

# DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES IN THE HISTORY OF THE KALININGRAD REGION: NATIONAL TRENDS AND REGIONAL SPECIFICS

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*This article aims to identify the main demographic development trends and features observed in the Kaliningrad region from a historical perspective and assess the extent to which the region's demographic development corresponds to the national model accepted in contemporary historiography. The empirical sources used in this study include demographic statistics from published and archival materials; theoretically, it draws on the concepts of demographic and epidemiological transitions. Analysis of statistics and historiography is employed along with the comparative historical method. The migration factor had the leading role in the emergence of the regional specifics of demographic development. Migrants from the regions of the USSR that were deeply involved in demographic modernisation before the war formed the resident population of the Kaliningrad region. The gender and age profile of the migrants ensured the prolonged post-war demographic compensation and secured fertility and marriage rates above the RSFSR average. The regional fertility rates converged towards the national average in the second half of the 1950s; from the late 1970s, the region had a fertility rate below the national average. Overall mortality rates remained significantly lower than the RSFSR average until the mid-1990s. The changes in the regional population replacement model that took place in the region during the Soviet period and at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century generally corresponded to national trends. Therefore, the concept of Russian demographic development proposed by Russian researchers is directly applicable to the exclave of Kaliningrad.*

## **Keywords:**

demographic transition, Kaliningrad region, epidemiological transition, birth rate, mortality

## **Introduction**

Over the 75-year history of the Kaliningrad region, its population has come a long way shaping its today's appearance. During this time there were processes that affected population replacement, related structures and types of social behaviour. To this day, demographic development remains a major area of interest. It has been studied, along with associated phenomena, at a global, regional and local level, using methodological tools from across the humanities and social sciences, including history.

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Russian historiography and demography focus heavily on how demographic structures and processes evolved in the post-reform (1861–1914) and Soviet periods, studying intently the demographic catastrophes of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the social policy pursued by the Soviet authorities. Along with conceptual, summarising works encouraged by the so-called archival revolution of the 1990s [1–4], the past decades have seen the appearance of numerous studies into the history of populating Russia's macroregions and administrative units [5–9]. Describing how population replacement and migration changed at a regional level is a research area of relevance and interest, all the more so in a country with a vast territory, complex sociocultural and economic spaces, and a complicated history.

The demographic history of the Kaliningrad region has not been studied in full detail. Yet there is a range of publications reconstructing the population of the region by Soviet citizens, the deportation of the Germans and major trends in the social development of the *late 1940s–1950s*. Although there is ample room for further work, this period has been explored most extensively [10–14]. Over the past ten years, groundwork has been laid for investigating the history of the socio-demographic processes of the 1960s–1980s, known to be the least studied decades in the history of the region [15; 16]. The migration and demographic processes of the *post-Soviet period*, particularly the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, have been addressed by geographers, sociologists and other researchers [17–20]. But this area of study, just like the contemporary history of the region in general, has remained peripheral to historical research.

Analysis of the historical-demographic literature suggests that the history of populating the Kaliningrad region is rarely part of themed or review works on the 20<sup>th</sup>-century national demographic processes. As a rule, the region is briefly mentioned when considering the migration of the 1940s–1950s. A detailed reconstruction of the socio-demographic past of Russia's westernmost territory is a province of future research, and the complete history of the region's population has not yet been written.

Attaining this ambitious goal requires an interdisciplinary approach. Within the scope of an article, it is only possible to provide an outline of a general *historical* concept of a single aspect of the region's demographic past — the *transformation of replacement processes*.

*This article aims* to describe the features and dominant trends in the evolution of population replacement processes taking place in the region in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as to understand whether the national demographic development model accepted in Russian contemporary historiography is applicable for the Kaliningrad case. The work draws on published

statistics and archival materials, combining elements of statistical analysis and the historical-geographical method. To identify dominant trends in the region's demographic development from a historical perspective, one has to look at the changes in the major components of population replacement — the birth and mortality rates, — as well as their patterns. It is also necessary to use correspondent adjusted measures. Overall, regional specifics are necessarily explored using a comparative-historical approach, juxtapositions of national and regional trends, and comparisons with the performance of typologically similar Russian regions.

### **Theoretical framework**

Analyses and explanations of the demographic processes of the contemporary period habitually use the demographic transition model, which originated in the works of Warren Thompson and Adolphe Landry and was finalised by Frank W. Notestein<sup>1</sup> and Kingsley Davis. Davis was the first to use the term 'world demographic transition' featured in the title of one of his articles [21; 22, p. 4—5]. This model, developed in the 1940s, sought to explain demographic changes in the West. Its 'classical' version described the transformation of replacement as a process consisting of four consecutive stages: high birth and death rates; a rapidly falling death rate and a still high birth rate (accompanied by a dramatic population growth); stabilisation of mortality and a slowly declining birth rate; a new equilibrium: low birth and death rates. Later, Charles Blacker's model gained popularity. It consisted of five stages, including 'diminishing', which is a transition to natural decline [22, p. 8]. In the second half of the 1960s—1970s, the theoretical apparatus of demography was augmented by Abdel Omran's epidemiological transition concept explaining the evolution (modernisation) of mortality. This new approach viewed the transition to the contemporary mortality model as a consequence of the fundamental change in the causes of death, the occurrence of diseases and the age pattern of mortality [23, p. 177—179]. The American geographer Wilbur Zelinsky, the author of the mobility transition concept, has analysed the historical role of migration in global demographic transformation [24, p. 232—246]. In the late 1980s, Ron Lesthaeghe and Dirk van de Kaa proposed the concept of the second demographic transition, which linked a sub-replacement fertility level observed in developed countries to a changing system of values, growing tolerance, independent choice of life strategies and the weakening connection between the marriage and childbirth [25, p. 4—8, 32—41; 26]. Da-

<sup>1</sup> On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Frank W. Notestine, 2013, *Demoscop Weekly*, 575, URL: <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0575/nauka01.php> (accessed 15.07.2021).

vid Coleman's concept of a third demographic transition, which zeroes in on the growing proportion of immigrants with different cultural backgrounds in some European states, has sparked considerable debate [27, p. 78; 28].

### **The peculiarities of Russian demographic transition in contemporary historiography**

The demographic transition concept, to which Russian researchers also contributed, is extensively used in national historiography when describing the social modernisation of Russian society [2; 4; 30]. The peculiarities of the demographic transition of *Russian society* are its delayed beginning as compared to Western Europe (the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century); its sporadic nature (a consequence of the social catastrophes of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century); rapid development against the deformation of the age-sex composition; the long prevalence of exogenous factors in the evolution of demographic processes. Another distinctive feature is that the first phase of the demographic transition (a declining death rate and a high birth rate) lasted longer than in other countries because of a 'postponed' epidemiological transition repeatedly disrupted by the devastating consequences of the world and civil wars, the famines of 1932—1933 and 1946—1947, and the 'prematurely' falling birth rate, which undermined demographic compensation after the next social catastrophe [30, p. 287—306; 6, p. 140—43]. The accelerated transition to a new subtle balance between the birth and death rates is dated to the post-war period and its completion in the second half of the 1970s. At the time, the birth rate in Russia (the RSFSR) was near replacement level. The mortality structure changed, and nuclear families with one or two children became prevalent. The socio-cultural modernisation of Soviet society and waning control of the state over population replacement created the conditions for further change, an explanation of which was given within the second demographic transition concept. A new phase in the rapid evolution of the replacement system, as many researchers stress, was interrupted by the crisis of the 1990s [4, p. 219—223; 3, p. 539—541]. Along with depopulation and the nascent 'contraceptive revolution' [31], the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by immigration becoming an important factor outweighing natural decline. As the most acute economic problems were solved, new generations replaced old generations, and the social policy and the age-sex structure changed; the first signs of transformations in replacement processes occurred, some of them resembling the features of the second demographic transition [32; 33].

Available statistics and earlier findings offer a preliminary answer to the question about the conformity of the Kaliningrad region variant of demographic development to the historiographic concept described above.

## **Regional demographic development factors in the newly established Kaliningrad region**

In the first post-war years, the demographic situation in the young Russian region was shaped by migration and the aftermath of the war. The mass settlement of Soviet citizens and the deportation of the Germans remaining in the region caused the local population to change completely, and a new society with a different model of reproductive and matrimonial behaviour began to emerge on the territory.

Most migrants were coming to the region from Central and Northwestern Russia and the Belarusian SSR [33, p. 133—140; 34]. All the peculiarities rooted in the cultural traditions and socioeconomic history of each area of origin were evened out in the new place by mixed settlement (albeit communities of newcomers from the same area did appear), close everyday contacts, the institutions and mechanisms of the Soviet political system and the Soviet economic model [35, p. 70—78]. Many people arrived from the regions that had suffered the deprivations of the war and occupation, and most newcomers originated from national autonomies *actively involved in demographic modernisation*.

Until the mid-1950s, migration was the key factor in the population growth in the region. Later, natural increase played the dominant role [33, p. 90]<sup>2</sup>. Population mobility would be a hallmark of the region in the years to come [36].

A major consequence of the intensive population of the region was an age-sex composition that bore the imprint of the demographic catastrophes of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and had visible disproportions in the most affected age groups, on the one hand, and differed from those of other regions of central and north-western Russia in that it had *a much higher percentage of younger generations*, on the other [37, p. 62, 63, 86, 87, 96, 97; 38, p. 233—245]. Substantial military forces were maintained in the region; conscripts from many other regions of the country resided temporarily there. All this contributed to post-war demographic compensation and slowed down demographic ageing. Even if the earlier replacement model persisted, the region was expected to have a high birth rate. At the same time, the considerable degree of urbanisation and mobility, noticeable migration exchange between the city and the country, the higher percentage of newcomers from cities in the region's rural population [33, p. 85—90] and the large percentage of younger generations brought about faster sociocultural modernisation and demographic change. A crucial factor in the process was the deployment of the Soviet healthcare system. Against the backdrop of medical advances of

<sup>2</sup> The state archive of the Kaliningrad region (referred to below as SAKR). Fonds 181. Series 15. File 487. Folio 1.

the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, commitment to universally accessible healthcare and health promotion stimulated the epidemiological transition. By the end of the 1950s, the region was one of the most successful in the USSR in terms of public healthcare [39, p. 32–35]<sup>3</sup>.

### **From post-war compensation to demographic stabilisation**

In the population period, the region, just like the rest of the country, experienced demographic compensation due to births delayed during wartime. In the second half of the 1940s, the crude birth rate (CBR) remained high, despite the grave consequences of the famine of 1947, and was well above the RSFSR average (Fig. 1) and the rates observed in the regions of the settlers' origin. The total marriage rate (20–24 per 1,000 population) was also above the national average<sup>4</sup>. The compensation period lasted longer in Kaliningrad than in other Russian regions, owing to the relatively favourable population structure, and its results were more impressive.

The next decade, however, saw a 40% decline in the marriage rate; the CBR followed the same trend, dropping to 32 in 1955 and 22–23 in 1960–1961. The specific fertility rate calculated for the rural population was only 105 in 1958, compared to 172 in 1949<sup>5</sup>. The central factors in this reduction were the end of the compensation period and the 'urban' model of reproductive behaviour becoming dominant in this urbanised region. *Both the marriage and birth rates were falling more rapidly than on average in the USSR* [40, p. 57–61; 41, p. 254]. This could be an effect of the age composition of the region's population, replenished in the 1940s–1950s mostly by young people, and the peak of their marriage and reproductive behaviour (giving birth to the first and second child) coinciding with the demographic compensation [38, p. 241–245].

The age structure of fertility changed. In 1950, women aged 20–24 accounted for about 40% of all births and 52% of first child births (35 and 56.5 in 1959); the 25–29 age group, for 37.6 and 34.2% respectively (28.8 and 23 in 1959).

<sup>3</sup> SAKR. Fonds 233. Series 6. File 33, Folios 1–8; Fonds 233. Series 6. File 119. Folios 54–65.

<sup>4</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR. Fonds 181. Series 1. File 11. Folio 4; Series 3. File 3. Folio 65–67; Series 5. File 1, 2 verso; File 8. Folio 3, 3 verso, 22, 22 verso, 33, 33 verso; Series 7. File 3. Folio 4, 4 verso; Series 9. File 3. Folio 3 verso.

<sup>5</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR. Fonds 181. Series 12. File 281. Folio 2 verso; Series 15. File 59. Folio 1; File 145. Folio 1 verso; File 241. Folio 7; File 353. Folio 3; Series 3. File 2. Folio 3; Series 7. File 4. Folio 20; Series 15. File 242. Folio 2.

The two categories of female population, whose age boundaries (20–29) were almost identical to those of the peak reproductive years (20–30), accounted for 78.6% of all births in 1950 and 63.8% in 1959<sup>6</sup>. Over the decade, the proportion of older age groups (chiefly, 30–34) increased in the total figure of births. The birth rate became ‘younger’ at the same time: the proportion of first children born by women aged 16–24 increased and by those aged 25–29 declined. These processes were much in line with the national trends in the fertility structure and the trends observed in Central Russia.

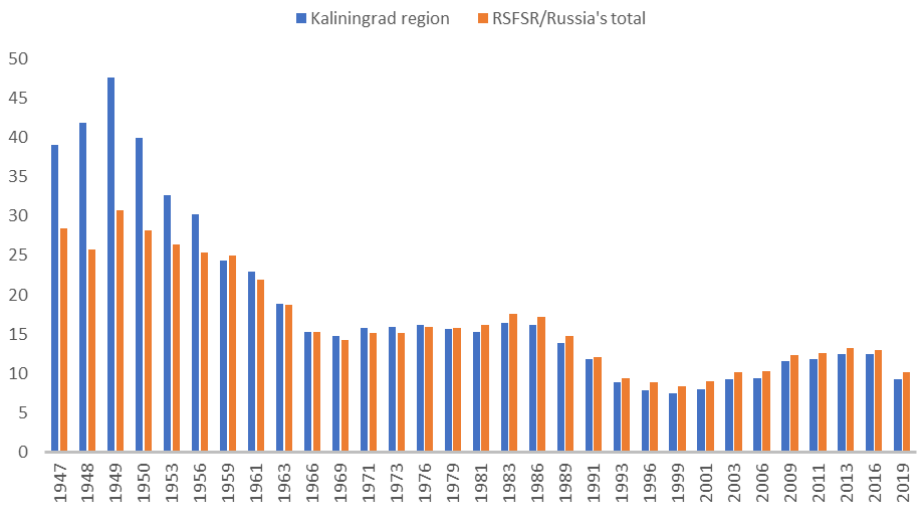


Fig 1. The crude birth rate in the Kaliningrad region of the RSFSR/Russia in 1947–2019 (births per 1,000 population)

Sources: calculated based on data from the Kaliningrad Regional Statistics Department<sup>7</sup>, official statistical publications<sup>8</sup> and the website [demoscop.ru](http://demoscop.ru)<sup>9</sup>.

In the 1960s, the birth rate continued to decline against the background of population growth (the CBR decreased from 22 to 14.7 by the end of the decade). This trend was partly explained by a falling percentage of the population aged 20–35, which made the most substantial contribution to the birth statistics<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR. Fonds 181. Series 5. File 8. Folio 5, 7; Series 15. File 353. Folio 48.

<sup>7</sup> SAKR. Fonds 181.

<sup>8</sup> *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2015, 2016*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 42–45 ; *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2020, 2021*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 44–47.

<sup>9</sup> Birth and mortality rate, and natural change in Russia by region, 1970–2011, 2011–2018, 2018, *Demoscop Weekly*, URL: [http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus\\_reg\\_nat.php](http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_reg_nat.php) (accessed 12.12.2021).

<sup>10</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR. Fonds 181. Series 13. File 633. Folio 1, 2.

However, a low CBR was recorded in the 1970s as well, when the new vast generation born during the post-war compensation entered the 'demographic scene'. The CBR edged up in the mid-80s, reaching 16.2 in 1986–1987, but the decline resumed in 1988, with the rate falling to 12.6 in 1990<sup>11</sup>.

Evidence of fundamental changes in the reproduction behaviour of the region's population was the spread of birth control practices, artificial termination of pregnancy being the most common at the time. The number of abortions, legalised in 1955, was rapidly growing. In the second half of the 1950s, when 83,624 children were born in the region, the medical statistics recorded 166,194 artificial abortions, including 41,837 performed out-of-hospital<sup>12</sup>. Data on births outside marriage offer an interesting angle on the evolution of demographic behaviour. If the rates recorded in the second half of the 1940s-early 1950s (over 20 % of all births) could be explained by a skewed age-sex ratio, and the decline of the 1950s by rectifying the skew, the gradual increase in the number of births out of marriage observed from the late 1950s (to 20–23 % in the 1970s)<sup>13</sup>, which coincided with a growing number of recorded abortions, is indicative of the spread of unofficial (de facto) marriages between members of younger generations.

A telltale sign of the demographic transition was a reduction in *mortality*: in 1949–1969, the crude death rate (CDR) dropped from 9.5 to 4.6 per 1,000 population. In cities and towns, this change was more rapid despite the alarming medical and environmental situation. The mortality rate was the lowest in the region's post-war history at the beginning of the 1960s (Fig. 2).

The most significant contribution to the positive change in the average values was a dramatic reduction in the infant mortality rate — from 90–108 per 1,000 live birth in the region's first years to 44–46 in the second half of the 1950s. The age structure of mortality also altered: child mortality accounted now for 25 % against 58 % earlier; that of people aged 50 and older, for 44 % compared to 15 %<sup>14</sup>. The 1950s witnessed the transition to the dominance of endogenous causes of death over all others: people in the region were most likely to die of cardiovascular diseases or tumours. Yet, mortality from infections, injuries, and intoxication remained high [42, p. 89–95]. All these changes, closely corresponding to

<sup>11</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR, Fonds 181. Series 20. File 670. Folio 1–3; File 869. Folio 5, 6; File 1109. Folio 8; File 1703. Folio 9–12.

<sup>12</sup> SAKR, Fonds 233. Series 6. File 7. Folio 24; File 14, Item 15; File 119, Item 54–60; File 165a, Item 14; File 197, Item 21.

<sup>13</sup> SAKR, Fonds 181. Series 3. File 3. Folio 7, 17; Series 5. File 1. Folio 7, 36, 59; File 8. Folio 6; File 241. Folio 4–16.

<sup>14</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR, Fonds 181. Series 7. File 3. Folio 4, 4 verso; Series 9. File 3. 3 verso; File 59. Folio 1; File 353. Folio 3.



the signs of Omran's epidemiological transition [22, p. 180—203], were possible due to advances in pharmacology, the establishment of a full-fledged healthcare system, prompt delivery of medicines to the region, and the successful solution of a range of sanitary problems. But mortality from some groups of causes (for instance, infections) was decreasing in the region at a slower rate than in Central and Northwestern Russia: the Vladimir, Bryansk, Novgorod and some other regions. The poor performance of Kaliningrad produced a sharp reaction from the republication Ministry of Healthcare.

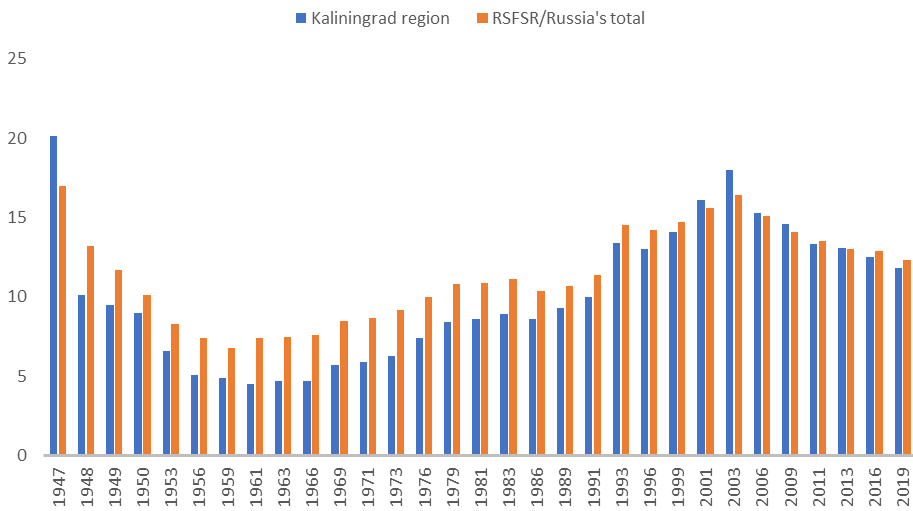


Fig 2. The crude death rate in the Kaliningrad region and the RSFSR/Russia in 1947—2019, deaths per 1,000 population

Sources: calculated based on data from the Kaliningrad Regional Statistics Department, official statistical publications<sup>15</sup> and the website demoscop.ru<sup>16</sup>.

In the next decade, the CDR slightly increased in the region (from 4.5 in 1961 to 5.8 in 1970), following changes in the age composition, i.e. demographic ageing. Injuries and accidents, once the most common causes of death, slipped down one position, and infant mortality decreased substantially<sup>17</sup>.

The region completed the transition to a new balance of low mortality and low birth rates in the 1960s, but the necessary fundamental changes took place earlier, in the previous decade. The age pattern of deaths altered, with endogenous

<sup>15</sup> *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2015, 2016*, Kaliningrad, 2016, vol. 1, p. 42—45 ; *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2020, 2021*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 44—47.

<sup>16</sup> Birth and mortality rate, and natural change in Russia by region, 1970—2011, 2011—2018, 2018, *Demoscop Weekly*, URL: [http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus\\_reg\\_nat.php](http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_reg_nat.php) (accessed 12.12.2021).

<sup>17</sup> SAKR. Series 13. File 633. Folio 1—3; Fonds 639. Series 1. File 40. Folio 32.

causes becoming the most common. The trend towards fewer children in a family prevailed; birth control within a family was gaining popularity. As life expectancy increased, the region's population started to age, entering the brief stage of demographic stability.

Juxtaposing the regional processes of the second half of the 1940s—1960s with the national ones highlights the features peculiar to Kaliningrad. Post-war compensation was more intensive and lengthier there: the birth rates in the region were much higher in its first decade than across the RSFSR. The CBR in 1948—1950 was well above the pre-war rate in the territories of the settlers' origin, which was not typical of Russian regions. In the late 1950s, the CBR in Kaliningrad approached the RSFSR average. And the adjusted mortality rate, which had an exceptionally favourable age structure, did not differ from the national average for long. During the study period, Kaliningrad, like the other regions of the RSFSR, underwent a sea change in the age pattern of death, and the hierarchy of the causes of death altered as well. However, the key trends in the evolution of the population replacement model were very similar in the region to those observed at the time in Central Russia.

### **The migration factor and demographic development at the turn of the century**

In the 1970s-early 1980s, the region had a balanced demographic makeup. The CBR still varied between 15 and 16; adult mortality was slowly growing, with the CDR reaching 8.9 in 1985; infant mortality was decreasing (Fig. 1, 2). Cardiovascular diseases, primarily heart conditions, and tumours became common causes of death<sup>18</sup>. The region saw a small natural increase.

In the late 1980s, the region, like the rest of the country, was on the brink of a demographic crisis, whose peak occurred in the 1990s-early 2000s. The CBR dropped to 11.8 in 1988—1991 and 8.0 in the next five years; the CDR rocketed from 8.7 in 1987 to 10 in 1991 and 13.6 in 1995. A natural population decrease has been observed in the region since 1992 (Fig. 3)<sup>19</sup>. Exogenous factors, such as car accidents, occupation and general injuries, murder, poisonings and suicide, once again ranked second amongst the top causes of death<sup>20</sup>. A slight increase in the adjusted measures was first registered in 2000—2002; mortality began to decline later, in 2006 (Fig. 2).

<sup>18</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR. Fonds 181. Series 20. File 670. Folio 1—3; File 869. Folio 5, 6; File 1703. Folio 9—12.

<sup>19</sup> Calculated based on data from the Regional Statistics Department: SAKR. Fonds 181. Series 20. File 670. Folio 1—3; File 869. Folio 5, 6; File 1703. Folio 9—12; *The demographic yearbook of the Kaliningrad region*, 1998, Kaliningrad, p. 8—14.

<sup>20</sup> *The demographic yearbook of the Kaliningrad region*, 1998, Kaliningrad, p. 45—48.

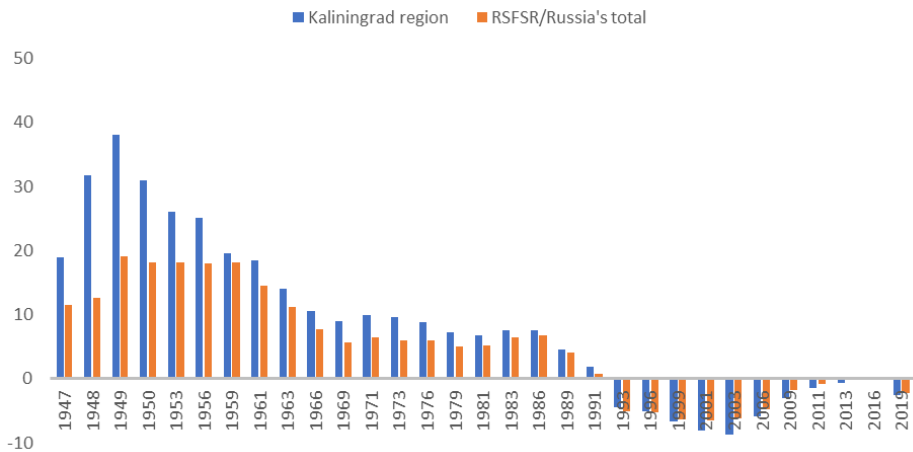


Fig 3. Rates of natural increase in the Kaliningrad region of the RSFSR/Russia in 1947–2019

Sources: calculated based on data from the Kaliningrad Regional Statistics Department<sup>21</sup> and the website *demoscop.ru*<sup>22</sup>.

The situation of the 1990s–2000s displayed signs of a demographic crisis: sub-replacement fertility, rising mortality and temporal shifts in the hierarchy of causes of death were accompanied by a crisis in the institution of marriage and the destabilisation of the family. In our opinion, these demographic dynamics should not be regarded as equivalent to Lesthaeghe and Kaa's second demographic transition: the effect of the deplorable economic situation and the perplexing socio-cultural climate of the first post-Soviet decade, marked by radical transformations and vast immigration was overwhelming [43, p. 37–39].

In the post-Soviet period, which witnessed the transition to sub-replacement fertility, the contribution of immigration to population growth increased. In 1992–1999, as mortality rose leading to natural decline, the population of the region grew through migration, primarily from former Soviet republics. In 1999–2009, net migration reduced, causing the population of the Kaliningrad region to decrease. Since 2010, the region has experienced demographic growth, immigration being an essential factor in it. Russia's westernmost territory became extremely attractive to migrants, having welcomed 43,000 par-

<sup>21</sup> SAKR. Fonds 181.

<sup>22</sup> Birth and mortality rate, and natural change in Russia by region, 1970–2011, 2011–2018, 2018, *Demoscop Weekly*, URL: [http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus\\_reg\\_nat.php](http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_reg_nat.php) (accessed 12.12.2021).

ticipants in the national repatriation programme and their family members in 2007–2018. With net migration reaching 82,000 people over the period, one can safely assume that the programme was responsible for half of all the arrivals. Most repatriates came to the region from Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzia. The programme also attracted people from Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Germany and Israel. Another visible phenomenon in that decade was student immigration.

Mass immigration concurred with, and probably stimulated, an increase in the birth rate. In 2001–2005, the CBR soared from 8 to 12.7 (Fig. 1). The total fertility rate started to grow in 2006 (Fig. 4). The regional rate of natural increase was above the national average (Fig. 3), but it never reached the levels of the 1980s–1990s. The CBR fell from 12.4 in the CBR to 9.2 in 2019. The gap between the regional and national average TFR widened substantially.

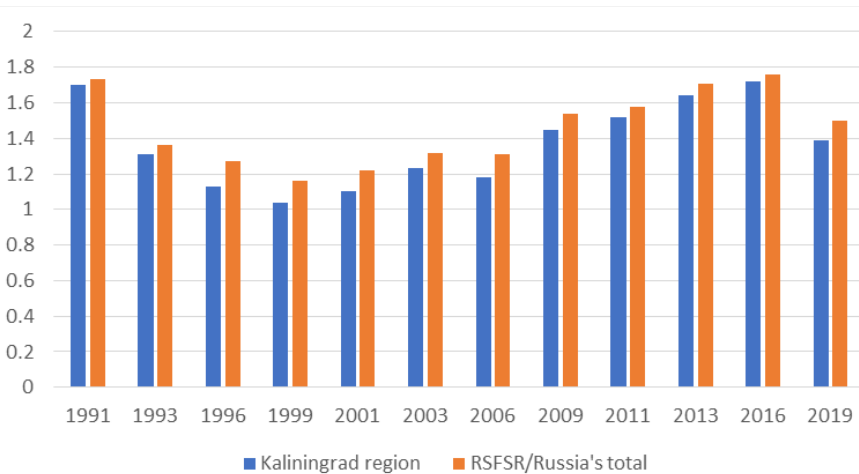


Fig. 4. The total fertility rate in the Kaliningrad region of the RSFSR/Russia in 1991–2019

Sources: data from official statistical publications<sup>23</sup> and the website demoscop.ru<sup>24</sup>.

In the post-Soviet period, the age pattern of fertility changed as well: the contribution of women of older groups increased, much in line with the national trend (Table).

<sup>23</sup> *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2015, 2016*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 42–45 ; *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2020, 2021*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 44–47.

<sup>24</sup> Birth and mortality rate, and natural change in Russia by region, 1970–2011, 2011–2018, 2018, *Demoscop Weekly*, URL: [http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus\\_reg\\_nat.php](http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_reg_nat.php) (accessed 12.12.2021).

**Age-specific fertility rate in the Kaliningrad region/Russia  
in 1991, 1999, 2006 and 2016**

Year	Births per 1,000 women aged						
	15—19	20—24	25—29	30—34	35—39	40—44	45—49
1991	57.1/54.2	144.7/145.9	75.7/82.7	43.7/41.5	16.5/16.5	3.7/3.7	0.3/0.2
1999	28.6/28.9	83.9/91.8	56.2/63.7	26.8/32.2	9.9/11.1	1.8/2.2	0.1/0.1
2006	25.8/28.6	75.5/85.8	71.3/78.2	43.3/46.8	17.5/18.7	3.1/3.1	0.2/0.1
2016	17.6/21.5	80.6/87.2	110.9/111.5	86.3/84.4	43.4/41.0	8.8/8.8	0.5/0.5

*Sources:* prepared based on data from official statistical publications<sup>25</sup> and the website [demoscop.ru](http://demoscop.ru)<sup>26</sup>.

As the marriage rate gradually decreased, the average age at marriage grew. The percentage of births outside marriage stabilised at 18—19.5 % of all births. The number of abortions decreased significantly in the post-Soviet period, to 50—57 per 100 births, betokening the completion of the ‘contraceptive revolution’ in the region.

In 2006—2018, the mortality rate fell from 16.5 to 11.8‰, as the population continued to age, the socioeconomic situation stabilised, and social welfare measures were introduced<sup>27</sup>. Probably, the age-sex structure of the new arrivals to the Kaliningrad region, including participants in the repatriation programme, had a pivotal role in this positive change.

### **Demographic development in the Kaliningrad and Sakhalin regions: problem setting**

A study of the demographic history of Russia’s westernmost territory cannot be comprehensive without comparing regional trends and indicators with not only national ones but also those registered in typologically similar regions. A territory often likened to Kaliningrad is the Sakhalin region, whose population

<sup>25</sup> *The demographic yearbook of Russia*, 2008, Moscow, p. 95—97 ; *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2015, 2016*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 42—45 ; *Kaliningrad region in digits. 2020, 2021*, Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 44—47.

<sup>26</sup> Birth and mortality rate, and natural change in Russia by region, 1970—2011, 2011—2018, 2018, *Demoscop Weekly*, URL: [http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus\\_reg\\_nat.php](http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_reg_nat.php) (accessed 12.12.2021).

<sup>27</sup> *Kaliningrad region in digits*, 2016, Краткий статистический сборник, Kaliningrad, p. 25—27 ; *Kaliningrad region in digits*, 2020, Статистический сборник. Kaliningrad, vol. 1, p. 39, 41, 128.

was shaped by resettlement campaigns and the mass migration of the post-war decades. But whilst an entirely new society was forming in the young Kaliningrad region in the late 1940s—1950s, the newcomers to Sakhalin were joining an already existing sociodemographic environment (the north of the island was part of the USSR before 1945). The authorities of both Sakhalin and Kaliningrad had to deal with the outflow of the newcomers; the process was more visible in the west due to the ease of reaching one's region of origin or a territory with better infrastructure [46, p. 98—101].

Differing in not only nature and geography but also their economic strong points, the regions had disparate demographic characteristics. The all-Union census of 1959 showed that the age-sex composition of the Kaliningrad region was very similar to that of Bryansk and other territories of Central Russia — where people were coming from after the war to the newly established region. The demographic situation on Sakhalin looked different in the census: the ratio between men and women was more favourable, even in the groups that suffered the most from the war. When populating the region, agricultural migration was secondary to the recruitment of fishers and industrial workers. Therefore, most of the newcomers were men [39, p. 240—246]. Like the Kaliningrad region, Sakhalin was amongst the most urbanised regions of the RSFSR, and the rural population declined more rapidly there after the disintegration of the USSR. The birth rate gradually decreased in both regions. The population of the Kaliningrad region grew markedly: from 881,000 people in 1990 to over 1 million in 2019. Another distinguishing trait of the region was an increase in the rural population. In the Sakhalin region, the population was declining: the territory lost almost one-third of its people, about 230,000, in 1992—2018. Yet a slight increase was observed in 2015—2017. Life expectancy in the Sakhalin region, which is conspicuous for premature ageing, is amongst the lowest in Russia; Kaliningrad performed much better on this measure [47, p. 6—12; 48, p. 78—82].

The demographic history of the Sakhalin and Kaliningrad regions followed the national trend towards a change in the replacement type, yet each had its own distinctive features. Further work needs to be done to produce an extensive comparison of the demographic trajectory of the two 'newly settled' regions of Russia.

## **Conclusions**

This study has distinguished five stages in the demographic history of Kaliningrad. At the first stage (the late 1940s-early 1950s), the population of the territory changed completely. The then mass migration was spurred by the transition from

war to peace (demobilisation and repatriation) and the integration of the new territory into the Soviet socioeconomic space (planned settlement and urbanisation). Replacement processes were greatly affected by the age-sex composition of the newcomer groups, migration from other regions of the country and post-war demographic compensation. The population of the region was made up by migrants from Central and Northwestern Russia and the Belarusian SSR. An important factor in the region's socioeconomic development was the transfer of demographic development models from the territories of the settlers' origin. The young region had a very high marriage rate and high birth and death rates; infections, traumas and other exogenous factors were the most common causes of death.

In the mid-1950s—1960s, the migration factor faded in significance. Although populating the region was largely completed, migration between the territory, on the one hand, and the other regions of the RSFSR and the Union republics, naturally continued. The process central to this stage was a change in the population replacement model. As the post-war compensation ended, the birth rate began to fall. Child, and particularly infant, mortality plummeted. The age pattern of change altered, with endogenous factors prevailing over exogenous ones; life expectancy increased, and the trend towards population ageing emerged. The new balance between the birth and mortality rates was reached in Kaliningrad earlier than in many other regions of the RSFSR. Having moved out of the 'state of emergency' of the first post-war years, the region developed demographically in a very similar way to Central Russia, with the adjustment for younger average age and ensuing beneficial consequences, such as slower population ageing.

The 1970s and most of the 1980s were a relatively stable period in the demographic history of the region, the 'halcyon days' between the turbulence of the previous stage and the forthcoming crisis. Although population ageing and the growing catalogue of social problems caused the death rate to speed up, the region maintained a steady natural increase bolstered by a stable birth rate, which, however, was falling below the RSFSR average. The death rate, due to a younger average age of the population, was below the RSFSR average and the values observed in the regions of the settlers' origin (Bryansk, Smolensk, Leningrad and others).

In the last years of Perestroika (1989—1991), the fourth stage began, marked by a severe demographic crisis: a rapid decline in the birth rate, rising mortality at both older and younger ages, and an accelerating trend towards depopulation, which was clearer in Kaliningrad at the turn of the century than in most Russian regions. Nevertheless, Russia's Baltic exclave managed to attract migrants in the

‘wild 90s’: despite a limited natural increase and out-migration, the population of the region grew, providing the groundwork for demographic recovery once the economic situation improved and the political situation stabilised.

As the most blatant manifestations of the crisis receded in the 2000s, the new, fifth, stage in the region’s demographic development began. The trend reversed, and the birth rate began to improve; the death rate slowly declined. And after 2010, the region once again became one of the most attractive to migrants. In 2019, net migration per 1,000 population rose to 12.9, compared to the national average of 1.9. Depopulation, however, was not overcome: the region still suffered a natural population decrease. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2019, Kaliningrad had a total fertility rate below the national average (1.392 against 1.504), a longer life expectancy at birth (73.56 against 73.34) and a lower crude death rate (11.8 against 12.3).

Therefore, as discussed above, demographic development in the Kaliningrad region had the same direction and occurred almost simultaneously with similar changes on a national scale both in the first post-war years and in the later decades. Consequently, the ‘ideal model’ of demographic development in Russia, proposed by national researchers [2–4; 30], is generally applicable for conceptualising the factual material on the population development in the Kaliningrad region until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Except for the first stage, the region’s development trajectory was very similar to that of Central Russia, with the adjustment for the considerable contribution of migration.

The findings of this research may help create a concept of the social history of the Kaliningrad region and launch a programme for comparative studies aimed to describe the features of regional demographic development in comparison to typologically similar ‘newly settled’ territories and the regions of the newcomers’ origin.

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