

REPRODUCTIVE INTENTIONS OF POPULATION IN THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC: PILOT SOCIOLOGIC SURVEY RESULTS

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Introduction and background. In the last few years after the socioeconomic situation stabilized and population of the Chechen republic returned to peaceful life favorable development trends of demographic situation are being formed with positive factors of natural increase of population and increase in population number. From the moment when collection of official demographic statistics was resumed in the republic in 2003 the following population dynamics is traced: as to January, 1 in 2004 number of population was 1121 thousands, and by January, 1 in 2009 it increased up to 9.5 % and was 1238 thousands.

Total fertility rate (TFR) in Chechen republic exceeds the replacement level. In 2008 it was 3.40 per woman at the age of 15-49. For comparison, in the same year TFR in neighboring Republic of Dagestan was 1.95, in Republic of Ingushetia it was 1.96, in the whole South Federal District it was 1.67 and in the whole Russian Federation it was 1.49.

In order to reveal fertility dynamics in the Chechen Republic analysis of reproductive health and behavior of 3 groups of population (women and men in active reproductive ages and adolescents 15-16 years old) was conducted. Questionnaires for these population groups included questions concerning employment, income, living conditions etc., and evaluation by respondents of socioeconomic situation in the republic, self-estimation of health and other factors influencing formation and realization of population reproductive intentions.

By the moment we questioned 1240 respondents including 460 women, 450 men and 330 adolescents. Questionnaires of these respondents are analyzed in this work.

Discussion. Average age of respondents turned out to be the same for males and females - 27.6 years (fig. 1). Among all female respondents 24.8% of questioned women had no children, 27.6% had one child, 22.5% had two children, 14.8% had three children, 7.9% had four children, 1.9% had five children, and 0.5% had six or more children. As of the moment when the survey was conducted 19.2% female respondents expected birth of another child. And 28.5% of questioned men had no children, 38.4% had one child, 28.1% had two children, 3.2% had three children, 0.5% had four children, 1.3% had five children, and no one questioned respondent had more than six children (fig. 2).

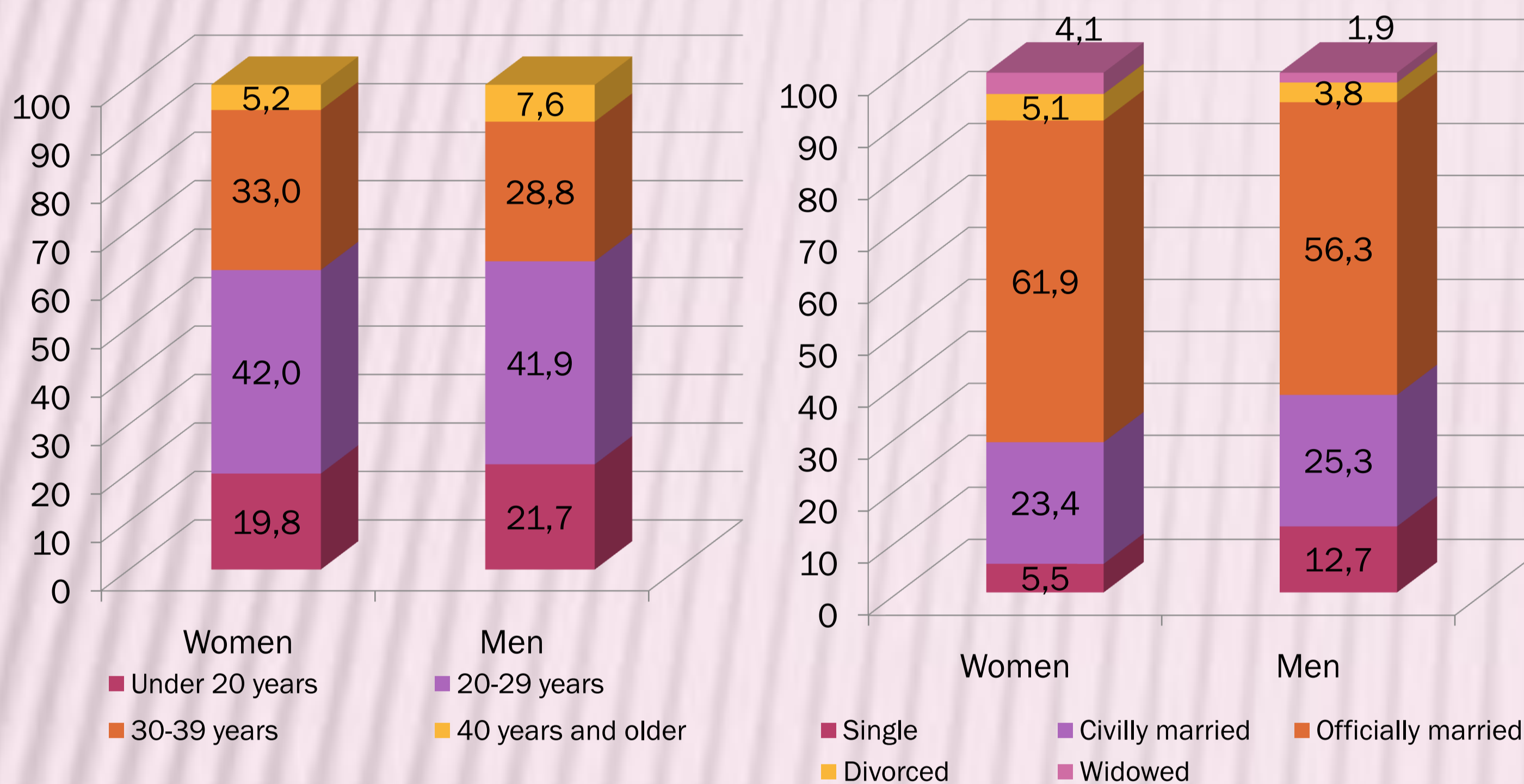


Figure 1. Age structure of respondents (%).

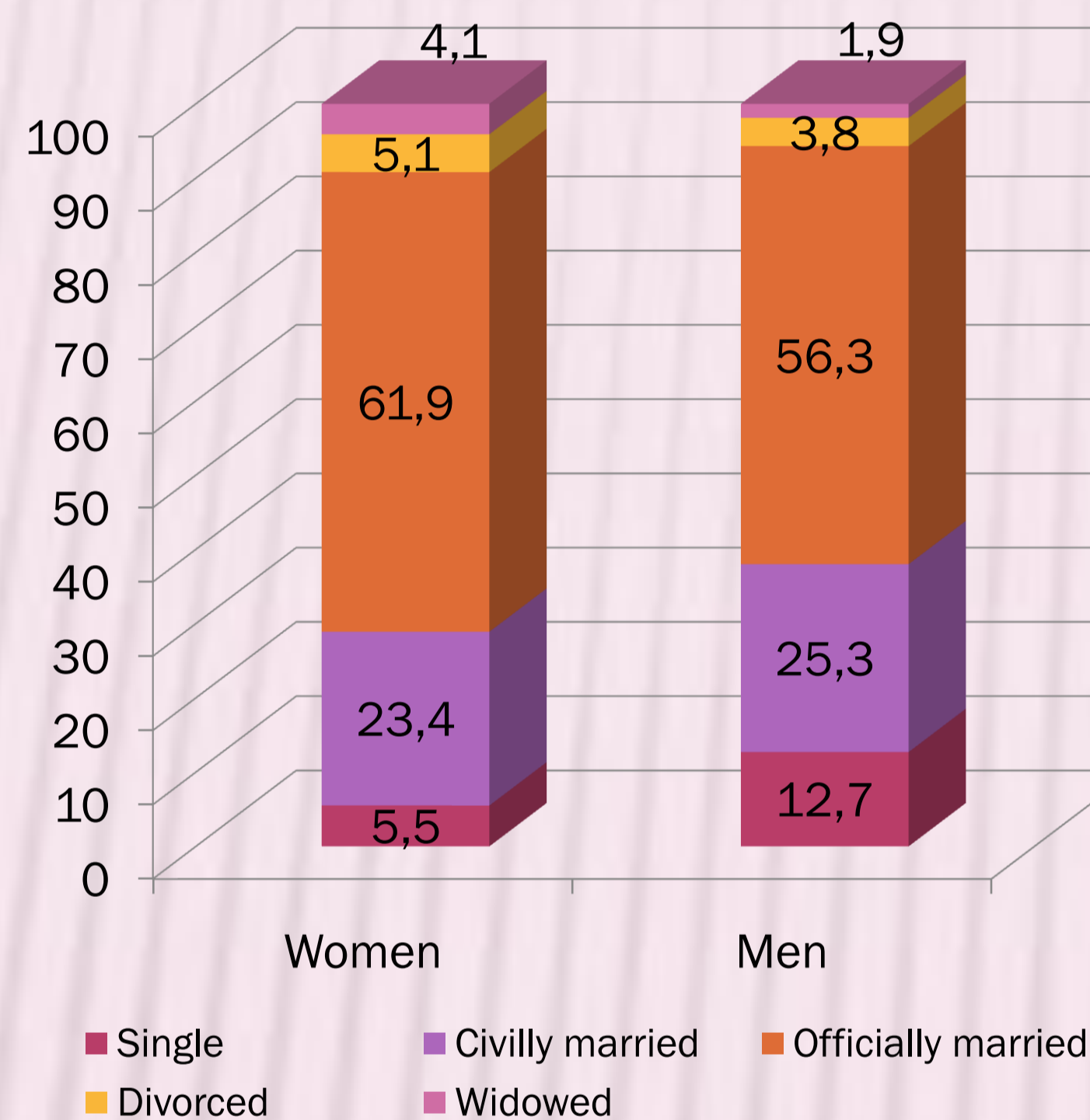


Figure 2. Marital status of respondents (%).

Table 1. Wanted number of children among respondents (% of respondents who specified wanted parity).

Age (years)	Percentage of respondents who specified wanted parity						Average wanted parity
	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more	
WOMEN							
under 20	0	0	14.3	7.4	50.1	28.2	3.9
20-24	0	1.4	12.1	22.4	49.3	14.8	3.4
25-29	0	1.7	6.6	11.3	44.5	35.9	4.5
30-34	0	0	5.8	10.9	38.4	44.9	4.1
35-39	0	5.6	5.1	5.3	35.1	48.9	3.6
40-44	0	14.3	0	14.2	42.9	28.6	3.7
45-49	0	0	0	14.7	50.1	35.2	3.8
total	0	3.2	6.3	12.3	44.4	33.8	3.9
MEN							
under 20	0	0	0	50.3	0	49.7	3.3
20-24	0	0	9.6	21.5	25.2	43.7	4.9
25-29	0	0	4.1	10.2	32.6	53.1	5.1
30-34	0	0	1.9	5.8	26.9	65.4	5.4
35-39	0	0	3.6	0	14.3	82.1	5.9
40-44	0	3.2	3.5	6.4	21.3	65.6	5.8
45-49	0	0	0	0	25.3	74.7	6.9
total	0	0.6	3.4	13.5	20.2	62.3	5.3

Neither of the age groups of men and women has intention to be voluntarily childless. This distinguishes our results from results of surveys conducted in other Russian regions.

As it can be seen from table 1, reproductive intentions of men of all age groups in relation to wanted parity, except for the most young group aging under 20, are considerably higher than that of questioned women. Dominating intention among women in all the analyzed age groups, except for group of 30-39, is wish to have 4 children, whereas dominating wish among men of all age groups is to have 5 or more children. The only exception is age group under 20, in which intentions for wanted parity are almost equally distributed between 3 and 5 or more children.

Important peculiarity is age differentiation of reproductive intentions in relation to wanted parity. Men in young groups clearly wish to have fewer children than men in older groups. For example, in age groups over 35 years average wanted parity is 5.9-6.9 children, whereas in 20-29 years age group it varies about 5 children, and in the youngest group under 20 it makes up 3 children. The last number shall be estimated with sufficient care, because number of respondents in this group is not high.

As for women, age dynamics in relation to wanted parity is not clearly expressed: in elder and younger groups this rate varies within 3.4-4.5 children. So, reproductive intentions of men and women in relation to wanted parity in young age groups become closer. "Expected" parity is more definite characteristic of reproductive orientation. Of course, in real life "expected" parity will not be the same as actual parity; however birth rate considerably depends on reproductive plans of families and individuals. In scientists' opinion, reproductive plans are sufficiently stable over reproductive period.

According to survey results expected number of children is lower than wanted number of children in all age groups that indicates the influence of living conditions on realization of reproductive plans. In this respect difference between wanted and expected number of children in females is essentially lower than in males (tables 1, 2) which evidences about more realistic estimations of wanted parity among women and presence of not evident consideration of real living circumstances while formation of reproductive plans.

Table 2. Expected parity among respondents (% of respondents who specified expected parity).

Age (years)	Percentage of respondents who specified expected parity						Average expected parity
	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more	
WOMEN							
under 20	0	9.1	18.1	18.2	18.2	36.4	3.5
20-24	6.1	4.5	3.1	21.7	48.1	16.5	3.6
25-29	0	1.8	10.9	14.5	40.1	32.7	3.9
30-34	0	2.3	4.8	21.4	42.9	28.6	3.9
35-39	5.2	15.9	26.3	15.7	26.4	10.5	2.7
40-44	0	14.3	0	28.3	28.9	28.5	3.6
45-49	10.1	0	19.9	10.2	39.7	20.1	3.4
Total	2.8	4.2	9.8	18.8	40.1	24.3	3.5
MEN							
under 20	0	0	0	49.1	0	50.9	4.3
20-24	0	0	13.9	19.4	38.9	27.8	4.3
25-29	0	2.2	13.3	22.2	22.2	40.1	4.4
30-34	2.1	0	14.3	16.3	27.5	39.8	4.5
35-39	3.4	6.9	6.8	10.3	27.8	44.8	4.3
40-44	6.6	20.1	16.7	3.3	23.2	30.1	3.3
45-49	0	22.1	37.9	40.1	0	0	2.2
Total	1.9	4.9	13.1	16.9	26.8	36.4	3.9

The other peculiarity of survey results is occurrence of respondents both men and women who do not plan to have children. In general sample share of that group is very low 2.8% of males and 1.9% of females respectively. But what is important that the group exists and especially among young people. Taking into account the fact that nobody mentioned childlessness as a wanted parity absence of real plans of having children evidences about existence of major health limitations and/or difficult living conditions.

The main socio-economical factors influencing decrease of expected parity in comparison with wanted among both male and female respondents are first of all socio-political instability, limited or poor housing conditions, wish to keep standard of living; minor reasons are such as specific character of respondents' jobs, troubles with children they already have, uncertainty about strength of marriage, low income.

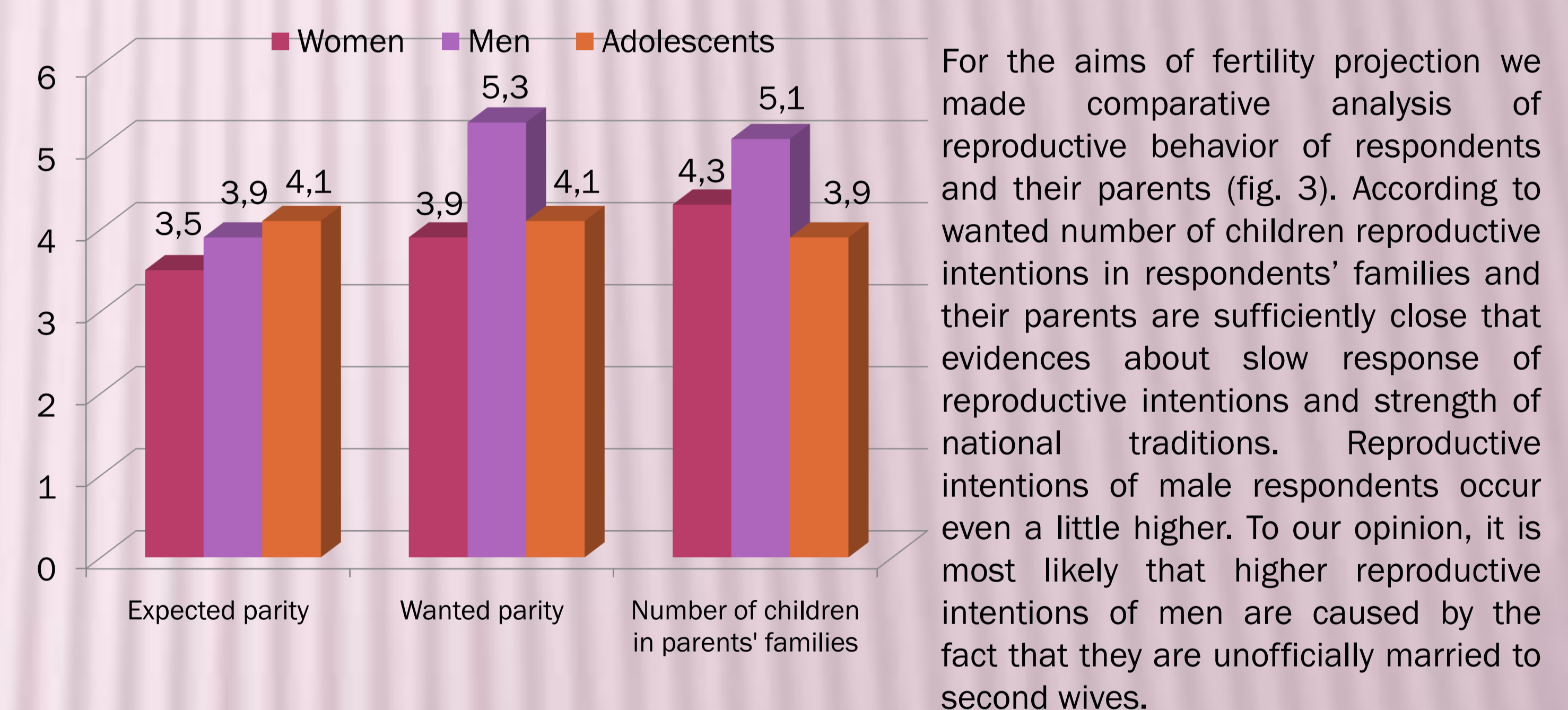


Figure 3. Average expected and wanted parities among questioned respondents.

As we can see wanted number of children among adolescents is sufficiently close to those in adults especially in females. According to the data of some researchers, the dominant reproductive intention of youth in Russia is to have 2 children, and the same intention of youth in Karachaevo-Cherchessian Republic is to have 2.9 children, and the same intention of youth of other peoples of Northern Caucasus is to have 3 children. According to the data of our sociological survey, 69% of Chechen adolescents stated that they want to have 4 and more children, 17% want to have 3 children, 14% - 2 children. It is important that neither of questioned teenagers wants to have 1 child or no children.

At the same time according to expected number of children which was mentioned above resulting fertility in respondent's families will occur lower than in families of their parents. Thus the main factor of projection of fertility reduction is living conditions affecting and transforming traditionally high reproductive intentions of population.

Conclusions.

- In Chechen population keep up traditionally high reproductive intentions. Wanted number of children among adolescents is sufficiently close to those in adults especially in females.
- Expected number of children is lower than wanted number of children in all age groups that indicates the influence of living conditions on realization of reproductive plans. In this respect difference between wanted and expected number of children in females is essentially lower than in males (respectively 3,9 and 3,5 children in females, 5,3 and 3,9 in males) which evidences about more realistic estimations of wanted parity among women and presence of not evident consideration of real living circumstances while formation of reproductive plans.
- Share of respondents both men and women who do not plan to have children is very low 2.8% of males and 1.9% of females respectively. But what is important that the group exists and especially among young people. Taking into account the fact that nobody mentioned childlessness as a wanted parity absence of real plans of having children evidences about existence of major health limitations and/or difficult living conditions.