

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

DOI: 10.15838/sa.2024.2.42.2

UDC 314.5:314.6:316 | LBC 60.7:60.561.5

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MODERN RUSSIAN FAMILY: CRISIS OR EVOLUTION



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The demographic situation in Russia is characterized by another decline in the birth rate, the persistence of a relatively high mortality rate and population ageing. Over the period of many years of research into the determinants of population reproduction, the family has been identified as the key actor whose functioning affects all demographic processes and the reproduction of human potential. The parameters of the institution of the family directly affect the functions it performs, that is why it is so important to understand and regulate the transformations taking place in the marriage and family sphere. The article analyzes three types of family relations: matrimony, parenthood and kinship. Based on the data of Russian studies and the author's monitoring of the reproductive potential of the Vologda Oblast population, the article reveals the signs of devaluation of the institution of marriage due to the loss of its exclusive right to intimacy and procreation. The key trends in young people's marital behavior is the widespread trial cohabitation and postponing marital registration. Children registration at the parents' joint request contributes to the separation of marriage from parenthood, denying marriage as the basis of the family and a condition for the birth and upbringing of children. Public opinion is loyal to childbearing outside marriage; the share of those who do not consider it obligatory to register a relationship in case of pregnancy and childbirth is growing among both men and women. At the same time, there is a clear demand for involved fatherhood and egalitarianism in the distribution of family responsibilities, as well as a trend towards having planned, consciously realized large families. As for

nuclearization, functional ties with the parental family are preserved, the priority shifts toward financial support of adult children. The key priorities of demographic policy are identified as the growth of the prestige of official marriage, which gives socio-economic advantages over single life or cohabitation, the introduction of the concepts of parenthood and grandparenthood labor, primarily for large multi-generational families, the calibration of information flows that determine the image of family, parenthood, and lifestyle in the public consciousness.

Family, marriage, parenthood, family nuclearization, family institution, devaluation of marriage.

Introduction

The crisis of the family, the strategically problematic consequence of which is the decline in the birth rate, has led to increased attention of researchers and the state to the regulation of the family sphere. The parameters of the family institution affect the functions it performs, which is why it is so important to understand and regulate the transformations taking place in the marriage and family sphere. It is significant that in the last four years the state position on the Russian family has been formed and consolidated. An amendment to the seventy-second article of the Constitution of the Russian Federation was introduced and supported by citizens, which enshrines the concept of marriage as the union of a man and a woman, defining the couple as the foundation of the family, the key function of which is the birth and upbringing of children. The country's main document, the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, prioritizes support for the family, motherhood, fatherhood and childhood precisely in connection with the task of increasing the birth rate. Decree 809, dated November 9, 2022, defines the fundamentals of state policy for the preservation and strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, including a strong family. In the context of the active formation of public demand for a complete well-functioning family with children, preferably large and multigenerational, the question arises about assessing the starting conditions for the desired changes. Identification of the "image" and assessment of the parameters of the modern Russian family from the point of view of its success in fulfilling its reproductive function to ensure population reproduction constituted the purpose of the study.

Crisis or evolution: theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of the family institution

Defining the theoretical framework of the study, it is important to outline the definition of family. A.G. Kharchev's definition is recognized and classic in the Russian familistic discourse: family is a small group whose members are connected by marriage or kinship relations, community of life and mutual moral responsibility and social necessity, and whose social necessity is conditioned by society's need for physical and spiritual reproduction of the population (Kharchev, 1964). This approach emphasizes the role of the family in the reproduction of population, human potential, which determines a special attitude to this social institution as the main actor of physical reproduction of population and social structure of society.

In the Western school of sociology there is another principle of justification of uniting people into a family through the function of receiving support. A. Giddens gives the following definition: "Family is a unit of society, consisting of people who support each other socially, economically or psychologically or identify each other as a supportive unit" (Giddens, Sutton, 2018). This approach denies the prevailing role of kinship ties, actualizes group self-identification ("friend-or-foe").

There are exceptions when blood kinship is not the primary basis for establishing kinship. First of all, it is about adopted children, and in a number of definitions there is a clear indication of the possibility to consider non-blood relatives as family. For example: "The family is a social institution, present in all societies, which unites people in groups so that they can raise and educate children together. A synonym

for family ties is kinship, a social bond based on blood, marriage or established through adoption”¹.

A.I. Antonov distinguishes three types of relations that define the family: “Family is a community of people based on a single common family activity, connected by the ties of marriage – parenthood – kinship, and thus carrying out the reproduction of the population and the continuity of family generations, as well as the socialization of children and maintenance of the family members’ existence”². Thereby emphasizing the role of the couple forming the family unit, its relationship with other generations (older, parents and younger, children), the presence of children as a sign of the family and the second type of relationship, child-parent ones, the nuclear family’s ties with other relatives, in particular with the parents of the spouses. The key function of the family for society is the reproduction of the population, social structure and culture of society, and for individuals it is self-sufficiency in the functioning of the family group.

The Russian family is characterized by the understanding of kinship, acquired either by blood or through marriage, as a legitimate basis for receiving support from relatives, on the one hand, and the acceptance of the traditions and norms of this family group, on the other. Traditionally, a wife passes into her husband’s lineage, and children who are not related by blood to a parent or both parents undergo the adoption procedure, i.e. are brought into the family, acquiring the status of a son or daughter. The change of social status is accompanied not only by normative procedures of civil status registration, but also by appropriate rituals: wedding (Gura, 2011), baptism, naming (Popovicheva, 2014), etc., which preserve and transmit from generation to generation the meanings attached to the notions of “family”, “marriage”, “parenthood” and “kinship”. Thus, marriage is a legitimate basis for the formation of a new family unit, giving the right to maintain an independent household, the birth of children, marriage regulates the rights of

spouses and children to inherit their spouse and parents after their death. The rights of children born out of wedlock not so long ago began to be protected by law, which made marriage not just desirable, but mandatory to ensure the economic rights and social status of children.

The norms of marital behavior and childbearing have been changing in the historical context. A.B. Sinelnikov considers the stages of transformation of family relations by the type of childbearing, attitude toward marriage and divorce, and nucleation. Each of the characteristics goes through four stages. The type of childlessness changes from a large number of children through medium and small children to voluntary childlessness. Marriage entered into by the will of parents (collusion) is softened by taking into account the opinion of future spouses, then parental consent is no longer required, and at the fourth stage freedom of choice between marriage and celibacy is enshrined. Attitudes towards divorce are also transformed towards personal choice: from absolute inadmissibility to traditional divorce in case of special circumstances (e.g. infertility of one of the spouses or adultery), to divorce as collapse and divorce as confirmation, which can take place without any explanation at all. Nuclearization goes through the following stages: extended branched family; partial nuclearization on the model of extended single-branch family (main line) plus separated nuclear families (lateral lines); full territorial nuclearization with preservation of mutual assistance between nuclear families belonging to the family group; full functional nuclearization of families (Sinelnikov, 2006). In general, it is possible to trace the change from the priority of public interests to the freedom of individual choice.

How to assess the ongoing changes in family relations? Russian demographic science is known for a rather sharp polemic between the supporters of two paradigms, “family crisis” and “family modernization”. The former advocate the importance of preserving and strengthening the family, which performs the

¹ Masionis D. (2004). *Sociology*. St. Petersburg: Piter. 9th ed.

² Antonov A.I. (2005). *Microsociology of the family: Textbook*. Moscow: INFRA-M.

function of population reproduction, the need for an active demographic policy (Sinelnikov, 2018; Sinelnikov, 2019; Sinelnikov, 2021), while the latter advocate the inevitable evolutionary nature of social norms, including in family relations (Vishnevsky, 2019). In our opinion, when the transformation of social systems is inevitable, the question about the risks or benefits of the ongoing changes can be solved differently depending on the level of their manifestation and the subject of assessment. Depopulation carries risks of national security, sovereignty of the country, the aging of the population entails significant changes in the structure of society's needs, manifesting the interests of another "minority", which is far from being small (the share of the elderly has reached 22%), there is a change in the technological mode, the monocentric model of the world is being replaced by a multicentric one, and the positions of countries in the new system are significantly affected by demographic processes (Balatsky, Ekimova, 2023). Under these conditions, attention to the "quality of population", i.e. human capital, is increasing (Lokosov, 2023), in the formation of which the institution of family plays a paramount role. The new round of family and demographic policy, including amendments to the Constitution, Presidential Decree 809, dated November 9, 2022, designed to strengthen traditional Russian values, and the allocation of a separate national project "Family", testify to the formed state course to support the family, the state's interest in a prosperous, healthy and large family.

The information base consists of official statistical data on demographic processes, the results of a number of sociological studies, the methodology of which was developed with the participation of the authors to identify the peculiarities of marriage and family behavior of the population: monitoring of the reproductive potential of the Vologda Region population (sample size is 1,500 people of reproductive age, quota sampling by gender, age, type of settlement, has been conducted since 2005, the study uses data from the waves of 2019 and 2023), interregional study "Demographic and Family

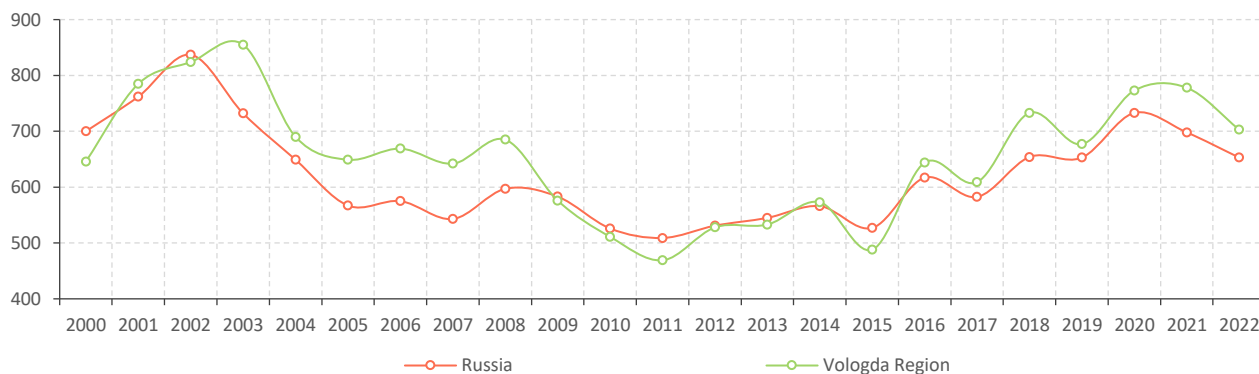
Behavior of the Population of the Vologda Region". The logic of the study is based on the above-mentioned three key types of relations that are realized in the family and regulated by the institutions of marriage, parenthood and intergenerational relations. Omitting the usual and stating data of demographic statistics, let us dwell on the analysis of the key features characterizing marriage and family behavior in the context of a critical understanding of their impact on population reproduction and human capital.

Research results

The institution of marriage as the union of a man and a woman in Russia is protected by the Constitution (Article 72). This amendment, adopted in 2020, normatively enshrines the impossibility of other marital relations, at least in the legitimate field. This is a logical step, as marriage and fertility are closely correlated processes. Almost 80% of children are born in marriage, those who prefer official marriage (according to the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the Vologda Region population, it is almost 70% of the population of reproductive age) assume a greater number of children. However, there are signs of marriage devaluation. First, the instability of unions: according to the data for 2022 in the country there were 653 divorces per 1,000 marriages (*Figure*). The regional indicator is higher, in the Vologda Region there were 703 cases of marriage dissolution per 1,000 weddings.

The high divorce rate is a dangerous trend. Only about 30% of women and 40% of men remarry, a loss of demographic potential. In addition, the consequences of divorce for ex-spouses themselves (Kalmijn, 2005) and for children can be very negative, including postponing or refusing to start a family, inheriting the same line of marital behavior, i.e. propensity to divorce (Amato, 1996; Amato, 2000; Umberson, Thomeer, 2020).

Second, among those living with a partner, the share of cohabiting partners is quite high: according to census data, in Russia it was 9.7% in 2002, 13.0% in 2010, and will drop to 9% in 2020. Moreover, cohabitation is clearly a



Number of divorces per 1,000 marriages

Sources: Unified interdepartmental information and statistical system. Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <https://fedstat.ru>

“rehearsal” for future marriages, as it is more common among young people. Among young people under 25 who are in a relationship, 41% of girls and 56% of young men cohabit (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Share of unregistered marriages, % of those married, registered or not registered

Age, years	Women	Men
Under 25	41.25	56.04
25–29	23.71	27.33
30–34	12.66	21.59
35–39	11.71	12.76
40 and older	12.47	10.33

Source: Sample survey of reproductive plans of the population in 2022 (Table 5). Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/RPN22/index.html

The reasons for the devaluation of marriage lie in the transformation of social norms regulating the marriage and family sphere.

1. Marriage has lost its exclusive right to intimacy. In the modern world, it is not necessary to get married to actually start marital life. In marriages concluded before the 1990s, marital relations in more than 70% began with the registration of relations in the civil registry offices (Tab. 2), the interval between the beginning of marital relations and the registration of marriage was on average about a year, and in the 1990s – early 2000s it approached three years.

Tolerance for extramarital sexual relations and change of partners is the norm today; 60% of young people had their sexual debut before

adulthood; 58% of men and 40% of women have had three or more partners since the beginning of their sexual life; 54% of men and 30% of women consider it possible to have a relationship with more than one sexual partner at the same time. Recall that adultery is one of the most important causes of divorce.

2. Marriage has lost the exclusive right to procreation. Procreation outside of marriage is a legitimate practice. As of 2022, 22.8% of children were born to unmarried mothers (Tab. 3). At the same time, in more than half of the cases, children are registered by joint application of parents and paternity is recognized. This may indicate that in fact there is a union, but it is not registered, or that one of the parents (more often a man) does not want to take responsibility for the family, for the spouse, limiting his participation in the upbringing of the child. It is important that the existence of such a legitimate norm officially allows to separate parenthood from marriage.

In people’s consciousness marriage is losing its necessity for having children. Among men and women, the share of those who do not consider it obligatory to register a relationship in case of pregnancy and childbirth is growing. According to the Rosstat survey of reproductive plans of the population, in 2022 the share of those who are oriented to a legitimate marriage in case of pregnancy and childbirth has increased, while only 12% of men and 20% of women intend to marry in the absence of pregnancy (Tab. 4).

Table 2. Proportion of marriages that started with registration and the average time interval between marriage and its registration

Year of this marriage	Proportion of marriages that started with registration, %				Average time interval between marriage and its registration for those marriages where registration was postponed, months.			
	first marriage		remarriage		first marriage		remarriage	
	wives	husbands	wives	husbands	wives	husbands	wives	husbands
until 1990	71.6	77.6	...	...	11.3	8.6	...	...
1990–1994	68.0	69.3	...	...	26.0	25.6	...	...
1995–1999	66.7	64.1	20.0	33.3	27.0	26.0	...	...
2000–2004	57.1	56.9	6.7	11.1	30.0	27.9	31.2	40.6
2005–2009	49.5	49.0	25.0	52.9	11.4	11.3	10.1	...

Source: Sample survey "Family and fertility" (2009). Rosstat. https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/2010/family.htm
n = 1999 persons.

Table 3. Fertility by marital status in the Russian Federation, %

Year	Live births, persons	Including			
		in a registered marriage	out of a registered marriage	of which registered	
				at the joint request of the parents	at the mother's request
1970	1903713	89.4	10.6	41.0	59.0
1980	2202779	89.2	10.8	38.2	61.8
1990	1988858	85.4	14.6	42.8	57.2
2000	1266800	72.0	28.0	47.2	52.8
2005	1457376	70.0	30.0	45.9	54.1
2010	1788948	75.1	24.9	44.8	55.2
2015	1940579	78.2	21.6	51.8	48.2
2016	1888729	78.8	21.1	52.9	47.1
2017	1690307	78.7	21.2	54.1	45.9
2018	1604344	78.2	21.2	50.7	49.3
2019	1481074	78.6	20.9	51.9	48.1
2020	1436514	78.3	21.7	52.2	47.8
2021	1398253	78.0	22.0	52.5	47.5
2022	1304087	77.2	22.8	52.3	47.7

Source: Demographic Yearbook of the Russian Federation. Rosstat.

The data of the reproductive potential of the Vologda Region population monitoring confirm this trend: 33% of respondents agree that it is not necessary to register marriage to create a family (the opposite opinion is held by 41%); 34% agree that it is not necessary to get married to give birth and raise a child (45% agree that marriage registration is mandatory for the birth and upbringing of children); 44.2% agree that divorce is normal, it is not worth keeping a family with a person

they do not love (37.7% believe that divorce is the destruction of the family and it is necessary to try to keep the marriage). No pronounced differences on these issues were revealed neither in gender nor age groups.

The devaluation of legitimate marriage, separation of matrimony from parenthood is very dangerous in terms of the strength of unions necessary for the realization of reproductive intentions that directly affect the birth rate of the population.

Table 4. Conditions of marriage registration

Year	Condition	Yes, obligatory		Yes, desirable		No		It's hard to say	
		male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
2012	In the absence of pregnancy	18.8	20.0	18.6	23.7	39.8	34.0	22.8	22.4
	If pregnant	34.7	36.4	19.0	23.7	28.7	26.2	17.6	13.7
	When a child is born	44.6	45.1	13.7	19.6	26.1	21.4	15.6	13.9
2017	In the absence of pregnancy	18.1	16.4	21.6	24.4	41.7	38.5	18.5	20.7
	If pregnant	31.8	30.9	21.7	25.8	33.3	29.1	13.2	14.1
	When a child is born	38.0	35.8	14.5	19.5	33.1	28.9	14.4	15.8
2022	In the absence of pregnancy	12.72	18.94	27.70	29.74	47.06	39.15	12.53	12.17
	If pregnant	35.65	40.10	24.00	27.40	32.82	26.07	7.54	6.43
	When a child is born	44.85	45.95	17.04	23.18	30.19	25.09	7.92	5.78

Source: Sample survey of reproductive plans of the population in 2012, 2017, 2022 (Tables 11, 12). Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/itog_inspect

Another important vector of transformation of marital relations is the perception of roles and distribution of family responsibilities. Already at the level of perceptions of projections of the social role of husband and wife and their comparison with reality, a contradiction is observed: attitudes retain patriarchal features, while in fact women often perform the functions of the head of the family and provide for it financially (Tab. 5). Probably, this contradiction leads to devaluation of a man in a marital union, underestimation of his functionality, which can provoke divorces. However, the latest monitoring wave (2023) shows a flattening of differences and greater certainty on the position of husbands. This is the result of a response to the established state position in family policy, increased attention to the family, and a clear and supported course to strengthen traditional Russian values.

On average, the majority of family responsibilities are fulfilled by spouses jointly, which is especially important, it concerns material provision of the family (Tab. 6).

At the same time, the distribution of household chores has patriarchal features: men are responsible for various household repairs, while wives are mainly responsible for daily routine labor: cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing laundry, and doing homework with children.

Table 5. Distribution of answers to the question "Specify what roles in marriage, in your opinion, should be performed by spouses and what roles they perform in reality", % of respondents

Role	The wife is supposed to fulfill the role of...		The wife fulfills the role of...	
	2019	2023	2019	2023
mothers	88.1	88.1	87.8	87.2
sexual partner	81.8	85.3	81.3	80.9
homemaker	79.1	80.1	79.1	78.6
hostess	78.4	76.5	78.9	71.6
head of household	19.1	32.1	54.7	31.1
breadwinner	20.9	31.6	58.5	31.2
friend	57.5	65.2	59.2	58.2
other	1.2	0.7	2.2	0.5
Role	The husband is supposed to fulfill the role of...		The husband fulfills the role of...	
	2019	2023	2019	2023
father	65.4	85.7	83.4	84.8
sexual partner	60.7	85.6	81.4	80.2
protector	62.2	78.2	76.6	73.5
host	56.9	72.6	71.8	70.9
head of household	42.9	78.7	75.2	73.0
breadwinner	45.2	77.9	78.3	75.4
friend	43.1	66.0	59.0	61.0
other	1.0	0.1	1.7	0.5

Source: reproductive potential monitoring data, n = 1,500, VolRC RAS.

Table 6. Distribution of responsibilities in the family, 2023, by gender, % of married persons

Function	Who fulfills	Men	Women	On average
Distribution of the family budget	Husband	165	10.9	13.7
	Wife	18.9	25.4	22.1
	Jointly	64.7	63.7	64.2
Child care and upbringing	Husband	4.9	7.7	6.3
	Wife	34.2	27.5	30.8
	Jointly	60.9	64.8	62.9
Material support of the family	Husband	27.4	24.9	26.2
	Wife	14.1	6.2	10.1
	Jointly	58.5	69.0	63.7
Organization of family leisure time (recreation, entertainment)	Husband	8.9	8.3	8.6
	Wife	27.6	24.4	26.0
	Jointly	63.5	67.3	65.4
Caring for the health and well-being of family members	Husband	8.9	7.9	8.4
	Wife	36.7	34.8	35.7
	Jointly	54.4	57.4	55.9
Providing psychological comfort	Husband	9.4	8.3	8.8
	Wife	33.8	34.6	34.2
	Jointly	56.8	57.1	57.0
Doing homework with children	Husband	8.3	6.8	7.5
	Wife	42.2	40.4	41.3
	Jointly	49.5	52.8	51.2
Maintaining family ties	Husband	9.1	6.7	7.9
	Wife	19.9	14.3	17.1
	Jointly	71.0	79.1	75.1
Buying groceries and other goods	Husband	12.5	11.4	11.9
	Wife	27.8	21.8	24.8
	Jointly	59.7	66.8	63.3
Cooking	Husband	8.4	9.7	9.0
	Wife	57.2	50.9	54.0
	Jointly	34.4	39.3	36.9
Cleaning	Husband	9.9	10.0	9.9
	Wife	58.3	55.2	56.8
	Jointly	31.8	34.8	33.3
Laundry and ironing	Husband	7.9	11.1	9.5
	Wife	76.7	66.1	71.4
	Jointly	15.3	22.7	19.1
Repairing the house, appliances and other things	Husband	71.8	68.4	70.1
	Wife	8.4	8.8	8.6
	Jointly	19.9	22.8	21.3
Garbage removal	Husband	42.5	38.2	40.3
	Wife	13.3	10.0	11.7
	Jointly	44.2	51.8	48.0

Source: reproductive potential monitoring data, n = 1,500, VolRC RAS.

A special attitude is observed to the distribution of responsibilities in young families. During the period of family formation, the rules of joint life are established, views on the organization of everyday life are agreed upon, which is very important, since spouses have different experience and example of parental families. It should be noted that in young families the responsibilities between spouses are distributed more evenly, young men more often cook and take care of children. In the study of marriage and family attitudes of young people, conducted by E.V. Zmanovskaya and T.E. Kartashova, "significant discrepancies were obtained between the ideal and real image of a partner, which indicates a high level of latent dissatisfaction, the conflict attitude of young spouses to each other on the background of mutual disappointment. The discrepancy between men's expectations and women's claims is associated with a higher desire of the latter to realize themselves in their profession than men would like. Men are not sufficiently involved in parental functions and provide little emotional support to their wives. At the same time, women are attuned to the fact that men should be socially more successful" (Zmanovskaya, Kartashova, 2011).

In general, 52% of respondents agree that a woman, like a man, should take part in material support of the family, only 11% disagree, while 52% believe that the main responsibilities of women in the family are taking care of children and running the household (the number of those who disagree with this statement is noticeably higher among young people). Fifty-seven and a half percent of respondents agree that men should deal with household issues and child-rearing on an equal footing with women, with 48.8% of women and 66.9% of men agreeing. In other words, motherhood still provokes a high dependence of a woman's well-being during pregnancy and infant care on a man. At the same time, men are ready to participate more in the life of children and in household functions of family support. At the same time, women's readiness to entrust child care and upbringing to their husbands is noticeably lower.

The analysis of subjective assessment of satisfaction with marriage and the probability of divorce is noticeably lower in couples whose relations are built on conditions of equality and “interchangeability”, joint fulfillment of all family responsibilities, which allows only to welcome the transition to an egalitarian model of gender consciousness as a manifestation of self-regulation of the contradiction between “cultural” and “social” (perceptions and real conditions) in determining the social roles of husband and wife.

In our opinion, it is not necessary to absolutize the role of the husband to the role of protector, provider, head of the family, whose functionality is mainly “in the external circuit”, outside the internal family affairs. In modern conditions, the patriarchal model of the family is not suitable for everyone, although, undoubtedly, it can be successfully realized in case of stability of preferences for such distribution of roles and responsibilities in the family by both spouses. With equal participation of husband and wife in professional activities and material provision of the family, balance in the distribution of other family functions is important. And with the variability and hybridity of samples of family life organization, the most urgent task of the family institute is to introduce the stage of coordination of ideas of the desired future of the new family as the most important element of the courtship period.

The second type of relations in the family is child-parent relations. Currently, the value of motherhood and fatherhood is high, it is among the three most important life values of 70% of women and 65% of men. The modern trend of parenthood is a request for involved fatherhood: “new fathers” have begun to realize their direct responsibility for their children and the fact that paternal behavior affects the formation of the child’s personality. Fathers are increasingly taking responsibility for the moral and intellectual upbringing of their children. For men, children cease to be a “burden” and become an important value in

life (Ildarkhanova, 2021). There are objective grounds for this: close child-parent ties have a positive impact on the health and socialization of children (Popryadukhina, Bubchikova, 2018; Chen et al., 2017; Umberson, Thomeer, 2020). According to the data obtained in the study of men’s generative behavior³, key features of responsible parenthood have been identified. Men talk about being fully responsible for the child’s life, providing conditions for the child to grow up and be independent, and being an example for children. This requires spending a lot of time on upbringing, keeping abreast of the child’s life, and, very importantly, changing one’s lifestyle, becoming an adult and taking responsibility not only for one’s own life, but also for the lives of one’s children. It is likely that it is the difficulties and efforts required for successful realization of fatherhood that cause, on average, a smaller share of men oriented towards marriage, a smaller number of children, and postponement of family formation to an older age. Thus, the average age of brides since the mid-1990s has increased by almost 7 years (from 18.6 to 25.3 years), and that of grooms by 4.6 years, to 27.4 years.

Shared responsibility of parents for upbringing of children, equal interest and involvement in the educational process, interchangeability in the fulfillment of family responsibilities seem to be promising for relieving dissatisfaction of both women and men with marriage, reducing excessive workload and preventing “dependent” position.

Another trend of parenthood is related to the growing prevalence of favorable large families. I.V. Pavlyutkin and M.A. Goleva distinguish “accidental” and “planned” transitions to large families, which are characterized, as a rule, by the third, maximum fourth births in a single marriage. In the first type, births are unexpected, in the second they are expected. Nevertheless, the logic of a balanced, responsible attitude to childbirth is common, which, however, is also presented as an argument in favor of stopping births (Pavlyutkin, Goleva, 2020). In addition,

³ RFBR Project 19-011-00644 “Generative behavior of Russian men in the conditions of demographic crisis: Volga and North-West districts of the Russian Federation” (comparative analysis, supervised by Doctor of Sciences (Sociology) Ch.I. Ildarkhanova). 40 in-depth interviews with men were conducted.

the “formal” type of transition stimulated by a new marriage to the birth of joint children in a new union, mentioned by the authors, can also be partly considered a conscious decision of parents in favor of increasing the number of children in the family.

Of course, the risks of poverty and social exclusion of large families remain. This is due to both objective reasons (high dependency burden) and stereotyping of the group. E.O. Smoleva identified the following strategies for large families to get out of social exclusion: some families constantly talk about their problems and ask for help from the state and public organizations, others avoid communication, and others actively solve their problems, unite (Smoleva, 2019). Estimates of the scale of the “active” part of large families vary from 10 to 40%, nevertheless, conscious large families in well-off families are far from rare, and it is very important to support this trend.

The third type of relations in the family is kinship which is associated with the nucleation of the family, primarily with intergenerational interaction.

According to the interregional study “Demographic Health of Russian Regions”, 22% of Russians have children living separately, and they help their parents in one form or another. The forms of help are most often of a non-financial nature (although such variants also happen and make up 21%). Children help with advice (56%), with household and dacha work (50%), take care during illness (33%), buy food and things, pay for housing (19, 14 and 10% respectively). Moreover, the last three positions are not necessarily carried out at the expense of children, it can be assistance in performing actions. Transfers from parents to children are more common, and advice (67%) and finances (66%) dominate in these flows. One third of parents help with groceries and in the upbringing of grandchildren, buy things, 20% pay for housing (Demographic development...). Consequently, functional ties between parental family and children’s family are preserved and play an important role in the lives of Russians.

The transition from a multigenerational family to a nuclear one led to a redistribution of the burden. In the three-generation family, the care of children lay mainly on the forebears, with the parents providing the family with material support. By the time of primogeniture, people had learned the experience of upbringing twice: when they themselves were the object of upbringing and when their children were raised by grandparents together with them. In the two-generation family model, parents have to combine material support for the family and child-rearing without full-scale support. This leads to a lack of resources, including time. According to various estimates, modern working parents have productive time for children from 6 minutes to 5 hours a day (Korolenko, Kalachikova, 2019). According to the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, children experience a deficit of communication with adults. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of Russians are convinced: the most important thing for a happy childhood is for parents to spend time with the child (76%)⁴. At the same time, there is also a problem of parents’ lack of competence in raising children. These circumstances, along with others, contribute to the spread of small children, in connection with which it is worth seriously considering the potential of parental labor, presented in the research of the team led by A.P. Bagirova (Bagirova et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The institution of family in modern Russia retains its leading position in the value field of people and continues to fulfill the functions of reproduction of human capital. The observed signs of devaluation of official marriage are caused by the loss of its exclusive right to intimacy and procreation, which is provoked, among other things, by the legitimization of cohabitation and extramarital births, which allowed to separate marriage and parenthood. In family-status relations there is a contradiction between patriarchal attitudes and egalitarian practices, the prospect of which is due to the

⁴ Responsible happiness holders: Patterns of behavior of modern parents. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/expertise/otvetstvennye-derzhatelyi-schastija-patterny-povedeniya-sovremennykh-roditelei>

greater stability of marital unions and men's readiness to realize them. In conjunction with the formalized demand for involved fatherhood, studies show the probability of increased fertility when an egalitarian family model is established (Ildarkhanova, 2021). Undoubtedly, the family is experiencing a crisis in terms of failure to fulfill its main function, the reproductive one. However, the social transformations to which the family was forced to adapt are evolutionary in a broad sense. The egalitarian model of the family, as well as the model with an agreed (contractual) clear division of functions between the spouses (where one takes care of the material support of the family, the other is the household and upbringing of children, and the choice of functions is based on expediency and benefit for the family, not on gender), is a variant of active strategies to ensure the well-being of families, especially families with many children.

In terms of recommendations, a very important direction of work is strengthening the social position of official marriage, which requires the development of socio-psychological support in the field of family relations with the parallel establishment of monitoring of the causes of divorce and family conflicts. The second direction is educational

and awareness-raising activities through the system of education, culture, civil society structures, with the active involvement of civil registry offices, which will gradually expand their functions in terms of educational and advisory activities.

Among the normative tools, it seems promising to change the divorce procedure to include pre-divorce counseling in the algorithm of providing this public service. Another tool for increasing the prestige of a legitimate union – official marriage should become a prerequisite for a couple's eligibility for family support programs.

Actualization of the potential of the multigenerational family is possible with the introduction of the concept of parenthood and parenthood. It is quite likely that at the first stages its testing on large families will be effective, which will improve the situation of this group and raise its prestige.

In the current circumstances, it seems very timely to intensify state family policy, including increased attention to the strengthening of traditional values and full support for the Russian family. Over the past five years, strategic steps have been taken to define the course of family and demographic policy, which are already yielding results.

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