

## **Transformation of Marriage and Family Relations in Russian Family: Comparative Analysis of Social Research**

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**Abstract:** The study analyses transformation peculiarities of family and marriage relations in a modern Russian family. The research was aimed at analyzing the results obtained due to representative all-Russian social surveys conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM), Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) and other researchers from 2008-2013. The study considers the following models of family and marriage relations: traditional patriarchal, soviet, sponsorship, bi-career and egalitarian models. The average Russian family can not be referred to egalitarian type because in reality a woman's "double employment" as a main feature of the soviet model still exists in family and marriage relations and the results of representative all-Russian surveys prove that. The author explains that low prevalence of neopatriarchal and bi-career models of family and marriage relations depends on social and economic conditions, as well as on stereotypes and norms of family relations that prevail in collective consciousness. Further, this prevalence will be increasing.

**Key words:** Models of family, marriage relations, traditional model, patriarchal model, soviet model, sponsorship model, egalitarian model

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Various peoples preserved traditional patriarchal model of family and marriage relations throughout the whole period of social development. Its main characteristics were a clear gender role division between spouses and children alongside with the man's leading role, economic dependence of wife and children on man and unacceptability in public conciseness and opinion of divorce and non-traditional types of family and marriage relations like cohabitation. The main spheres of female activity were motherhood, child rearing and householding. The man fulfilled his functions in professional and social spheres; he was the head of the family and the breadwinner as well as the link between his family and the society on the whole. According to the type of family relations and family behaviour, traditional patriarchal family corresponded to the norms and rules accepted by the society both on formal and informal levels. Following the development of the society and social life complexity, traditional patriarchal family model transformed. Emancipation of women and children, transition from closed to open marriage system and growth of personal freedom of each member of the family were the key factors of this process.

In recent years, statistical data in Russia show a decrease in number of contracting marriages and an

increase in number of divorcing. Informal unions (cohabitation) are becoming a more widespread social phenomenon in the European countries and in Russia. The results of the 2010 Russian Census showed that the number of married couples dropped by almost 1 million and amounted to 33 millions compared to 2002 (in 2002 it was 34 millions) (Mironova and Tyrnova, 2014).

Currently, family and marriage relations undergo changes, institution of marriage and family transforms and transition from "traditional" type to "modern" one comes with growth of alternative forms of family and marriage relations. In the 20th century other types and models of family relations like soviet, egalitarian, bi-career and sponsorship began to appear.

The soviet model of family relations gradually replaced a traditional patriarchal one and then it became the major model in the 80s of the 20th century. Dominant Marxist ideology of gender equality and "social emancipation" of women, their participation in professional and social spheres alongside with men, industrialization and urbanization processes occurring in the country throughout the 20th century contributed to the formation of this model. For the majority of the population a woman's "double" employment in professional and domestic spheres became the notion of gender equality as women's professional activity became an important resource for economic development of a

country and traditional ideas on the destiny of man and woman were still in collective consciousness of the population. Typical features of the soviet model of family and marriage relations are women's "double" employment and declaration of the equality in sharing family responsibilities between spouses. Man's role was to be employed and to refill family budget but in fact the employment of both spouses was a guarantee to prosperity of a Soviet family. Besides, very often a wife's financial contribution to the family budget was rather significant. Surveys of 1970-1980s showed that those women who raised children were busy with domestic work five times more than their husbands were (Zadvornova, 2014).

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Political, economic and social changes that occurred in Russia in the late 20th century led to drastic social income stratification. They also expanded professional personal development in the market economy conditions and led to emergence of a new ideology of individualism and personal hedonism. All these factors contributed to the formation of new types of family and marriage relations like egalitarian, bi-career and sponsorship models (Kartseva, 2003).

There is no head of the family in the egalitarian model. Spouses solve all family issues together and define the possible ways of their leisure time by agreement. Household duties are shared equally and spouses spend time with their children together. The man and the woman have equal rights and opportunities for personal development in professional, social and family spheres.

Bi-career model is characterized by the situation when both spouses want to gain professional recognition and do not want to sacrifice their career for the sake of family responsibilities. Both spouses contribute financially to their family; they realize their potential in professional and social spheres and hold their relatives and wagers responsible for the household duties (Zadvornova, 2014).

Sponsorship model is characterized by husband's dominance in the family. He has an authority and financial resources. The "housewife" role in this model is modified in the following way: the woman does not work, she is financially dependent on her husband however, all household duties are shifted on the wagers. The husband covers all the costs the wife spends to maintain her attractiveness. Not only the husband, both spouses can have authority in the family. The woman can be an initiator in the issues concerning leisure time, child rearing and cost planning. In this case lack of economic

dependence makes the woman dependent on her husband. This model is spread among the families where the man has a high income and is a representative of the economic elite while his wife plays the role of the housewife proving high social and economic status of the husband. This model is slightly similar with the traditional patriarchal one in the same "breadwinner's role of the man" but modern legal provisions stated in the Family Code, as well as emancipation of women and children in the modern family structure give freedom to all its members and allow to call this model neopatriarchal (Zakharov, 2007).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The researcher of the study analyzed a number of sociological studies conducted in recent years in Russia to identify the dynamics of family and marriage relations changes. Thus, according to VCIOM data the initiative all-Russian survey VCIOM was conducted on June 17-18, 2008. A total of 1600 respondents were interviewed in 153 settlements in 46 regions and republics of Russia. Statistical error of the present study does not exceed 3.4%. About 38% of respondents who say that there should be no head in the family are adherents of absolute equality in the family. They believe that all members of the family should make big decisions together and small decisions should be made in accordance with the existing shared responsibilities. 32% of respondents are adherents of patriarchal relations. They believe that the oldest man in the family should be the head of it. If there is no such a man, then the oldest woman becomes the head of the family.

It should be noted that the percentage of the patriarchal model supporters slightly decreased from 38% to 32% over the last three years. Men still choose this model much more often than women do. Total 38% of men and 27% of women prefer this very model of family relations. About 14% of respondents think that whoever is better informed about the current situation should make important decisions in the family. The 12% of respondents rely on the following principle: the person who earns more money is the head of the family. Total 49% of respondents believe that a woman in a family should be in charge of every day shopping and a man makes decisions on big costs. Other 51% of people think a wife is free to make big purchase even if it is the husband who earns money in the family. About 62% of men support the first point of view and 62% of women support the second one. Career of a wife is no less important as career of a husband. A little more than a half of respondents, to be more precise, 54% support this idea. Less than a half of respondents (46%)

assume that a married woman cannot stay late at work as she has household chores to do. The first thesis is more supported by women (61%) and the second one is more supported by men (54%). The 71% of respondents suppose that the person who runs the house can decide how to spend money in the family. The 71% include 75% of women and 66% of men. This thesis confirmed the respondents' opinion over three years. And only 28% note that the person who earns money can decide how to spend it.

Running the house is a hard work that should be shared equally between spouses. Three-quarters of respondents (79% of women and 66% of men) support this idea. About 3 years ago <67% supported the thesis. 27% of respondents think that it is the woman who should run the house. This number includes 34% of men and only 21% of women.

Half of respondents note that in their families both spouses equally support relations with relatives (55%); both spouses think how to spend their leisure time, weekend, vacation (54%) and both spouses allocate their budget for large expenses (50%). Far fewer respondents indicate that in their families both spouses raise children equally (44%); both spouses run the house (37%) and both spouses allocate their budget for current expenses (32%) and earn money (30%). The main male function in Russian families is earning money. About 34% of respondents note that in their families it is the husband who earns money and only 5% note that in their families it is the wife who does it. The rest of the functions mentioned in the questioner are rather female than male. First and foremost, it is the function of allocating the budget for current expenses. In 36% of cases a wife is responsible for this function and in 3% of cases a man is. In 31% of cases a wife runs the house, a husband accounts for 3% of it. A wife accounts for 22% of child rearing and a husband accounts for only 2% of this function.

Another VCIOM survey was conducted on February 26-27, 2011 in 138 settlements in 46 regions and republics of Russia. 1600 respondents were interviewed. Statistical error of the present study does not exceed 3.4%. The results of this survey show that a wife is responsible for the vast majority of chores and domestic responsibilities in an average family. At first, it concerns laundry and ironing (74%), cooking (65%) and housecleaning (60%), dishwashing (57%) and paying accounts (44%). Men, as a rule, perform only one household chore. It is simple home repairs (56%). Other family duties are performed by spouses together: grocery shopping (51%), organization of leisure activities (56%) buying presents (56%) and pet care (31%). Men and women have different points of view

on how to share domestic chores. Men believe they perform certain duties together with women, however, women do not actually think so. The 63% of men buy presents together with their wives, women account for only 51%. 57% of men go grocery shopping with their wives, women account for 46%. 35% of men versus 28% of women take care of pets. Men account for 29% of cooking, for women this number is only 21%. 33% of men versus 26% of women spend time with their children. Women also note they do home repairing themselves (18%), yet only 4% of men noted this type of work. However, men pay accounts two times more (21%) than women do (12%).

The respondents were asked a question on household chores sharing in the family within the survey conducted by FOM on July 14, 2013. 1500 respondents were interviewed in 100 settlements of 43 subjects of the Russian Federation. It should be noted that the vast majority of respondents (83%) believe that a wife and a husband should run the house equally and the percentage of respondents adhering to this point of view is increasing every year (it was 70% in 2003 and in 2007, it was 73%). The percentage of those who think that it is the wife who should run the house is decreasing (it was 26% in 2003, 22% in 2007 and 14% in 2013).

On August 17-18, 2013 VCIOM conducted the survey in 130 settlements in 42 regions and republics of Russia where 1600 respondents were interviewed. Statistical error of the present study does not exceed 3.4%. The results of this survey indicate that an ideal family is first of all, the family where there is common understanding and respect (25%). The second most important factor is the factor of welfare and prosperity (22%). The third factor of an ideal family is a complete family that includes a mother, a father and children (17%). The notion of an ideal family is different for men and women. Thus, women (25%) appreciate family welfare more than men do (18%). The factor of a complete family matters for 20% of women and 14% of men. Young Russian generation supposes that the most important factor of an ideal family is love (19%) but the older generation chooses this factor rather rarely (only 10%). Older respondents choose common understanding as the most important factor more frequently (31%). The youngsters account for 17%.

A similar study was conducted by Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) on July 14, 2013 in 100 settlements of 43 subjects of the Russian Federation. The 1500 respondents were interviewed at the place of their residence. Statistical error of the present study does not exceed 3.6%. Unlike the previous study, this one considered the notion of an "ideal family" by means of open-ended question: "What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the expression "an ideal family"?"

According to 32% of respondents, one of the main characteristics of an "ideal family" is "love, respect and common understanding". 14% of respondents see "prosperous, happy and harmonious" family as an "ideal" one. For the same percentage of respondents an "ideal family" is considered to be "peaceful and friendly" one. The fourth characteristic of an "ideal family" is "welfare" (13%). About 8% of respondents chose "a complete family" and "mutual trust". Deficiency of "unfaithfulness" was chosen only by 7% of respondents.

The Initiative All-Russian VCIOM survey was conducted on June 29-30, 2013. About 1600 respondents were interviewed in 130 settlements in 42 regions and republics of Russia. Statistical error of the present study does not exceed 3.4%. Analyzing the survey results concerning Russians' attitude toward divorces, we can say that their opinion on who is to blame for the divorce has not significantly changed over the past decades. As before, the vast majority of respondents (64%) tend to believe that both spouses are equally responsible for family breakdown. This point of view is held by 65% of women. It is also held by 66% of those who are married or have an informal union as well as by 66% of those who were officially married at least once. It is interesting that men tend to blame women for divorce and women do vice versa. Other 12% of respondents note that it is external circumstances to blame for family breakdown.

Total 24% of respondents think people divorce because of unfaithfulness. The 21% of respondents think it is poverty that makes people divorce. Besides, the most important factors of divorce are inability to compromise and family quarrels (19%), as well as bad habits like alcohol and drug addiction (16%). Mismatched personalities and views of life (8%) and domestic problems (7%) are rarely mentioned as the reasons of family breakdown. Almost half of respondents (48%) believe the decision to divorce depends on the particular case. In most cases people supporting this idea have never been married (52%). Every tenth respondent thinks that people can divorce anyway and it will not do any harm to them (11%). People who got married two times or more support this point of view more often (16%). Almost the same number of respondents holds an alternative idea saying that people cannot divorce and they should save their family no matter what (10%).

Sociological research analysis of transformation of gender roles in modern Russian family is of a particular interest. It was conducted in the Ivanovo region in 2003 under the supervision of Yu.S. Zadornova. 1200 married men and women were interviewed. All respondents live in administrative centers of medium and small towns with a total population of 408; 88 and 27 thousands of people.

The 30 spouses participated in the interview. Families participating in the study represent the social portrait of the spouses who have been officially married for more than ten years. As a rule, they have got one child and an income in the amount of ten-fifteen thousand rubles per month per one family member. They are employed full time and usually work as average employees. The characteristics mentioned above can be extrapolated on families living in provincial Russian towns. Unlike the large cities, the labor market here is represented by occupations with low and medium labour costs level. The income level is low and the infrastructure created to provide favorable living conditions for the families is not sufficiently developed (Kartseva, 2003).

The results of the survey show that 69% of spouses hold egalitarian points of view on division of gender roles in the family. In their opinion, there is no leader in the family, all decisions are joint and the spouses strive to reach compromise in conflicts. The analysis shows that the egalitarian orientations are common among the spouses with higher education who have been officially married for more than ten years. But at the same time, there are 60% of families where it is the husband who makes decisions and the spouses have secondary and vocational education (Zadornova, 2014).

The orientation of spouses at the joint managing family budget (66.9% of families) proves the existence of egalitarian tendencies in the process of transformation of family roles. Yet in 22.5% of cases the person who manages the budget is a woman. As a rule, these are families with medium and low income. It corresponds to the soviet model where there is a need to concentrate the whole budget in the hands of one person for its more efficient use. In this case a woman is in charge of this control function.

Only 4.5% of families note that in their families it is the man who controls the budget, which corresponds to neopatriarchal model of family and marriage relations. In such families women accept the husband's leadership and they think that in this case a housewife's role is purely formal as the household chores are made by waged workers and relatives (Zadornova, 2014).

About 69% of respondent families say that in their families both spouses contribute equally to the family budget. However, in their opinion, a role of the breadwinner is performed by a man in the majority of families. Usually women perform a role of a breadwinner in families with low income (Zadornova, 2014).

So, the study shows that the roles of the head of the family and the breadwinner are not necessarily the same. If the majority of spouses hold the egalitarian orientations at leadership in the family, than their financial support strongly depends on patriarchal orientations that are not influenced by the economic factor.

Despite the fact that the majority of spouses are liberal about the equal sharing of household chores in the family, in practice provincial Russian families hold to the soviet model of dividing household responsibilities. The study results show that household responsibilities are clearly divided. If spouses share household chores, then, as a rule, a woman makes two-third of it and usually this work should be done systematically. Thus, 70% of women think they are in charge of cooking, 65% of women clean the house, 88% of women do the laundry and 89% of women wash the dishes. Men usually do the work that rarely becomes necessary. Total 79% of men believe they are in charge of small house repairs and 70% of men carry out construction and renovation works. So, we can see a serious problem in sharing household chores towards women's work.

It should be noted that a man perceives his participation in running the house as a help to his wife while for a woman the household chores are considered to be an integral part of her responsibilities. We can see the situation that is accepted in the soviet model: household chores are shared equally but in fact, a woman does the best part of them. About 70% of respondent families note that the responsibilities connected with childcare (including cooking, nursing and taking children to kindergarten or school) are carried out by a wife. The 67% of spouses solve the issues on education, cultural and moral upbringing together (Zadvornova, 2014).

Besides, there are no men among the respondents who would take children to school or kindergarten or make food to them. Only 1% of respondents answer that they take care of a sick child. The obtained results show that despite spouses' orientations at equal relations, in practice only women are responsible for taking care of a child and child rearing.

Moreover, the existing model of family and marriage relations seems to be a normal one for both sexes as 88% of respondents are satisfied with the division of their household chores. The majority of people who are not satisfied with that are women. They note they do not have enough help with their household chores. Besides, there is a lack of attention, respect and care from their husbands. The study results conclude that in general family and marriage relations in modern Russian family keep parameters of the soviet model and 69% of families belong to it. 16% of families belong to the sponsorship (neopatriarchal) model. Bi-career model accounts for 11% of families and egalitarian model accounts for 4%.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of social research analysis of peculiarities of family and marriage relations the following conclusions are made: a modern Russian family continues transforming and traditional patriarchal model of family and marriage relations can be found more rarely. Currently, there is no more rigid husband's leadership in the family. A growing number of families show the equality between spouses in solving family problems is becoming the norm.

The number of those who support patriarchal model of family and marriage relations is decreasing and in most cases, these supporters are men. Egalitarian values are mostly spreading on family and marriage relations, however, in practice they coexist with traditional patriarchal ideas of sharing roles and responsibilities in the family.

An average Russian family can not be referred to egalitarian type because in reality woman's "double employment" as a main feature of the soviet model still exists in family and marriage relations and the results of representative all-Russian surveys prove that low prevalence of neopatriarchal and bi-career models of family and marriage relations depends on social and economic conditions as well as on stereotypes and norms of family relations that prevail in collective consciousness. Further, this prevalence will be increasing.

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