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Child of its time: The potential of the Escalating Actions Structural Theory in explaining family-demographic macro-trends*

O.L. Chernozub¹, M.L. Belonozhko², V.V. Fedorov³

¹Rosatom State Corporation,
Bolshaya Ordynka St., 24, Moscow, 119017, Russia

²Industrial University of Tyumen,
Volodarskogo St., 38, Tyumen, 625000, Russia

³VCIOM,
Prechistenka St., 38, Moscow, 119034, Russia

(e-mail: OLChernozub@rosatom.ru; belonozhkoml@tyuiu.ru; fedorov@wciom.com)

Abstract. The Escalating Actions Structural Theory (EAST) considers social action as an outcome of the interplay between implicit and explicit driving forces within the process of action escalation. Two primary forms of this escalation outcome are “prescribed” and “deliberate” actions. The former implies more or less unconscious use of pre-existing behavioral patterns, access to which depends on the actor’s experience; the latter implies conscious elaboration of a course of action adapted to the situation, which depends on the actor’s potential in reasoning. Thus, two distinct domains of social experience and cultural capital compete for control over escalation process and resulting actions. The article presents the findings from the test of the EAST’s ability to distinguish between social groups and behavioral domains based on the balance between prescribed and intentional actions. The study is based on the empirical data on family formation practices — marriage and cohabitation — in Russia over the past seventy years. Adoption patterns for cohabitation culture versus marriage differ between men and women: unlike men, women have not yet developed an effective culture of cohabitation. Two domains differ in dynamics of cultural regulators, providing examples of both cultural rise (intentional actions predominate under the practice’s expansion) and decline (prescribed actions prevail under the practice’s contraction). The study confirmed the hypothesis that social actions resulting in the same outcome but following different escalation trajectories tend to have different social consequences. In both marriage and cohabitation, a prescribed course of action fosters a more effective partnership — one that endures longer and results in more children. Thus, as an effective culture of cohabitation develops among women, this practice will become more socially productive, leading to longer-lasting unions and more children.

Key words: social action; cultural evolution theory; dual process framework and model; prescribed action; deliberate action; sociology of family; marriage; cohabitation; Escalating Actions Structural Theory (EAST)

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This study aims at testing the ability of the Escalating Actions Structural Theory (EAST) to explain social groups behavior within specific domains by dynamics of their cultural norms, in particular, whether the EAST is able to differentiate (a) social groups and (b) behavior domains by the structure of behaviors' main cultural regulators, explaining such structure dynamics over time. The EAST considers social action as an output of controversial interaction of implicit (uncontrollable and unconscious) versus explicit (controllable and conscious) forms of cultural regulation of behavior and differentiates actions by their trajectories within the action's escalation process. These trajectories set up “structural types” of action, and shares of different structural types in population behaviors are assumed to be a substantive feature of social groups, behavioral domains and cultural norms systems.

General rationale to explore this sphere arises from the fact that social actions are performed both consciously and unconsciously, while their motives and reasons are frequently inconsistent, and actors are normally unaware of real forces guiding their social behaviors. Responding to this “quest to find new analytical or methodological tools to explicate social action”, sociologists turned to the dual-process models developed by cognitive and social psychologists [28. P. 169]. From the “dual-process” perspective, actions should be explained not only by conscious, declarative knowledge, but also by acquired social experience stored in ready-to-use cognitive schemas and accessible through automatic cognition (Type 1 data processing). It is assumed that deliberate cognition (Type 2 data processing) prompts action when Type 1 data processing proves ineffective (fails to reply to the external conditions of action). These two cognitive processes constitute the Dual-Process Model (DPM) [18].

Within a broader sociological framework, this approach is rooted in American pragmatism theories [17; 30], being further disciplinary articulated by Bourdieu's habitus concept [5; 6], Collins' ritual chains theory [12], Giddens' structuration theory [25], and Swidler “tool kit” model [39; 40]. Later DiMaggio called to pay special attention to the DPM as a potentially powerful explanation of social actions. Vaisey suggested the very first scheme of adapting the DPM for sociological needs, and then attention to this approach has grown exponentially [29. P. 288] and many approaches and models have been developed, mainly in sociology of culture [8; 15; 19; 20; 29; 38; 42; 43].

There are several conceptualizations of the main fields of potentially productive allocation of the dual process framework (DPF) as a general methodological approach, unlike the DPMs as particular models that could be quite

different in cognitive science and sociology [29]. In 2019, Leschziner mentioned two directions of such application: “cognitive processing as explanans” direction does not study the dual process but focuses on its output’s impact on social actions (almost unexplored field for sociology, these studies primarily identify and explain implicit, uncontrollable and unconscious, Type 1 factors effects); “context and cognitive processing in action” direction studies the interactions of Type 1 and Type 2 processes, focusing on how environmental and social contexts affect and control the action [14; 18; 21; 35; 43]. In 2025, Devyatko proposed an alternative classification of the DPF implications: integration of theories of moral judgments and norms adoption; development of quantitative sociological measurements, which looks more promising for diagnosing implicit factors than in-depth interview and other qualitative methods [16].

We use the epistemological model of Lizardo and co-authors, who suggested to apply the DPF to the holistic process of enculturation, dividing this process into four stages — acquisition, storage, processing, and use of culture [29. P. 291]. For each stage, they proposed a sociological (cultural) interpretation of Type 1 and Type 2 factors and the stage-specific form of their interaction. The most problematic is the fourth stage of using culture due to the lack of diagnostic instruments for linking the output of culture processing with real social action. That is why most studies consider intention as a relatively close proxy for real action: “cultural analysts very often rely on data that get at (usually indirectly) culture in thinking and then attempt (with mixed success) to theoretically extend arguments to culture in action; this is an analytic move — the data themselves are not data of action” [29. P. 299]. However, accepting the output of culture processing instead of real action as a final point of analysis lead to a Parsonian bias (only “reasoned” action is defined as action, which is too far from reality).

In fact, Type 2 processes “implicate culture in action via intentional, controlled, and effortful mechanisms premised on planning and goal setting prior to action. This ideal type aligns with Parsonian models wherein actors are reflexively aware of reasoning in the process of execution and the specific intentions of action” [1. P. 7]; these models are also consistent with “bounded” rational action approaches popular in sociology [27]. Alternatively, Type 1 processes involve culture in action via the automatic eliciting of action schemata durably (through repeated past experiences in Type 1 cultural learning) associated with the perception of affordances in situation [6]. This culture in action process is generally unreflective (although it could become conscious) and relatively effortless [29. P. 300].

The EAST should be classified as a synthetic model by Leschziner, a quantitative DPM instrument according to Deviatko, and “use-of-culture” DPM model of escalating action according to Lizardo and colleagues. Leaving aside numerous discussions of the “true” nature and “correct” naming of both types of behavioral factors [37], the EAST differentiates Type 1 “implicit” ones, which

are deeply interiorized forms of social experience, conceptualized as dispositions. They are elicited automatically and affect behavior in uncontrollable way through a priori prescriptions to act in some specific way. In contrast, Type 2 “explicit” factors are output of more or less controllable reasoning over prospective action. The EAST suggests that both types of factors have their own nature and should be studied with specific measuring and analytical instruments. Within escalation, two types of factors compete for control over action, which results in a specific “structural type” of action with the following trajectory: stimulus to act — initial attitude (action program) — initial intention — intervening reasoning — revised attitude (action program) — revised intention — actual action. The balance of both factors’ influence (composition of typical structural types) denotes specifics of (a) social group, (b) behavioral domain, and (c) cultural norms regulating behavior of the group within the domain [10].

To test the EAST potential to differentiate social phenomena based on the specifics of their behavior escalation, we chose the behavioral domain of romantic partnership, in which men and women will act as different social groups, while formal marriage and cohabitation will serve as markers of different types of cultural control over the given behavior.

In Judeo-Christian cultures, marriage is regarded as a formal union of two partners, while cohabitation refers to a couple that lives together but not married or in a civil partnership [13]. Cohabitation is increasingly widespread, with more couples choosing to cohabit before or instead of marriage. Even if couples cohabit together for a variety of reasons — from testing compatibility to cutting expenses, this trend undoubtedly reflects evolving values of relationships and commitments [31; 32]. Some scholars argue that cultural recognition of nonmarital cohabitation influences relationship outcomes [3]: reliable markers of cultural acceptability — relationship duration or number of children; however, individual reasons are as far more influential factor [41].

This is consistent with the commitment theory [36] which distinguishes between commitments based on internal factors (i.e., dedication) and external factors (i.e., constraint commitment). That is, relationship-driven reasons correspond to dedication, while event-driven reasons — constraint commitment. Commitment theory and family studies show that it is useful to distinguish between internal and external reasons for marriage or cohabitation: internal causes are positively related to relationship quality, while external causes — negatively [31; 32; 42].

In our study, we will test another aspect of the potential factors of partnership: whether cultural adoption affects the effectiveness of marriage versus cohabitation, and what is the intensity of this cultural impact, if any. Markers for the grade of this adoption will be combinations of the EAST structural types of actions. According to the DPF, a higher share of prescribed actions will indicate relatively high level of cultural acceptability and higher adequacy of corresponding cultural norms to actual behavior. Higher level of deliberate actions will mean inadequacy

of cultural norms to most behavioral situations and cultural unacceptability of the given form of behavior. The reliable markers of cultural adoption's impact can be relationships' duration and number of children. Better adopted forms of behavior are anticipated to be more productive: the first marker will represent primarily individually, while the second — socially significant output of romantic partnership.

Our main hypotheses are as follows: **H0**. Proxy form of the EAST method to diagnose structural type of action is effective in this role; associations with control variables of self — assessment reasoning intensity and cultural capital level of development will be statistically-significant. **H1**. Social groups (men and women) will differ in the composition of structural types of action. **H2**. Behavioral domains of marriages versus cohabitations will differ in the composition of structural types of action, meaning they are at different stages of cultural adoption. **H3**. Compositions of structural types of actions will evolve over time in non-stochastic way, meaning the cultural adoption's directional dynamics. **H4**. This evolution, if any, will affect individual and social productivity of every form of partnership in the predicted way: higher level of cultural adoption — higher level of partnership productivity. This way, H1 is instrumentally focused, H2–3 — methodologically, and H4 — theoretically.

Thus, we hope to identify stable forms of behavioral factors' (In the EAST — structural types of actions) composition, which can substantively characterize groups, behavioral domains, and sets of cultural norms. That will support one of the EAST core provisions: *social actions, totally equal in other aspects but differing in escalation trajectories, would generate different social consequences*. This provides an opportunity to supplement the contemporary theory of individual reasons as the main factor of romantic partnership with the dimension of cultural influences. Finally, we hope to acquire some practical implications of our findings regarding interventional policy of the mass media, government, civil activists, and the Russian civil society regarding the family. To do this, we conducted a quantitative study in the form of the CAWI (N representing the Russian population 18+) to collect data on the objective context and subjective experience of romantic partnership. Due to the limited size of questionnaire and the permissible cognitive load for respondents, we focused only on cases of their very first experience. One should keep in mind these limitations of our generalizations.

The EAST original instruments and proxy model

The EAST focuses on the differentiation of social actions according to their origins determined by the features of escalation process — they can be different even for identical social actions. In its operationalized form, the EAST analyses action escalation based on a comparison of initial and resulting forms of the action program. An action automatically executed according to the initial

program is considered to be “prescribed” by a priori attitudes. If, however, some signs of prescriptions inadequacy arise, the reflective apparatus of the actor can be elicited, and ready-to-use behavioral program can be revised and altered. If successful, this process results in implementing the output of reasoning, which constitutes “deliberate” action.

Methodological meaning of this “structural” (by structure of action escalation) differentiation is based on the fact that even identical to outer spectator social actions can be driven by principally different factors and have to be explained and predicted in different ways. Two of the most common “structural types” of action are “prescribed” (the main driver is a set of general attitudes towards an object and a form of prospective action) and “deliberate” (the main driver is a set of particular attitudes towards action effectiveness criteria). There are some other types, like “heuristic” or “unplanned” actions, but we will focus on the above mentioned two.

To empirically differentiate actions by “structural types”, the EAST proposes a matrix of principal drivers (Figure 1). If action is performed while the prescribed program prompts action, and reasoning suggests inaction, this action is guided by predispositions and is “prescribed”. The opposite combination of operational driver statuses indicates a “deliberate” action. The space between these two poles of the matrix contains actions of various intermediate structural statuses, which we do not consider here (see: [10]).

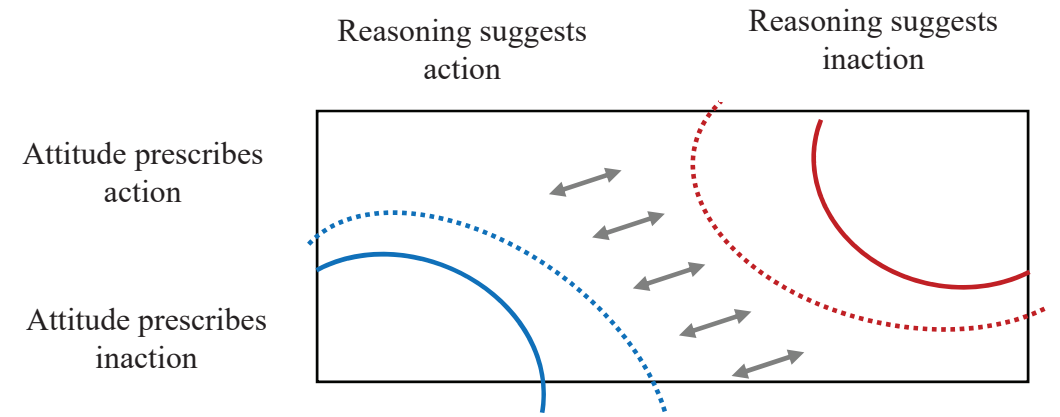


Figure 1. The EAST matrix conceptual model

To construct the “Prescriptions” scale of the matrix, the EAST uses a model of structural theory of attitudes: a complex structure of attitude; due to their mismatched nature, its components can be and often are inconsistent [33; 34]. Consistent positive attitudes towards anticipated actions are associated with the maximum probability of the prescribed action performance, while consistent

negative attitudes — with the maximum probability of inaction as inconsistent attitudes typically result in intermediate levels of action probabilities [9; 10]. The D2 (two-dimensional) metric of attitude consistency we use is a crosstab of attitude valence measured by direct and indirect instruments, which presumably indicate a valence of explicit and implicit factors of behavior. The former consists of conventional questions about attitude towards objects and forms of action. We use the Graphical Associative Test of Attitudes (GATA) as the second instrument, but other convenient techniques could also be used [10]. This kind of measurement results in scales of “Consistent” (both instruments detect positive valence), “Consistent–” (negative valence), and “Inconsistent” (reciprocal values) attitudes. Within the EAST Matrix, this D2 scale represents the potential impact of a priori prescriptions (D2 output is presented in Table 1 rows).

The “Deliberation” scale, reflecting the influence of reasoning, is formed with the common Theory of Reasoned Actions/Theory of Planned Behavior (TRA/TPB) toolkit. In most cases, we use basic questions about beliefs, (a) anticipating the output value of action, (b) expecting a reaction of social environment, and (c) assuming the physical ability to fulfil the action’s program [23]. The TRA/TPB output is presented by Table 1 columns. Combination of two scales provides an operationalized form of The EAST matrix of actions.

Table 1

The EAST matrix of action “structural types”

Deliberation & Prescription scales	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Consistent+		Mainly prescribed	Entirely prescribed
Inconsistent	Mainly deliberate		Mainly prescribed
Consistent-	Entirely deliberate	Mainly deliberate	

Table 1 illustrates the technique of empirical differentiation between actions based on their dependence on the corresponding driver. The general pools of prescribed and deliberate actions can be formed by aggregating structural subtypes in the upper-right and lower-left corners of the EAST matrix [10]. Thus, the EAST methodological and technical apparatus seems to be appropriate to identify prescribed and deliberate behaviors in the empirical study and to form corresponding subsamples.

Since we wanted to consider actions performed years ago, we modified instruments to keep their measurands as close to the original EAST concepts as possible. We started with the analysis of self-report method as the only

available for our task, despite its effects of “lack of introspection” and “deliberate misreporting” [24]. To decrease their probability, we added some indirect indicators, intentionally degrade their face validity, to direct measurements — self-assessment of the reasoning intensity (RI) concerning the anticipated partnership. **RI**. “Some people think about the prospect of marriage for a long time, weigh the pros and cons, while others act more on a hunch. What was your case? (I thought about everything carefully and I believe that I made a conscious decision — I can’t say that I thought about it too much, everything seemed to work out by itself)”.

Three core questions rooted in the TRA/TBP [23] were stipulated to represent the output of the action escalation step, when the adequacy of initial (prescribed) program is tested: “When you were planning a family, how focused were on: **TBP1** — expected personal value (What will I get? What I have to pay for? Is my romantic partner good enough for me? And am I?); **TBP2** — feasibility of action (Where do we move together? Will we have enough means for our family?); **TBP3** — social environment reaction (Will people, whom I really respect, approve of this action?)”. These questions were supplemented with commonly accepted ten-point ordinal scales: “1 — had no thinking at all, 10 — I thought carefully”. Instrumentally, these variables can be used as both independent indicators and summative scales. To differentiate prescribed and deliberate types of actions, we assumed the level of general (or summative) reasoning intensity an informative metric. All other things equal, its low level will indicate relatively higher probability for action to be of the prescribed type, while its high level — relatively higher probability for action to be of the deliberate type. In terms of the EAST matrix, the former tends to reflect right-upper corners, while the latter — left-bottom corners.

Certainly, this measurement model is quite rough approximation of the original EAST model. However, there proofs that “it is the degree of effort, controllability, automaticity, and awareness involved in action initiation and execution that becomes a main analytic (and, from the actor’s perspective, phenomenological) differentiating factor between Type I and Type II culture in action processes” [29. P. 300; 2]. Thus, our proxy model is a diagnostic instrument for the culture processing output, which, according to the enculturation DPM, is an indicator of the prevailing impact of implicit or explicit factors.

The previous section resulted in four operable variables (**RI**, **TBP1-3**), their summation is assumed to provide variable (**TYPE**) denoting prescribed versus deliberate structural types of action. To test validity of this indicator, we planned to additionally assess its associations with variables representing level of cultural capital (**CC1**, **CC2**). Then, the core variable is to point to the form of partnership (**Form**), supplemented with variable of the year of its creation (**Year**) to form a timeline for cases under studying. Finally, two variables represent the partnership productivity: duration (**Dur**) and number of children born (**Child**). The questionnaire

was structured as follows: **RI** — internal validation for **TYPE**); **TRA1-3** — structural type indicator resulting in the summative scale of **TYPE**); **CC1** — please, count all cases when you were forced to change your opinion on important issues (additional validation for **TYPE**); **CC2** — please, sum up all years you have invested in education, excluding secondary school but including all kinds of training courses (additional validation for **TYPE**); **Form** — when your first partnership was created, what was the first event (1. marriage; 2. Cohabitation); **Year** — in what year was this partnership established; **Dur** — how long did this partnership last; **Child** — how many children were born in this partnership; **Gender** — 1. male; 2. female.

Thus, our questionnaire consisted of 11 variables, 4 of which described objective aspects of partnership's creation (Form, Year, Gender, CC2), 2 — objective output (Dur, Child), and 5 — self-assessment of subjective factors of this action (RI, TPBI-3, CC1).

Data collection and transformation

Data was collected using CAWI on the VCIOM all-Russian representative online panel in February 2026. N = 1600 (18+); age, gender, education, federal district, type of settlement quotas (estimated standard error 2,75%). 82,4% have experience of family creation, thus constituting subsample for analysis. We transformed the data in two ways: introduced a nominal scale to differentiate prescribed and deliberate structural types of action, then, to represent temporal dynamics, introduced an ordinal time scale.

The action structural type's indicator was as a summative scale based on three of the TRA/TPB model's variables. To test the quality of summative scale, we used Cronbach's α statistics: if it is about 1 — variables are identical, do not complement each other and construction of summative (general) variable is senseless; if Cronbach's α is close to 0 — tested variables have nothing in common, and a summative variable cannot be created as variables measure different constructs. For our data Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.633$ (3 variables), for 2 variables is $\alpha = 0.5$ (without TBP1), $\alpha = 0.503$ (without TBP2), $\alpha = 0.593$ (without TBP3). Thus, our initial variables represent some common construct (Cronbach's α for all 3 variables is relatively high — 0.633). At the same time, taking any of them from the equation leads to a dramatical drop of α , i.e., our variables measure the common construct. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,63$ indicates that the set of initial variables is not sufficient to represent the construct, and additional variables are needed to cover its missing aspects. In general, our three TRA/TPB variables are suitable for an integral indicator of “general concern” about action.

The summative variable was calculated as sum of initial variables and then split into approximately equal parts at the summative scales' mean. The point of low values is supposed to represent the pool of predominantly prescribed actions, while the point of high values — predominantly deliberate ones (Table 2).

Table 2

Main indicators of prescribed/deliberate action

Summative scale	Mean	N	%	Structural type of action
Low intensity	6.69	665	50.4	Predominantly prescribed
High intensity	19.8	654	49.6	Predominantly deliberate
Sample	13,.19	1319	100	All

The main indicator **TYPE** was constructed. To test its validity, we added direct measurement variable of reasoning intensity self-assessment (**RI**) and two indicators for actors’ cultural capital: **CC1** (important, mind-changing events) and **CC2** (additional education) [11]. ANOVA testing of **TYPE** variable in initial (summative) form with **RI** resulted in the means of 14.5 versus 12.5 for “reason” versus “hunch” — driven action ($F = 21.521$ for $DF = 1318$, $\rho = 0$). Tabulation of the two-point **TYPE** variable with the two-point **RI** demonstrated sufficient level of association ($\chi^2 = 18.501$, $DF = 3$, $\rho = 0$), i.e., internal validation with **RI** self-assessment direct measurement did not reveal any threats to the core variable’s validity.

Theory suggests that people with well-developed cultural capital can act in a prescribed mode in wider range of situations to save resources of their reflective potential for complex and critical decisions [22]. As creation of romantic partnership (family) is one of the kind, we should encounter a relatively high level of cultural capital development in the group of deliberate actions and relatively low — in the group of prescribed actions. ANOVA output resulted in 0.67 years for prescribed versus 1.07 for deliberate actions ($F = 7.859$, $DF = 1318$, $\rho = 0.001$), and 0.176 years for prescribed versus 0.189 for deliberate actions ($F = 1.988$, $DF = 1299$, $\rho = 0.159$). Input data reflects extra education years and important mind-changing events in the period from 16 to the first family creation. Both cultural capital indicators favor the deliberate structural type: its practitioners seem to be more educated (In average have 0.1898 versus 0.1765 year of post-secondary school education) and more socially experienced (1.0994 versus 0.6701 mind-changing events). Thus, our data does not reveal any signs compromising the initial assumption of the ability of “general concern” to differentiate respondent’s action as prescribed and deliberate structural types. More experienced and slightly more educated respondents tend to act in the deliberate mode, while less experienced and probably less educated ones tend to rely on the previously adopted attitudes’ prescriptions. Thus, **H0** (preliminary) could be accepted.

To create the time scale we tested moving average procedure of 2, 3, 4 and 5 levels, which showed that moving average 3 serves better to keep enough observations for every period (Table 3).

Table 3

Timeline model								
Name	1965	1980	1991	1996	2002	2007	2012	2019
Period								
Start	1946	1970	1985	1990	1997	2002	2007	2012
End	1985	1990	1997	2002	2007	2012	2018	2026
Duration, years	39	20	12	12	10	10	11	14
Family creations								
N	392	390	399	397	404	383	393	380
%	30.3	30.2	30.9	30.7	31.3	29.6	30.4	29.4

The EAST as explaining behavioral domains and cultural norms

The research question was whether the EAST model could help to explain, even partially, how, why and with what subsequences the practice under study penetrates traditional social structure. Figure 2 provides an overall picture, presenting data on the balances of marriage versus cohabitation and of prescribed versus deliberate types of actions in romantic partnerships: a rise in the number of cohabitations and a decline in number of marriages. Marriages, which in 1965 were guided primarily by prescribed actions, start to lose their cultural ground — since 1991 marriage has no longer been an automatic implementation of cultural schemata but a balanced combination of prescribed and deliberate actions. 1965–1991 is a period, when the marriage’s cultural norms were revised: deliberate marriages are flat, while prescribed ones drop dramatically. In 1991, this process in general finished, and since then we see this cultural shift’s output in social behavior — a gradual but steady decline in the number of marriages.

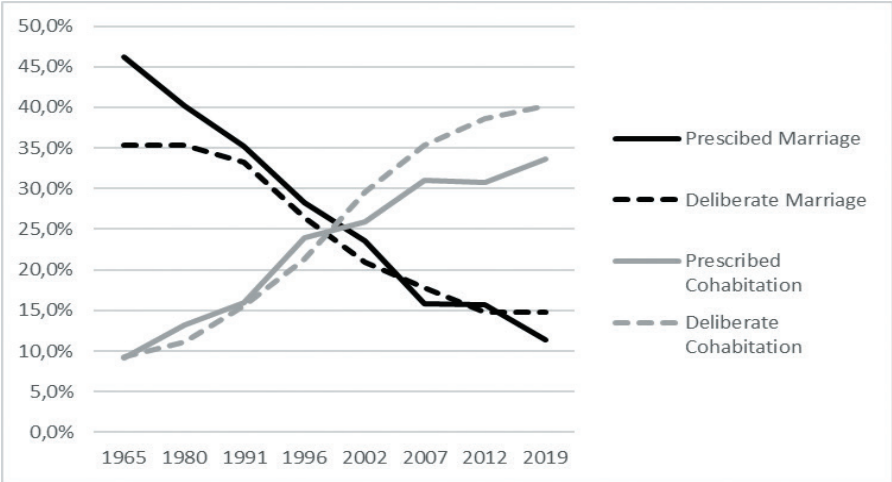


Figure 2. Marriage and cohabitation dynamics by structural type

On the contrary, the share of deliberate actions, i.e., based on situational decisions, still overweigh the prescribed ones in cohabitations. In other words, the balance of prescribed versus deliberate cohabitations suggests that elaboration and adoption of alternative (In favor of cohabitation and accurate enough to be its effective regulators) cultural norms has not finished. Russian society seems to question the traditional norms of official marriage, while cohabitation partnership’ cultural regulators are still under consideration. These conclusions prove the EAST’s ability to explain cultural evolution and differentiate behavioral domains by dynamics of this evolution.

The data on Figures 3–4 represents examples of the more detailed EAST’s description of social groups. In the period under analysis, men behaved predominantly in the “prescribed” mode, i.e., they are not an agent of new forms of partnership. Apart from the revolt of marriage/cohabitation behaviors common for both groups, the only mentionable change for men is the narrowing gap between prescribed and deliberate marriages — from 13.8% in 1965 to 2% in 2019. This means men’s careful attempts to test the adequacy of traditional marriage cultural norms in the new social environment. Nevertheless, during all period men’s behavior was guided predominantly by the currently adopted culture.

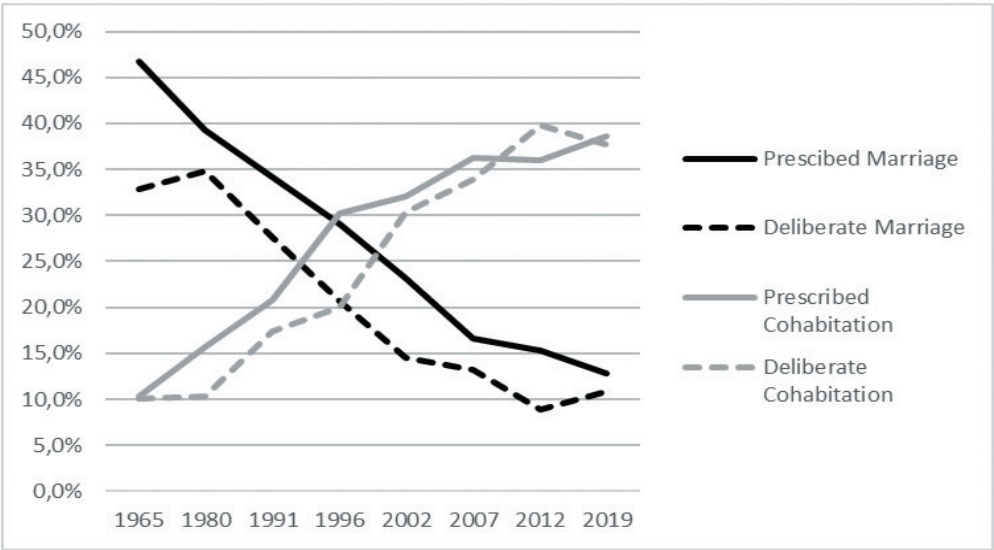


Figure 3. Marriage and cohabitation dynamics by structural type (men)

There are some meaningful differences in women’s behaviors: from 1980–1991, women’s behaviors within both domains are primarily deliberate, i.e., women are the “agent of change”. From 1991, women began to revise the traditional marriage, and from 1996 — to experiment with cohabitation. For both domains, deliberate behavior starts to significantly exceed the prescribed one, which indicates the full-scale efforts to revise norms and attempts to explore new behavior forms. In theory, this should lead to new norms and adoption of a new, supposedly “enhanced” and

more effective culture. As the gap between women's deliberate and prescribed cohabitations is extremely wide (14.2%), the search for new forms of romantic partnership is currently underway.

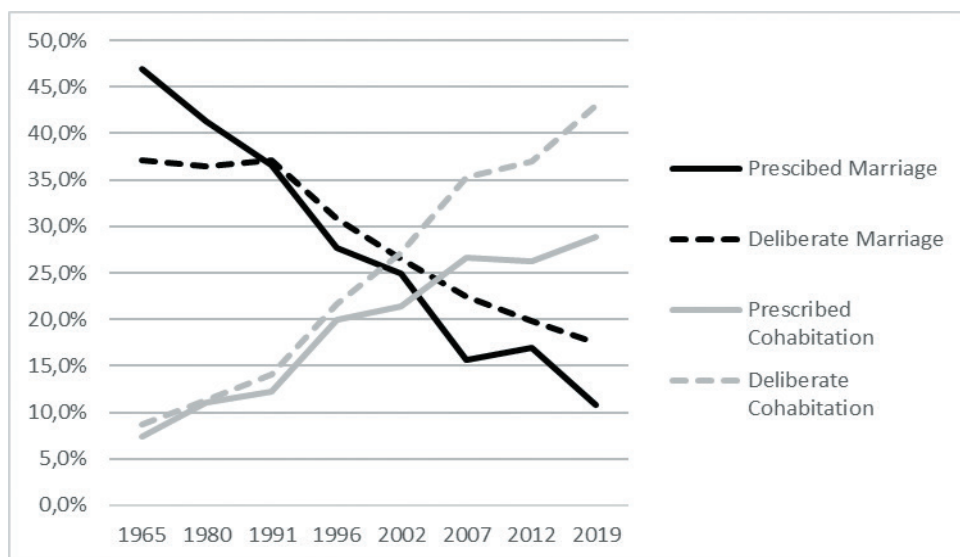


Figure 4. Marriage and cohabitation dynamics by structural type (women)

Thus, our data does not problematize the hypotheses concerning the EAST's ability to explain cultural evolution as differentiating behavioral domains and particular social groups.

Two of our variables were designed to test “social effectiveness” of different forms of partnership as an output of prescribed versus deliberate action. These variables indicate temporal sustainability partnerships and their demographic impact as the main social effect. For our behavioral domains and EAST structural types, we systematically examined (1) initial data, (2) ANOVA statistics, and (3) initial data normalized to simplify the comparison. Prescribed behavior looks considerably more “productive” in terms of individual and social outputs. The duration of partnership is longer for both marriage and cohabitation for both time periods:

- 1965–1996 — for marriage prescribed is 28.21, deliberate is 26.73, for cohabitation — 22.72 and 20.83 respectively;
- 2002–2019 — for marriage prescribed is 13.33, deliberate — 9.89, for cohabitation — 9.15 and 9.05 respectively.

The number of children born in both types of partnership is in favor of the prescribed form too:

- 1965–1996 — for marriage prescribed is 1.94, deliberate is 1.92, for cohabitation — 1.75 and 1.87 respectively (this is the only exception);
- 2002–2019 — for marriage prescribed is 1.99, deliberate — 5.56, for cohabitation — 1.63 and 1.58 respectively.

Prescribed marriage seems to be most effective and the most stable form, demonstrating in both periods the best values of indicators, and effectively keeping the fertility rate.

It is worth noting that we still do not have enough data to consider these associations as a casual explanation of partnership's productivity. To this date, the EAST structural types could be accepted if not as a casual driver but as a reliable predictor of the valency of cultural dynamics' social impact. It may be (even partially) a casual source of the effect or just indicate a presence of some "true" sources, and this uncertainty should be further studied. Nevertheless, our observations correspond to both EAST and cultural evolution theory in that prescribed behavior is associated with cultural regulation which fits environment well, does not elicit extra concerns and stimulates further reasoning over prospective action, while deliberate behavior — with revising and altering outdated regulators. According to our data, we are in the middle of the conflict between these two: residuals of marriage favoring environment are still in place, which why prescribed marriage, albeit on a smaller scale, is still the most developed and the best tailored (for external requirements) and subsequently the most productive form of behavior. Prescribed cohabitation has not yet finished elaboration of its cultural regulators, which explains why this behavioral domain is relatively less effective than prescribed marriage. Nevertheless, prescribed cohabitation looks generally more effective than deliberate: duration in 1965–1996 — prescribed 22.72, deliberate 20.83, in 2002–2019—9.15 and 9.05 respectively; number of children in 1965–1996 — prescribed — 1.75, deliberate — 1.87, in 2002–2019—1.63 and 1.58 respectively.

We can conclude that all four hypotheses were proved by our data. **H0**: proxy model using the indicator "grade of concern" about prospective action as a criterion to differentiate prescribed versus deliberate actions demonstrated acceptable functionality, which could be regarded as an instrumental (developing measurement methods) contribution to the EAST and other cultural evolution theories. **H1**: the EAST approach proved to be effective enough to differentiate large social groups by peculiarities of their actions' escalating process, e.g., by the mode of use of cultural capital. In theory, this suggests meaningful difference in the specific social groups' roles in cultural evolution: women act as pioneers in elaborating new cultural norms to make them effectively regulate emerging practices of cohabitation. This is in a good association with the fundamental principle of the EAST: even identical in form, social actions can differ in their social sources and outputs (for men and women partnerships are the same, but their impacts on the family creating culture are tremendously different). **H2**: composition of action escalation structure enables to differentiate behavioral domains by the grade of compliance with the current cultural regulations. In specific circumstances some

domains can fall out from the established cultural prescriptions. For the theory of social action this means the need for separate models to explain and predict social behavior in culturally homeostatic versus misbalanced domains. **H3:** the EAST has a potential ability to predict not only the general direction of evolving cultural norms and corresponding social practices but probably even some forms of models for these processes' dynamics (regular stages and speed). **H4:** prescribed forms are far more effective both in the individual and social dimensions, which means that Russian society can affect the above-mentioned processes by effectively stabilizing “prescribed marriage” and boosting the development of “prescribed cohabitation” cultures.

Thus, our study successfully completed its main tasks, providing some meaningful conclusions and observations. However, we should keep in mind its limitations, as it did not aim at the detailed description of the behavioral domains under study. Every reader should pay attention to the fact that we (trying to simplify the method and avoid potential interference of different experiences) considered only the very first romantic partnership of our respondents, and our timeline is a product of quite rough approximation. Therefore, our materials represent trends and their substantial aspects accurately enough, but particular characteristics may suffer from oversimplification.

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Дитя своего времени: потенциал структурной теории эскалации действий в объяснении семейно-демографических макротрендов*

О.Л. Чернозуб¹, М.Л. Белоножко², В.В. Федоров³

¹ЦК ГК «Росатом»,

ул. Б. Ордынка, 24, Москва, 119017, Россия

²Тюменский индустриальный университет,

ул. Володарского, 38, Тюмень, 625000, Россия

³ВЦИОМ,

ул. Пречистенка 38, Москва, 119034, Россия

(e-mail: OLChernozub@rosatom.ru; belonozhkoml@tyuiu.ru; fedorov@wciom.com)

Аннотация. Структурная теория эскалации действий (СТЭД) рассматривает социальное действие как результат взаимодействия его имплицитных и эксплицитных движущих сил в рамках процесса эскалации действий. Две основные формы такого результата эскалации — «предписанные» и «обдуманые» действия. Первые предполагают более или менее бессознательное использование готовых поведенческих схем, возможность обратиться к которым зависит от опыта актора, вторые — сознательную разработку адаптированной к ситуации программы действий, которая зависит от рассудочного потенциала актора. Таким образом, две разные области социального опыта и культурного капитала соревнуются за возможность управлять процессом эскалации и формировать действия. В статье представлены результаты проверки способности СТЭД различать социальные группы и области поведения с точки зрения баланса предписанных и преднамеренных действий. Эмпирическая основа работы — поведенческая практика создания семьи в форме брака и совместного проживания в России за последние семьдесят лет. Принятие культуры совместного проживания вместо брака различается в группах мужчин и женщин — эффективная культура совместного проживания у женщин все еще не сформировалась. Также эти формы семьи отличаются динамикой культурных регуляторов, предоставляя примеры культурного подъема (преобладание преднамеренных действий на фоне расширения практики) и упадка (преобладание предписанных действий на фоне сужения практики). Была подтверждена исследовательская гипотеза, что

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социальные действия, одинаковые по результирующей форме, но отличающиеся траекториями эскалации, будут отличаться по своим социальным последствиям. Как в браке, так и в совместном проживании предписанный порядок действий приводит к гораздо более эффективному партнерству, которое длится дольше и приводит к рождению большего числа детей. В конечном счете, по мере развития женской культуры совместного проживания, оно станет более социально продуктивным: союз будет длиться дольше и принесет больше детей.

Ключевые слова: социальное действие; теория культурной эволюции; рамка и модель двойственного процесса; предписанное действие; обдуманное действие; социология семьи; брак; сожительство; структурная теория эскалации действий (СТЭД)

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