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 The Authoritative Syndrome in Attitudes and Educational Practices of Russian Parents
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The contradictory nature of the post-Soviet cultural transformations manifests itself in the ambivalence of parental consciousness, in the gap between the declaration of democratic values and the transmitting of authoritarian attitudes, which indicate the stability of the manifestations of the syndrome described in the works of T.Adorno. Authoritarianism exists as a stable personal formation, but the degree of intensity of which depends on external conditions, and the social situation may actualize or, on the opposite, weaken corresponding personal dispositions. Rigidity of educational attitudes as a manifestation of the syndrome of authoritarian aggression is the centerpiece in the structure of indicators of authoritarianism. Its significance is exacerbated by complexity of mechanisms of intergenerational transmission, extreme resistance of principles and methods of upbringing that parents carry from their own early experiences over to relationships with their children. These attitudes increase likelihood of domestic violence and endanger psychological health of children. The article addresses educational attitudes of mothers, as well as their idea of the role of a father in families with varied economic resources.

Methods

The study involved 500 mothers selected basing on the criterion of self-identification of their economic status (low and medium), under the age of 45, with children aged from 1.5 to 3 years old. Economic resources, within the framework of the study, are generally understood to mean a complex of material goods in the possession of a family, including aggregate income, property security, housing situation, together with assessment of a subjective consumer status. The instrument employed here to obtain primary information was the direct questioning method - a personal interview with registration of respondents' answers to questions put by the interviewer.

The questionnaire included the following sets of questions: (1) social and demographic characteristics: age, educational level, family and professional status, (2) family structure (nuclear and extended), parents' family status (normative family, stepfamily, single-parent family), parenthood status of the family; (3) economic resources of the family (family income level, property security, housing situation, subjective assessment of the consumer status, (4) cultural resources of a family (cultural and educational competencies, cultural practices); (5) attitudes and educational practices of mothers/ fathers.

Results

The stability of the authoritarian personality syndrome, of which "strict upbringing strategy" is part, is conditioned by its complex nature and difficult living conditions. Therefore we expected it to be stronger in low income families. Mothers from medium income families showed an unexpected result. Their parenting strategies appeared to be not only contradictory, but also even more authoritarian in terms of control of the children. The well-being of their children is closely connected with providing a high level of direction, defining the limits of safe behavior and strictly monitoring that these are not violated by the children. Mothers from IC families are willing to give more freedom to their children, but less often tend to establish emotional bonds with the child, more often ignore the child's interests and desires, and tend to be more detached from the child's life in general. Analysis of educational attitudes in relation to the age of mothers shows that mothers over 30 years of age, in comparison to younger mothers, are more likely to respect a child's personality, they more often take into account his/her individual peculiarities and adapt to them, believe in the potential of their child and in his/her ability to succeed. With age, focus on a child's needs and security grows. At the same time, no age-related differences in attitudes were revealed with respect to the level and nature of control over a child's behavior. Mothers with secondary vocational education more often than mothers with higher education, consider total control and strict discipline, as well as guarding, essential, as they believe that a child is unable to succeed alone. Mothers from MI families have higher requirements for the activity of their spouses in the role of father.

Conclusion

In mothers' attitudes an authoritarian position towards their children is expressed quite clearly: expectation of obedience, willingness to control all aspects of his/her life, strictness. This model of education is the result of both a simplified approach to the parent role characteristic of part of parents, and a reflection of hypertrophied care of loving parents for their child's in a society undergoing numerous transformations. Authoritarian attitudes are more often characteristic of families with low economic resources. Improvement of material conditions of life and high level of education of parents contribute to weakening of authoritarian tendencies, but the inertia of authoritarian upbringing continues to exist. Awareness of parents of the effects of authoritarian practices on mental and personal health of children, growth of competence in developmental psychology, effective communication with children, development of tolerance skills, cooperation, and respect for personal space and children's right to free choice are vital for democratization of family education.

References

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