

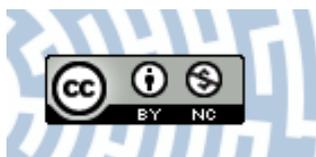


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Author: Wojciech Świątkiewicz

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The Family in the World of Axiological Turmoil

Abstract

The family and all the types of social behaviour that were directly associated with it, its stability and sacred dimension created the natural and obvious world of the social life, the fundamental reality of culture that once for all became the “symbolic structure of reference” when man, in his/her adult life, was improving family experiences in a creative way, as well as when he/she was denying them. In the situation of axiological turmoil of culture, the family starts to be losing its privileged position in the structures of the social world. The significance of its existence as the fundamental group and social institution, the environment for social personality maturation becomes weaker. It is more and more common that family understood in a traditional way becomes unnecessary in the contemporary world. Demographic crisis is first of all the crisis of values and the crisis of the man as a value; the crisis of the family that is the natural educational environment. The future of every society depends on the state of its family. The question concerning the shape of the family is the question of the shape of the society, the nation and the State.

Key words: *Family, demographic crisis, axiological turmoil, cohabitation, LAT, “pro-family” attitude.*

Contemporary family struggles with axiological turmoil of the modern times.

I refer here to the cultural state of the contemporary world of the globalisation era as turmoil. Of course it is a metaphor. Turmoil is made of wind and windstorm, the synonyms of rapid and violent cultural changes: the wind that blows in different, sometimes opposite directions bringing new values and behavioural patterns,

creates and refreshes life, but also destroys and “blows away” traditional values and principles if they are not rooted in the native culture strongly enough. Turmoil is the symbol of changeability, instability, different speed, dynamics, dispersal, banishment, scattering to the four winds sometimes in a brutal, relentless, ruthless and irrevocable way.

Ulrich Beck, a contemporary German sociologist and the author of the famous book “The Society of Risk” wrote among others: “When we say that we live in the post-modern world, we assume that we have some new order. We create the illusion that our world has changed and the institutional order, the way of thinking and social mechanisms have been conformed to the new reality. «One order has been used up so people have created a new one». Just like at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, when the feudal order was depleting, people created a modern capitalist order – free market, democracy and society based on the idea of equality. At present, nothing like that has happened. (...) – the author adds – We protect old institutions, although the world does match them. The old order does not function because modernity is too radical and there is not a pos-modern order. We abolish different borders to cope with the pressures that are growing together with radicalisation through which we create new, even bigger risks” (Beck 2005, p. 5). Turmoil brings along and multiplies the RISK that cannot be foreseen until it is manifested.

The fast pace of transformations that have not been observed in the whole history of mankind, and the multi-directional character of their axiological references and symbolic interpretations, all that I describe using the metaphor of turmoil, is considered to be the specificity of the contemporary cultural changes. Freedom, equality and brotherhood seen as the symbolic figures of the era of modernism are replaced by liberty, diversity and tolerance that are presented as values that give directions to contemporary transformations (Bauman 1995). Knowledge is fragile and the ethos is adapted to the changing socio-cultural contexts losing the persistence and certainty of cognitive and axiological criteria. CHANGEABILITY seems to be the only persistent value and individualization of choices, egocentrism of motivation and subjectivism of assessment determines a significant difficulty to undertake efforts to create a persistent community of people that demands the attitude of systematic commitment, devotion and responsibility.

The main trends of changes in the contemporary culture include: **1. social differentiation** that is based on acquisition of independence by different spheres of social life (family, economy, work, culture, science, politics, religion, etc.) that influence one another but at the same time become independent of one another in the normative sense, **2. de-institutionalisation**, which means that the world of institutions is imputed to be showy, fossilized and impersonal. The claim of

autonomy in relation to institutions that present the values and standards for their selective choice and its adaptation to individual models of life is getting deeper and deeper, 3. **cultural pluralism**, defined as the basic principle of *modern society* organisation, a superior value and the determinant of modernity. The variety of values is beaten by the universal values in everyday experiences. “Radical pluralism that is tolerant towards contradictory values and standards and gives the impression that everything is allowed, is a specific sign of the contemporary time,” (Mariański 1995, p. 31) 4. **structural individualism** that brings the tide of radical privatisation of individual decision, instability, ambivalence and risk, chaos and uncertainty. The models of life do not have to be inherited but create themselves according to their own direction, “under the pressure” of choice without support in the certainty of permanent values (Mariański 1995).

Where, in this axiological turmoil, can the family be found?

In the European tradition the family used to be defined as a community of people, the most important form of social life, a group that is elementary for every society, the centre of life transmission and life culture that has a significant meaning in the shaping of the social identity of a human being. Tradition, morality and religious principles used to define socially expected ways of life. Family and all the types of social behaviours, that are directly related to it, its stability and religious dimension made the natural and obvious world of social life, the fundamental culture reality that once for all became the “symbolic structure of reference” when man, in his/her adult life, improved family experiences in a creative way, as well as when he/she denied them. Different biographical fortunes found their justification in the consecration of religious social roles, in individual personality characteristic features or in non-typical social situations. Avoiding the rules of family morality even if it took a significant form was not the questioning of their essence. The sense of the family understood as a value could be defined in this way.

Pro-familial attitudes and the orientation towards the family as a value had a very important influence on creating individual personality. The family was perceived as extended personality and a reference group in the prospect in which man created his/her own fate. Such a strong position of the family in the hierarchy of values was the result of historical experiences of the nation (deprived of sovereign political institutions in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century) and its tradition, and also, to some an extent, of living conditions in the totalitarian communist system that aimed at an individual's complete subordination to the State interests. Therefore the family was, as if opposed to the intentions

of the State politics, the “oasis”, “cultural niche”, the “fortress” (such notions were often used), that guaranteed the preservation of life privacy, intimacy, freedom of thoughts and views. It constituted a specific choice for the constrained world of institutions and apparent actions that took place on the stage of the theatre of public life. The concept of “family fortress” that originated after the II World War appeared in the public discourse again.

In the situation of axiological instability of culture, the family starts to be losing its privileged position in the structures of the social world. The significance of its existence as a fundamental group and social institution, the environment for social personality maturation becomes weaker. It is a common opinion that the family understood in a traditional way becomes unnecessary in the contemporary world.

“Traditional principles and advice that used to control personal relationships ceased to function and nowadays individuals face the necessity of making a decision out of an infinite number of possibilities of creating, improvement and cancelling their relationships with others.” (Giddens 2004, p. 198; Beck, Beck – Gernsheim 1995) We live in the world of contradictory interests associated with the family, love and freedom in the realisation of individual targets.

The fact that European countries adapt legal regulations to cultural changes, in response to the increase in cohabitation, homosexual relationships with adopting functions, different types of single-parent families, illegitimate children, divorces, and considering them as legal and not stigmatising confirms that traditional marriage based on the marriage of a woman and man experiences the crisis of its moral significance. (Kwak 2005, p. 54)

In the light of some concepts that appear among Western demographers, the traditional family, which has been a natural and universal institution for centuries, will gradually decline, and the present nuclear family that is tormented by the crisis of stability will transform into a little persistent co-habitual relationship to reach the stage of “hybrid” that is a free relationship, in which the husband and wife (partners) will live separately and be more independent. This relationship is defined by the term LAT: *Living Apart Together* (Slany 2002; Wierchosławski 1987). In strengthening cultural models marriage ceases to be the pre-requisite of a regular and socially accepted sexual intercourse and living together is not a family criterion.

The percentage of marriages has decreased in the majority of European countries over the last decades. Therefore, as the demographers state, in Europe the “tendency to get married” is decreasing, although there are some exceptions, including Poland. Those who get married do it definitely later in their life (over 30). Although young people consider the family to be one of the most important values, they

postpone the decision to form it because they want to make a career or have a good financial situation first. This tendency that has been observed in developed Western countries is explained by the fact that people are ready to start a professional career later and later and by work discipline in corporations that demand flexibility and mobility from their employees. We should also be aware of similar paths of professional development of both sexes, which results in stronger competition between them. Perhaps this promotes the neglect of being emotionally close in favour of being ready for mutual services in the culture of “single people”. (Bomba 2005) It is more and more common to be single. Such a direction of social processes is confirmed by the data from the National Census in 2002. In Poland, for example, nearly a third of men and about 24% of women do not start a family. In Poland in 1989, 225.7 thousand marriages were contracted, and in 2003 – 191.9 thousand. (Rajkiewicz 2004). Certainly there are many reasons for such a situation. A difficult economic situation, unemployment and lack of flats are often pointed at in Poland (Rajkiewicz 2004). But the indicated trend is also observed in the countries with remarkably more favourable situation of population as regards living conditions. Therefore the problem is probably deeper and touches on the problems of the most fundamental values that refer to the moral status of people, their attitudes and fundamental life orientations that reflect the ideas present in contemporary culture. In Poland in 1994, for the first time after the World War II, the number of contracted new marriages was lower than the number of “dissolved” marriages, which was caused, first of all, by high mortality, especially among men, but also by the divorces rate. In Poland, for example among the dissolved marriages, relationships ended by the partner’s death are predominant. About 80% of the relationships are ended with the death of a spouse.

The low rate of contracted marriages is, on the other hand, associated with the increasing rate of illegitimate births and the phenomenon of co-habitation of the couples of marital and pro-genitive age. Concluding from Anna Kwak’s research we can say, for example, that the “higher level of education (higher than the secondary school), younger age (39 years of age or younger) and weak connection with religion, co-exist with co-habitation relationships that are much more often accepted in general and with decidedly more approving attitudes. As much as 82% of the investigated young people with a higher level of education, and 93% of those weakly related to religion, approved relationships of that kind” (Kwak 2005, p. 223). The attitudes of approval or moderate tolerance towards co-habitation have also been observed in the research on the socio-cultural capital of family in Silesian Voivodeship. (Świątkiewicz 2006) Comparative research of attitudes towards family life carried out in 2002 in four countries of the Central Europe – in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary show that about half of the respondents

accept living in informal relationships. The Poles are the most tolerant – 59%, then Czech people – 55%, the Hungarians – 52% and the lowest rate of acceptance of co-habitant lifestyle was recorded among the Slovaks – 37%. (OBOP 2002). Government statistics in Great Britain foresee that in the next 25 years the number of people who live in marriages will decrease radically. In 2031, 40% of men and 35% of women over forty will live in marriages, the number of people who live in the concubinage will double and will reach the number of 3.8 million. The number of people who will never get married will grow from 14 to 40% for men and from 9 to 30% for women. *Fewer and fewer British people get married in church.* (<http://wiadomosci.o2.pl>)

The countries with low marriage rates have high rates of illegitimate births. Among them, the leading positions are occupied by Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the former German Democratic Republic is joining them now. In Iceland the rate is close to 60% and in Sweden it exceeds 50%. The highest growth in the rate of illegitimate births in the last several years has been recorded in Norway, Estonia, France, England and former Democratic German Republic. Also in Poland, since the half of the 80^s the number of children born illegitimately is systematically increasing. It is also connected with the growing percentage of births that is observed in the youngest age group of women that is between 15 and 19 years of age. The percentage of illegitimate births increased from about 5.0% in the first half of the 80^s to almost 15% in 2004. For some bigger cities, this percentage is higher than 20% of the total number of births. On the other hand, almost one third of marriages do not have children and the number of marriages without children is growing faster, than the number of families who have one or two children. Since 1989 reproduction of people has not secured the simple replaceability of generations and demographic predictions do not foresee changes in the process of a decreasing number of children in families in the next 20 years. Since 1999 the population of Poland has been decreasing. The balance between the number of births and deaths is “negative“. According the to GUS at the end of 2003 it was – 14.1 thousand (–0.4 for a thousand of people). (www.stat.gov.pl/dane_spol-gos)

The number of incomplete families that make 1/5 of all the families is also systematically growing. The growth in the number of single-parent families presents the most significant dynamics. The increase in the number of incomplete families is accompanied by the increase in the average number of children who are maintained by them. Over 1.5 million of children grow up in single-parent families.

We can quote a lot of statistical data that more or less precisely describe the state of contemporary family. Statistics show only the numbers but the numbers represent the changes in culture and social mentality. Demographic crisis is first

of all the crisis of values and the crisis of the man as a value; the crisis of the family that is the natural educational environment (Świątkiewicz 1994).

Weakening of the meaning of the family, as a persistent and fundamental community of human life as well as inscribing the family in liable principles of the disordered world of values are the most radical expression of its crisis. Family crisis is not the same as crisis phenomena in a family. They have always been present in human life. And although they have always evoked social anxiety, the ways to reduce them have never questioned the sense of constancy in the family. But at present they are strengthened by a new phenomenon in the history of post-war Poland, in the presence of which society is still helpless. What I mean here is unemployment that is sustained and refers to both parents or to the family of a mother or a father who brings the child alone and that influences, in a disintegrating way, the models of social roles preserved in the tradition of family, mutual emotional relations and life aspirations (Dyczewski 1994; Mariański 1994; Tyszka 1993; Kurzynowski 1995). The strengthening of crisis in the family is also the result of general economic pauperisation and stratification of society and a consumer style related to selfishness and egocentrism which is a more and more popular model of life that is subordinated to the principle of visualization of symbols of social prestige (Bojar 1991), which finds its medium in deceptive colours of advertisements and the pressure of public opinion. Stratification function of Polish families has also been strengthening. Sociological research and different journalistic materials seem to point at changes in the meaning of the function of providing material grounds of existence, feeding on the reduction of the educational function and, what is more, providing a cultural and community-making function that is presented by creating emotional ties that serve individual development and realisation of common good of a family group. For example: in the sociological research realised in Katowice voivodeship in 1995 in which the question of the most important purposes of the family was asked, "securing the material well-being for the family members" was pointed at in the first place (over 71% of the respondents). The function of the family in the sphere of creating the conditions for relaxation and leisure was decidedly more weakly stressed (15.6% of the respondents). The "pro-creating and educational" function of the family was also marginally treated among the most important aims of the family (25% of the respondents). About 51% of the investigated people said that the most important aim of the family was "to ensure the sense of security for the family members". More than 48% pointed at "ensuring proper education for the children" as the most important function of the family, almost 46% of the respondents defined it as "assuring the sense of love and friendship in the family", and 40% as "assuring care for children and ill and older family members" (Monitoring Społeczny Województwa Katowickiego 1996).

Young people's statements that reproach their parents with specific kind of loss of the sense of the family function as a consequence of their desire to increase the economic standard at the cost of being present at home and keeping the emotional ties are presented in the magazines for young people. The home sometimes becomes only crowded with, and often literally overcrowded by tenants, who can see only their own aims and are lost in the search for the ways to realise them. Being present becomes only the existence side-by-side and living with the illusion of postponed values. Individualisation and separation of the living space in the flat is also related to the state, which in consequence weakens emotional ties in the family.

Approximately 14% of the whole population live in overcrowded conditions. According to the data from the Government Commission of Population, almost 16 million people live in overcrowded or substandard conditions. Independence of living is decreasing in all types of families. Young families are in the least favourable situation: every third of them and especially married couples with children live in flats together with other families, which means that they do not have their own separate flat. The lack of their own flat, renting a flat, living with parents, family or at friends' places often brings about the feeling of temporariness, which makes them feel that it is no use investing money in something that is not their own, even if this "temporary state" lasts for "decades"; the lack of their own flat gives rise to the feeling of the state of "flimsy" lifestyle that is connected with it. (Bojar 1991) The way in which the living space is organised, the lifestyle, the way of spending money - everything seems to be temporary. The pathology of family life comes into being in this way and the distant target of stabilisation of living conditions of the family vanishes in the collapse of family ties. The desired targets created in the period of marriage initiation euphoria will never be realised because their subject lost its identity in the disordered axiological meanders. The family has collapsed.

Sociological surveys report parents' opinions who complain about the lack of time for cultural, religious and social "family life", etc (Świątkiewicz 1993). Also, parents can seldom answer the question of the areas of their children's interests. The models of use of the mass media, especially television, favour such an attitude. The working time is becoming longer and different forms of supplementing the income bring about obliteration of boundaries between professional activity and family life; between private and public life. It results in disorganisation of the structure of time spent with the family that is sanctioned by the manners of the surroundings and religious standards and sometimes it forces changes in the organisation of the living space. In this context the child is often seen as a "tool" to realise one's own unrealised plans and intentions and locating one's own aspirations in children is treated as a specific protective mechanism that is transferred from generation to generation.

The acceptance of one's own "self" without being ready to sacrifice for the needs of other people who co-create the commune is expected from the family. The common good that is the substance of the family commune makes room for the power of selfishness and egocentrism that demands acceptance and justification. (Budzyńska 1994) The model of dissymmetry of the right to express emotions is also pointed at. Violence in the family, which is widely discussed at present, is the most radical expression of such inequalities. The "right" of domination of the stronger (older) that is transferred in the future life to models of one's own adult life is created in this way, especially in children's mentality.

Some surveys also seem to suggest the occurrence of the cultural generation gap that results from the fact that there is a strong relationship between grandparents and grandchildren and a weaker emotional relationship between parents and children (Tyszkowa 1991).

The major directions of changes in the forms of marriages and family are presented in the Table below. It is entitled "family and its changes" (Macklin 1980, Kwak 2005, Giddens 2004).

Table 1. Family and its Changes

Model of tradition	Models of changes
Marriage legalised according to secular or religious law	Concubinage, cohabitation, LAT, swinging, group marriages, communal families, communes, one-parent family, single motherhood at choice, singlehood, reconstituted family, homosexuality, extramarital sex, etc.
Multi-generational family	Nuclear family, distant family, generation gap in the transfer of culture
Having children	Small number of children, usually one or two at the most, voluntary childlessness
Relationship ties and defined legal and moral status of a child	Binuclear families, reconstituted families, the child in the position of both divorced parents who has no relationship ties, hybrid families
Two parents: mother and father	Single motherhood at choice, without marriage in general, premarital, single fatherhood
Persistence	Divorces, second marriages
Man maintains the family, he has the authority, the woman concentrates on the household and up-bringing of the children	Professional work of both spouses, higher economic position of the woman and in the period of unemployment loss of work by the man, the growth of women's rights in decision making in the family, open marriages, commuter marriage

Model of tradition	Models of changes
Sexual exclusiveness	Extramarital relationships, sexually open marriages, swinging
Heterosexuality	Homosexual relationships and the possibility to legalise them
The household of two adult people	Communes, extended families, family with joined members who are not related, the "so-called" families

Towards the future

Contemporary sociological studies show multiple changes in the family both in the role of an elementary group of reference and in the functions it realises. The family in its social, cultural and moral status reflects the turmoil of the culture of the macro-society. The data shows the wide range of the phenomenon of a family crisis. However, it does not mean that the family has definitely lost its privileged position in the society and that it is not able to oppose the destruction of socio-cultural order or participate in shaping the public life in an active way. Marriage and family are still strong institutions although they face different types of crisis. As if in opposition to what is stated in demographical statistics, a lot of sociological studies still report a central position of the family in the society's system of values and emphasise the most important role of the family in the life of a human being and the society. The respondents indicate happiness of the family-marriage as the most important objective in life and the family good is considered to be constant good that should be protected and strengthened. Such attitudes apply not only to a small family but also an extended family. The family is treated as a reference structure in difficult situations. Everything that is the most important for the investigated group is located in their closest surroundings, especially in the sphere that is filled with the feeling of ties and close emotional contacts of the subjective character. Family lifestyle is the most characteristic of families with vocational and secondary school education, manual workers and owners of private enterprises, inhabitants of villages and small cities, rooted in local and regional cultures. Family way as the aspect of lifestyle is the most apparent during family celebrations. They are an opportunity to strengthen family ties in the circle of the so-called extended family that include-s more distant relatives such as cousins and uncles. The social composition of such events that often do not go beyond an extended family circle is characteristic here. It has to be stated that is important to have a meal with the family which is an important element in everyday rhythm and the meal is eaten together by parents and children or at least by one of the parents and children in 68% of the investigated families. It creates potentially favourable condi-

tions to develop interpersonal communication and emotional ties in the family (Świątkiewicz 2005).

Stability of the family proves its position as a value in the system of culture. At present, the function of satisfying emotional needs is considered to be the most important principle of family life durability also in such a way that a subjectively and one-sidedly experienced lack of satisfaction of those needs by the family is considered to be a justified cause of family collapse. Divorces prove the real meaning of this function in a negative way. It should be remarked that divorces are not only facts in terms of social behaviours measured by statistical indices but also moral standards that inscribe the possibility to divorce in the axiological system shared by a given cultural circle. The presentation of views that protect the durable character of the marriage is often accompanied by (in terms of statistics) age maturity, a lower level of education, a higher number of children and stronger religiousness. Happiness of marriage-family is desired more by women than men, by people who have children rather than by the childless, by divorced people and the least by those who have not raised their own family yet. "The value of the family is therefore more valuable for the people who have already raised their own families and are responsible for them. The choice of the value depends on life experiences of the investigated people and reaching the state of happiness in the marriage-family life for the children is desired more by those who have not shaped their life conveniently, that is, by the divorced people" (Wadowski 2004, p. 148).

A lot of contemporary countries concentrate more on an individual rather than on the family. It is thought that individuals accept new models of behaviour faster; they are more mobile and adapt themselves to new conditions more easily. It is easier to manipulate them. In this situation the position of the family becomes weaker and its problems are considered to be private problems, the State does not have to care about. Such a model of family is very dynamic in Poland nowadays. Young boys and girls often want to become independent of their parents. And if somebody wants to become independent then they do not necessarily want to raise their own family immediately. First they should make money, emancipate themselves and if they make good money, has a career and lives alone it is hard to give this independence up. Alternative forms of marriage and family seem to be attractive. The family is included in the sphere of political economy influence and takes over the major tensions of the sphere. "Preparing for life in the standardised and segmented inconstant world" is one of the main tasks of socialisation. On the other hand, there are some demands towards the family from individualised, autonomous «people». As we can see, the family is in a kind of a trap because it is one of the spheres in which two divergent essences of "self" compete. The family, while forming autonomous and self-steering personalities, will lead to a disaster because the

individuals endowed with them will not be able to conform to the demands of the society of organisation. Identity genuineness leads to a lack of adjustment. By contrast, creating personalities useful for a large organisation, the family creates neurotics, whose usability ends with adjustment, because while facing the demand for achievement, they demonstrate too little autonomy and self-confidence that are necessary in practice (Bokszański 2005, p. 220).

In Poland, and probably also in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary we have also experienced practical realisation of the second philosophy of the State towards the family. It intended to completely conform the family to the State and justified its interference in even the most intimate spheres of family life. But the State, the commune cannot replace the family and relieve it of realisation of its natural function. Structures of authorities are obliged to support the family through the shaping of a proper social, housing, salary, tax and educational policy, etc. But the help from the State or commune starts only, when the family itself is not enough. The principle of giving help should generate the principle of self-achievement, which refers to the right and obligation of the family to “act independently and responsibly and to the concern that can be foreseen” (Ockenfels 1993) Pope John Paul II, quoting the principle of being helpful in *The Letter to families*, emphasised: “Family is such a commune that does not possess all the means that are necessary to realise all its objectives, especially in the sphere of education and up-bringing. Therefore the State’s should interfere (...) but in every sphere where the family can be independent we should leave it alone, the State intervention would be harmful in such situations, and it would be the expression of no respect and trampling on the rights of the family. The help from the State begins where the family itself really cannot manage” (Jan Paweł II 1994, p. 17).

Regardless of the political system, the family’s task is to protect its position in social culture and structure, and the rights of the family but also the warranty of obligations from institutions of the State authorities or local self-government institutions. The right of pro-familial policy of the State and other structures of authorities is an apparent consequence of the principle of being helpful. **The future of every society depends on the state of its family.** The above-quoted demographic data prove this thesis in an obvious way. Therefore it is not indifferent how the social relations are shaped at the level of the State, the commune or the region and whether they favour the family and family policy or not. **The question of the shape of the family is in fact the question of the State condition** (Świątkiewicz 1994).

Creating democracy, respect for human rights, re-creation of culture and morality of work, shaping the pro-social attitudes, entrepreneurship and courage to introduce innovations must have their starting point in the family. It is not possible to make a democratic society if there is no understanding towards different

views and if the power of arguments is replaced by the arguments of power; especially towards the weaker. We will not recreate the culture of work if parents show their children the models of cunning in life and work dishonesty. The same regards being engaged in the activities for community well-being that has to go beyond the limits of family selfishness or with religiousness, the chance for the future of which is stronger reflected in social and family, private and public morality (Mariański 2005).

Selection and cultural substance interpretation of big communes constitute the fundamental qualities of the family in its relations towards the social macro-world. It is realised through complex processes of socialisation and education, through presented stereotypes and patterns of social activities. The lack of support for transformations of the political system that take place in contemporary Poland and which are shaped in the family creates mental barriers that make it difficult to accept them. The family is concentrated on its crisis and it does not care about the transformation. The changes will be seen through the prism of threatening or real unemployment, loss of social privileges and growing social stratification or in the context of difficult demands of individual social activity that often require a radical change of one's own personality. You only need to listen to everyday conversations to notice groups of people who are not satisfied, who gloss over the Polish past with nostalgia and who locate their lost chances for unrealised successes and dreams in that period.

Therefore, we should first heal the family and through reasonable cultural and social policy protect it from axiological disorder. Weakening of the family as the strong basis of social life definitely does not favour the creation of social order. The threats to the family are in fact the threats to man and as a result the whole macro-society. The axiological consensus of society depends on the extent in which moral socialisation in families will stress the ethos of personalisation, which is altruist and common at the same time rejecting selfishness and egocentrism, relativity that is popular nowadays with its "post-modernism" and "individualisation and subjectivity" (Olbrycht 2002, Mariański 1995).

"The vision of changes in family forms brings the question of the future of European societies. The societies of a lower demographic reproduction rate, based on the system of social values that prefer the attitudes of consumption and hedonistic lifestyle that results from them will not be able to ensure either the biological continuation or rich European traditions through the family, which will not be a compact integrated social group (Wierchosławski 1997, p. 79).

If we do not create a system of social policy that favours pro-familial and pro-natal attitudes and brings them together with promotion of entrepreneurship, individualisation and freedom, we will have to face a progress of family disintegra-

tion and fast deterioration of the demographic situation of society soon (Giddens 2004, p. 221).

If we want to see the future of mankind “through the family” we have to work out a model of pro-family up-bringing of society that will include the historical and cultural context of social life and make it speak through the example.

Anthony Giddens in his summary of vast analyses concerning the family transformations states: “... we will not solve these problems while examining the past. There is nothing we can do, but reconcile individual freedom, which is appreciated by most of us in our private life, with the need to stay in durable and persistent relationships with other people” (Giddens 2004, p. 218–219).

Only what is deeply rooted in home culture, all that is free from transient, attractive afflictions, situational conformism, seasonally attractive ideologies, can outlive as refreshed, fertilized and purified by the blows of historical wind. And the WIND – the SPIRIT blows as it wishes.

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