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Marriage and Family in Life Projects of Contemporary Youth

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Like culture, like family

Contemporary culture seems to be characterized by a notion of incessant, multidirectional change, a loss of one's identity for the sake of transformations and extreme forms of networked decentralization. Nowadays, cultural changes are commonly categorized with respect to their historically unparalleled pace as well as the multilateral nature of axiological references and symbolic interpretations, which is referred to as a condition of *warpedness*. Both the post-modern dissolution of basic moral terms and the deconstruction of cultural ecumene could be subsumed within the aforementioned notion of warpedness. The values of liberty, equality, fraternity, once conceived as symbolic figures of modernity, are becoming dethroned by latitude, diversity and tolerance conceived of as values orchestrating the direction of contemporary changes in culture.¹ Knowledge is fragile, and ethos is being fitted into changing socio-cultural contexts, thereby losing its durability and the certitude of applied cognitive or axiological criteria. *Changeability* seems to constitute the sole long-lasting value. In this sense, individualization of human choices, egocentrism of

¹ Z. BAUMAN: *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993.

motivations and inherent subjectivity of ethical judgements make the creation of social structures difficult. The category of social structure clearly applies to marriage which may be perceived in terms of a social group founded by the man and woman with an underlying intension of its dissolubility — which is expressed in the Christian doctrine as an institution lasting until one of the spouses' demise — and its subsequent transformation into the structure of family based on kinship ties, either biological or adoptive. Since ideologized egocentrism aims to emancipate an individual from social relations based on mutual obligations and responsibilities, it also submits the said relationships to the principle of self-actualization conceived as an incessant pursuit of entertainment, wealth, power, or self-realization. The ideology of radical egocentrism “gathers its followers easily because it knows how to entice them: new idols say that being oneself and jumping at occasions is sufficient enough to learn that there are no limits, and no greater effort is needed to obtain everything and everyone.”²

What follows are the main tendencies with respect of changes of contemporary culture:

1. Social differentiation leading to the atomization of diversified spheres of social life (i.e. family, economy, work, culture, science, politics, religion, etc.) which remain interrelated to a certain degree, but stay independent in normative and behavioral ways. The tendency, to a certain extent, becomes manifested as the privatization and individualization of cultural significance attributed to the family. While diagnosing the directions of changes in contemporary culture, T. N. Clark and Ronald Inglehart postulate that the diminishing role of the family facilitates individualization and differentiations of tastes, which becomes conducive for tolerating diversity of lifestyles. Likewise, by enabling the execution of rights towards new individuals or types of social activity, the changes foster the development of a new political culture³ in which the role of natural family diminishes, and family-related problems are generally conceived as private issues. When understood as a self-sufficient component of social system, the family becomes disconnected from its traditionally robust ties with the religious component of social system. This process is multidimensional and could be represented as a delegitimization processes with regard to the sacramental character

² “An interview with Professor Zbigniew Stawrowski.” Interview by Bogumił ŁOZIŃSKI. Available at: <http://religie.wiara.pl/doc/3334109.Samobojstwo-Zachodu> (date of access: 1.09.2016).

³ T. N. CLARK, R. INGLEHART: *The New Political Culture. Changing Dynamics of Support for the Welfare State and Other Politics in Post-Industrial Societies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

of marital union. The decreasing marriage rate becomes concurrent with an increase in the number of civil marriages with regard to the number of marriages taken according to the Code of Canon Law.⁴ In the context of Polish society, the secularization of mentality is more evident in the case of young Poles, which means that religious forms of legitimation (especially institutional ones) are increasingly marginalized in the adolescent population.

2. De-institutionalization as a result of which social institutions are perceived as being superficial, fossilized or impersonal. Claims to be autonomous from institutions (i.e. the guardians of norms and values) are also increasing, and institutions themselves are being progressively customized to fit into individual life projects. The process is also represented as attempts to free oneself from the family conceived as an institution. “The depreciation of the marriage and family by both the state and international institutions is a result of the total disregard with reference to their role and significance for the state and social life.”⁵

The increasing number of alternative forms of marriage and the family (there are numerous types of such relationships but LAT and cohabitation are most frequently referred to) may serve as a neat illustration of the aforementioned processes. These alternative forms share one common characteristic; namely, they remain beyond the sphere of institutional legitimation including legal, religious or social regulations. In this context, one may commonly address the issue as *having a relationship with one's partner*. Casual cohabitation, being together yet apart, are a serious competition for demanding bonds of marital unions and, consequently, could be easily inscribed into a model of culture postulating ideologized egocentrism and the pursuit of *changeability*.

3. Cultural pluralism which is defined as a primary organizational rule rendering sense and shape to *modern society*, a chief value and indicator of being modern. When observed from a perspective of everyday

⁴ The Statistical Institute of the Catholic Church informs that “merely” 62.2% of couples decide in favor of the Church marriage (the lowest rate has been observed in the Zachodniopomorskie Province — 49.9% and the biggest rate in the Podkarpackie Province — 73.2%). This is correlated with a low frequency of taking part in religious practices observed in the Zachodniopomorskie Province and, conversely, the high rate of similar observations noted in the Podkarpackie Province. At the same time, 3.5 thousand applications for stating that the marital union is invalid were posted to Bishop Courts in 2015. The number of such application has doubled in the timespan of a decade and each year witnesses an increase in the number of such applications. Church marriage is becoming less popular.

⁵ P. MAZURKIEWICZ: “Kościoł wobec wyzwań demograficznych.” In: *Sytuacja demograficzna w Polsce. Aspekty politologiczno-etyczne*. Eds. M. PAWLUS, M. CHAMARCZUK. Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Franciszka Salezego, 2015, p. 56.

experiences, the existence of universal values is losing ground to axiological diversity. “A radical form of pluralism, which remains tolerant with respect to contradictory norms and values, and giving an impression that anything goes is acceptable, is a sign of our times.”⁶ In the context of family-related considerations, the concept of radical pluralism espouses a bigger degree of arbitrariness as to providing definitions of marriage and family both in the context of legal jurisdiction and social awareness. The Polish parliament passed the “Act on Gender Reassignment” on the 10th of September 2015, which could possibly have serious consequences for our understanding of marriage as it is expressed in the Polish legal system.⁷ Additionally, social perceptions of the family are also becoming increasingly all-inclusive.⁸ Recently, there has been an increase in the number of respondents who are willing to perceive an unmarried, cohabitating couple raising a child/children (71—78%) or an unmarried childless couple (26—33%) in terms of a distinct types of family structures. Likewise, similar tendencies have been observed with respect to homosexual couples raising children (9—23%) and homosexual couples not having their own children (6—14%).⁹ The family is perceived to consist of components which are willingly perceived to constitute a part of family structure. This refers to pets, such as dogs, cats or hamsters. Sociological textbooks contain references to “poliamoric families” conceived as being more durable than family structures based upon legal and formally acknowledged marital unions.

4. Structural individualism paving the way for a radical privatization pertaining to taking individual decisions, which results in experiences of ambivalence, uncertainty or risk. Life patterns are not necessarily inherited, but created according to one’s own scenarios, without a facilitation of being anchored in the sphere of fixed, durable values.¹⁰ When understood on the most basic level, this refers to disregarding family-centered traditions and the marginalization of inter-generational ties conceived as factors safeguarding the transmission of traditions and cultural identities. The latter function has been extensively elaborated

⁶ J. MARIAŃSKI: *Młdzież między tradycją a nowoczesnością. Wartości moralne w świadomości maturzystów*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 1995, p. 31.

⁷ The project is available at <http://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/PrzebiegProc.xsp?nr=1469> (date of access: 7.09.2016).

⁸ M. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ-MOŚNY: “Rodzina jako element definiowania siebie.” *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych*, no. 4 (2013).

⁹ “The Family and Its Contemporary Understanding.” CBOS. BS/33/2013, Warsaw, March 2013.

¹⁰ J. MARIAŃSKI: *Młdzież między tradycją a nowoczesnością...*

upon in sociological studies aiming to indicate a role of extended families in sustaining cultural identity. For instance, a research conducted in Slovakia points, among many other issues, to the diversification of trust capital within families, which becomes manifested as significantly weaker patrilineal intergenerational ties. Mothers are depositaries of trust, and the role of fathers diminishes in this specific context. Likewise, family relationships are increasingly affected by culture of distrust, which is manifested as a stronger propensity for living next to each other, not together. Furthermore, more than one-fourth of the surveyed adolescents are not interested in sustaining emotional ties with their grandfathers who have become absent, redundant in the social representation of the family as it is constructed by representatives of the younger generation.¹¹

When observing the contemporary cultural transformations, one is definitely predisposed to accept Anthony Giddens's insightful postulates indicating the global, and perhaps obligatory, character of revolutionary changes in the sphere of family relations and intimacy. These changes could be compared to a hurricane which finally reaches everywhere, affecting and completely altering local social systems.¹²

Nowadays, one experiences a crisis of the family understood both as a social group and social institution. Alternative forms of marriage and the family are enjoying an increasingly wide social acceptance. At this point, numerous statistical data referring to the condition of families could be adduced. Yet, statistics are able to focus our attention on figures being merely representations of real transitions in culture and human mentality. Demographical crisis is, first and foremost, a crisis of values and a crisis of human conceived of as a specific type of value, a crisis of family conceived of as a natural environment of upbringing and primary socialization.¹³ Lucjan Kocik rightfully observes a plethora of factors responsible for the dissemination of attitudes of hostility towards the family in the contemporary world: 1) dissolution of traditional extended family, 2) lack of responsible pro-family policy on behalf of state or regional authorities, 3) opportunity for having a wealthy life not being married or not having a family, 4) childlessness as a form of fad, 5) privatization of family life, procreation and motherhood, 6) exhaustion of the procreation under-

¹¹ W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ: "Zaufanie jako wartość życia rodzinnego." In: *Medzigeneracyjne wzaby v súčasnej rodine. Vysledky sociologickeho vyskumu v Nitrianskom kraji*. Eds. W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ et al. Katowice: Studio Noa, 2014.

¹² A. GIDDENS: "Ramy późnej nowoczesności." In: *Współczesne teorie socjologiczne*. Ed. A. JASIŃSKA-KANIA et al. Warszawa: Scholar 2006.

¹³ W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ: "Rodzina jako wartość społeczna." In: *W trosce o rodzinę*. Ed. W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ. Katowice: Instytut Górnośląski, 1994.

stood as a kind of duty towards God or nation.¹⁴ Additionally, the aforementioned list may be supplemented with a fact that procreational function and sexual desire have been separated, which is concomitant with cultural patterns stressing one's penchant for sensual experiences.

The aforementioned characteristics of contemporary culture are directly responsible for the creation of young individuals' life projects. Such projects could be understood in terms of a normative capital yielding an anticipated, accepted or perceived as modern (i.e. better, more attractive than the traditional one which is automatically downplayed as obsolete, worse) mode of existence that becomes actualized in the practice of everyday life. In this context, the adjective *modern* designates a sphere of life that has been emancipated from the rule of cultural traditions. The colorful reality of advertisements or commercials lays stress on the eternal youth, health or beauty, as well as human life emancipated from material pressures of everyday existence. At the same time, this world is based upon selfish motivations and subjective value judgements, which becomes manifested as an essential difficulty in the constitution of robust communities based upon the attitudes of engagement, sacrifice and responsibility. The words wife and husband have been replaced by partners in the discourse of glossy, full-colour magazines. Staying focus on individual career, the search for an attractive job, which requires social mobility and being able to work long hours, consumerist lifestyle are not conducive for having and raising children. When seen as a result of the incessant pursuit of success, *fatigue* results in the lack of one's time for the family and children. It is little wonder, then, that there are significantly less non-immigrant children nowadays. Similarly, an increasing number of adults are deprived of experiences concerning their own childhood as associated with positive emotions of living among one's mother, father, siblings, grandparents and other relatives. The experience and image of one's own family are always to a certain extent transposed to social roles which are undertaken in adulthood.¹⁵ Such experiences and patterns are not only responsible for modelling or justify (however, I prefer the notion of legitimation in this context because the latter term has a broader meaning as it denotes a process of providing sense and value to undertaken life choices and their actualizations inscribed in practices of the quotidian) practices of day-to-day existence. When interested in welfare issues, sociological studies indicate the intergenerational patterns of helplessness, inability to cope with one's life, or poverty. The same conclusions could be drawn

¹⁴ L. KOCIK: *Rodzina w obliczu wartości i wzorów ponowoczesnego świata*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM, 2006.

¹⁵ H. KRZYSTECZKO: *Z rodziny do rodziny*. Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2016.

with respect to intergenerational patterns defining an individual's ability to design one's life, which is also true of their relations to forms of everyday existence. Hence, the aforementioned postulates point to social mechanisms fostering the intergenerational cultural reproduction of patterns which refer to social practices taking place in families: *since poverty breeds more poverty, one divorce breeds more divorces*.

The family has become incorporated into the sphere of political economy and, consequently, it mirrors its basic tensions. A fundamental aim of socialization is

a preparation for one's existence in the world that is standardized, segmented, and discontinuous. On the other hand, the family faces a postulate of individualized, autonomous 'persons'. Consequently, the family is kept hostage in a no man's land located between two dissimilar grammars of the self. By forming autonomous, self-directed personalities the family-related socialization paves the way for a failure because thusly formed individuals could not be able to accommodate to pressures set by the society of organizations. In this way, authenticity of one's identity must lead towards maladjustment. Conversely, by forming personalities which are useful for complex organizations, the family produces neurotics whose usefulness is limited to being accommodated to life demands since they face obligations of achievement and demonstrate too little an amount of practical autonomy and self-confidence.¹⁶

Although the family is not sufficiently supported by culture or politics, certain initiatives are undertaken (i.e., the Big Family Charter, 500+ programme) and legitimized by introducing the term "family" into the name of relevant ministry.¹⁷ The *fatigue* could be also caused by the incessant dissemination of pathological aspects of family life and the lack of positive coverage in mass culture which is nowadays responsible for the production of norms and patterns of social existence. Risking a certain overstatement, one could dare to say that marriage and family — especially when considered with regard to procreation — are represented in popular mediascapes in the context of violence, pathology, and other situations of oppression.

¹⁶ Z. BOKSZAŃSKI: *Tożsamości zbiorowe*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2005, p. 220.

¹⁷ The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

Where can adolescents search for the family in the world of axiological warpedness?

The status of family in adolescents' life projects may be succinctly described by socio-demographical data which register social facts understood as consequences of life projects realized by consecutive generations of Poles.

Although the data provided by the Statistics Poland indicate that as many as 60% of adult Poles are married,¹⁸ the figure alone does not seem sufficient enough to fully understand the changing condition of Polish families. A long-term observation reveals fluctuations in the marriage rate that point at a tendency towards the decrease in the number of marriages. In 1990, the marriage rate (i.e. one marriage per 1000 individuals) was higher than seven, and in 2013 this very rate is below five. Concurrently, a comparable, longitudinal analysis, which focuses on the median of first marriages in Poland (years 1900, 1995, 2000—2013),¹⁹ demonstrates the increase in the age of individuals who plan their first marriage with a concomitant decrease in the willingness to marry. The data clearly indicate that young Poles, as a rule, are motivated to delay their decisions concerning their first marriage. The relevant median for Poland amounts to 28 years of age for males and 26 years of age for females. At the beginning of the 1990s, the relevant figures were respectively 24 and 22 years of age. The said tendency exerts a negative influence upon one's willingness to have children as well as the functioning of the whole family in the future. Likewise, the number of childless families is growing, and the decreasing tendency in the birth rate, as relevant demographic forecasts show, is becoming more visible.

When observed from a perspective of marital status, the aforementioned statistical analysis indicates that more than 2.1% of Poles declare their willingness to remain in a cohabitating relationship.²⁰ Concomitantly, the structure of Polish cohabitations with regard to respondents' age and gender shows that cohabitation is a feature of relationships formed by young couples of less than 30 years of age.²¹ In this specific context, cohabitation is either regarded as an alternative with reference to the traditional marriage, or as a consequence of life projects managed after one's divorce or,

¹⁸ J. STAŃCZAK, K. STELMACH, M. URBANOWICZ: "Małżeństwa oraz dzietność w Polsce." Available at: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/malzenstwa-i-dzietnosc-w-polsce,23,1.html> (date of access: 25.05.2018).

¹⁹ J. STAŃCZAK, K. STELMACH, M. URBANOWICZ: "Małżeństwa..."

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Ibidem.

less frequently, the spouse's demise. Thusly understood, cohabitation is a social category which is characterized by a dynamic increase.²²

An interesting perspective on the role of marriage and family in adolescents' life projects is provided by a report "The Youth 2011" devised by Professor Krystyna Szafraniec.²³ The report shows that until the mid-1990s characteristics of the young generation were only insignificantly different from the relevant features typical of the youth of the mid-1980s. The studies pointed towards the adolescents' constant orientation on the "well-established" values and existential patterns, such as life stabilization, family happiness, friendship, satisfying job, self-directedness. In the second half of the 1990s, sociological studies observed different characteristics. Unprecedentedly intense educational and status aspirations, penchant for comfortable life, pragmatism, significant success orientation, and ambivalent attitudes towards the family and marriage were observed. It is also noteworthy to observe global tendencies towards ethical solitude, lack of personal fulfilment, anxieties, depression or neurosis — all of which affect Polish adolescents, too. "[T]he youth experience problems with achieving maturity, and their psychological maturation is becoming more difficult to be achieved as a developmental process. Despite the lack of complaints, a significant number of adolescents cannot cope with excessive social demands, cultural pressure for success, ambivalence of social norms, lack of interest from their adult guardians, fragility of family bonds, or burden of parental problems."²⁴ These are the factors, or circumstances, that are not conducive to taking decisions concerning having their own family.

Sociological publications in Poland tend to deploy an ornithological term "altricial humans" in order to denote a category of elder adolescents who stay at their family home, not trying to live on their own due to the fear of responsibility for decision taking. This is even more related to the fear of marriage conceived of as an irrevocable decision. Poland is among the top ten of European countries in which adult children are unwilling to leave their homes for a long period of time: females are on average willing to become independent at the age of 28.5, and the relevant figure for males amounts to 30 years of age. More than half of the 18—34 population could be defined as representatives of the said "altricial humans." The relevant rate in Poland amounts to approx. 58%, and the highest

²² The issue of cohabitation is more extensively elaborated upon by K. Juszczak-Frelkiewicz who presents the problem in the context of adolescents' social environment. See K. JUSZCZYK-FRELKIEWICZ: *Kohabitacja w Polsce i na Słowacji. Studium socjologiczne*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2014.

²³ K. SZAFRANIEC: *Młodzi 2011* (Warszawa: Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 2011).

²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 21—22.

percentage (almost 70%) has been observed in Slovakia. The lowest rate of “altruistic humans” is observed in Denmark (approx. 14%), and the average figure for the European Union is approx. 46%.²⁵

Although a *successful* marriage, family, having children, and personal happiness are still on the agenda of strongly stressed existential values, one may observe a tendency towards focusing upon the category of personal happiness, and a *successful* marriage is not necessarily a result of having children. When conceived as a precondition for a successful life, *successful* marriage is declared by half of Poles at the age 18—29, and having children is mentioned by the quarter of respondents. One in five claims that marriage is an obsolete institution. Adolescents commonly accept informal relationships as a form of getting to know each other or a kind of preferred lifestyle. Marriage is conceived of as an institution which is getting accommodated more to the partners’ individual, egocentric needs and expectations, than to socially prescribed functions or roles. An imagined family should be perceived as an opportunity for a more profound intimacy, mutual cognition, self-development, and self-fulfillment. The trivialization of divorces results in a situation in which deficiencies in the said areas create an opportunity for taking divorce-related decisions. “It occurs more frequently that an individual feels deprived of something desired or is motivated to dissolve a marriage when one’s desires are not fulfilled. This is not a path towards a durable marriage.”²⁶

The quoted report also refers to a tendency towards the radicalization of traditional beliefs, which is manifested as an increase in disapproval of informal relationships and divorces. Such attitudes are typical of adolescents who are strongly affiliated with religion or the Catholic community. As much as 82% of adolescents accept Church marriage and consider it as more important than civil marriage. The report “The Values of Poles and the Legacy of John Paul II” prepared by a team of sociologists affiliated with the Center for the Thought of John Paul II points at the increase in social acceptance of family and the concomitant decrease in the acceptance of divorces. Such beliefs are authored by individuals who are considered as leaders of modernity. The turn towards the family has been observed among the population of young, highly educated Poles, rather than the social category which is customarily defined as a stronghold of family-centered values.²⁷ One is also inclined to notice that the tendency

²⁵ M. CHOROSZEWICZ, P. WOLFF: “Population and social condition.” *Eurostat Statistics in Focus*, vol. 50 (2010), p. 1.

²⁶ POPE FRANCIS: Posynodalna Adhortacja Apostolska *Amoris Laetitia*. *O miłości w rodzinie*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo M., 2016, p. 237.

²⁷ B. FEDYSZAK-RADZIEJOWSKA: “Niezmiennie rodzina, dzieci i praca — wartości Polaków po 5 latach.” In: *Wartości Polaków, a dziedzictwo Jana Pawła II — 2007—2012*.

is a result of activities undertaken by the Catholic Church with regard to various groups of adolescents and manifested by a plethora of initiatives for the sake of the family based upon the sacramental marriage and the sustainability of cultural transmission in families which take care of traditional values.

Furthermore, the report provides an interesting characteristics of cohabitation. The dissemination of cohabitation, and the degree of social acceptance accompanying it, could be seen as relatively new phenomenon which is associated with political and cultural transformations of the 1990s. Adolescents are willing to treat cohabitation as a temporary kind of relationship which can protect individuals against the risk of marriage. Yet, cohabitation is often provided with a more permanent character. Cohabitations are formed by partners having a relatively lower level of education, lower income, or experiencing unemployment. A great number of such couples bring up children with a benefit of state welfare, rent subprime housing, take part in undeclared work, or migrate to other countries.

As preferred by adolescents, the model of marriage is strongly based upon positive interpersonal relationships which are manifested by trust, mutual respect and tolerance, sexual and emotional faithfulness, satisfying sex life, having children, forgiveness, and sharing household and upbringing duties. The research has noted adolescents' tendency to perceive the role of a father in a broader way so that it may include traditional female activities. It is observable, for instance, as male adolescents' readiness to take care of small children. At the same time, on the other hand, risk is inevitably calculated as an element of marriage, which is observed as a high acceptance of divorces (it oscillates around 73% or 78%, depending on a type of research).

Young Poles' life projects are characterized by a tendency to accept a cultural pattern of the monoparental family. Since 1984, a steady increase in children born out of wedlock has been observed. In 1996, the relevant rate exceeded the "magical" threshold of 10%.²⁸ In 2013, the rate amounted to 23%. Moreover, one may refer to an observation suggesting that a little less than 10% of adolescents of 19–26 years of age are childless and do not plan to have children in the future. Such an attitude seems to be quite permanent. Poland is characterized by a very low birth rate which amounted to 1.29 in 2013. The substitutability of generations has not been observed for twenty years now, and since 1990 this situa-

Wstępny komunikat z badań społecznych. Warszawa: Centrum myśli Jana Pawła II, October 2012. Available at: www.centrumjp2.pl

²⁸ P. SZUKALSKI: "Płodność i urodzenia pozamałżeńskie w Polsce." *Prace Instytutu Ekonometrii i Statystyki Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, no. 132 (2001), p. 14.

tion has been additionally aggravated by migration tendencies resulting in young Poles taking an active part in the reproduction of demographic structures abroad.²⁹ Multi-children families are not a model which is preferred by adolescents, though it still has a bigger number of supporters as compared to a model of family with one child only. The motivation to have children weakens as a respondent's age progresses, which — on the one hand — could be explained by the susceptibility to existential patterns associated with the ideology of consumerism and — on the other hand — a result of being confronted with the devastating realities of labor market in Poland.

Numerous sociological studies,³⁰ including the aforementioned report, are sufficient enough to observe that the said tendencies are internally diversified and are equipped with their own district status- an environment-related counterparts. Rural youth are more traditional, whereas adolescents living in big cities tend to be more educated and liberated. Females are more family-oriented than males, but they are also willing to manifest a more liberal attitude towards alternative forms of family and marriage. Religious affiliations also matter because they are associated with a higher tendency to attach positive values to family life and its traditional forms. Similarly, a more positive assessment with respect to parental relationship renders adolescents to express a more positive attitude towards the imagined family.

Sociological studies reveal a progressive crisis of norms of Catholic morality, which is especially observable in the context of morality related to marriage, family and one's sexuality. Marriage faithfulness is more universally accepted than the norm safeguarding the life of unborn children. Norms referring to robustness of marriage, sex life before wedding and use of contraceptives are significantly less accepted in the Polish society.³¹ Needless to say, a debate over a future shape of the family and society will be solved in the area of axiology.

The family as a cultural value cannot be acknowledged merely by means of social benefits, legal regulations encouraging individuals to start a family, regardless of how significant the foregoing systemic solutions are. Love and family happiness cannot be written into acts or by-laws. A positive choice with respect to the family is rendered possible by the dissemination of pro-family culture which is based upon positive traditions

²⁹ J. STAŃCZAK, K. STELMACH, M. URBANOWICZ: "Małżeństwo oraz dzietność w Polsce." Warszawa: GUS — DRP, 2016.

³⁰ J. MARIAŃSKI: *Przemiany moralności polskich maturzystów. Studium socjologiczne*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe KUL, 2011, including the bibliography.

³¹ IDEM: *Kontrowersje wokół relacji religii i moralności. Tożsamość czy rozbieżność. Studium socjologiczne*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2014.

and remains resistant to temporary tendencies or fads. Polish and European heated debate over the family and the child's place in it is, therefore, a conflict concerning values. Hence, the strategies of forming social relations are a matter of great importance: Are they conducive to the development of families and the accumulation of an individual's social and cultural capital due to their participation in the family life or, conversely, do the strategies pave the way for the formation of egocentric individuals who are unable to build relationships inside the family and marriage, afraid of durable emotional obligations, or promote alternative forms of marriage and family inscribed in a *new political culture*?

The weakening of the family conceived of as durable foundation is definitely not conducive to the formation of social order. Threats to the family are, consequently, risks to the human being and his/her micro-community. The axiological consensus largely depends on the extent to which moral socialization in families is oriented towards the ethos of personalism which underscores such values as altruism, community, and resistance to relativism typical of ideological egocentrism that has been rendered popular due to its overtly *postmodern* character. Pro-family and pro-life movements, which are gathered around the Catholic Church, are able to produce socio-cultural conditions for bringing back the privileged status of the family in the Polish society. Both the preservation and creative development of the Polish national and religious identity is to a large extent dependent on the ability to subsume national or religious values within family-related practices of day-to-day life. The profound metaphor of the threshold of family home — when re-introduced to the mentality of Polish society — may pave the way, as in the 20th century, for the reinforcement of socio-cultural functions of the family due to the assistance of adolescent life projects and the legitimizing character of Christian values. It is a threshold of a *home* which is not perceived as a closed reality, hermetic and anxious when it comes to a confrontation with the world of multiple values. It is a *home* which comes to be understood as a starting point and a nexus of social reference for its dwellers, a *home* which aims to retain and reinforce *our own* cultural identity when an encounter with other, perhaps alien, values is experienced.³²

³² M. REMBIERZ: "Dom rodzinny jako przestrzeń wychowania intelektualnego — wzrastanie w mądrości czy utwierdzenie się w dziedziczonych uprzedzeniach i stereotypach?" *Jaka rodzina, takie społeczeństwo. Wspólnototwórczy wymiar wychowania integralnego*. Ed. M. T. KOZUBEK. Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2012.

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WOJCIECH ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ

Marriage and Family in Life Projects of Contemporary Youth

Summary

Contemporary culture is dominated by the conviction that an incessant and multi-directional change is necessary, that identity is lost for the sake of transformation and extreme network decentralization. It is believed that the specificity of contemporary cultural transformations lies in the fast pace of changes, unprecedented in the history of mankind, as well as the multidirectionality of their axiological references and symbolic interpretations, for which I use a metaphor of axiological warpedness. We are experiencing a crisis of the family as a sustainable social group and as an institution. The so-called alternative forms of marriage and family are becoming widely accepted by the society.

Despite the fact that both a successful marriage, family, having children and personal happiness are still values that are strongly emphasized by young Poles, there is a tendency to expose the category of personal happiness more strongly, and a successful marriage as a declared value does not necessarily involve the expectation of having children. Every fifth young Pole claims that marriage is an outdated institution. It is common in youth circles to accept informal relationships as "a check out," or simply as a way of life. Marriage appears in the images of young people as an institution that adapts more to the individual, egocentric needs and expectations of the partners rather than to the functions and roles expected by society. An imaginary family should deepen

intimacy, self-knowledge, self-development and self-fulfillment. The trivialization of divorces enables the perceived deficits in this area to find quick solutions in making divorce decisions.

Pro-family movements centred around the Catholic Church or pro-life movements legitimized by Christian axiology, to a large extent gathering also young people, create socio-cultural conditions for restoring the family's privileged place in Polish society. The preservation and creative development of Polish cultural and religious identity largely depend on the family's ability to interpret and integrate national and religious values into everyday life.

WOJCIECH ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ

Le mariage et la famille dans les projets de vie des jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui

Résumé

Dans la culture contemporaine domine la conviction sur la nécessité d'un changement incessant et multidirectionnel, celle sur la perte de l'identité en faveur de la transformation et d'une décentralisation réticulaire extrême. Comme la spécificité des transformations culturelles contemporaines, on considère le rythme rapide — non rencontré jusqu'à présent dans l'histoire de l'humanité — de changements et le caractère multidirectionnel de leurs références axiologiques et interprétations symboliques, à ce que j'attribue la métaphore de gauchissement axiologique. Nous éprouvons la crise de la famille en tant que groupe social durable et en tant qu'institution. Ce qui jouit d'une large acceptation sociale, ce sont les soi-disant formes alternatives de mariage et de famille.

Quoiqu'aussi bien le mariage réussi, la famille, le fait d'avoir des enfants et le bonheur personnel appartiennent toujours aux valeurs de la vie fortement accentuées par les jeunes Polonais, on aperçoit des tendances à une exposition plus forte des catégories du bonheur personnel, et le mariage réussi en tant que valeur déclarée n'est pas nécessairement lié à la volonté d'avoir des enfants. Un jeune Polonais sur cinq trouve que le mariage est une institution démodée. L'approbation des unions libres en tant que « tentative de se tester » ou tout simplement un mode de vie est commune parmi les jeunes. Le mariage apparaît dans les imaginations des jeunes comme une institution qui s'adapte davantage aux besoins individuels, égocentriques et aux attentes des partenaires qu'aux fonctions et rôles attendus par la société. Une famille imaginée devrait servir l'approfondissement de l'intimité, à l'autoconnaissance, à l'autodéveloppement et à l'autoréalisation. La banalisation des divorces fait que les déficits ressentis dans ce domaine trouvent des solutions rapides dans la prise de décisions de divorce.

Se ramassant autour de l'Église catholique, les mouvements en faveur de la famille ou les mouvements *pro life* légitimés par l'axiologie chrétienne, réunissant aussi à un haut degré les jeunes gens, créent des conditions socioculturelles visant à redonner à la famille sa place privilégiée dans la société polonaise. La sauvegarde de l'identité culturelle et religieuse polonaise ainsi que son développement créatif dépendent considérablement des capacités d'une famille à comprendre les valeurs nationales et religieuses, et à les mettre en pratique dans sa vie quotidienne.

Mots clés : jeunes gens, famille, mariage, religion, valeurs

WOJCIECH ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ

Il matrimonio e la famiglia nei progetti di vita dei giovani contemporanei

Sommario

Nella cultura contemporanea domina la convinzione della necessità di cambiamento incessante e pluridirezionale, di perdita dell'identità in favore della trasformazione e della decentralizzazione estrema della rete. Si considerano peculiarità dei mutamenti culturali contemporanei il ritmo veloce — insolito finora nella storia dell'umanità — dei cambiamenti e la pluridirezionalità dei loro riferimenti assiologici e delle interpretazioni simboliche, a cui appongo la metafora di distorsione assiologica. Stiamo vivendo la crisi della famiglia come gruppo sociale durevole e come istituzione. Godono di un'ampia accettazione sociale le cosiddette forme alternative di matrimonio e di famiglia.

Malgrado il matrimonio riuscito, la famiglia, il possesso di figli e la felicità personale continuano ad appartenere ai valori della vita fortemente accentuati dai giovani Polacchi, si rileva una tendenza ad esporre più decisamente la categoria della felicità personale, e il matrimonio riuscito come valore dichiarato non implica necessariamente l'aspettativa di avere dei figli. Un giovane Polacco su cinque afferma che il matrimonio è un'istituzione superata. È comune negli ambienti dei giovani l'assenso alle unioni non formali come "prova per collaudarsi" o semplicemente come stile di vita. Il matrimonio appare nelle immagini dei giovani come un'istituzione che si adatta maggiormente alle esigenze individuali, egocentriche ed alle aspettative dei partner che non alle funzioni ed ai ruoli che si aspetta la società. La famiglia immaginata dovrebbe servire ad approfondire l'intimità, l'autoconoscenza, l'autosviluppo e l'autorealizzazione. La banalizzazione dei divorzi fa sì che i deficit avvertiti in tal campo trovino una risoluzione rapida nel prendere le decisioni di divorzio.

I movimenti in favore della famiglia che si concentrano intorno alla Chiesa cattolica o quelli *pro life* legittimati dall'assiologia cristiana, che in gran misura riuniscono anche i giovani, creano le condizioni socio-culturali per restituire alla famiglia il suo posto privilegiato nella società polacca. Il comportamento e lo sviluppo creativo dell'identità culturale e religiosa polacca in gran misura dipendono dalla capacità di lettura e di inserimento dei valori nazionali e religiosi da parte della famiglia nella prassi della vita quotidiana.

Parole chiave: giovani, famiglia, matrimonio, religione, valori