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TRENDS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF MARRIAGE IN RUSSIA

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Abstract

Social transformations led to a crisis of marriage and family relations, manifested in the destruction of the moral foundations of the family as well as loss of vital family and marriage values. The mentioned trends are the reasons for decline in Russian population. The tendencies of the marriage of modern Russia are manifested in the increase in the number of unregistered marriages, the mass marriage refusal, and the change in boundaries of a marriage age. The paper presents the results of a survey of residents of the Urals Federal District, reflecting the depreciation of family and marriage values. The value of "family well-being" retains the leading position in the hierarchy of values of respondents. But the value of the traditional marriage form, registered by the state, lost its institutional role. The authors concluded the need to revive the value of the registered marriage, which is the basis for the creation of a family and the birth of children. They pointed out the need to strengthen the state influence on the process of formation of value orientations of the family and the individual. The authors noted the existence of at least two theories about the prospects of the institution of marriage. According to the first one, the relationship between the sexes will change in accordance with the social transformations; therefore, the model of marriage will undergo further changes. The second theory takes into account the property relations and rights of spouses and children. It indicates the long-term nature of registered marriage.

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1. Introduction

The demographic crisis that befell Russia at the turn of the century poses a difficult task for sociologists to find ways to influence the process of population reproduction. The situation is worsened by the fact that the current demographic situation in the country is due, on the one hand, to the inevitable evolutionary changes that involve the replacement of types of reproduction, and, on the other hand, to cardinal social and economic as well as political transformations. The change in the administrative and controlled system of governing the country to a democratic one inevitably implies the replacement of the paradigm for managing the processes of population reproduction (Khairullina, 2010; Savinov, Kasymova, 2011; Osipova, 2014; Sinitsa, 2017).

The demographic crisis in Russia, unlike the developed countries of the West, is manifested in a decline in the birth rate against the background of a continuing high mortality rate. If the indicated trends continue, the population of Russia will decrease to a critical level by 2050 to 111.7 million people, according to the UN forecasts (Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects*, 2005). This threatens to increase the migration flows necessary to ensure the normal functioning of the main social and economic institutions (Castles, Miller, 1993), which in turn will lead to increased social tension, national conflicts, and the loss of the national identity of the Russian population (Deleva, 2010).

1.1. Deformation of the value of marriage

Marriage is one of the processes that affect the reproduction of the population. In recent decades, the retrogression in the institution of marital relations has been experienced in Russia (Sofronova, 2010; Antonov, 2015; Khairullina, 2015). This is due to the change in spiritual and moral values and public morality. If earlier the family as a cell of society was controlled by the church, state and society, such control is minimized today. Young people become self-centered. Achievements, success and professional growth become the highest value. (Ustinova, 2014). Thus, the results of studies conducted in 2012 by O. Ustinova, and A. Artyukhov showed that "marriage" occupies positions at the end of the rating and is inferior to career, material well-being and other values in the values system of residents of the Urals Federal District (Ustinova, Artyukhov, 2012).

Marriage is the process of the formation of married couples in the human population. In demographic analysis, it is usually considered in relation to the generation (real or hypothetical one). It is also a sequence of demographic processes and of the registration of marriage in a certain community of people who are not married but can marry, e.g. have reached the minimum marriageable age, established by law or custom.

1.2. Statistics of marriage in Russia

In the second half of the nineteenth century, marriage took place in Russia immediately after the beginning of the socially recognized majority age, which was for the young woman in the interval of 13-16 years, for the young man in the interval of 17-18 years. The marriage age of majority coincided with the marriage age. In the South Russian regions, a girl who did not get married by the age of 19 was

considered as "inveterate", and 20-year-old brides were rejected for having shortcomings. In the central and upper Volga province, the "girl" at the age of 23-25 was considered as "old maid", and over 25 years old as "person over age". In the Russian North and Siberia, the marriage age was broader, but marriages after the age of 25 both for young men, and especially for girls, were rare even there (Table 1).

Table 01. Age of majority and social norm of age of marriage in the second half of the XIX century.

	Beginning of the recognized majority	Age peak of the recognized majority for young women	Social norm for the age of marriage
South Russian regions	13-14	16	16-18
Central and Upper Volga Regions	13-15	16-18	16-23
Middle Volga Region	13-16	16-18	16-25
North-Russian zone	13-16	16-22	16-27
Siberia	-	17-21	17-21

In the Russian Federation, the minimal marriageable age is 18 years old. Although, local government bodies have a right to allow persons who have reached the age of sixteen to marry if there are valid reasons.

According to statistics in 2015, there were 52.2% of couples with a bridegroom at the ages of 25 to 34; 26,4% at the age 35 years old and more; 21.3% at the age 18 to 24 years old and 0.1% at the age up to 18 years old. The number of couples where the bridegroom is younger than 19 does not exceed 1.5% in the total number. The prevailing age of the bride in registered marriages was 25-34 years old (44.2% of marriages) in 2015. The next was the 18-24-year old age (34.5%) followed by 35 and older (20.6%). The number of marriages with the age of the bride less than 18 years old was 0.7%. (Operational data of the natural movement of the population)

1.222.971 marriages were registered in the year of 1950 (12 marriages per 1000 people). This figure was 1.161.068 marriages after 65 years (7.9 per 1,000 people). In absolute figures, the difference seems to be small, but it is obvious when comparing the marriage rates with those of these years. At the same time, the lowest marriage rates were recorded in the relatively stable 2000, 2001 and 2004 (Table 2). In 2015, the number of marriages was 7.9 per 1000 people. It was the lowest rate for the last nine years, comparable to the indices of the unstable 90s.

Table 02. Number of marriages in the USSR and Russia

Years	Units	Per 1.000 people*
1950	1222971	12.0
1960	1499581	12.5
1970	1319227	10.1
1980	1464579	10.6
1990	1319928	8.9
1995	1075219	7.3
2000	897327	6.2
2001	1001589	6.9
2002	1019762	7.1
2003	1091778	7.5
2004	979667	6.8

2005	1066366	7.4
2006	1113562	7.8
2007	1262500	8.8
2008	1179007	8.3
2009	1199446	8.4
2010	1215066	8.5
2011	1316011	9.2
2012	1213598	8.5
2013	1225501	8.5
2014**	1225985	8.4
2015	1161068	7.9

*For the years of 2003-2010, the figures were calculated using the population quantity recalculated taking into account the results of the 2010 Russian Census.

** With the Crimean Federal District

2. Problem Statement

The trend of marriage rates is so that the number of officially registered marriages in Russia will start soon to decrease steadily. People refuse massively to officially register their marriage, and the boundaries of marriageable age change. There will be even more people who have no experience of living as a couple. This, in turn, will negatively affect the childbirth figures and reproduction of the population.

3. Issues for Discussion

Issues for discussion are actualized by the interdependence of demographic processes such as marriage and fertility. The fertility dynamics is determined by the dynamics of marriage by 90% (Sinelnikov, 2015).

3.1. Childlessness of unmarried women.

Women who "lost the time" and did not marry remain childless. They justify their decision by building a career, approaching the end of the reproductive age, the absence of a spouse. Most Russian women do not dare to have an illegitimate child despite a significant relaxation of public and moral standards.

3.2. Emergence of new forms of marriage.

The results of the latest censuses in Russia have shown an increase in the number of unregistered marriages. If there were 10% of people in such marriages in 2002, so there were 13% in 2010. More frequent guest marriages occur when spouses live each in their own territory, marriage with free relation, when spouses were allowed to have relationship with other partners, and trial marriage, when spouses do not register their marriage, checking their relationships for years.

3.3. Remarriages.

Remarriages significantly affect the increase in the birth rate. At the turn of the XX - XXI centuries, they provided more than 16% of all births, almost 10% of the first, more than 23% of the second and more than 35% of the third and following births (Zakharov, Churilova, Aghajanian, 2016). These indicators will be even higher if one takes into account unregistered marriages (so-called, marriages by habit and repute). If living together before the wedding was considered immoral for young people in the Soviet Union, most families start their relationship today with long-term cohabitation. And if such cohabitation does not end with the state registration of a marriage, then, nevertheless, it must be taken into account as the first (even unregistered) marriage.

4. Research purpose

The purpose of the research is studying the problem of devaluation of family and marriage values. The results are presented in the paper.

Research objectives:

- identifying the values hierarchy of respondents and determining the positions of family and marriage values there;
- finding out the preferable form of marriage among respondents;
- revealing the opinion of the population regarding the acceptability of unregistered marriage..

5. Research methods

The survey of the Ural Federal District population in the context of the subjects of Federation, including Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Kurgan and Tyumen regions, as well as the Yamal-Nenets and Khanty-Mansiysk autonomous District.

Table 03. Distribution of respondents by sex and type of populated locality where they live, in %

Region	Men	Women	Urban population			Rural population		
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Ural Federal District	46.1	53.9	36.1	40.2	76.3	10.0	13.7	23.6

6. Findings

Almost one third of respondents were within registered marriage (35.4%). Another third was planning to enter a registered marriage (33.7%) (Figure 1). An analysis of the marital status of the respondents showed that the majority of unmarried people still had experience in family life: thus, 73.2% of all unmarried women were divorced, and another 9.4% lost their spouse (widowers, widows).

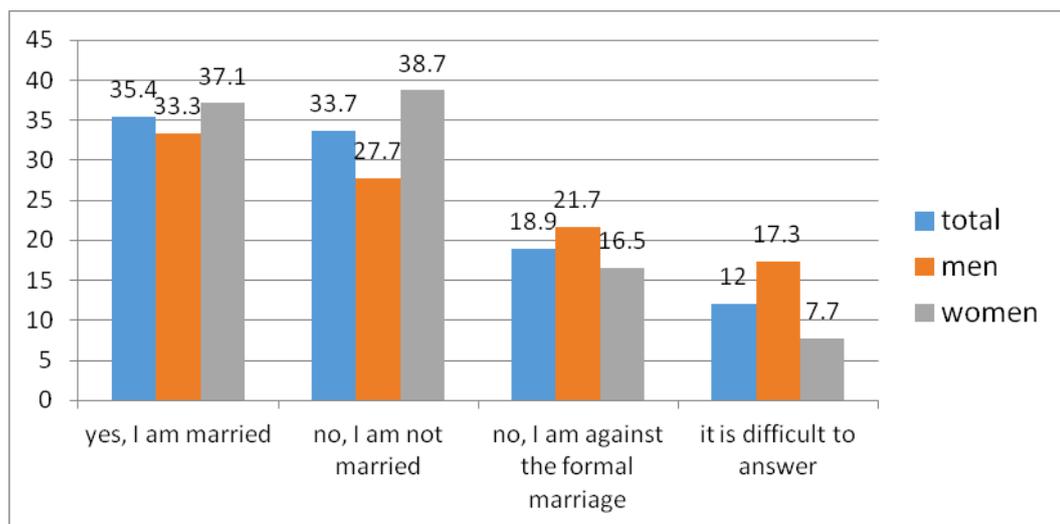


Figure 01. Answers of respondents to the question "Are you married or are you planning to marry?", in %.

According to the data presented in Fig. 2, one could draw a conclusion about the priority of family well-being in the values system of respondents. The fact is noteworthy that the family well-being of respondents was mostly supplemented by interesting work and health. Love was pushed to the fourth position. Probably, this distribution of values is justified by social instability, where Russia has been staying for a long time. In this connection, the need for a safe existence is associated among Russians with family, work and health.

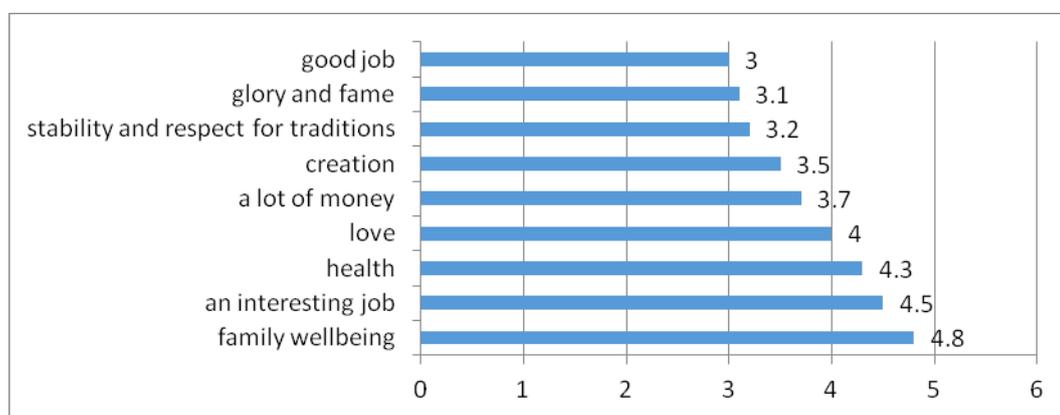


Figure 02. Hierarchy of values of respondents, average score

As for the preferred forms of family organization, the most respondents preferred to legitimize their relationship in one or another way. Thus, 36.2% of respondents preferred the marriage registration in Civil Registry Offices. Another 21.7% of respondents spoke in favor of church wedding, which could also be attributed to the traditional forms of marriage registry.

The results of the survey showed that Russian society was tolerant of relatively informal forms of the family. One-fifth of respondents preferred an unregistered marriage to marriage registry (20.2%). A fairly high percentage (15.6%) showed that it was regardless which form of marriage to prefer. Another 6.3% found it difficult to answer this question (Figure 3).

If one considers the gender distribution of answers to this question, according to the results of the study, women prefer more traditional forms of marriage, such as registry in the Civil Registry Office and church wedding (63.8% versus 50.9% for men), which can be associated with greater social and economic security of a woman within a registered marriage than within an unregistered one (Figure 3).

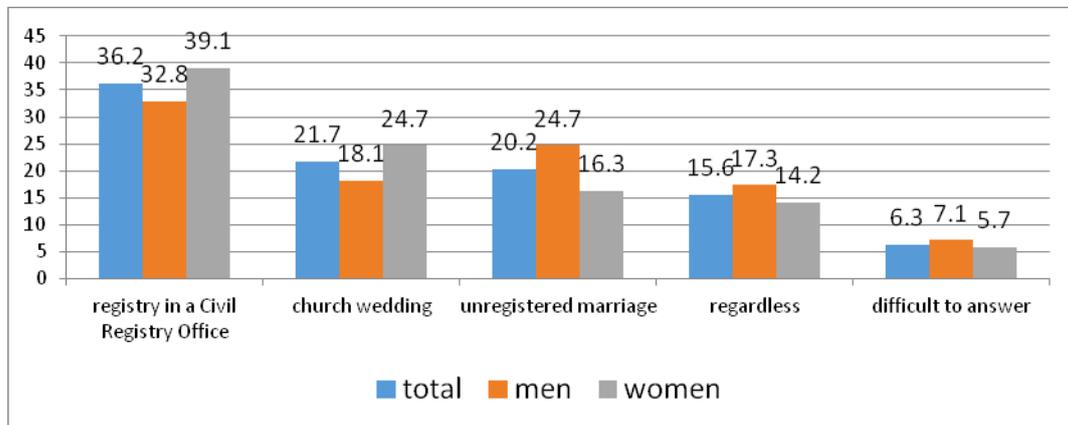


Figure 03. The answers of the respondents to the question "What marriage form do you prefer?", in %.

The majority of respondents (66.9%) believed that a registered marriage is more lasting than unregistered one.

Researching gender differences in answers of respondents, it could be noted that women's confidence in the reliability of registered marriage was more indicated. Such form of the family was considered to be close-knit by 72.7% of surveyed women and only 60% of men. It seems that the difference is quite substantial – more than 10% (Figure 4).

The authors believe that such significant difference was due to the legal peculiarities of the marriage and family institution in Russia. In divorce cases, a woman has a priority position both in matters of child custody and in matters of property division. It is typical in Russian society, which makes a man more vulnerable in a marriage.

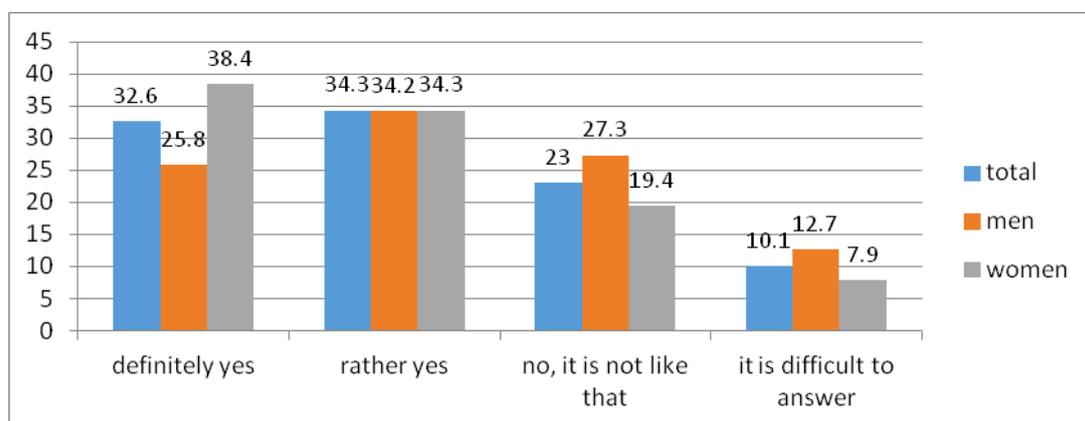


Figure 04. Answers of respondents to the question "Is a registered marriage more durable than a unregistered one?", in %

The data obtained during the research were not proved by statistical data reflecting the real marital status of citizens (Figure 1). So, in 2010 only 5.6% of civil marriages were registered, according to

Russian Federal State Statistics Service. Such low (in comparison with the results of the study) indicator could be explained by a different formulation of the question. So in the author's research, the attitude of respondents to unregistered marriages in general was studied, both in relation to a possible event in the future and a happened one. Statistical data reflected only quantitative (accomplished) indicators displayed the marital status of the population.

Ambiguous attitude of spouses to unregistered marriage was proved by the results of censuses of 2002, 2010, according to which the number of married women exceeded the number of married men (in 2010 - by 363 people and in 2002 - by 1.400 people).

There was some concern that the increasing number of women who did not have a clear position on the forms of family life organization (they answered, either "regardless" - 14.2%, or "difficult to answer" - 5.7%).

At the same time, a woman has been traditionally the basis of marriage and family relations. Its gender role presupposes a focus on strengthening and preserving the family as an independent microsocial structure, with certain spiritual and moral values. Such significant proportion of women who do not see themselves in this role (19.9%), serves as an indicator of the destruction of the institution of the family.

7. Conclusion

Summing up, the authors note that, on the one hand, the value of "family well-being" retains the leading position in the hierarchy of values of respondents. But, on the other hand, the value of the traditional form of marriage, registered by the state, lost its institutional role.

There are several theories about the future of the institution of marriage. Some experts are inclined to believe that the relationship between the sexes will change in accordance with the changes in society, and, therefore, marriage is not the last model. The others are convinced that a registered marriage will never become obsolete since the property relations and rights of the child depend on it.

Taking into account the results of the author's research, it is obvious that the special role of the state should, among other things, be given to systemic influence on the process of formation of value orientations of the family and personality with a shift in emphasis towards a culture of creation, strengthening of family values and the institution of marriage.

For the state today, it is very important to maintain official marriage. This is necessary to change the demographic situation in the country, which today has become a problem not only for Russia, but, for example, for Europe. The traditional family must be supported taking into account that children are born mostly in wedlock.

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