Social Orphancy: Sociological Analysis of Personal Motives to Child Abandonment

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ABSTRACT

This paper is devoted to the study of social orphancy reasons and growing number of abandoned children. Authors stress on personal factors affecting abandonment by mothers. Urgency of that issue is caused by the need for comprehensive study of social orphancy via negative social phenomena: Poverty, unemployment, social deviation which may potentially adversely affect individual behavior of any unfavorable socialization's victim. Personal factors of child abandonment were studied in two aspects: considering mother's deprivation of abandoners and their socialization in childhood. Problems referred to by abandoning mothers are absence of accommodation, money, work, etc., i.e., objective problems of everyday life, but to a great extent that is the heritage of personal and family nature connected with unfavorable previous generations and forgetting about morals.

Keywords: Childhood Sociology, Social Orphancy, Socialization in Childhood, Mother's Deprivation
JEL Classifications: I380, I180, I150, Z130, Z180

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest achievements of social humanitarian knowledge about childhood of the end of the last century is sociology of childhood. Surely, sociologists have always been interested in childhood issues but mainly simultaneously with some other matters under education sociology or family sociology. Subjective aspects and specific social difficulties are often in the shade.

As distinct from traditional psychological and pedagogical research, still related to the biological paradigm of ontogenesis, childhood sociology considers childhood category not as a natural being but as a social construct and children - as participants (not always fully entitled, though) of the social process, having own world views, stressing that children's view/views require serious attention from the adults (Scheglova, 2004).

Within the last decade of XXI century, childhood sociology was developing as after wars and civil riots about 1 million of children became orphans or were taken away from parents, 12 million lost their homes and about 10 million were psychologically injured. Only in developing countries, 143 million children are orphans and dozens of millions of children live in the streets, 1 million in prison (Situation with children in the world 2006-2005, 41). In that case, orphancy is an objective social phenomenon of abandoned minor children lives.

Meantime, modernization and social problems growth in many developed and developing countries especially in Western and Eastern Europe actualize the social orphancy issue. As opined by the UN international experts, hospitals, nursing homes and special institutions are filled with abandoned newborns (Situation with children in the world 2006 2005, 41). In various countries various specialists call them differently: Abandoned

children, governmental babies, born to be abandoned, forever newborns, etc.

2. ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE

As opined by Shulga, Oliferenko, social orphans are a special social and demographic group of children, 0-18, left without parents' care by socio-economic and moral reasons (Oliferenko et al., 2008), i.e. those children who have parents deprived of parental rights, suffering heavy diseases (including mental), due to alcoholism, drug addiction, etc., who abandoned their children.

Social orphancy, as stressed by Rybinskiy is refusal from or non-participation of people in exercising parental liabilities (parent deprivation) (Rybinskiy, 1997, 22). As evidenced by the same author, over 50% of children are put in orphanages due to social problems: deprivation of parental rights, bad living and material conditions, unmarried woman's status, imprisonment of parents. In 96% of families where parents are deprived of parental rights, one of them and two even more often are alcoholics. Alcoholism is still the leading reason for social orphancy. Abandoned children are a special group. The main reasons or child abandonment are: his/her heavy disease (60%), hard living and material conditions of a family (20%) (Rybinskiy 1997, 32).

Traditionally social orphancy is studied via integration of sociological approaches which ensures its analysis as a manifestation of global transformations on one hand and a factor of creation of a special type of personality on the other hand. In the first case, social orphancy is productively analyzed via anomia developed in works by Durkheim and Merton, in different times analyzing anomia and subjective reactions of individuals to anomic situations (Durkheim, 1998). Caused by anomic processes the research phenomenon itself becomes a factor of further anomization of family/matrimonial and parent/child relations deepening dysfunctional relations in the family and breaking institutional public basics (Merton 2003, 41).

Merton's concept allows to fit into macrosociological paradigm the individual responses to social orphancy (Dementieva, 2008, 105). Mass disacceptance of social norms caused degradation of motherhood and parenthood resulting in ignorance of traditional family functions. On the other hand, behavior of orphans is also strictly deviant as socialization faults create destructive behavior patterns. Life situations leaving no opportunities for realization of individual rights and concerns cause negative adaptation methods which nevertheless ensure more efficient positioning in the environment, neglecting social norms and rules of play. Therefore, social orphancy is to some extent a result of such adaptation.

Subjectivist approach to social orphancy as a deviation is seen in theories of secondary deviation emerging in the second half of XX century. Here, social orphancy is regarded as a social construct, stigma or label, and on the other hand as a response to its award. In the center of construction-building, there is a norm notion as a sample of sociological relativism and therefore, as opined by authors, may not be considered as a turning point to find social deviations limits, including in connection with social orphancy.

Besides, authors specify functional aspect of social deviations. That approach is represented in works by Lemert, Becker, etc. (Lemert, 1998).

Within constructionist sociology of Bourdieu, social orphancy may be discovered via habitus term as a system of dispositions preventing changes, and social space (Bourdieu, 2007). Critical approach to family, basics of which were put by Hoffmann, stating dominating and exploitation nature of family relations explains the nature of stable negative behavior practices as a factor of social orphancy. The logic of critical paradigm development in sociology conditioned feminist approach in the social science, trying to argue traditional division of male and female roles and therefore family functions and to initiate a discussion on public forms of child education and liberalization of family unions (Hoffmann, 2000).

In structuration theory of Giddens, personal factors of mother's child abandonment are considered as a stratification model containing three levels: motivation of action, rationalization of action and reflective monitoring of action (Giddens, 2005).

In the paper by an American psychiatrist Bowen family systems theory we studied how a number of non-overcome injuries tend to be passed on the next generations with a lot of emotional cut-off patterns growing (Bowen, 2005). Back in 1930's, studied child-abandoning mothers were demonstrating emotional and psychological immaturity, unpreparedness for marriage due to emotional instability and egocentrism (Nash, 2000).

In Kazakhstan, social orphans are the absolute majority of abandoned children. Hidden social orphancy has been manifesting more and more in recent years. Growing number of abandoned children inevitably causes growing orphan homes. Real view of orphanage in Kazakhstan is hard to determine. Recently, there has been growth trend in connection with abandoned children.

According to the information submitted by Ministry of education and science of Kazakhstan, there are 33,680 orphans in our country, 21,856 of them are under guardianship in Kazakh families, 1,947 are under foster care. Meantime, 9,879 abandoned children are kept under governmental support in 188 child homes. Out of them, 19.6% of children are living in 43 organizations of public social healthcare and protection system and 80.4% - in organizations of educational system (Kazakhstan truth 2014).

The need to study the reasons for child abandonment and implementation into social prophylactic practice of preventive measures are dictated by public concern about catastrophic growth of child abandonment after birth, dramatic consequences for health and fate caused by early removal of children from biological mothers (Study Of Child Abandonment Reasons [0-3 years of age] in Karaganda region, 2011-2012; The government put a noble task for all the citizens - to eliminate social orphancy 2013).

In this paper we tried to study the effect of deep personal factors of child abandonment by mothers. In sociological research design we put the research question: What determines child abandonment

motive? How personal is mother's biography, how her psycho-emotional state and socialization specifics determine her decision on child abandonment?

3. METHODOLOGY

In the analysis of such delicate issues like child abandonment, qualitative collection of information is the most adequate. That method is unique as using it we studied life situations of abandoning mothers containing specific experience, special emotions and sufferings integrated into their living world. The qualitative methodology helped us to concentrate on the subject, an agent of social action and apply first of all to the personal everyday experience and cooperation with others, expressed in words, statements, stories about personal life. Using qualitative methods like narrative interview we tried to study concrete people in concrete situations, disclose the sense of individual emotions, see their world.

For narrative interview, a guide was developed containing four units of open questions and some with possible variants. The first unit contained demographic questions about respondents, the second - family status, the third - welfare level, the fourth - child abandonment factors. Audio recording was used during interviews. To improve the contact, we stressed that the information is important and interesting for us: It is very important what you told now. Can you give us more details? It is very interesting; we did not think that the situation is like that. Then, main questions were asked accompanied by introductory words stressing the importance of future conversation: What feelings do you have after child's birth? Which factors did affect child abandonment? Finally, the result of logical part of interview was summarized (Yadov, 2003).

Use of narrative interview allowed the interviewees to freely narrate about their lives. During such free narration, abandoning mothers associatively remembered the episodes of the most subjective value, they were thinking of their lives, their self, separating it from integral we. It allowed to find the most important sense-building moments constructing their biographies.

As shown by the practice of interviewing by Russian researchers, such self-cognition and separation of inner self is hard for interviewees, especially for low educated people, which is typical for our research when abandoning mothers would commonly think in *we* paradigm. Via deep interviews, we studied individual fates of abandoning mothers, their past experience and everyday troubles and emotions. The experience of such people is a sort of a fragment of general social experience. The aggregate of such practices as a puzzle ensures social view of society as a whole (Giddens, 2005, 352).

Thus, qualitative method in our research is an unchangeable way of collecting, processing and analyzing information about certain individuals and their personal senses. In the research we concentrated attention on social action's agents, their everyday personal experience and cooperation with others, expressed in words, statements, stories about their lives.

4. RESULTS

For interviewing, 17-38 years old women were selected. The selection covers only voluntary child abandonment (mothers' free will but not governmental like deprival of parental rights by court decision). In perinatal center of Astana we did 52 interviews with child abandoners. Information on interviewees was processed in MAXQDA software with the following results. Average age of children abandoning mothers: 26, the youngest - 17, the oldest - 36 (Figure 1).

Age data evidences that children abandoning mothers are rather not teenagers who got unplanned pregnancy but women who reached natural child-bearing age (22-28) and could fully be mothers due to age characteristics. As the practice shows, age factor in abnormal mother's behavior plays an important but not main sense. Psychological factors should be accounted for, as most of children abandoning mothers are socially infantile and personally immature which is the result of bad socialization.
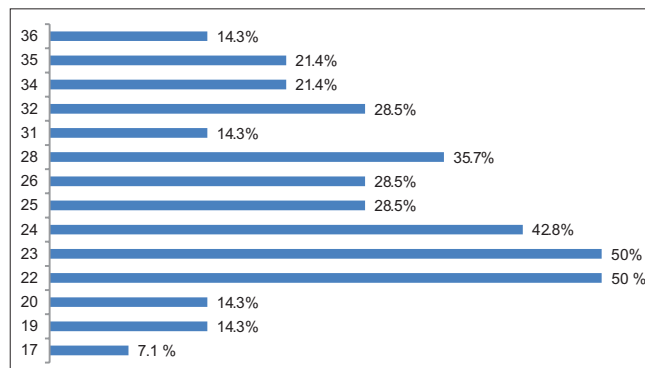
So, over 50% of children abandoning mothers socialized in bad conditions with child/parent relations characterized by a higher level of emotional and psychological coldness. Those specifics of the initial socialization affect further lives of women. As shown by interviews, over 50% of children abandoning mothers are from incomplete families (Table 1).

As seen from the above family status data, 85.7% of women are married, 50% divorced, 46% single. Those are the women socialized in parent families. Then, 50% are widows, 25% divorced and 17.9% single. They were socialized by grandparents. Out of those initially socialized by stepfathers, 25% are divorced, 14.3%

Table 1: Distribution of children abandoning mothers by the type of initial socialization in families and family status

Type of initial socialization	Distribution by family status (%)			
	Married	Single	Widows	Divorced
Socialized out of parents family by grandparents		17.9	50	25
Socialized by stepmothers		7.8	50	
Socialized by stepfathers	14.3	12.8		25
Socialized by relatives		15.5		
Socialized by parents	85.7	46		50

Figure 1: Age of children abandoning mothers

married, 12.8% single. Out of those socialized by stepmothers, 50% are widows and 7.8% single. 15.5% of single women were socialized by relatives.

As seen from the data, children abansdoning mothers do not have family support: 25 women are single, 12 had civil marriage for 2 months - 3 years, 9 were married, 6 - divorced or widows (Figure 2).
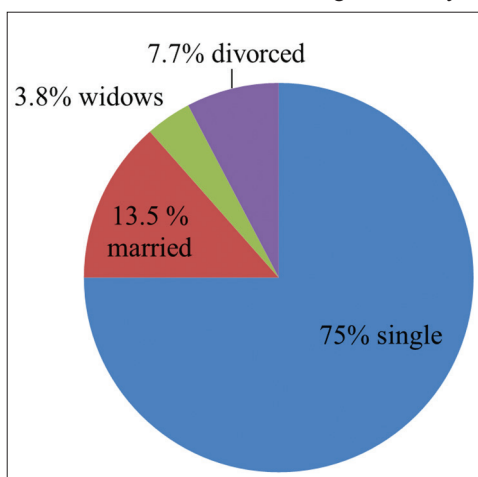
Analyzing family status of children abandoning mothers it should be noted that in most cases 75% of abandonments were made by single women. Pregnancies of such women abandoning babies were often results of either accidental relations or long cohabitation terminated after pregnancy (Rakhypbekov et al., 2014). I do not know him, we met a couple of times. I am not going to leave the child with me (Zhanna, 25).

Reason for child abandonment in married women (13.5%) is linked to uncertainty in husband's feelings, fear not to manage mother's role, lack of financial stability, health problems. We do not have own place to live, we hire an apartment, we need to work together with my husband to feed other kids (Aida, 35).

Quite often, child abandonment is caused by sudden termination of relations with baby's father or divorce. Instability and ruined family, feeling emptiness caused divorced women to abandon children. We lived together for 5 years, we have two kids. We often went on business. When I got pregnant he told he leaves me. He has a girl in Pavlodar who he visits. I left him. Now my sister helps me watching kids. I cannot keep one more child (Gulsaya, 32).

In some cases, sudden widowhood causes child abandonment. In our case, 3.8% account for that as well as psychological reasons related to shock from death of close people but the decisive factor for child abandonment is lack of support from relatives. Once my husband was called to come to sauna with his friends. He

Figure 2: Distribution of children abandoning mothers by family status

went. He came late night. In the morning police came and said he was arrested for rape. Hi friends hired prostitutes and violated them. They made him guilty. He was imprisoned and killed there. I did not think that everything would happen so quickly, that my husband will be in jail and killed (Zhanargul, 34).

Me and my husband just married. He died in a car crash. I do not want the kid to remind me of him. I want to build a new life. I think I can marry again (Banu, 26).

Among our respondents, five girls 17-22 years old had relations with married men. He has his family, he came to us from another community to be employed. When he was here, we lived together, I got pregnant and knew late about that and did not tell him, as he left (Aigul, 22).

We met almost for a year when I told him about pregnancy and he said he did not wish the kid as he was married (Zhaniya, 23).

We have been friends for 6 months and then I told him I was pregnant and he said that it's your problem and solve them your own way. He lives in another city, married and has family (Dariga, 23).

Of great interest for the analysis of personal motives for child abandonment is the socio-territorial data. Regions of residence of abandoning others: 17 - South Kazakhstan region, 11 - Akmolinsk region, 8 - Kostanai region, 7 - Karaganda region, 4 - North Kazakhstan region, 3 - Kyrgyzstan, 2 - Mongolia. The results show that most abandoning mothers are from the regions with high unemployment rate causing them to come to Astana to look for job opportunities and earn something.

Women during pregnancy were working for sole proprietors providing various services: Bakers, waiters, kitchen workers, sellers, commercial representatives, cleaners, janitors, nursery teachers, construction workers. They were earning 40,000-100,000 tenge per month (USD 260-660). Rather low for capital city, their income relates first of all to the low level of education: out of 52 interviewees, only 1 has higher education, 8 do not have full secondary education, 12 have specialized secondary education, 31 have secondary education. Most money is spent on hire of accommodation (Table 2).

So, 75% of interviewees did not own accommodation. They hired accommodation with friends or lived with relatives. For instance, a single woman hires accommodation and understands that with a child she will lose this opportunity. Some of them did not have accommodation when leaving birth home: I simply do not know where to go when I leave birth home (Makhabbat, 23).

Also, interviewees told that they were living in other region and came to Astana with the purpose to abandon the child: I came to a

Table 2: Distribution of children abandoning mothers by accommodation

Owned accommodation (living with parents, husband)	Hired (with friends)	Joint residence with relatives	No accommodation when leaving birth home	Living in other city (came to abandon child)
4	34	6	5	3

friend here before child birth, she called ambulance for me. Now I will go home. Only my friend and aunt know about abandonment (Aigul, 22).

In 37 cases, pregnancy was not planned. The number of first-time mothers abandoning children is 36, multiparas abandoning children - 16.

Most abandoned children do not have heavy diseases. 96% of children - social orphans did not have detected diseases.

As told by interviewees, reasons for child abandonment were: First, absence of accommodation, work, education, income; second, wish to hide illegitimate children from parents and relatives, no support from father of child; third, death of relatives or close friends.

5. DISCUSSION

During narrative interviews, we studied deep personal factors causing girls/women to abandon their children. The research results show that to reduce the basic problem of motherhood refusal to the social factors (low social welfare, accommodation problems, cultural and religious traditions, etc.) is not quite correct. Surely they play a role at every stage of preparing to motherhood but the basics of personal socialization, behavior stereotypes and world-view potential are built in childhood, so family plays an important role in motherhood development.

Back in 1930's, studied child-abandoning mothers were demonstrating emotional and psychological immaturity, unpreparedness for marriage due to emotional instability and egocentrism (Newell 1934, 387-401). This occurs in women who suffered psychological deprivation and aggression in childhood and were unable to solve their childhood or pubertal conflicts. Such persons may be concentrated on their own problems only, feeling unfairness and lack of love. Sometimes, extreme dependency on mother or father is seen in them, and in some - vague striving for new emotions. Quite often that leads to numerous sexual acts which they are unable to continue due to personal immaturity and which do not bring emotional satisfaction.

In our research, 58% of interviewees were socialized outside of parent family, 26% in unstable families missing parent love and care. Since the early childhood they had negative experience of interpersonal relations. Personalities of many women not ready to efficient motherhood were formed in aggression subculture, some of them suffered humiliating distress and indifference from their parents. Negative experience in initial socialization allowed us to consider those women victims of insufficient socialization in the early age, insufficiently covered by humanization process (Nikitina, 2004). Many women abandoning their children repeat the defective stereotype of mother's behavior acquired in childhood (Chamberlen, 1988).

Mother's deprivation is a deep root of child abandonment in women suffering replacement of social roles. Socialization function was exercised by relatives or grandmother who was unable to be a good enough mother. From narrative interview of Dinara: I was small wham mum took me to my granny for living. I do not remember her, granny told me she did not contact with her, Elmira: My granny fostered me, my mum had her family and did not communicate with us. When I was 21, granny died and my aunt brought me up.

Child abandoning mothers briefly describe their mothers' families and in detail are telling about grandmother, creating the impression that grandmother was the functional mother, at least, the main fostering adult. In socialization of grandchildren grandfathers and grandmothers share their experience, observe customs and traditions of respect to ancestors when older generation person's image was closely related to life experience category, its accumulation and transfer to the young. But in the quickly changing world that style of training is not essential for current grandchildren as it suggests hypercare, extra concern about grandchildren, making them spoon fed - dependent, egocentric, infantile, not adapted to the contemporary society. As exemplified by interviewees - Bayan: Granny has never been angry with me, always was indulging me, Indira: Granny and grandpa were caring about me letting do whatever I wanted, telling that I was their favorite granddaughter, Gulzhan: Granny loved me, stuck up for me and solved everything for me.

The trend for children socialization by grandmothers and grandfathers in Kazakhstan is more and more popular every day. Abandoning their children, parents form a hidden/latent model of social orphancy which may adversely affect the relations which those children will enter into in future. Contemporary society's growth rates are blistering, knowledge and experience of the older people are often inapplicable or even dangerous due to changing conditions, circumstances, laws - thus making an individual to get socialized in community independently, taking the above into account rather than the authority of the elders which cannot be the main support for them. The contemporary lifestyle makes looking for individual survival methods and problem situation settlement. As specified by Alvin Toffler: Now, lifestyle became the way of individual identification with some or other subculture (Toffler 1970, 306). Lifestyle becomes the way of individual's social adaptation to the contemporary civilization (Nash 2000, 147-151). In those conditions, individual personal immaturity is reflected in socialization level.

Narrative interviews confirmed that decision to abandon children in that women emerges as a rule long before child's birth as the result of motives struggle - when instinctive female's striving to motherhood and public morals are counterweighted by disbelief in own strengths and abilities. That may relate not only to real difficulties but to false expectations of physical or moral disability, feeling inability and unwillingness to overcome life difficulties. Apparently, that's why the most frequent references to direct reasons for abandonment are material conditions (no accommodation, money, etc.) making up 46%. They are followed by references to young age and wish to hide illegitimate children from parents/relatives (15.38%) and to abandonment by child's father (9.68%).

Also, the latter motive is often related to aggression to both child and child's father. In that case, a female abandons her child as if in good faith stating that she will not love the child anyway and will revenge for insults caused by child's father. As opined by such abandoning mothers, for their child, an ideal family of a rich businessman will be immediately found where the child will feel better. Such abandonment motivation is beneficial for the child only due to a single reason - mother is approved abandonment immediately and the child gets more opportunities to quicker find a family.

Abandoning females are mostly unsure that they do not wish a child, while so-called childfree do abortions in most cases, even late abortions causing life danger. Meantime, the less socialized a woman is, i.e. the less close people are around her, the higher the chances are that she will make her decision and find money for abortion, even late. Weakened social relations and so called anonymity typical for large cities are often the reasons or abandonments.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data obtained allows to make some conclusions on women abandoning their children. So, a typical feature of such women is psychological and emotional immaturity manifested in infantilism, egocentrism, affective expansiveness, mother's deprivation. The distinctive features were: inadequate self-assessment, increased personal and situational worriedness, unresolved complexes and fears, emotional instability, uncertainty in successful exercising of mother's role. In some cases, deep personal problems were detected related to conflict relations in the family, members of which are often morally and materially unprepared to child's birth, to woman's social status not permitting to create a normal family, to father's abandonment.

Briefly summarizing, it should be noted that the role of parents in children's socialization is multi-aspect and is reflected in formation of child's personality in early childhood. Socialization of personality, family's social status, occupation of family members, material conditions and level of parents' education greatly predetermine child's life way. Besides conscious, full and targeted training given by parents, children are affected by family environment while its impact is accumulating with aging, reflecting in personality structure. Specifics of cooperation between a child and parents, the degree of tenderness, emotional links and attachments are effective within the whole childhood period and further, being sort of an etalon for building child's relations with other people.

In the contemporary Kazakhstan transitive society, social norms boundaries are being lost: the previous system of values is destroyed while the new has not been developed or generally accepted. Certain social groups like family and children begin to stop feeling their belonging to that society which causes socially important problems like growing number of abandoned children due to personal factors. Today we can speak about macrofactors like unemployment, accommodation problems, income absence, forming social orphancy problem, but they are secondary while the core factors are personal, internal female factors.

In this article we tried to study how personality's motivation analysis in the context of routine and the unconscious contributes to the detection of child abandonment problem affecting individual's social life foundation and social cooperation. We studied how individuals with their activities change themselves and the society as well. We studied the series of biographies of child abandoning mothers in connection with internal mental experience and events faced by individuals in the course of cooperation with maters like family, environment, and training. The study of family stories and family situations occurring in the childhood of child abandoning mothers showed great importance in researching child abandonment reasons. Of special importance is the image of own family - mother and father – as it forms the model of woman's and future mother's behavior.

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