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Elderly families of indigenous peoples of the Arctic in the sociological dimension

K D Barashkova

Institute of Finance and Economics, North-Eastern Federal University. M. K. Ammosova,
Yakutsk, Russia

bardka@mail.ru

Abstract. The increasing share of older people in the demographic structure of society, the increasing instability of family and marriage relations, the transformation of the traditional family model in the context of global social and natural changes – this is not a complete list of factors that affect the institution of the family. The phenomenon of old age, including the elderly family, is a complex ideological problem of the value of life. Demographic aging requires a special infrastructure focused on meeting the social needs of people over 65 years of age. Such modernizations primarily concern the sphere of health and social services. Together with various types of social services, conditions are created that ensure the active longevity of elderly citizens. Family development is based on the social and personal needs of a person. In modern Russia, there is instability and transformation of family relations, which, in our opinion, is an indicator of crisis phenomena in its development, as well as institutional changes. Statistics for 2018 in Russia show that 65 % of marriage relationships have broken up, whereas 70 years ago, divorce was rare. And the forecast is quite negative, under such circumstances, there will be more and more divorces every year. And all the more valuable is the role of families who have a long family history and life experience. Their accumulated family values, proven over time, can help strengthen the institution of the family, preserve its significance for society and the individual, especially in the harsh conditions of life in the Arctic, when mutual assistance and mutual support becomes even more meaningful for a person.

1. Introduction

The basis for the sociological analysis of the study of the elderly family and its life is the socio-philosophical views on the life world of the phenomenology Of E. Husserl (1910) [1], A. Schutz (1932) [2]. According to Husserl, the world of life is an expanded horizon of knowledge of evidence, a world that is not created artificially by us, as, for example, any mathematical abstraction, but exists as an evidence that does not cause doubt [1].

T. Parsons (1955) in the work "Family, socialization and interactive process" considers the family from the point of view of a structural and functional approach [3].

N. Smelzer from the point of view of the structural and functional approach determines the nature and dynamics of the life of society and man [4]. The theme of the life world is also considered in the philosophy of the XX century by L. Landgrebe [5]. J. Habermas (2011) [6], J. Mead (1981) [7] consider the life world as a communicative action, Habermas identifies, first of all, the problems of



possible "embodiment" of reason (or, on the contrary, anti-reason) in the activities of people, their connections, interactions and objective life forms.

Russian scientists, philosophers and sociologists applied the concept of the life world to analyze modern socio-cultural changes in the modern history of Russia (Zh. T. Toshchenko, V. N. Volkov, V. G. Fedotova, N. M. Smirnova, V. M. Mezhuiev, Yu. M. Reznik, V. I. Ilyin, I. O. Loginova, K. S. Metelskaya, K. S. Divisenko, etc.).

Old age as a subject of scientific research began to be studied for the first time in the 40s of the twentieth century. The concept of «social gerontology» was first used by the American scientist E. Stiglitz. At the forefront of the study are the conditions of existence and lifestyle of an old person. Also, social gerontology is interlinked with issues of General culture, meaning the attention of the state, society and family to the old person, his social and psychological well-being.

Gerontologists and sociologists rightly point out that old age means an inevitable decline in social mobility, economic and professional status. This leads to a decrease in social status as an employee engaged in the labor sphere and retirement from the labor market [8].

Modern sociological studies of older families belong to a variety of scientific areas. Thus, the scientist D. V. Latyshev studies the elderly family in the aspect of institutional relations and interactions at the micro level [9]. E. L. Chekanova identifies the processes of social «planning» of old age at the present stage of development of society as the object of her research [10].

The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is one of the Arctic regions hunting, fishing, and reindeer herding are traditionally the basis of the way of life and ethnic identity of the peoples of the North. Tradition is reflected not only in the socio-economic way of life of people, but also in family relations

2. Research methods

To study the elderly families of Yakutia, we conducted a sociological survey in the form of interviews. A total of 23 elderly families who have lived together for 50 years or more in the same marital relationship took part in the survey. Elderly families live in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), in the cities of Yakutsk, Srednekolymsk and 19 uluses (districts). The total number of respondents is 46 elderly respondents.

To identify the total number of elderly families who have lived together for 50 years or more, we made a request from the heads of the civil registry Offices of municipal districts and uluses (districts) of the Republic using a continuous method. As a result, as of February 2019, the number of elderly families was 211 families in 15 districts of the Republic (out of a total of 35 districts and municipalities of the Republic).

In the analysis of the data obtained, the task was put forward, among other things, to identify the value and behavioral attitudes of older families of indigenous peoples of the Arctic, and how they contribute to the stability and longevity of the family, in the context we are considering.

Of the 23 married couples interviewed, 9 elderly married couples live in the cities of the Republic – 39.1%, and 14 elderly married couples (60.8%) live in rural areas.

3. Research result

The study sample includes elderly families who have lived together for 50 years or more, and the age of the spouses is of interest: the age of the Respondent husbands ranges from 71 to 96 years. Among wives, the age of 69-75 years prevails, the oldest of the respondents was 89 years old.

In the cities of the Republic, in Yakutsk and Srednekolymsk, only 4 families (17.3%) live permanently, in rural areas 19 families (82.6%), almost half of rural elderly families move to the city for the winter period to their children and grandchildren for "wintering", usually from November to March–April. Winter Yakut cold months require more effort in the household: harvesting firewood, ice for drinking water, and maintaining heating stoves for heat in homes. And since most elderly families live independently and sometimes physically do not have the strength, they move to their children and grandchildren.

As a fundamental value in all older families, the attitude to marriage as a prerequisite for creating a

family has been revealed. Each study couple in premarital relationships sought to legitimize the relationship and create a common life, implementing the traditional family values of their generation. These values are reflected in their behavioral attitudes as determining when creating a family.

Most respondents (80%) formed their value ideas about family life based on the experience of their parents, older brothers and sisters before starting a family. Note that this was the post-war generation, many of whom had no fathers, and the families of older sisters and brothers lived separately, and often in other settlements. Therefore, some of the older families we examined «had no particular idea of family life».

All elderly families have children: two families have one child, two children in two families, three children in 6 elderly families, 2 families have four children, three families have five children, 4 families have 6 children. The largest number of children has one family – 8 children. Yakut families are characterized by raising children of relatives, adoption. One elderly family, unable for health reasons to have children of their own, took two children to raise.

Parents, being the primary agents of socialization, tend to give advice to their children on a variety of issues and areas of life [10]. Children can perceive and follow the advice, but they can also go their own way. From our question, «have you Influenced and are you influencing the life path of Your children and grandchildren?» it turned out that parents prefer not to interfere in the life of their children, but they try to lay down a strategy for the correct choice of education and future profession, guide them, in most cases this is advice. If you rank the answers, the answer «we try to influence the choice of a particular education» sounds most often.

Also, the place of education (in the city of Yakutsk or the Central University) plays an important role for parents. And of course, parents want to advise their children what profession is best to choose. 13 elderly spouses replied that they try not to influence the determination of their children's life path.

Parents feel responsible for the well-being of their children and grandchildren. We can say that for most older families, this is the meaning of their life. But as a couple, they try to pay attention to each other, maintain their health and their spouse. In our interview, we asked the question of responsibility, for whom and what they consider themselves responsible. 80% of older families said that they are responsible for the overall well-being of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Half of the respondents said that their health and the health of their spouse were among them.

In our opinion, the behavioral attitudes of the studied elderly families are particularly interesting from the point of view of their marital longevity.

So, it was revealed that the main thing in family relations is «taking care of children, raising and raising them as decent people», «maintaining good relationships with a spouse, living his/her interests in life and work».

In most of the older families studied, husbands built a successful professional and economic career, provided the family with everything necessary, and wives deliberately did not pursue a professional career, devoting themselves to their husband and raising children. They also answered that good relationships between spouses, care for children, and mutual understanding with relatives are equally important, «to help and support everyone».

Both the husband and wife are the heads of families for the respondents. We did not reveal an absolutely Patriarchal or matriarchal attitude to our role. But almost all the husbands agreed that it was the wives who held the household in their hands and were engaged in raising children. The husbands replied that they paid their wives salaries, and in most cases the wives distributed the budget themselves. And it was the wives who determined the main strategy of family life.

Raising children was the main responsibility of wives. But more than half (70%) of respondents said that both parents were engaged in parenting. In two families, grandparents were mainly responsible for raising their grandchildren, and in one family, the children were raised by close relatives of the spouses.

In every elderly family, important decisions are made together, only one family replied that the husband makes important decisions. The majority of older families (85%) do not experience difficulties in performing the functions of father and mother. But, nevertheless, part of the elderly

families have experienced some problems in the upbringing of children.

Older parents still try to help their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren because of the financial difficulties of younger families and because of traditional traditions. No elderly family has chosen the options «No, we need help ourselves», «No, we don't help, although we can afford it». First of all, parents think and care about their children. Aid is expressed in the form of aid money for various purposes such as paying mortgage loan products (meat and dairy products, vegetables, fish), support during the construction of private homes, fathers help sons, sons-in-law to build a house.

In addition to the fact that the wives were engaged in raising children and managing the family economy, they also, for the most part, contributed to the professional development of their spouses.

Elderly families were quite independent in everyday life, since almost all families live separately. From the answers, we see that only two families live together with their children's families. And all respondents maintain close relationships with their children. Children and grandchildren take constant care of their elderly parents, grandparents and try to help them. These are mainly household help, food and medicine purchases, and help with paperwork in institutions.

Children and grandchildren try to take turns visiting their parents and grandparents every day. Grandchildren-school children almost every day run to their grandparents for lunch, to do homework. Older families are happy with the way their children's lives have turned out. During the interview, it was found out that some parents prefer not to interfere in the life of their children, and they are already happy that their children have received an education, have a profession, a family, and children. Most of the older families replied that they had raised their children well, noting in interviews that the children had received education, worked, had their own families, and had given birth to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Older families are not confined only within the boundaries of their family, they have managed to maintain good and friendly relations and still communicate with their family friends. In older families, there is usually no distinction between «friends only of the husband or wife».

Modern times offer rapid development of various types of gadget technology, new forms of communication through social networks are emerging. And elderly spouses may be «torn» from society due to their inability to independently use modern means of communication and applications (mobile phone, whatsapp, other social networks) [11]. Modern gadgets and applications for older people are taught by their children and grandchildren, connected to the Internet, registered in social networks, and downloaded various necessary applications.

4 respondents are confident users of a personal computer: they use them for work, are able to make online purchases via the Internet. In second place is the use of a mobile phone, which has almost completely replaced landline home phones. The vatsap app is used by 18 respondents. Only 2 respondents were registered on the social network and Instagram. And 11 respondents do not know how to use the above-mentioned tools at all.

36 spouses (78%) from older families have common Hobbies with each other. The couple prefer to spend their free time together reading Newspapers and magazines, art books, doing household chores together, tending the garden, watching TV news programs, movies, and concerts together. 16 spouses (35%) said that they cook together, go hunting and fishing together. The same number of spouses like to solve crosswords together, explaining that solving crosswords stimulates mental activity, and that it is exciting. 9 spouses like to go to the movies, visit theaters and museums. 12 elderly couple who attend the clubs together creative performances.

Half of the respondents meet and communicate with their peers at various social events, celebrate holidays together with their friends. The same number of respondents often communicate only by phone. One-third of older spouses constantly meet with their friends. Only one elderly family does not communicate at all.

Most of our studied older families lead active social lives. They are members of veterans clubs and associations based on their interests. One of the elderly spouses leads a chess and draughts club for children. Wives participate in women's creative circles. But, at the same time, 14 of the 46 spouses replied that they did not participate in anything. One elderly couple is an active participant in the

Republican family competitions. In 2016, they won the competition, and they were actively supported by their children and grandchildren, as well as the administration and population of the village where they live.

The social policy of the state is aimed at helping the elderly, providing support not only in material terms, but also in the form of various activities, but does not take into account the opportunities and needs of older families [12].

Half of the respondents believe that it is necessary to increase the pension, an eighth of the respondents wanted to be invited to celebrations and events dedicated to the family, every fourth would like to organize various events for them (specifically for older families) and provide social assistance. However, a third of respondents believe that older families should be taken care of by their children, without shifting the care of them to the state.

Upon termination of employment, the only permanent source of income for the elderly is a pension. A very small percentage (6 respondents) continue working and professional activities. Five families have additional seasonal income from their farm, sell flowers and vegetables. Children provide constant financial assistance to one family.

To the question «Your income per month is» the answers are arranged as follows: from ten to thirty thousand rubles per month – 52.1% of husbands and 69.5% of older wives. From 30 thousand to 50 thousand rubles – 21.7% and 17.3% of wives. 50-70 thousand rubles are received by 21.7% of husbands and 13% (three respondents) of wives. From 70 to 100 thousand rubles – one Respondent. The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is one of the regions with the largest pensions – 18.9 thousand rubles, while the average old-age pension in Russia is 14,100 rubles. Such statistics in our Republic are formed due to increasing coefficients, the official news Agency of Yakutia notes [13].

Our respondents also receive additional payments to the basic age pension (the «age» Supplement to the pension at the age of 80), veterans allowances. The elderly Respondent with the highest income of about one hundred thousand rubles is a veteran of the second world war and a veteran of the Ministry of internal Affairs. The majority of elderly families receive a pension without a variety of allowances.

Most of the respondents 56.5% said that they are completely satisfied with their financial situation. Half of the respondents said that they help their children and grandchildren with money, can save money to buy expensive household items, go to the sea for a vacation. 4 elderly families are not completely satisfied with their financial situation, they replied that the pension is only enough for the purchase of food, medicine, and utilities.

Each family strives to acquire its own farm, arranges its own life, and acquires real estate in order to later leave an inheritance to their children and grandchildren. We were interested in asking and listening to the answers to questions about inheritance of property of elderly families. Are there any criteria for the distribution of inheritance and what are the guidelines for older families?

Initially, we asked what property older families own. 60.8% of respondents own an apartment, the same number have private houses with outbuildings, 8.6% of respondents have a dacha (urban) (two families), and 30.4% own a car. And other equipment (tractor, motorcycle, motor boats) is owned by 30.4% of families.

We asked the question, «do they adhere to any established traditions in matters of inheritance», for example, national ones. This question caused some difficulties in choosing the answer options, since there are no prescribed national Yakut inheritance rules.

Older families responded as follows: two families would prefer to pass the property on to their children who have made a greater financial contribution to the purchase of apartments and houses by their parents. 17.3% of older families said, «those who pay more attention to us, will inherit the property». Another 17.3 families decided that the inheritance of their parents will be given to children who have more children. 5% of respondents said that they would distribute the inheritance equally among all children. One and two families would like to pass on the inheritance to the one of the children who will take care of them, the son. And 6 elderly families did not give an answer.

Older families, even if their permanent place of residence is in the countryside, try to buy an apartment in the city, which they later leave to their children or grandchildren. Dachas and dacha plots are mostly owned by residents of the city.

In the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in 2015, at the state Assembly of deputies of Il Tumen, a Deputy from Neryungri prepared and proposed a bill "on a one – time monetary payment to spouses for anniversaries of joint life": for 50 years of joint life – 10 thousand rubles, 60 years – 20 thousand rubles, 70 years-30 thousand rubles. The Project was not implemented.

Currently in the Republic the following types of awards are awarded for family longevity:

- The medal «For love and loyalty» is awarded on the day of celebration of the Day of love, family and loyalty. The medal is awarded to families who have lived together for at least 25 years. Awarded families must be worthy members of society, distinguished by their contribution to public Affairs, to work, and to the upbringing of children;

- Inclusion in the book «Golden families of Yakutia», which is dedicated to long-lived families. The organizers and responsible authorities are the civil registry office And the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). The main requirements for inclusion in the book: 50 years of joint family life, education of worthy citizens for society, contribution to the socio-economic development of society, recognition by society of the contribution of this family, active civil and social activity. The book «Golden families of Yakutia» is a unique project implemented only in the Republic of Sakha since 2007. in 2019, the 6th book should be published. Each book contains information about 80 married couples. Family or close relatives must submit a request for inclusion in the book through the registry office Management bodies;

- The award «Family valor» was established by the registry office. It is funded under the program Of the government of the RS (Ya) «Implementation of family demographic and youth policy in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for 2014-2019». The award is given to families who have lived together for at least 50 years, are an example for society, and have raised their children as worthy citizens;

- «Il Darkhan's letter of thanks» is awarded along with the «Family valor» award. The letter was established by the civil registry Office. Since 2019, it is awarded to families who have lived together for 50 years or more, for strengthening the institution of the family. In the first half of 2019, 115 families were awarded a letter of thanks in honor of the family's anniversary [14].

The state's social policy does not provide for specialized types of assistance for elderly families. The study showed that respondents would like to receive assistance from the state, both moral and material. For example, in the form of increasing pensions in connection with the 50th anniversary of joint life, inviting and honoring elderly families at celebrations and events.

4. Conclusion

In their family and social life, the elderly family is included in a variety of areas of social life. An elderly family is active, mobile enough, maintains social contacts, interacts with a variety of social groups, and this is not only the family and relatives' groups.

In the study of elderly families, we found that there are factors, both internal and external, that shape the life world of an elderly family, affect its internal atmosphere, and indicate the main strategies for the life of an elderly family. At the same time, the elderly family does not take a passive position, but is an active participant in social life.

The relevance of studying the lifestyle of older families, first of all, is related to the change in the world and in our country, the conditions of life of members of society, which entails a change in the ways of organization of elderly families of their life, lifestyle.

Focusing in our research on the life world of an elderly family, we highlight the following main features of its component: family values, motives for marriage, criteria for choosing a marriage partner, age matching of spouses, level of education, family roles, family mobility, family health and economy, social support for the family, attitude to childhood.

The results of our research have shown that older families are self-sufficient in organizing their lives, do not require any special assistance from incoming social workers, as these functions are

replaced by resources of mutual support and support (emotional, material) from children and relatives. Older families are included in various social communities and groups, and they are actively engaged in professional activities. Spouses perform many functions for each other, replacing them with professionals and specialists, for example: the functions of a psychologist, since they have lived together for 50 or more years, allow them to understand each other's emotional state well.

The family values of older indigenous families are traditional, including raising children in accordance with the moral and universal values of society and morality, receiving their education, profession, creating their own families, raising children and grandchildren, and transmitting their culture across generations.

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