

FAMILY AND ITS POSITION IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

RODZINA I JEJ POZYCJA W NOWYM TYSIĄCLECIU

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ABSTRACTS

The genesis of the development of family and its members in built on family life. In Slovakia the emphasis was laid on the phenomenon of sociability, having common family events and on collective work. The data have confirmed that in spite of accelerated tempo and work load, in spite of the assaults of modern day alienation, the common life has not completely disappeared from our families. Common moments are still one part of our family life.

Geneza rozwoju rodziny i jej członków w oparciu o życie rodzinne. Na Słowacji nacisk położony został na zjawisko wspólnoty towarzyskiej, wspólnie obchodzonych imprez rodzinnych i na pracy zbiorowej. Dane potwierdzają, że mimo wzrostu tempa życia i większego obciążenia pracą, mimo ataków współczesnej alienacji, wspólne życie nie zniknęło całkowicie z naszych rodzin. Wspólne chwile są nadal jedną z części naszego życia rodzinnego.

KEYWORDS:

*family, society, coexistence, blood relationship, children, marriage
rodzina, społeczeństwo, współistnienie, związek krwi, dzieci, małżeństwo*

Family is a primary group characterised by maximum intimacy, high cohesiveness, which is above average, emotionality and authenticity, which depends on the strong emotional bonds inside the family.

The basic function is biological-reproductive function of the family, which is understood to be reproduction of the mankind and regulation

and guidance of sex life. In the civilised world the emphasis is laid on the area of conscious, planned parenthood, based on knowledge of science, such as: genetics, biology, psychology, ethics, hygienics and last also economics.

The family is perceived by us, as a place, where we create our first social bonds, we look for the first examples, acquire the first experiences and unrepeatably sensations and good and maybe also bad habits. The family protects us and prepares us for confrontation with the surrounding world already since our birth.

Among the principle and inherent functions of the family can be included the following (Levická, 2004):

- *biological-reproduction,*
- *economic,*
- *educational and socializing,*
- *emotional and psycho-hygienic,*
- *protective*
- *socializing.*

The healthy family as irreplaceable institution hands its basic positions and moral values over to the new generations. In optimum case its basis is a stable marriage based on the equality of husband and wife, not on the predominance of one of them. (Langmeier, Krejčířová, 2006). The family is currently experiencing a lot of stress, fear of the future. It is mainly in families that have a lack of funding or to solve a variety of negative phenomena family members (Slovák, 2014).

In the family environment all members mutually influence each other and inspire and help each other. If a child grows up in the creative environment, it acquires interesting incentives, which will have impact upon him in the course of his whole life.

“If we spoke by human tongues, even if they were like an angel and if we did not have any love, then we would be only jingling medal and ringing bell” (Bočáková, 2010).

Nowadays the traditional family is often considered to be a relic. The present time brings new trends with itself and according to them the traditional marriage is considered to be something, which is not necessary to conclude with the vision of accepting a firm obligation. However it is required that the values inherent to our culture are preserved, although the conditions for their preservation get changed in the context of everyday development of the society.

According to Sobotková (2001) the indisputable fact is true that at the present time there are many more divorced and re-concluded marriages

than they were a short time ago and their number is still increasing. There appear even more and more repeated marriages, at least of one of the partners. There appears also a noteworthy phenomenon that many older mothers have younger partners. The mothers who give birth after the age of forty usually have the partners who are two to three years younger. In the population it is quite common that the husbands are older by half a year on average than their wives.

According to Rozinajová (1988) family is a natural environment. In the given period the child needs much love to be able to develop appropriately. It is important, if the parent is aware of the fact that it is necessary to provide also enough incentives for to the child for its intellectual and emotional development. In every family it is in particular fulfilling of all needs of the child, which the parent is capable to fulfil. However he must know about them and must be aware of the fact that they exist. The specialists of the training program PRIDE have defined five main areas of the development of a human being (<http://www.nahradnarodina.sk>):

- *physical needs – accommodation, food, clothes, warmth, embraces, touches, kisses, security*
- *emotional and mental needs – love, care, the feeling of belonging, certainty, safety*
- *social needs – capability to build relations, communicate, solve problems*
- *learning needs – arranging the values and morality, learning the skills, support in learning*
- *moral needs – distinguishing between good and evil*

By Vojtech and Vrbínčík (2015), each state has its own rules on social security. This also applies to families, each state separately in its legislation determines the category of persons covered by social security covered.

If the family is supposed to fulfil its position in the society, it has to function properly and fulfil the tasks, resulting from its essence. According to John Paul II. “family is a sincere community of life and love” for a family to be a community of trust, space for love, formation and development of human life, the Pope is talking about tasks that the family must necessarily fulfil.

In his encyclical *Familiaris Consortio* the Pope has expressed a requirement to stress the unique and special mission of family in the life of each individual person and of the society. “Family contributes to building of the world in an effective manner by making it possible to live really a human life, in particularly by the fact that it guards and mediates the virtues and significant values. Different generations meet in the

family and they mutually help each other to acquire the fuller wisdom, as well as to harmonise the personal rights with other requirements of social life”

The first task is creating personal community. It is the community of a husband and wife, parents, children and relatives. The community of truth is in particular emphasised here, which these persons are supposed to try to achieve. The persons form a family and a family participates in creation and formation of a person into a personality. Family members should remember this target and lead a family life towards this target. Each human being has an immense value and cannot be replaced by anything else.

“It is its inter-generation nature and permanent relations, role of an individual person in a family accepted by a culture, simultaneous procedural orientation, emotional intensity, high quality targets, altruistic values and educational leadership that the family is delimited from other areas of human experience and perception of relations” (Koteková, et al., 1998).

There exists many views on the family and its significance for a society. Let us mention several levels:

1. Functionalistic view – marriage and the family life are social institutions, which secure fulfilling of the main functions of the family.
2. Conflict-oriented view – stresses the fact that families and institution of marriage provide disadvantageous positions to some family members against other family members.
3. Biological view – family above all as a natural reproduction unit.
4. Theological view – considers the family to be a continuation of the work of Creator and accepts spiritual – mystic essence of a family, designating it as a Church on a small scale. (Koteková, et al., 1998).

There exists a traditional idea that our society consists of families. As it had been recorded by Chevalier de Jacourt in his book *Large French Encyclopaedia*: “Family is a society, which creates basic outfit and natural condition of a human being. Family is indeed a civil society created by nature, which is the most natural society and the oldest of all societies: it creates basis for a national society, because the people or the nation is nothing else only a unit consisting of many families. Family is based by a marriage and it is a nature itself, which relates a human being into this bond; then the children will be born from it, prolonging the life of the family, maintaining the human society at life and replacing the losses, which the death causes in it every day.”

Family is the most important link of natural system of human relations. On the basis of the vast studies on family six main features are attributed to it, which means that it is: historical, systematic, informational, internally similar, internally classified and is also marked by the processes of family transfer. (Pávková, 2002, p. 134).

It is usually delimited from the point of view of social character such as a group, social unit, cell of the company etc. As a rule in the present day literature the following conceptual meanings of a family are distinguished:

1. Orientation family – a family into which a certain individual person is born.
2. Reproductive family – family, which is based by a couple upon a new marriage.
3. Nuclear family – i.e. immediate group consisting of a father, mother and children, all of them living together.
4. Extended family – includes also other relatives, such as grand parents, uncles, aunts (Máchová, 1970).

From the point of view of family functioning it has been characterized by Plaňava (2000) as a structured whole (system), the sense, purpose and content of which is creating a relatively safe, stable space and environment for sharing, reproduction and production of life of people. The family and marriage can be characterised by four basic components (Plaňava, 2000):

Family structure – Here belongs arrangement of the members of the family, their characteristics, mutual bonds and positions, as well as organisation of a family, alliances, hierarchy, distribution of competencies, borders between the systems and subsystems, it means generation and personality borders within the family as well as degree and quality of connection with the broader family and with the society.

Intimacy – is understood to be emotional qualities, feelings and awareness of mutual closeness, manifestations of interest, warmth of feelings, cohesion, support and mutual dependence.

Personal autonomy – it is the quality and quantity of differentiation between the members of the family, it means, to what degree each member of the family is respected as a unique human being, to what extent it has space for the development of its personality, identity, interests and capabilities.

Values and positions – Here belongs the life value orientation of a family, which is connected to a concrete phase, in which the family is situated.

Pláňava (2000) considers dynamics and communication to be the two most important processes.

According to O. Matoušek (2003) family is an environment, where their members must necessarily create relations as well as necessarily communicate with each other. Family relations (family interactions) are system based, dynamic manners of communication of family members and also the fact how the family members individually relate to each other. Interactions between the members of the family are the most important factor influencing the well-being¹ in the family. They are just interaction patterns that create the overall unique atmosphere of the family (Sobotková, 2007). It is possible to define the relations in the family by the rules. The rules determine in what manner one has to behave to the other. In everyday situations these rules manifest themselves by communication stereotypes of the family, by certain established sequences of behavior (Matoušek, 2003).

“Family functioning is a way, how family fulfils its functions. These are considered to be inclusion of an individual into family structure (it provides the feeling of unity, it influences the personal identity, sense and focus of life); economic support (securing of basic and development needs of the family members); care, education, socialization (enables physical, mental, social and spiritual development of the children as well as the adults, mediates social values and norms); protection of vulnerable members (young, ill, handicapped, old or dependent on others in some way, etc.)” (Sobotková, 2007).

J. Levická (2004) mentions time stress, health and financial problems as the most common forms of load, which can become starters of crises in the Slovak families. If the family system is supposed to be functional, it has to react permanently to the changing exterior and interior conditions. This requires the mobility of forces in the family, solving of arising load situations and the subsequent adaptation to them. Otherwise imbalance appears, conflicts and crises arise and the final consequence is the disintegration of the family. Dudžáková (2014) has stated the caring accompanies us all our life. But we do not even realize it. In our childhood they are our parents that look after us. As adults on the other hand we look after our children and we also have the obligation to look after our parents, either we are able to do it by ourselves or we secure the care by means of service. Within preservation of dignity and maintaining the basic self-service of a person, it is very good, if the person

dependent on the help has the possibility to remain in their domestic environment.

After 1989 the apartment market starts to be governed by the laws of offer and supply and as a consequence of this the market price of real estate properties has increased. At the same time the loans for just married couples discontinue to be provided. An assumption for starting up a family is a certain material foundation, i.e. the housing. Complications with acquisition of housing caused that the marriages are postponed until the higher age. This is connected with the shifts in birth rates, also the parenthood is postponed up to the higher age.” (Bočáková, 2013).

“With the development of industry and technologizes also the working conditions and the character of work change and on the basis of this also the living conditions of a human being. This development brings with itself also the increase of social risks”. (Vatehová, 2015).

It is important to realise the fact the families fail in fulfilling the functions and tasks and the consequence of this is dysfunctionality of a family or as the case may be disorders of family environment (Hroncová, 2000).

“Our most basic instinct is not for survival but for family. Most of us would give our own life for the survival of a family member, yet we lead our daily life too often as if we take our family for granted.”(Paul Pearshall)

The family has been and will also in the future be a stabilising component of the society. At present the family is going through many changes and transformations. The dominant position of the father is retreating to the background, also mothers devote their life to their career and the families are smaller, there are fewer children and multigenerational households disappear. Slovák (2014) has written that the family experiences stress and is going through various conflicts. Regarding the structure of population according to the family status, the point is the social and legal character. The basic groups of population according to family status in the Slovak Republic are:

- *single*
- *married*
- *divorced*
- *widowed*

Table 1. Population of the Slovak Republic according to sex and family status 2009–2013

Family status 2009		Year			
		2010	2011	2012	2013
men		number of persons (in thous.)			
single	1,260.5	1,266.5	1,255.9	1,260.0	1,271.2
married	1,191.0	1,186.6	1,126.4	1,123.4	1,107.6
divorced	147.7	154.0	188.7	193.7	200.7
widowed	37.8	35.2	60.7	58.9	59.6
total	2,636.9	2,642.2	2,631.8	2,636.0	2,639.1

Source: Statistical Office

It is clear from the table that the number of single men is on the rise, the number of married men is decreasing. Also the number of divorced men is increasing.

Table 2. Population of the Slovak Republic according to sex and family status 2009–2013 in %

Family status	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
men	structure (in %)				
single	47.8	47.9	47.7	47.8	48.2
married	45.2	44.9	42.8	42.6	42.0
divorced	5.6	5.8	7.2	7.3	7.6
widowed	1.4	1.3	2.3	2.2	2.3

Source: Statistical Office

Table 3. Population of the Slovak Republic according to sex and family status 2009–2013

Family status	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
women	number of persons (in thous.)				
single	1,078.4	1,084.7	1,070.8	1,074.0	1,081.2
married	1,195.9	1,190.7	1,137.8	1,134.2	1,124.5
divorced	201.5	209.2	236.2	242.3	250.1
widowed	312.3	308.5	327.7	324.3	321.0
total	2,788.0	2,793.0	2,772.6	2,774.9	2,776.9

Source: Statistical Office

The table indicates that the number of single women is on the rise, the number of married women is decreasing. The number of divorced women is also on the rise.

Table 4. Population of the Slovak Republic according to sex and family status 2009–2013 in %

Family status	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
women	structure (in %)				
single	38.7	38.8	38.6	38.7	38.9
married	42.9	42.6	41.0	40.9	40.5
divorced	7,	7.5	8.5	8.7	9.0
widowed	11.2	11.0	11.8	11.7	11.6

Source: Statistical Office

At the present time a characteristic feature of the demographic development is population aging. It means that the proportion of older persons is increasing and the proportion of the persons in productive age is decreasing. The proportion of older persons in the overall population will be increased in the coming dozens of years, when the major part of after war generation has reached the retirement age. Social security of aging population will be reflected in the increased load on the people in the productive age. What are the main trends in EU 28?

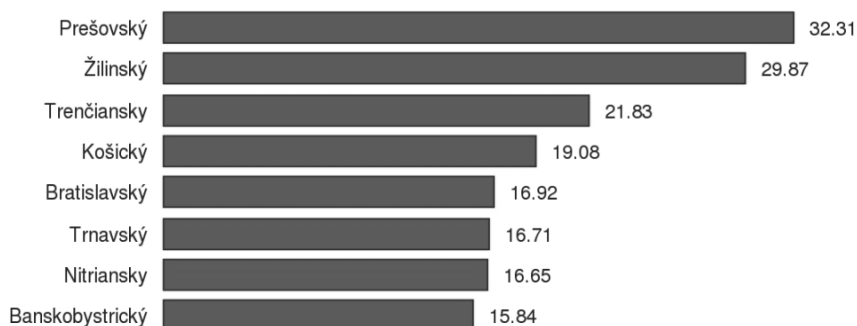
- *The growth of number of inhabitants on the basis of migration continues to be on the rise.*
- *The average age at birth increases*
- *The number of births outside the marriage is on the rise*
- *The average life expectation of men is lower than in case of women*
- *Fertility rate is decreasing*
- *Number of marriages is decreasing and number of divorces is on the rise*
- *The increment of population is slowly on the rise*
- *The demographic aging is evident* (Statistical Office, 2014)

Alianciazarodinu (Alliance for the Family) decided to make the Referendum for the protection of family. According to its declarations its aim was to protect the children and their rights and to achieve that the family remains the most important value of the society. The referendum contained 3 questions:

1. Do you agree that no other cohabitation but the union between one man and one woman should be called marriage?
2. Do you agree that neither same sex couples nor groups shall be allowed to adopt children and subsequently raise them?
3. Do you agree that schools cannot require the participation of children in classes dedicated to sexual behaviour or euthanasia if their parents or the children themselves do not agree with the content of the lessons?

We have provided a graph representing the participation in the referendum according to the regions of the Slovak Republic.

Graph 1. Participation in referendum according to regions in %



Source: <https://dennikn.sk/43529/vysledky-referenda-o-rodine-2015/>

From the graph it is clear that most inhabitants that participated in this referendum were from the self-governing region of Prešov, then follows the self-governing region of Žilina. The lowest representation was in the self-governing region of Banská Bystrica.

We have also provided the results of referendum according to individual questions.

Table 5. The results of referendum according to individual questions

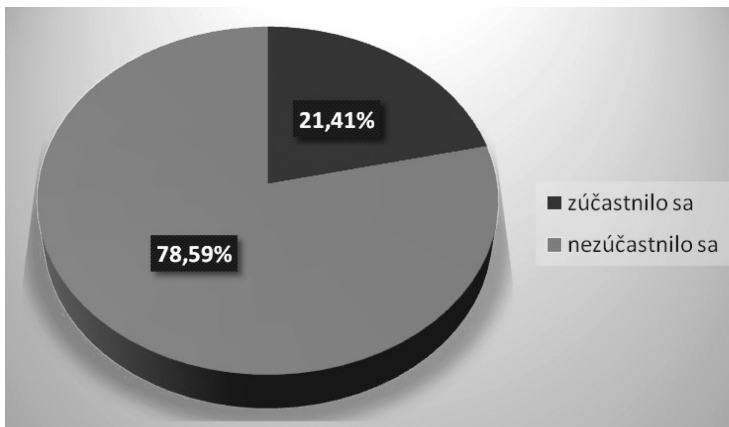
Question number	Wording of the question	Answers yes
1.	<i>Do you agree that no other cohabitation but the union between one man and one woman should be called marriage?</i>	94.5 %
2.	<i>Do you agree that neither same sex couples nor groups shall be allowed to adopt children and subsequently raise them?</i>	92.43 %
3.	<i>Do you agree that schools cannot require the participation of children in classes dedicated to sexual behaviour or euthanasia if their parents or the children themselves do not agree with the content of the lessons?</i>	90.32 %

Source: *Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic*

From the table we can see that we have recorded the answers “yes” for all three questions. From the number of the present persons in referendum these replies reached more than 90%.

This table indicates the overall replies according to individual questions. The highest percentage i.e. 94.5% was received by the first question – yes, then followed the second question – yes 92.43% and then the third question 90.32% – yes. As far as the answer “no” is concerned, so 7.34% citizens expressed themselves on the question three, then on the question two it was 5.54% and on the question one 4.13%.

Graph 2. Participation in the referendum (attended – did not attend)



Source: *Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic*

The graph indicates clearly that 21.41% citizens participated in the Referendum for the protection of family. 78.59% citizens did not participate. On the basis of this we can state that for the results of the referendum to be binding more than half of all voters would have to vote. It is approximately 2.2 million people, on the whole more than 944 thousand people voted. *The referendum on family is not valid, the attendance at it was low.* After adding up 100 of constituencies it represented 21.41%. The regional differences were in particular between the south and the north: in principle it held true that the further north, the higher the attendance, the highest attendance was in the regions of Prešov and Žilina.

At the present time the family is perceived as a connecting link between the child and the society. Within the family we teach each other the mutual trust, we are open to other people and we learn the mutual tolerance.

A family has to overcome many problems. Sometimes the family can help itself at other times it needs help. Social work and also social services are important for the family. The issues of harmonisation of work and family represent quite a frequented topic for debates at the present time. Not only within individual families, but also on the political scene or on the level of employing entities. It turns out that at the present time the economic value of the family is one of the main political issues within the European Union.

However we can state that the present families face big problems and in particular that they miss funds and that many of them do not have work. Other problems are developing from it. On the part of the government institutions it is necessary to pay more and more attention to the families, because the family has been and will be the foundation of the society.

The present family is on the halfway between a traditional and a modern family. It has found itself in the transient phase between the society that recognised one generally valid norm of family life and a plurality model, in which the diversity of norms is legitimate, even required. It also reflects the present social and economic situation and passes to the new model of reproduction behaviour of the population (Such, 2008) (Such-Pyrgiel, 2014).

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