

## Parenting potential of a family of a Ural monotown

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**Abstract.** The necessity to study modern families, reveal the parenting strategies of a modern Russian family is, first of all, determined by the special significance of a family as one of the fundamental mechanisms of social life reproduction. The importance of implementation of the parenting function by a family resides in developing and functioning of a sound society and in the processes of determining the future of this society. The multivariate approaches to formation of living strategies of a family in the sphere of parenting, the prevailing of studying the parenting within the framework of pedagogy have determined the selection of this article's subject. Change of various spheres of Russian society has caused a series of significant socio-economic and spiritually moral changes, which have clearly manifested themselves in destroying the former and searching for new value references, organization structures, models of personalized, business, and family relationship. In 2010, the author carried out a sociological research targeting studying a family of a modern Ural monotown. The article analyzes the peculiar features of the family culture of plant workers and the plant's corporate culture, which influence greatly everyone who is inside of it, and which have the strong potential in preventing various forms of deviant behavior.

[Satybalina E.V. **Parenting potential of a family of a Ural monotown.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(5s):224-227]. (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 43

**Keywords:** Ural monotown, family of the monotown dwellers, deviation, parenting function of a family, professional socialization.

### Introduction

The sociopsychological aura in the society, economics, politics, law and order, culture, and health of the country's population are mainly determined by the extent of deviant behavior proliferation. An important role in the existing situation belongs to reforms of 1990s, and the unhealthy situation in the Russian society can be deemed a consequence of them. The modern young people who are physically and morally unhealthy are sometimes called "the children of reforms", and only spiritual health improvement and correction of the basic life purposes of all layers of the society, starting with the supreme authorities and ending with ordinary people, can help them. One of such methods of health improvement is maintenance and support of family traditions as a method of forming a fully-fledged personality able to self-realize.

According to the researcher Eisenstadt, "creative and stabilizing elements are closely interleaved in a tradition – both of them are the constituent elements of a single tradition" [1]. This entirely refers to family traditions, which are one of the most important resources of the society's health improvement. Family traditions are a dynamically developing social institution, which includes its own standards and specificity. Family traditions and customs are a battery of long-standing moral and ethic requirements to family and marital relations of people, which are specific for each particular national culture. This definition should be complemented with the following: they "... are characterized by stable

spatiotemporal relations, morals and standards of behavior, family values, accumulated experience of previous generations" [2].

Western sociologists at the turn of XX century observed the collapse of traditional structures – family, neighborhood, and craft guild. These processes gave a rise to their concern. The modern human feels homeless in the modern society, which is mainly explained by the lack of traditions, including the family ones. Sociologists state that some people in a family are more concerned with their personal happiness and income gain [3]. If we bring the existing market model to its logical end, as sociologists note, we can end up with a world of no marriages and families. The settled market society is childless society.

Family traditions survive where there are appropriate conditions for that, as well as historical environment and community of people united with the system of unified standards and values. Researchers notice that, even in modernized countries, traditions being the tools of social regulation and translation, and cultural patterns in the household particular scheme are significantly developed; they are strictly localized in a certain area of everyday life [4].

One of such environments, to our opinion, is the environment and the community of people united with the same industrial activity and similar way of living. The subject of the research carried out by the author in 2010 was the culture of a modern family of a Ural monotown dwellers. The goal of the research

resided in revealing main characteristics and trends of development of the modern family culture of the monotown dwellers. Thus, studying the value settings, main functions and peculiar features of matrimony of the monotown dwellers, the author found it possible to carry out an analysis of the parenting potential of this family type.

The family culture of the dwellers of a Ural monotown who were workers of the local economic mainstay is the expressed and mediated by traditions, customs, and standards achievement by a human of certain goals by means of value-related commitments. Family culture and opportunities of the parenting potential of a family is determined by both external and internal factors and connections. We associate with the external connections the peculiar features of the life in a Ural monotown. A contemporary average Ural town is as a rule a monofunctional, one-company industrial center, which is most closely tied to the activity of the local economic mainstay. The peculiar features of the family life of monotown dwellers are partially represented in the provincial urban families. For example, according to the opinion of the Ural researcher E.N. Zaborova, the specific features of a Ural town are deemed to be the dominance of family and household values, family home celebrations combined with the public ones, closeness of the family and collective relations [5]. The research that we have carried out allows complementing the above features with the following ones:

- survival of the patriarchal nature of a family in the form of behavioral stereotypes established by the parenting and cultural traditions of the plant's environment, which in turn influence on the gender culture.

- unilinearity at interaction with the external world, which is based on the mono consciousness, mono behavior, mono standards that manifest themselves in the mono-family-related and traditional for the miners' family stereotypes of family behavior.

A comparative analysis of the parenting potential of this type of a family in the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods was rather difficult for the author due to the small number of information sources, especially with regard to the pre-Soviet period, as certain aspects of the family culture of Ural plant workers were of no interest for researchers.

Nevertheless, the provided analysis of information sources gives reasons to conclude that the following circumstances influenced the implementation of the parenting function by a Ural plant workers' family:

The structure of the family, which determined total subordination of the younger members of the family to the elder ones. A workers' family was

distinguished for its straight relationship and mutual care of each other. Older workers note the principles of collectivism and mutual aid, which were nurtured in workers' families since childhood.

The financial insecurity of workers' families was the cause of the immense scale of juvenile labor. Children were engaged in production as they reached the age of 12, and teenagers started working in hot shops as they reached the age of 15. Often, the head of a family had to seek extra earning. Materials of studying the Ural mining plants showed that the working conditions at all plants of the region including the state-owned ones were deadly harmful for human health [6].

The unsatisfactory living conditions: in each barrack-room of the Nadezhdino plant, "two or three families live despite they do not have anything common. It is difficult to choose better conditions to destroy a family, which is interleaved with elements that are strange for it. The intimate relationships lose their blushes and decency" [7].

The working overstrain, which, however, did not prevent families from managing the parenting function. Children were taught the principles of collectivism and mutual aid as essential skills for living in a society through the joint work with their parents.

The above-listed circumstances did not humiliate childcare in the workers' families. The urge of parents to arrange leisure and parenting of their children evidences that workers had Philoprogenitiveness. In the territory of Urals, such sayings as "Children are no burden, but joy", "Cutting off any finger hurts" are still used sometimes. Family rules and customs were common for the population of all factory towns of Urals. The low level of literacy and culture of the adult members of families determined the forms of intra- and extrafamilial communication, which were of passive nature (having relatives as guests and visiting them), which required much more time than education of children.

All the mentioned above gives reasons to conclude that a Ural family of the pre-Soviet period managed to fulfill the parenting function, with the basics of parenting taught through joint labor starting from the early childhood. Labor was the main method of socialization of the rising generation in the families of Ural workers.

During the Soviet period, workers' families transformed considerably but many features of the culture of a patriarchal family of mining factory workers survived.

In general, the implementation of the parenting function in the families of the Ural region dwellers during the Soviet period was greatly influenced by

the foster care of workers' families rendered by the government. The government (and the enterprise) provided permanent and material aid to families in the form of free pre-school and educational institutions of any levels, recreation camps, sports schools and clubs, as well as the system of supplementary education (which was free either). This greatly encouraged fully-fledged socialization of the rising generation despite the financial capacity of the workers of family.

Despite this fact, researchers show that in the families of Soviet workers in the early 1970s, such an important element as communication with children was developed insufficiently. Three days of observation showed that 35% of fathers and mothers did not arrange joint strolls, games, checking home task, joint reading at least once (even any of them!) [8]. The cause of this phenomenon resides in the unreasonable duration of the housework combined with the hard physical work at production as well as the passive nature of the parental consumption of culture.

It is to be noted that in families of the USSR period, the primary orientation of adolescents took place quite successfully. According to researchers, the determining influence on the selection of a profession by children was provided by the family. The basic concepts of professional socialization are based on the general development of the role theory by T. Parsons [9] and R. Linton [10]; the stages and levels of the process of professional socialization were concerned in the works by D.E. Super [11].

According to the results of the carried out research, labor was used as an important tool of children parenting in the Soviet period family culture [12].

The reforms of 1990s placed monotown families in extreme conditions by making them to exist at the end of tether in financial terms. The changes taking place in the society negatively affected the parenting potential of families. Transition of enterprises into market operation mechanisms in 1990s and the financial and economic crisis of the early XX century discouraged and hindered implementation of the parenting mission by families. The market ideology that was actively promoted during that times allowed the government and enterprises to disengage themselves from the obligations on foster care of the families of their workers and children. This process redoubled due to the weakening of relatives and parents' obligations and the strengthening of the freedom of choice at professional self-determination.

We have tried to analyze the parenting function of modern families using the materials of the research, which we have carried out. Thus, we

revealed that our responders had an almost unanimous opinion that love is the essential element of fully-fledged development of a child. 89.9% of men and 94.2% of women insisted on that. The second most important obligation of a family with respect to children according to responders was health care: this was confirmed by 84.1% of men and 90% of women; the importance of parenting in a family was emphasized by 81.3% of men and 82.3% of women. According to the responders, education is also the prerogative of a family, with education of the parents being one of the main factors that predetermines education strategies of the children. Some 50% of the responders among workers emphasized the necessity to provide child's education. 78.1% of men and 83.2% of women among junior executives, 87.9% of men and 91.6% of women among mid-level executives, and 94.5% of men and 95.5% of women among senior executives were sure that families must educate their children. The obtained results confirm the settled trend in the society: parents who work as executives program the life scenario of their children by analogy with their own scenario, in which education has played the primary role.

Educating children at commercial higher educational institutions was affordable for 53.9% of responders; 46.1% of them did not find it possible or necessary; and 20% were in doubt. At that, among the 53.9% of responders who agreed to educate their children at higher education institutions on a fee-paying basis, 84.5% were office workers and executives of various levels, i.e. educated responders are more prone to invest the money they have saved in their children. Thus, a modern provincial Ural family has poor opportunities to provide their children with contracted higher education (some 60%) as it increases the risk of the family poverty. An important role in this belongs to the limited variety of secondary and higher educational institutions that would meet the modern educational standards and take into account not only the demands of the infrastructure of the monotown, but also the demands of the individual himself.

We should also note that labor in the circumstances of a plant, which includes industrial risks, intensive physical loading, routine nature of the work, harmful impact on the organism, is not found attractive by the responders despite they, let alone their parents, work at the plant. The limited nature of the labor market and the need in earning money is the leading factor that determines selection of a profession in the circumstances of a monotown. Stating this, we base on the conclusions of researchers that social movements of the population take place less intensively in smaller towns, which

have less number of economic spheres and sociocultural and professional positions, than in large polyfunctional cities.

The result of the comparative analysis of the parenting potential of a family of a Ural monotown dwellers is as follows: for the modern families, the economic function is prevailing, which makes it closer to its pre-revolution "prototype", thus narrowing its capability of implementation of the parenting function. Nevertheless, despite the poor fulfillment of the economic function, a modern family fulfills its parenting function. At that, all responders noted that efficient socialization of children is possible only if combined with support of the families by the local economic mainstay and generally the government. Assistance to a family is a matter of national importance and requires immediate implementation.

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3/23/2014