

A Valuable Shift in the Reproductive Behavior of the Provincial Population

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ABSTRACT

The urgency of the investigated problem is caused by the fact that in Russian society family values are gradually being replaced by values of individualism, rationalism and hedonism. The intensity of the taking place changes leads to essential changes in marriage and family relations, sexual practices of the provincial cities population. With changing values and normative foundation of the family, marriage, children it leads to transformation of reproductive behavior, the crisis of the family as a social institution. The purpose of the article is to subject to sociological analysis the changes of valuable shift in the reproductive behavior of the provincial population. The leading method of the research is the method of triangulation, which is reflected in the use of quantitative and qualitative collection methods. The sociological analysis of changes of valuable shift in the reproductive behavior of the provincial population allowed to reveal the social consequences of cross-conflict marriage values, family and children in the structure of value orientations, which have led to valuable shift in the reproductive behavior of the provincial population and changes (at the level of values) practices of everyday relations of individuals in the matrimonial and sexual spheres. The results of research can be used by public authorities in the development of projects and programs for the development of population and family planning. The practical value of the results related with the possibility of their use in the teaching of the humanities, such as the courses on sociology, demography, as well as special courses on the family sociology of the family, mass communication, literature; gender, economic sociology.

KEYWORDS

Individualism; hedonism; method of triangulation;
reproductive behavior;
cross-conflict

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Introduction

Urgency of the problem

In Russian society family values are gradually being replaced by the values of individualism, rationalism and hedonism. The intensity of the taking place changes leads to essential changes in matrimonial and sexual practices of the provincial cities population. The changing values in basis of the family,

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marriage, children leads to transformation of reproductive behavior, the crisis of the family as a social institution.

The changes in the reproductive behavior of the people are the result of the evolution of functions of the family in the long process of historical, economic and socio-cultural development of the Russian society. During the last two decades a traditional type of reproductive behavior has been altered, according to this type the social and cultural norms, supported by the religion and customs, did not allow intra-regulation of procreation. The birth rates depended only on the fertility and marital structure of the population. Nowadays with gradually changing type of reproductive behavior the practice of family planning becomes widely spread and is predetermined by lifestyles of people.

Western classical (Durkheim, 1995) and post-classical (Masionis, 2004) researches define social values as rules, means of formal correlation of individual actions and the functioning of social institutions (macrosociological approach) and as the orientation of individual and group activities (microsociological approach). In the interpretations of the concept "social values", offered by post-Soviet sociologists, can also be seen the influence of both macrosociological and microsociological scientific traditions. That is why in the present research the method of triangulation was chosen as the leading method, which is reflected in the use of quantitative and qualitative methods of gathering information, which allows us to consider this problem more efficiently.

The problem of social values was always (in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods) in the focus of Russian scientists interest (Zdravomyslov, 1986; Ruchka, 1987). Despite the preservation of the priority of family values, marriage, children in the value structure of the provincial population, its pragmatism and assessment from the point of individual needs constantly proceeds. Marriage and family attitudes and behavior models are refracted from individual needs firstly, collective needs and interests are sidelined, so a value-shift in the reproductive behavior of the provincial population is happening, which actualizes the necessity to consider this problem using not only quantitative but also qualitative methods.

The role of value shift in reproductive behavior provincial population

With changing values and normative foundation of the family, marriage, children it leads to transformation of reproductive behavior, the crisis of the family as a social institution.

Literature Review

Accumulation and generalization of experience of studying the significance of social values inherent in the works of Russian and foreign sociologists (Boagaarts & Potter, 1983; Davis & Blake, 1956; Hill, Stycos & Back, 1959; Antonov & Medkov, 2000; Belova, 1975; Borisov & Sinelnikov, 1995; Dyurgkeim, 1995; Zdravomyslov, 1986; Masionis, 2004; Ruchka, 1987; Sonin, 1980; Hill, 1977).

The work of these and other authors allow us to study changes due to a valuable shift in the reproductive behavior of the population of the province ; to identify the social effects of conflict in marriage, the family, the structure of value orientations and to identify prospects for its settlement. The analysis of theoretical studies, best practices and mass shows that the problem of value

shift in the reproductive behaviour of the provincial population is very sharp and so far has not been the subject of special sociological research.

Materials and Methods

The leading method of the research is the method of triangulation, which is reflected in the use of quantitative and qualitative collection methods, namely: mass survey carried out in the cities of Kazan, Zelenodolsk, Naberezhnye Chelny, Nizhnekamsk, Elabuga and in a number of rural settlements Elabuga region with selective a collection of 1120 people selected in compliance with the characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, type of employment; of them 299 people - residents of Kazan, 200 - Nizhnekamsk 166 - Naberezhnye Chelny, 55 - Zelenodolsk, 200 - Yelabuga and 200 - in rural areas of the Republic of Tatarstan; in-depth interviews with married people (with the number of informants in 78 people in the age group 30-45 years), the essays of the senior classes students of secondary schools, colleges ("My future family").

Results

Mass survey (questionnaire)

This survey was carried out to make the provincial population, especially the population of Tatarstan, estimate the importance of traditional values such as family, marriage, children, as well as for subsequent sociological analysis and the identification of valuable shift in reproductive behavior of the provincial population.

The paramount importance of public financial incentives of the reproductive behavior is widely believed by people. According to a survey conducted by the mass contact, nearly half of respondents (48%) consider the measures taken by the state economic support of the childbirth to be effective; one in four (25%) believes that these measures won't significantly effect the birth rate. There was a high proportion of respondents (27%), who couldn't definitely assess the economic measures impact of state influence on the population reproductive activity. It allows us to make the following assumptions:

- the measures for fertility enhancing taken by the state are not relevant for them because of the age (over 45 years), or already the realized need for children (and, therefore, they take measures to prevent pregnancy), or parents have a very high material status, that is why the "mother's certificate" is not a great incentive;

- the "compensation" for the birth of the child offered by the state does not correspond the increasing demands of the respondents: the volume of payments, in their opinion, is insignificant, does not compensate for the estimated costs for the maintenance and education of the child; the size of "mother's certificate" is not sufficient to solve their housing problems.

Also a conducted survey showed that the most important values for the respondents are a good health (83.8%), a happy family (79.5%), healthy relatives and friends (77.1%), material welfare (71.4%). As a less important were given such values as a good housing (46%), an interesting work (35.6%), a personal safety (24.1%); The recognition of other people (8.3%) and democracy (2.4%) were assigned as unimportant values. In addition, it was revealed the discrepancy between desired and planned number of children: three out of four respondents

of Tatarstan (74%) consider it desirable to have two children in the family, but only 60% of them are planning such number of children. Small proportion of respondents (6%) would consider one child to be enough, but planning one child is still 16% of respondents. The proportion of respondents who plan childless families is 6.5 times more than those, who consider childless families to be ideal. The desired and planned number of children matched only in the assessment of many children (three or more) family type (respectively, 20% and 19%). According to the survey, two-child family is considered an ideal by the majority of respondents having one or two children, and childless. The opinion on the desire to have three or more children interviewed expressed predominantly by respondents from large families.

An important factor of reproductive behavior in postmodern society is intra birth control. According to the mass survey we conducted that more than half of respondents (54%) uses a variety of means to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Marital status has a little effect on the use of contraceptives: a higher proportion of those using contraceptives among unmarried respondents (68%), presumably do not have a regular sexual partner; low rates (15%) were observed among widowers / widows, because of their non-reproductive age.

Significant impact on the use of contraceptives has age-related characteristics of respondents in Tatarstan (Figure 1).

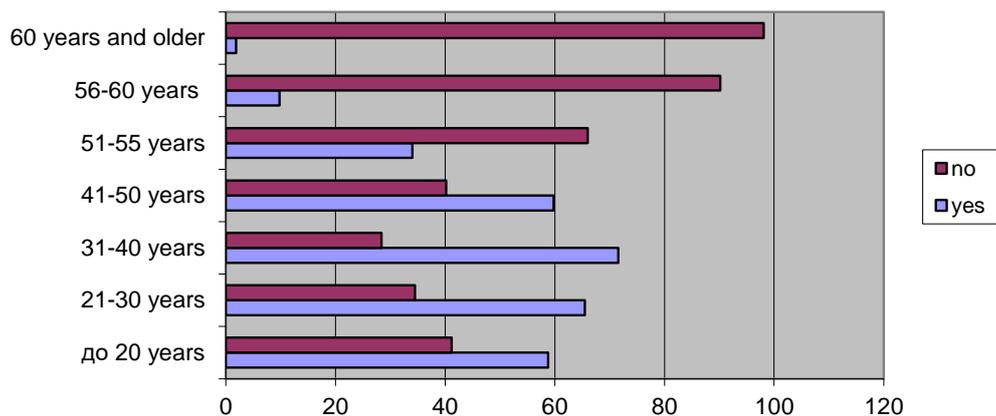


Figure 1. Distribution of answers to the question: "Do you use a means of preventing unwanted pregnancy?" (In % of respondents).

An active use of contraceptives among respondents under 20 years of age (59%) indicates an early age of entry into sexual relationships, and the undesirability of having children at this age. In the age groups 21-30 years and 31-40 years there has been increase in the proportion of those using contraception (66% and 72%, respectively), in spite of the marriage, and the improvement of material and housing living conditions that can be explained by the spread and intensification of intra-control childbirth, according to the emerging install families for few children. Active use of contraceptives is typical for people under 50 years of age (60%) gradually weakens to 55 years (34%), and, as it might be expected, because of non-reproductive period.

According to our survey, in order to prevent an unwanted pregnancy mechanical means (a spiral, a condom) are used oftener than others (75%), followed by a physiological method (calculation of the "safe" days) (11%), hormone pills, injections (14%). In our opinion inactive use of hormonal contraceptives is associated with: 1) common in the public mind a stereotype about the side effects of hormonal pills, 2) a weak development of the national industry of modern hormonal contraceptives, its high cost, and therefore - lack of access for many women, 3) lack of women awareness about the consequences of using this method, 4) expensive tests required for individual selection of hormonal methods.

Such women's attitude of reproductive age to hormonal contraceptives at the same time can also be considered as an explanation for the prevalence of abortions - abortion is preferred to other contraceptives by every fifth respondent (21%). Only 27% of respondents assume to save an unplanned pregnancy; a large proportion of those respondents (36%), who cannot definitely answer about their actions in the case of unwanted pregnancy also indirectly indicates an indifferent attitude of the society towards abortion. In addition, it was revealed that respondents without children (69%) support the preservation of an unwanted pregnancy, which indicates the importance of such value as children. The respondents, who have two children, would rather have an abortion than an unwanted pregnancy (33%); one child families are likely guided by the two-child (39%) and are therefore configured to bear in the case of an unwanted pregnancy, but 16% of respondents will make an abortion. The respondents who have three children (24%), are more likely to make an abortion, only 12% will maintain a pregnancy.

These results can be explained as an approving assessment of surveyed for two-child family model as "optimal", i.e. satisfies the psychological need in children and corresponds the necessary social costs of growing-up children.

The significant influence of the subjective factor (value orientations, attitudes, stereotypes) in the reproductive behavior of the population is reflected in the assessment of financial position (objective factor) of participants of a mass survey (only every third respondent, or 33% of respondents noted that a decision on the alleged behavior during an unwanted pregnancy corresponds its financial position). The material factor is more significant for respondents, who decide to make on abortion (57%), than for those who prefer to save unwanted pregnancies (35%). In our opinion, this fact testifies the pragmatism of reproductive behavior, i.e. the tendency of people to justify their actions by rational reasons, regardless of their true nature, often unknown by people.

In-depth interviews with married people

According to the results of in-depth interviews (the number of informants is 78 people in the age group 30-45 years), most of the informants believe that the birth and upbringing of children requires a much higher resource than economic measures undertaken by the State to compensate them. Some families (especially families where there are minor children, disabled children) are not able to cope with the housing, financial problems and need the state patronage.

According to interviews, nowadays the main reasons of low birth rates are falling live standards of the population, mass poverty, poor living conditions, lack of comfort for the upbringing of children living conditions, unemployment,



payment for education and health services, lack of confidence in their life prospects.

Paternalistic beliefs that the state is obliged to provide the satisfaction of housing, educational, health and other welfare needs of its citizens, were reflected in the statements of informants about the necessity of state intervention in family planning. Among the measures of population policy, which can significantly have an influence on the increase of the birth rate, the interviewees pointed out such measure as the provision of family housing allowances on favorable terms with a partial repayment for the birth of the first child and the next; an increase in the size of monthly payments to women who are on leave for child care, an increase in the size of lump-sum grants for child birth.

The materials of the in-depth interviews reflects sufficiently loyal attitude of most middle-aged informants divorces and remarriage (informants answer in such way: "Any person has the right to happiness, whether it is the second or the third marriage, it does not matter", "I consider remarriages to be all right. Many of my friends and former classmates are now married for a second time"; "Nobody is immune from the mistakes in the choice of a husband or a wife, that is why divorces are and will be". "I believe that if it is impossible to live with a man, you even need to divorce him, in order children don't suffer from marital strife. But I have a negative opinion about the husbands, who lived in a marriage for many years, became the ones who are now - successful, rich, and then abandon their wives, finding a young girlfriend" (woman, 49 years old, three children). Children were named as the most important reason for not divorcing: "If there are children, then any contradiction between spouses should be resolved in favor of the children, not the parents 'self-interest', and divorce is out of question."

The essays of the senior classes students of secondary schools, colleges ("My future family")

To determine the prospects for the reproductive development of the situation in the Republic of Tatarstan we studied the presentation and reproductive orientations of students. In order to achieve these we have initiated writing compositions "My future family" in high schools and colleges; essay "My idea of the family and marriage" in senior courses of universities and colleges.

According to the received information, the vast majority of the authors considers a small family to be an ideal. "Feedback paradox" between the birth rate and welfare" has found confirmation in the compositions and essays. Among the students of secondary schools and vocational colleges there are more supporters of a large family (in the sample "normal", non-elite schools attended by children from families with middle and low-income) (Table 1).

Table 1. Desirable type of families for the authors of compositions and essays

Type of family	Type of educational institution:				Total (B %)
	school	Vocational school	college	university	
A small family	39	15	23	65	75.5
A large family	21	6	1	7	18.6
No information	3	1	3	4	5.9

Accordingly to the analyzed information: 1) the attractiveness of few children family model for young people can be considered as "inherited" from their parents formed installation for few children; 2) the reason for the high motivation of the reproductive orientation to few children among students of senior classes we see in "imitative effect" (this is, apparently, the reproductive orientation of their parents), while for the students it is a conscious choice; 3) orientation of every fifth school student's for many children, judging by the content of works, can be explained by juvenile romanticizing, idealization of a large family characteristic to this age, which is unlikely to play a significant role as they get older to secure their reproduction installation in favor of a large family.

Despite the fact that the dominant factor in the birth rate in Russia in the past decade is the intra-control, an important role, in our opinion, is focused on marriage and marriage rate of the population. Analysis of the young students' concepts of family and marriage showed that the vast majority of respondents' plans to found a family, while a registered form of marriage is considered to be more preferable. The authors of the works determine the age of 21-29 to be the ideal for the marriage. Gender peculiarities can be easily observed: the girls want to get married at the age of 21-24 years, the majority of men – to marry in 25-29 years.

These facts coincide with the results of the survey conducted by the mass questionnaire, although the criteria for desired age of the first marriage is "blurred": for women is the age 22-26 years (20-22 years were called by 37% of the respondents; 23-24 years - 29 %; 25-26 years - 23%) for men - 22-31 years (or 22-23 years - 12%; 24-25 years - 47%; 26-27 years - 14%; 28-29 years - 5 %; 30-31 year - 14%). This variation of the age range of the first marriage is explained by participation in the survey of different age groups having not only positive but also negative marriage experiences. These notions of marriage and family reflect the general trend of the marriage practices of the Russian population in the 2000s. The comparison of statistical data in recent years leads to the conclusion that the age of marriage, regardless of gender, is increasing.

The compositions and essays reflected the attitude of informants to such values as "marriage for whole life." Only one in three authors expressed the opinion that only once a person should get married (34%); more than half of men (58%) and girls (61%) believe that person can marry multiple times. As possible reasons for divorce are called: infidelity, lack of understanding, love exhaustion, alcohol abuse, the unwillingness or inability of a spouse to have children, a sense of mistrust, and excessive authoritativeness of one of the spouses.

Discussions

One of the first western sociologists and demographers, who drew the attention to the importance of reproductive behavior and proposed a theoretical model of its structure, were K. Davis and J. Blake (1956). They distinguished three groups of fertility factors: 1) influencing the sexual life, 2) influencing the conception, 3) determining pregnancy and successful birth. The empirical testing of the K. Davis and John. R. Blake (1956) model of "intervening variables" was carried out by R. Hill, J.M. Stycos and K.W. Back (1956) (as the main factors of "family planning" they allocated settings on desired number of children and the use of contraception), R. Friedman (1977) (he calls the demographic and

socioeconomic characteristics of couples, institutions and communities in the region, the nation, as well as cultural factors" to be universal determinants of fertility, J. Bongaartsom and R. Potter (1983) (they consider marital status, use of contraception, abortion, postpartum infertility, sterility to be the immediate determinants of birth).

Dedicated by the researchers' fertility determinants, except infertility, caused by physiological reasons, are subjective factors in the mating and reproductive behavior of the individual and the family. Marriage / postponing such decision, the average age of marriage and the birth of the first / subsequent children, the use / non-use of contraceptives, save / termination of pregnancy, breast-feeding a baby and its duration or artificial feeding, preservation / breakdown of the marriage, entry into / non-entry into remarriage relate to individual choice of people: the lack of a family and children is not seen as a sign of social inferiority of the individual.

In national demographic literature (Belova, 1975) different interpretations of reproductive behavior were presented. Its analyses allows us to suggest that in sociology and demography of the post-Soviet period have not been made any new meanings in the classic definition of reproductive behavior. National researchers have paid a great attention to one of the most important factors determining the number of children in the family, - reproductive needs. M.Ya. Sonin (1980) was one of the first Russian researchers of reproductive needs. After that V.A. Borisov & A.B. Sinelnikov (1995) continued studying the factors involved in birthrate, who in the 1970s warned about the danger not only the fact of childbirth declining, but formation a stable orientations of families for one child. Nowadays recent trends can be considered as already established, and it indicates the transition of the population in the narrowed reproduction mode.

The demand for children is the inertial element of reproductive behavior patterns. The researchers assumed that it is the result of inheritance reproductive experience of previous generations, assimilation of reproductive norms, i.e., settled in different social and demographic groups of behavior patterns associated with the birth of a certain number of children. However, in a changing Russian society we are dealing with a significant weakening of the action of genetic factors in family planning and highlighting social economic factors, i.e., family economic capacity to give birth and upbringing offspring without shifting required cost on the state. At the same time the genetic factor continues to operate selectively: 1) in families where spouses' religious beliefs do not allow them to have recourse to abortion; 2) in poor families with strong paternalism and prejudices.

Thus, analysis of scientific works on the issue of changes in the reproductive behavior of the provincial population rarely affects the axiological aspect of the changes and they are only debatable. Researchers try to avoid the use of the method of triangulation (using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection) on this issue, which significantly increases the value of our research.

Conclusion

Thus, in the materials of the conducted empirical studies with qualitative and quantitative methodology dominant conjugal relationship attitudes and orientations are traced (economic interests, the values of individualism and pragmatism are prevalent). Psychological experiences in the context of growing social differentiation on the weakening of the role of marriage, where a person is entitled to rely on emotional balance and mutual understanding, are noticeable. The paradoxical desire of people to have children with their orientation to few date birth is predetermined by awareness of significant personal investment in the birth, maintenance, children's education.

Sustainable dominance of materialistic values to the detriment of post-materialist is the peculiarity of the value orientations structure of the provincial population in family and marriage and reproductive practices in the Russian society.

Public opinion about the reproductive behavior of the provincial population in the Russian society, in the family and marital relationships, family and marital morality, is changing. This public opinion is altering much faster than the changes in the structure of social values in general.

Based on the studies we define the following main features of changing values of post-Soviet society:

- changes in hierarchy of values, its restructuring due to the rotation of values: values such as teamwork, partnerships, mutual support, equality, justice not only move to the peripheral position, but are blurred ("equality of opportunities" displaces "income equality"; the collective influence gives way to the freedom of individual choice; pragmatism devalues selfless help and partnership);
- changes in semantic context, the content of some values (concepts of "family" and "marriage" are separated; rethinking about the social destination of women and men, the importance of marriage, children, family, kinship);
- uneven transformation of value structure, due to age and settlement factors (more intensive changes in the structure of values are characteristic for the new post-Soviet generation).
- Based on the analysis of changes in the field of marriage and family values and reproductive behavior of the provincial population, particular in the Republic of Tatarstan, we can make the following conclusions:
- changes in marriage and family and the sexual sphere are happening much faster than changes in the structure of social values in general;
- despite the persistence in the priority of family values, marriage, children of the provincial population value structure their pragmatism and assessment of individual needs point of view is happening. Marriage and family attitudes and behaviors are caused by refracting through the focus of individuality firstly, collective needs and interests are sidelined;



- "the triumph of the individuality" causes changes in semantic context and the content of family values, marriage, children, love, social destination of women and men, the importance of family relations;
- uneven transformation of value structure, due to age and settlement factors (changes in the structure of values among the younger age groups and the population of the capital and major cities are more intense), is less pronounced in the reproductive behavior: the provincial and overprovincial population is also oriented toward a small childbirth and practice of intra birth control;
- among the provincial population there is a tendency to increase the age of marriage, delaying the birth of the first child, an increasing tolerance to practice of divorces and remarriage;
- the study of changes in the value level and at the level of everyday interactions of individuals practices in family-marriage and sexual spheres confirms our hypothesis of the predominance of transmutation processes: essential changes in matrimonial and sexual practices with little change in value-normative foundation of the family, marriage, children, are happening. Although there are elements of transformation in reproductive behavior, even the emergence of a new post-modern "ideological fundamentalism", which proclaims practice child-free families.

Article information may be useful in practical terms, with the possibility of their use in the teaching of the humanities, such as reading courses in sociology, demography, as well as special courses on the sociology of the family, the mass media, literature; gender, economic sociology. Taking into account the results of this study a number of scientific problems and promising areas can be identified for further consideration: the deepening and extension of certain provisions contained in the article.

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