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## THE MAIN PROBLEMS AND CRISES OF LARGE FAMILIES IN MAJOR CITIES: BASED ON THE RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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**Abstract.** In major urban centers, large families constitute a vulnerable social group that requires special attention within the framework of social policy. The challenges they face are intensified by the fast-paced urban lifestyle, high cost of living, and increased competition. This study aims to explore the crises and key problems experienced by large families, identifying the main contributing factors through qualitative research methods.

State-provided social assistance plays a crucial role in improving the socio-economic conditions of large families and reducing their risk of poverty. According to the results of the study, it is necessary to additionally increase the system of social support (cash payments) aimed at large families or increase the employment of parents in large families. Data analysis revealed a predominant “male breadwinner” employment model, where the man is typically the sole income earner. Consequently, many large families exhibit low economic performance due to limited income sources. The study also highlights psychological challenges, particularly among urban-dwelling mothers of many children, who demonstrate significantly higher levels of stress and depression compared to mothers with fewer children. Therefore, it is necessary to create an organization that provides specialized assistance to women in this category. Furthermore, the results underscore the need to reconsider and redesign the existing system of social support, incorporating targeted programs and specialized financial assistance tailored to the unique needs of large families.

The practical significance of this study lies in the fact that its results can be used at the expert and institutional level to develop effective strategies and programs for social support for large families.

**Keywords:** crisis, large family, social payments, social support, welfare benefits.

### Introduction

In contemporary Kazakhstani society, large families remain a prevalent social phenomenon. Despite the ongoing urbanization processes, the number of large families in the country's major cities continues to increase. This trend stands in contrast to many industrialized nations, where

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shifts in family structure have occurred due to the transition to industrial society, the increasing participation of women in the workforce, and the normalization of full-time employment for women. These structural changes are largely influenced by globalization.

The concept of a large family is of significant interest to researchers across various academic disciplines. According to Article 90 of the Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, families with four or more underage children are classified as large families and are eligible for social benefits (*Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023*).

In the Russian Federation, the legal framework defining the social status of large families is established by Presidential Decree No. 63 dated January 23, 2024, titled "On Measures of Social Support for Large Families." This decree classifies families raising three or more underage children as large families and grants them permanent status (*Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, 2024*). However, while federal regulations in Russia generally consider families with four or more children as large families, the definition may vary depending on the region. For example, in major cities such as Moscow and Saint Petersburg, families with children up to the age of 16 are recognized as large families, whereas in Ryazan region, the threshold is set at 18 years. In some other regions – including Kursk, Voronezh, and Belgorod regions – local legislation recognizes families with children up to 24 years of age as large families (*Dogadaeva, 2016*). Therefore, in Russia, the age criteria for children included in a large family status are determined by regional legislation.

In several European countries, the definition of a large family is not formally established in legislation, which leads to varying interpretations of the term. On average, according to statistical classifications, a family with two children may already be considered a large family in some European contexts. For instance, in Hungary, although the status of a large family is not legally defined, certain branches of family policy provide special rules and benefits for families with more than four children. In France, while there are specific legal provisions related to large families, a distinctive recognition system is applied: the French Family Medal is awarded to parents based on the number of children they raise. The medal is divided into three levels: a bronze medal for mothers with four or five children, a silver medal for families with six or seven children, and a gold medal for those raising eight or more children. Thus, in many countries, the classification of a family as "large" is closely tied to the national family policy framework and its implementation.

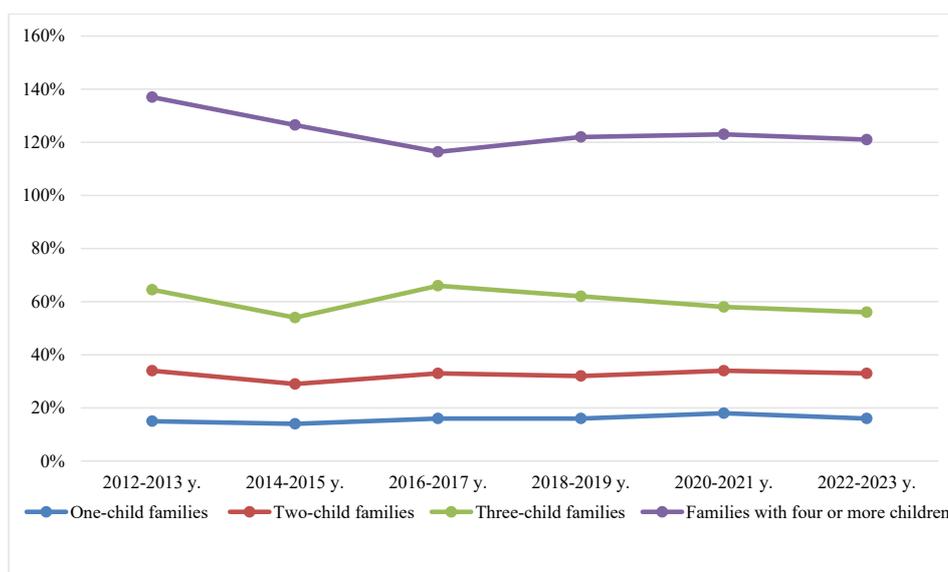
Research into the challenges and crises faced by large families contributes to a better understanding of their socio-economic conditions and can help shift existing positive or negative societal stereotypes. Therefore, studying the value orientations and problems of large families is highly relevant and significant for today's socio-economic landscape and the field of social service provision.

Thus, we propose the following *research questions*:

1. What are the main psychological difficulties that large families in large cities face compared to small families?
2. How does the unemployment of one of the partners in a large family affect the financial situation and emotional well-being of the family?
3. To what extent do government social programs and financial benefits influence the improvement of living conditions of large families?

## Literature Review

Currently, the term “large family” refers to families that, during the Soviet era, were considered families with a moderate number of children (4-5 children). The shift from the traditional large family type (7-8 children and more) to the modern type of large family (4 or more children) has several causes and consequences. For example, in several European countries, factors such as urbanization, unemployment, rising living standards, time scarcity, career advancement, and the postponement of family formation have led to a decline in the number of children per family. According to data from the European Statistical Agency, Eurostat, while the number of children per family is decreasing in the UK, the number of families willing to have more children is increasing (Harker, 2015). Currently, approximately 13% of Europe’s total population consists of large families. In European countries, large families are typically those with three or more children (Schneider et al., 2021). In Germany, families with three children are granted large family status. However, many European countries face economic crises and financial difficulties among large families. For example, official data show that in the UK, as the number of children in a family increases, the risk of poverty also increases (see Figure 1).



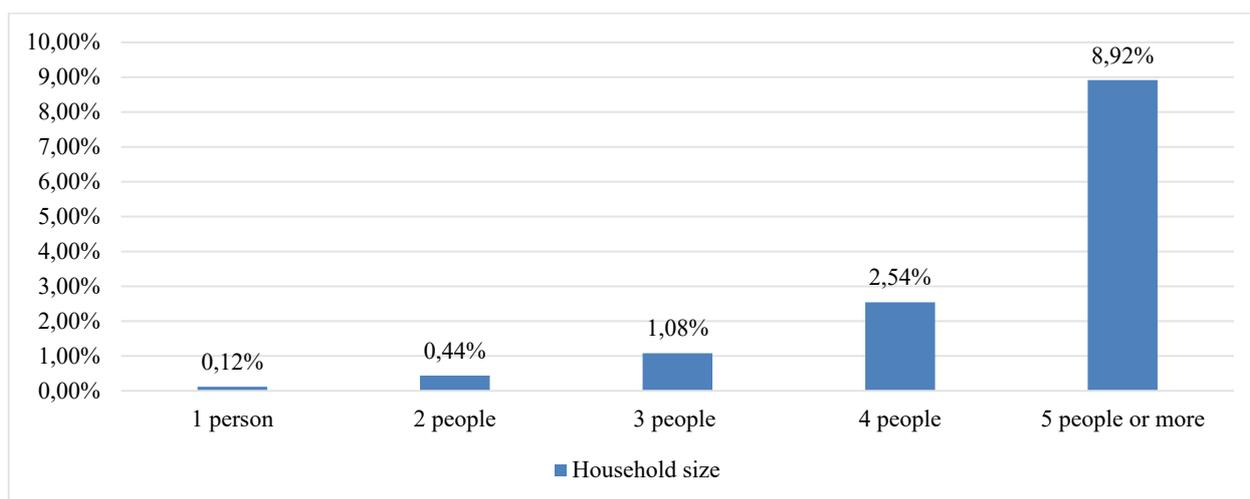
**Figure 1. Poverty level depending on the number of children in the family**

Source: [www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/9781861348777.pdf](http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/9781861348777.pdf)

According to Figure 1, as the number of children in a family increases, the risk of poverty also rises. Looking at the data over the years, we can see that the poverty level in one-child families is lower compared to families with two, three, or more children. In families with three children, the poverty level increased between 2016 and 2017, but stabilized in the subsequent years. Families with four or more children have a significantly higher poverty level compared to families with one, two, or three children, and the distance between the curves on the graph is noticeably wider. Therefore, in the UK, as the number of children in a family increases, so does

the risk of poverty. Hence, large families should remain a focal point for government attention, and policies and efforts to reduce poverty risks in these families should continue.

According to official data, in Kazakhstan, large families are considered to be part of the category of families that are either unprotected or less protected. According to the data from the National Statistics Bureau of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the higher the number of members in a household, the higher the likelihood of poverty.



**Figure 2. Poverty level depending on family size (IV quarter, 2024)**

Source: Data from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan

As shown in Figure 2, the greater the number of people in a family, the higher the poverty level. In families consisting of 1-2 members, the poverty rate is very low, indicating that such households are likely not experiencing significant financial difficulties. In four-person households, the poverty level stands at 2.54%. However, in families with 5 or more members, the poverty rate is relatively high, and their income falls below the subsistence level (*Halyk Finance, 2025*).

Ilmakunnas and others define large families as those with at least three underage children in their care (*Ilmakunnas et al., 2024*). Various factors influence the number of children in a family. These include religion, culture, educational level, socio-economic conditions, family policies implemented by the state, societal attitudes, and more. However, first and foremost, it is the couple's personal choice that plays the most decisive role.

The formation of large families can be categorized into several types:

- as a result of the union of two single-parent families, each having children from previous marriages;
- due to the birth of twins or triplets;
- based on religious beliefs, when women refuse to undergo artificial abortion or use contraceptives;
- when having many children is viewed as a means to receive various types of government social support (*Solovyova, 2017*).

According to the results of a study conducted by Bujard et al. in Germany, the following types of large families can be distinguished:

- large families belonging to the middle class, where the parents have a high level of education;
- large families in which the parents have a low level of education and face economic instability;
- large families with stable and high income levels, who employ domestic workers or nannies for child care and household tasks;
- migrant large families with low parental education and strong religious beliefs;
- large families living in rural areas, influenced by cultural factors (Bujard, 2019).

Today, there are both positive and negative perceptions regarding large families.

The first viewpoint considers large families as those facing material difficulties, not meeting adequate and quality standards of living, often poor, living in substandard conditions, lacking housing, and dealing with various other challenges. According to the second viewpoint, such families are seen as a union of individuals characterized by mutual respect, strong familial bonds, support for one another, and other positive values.

Let us consider the negative stereotype that exists in society regarding large families. Numerous foreign studies indicate that crises frequently occur in large families. According to Stewart et al., family structure, as well as the number and age of children, are key determinants of poverty risk. In their research on poverty among large families in the United Kingdom, they found that the majority of such families belong to ethnic minority groups, whereas in smaller families, parents tend to have a higher level of education (Stewart, 2023). Köppe and Curra emphasize the economic challenges faced by large families. Raising multiple children requires substantial financial resources, often leading to financial strain. They note that state social support and allowances are insufficient to cover the costs associated with raising many children (Köppe, Curra, 2025). Although large families are relatively rare in developed countries, they represent one of the most economically vulnerable social groups (Curran, 2021, p. 37). According to Bujard et al., many three-child families belong to the middle class and have an average level of education. However, 18% of large families lack high professional qualifications and are at a high risk of poverty (Bujard et al., 2019).

Mothers in large families have numerous family and household responsibilities, such as taking children to school, attending various extracurricular activities, doing housework, helping children with their homework, etc. The fewer children there are in the family, the more likely it is that mothers will be able to find employment. In contrast, mothers in large families often face the choice between fulfilling family duties and working. Since salaries are often insufficient to cover the costs of childcare, hiring household helpers or nannies, it is financially more beneficial for most mothers to care for their children themselves. As a result, there is a trend towards increased unemployment rates among mothers of large families, or if they work, they may be unable to manage household responsibilities, which leads to family conflicts. Ch. Jiang et al. conduct a cross-national analysis based on data from international social research programs and find that conflicts arise in large families in terms of work-family and family-work relationships. According to the researchers, working mothers in large families struggle to balance work and family, which results in conflicts with their spouses due to their inability to meet family obligations. The work-family or family-work conflict intensifies with each additional child. According to the research results, work-family and family-work conflicts are more pronounced in families with

an individualistic approach, while in collectivist or conservative families, such conflicts take on a positive character. However, the number of children and the process of childbirth is influenced by cultural and national values and norms (*Jiang et al., 2024, p.1047*). Burch's research also found that the work-family conflict is directly influenced by family structure and the number of children (*Burch, 2020, p. 594*). Brown et al. argue that the risk of poverty in large families is not only related to the number of children but also to the "complexity" of the family structure (*Brown et al., 2015*).

The risk of crises is high in large families. Therefore, it is important not only to know about the types of support but also to provide timely assistance. In this regard, a three-phase support model in stressful situations can be identified: emotional support, which is the main form of assistance during the early stages of a crisis; informational support and advice, which occur during the transitional phase of the crisis; and material or financial support, which is necessary at the peak of the crisis. If the social support system in large families is insufficient, emotional support may not prevent the family crisis (*Avison, 2008, p.245*). According to the latest official statistics from the European Commission and the OECD, children from large families face adverse conditions such as material deprivation, insufficient funds, and social isolation (*European Commission, 2019; OECD, 2022*).

In large families, there is a high risk of financial difficulties since the only source of income is the husband's salary. According to Häusermann, the presence of young children in large families, especially for mothers, creates barriers to full participation in the labor market (*Häusermann, 2018, p. 865*). Therefore, policies aimed at improving the balance between paid work and childcare are particularly relevant for large families.

## Materials and methods

A qualitative study was conducted among large families. The study was carried out using the in-depth interview method. The interviews involved large families from the city of Almaty. The geographical scope of the study was chosen because, according to official data, Almaty is the city with the highest number of registered large families among Kazakhstan's major cities.

The number of respondents participating in the study was 10. This number of respondents is explained by the need to avoid or reduce the repetition of information, as well as a balance between time and resources. The organization of the interviews: the respondents were pre-agreed, and the location of the interviews was determined. Furthermore, since this is a qualitative study, the focus is on the quality of the interviews, not the quantity. The average duration of each interview was between 50-60 minutes. The interview participants were randomly selected using the snowball method. The sample included large families with at least one minor child and both parents under the age of 18. Participants were selected based on different income levels, numbers of children, and social statuses. The average age of the respondents was 42.2 years. The majority of the respondents had higher education. The research was conducted from February to March 2025.

The interviews were conducted using a pre-constructed guide. The questions in the guide were formulated using simple terms and in an understandable manner. The questions were aimed at revealing the main content of the study and did not include questions that would demean the respondent's dignity or focus on their age or gender. The study program and interview questions

were approved by the local ethics committee of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Approval number (IRB-A967). The interview guide consisted of several blocks. The first block contained questions that provided general information about the family, such as the number of children in the family, material conditions, sources and amounts of income, etc. The second block included questions regarding assistance from governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions, as well as questions about housing issues. The third block consisted of questions about types of crises in the family, their sources, and ways to solve them.

The course of the interview was recorded on a voice recorder and then transcribed. The transcribed information was coded. The coded data was processed using MAXQDA 20 software, which ensures the processing of qualitative research methods. The interview process complied with the research ethics, with prior consent obtained from the respondents for data collection, and they were informed that confidentiality and anonymity would be ensured.

### **The research results**

For the majority of large families, the main source of income is the salary of the parents. Usually, one of the parents (most often the father) works regularly to support the family. In some cases, both parents work, which helps increase the total income. To explore this issue, the participants were asked the question, "How would you evaluate the material situation of your family? What is the main source of income for your family?" The following responses were received to the question:

*I cannot say that the material situation of my family is high; I consider it average. Because we barely make it from one welfare payment to the next. The main source of income for the family is my husband's salary, as I am currently at home with the girls, focusing on their upbringing, and only my husband works. Additionally, we receive social payments for the children, 13,000 tenge per child. Of course, I would like to go back to work, but for me, raising my daughters is more important. I need to work with them, take them to their lessons, pick them up, and teach them – that's also work. On the other hand, I am worried about my daughters because there are many reports in society about children being kidnapped and raped, and that concerns me, which is why I stay at home. My job right now is to take care of the children, ensure their safety, meaning taking them to school and picking them up – that's my job at the moment (R1).*

*Basically, I could say that our material situation is high. This is because, for us to have a good situation and for our children to want for nothing, my husband works day and night. As for me, my direct job is raising the children and making sure they have everything they need at home. My husband does not participate in raising the children because he works hard to provide for our material situation. The main source of income for our family is my husband's income... When you add his salary and the payments for each child, our monthly family income is around 800,000 tenge. I rate our material situation as high because we send one of our children to a private school and two children go to a private kindergarten. Their monthly fees are expensive. For our children to receive quality education, my husband works tirelessly (R5).*

*I can't say that our material situation is high; I would rather rate it as average. The main source of income for our family is my husband's salary and benefits. The government-provided allowance*

*for 4 children is, of course, not enough, it's very small. Since my youngest child is not yet one year old, I receive a monthly social allowance for child care of 32,000 tenge until he turns one. ... In addition to the child care allowance, as a mother of many children, I receive an allowance of around 62,000 tenge for 4 children. This is also not enough, we all know that everything has become more expensive. ... We can't say that our income satisfies us or doesn't, but we are grateful (R2).*

According to the interview results, the main problems faced by large families are financial difficulties and insufficient state social support. The main source of income for the family is the husband's salary and social payments (benefits). Furthermore, the majority of respondents in the study rate their material situation as average. This is due to the fact that, due to the large number of children, the expenses for each child exceed the amount of government benefits received. Sometimes they even refuse to buy items they deem necessary. For such families, the main value is not material, but above all, the health and safety of the children.

Large families are typically faced with issues such as financial difficulties and material insufficiency. To analyze how well the family income meets the needs of the family, the respondents were asked the question: *"How well does your family income meet your family's needs?"*

*The family's monthly income only covers basic needs such as food and children's clothing. There are times when I can't afford to buy clothes for myself. When there is an opportunity to travel, we try to take the children to Balkhash or Alakol in Kazakhstan every year. We haven't thought about going abroad yet, because there isn't enough money (R8).*

*Sometimes we can't even buy clothes for ourselves. We buy things for the children to make sure they don't miss out. Due to financial instability, we haven't thought about buying furniture, appliances, or traveling. We can go to weddings in other cities, but there's no opportunity to travel abroad yet (R9).*

*Family income only covers basic needs. There is no furniture in the house, and there's no opportunity to buy extra necessary things right now. We can't afford to travel at the moment, and we don't really think about it. But on weekends, we try to spend time with the children, going for walks. When we moved into the house, we did a light renovation, but the kitchen is still unfinished. There's no money left for extra purchases (R5).*

*In our family, there are 6 people, and the social assistance we receive, along with my husband's salary, is not enough. We have to cover food and clothing for the children. In general, it only covers basic needs. We don't have enough money to send my daughters to entertainment centers, so we save money on that. There's no money at all for traveling abroad. Currently, there are no plans to travel abroad (R2).*

*As a mother of many children, I receive social assistance. But even that is not enough for children's clothing. To be honest, our income only covers food and clothing. Right now, food is very expensive. There isn't enough money even for one child when we go to the store (R10).*

In analyzing the results of the qualitative research, it was found that the income of large families and their monthly earnings cover only basic needs. These families face a high risk of poverty because their income is only sufficient to cover essentials like food and clothing. Many

of these families do not have enough funds for leisure activities, such as visiting entertainment centers, parks, and other recreational places, which indicates that the family's monthly financial resources are insufficient for these purposes.

One of the main issues for many large families is housing and improving living conditions. In order to understand the challenges related to housing, respondents were asked: "What are your housing conditions? Do you own your apartment, or are you renting?"

*We have a difficult housing situation. We live in our two-bedroom apartment, which we took out on a mortgage, but we've paid it off. I can say that we have our own two-bedroom apartment. However, due to the number of children, we lack enough rooms. There is a need to improve our living conditions. As I mentioned before, we have two older sons: one is a student, and the other is in the 9th grade. My twin daughters are in the 1st grade, and they need separate rooms. Currently, my sons and daughters share one room, and it's uncomfortable. I would like a four-room apartment or more because my children are growing up, and they need their own space. Every parent wants their children to have their own rooms. For example, my sons need separate rooms where they can change clothes. Right now, it's uncomfortable for them as they are already young adults. Our apartment is too small for us (R7).*

*As I mentioned earlier, we moved to Almaty, and my parents helped us buy a small two-bedroom house. Since the house is only two rooms, it is becoming cramped for the children as they grow. All of them sleep in one room. We have four daughters, and we would like each of them to have their own room. We want to expand the house, but currently, we do not have the financial means to do so (R6).*

Most of the interview participants noted that the high cost of housing allows them to only afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment, limiting their opportunities and living conditions. Based on data analysis, issues such as the cramped size of the house and the lack of personal space for children were identified in families with grown children. As children grow, they require separate and well-equipped rooms.

*We live in our two-bedroom apartment. We took out a mortgage and pay monthly. Thank God, there is no issue with housing at the moment, and there is no need to improve our living conditions. Right now, the children are still small, so there is no need for expansion, and we don't experience any difficulties. Maybe when the children reach high school, we will think about moving to a larger apartment. Right now, both the girls and boys are small, so the tightness of the apartment is not felt. They all sleep in one room. Also, at the moment, I find it convenient to live in this neighborhood, as the school, kindergarten, and after-school activities are all nearby. I don't worry, they go to their lessons on their own. In the future, when the children grow up, we might consider moving to the city center. In the center, there are various development programs for children. At the moment, there are no housing problems (R2).*

*Thank God, we live in our own house, which my husband built, that is, in a private house. The house is still not completely finished. We are building it ourselves, and every year a lot of money goes into updating and doing construction work. There are still rooms that are not completed, and we are gradually saving money each month to finish the house. My husband's mother also lives with us, and we need to finish a room for her as well. Since our children are small, the tightness of the house is not felt. For now, there are no issues with the house (R6).*

*We live in our own home, but two years ago, we bought an apartment in the "Alma City" residential area on a mortgage. Before that, for 9 years, we moved between cities for work and rented apartments. Since the children are small, there is no need to change or renovate the apartment for now. Everything suits us (R8).*

According to the research results, it was found that most large families, although small in size, live in their own homes. Based on the gathered data, the specific housing issues for large families with both adult and young children were observed. For families with adult children, the key issue regarding housing is having personal space for each child, meaning the number of rooms needs to increase. For families with young children, the main factor in housing selection is proximity to infrastructure, such as proximity to kindergartens, schools, healthcare facilities, and playgrounds. In comparison to other regions of the country, the overall cost of housing in Almaty is high, and apartment prices in the city center are particularly steep. Therefore, these families typically try to buy homes in the city's "sleeping areas", where housing prices are more affordable than in other parts of the city.

Due to financial and domestic challenges, parents in large families often experience stress and depression, particularly mothers, who may face higher stress levels. To determine this, the question "Has your family ever experienced any crisis situations?" was asked.

*I think it's inevitable. Whether it's a large family or a small family, crisis situations can happen in any family. Of course, due to a lack of money, we also experience crisis moments. Usually, it's an economic crisis that leads to a psychological crisis. Of course, there are times when I get tired and feel worn out. I want to treat myself, buy new clothes, get new things and furniture for the house, I want to buy a car, but everything comes down to financial issues. As a result, my husband and I sometimes argue (R9).*

*There are moments of exhaustion, but for the sake of the children, you get up again. During those times, our family experienced an economic crisis. As a result, my nerves got worn out, it affected my psyche, and I became irritable. I couldn't handle any words calmly, argued with my family, and I can say that a psychological crisis occurred. Mainly, I noticed that poverty, lack of money, really tires a person and leads to psychological stress (R6).*

*Yes, I think it's something that shouldn't be hidden. When money is tight, poverty leads to stress in a person. And that, in turn, leads to arguments. For example, one of the kids says my shoes are torn, another says my clothes are getting too short, and there is no money to buy new ones. This causes stress and affects the psyche. Because you don't want your children to fall behind their peers, so I end up getting angry at my husband, arguing with him, asking why he doesn't earn money. But in the end, arguing doesn't help, it only disrupts the harmony in the house. It's better to solve everything calmly, with the belief that everything will get better in the future. What I want to say is that the crisis in our family starts with material and economic problems, but it leads to a psychological crisis (R2).*

The research findings revealed that psychological crisis is one of the most common types of crises in large families. This is because such families often face financial difficulties, which can lead to stress for parents and conflicts within the family. Due to financial issues, large families are

unable to provide their children with quality education, development, extracurricular activities, and even basic necessities such as clothes. This leads to psychological crises.

In many cases, the material difficulties, lack of money, and socio-economic problems in large families impact the development and health of children. Children in smaller families tend to have access to the latest smartphones, spend their free time in entertainment venues, etc., and have extra money on hand. On the other hand, children in large families do not always have these opportunities and have to deprive themselves of many things. As a result, they may feel uncomfortable and experience psychological crises, including a lowered sense of self-worth.

It is known that psychological crises are common in large families. To understand which services they use to cope with these crises, respondents were asked the question: *“Have you ever used the services of specialized centers to resolve crisis situations?”*

*A manager from “Bakitty otbasy” contacted me and informed me that free psychological assistance is provided to mothers of large families. If needed, we can visit and get the services. The psychologist, using a transformational game, pointed out many psychological issues I had. He identified that my self-esteem was low, that I didn’t feel feminine in front of my husband, and that I was always running around just for the kids... I also took my eldest son because I started noticing that he is very shy and has few friends. He is now a student, but we limit him in many ways. He sees his peers driving cars and wearing fashionable clothes and asks us for the same things. But, knowing our response, he no longer wants to talk to us and isolates himself. I think this behavior stems from the lack of financial resources (R1).*

*Right now, I can’t say it’s really necessary. But, if not financial help, then psychological support would be good. The exhaustion from family responsibilities, work, and lack of money affects everything. Once, I wanted to visit the district center, but didn’t have time. In general, if there were psychological support clubs for mothers, I would gladly visit them. I looked for such clubs but couldn’t find any. So, if help is provided, it would be better to have psychological support rather than financial help (R6).*

*Yes, I attended free courses and went to psychologists. Since I’m a stay-at-home mom, I think about everything, and sometimes I get tired and exhausted. That’s why I reached out to psychologists to help me get a grip and develop myself. When I was in that stressful state, they helped me find ways to get out of it. There was a time when I lost interest in life, didn’t want to see anyone, didn’t want to talk, and didn’t even want to see my children. Honestly, we’re living, not falling behind, but something was missing. So, I earned some money, went to a psychologist, and attended a training. You know, I came home feeling like I was reborn. Domestic shortages, financial problems, and the monotony of everyday life can really wear you down. But after the training, I gained many insights, worked on myself, and learned to approach these problems more easily. What I want to say is that most mothers of many children stay at home and don’t work, and they are much more likely to face psychological stress compared to those who work or have fewer children. So, it would be great if there was access to free psychological services for mothers with many children (R2).*

*I haven’t used the help of centers, but I have turned to psychologists for assistance. I’ve been through therapy with psychologists several times. Their help was really useful. I learned to approach household problems more calmly and work on myself (R7).*

According to the research results, mothers with young children constantly care for their children, dividing their time and resources, which may lead to physical and emotional exhaustion. In the opinion of the respondents, psychological crises primarily manifest as stress and anxiety, which can further escalate into family conflicts and arguments.

## Discussion

In large families, especially for mothers, there is often a sense of losing oneself. The first reason is the large number of children, which prevents many mothers from working until their children grow up. As a result, they lose their professional identity, and due to a lack of time for personal development and career-building, their self-esteem decreases. On the other hand, material deprivation for mothers in large families can lead to psychological crises and emotional decline. Therefore, the concept of a large family is often associated with the notion of a “stay-at-home mother”. Unfortunately, the work of caring for and raising four or more children is not recognized by society as work. In reality, managing, organizing, and maintaining order in a large family requires great responsibility. Mothers of large families are forced to put their personal goals and objectives on hold. Since caring for young children and infants requires extended and high-quality attention, mothers temporarily stop building their careers, leading to personal limitations and financial difficulties.

Negative stereotypes about large families are still prevalent. For example, despite social policies supporting large families and strong state ideology in Hungary, there is still a stigma surrounding large families (*Herke, 2025, p.21*). Similarly, in our country, there is a stereotype that large families are those living below the poverty line.

For large families with children of different genders, housing remains a key issue. In their research, Culora and Janta showed that large families face housing problems, and for families with adolescent children and children of different genders, the main issue is the lack of personal space or individual rooms for children (*Culora, Janta, 2020*). For large families with uneven gender characteristics (e.g., two boys and two girls), a two- or three-bedroom apartment is insufficient to provide adequate housing. Our research findings also indicate that, while large families do have their own homes, compared to previous studies, housing difficulties arise not due to gender differences, but because of the age differences among the children. For example, compared to the studies by Stamoulis and Pierrakos, our research results also revealed similarities in the challenges faced by large families in major cities, such as insufficient social benefits and financial instability (*Stamoulis, Pierrakos, 2023, p.23*). However, during the data analysis, it became evident that, unlike other studies, large families also face issues such as social isolation and psychological and emotional burnout.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, analyzing the main problems and crises in large families, several factors can be identified that affect them.

In many large families, the main source of income is the husband's salary. The larger the number of children, the higher the costs for food, clothing, education, entertainment, and other expenses, all of which require significant financial investments. Therefore, families where the

main source of income is the husband's salary often have to carefully plan their budget and find ways to save. The amount of social benefits from the state, as a rule, covers only the basic needs of the family. Thus, we can answer the 3rd research question that states social benefits have only a small impact on improving the living conditions of large families. But it was revealed that for these families, the main value is not material well-being, but the health and safety of the children.

Based on the data analysis, in large families where only one family member, most often the man, works and serves as the primary breadwinner, the families were assessed as having low or average socio-economic status. For women with a medium level of education, childcare is seen as a strong investment, which often takes precedence over entering the labor market and earning an income. However, this decision can negatively affect the family's economic situation. The qualitative research results revealed that in large families, there is a labor market model where only the "man" is employed. According to the 2nd research question, the lack of work for one of the partners in a large family has an impact on a low or average standard of living. Also, there is no alternative source of income in such families.

For families with young children, a safe, comfortable, and functional space for infant care and development is sufficient. In families with older children, it is important for each child to have their own space. In both cases, having a private home is important, but the focus on organizing the interior space differs.

Taking care of and raising several children requires significant emotional and physical effort from parents, especially mothers. The lack of support from the state and close ones, the absence of time for rest and self-care, leads mothers to depression and crises. The psychological distress and depressive state of mothers with many children is significantly higher compared to mothers with fewer children. Thus, we have received an answer to the 1st research question, that the main economic and psychological difficulties faced by large families in large cities are psychological crises due to limited social support opportunities compared with small families. Therefore, several ways to prevent and address psychological crises in large families can be suggested:

**Support services:** It is important to establish a support system for mothers with many children. This includes services and consultations provided by psychologists, as well as the growing need to create a "women's club" where women facing similar issues can seek help, consisting of women from this category.

**Information and training:** Organizing and conducting training sessions and seminars for mothers with many children to help them cope with stress, manage emotional stagnation, and overcome it.

Analyzing the data, it is evident that in large cities, there is a need to develop and reconsider a comprehensive social policy and targeted social programs aimed at supporting large families to alleviate their financial difficulties. Preventing socio-economic issues will significantly improve the quality of life for such families. Therefore, one of the ways to combat the economic crisis in large families is to increase the amount of social payments and continue the overall social policy. Additionally, as a measure aimed at meeting the high consumption needs of large families, it is necessary to introduce state additional payments for child care services.

Large families often face discrimination and a lack of understanding of their needs by society, which leads to social isolation and alienation. Despite the ongoing social policies and support systems, negative opinions about large families still exist in our country. Therefore, it

is necessary to continue the advocacy efforts through mass media to enhance the social status of large families.

### Author Contributions

**A. Sultanova** played the leading role in data collection, defining the research design, and writing the article. **A. Sarsenova** made a significant contribution to the theoretical review, gave recommendations on improving and improving the situation of large families.

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### ІРІ ҚАЛАЛАРДАҒЫ КӨПБАЛАЛЫ ОТБАСЫЛАРДЫҢ НЕГІЗГІ ПРОБЛЕМАЛАРЫ МЕН ДАҒДАРЫСТАРЫ: САПАЛЫҚ ЗЕРТТЕУ НӘТИЖЕСІ БОЙЫНША

**Аңдатпа.** Ірі қалаларда көпбалалы отбасылар әлеуметтік саясат пен отбасыны қолдау контекстінде ерекше назар аударуды қажет ететін әлеуметтік топ. Көпбалалы отбасыларға қалалық жерлерде өмір сүру қарқынының жылдам болуы, қымбатшылық, бәсекелестіктің салдарынан

бірқатар мәселелер туындап жатады. Зерттеудің мақсаты сапалық зерттеу арқылы осындай отбасыларда туындайтын дағдарыстық жағдайлар мен проблемалар, оларға әсер ететін негізгі факторларды анықтау.

Мемлекеттен тағайындалған әлеуметтік жәрдемақылар көпбалалы отбасылар үшін әлеуметтік-экономикалық жағдайларының жақсаруына, кедейлік қаупінің төмендеуіне ықпал етеді. Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша көпбалалы отбасыларға бағытталған әлеуметтік қолдау жүйесін (ақшалай төлемдерді) қосымша ұлғайту немесе көпбалалы отбасылардағы ата-аналардың жұмысбастылығын арттыруды қажет етеді. Мәліметтерді талдау барысында, көпбалалы отбасыларда жұмыспен қамтылудың «ер адам» үлгісі айқындалды. Демек, отбасыда тек ер адам еңбек етіп, отбасының табыс көзі ер адамның жалақысы болады. Соның салдарынан көпбалалы отбасылардың көпшілігінің табыс деңгейі төмен. Қалалық жерлерде тұратын көпбалалы отбасыларда психологиялық дағдарыс орын алатынын көрсетті. Көпбалалы аналардың психологиялық күйзеліс деңгейі мен депрессиялық жағдайы балалары аз аналарға қарағанда едәуір жоғары. Осыған байланысты қолдау шарасы ретінде осы санаттағы әйелдерге мамандандырылған көмек көрсетілетін арнайы қолдау топтарын құру ұсынылады. Сонымен қатар, көпбалалы отбасыларға бейімделген әлеуметтік бағдарламалар мен арнайы төлемдердің тиімділігін арттыру үшін кешенді әлеуметтік қолдау жүйесін қайта қарастыруды талап етеді.

Зерттеудің практикалық құндылығы көпбалалы отбасыларды әлеуметтік қолдаудың тиімді стратегиялары мен бағдарламаларын әзірлеу үшін сараптамалық және институционалдық деңгейде пайдалы болуы мүмкін.

**Негізгі ұғымдар:** әлеуметтік төлем, әлеуметтік қолдау, дағдарыс, жәрдемақы, көпбалалы отбасы.

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## **ОСНОВНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ И КРИЗИСЫ МНОГОДЕТНЫХ СЕМЕЙ В КРУПНЫХ ГОРОДАХ: ПО РЕЗУЛЬТАТАМ КАЧЕСТВЕННОГО ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ**

**Аннотация.** Многодетные семьи в крупных городах - это социальная группа, которая требует особого внимания в реализации социальной политики в сфере поддержки семьи. Многодетным семьям, проживающим в крупных городах, приходится сталкиваться с рядом проблем из-за высокого темпа жизни, высокой стоимости, конкуренции. Целью исследования является выявление кризисных ситуаций и проблем, возникающих в таких семьях, с применением качественных методов исследования и основных факторов, влияющих на них.

Социальные пособия, назначаемые государством, способствуют улучшению социально-экономических условий для многодетных семей, снижению риска бедности. В то же время по результатам исследования была выявлена необходимость расширения мер социальной поддержки не только в виде денежных пособий и выплат, назначаемых многодетным семьям, но и за счет обеспечения занятости родителей. В ходе анализа данных была выявлена строго «мужская» модель занятости в многодетных семьях, когда в семье трудится только мужчина, а источником дохода семьи является его заработная плата. В результате большая

часть многодетных семей имеют низкий уровень доходов. В ходе исследования также было выявлено, что женщины в многодетных семьях, проживающих в городах, часто переживают психологический кризис. Уровень психологического стресса и депрессивного состояния у многодетных матерей значительно выше, чем у матерей с меньшим количеством детей. В связи с этим в качестве меры поддержки предлагается создание особых групп поддержки, в условиях которых будет оказываться специализированная помощь женщинам этой категории. Кроме того, для повышения эффективности социальных программ и системы специальных выплат многодетным семьям необходимо пересмотреть систему комплексной социальной поддержки данной категории.

Практическая ценность исследования заключается в том, что его результаты могут быть использованы на экспертном и институциональном уровне для разработки эффективных стратегий и программ социальной поддержки многодетных семей.

**Ключевые слова:** кризис, льготы, многодетная семья, социальная выплата, социальная поддержка.

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