



You have downloaded a document from  
**RE-BUŚ**  
repository of the University of Silesia in Katowice

**Title:** Silesian family - yesterday and today

**Author:** Monika Żak

**Citation style:** Żak Monika. (2013). Silesian family - yesterday and today. W: U. Swadźba, D. Topinka (red.), "Changes in social awareness on both sides of the border Poland - the Czech Republic : sociological reflections" (S. 70-83). Katowice : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego



Uznanie autorstwa - Użycie niekomercyjne - Bez utworów zależnych Polska - Licencja ta zezwala na rozpowszechnianie, przedstawianie i wykonywanie utworu jedynie w celach niekomercyjnych oraz pod warunkiem zachowania go w oryginalnej postaci (nie tworzenia utworów zależnych).

## **Silesian family – yesterday and today**

### **Introduction**

Times are changing very quickly and there are few things in our daily lives that are certain, permanent and make it a “safe haven” that you can always return to. Technology and the progress of civilization evoke ambivalent feelings: on the one hand, we have the joy and pride of the facilities and amenities that make our lives easier. On the other hand, we are more and more concerned that we forget what is really important in life. Nowadays, we hear a lot about family crisis, life model changes and the collapse of family values. Family exists on every stage of human life, from the cradle to the grave. At the earliest stage, parents and siblings take care of the child, educate it and prepare it for life in a society. Then, the family accompanies the child throughout its adolescent period and when it enters the adult life. And later, from gaining new life experiences up to the point of establishing their own families and moving into new roles within a society: that of a spouse, parent, and a grandparent.

The existence of family and its functions are important not only from an individual point of view but, more importantly, from the viewpoint of society as a whole. It is a truism that all the functions of society depend on family and it is the first key link in its overall functioning. Socialization, education, preparation for life in the community and ensuring all needs, either basic or more advanced, are all examples of the tasks that family fulfils. A well-rounded, functional family becomes a counterweight to the pressures of daily and professional life. However, being able to combine work with family life is very important. More and more often, developing the ability to balance work and family life becomes the subject of contemporary research. We can find numerous studies that indicate many difficulties in balancing family and work: “Increasing tension between work and daily life is often debated. It is claimed that it is due to increasing capitalism, not to real society changes” (Crompton 2002: 537).

So what is the real answer? Do we talk about real family crisis or just its deep transformation? Does this crisis affect everyone to the same degree? Is it possible to say that such a basic cell of society as family could cease to exist? There has been a need to think and analyse the family dynamics in the recent years. The Silesian family was and still is shown as a model example. For this reason, this paper will use the Silesian family to show recent changes in human life. “Family in Upper Silesia is more than a basic group of socialization and education. It symbolizes the identity and is the centre of the local community” (Świątkiewicz 1998a: 15).

Firstly, it should be stressed that the existence of a family is a natural part of every society. It is obvious that the variety of its forms and functions all over the world (even in a small area) are numerous. However, it is an essential element in the functioning of the community. “The family is born, we grow up, we develop, every day we deal with our closest relatives emotionally. In family, we make life choices and we die in it as well” (Stelter 2009: 110). The role of the family is also very significant for the efficient functioning of society as a whole: the oldest social cell prepares its descendants for the succession of life and social community. Family is distinguished from other social groups by many elements, including the following major ones:

- It is the oldest and most basic social cell/institution.
- The structure of the family is strictly defined and its members play certain roles that are all linked.
- It is universal: family works in all known societies, it just takes various forms. “Family takes different forms in different cultures. It is most often treated as a social group made up of a marriage and children (immediate or nuclear family) and all relatives of each of the spouses (extended family).”
- A family unit gains a certain status and social identity. Family is a bridge into the wider community. It also facilitates the acquisition of social contacts.

## The Silesian family of the past

The traditional Silesian family was largely sanctioned by tradition handed down from generation to generation. Firstly, we must define what we mean by the term “Silesian family”. Taking into account the difference between the geographical, historical and mental recognition of Silesia, it is important to clarify what will be the precise subject of discussion. The area of interest of this work is the area of Upper Silesia, in particular, the area encompassing the Upper Silesian Industrial Region (GOP), as well as Rybnik Coal District and Cieszyn Silesia.

Family life was based on the knowledge and authority of seniors who were a kind of fountain of knowledge of habits, customs and educational methods. It was a custom for several generations to live together in one household, where each family member had their position, role and tasks to perform. Almost every stage of life was defined by tradition, which was respected and cherished by the vast majority of the community. "In Polish society, the marital roles model dominated for generations, in which the principles of coexistence were strictly defined and determined by tradition. Marriage laws were common and their primary goal was to protect family life. The institutional and legal nature of them guaranteed safety of their family members, stability, transfer of material and moral values" (Bakiera 2009b: 26).

Selection of partners was usually endogamous in character – geographical closeness favoured marriage. It was assumed that a woman should marry a man whose origin and family roots were factors of his suitability for the role of husband and father. The general role of marriage was to merge a society, in this case the Silesian community. This constituted a very consistent environment and neighbourhood. In those days, a good rapport with the community was treated very seriously, the meaning of family was important and noticed in everyday life.

Neighbours were very close, and co-operation for the sake of common good was something completely natural. It was strengthened by the homogeneity of the situation of most families. The functioning model was based on the same principles and traditional communication. The choice of a partner was a natural consequence of a woman reaching maturity and adulthood, but it was not equated with any form of external coercion or necessity. In fact, most women felt the need to cultivate the self-contained family model, the existence of which they had witnessed throughout their entire life. "Participation in the community exists only when a person chooses what others choose, or moreover, one chooses due to the choices of others – at the same time one selects it for good as for the purpose of their own aspirations" (Kubik 1992: 12). Implementation and cultivation of the traditional family model was as if it was entrenched in the adult life of a given person. Women agreed to play the role of a wife and a mother, while for men it was natural to serve as head of the family who provides the necessary financial resources.

Women in the vast majority of Silesian families did not have a profession. Men, as breadwinners, took over the duty of providing by any means necessary to maintain its existence. There were roles for many children within the family dynamics, and therefore, the traditional Silesian family was usually quite large. Performing domestic tasks for women was something quite natural, and the income they obtained from men working was sufficient to cover the costs of raising children and maintaining the household. The traditional division of roles meant there was little or no motivation for women to pursue a career. The professional

career of a Silesian woman in those days was something quite unique and in fact there were only very few who chose this path. We must remember though that it was a conscious choice of every woman. However, it was sanctioned by tradition and in that time the stereotype of the role of wife and mother usually prevailed. The role of women as housekeepers was extremely important from the point of view of family cohesion – it gave a sense of solidarity, and was a kind of refuge, which the men came back to after a hard day's work. Women added to the household budget through a variety of odd jobs, such as sewing clothes, bed linen, etc. "The Polish mother myth is associated with the belief of the Polish society in the strong position of women at home. The strong position of women in family is also the result of a 'natural' division of social roles between men and women and it makes up for the lack of a significant role for women in public life" (<http://temida.free.ngo.pl/raprodzina.htm>).

A woman thus occupied a very important place within the family, because she bound all the family members together and she dictated the pace of the big day as well. The man in a traditional Silesian family served as the breadwinner. He assumed the obligation of providing a material basis for the functioning of his family. This division of roles in the family was a natural result of the lifestyle that had been cultivated over many generations; men dealt with earning, and women with the home. "The Silesian family was one of the most important elements that was used in one's work ethic. The family was a place where boys were prepared for employment, and girls to do their household chores. There was a strict division between females who took care of the home and children, and males that had the task of earning. In the traditional role of a woman, she was not supposed to work, especially if she was married. Only single girls and the widowed women entered the workforce. Women who came from a family that owned land worked on that land. Boys were prepared for life as a blue-collar workers. This was due to the lack of other possibilities and opportunities to obtain employment that would earn them money" (Swadźba 2008: 23). Being a blue-collar worker was a natural result of the opportunities that existed in the Upper Silesia, an economy based on heavy industry and mining. The vast majority of men followed in their male ancestors' footsteps. Families in which all the men were employed in the same workplace was not a rare phenomenon, and in fact, it was normal to see male members of a particular family working in the same place. It was natural that fathers passed on "tricks of the trade" to their sons. The sons then passed on that knowledge to their sons and so on. Until recently, Upper Silesia was seen as a heavy industrial basin with the vast majority of it being mining. After the period of war, Silesia developed much quicker than other Polish regions. This was due to a number of mines and smelters which fuelled the economy of the whole country. "Industrial production was restored, and its development was so dynamic that it quickly surpassed pre-war industrial production results. Silesia also developed culturally. The government invested

in education, universities, theatres and opera. The majority of the population worked in mines and its earnings ensured the maintenance of families" (<http://www.poznaj.slask.pl/slask-po-wojnie>).

The vast majority of men found employment in mining and heavy industry, and their wives took responsibility for all duties related to care of the home and family. Development of professional attitudes took place from early childhood, when boys saw their fathers going out to work every day. They appreciated the efforts of their fathers and admired the skills they had. It was a rare situation for the son to choose a different profession to his father's. So choice of careers were significantly limited and as has been already mentioned, a lot of choices were made due to tradition and customs passed down from previous generations.

"While working in terms of economic compulsion occurs relatively late in life, on the threshold of maturity, in terms of psychology – emotional, cognitive and decision-making – it is experienced from early childhood. Human involvement in the world of competition occurs in childhood [...]. From early childhood a person builds a self-image, learns values of the world, where the central position is occupied by 'world life' which is a system of attitudes and internal roles associated with what one imagines about the relationship 'I – the world'" (Bańska 1995: 122–123).

The traditional division of roles, as well as the employment of men mainly as blue-collar workers meant that there was no need to obtain a high level of education. The focus was more on getting the necessary qualifications to carry out a particular profession as soon as possible rather than on achieving a higher education. People usually chose vocational schools, which were a fast way to get both a proper education and experience. Of course, individuals who aspired to have a higher education were given the chance, but it was the result of individual choice rather than a necessity dictated by the situation on the labour market. Men and women who chose to continue their education, in the vast majority of cases had to move out of the family home because academies were often away from their place of residence. Education, however, was not necessary but it was a conscious choice. The family environment and neighbours did not exert pressure on those who did not want to study. However, educated people usually got promoted and often became leaders.

Strong religious roots were characteristic of Silesian families. It was one of the basic values that was important for all family members. The role of the Roman Catholic Church was very important and exerted a significant impact on the functioning of families: "Traditional religious faith is a fundamental value of the Silesian community. This resulted primarily from the dangers of the mining work. The help and dedication of St. Barbara was supposed to keep miners away from danger. Silesian religiosity was closely connected with morality. It determined the rhythm of the year, months, and weeks" (Swadźba 2008b: 7).

The strong position of the church was also important for a number of families in Silesia. Having many children was consistent with the views advocated by the Roman Catholic Church. Religiosity was not only a dedication to the care of patrons but also cultivating ecclesiastical traditions, the principles proclaimed by the church and adapting to its recommendations. In a traditional Silesian family, holy days were celebrated with respect, according to the tradition approved by the church.

Sunday was a special day for all families, when all members of the family went to church, which was followed by a formal dinner. Most women chose the morning or evening mass, while the men took part in the noon mass. It was not a random choice because at the time when men took part in the mass, women were busy preparing the festive Sunday dinner. Different kinds of holy days were even more festive in character, when all members of the family and the community tried to unite for the fullest spiritual experience. People decorated churches, small chapels and houses together. The church, therefore, served an integral role in life and the position of the priest at the time was very strong. All of this was important in developing and maintaining the traditional division of roles in the family and produced the Silesians' respect for the elders of individual families. "Religiosity as a culturally specific form of realization of the principles, values and religious norms is certainly very deeply rooted in the structure of Polish society. [...]. Religion strengthened the position of the family in the social structure, the family recorded the role of religion in society" (Świątkiewicz 1992: 116). Religiosity in the Silesian family was not the only unifying element of the entire society, but also significantly affected the stability of marital life. Divorces in traditional Silesian families happened very rarely. The religiosity in Silesian families affected the durability of marriage as well. People fulfilled the recommendations of the church in everyday life. The influence of the community was also very important, which often acted as a kind of censorship. Neighbourhood control over the people's lives had a big influence on the solidarity of marriages, even more than church rules and recommendations. The traditional Silesian family did not tolerate divorce because the family was a refuge and was supposed to be cherished by all its members. Family stability was a goal in itself, and all members were to endeavour to make it sustainable and consistent. All Silesian tribes took care of family and the importance of family in the life of every human being was implanted in the youngest children in the process of socialization.

In summary, the traditional family was often multi-generational and there was a clear division of roles. A woman acted as a wife and mother, dealing with household chores and raising children. The man, however, was head of the family and provided its members the necessary means to meet material needs. Strong attachment to tradition and religion were prominent features of a traditional Silesian family.

## The modern Silesian family

The changes that have taken place in the modern world affect almost every element of human life. They affect the functioning of societies in both a global and individual sense. Every day a human being faces many choices and has to make decisions that can have a significant impact on one's life. The pace of life that we experience daily can be frightening at times, but it is invariably embedded in everyday life. Has the family of Silesia, which was so strongly rooted in tradition, undergone changes brought about by civilization? Or has it been unaffected by the progress in terms of its shape and function? "The changes caused by industrialization and urbanization have brought about far-reaching changes in the family. Firstly, the family stopped to be the centre of production. Woman has been involved in working outside the home due to either increased family income or to become economically self-sufficient. Increasing female education and legislation in the field of equality between men and women dictated it" (<http://www.medyk.lbl.pl/pub/7.pdf>).

Modern family has also been subjected to change. Tradition is not as strong, and even its shape has changed over the last few years. Modern Silesian families are unfortunately less and less multi-generational. The reason for this is the changes that we observe in the Polish economy in the recent years. "Since the 1990s, the Silesian economy has undergone a process of transformation. In the Katowice province traditional industries had always been dominant up until then. Therefore, the transformation has caused changes in employment. They have related to mining, where it was necessary to cut jobs. This resulted in a change in the structure of employment in the communities where heavy industry was dominant" (Swadźba 2008b: 7). The changes that have been brought about by this transformation have significantly affected the functioning of many families in Silesia. In those families where men could no longer work in their current workplace, there was a need to find alternative employment. Very often, the changes were connected with the necessity to move residence due to the difficulty in obtaining employment. Increasing mobility for many families was very hard to accept, and sometimes even impossible. Those families who either could not move or did not want to, found it difficult to find the means to maintain their homes. On more than one occasion, women who had not worked up to that point, made the decision to work in the commercial or service industry. Women had to learn how to perform new roles, as a worker and co-breadwinner. This role swap brought on other problems as there was a need to divide household chores that had previously only belonged to women. "The ability to balance the working roles with those within the family is the basis of an experienced sense of satisfaction and happiness, and thus to a large extent determines the level of quality of life partners. There is no doubt that most people have the ability to si-

multaneously perform the functions associated with multiple roles in their daily lives, such as wife, mother, employee, friend. [...]. But, there are situations that those roles are possible or impossible to combine." (Rostowska 2009: 62).

As was already mentioned, in a traditional Silesian family, the responsibility for all housework rested on the woman's shoulders. They took care of the house and brought up the children. Women did not have to worry about material resources because they were sufficiently provided for by the men. Nowadays, when lots of men struggle to find a job, women take over their duties in some part and in some cases, they even become the main breadwinner in the family. It does not mean that the responsibility for housework now falls to the man. In a Silesian family, women still do most of the housework. But if a man does housework he is not perceived by society in a negative way. More and more men contribute to doing the housework. Thanks to this, women can accomplish things professionally.

"The period of transformation has brought significant changes to the labour market in Silesia. The reductions in employment and unemployment occurred. Restructuring affected the mining industry – a trade that used to be the easiest to find a job in. Well-paid jobs were not associated with heavy industry, but with a good education and qualifications" (Swadźba 2008c: 69). Silesian women's growing career aspirations and reduction in employment in heavy industry and mining have led to the need for change in attitudes to the education system. Higher education has become a kind of necessity, not only for women but also for men. The inheritance of employment has become less and less important, because without proper education and the required skills, even men encounter difficulties in finding employment. Modern Silesians therefore have begun to study and to obtain higher education, which should increase their employment opportunities. More and more often, education does not stop either at the level of vocational education or even university. Obtaining a degree and graduating from university has become very important for Silesians. They are more willing to take training courses, which, in their opinion, are needed in the labour market. Parents have noticed changes in employment and that is why they try to motivate their children to continue their education. Since this transformation, universities have been bursting at the seams. Not all people willing to study have been able to find a place in their chosen fields. In the traditional Silesian family, the choice of profession depended on parent's profession – aspirations that in the end meant employment inheritance. Nowadays, we can see that the choice of profession is the result of our skills, labour market and social trends assessment. The younger generations do not follow traditional recommendations but choose their own way in living, in regard to profession and education. "The concept of work is shaped in our consciousness as a result of our own personal experiences in life and confrontation with the stereotypical, usually not precise or colloquial term 'work', popularized in community we live in. Individual experience is formed by the current conditions of work and life, the location of the work in

a specific social context – in the totality of social relations, legal and political, to the customs, traditions and agreed system of values" (Sztumski 2004: 23).

Fulfilling educational requirements has given Silesians the opportunity to find suitable employment, and therefore the material resources necessary in their daily life. However, getting higher education has changed not only the professional but also the personal life. Definitely, we have seen an increase in the age on which people marry. Those who have decided to continue studying often delay marriage plans that are no longer a natural consequence of maturity. Getting married later in life is no longer seen as shameful and has become quite normal. Being a "single" person is commonly accepted, but does seem to be less common in Silesia than anywhere else in Poland. Nevertheless, deferring marriage is a typical feature of the modern world and Silesians are no exception. It is the choice of the individual whether to get married or to sacrifice it for the sake of career. It is difficult to find the perfect balance between personal and professional life. "Either professional or married and family life are associated with the implementation of many widely accepted roles and responsibilities of development [...]. Both married/family life and professional work can be a source of joy and happiness or conflict, tension and emotional stress. Depending on the nature and severity of such experiences in the areas of life referring to which we can speak of a high or low quality of life" (Rostowska 2009: 60).

Nowadays, the choice of a life partner no longer has a characteristic of endogamy. The progress of civilization and the development of communication technology have made it increasingly easier to keep in touch with people who live in places far away. University studies have encouraged a mixing of cultures, customs and traditions. This has given many the opportunity to meet people from different parts of the country and even the world. Therefore people have stopped looking for a partner in the closest community. The opinion of family and neighbours is no longer as relevant, and the main incentive to choose the right partner is based on individual feelings, plans and beliefs. A natural consequence of this state of affairs has been the mixing of cultures. Silesian culture, tradition and habits are still very strong but are no longer quite so obvious. Younger generations often forget about values and traditions passed down from generation to generation because of the rapid pace of life. The exogamous nature of marriages can strengthen the Silesian ties, especially if it is combined with passing the culture on to a partner. On the other hand it can weaken Silesian traditions and even wipe them out entirely.

"The past century has weakened family ties and disturbed functions of the family, not only those related to raising children and giving mutual support, but also meeting the needs of intimacy, security, acceptance and love. Work has become a second sphere that has been embedded in life. For many people, it has become an attractive form of replacement, and above all (seemingly) effectively compensates for deficiencies and gives people a chance to get what they were

not getting in the family; recognition, satisfaction and acceptance" (Golińska 2008: 11). The postponement of starting one's own family either for the sake of education or for career has also led to the delay of decision making in terms of having children. Women who have decided to continue higher education have consequently given birth later. It is seen both in modern families within Silesia and those outside Silesia. Modern marriages put more emphasis on reaching a certain material level first and having children is further down the list of priorities. The number of children that are born in modern families is definitely smaller. It is connected with women's educational aspirations, marrying later in life and their financial situation. Families often cannot afford to have a lot of children. "The modern family is kind of the opposite to the traditional family model. Frequently, it consists of two generations (parents plus a small number of children), living alone and just running their household. Family members today do not maintain extensive contact with extended family, limiting them to the closest relatives. They are also not especially engaged with the local community" ([http://www.bardziejkochani.pl/konf/prog/konf\\_353.doc](http://www.bardziejkochani.pl/konf/prog/konf_353.doc)).

Achieving educational and professional goals is not the only element that characterizes modern generations. Young people often rely heavily on achieving individual goals, which leads into the lifestyle of a consumer. "Aspirations of society as well as individuals are formed in a complex process, which is influenced by historical experience and cultural patterns, the ethos of various social and professional groups, achievements and shortcomings of the current socio-economic development, general awareness, aspirations disseminated by the mass media, comparison with other societies, the modern challenges of civilization, and awareness of other cultural factors" (Jurczyńska 1992: 121–122). The prevailing fashion and the formation of needs make the younger generation more and more inclined to distance themselves from the traditional image of family life. It is often pushed into the background and it is being replaced by plans and needs that are artificially imposed on them by fashion and trends in society. It does not mean that young people turn their back on family and marriage. Without a doubt, they occupy a position in the value system but the timing of these is delayed. They want to achieve their goals first and then start a family. All these circumstances influence the delay of establishing family and the family model.

Nowadays we can observe the weakening of the church's influence, especially among younger generations. The influence of priests on those people who are impressed by the "big wide world" has weakened and these people do not seem to acknowledge the values that they were given by priests and older generations. We cannot generalize and claim that young people have turned their backs on religious rules, but it is impossible not to notice that younger generation's attitudes to religion is different to that of their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. Church does not, as it did in the case of the traditional Silesian family, play a controlling role any more. This has influenced the stability of mar-

riages. The message of the church has not changed but it is people's attitudes to values that used to be sacred that have changed. Church traditions are not adhered to as strictly as they used to be, but they have not completely disappeared either. It has influenced the family bounding function and is a natural consequence of family forming out of a society.

Not being a part of a society any more is a natural consequence of neighbourhood ties becoming weaker and increasing anonymity. Mutual help and sharing the experience of religious, social and national events has become less and less common. Social ties weaken due to the pace of life and the constant state of hurry that people seem to be in. Of course, these phenomena are formed differently in different places. The impact of the so-called "big wide world" is more noticeable in large cities. Village life is considered to be a counterweight to the hustle and bustle of cities. People in small towns and villages carry on the traditions and customs of the region in a slightly more involved way, which has largely influenced the shape of the Silesian family. "It would be a truism to say that the modern families, including those in Poland, are exposed to a number of risks and deficiencies. Often, the reason for this type of problem is everyday life: difficult material and living circumstances. The high level of poverty and difficult living conditions have a significant impact on the limitations of the majority of needs (food, culture, education) of the family. Despite the difficult conditions, the family in Poland is still seen as the greatest value [...]" (Korzeniowska 2007: 7).

## Conclusions

Modern family is not sanctioned by a traditional role division. Modern conditions have forced women to be involved in supporting family financially by entering the workforce. This sort of situation has resulted in all habits that most Silesian families had lived by being re-evaluated: the role of father as the only breadwinner who did manual labour to provide material and economic resources, and mother as the home guardian that took care of house-bound duties such as bringing up children and taking care of the house, do not exist any more. Today, the role of family in Silesia is apparently similar to the standard roles, but in families where tradition is deeply rooted, even having a professional career by women is not a contradiction to cultivating family patterns passed down from generation to generation. A lot of Silesian women who have started working place the same emphasis on career and family goals. Achieving satisfaction in relation to functions imposed by tradition and education is now more difficult, but not impossible. It is more and more difficult to find a multi-generational

family whose traditions and customs are passed on and done under the control of an elder because the situation of the labour market has made it a necessity to be mobile and so far away from the traditional family home in many cases.

Fulfilling educational and professional goals now often take preference to having a family. Family values have been replaced by individual and consumer needs. Choice of partner is no longer limited by close proximity – it has become global thanks to modern communication techniques. The importance of marriage durability is now challenged. The lesser role of the church has limited the influence of its message on the individual as well as the social stigma connected with divorce. Single parenthood is now quite common and is no longer surprising as it was when sole parenthood was caused mainly by a partner's death. The decrease in the length of marriage is one of the basic changes that we can observe in the modern world. This applies to almost all societies. The Silesian family, though so deeply rooted in tradition and in the awareness of marriage stability and family, has also failed to protect itself against the changes and progress of civilization. And as it was mentioned in this paper, technological changes are needed but all the negative consequences that accompany them do not discriminate – even against powerful structures such as the Silesian family.

Changes that occur in modern families globally have also affected the Silesian family. It seems that Silesian families resist more and longer than other families whose traditions and habits are not as strongly rooted. We can no longer talk about the Silesian family as it used to be tens of years ago when all levels of one's life were connected to all social functions. However, we have to notice that this model of family is an important element of life for all of us. Silesian families are seen in a slightly different way – it seems that we require a bit more from it nowadays. We have to satisfy not only the basic functions associated with the family, but also the passing on of traditions, patterns and habits that differ Silesia from other regions. The responsibility to maintain identity and the awareness of being a part of the Silesian society belongs to every Silesian family. The Silesian family appears to be one of the least common but safe and sure elements of social life and it is strongly rooted in tradition. The changes that occurred in Silesian families recently have made it quite hard to describe, but thanks to its numerous traditions and habits we can still talk about Silesian families as a separate entity.

## References

- ADAMSKI, F. 1980. *Małżeństwo i rodzina: analizy socjologiczne*. Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski.

- BAKIERA, L. 2009a. „Generatywność rodziców jako wartość rozwojowa rodziny.” In: *Rodzina jako wartość w rozwoju człowieka*, ed. by B. HARWAS-NAPIERAŁA. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- BAKIERA, L. 2009b. *Wartość małżeństwa w rozwoju człowieka dorosłego*. In: *Rodzina jako wartość w rozwoju człowieka*, ed. by B. HARWAS-NAPIERAŁA. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- BAŃKA, A. 1995 *Zawodoznawstwo, doradztwo zawodowe, pośrednictwo pracy. Psychologiczne metody i strategie pomocy bezrobotnym*. Poznań: „Print-B”.
- BUKOWSKA-FLOREŃSKA, I. 2007. *Rodzina na Górnym Śląsku*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- CROMPTON, R. 2002. “Employment, flexible working and the family.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 53 (4), December 2002.
- CSEH-SZOMBATHY, L. (ed.) 1985. *The Aftermath of Divorce – Coping with Family Change: An Investigation in Eight Countries*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- GOLIŃSKA, L. 2008. *Pracoholizm*. Warszawa: „Difin”.
- JURCZYŃSKA, E. 1992. „Wzory konsumpcji w rodzinach śląskich w latach osiemdziesiątych.” In: *Wartości a style życia rodzin. Socjologiczne badania rodzin miejskich na Górnym Śląsku*, ed. by W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski.
- KORZENIOWSKA, W. 2007. „Wstęp.” In: *Rodzina – w świetle zagrożeń realizacji dotyczących czasowych funkcji. Szkice monograficzne*, ed. by W. KORZENIOWSKA, A. MURZYN and U. SZUŚCIK. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- KUBIK, W. 1992. „Rodzina jako wartość a styl życia.” In: *Wartości a style życia rodzin. Socjologiczne badania rodzin miejskich na Górnym Śląsku*, ed. by W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski.
- LUBER, D. 2008. *Antropologia daru: małżeństwo – rodzina – wychowanie*. Mysłowice: Górnoodleńska Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Kardynała Augusta Hlonda w Mysłowicach.
- MROZEK, W. 1987. *Górnośląska rodzina robotnicza w procesie przeobrażeń*. Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy.
- MUSZYŃSKI, W., and E. SIKORA (eds.) 2008. *Małżeństwo i rodzina w ponowoczesności: szanse, zagrożenia, patologie*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- ROSTOWSKA, T. 2009. „Aktywność zawodowa małżonków a jakość ich życia.” In: *Psychologia rodziny. Małżeństwo i rodzina wobec współczesnych wyzwań*, ed. by T. ROSTOWSKA. Warszawa: „Difin”.
- STELTER, Ź. 2009. *Rodzina z dzieckiem niepełnosprawnym intelektualnie jako wartość*. In: *Rodzina jako wartość w rozwoju człowieka*, ed. by B. HARWAS-NAPIERAŁA. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- SWADŹBA, U. 2008a. „Pojęcie wartości a śląski system wartości. Teoretyczne podstawy realizacji badań.” In: *Śląski świat wartości. Z badań empirycznych w Rybniku*, ed. by U. SWADŹBA. Katowice: Gnome.
- SWADŹBA, U. 2008b. „Wprowadzenie.” In: *Śląski świat wartości. Z badań empirycznych w Rybniku*, ed. by U. SWADŹBA. Katowice: Gnome.
- SWADŹBA, U. 2008c. „Praca jako wartość w życiu Ślązaków.” In: *Śląski świat wartości. Z badań empirycznych w Rybniku*, ed. by U. SWADŹBA. Katowice: Gnome.
- SZTUMSKI, W. 2004. „Nieklasyczne podejście do pracy i bezrobocia.” In: *Praca a bezczynność zawodowa*, ed. by Z. STACHOWSKI. Tyczyn: Wyższa Szkoła Społeczno-Gospodarcza.

- ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ, W. 1998. „Rodzina jako wartość w tradycji kulturowej Górnego Śląska.” In: *Rodzina w województwie katowickim*, ed. by W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ. Katowice: Socie-tas Scientiarum Silesiae Superioris, Instytut Górnospolski.
- ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ, W. 1992. „Religijność w życiu współczesnych rodzin.” In: *Wartości a styl życia rodzin. Socjologiczne badania rodzin miejskich na Górnym Śląsku*, ed. by W. ŚWIĄTKIEWICZ. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski.
- TYSZKA, Z. (ed.) 1991. *Badania nad rodziną a praktyka społeczna: praca zbiorowa*. Po-znań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.

#### Online resources

- <http://temida.free.ngo.pl/raprodzina.htm>  
<http://www.poznaj.slask.pl/slask-po-wojnie>  
<http://www.medyk.lbl.pl/pub/7.pdf>  
[http://www.bardziejekochani.pl/konf/prog/konf\\_353.doc](http://www.bardziejekochani.pl/konf/prog/konf_353.doc)

## Summary

Changes and developments that can be observed for several years concern almost every aspect of human life. These changes occur globally and locally. We can talk about technological change as well as individual – concerning personality. The family is only one of many important elements of social life that have changed recently. Silesian family was exposed to the factors that largely influenced its form and function. We can observe explicitly the differences between the Silesian family: yesterday and today. Silesian family of the past was a multi-generational family, connected with a very strong emotional bond and economical bond. Daily life of every Silesian family was determined by tradition and a specific lifestyle. Contemporary Silesian family is often nuclear family that cultivates the traditions of Silesia only in the occasion of various festivals and cultural events. We should lean over the changes that have taken place in the form of everyday life of the Silesian family. This article attempts to outline the image of the Silesian family yesterday and today.