

HISTORY AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIA

კავკასიის საერთაშორისო უნივერსიტეტის
სოციალურ მეცნიერებათა ფაკულტეტის
პოლიტიკის მეცნიერების სადოქტორო
პროგრამის დოქტორანტი
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დღეისათვის ქართველ დემოგრაფთა მეცნიერული კვლევა-ძიების მთავარი საგანი საქართველოში არსებული მწვავე დემოგრაფიული ვითარებაა. ამჟამად საქართველო მსოფლიოს იმ მცირერიცხოვან სახელმწიფოთა რიგს განეკუთვნება, რომელთაც რეალური დემოგრაფიული საშიშროება ემუქრებათ. ქართულ დემოგრაფიულ მეცნიერებაში ჩატარებულია უამრავი საყურადღებო კვლევა ყველა მიმართულებით, რომელიც მთელი სიღრმით ასახავს საქართველოში არსებულ დემოგრაფიულ მდგომარეობას და მოსალოდნელ სერიოზულ საფრთხეებს. იმისათვის, რომ დავრწმუნდეთ, თუ რატომ არის დემოგრაფიული პოლიტიკა სახელმწიფო პოლიტიკის საწყისი ეტაპი, აუცილებელია, გავეცნოთ საქართველოს დემოგრაფიულ ისტორიას. ამ მიმოხილვით დავრწმუნდებით, რომ სახელმწიფოს სიძლიერე ფეხდაფეხ მიჰყვება მოსახლეობის რაოდენობას. ქვეყანა სწორედ იმ წლებში იყო ძლიერი, როდესაც მას მრავალრიცხოვანი მოსახლეობა ჰყავდა. განსაკუთრებით საყურადღებოა ბოლო ორი საუკუნის დემოგრაფიული ისტორია, როდესაც 18-ე საუკუნის ბოლოს საქართველოს მოსახლეობის რაოდენობა 770 000-ს არ აღემატებოდა, ხოლო 20-ე საუკუნის დასაწყისში 2 მილიონს გადააჭარბა. რა ფაქტორებმა განაპირობა მოსახლეობის ასეთი სწრაფი ზრდა და როგორია

საქართველოს დემოგრაფიული ისტორია ქართული პოლიტიკის გზადაგზა. სწორედ ამაზე გვექნება საუბარი და მეცნიერული მიმოხილვა.

Abstract

Currently, the main subject of scientific research of Georgian demographers is the acute demographic situation in Georgia. Currently, Georgia is one of the few states in the world that are facing a real demographic danger. In Georgian demographic science, a lot of noteworthy research has been conducted in all directions, which fully reflects the demographic situation in Georgia and the expected serious threats.

In order to be sure why demographic policy is the initial stage of state policy, it is necessary to get acquainted with the demographic history of Georgia. With this review, we will make sure that the strength of the state follows the size of the population. The country was strong in those very years when it had a large population.

The demographic history of the last two centuries is particularly noteworthy, when at the end of the 18th century the population of Georgia did not exceed 770,000, and at the beginning of the 20th century, it exceeded 2 million. What factors led to such a rapid growth of the population and what is the demographic history of Georgia on the road of Georgian politics. This is what we will discuss and do a scientific review on.

Among the Georgian demographers, the famous demographer Anzor Totadze conducted thorough historical-demographic research. He published several books not only about the demographic data of Georgia but also about the demographic indicators of individual regions. According to his research, information about the population of Georgia was not available in BC, in the early centuries, but from the oldest written sources that have reached us, it is known that numerous Kartvelian tribes lived in some of its historical provinces¹.

Also, as a result of A. Totadze's research, it was determined that the population of Georgia, historically, was the most numerous in the first half of the 13th century. According to the census conducted in 1254, its population was equal to 8 million people. As a result of constant invasions, the population dwindled to 761,000 by 1770. During this period, as a result of the spread of the Black Death, the population further decreased to 400,000. And later, by the end of the 19th century, the population of Georgia increased sharply and exceeded 2 million².

According to the demographer Anzor Totadze, the Georgian nation is facing the danger of physical termination and extinction. It becomes increasingly difficult to renew the same number of generations, which is much more dangerous compared to the significant slowing down of the process of spiritual continuity. Thus, the primacy of physical continuity is evident,

¹ თოთაძე ა. „მოსალოდნელი დემოგრაფიული კატასტროფა ერმა უნდა აიცილოს“, გამომცემლობა „უნივერსალი“, თბილისი 2013 გვ. 26 / Totadze A. "The nation must avoid the expected demographic catastrophe", Publishing House "Universal", Tbilisi 2013 p. 26

² (თოთაძე ა. „საქართველოს დემოგრაფიული პორტრეტი“ თბილისი, 1993) / (Totadze A. "Demographic portrait of Georgia" Tbilisi, 1993)

for even a considerable decrease in the spiritual life of the nation can be overcome. Nations with a rich spiritual heritage, due to the situation of the times, in the case of the decline and almost cessation of their cultural life, still manage to revive the cultural heritage, return and develop spirituality. This is determined not only by the nation's rich spiritual past but also by the fact that the nation's gene pool is the carrier of this rich spirituality³.

When we talk about demography as one of the important components of national security, it is important to know what areas this science covers. The most important and most essential thing in this regard is birth. Continuous fertility research is one of the main components of demographic science.

Anzor Totadze's study "Demographic Situation of Georgia" describes in detail the dynamics of birth in Georgia. According to this study, the most children were born in Georgia in 1961 - 104 thousand. Between 1960 and 1990, an average of 93,000 children were born every year. A sharp decrease in the birth rate began in 1992. In 2005, 46,000 children were born in Georgia, and the birth rate decreased by 2 times compared to previous years. Mainly as a result of this, in recent years, the natural increase in the number of population has also decreased significantly. Even during the 2nd World War, in particular in the years 1941-1945, the natural increase was 135 thousand people, while in 2002-2006 this figure was equal to only 5.8 thousand people⁴.

The fact that in the South Caucasus, where indigenous peoples -Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis live, the demographic development of Georgians is substantially different from the demographic development of Armenians and Azerbaijanis is very significant. At the same time, it should be considered that the South Caucasus is one entire region, where natural and climatic conditions and the general lifestyle are somewhat close to each other.⁵

Thus, modern birth parameters are almost twice as small as what is needed for generational replacement/rotation. When a woman gives birth to 1.3 children in her lifetime (in some years these figures are much less) it can be said that she is actually substituting one parent. This process will manifest itself after 8-10 years and will reach its peak in the early 2030s if radical measures are not taken. In the case of an active demographic policy, which will be considered only for a long-term run, this process can be slowed down and the desired result will be achieved after an extensive period of time.

The well-known demographer Anzor Sakhvadze has also conducted studies on birth and mortality rates. According to him, the mortality rate in Georgia was traditionally low compared to neighboring and most European countries, but in recent years it has increased significantly.

³ ლორთქიფანიძე ვ.; თოთაძე ა. ერი ერმა უნდა გადაარჩინოს. დემოგრაფიული ვითარება თანამედროვე საქართველოში. თბილისი, 2007 წ.; / Lortkipanidze V.; Totadze A. The nation must be saved by the nation. Demographic situation in modern Georgia. Tbilisi, 2007;

⁴ თოთაძე ა. „საქართველოს დემოგრაფიული პორტრეტი“ თბილისი, 1993, გვ.23 / Totadze A. "Demographic portrait of Georgia" Tbilisi, 1993, p. 23

⁵ (თოთაძე ა. „საქართველოს დემოგრაფიული პორტრეტი“ თბილისი, 1993) / Totadze A. "Demographic portrait of Georgia" Tbilisi, 1993

In particular, if 6.5 people died per 1000 people in 1960, this figure was equal to 11.3 in 2004. According to official statistics, the mortality rate has decreased sharply in 2017-2018.⁶

Abortions are one of the main demographic problems. Georgia has always been distinguished by the number of abortions. According to official statistics, the number of abortions reached 40,000 by 2012, and the number of illegal abortions, according to experts, is much higher.

Abortions have increased among minors. Primary abortions lead to infertility in most cases. In general, infertility is a serious problem in Georgia. If before 2010 the seniority of infertility was 35 years, today it has reached 27 years.

Selective abortions are noteworthy here, that is, as a result of sex selection in Georgia, in most cases, abortions were performed in favor of sons. Today selective abortions are prohibited in the country, however, it is very difficult to control.

Internal and external migration is one of the important demographic problems. Mainly due to economic circumstances. According to the data of the State Department of Statistics, 85% of those who left the country are of working age, while the share of this age population in the entire population does not exceed 2/5. The fact that gender inequality has been increasing in recent years makes the mentioned process especially dramatic. Among the young people who left Georgia, there are more women than men, which in the long run can cause serious socio-demographic problems⁷.

According to official data, the first internal migration process in the country began in the 80s, when the rural population moved to cities to work in heavy industry. And then, since the 90s, due to the socio-economic situation, families closed their houses and moved to big cities, mainly the capital. According to demographers, a family that migrates cannot reproduce, because it is mainly focused on maintaining the family and settling in a new city⁸.

The famous professor Leo Chikava notes in his research that if at the end of the 80s of the last century only one of the regions of Georgia - Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti - experienced depopulation, today we have the same situation in five more regions - Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti.⁹

We are not doing well in other regions either. In the study of scientist Anzor Totadze, we read: "In 2012, compared to 1990, the natural increase of the population decreased 4 times in Kvemo Kartli, 11 times in Samtskhe-Javakheti, and there is almost nothing left to create a depopulation situation." The natural increase in rural areas in 2002-2014 amounted to 39,000 people.

⁶ (სახვაძე ა. დემოგრაფიული ეტიუდები. თბილისი. 2005 წ.) / (Sakhvadze A. Demographic etudes. Tbilisi. 2005)

⁷ ემიგრაცია საქართველოდან 2002 წლის მოსახლეობის აღწერის მონაცემების მოხედვით. თბილისი: CRRC, 2005 (1) / Emigration from Georgia according to 2002 population census data. Tbilisi: CRRC, 2005 (1)

⁸ გუგუშვილი პ. საქართველოსა და ამიერკავკასიის ეკონომიკური განვითარება. ტ. I. თბილისი, 1994 წ. / Gugushvili P. Economic development of Georgia and Transcaucasia. Vol. I. Tbilisi, 1994

⁹ (ჩიქავა ლ. „დემოგრაფიული კატეგორიები დაკანონები. თბილისი, 2002) / (Chikava L. "Demographic categories and laws. Tbilisi, 2002)

495,000 people have migrated from the rural areas in the last 20 years. Some of them emigrated, some moved to big cities, where it seemed easier to make a living. When a person leaves the village, they lose their freedom and feel like a minority.¹⁰

Depopulation is especially notable in mountainous regions. According to the official data of the 2002 general population census of Georgia, 152 mountain villages were completely depopulated, while 10 or fewer people lived in 165 villages.¹¹

The 2014 general population census of Georgia reveals even worse data. At the moment, that is, according to the latest data, 202 villages in the mountainous regions of Georgia are completely depopulated, and 175 villages have 5 or fewer people, that is, they are half depopulated¹².

As for the border strip of Georgia, it is almost completely empty. However, the local population protects the border of the country better than the border guard. In this case, one infallible principle applies - if you move, others will settle, the signs of which are already visible in Georgia. This is the very demographic annexation, which begins with peaceful settlement and often ends with internal conflicts and loss of territories.

The demographic situation in Georgia, along with other circumstances, is significantly aggravated by the processes of emigration of the population (mainly young people). The number of people who have left Georgia has not been fully determined due to the difficulties of registration. Various expert calculations are negative and it reaches about one million, which is quite a large figure for a small country like Georgia.

Along with other negative processes, demographic aging of the population is going on intensively in Georgia. It has been considered a demographically aging country since the mid-70s. In the 1990s, due to the acute socio-economic crisis, the demographic aging process accelerated and the country reached a high level of demographic aging. According to scientific studies, the aging of the population means an increase in the share of elderly people in the population¹³.

The aging of the nation has become one of the most important demographic processes worldwide. According to the research of the scientist Mzia Selia, compared to many other countries, Georgia has already advanced significantly in the mentioned process, although it has not yet reached the final stage of this process. The results of the mentioned demographic

¹⁰ (თოთაძე ა. „დემოგრაფიული ვითარება საქართველოში და დემოგრაფიული განვითარების პროგრამა“. თბილისი, 2016) / (Totadze A. "Demographic situation in Georgia and demographic development program". Tbilisi, 2016)

¹¹ დემოგრაფიული ვითარება საქართველოში. სტატისტიკური კრებული. საქართველოს სტატისტიკის ეროვნული სამსახური: თბილისი, 2017 / Demographic situation in Georgia. Statistical collection. National Statistical Service of Georgia: Tbilisi, 2017

¹² დემოგრაფიული ვითარება საქართველოში. სტატისტიკური კრებული. საქართველოს სტატისტიკის ეროვნული სამსახური: თბილისი, 2017 / Demographic situation in Georgia. Statistical collection. National Statistical Service of Georgia: Tbilisi, 2017

¹³ შელია მ. მოსახლეობის დაბერება საქართველოში თბილისი, 1999, გვ 21 / Shelia M. Population aging in Georgia, Tbilisi, 1999, p. 21

event are already quite clearly visible in the country, although its full impact and the severity of the consequences, both at the individual and societal levels, are still not fully understood.¹⁴ The well-known demographer Gia Meladze has done comprehensive research on aging policy, which he published in the book "Demographic Winter in Georgia".¹⁵

According to G. Meladze, the process of demographic aging of the population belongs to a series of regular events. At the same time, it is one of the current socio-economic problems of modern times. Demographic aging of the population is defined as the percentage of the population aged 65 and over in the total population (in some cases, the share of the population aged 60 and over)¹⁶.

According to the research of not only Georgian but also foreign scientists, Georgia is a demographically aging country. The process of demographic aging was particularly intensive in 1992-1997, which was determined by two main reasons: a decrease of the birth rate at the level of simple reproduction of the population and the significant increase of emigration processes, where mainly the population under 60 years of age participated. Georgia is a specific demographic region, which is manifested in the peculiarity that in a country that is economically very detained, due to the sharp deformation of the age structure of the population, the level of old age of the population is significantly higher at 14% (2012). Among the 25 most demographically aging countries in the world, in 2008, Georgia was in the fourteenth place. According to today's data, Georgia is considered the most aging nation in Europe.¹⁷ Such indicators of the aging of the nation pose a serious threat to the economy of Georgia. When we talk about the importance of demographic policy in matters of state security, this is also what is meant.

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¹⁴ (შელია მ. „ხანდაზმული მოსახლეობა საქართველოში, სოციალური და ეკონომიკური პრობლემები“, თბილისი, 2013) / (Shelia M. "Elderly population in Georgia, social and economic problems", Tbilisi, 2013)

¹⁵ (მელაძე გ. დემოგრაფიული ზამთარი საქართველოში, თბილისი, 2014.) / (Meladze G. Demographic winter in Georgia, Tbilisi, 2014.)

¹⁶ მელაძე გ. დემოგრაფიული ზამთარი საქართველოში, თბილისი, 2014. გვ. 27 / Meladze G. Demographic winter in Georgia, Tbilisi, 2014. P.27

¹⁷ (საქართველოს მოსახლეობის სტატისტიკური წელიწადი, თბილისი. 2009) / (Statistical Yearbook of the Population of Georgia, Tbilisi. 2009)

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