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**SOCIALLY ACTIVE BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
AS A RISK FACTOR OF FAMILY AND MARITAL RELATIONS  
IN A PROVINCIAL REGION (THROUGH THE EXAMPLE  
OF KURSK AND THE KURSK REGION)**

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Modern society currently undergoes socio-cultural transformation. Taking into account the high degree of dynamism of this kind of society it can be considered as a risk society, where the existence of traditional institutions itself (the family institution, in particular) is menaced. This is especially prominent among young people, because most of them are actively involved (engaged?) in the processes under consideration.

**Objective.** The objective of this article is to analyze the interrelation between socially active behavior of modern youth and their attitude as to family and marital relationships.

**Method.** Achievement of the aforesaid objective was initiated by another sociological survey conducted within the area of Kursk and the Kursk region (using method of questionnaires).

**Results.** As a result of the sociological survey within the area of Kursk and the Kursk region, it was revealed that young people feel the need to participate as in social life, in general, so in social life of their region, in particular. However, many young people actively participating in social life prone to leave over their family plans, or prefer to have only one child, or live with a partner not entering into marriage. Thus, socially active behavior of modern youth cause a risk from the perspective of their family and marital attitudes.

**Research results application area.** The data obtained herein can be used, for example, to provide recommendations for officials developing various directions of youth and population policies, as well as within the frames of courses devoted to sociology of youth and family.

**Keywords:** youth, risk, socially active behavior, family, family and marital relations.

**СОЦИАЛЬНО-АКТИВНОЕ ПОВЕДЕНИЕ МОЛОДЕЖИ  
КАК ФАКТОР РИСКА СЕМЕЙНО-БРАЧНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ  
ПРОВИНЦИАЛЬНОГО РЕГИОНА  
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ Г. КУРСКА И КУРСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ)**

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Современное общество переживает процесс социокультурной трансформации. В сочетании в высокой степени динамичности такое общество является обществом риска, в котором существование традиционных институтов, в частности семьи, ставится под сомнение. Особенно это сильно проявляется в молодежной среде, поскольку её представители наиболее активно вовлечены в современные процессы.

**Цель.** Целью данной статьи является анализ взаимосвязи социально-активного поведения современных молодых людей с их брачно-семейными установками.

**Метод.** Реализации поставленной цели способствовало проведение социологического исследования на территории г. Курска и Курской области (методом анкетирования).

**Результаты.** В результате проведенного социологического исследования на территории г. Курска и Курской области, было установлено, что молодые люди, считают необходимым для себя участвовать в жизни общества в целом и

региона в частности. Однако, среди активно участвующих в общественной жизни, больше тех, кто склонен откладывать создание собственной семьи на более поздний срок, а так же ориентированных на малодетную семью или одинокую семью и гражданский брак. Таким образом, социально-активное поведение современных молодых людей является рискологическим в отношении их семейно-брачных установок.

**Область применения результатов.** Полученные данные могут использоваться при разработке рекомендаций по отдельным направлениям молодежной и демографической политики, а так же при чтении курсов по социологии молодежи и семьи.

**Ключевые слова:** молодежь, риск, социально-активное поведение, семья, семейно-брачные отношения.

Modern dynamic and globalizing society with high rates of advanced technologies development imposes a number of sociocultural risks on its members. Vital functions of a modern individual are related to riskogenic situations. Resulting from this behavioral patterns serve as a means of adaptation to the prevalent socio-cultural conditions and make the existence of a person within the «society of risk» relatively comfortable. According to U. Beck, risk is no exception, neither a “consequence” nor a “by-product” of social life. Modern social life is constituted in a such way that inevitably produces risks, and this is a common type of production, carried out in all spheres of the society life activity - economic, political, social. Risk becomes the part of the objective reality of the environment for the individuals (natural catastrophes, environmental disasters, technology-related accidents, economic and political crises, terrorist acts and errors in social control). Thus, risk is an immanent characteristic of modern society that qualitatively differentiates it from modernistic industrial society [3].

In the scientific literature two major approaches to interpretation of risk as a social phenomenon exist. In accordance with the first approach which originates from

the cognitive sciences, based on psychology and practiced in engineering disciplines, economics, statistics, psychology and epidemiology, risk is interpreted in technical terms. The basic components of this approach are the concept of hazard, as well as the postulation of feasibility of estimating the degree of occurrence probability thereof and of calculating possible damages caused by the certain types of hazards. In this case, risk is understood as "a product of the occurrence probability of hazards and severity (magnitude) of their consequences" [5]. In other words, risk is interpreted as an objective and knowable fact (potential hazard or caused harm), which can be measured regardless of social processes and cultural environment. But this approach raises an issue of constituting risks as social facts, because perception not only of regular people but also of experts engaged in calculating an "objective risks" depends on the political and cultural contexts. Therefore, a different concept for risk analysis exists — the socio-cultural one, where risk is considered as a social construct, rooted in culture, social relations and social institutions.

One of the most popular concepts in the study of the risk phenomenon is the cultural theory of risk perception, developed by A. Wildavsky, M. Douglas and K. Dake [4, 6]. According to their concepts the risk perception by social groups should conform to the cultural peculiarities and deep-rooted socio-cultural values, which determine the forms and patterns of social interactions. Acceptance and non-acceptance of risk possibility are not homogeneous integral processes, but rather dependent on the emotional attitude of people towards the object being the focus of their attention.

D. Lapton regards risk as a result of socio-cultural and political processes and the risk itself is a changes catalyst in the society [8, pp. 17-35]. The representative of the phenomenological approach, S. Lash, considers risk and risk assessment in terms stereotypes and other semantic meanings, which determine perception and reaction to that which is considered as "risky"» [9]. A.P. Algin defines risk as the activity or action intended to illuminate uncertainty [1, pp. 19-20]. Y.A. Zubok gives more concrete definition of risk, in relation to studies devoted to societies in transition: risk is the activity in the conditions of transition from the state of uncertainty resulting from

presence of reasonable opportunity and including assessment of likelihood of achieving the desirable result, as well as assessment of possible failures and deviations from the objective achievement with consideration for actual moral and ethical standards [6].

One of the risk types is the socio-cultural risk which pertains to anticipation of certain events occurrence in the context of value system, commitment to traditions. Socio-cultural risks are associated with the social and cultural determinants and arise from the specificity of relations in the society. At present, a number of globalization consequences acts as a catalyst for production and reproduction of socio-cultural risks in family and marital relations, that is, uncertain events or conditions that, if any, lead to adverse consequences [3].

Since modern society is dynamic, and the most dynamic and progressive group of society is youth who ahead of other groups face all the changes and innovations in social life, then it first of all has to adapt to the «risk society». The process of young people's life in society and their adaptation to riskogenic situations is accompanied by developing adaptive risk-originated behavior. Individual readiness and capability to act in the conditions of risk, the ability to optimize its possible outcomes form as a necessary condition for further realization of life strategies of a modern society individual. Achieving success in life through a social activity becomes one of the life strategies at present. Thus, socially active behavior of today's young people is a mechanism of adaptation to the «risk society».

Risk is considered as a phenomenon specific to youth due to the social nature of young people as a social group. It is related to the transitional nature of the youth age as a phase of life and revealed in the process by means of which the youth becomes a subject of social reproduction.

However, in its turn, socially active behavior of the young people can also bear the risk to family institution and have a significant impact on the specifics of family and marital relations among the young people. Risk in the present conditions gains

existential meaning; it finds its reflection within the minds and behavior of individuals, affects interpersonal relationships, including family and marital ones.

Nowadays a paradoxical situation regarding family can be observed in society. On the one hand, the results of numerous studies state that family is one of the most important life values of the modern Russians and prevail over such essential things as, for example, interesting work, material prosperity, and success in professional life. On the other hand, family is one of the most disadvantaged, critical areas of the modern Russians' lives. This situation makes itself evident in the instability of marriages, disturbances in family communications and deficiencies in children's socialization increase in the number of nuclear and small families. [7].

According to analysts, the reason for the family crisis is that most people nowadays want to satisfy their spiritual needs (the drive to self-actualization, to self-development and self-improvement) not within the family but outside of it.

In order to determine the effect of modern youth's behavior in February-March of 2013 within the area of Kursk and the Kursk region we conducted a sociological survey wherein 500 young people employed in various fields and living in the Kursk region took part. The age of the respondents ranged between 15 and 29.

Youth is considered to be the most socially active category of the society. "If young people are not active, do not serve as a source of development and progress, their existence in all basic aspects is of no social consequence ... A younger generation which failed in its social self-fulfillment is a lost generation ...", – says I.M.Ilinsky [2, pp.24-25]. Social activity is the need and ability of an individual or of a group of individuals to take socially important steps resulting in change of the doer's status and / or influence targeted to trigger certain changes in actual state of affairs, thus necessarily interaction with society takes place.

The results of the conducted sociological survey show that young people in the Kursk region have active an interest in the events of social and political life (60 % are interested in the events of social and political life). However, 25% of the respondents reported lack of concern to social and political life, whence it follows that they focus

their attention on completely different issues. Such indifferent attitude of people towards politics is usually determined by the belief that policy is not of their concern.

Socially active behavior of young people manifests itself in participation of the young people in social life. The majority of the respondents of Kursk (51%) consider participation in social life to be necessary for modern people. Youth is, in fact, the most active part of the population, the vast majority of it is open minded with respect to innovations, and is willing to participate in social and political processes. And while young people should not be regarded only as a resource, youth is a real force that is able to act vigorously on the way to achieving its goals. In addition, young people believe that expansion of their involvement in social processes will increase confidence in usefulness of their activities. And exactly because of the lack of results and benefits, young people do not actively participate in social life.

The responses indicate that usefulness of the activities is put forward by the respondents (41%). The second in order of importance is the motive to solve a problem (23%). 21% of the respondents think of the possibility to earn money. That is to say that today the young people are becoming more active in exploring social life, its rationalistic component, which opens up a wide range of possibilities for self-realization and social mobility. It is no coincidence that most of the respondents see social activism manifestation as participation in socially useful programs and actions. The second most important motive according to the respondents consists in the possibility to realize and exercise their civil rights (18%). Then in order of importance follow such answers as to take part in any social movements. (14%). The other variants presented in the questionnaire were marked by a fewer number of respondents: 13% of the respondents chose the variant to engage in socio-political and professional life consciously and creatively; to love and value their country, to be aware of their rights and protect thereof; 7% - to be a member of any political party, any public organization.

In the course of the study a correlation between the age in which a couple got married and the level of social activity thereof was revealed. The more a young per-

son is involved in social and political life, the more career-oriented he/she is, and, consequently, the later he enters into marriage.

Also the study results showed that young people, actively involved in social and political life of the region being members of the public youth organizations prefer common-law marriage and are in no haste to legalize their relationship.

The majority of the respondents non-involved in social and political life consisted for the most part of people having families and children. Thus, socially active group of young people is not focused on traditional family, and it gravitates to personality-centered family. Beside that another major problem arises - the preference given by the young people to a lonely way of life. Thus the study results showed that 14% of the respondents demonstrating active public stance prefer solitude.

Young people who are not married or live common-law marriage, take an active part in demonstrations on the account of different festive events (89% and 61% respectively), are involved in the city celebrations, cultural events (65% and 43% respectively) and in the activities of political parties. The number of the people leading such way of life is noticeably less among married young people.

Table 1

**The answers distribution regarding types of personal participation in public life, depending on marital status**

Possible answers	married young people	young people living common-law marriage	unmarried young people	Total
Participation in demonstrations on the account of different festive events (1 May, 9 May and etc.)	36	61	89	62
Participation in the city celebrations, cultural events (Youth Day, City Day and etc.)	38	43	65	49
Participation in the elections of authorities for different governmental bodies	44	46	50	47
Collective beautification of the entrances, houses, children's playgrounds, surrounding areas	38	34	42	38

Participation in election campaigns (signature collection, election campaigning, work at the polling stations)	12	34	45	30
Participation in the activities of trade union organizations	17	21	21	20
Participation in meetings, demonstrations, pickets on the account of different kinds of significant events in the life of the country, the region	3	21	24	16
Participation in the work of house committees, cooperatives, organs of public self-government	16	16	10	14
Participation in the activities of political parties	11	12	16	13
Participation in job actions	6	6	7	6
No engaged in anything like that	25	17	10	17

Note: When answering this question the respondents could choose more than one answer.

Among the young people striving to change life for the better was the main driving factor for participation in socially active behavior (see table 2). It was revealed to be typical among the unmarried young people.

Table 2

### The main driving factor of young people's participation in public and political life

Possible answers	married young people	young people living common-law marriage	unmarried young people	Total
I want to change life for the better	28	30	36	31
I think it is my duty	16	16	13	15
I want to solve the problem of my concern	21	16	16	18
I want to help people	16	16	16	16
I do it to accompany the others, just out of solidarity	7	11	11	10
I want to earn money	7	8	7	7
I do it under pressure of others	5	4	2	4

It should be emphasized that the responses to this question were split as follows: 31% of the young people do not want to put up with the status quo: they want

to have the situation changed, 15% express confidence in the fact that strengthening of the true democracy is impossible without participation of the citizens guided by sense of duty (following the dictates of their hearts) in social and political life, 18% of the respondents want to be involved in solving important problems, to defend their interests. But, at the same time, motivation of married and unmarried young people, while to a certain extent maintaining the same overall trends differs significantly – the married ones are more eager to solve the problem of their concern by participation in public life.

Also not without interest is to analyze the argumentation revealing why the unmarried young people do not participate in public and political life.

Table 3

**Main driving factor of youth's non-participation in public and political life**

Possible answers	married young people	young people living common-law marriage	unmarried young people	Total
I do not have enough time to be involved in it, I'm busy	62	58	31	50
This is of no interest for me	23	23	23	23
I am convinced that my participation does not change anything	9	9	11	10
I believe that politics is the issue professionals should be dealing with	2	4	14	7
I have not had the opportunity to participate, although there was a desire	2	3	11	5
I do not see any leaders whom I wish to follow	2	3	10	5

As we can see, the arguments in favor of non-participation in political life are expressed by a considerable amount of the respondents. As for the main reasons of non-participation the answers distribution is as follows: lack of free time (50%), lack of interest (23%). At the same time family life (that is primarily true for the registered marriages) is undoubtedly a factor that reduces social activity.

The results of the presented study prove that young people who have families and children more often than not demonstrate low level of social activity. Unwilling-

ness to participate in public life has quite a negative impact on the society itself, in general, and on the family institution, in particular. Amorphous behavior of the married young people coupled with unwillingness to influence in any way social and political processes in our society, can prove both presence in them of indifferent attitude towards their own future and that of their children, towards family as an institution of the society, and lack of faith in the fact that their personal involvement can change something. This is a menacing tendency for modern society putting in danger family and marital relations, and, at the same, it is a kind of adaptive riskogenic behavior.

Also the majority of socially active young people do not want to have more than one child (51%) and 9% stated that they did not want to have children at all.

At the same time, the tendency to participate in social activities was observed among 15-18 year old young people resulting from their need for independence, their eagerness to leave the parental home and get married. In these marriages such negative trends as the immaturity of the young couple, economic inadequacy and absence of accommodation of their own may be present. All this can negatively affect a young family. Thus, we can conclude that socially active behavior of today's youth can be considered as a risk to family marital relations. And the developed patterns of riskogenic adaptive behavior themselves carry the risk.

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