coding (including open coding) to highlight topics and categories; (3) content analysis with counting and making a classification of key text units; (4) semantic analysis to interpret the meaning and context of the responses received; (5) synthesis of the results in the form of generalizing conclusions. This approach was implemented in the work under consideration.

The standard methods of modern qualitative sociology (coding and visualization of information) used in this study are central techniques for analyzing qualitative data (Panova et al., 2025), and the reliability of conclusions is increased with the combination of heterogeneous methods and sources of information (Ukolova et al., 2024).

As a result, the chosen data processing strategy – focus interviews, content analysis, and semantic analysis – produced well-grounded results that reflect the opinion of young people about the social responsibility of the state and the measures needed to overcome demographic problems.

RESULTS

The study paid close attention to the ideas of young people about ways to solve one of the most acute problems of Russian society – the demographic crisis. The question asked of young people during the interview was, “What measures would you propose to overcome the demographic problems of Russia?”

A total of nine young people (18%) found the question difficult to answer, and some explained why:

“Honestly, I don’t know, but I’m sure Russia is doing everything possible to increase the birth rate in our country through programs like maternity capital and preferential mortgages.” (F., 20)

“In general, it is a thing that people in developed countries are less likely to have children, and on the one hand, I’m not saying that we should become poor and then everything will get better by itself, but besides this, I have no idea, to be honest.” (M., 22)

“I can’t suggest any measures, because I haven’t thought about it before, and I don’t want to really get into it.” (F., 19)

Here, we should highlight that the responses reflect the diversity of respondents’ challenges.

On the other hand, 41 (82%) interview participants did express their opinions on measures to overcome demographic problems in Russia. The content analysis of words and phrases used in their answers and their number of mentions (Table 1) allows us to place some accents.

TABLE 1. Alpha de Cronbach e KMO.

Block	Words and phrases	Number of mentions
1	Increase (noun), boost, improvement, grow, rise, increase (verb), add, more	27
	Stability, stable, stabilization, constant, sustainability, safety	10
	Confidence in the future, in tomorrow, giving future guarantees, confidence in your country	7
	Special military operation, mobilization, military operations, "sitting on a time bomb," "the 2014 and 2022 crises"	7
	Accessibility, accessible	3
2	Economy, economic situation, normal economy	5
	Standard of living, quality of life, well-being, living conditions	14
	Price regulation, reducing lending rates, strengthening the ruble	5
	Jobs, salaries, stimulation of employment	9
	Housing, apartment, living conditions	5
3	Payments, benefits, allowances, subsidies, support measures, assistance, maternity capital, payment for kindergarten, school supplies	21
	Programs: maternity capital, preferential mortgages, housing for families, the Far Eastern hectare	5
4	Campaigning, prevention, upbringing, advocacy, courses, education, education, training, media	13
	Values, traditional values	3
5	Young families	6
	Youth	5
	Young specialists	1
	Parents	3
	Large families, many children	2
6	Kindergartens	5
	Education, schools	5
	Healthcare institutions, cultural and sports centres	3
	Children's homes	1
7	Attract, attracting migrants, obtaining citizenship	3
8	Other: medical examination, responsible relationships in the couple, punishment for embezzlement of state funds	3

Source: research results.

In the first block, the leading word is "increase," which can be regarded as an indicator of dissatisfaction with the current situation and the insufficiency of current state measures. The words "stability," "sustainability," etc., used by interviewees in different contexts, characterize the priorities of the future, as opposed to the volatile, rocky, unstable, and unsafe present: "Stabiliza-

tion of the economic situation, because amidst impermanence, it is scary to take such a step as having a child” (F., 19).

Stability in the country, according to the respondents, creates confidence in the future and thus positively affects fertility: “If there was stability and young people were confident in their future – a stable, well-paying job, living conditions – then families would have babies.” (F., 25)

Four participants in the interview argue that military-political conflicts have caused a state of instability, influencing the feeling of security and confidence in the future:

“Stabilization of the situation within the country, reinforcement of the ruble’s position, cessation of the Special Military Operation and mobilization, why have a child when the husband is at war?” (F., 23)

“We need another 10-20 years of stable economic development, without world wars, for example. Then it will be possible to get out of the demographic pit. People need confidence in the future. There have been several events in recent years – the crises of 2014 and 2022, which undermine confidence in the future rather than strengthen it. If there are no such crises in the future, it seems to me that things will smooth out in demographics.” (M., 24)

The conducted open coding identified the main directions and key measures to address the demographic problems of Russia, deemed important by participants in the interview.

According to more than half of the respondents (24 people, 58%), the state must create better conditions for people’s lives, using, first and foremost, economic instruments (this includes the general characteristics of the economy, improving the quality of life, income growth (particularly wages), price regulation, etc.):

“More and more things come down to the economy. If people become more financially comfortable, stable, and happy, they will naturally raise demographics on their own, most likely even without any benefits and capital.” (F., 19)

“Improving the standard of living and well-being in the country until people have the desire to live here, stay here more often, and have more children.” (M., 19)

“Economic growth and improving the quality of life of the population.” (F., 21)

“More work on the surrounding conditions for people’s life and growth, fewer attempts to plaster the demographic pit over with rubles through maternity capital and pseudo-generous mortgages.” (M., 25)

“Raise salaries, lower prices” (F., 20)

The second place in the responses is occupied by social measures: support, employment, and housing:

“Increase the maternity capital, and raise it with the birth of each child, because the more children there are, the harder it is to raise them.” (F., 19)

“Benefits and payments for young families and parents.” (F., 21)

“Add benefits for the population, like mortgage programs and so on, allowances, and job increases in different spheres.” (M., 18)

“Focus on improving the quality of life, the affordability of housing, and jobs in the regions.” (F., 22)

“Focus on improving citizens’ quality of life, the affordability of housing, and jobs in the regions.” (F., 22)

“Provide additional benefits when starting a family (marrying).” (M., 21).

“Programs to provide young families with children with housing: giving private ownership of apartments.” (M., 23)

Four interviewees proposed helping families until the child comes of age:

“More support, subsidies, and payments from the state not only when the child is born but also while they are growing up.” (F., 20)

“Helping a child’s family until they reach adulthood: paying for kindergarten and school supplies.” (M., 20)

In third place come cultural, educational, and propaganda measures. The six (16%) interview participants who mentioned this category of measures used different wordings: from abstract (“sex education,” “cultural propaganda,” “moral education,” “work on values,” “advocating for large families,” etc.) to specific (“parenting courses,” “master classes,” etc.).

Some drew attention to how such measures should be carried out and to their goal: “psychological work with young people; this can be done through agitation, but not like it is now, more carefully and elegantly, showing what a person can gain with the birth of a child.” (F., 20); “Courses for parents to prepare at least mentally. So that it wouldn’t be seen as the norm to shout at a child.” (F., 20)

The fourth place was taken by infrastructure conditions – the development of the network of kindergartens, schools, cultural institutions, sports facilities, and healthcare institutions:

“Opening kindergartens, schools, medical institutions, and sports and cultural centers to improve the living conditions of families with children.” (F., 21)

“It is necessary to provide comfortable conditions for having children, that is, to increase the number of kindergartens and schools, because now the waiting lists for the child to be enrolled are enormous...” (F., 20).

One of the participants in the interview also noted the need to “work with children’s homes” (F., 22).

Oftentimes, the proposed infrastructure measures were economic: “Provide payments until the child comes of age, which will cover medical services, kindergartens, and everything you need for school. With such benefits, families who don’t want to have kids due to financial difficulties will be able to afford it” (M., 22); “Assistance to the family until the child comes of age: payment for kindergartens, school supplies” (M., 20); “Discounts on kindergartens for large families...” (F., 20). These transcripts address the issue of accessibility of educational institutions and services.

The fifth group of proposals addressed the attraction of migrants, albeit under specific conditions:

“Attract migrants from countries that are close to our culture and values.” (M., 20)

“Make it easier to become a Russian citizen with various professional achievements to attract even more people from countries with traditional values. Maybe it would make sense to consider something similar to the Far Eastern hectare program for interested residents of other countries.” (M., 21).

DISCUSSION

The open coding revealed which measures in overcoming the demographic problems of Russia were considered important by the participants in the interview. According to more than half of respondents (24 people, 58%), the state needs to create better living conditions, primarily by economic means.

An important place among the measures significant for young people to support the demographic situation is held by social measures: support, employment, and housing provision. These findings are confirmed by several studies (Stepanova, 2024). For example, surveys of student youth in the Astrakhan region show that most young Russians see the creation of economic conditions as the main task of the state to increase birth rates (Dzgoev et al., 2024).

The interviewed young people attach an important role to the revival of traditional family values. Among the high-ranking measures proposed by respondents are cultural, educational, and propaganda measures. These conclusions are confirmed by studies conducted in other regions of Russia (Yakovleva and Stepanova, 2024). In a study of Moscow youth, the researchers concluded on the need to revive culture and traditional values, most importantly, family values. The student youth of the metropolis show adherence to the traditional model of a complete family started by marriage (Gonçalves and Werner, 2024). In addition, a significant part of young Russians support the fundamental “traditional values” as they are enshrined in official discourse. For example, in a survey of active youth (participants in the World Festival of 2024), most respondents shared the values prioritized in the state program for strengthening traditions (Besschetnova, 2025).

Thus, our ideas about the value-driven demand of young people to strengthen the institution of the family and moral foundations are largely consistent with the results of other scientific works.

As demonstrated by our study, Russian youth have their own opinions on the possible ways to solve the demographic problem. These ideas are generally consistent with and complementary to the measures taken by the state in this area. It should be noted that the problem of reproductive behavior of young people is actively discussed among researchers (Gruzdev and Startsev, 2024). To change the situation, declarative forms of support need to be implemented in tandem with tangible measures. For example, Besschetnova (2025), in a study of Moscow students, found that the demographic policy measures taken by the state (national projects, maternity capital, etc.) have not led to a drastic transformation of the reproductive attitudes of young people.

Modern youth still focus mainly on the model of a family with two children and demonstrate a tendency to postpone the creation of a family and the birth of children until they are older. This pragmatism is associated with the high responsibility of young people for their own future and that of their children: under economic uncertainty (Shichkin et al., 2024) and high competition in education and labor (Turgaev and Turgaeva, 2024), young people prefer to “get on their feet” first (get an education, a job, and housing) before having children.

The young people of the Far East have shown that they are not indifferent to the future of Russia; they act as a thoughtful and invested part of society, and it is important for them that the state makes efforts to fulfill its social responsibility functions and social obligations to the young population, which will ultimately increase confidence in the future among youth.

The results of this study may be of interest to public authorities, the administration of educational institutions, and the mass media.

CONCLUSION

The conducted research established the key ideas of the youth of the Russian Far East about the social responsibility of the state in the context of demographic policy. The data obtained show that the younger generation considers the state as the main entity capable of providing the conditions needed to increase birth rates and strengthen family values. The most significant factors noted by the respondents are the stability of the economic situation, job security, housing affordability, and systemic support for families with children. At the same time, young people recognize that economic instruments should be combined with cultural, educational, and propaganda measures to foster a responsible attitude towards parenthood.

The limitations of the study include the exclusively qualitative method of data collection and the focus of the study on a single region, which does not allow extrapolating the results to Russian youth. In addition, although the qualitative design of the study based on interviews reflects the depth of perception, it does not quantify the scale of the phenomenon.

Prospects for further research are related to how changes in economic and social aspects affect the attitudes of young citizens towards family, fertility, and trust in state demographic policy.

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