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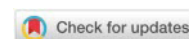
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Social Representations of Body: A Comparison in The Two Generations of Russian Women (Results of an Exploratory Study)

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Abstract: Body is a complex and polymorphic object that lies at the intersection of a number of dimensions: natural-social-cultural; individual-social; body-soul; flesh-spirit; private-public; visible-invisible; decent-indecent; real-virtual; health-illness. If the body is in the heart of psychological research, lay thinking analysis rests somewhat in the shadow of this research line. Following the ideas of the social representations theory, the aim of study was to reveal how the body was represented in groups of young and older Russian women. A total sample consisted of 314 Russian females (N=258 females formed the group of young females from 18 to 25 years old, Mage=19.73, SDage =1.56; N=56 females formed the group of older females aged from 39 to 55 years old, Mage=45.63, SDage =4.68). The snowball technique was used in order to recruit the participants, they were invited to fulfil the online questionnaire. A free-association technique was used. The data were analysed by using prototypical analysis. The obtained results shed light on the articulation of the two normative elements health-beauty in the social representations of body in the two generations of Russian women. The comparison of the hypothetical structure of social representations (my body, ideal body, female body) in the two age groups of Russian women reveals several points concerning the lay mentality as a matter of age. A further study to verify the hypothetical structure of the social representations of body in young and older Russian women is needed.

Keywords: social representations theory, hypothetical structure of social representations, body, health, beauty.

Introduction

Body is a complex and polymorphic object that lies at the intersection of a number of dimensions: natural-social-cultural; individual-social; body-soul; flesh-spirit; private-public; visible-invisible; decent-indecent; real-virtual; health-illness. An analysis of the naive representation crystallised in the Russian language leads to a conclusion that some oppositions are not absolutely parallel. For example, the body is a place of the soul. In the case of the opposition flesh-spirit, flesh does not interact with spirit, even more, flesh has negative connotations like base motives (Zaliznyak, Levontina and Shmelev, 2012).

The discourse about the body includes some other topics like taboo, sexuality, maternity, beauty, power etc. Body is an arena of social norms functioning as well as relevant social control associated with these norms. It needs to be underlined that social norms evolve over time, change from one social group to another, from one culture to another. This fact has an impact on the body image as well as on the social practices associated with the body. At all stages of human history, the human body has been subjected to social control (Kabakova and Compt, 2005). The female body is subject to a more strict control in comparison with the male one. The higher social status a woman occupies, the stronger is the social control. The emergence and widespread of feminist ideas is a quite important moment concerning the body. First of all, "feminists reinserted the body into history, bringing to light issues that had previously been considered too vulgar, trivial or risqué to merit serious scholarly attention" (Shienbenger, 2000, p.1). Then, these ideas that appeared in the public discourse affected the issue of social norms as well as influenced upon the perception of the female body.

Some particularities of the Russian context concerning the social control of the body in general are related to the Orthodox religion with its suspicion towards corporeality, and to the censorship of the Soviet

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time with its struggle against physiology (Kabakova and Compt, 2005). It seems that the body censorship has loosened somewhat since the thaw era (Lebina, 2014).

The advances in the medical technologies have opened great possibilities for individuals in order to intervene into the spheres that used to be seen as sacred. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the progress in this domain of scientific knowledge turned the fairytales (for example, about rejuvenating apples, living water, or Thumbelina) into reality. Now individuals have got a range of possibilities to correct, improve, or change themselves and their bodies in accordance with certain standards widely broadcasted by the mass media. Even a quick look at the statistical data available from the International Society of Aesthetic and Plastic Surgery (ISAPS International survey on Aesthetic/Cosmetic procedures, 2020) allows us to conclude that aesthetic and plastic surgeries are widespread around the globe, in various regions of the planet people coming from different cultures, age and gender groups want to change their bodies, following certain beauty standards, which are universally transmitted by the mass media in the era of visual culture (Rose, 2014) when the iconic entities dominate the conceptual ones. It seems possible to say that the body is seen as fragmented in terms of the possibility to change it. The most demanded procedures are the following: breast augmentation, liposuction, eyelid surgery, rhinoplasty, abdominoplasty (a certain decrease of the surgical procedures frequencies are observed from 2019 to 2020, but it could be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic) (ISAPS International survey on Aesthetic/Cosmetic procedures, 2020).

With the emergence and widespread of the new technologies (Internet is one among others), an individual has got an opportunity to acquire a virtual body. This kind of body exists according to different rules than the real one. This is one of the ways to construct a desired image of oneself, to correct imperfections of any kind, to get closer to the ideal.

By referring to analysis proposed by Kabakova and Compt, 2005, it is possible to conclude that body is among the attractive and relevant topics in social sciences and humanities. The research questions concerning the body (as a cultural object) are in the very center of scientific interest in different disciplines, namely: philosophy, history, philology, culture studies, social anthropology, sociology and psychology. Following the idea expressed by Jodelet, body is an important issue in psychology (Jodelet, 2015), this topic is at the heart of psychology. Indeed, even by taking a very quick look at the knowledge obtained from the different branches of psychological discipline, it is possible to become aware about the exactness of Jodelet's claim. The variety of questions in psychology where the body is a variable of analysis is really vast: starting from body-mind problem, passing to the psychoanalytic conceptualisation of body, formation of body as a sociocultural entity, self-consciousness, body language, eating behaviour, body objectification, going vers stress, attraction, emotions, health behaviour, stereotypes, stigmatisation, etc.

Our particular interest in this paper is related to the naive representations of body. Before focusing our analysis on the corresponding theoretical framework and pertinent empirical facts, the two general points should be stated here.

First, the connection between body and self should be revealed: it concerns the idea that the body schema ("a subjective image of the relative position and state of motion of body parts in space" (Stolin, 1983, p.212) is a part of self-consciousness. Being a mental entity, body schema can go beyond the physical borders and also includes objects like clothes or even physically absent elements. For example, in case of surgical amputations the so-called "phantom limb" is included in a body schema (Stolin, 1983, p.212). It is obvious that body schema and representation of one's own body are different categories, however, both of them refer to the question concerning the borders of one's body.

The answer to the question concerning "my body" is quite paradoxical, as Tkhostov puts it: "The answer to the question of what "my body" is, on the one hand, seems to be self-evident, since everyone can uncontroversially define what is "my" body and what is not. But, on the other hand, when I try to do so, I am immediately confronted with rather difficult questions. How do I determine what belongs to me and what belongs to the world? I am aligned with my body, but sometimes it refuses to obey myself. Are my hair and nails parts of my body?" (Tkhostov, 2002, p. 62).

Second, the important transformation of the body happens during the socialisation process, namely, a body as a natural entity becomes a sociocultural one. The numerous studies realised in the field of psychology of corporeality provide the empirical evidence of this transformation (Kazanskaya and Meshcheryakov, 2012; Nikolaeva, Arina and Leonova, 2012; Tkhostov, 2002; Tkhostov, 2020). The value of these studies is explained by the fact that they revealed the ontogenesis of corporeality from the point of view of cultural historical tradition, in other words, the transformation of the natural body into the cultural one goes by the same way as do the mental functions to become the higher mental functions (Kazanskaya and Meshcheryakov, 2012; Tkhostov, 2020).

Body: a representational perspective

There is a theoretical tradition where the body is considered as a privileged topic (Jodelet, 2015). We are talking about the theory of social representations (SRs). Among the numerous definitions of the SRs done by Moscovici the preference could be done to the one where the SRs are seen as: "systems of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function...: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history" (Moscovici, 1973, p. xiii). The SRs are socially produced and shared. The existence of a SR refers to the existence of a group that communicates about an object, event or phenomenon that are new, unknown, strange or threatening and produces the SR about it by transforming the strangeness of these objects, events or phenomena, by putting them into the existing frame (Moscovici, 1976). The object of the SR is a complex and polymorphic entity. The SRs perform some other functions, namely: regulation of social behaviour and justification of social relations, construction and management of social identity.

Before going ahead, the relevance of this theoretical framework to study the body issues should be highlighted: the body is considered as a social-cultural entity, as a social construction, the particularities of modern society are taken into account.

It was already underlined that body was a complex and polymorphic entity at the intersection of a numerous dimensions, among others: natural-social-cultural; individual-social; body-soul; flesh-spirit; private-public; visible-invisible; decent-indecent; real-virtual; health-illness.

This social psychological tradition provides an opportunity to analyse how the "amateur" scientist (or so-called "naive scientist from the street") develops his/her own explanatory theories about the world around himself/herself. This interest of the "amateur" scientist towards the world is explained by the need to predict and to control this world, to reduce its uncertainty. It is quite clear that the quality of these naive theories is inferior to scientific knowledge in terms of its rationality or rigour, however people actively produce this knowledge and use it in their everyday life.

Following the ideas proposed by Moscovici, it should be said that the "notorious man from the street" cannot come up with naive explanations of the world on his own; these explanations are formed in the numerous communications (Moliner, 2001). These communications take place at several levels (Moliner, 2001): from interpersonal communication with significant others to cultural communication.

In the era of visual culture (Rose, 2014) with the omnipresence of visual discourse, the iconic entities dominate the conceptual ones. The mass media actively use this strategy of influence by broadcasting this component. The emergence and widespread of the new social media are the greatest transformation of communication and interaction processes (Kende et al., 2015). The participants of communication mediated by the new technologies have equivalent statuses, their power positions in the communication process are interchangeable. Not only information but also impressions, evaluations, feelings and emotions are shared and exchanged (Buschini, 2016; Marzouki, 2016). These two aspects become particularly important in relation to the formation of SR of body.

A review of the numerous studies concerning the SRs of body reveals the effort of the researchers to answer a variety of questions, whether it is the particularities of SRs of body in different ethnic and professional groups; the relationship between SRs of body and SRs of health, ageing and AIDS; gender-specific SRs of body; and of SRs of body and nutrition in women after 75 years old, the impact of social practice (physical trainings) on SRs of body (Camargo et al., 2011; Camargo and Wachelke, 2010; Costalat-Founeau et al., 2002; de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009; Goetz et al., 2008; Jodelet, 2015; Souza et al., 2019).

It was revealed in the studies on SRs of health and illness that body was an element of SRs (from Herzlich first works to contemporary studies (Aim et al., 2018; Herzlich, 1973; Silveira, Camargo and Giacomozzi, 2021)). In the research on SRs of beauty, it was revealed that the possibility to change one's body through certain surgical interventions in order to meet the standards was normalised (De Rosa, Homlan, 2011).

Just as Herzlich has claimed that the transformation of SRs of health and illness is associated with the progress of medical technology (Bovina, 2007), it seems possible to think about transformations in the SRs of body related to the development and widespread usage of technology in the modern world (especially the ones to correct and change the body).

Some remarks on the interlinkage in between beauty, health and body demonstrated in the research on SRs could be stated here. The relation between health and body is evident, as far as it is a kind of the societal requirement to be healthy and to have a healthy body. The normative pressure is stronger for

women than for men. The relationship between health and beauty looks understandable as well: health has positive attributes and beauty is one of them (it is an illness that spoils and disfigures the body) (Bovina, 2007). Finally, beauty is also a normative attribute of the female body (Moscovici and Vignaux, 1994). As a result, it is not surprising that the two elements that are systematically presented in the SRs of body are *beauty* and *health* (Camargo et al., 2011; Camargo and Wachelke, 2010; de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009; Goetz et al., 2008; Souza et al., 2019). Taking into consideration the SRs of body in women, a simple question could be raised: Are beauty and health stable elements of SRs in groups of women of different ages?

In order to answer the question a study was conducted, its aim was to reveal how the body was represented in groups of young and older Russian women.

The presented study was exploratory in nature, and it justified the fact that no precise hypotheses were formulated in advance. However, we suppose to find the differences in the hypothetical structure of the SRs as a matter of age. These differences should be found in the case of all objects of the SRs (my body, ideal body and female body). With the reference of the results obtained in the studies on SR of body (Camargo et al., 2011; Camargo and Wachelke, 2010; de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009; Goetz et al., 2008; Souza et al., 2019), namely, concerning the persistence of the elements “health” and “beauty” in SRs of body, it would be expected that for the young participants the SRs of body would be crystallised around the elements concerning beauty and the ways to get it, for the older participants the SRs of body would be crystallised around the elements concerning health and its maintenance.

Materials and Methods

Participants and procedure*

A total sample consisted of 314 Russian females (N=258 females formed the group of young females from 18 to 25 years old, Mage=19.73, SDage =1.56; N=56 females formed the group of older females aged from 39 to 55 years old, Mage=45.63, SDage =4.68). The snowball technique was used in order to recruit the participants, they were invited to fulfil the online version via Google Form.

Measures

In line with the theory of SRs, the main tool to reveal the content of SRs was free association technique (Abric, 2003; Moliner and Monaco, 2017). The participants were asked to produce 5 words or expressions that came immediately to their minds while they were thinking about each of the stimuli (my body, ideal body, female body). In order to reveal the evaluative connotation of each answer, the participants were asked to evaluate each answer on a scale from -3 to +3. The participants were asked several questions in order to obtain the social-demographic information.

Representational structure analysis

The present study was based on the ideas of the structural approach that operationalises the idea concerning the SR organisation (Abric, 2003). SR consists of a core and a peripheral system (Abric, 2003; Moliner and Abric, 2015). Core part of SR, being rooted in culture and crystallised in the value system shared by group members, it is maintained through collective memory (Abric, 1993). This part of SR has several functions: to give meaning to SR, to organise it, and to provide the stability of SR (Moliner and Abric, 2015). The peripheral system of SR serves to concretise the meaning of the core part. This part is characterised by variability and changeability. If the core part is formed by a few elements, the peripheral system consists of a larger number of elements (Moliner and Abric, 2015). Due to variability, the peripheral system permits SR to adapt to the changing context. If the core part is “stable, coherent, consensual and historically marked” (Abric, 1993, p. 76), the peripheral system is “flexible, adaptive, and relatively heterogeneous” (Abric, 1993, p. 76).

The main analysis of the obtained data was realised by using the prototypical analysis. The key idea of this analysis was that the core elements of the SR were more salient in comparison with non-core elements (Abric, 2003). The operationalisation of this idea required the usage of the two parameters, namely: frequency of an association (it refers to quantitative parameter) and appearance ranking of an association (it refers to qualitative parameter) (Flament and Rouquette, 2003). The combination of the two parameters reveals the hypothetical structure of SR (the core zone, the contrasted elements zone, the first and the second peripheral zones). The core zone of SR is formed by the elements with high frequency and low appearance ranking, the potential core elements (“candidates to the central core”

* The presented study is a part of a much larger research project. The only part of the obtained data is presented here.

(Lo Monaco et al., 2016) are situated here). The contrasted elements zone is composed of the elements with low frequency and low appearance ranking. As Abric put it concerning this particular part of the SR: "There are themes stated by few people (low frequency), but who consider them very important. This configuration may reveal the existence of a minority subgroup with a different representation <...> But we can also find here <...> a complement of the first periphery" (Abric, 2003, p. 63). The first peripheral zone consists of the elements with high frequency and high appearance ranking. The zone could be defined as a kind of afterthought in relation towards the object of the SR. Finally, the second peripheral zone unites the elements with low frequency, high appearance ranking. These parts of the hypothetical structure of SR would be described and analysed below. In addition to the key parameters of the hypothetical structure of the SR the indicator of the evaluative connotation of each association was also used.

It needs to be highlighted that even the combination of these two parameters could be seen as an indicator of the centrality of elements, nevertheless, the prototypical analysis reveals almost the hypothetical structure of SR that should be verified in a supplementary empirical study (Lo Monaco et al., 2016).

The prototypical analysis was used in order to reveal the hypothetical structure of the SRs in the two groups of participants for each object of the SR. The free-associations data matrix was composed of words evoked by at least 10 % of respondents. The analysis of the data matrix was realised by using the IRaMuTeQ software (Moliner and Monaco, 2017).

Results

Before going into detailed description of the results obtained in the prototypical analysis, some comments should be stated here. If we look at the whole data obtained in the two groups associated with the object "my body", several ideas come to our mind. They coincide with what is described in the literature by linguists, in particular, it concerns the difficulties of describing the body (Kabakova and Compt, 2005). As it could be seen in the dictionaries of Russian language, the meaning of the lexeme "body" varies (it is about the external form and internal structure, about whether or not to include the human soul, what is the composition of the body, whether the head is included or the body is identical to the torso?) (Kabakova and Compt, 2005). It seems that the body parts have different statuses in culture, which is reflected in language (Kabakova and Compt, 2005). Some body parts are tabooed, as if they should not be mentioned in the description of one's own body, while other parts of the body are more neutral, acceptable for discussion.

The frequencies of these concepts are low (in case of SR of my body in the group of young women the frequencies are following: legs - 23, hands - 19, torso - 16, head - 14, hair - 9, soul - 5, conscience - 4, in group of older women: head - 9; hands - 8; legs - 7; torso - 5; soul - 4) and they are not included into the main analysis, which includes the concepts mentioned by 10% of respondents. These results perfectly meet the claim of Tkhostov, discussed above (Tkhostov, 2002).

SRs of body in young women

My body. The core zone of the SR in case of the object my body (see Table 1) is formed by the only element with the positive valence (+1.5): my choice. This element needs some particular attention: on the one hand "my body, my choice" (in Russian: moe telo-moe delo) is a feminist slogan that refers to individual rights on determination concerning the bodily autonomy of women. On the other hand - putting aside the activism ideas, it is still a means to refer to bodily autonomy, a way to protect self from open discussion with others.

The contrasted elements zone (see Table 1) does not consist of any element. Taking into account the idea of Abric about the minority position (Abric, 2003), this fact could reinforce the content of the core zone of the SR.

The first peripheral zone includes the only element with the highest positive connotation (+2.5) - beautiful. It is a normative element associated with the body, however, it is thought by respondents for the second time.

Finally, the second peripheral zone unites the two elements with positive valence (+2.0; +2.1) - health and temple. These themes correspond to the individual experience and serve to contextualise the core elements. The element temple could be seen as another means to protect self.

Ideal body. The core zone of the SR of ideal body (see Table 1) consists of the two elements with the positive valence (+2.6 and +1.5 accordingly): healthy, slender. The presence of the element healthy in the core zone is not surprising, it is a normative element; and this fact corresponds to the results of the

numerous studies (Camargo et al., 2011; Camargo and Wachelke, 2010; de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009; Goetz et al., 2008; Souza et al., 2019).

The contrasted elements zone (see Table 1) unites the following elements: toned, sportive, slim, muscular, good skin. The connotation of these elements varies from neutral (+0.9) to positive (from +1.8 to +2.1). If we follow the thesis that the minority position is located in this zone (Abric, 2003), we can talk about a kind of opposition between the two versions of the ideal body: on the one hand, beautiful and slender (in the case of the majority position - core elements), and on the other - slim, with good skin and athletic body (the theme of athletic body implies the effort in order to get the ideal body). If we follow the other thesis and the elements of this zone are considered as the complement of the first peripheral zone (2003), it is possible to think that beauty is the result of effort and it does not look like the traditional feminine body.

Another observation concerning the content of this zone of the SR: the three elements concerning the athletic body (toned, sportive, muscular) could be seen in two directions. On the one hand, it looks like the ideal body is not seen as feminine one, but as masculine one as well (at least by a part of the respondents). On the other hand, it is a kind of resistance to the traditional way to see the ideal body (as feminine).

The first peripheral zone includes the only one element with the positive connotation (+2.2) - beautiful. It is a normative element associated with the body. As in the case of the SR concerning the own body, this attribute is seen by respondents in the second place.

The second peripheral zone consists of the two elements with the positive valence (+2.3;+2.7): loved and strong.

Female body. The core zone of the SR of female body (see Table 1) has only one element with the positive valence (+2.4): beautiful. Once again, it is not surprising because this is a normative element and it corresponds to the results of numerous studies (Camargo et al., 2011; Camargo and Wachelke, 2010; de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009; Goetz et al., 2008; Souza et al., 2019).

Table 1

My body, ideal body and female body in SRs of younger Russian women (hypothetical structure of SR revealed by prototypical analysis)

	My body (57.25;2.02)**	Ideal body (49.80;2.53)	Female body (54.57; 2.57)
Core zone* (high frequency, low appearance ranking elements)	my choice (92;1.5;+1.5)***	healthy (104;2.5;+2.6) slender (78;2.2; +1.9)	beautiful (123;2.5;+2.4)
Contrasted elements zone* (low frequency, low appearance ranking elements)		toned (39; 2.1;+2.1) sportive (37;2.4;+2.0) muscular (32;2.3;+1.8) slim (32;2.4;0.9) good skin (27;2.3;+2.1)	breast (51; 2.2;+1.5) shapes (34;2.3;+1.7) waist (28;2.5; +1.7)
First peripheral zone* (high frequency, high appearance ranking elements)	beautiful (69;2.4;+2.5)	beautiful (82;3.0;+2.2)	soft (55;2.6;+2.3)
Second peripheral zone* (low frequency, high appearance ranking elements)	health (36; 2.5; +2.1) temple (32; 2.1;+2.0)	loved (37;2.9;+2.7) strong (30;2.8;+2.3)	gentle (48; 3.0;+2.3) elegant (43;2.9;+2.4)

Note: «*» - the four zones of SR hypothetical structure were revealed by the usage of rank-frequency method [6;24];

«**» - for each object of the SR the average frequency and rank are indicated in brackets

«***» - frequency, average rank of occurrence and average valence for each element are indicated in brackets [6;24]. Valence varies from - 3 to +3; several segments could be distinguished: negative [-3; -1], neutral (-1;+1), or positive connotations [+1;+ 3].

The following elements are situated in the contrasted elements zone (see Table 1): breast, shapes and waist. The connotation of these elements varies is positive and it varies from +2.2 to +2.5. Once again following the minority position thesis, we can think that there is an opposition between the majority and a minority vision of the female body: abstract beauty VS visualisation of feminine shapes (breast and waist). Based on the opposite thesis, according to which it is a complement to the first peripheral zone, it turns out to reinforce the image of the feminine body in combination with its softness (the only element of the first peripheral zone with the positive connotation (+2.2)).

The second peripheral zone consists of the two elements with the positive valence (+2.3;+2.4): gentle and elegant.

Overall, the content of the core zone and the peripheral system in case of the SR of female body corresponds to the logic evoked by [Moliner and Abric \(2015\)](#) concerning the expressive properties of core and peripheral elements. The core elements are the general characteristics of the SR object (in our case - beautiful), they are abstract, and almost unconditional beliefs. The peripheral elements are: specific, concrete and contextualised, conditional beliefs. In the case of the SR of female body - the abstract beauty gets the concretisation in the elements: breast, shapes, waist, soft, gentle and elegant.

SRs of body in older women

My body. The core zone of the SR in case of the object my body consists of the only one element with the positive valence (+2.0): health (see Table 2). On the basis of the available research ([Camargo et al., 2011](#); [Camargo and Wachelke, 2010](#); [de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009](#); [Goetz et al., 2008](#); [Souza et al., 2019](#)), this fact is to be expected.

The three elements with the positive valence (from 1.4 to 2.2) form the contrasted elements zone (see Table 2): figure, my choice and strong.

The thesis concerning the opposition between the majority and minority positions seems more meaningful in this case than the thesis that the contrasting zone elements and the first peripheral system are a single whole (composed by the element beautiful (+2.3)). In other words, health VS reference to bodily autonomy, a means to protect self from the discussion with others.

The fact that beauty is less important (associated with the body secondarily) was expected.

The second peripheral zone unites such elements with the positive valence (+1.5;+2.1) as skin, head, hands. These elements refer to the individual experience, their function is to contextualise the abstract core elements (health is visible in the elements of the second peripheral zone).

Ideal body. The core zone of the SR of ideal body (see Table 2) consists of the two elements with the positive valence (+2.6 and +2.4 accordingly): healthy and slender. The situation of the element healthy in this part of the SR in the case of ideal body is not surprising, it is a normative element; and it was revealed in the numerous studies ([Camargo et al., 2011](#); [Camargo and Wachelke, 2010](#); [de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009](#); [Goetz et al., 2008](#); [Souza et al., 2019](#)). The surprising point is that the elements of the core zone are identical to those in the case of the young woman. This point will be discussed in the next section.

The contrasted elements zone (see Table 2) includes the following elements: muscular, good skin, sport. These elements have a positive valence that varies from +2.2 to +2.5. Once again there are the two possibilities to understand this empirical fact: to oppose the majority and minority positions or to reunite the content of the contrasted elements zone with the elements of the first peripheral zone. If we apply the first thesis, we can talk about a kind of opposition between the two visions of the ideal body: beautiful and slender VS muscular, good skin and sport. The minority position reveals the effort (sport) in order to get the ideal body. If we apply the second thesis, it is possible to think that beauty (the first peripheral zone includes only one element - beautiful (+2.6)) is a result of effort.

Once again as it was already noticed in the group of young women: the element concerning the muscular body could be seen in two directions. On the one hand, it looks like the respondents were not associating the ideal body with the female body (at least some of them). On the other hand, it is a kind of resistance to the traditional feminine body image.

The second peripheral zone consists of the following elements with positive valence (from +2.1 to +2.9): sportive, young, flexible, strong.

Table 2
My body, ideal body and female body in SRs of older Russian women (hypothetical structure of SR revealed by prototypical analysis)

	My body (10.50; 2.44)**	Ideal body (15.20; 2.62)	Female body (10.56; 2.52)
Core zone* (high frequency, low appearance ranking elements)	health (17;2.4;+2.0)***	healthy (32;2.1;+2.6) slender (22;2.3; +2.4)	beautiful (22;2.1;+2.6) breast (13;2.4;+1.9) soft (11; 1.8; +2.5)
Contrasted elements zone* (low frequency, low appearance ranking elements)	figure (10;2.3;+1.4) my choice (7;1.6;+1.5) strong (6;2.0;+2.2)	muscular (8;1.9;+2.5) good skin (7;2.3;+2.3) sport (6;2.5;+2.2)	gentle (9; 2.4;+2.9) smooth (6;2.5;+3.0)
First peripheral zone* (high frequency, high appearance ranking elements)	beautiful (19;2.8;+2.3)	beautiful (30;2.8;+2.6)	slender (14;3.0;+2.8)
Second peripheral zone* (low frequency, high appearance ranking elements)	skin (10; 2.6; +1.5) head (9; 2.6;+2.1) hands (6; 2.7;+2.0)	sportive (15;3.0;+2.1) young (12;3.1;+2.5) flexible (12;3.6;+2.9) strong (8;3.1;+2.8)	flexible (8; 3.2;+2.6) healthy (6;2.8;+2.7) seductive (6; 3.3;+1.8)

Note: «*» - the four zones of SR hypothetical structure were revealed by the usage of rank-frequency method [6;24];

«**» - for each object of the SR the average frequency and rank are indicated in brackets;

«***» - frequency, average rank of occurrence and average valence for each element are indicated in brackets [6;24]. Valence varies from - 3 to +3; several segments could be distinguished: negative [-3; -1], neutral (-1;+1), or positive connotations [+1;+ 3].

Female body. The core zone of the SR of female body (see Table 2) is formed by the elements with positive valence (from +1.9 to +2.5): beautiful, breast, soft.

The contrasted elements zone (see Table 2) unites: gentle and smooth (+2.9 and +3.00 correspondingly).

The only element of the first peripheral zone is slender (+2.2).

The second peripheral zone consists of the two elements with the positive valence (+1.8;+2.7): flexible, healthy, seductive.

Overall, the content of the SR of female body reflects the feminine body with the corresponding attributes. The disappearance of the element health is noteworthy. This object is less idealised than the two other ones.

Discussions

It should be kept in mind that the presented study was exploratory in nature, and it justifies the fact that no precise hypotheses were formulated. However, we suppose to find the differences in the hypothetical structure of the SRs as a matter of age in the two groups. These differences should be found in the case of all objects of the SRs (my body, ideal body and female body). With the reference of the results obtained in the studies on SR (Camargo et al., 2011; Camargo and Wachelke, 2010; de Souza-Filho and Beldarrain-Durandegui, 2009; Goetz et al., 2008; Souza et al., 2019), namely, concerning the persistence of the elements "health" and "beauty" in the SRs of body, it would be expected that for the young participants the SRs of body would be crystallised around the elements concerning beauty and the ways to get it, for the older participants the SRs of body would be crystallised around the elements concerning health and its maintenance.

The comparison of the hypothetical structure of SRs (my body, ideal body, female body) of in the same age groups of Russian women reveals several points concerning the lay mentality: in the lay mentality of young women concerning the body the own body is "protected" from the reflection, in the case of the ideal body an effort (physical training as it is implicitly presented) should be done in order

to transform a body into the ideal one. The female body (seen as feminine one, almost beautiful with feminine attributes) does not need any effort. Femininity is the attribute of the female body. It is surprising to see that the element health is not a part of the hypothetical structure of the SR of female body.

In the lay mentality of older women concerning body, the own body is seen as more healthy than beautiful one; in the case of the ideal body an effort (physical training as it is implicitly presented) should be done in order to transform a body into the ideal one (healthy and slender). The female body (seen as feminine one, beautiful with feminine attributes) does not need any effort. Femininity is the attribute of the female body. It is surprising to see that the element health is a part of the second peripheral zone of the hypothetical structure of the SR of female body.

The comparison in between the two age groups gives only partial support to our general assumption concerning the differences in the hypothetical structure of the SRs of body (my body, ideal body, female body), namely: beautiful, this normative element was not situated in the core zone neither in the SR of my body, nor in the SR of ideal body. Another normative element healthy, was situated in the core zone of the SRs of my body and ideal body, but not in the SR of female body in the group of older women.

The core zone elements in the case of the SR of ideal body are identical in the two age groups. This is the most surprising result of the study, but it could be seen as the mass media influence. The popular glossy magazines use quite the same idea relating body-beauty-health. The popularity of the fitness centres that help to get the desired body, the new social media with possibilities to broadcast the images of the beautiful body together with the scripts how to get it (easily and quickly) etc. In the SRs of body in the two generations of Russian women all these attributes of the modern conceptualisation of the body were revealed.

Only one element (beautiful) reveals a match in the case of core zone elements in the two age groups in the case of the SRs of female body. The female body seen by older women was more feminine than the one seen by the younger ones.

Finally, taking into account the point that the two objects of the SRs, my body and ideal body are the ones that are associated with stronger normative pressure in comparison with the object female body, then one paradoxical conclusion could be drawn: the normative discourse connecting sport and health, the necessity of an effort in order to have ideal body (almost athletic, sportive) disappears in another context (female body) where the abstract beauty of the body is represented by the quite traditional vision of the body.

Conclusions

The aim of this study presented here was to reveal how the body was represented in groups of young and older Russian women. In line with the key ideas of the theory of SRs and the research methodology of the structural approach an exploratory study was conducted.

The detailed analysis of these SRs leads to a conclusion about certain particularities of the lay mentality of the body in the two age groups of Russian women: in the lay mentality of young women concerning the body the own body is "protected" from the reflection, in case of the ideal body an effort (physical training as it is implicitly presented) should be done in order to transform a body into the ideal one. The female body (seen as feminine one, almost beautiful with feminine attributes) does not need any effort. Femininity is the attribute of the female body.

In the lay mentality of older women concerning body, the own body is seen as more healthy than beautiful one; in the case of the ideal body an effort (physical training as it is implicitly presented) should be done in order to transform a body into the ideal one (healthy and slender). The female body (seen as feminine one, beautiful with feminine attributes) does not need any effort. Femininity is the attribute of the female body.

The study has several limitations; first; it is related to the fact of the disproportion of the age groups; second, the usage of a single instrument to evoke the SRs of body in the two age groups reveals the only hypothetical structure of the SRs.

As it was mentioned, this study is a part of a larger research project, however, being limited by the articles parameters, the results obtained on the males were not presented here. The comparative analysis between two age groups in females and males could shed light on the particularities of the results presented here.

To conclude, a further study to verify the hypothetical structure of the SRs of body in young and older Russian women is the aim of the next step. Moreover, the same analysis as the one presented here in case of young and older females will be done with the data obtained in the male sample in order

to reveal the hypothetical structure of the SRs of body. Finally, the further study in order to verify the hypothetical structure will be realised as well in male sample. Only then will we have the empirical results for making claims about the SRs of body, rather than considering only the hypothetical version of a naïve understanding of the body in the two generations.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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