

## Demographic Resources of Russia: Variability of Approaches and Assessments



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**Abstract.** In the context of a deep demographic crisis faced by many countries in the world, the issue of identifying and using demographic development resources as a key component of national security is becoming important. This article continues a series of publications by the authors devoted to the study of fundamental concepts of demographic science. The aim of the article is a critical understanding and systematization of existing approaches to defining the term “demographic resource”, identifying common and contradictory interpretations in order to unify and clarify the terminology of demographic science. For this purpose, the article provides an overview of current studies by Russian and foreign authors in the field of population, presents their definitions of the listed terms, and identifies common and contradictory features. The authors identified four groups of the most common interpretations of “demographic resources”: population size, labor force, English-language and alternative interpretations. The authors also offer an interpretation of “demographic resources” as “prosperous young families with

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children”. An attempt was made to critically understand and generalize disparate approaches in order to systematize and unify the terminology of research in the field of population. The study used methods of comparative analysis, content analysis of scientific literature, as well as statistical analysis using current data from Rosstat. The novelty of the work lies in the proposal of the authors’ definition of the concept of “demographic resources”, taking into account the specifics of modern demographic challenges and meeting the tasks of public administration in the field of population. The main results are presented by a grouping of approaches, accompanied by a statistical assessment of the demographic resources of Russia. Future research will be aimed at a more in-depth analysis of each of the identified types of demographic resources, as well as the development of methodological recommendations for their practical use in the state demographic policy of Russia.

**Key words:** demographic resource, human resource, migration resource, labor resource, prosperous young family, demography, demographic development, demographic development resource.

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### Introduction

The demographic crisis spreading around the world has determined the relevance of research devoted to the search for tools for Russia’s demographic development as a key area of public administration, identified by the President of the Russian Federation as a priority (Demographic Development ..., 2022, pp. 8–9). The current state of demographic science does not allow giving an unambiguous answer to the question of what is the source of demographic development, its root cause. Nevertheless, the classical interpretation of the fundamental concepts developed by Professor L.L. Rybakovskii, whose followers of the scientific school are the authors of this article, has become fundamental for the Russian demographic school.

His recommendations on improving the demographic situation and stimulating the birth rate were reflected in the state policy of the Russian Federation and helped in the development of effective measures to regulate migration flows. For more information on the formation of demographic knowledge, the formation and evolution of the scientific school of L.L. Rybakovskii, see the published scientific work

*Demographic Development of Russia: Formation and Evolution of the Scientific School of L.L. Rybakovskii* (Rostovskaya et al., 2025), presented in April 2025 at the 1st Readings in memory of the outstanding demographer of our time.

L.L. Rybakovskii defines demographic security as “a state of demographic processes that is sufficient for the reproduction of the population without significant external influence and the provision of human resources for the geopolitical interests of the state” (Rybakovskii, 2003). This definition not only formed the basis of strategic and long-term documents in the field of demographic development of the country, but also served as an important milestone in the formation of modern approaches to ensuring demographic stability.

In turn, T.K. Rostovskaya supplemented this concept by introducing the concept of “demographic stability”. Demographic stability refers to “the formation of such qualitative and quantitative characteristics of matrimonial, reproductive, self-preservation and migration parameters that lead to a stable state and development of demographic processes that ensure the natural reproduction of

the population at a level that meets the national interests of the country” (Rostovskaya, Zolotareva, 2022).

It is from the perspective of ensuring demographic security and stability that the structuring and unification of the terminological apparatus used in demographic science are of particular importance. As part of their research, the team of authors proposed the concept of “demographic development resources” aimed at identifying and explaining the determinants of demographic development and their management. In 2023, in a previous paper, we presented the author’s interpretation of demographic development resources as “a set of tangible and intangible assets available to demographic policy actors that can be used to manage demographic and migration processes in order to achieve demographic stability” (Rostovskaya, Sitkovsky, 2024).

In continuation of the previously initiated research, this article aims to critically comprehend and summarize disparate approaches to defining the concept of “demographic resource” for further systematization and unification of the terminological apparatus, which is a key condition for developing effective measures to overcome the demographic crisis and ensure national security.

### **Methodology and methods**

The study of the definitions of fundamental demographic concepts revealed significant discrepancies in their interpretation. To systematize the terminological apparatus of demographic science, the previous article reviewed the literature and proposed author definitions for the following concepts: demographic development, demographic policy, tools of demographic development (policy), mechanism of demographic development (policy), demographic potential, demographic sustainability, and also focused on the synthesis of a new concept — demographic development resources (Rostovskaya, Sitkovskii, 2024).

Our article is the second in a series of studies devoted to the issue of defining and measuring the resource of demographic development, which, in accordance with our own vision, acts as the basis (source) of demographic development. Understanding, defining and measuring the demographic development resource marked the beginning of a study of the possibilities of its expansion and management, which, ultimately, should lead to a situation of demographic development management.

Our theoretical and methodological concept of demographic development resources is largely based on the works of L.L. Rybakovskii and was presented on September 15, 2023 at the Institute for Demographic Research of FTAS RAS as part of a special scientific and methodological seminar “Demographic Development Resources: Concept, Essence”, which was led by L.L. Rybakovskii, Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor, Chief Researcher and head of department of theory and methodology at the mentioned institute<sup>1</sup>.

In the previous work, the term “demographic resources” was mentioned, in relation to which significant discrepancies were also identified. Despite the similarity with demographic development resources, demographic resources have a different content. The problem lies in the very significant fragmentation of definitions of demographic resources, which required the systematization of groups of approaches in the framework of this study.

To achieve the aim of the study, we used the following methods: literature review, grouping of approaches, content analysis of concepts, and statistical illustration based on relevant data.

<sup>1</sup> The program of the methodological seminar “Demographic development resources: concept, essence”. Institute for Demographic Research of FCTAS RAS, September 15, 2023. Available at: <https://cloud.idrras.ru/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ПРОГРАММА-семинара-по-ресурсам-дем.развития-15.09.-.-2.pdf> (accessed: 13.04.2025).

All sources available to us that use the term “demographic resource” are used as an information base (about 50 publications, mainly works by Russian demographers from 2001–2024). The base for the review was formed based on the aim of the study, and not in connection with the preferences of the authors. As a result, it is represented mainly by the works of the most famous demographic researchers in contemporary Russia, since the research topic is highly specialized and rarely found in the works of non-specialists. The demographic resources of Russia are illustrated and evaluated using up-to-date statistical information within the framework of the identified groups of approaches.

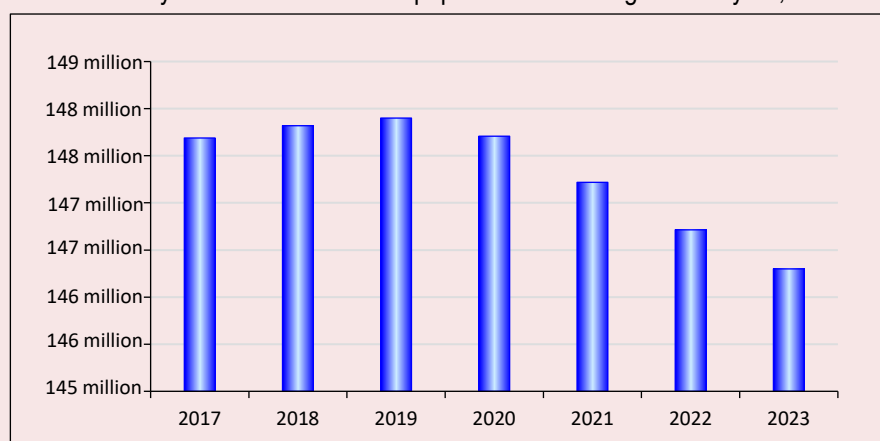
These sources were classified into four main groups, depending on the interpretation of the concept. An analysis of the content of definitions and terminology used was carried out for each group. In addition, we performed a quantitative illustration for each group, i.e. the corresponding statistical indicators characterizing the demographic resources of Russia within the framework of this approach are presented. The logical sequence of the

work provided for a movement from collecting and selecting relevant sources (based on the availability of the desired term) through their grouping and meaningful analysis to a comparative assessment of the identified approaches and the formulation of a refined our definition.

#### **Population size as a demographic resource**

The most common interpretation is that the authors understand the demographic resource as the population (Galetskii, 2005; Kapitsa, 2013; Zhukov, 2013). The same approach is found in the dissertation of I.V. Aleksandrova<sup>2</sup>, in the article by A.Z. Aliyev, E.K. Bizhanova (Adiev, Bizhanova, 2019) and many other authors. L.N. Andronova and N.M. Lantsova write that “the demographic resources of a country are one of the most important factors of its economic growth” (Andronova, Lantsova, 2022). We cannot but agree that in an applied, mathematical and statistical sense, the demographic resource of a state is its entire population. Let us consider the dynamics of Russia’s demographic resources from this point of view.

Figure 1. Number and dynamics of the Russian population on average for the year, 2017–2023, people



According to: Number of permanent residents per year on average. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <https://showdata.gks.ru/report/278928> (accessed: 17.05.2025).

<sup>2</sup> Aleksandrova I.V. (2005). Reproduction of the population as an object of social management (case study of a mono-industrial town): Candidate of Sciences (Sociology), thesis. Kazan. Available at: [https://new-dissert.ru/\\_avtoreferats/01002852333.pdf](https://new-dissert.ru/_avtoreferats/01002852333.pdf) (accessed: 07.05.2025).

*Figure 1* presents the average annual population of Russia from 2017 to 2023. These data can be considered as Russia's demographic resource. Therefore, an increase in the population is an increase in the demographic resource, which, of course, should be assessed positively. Official data from Rosstat shows that Russia's demographic resource in the study period ranges from 146.3 to 147.9 million people. The dynamics of the change is contradictory and undulating, and is probably explained by the change in the share of population in the reproductive age groups in accordance with demographic waves.

It is worth noting that in the historical perspective, the most noticeable increase in the population was observed in 2014, which is associated with the annexation of new territories. L.L. Rybakovskii suggests calling such an increase "mechanical", along with natural and migratory. Previously, this was the name given to migration growth, including in the *Demographic Conceptual Dictionary*<sup>3</sup>, but today this interpretation is practically not used in the scientific community. When considering population size as a demographic resource, it does not really matter whether population growth is natural, migratory, or mechanical. The very fact of growing demographic resources is important as a guarantee for further increasing the pace of socio-economic development, ensuring the sovereignty of the country and raising its role in the international arena.

It is also necessary to note a sharp increase in the population by the end of 2022 compared to 2021 (+0.61%, or 890 thousand people). The natural increase in 2022 remained negative and amounted to 595 thousand people<sup>4</sup>, while the migration

increase was 7 times lower than a year earlier and amounted to 62 thousand people (*Fig. 2*). Thus, the nature of the 1.4 million additional population is not entirely clear. We can assume that in this case we are talking about a partial assessment of the population of new territories of the Russian Federation. However, this explanation is not exhaustive either, since the population of each of the four affiliated regions is estimated at more than a million people. According to V.N. Arkhangelskii, in this case we are talking about an increase in the total number due to additional accounting of the previously unaccounted population in accordance with the results of the "All-Russian Population Census 2020". Such a significant difference is not explained by recalculating previously published data.

The consideration of the total population as a demographic resource is typical for researchers dealing with issues of socio-economic development, political science and philosophy. Demographic researchers, as a rule, do not allow themselves to interpret demographic resources so narrowly and straightforwardly. Our team of authors of this article also considers it unjustified to replace one narrower concept with a broader one that includes not only and not so much the total population. However, in those studies where the typology of the territory's resources (economic, demographic, administrative, etc.) is given, this assumption is possible, but still in this case it is better to use the concept of "human resource" or "manpower resource".

We should also say that some authors identify socio-demographic resources rather than demographic ones. T.G. Nefedova, exploring the problems of rural areas, writes that demographic dynamics is more due to other socially significant processes, as a result of which "we can talk not so much about demographic as about socio-demographic resources" (Nefedova, Pallot, 2006, p. 103). On the issue of allocating socio-demographic resources, the same point of view is held because

<sup>3</sup> Rybakovskii L.L. (Ed.). (2003). *Demographic Conceptual Dictionary*. Moscow: TSSP. Available at: [https://studylib.ru/doc/2234370/demograficheskij-ponyatijnyj-slovar\\_](https://studylib.ru/doc/2234370/demograficheskij-ponyatijnyj-slovar_) (accessed: 07.05.2025).

<sup>4</sup> Birth rate, mortality, and natural growth. Population. Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/demo21\\_2022.xls](https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/demo21_2022.xls) (accessed: 19.01.2025).

Rostovskaya, pointing out in her work that youth is a strategic socio-demographic resource of the state (Rostovskaya, 2014). It can be concluded that by a socio-demographic resource, the authors mean not just the size of the population, but that part of it that is able to effectively influence the size and structure of the population.

### **Labor resources as a demographic resource**

The second large group of demographic studies consists of those in which the terms “demographic resource” and “labor resource” are used as identical. We observe this in the work of V.L. Shabanov (Shabanov, 2013), in the article by V.A. Lyadov (Lyadova, 2012), the MGIMO team of authors adheres to the same point of view. In addition, many authors note the displacement and substitution of these concepts, especially for research in the field of labor economics (Mosunova, 2004; Batrakova, 2013; Ivannikova, 2015, etc.). This circumstance has predetermined the need for a more detailed consideration of the definition of “labor resource” in the framework of this article.

“Labor resource is a population engaged in economic activity, as well as able to work, but not working for one reason or another” reads the definition from the Rosstat Order<sup>5</sup>. Academician N.K. Dolgushkin believes that the labor force is “a part of the country’s population that has important physical development, health, education, culture, opportunities, qualifications, and professional knowledge to work in the field of socially useful activities” (Dolgushkin, Novikov, 2001). Rybakovskii considers labor resources as citizens and non-citizens (migrants) of working age (Rybakovskii, 2011). A.V. Kashepov examines the labor resources of the USSR and, based on this, understands them as the entire employed population of the country (Kashapov, 2023). Summarizing

the above, we can note that labor resource is part of demographic resources, therefore, these terms should not be understood as identical.

The monograph by V.A. Gnevasheva, A.V. Topilin, and O.D. Vorobyeva proposes to distinguish the synonymous definitions of “labor resource” and “labor potential”, by which the authors mean “a set of developed demographic, social, spiritual characteristics and qualities of working-age population, which are realized in the current system of economic and socio-labor relations in the process of labor and social activity” (Gnevasheva et al., 2023, p. 11). The paper also suggests distinguishing between the potential labor force – the entire population aged 15–72 years, highlighting the most active part of it – the working-age population, as well as the real labor force – economically active population, including those employed in the economy and unemployed.

Let us analyze the Russian labor resources in accordance with the terminology and methodology proposed in the monograph (Gnevasheva et al., 2023). *Table 1* shows data for 2017–2023. The number of economically active population is calculated as the sum of the employed and unemployed in accordance with the proposed methodology. The entire population of the country in the age group of 15–72 years is considered as a potential labor resource, as well as the working-age population separately from it (for men 16–59 years, for women 16–54 years). The data is given in thousands of people, and the proportions of the Russian population are calculated. The data presented is dated January of the year following that indicated in the table (2022 is January 2023, etc.).

“Real labor resource” in the entire study period (2017–2022) ranges from 51.2–51.8% of the country’s population. The “potential labor resource” is 75.1–76.2% in the broad sense, 55.4–58.0% in the narrow sense (the working-age population). Thus, almost the entire working-age population of the country is employed or

<sup>5</sup> On approval of the Methodology for calculating the balance of labor resources and estimating labor costs: Rosstat Order 647, dated 29.09.2017. Available at: [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_279671/1eb2644866cba18ea6723cfbf666f7e492455a67/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_279671/1eb2644866cba18ea6723cfbf666f7e492455a67/) (accessed: 19.01.2025).

Table 1. Number of labor resources and their share in the total population of Russia, 2017–2023

Population	Unit of measurement	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Real labor resource								
Economically active	thousand people	76108.5	76011.4	75398.0	74922.7	75350.0	74924.3	76036.6
	share in %	51.8	51.8	51.4	51.3	51.8	51.2	52.0
Employed	thousand people	72142	72354.4	71933.1	70601.4	71719.49	71973.59	73636.1
	share in %	49.1	49.3	49.0	48.3	49.3	49.1	50.4
Unemployed	thousand people	3966.5	3657.0	3464.9	4321.3	3630.5	2950.7	2400.5
	share in %	2.7	2.5	2.4	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.6
Potential labor resource								
Aged 15–72 years	thousand people	110558.9	110575.8	110369.5	109734.2	110922.9	110181.8	109703.0
	share in %	75.3	75.3	75.2	75.1	76.2	75.2	75.1
At working age	thousand people	82264.1	81361.7	82677.7	81881.1	84400.0	83440.4	84711.5
	share in %	56.0	55.4	56.3	56.0	58.0	57.0	58.0
According to: Number of employees by gender and age groups. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <a href="https://showdata.gks.ru/report/277902">https://showdata.gks.ru/report/277902</a> (accessed: 19.01.2025); Number of unemployed by gender and age groups. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <a href="https://showdata.gks.ru/report/277906">https://showdata.gks.ru/report/277906</a> (accessed: 19.01.2025); Number of permanent Russian population by age as of January 1. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <a href="https://showdata.gks.ru/report/274848">https://showdata.gks.ru/report/274848</a> (accessed: 19.01.2025).								

unemployed. The dynamics of changes in these indicators is undulating. By the end of 2022, a record low number of unemployed people was recorded – 2.0% of the country’s population. It is worth saying that the change in the share of the working-age population seems to be due more to migration processes than to the processes of natural population movement (demographic waves). The share of the working-age population (as well as the employed) is about half, which leads to a twofold tax burden on each employee, from whose funds payments and social guarantees are formed not only for themselves, but also for social dependents.

From the above interpretations and data analysis, it follows that, as in the previous case, labor resources are part of demographic resources, but not all of them. This assumption is often found among researchers, economists and specialists in the field of labor economics. We believe that replacing a narrower concept with a broader one is not fully justified. Undoubtedly, labor resources are demographic resources, as a result of which these concepts are sometimes used synonymously in works. However, in this case, the idea of

demographic resources is narrowed down to “labor force” or “population able to work”, which is only an indirect determinant of demographic processes.

#### Demographic resources in English-language literature

English-language literature usually determines demographic resources in a completely different meaning. Resources are treated as sources of literature, respectively, demographic resources in English-language materials are sources of information about demography. For example, this understanding has been demonstrated in the work of Thomas Green of Princeton University (Grin, 1997), Brian Queen of Texas Tech University (Quinn, 1999), Rebecca King of the University of Delaware (King, 2010) and others.

Demographic resources in the English-speaking sense include both traditional and innovative sources of demographic data. Traditional demographic resources include population censuses, national surveys, and administrative records (Corsi et al., 2012; Baker et al., 2017). Innovative demographic resources include digital traces of social media, digitized historical records, and large-

scale datasets offering previously unavailable scale and resolution for demographic analysis (Ruggles, 2014; Vikström et al., 2023; Breen, Feehan, 2024).

Some English-speaking researchers identify the concept of “demographic resources” with specific databases such as the Demographic Frame and Demographic Data Base (DDB), which combine individual-level data from multiple sources, providing opportunities for advanced analysis and innovation in the collection and processing of demographic data (Ortman, 2024; Velkoff, 2024). Other researchers refer to online platforms as demographic resources that allow users to visualize demographic data (for example, gender and age pyramids, heat maps of mortality, etc.) and upload datasets for further analysis (Pomazkin, Filippov, 2022).

In the case of English speakers, there are original interpretations of demographic resources. For example, in one of the relevant papers on the migration crisis in Europe in 2015, the term refers to the number of people ready to move (Komušanac, 2021); in another study – a complete family, healthy psychoemotionally and financially secure (Gesthuizen et al., 2005). Demographic resources also mean the demographic situation, i.e. the dynamics of the population and the prospects for its change (Pashalich et al., 2020; Marinkovich, Trifunovich, 2023).

In the case of English-language studies, we cannot assess the correctness of the use of the term “demographic resources”, we state the established practice. In Russian-language studies, we do not find a similar understanding of a demographic resource as a source of demographic data, and probably never will find. On the contrary, among all the English-language works in which the demographic resource would be understood as something else, we find only English-language publications by Russian-speaking authors (Bagirova, Voroshilova, 2014).

Thus, in the English-language literature, the term “demographic resources” has a generally

accepted interpretation, it refers to sources (websites, databases) of demographic information. This interpretation is not found in Russian-language sources and should not be blindly borrowed for Russian demographic science due to the difference in speech norms. The main conclusion to be drawn is that when translating Russian-language publications into English and vice versa, close attention should be paid not only to the correctness of the translation of the term, but also to the established practice of its interpretation, which may vary significantly.

### **Alternative and outdated interpretations of the concept of “demographic resources”**

In addition to the three identified groups of interpretations of the term “demographic resources”, the literature review revealed original authorial interpretations that cannot be grouped. We present some of them. For example, G.A. Drobot writes that a demographic resource is “the workers and soldiers of a country”<sup>6</sup>. A.G. Maiorova understands a demographic resource as “the population, its size, structure, and processes occurring in it”<sup>7</sup>.

T.A. Zhernakova explores the topic of demographic resources in a political science perspective in her dissertation. She points out that the demographic resource “is multifunctional and can act in many guises, ensuring the reproduction of other resources and the creation of new ones. <...> Human participation and labor represent an indispensable integral element of the reproduction of tangible and intangible benefits and conditions for the development of socio-political practices and institutions”. The dissertation also introduces the

<sup>6</sup> Drobot G.A. (2019). *World Politics: Textbook for Universities. 3rd Ed., Rev. and Add.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Yurait. Available at: [https://studme.org/1299101029659/politologiya/vneshnepoliticheskie\\_resursy\\_rossii](https://studme.org/1299101029659/politologiya/vneshnepoliticheskie_resursy_rossii) (accessed: 07.05.2025).

<sup>7</sup> Maiorova A.G. (2022). *Demography Resources. Directory: Educational Portal.* Available at: [https://spravochnik.ru/gosudarstvennoe\\_i\\_municipalnoe\\_upravlenie/demografiches\\_kaya\\_politika/resursy\\_demografii/](https://spravochnik.ru/gosudarstvennoe_i_municipalnoe_upravlenie/demografiches_kaya_politika/resursy_demografii/) (accessed: 07.05.2025).



term “demographic resource conservation”, which means “modeling state Russian and foreign policy in such a way that demographic costs are minimal (limiting the use of military force, preventing man-made disasters, promising investments in healthcare, education, and science)”. The author also notes that in the issue of demographic resource conservation, “spiritual factors play an important role, designed to influence mental and behavioral aspects to develop moral and moral counterbalances to spiritual and intellectual degradation”<sup>8</sup>.

A popular but outdated and currently unused group of common interpretations include those that identify their demographic resources with migrant workers. The current Concept of the state Migration Policy for 2019–2025 states that “the purpose of migration policy is to create a migration situation that contributes to solving problems in the field of socio-economic, spatial and demographic development of the country”. However, it is further clarified that “migration policy is an auxiliary tool for solving demographic problems”<sup>9</sup>. In the action plan for implementation in 2016–2020. The concept of demographic policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 indicates as one of the goals “ensuring migration growth at the level of at least 200 thousand people annually”<sup>10</sup>, which indicates the normative legal consolidation of migrants as one of the demographic resources in that period of Russian history.

<sup>8</sup> Zhernakova T.A. (2003). Demographic resource in the system of resources of political power in post-Soviet Russia: Candidate of Sciences (Politics), thesis. Available at: <https://www.dissercat.com/content/demograficheskii-resurs-v-sisteme-resursov-politicheskoi-vlasti-v-postsovetskoi-rossii> (accessed: 07.05.2025).

<sup>9</sup> On the concept of the state migration policy of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025: Presidential Decree 622, dated October 31, 2018. Official publication of legal acts. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201810310046> (accessed: 19.01.2025).

<sup>10</sup> On the action plan for the implementation in 2016–2020 of the “Concept of Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025”: RF Government Resolution 669-r, dated April 14, 2016. Available at: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71281980/> (accessed: 19.01.2025).

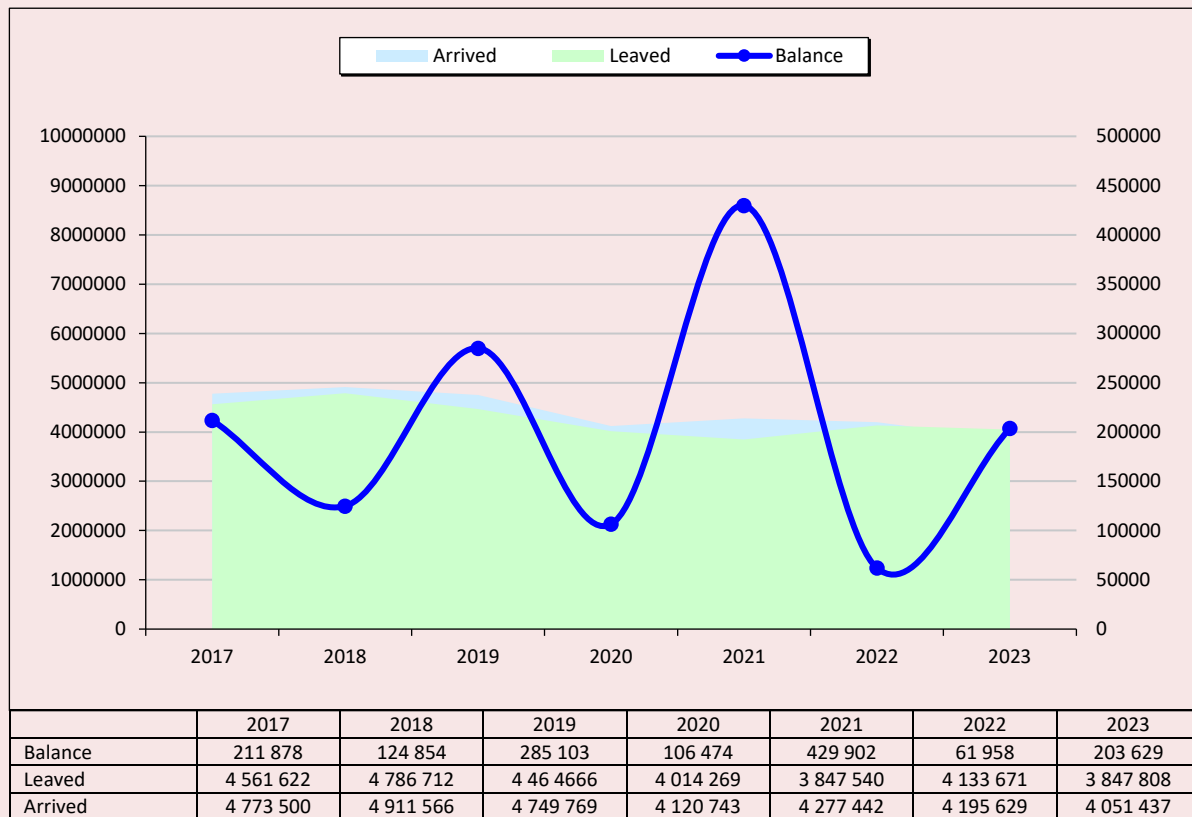
A.G. Vishnevskii, a well-known researcher and demographer, writes in one of his works that “migration is the most important resource for replenishing the Russian population” (Vishnevskii, 2013). In another work, he introduces the term “migration resource” and points out that “closing the doors to immigrants means accepting the continuous decline of the population, its aging, loss of place in the global demographic hierarchy, the continuous deterioration of the already poor ratio of population and territory, etc.” (Vishnevskii, 2004). In one of the issues of *Demoscope Weekly*, A.G. Vishnevskii devoted the section “migration as a demographic resource”, where he assessed the dynamics of migration replacement<sup>11</sup>.

Another leading demographer, S.V. Ryazantsev, also understands migrant workers as one of the demographic resources. In an English-language article on “migrant workers as a resource for demographic development”, he points out: “Russia, as the main host country, has not yet fully taken advantage of the demographic advantages of the Eurasian migration corridor. <...> Migration should be one of the resources of demographic development” (Ryazantsev, 2021, p. 210). In 2019, edited by S.V. Riazantsev published a collection of articles entitled “migration as a resource for socio-economic and demographic development”, in which many Russian and foreign demographic researchers devoted their research to this issue, as well as sections devoted to the relationship between migration and demographic, socio-economic and innovative development<sup>12</sup>. Let us consider the current dynamics of Russia’s demographic resources as migration dynamics.

<sup>11</sup> Vishnevskii A.G. (2012). Demographic breakthrough or circular movement? Part two. *Demoscope Weekly*, 535–536. Available at: <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2012/0535/tema01.php> (accessed: 07.05.2025).

<sup>12</sup> Ryazantseva S.V., Khramova M.N., Maksimova A.S. (Eds.). (2019). *Migration as a Resource for Socio-Economic and Demographic Development: Collection of Articles. In 5 Volumes. Volume 3*. Moscow: Izd-vo Ekon-Inform. Available at: [https://испи.рф/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ДСЭ\\_Рязанцев\\_т5в3\\_2019-ok.pdf](https://испи.рф/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ДСЭ_Рязанцев_т5в3_2019-ok.pdf) (accessed: 07.05.2025).

Figure 2. Number of arrivals, number of departures and migration balance, 2017–2023, people



According to: Migration population growth by gender, age and movement flows. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <https://showdata.gks.ru/report/278004/> (accessed: 19.01.2025); Number of dropouts by gender, age, and movement patterns. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <https://showdata.gks.ru/report/278006/> (accessed: 19.01.2025); Number of arrivals by gender, age, and movement patterns. Statistical data showcase. EMISS. Moscow, 2024. Available at: <https://showdata.gks.ru/report/278008/> (accessed: 19.01.2025).

Figure 2 provides information on the dynamics and abundance of Russia's demographic resources in terms of migration processes. Throughout the study period (2017–2023), the number of arrivals prevailed over the number of departures. In 2021, there is a sharp increase in the migration balance due to a record low number of retirees. This is due to the closure of borders for those leaving due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which, apparently, were not as closed to migrant workers entering Russia. By the end of 2022, the migration balance decreased sevenfold, due to the effect of a high base. At the same time, in 2022, although the migration

balance remains positive, despite the complexity of the ongoing foreign policy processes, it is still the lowest in the entire study period. The migration balance has a wave-like trend, which indicates a general downward trend with the inclusion of compensatory state mechanisms for attracting migrants. These mechanisms are reactive in nature and are applied in the year following the recorded insufficiently high migration balance. If this trend in migration management continues, it is reasonable to expect a record high migration growth by the end of 2024, including due to the return of those who had previously left.

### Prosperous young families with children (large families)

In addition to the listed most common approaches, we will offer our vision of demographic resources. In our opinion, the key strategic demographic resource of the state is a prosperous young family, by which we mean “a family that carries out its life activities in the first registered marriage, is focused on the birth of two or more children, has them, is engaged in their upbringing and development based on the interaction of the spaces of family, public and state education” (Rostovskaya, Kalachikova, 2022). Let us consider the volume of demographic resources in Russia from this point of view.

According to the proposed definition, the demographic resource is young families with

children. A successful young family in general is one in which at least one person is under 35 years old and in which there are two or more children (Rostovskaya, Knyaz'kova, 2022). Since it is impossible to analyze statistics on whether a particular family is involved in the upbringing and development of children, in this study we will assume that all young Russian families belong to these groups. *Table 2* shows the data and calculations, which were based on “Volume 9. Birth rate” according to the results of the All-Russian Population Census 2020”, namely the tables: “1. Women living in private households, by age group and number of children born in the RF constituent entities” and “3. Married women living in private households, by age group and the number of children born in the RF constituent

Table 2. Number of married women by age group and number of children born, according to the results of the “All-Russian Population Census 2020”

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Women aged (years)							Share of youth, %
		15 and older	15–17	18–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	15–34	
Total women	Total people	67 235 894	2 161 150	1 471 052	3 726 614	3 986 377	6 140 866	17 486 059	26.0
	Married people	30 113 156	13 778	83 235	909 918	1 966 823	3 590 667	6 564 421	21.8
	Share in marriage, %	44.8	0.6	5.7	24.4	49.3	58.5	37.5	–
Women who indicated the number of children	Total people	49 318 214	1 224 843	855 512	2 190 072	2 679 088	4 355 425	11 304 940	22.9
	Married people	25 766 198	9 707	63 594	715 447	1 651 985	3 055 616	5 496 349	21.3
	Share in marriage, %	52.2	0.8	7.4	32.7	61.7	70.2	48.6	–
Women with no children	Total people	9 209 184	1 216 639	819 204	1 686 261	1 133 386	964 680	5 820 170	63.2
	Married people	2 373 679	6 576	39 239	320 078	402 879	383 401	1 152 173	48.5
	Share in marriage, %	25.8	0.5	4.8	19.0	35.5	39.7	19.8	–
Women with 1 or more children	Total people	40 109 030	8 204	36 308	503 811	1 545 702	3 390 745	5 484 770	13.7
	Married people	23 392 519	3 131	24 355	395 369	1 249 106	2 672 215	4 344 176	18.6
	Share in marriage, %	58.3	38.2	67.1	78.5	80.8	78.8	79.2	–
Women with 2 or more children	Total people	23 436 131	1 281	4 699	137 100	636 466	1 809 693	2 589 239	11.0
	Married people	14 571 403	372	3 158	115 313	549 086	1 541 374	2 209 303	15.2
	Share in marriage, %	62.2	29.0	67.2	84.1	86.3	85.2	85.3	–

According to: Table 1. Women living in private households, by age group and number of children born in the RF constituent entities. Results of the VPN2020. Volume 9. Birth rate. All-Russian Population Census – 2020. Moscow: Rosstat, 2022. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom9\\_tab1\\_VPN-2020.xlsx](https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom9_tab1_VPN-2020.xlsx) (accessed: 19.01.2025); Table 3. Married women living in private households, by age group and number of children born in the RF constituent entities. Results of the VPN2020. Volume 9. Birth rate. All-Russian Population Census – 2020. Moscow: Rosstat, 2022. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom9\\_tab3\\_VPN-2020.xlsx](https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom9_tab3_VPN-2020.xlsx) (accessed: 19.01.2025).

entities". We should note that according to the results of the census, "married" persons are considered to be those who independently indicated this in the questionnaire, and not the legal fact of the marriage.

The data in Table 2 indicate the following characteristics of Russia's demographic resource in terms of prosperous young families. First, the share of married women among women with children is higher than among the total number of women (58.3% vs 44.8%). Among young women (15–34 years old), the difference is even more noticeable (79.2% vs 37.5). It follows from this that the position that children should not be born out of wedlock still prevails in young families. Second, among young women who have two or more children, 85.3% are married. This contingent makes up the demographic resource of Russia. However, the share of young women who are married and have two or more children is only 12.6% of the total number of women aged 15–34 (19.5% of the number of women who indicated the number of children), which indicates a great potential for increasing the demographic resource of Russia by intensifying efforts to spread traditional family spiritual and moral values. Third, the number of women who have no children at all (among those who indicated) is 18.7%, and among young women – 51.5%. This is due to the tendency to postpone the first births, which, apparently, in half of the cases occur after 35 years or do not occur at all. Fourth, when comparing groups of women without children and with children, there is a clear correlation between marriage and childbearing: the older the age group, the greater the difference and the greater the dependence. For example, in the age group of 15–17 years, women without children are married in 0.5% of cases, with children in 38.2% of cases. The priority of state demographic policy should definitely be to ensure that women with children, especially young ones, are married in more than 90% of cases. Fifth, young women with two or more

children make up 47.2% of all women with children, which indicates a high potential for second, third and subsequent births among families with their first child. The data indicate that it is necessary to prioritize the second and subsequent births as the most likely ones. Sixth, when we look in more detail at the share of married women, depending on the number of children in the category of women with more than two children, we do not see a significant difference between the categories of two, three, four children, five, six, seven or more children. Among all women, the share of married women ranges from 47.3–63.5% and decreases with an increase in the number of children, due to an increase in the age of women themselves. In the category of young women, the share of married women, depending on the number of children, ranges from 86.8–83.2% and also decreases with the increase in the number of children. Seventh, among all Russian women, the 15–34 age group accounts for 26.0% of the total number of women over the age of 15. This circumstance is due to demographic waves, and also largely determines the decline in the birth rate observed in recent years. The share of childless women among young women is significantly higher than among all women, which indicates the priority of intensifying efforts to stimulate fertility in young families.

Russia's demographic resource, enclosed in prosperous young families, remains poorly explored and is deprived of due attention from the state demographic policy. In our opinion, to solve Russia's demographic problems, it is primarily necessary to financially stimulate prosperous young families as they have the greatest reproductive and qualitative potential. In addition, efforts to increase the number of well-off young families and their share of the total number of families also need to be intensified. To do this, it is necessary to popularize a large family, involved fatherhood, an even distribution of unpaid household work among family members, etc.

### Discussion of the results

Combining disparate approaches, we can conclude that a demographic resource is not only a concept and a term, but also a theoretical and methodological approach that considers the population itself, its number as a resource (source, means) to achieve any goals. We are talking about demographic resources only when there is a goal or a problem that needs to be solved. Thus, the approach to determining a demographic resource varies depending on the goal set, as well as the approaches and concepts that the researcher adheres to (*Tab. 3*).

A comparison of different approaches has shown the lack of a common understanding of the concept of “demographic resources”. Some interpretations reduce it to a purely quantitative indicator (the total population), others limit it to labor potential, and

others offer original or expanded interpretations (up to information resources or specific population groups). This diversity indicates a pronounced heterogeneity in interpretations. At the same time, all these aspects can be considered as components of a single comprehensive view of demographic resources. An integrated approach combining quantitative and qualitative characteristics (number, structure, reproductive potential of the population) has the advantage of a more complete assessment of the demographic potential of the country.

From a scientific point of view, the unification of the understanding of demographic resources is important for the consolidation of terminology and comparability of research. From the point of view of state demographic policy, the interpretation of this concept directly affects the prioritization and choice of measures. For example, if demographic resources

Table 3. Comparative analysis of theoretical approaches to the definition of demographic resources

Approach	Authors	Essence of the definition	Terminology used	Evaluation method	Statistical operationalization
Population	S.P. Kapitsa; V.I. Zhukov; V.F. Galetskii; I.V. Aleksandrova; A.Z. Adiev; E.K. Biizhanova; L.N. Andronova; N.M. Lantsova; T.G. Nefedova; J. Pallot et al.	Demographic resources are treated as the total population of a country (demographic resource = the entire population). Population growth means an increase in demographic resources.	Population (all residents of the country); sometimes the related term “demographic potential” is used	Analysis of the total population and its dynamics (increase/decrease) without component details	Total population (as of a certain date or average annual rate); population growth rates in absolute terms and percentages
Human resources	V.L. Shabanov; V.A. Lyadova; A.I. Shcherbakov; M.G. Mdinradze; A.D. Nazarov; E.A. Nazarova; L.G. Batrakova; Zh.S. Ivannikova; L.N. Mosunova; N.K. Dolgushkin; V.G. Novikov; L.L. Rybakovskii; A.V. Kashepov; V.A. Gnevasheva; A.V. Topilin; O.D. Vorob'eva et al.	Demographic resources are identified with the workforce, which is a part of working-age population (including those who are employed and potentially able to work). In fact, the demographic resource is reduced to the labor potential of the country.	Terms: “labor resources”, “economically active population”, “labor potential”; concepts of “real labor resource” (employed + unemployed) and “potential labor resource” (population 15–72 years) are introduced	Calculation of working-age population and the labor force; assessment of their share in the total population; analysis of employment and unemployment dynamics	Number of working-age population; number of economically active population (employed + unemployed); share of these categories in the total number (in %)

Continuation of Table 3

Approach	Authors	Essence of the definition	Terminology used	Evaluation method	Statistical operationalization
English-language interpretations	T.A. Gryn; B. Quinn; R. King; D. Corsi; M. Neuman; J. Finlay; S.V. Subramanian; J. Baker; D. Swanson; J. Tayman; L. Tedrow; C. Breen; D. Feehan; S. Ruggles; P. Vikström; J. Ortman; V. Velkoff; D. Pomazkin; V. Filippov; M. Komušanac; M. Gesthuizen; P.M. de Graaf; G. Kraaykamp; S. Pašalić; Z. Mastilo; A. Đurić; D. Marković; D. Marinković; M. Trifunović; A. Bagirova; A. Voroshilova et al.	In English-language literature, the term demographic resources usually means demographic information resources – sources of population data (information resources, databases, etc.). Other uses of the term are extremely rare.	Demographic resources in the meaning of information resources; names of specific projects: e.g. Demographic Data Base, Demographic Frame	Not applicable (the term does not refer to the size of the population, but to information resources)	Not applicable
Original interpretations	G.A. Drobot, A.G. Maiorova, T.A. Zhernakova	Individual author definitions that do not relate to the main groups; cover different aspects of demographic development. For example, G.A. Drobot considers a demographic resource as the labor and military potential of a country (“workers and soldiers”). A.G. Maiorova includes in the content of the concept the entire population, its size, structure and processes occurring in it. T.A. Zhernakova gives the concept a multifunctional character, linking it with the reproduction of other resources, and introduces the term “demographic resource conservation”.	Diverse terminology depending on the author: “workers and soldiers” (Drobot), “population, its size, structure, processes” (Maiorova), “demographic resource conservation” (Zhernakova)	Quantitative assessment methods are not explicitly proposed (definitions are conceptual in nature)	They are not statistically operationalized (there are no specific indicators for measurement)

End of Table 3

Approach	Authors	Essence of the definition	Terminology used	Evaluation method	Statistical operationalization
Migration as a demographic resource (outdated approach)	A.G. Vishnevskii, S.V. Ryazantsev et al.	Number of works interpret the influx of migrants as a demographic resource capable of replenishing the country's population. Migration is considered as the most important reserve for population growth in Russia. In particular, in the strategic documents of the 2000s, migrant workers were identified as one of the demographic resources of the state.	Migration resource, migrant workers as a demographic resource, migration population growth	Assessment of migration's contribution to population dynamics: analysis of arrival, departure and migration balance indicators; comparison of migration growth with natural growth	Indicators of migration growth (net migration balance for the year); targets for attracting migrants (for example, $\geq 200$ thousand people annually according to the Concept of Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation until 2025)
Prosperous young families (our own approach)	T.K. Rostovskaya; A.M. Sitkovskii; O.N. Kalachikova; E.A. Knyaz'kova	We propose to define demographic resources through a set of prosperous young families with children – families in their first marriage, focused on at least two children and their successful upbringing. Such families are considered as the basis of demographic development and the main reserve of population reproduction.	A prosperous young family is a family in which the spouses are married for the first time, have two or more children and are actively engaged in their upbringing and development.	Comparison of socio-demographic characteristics of young families with children; content analysis of the concept of family and statistical illustration (marriage and fertility rates) to demonstrate the contribution of such families to demographic development	Indicators of the status of young families (e.g., the proportion of married women among mothers; the number of young families with children; the average number of children in a young family, etc.) are used to assess the demographic resource in this category.
Source: own compilation based on the results of the conducted research.					

are understood solely as the size of the population, then the emphasis shifts to increasing it by any means, without due consideration of structural and qualitative characteristics. If migration is primarily considered a resource, there is a risk of excessive hope for an external influx of the population. On the contrary, a broader understanding that takes into account the quality of human potential (family well-being, level of labor participation, etc.) allows for more balanced and long-term measures. Thus, the focus on supporting prosperous young families stands out as a key resource for Russia's demographic development. In the context of the demographic crisis, the clarification and unification

of interpretations of demographic resources is of strategic importance for developing effective measures and ensuring the demographic security of the country.

### Conclusion

Thus, different authors interpret the definition under study in their own way, which is demonstrated in the article. Interpretations are determined by the branch of knowledge within which a study using this terminology has been prepared. The most common groups of interpretations of the concept of "demographic resource" are highlighted: human resource, labor resource, migrants, and prosperous young families.

The review showed that the concept of “demographic resource” does not have a universal content: in different scientific traditions, it covers both the entire population and its individual subsets: working-age, migrants, prosperous young families. In the English-language literature, it refers to sources of demographic data. This variability is due to the tasks that the researcher solves: for macroeconomic analysis, the absolute size of the population is important, for assessing the production potential – the volume and structure of the labor force, for replenishing the natural decline – migration flows, and for ensuring sustainable natural reproduction – the reproductive potential of young families.

The demonstrated multiplicity of interpretations indicates the need for a clear terminological distinction. In the framework of this work, we propose to consider demographic resources as a flexible, context-dependent concept reflecting any quantifiably or qualitatively measurable characteristics of the population that can be mobilized to solve a specific scientific or managerial task. At the same time, the term “demographic development resources” should be used in a broader sense – as a set of not only demographic, but also institutional, financial, informational and cultural factors that serve to achieve demographic stability.

A systematic comparison of approaches leads to three fundamental conclusions.

1. It is impossible to find a single indicator of a demographic resource – it should be selected taking into account the purpose of the study and the level of analysis (country, region, company, family).

2. In management practice, the quality of a resource should be taken into account, not just its volume. Relying solely on population size or migration attraction without assessing age, professional, and family structure can produce short-term effects, but it does not ensure long-term demographic growth.

3. In management practice, the quality of a resource should be taken into account, not just its volume. Relying solely on population size or migration attraction without assessing age, professional, and family structure can produce short-term effects, but it does not ensure long-term demographic growth.

Thus, the development of demographic science requires further unification of concepts, and demographic policy requires an integrated approach, where each component of the demographic resource is considered not in isolation, but in conjunction with other socio-economic and cultural factors. Future research should focus on the operationalization of integrated demographic resource indices and the development of tools that make it possible in practice to balance its quantitative and qualitative aspects in the interests of sustainable demographic development in Russia.

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