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## **Motherhood with many children in Kazakhstan: combining work and care**

The article examines the phenomenon of motherhood with many children in modern Kazakhstan, which is studied from completely different theoretical and empirical positions by representatives of socio-humanitarian sciences — philosophy, demography, sociology, psychology, anthropology, etc. Modern studies state a wide variety of maternal practices and social perceptions of motherhood in different cultures. However, as a rule, the problematization of motherhood is carried out in essentialist terms related to the issues of fertility, marriage, mortality, and population reproduction. Researchers ignore such features of motherhood with many children as the subjective perception of the role of the mother, building relationships with relatives, with managers at work, the influence of place of residence, ethnicity, and the education of mothers. The purpose of this article is to present the ideas of motherhood from the point of view of mothers with many children themselves and the resources that allow them to combine the role of a mother and a worker. In particular, we will describe how educated urban Kazakh women and mothers with many children combine their professional employment and childcare. The scientific significance of the work lies in the problematization of the performance of the maternal role by women with many children and the possibilities of combining professional employment and motherhood with many children. The value of this study lies in the presentation of motherhood, taking into account the ethnicity, class and level of education of mothers with many children, as well as attention to the practice of combining motherhood with many children and professional employment.

*Keywords:* motherhood, many children, professional employment, care, children, state, social policy.

### *Introduction*

On February 22, 2021, dozens of Kazakhstani women came to the building of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Nur-Sultan and demanded that the head of the ministry provide them with social housing and grant an allowance for each child under 18 years of age. Women insist that insufficient government support leads to tragedy. The last tragedy was the death of five children from the same family in a fire in February 2021, which occurred in the town of Zhanatas, Zhambyl region of Kazakhstan. The protests of mothers with many children in Kazakhstan intensified after the tragedy in the Siter family in February 2019 in Nur-Sultan, when five sisters were burned alive in a fire in a temporary house. The fire in the house started around three o'clock in the morning, when the children were sleeping in the house alone. The father of the family works as a rigger and was called in to a service station to work. The mother also took a shift job as a packer at a plastic goods factory. The large family needed money: the authorities did not put them in line for social housing, and they lived in a temporary house with an area of about thirty square meters. The house was heated by a stove and caught fire almost instantly. Despite the fact that a team of firefighters arrived at the fire scene within seven minutes, they were unable to save the children. A few minutes after the arrival of the fire brigade, the roof collapsed, and all the girls were burned to death. They were twelve, eleven, six, three and one years old [1].

In most post-Soviet states, the reforms of the early 1990s were accompanied by serious changes in the official ideology of the family and in family policy. As demographers V. Agadjanian, P. Dommaraju and L. Nedoluzhko note: “Declining marriage and fertility rates following the collapse of state socialism have been the subject of numerous studies in Central and Eastern Europe. More recent literature has focused on marriage and fertility dynamics in the period of post-crisis political stabilization and economic growth. However, relatively little research on marriage and fertility has dealt with the Central Asian part of the post-socialist world”. The authors used survey and published data from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two multi-ethnic countries with differing paths of post-crisis recovery, to examine overall and ethnic-specific trends in entry into marriage and fertility. They found that in both countries rates of entry into marriage continued to

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decline throughout post-crisis years. By contrast, fertility rose, and this rise was greater in the more prosperous Kazakhstan. The authors also detected considerable ethnic variations in fertility trends [2].

At the same time, post-Soviet experts for the first time publicly raised the issue of the excessive overload of women who combine the family role with the production role, and the need to provide women with the freedom to choose between a professional career and family. One of the ways to ensure this freedom was seen as the transition from a two-income family to a single-income one, i.e., raising a man's wages so that he could fulfill the role of “breadwinner”. These changes were not just a reaction to the official ideology of egalitarianism and a manifestation of the latent tendencies of the “renaissance of patriarchy”, which was previously present at the level of mass consciousness. They reflected the crisis of the socialist “welfare state”, a veiled recognition of the social ineffectiveness of its family policy and the desire to return economic powers and responsibility for raising children back to the family [3].

At present, if we consider the main statistical indicators related to the birth rate and ethnicity of Kazakhstani women, we can see that:

- the total population of Kazakhstan as of March 9, 2021 is 18,877,100 people. Kazakhstan today ranks 74th in the list of countries by population. The average density is just over 6.71 people per km<sup>2</sup> (184th place in the list of countries by population density). This indicates that Kazakhstan, ranking 9th in the world by territory, is a sparsely populated territory and this requires an effective demographic policy aimed at increasing the birth rate;

- according to the data of the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, at the beginning of 2017 Kazakhs constitute the majority of the population of the republic (67.47 %). The next in number are Russians (19.76 %), Uzbeks (3.18 %), Ukrainians (1.53 %), Uyghurs (1.46 %), Tatars (1.11 %) and representatives of other ethnic groups;

- in Kazakhstan in 2020 civil registry offices registered 419,582 births, including 239,496 in urban areas, 162,814 in rural areas. As we can see, the birth rate in urban areas has become higher than in rural areas, which indirectly indicates an increase in the proportion of women of reproductive age living in urban areas and, conversely, a decrease in those in rural areas. But at the same time, the total fertility rate (TFR) — that is, the number of children born on average by one woman during the entire reproductive age (from 15 to 49 years) — is 2.74. That is, on average, a Kazakhstani woman gives birth to 2 to 3 children. However, the TFR is 2.57 in cities and 3.18 in rural areas. In terms of TFR, the leaders are Mangystau region — 3.78, and South Kazakhstan region — 3.62. The lowest results are in the city of Almaty — 1.67, and Kostanay region — 1.73;

- if we analyze the fertility trends according to the ethnicity of women, then we see that most often children are born to Kazakh women (231,016) and to Russian women (28,354), which corresponds to the overall representation of these ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. Summarizing the statistical data related to ethnic factors of fertility, we can conclude that the main population growth in the republic is provided by Kazakh women living in rural areas.

Studying the situation of mothers with many children, we should turn to official documents and, according to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, mothers with many children are women who have given birth to and are raising four or more children. In 2019 more than 340 thousand large families were registered in the state. The leaders in this indicator are Almaty, Turkestan, Zhambyl regions. Large families in Kazakhstan receive state support: cash allowance and a set of benefits. The amount of payments depends on the number of children, income level, having an honorary order, place of residence. In Kazakhstan these honorary titles are held by 237 thousand mothers. Mothers with many children, awarded with “Altyn alqa” and “Kümis alqa” pendants, are also exempt from paying taxes on transport and land, state duties when performing notarial and legally significant actions when registering a place of residence, issuing passports and identity cards, etc. Large families belong to the category of socially vulnerable segments of the population and have the right to be registered as in need of housing. They, like other candidates, are provided with housing on a lease basis [4].

The text of the National Report “Kazakhstan Families–2020” provides data that, according to the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding large families with 4 or more minor children living together for the period of 2017–2020, the largest number of such families was 399,855 families in 2020, 265,605 in 2019, 284, 367 in 2018, 309, 844 in 2017 [5]. Also, the text of the national report points to the fact that the republic is implementing state measures to support large families. One of them is the possibility of obtaining housing from the public housing stock or support in the form of concessional loans. But for this it is necessary to sign up for the waiting

list of people in need of housing. Housing is provided on the basis of Article 67 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Housing Relations” dated 04.16.1997 (59). In 2018 12,000 large families were provided with housing. As of 2019, there were 28,000 large families in the queue for housing in Kazakhstan. Housing is provided in two ways. The first one is passing the queue in a standard way to allocate an apartment from the state fund. In the second case, an apartment is provided under the state program of housing and communal development “Nürly jer” for 2020–2025. To support low-income families, including large families, under the “Nürly jer” program, the “Lending to low-income families from the waiting list of the local executive body by House Construction Savings Bank” (“Baqytty otbasy”) mechanism is being implemented, whose participants are provided with loans at a rate of 2 % per annum for up to 20 years from an initial payment of 10 % of the loan amount. This is the lowest interest rate in the country to date.

At the beginning of 2020 the amended Tax Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan entered into force, according to which a tax deduction will apply for large families. Both parents will be taken into account when determining the amount of the deduction. The amount cannot exceed 282 MCI (about 712,000 tenge as of today). There are no additional tax deductions for single mothers. However, according to the norms of the current tax legislation, exemption from payment of land tax and property tax is provided only for mothers with many children who have been awarded the title “Mother Heroine”, as well as for those awarded with the “Altyn alqa” pendant. Property tax exemption for them is provided within 1,000 times the MCI (about 2.5 million tenge). According to the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan as part of the State Program for Housing Construction from 2018 to 2019 housing was mainly received in the cities of republican significance — Almaty, Nur-Sultan, Shymkent [5].

The text of the national report for 2020 also provides subjective assessments of the material well-being of large families. To measure the effectiveness of the implemented state programs, researchers refer to the results of sociological studies conducted by the Kazakhstan Institute of Social Development “Rukhani Zhangyru” on “Family and Demographic Policy” for 2019 and 2020. Thus, almost half of the surveyed large families (46.8 %) answered that they hardly have enough money for the most basic necessities. Also, 35.5 % of the respondents indicated that they earn enough money to pay for the most necessary things, but it is problematic to buy some household appliances. 15.9 % of the respondents indicated that they earn enough, but it is difficult to save money for an expensive item (fur coat, car). 1.7 % of the surveyed large families have no financial problems, they can buy a house or a car if they want. The authors of the national report come to the conclusion that the main problems for the majority of large families are material problems and low income. This opinion is confirmed by the respondents, 61.9 % of whom believe that the main problems in their families are material problems. 39.4 % of the respondents indicated domestic problems as the main ones in their families. 14.2 % of the respondents answered that for them the problems of raising children are the most urgent. The lack of opportunities for joint recreation is a problem for 11.7 % of the respondents. 7.9 % of the respondents indicated the absence of children's classes and clubs as the main problem in their families. The presented data indicates that economic and domestic problems are the main ones for the majority of respondents. More than half (59.8 %) of large families need financial assistance from the state. The second most important need for families is to improve their living conditions — 30.3 % [5].

But in our opinion, not a single government, research, or publicistic document indicates the fact that, as a rule, women are engaged in raising children in large families, and it is they who bear the burden of daily nursing and care for children. At the same time, it is important to take into account the fact that the low material and financial well-being of large families forces mothers to work as well. Unfortunately, at the moment there is no data, no survey results that could show us how the strategy of adaptation of a Kazakhstani mother with many children to the fulfillment of the “working mother” gender contract is being built. Therefore in this article we will try to describe how a working mother with many children living in the city has the opportunity to combine motherhood and work, how she carries out the function of caring for and raising children, whether she is able to devote time to herself and receive additional education.

The purpose of the article was to study the possibilities of combining motherhood with many children and professional employment of Kazakh mothers with many children living in cities.

The main research methods are interdisciplinary, comparative and systematic approaches, the method of sociological survey. The method of interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to determine the socio-cultural boundaries of the study of motherhood as an object and subject of socio-humanitarian knowledge. The comparative method provides a scientific and theoretical basis for identifying the essence of motherhood in socio-humanitarian thought.

### *Research methods*

In the period from January to May 2020 a survey was conducted among Kazakh women aged 25 to 45 years with higher education from Karaganda, who are mothers of four or more children. The research method was a questionnaire survey, the toolkit was a questionnaire. A total of 360 people were interviewed. The purpose of the research was to obtain information on how motherhood with many children is arranged in Kazakh urban families. The objectives of the research were formulated as follows: 1. Study how women with many children perceive the role of mother; 2. Analyze whether mothers with many children have professional employment opportunities; 3. Find out how much time a mother of many children devotes to herself; 4. Find out if a mother with many children has the opportunity to get additional education; 5. Consider how other family members are involved in nursing and caring for children.

The object of the research was Kazakh women with many children, mothers of 4 or more children, living in the city of Karaganda at the age of 25 to 45 with higher education. Subject of research: the possibilities of professional self-realization of Kazakh mothers with many children. The study sample was quota, stratified. As a hypothesis of the study, it was suggested that there are many restrictions on combining the role of a mother with many children and professional activity (long maternity leave, the ideology of “intensive motherhood”, limited access to kindergartens, gender stereotypes). This is especially true for mothers who have four or more children, ethnic Kazakh women, because traditional cultural beliefs prescribe them to be, first of all, mothers and not professionals. But at the same time women with many children poorly reflect on the problems of performing domestic work as care functions, which is associated with the idea of motherhood as a woman's “natural destiny”.

### *Results and Discussion*

Motherhood as an institution and as a practice began to be actively studied by Western philosophers, psychologists and sociologists in the 1960–70s, during the period of activation of the second wave of feminism and scientific fashion for such theoretical paradigms as social constructivism, poststructuralism, postmodernism. It was they who raised the question of the social nature of the human reproduction system in modern society, overcoming the essentialist discourse characteristic of the structural functionalism of T. Parsons and psychoanalysis of S. Freud, who believed that giving birth and upbringing of children is a natural, instinctive and objective purpose of women [6]. In her work “The Feminine Mystique” B. Friedan voiced that motherhood remains largely a space of uncertainty, tension, vulnerability, and frustration [7] and can no longer be seen as a timeless biologically determined practice. American feminist A. Rich wrote in 1976, “Motherhood — unmentioned in the histories of conquest and serfdom, wars and treaties, exploration and imperialism — has a history, it has an ideology, it is more fundamental than tribalism or nationalism” [8].

But significant changes are also taking place in the urban environment, among middle-class Kazakh women. With the advent of capitalism, a new urban middle class is formed in Kazakhstan, which is a cultural hegemon in a capitalist society, i.e., setting cultural standards and the main implementers of child-centric ideology, when a child is an investment project in which resources must be invested and then he or she will grow up smart and successful. The concept of early development contains normative conventions about when parents need to consult psychologists, speech therapists, therapists, defectologists, teachers; what books to read to the child, what music to listen to, what toys to play with, what clothes to buy, what methods of education and training to use; what standards of hygienic care to use [9]. In her article, Russian researcher O. Isupova writes that “... the ideology of intensive motherhood, which is popular today, asserts that the ideal of maternal behavior includes a family and educational strategy, the center of which is the child (“child-centeredness”); a tendency to follow the advice of parenting experts; emotional sensitivity to the needs of children; a large amount of work and time devoted to children, with significant financial costs for their upbringing”. The ideology of intensive motherhood and its impact on the well-being of both mothers and children are currently the objects of attention of many specialists. For example, I. Gimenez-Nadal and A. Sevilla studied the impact of modern maternal practices on the well-being of mothers and the variation of this indicator in relation to the level of education. By monitoring a wide range of personal characteristics these authors found that mothers with higher levels of education showed lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction, as well as higher levels of fatigue due to involvement in various parenting and childcare activities. Although less educated mothers also reproduce some patterns of intense motherhood, the time spent with their children has increased in recent decades, especially among more educated mothers. At the same time, wom-

en with a high level of education are haunted with the feeling that they still do not do enough for the well-being of their children [10]. Some questions arise: how do young Kazakh women with 4 or more children with higher education, representatives of the middle class, implement the ideology of intensive motherhood? How do they manage to do this? Does someone help them? How do they explain to themselves why they need many children? What is the role of the state in ensuring the social conditions for the implementation of the functions of motherhood?

An example of the importance the symbolic role of women in national relations is the works of several post-Soviet and foreign researchers. For example, Ukrainian researcher T. Zhurzhenko in her work “Gendered Markets of Ukraine: Political Economy of Nation Building” writes that post-Soviet traditionalism has formed in the post-Soviet space, and it has become the dominant form of gender ideology in a transitional society. And it has a number of essential characteristics, including the fact that post-Soviet traditionalism characterizes the actual reduction of the family to the reproductive function, to the tasks of procreation and socialization of children. Relationships between spouses are viewed as a derivative of their parenting function; a family without children is not even considered as a family by some sociologists (but only as a “family group”). Naturally, the widespread small (and especially one-child) family is seen as an extremely negative phenomenon both at the macro and micro levels. From the point of view of society, this means an alarming trend towards a decrease in the birth rate and depopulation... Accordingly, the proposed measures to get the family out of the crisis come down if not to promoting large families, then to measures aimed at “increasing the need for children”. As a social ideal, traditionalists propose only one type of family: with two parents and at least three or four children...” [3].

D. Kandiyoti believes that “Post-Soviet gender ideologies do not represent a simple return to national traditions interrupted by Soviet politics, but they represent a strategic redistribution of the notions of cultural identity to serve new ideological goals. Thus, gender politics play a crucial role in signaling both leaving the Soviet past and the creation of new imaginary nations that enhance social solidarity in increasingly fragmented post-Soviet societies” [11].

Belarusian researcher A. Pershai in his work “Perspectives of History: On Everyday Life, Gender and Nation in Post-Soviet Belarus” says that “... the relationship between the national and everyday life lies at the intersection of at least three conceptually complex aspects: the nation state, gender stratification and the fact that men and women have different everyday life, as well as different involvement in national projects” [12].

Another Belarusian researcher T. Shchurko notes that “... it is believed that the process of nation-building includes all the inhabitants of a territory, but since the national discourse puts a person in its center, then in the androcentric system this means the male norm, point of view, privilege and identity. On the other hand, men are the real spokesmen for the will of the Belarusian nation. Women usually become visible in the Belarusian national discourse when it comes to the demographic crisis and the extinction of the nation, which, in fact, represents a woman as a machine for biological reproduction” [13].

E. Gapova in her work “On Gender, Nation, and Class in Post-communism” analyzes the formation of the “gender rhetoric” of the leaders of the nationally oriented Belarusian opposition, and finds that this rhetoric is not only deeply patriarchal (women's bodies, women's destinies are the property of the nation and the arena of political struggle), but also mediated by class interests. “The possession of women and their consumption is a class marker that performs the function of endowing masculinity as an attribute of the “Western», that is, the capitalist — in the sense of possessing resources, the possibilities of earning income and methods of consumption — class” [14].

We can see that researchers consider gender relations as a complex structure, which is differentiated depending on belonging to a particular class, ethnicity, religious denomination and other social groups and is associated with socioeconomic reforms in post-Soviet societies. It is also important to consider how the concept of gender relates to such concepts as ethnicity, class and education. This approach is based on the recognition of the close intertwining of national/ethnic and gender relations, which cannot be understood through a simple summation of gender theory and theories of nation/ethnicity. Its representatives are F. Anthias and N. Yuval-Davis, S. Inloi. The relationship of these fundamental social categories can only be clarified through a thorough analysis of the causal relationships between various forms of gender and national/ethnic differentiation and inequality [15].

In this study we adhere to the above position and consider how ethnic identity is formed by constructing women as the boundaries of the nation, and how, in turn, boundaries are created by women performing the biological and cultural reproduction roles. In this case, the biological role is understood as the reproductive role of a woman, a woman-mother. The cultural role is understood as her role as an agent of transmission of

traditions and normative behavior patterns. To create a gender-sensitive analytical model of “production” and “reproduction” of collective identity in Kazakhstani society, the N. Yuval-Davis’s concept of women's roles in national projects is used.

Yuval-Davis argues that women create the “boundaries” of the nation, thus forming a collective ethnic identity “... A woman's belonging to a national or ethnic community is of a dual nature. On the one hand, women, like men, are members of a community. On the other hand, there are always certain rules and regulations that treat women as women... The gender and sexuality of the body play a major role as “territories”, “markers” and reproducers of the narratives of a nation and other communities. Gender relations are at the very center of the cultural formation of social identities/communities and at the center of most cultural conflict and controversial situations” [16].

Following Yuval-Davis, we believe that Kazakh women construct and reproduce the collective identity of an ethnic community through giving birth to a large number of children and indirectly participating in the national revival of independent Kazakhstan. Yuval-Davis identifies five areas linking women and national projects: 1. Women are responsible for the biological reproduction of members of ethnic groups; 2. They reproduce the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; 3. Women play a central role in the ideological reproduction of the collective and the transmission of its culture; 4. Women are carriers of ethnic/national differences — and, therefore, an object of attention and a symbol of ideological discourses, with the help of which ethnic/national categories are created, reproduced and transformed; 5. Women are involved in national, economic, political and military struggles. Also N. Yuval-Davis identifies three main discourses within the framework of which women are manipulated as potential mothers: 1. The “human resources” or “people as power” discourse, which sees the increase in the size of the nation as a vital means of realizing national interests; 2. The Malthusian discourse, which, on the contrary, seeks to reduce demographic pressure” as a means of avoiding a future “national” catastrophe; 3. The eugenic discourse that aims to “improve the quality” of the national community by encouraging the increase in birth rate among the “best” population groups in terms of biological or class origin and limiting the birth rate among the “unsuitable” groups [16].

Each discourse corresponds to a certain state and social policy. In our opinion, the discourse that Yuval-Davis called “people as power” is dominant in Kazakhstan as well. The decline in birth rate and depopulation are seen as the most important problems determining the future of the nation. The economic and social consequences of depopulation are the worsening of the situation on the labor market, population aging and an increase in the burden on the pension system. Some experts point out that the main goal of policy in this area should not be to stimulate the birth rate and increase its level. However in Kazakhstan the “people as power” discourse has another side. It is not just about a decrease in the population, but about a more serious threat — “national degeneration”, “erosion” of the Kazakh ethnos. In modern demographic literature, the reproductive function of women belonging to both the “indigenous” nationality and ethnic and linguistic minorities is considered not only from the point of view of population growth, but also as a factor in the national consolidation of Kazakhstani society on an ethnic basis.

Manifestations of the eugenic discourse can also be found in the program documents of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The problem of “preserving the gene pool” of the nation is associated, first of all, with the decline in the health indicators of the population. The pseudoscientific eugenic discourse, transferring the patterns of development of a biological population to human society, is part of the ideology of nationalism. Apparently, the nationalist discourse, which sees the nation as a single organism, whose “health” causes concern, assumes its “treatment”. Therefore, measures dictated by concern for the health of future generations (development of medical genetic services and a genetic monitoring system) are by no means politically neutral, and can be used by the authorities as a means of controlling the “quality” of the nation [16].

All the types of political discourses described above have a pronounced gender character: their addressees are mainly women, potential mothers, and not potential fathers. It is their reproductive behavior that is controlled. Many of these policies are centered on the concern for the genetic makeup of the population. Those national projects that attach critical importance to genealogy and descent as the main principles of organizing a national community imply the exclusion of members of the community that do not meet these criteria. This entails control over marriage, fertility and sexuality, i.e., violent regulation of gender relations. Yuval-Davis believes that genetic commonality is only one of the possible reasons for the unification of nation/ethnicity. In any national project, a significant role is assigned to the common culture and traditions with a special role played by religion and/or language. Common culture is often considered a more important trait than biological origin. The mythical unity of national “imaginary communities” that divides the world into

“us” and “them” is strengthened and reproduced at the expense of symbolic “boundaries”. These boundaries are closely related to the cultural codes embodied in the style of dress and behavior, as well as in more developed systems of customs, religious practices, artistic production and, of course, the national language [16].

In all of these areas gender symbols and ways of constructing masculinity and femininity, as well as sexuality and the distribution of power between the sexes, are particularly important. The most important role in this belongs to women as symbols of cultural boundaries and the embodiment of national values, at the same time being a key link in the reproduction of culture. It can be said that women bear the “burden of representation”, thanks to which they are constructed as symbolic carriers of the identity and honor of their nation. The position of women within the national community is usually ambivalent. On the one hand, they symbolize national honor and unity, moreover, they are the final argument in the justification of any national or ethnic project. At the same time, they are often excluded from real national politics and are rather its object than its subject. Strict cultural codes that dictate what it means to be a “worthy woman” often mean that she is in a subordinate position.

Thus, the “women's question”, gender roles and the lingering tension between motherhood and women's participation in professional careers continued to resonate. In many cases, the Central Asian Soviet Socialist Republics were the stage at which various experiments were carried out to identify female identity and the difficulties of reconciling traditional and modern roles of women. Likewise, it is these experiments that have created the basis for contemporary debate about women's rights to social services and their access to social resources.

The questionnaire completed by the respondents contained questions about the role of the mother, upbringing of children, relations with relatives, free time of Kazakh mothers with many children, father's participation in the process of caring for children, influence of relatives, etc. So, when asked whether the respondents are in a registered marriage, 90 % of women answered “yes”. 6.7 % of women indicated that they are “in a civil marriage” and 3.3 % answered that they were “officially divorced”. Thus, the majority of the surveyed Kazakh women with many children are in an officially registered marriage.

When asking the respondents about their income level, we saw that 33.3 % of women with many children have income of 110 to 160 thousand tenge, 25 % — 50 to 100 thousand tenge, 18.3 % — 170 to 220 thousand tenge, 10 % — 230 to 280 thousand tenge, 10 % — 290 to 340 thousand tenge, 3.3 % — 390 to 440 thousand tenge. Thus, most of the women we interviewed have an income in the range of 50,000 to 160,000 tenge, which allows to attribute them to the representatives of the lower middle class.

When asked how they would define who a mother is, the majority of women described her as loving (81.7 %), attentive (51.7 %) and caring (50 %). The respondents also noted that a mother is kind (35 %), controlling (35 %), patient (31.7 %), understanding everything (30 %), responsible (28.3 %), forgiving (18.3 %), responsive (15 %), tired (5 %), strict (13.3 %), resentful (1.7 %), irritable (1.7 %). None of the mothers described the mother as nervous and angry. The responses were distributed in such a way that we see that the mother is associated primarily with positive characteristics such as love, attentiveness and caring.

The distribution of answers to the question on how many children women consider optimal, showed that most respondents — 61.7 % of women — answered “three”, 25 % answered “four or more”, and 11.7 % answered “two”. Only 1.7 % answered “one”. Such opinions demonstrate the focus of Kazakh women on the medium number of children, which is determined by the reproductive attitudes of the spouses, but also by external circumstances that can facilitate or hinder the birth of children. Everything related to fertility is very individual and depends on many factors: the age of the woman, her health, genetic characteristics, financial condition of the family, etc. While one woman can give birth to five or six children without harm to her health, the other can have to recover all her life after giving birth to one child. Doctors say the optimal number of pregnancies and childbirth for a modern woman is three or four, and it is better to give birth after 20 and before 40 years. The women we interviewed for the most part adhere to these recommendations. Modern Kazakh families, regardless of their wealth, do not refuse to have many children. Although there is a tendency to have many children in low-income, rural families.

When asked what responsibilities are the most important for a mother, 83.3 % of mothers answered “to love the child”, 45 % answered “to devote time and attention”, 43.3 % — “to cook food and teach the rules of behavior”. This is how the answers were distributed, since in Kazakh culture it is believed that a woman is successful only when she spends all her energy and care on children. It is believed that the more successful a child is, the more successful his parents, and his mother in particular. When asking respondents a question about what they like in the role of a mother, 85 % indicated that they like hugging and caressing a child,

73.3 % — talking, communicating with a child, 38.3 % — walking with a child, 38.3 % — explaining something complicated. It follows that it is important for the mother to feel an emotional connection with the child and it is important to spend and devote a lot of time to the child. When women were asked what they dislike about being a mother, 63.3 % answered that they did not like children's tantrums, 53.3 % — visiting hospitals and clinics, 50 % — interrupted sleep, 31.7 % — doing homework with children.

From the answers to the questions about who cares more about the children in the family, we received the data that 51.7 % of mothers believe that both mother and father care for the children equally. Those who believe that mother and father care for children unequally made 30 %. 18.3 % indicated that the mother and father sometimes care equally. Based on the answers to this question, we can conclude that women position father as an active participant in the process of upbringing and caring for children. Although in the clarifying question of the questionnaire, we asked if they would like their husband to be more involved in the process of raising and caring for children, and 73 % of women indicated that they would.

In the block “motherhood and professional self-realization”, when asked whether the mothers with many children we interviewed work, 90 % answered that they do and only 10 % answered that they do not (see Figure 1). This confirms the existence and dominance of the “working mother” contract. This contract implies that a woman combines professional employment and motherhood, which puts her under a double burden.

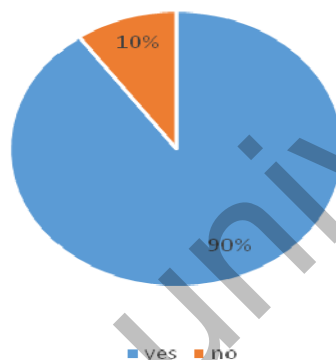


Figure 1. Are you working at the moment?

When asked why they combine work and motherhood, 43.6 % of mothers with many children answered “I don't want to stay at home”, 41.8 % — “I want to help my husband financially”, 32.7 % — “I like my job”, 23.6 % — “I don't want to lose my job”, 21.8 % — “I can afford it because...”, 18.2 % — “It is expensive to support a child”, 7.3 % — “I am a highly qualified specialist”, 1.8 % — “I support my child/children myself”, 1.8 % — “I do not work”. Based on the answers, we see that the reason for combining the roles of mother/wife and worker is the unwillingness to stay at home and the desire to contribute to the family budget, as well as the fact that women enjoy working.

To the question “Do you work full-time?” 70 % of the respondents answered positively, 23.3 % answered “no” and 6.7 % chose the option “I do not work”. Thus, the major part of Kazakh women with four or more children work full-time (see Figure 2).

38.3 % of Kazakh mothers with many children answered to the question “How much time per day do you devote to work?” that they work 8–10 hours, 28.3 % spend 6–7 hours at work, 13.3 % — 3–4 hours, 10 % — 5–6 hours, 1.7 % — 1–2 hours. Thus, we see that most of the mothers with many children we interviewed work more than 8–10 hours or full-time (see Figure 3).

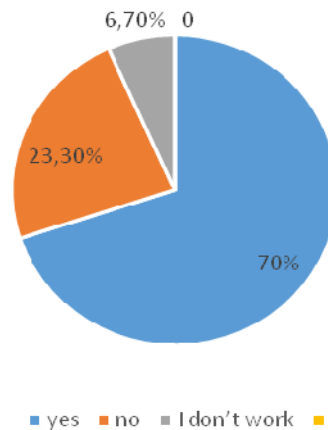


Figure 2. Do you work full-time?

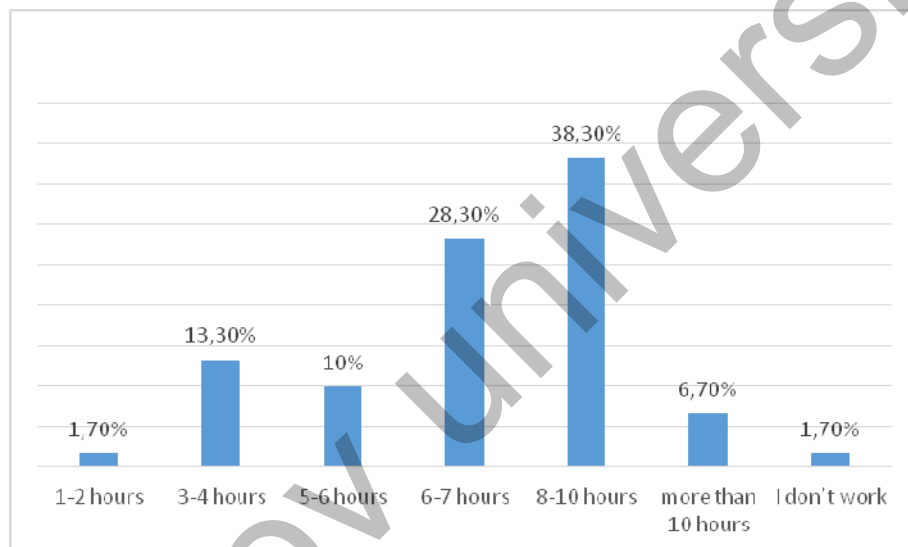


Figure 3. How much time per day do you devote to work?

When asked in the questionnaire whether mothers with many children take work home, 61.7 % answered positively and 38.3 % negatively. This lets us know that the majority of mothers with many children continue to work at home. To the question “How long do you work at home?” 75.8 % chose the option “1–2 hours”, 12.1 % — “3–4 hours”. It should be noted that while continuing to work at home, most of the respondents devote 1 to 2 hours to it.

To the question “How do you relax?”, where women could choose several answers, 43.3 % answered “I do my hobby”, 36.7 % — “I sleep”, 36.7 % — “I watch a movie”, 31.7 % — “I read”, 28.3 % — “I go to see someone”, 23.3 % — “I communicate in social networks”, 21.7 % — “I watch TV”, 20 % — “I go to the gym”, 16.7 % — “I play with children”, 1.7 % — “I go to a cafe”. Based on the answers, we can conclude that mothers with many children prefer passive rather than active types of recreation.

To the question “How much time, approximately, during the day, do you devote to yourself?” 80 % answered “1–2 hours”, 18.3 % — “3–4 hours”, 1.7 % — “5–6 hours”. According to the survey results, we saw that the majority of women can devote no more than 1–2 hours a day to themselves (see Figure 4).

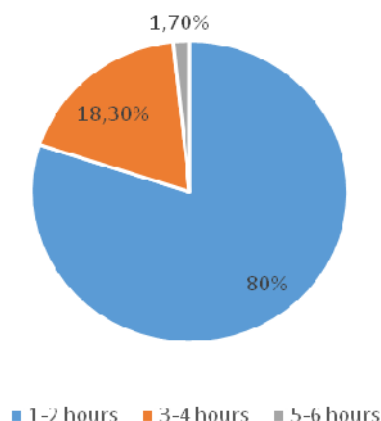


Figure 4. The amount of time mothers with many children devote to themselves

When answering the question “How do you decide who to leave your family with when you need to leave home on personal matters?” 40 % answered that they ask grandparents to stay with their children, 28.3 % — “I ask my husband to stay at home with the children”, 25 % — “I ask older children to look after each other”, 3.3 % — “I hire a babysitter” 3.3 % — “I let everything run its course”.

We were also interested in whether Kazakh mothers with many children receive additional education. 85 % chose the answer “no”, 15 % — “yes” (see Figure 5). So we see that most women do not have the opportunity to receive additional education, which has a negative impact on their career growth and self-development.

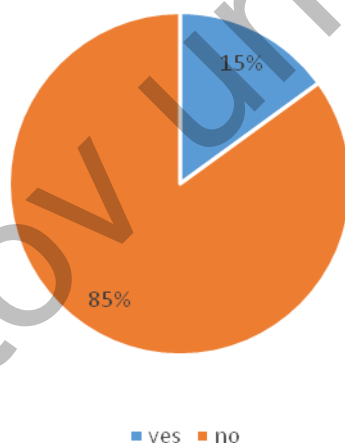


Figure 5. Are you getting additional education?

To our question about how women are compensated for their constant care for children, 36.7 % of women answered that taking care of family members is their direct responsibility, 31.7 % expect gratitude from family members, 23.3 % of women compensate it with gifts. 21.7 % answered that this is not accepted in their family, and 8.3 % answered that they have the “last word”. Such a distribution of opinions may be due to the fact that mothers with many children believe that caring for family members is their “natural” duty, a direct responsibility, and they do not even think about the possibility of compensating for their emotional labor. But we clarified the question and asked how women would like to be compensated for their care. Thus, 66.7 % of mothers want family members to understand the importance of their work, 43.3 % would like to have more personal free time, and 40 % would like help with housekeeping. The answers were distributed in such a way that mothers with many children indirectly indicated that other family members do not understand the importance and severity of the housework of mothers with many children, that they do not have enough personal time and want to be helped more.

According to the results of the answer to the question whether the state should help mothers take care of children, 40 % of women answered that the state should help, 40 % did not think about it and 20 % believe

that the state should not help mothers with many children. Here we can conclude that mothers with many children have little understanding of the degree of state participation in the process of raising children and perceive state care only in the form of various material payments and benefits, although there are so-called indirect payments that can provide significant support to families with many children (for example, public nanny, free travel on public transport, free classes or clubs for children, coupons for the purchase of clothes, etc.).

### Conclusion

Based on the theoretical analysis and survey results, we can conclude that Kazakh mothers with many children have traditional attitudes towards motherhood: to love children, give them time and attention, teach them the rules of behavior, take care of them. They believe that the child primarily needs their love, care and attention. The status of a Kazakh woman in society and family depends on the success of motherhood, as a result of which they believe that love and attention are basic emotions in the process of raising children, and it is they who should share them with children. Mothers with many children also note the special role of education for their children, which is associated with the dominance of the ideology of intensive motherhood, which prescribes the regular involvement of mothers in the life of their children and the focus of mothers themselves on achieving success for their children. In addition, Kazakh mothers consider education and development not only a concern, but also their direct responsibility towards their children. Kazakh mothers with many children prefer to work, as they do not want to stay at home and want to help their husbands financially, and they also like their jobs. We also saw from the survey data that most women work full-time, at least 6–8 hours. Due to the combination of the role of a mother with many children and a working mother, women, as a rule, cannot afford to receive additional education. At the same time, Kazakh mothers devote one to two hours a day to themselves, they rarely devote time to going to the cinema, visiting beauty salons, they also rarely visit sports clubs and can afford to sleep 5 to 7 hours. If it is necessary to leave home for personal matters, mothers leave their children and household to their grandmothers, husbands and/or older children. Mothers with many children believe that caring for family members is their duty, a direct responsibility, and they do not even think about the possibility of compensating for their emotional labor. Mothers believe that other family members do not understand the importance and severity of housework, do not have enough personal time and they want more help. Women with many children have little understanding of the degree of state participation in the process of raising children and perceive state care only in the form of various material payments and benefits.

Such altruism and focus on motherhood among Kazakh women with many children are associated, in our opinion, with the situation of building a new national state that tries to control the reproductive behavior of women, considers mothers as a symbolic embodiment of national values and constructs them as symbolic carriers of the identity and honor of the nation.

We would like to express the hope that studies of motherhood, taking into account such factors as the number of children, class, ethnicity, place of residence, education, subjective interpretation of the role of the mother, etc. will significantly intensify in Kazakhstani socio-humanitarian sciences, and academic interest will contribute to the revision and change of the state's social policy in relation to motherhood, childhood, parenting.

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### Қазақстандағы көп балалы аналар: қызмет пен қамқорлықты қоса атқару

Мақалада философия, демография, әлеуметтану, психология, антропология және әлеуметтік-гуманитарлық ғылымдар және басқа өкілдер теориялық және эмпирикалық тұрғыдан мүлдем әртүрлі зерделейтін заманауи Қазақстандағы көп балалы ана феномені қарастырылған. Қазіргі зерттеулер әртүрлі қоғамдағы аналардың тәжірибелері мен ана туралы әлеуметтік идеялардың әр алуандығын көрсетеді. Бірақ, әдетте, ана мәселелері күрсақ көтеру, неке, өлім, халық санын көбейту сауалдарына байланысты маңызды мағынада жүзеге асырылады. Зерттеушілердің назарынан көп балалы ана болу, ананың ролін субъективті қабылдау, туыстарымен, жұмыстағы басшылығымен дұрыс қарым-қатынас құру, тұрғылықты жері, этностығы, аналардың білім алуы сияқты мәселелер тыс қалған. Мақаланың мақсаты көп балалы аналардың өздері тарапынан және ана мен қызметкердің ролін біріктіруге мүмкіндік беретін ресурстар тарапынан қоғамдағы мүмкіндіктері қарастырылған. Атап айтқанда, авторлар білімді қалалық қазақ әйелдерінің, көп балалы аналардың кәсіби жұмыспен қамтылуын және балаларға деген қамқорлығын қалай үйлестіретінін сипаттаған. Жұмыстың ғылыми маңыздылығы көп балалы әйелдердің өздерінің ана ролін атқаруы және кәсіби жұмыспен қамтылуы, оны бірге алып жүруде аналық рөлдің орындалу мәселесі тұжырымдалған. Бұл зерттеудің құндылығы көп балалы аналардың этностығын, ортасы мен білім деңгейін ескере отырып, оларды кәсіби жұмыспен қамтуды үйлестіру практикасына назар аудару.

*Кілт сөздер:* ана, көп балалы отбасы, кәсіптік жұмыспен қамту, қамқорлық, балалар, мемлекет, әлеуметтік саясат.

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### Многодетное материнство в Казахстане: совмещение работы и заботы

В статье рассмотрен феномен многодетного материнства в современном Казахстане, который изучают с совершенно разных теоретических и эмпирических позиций представители социогуманитарных наук — философии, демографии, социологии, психологии, антропологии и др. Современные исследования констатируют большое разнообразие материнских практик и социальных представлений о материнстве в различных обществах. Но, как правило, проблематизация материнства осуществляется в эссенциалистских терминах, связанных с вопросами фертильности, брачности, смертности, воспроизводства населения. Из внимания исследователей ускользают такие особенности осуществления многодетного материнства, как субъективное восприятие роли матери, конструирование отношений с родственниками, с руководством на работе, влияние места жительства, этничности, образования матерей. Целью данной статьи является презентация представлений о материнстве со стороны самих многодетных матерей и тех ресурсов, которые позволяют им совмещать роль матери и работницы. В частности, авторами описаны, как образованные городские женщины-казашки, многодетные матери совмещают свою профессиональную занятость и заботу о детях. Научная значимость работы заклю-

чается в проблематизации исполнения материнской роли самими многодетными женщинами и возможностей совмещения профессиональной занятости и многодетного материнства. Ценность данного исследования состоит в презентации материнства с учётом этничности, класса и уровня образования многодетных матерей, а также в привлечении внимания к практикам совмещения многодетного материнства и профессиональной занятости.

*Ключевые слова:* материнство, многодетность, профессиональная занятость, забота, дети, государство, социальная политика.

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