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TRANSFORMATION OF THE MARRIAGE MARKET IN THE NORTHERN REGION: FEMALE VIEWS

Anastasia Barashkova (a)*, Svetlana Sukneva (b), Yulia Potanina (c), Oksana Tarasova-Sivtseva (d)

*Corresponding author

(a) Scientific-Research Institute of Regional Economy of the North, North-Eastern Federal University,
1, Lenin Prospect, Yakutsk, Russia, asbarashkova52@mail.ru, 8-924-660-40-07

(b) Scientific-Research Institute of Regional Economy of the North, North-Eastern Federal University,
1, Lenin Prospect, Yakutsk, Russia, sa.sukneva@s-vfu.ru, 8-924-660-46-27

(c) Moscow State University n.a. M.V. Lomonosov, 1, Leninskiye Gory, Moscow, Russia
yu_potanina@mail.ru, 8-916-748-94-02

(d) Scientific-Research Institute of Regional Economy of the North, North-Eastern Federal University,
1, Lenin Prospect, Yakutsk, Russia, toksana19@mail.ru, 8-914-107-29-33

Abstract

The article describes directions of transformation of the marital status of the population of Yakutia which indicate a decrease in the importance of marriage. The purpose of the study is to describe directions of transformation of the marriage behavior of the population of Yakutia and present views of the female community on the causes of celibacy. The key factor in the demographic disadvantage of the region is celibacy of the population. The results of focused group interviews which revealed causes of the celibacy are presented. Both objective and subjective circumstances of non-marriage were revealed. Behavior of potential marriage partners is subject to environmental factors. Freedom of the individual is in line with life positions of men who do not want to lose real or imaginary independence. Therefore, they choose alternative forms of marriage or abandon the idea of marriage. Each focus group argued that values had changed. Career, financial well-being and material security are more important than family and marriage. Boundaries of the marriage circle remain unshakable especially in small rural settlements. Female assessment of the image of men is very critical, and the requirements of modern women for potential fiancés, fathers of their future children are very high. The traditional model of demographic behavior of women (birth of a child in marriage) has changed. There is a very tolerant attitude of public opinion to these changes. Celibacy is an attempt to assimilate new life strategies, behavior patterns in an era of profound changes in the usual socio-economic environment

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Keywords: Marriage market, celibacy, focus group, northern region.



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1. Introduction

The need for studying the issues of family demographic development is due to the fact that changes in the family structure determine the demographic situation and efficiency of the National Project “Demography” (Putin, 2018). In the open information space, even relative isolation of the region is not an obstacle for penetration of globalistic demographic processes, liberal views on marriage and family (Isaaks, 1981). Within the second demographic transition (Van de Kaa, 2001; Caldwell, 2008; Lesthaeghe, 2010; Antonov, 2016), this impact concerns the matrimonial and reproductive behavior of the population. Transformation of the nature of marriage designed to ensure reproduction of the population, distorted perception of the concept of freedom, spread of the consumer approach eliminated the need for marital relations (Tribe, 1992; Mitrikas, 2004; Sinelnikov, 2018). Marriage is rejected. Benefits of other forms of marriage (e.g., guest marriage) are justified (Levin, 2004; Egorova, 2016). The stability of existing marriages weakens from generation to generation (Zakharov & Churilova, 2013; Popova & Barashkova, 2014; Novoselova, 2016); the number of extramarital births is growing (Plotnick, 1993; Hartmann, 1995; Martin & Thery, 2001; Popova, 2007; Churilova, 2018). All of the above is a basis for transformations in the human value system (Varlamova, Noskova, & Sedova, 2006; Lapin, 2010; Arkhangelsk, 2013; Mareeva, 2013; Dobrohleb & Zvereva, 2016; Sukneva & Barashkova, 2016).

2. Problem Statement

The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), along with the republics of the North Caucasus, retained the status of a region of traditional large families with a steady high birth rate. However, the spread of small-sized and incomplete families indicates adverse trends in the family structure of the population related to disparities in the marriage market. The share of men who have never been married increased from 24.0% in 1989 to 30.3% in 2010, and the share of women in this category increased from 16.6 to 24.0%. On the contrary, the share of married men and women decreased from 68.3 to 59.8% and from 66.8 to 53.7%, respectively.

An increase in the number of incomplete families is a high level of celibacy. For a long time, this problem has been relevant for both men and women. This is evidenced by the calculation of the total marital status index. Comparison of population censuses of 1989 and 2010 show that probability of marriage for 30-34-year-old men in the conditional generation of sons (2010) is much higher than probability of marriage for their conditional fathers (1989). This situation is typical of all potential husbands. For potential brides, probability to find marriage partners for the generation of daughters have significantly decreased compared with the generation of mothers. Thus, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the marriage behavior is based on the European patterns.

3. Research Questions

Under the pressure of environmental factors, new barriers (e.g., competition) will arise. Borders of the “marriage circle” are expanding or narrowing. What qualities must potential marriage partners have in order to implement their matrimonial plans? Does the population consciously abandon the idea of marriage,

or are there any objective and subjective obstacles for getting married? What does society think of bachelors and single women?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe directions of transformation of the marriage behavior of the population of Yakutia and present views of the female community on the causes of celibacy.

5. Research Methods

To know the world of potential marriage partners, it is necessary to plunge into the environment where they live. To understand feelings of women and men who are ready to create families, qualitative research methods were used.

The analysis of dominant opinions of the female community on the issue of celibacy is based on the results of group focused interviews (a focus group method). This method is a group discussion of the attitudes towards the phenomenon under study. Participants who are not familiar with each other express their points of view. The result is a wide range of opinions.

The field study was carried out twice. In 2017, the focus was on rural settlements of Olekminsky, Churapchinsky, Megino-Kangalassky districts. In 2018, in addition to rural areas (Namsky, Amginsky), the survey covered residents of Yakutsk. The cameral study was carried out at the end of each travel. There were 24 focus groups in ten settlements. The target groups were women from small, large and young families. The selection criteria for the in-depth survey were age, marital status, and the number of children.

6. Findings

The fragments which give answers to the research questions can be selected.

The urban focus groups argued that liberal views on marriage and family are widespread. Official marriages are not popular.

"Civil marriage are popular now." A modern woman does not get married deliberately. "It is more convenient for her to live alone, and not to waste her precious health and time on a spineless person dissatisfied with himself and the whole environment. "Even if she has a child" "I can raise a child myself!" Career and financial well-being are more important than family and marriage. Participants expressed concern about the material aspect. "Of course, everything is very expensive, not affordable. You need to have a job, an apartment."

Each focus group said that values had changed. Previously, the girl had to get married, have children, care about her family. "Modern girls have wider horizons." Potential grooms and brides "love freedom." Older participants emphasized the lack of a desire to depend on someone. "Everyone has their own needs, the youth is completely different." "The main things is imaginary or real independence." One of the obstacles for having a family is the Internet!"

Boys and girls do not want to take responsibility, are afraid of having children. The discussion on the choice of a partner emphasized moral aspects. There might be good men, but they are married. It is bad to destroy someone's family. Our young people are immature.

The survey participants were almost unanimous in their opinion that rejection to register marriages is a conscious step of young women. "Marriage is less important than education, a car, career. It is not comfortable." Each focus group said that the requirements for partners are becoming stricter. Modern parents participate in choosing partners.

The opinion of a young mother is very remarkable: "women are searching for a prince, while men – for young girls." The prince is an ideal of Turgenev heroines. In reality, men are less educated, abuse alcohol. They are not adapted to the modern environment, immature. How can I rely on a super-cured single son?" These answers were given by the urban urban focus groups. A young man who has grown up in greenhouse conditions is helpless."

"They are like narcissuses." The rural focus groups said that there are more and more effeminate men and masculine women. "These independent girls are a problem for young men. They have completely different plans, and the young men cannot satisfy their needs."

The discussion concerned the problems of prosperous families or the daily routine of married women having children (who is looking after the child? Men are). Women work hard. Does she need such a husband? One divorced woman said: to live alone it is like central heating, you do not need firewood". In the wooden houses of Yakutia, the heating season lasts for 7-9 months.

Our participants assess behavior of married men: why should a man think about it? Let a woman think, but for him life is "a game and he should have time to play different roles." He shows that "he is a holiday".

Women became more independent, resolute. They gave examples from the lives of their mothers and grandmothers. "In the Soviet ear, our grandmothers suffered from humiliation, treason, drunkenness of their husbands." It was shameful to get divorced, only the woman was guilty. Everybody had different situations, "they endured, gave birth to a lot of children". For the society, it was a prosperous family. "Now, the values are different. The society has changed. Modern women will not tolerate humiliation, beatings, insults."

The troubled market period caused "social stratification of people, families." The woman is so busy that she had no time to educate children.

"Closeness" of the marriage circle, typical of Yakutia, was discussed. The region has a large area, a complex transport network. Closeness of the marriage market is due to the lack of lines of communication. And this is in the ear of the Internet. It is difficult to implement matrimonial attitudes of young people from low-income families. In some of the most remote rural settlements of Yakutia, over 40% of men of marriageable age have never got married.

7. Conclusion

In general, discussions were relaxed; the participants talked about their personal experience. They expressed their opinions, defended their points of view. The survey revealed a tolerant attitude of society towards celibacy, even in small rural settlements. There were slightly different views of the representatives of the older and younger generation. Older participants paid more attention to the environmental changes under the influence of global changes. Younger women paid attention to personal characteristics of potential partners. There were no differences in the assessments of urban and rural participants. One can

conclude that society considers celibacy as a new life strategy, a new behavior pattern. This transformation is due to fundamental changes in the socio-economic environment.

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Corresponding Author: Anastasia Barashkova

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