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Sociocultural Aspect of the Studying of the Young Family Lifeworld: Value Orientations

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Abstract

Introduction. In the article, the sociological reflection is subjected to the problem of the young family lifeworld, which is topical for Russian society and has not yet been sufficiently researched previously. The authors address the sociocultural component of the lifeworld of young spouses.

Materials and methods. A combination of the “sociology of life” theoretical concept by J. T. Toshchenko and the risk concept of youth developed by Y. A. Zubok is used in order to solve the set of tasks in the research.

Results. The lifeworld of a young family is a system of spouses’ ideas about the family image based on value orientations and attitudes, constructed by means of building practices of young spouses’ role interactions as a result of their interiorization and exteriorization of the external social environmental factors. The structure of the young family’s lifeworld includes such components as cognitive, value and behavioral.

Discussion and conclusion. In the analyzes of the structure of a young family lifeworld, the authors emphasize such an important component as value: the value of family, sensual values (love, trust), the value of children and parenthood, the value of education and career, and material values. It is alleged that in order to preserve family values and the family as a whole, it is necessary to implement a competent social policy involving all the resources of the state, the business community, the non-profit sector and local communities.

Keywords: family, young family in Russia, family policy, values, attitudes, young family lifeworld

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Научная статья

Социокультурный аспект исследования жизненного мира молодой семьи: ценностные ориентации

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Аннотация

Введение. В рамках данной работы социологической рефлексии подвергается актуальная для российского общества и еще недостаточно исследованная в науке проблема жизненного мира молодой семьи. Авторы обращаются к социокультурной составляющей жизненного мира молодых супругов.

Материалы и методы. Для решения поставленных в рамках исследования задач используется сочетание теоретической концепции социологии жизни Ж. Т. Тощенко и рискологической концепции молодежи, разработанной Ю. А. Зубок.

Результаты исследования. Жизненный мир молодой семьи — это система представлений супругов об образе семьи, основанная на ценностных ориентациях и установках, конструируемых посредством выстраивания практик ролевых взаимодействий молодых супругов в результате интериоризации и экстериоризации ими факторов внешней социальной среды. В структуру жизненного мира молодой семьи входят такие составляющие, как когнитивные, ценностные и поведенческие.

Обсуждение и заключение. Анализируя структуру жизненного мира молодой семьи, выделяется такой важный компонент, как ценностный: ценность семьи, чувственные ценности (любовь, доверие), ценность детей и родительства, ценность образования и карьеры, материальные ценности. Утверждается, что для поддержания семейных ценностей и семьи в целом необходимо реализовывать грамотную социальную политику с привлечением всех ресурсов государства, бизнес-сообщества, некоммерческого сектора и местных сообществ.

Ключевые слова: семья, молодая семья в России, семейная политика, ценности, установки, жизненный мир молодой семьи

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Introduction. The study of a young family is one of the most relevant directions of modern Russian family studies. The young family is in the focus of attention of researchers, as it is a small group, the nucleus of society, as well as the most important resource for social development. The modern young family is going through a stage of its formation and development in the framework of a complex process of socio-economic, political and socio-cultural modernization, which affects the value orientations and behavioral attitudes of young families, stimulates the formation of new models of family relations.

Vision of the problems in young families' functioning through reference to the analysis of the young family lifeworld helps to understand how young spouses themselves represent the value of the family and build their family strategies.

Materials and methods. Domestic and International family studies' researchers on the basis of many different works have made a conclusion about the complex processes that are observed in the institution of the family. At the same time, some scientists take the position about the crisis of traditional marriage as a social institution [1; 2; 3], and others talk about the transformation of family-marital relations [4; 5].

The collective monograph of Nizhny Novgorod family studies' researchers, devoted to the life strategies of the modern Russian family, speaks about the multidimensionality of the family and its unique nature. In this study, the family is considered as an institution, as a small social group, as an economic organization, and also "as a value in the system of basic values, a subject of socio-psychological therapy, a client and at the same time a structural part of the social work system" [16, p. 4].

Despite the different positions of specialists on family issues, the realities indicate the transformation of the institution of the family as a whole, which is confirmed by changes in family-marital relations, the loss of many family traditions and values, the emergence of new models of family behavior and attitudes [7]. Moreover, in the Muslim regions of Russia such archaic phenomenon as polygamy has been revived, such form of marriage union as "civil marriage" has become widespread, which in strict scientific consideration is the so-called cohabitation. There is also a change in demographic behavior, an increase in the number of divorces, respectively, and the number of single-parent families [8]. All these factors to a certain extent pose a threat to the institution of the family, because they destroy traditional foundations, weaken the relationship "parents-children", in other words, they are destructive trends in the family sphere.

The young family occupies a special place in the study of the family institution, because at the first stage of its existence it faces a whole set of problems of different nature, among which, first of all, is the issue of material well-being, availability/lack of accommodation, work, generally a highly paid one, because the unsatisfied needs of a young family can provoke its destruction.

Analysis of scientific sources devoted to the problem field of the study shows that today the most popular are the following areas: theoretical approaches to the definition of "young family"; young family as an object of social policy of

the state [9; 10]; motivational factors of marriage [11]; reproductive behavior of a young family [12; 13]; conflicts and violence in a young family [14].

The paradigmatic basis for solving research problems within the framework of this work is the combination of the “sociology of life” theoretical concept by J. T. Toshchenko [15] and the risk concept of youth developed by Y. A. Zubok [3].

Results. Lifeworld as a construct and social reality. The definition “lifeworld”, earlier introduced by E. Husserl and later used in the studies of A. Schütz, was in great demand in the last century in social psychology, practical psychotherapy and existential philosophy. E. Husserl considered the lifeworld as an ambivalent phenomenon: on the one hand, as the world of objective experience, on the other hand, as a state inside the consciousness of a person/group. This concept defines a certain individual-personal, imaginative-semantic reality, extrapolating a complex of emotional and value attitudes and guidelines, which somehow accompanies a person/group in its everyday life and is a fully defined world and personal value-semantic interpretation of social reality for it [16]. However, today, according to E. V. Zolotukhina-Abolina, “living in a culture that knows the ideas of M. Foucault and P. Watzlawick, it is more interesting for us to consider the lifeworld from another point of view: as a result of unconscious construction and as an ontological sphere within which an individual dwells” [17, p. 64]. E. V. Zolotukhina-Abolina interprets the lifeworld as a certain construct and social reality, as “not a momentary invention, but living, staying, being in some existing, value-meaning and emotional-volitional coordinates, where not only human “I” but also “Other” is inscribed, where communication is carried out and life path unfolds” [17, p. 65].

In the framework of this work, the lifeworld of a young family is presented as “a system of young family’s perceptions of the family image, based on value orientations and attitudes, constructed through building of practices of young spouses’ role interactions as a result of their interiorization and exteriorization of the external social environmental factors” [18].

As for the modern social reality, the market society with its economic dictate, political propaganda, various impersonal forms, generating “automatizing conformism” (according to the theory of E. Fromm), when people’s lifeworlds in their semantic content and configuration are produced as “on a flow line”, dominate over families in general, and young families in particular.

However, nevertheless, modern social reality suggests the possibility of the existence of so-called “semi-autonomous” social realities, when the lifeworld of an individual/group (in our case — a young family) in its value-semantic content partly coincides, but partly does not with the attitudes of the modern socio-cultural canvas of society.

Realizing that the modern young family is partly the creator of sociocultural reality, it is necessary to understand at the same time that the reality of the modern life world (value-semantic, cultural, intellectual, ethical) can get along with other life worlds and enter into competition with them.

The structure of a Russian young family lifeworld. Based on the methodological constructs we have presented, we can point out that the structure of the lifeworld has such components as cognitive, value and behavioral.

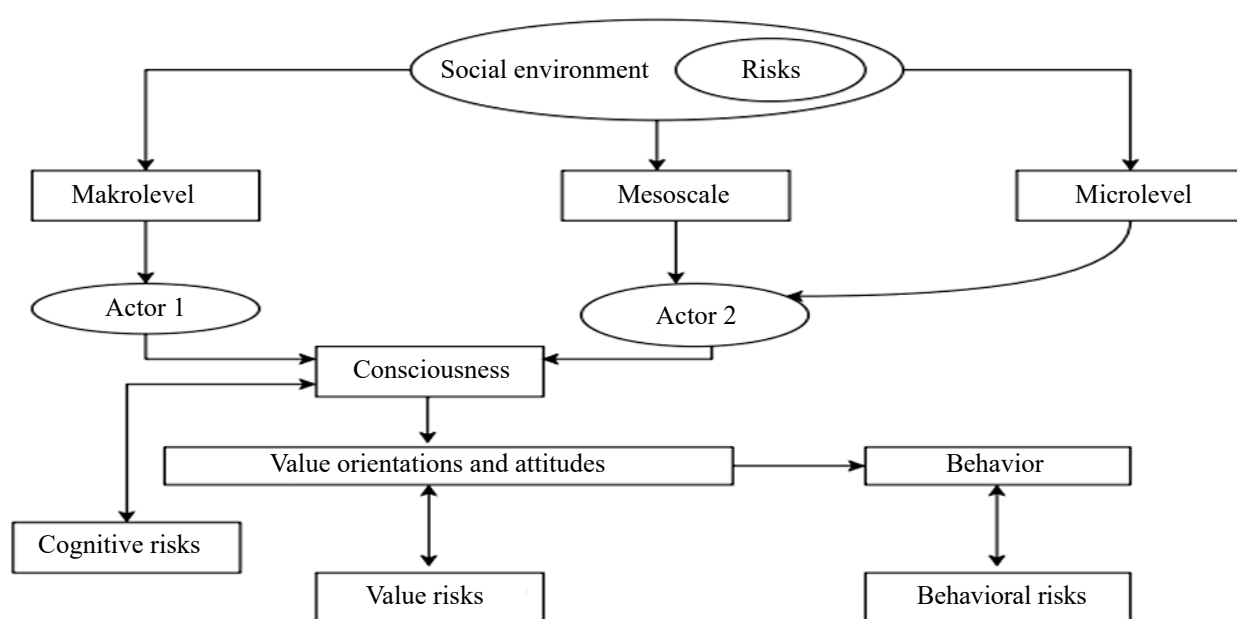


Fig. 1. The structure of a young family lifeworld [18]

“In the process of social communication, actors (young spouses) carry out joint activities aimed at meeting the family needs. The second element is the external factors of the social environment, which have a significant impact on the value orientations and attitudes of spouses. They are a certain reference point for a young family, which helps to form the right image of the family, as well as to realize family practices. Within the framework of the lifeworld’s second element, it is possible to note internal factors, which include motives of family creation. Family practices of young spouses are built on the basis of established value orientations and attitudes” [18, p. 129].

Sociocultural aspect of a young family lifeworld in Russia. The socio-cultural aspect of a young family lifeworld is an important component of the spouses’ family life. This aspect includes the value component: how young spouses view the family, whether it is a significant value for them, what meanings they give to this definition, or they share the value of parenthood, which family values underlie the lifeworld of young spouses.

The results of all-Russian sociological surveys clearly show that for Russians the family remains an enduring terminal value. According to the majority of the surveyed Russian population, life without family and children is incomplete [19]. This statement about family is equally important both for young Russians under 35 and for the older generation.

“Love, trust and respect are the pledge of harmonious relationships of a young family; the most convenient for it is such type of family relations, where equality is established; the nuclear family model dominates in the ideas of young spouses” [20 p. 80].

Family for modern young spouses is a comfortable relationship that is built on mutual assistance and support from the state. The majority of modern young families (about 50 %) want to have two children and share the value of parenthood [21].

In general, it is possible to identify a range of value orientations, usually associated with family and family life: love, children and parents, kinship and marital relations.

In sociology of family studies, from the point of view of family values and value orientations, several typologies of families, and young families, among others, are proposed. For example, L. I. Savinov describes five types of families:

- 1) families where family values have a priority position;
- 2) families where personal value orientations are of primary importance for young spouses and family values are of secondary importance;
- 3) families with different value orientations, where one spouse chooses personal values and the other prefers family values;
- 4) families maintaining parity positions of family and personal values;
- 5) families with balancing, “floating” value orientations, in which family values prevail in one period of life, and personal values prevail in another period of family life [22].

Each type characterizes of a young family lifeworld.

The interaction of different value systems is not easy, often connected with the contradiction and sometimes with the opposite interests of society, family and individual.

We associate ourselves with the opinion of Z. H. Saraliev, V. A. Blogin, N. Y. Egorova and others, who speak about the contradictory and conflicting nature of family and social values in modern Russian conditions. In their monograph they emphasize: “the change in the value and socio-psychological foundations of family life taking place in modern Russia can be presented as a process of transition from the traditional family, where the main bases of family-marital relations were blood kinship and common household, to the modern family based on partnership and intimacy. However, the center of the value orientation of the family may be, however, not only marital relations, but also children, kinship, etc.” [6, p. 30].

Based on all of the above, a cognitive model of preservation of the family institution as a whole was constructed (Fig. 2). The cognitive model should be read as a system of cause-effect relations, in which positive connections + mean that the factor-cause and factor-effect change in the same way (e. g., an increase in the value of the factor-cause leads to an increase in the value of the factor-effect), and negative connections mean that they change in different directions (e. g., an increase in the value of the factor-cause leads to a decrease in the value of the factor-effect). This model should be read from the central factor “family”, moving counterclockwise along the right contour.

Thus, the development of the institution of the family also leads to social development, which provokes changes in the socio-economic structure. On the one hand, the socio-economic structure promotes the reproduction of existing patterns and strengthens the importance of the family, but on the other hand, it invariably carries economic risks, which may become a reason for young people to postpone the creation of a family or abandon it altogether. The opportunities

provided by the socio-cultural possibilities for self-fulfillment of the formation of various models of behavior in young people can also reduce the value of the family. Thus, having passed the right contour and returned to the factor “family”, we can find it significantly reduced, since automatic conformism alone cannot always resist economic risks and young people’s desire for variety.

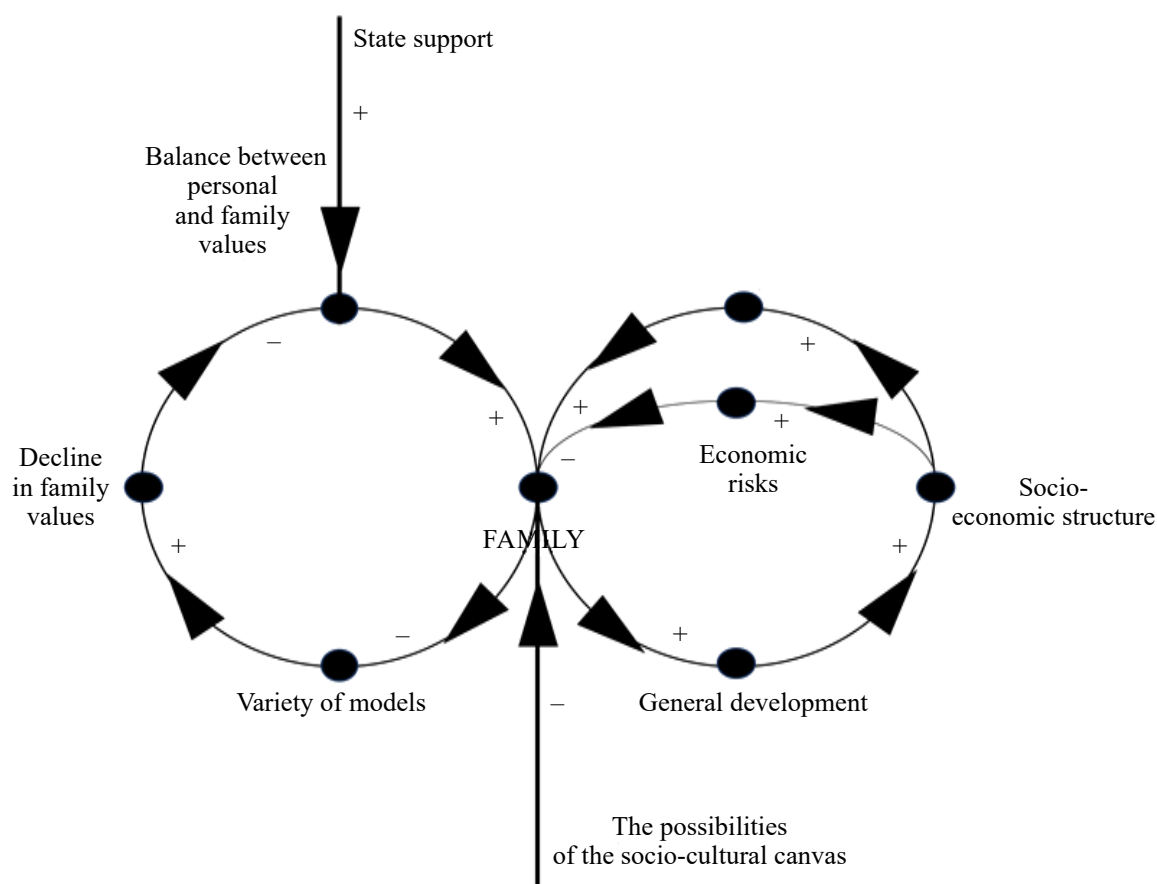


Fig. 2. Cognitive model of preserving the family institution

From the decreasing factor “family”, we move to the left contour clockwise. Here the decline in the value of the family institution leads to the increase in the variety of family models, which in turn leads to a decrease in family values. When family values decline, we can observe an imbalance between personal and family values, which again leads to a decrease in the value of the family institution. This leads to the need to introduce into the model such a factor that would help to maintain the balance, i. e. to preserve the high value of the family institution and family values and to support personal interests that are not contradictory to family ones. In our opinion, such a factor is state support.

Discussion and conclusion. Thus, this publication considers the lifeworld as a construct and social reality; describes the structure of a Russian young family lifeworld; presents the value orientations of the lifeworld of a Russian young family within the framework of the socio-cultural aspect.

The new system of family policy will require improvement of the management system, its inclusion in the system of strategic planning of socio-economic development of the Russian Federation, which implies:

- first, the creation of an National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the Government of the Russian Federation, and Councils on Family and Children’s Affairs under governors and heads of municipalities;
- secondly, the creation of a Young Families Support Fund, which should ensure the payment of family allowances, administration of maternity capital, provide social support to young families in difficult life situations, finance the development of a system of childcare services for children up to the age of three, etc.;
- thirdly, the development of a new National Project “Young Family and Children” with the possibility of participation of municipalities and organizations and additional socio-economic incentives based on results;

– fourth, revision of the current state programs (National Projects) as well as regional programs in order to include additional measures in accordance with the current conditions in the sphere of demographic situation and young family problems;

– fifth, the activation of family-parent relations non-profit organizations (NPOs) within a three-tier system: at the federal, regional and local levels.

In general, the development of the concept and strategy of family policy for the social institution of the young family is currently an urgent task that requires an innovative approach and the involvement of all the resources of the state, the business community, the non-profit sector and local communities.

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