

STATE POLICY OF SUPPORT OF LARGE FAMILIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COUNTRIES OF EUROPE AND RUSSIA

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Abstract

Changes in the reproductive behavior of the European population, the transition to small families has an impact on the demographic structure and the quality of human capital. The purpose of the article is to study the general and particular in the state policy to support large families in Europe and Russia.

Social and family policy, demographic policy is reviewed from the point of view of different approaches: economic approach, gender theory, inequality theory, stratification, with the distinguished continental, liberal, southern European, Scandinavian models of social policy. The research methods were the analysis of regulatory documents and analysis for organizing a of social support for large families in nation states are considered.

The conclusions about the relative effectiveness of state policy with respect to large families are made. Measures of state support for large families in Europe are not united and universal. Among the most developed and effectively applied are measures of support in the Baltic Sea countries, as well as in France. In the rest of the EU, state support measures for large families are non-systemic, as well as in Russia.

Keywords: large families, government policy, social support, social policy, human capital

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Introduction

The interest of researchers to social problems, which has grown steadily over the past century, has led to the formation of various approaches to explaining government policies supporting large families. A. Smith believed that capitalism would stimulate large families since capitalism is aimed at the mass production and consumption of goods; for this, the growth of potential consumers is necessary (Smith, 2010). However, we observe that the evolution of capitalism led to the collapse of a large family, to the transition to mass small families and the depopulation of

entire countries and territories. Therefore, the main research question posed in this article is what general and specific measures to support and encourage large families to exist today in European states, including Russia. The focus of researchers is on social policy issues, especially the implementation of family policy, both in a set of measures (married couples with children) and in relation to children's rights, marriage, and birth, etc. These topics are studied from the standpoint of the regulatory approach (Nygren and other, 2018), in terms of the characteristics of social services and work (Silinsh & Martyniuk, 2016; Zhuravleva, 2016), as measures to support individual categories (Annink, Dulk, Steijn, 2015; Ng, Julià, Muntaner & O'Campo, 2017), etc.

1 Theoretical foundations of the state policy research on large families in Europe and the Russian Federation

1.1 Models of state policy to support families with children

One of the first attempts to classify models of social policy belongs to R. Thimus, who identified three models of such a policy, depending on its essence, objects, and mechanisms, and later – four models according to the degree of state participation in the economy (a “strong” interventionist state, a “soft” welfare state, small-scale welfare state expenditures, policy-oriented mainly to the market). In the 70s. XX century. T. Marshall, G. Esping-Andersen, T. Tilton, N. Fernis proposed their own classification of the types of the welfare state. The classification of social regimes in welfare countries, proposed by the Danish sociologist G. Esping-Andersen in 1990, is one of the key theoretical frameworks used in comparative studies of family policy in European countries. On the basis of such criteria as decommodification (the dependence of the individual's welfare level depends on his involvement in market relations); stratification system supported by state policy; government intervention in market and family relations, he singled out three models: neoliberal (Anglo-American), conservative-corporatist (French-German) and social democratic (Scandinavian). Studies of models of the social policy depending on the participation in it of various social institutions are interesting. So, E.N. Sochneva and V.M. Fedotov identified four models of social policy in terms of the influence of various social institutions on its formation (Sochneva, Fedotov, 2016): continental, liberal, southern European, Scandinavian. From all the above models, the Scandinavian model is the most effective from the position of a citizen, since in it the state performs the functions of social policy to the maximum and bears the burden of social responsibility. From the standpoint of the individual, the South European is the least effective model of social policy, since it demonstrates the weakness of the development of social institutions. Sochneva E.N. and Fedotov V.M. believe that in Russia the formation of social policy occurs in the framework of the continental model. According to M.A. Klupt, a significant role in

the family and demographic policies of national states belongs to both government agencies and national and international non-profit organizations. It is their coalitions, which include certain groups of the ruling elite with different values and geopolitical interests, and determine the content of politics at various historical stages (Klupt, 2016). In the modern period, social and family policies are analyzed from a gender perspective. Thus, D. Sainsbury identified three “gender policy regimes” in different European countries: “father’s mode of the breadwinner”, in which the father provides the family and mother plays the role of the housewife, “gender roles mode” the equal importance of financial support and domestic work, and the “double wage and care regime” that guarantees men and women equal rights and duties in the field of paid work and childcare (Sainsbury, 1999). Scientists note that family policy is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of stimulating fertility, but it does not always take into account the gender imbalance of inequality. (Leskosek & Dragos, 2018).

1.2 Features of state policy in relation to large families in European countries

Measures of state support for large families are part of the state social and family policy as a whole and depend on what aspects of family and family life are recognized and “approved” by the state. Thus, out of twenty-eight countries that are part of the European Union, only thirteen of them included the rules on state protection of the family in their basic law (constitution). In 2017, the European Commission launched the European Pillar of Social Rights. An analysis of European legislation shows that there is no direct policy on the territory of the EU aimed at supporting large families, one can only argue that this support is implemented in the framework of the implementation of various approaches and programs aimed at supporting children. According to O.V. Kaylova, the measures of the “new” family policy in Europe are to some extent anti-natalistic in nature, since focused on quality, not on the number of births. The exception is France, where the demographic and family policies have a long history and a pronounced pronatalistic orientation (Kaylova, 2004). At the same time, it is possible to highlight examples of public policy, which is mainly focused on the person, not on the family, as in Sweden (Hantrais, 2004), and is “de-family-oriented”. At the same time, common approaches in the territory of the European Union play a large role in eliminating the barriers faced by “different family forms” in their own country and when moving within the European Union (Long, Naldini & Santero, 2017).

The measures of the state support system for families with children are divided into two main categories: a) direct and indirect financial support for families with children; b) support for working parents. Family policy, including for large families, in the EU, includes several key aspects: maternity policy; parental leave policy; childcare policy; child benefits, incl. tax breaks

for parents (Jalilova, 2016). Governments can provide financial support to families in various ways: direct financial support (that is, paying monthly family benefits) and indirect financial assistance (tax breaks for children) are possible.

Consider the implementation of these measures in EU countries, common approaches in the territory of the EU play a large role in eliminating the barriers faced by “different family forms” in their own country and when moving within the EU. All countries pay family allowances for children, while in some countries benefits are universal, while in others they are paid after income verification. Childbirth benefits are paid in most countries. In most countries, the amount of benefits depends on the order of birth of the child. There are also age limits for the provision of family benefits. When analyzing the purchasing power of family benefits (when compared with living standards), the highest level of cash payments was recorded in Luxembourg, Finland, France and Sweden, and the lowest in the United Kingdom, Spain, and Portugal (Kaylova, 2004). In addition to child benefits, there is a variety of tax breaks for EU countries. At the same time, special attention is paid to single-parent families due to their lower financial security, and therefore single parents are provided with additional tax benefits in the form of income tax cuts. One of the priorities in the modern socio-demographic policy of the EU countries is the creation of the foundations for the possibility of combining work and childbirth. Different types of support can be provided, including maternity leave, childcare leave, nursery and kindergarten services, flexible working hours, etc.

In the early 1970s, only Austria and Italy provided childcare leave, and now this type of leave exists in all EU countries. According to the 1992 Law on Employment and Family Responsibilities, the European Union prescribes a mandatory paid maternity leave of 14 weeks in length as a measure aimed at preserving the health of the mother and child. In 1998, a directive was passed that prescribes a mandatory three-month leave for childcare. In some countries, in addition to maternity leave, paternity leave is granted: Austria (6 months), Belgium (3 days), Denmark (10 days), Spain: (2 days), France (3 days), Finland (1 week) and Sweden (2 weeks). In Denmark and Sweden, the duration of parental leave is increased by one month if the father takes the leave.

Since the 1980s, government spending on childcare has increased significantly in all countries, and this has been a response to the increasing demand for such services. However, the differentiation of this type of family assistance is still great. In 1993, in Belgium, Italy, and France, more than 90% of preschool children from 3 years of age attended state-funded kindergartens. At the same time, in the UK, Ireland, Portugal and Finland, this figure was less than 60% of children. The coverage of children under 3 years is usually small, only in Denmark half of the children of this age attended nurseries (Kaylova, 2004).

2 Countries of Europe and the Russian Federation: Results of a Study of State Support Measures for Large Families

2.1 Features of state support for large families in Europe

All countries pay family benefits for children up to the age of 16-18, and in some cases 25 years, while in some countries the benefits are universal and in others are paid after checking income. In some countries, the amount of benefits depends on the order of birth of the child and may increase progressively as the child grows older (Germany, Ireland, Estonia, Finland, Czech Republic). For example, the amount of allowance for the first and subsequent children may increase by 10 euros per child (Eastern European countries, Finland, Estonia), and may increase in progression up to 10 times the size (Ireland).

First of all, it is necessary to single out the experience of France, since it was there that the first support of large families in Europe in 1860 was realized (allowance for children of sailors). Direct support for large families was actively implemented from the 1920s to the 1970s, it was based on pro-natalist policies and demographic measures (prohibition of abortions and contraceptives, benefits and tax benefits for children, especially the third and subsequent ones). Since the 1970s, the policy of supporting large families has become more purposeful – for the poor or single, and not for all. The grounds for providing support to large families are pronatalistic and paternalistic orientations. In France, the state program “Big Family”, which has existed since 1921, is aimed at supporting large families. According to the program, each next child reduces the taxable base of the family, so families with four children practically do not pay taxes at all, and this is regardless of their income. Premiums for large families: À partir de 2 enfants: allocations familiales, À partir de 3 enfants: complément familial. These payments of € 168.18 per month are added to the actual family allowances paid to families with three or more children after payment. An additional benefit (Complément familial) is paid if there are at least three children in the family (all of them are over three years old) and the family income does not exceed a certain limit. This allowance is paid to child from the month following the date of execution of three years to the third, fourth, etc. Thus, about 83% of interested families receive additional family benefits. In the case that a large family changes housing, the Prime de déménagement benefit can be paid from € 974.90. Despite the fact that families with three or more children represent no more than 1/5 of all families, they receive financial assistance in the amount of 43% of all assistance allocated to children. That is why the French system allocates them (including housing subsidies) about 46% of the total amount of all benefits. Large families are provided with pension benefits – for example, an additional 10% to the basic pension for women who have raised three children,

and another 5% – for each subsequent, as well as insurance for pensions for housewives with children (for low-income families). The main body implementing the policy of supporting large families is the Caisse nationale des allocations familiales (CNAF). According to Eurostat, the share of spending on benefits for children and families in GDP is 2.68% (Butkute, Iakovidou & Janta, 2018). Thus, it can be stated that the measures of state support for large families in France are composed of direct and indirect, and sociocultural factors have a certain influence. At the same time, these measures bring tangible effect – the number of births per woman in France is the highest in Europe, the number of large families is much higher – 20-25%.

Sweden is considered a welfare state, in which great importance is attached to social policy, including family policy. The main body is the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, but the main support measures are decentralized to the level of municipalities. Traditionally, the state plays a large role in the implementation of social and family policies, which are mainly focused on the person, not on the family (Hantrais, 2004) and encouragement and support of families with double income (Lundqvist and Roman, 2008). Sweden's family policy is therefore called "de-family-oriented". In the country, large families receive a very substantial allowance, the size of which increases with the birth of the next child. In addition, for large families with incomes below the subsistence minimum, there is a system of additional benefits: for example, for payment of housing, pre-school institutions (full payment of rental housing and utility bills is possible). There is also a system of non-monetary subsidies – for example, members of large families are given special food stamps. The share of spending on benefits for children and families in Sweden's GDP is (3.14%).

The system of support measures in Germany can also be recognized as effective. The family support system and large families can be carried to a mixed system of various benefits and benefits. First, in large families for the birth of each child, the mother receives an additional tax bonus, and the amount of benefits paid to the child increases depending on the number of children. Secondly, at the birth of a child, the right to take maternity leave to both parents.

2.2 Features of state support for large families in the Russian Federation

Considerable attention in the Russian Federation is paid to family and demographic policies, which are formulated in a number of legislative and program documents. Pronatalistic state policy in Russia has been implemented for 10 years, but mainly it is aimed at supporting the birth of a second child. At the same time, there is a separate system of support for large families. The minimum list of support measures at the federal level provided to large families is set forth in the Presidential Decree of 05/05/1992. These include, for example, a discount on utility bills; the possibility of free provision of medicines for young children, travel on public transport, feeding

children in educational institutions, visiting museums and exhibitions; the allocation of garden plots; assistance in organizing peasant farms, etc. At the regional level, for large families, additional payments may be provided for the amounts of various payments specified in federal laws. For example, a monthly allowance for a child up to the age of 16 or 18 years can be established in an increased amount in respect of children from large families by subjects of the Russian Federation on the basis of the relevant regulatory acts.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on May 7, 2012 No. 606 “On Measures for Implementing the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation”, in the subjects of the Russian Federation families needing support have a monthly cash payment in the amount of the subsistence minimum for children defined in the subject, the birth of a third child or subsequent children until the child is three years old. In 2017, this payment was made in 67 regions of the Russian Federation. According to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 05.05.1992, No. 431 “On measures for social support of large families”, regions should provide large families with free distribution of medicines purchased by doctors’ prescriptions for children under 6 years of age; admission of children to preschool institutions in the first place; free travel on intracity transport, free provision of school uniforms or a set of children's clothes replacing it, sports uniform and free food for students of general education schools (the latter also for students of vocational schools). In addition, organize one day per month for free visits to museums, parks of culture and recreation, as well as exhibitions.

One of the responsibilities of the subjects of the Russian Federation is to assist large families in the provision of soft loans, as well as interest-free loans and various subsidies for the construction of housing and building materials. In many regions, it is practiced to reimburse part of the interest paid on a mortgage loan from the regional budget. Subjects of the RF also implement such a measure of social support as the free provision of a plot of land. Also, measures to support large families, established by federal legislation and implemented by subjects of the RF, are tax exemptions – exemption from paying transport and land taxes, property taxes, etc., and discounts for utilities are applied.

The effectiveness of the pronatalist policy is assessed by Russian researchers ambiguously. However, research results show the following patterns: 1. In the subjects of the Russian Federation, where the average per capita cash income in the region (43) is set as a criterion of need, or at a rate close to the per capita cash income in the region (5), in 2013–2015, the total fertility rate increased on average by 7, 2%. 2. In the regions of the Russian Federation in which the monthly cash payment was made with the support of the federal budget, the total fertility rate for 2013–2015 increased on average by 9.9%, and in the subjects of the Russian Federation in which such payment was not made, the average decline by 1%. At the same time, in

the whole of the Russian Federation, the total fertility rate for the specified period increased only by 5.1%. 3. In the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, where the size of the regional capital is more than 150 thousand rubles, there is a higher increase in the birth rate (for the period 2012-2015, the total fertility rate increased by 14.4%, while in regions where family capital is paid in less than 150 thousand rubles, this figure increased to a lesser extent – by 12.9%).

Conclusion

Despite the variety of measures implemented in European countries to support large families, the question of their effectiveness remains open. According to Eurostat, the proportion of children, third and subsequent births for women was 18.5% of the total number of children born in 2017, but the social policy of countries, in general, is not aimed at supporting and encouraging large families.

Analysis of the results of European studies revealed trends in the effectiveness of measures to support large families:

1. Increasingly, households make individual decisions regarding the birth of children, not focusing on support measures.
2. The impact of the measures taken is positive but insignificant.
3. Measures in relation to large families affect the time of birth rather than the total number of children.
4. Support measures such as parental leave and childcare subsidy affect fertility, but not significant.
5. The results of research on the impact of different types of family policy on the possibility of combining work and family responsibilities are also diverse – while some researchers suggest that longer maternity leave and children's subsidies encourage mothers to go to work, others find no effect.
6. A greater number of measures does not determine an increase in the number of births but may lead to a threat to the income level of other members of society.

According to a number of researchers, the most successful family policy is carried out by the UK, France, and Denmark. So, France pursues an intensive pronatalistic policy and has a well-developed network of children's institutions; Great Britain professes the principle of non-interference of the state in the affairs of the family; Denmark monitors, above all, respect for gender equality. Common to these countries are high fertility rates. Also in these three countries, enterprises are taking measures that meet the framework conditions of the family policy of the respective state. In Russia, measures of social support for large families are not systemic in nature, highly differentiated by region.

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