



BIRTH ORDER AND DISPOSITIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IN THE RUSSIAN YOUTH



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In its widest possible sense, however, a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account. All these things give him the same emotions.

William James. The Principles of Psychology

Theory

Adler's Birth Order Theory (1964), Eco-psychological Approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kagitcibasi (2013), System Family Psychotherapy (Selvini Palazzoli et al., 1975), the Personal Sovereignty Theory (Nartova-Bochaver, 2003--present time).

Research:

Howarth (1982), Michalski, Shackelford (2002), Modin (2002), O'Leary et al. (1996), Ralph, Nerissa & Sulloway (2002), Salmon, Daly (1998), Sulloway (2007).

The aim

Studying the connection between DS, number of siblings in the family, and person's birth order.

Hypotheses

- 1) The more children in the family the lower DS level of each of them
- 2) The last children in the family have a lower sovereignty level than the first ones.

Dispositional Sovereignty (DS)

A person's ability to maintain and defend a personalized environment (Altman, 1985; Clayton, 2012; Heft, 2012; Nartova-Bochaver, 2017).

As a phenomenon, the DS is a trait of lower order (characteristic adaptation), highly correlating with social adaptation and various parameters of well-being.

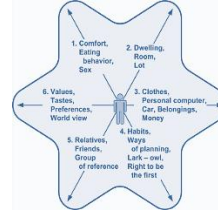


Topicality

Therefore, it is necessary to study all the factors preventing or stimulating development of the feature. Previous research has shown that DS depends on the peers-relations (Silina, 2017) and culture (Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2014, 2018) but nothing is known about whether it depends on the person's status in the in the sequence of siblings.

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The person

is a body-territorial-existential integrity

Books about Sovereignty



Sample

187 respondents (Mage = 17.8, 131 female) participated in the survey: 39 – the only children, 148 have brothers or sisters, 85 of them are the first children, 48 – the second, 10 – the third, and 5 – the fourth ones.

Method

The Psychological Sovereignty Questionnaire-2010 (Nartova-Bochaver, 2014) was used.

6 sub-scales: Physical (Body) (BS), Territory (TS), Things and Belongings (TBS), Time (routine) habits (THS), Social contacts (SCS), and Tastes and Values (TVS) sovereignties.

Examples of items:

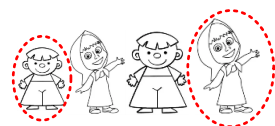
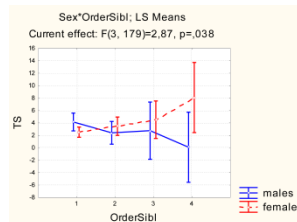
1. Even as a child I was sure nobody touched my toys when I was absent.
2. I often felt offended when adults punished me with slapping and cuffing.

Results

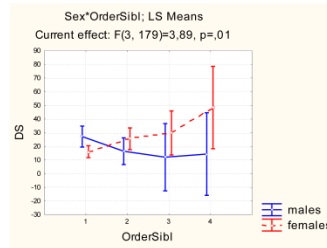
DS and number of children in the family:
No dependence

The only children and those who have got brothers and sisters:
No differences, except sovereignty of routine habits is positively associated with the order of birth - in younger children in the family it is higher ($r_s = 0.16, p = 0.03$).

The sovereignty of the **territory** is higher in females who approach the end of the children sequence and lower in males who approach the end of the children sequence.

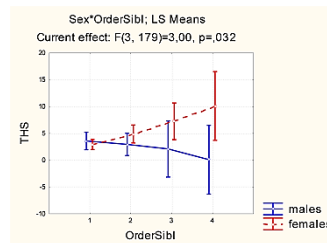


Birth order x gender =>
Dispositional sovereignty



No effects in **belongings sovereignty** and **tastes and values sovereignty**.

The sovereignty of the **routine habits**: the more older brothers and sisters a girl has, the freer she manages her time. In young men, on the contrary, younger children in the family have more limitations.



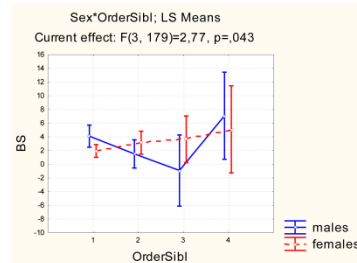
Conclusions

From the point of view of the integrity of the empirical Self boundaries, the best position for boys among siblings is to be older; for girls, it is to be younger.

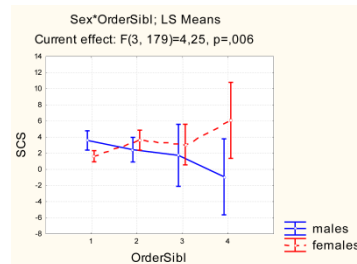
Limitations of the study: the sample is not balanced by sex; the groups of different sibling status are not equal.

Applications: for family therapy and counseling of children.

The **physical** sovereignty in males group (in the female there are no differences) also has a dynamics, with a decrease in the third child: the most deprived boys are born third in the family.



Apparently, this is because they are invaded by parents' invasions and bullied by older children.



The sovereignty of the **social contacts** decreases from the first to the third child in males and increases in females. In the group of fourth children these differences increase dramatically: the fourth girls are the freest in communicating, and the fourth boys are the least free.

