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**FAMILY IMAGE AND SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS TO
PROMOTE IT IN PERCEPTION OF YOUNG**

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Abstract

The paper is concerned with the analysis of the image of family as it is perceived by the modern young through a series of image-making factors. The relevance of the issue under study is due to the decline in family awareness amongst the youth, expressed in the rejection of marriage, the increase in the number of divorces and alternative forms of marriage. It assumes that the attitude towards marriage is conditioned by the image of the family. The empirical research attempts to reconstruct the image of the family and to articulate the key parameters for analysis. The important parameters for creating the image of family are identified to be the prospects that open up with the family, parenthood opportunities, responsibility and mutual obligations of spouses. Gender, age and ethno-cultural affiliation influence the formation of family image. In terms of gender, significant differences are determined in parameters of reliability of partnerships and the legal protection of family. Through the lens of age, differences are determined in the significance of social assessments and the status that the family provides for its members. Cross-cultural differences are manifested in the high importance of social assessments, and in the fact that the family is associated with the birth of children. It is established that the image of the family as perceived by the modern youth congruently reflects social functions and tasks of the family. The author suggests that the willingness of young people to assume commitment to the family is being transformed today.

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1. Introduction

The culture of society and its traditions are constantly evolving, so the subject of family as its main cell always retains its importance. In domestic science, the idea is widespread that as a result of socio-economic transformations taking place in modern society, the family institution is in crisis, the value of the family and family lifestyle in the perception of youth is declined. In this regard, particular importance is attached to the process of cultural transformations, during which traditional views of the family, its structure, ideas of gender and role models of a conjugal paradigm, distribution of functions and tasks, etc., are often destroyed. The overestimation of the value of the family is manifested to a greater extent in the consciousness of young adults. These disappointing conclusions are supported by Roskomstat data: the percentage of marriages per capita has decreased, the percentage of divorces has increased, the number of children in marriage has decreased, the cases of deliberate refusal to start a family and the birth of children have increased, and the share of non-conventional families has increased (Roskomstat, 2018).

The urgency of the family issue is attributed to the need to come up with new value orientations and basis of subsistence.

2. Problem Statement

In modern scientific literature there are many interpretations of the concept of family. Their content in a generalized form represents a family as a group of people related by consanguinity (by recognized birth, relations by blood) or affinity (by marriage), whose members lead a common life and have mutual moral obligations to each other.

Various aspects of family life have been addressed in the studies of a wide range of scientists. They studied the history of a family to be born as a social entity (Bachofen, 2018; Morgan & White, 1993; Sorokin, 1997; Zider, 1997; Druzhinin, 2008), its transformations in the context of socio-economic growth of society (Marx & Engels, 1998). They proposed the ontology of various functions of the family (Murdoch, 2003; Golod, 1998), depicted the place and role of the family in the socialization of a person as a member of society (Erickson, 2000; Mead, 1988; Cohn, 2003), considered the structure, types and forms of families through a cross-cultural approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Antonov & Medkov, 2007), and reported the family within a transforming society (Artyukhov, 1998; Kartseva, 2003). These works formed the methodological basis for the present study.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study is the reflective embodiment of family structure, its functions and tasks, the role in human life as perceived by the modern youth.

As a working hypothesis, it was suggested that such characteristics as gender, age, individual experience, personal maturity, ethnic culture, etc., influence the formation of the family image in the consciousness of an agent. The image of family formed under the influence of various social and psychological factors specifies conjugal attitudes of young people.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study towards the image of the family and the socio-psychological factors that play a crucial role in its formation was aimed at providing the rationale for the programs geared to train and adapt young people to marriage and family life.

5. Research Methods

The program of empirical research included two stages: the stage of qualitative and quantitative studies.

The first stage was aimed at reconstructing the image of the family in the views of young people and to establish the main parameters for its conveyance. This stage included focus groups, structured interviews, conversations, and self-report protocols, which were subsequently processed through the content analysis. This method enabled to distinguish the main categories by whose means the image of the family is represented in the minds of young people and to give their informative characteristics.

The objectives of the second stage were aimed at identifying the prevalence of certain ideas of the family in different social and ethnic groups of young people inhabiting the Crimea. At this stage, mass survey questionnaires designed to rely on qualitative data were used.

6. Findings

At the stage of qualitative study towards the image of the family, the following areas of analysis were identified: a normative family as it used to be in the past; a real family in culture as the way it looks like now; an ideal family, the most desired and expected characteristics of the family (orientation towards the future). Resulting from the content analysis of focus groups protocols, 14 categories describing the family were singled out. These categories were grouped into clusters of positive and negative traits of the family image.

The positive features characterized the attractive aspects of family life through the reflective embodiment of the respondents.

The prospects ensured by the family for an agent

Family offers a huge potential for the future.

Family ensures confidence in a stable future.

Legal security to spouses

Marital relations are protected by law. No one can give you the heave-ho.

There is a document to certify marriage and there is a husband (wife).

Economic security

A single family budget helps spouses survive together.

A husband and his wife are the first devisees in tail.

Marital property is divided between spouses in half in the event of a divorce.

The possibility to give a birth and raise children

There are more opportunities to give a birth and raise children.

In marriage, a spouse's attitude to parenthood is more often positive.

Children born in the family are socially and legally protected.

Psychological security

It is possible to love someone and take care of someone.

There is accountability to each other, responsibility of spouses for each other and for their family.

In the family there are no separate concepts "I" and "you". They are substituted with one common "we".

Most problems are solved together.

This is a completely different step in the relationship. There is a sense of trust and intimacy.

Guarantees for reliability and stability of relationships

Family is a duty-bearer for substantive, long-term relationships.

There is an inner sense that everything is serious and stable.

Less likeliness of adultery.

Reflexive embodiment of a societal attitude to marriages

Marriage gets more approval in society rather than non-marital relationships.

A woman registered as a single mother is often condemned in society.

The negative traits of the family reflected the rationale behind the young people's decision to avoid marriage.

A load of responsibility

A load of responsibility for the family is too big.

Routine, oppressing drift through a day-to-day existence

Monotonous and dull family life

A freedom-constrained environment

A spouse will eventually start bothering, but it's difficult just to leave.

There is no discretion.

Anxiety to get disappointed

Passport endorsement does not make you safe.

A spouse will commit adultery in any case.

Formal difficulties in terminating marital relations

If a spouse is unhappy in marriage, it is more difficult to break off the relationship.

If spouses getting divorced do not come to a single agreement pertaining to the partition of marital property, divorce settlement can take several years.

Upon divorce it is obligatory to pay alimony.

Psychological difficulties in the event of divorce

Under just the wrong set of conditions, there are a lot of scandals and mudslinging at each other.

Self-sufficiency blackout

A husband or his wife are entitled to dispose of marital property solely with the consent of a spouse.

The budget needs to be planned together.

To provide for a family is a luxury.

The questionnaire designed in the light of the categories obtained was built on the principle of semantic differential. Each parameter represented a bipolar scale, with one of the poles to describe the positive features of the image of the family against this parameter, and the other – negative. For example, the parameter “The prospects ensured by the family for an agent” contained two poles, namely: “Family offers a huge potential for the future” and “Family is the quick sands that can swallow up all prospects”, which became detectors conducive to reveal the attitude to the future of family life. Table 1 below presents the results of the distribution of the identified detectors in the sample under study. In order to reveal the most significant elements of the family image, the detectors were ranked according to the received points. Ranking positions reflect the significance of one or another characteristic in the framework of the image of the family. As can be seen from the table, the first ranking positions in the resulting hierarchy were occupied by the categories to describe the prospects that the family ensures in the face of parenthood. Next are the categories that reveal the family implication, as an economic aid in solving the major task – the provision of education for children. It is noteworthy that assessments of economic appeal of family life are closely related to legal ones. Based on the statements, a significant advantage of the family is its official status, approved by the society and secured by the State in regulations. This status appears in the ideas of young people as a guarantee that the provision of economic support for the family and the protection of its members will continue even if a family falls apart.

Table 01. Rank distribution of characteristics in the framework of family image

N		\bar{x} at min – 0, max – 3	Deviation, σ^2
1	The future is planned jointly	2.44	0.83
2	Children use father’s name	2.4	1.06
3	Marriage ensures future prospect, new opportunities	2.31	0.85
4	Children born in the family are socially protected	2.28	1.02
5	It is easier to raise children in the family	2.22	1.04
6	Families are budget-friendly; everyone in a family works to contribute to a “pool account”	2.1	1.03
7	A husband and his wife are the first devisees in tail	2.00	1.04
8	A positive spouse’s attitude to parenthood	1.94	1.18
9	In the event of divorce marital property is evenly partitioned between spouses	1.93	1.09
10	Marital relations are protected by the marriage act	1.92	1.01
11	It is advantageous that spouses are entitled to dispose of marital property solely with the consent of each other	1.87	1.05
12	It is advantageous that upon divorce alimony shall be paid	1.66	1.14
13	Family is a duty-bearer for substantive, long-term relationship	1.5	1.25
14	There is nothing wrong with being a single mother	1.06	1.19
15	Being a single mother is indecent	0.96	1.15
16	A document to certify marriage still does not give any guarantees that you really have a husband (wife)	0.89	1.28

17	Passport endorsement does not guarantee a stable, long-term relationship	0.81	1.19
18	Intention to have a baby has nothing to do with passport endorsement	0.69	1.2
19	Divorce settlement can take several years due to property partitioning	0.33	0.85
20	It is disadvantageous that upon divorce alimony shall be paid	0.32	0.77
21	It does not matter whose surname children use	0.28	0.82
22	Marriage does not guarantee social invulnerability for children	0.28	0.84
23	Marriage prevents people from functioning in a normal way	0.25	0.71
24	It is a luxury to provide for a family	0.25	0.74
25	It is disadvantageous that spouses are entitled to dispose of marital property solely with the consent of each	0.24	0.65
26	With good organization, children can be brought up well outside the family	0.15	0.61
27	The family as such is now relegated to the background with alternative forms of marriage to gain popularity	0.15	0.52
28	Family is the quick sands that can swallow up all prospects	0.11	0.49
29	Restricted opportunities to plan budget on one's own	0.10	0.51

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the perception of the functions and tasks of the family have not changed much from previous years. With the family, as before, the function of reproduction, the function of socio-economic support, status-role function, etc. are linked. The willingness of young people to assume commitment to the family and related social tasks is changing. This conclusion is confirmed by the answers of respondents to the questions “Are you ready for marriage?” and “What determines readiness for marriage?” More than 42% of young men and 28% of girls between the ages of 20 and 25 answered that they were not ready for marriage. According to the respondents, young people are ready for marriage as soon as they graduate and acquire a speciality, get a job or a steady income, become self-sufficient, obtain material basis (housing, car, bank account), etc. Girls associate readiness for marriage with psychological maturity and graduation.

Based on the findings, a conscious rejection of the family is associated not so much with the infantilism of young people, which is discussed much today, but with the increased standards of living and the fear of young people who cannot cope with these standards. Social responsibility is demonstrated in the fact that almost all the participants in focus-groups unanimously attributed traditional marriage to parenthood and described civil marriage as trial or frivolous. This conclusion is confirmed by the survey feedback. Less than half of the respondents agreed that having children outside of marriage is natural: “I can see nothing reprehensible in being a single mother” (38.2%). Interestingly, there are almost no differences in the responses by gender (Table 2).

Table 02. Distribution of opinions of young people as per the status of a single mother

I can see nothing reprehensible in being a single mother					
Degree of agreement with a statement		Gender		Total %	
		M	W		
No	0	46.8	49.5	48.6	65.3
Very unlikely	1	14.9	17.5	16.7	
Very likely	2	21.3	12.4	15.3	

Yes	3	17.0	20.6	19.4	
Total		100%	100%	100%	

It is curious that, while talking about the advantages of the traditional family as opposed to its other forms (civil marriage, single-parent family), a significant part of the respondents simultaneously emphasized that the family does not guarantee social protection for children and the spouses themselves. This is evidenced by such statements as “The document to certify marriage still does not give any guarantees that you really have a husband (wife)” – 38% and “A registered marriage does not guarantee that children born in family are socially invulnerable” – 41%. These results can be explained by the fact that there is an ideal family (ideas of how it should be), a normative family (as prescribed by society) and a real one (as it really is). In other words, the hope for the family to provide legal and economic protection rests on the stereotype generated by the normative and ideal family, and the correction of these expectations is conditioned by the image of the real family.

In order to find out what psychological meaning the family has for young people, the respondents were asked the question “Why does a person need a family, what is its meaning?” The answers were distributed as follows (Fig. 01).

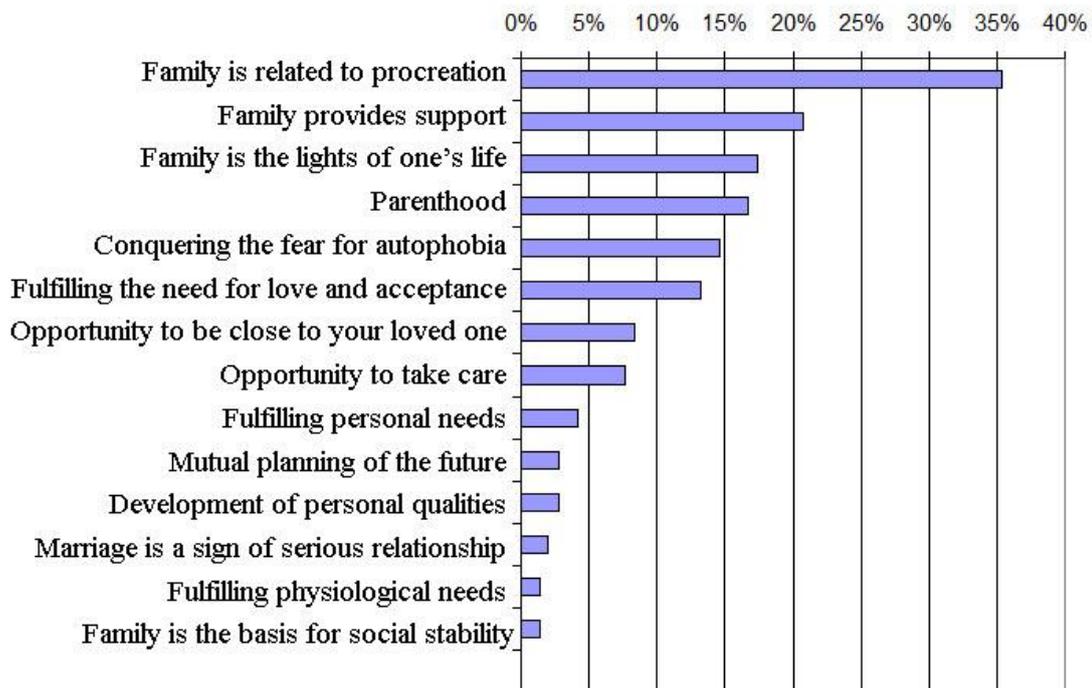


Figure 01. Distribution of responses as per the meaning of family

The graph shows that at the top of the list of family priorities are such values as procreation and an echoing value of parenthood. The first value reflects the continuity of kinship, the connection of generations, the second is associated with parental instinct. The next most important is the value of prop and stay of the home ensured by the family. Next to it is such an alternative as “conquering the fear for autophobia.” That is, the family is for young people a means of psychological protection from loneliness and a mechanism for fulfilling the need for acceptance

and love. A comparative analysis of family image in terms of gender showed significant differences in averages (\bar{x}) at the $p < 0.01$ level according to the indicators shown in Fig. 02.

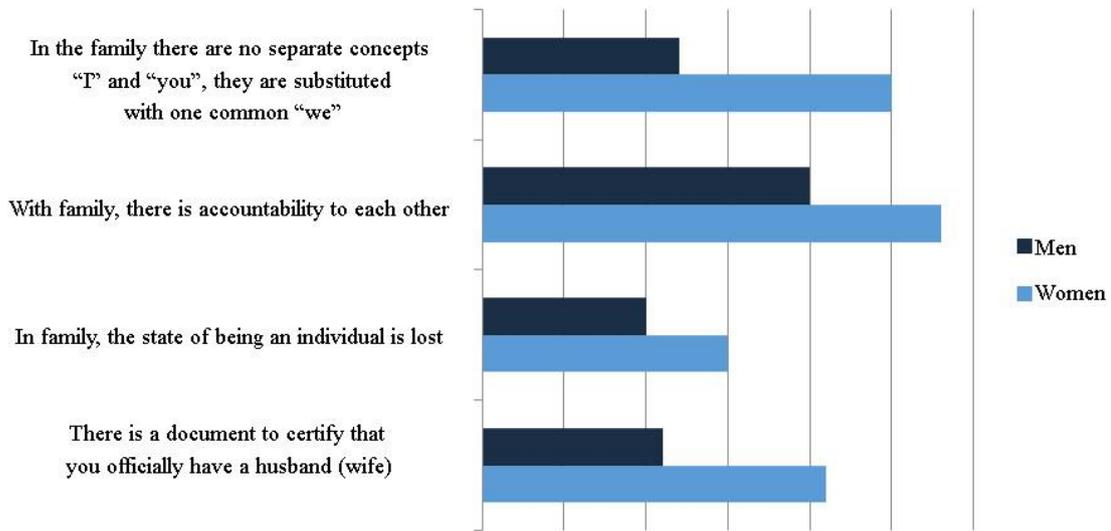


Figure 02. Gender differences in the severity of family image attributes

Based on the analysis of these differences, women experience more loss of individuality in the event of family creation. For them, the presence of legal guarantees is also more significant. This is fully consistent with the role and responsibilities that traditional culture imposes on women.

A comparative analysis of the materials obtained in cross-cultural context was carried out between two ethnic groups living in the Crimea: Russians and Crimean Tatars (Fig. 03). Here, significant differences are distinguished upon the following indicators:

- 1) Family is a duty-bearer for substantive, long-term relationship семья.
- 2) Family provides the opportunity of parenthood.
- 3) I can see nothing reprehensible in being a single mother.

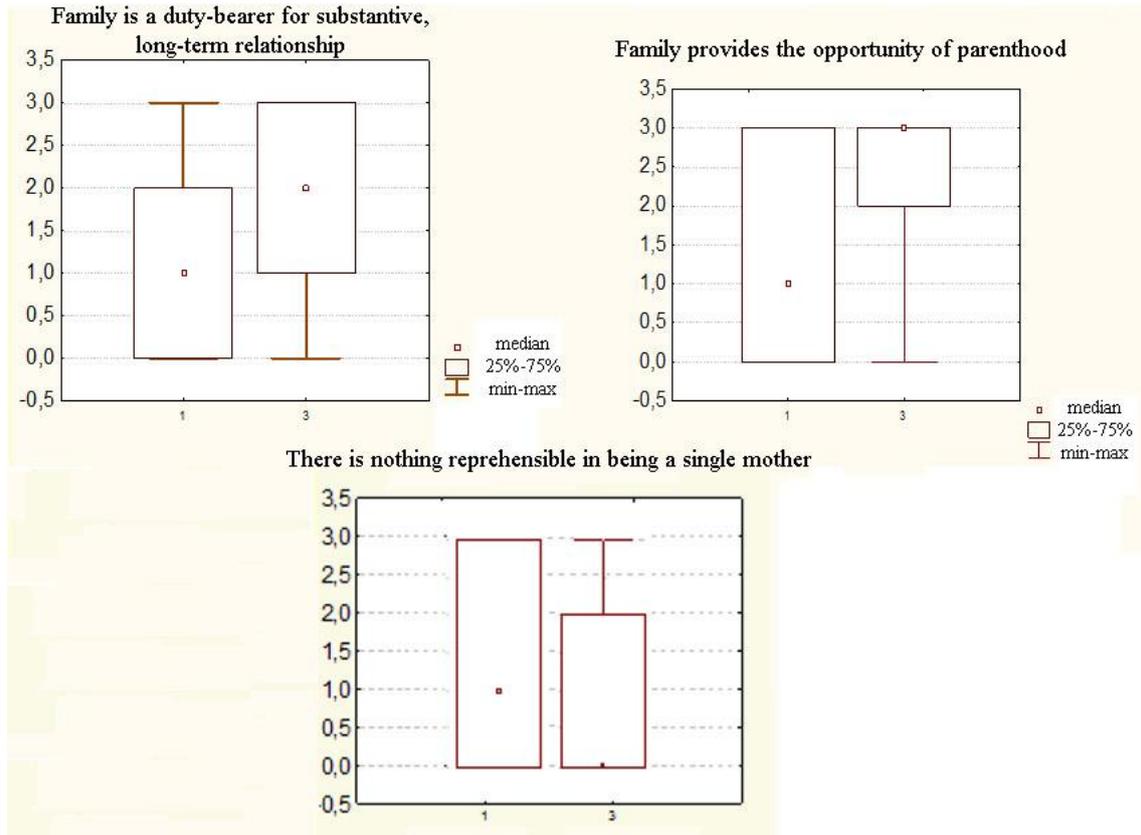


Figure 03. Comparative characteristics of family image

The respondents' answers clearly show cultural attitudes to the family. Thus, in the Russian group, in which urbanization processes are more pronounced, such statements as “passport endorsement does not guarantee a stable, long-term relationship,” “it often happens that a partner does not want to have children or postpone parenthood”, “I see nothing wrong with being a single mother” are more significant. In the Crimean Tatar group that preserves the traditions of patriarchal family, the statements “family provides the opportunity of parenthood”, “family is a duty-bearer for substantive, long-term relationship” and “having children outside of marriage is reprehensible” are more significant. This distribution reflects the traditional views on the family and the resulting socially-approved behavior.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, reflexive awareness of the image of the family as perceived by the modern youth congruently reflects social functions and tasks of the family. It is the willingness of young people to assume commitment to the family that is being transformed.

A conscious rejection of the family or marriage delay are conditioned by the fact that young people do not have sufficient resources to ensure high standards of living for the family or do not wish to assume responsibility.

Significant parameters for creating the image of family are the prospects that open up with the family; parenthood opportunities; responsibility and mutual obligations of spouses; the attitude of society to the family; economic and legal protection of the family and social relationships between its members; reliability partnerships; psychological support and protection provided by the family; personal development space.

Gender affiliation, age, previous individual experience, ethnic culture, its social norms and attitudes have a significant impact on the formation of family image and attitude towards marriage.

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