

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY “THE LIFE OF MEN IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS”

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Introduction. Methodology.

In 2016, with the support of the Heinrich Boell Foundation and the international center Free Happy People, a group of researchers investigated problems and beliefs of men living in four Russian republics: Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia. A total of around 800 questionnaires and 80 problem-oriented interviews were collected in these republics. The sample selection sought to equally represent men of different ages, marital status and education. The survey was conducted by employees of the North Caucasus NGOs and educational institutions using face-to-face interviews at informants' places of residence, workplaces and during their leisure time.

The research focused on a number of issues regarding men's lives in the republics: the respondents were asked about problems and hardships they face, their life priorities and values, living conditions and leisure time, marital status, family life and so on. The section of the questionnaire about family and personal life included questions on some local practices, such as polygamous marriages and “honor crimes”. The researchers also enquired about hardships men face in the North Caucasus and spheres they want to see changes in; their opinions, beliefs and opportunities that are available for men's personal fulfilment. A unit in the questionnaire was devoted to the problem of violence: possible motives for physical and psychological violence were discussed, as well as men's personal experience of manifestation of violence and the ways it is legitimated.

The results enable us to understand the social environment that men live in, as well as their attitudes towards problems they face in the North Caucasus. The report contains links to the detailed data provided in the presentation.

Hardships and problems

The main survey section included questions on hardships men faced in their lives, their emotional state and spheres they wanted to change around them.

First and foremost, men spoke about economic problems in the region, such as unemployment and low wages (Slide 2-3). The majority of participants were concerned about the lack of work in the republics: in Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan this problem was mentioned by 78%, 76% and 69% respondents respectively, while in Kabardino-Balkaria 58% considered it to be a major problem. About half of the respondents believe the wage rate is low (the problem is especially critical for residents of Ingushetia, with 61%). About a quarter of men also believe that at the level of republics, there are limitations in occupation options. In Chechnya and Dagestan, this problem is noted primarily by young men under 30 and men with higher education. It is not surprising that in the face of the current economic situation, about a third of the respondents noted that the need to provide for the family is an issue for the men in the North Caucasus (it is most problematized in Chechnya, with 37%, and to a lesser extent in Dagestan, with 25%).

Another disturbing indicator is their relationship with the government. The problem of powerlessness in face of the authorities is most acute for men in Chechnya and Ingushetia, where

a half of them reported this. It is also not all safe in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, where about 30% of the respondents claimed that men didn't feel protected when interacting with the police.

There were also local peculiarities detected by the survey: in Chechnya, men are more concerned with male health problems (34% of participants), while in Dagestan excessive drinking was more of an issue (32% of respondents). Based on specific questions, it is noticeable, indeed, that Dagestan had the smallest percentage of men who had never tried alcohol in their lives (compared with other republics), and the highest percentage of respondents who mentioned they consumed different types of drinks a few times a month.

The republics of the North Caucasus are societies with strong patriarchal structures that form the base of the social order where men are obliged to take responsibility for women in their families and represent their clans. About 30% of participants consider this a burden. Although for the men of Kabardino-Balkaria this is true to a lesser extent, as only 18% listed the responsibility for clan and family. A similar difference can be seen in the evaluation of the necessity to be responsible for women's behavior: around 20% in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan found this burdening. In Kabardino-Balkaria, however, only 8% of respondents interpret this as an issue.

In the research, men were also asked to depict the issues they faced personally, and the ranking of problems somewhat changed (Slide 4).

Despite the high level of concern regarding powerlessness in face of the authorities, the number of men that responded to having a first-hand negative experience decreased, although still remained large; almost 40% in Chechnya and 30% in Ingushetia faced it personally. In Dagestan, this number is smaller – 24%. In contrast with the other republics, Kabardino-Balkaria appears to be a safer region, with only 16% of those who feel powerless when contacting with the authorities.

Health issues were experienced by around 30% of respondents from Chechnya and Ingushetia, 20% in Kabardino-Balkaria and 12% in Dagestan. For older respondents, this percentage naturally increased.

Questions reflecting community control were problematized only by a small number of respondents, both on the level of the republics and from men's personal experiences. Such options as limited bride candidate options and inability to make one's own decisions were not considered a problem by most men. Even though the largest number of participants were pressured by these limitations in Kabardino-Balkaria, this number is still small (no more than 16%). The results reveals, however, that Chechen men are also burdened by the lack of autonomy (14%).

A tiny proportion of respondents thinks that men do not face any problems in the republics: only 2% in Chechnya and Ingushetia, and 7% in Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan.

Life satisfaction. Who helps?

An important indicator of the men's well-being is respondents' answers to the question "What feelings and emotions do you have the most often when thinking about your current life?" (Slide 5). The most optimistic appeared to be the residents of Dagestan: an equal number chose options "I have vigor" and "I am in a cheerful mood" (22%); 30% of men feel calm, 21% feel content, 18% are happy and only 10% and 5% mentioned anxiety and indifference. The respondents from Kabardino-Balkaria felt similar: 21% of participants often have a cheerful mood, 15% mentioned they have vigor and 18% feel calm. However, the region also showed the highest percentage of men who are annoyed when thinking about their lives (11%).

The responses of men from Chechnya and Ingushetia were quite similar: “cheerful mood” was chosen by only 9%. Anxiety was mentioned by 27% in Chechnya and 21% in Ingushetia; 12% of men in both republics claimed they felt indifferent. Other important alternatives are confusion (13% in Chechnya, 16 % in Ingushetia, and only 3% in Dagestan) and happiness (7% in Chechnya and 8% in Ingushetia). It is worth mentioning that the most frequent answer chosen was “ I hope for change for the better”: it was chosen by 46% of the total sample, while distribution over the republics is more curious, being 59% in Chechnya, 47,5% in Ingushetia, 42% in Kabardino-Balkaria and 33% in Dagestan.

This data shows that despite the controversial evaluations of their lives, many men are, nevertheless, not satisfied with the current state of affairs and anchor their hopes in a better future.

Men were also asked to name people they are most often willing to share their problems and concerns with (Slide 6).

First and foremost, respondents from all the republics are open with their friends: half of participants from Ingushetia, 43% from Kabardino-Balkaria and 39% from Chechnya discuss their troubles with friends. In Dagestan, alongside with friends, 30% of men also trust their brothers. Men also appreciate opinions of their wives while solving problems; this is more salient in Dagestan with 42%, although also not insignificant in other republics, with 33% in Chechnya, 29% in Ingushetia and 27% in Kabardino-Balkaria. To a lesser extent, men share their feelings with parents; they do it more often with mothers than fathers; in Ingushetia, this number is the highest (22,3%). Of note is that the option “with nobody” was picked by about fifth of men: 23% of men in Kabardino-Balkaria, 20% in Chechnya, 19% in Dagestan and 18% in Ingushetia do not have a person in their social environment whom they can share their feelings and problems with. It is probably at least partly because men are expected to suppress their emotions and the problems they face.

For a deeper understanding of problems of and expectations from the men in the North Caucasus, we examined the image of a “successful man” constructed by the respondents. (Slides 7). According to their responses, a successful man is

a family man: the majority of men picked this option in the survey (74% in Dagestan, 61% in Chechnya, 56% in Kabardino-Balkaria and 50% in Ingushetia)

a wealthy man: 40% of men in each republic (and a half in Ingushetia) mentioned the importance of material well-being

a respected man: more than a third of respondents (this number is 44% in Dagestan) consider that being a successful man requires respect of his family. Respondents from Chechnya emphasize the importance of community respect.

a man who can protect his family: about 30% of men from all republics think that it is important for men to be the rock of the family.

a man who is satisfied with his life: as it appears, having a positive evaluation of his life is also a trait of a successful man. To a lesser extent, it was mentioned in Kabardino-Balkaria (24%), and to the greatest extent – in Ingushetia and Dagestan (30% and 35% respectively). Men possibly interpreted this option as an ability to keep negative emotions inside and not to complain about their hardships.

For 29% of respondents from Ingushetia and 27% from Dagestan, high social status was an integral part of the image of a “successful man”, while independence and freedom are particularly appreciated by the participants from Ingushetia (31%) and Chechnya (25%).

Responses to the question about changes men want to have in their lives generally correspond with the issues men mentioned above. (Slide 8)

The desired changes primarily involved financial improvement: men from the four republics want to make a better living. It is more salient in Ingushetia (46%) and Chechnya (41%),

albeit the respondents from Kabardino-Balkaria (37%) and Dagestan (33%) also support this endeavor.

Being capable of helping other people was also valuable for about a third of the men in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia. What they probably meant by this was not charity, but mostly being able to support their relatives. A certain proportion of men would also like to improve their health, especially in Chechnya (32%) and Ingushetia (31%).

Quite a big number of men claimed they wanted to get married.

Love, family and intimate relations

One of the questionnaire sections related to intimate and family lives of men in the republics of the North Caucasus (Slide 9 and 10).

The analysis of the responses about premarital sexual life revealed that the majority of men in all republics experienced sexual relations with one or several women before getting married: 53% of respondents from Chechnya, 55% from Ingushetia, 63% in Dagestan and 75% in Kabardino-Balkaria confessed they had had premarital relations with at least one woman.

The analysis also showed that age, place of education and religion significantly affected the freedom of premarital intimate life in some republics. For example, in Chechnya and Ingushetia young people are less likely to have sexual experience before marriage, compared with older men. The level of religion has an impact on intimate relationships in Dagestan and Ingushetia: men from more religious families are less likely to have sex before marriage. Furthermore, the place of education was a significant characteristic in Dagestan and Ingushetia: men who received education in other regions were more likely to have sexual relations than those studying within their native republic.

A certain percentage of men continued to have intimate relations with other women while being in marriage. In Kabardino-Balkaria it appears to be a typical experience, as about half of men admitted they had an affair with at least one woman. In Dagestan and Ingushetia, however, two-thirds of men stated that they had never had an extra-marital affair.

The North Caucasus is well-known within Russia as a place where polygamous marriages are permitted by religious rules. The research shows, however, that the vast majority of men did not practice polygamy marriages. Only 11% of men from Chechnya, 15% from Dagestan, 10% in Kabardino-Balkaria and 7% of men from Ingushetia stated they had two wives. (Slide 11)

Men named different motives for having a second wife. One of the legitimate reasons accepted by many participants was simply the opportunity itself, which is provided by the Quran. This was especially so for the Chechen and Ingush men (62% and 47% respectively), however, 37% of men from Dagestan and 41% of men from Kabardino-Balkaria also mentioned this reason. (Slide 12)

The next significant reason for men to have a second wife is the impossibility to have children in their first marriage. The absence of children is especially important for men from Chechnya (39%) and Ingushetia (44%), although respondents from Kabardino-Balkaria are also concerned about their heirs (27%).

The emotional component of the second marriage was important for 43% of men from Ingushetia, 31% of respondents from Chechnya and 29% from Dagestan. The emphasis on love-based relationships in the second marriage is probably related to the fact that first marriages are

often organised for the purpose of social status and domestic reasons (helping out with domestic duties, looking after men's parents and so on), where the groom's affection is not a primary reason for the first marriage.

Interestingly, 30% of men from Dagestan considered gender disproportion (too few men) in the republic a legitimate reason to promote polygamy.

Some men argued that polygamy was no more than just a popular trend today (15% of respondents in Chechnya think so). Men also admit that often plural marriages are just a morally justified strategy to have a lover (15% in Dagestan hold this opinion)

One of the survey's questions was about the gender division of labour in families. Men were asked who usually perform different types of domestic duties, men, women or jointly. (Slide 13 and 14)

In general, from men's perspective, domestic duties are quite gender-polarized within families in the North Caucasus. Almost unanimously, men emphasized female duties, which included cleaning, cooking, dishwashing and ironing. However, the results revealed that not all men refute participation in these activities. Respondents from Kabardino-Balkaria appeared to be the most egalitarian, as around 12% of men mentioned they performed tasks that usually fall on the shoulders of women. The division is more salient in Chechnya and Ingushetia. In Dagestan, around 7% of men believe that these duties are shared between men and women.

Domestic violence. Men's viewpoint

Russia is known to be a country with a high rate of domestic violence and high tolerance to violence in general, and North Caucasus is no exception. One of the research's purposes was to determine how men legitimated psychological or physical abuse towards women. In a questionnaire, men were provided with a list of "reasons", and they were expected to choose those legitimate for physical and/or psychological violence. (Slides 15, 16 and 17) Although it is important to mention that there was a certain number of men who consider any kind of violence towards women as unacceptable, many respondents chose at least one option.

The main legitimate motive for physical violence is the woman having an affair: 85% of men from Chechnya, 80% respondents from Dagestan and 67% from Ingushetia mentioned this option. Talking back was considered deserving of punishment by 45% of men from Chechnya, 40% from Ingushetia and 33% from Dagestan.

In contrast with other republics, Kabardino-Balkaria is distinct in its "mild" customs. The only motive for physical abuse that men from Kabardino-Balkaria are allied with remaining republics is a woman having an affair (85%). As for talking back, men suggested it should be responded to by moral pressure, not physical assault.

Communicating with unknown men is considered a potential motive for physical violence by 49% of respondents in Ingushetia, 39% in Chechnya and 34% in Dagestan; it is a reason for psychological pressure for more than a third of men in each republic. Keeping in touch with people she was prohibited to could also be punished physically: this is so for 29% of Chechen men, 22% of Ingush men and 21% of men from Dagestan. Psychological violence is justified by respondents in 40% of cases if the woman keeps in touch with people she was not allowed to; a third (46% in Dagestan) consider communicating with unknown men as a legitimate reason for moral pressure, and for 48% of Ingush and 64% of Dagestani men, visiting public places without permission or while being escorted is also a legitimate motive for psychological violence.

Around a half of all participants justify psychological abuse in cases of a wife not showing respect to the husband's parents or other relatives (in Ingushetia, the percentage is the highest and

lies at 60%). Moreover, quite a number of men, especially in Chechnya (35%) and Ingushetia (25%) believe this is a reason for a physical punishment.

In Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, most options were seen as possible motives for psychological violence. Thus, unsatisfying performance of the roles of mother and housekeeper was considered a legitimate trigger for moral pressure for more than half of respondents; wearing indecent clothes, visiting public places without permission and communicating with the wrong people are all reasons for moral abuse for more than 40% of men. Being disrespectful to husband's relatives as well as verbal non-obedience should be "corrected" by means of psychological pressure, according to more than half of respondents. Even the refusal to carry out the so-called "marital duty" – basically, refusal to have sex, – may be punished using psychological pressure, according to 43% of men from Chechnya and 36% of those from Dagestan.

Furthermore, for a number of men, physical and psychological violence towards women could be justified by their personal intoxication or even used simply as a precaution or losing his temper.

The research showed that the majority of men were aware of the level of violence towards women in the republics (Slide 18). Firstly, men acknowledged the existing controlling practices, such as men's control over the family budget (92% in Ingushetia, 86% in Chechnya, 85% in Dagestan and 75% in Kabardino-Balkaria); expression of jealousy, which can be seen as a controlling strategy (83% in Dagestan, 81% in Ingushetia, 80% in Chechnya and 75% in Kabardino-Balkaria); obstruction of education (84% in Ingushetia, 82% in Dagestan, 78% in Chechnya and 63% in Kabardino-Balkaria); control over women's leisure time (85% in Ingushetia, 73% in Chechnya, 72% in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria) and restriction of communication with her friends (this is admitted by more than half of all respondents).

More than half of respondents were able to distinguish psychological assault, such as critique of women's appearance and mental abilities (mentioned by 76% of respondents in Ingushetia, 71% in Kabardino-Balkaria, 63% in Dagestan and 61% in Chechnya), verbal insults (around 65% of men admit this), as well as threats to take the children away (this is a problem for 50% of respondents in Kabardino-Balkaria, 63%, in Chechnya and 37% in Dagestan). Half of the respondents from Chechnya and Kabardino-Balkaria were familiar with cases when women were expelled from home, and more than half of men in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia were aware of the fact that women in their relatives' or friends' families are forced to do the housework.

Awareness of physical violence against women was significantly lower among respondents. Although men acknowledged that women in the republics suffered from physical abuse in the form of slaps or pushing (this is acknowledged by 52% of respondents from Chechnya, 50% from Kabardino-Balkaria, 44% in Ingushetia and 41% in Dagestan), men remained strikingly ignorant about more serious physical assaults. About a third of men in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia, and only 14% in Dagestan are aware of cases of women being beaten with fists or other objects; no more than 15% of men in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia are aware of the threats of using weapons or gunshot injuries, as well as of cases of rape. Respondents from Kabardino-Balkaria were the most aware of the problems with physical violence that exist in their republic: 21% of men are aware of instances of a weapon being used to threaten or wound, and 28% recognize the problem of rape.

When comparing this data with the results of a survey of women conducted in the same republics, the higher rates of physical abuse becomes visible (Slide 19). 23% of women from

Kabardino-Balkaria experienced rape, 35% of women in Chechnya and 25% of women in Dagestan said they experienced rape, or they were aware of cases that had occurred to women they knew. Furthermore, 71% of women from Chechnya and 54% of women from Dagestan complained about beatings, and 40% of women from Chechnya and 24% of women from Dagestan reported being threatened with weapons or gunshot wounds.

Thus, based on the research results, we can imply that even though the level of physical abuse is supposedly lower in Kabardino-Balkaria than in Chechnya and Dagestan, men in Kabardino-Balkaria are more willing to notice and admit existing problems of domestic violence.

Place of living. Leisure time

According to the research, about a half of participants live in a separate house or apartment: 51% of respondents from Chechnya, 55% from Dagestan and 47% from Kabardino-Balkaria have their own place, while 29% of men from Chechnya and Kabardino-Balkaria and 20% of men from Dagestan live in their parents' house (Slide 20). In Ingushetia, 41% of men live in their own houses, while 42% of respondents share a living space with their parents.

The results revealed that men in the North Caucasus devote a lot of their time to socializing and maintaining social relations (Slide 21).

More than half of the respondents from all republics mentioned that they prefer spending their free time with friends: 65% of men from Chechnya, 52% from Ingushetia, 52% from Dagestan and 50% of respondents from Kabardino-Balkaria chose those options.

A number of men spend their pastime in front of the TV: it is popular in Chechnya (60%) and Dagestan (49%), however, it is also quite typical for the residents of Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria (41% and 39%).

About 40% of men communicate with their relatives when possible. In Kabardino-Balkaria, the percentage is considerably lower: only 25% of respondents spend their free time socializing with relatives.

In their spare time, respondents also visit mosques (or churches). This is more typical for the men from Dagestan and Chechnya, where a third of them chose this option, and less common for Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia (20% and 22% respectively).

The results reveal that a number of men use mobile phones and the Internet to maintain relations and vary their leisure time. This is especially true for the respondents from Chechnya: a third of them (34%) socialize on social networks, 31% speak with relatives and friends via the phone and 24% surf the Internet. Men from Dagestan also often call their relatives and friends (29%) and use the Internet, though to a smaller extent (20%). In Ingushetia, 24% use the Internet for their leisure, 21% use social networks, and only 16% communicate by phone. Kabardino-Balkaria differs from the rest: only 15% of men use the Internet and even smaller number of men call their friends and relatives (13%).

A considerable number of men do physical exercise, especially in Dagestan where 38% of men go to the gym. Compared to Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, residents from Chechnya and Dagestan visit their native villages more often when they have free time (33% and 27% compared with 15% and 20%).

Conclusions:

According to the research results, some conclusions can be made on the status and attitudes of men in the republics of the North Caucasus:

- Men in the republics of the North Caucasus are significantly involved in the community: they often communicate with friends and maintain close contact with their relatives. There are men among the respondents who confessed that they faced loneliness.
- There are problems that are widely acknowledged in the society, which a lot of men face in their daily lives. These are economic issues, such as unemployment and low wages, and powerlessness in face of the authorities, which were mentioned by the majority of respondents, in particular in Chechnya and Ingushetia. When thinking about their lives, men felt hope for positive changes. Respondents desired better living conditions and the capability to help others. Many men also looked for changes in marital and parental status. These changes are inspired by the cultural image of a successful man, who is, first and foremost, a respected family man, capable of providing for his family.
- Men in the republics do not usually criticize the patriarchal social order: they often do not problematize restrictions it imposes on men's choices and their lives as well as on women's lives and do not consider this as a hardship that needs to be tackled.
- A positive trend is that many men are aware of the various forms of domestic violence that women experience in the republics. To a greater extent, they acknowledged the practices of control and psychological violence against women, to a lesser extent, they are aware of more serious forms of physical violence. The negative aspect of this is that many respondents listed a number of motives they consider legitimate for psychological and physical violence. However, there are men who state that any violence towards women is impermissible.

As part of a community with patriarchal order, men keep producing the models of relations and beliefs that impair women's condition and limit their chances. Nevertheless, there are solutions and actions that can work to change men's beliefs. In particular, many men have mentioned that they are also pressured by patriarchy and there are some features of their society that they would like to change. For example, many men are uncomfortable with lack of control over their personal lives and constraints imposed by the local community, the need to look towards the community for judgment. A number of men look for more autonomy from their clan, especially when creating a family. Respondents mentioned that they would like to make their family more independent from their extended families, living separately and having the opportunity to make personal decisions and devote more time to their children.