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Online Appendix

Three Decades on Russia's Path of the Second Demographic Transition: How Patterns of Fertility are Changing Under an Unstable Demographic Policy*

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1 Data and methods

Dirk van de Kaa, in describing the idea of the Second Demographic Transition, put in the first place changes in the age profile of fertility and shifts in the distribution of births by order (*van de Kaa* 2002). It is logical to assume that changes in the direction of later motherhood and in distributions of women by number of children ever born indicate changes in social norms and the hierarchy of values at the individual level. That is why in this work we have concentrated on an in-depth analysis of the reliable and verifiable indicators of fertility modernization, which are provided by routine vital statistics, and increment-decrement age- and birth-order-specific period and cohort fertility tables, which are computed from official statistics.

A serious problem is the calculation of cohort fertility tables for censored cohorts who, due to their age, have not yet necessarily completed childbearing. In the present study, it was of fundamental importance for us to predict the key characteristics of cohort order-specific fertility profiles. Unfortunately, all known methods for forecasting cohort fertility (see critical review: *Bohk-Ewald et al.* 2018) are focused on obtaining the cohort total fertility rate (CTFR), and do not include the construction of cohort age- and order-specific fertility life-tables. In addition to the expected average number of children born fertility tables give the other important parameters of fertility, such as the probability of having another child, detailed characteristics of the age profile of women for each birth order, distribution of women by number of children born, etc.

The method proposed for projections of Parity Progression Ratios (PPRs) for cohorts who have not yet exceeded childbearing age is illustrated by two figures below. Figure S-1 gives an idea of the actual and smoothed functions of the growth

* This Online Appendix contains additional information regarding the article: https://www.comparativepopulationstudies.de/index.php/CPoS/article/view/626/401.

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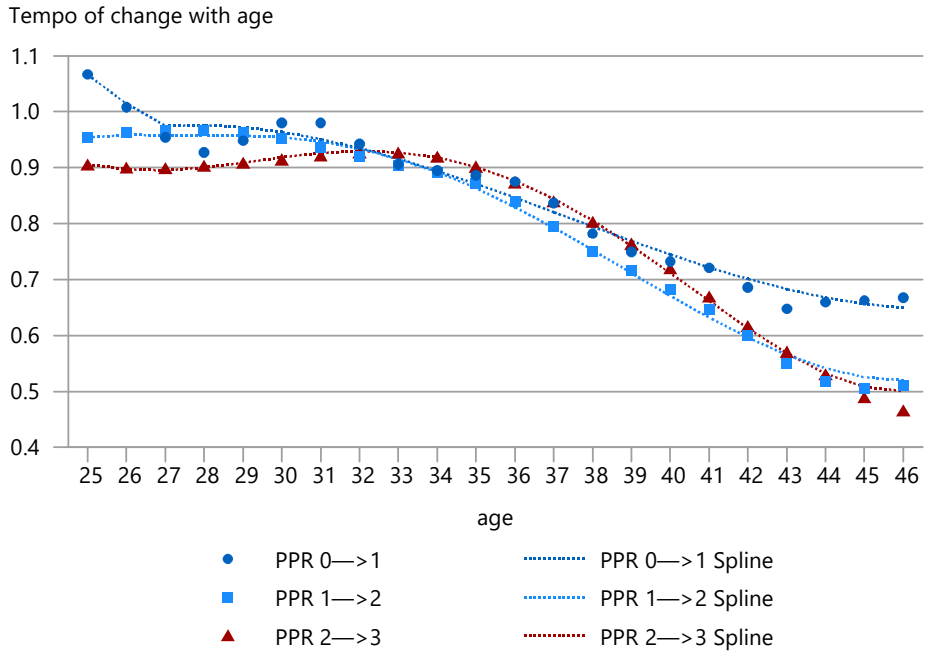
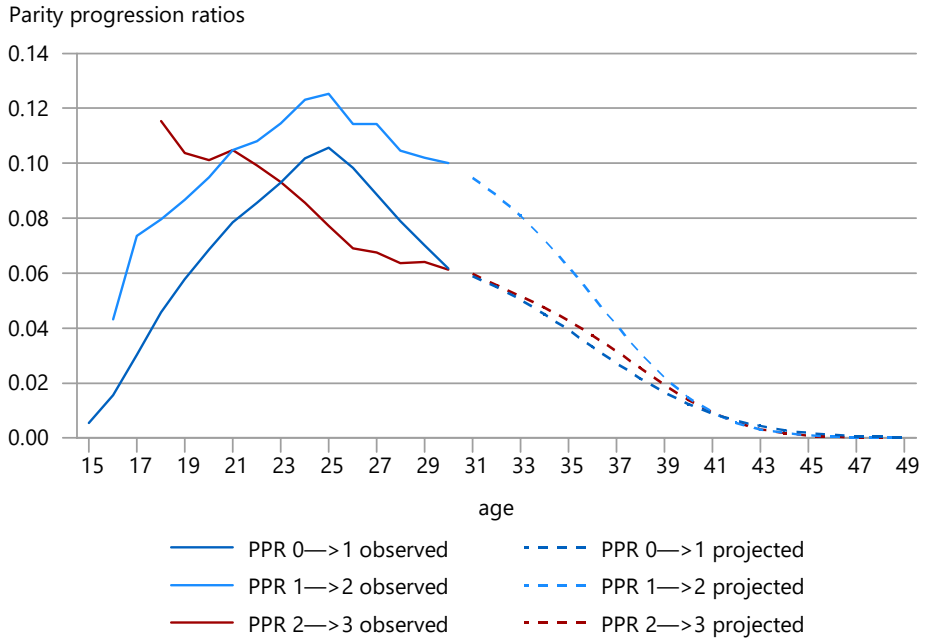
Fig. S-1: Tempo of change with age of transition ratios to the first, second and third births observed in 2019-2021, and their smoothing spline-functions, Russia



Source: period age- and order-specific fertility life-tables calculated by S.V. Zakharov, and based on data from the Human Fertility Database (http://www.demogr.mpg.de) and unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

rate of PPR values with age in accordance with the average period age- and order-specific fertility life-table for 2019-2021. Next, the spline functions obtained from the period table are used to predict the probabilities of having the next child for cohorts that have not completed childbearing. Figure S-2 shows an example of predicting PPRs for a cohort of women born in 1990. Based on the observed and predicted values of the probabilities of giving birth to the next child, we build full tables of fertility for each cohort, and, accordingly, we obtain estimates for the key quantitative characteristics of cohort fertility patterns.

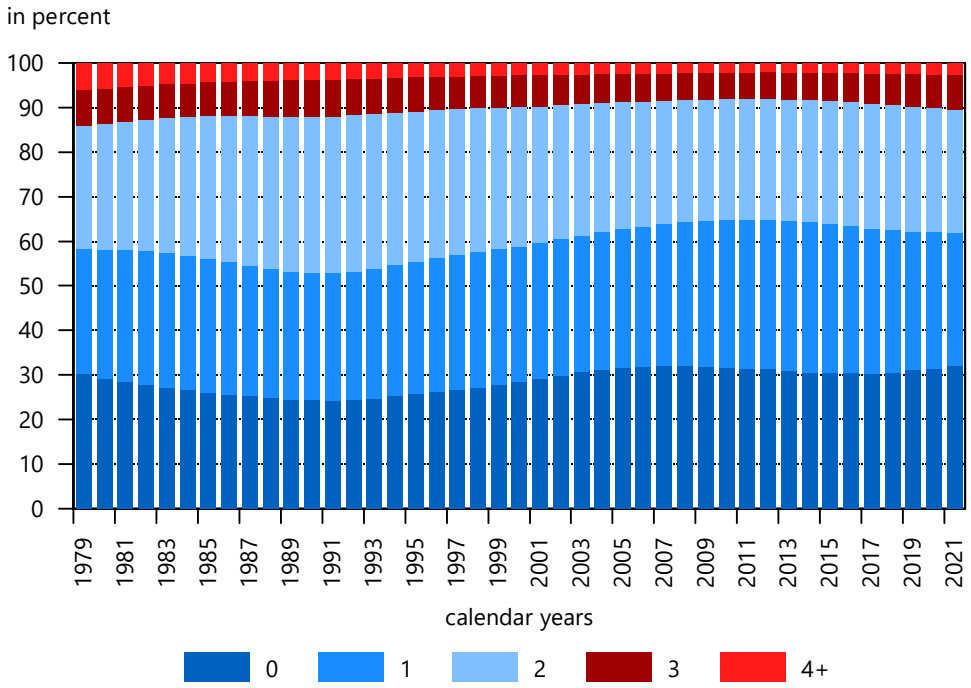
Fig. S-2: Parity progression ratios for the first, second, and third births for a cohort of women born in 1990, as observed by and expected in 2022 (the last available statistical data is for 2021), Russia



Source: cohort age- and order-specific fertility life-tables calculated by S.V. Zakharov, and based on data from the Human Fertility Database (http://www.demogr.mpg.de) and unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

2 Annual estimates of women by number of children born

Fig. S-3: Annual distributions of women aged 15-49 by number of children ever born, Russia, 1979-2021, %



Source: period age- and order-specific fertility life-tables calculated by S.V. Zakharov, and based on data from the Human Fertility Database (http://www.demogr.mpg.de) and unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

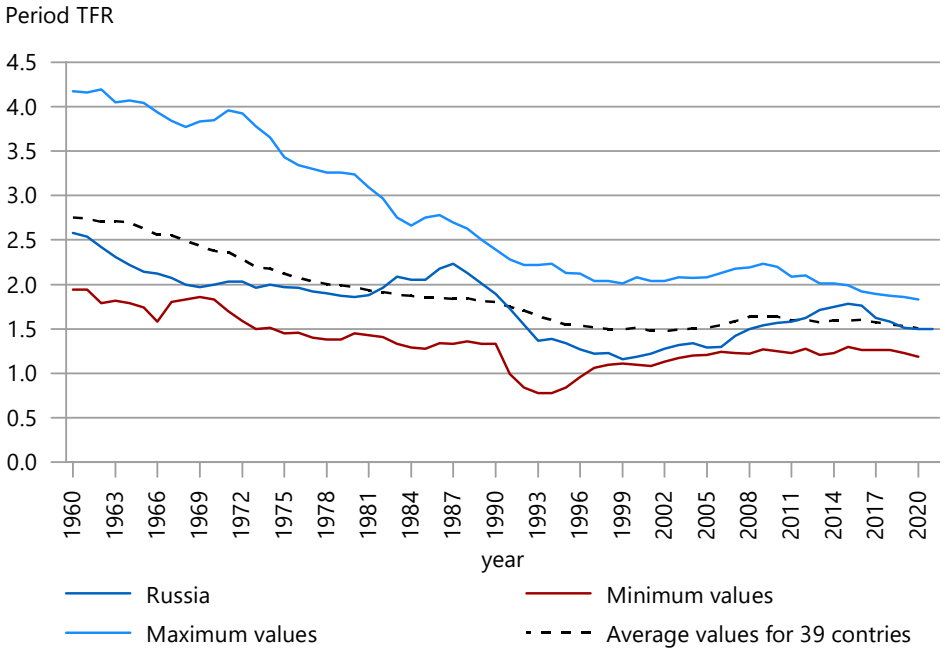
3 Features of trends for period and cohort fertility indicators in comparison with other industrialized countries

3.1 Long-term trends in period and cohort total fertility rates

Over the past six decades, the total fertility rate (TFR) in Russia has experienced several periods of decline (in the 1960s, in the 1990s), of upswings (in the mid-1980s, in 2000-2015) and of relative stability (in the 1970s, and in 2019-2021). During upswings, Russia approached the upper limit of variation in the PTFR for industrialized countries – in years of recessions – to its lower border, but, most importantly, it was never an outsider, it always remained within these limits, and, moreover, tended to occupy a middle position (Fig. S-4).

The general trend for developed countries over the period under review, which Russia also shared, boils down to a decrease in fertility from the PTFR exceeding an average of 2.5 births per woman to an average level of about 1.5-1.6 births.

Fig. S-4: Period TFR in Russia and limits of variation of the indicator for 39 industrialized countries, 1960-2019



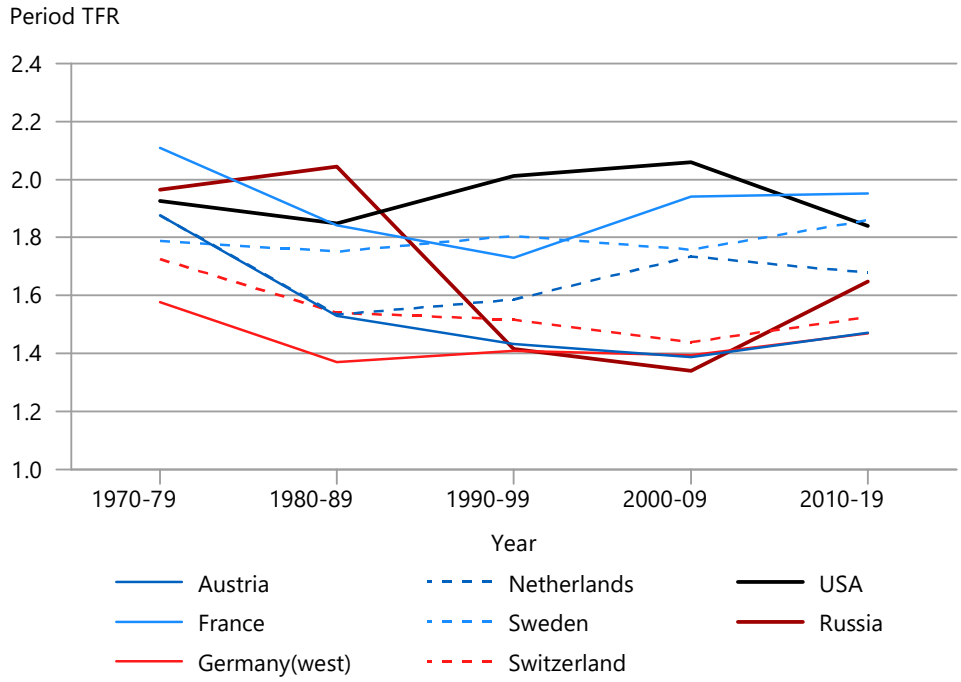
Source: calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on data from the Demographic database of A.G. Vishnevsky Institute of Demography, Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/app/app4007.php).

It should be noted that for 39 industrialized countries, that level was reached by the beginning of the 1990s and has remained unchanged since then, i.e. for three decades. The PTFR in Russia in recent years has been at this average level (1.62 in 2017, 1.58 in 2018, 1.51 in 2019-2021, and 1.65 on average over the last decade, 2010-2020). The Covid-19 pandemic in Russia, which had a devastating effect on the mortality of older people, had no effect on annual TFRs.

Let us consider in more detail the diversity of the level and trends of fertility in different countries, selecting, on the one hand, the "richest" countries, in which GDP per capita is much higher than that of Russia: Austria, Germany (western states), the Netherlands, the USA, France, Sweden, Switzerland (Fig. S-5). Except for the USA these countries undeniably boast the most advanced and generous social and family policies in the world. At the same time, among selected countries, the United States stands out for the most controversial and, on the whole, the weakest intervention of the state in the social sphere.

On the other hand, it is useful to compare Russia with those countries most similar to it in terms of economic development and which, moreover, had been part of the USSR: Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania (Fig. S-6). Over the decades following the collapse of the USSR, these three countries significantly diverged from Russia

Fig. S-5: Period TFR in Austria, Germany (western states), France, the Netherlands, USA, Sweden, Switzerland, and Russia, 1970-2019, average values in the specified decades



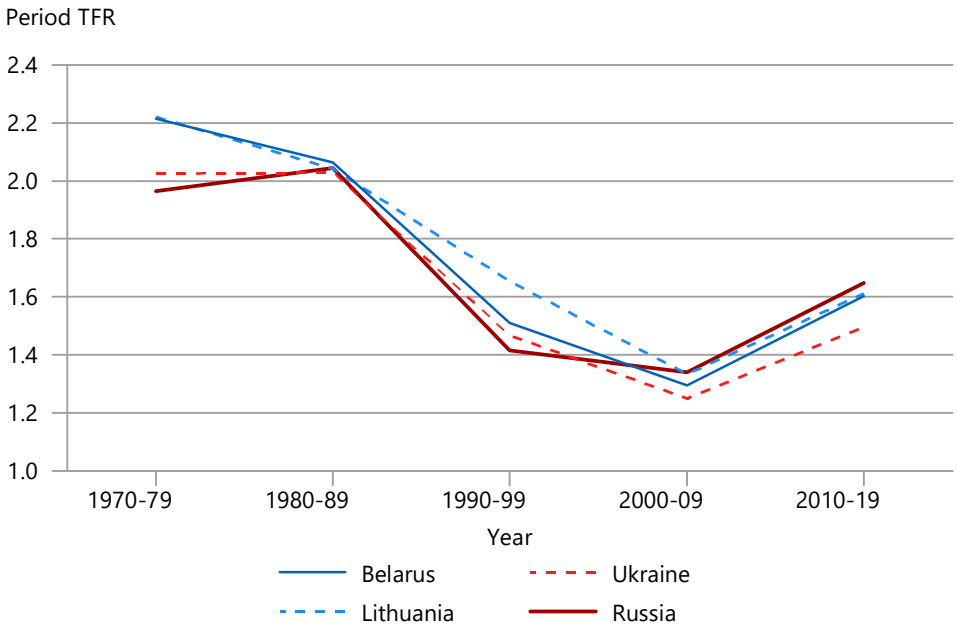
Source: calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on data from the Demographic database of A.G. Vishnevsky Institute of Demography, Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/app/app4007.php).

in reforms to their economies and the social sphere, including systems to support families and fertility.

Among the economically most prosperous countries in the world, the United States, France and Sweden stand out, in that the TFR for half a century has been above the average of the industrialized countries of the world (1.8-2.1 births per woman). In contrast, Austria, Germany and Switzerland, with comparable levels of economic prosperity, have the lowest fertility rates, especially since the 1980s (below 1.6 births). The Netherlands adheres to the average fertility level throughout the period. Despite the noticeable fluctuations in period TFR in all countries, which even aggregation and averaging over decades cannot completely eliminate, the fertility rate is most stable in Sweden (fluctuations around 1.8 births per woman) and in Switzerland (fluctuations within 1.4-1.6 births per woman), which, apparently, indicates the long-term stability of the situation of citizens in these countries in all spheres of life.

Significant fluctuations in PTFR are, first of all, a manifestation of the main property of this indicator as a conjunctural measure of total fertility. Fluctuations

Fig. S-6: Period TFR in Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Russia, 1970-2019, average values in the specified decades



Source: calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on data from the Demographic database of A.G. Vishnevsky Institute of Demography, Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/app/app4007.php).

in PTFR indicate, mainly, changes in the fertility tempo under the influence of temporary circumstances – the improvement or deterioration of political and economic conditions, introduction of family policy measures from time to time, etc. As a rule, the surge or failure of childbearing activity is followed by compensatory fluctuations in the other direction, as can be seen from numerous historical examples in all countries, including Russia.

Against the background of the countries discussed above, Russia appears as an unstable state, which is hardly surprising given the enormous political and socio-economic changes that have taken place in the country over the past decades. The range of fluctuations in PTFR in Russia from 2 to 1.3 births per woman speaks for itself. In the 1990s, births were postponed en masse, after which a period of compensatory recovery began. At the same time, the base level of Russian fertility changed less significantly, which will be discussed below. The fate of Russia was completely shared by Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine – where the trajectories of the TFR are very similar and almost perfectly synchronized (Fig. S-6), which is even more surprising considering different and changeable economic situations and family policies (*Wesolowski* 2015; *Frejka/Gietel-Basten* 2016; *State program in Ukraine* 2018; *Bobrova* 2018; *Kazimov/Zakharov* 2021).

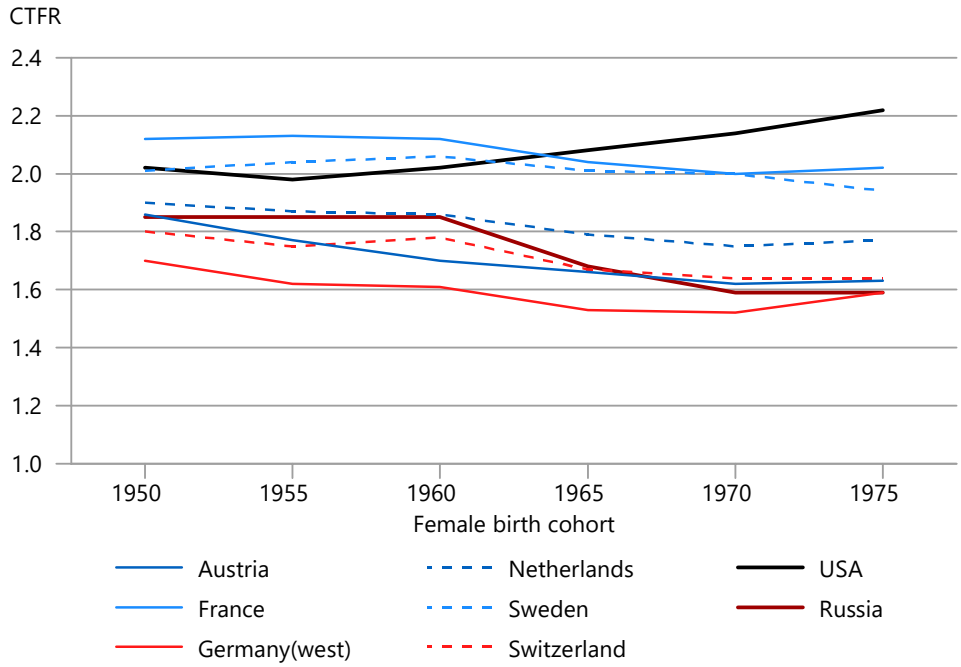
The policy in Belarus follows in the footsteps of the Russian version of pronatalism, actively using monetary instruments to stimulate the birth of children of higher orders. In Lithuania, politics does not have a clear and sustainable strategy; its ideology changes depending on the program of the political party in office at a given time, but it is not pro-natalist in nature, and is mainly concentrated around the concept of women combining economic activity and family responsibilities, and the development of infrastructure for raising and educating children. Ukraine, like Belarus and Russia, has aspects of traditional family policy (*Wesolowski* 2015), but pays less attention to fertility policies, especially after 2014 amidst the crisis that arose as a result of Russia's intervention. Policy priority in Ukraine is given to supporting families with low incomes, focusing on lump-sum maternity grants, differentiated by birth order until 2015, and undifferentiated later. It would not be superfluous to recall what *Perelli-Harris* wrote in 2008: "Ukraine has one of the most generous but least effective family policies in the world" (*Perelli-Harris* 2008: 1167). We are not able to discuss the situation that arose after the new phase of Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine began in 2022.

The transition to more accurate measures of the fertility level – cohort total fertility rates – significantly clarifies our ideas about the fertility level and trends in its change.

Figures S-7 and S-8 demonstrate the cohort TFR for women born in 1950-1975. As one might expect, indicators that are free from the influence of conjuncture contexts demonstrate weak variability over time. Thus the generations born in the 1970s, compared to their mothers born in the early 1950s, gave birth to about 0.1 fewer children per woman in Austria, in the Netherlands, Germany and France. In Sweden, the loss was smaller, and in Switzerland it was 0.2 births. The only exception – not only among the selected countries, but also among the entire aggregate of 39 countries – is the United States, in which the 1970s birth cohorts produced on average 0.2 children more than the generations of their mothers in due time gave birth to. One can hardly refer to successful socio-demographic policy aimed at increasing fertility when attempting to explain the American phenomenon, with its market-based approach to family issues (*McDonald* 2002; *Morgan* 2015). Instead, suggested explanations include the influence of echoes of the post-war "baby boom" period, structural changes in American society, religiousness, immigration, flexible labor markets, a higher proportion of unintended births, and others (*Frejka/Kingkade* 2001; *Sardon* 2006; *Kohler et. al.* 2006; *Morgan* 2015). At the same time, given the significant current decline in period fertility rates in the United States (see Fig. S-5), there is every reason to believe that a continuation of the growth in the cohort total fertility in this country is unlikely (See also: *Kearney/Levine* 2022).

The trend of cohort total fertility rates in Russia and in neighboring Eastern European/former USSR countries is very similar and devoid of sharp fluctuations (Fig. S-8). We see losses of about 0.2-0.3 births per woman. Lithuania maintains a slightly higher birth rate than Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. In the last three countries, both the level and long-term trends are very similar. In general, it can be assumed that in all three countries generations born in the 1970s will remain with the lowest fertility historically, since a further decline in indicators is unlikely, as evidenced by

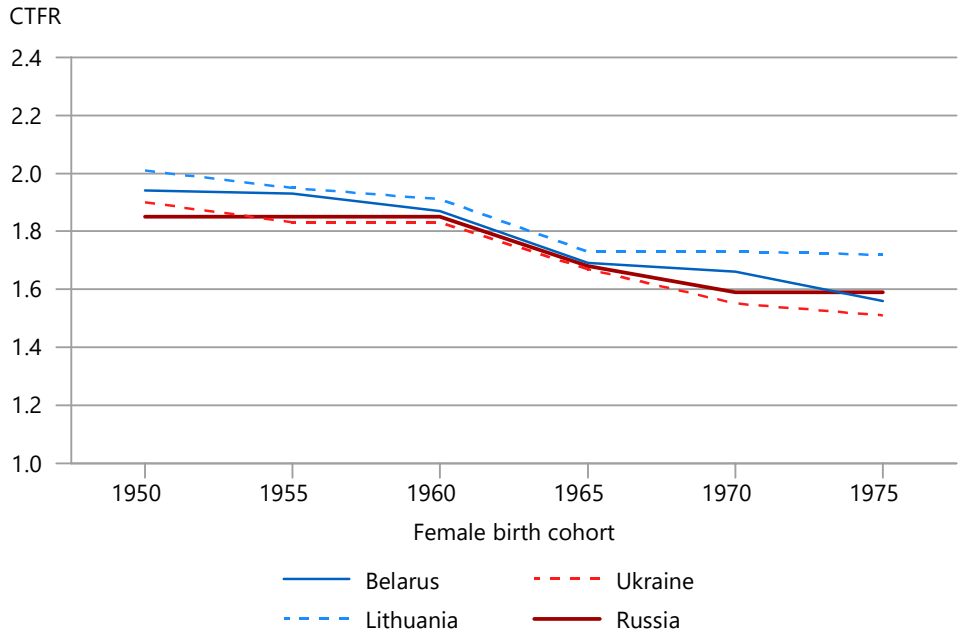
Fig. S-7: Completed cohort fertility (CTFR) in Austria, Germany (western states), France, the Netherlands, USA, Sweden, Switzerland, and Russia, female birth cohorts 1950-1975



Source: Human Fertility Database (http://www.demogr.mpg.de); Demographic database of A.G. Vishnevsky Institute of Demography, Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/app/app4007.php).

the welcome rise in PTFR in the first decade of the 2000s (see Fig. S-6). In addition, international comparisons reinforce doubts about the significance of the role of pro-natalist policy measures in stopping the decline in fertility and in the emergence of the possibility of its slight increase in the generations of parents born in the 1980s.

Fig. S-8: Completed cohort fertility (CTFR) in Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Russia, female birth cohorts 1950-1975



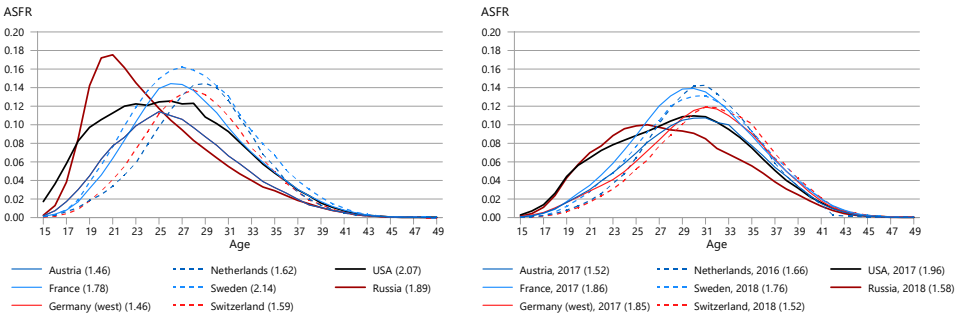
Source: Human Fertility Database (http://www.demogr.mpg.de); Demographic database of A.G. Vishnevsky Institute of Demography, Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/app/app4007.php).

3.2 Peculiarities of the age fertility profile

Over the past three decades, there have been fundamental shifts in the age profile of fertility in all developed countries, and Russia only lagged behind the universal process towards older motherhood, which was observed in the leading countries: in Sweden, the Netherlands, West Germany, etc. (Fig. S-9). It should be emphasized that the change of the age model of fertility is weakly associated with a change in the base fertility level, measured by cohort TFR. At the same time, the transition from a younger age profile to an older one inevitably causes a more or less pronounced, temporary decrease in period TFR, as seen in the 1970s-1990s in all developed countries, including Eastern European countries and Russia.

In 1990 the age curve of fertility rates in Russia still had a high kurtosis with a modal value of the mother's age around 20 years. Consequently, in twenty years the pronounced kurtosis has disappeared, and the modal age is hardly determined within the interval of 25-27 years. Based on one-year age-specific fertility rates, we can say that today, women have almost the same chances of having a child (first child) at any age within the interval from 24 to 31 years.

Fig. S-9: Age-specific fertility rates (ASFRs) in selected countries, and in Russia



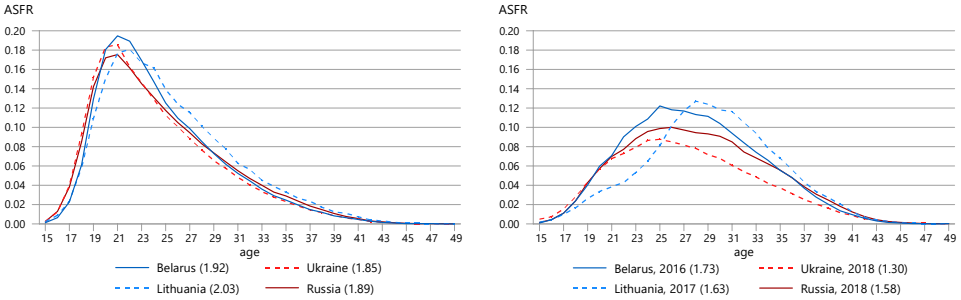
In 1990 (left panel) and in the last available year, 2016-2018 (right panel), births per a woman.

Note: PTFR values are in brackets.

Source: Human Fertility Database, Human Fertility Collection, and calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

Meanwhile the United States and Russia – outsiders with regard to the restructuring of the age pattern of motherhood – when compared with other countries have greater reserves in reducing the fertility rate among young women under 25 years of age (Fig. S-9). Considering the trends observed in recent decades, it can be assumed that in both Russia and the United States, changes in the age profile of fertility towards older maternity will continue in the direction of unification with other developed countries, and this process is documented at various stages of development (*United Nations* 2003; *Sardon* 2006; *Beaujouan/Sobotka* 2019; *Morse* 2022). Comparison of Russia with its closest neighbors increases confidence in this. In 1990, the age profile of fertility was almost identical in Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine (Fig. S-10). Over the past two decades, the age pattern of motherhood has to a complete negation of the previous one in all four countries: in Lithuania, it began to fully reproduce the typical pattern in Western Europe, while Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are moving towards it with some delay, maintaining a residual left-sided asymmetry due to the higher birth rates of the youngest women.

Fig. S-10: Age-specific fertility rates (ASFRs) in Belarus, Lithuania, and in Russia



In 1990 (left panel)) and in the last available year, 2016-2018 (right panel).

Note: PTFR values are in brackets.

Source: Human Fertility Database, Human Fertility Collection, and calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

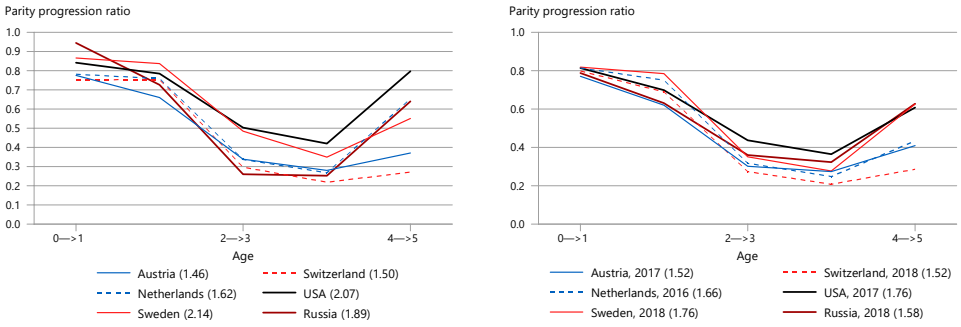
3.3 Peculiarities of parity progression ratios and of ultimate distribution of women by number of children born

Over the past three decades, Russia has retained common features of the ultimate distribution of women by number of children born with its closest neighbors in the former USSR, on the one hand. And on the other hand, together with those countries, Russia has transformed the pattern of fertility by birth order to a great extent and practically unified it with that of other industrialized countries.

First, Russia, like Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine, has lost the characteristic feature of the former historical and cultural fertility pattern, which was expressed in the universality of motherhood. The expected share of ultimately childless women is approaching 20 percent, which corresponds to the average level for developed countries nowadays (Fig. S-11 and S-12) and is at least three times higher than the level of the natural/biological norm on which childlessness in Russia has been maintained for centuries.

Second, in Russia the probability of third and fourth births has noticeably increased, which also played a role in bringing the fertility pattern closer to those observed in other countries (Fig. S-11). Interestingly, a similar shift to higher order births is observed in Belarus and Ukraine, but not in Lithuania (Fig. S-12), which may be associated with differences in family policy, but this issue requires additional research. Despite a noticeable increase in the likelihood of births of the 3rd and 4th order, one should not expect an increase in the prevalence of large families in Russia, on a comparable scale with, say, that observed in the United States. In addition, in the United States over the past decades, women with third and higher order births have greatly reduced their prevalence (Fig. S-13). In Russia, as elsewhere in the developed world, large families will remain a marginal phenomenon for the foreseeable future.

Fig. S-11: Period parity progression ratios in Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, USA, and in Russia

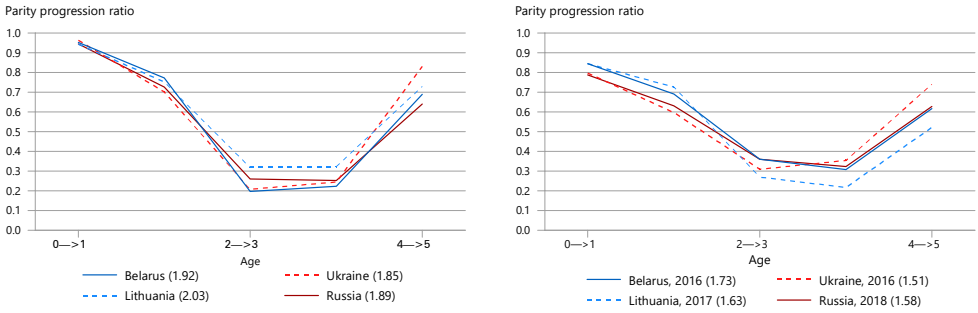


According to period age- and order-specific fertility tables in 1990 (left panel) and in the last available year, 2016-2018 (right panel).

Note: PTFR values are in brackets.

Source: Human Fertility Database, Human Fertility Collection, and calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

Fig. S-12: Period parity progression ratios in Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and in Russia



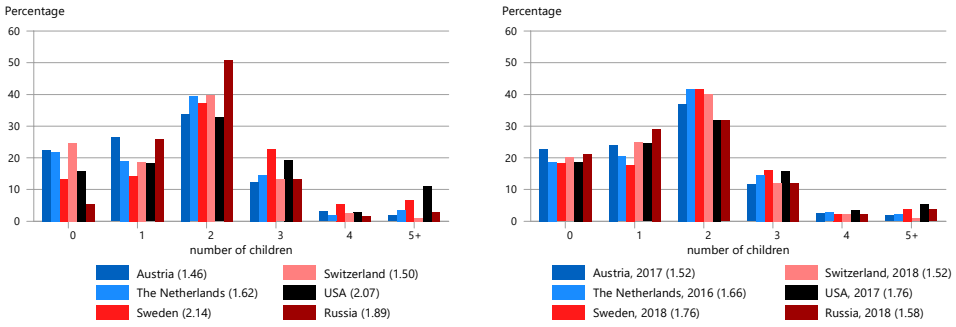
According to period age- and order-specific fertility tables in 1990 (left panel) and in the last available year, 2016-2018 (right panel).

Note: PTFR values are in brackets.

Source: Human Fertility Database, Human Fertility Collection, and calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

Third, over the past decades in Russia, the transition to second births as measured by period indicators has noticeably decreased for women and, in comparison with other countries (Fig. S-11), Russia has retained lower positions in this indicator, even when compared with Belarus and Lithuania (Fig. S-12), which indirectly testifies to

Fig. S-13: Completed distributions of women by number of children born in Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, USA, and in Russia

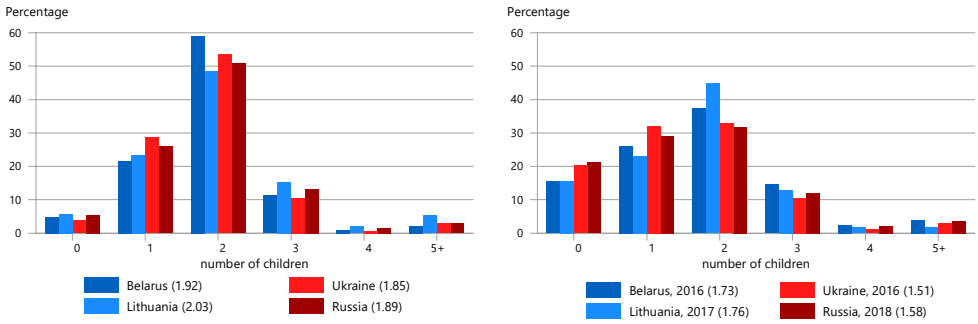


According to period age- and order-specific fertility tables in 1990 (left panel) and in the last available year, 2016-2018 (right panel).

Note: PTRF values are in brackets.

Source: Human Fertility Database, Human Fertility Collection, and calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

Fig. S-14: Completed distributions of women by number of children born in Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and in Russia



According to period age- and order-specific fertility tables in 1990 (left panel) and in the last available year, 2016-2018 (right panel).

Note: PTFR values are in brackets.

Source: Human Fertility Database, Human Fertility Collection, and calculations by S.V. Zakharov based on unpublished data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).

the low effectiveness of pro-natalist policy measures initially focused specifically on increasing the likelihood of having a second child.

Thus over three decades the distribution of women by number of children born has become characterized by significantly greater diversity in Russia – the dominant

ideal of womanhood as having one or two kids is gradually becoming a thing of the past, due first and foremost to a significant increase in the proportion of women who have never given birth (Fig. S-13 and S-14). This has brought Russia closer to other developed countries where diversification of behavior patterns began much earlier.

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