



## **The Structure of Value Orientations of Modern Russian Families: The Regional Dimension of the Problem**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article discusses the value systems of families in the context of transformation processes taking place in contemporary Russian society. The main results of the regional empirical study of value systems of families (on the example of Primorsky territory) were analyzed. The relationship between the family values and values of professional employment was also revealed. A formal questionnaire survey was used as the primary method of sociological data collecting. The study has theoretical and applied aspects, was implemented in line with intelligence and narrative strategy. The results of the conducted research showed that the family in contemporary society is one of the most important human life values. The vast majority of the respondents noted the positive role of the family in human adaptation to social changes which are characteristic of contemporary Russian society. It was also found out that the gender aspect is a major determinant of the degree of person's satisfaction with combination of the family responsibilities with the professional ones. In the course of professional activity high salary is the most important aspect of labor for a considerable part of the respondents. In general, in the structure of value systems of families, living in the Primorsky territory, the family values are dominant and the values of work and professional employment are inferior.

**Keywords:** Family, Values, Value Systems, Social Transformation, Professional Employment

**JEL Classifications:** I390, J130, J240

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

A condition for the existence and development of any society is the existence of some set of perfect formations considered in the form of value systems. The views about the direction of social development, about man and his place in the social system, "correct" and "incorrect" way of life, etc. are found in every society, as an important part of national culture. Acting as value systems, these views are quite stable, although are subject to change. The values which prevail in a particular society serve as a social regulation instrument and form a stable social system framework.

Meanwhile, there are intense changes, associated with the processes of informatization, scientific-technical and technological development, culture massification, etc. in today's global society. A main source of these changes in the transition from modern to

post-modern society is the extension of the post-industrial mode of production. The change of production method and technologies has led not only to deep and qualitative transformations in economic life, but also to changes in the culture and social structure of the society, and, therefore, the structure of a person's value systems.

While the culture is still performing the function of norms and values transfer, the cultural diversity is growing, the boundaries of cultural forms are blurring. At the same time, the cultural products, designed for mass consumption, directly, although ambiguously, affect the value systems of people. This leads to the results, which are directly opposite by their cultural significance: On the one hand, the new valid value samples, associated with intensive intercultural interactions, appear. On the other hand, the created samples are often stereotypical and averaged. This hurts the uniqueness of the national culture, leads to the rejection of a part of spiritual values in favor of the material ones, reduces the

creative potential of a person (Yachin, 2014. p. 39; Bubnov and Radugin, 2014. p. 96).

The above ambivalent trends, associated with globalization processes, cause substantial contradictions in the value field of specific societies. Manifesting themselves at all levels of society – in the society at large, at the level of social communities and groups and relative to each individual – these contradictions intensify the transformation of value systems.

One of the main social groups, which constitute a person's socio-cultural value system, is the family. A man acquires the initial life experience in it, receives the first social information, which results in further selecting, accepting or rejecting the values and ideals of society. Therefore, the family becomes the immediate environment, in which the formation, development and change of value systems of a particular person, occurs. Consolidating and transforming the values of its members, the family has an impact on the values of society, determining the possibility of its successful functioning. This fact causes the necessity of applying a value approach to the study of the family, one aspect of which is understanding the family through the prism of estimates of its component individuals.

In Russian and foreign sociology a solid theoretical and empirical base in the study of values of the members of the family in the context of axiological approach has formed (Winch, 1963; Bogenschneider, 2002; Kharchev, 1979; Matskovsky, 1989; Vishnevsky, 1992; Zadornova, 2013). In the last decade the studies on this subject are also intensively conducted in Russia (Kartseva, 2003; Forsova, 2006; Antonov, 2007; Palibina, 2011; Kuzina, and Vinokurova, 2011; Sleptsov, 2014; Volkova, 2015). Most authors agree that in the process of society adaptation to the requirements of time the value systems of people change significantly, however, the value of the family remains valid.

At the same time, some authors mark that the family values are approved only verbally (Rogova, 2007; Sinelnikov, 2008; Berezutsky and Efrosinina, 2008; Vasilenko, 2010; Mukhina, 2012). Speaking about the relationship between the family and non-family value systems in the personality structure of the individual, the researchers conclude that an increasingly important value is self-realization in professional activity. In their opinion, the value systems of the family with several children, family life, and parenthood recede into the background compared to the value systems of professional activity and status characteristics.

Thus, the essence of contradictions in the structure of value systems of modern family can be formulated as follows: On the one hand, for its members the family values are important, on the other hand – The importance of professional self-realization and achieving high social status is growing, which is not always compatible with the real importance of the family for a person.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

To identify the relationship between the family and non-family values the authors conducted the empirical sociological study, the

purpose of which was to identify the structure of value systems of families of the Primorsky territory in the context of transformation processes taking place in contemporary Russian society. The study has theoretical and applied aspects, was implemented in May 2009. The objects were the two-parent families living in the Primorsky territory. The subjects of the study were the opinions and judgments of married couples testifying to the contents of value systems of Primorsky territory's families. The main method of collecting sociological data, used in the study process, is a formal questionnaire survey. The respondents were couples in a registered marriage. The sample was quota. The marital status, the number of years spent in marriage, the educational level of husband and wife were selected as the quoted signs. The sample was spatially localized within the cities of Primorsky territory (Vladivostok, Nakhodka, Arsenyev, Partizansk), the sample volume was 1000 people (500 married couples) which gave an opportunity to describe the value systems of the modern family in transforming Russian society with regard to regional peculiarities more fully.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. The Family in the Structure of a Person's Value Systems

We believe that the place of residence of the family is one of the main components influencing the formation and realization of its value systems. Features of the geographical position, the social and economic development of the region, the level of urbanization, the state of infrastructure can be considered as the main factors influencing the contents of value systems of the modern family. Therefore, before describing the results of the study, we should give a brief description of the regional factors influencing the transformation of value systems of families of a particular territorial community, in our case – Primorsky territory.

Primorye is a port and border zone with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The Primorsky territory is maximum, according to the Russian scale, remote from the European part of the country and the Federal center. At the same time, it is the most favorable region by climatic, economic and transport conditions than other ones in the Far East of Russia. So, it is logical that with all the problems of post-Soviet demographic reduction, the Primorsky territory remains one of the most populated regions of the Far East. Primorye is a leader in the Far Eastern Federal district by the volume of foreign investments and imports, is in the third place by gross national product and gross output of agriculture. In structural terms, the industry of the Primorsky territory is characterized by the fact that it has a high concentration of enterprises of mining and defense sectors. This leads to the significant proportion of the population employed in the defense sector, maritime transport, port industry and fishery. The sailors, fishermen and marine military are affected by migration more often than other categories of population, which influences the demographic situation. Currently the number of people, living in the Primorsky territory, is decreasing. The population reduction is caused by natural decline and migration outflow. Thus, all the important social processes and factors (including the factor of remoteness from the European part of the country) have a direct impact on the livelihoods of

families living in the Primorsky territory. Therefore, the specific sociological studies of value systems of the family with account of induced differentiating factors allow to represent ambitions, goals and life plans of the married couple and to develop ways and methods of influence on their values more accurately.

In developing the study program, we formulated several basic hypotheses. One of them was made by the following assumption: In most families of the Primorsky territory, the family is included in the “core” of the most significant value systems for both husband and wife. The verification of this hypothesis was carried out, in particular, with the question: “Select from the list the most important values for you and list them in descending order.” The respondents’ answers to this question are as follows: In the group of women in the first place the family was put by 19.6% of the respondents, in the second one – by 28.3%, in the third place – by 30.5%, in the fourth one – by 6.5% and in the fifth place – by 4.4% of the respondents. In the group of men the family was determined as the most important value by 19.6% of the respondents, in the second place the family was put by 30.5% of the respondents, in the third one – by 23.9%, in the fourth place – by 4.4% and in the fifth one – 10.8%.

Thus, the obtained data indicate that 91.4% of the polled women and 89.2% of the polled men consider the family to be one of the most important values, and 19.6% of all the polled put the family in the first place.

During the study it was recorded that the vast majority of respondents noted the positive role of the family in the adaptation of a person to rapid social changes, i.e., to the situation which Russia is now experiencing. More than a half of the polled women (58.1%) said that the family was a psychological refuge for them in stressful situations. The distribution of the answers of men was similar – 57% marked the positive role of the family in stressful situations. Weighing all the pluses and minuses of family and single life 67.4% of men said that the family was, rather, a support in the life of a modern man. The women gave more positive evaluation for the role of the family: 79.3% of the respondents believe that the family is a support in the life of a modern woman.

Based on the foregoing it can be concluded that the developed hypothesis was confirmed, and the data obtained shows high importance of the family in lives of Primorye inhabitants.

### **3.2. The Relationship between the Family Values and Values of Professional Employment**

Later in the study, the authors tried to identify the interrelationship between the family values and values of professional employment. The hypothesis was formulated: The family for the residents of Primorye is more important than realization of professional interests and career aspirations. The respondents were asked a question: “What is more important for you – happiness and family well-being or success and recognition at work?” In the men’s group for 69.6% of the respondents the happiness and family well-being were the most important, and 26.1% of the respondents noted that they could not imagine their lives both without their families and work. The similar results were obtained in the women’s group:

63.1% of the respondents determined the happiness and family well-being as the most important things for themselves. However, the women chose the answer, testifying to the same importance both of the family and work in their lives, more often: It is typical for 36.9% of the polled women, which is, probably, due to the growing process of their labor emancipation.

At the same time it should be noted that a small number of the polled men (4.3%) believe that success and recognition at work are more important than the family well-being. In the women’s group there were no such answers. On the whole, the results presented show that a majority of the respondents consider that the family value systems are more important for them than the values of professional employment. Thus, the developed hypothesis was fully confirmed.

At the same time, we hypothesized that in realizing professional responsibilities on the one hand, and family responsibilities on the other hand, the family members have certain difficulties. In accordance with this statement, we formulated the following hypothesis: Effective combination of the family responsibilities with the professional ones is difficult for representatives of Primorye families.

To test this hypothesis, the respondents were asked to answer the question: “How well do you balance work and family life?” The results of answers to this question were distributed as follows: In the men’s group 34.7% of the respondents always combine the family responsibilities with work effectively, in the women’s group there were only 10.8% of such persons. Furthermore, 69.5% of the polled men said that they managed to combine the family and work effectively, whereas in the women’s group of the sample it is typical for 43.4% of the respondents. For 28.2% of the respondents combination of the family responsibilities with the professional ones is problematic, 4.3% of the polled men pointed out to it. And 8.6% of the polled women are not able to carry out their family responsibilities and work outside their home effectively, whereas in the men’s group 2.1% of the respondents choose such an answer.

Thus, it was found out that the gender features are a determining factor affecting the degree of satisfaction with combination of the family responsibilities with the professional ones. Almost all men-respondents (95.6%) indicate that they are either completely or mostly satisfied with combination of family life with professional activity. For a large part of the polled women, on the contrary, combination of the family responsibilities with the professional ones is either difficult or they don’t manage to combine the responsibilities at all. Such answers were chosen by 36.9% of the respondents. We believe that, in this case, a significant difference in the responses of men and women is associated with the uneven distribution of domestic work and responsibilities of raising children and caring for them.

So, the developed hypothesis, that effective combination of the family value systems with the values of professional employment for Primorye families is problematic, is partly confirmed, as this is not typical for men-respondents, but is quite common for women because of their “dual business.”



## 4. DISCUSSION

It was important for the authors to determine the factors characterizing the quality of non-family (first of all, professional) value systems. In particular, the economic realities (the emergence of private and other forms of private property, freedom of enterprise, opportunities of self-realization in business), emerged during the post-Soviet transformation of the country, would have had to contribute to the creating new value samples in employment associated with a person's creative activity. However, the results of our study show that for the majority of the respondents not a creativity process, but other factors are determining in work.

For Russia during the study period the problems, appeared previously and characteristic of transforming societies have not lost their importance: These are unemployment, low wages, drop in real incomes. Also purely Russian difficulties influence the value systems in the professional sphere: These are the difficulty of moving to another area for interesting work, high degree of dependence on the administration and employers, a minor role of trade unions in protecting the rights of workers, etc.

We hypothesized that under these conditions most people have to appreciate any work which they have, and put forward the following hypothesis: The most important determinant of a positive attitude to work of people is material incentives.

In answer to the question: "What aspects are the most important in work for you?" the following results were obtained: 88.1% of the respondents noted that, first of all, the work must be well paid; 58.7% indicated that the work should be guaranteed. For 48.9% of the respondents the main thing is that there should be a good team. For 47.8% it matters that the work should be interesting. Thus, 34.8% believe that the work should match a person's abilities; the same number of the respondents says that the work should be such one as to have more free time for doing household chores and caring for children. For 27.2% of people the fact that the work they do should be necessary is of fundamental importance; 18.4% of the respondents indicated that the work should not be too hard; the same number of the respondents believes that the work should contribute to the development of their personalities. For 10.8% it is important to have a long vacation, a sufficient number of non-working days; 8.7% of the respondents expressed the views that the most important thing in work is an opportunity to get a promotion, make a career. According to 2.1% of the respondents, the work must bring fame, the popularity, increase personal credibility.

Thus, the developed hypothesis was confirmed. We found that in the process of professional activity for the vast majority of the respondents the most important aspect of work was high wages. At the same time, the main part of the respondents did not consider an opportunity of personal development to be a significant factor of their work activities (only 18.4% of the respondents chose this answer). It should be added that the respondents (77.1%) agree that changes in the level and quality of life of the population have worsened the economic situation of their families. Accordingly, a vast majority of the respondents (89.1%) expressed the views

that they need additional work as a source of material supplies to support lives of their families at the acceptable level.

The conclusion about the material factor as the main one, determining the quality of professional value systems, is confirmed by the results of answers to the question about the degree of satisfaction of the family members with their work indirectly.

In answer to this question the respondents were asked to choose one of the options by a 10-point scale, where "1" value corresponds to "totally not satisfied" estimate and "10" – "completely satisfied". The distribution of the answers showed that in practice the requirements of Primorye residents to work are very reasonable. About a half of the respondents (56.9% of the respondents) estimated their work positively (6 points and above), 7.6% indicated that the work satisfied them completely (10 points) and 25.3% of the respondents chose the 4 and 5 points, i.e. the values maximum close to the average ones. Taking into account the current Russian realities it is difficult to imagine that for such a significant part of the respondents the work fully meets their requirements. It is likely that the prevalence of positive estimates was influenced by fear of losing their jobs, which allows the family to function normally.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Summarizing the results of our study, we can conclude that in the structure of value systems of families, living in the Primorsky territory, the family values are dominant, and the values of professional employment are inferior relative to them. At the same time, among the factors, determining the quality of professional value systems, the material one dominates evidently, whereas the interest in work and personal self-realization in work recede into the background. In answer to the question of the respondents: "How does the professional employment contribute to ensuring a stable social status of your family?" (the respondents could choose only one answer) the results were as follows: 72.4% of the respondents indicated high earnings as a source of social stability of a family; 17.9% noted in this context useful acquaintances and relationships in the professional sphere. To a much lesser extent, the respondents relied on the creativity process in their own labor activity: Only 9.7% believed that the source of stable situation of the family is their personal achievements in the profession. Probably, in the current economic situation, when most people are concerned to maintain the social and economic status of their families at the acceptable level, a long path of professional self-realization seems to be less attractive than receiving high earnings at the moment, including for work not so creative.

Besides, the value systems of a modern Russian family are characterized by the internal contradictions, a possibility of parallel coexistence of systems, seemingly, mutually exclusive. Therefore, in the course of the study, we relied on the classification of family value systems taking into account the criterion of functioning in a particular situation and the one of integrating and differentiating resources. By this sign the family value systems were divided into the family and non-family ones. To the family value systems we attribute values including marriage, parenthood and kinship.

And the non-family value systems, in our opinion, are connected with the values of professional employment assuming both the opportunities for advancing up the promotion ladder and building a horizontal career which involves creative and personal self-realization.

In the context of current transformation processes, taking place in Russian society, the growing contradiction between the family and non-family value systems becomes more evident. On the one hand, a high value of the family, focus on the family way of life remain, on the other hand – there is widespread of individuality and autonomy in human behavior in the family and out of it, which is not always compatible with effective implementation of family responsibilities.

In general, the transformation of family value systems in contemporary Russian society, firstly, is determined by the global trends associated with the transition from one civilization type to another one. It is evident that there has been a considerable turn from the traditional, collectivist values to the person-centric, post-modern values. The latter ones, expressed in the freedom of choice, the opportunities of self-realization and creative development of a person, ultimately complicate the qualitative parameters of the whole structure of family value systems, enriching them with new content. Secondly, the transformation of value systems of a Russian family is associated with profound and qualitative changes of basic social institutions in our country and public organization in general. However, this process is uneven, depending on the proximity or remoteness of the regions from the center.

We believe that the conducted study represents adequately what place the family and family values take in the structure of a person's value systems. Also the relationship between the family value systems and values of professional employment depending on the gender features is shown. At the same time, it is advisable to perform the differentiated analysis not only by gender principles but also by other ones; to present the correlation analysis of two kinds of values: To identify groups with the highest and lowest family values and to consider how the professional values change in these groups; to describe the typical representatives of traditional, modern and mixed samples of consciousness. Thus, there are further prospects of continuing the present author's study.

In conclusion, we would like to stress once again that the contemporary Russian society is characterized by profound and qualitative changes of basic social institutions, the state of unstable balance of old and new, the asymmetry between the economy and moral resources, the continuing growth of social tension. In these circumstances, it is the family that remains a permanent value of

a person, an object of his/her concern and his hope and support forming the stable basis of social life in general.

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