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Moral values in family relations of youth in Arkhangelsk¹



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Abstract. The article presents the results of a sociological survey conducted in December 2014 — May 2015 in Arkhangelsk. The aim of the study was to make an image of the perfect marriage and analysis of the role

of moral values in family-marriage attitudes of contemporary youth in the Arkhangelsk. By using such methods as questionnaire survey, document analysis and expert interviews, data were obtained, largely duplicating the result of the survey conducted by FOM and important in predicting the change of the role of spirituality in family values of youth.

Keywords: *marriage, family, youth, morality, values, spirituality*



Introduction

Areas of the Arctic zone of Russia at the moment are the most promising in terms of the state. However, their development depends on the activity of socio-demographic behavior of young generations. The image of the "ideal young family" in the minds of both rural and urban residents determines the future of this region. Even in the recent past it was thought that every young person should be prepared and, most importantly, must be willing to become a father or mother. In today's world, we can see ambiguous picture: often frivolous attitude towards sexuality is formed in youth, their attitude toward marriage and children as a barrier to a successful career, which, in turn, is a benchmark of success. Someone may consider such attitude to the future immoral and selfish, but this way of thinking is not associated with the departure of the current youth from standard family values laid down by religion, and rooted in the minds of the older generation, but with the changes in the whole society (globalization, gender equality, economic situation).

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If we turn to the modern Russian society, and to the people of the Russian north in particular, it should be noted that young people tends to settle in life: to buy housing, to build a successful career, to ensure their old age. Marriage and children are now treated as "procreation" and "extra material costs." Our research is made on materials of Arkhangelsk, it is extremely important for the forecasting of demographic situation of the Arkhangelsk region and for the analysis of the changing role of moral values in family relations of youth.

Opinions of the reseachers of family and marriage

To draw a conclusion about changing family values, you must turn to the sources, and more specifically to the Bible. It contains the ideas of different positions of partners in marriage: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church ... But as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives to their husbands in everything." "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; And Adam was not deceived"[1].

At the same time, a husband should love and cherish his wife as Christ loves the Church. Due to such statements of the apostle Paul, we can conclude that in Christianity such basic family values, as patriarchy, mutual respect, trust and mutual support are found. With the course of time, all values undergo certain changes, and the same refers to family values. Then we should apply to the works of researchers to specify these metamorphoses.

Researchers argue for a long time already about the change of the family and marriage image. For example, an outstanding scientist, Sorokin P.A., considering the institution of the family, came to the conclusion that it is going through a serious crisis. [2] As a proof of the coming crisis of matrimony Sorokin Pitirim gives following facts: a decrease in the number of registered marriages, increase of divorces, decrease in the birth rate, increase of the number of illegitimate children, the weak protection of marriage by the state, prostitution growth and destruction of the religious foundations of marriage. Sorokin P.A. condemns those families which unwilling to have children, because children, in his opinion, are the foundation of marriage. The author thinks that one more reason in family crisis is the loss of intercommunication between parents and their children. The family stopped to make functions of educator, school, and guardian. Now all of these functions are performed by different organizations [3]. The result of his statements — the value of family lost its importance for the people, now free relationships and view about children as a burden are in vogue.

It is interesting, that Sorokin P.A. considered as marriage only relationships recognized by the state, that is officially registered. Thus, for example, a wedding in church he did not regard as marriage. This position is shared by most part of modern youth.

Golod S.I. compares women with the Jews. [4] Women are just as this nation which for a long time did not have any freedom, but then, having received it, were forced to very fastly prove their right to "otherness". Since the rules and laws were set by men, "ideal human beings", for women it was difficult to change anything here. But it was done with patient adoption by women of domestic violence and "one-sided" faithfulness in families. Since then the patriarchal family model was destroyed. Weakening of dependence of children from their parents and a wife from a husband suggests a new type of family. "Family Hearth" has now become a place where people can come to get everything they need, anything they could not get in rest social environment. Golod S.I. called such a family model as "conjugal" [4]. This family looks more like a family enterprise, whose agents profitably exchange by "social gifts", sometimes sacrifice by their well-being in favor of another family member, seek self-actualization. This represents a new model family. And this fact also proves the departure from traditional Christian family values.

All these arguments have contributed to carrying out sociological research to clarify the image of the perfect marriage for young people in Arkhangelsk.

Basic categories

It is important to consider the notion of "ideal" marriage. There is no clear generally accepted definition of marriage, so we shall consider a union of a man and a woman registered in Office of civil registrations, as a marriage. As for the "ideal" marriage, we shall regard it as marriage corresponding to ideal. Each person finds his marriage as ideal. And we with the use of the questionnaire have revealed averaged "ideal marriage" for the respondents.

Public Opinion Foundation, conducted a corresponding study, offers their version of the perfect family:

- ✚ Love, trust, mutual understanding.
- ✚ Two kids.
- ✚ Wife earns, if not more, then on the same level with her husband.
- ✚ Newly wedded couples live separately from their parents
- ✚ Both partners deal with upbringing of the children.
- ✚ Husband is older than wife in 4-5 years².

It is also necessary to define notion of "youth". Domestic social science currently often operates in boundaries 15 (16) — 29 (30) [5]. We consider the lower age limit of 18 years, because

² Fond «Obshchestvennoe mnenie». Obraz ideal'noj sem'i. URL: <http://fom.ru/Rabota-i-dom/11024> (accessed: 27 May 2016).

by this age the human body ends physiological and psychological sexual "maturation", and starting from this age young people in Russia can get married. Many authors offer to consider the upper limit of 29-30 years, due to the fact that by this age marriage socialization is ended, which is important for the topic of this work. We stopped at the boundary of 29 years.

Moral values reflect the world perception of a human being, his understanding about good and evil, justice, love and relationships between people. They are for sure connected with the spirituality. This concept is often correlated with such categories as warm-heartedness, religiosity. By spirituality, we understand such stage of development of the individual, in which the highest values (family, love, morality) become the main regulators of behavior and human life in general.

Expert interview

Five experts took part in expert interviews: specialist of office of civil registration, university professor (family sociology), professor of social sciences, practicing psychologist, head of the social policy of the municipality. They were asked questions, the answers to which were to illustrate an expert point of view on the crisis of the family, the causes of the crisis and image of the ideal marriage in general. All the experts agreed with the thesis about changing of family image in the minds of today's youth, but minority of them agreed that such changes could be called the crisis ones. The experts think that the main reason for marriage is love. Another reason is the symbolic aspect of the wedding, and the material factor plays here one of the last roles. This position illustrates the appeal to traditional family values.

Introduction of a penalty for a divorce, punishing the party responsible for divorce, the transformation of the church marriage in the official registration of relations, according to experts, are not needed to be realized. This view does not show indifference of the experts to spirituality and moral values. The modern way of life, though varies, but in legal terms, the system is working properly, and it is not necessary to change anything in it. "We have a system, no need to touch it. When the instrument is playing, why to tune it?", says one of the experts.

Questionnaire survey

Let's come over to the public opinion of young people about perfect marriage. Mainly the youth of Arkhangelsk was interviewed here. According to the Local Agency of Federal State Statistics Service of Arkhangelsk region, there are 60,782 of young people as per January 1, 2014³. Selection totality was calculated according to Paniotto V. table assuming 5% error. We will give

³ Territorial'nyi organ Federal'noi sluzhby gosudarstvennoi statistiki po Arkhangel'skoi oblasti. Ofitsi-al'naiia statistika. Naselenie. URL: http://arhangelskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/arhangelskstat/ru/statistics/population/ (accessed: 27 May 2016).

data on 406 young people questioned. We have defined the boundaries of age, which include young people, as 18-29 years. Single and married young people were interviewed. The received data were processed with the methods of descriptive statistics, making tables of contingency and factor analysis by means of IBM SPSS Statistics software. 52.5% of female respondents were interviewed, 47.5% of male.

The dependence of the preferred model of family relationships (the patriarchy, matriarchy or equality) from gender of respondents mainly clear: women (92%), and men (84%) were in favor of equal rights (Table 1.) It is noteworthy that matriarchy is not regarded as acceptable form of youth relations, and patriarchy, though less chosen, was more attractive for men. These results probably connected with reviving religiosity among young people.

Table 1

| Model of family | Indicate your gender, please | | Total |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Female | Male | |
| Patriarchy | 18 (8%) | 26 (16%) | 44 (11%) |
| Matriachy | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Equality | 195 (92%) | 167 (84%) | 362 (89%) |
| Total: | 213 (53%) | 193 (47%) | 406 (100%) |

Family obligations are considered by youth as following:

1. Bringing up children, household responsibilities, moral support are duties of women.
2. Bringing up children and earning money are men's obligations.
3. Together married couples should coordinate family budget, raise children and keep psychological family climate.

This allocation of responsibilities, without a doubt, can be described as traditional. A woman — keeper of the hearth, a man — earner. The idea of these roles, transmitted from generation to generation, at the moment remains unchanged. It is noteworthy that bringing up children is considered as a duty of husbands and wives. Preferrable number of children for the youth — "2 maximum" and "3 and more", the last is most common for older age. Thus, the arguments of the society that young people do not want to have many kids, are wrong.

Continuing the topic of the allocation of family obligations, it is necessary to find out who should have greater earnings. None of the respondents said that a wife should earn more (Table 2). In other cases, men and women shared the same opinion: a man must have wages higher than his wife or it does not matter who will provide money to support the family. These responses once again prove the desire of modern youth to have equal rights not only in interpersonal relationships, but also in the material sphere.

Table 2

Preferences of the respondents regarding the income of spouses

| Whose income must be higher? | Indicate your gender, please | | Total |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Female | Male | |
| Husband's | 97 (46%) | 78 (40%) | 175 (43%) |
| Wife's | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Equal | 28 (13%) | 27 (14%) | 55 (14%) |
| It does not matter | 88 (41%) | 88 (46%) | 176 (43%) |
| Total: | 213 (53%) | 193 (47%) | 406 (100%) |

Love remains the main reason for marriage (Table 3). Respondents do not consider sufficient basis for marriage either improvement in the material conditions or pregnancy, or the desire of parents. Only the relations, based on love, can lead to marriage and become the foundation for a happy family. Such distribution of the respondents' answers can be considered as illustration to the above mentioned Bible description of the perfect relationship between husband and wife. Thereby the ideal age for women and men to get married is 21-25 and 26-30, respectively.

Table 3

Reason to get married

| Ideally, marriage is result of... | Indicate your gender, please | | Total: |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Female | Male | |
| love | 207 (97%) | 182 (94%) | 389 (96%) |
| material inability | 6 (3%) | 0 (0%) | 6 (1%) |
| Parents' wish | 0 (0%) | 11 (6%) | 11 (3%) |
| Total: | 213 (53%) | 193 (47%) | 406 (100%) |

Now we come over to clarify the main reasons for divorce, according to the opinion of the youth. Life and daily routine may not be convincing reason for divorce. While cheating is considered to be a valid reason for applying for a divorce in the majority of cases. Also young people do not accept alcoholism and drug abuse in family life. Serious illness, inability to have children, financial problems in the family and the lack of intimacy are not the reasons for divorce, according to the opinion of the youth of Arkhangelsk. Thus, it is possible to confirm that the respondents are loyal to the "drawbacks" of their partners and ready to come to terms with them. Excluding alcoholism and drug addiction.

Moral values are important for family life, but they do not always come from religiosity of youth. So, young people answered the question about the necessity of church marriage in such a way: church wedding was necessary for the 14% of respondents, whereas for half of the respondents such a union does not matter, and only 23% are categorically against of such a union (Table 4). Also, the church is not an institution, which modern family would rely on. The majority of respondents do not need church support, or find it difficult to answer. consequently, the church

does not take a dominant role in the family and marriage relationships of the youth, but to a certain extent able to influence on them.

Table 4

Opinion of the respondents about church marriage

| | |
|---|------------|
| Is it necessary to register marriage in church? | Total |
| Yes | 56 (14%) |
| No | 93 (23%) |
| It does not matter | 257 (63%) |
| Total: | 406 (100%) |

For the analysis of perfect spouse image, namely to reduce the number of variables, factor analysis should be applied. So, after all the calculations, variables relating to each of the factors were defined.

- ✚ The first factor includes all the variables, meaning humanity, sensuality ("selflessness").
- ✚ The second factor includes the spouse qualities related to the professional sphere ("professional capital").
- ✚ The third factor combines domesticity and appearance, which are formed in the parental family ("Dowry").

The main factor is the "selflessness", which means applying of young people to moral values, setting for the first place of sensual intimacy with a partner (the coincidence of the characters, attitudes to life), a sense of caring from a spouse. This conclusion again confirms the thesis of the dominance of the romantic feelings while choosing a partner for marriage and referring to spirituality.

Now we can summarize the analysis of public opinion of Arkhangelsk youth about perfect marriage.

1. For young people equality is the preferred model of forming relationships in the family, while matriarchy is absolutely not in their minds.
2. Young people think that bringing up children, household responsibilities, moral support are women's obligations. Men's obligations are to earn money and to bring up children. Together married couples should coordinate family budget, raise children and keep psychological family climate.
3. Mutual understanding, mutual love and trust are key factors for perfect marriage. Perfect marriage is not based on a material values, but and on the intimacy and harmony between spouses.
4. In young people environment while choosing a spouse, pursuit to spiritual closeness and true love dominate, which are the only valid reasons for marriage.

Conclusion

The aim of our work was to make the image of the perfect marriage in the minds of the youth of Arkhangelsk. So, perfect marriage is equality; adequate (approximate to the traditional) distribution of responsibilities in the family; the possibility of self-development for both spouses; 2-3 children. This image quite corresponds to the image of the all-Russian poll "Public Opinion"

Fund, which means that Arkhangelsk has no significant deviations from the Russian society on the issue as a whole.

The received data allowed to judge about growing role of spirituality and moral values in the youth environment, particularly in the area of family relations. Loyal attitude to patriarchy, the importance of harmony, mutual respect and mutual responsibility in relationships, traditional distribution of family obligations between husband and wife play a special role in making of perfect relationships.

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