

Analysis of the social well-being of urban citizens: gender aspect in the conditions of digital transformation

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Abstract— The article discusses the social well-being of the residents of Volgograd based on the data of empirical studies of recent years. Social well-being is defined by the authors as an integral characteristic of a person who is self-aware and has an idea of the degree of his emotional, psychological, social comfort in society, by correlating his activities, lifestyle, goals with values, norms, traditions, social processes, dynamics of social development generally. Estimates of social well-being by of Volgograd citizens are lower than in neighboring regions and the country as a whole. In survey, citizens showed the low-key expectations of macro-social changes and the critical attitude to the economic situation in the country. At the same time, Volgograd citizens value of family, health, work, housing, clothing, the ability to buy food, friends, close people, their support, the ability to educate children. It is that values help Volgograd citizens to define their state of social health as positive. If the population of women is more than men in Volgograd, it is interesting to use a gender approach to understand the social well-being of urban citizens. In the article, the research results correlate with the ongoing digital transformation, as instability and/or high rate of changes in the technologies.

Keywords—social well-being; gender; digital transformation; city; urban citizens; social health.

I. INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the state of social mood and social well-being in the dynamic conditions of modern life is an actual direction of sociological research. This theme is related to assessments of the relationship between the individual and changing society.

Actually, sociological interpretations of social well-being have different traditions. Philosophy, psychology, and cultural studies have influenced it, which leads to the

variability of research approaches and methods of measuring social well-being.

In this article, social well-being is considered as an integral characteristic of a self-aware person who has an idea of the degree of his emotional, psychological, social comfort in society, by relating his activities, lifestyle, goals to values, norms, traditions, social processes, and dynamics of the social development in general scale of Volgograd.

According to statistics, the share of the urban population as of January 1, 2017, in Russia is 74.3%, the share of the rural population is 25.7% [1]. There is an imbalance in the composition of the Russian urban population in 2017: out of 109032363 city residents, 49858997 people are men, and 59173366 people are women. [2]. Judging by the statistics, this asymmetry persists over the past three decades. Thus, there is a trend towards the feminization of Russian society, in this case, its urban part.

The relevance of the modern understanding of the "women's issue" emphasizes the acceptance disposal by the Government of the Russian Federation from March 8, 2017, No. 410-r about "National Action Strategy for Women for 2017–2022". This document speaks of "a system of measures by 2022 that ensures the implementation of the principle of equal rights and freedoms of men and women and the creation of equal opportunities for women to implement them in all spheres of life, increasing economic independence, political activity, opportunities for women's self-realization, and overcoming stereotypical ideas about the social roles of men and women" [3].

It seems certain that the participants in the implementation of this Strategy will be urban women of metropolitan centers and large cities. The urban women is the most important levers of management and organization of social life are concentrated. The more significant is the

gender approach, which reflects social relations as determined by society and culture and not by nature, for analyzing the social well-being of citizens. The hypothesis of a possible gender difference in social well-being is, in our opinion, interesting because it will help to see whether this difference affects, if it exists, social life and whether it affects the stability of social and many other relations involving two large social groups - men and women.

Describing the main approaches to the operationalization of social well-being, they can be grouped on the basis of the interpretation of the key concept. Thus, social well-being is considered as a determinant of the strength and power of the state (T. Yudina, and others [for example 4]), as a socio-psychological emotional indicator of self-organization in life, and satisfaction with it (J. Toshchenko, N. Latova, E. Shlykova, etc. [for example 5]). In turn, a number of authors present a more comprehensive social well-being, seeking to include both macro and microindicators there. It should be noted that the study of social well-being has a peculiarity in connection with its study within the boundaries of a particular social community - territorial, ethnic, professional, gender, etc. In this regard, the analysis of community identity is of particular importance. Identity can act as a factor in determining social well-being, be a resource of positive well-being, or be a source of discrimination, restrictions, dissatisfaction of needs and depreciation.

Foreign studies open up a wide range for measuring social well-being, as they are presented in quite detailed and well-developed methods, including methods for analyzing and interpreting research results. The methods of Corey Lee M. Keyes, a group of Iranian researchers, as well as the Ukrainian method of IISS-44 by E. Golovakha and N. Panina [6, 7, 8] are most fully described.

In 2017, the authors undertook a survey to search for those factors that, according to respondents, determine their social well-being (N = 504, residents of Volgograd 18 years and older, the sample is representative by sex and age). To be able to analyze a number of indicators in dynamics, measurements were carried out according to previously developed methods - the RIPN method [9, 10] and the IISS-44 method [8]. In order to expand the possible limits of interpretation of quantitative data, they were supplemented and strengthened by the possibilities of qualitative research (in-depth interview, N = 23).

Investigating the social well-being of citizens, we will test the following hypothesis: Volgograd residents have a low level of social well-being. It has gender differences and is due, among other things, to a comparative assessment of the city relative to other regions and the country as a whole. Volgograd city men and Volgograd city women, who share traditional values, are generally satisfied with the situation. Values of development, self-realization, in the urban space of Volgograd are not personalized.

An important factor influencing the social well-being of citizens is, in our opinion, the process of active penetration into the daily life of digital technologies [11]. The ongoing digital transformation, understood as instability and high dynamics, due to changes in the technological sphere of society, is the focus of attention of researchers, including gender scientists. For example, the All-Russian Scientific Conference with international participation with elements of

the scientific school “The Gender Dimension of the Digital Economy: From Strategy to Action (2018-2030)” was devoted to the problem of providing women and men with equal and effective access to the digital economy [12].

Modern studies show that “there is a digital gender gap in Russian society, as a result of which women are not well integrated, for example, into IT education and the digital economy, which contributes to the growth of social tension and declining of the woman’s social well-being, which are subjective factors of social risk. <...> The goal of closing the digital gender gap is to overcome the sociocultural threats and risks associated with gender stereotypes and discrimination against women, as well as threats of socio-economic stagnation due to the lack of specialized staff [13].

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

In our study, the in-depth interview method was used, conducted in Volgograd among citizens aged 18 to 65 years. A total of 23 informants took part in the survey. Discussion of issues of social well-being related to various aspects of its manifestation. So, the issues of assessing the political and economic situation in the country, region, city were raised. The issues of everyday life, the plans of citizens for the future, etc. were discussed. In earlier works, we investigated social tension as a manifestation of negative social well-being through the analysis of comments on social networks [14].

Qualitative methods will allow to establish differences between the factors of individual, subjective level, level of identification - family, home, life, work as determinants of social well-being and macro-level factors - economy, politics in the country and in the city. So, for example, foreign qualitative studies consider the problems of identification of children with disabilities as factors affecting social well-being [15]. Actually, this study shows, along with an analysis of the influence of the factor of limited physical abilities, the importance of social connections, relationships in a community, group identity of people in determining their social well-being.

The process of self-identification, which takes place not only by territorial, but also by ethnic, gender characteristics, identification by family, professional and other status, experienced by the population of the city, increases the level of uncertainty, instability in the life of citizens, which, in addition to objective statistical indicators of population income, social infrastructure, has an impact on changes in the social mood and well-being of citizens.

Before stating the results of the study, it is necessary to make a number of explanations.

To denote the sociocultural nature of men and women, the concept of “gender” is used — a society-shaped system of values, norms and characteristics of male and female behaviour, lifestyles, ways of thinking, roles and attitudes of men and women acquired by them in the process of socialization, supported by social institutions.

The essence of the gender approach is to achieve gender equality we need that special measures. The awareness that the phenomena occurring in society have a different impact on the male and female population, causing their different reactions - and there is a gender approach.

Thus, a gender approach in social and humanitarian knowledge implies an analysis of the relationship between a person and society, organized on the basis of cultural and symbolic sex determination, using gender as a complex characteristic arising at the intersection of many social characteristics.

The urban environment becomes a place for the development of new values, including gender ones. The city as a centre of sociocultural interaction networks influences the hierarchy of citizens' social values, which is manifested in the change of priority values for men and women, and consequently, on their social well-being.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

So, we will analyse the research results obtained during the mass survey (N = 504). The collection of information was carried out by the method of questioning, from 10 to 20 November 2017. The sample is representative by sex and age.

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS BY THE GENDER TO THE QUESTION "WHAT DO YOU THINK, THE CURRENT CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN OUR REGION BETTER, WORSE OR THE SAME AS A WHOLE IN THE COUNTRY?" IN %

Variants of answers	Men	Women	Total
Living conditions in our region are worse than in the whole country	56,10	50,00	53,00
Living conditions in our region are the same as in the whole country	42,68	47,64	45,20
Living conditions in our region are better than in the whole country	1,22	2,36	1,80

So, from table 1 it is clear that inter-regional comparisons are clearly not in favor of our region - just over half of the respondents (53%) rate life in the Volgograd region worse, compared to the country, the rate of those who believe that we live the same is very high, like other Russians - about 45%. It is believed that the living conditions in our region are better than in the country only about 2%, which is within the limits of statistical error. A significant role here, in our view, is played by public authorities, which, with their management decisions, form public opinion and population estimates, as well as analytical ratings of cities, which, according to a set of indicators, put Volgograd on the last places [16, 17].

It should be noted that women responded more optimistically to the question, compared with men. It can be explained by the need of women to remain optimistic and find positive sides in the most difficult situations. Some parallels can be drawn with the results of research on the social well-being of women conducted in certain regions of Russia, analysing which the authors note: "On the one hand, women are more adapted to new environmental conditions because of their natural qualities (they are more enduring, tolerant, socially responsible) on the other hand, manifestations of discrimination against women are significant barriers to adaptation (they have a higher risk of losing their jobs, fewer opportunities to get a new place, promotion) <... > Women are sensitive to adverse changes in the economic situation. At the same time, their social

well-being depends primarily on the socio-psychological climate in the family, relationships with children, close relatives, and friends. However, as experts note, this cannot last for long. N. M. Rimashevskaya argues that the decline of the socio-economic situation, low financial defence and poverty of women can lead to destabilization of intra-family relations, and then to gender asymmetry of health and process of depopulation, in other words, to a weakening of the quality of the population" [18].

We illustrate the estimates of Volgograd with data from a qualitative study that will make clear the negative opinions of life in the city and region. "I don't like that it takes two and a half hours from Krasnoarmeysky to Spartanovka, without the opportunity ... Well, that is, I don't like public transport in general. I do not like the lack of such an assortment and quality of goods that I would like to see. That is, everything gets better with time, but if you compare it with the same ... with our capitals, then to get to any place and find what you need in Volgograd is much more difficult and often impossible" (man, 56).

"Almost all factories are closed. Giants that. The tractor plant, the aluminium plant is almost stopped. Our chemical plant has got up, the shipbuilding plant. That is, the economy of the city does not live, and so, stagnates. If we take it just externally, then, too, in the city not everything is flourishing here, clean and good. Roads are not cleaned in timely. New parks do not open. Prices for everything else, utilities are rising, and the service is vice versa (getting worse)" (man, 47).

"Well, our crime has not decreased. For example, a year ago, right near my house, they shot ... Just a man, probably from the State Duma in the Volgograd region, just was walking in the park near the house" (man, 19).

Estimated judgments about life in Volgograd are often negative, and the range of problems is rising prices, crime, poor infrastructure (bad roads, lack of parks, family recreation places), dirt, and lack of developed industry. Most of the informants designate these problems, but they also find a source of positive assessments of the situation in the city - the upcoming World Football Championship - "Volgograd is preparing for the World Championship of the 18th year, a stadium is being built. This is certainly better. The condition of the roads is not very much, I would like better. Well, I hope that by the 18th year, the city of Volgograd will be transformed in terms of roads, hotels and the rest of the infrastructure, which will help us accept the World Championship games, and the residents of the city will get some good consequences." This is the only promising event that has a positive assessment in the eyes of Volgograd. They see the potential to solve other problems - with roads, the development of tourism and sports infrastructure, jobs, support for sports. Next, we turn to the analysis of indicators for assessing the financial situation in the family. Table 2 presents the results of the respondents' answers to the corresponding question. In 2017, the indicator was 25%, the financial situation improved by 17% respondents in 2017.

Women are less optimistic in their responses, compared with men, assess the situation of the family "worse than it was a year ago" and better than the previous year. Perhaps, such answers are related to the fact that in most families it is women who are involved in planning and implementing the

family budget, and if the income part is stable, then the expenditure is changing and these changes are visible primarily to women, respectively, affect their social well-being.

TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS BY THE GENDER TO THE QUESTION "WHAT DO YOU THINK, YOUR CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION (YOUR FAMILY) IS BETTER, WORSE OR ABOUT THE SAME WHAT IT WAS A YEAR BACK?", IN %

Variants of answers	Men	Women	Total
The financial situation of the family is worse than it was a year ago	22,98	26,95	25,00
The financial situation of the family is the same as a year ago	56,85	57,81	57,34
The financial situation of the family is better than a year ago	19,76	15,23	17,46

In assessing prospects for the next year (Table 3), residents of Volgograd are more restrained - more than half – 59% in 2017 remain neutral, and about a quarter (27%) are optimistic about the improvement of their financial situation in the family.

TABLE III. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS BY THE GENDER TO THE QUESTION «WHAT DO YOU THINK, IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION BECOMES BETTER, WORSE OR THE SAME AS NOW?», IN %

Variants of answers	Men	Women	Total
The financial situation for the next year will worsen	14,92	12,50	13,69
The financial situation for the next year will not change	57,66	61,33	59,52
The financial situation for the next year will improve	27,42	26,17	26,79

In a qualitative study, informants, giving a subjective assessment of their lives, used neutral subcategories more often - no better and no worse than everyone else. For example, "well, my life is not better and not worse, stable, because I work as a kindergarten teacher. And while It hasn't touched me personally, but it has already touched other people. And when you look at it all, I think that this is not very good at all" (woman, 43).

Some noted that life is changing for the better. These statements are rather restrained and can often be explained by the personal characteristics of the informants. So, one of them, a man, 22 years old, participates in the volunteer movement and social life of the city.

Volgograd residents have very different plans for the future. There are active positions like "I am planning, plans are very much the very first to open a Centre for youth innovation creativity in Volgograd. Now we are actively engaged in this and we hope that everything will be fine, everything will work out" (woman, 37).

There are very restrained statements, for example, "What I strive for, honestly, I do not know. I do not even know what plans I will have next week. I have some local

plans, perhaps for a day, for three days, for example, on that day I need to go to the store, clean up. Some such local plans. But global ... There are, let's say, some ideas, but I cannot call it plans that I really realize" (man, 42).

"There's nothing so special as any other person: I would like to improve financial well-being, to rest more, to take care of my health" (woman, 56).

Several people are going to leave the city and even the country, arguing this as follows:

"I strive for self-development; I want to travel. Maybe abroad, perhaps somewhere in central Russia. I just do not like the Volgograd climate" (man, 56).

"I would like to earn six thousand euros and go to Italy to the best pastry chefs to do an internship there" (man, 19).

Over the last 100 years (according to censuses of the population in 1897 and 2010), the population of Volgograd has grown from 54,754 urban residents in Tsaritsyn district [19], up to 1021215 people in Volgograd [20]. More than 120 nationalities live in Volgograd and the Volgograd region: Russians, Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Armenians, Tatars, Cossacks, Azerbaijanis, etc. There is a mixture of cultures, languages, religions, norms and values, traditions and attitudes, which is the product of its sociocultural development throughout history.

The sociocultural specificity of the urban culture of Volgograd finds its expression in the existing way of life, in the standards of behavior and in the systems of basic and instrumental values.

The sociocultural and historical space of the urban culture of the city forms, realizes and exposes social consciousness containing social norms and values, from universal, shared by all humanity, to unique, characterizing a certain subculture [21, 22]. The concept of value is differently understood in different disciplines. For example, the social interpretation of values raises the question of their understanding as standards (specific norms and standards) or ideals (vectors that set the direction, but not specific goals of actions). Social value is a concentrated expression of the collective experience of a group or community in the form of an ideal, that is, the idea of perfection, of the desirable in various spheres of social activity [23].

As we mentioned above, values are one of the factors of social well-being of citizens. Therefore, of interest are the results of studies showing how the hierarchy of social values of citizens of a large city is changing (from a gender perspective) and how these changes affect their social well-being.

According to respondents, such values as: active life; love (spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one); beauty of nature and art (experience of beauty in nature and art); good and loyal friends; life wisdom (maturity of judgment and common sense); health (physical and mental health) and a happy family life are priorities. If you take the liberty of gender marked these values, it turns out that traditionally perceived as feminine values: "the beauty of nature and art (experiencing beauty in nature and art)", "love (spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one)" are a priority for male respondents [24]. Marking social subjects as male and feminine entails attributing to them the corresponding qualities and corresponding social values.

Thus, social values can be labeled as male and female, and as shown by the results of the study, the sociocultural space of the city can be explored using a gender approach, complementing and identifying gender features important for the formation and improvement of this environment.

Accordingly, the range of prospects and plans reflects the presence of social dynamics, population mobility, and, moreover, of different age groups. The level of plans and goals is different - from family values, to self-development, the creation of community centers in the city scale.

TABLE IV. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS BY THE GENDER TO THE QUESTION «WHAT DO YOU THINK, IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE RUSSIANS WILL BE IMPROVED, WORSE OR REMAIN AS THE SAME AS NOW?», IN %

Variants of answers	Men	Women	Total
The life of most Russians for the next year will worsen	25,40	23,44	24,40
The life of most Russians for the next year will not change	60,08	66,02	63,10
The life of most Russians for the next year will improve	14,52	10,55	12,50

Short-term social optimism presented in Table 4. It is evaluating the expectations of changes leaves much to be desired - more than half (63%) believe that life will not change (neither it will improve, nor will it worsen), and 24% predict deterioration. Thus, optimists in 2017 only 12%.

Table 5 presents forecasts for 5 years. Here the estimates are less pessimistic, apparently, since the forecast horizon is much further. However, only 28% of Volgograd residents believe in improving the situation in the country, while 40% of respondents hold a neutral position, and 31% are expecting deterioration.

TABLE V. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS BY THE GENDER TO THE QUESTION « WHAT DO YOU THINK, IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS, THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE RUSSIANS WILL BE IMPROVED, WORSE OR REMAIN AS THE SAME AS NOW?», IN %

Variants of answers	Men	Women	Total
The life of most Russians for the next 5 years will worsen	29,44	32,81	31,15
The life of most Russians for the next 5 years will not change	41,13	39,84	40,48
The life of most Russians for the next 5 years will improve	29,44	27,34	28,37

Discussing of affect social relations to social well-being, we will illustrate by the respondents' answers in in-depth interviews. Assessing their own mood (emotional characteristics), they indicated the weather, health, the ability to do a pleasant job (watch TV, work, etc.) as factors that influence to their mood.

Responding to a question about their well-being, satisfaction with life, respondents said that if they are healthy, then this is an occasion for happiness and

satisfaction. Among other factors, there were good family relationships, job availability, and in some cases - the prestige of the work. Family, children, health, the opportunity to educate children are the key factors that Volgograd residents of different ages considered when assessing their social well-being.

Critical assessments of the economic situation in the country are consistent with the data from a quantitative survey in which respondents were asked about purchasing activity (see Table 6).

TABLE VI. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS BY THE GENDER TO THE QUESTION «WHAT DO YOU THINK, IF WE TALK ABOUT LARGE PURCHASES FOR HOME AS FURNITURE, REFRIGERATOR, HOUSEHOLD ELECTRONICS, TV, THAT IS NOW GOOD OR BAD TIME TO MAKE SUCH PURCHASES?», IN %

Variants of answers	Men	Women	Total
Bad time to make large purchases	22,27	21,09	21,67
Neither good nor bad time for making large purchases	60,32	61,72	61,03
Good time to make large purchases	17,41	17,19	17,30

So, December 2017 was called a good time for shopping by 17% of Volgograd residents, a bad time by 22%, a neutral answer was given by 61% of city residents.

IV. CONCLUSION

Citizens of Volgograd estimate their life in the region lower compared to the country as a whole. At the same time, city women set higher marks for this parameter. It can be explained by the need to remain optimistic and find positive sides in the most difficult situations. Social well-being of Volgograd women depends on the family environment, the health of children and loved ones, which prolongs optimism, but cannot last for long. In in-depth interviews, it was men who gave bright negative assessments of life in the region.

In assessing the financial situation of the family, the Volgograd women are less optimistic, which is possibly related to the increase in expenses in the family budget. Traditionally the expenses of budget for food, utilities, clothes, house is kept by the housewives.

Values such as active life; love (spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one); good and loyal friends; life wisdom (maturity of judgment and common sense); health (physical and mental health) and a happy family life are of high priority among Volgograd residents. Focusing on them, citizens assess their lives as happy and prosperous.

The presence of perspectives and plans reflects the social dynamics, mobility of the population, and, moreover, of different age groups. The level of plans and goals is different - from family values, to self-development, the creation of community centers in the city scale. But it must be admitted that a number of citizens see prospects for the realization of their goals outside Volgograd.

Short-term and long-term optimism of women is lower than that of men. Only 10% of urban women are waiting for improvements in the coming year, and 27% - within 5 years.

Studying the factors affecting social well-being, we referred to the judgments of the respondents. We note that they called such as the weather, the opportunity to do a pleasant job, rest, work, health. These values are traditional. As for self-development, learning, achieving goals, many respondents found it difficult to determine their perspectives, and they used the definitions of “like everything”, “no better and no worse than others”, etc.

Referring to the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the study, it should be recognized that the social well-being of Volgograd residents is determined by traditional universal values, and therefore are not very pessimistic.

Those urban citizens who are focused on change, growth, development, advanced training, improving the quality of life evaluate life in Volgograd in a negative way, including comparing with other regions. Such assessments mean that the development values in the sociocultural space of a city are quite problematic to implement.

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