



„Wychowanie w Rodzinie” t. XXXI (2/2024)

Submitted: July 12, 2024 – Accepted: September 10, 2024

Sylwia ROMANOWSKA-JONIO*

The family in the context of socio-cultural changes in light of own research

Rodzina w kontekście zmian społeczno-kulturowych w świetle badań własnych

Abstract

Aim. In the 21st century, the digital world is causing young people to change their attitudes toward the most important values that have been upheld over time. Contemporary society is undergoing a technological revolution that affects nearly every aspect of daily life. The development of information and communication technologies not only changes the way we communicate and process information but also has far-reaching consequences for social structures and cultural processes. The family, as the basic social unit, is not unaffected by these changes. Traditional family models, based on strong intergenerational bonds and clearly defined social roles, are increasingly giving way to more flexible and diverse forms of family life. These processes are further intensified by increasing social and professional mobility, leading to a loosening of family ties and changes in family functioning. In the face of the rapid technological and cultural changes occurring

* e-mail: s.romanowska@uwb.edu.pl

Uniwersytet w Białymstoku, Wydział Nauk o Edukacji, Świerkowa 20, 15-328 Białystok, Polska

University of Białystok, Faculty of Education Sciences, Świerkowa 20, 15-328 Białystok, Poland

ORCID: 0000-0002-3632-6147

in the 21st century, studying the values and life directions of young people becomes not only important but essential. This paper aims to shed light on these changes and to understand how they affect young people. The aim of this article is to examine the factors shaping the concept of family in the context of contemporary socio-cultural changes. It analyzes how the family was understood in the last century and the factors influencing its characteristics and relationships. Drawing on other researchers' work, the article shows how young people's aspirations, ambitions, and life plans have evolved. Based on relevant literature, the article analyzes key factors in shaping the contemporary family, its definition, and structure. To deepen the analysis, original research is presented on the values and life goals guiding young adults.

Methods and materials. The article presents an analysis of the literature as well as original quantitative research. The diagnostic survey method was employed, utilizing the questionnaire technique. The tool used was an online survey questionnaire. Respondents completed the survey using new technologies, specifically Google Forms.

Results and conclusion. Existing analyses indicate that family is a significant value in the lives of young people. However, its role and significance slightly differ depending on the generation. For young adults representing Generation Z, family as a life goal holds a substantial role. Over time, the determinants shaping family structure and its roles have significantly changed. In the past, work, clearly defined social roles, and culture were the pillars of family functioning. Today, traditional family models are increasingly giving way to more flexible and diverse forms of family life, and the roles of women and men are no longer treated so stereotypically. Technologies, which increasingly facilitate life, often create barriers between real relationships.

Keywords: values, life goal, family, young adults, digital world.

Abstrakt

Cel. W XXI wieku cyfryzacja powoduje, że młodzi ludzie zmieniają swoje postawy wobec najważniejszych wartości, które były uznawane w poprzednich stuleciach. Współczesne społeczeństwo przeżywa rewolucję technologiczną, która wpływa na niemal każdy aspekt życia codziennego. Rozwój technologii informacyjno-komunikacyjnych nie tylko zmienia sposób, w jaki komunikujemy się i przetwarzamy informacje, lecz także ma daleko idące konsekwencje dla struktur społecznych i procesów kulturowych. Rodzina jako podstawowa jednostka społeczna również podlega tym zmianom. Tradycyjne modele rodziny, oparte na silnych więziach międzypokoleniowych i jasno określonych rolach społecznych, coraz częściej ustępują miejsca bardziej elastycznym i zróżnicowanym formom życia rodzinnego. Procesy te są dodatkowo intensyfikowane przez rosnącą mobilność społeczną i zawodową, co prowadzi do częstszego rozluźnienia więzi rodzinnych i zmian w funkcjonowaniu rodzin. W obliczu gwałtownych zmian technologicznych i kulturowych, jakie zachodzą w XXI wie-

ku, badanie wartości i kierunków życiowych młodych ludzi staje się nie tylko ważne, lecz wręcz niezbędne. Niniejsza praca ma za zadanie przybliżyć te zmiany oraz pozwolić zrozumieć, w jaki sposób wpływają one na młodych. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie czynników warunkujących kształtowanie się pojęcia rodziny w kontekście współczesnych zmian społeczno-kulturowych. Skupiono się na analizie, jak rodzina była rozumiana w ubiegłym stuleciu oraz jakie czynniki wpływały na jej cechy i budowane relacje. Na podstawie prac innych badaczy ukazano, jak zmieniały się aspiracje, dążenia, a także plany życiowe młodzieży. W nawiązaniu do historycznych uwarunkowań przedstawiono, jak mogą one kształtować dzisiejszy model rodziny. Oparto się na literaturze przedmiotu, aby przeanalizować czynniki ważne dla kształtowania się współczesnej rodziny, jej definicji oraz struktury. Dla pogłębienia analizy zaprezentowano autorskie badania mające na celu poznanie wartości oraz celów życiowych, którymi kierują się ludzie wstępujący w dorosłość.

Metody i materiały. W artykule dokonano analizy literatury, a także zaprezentowano autorskie badania ilościowe. Posłużono się metodą sondażu diagnostycznego, techniką ankiety. Narzędzie, które wykorzystano, to kwestionariusz ankiety internetowej. Respondenci wypełniali ankietę za pomocą nowych technologii – formularza Google.

Wyniki i wnioski. Z dotychczasowych analiz wynika, że rodzina jest ważną wartością w życiu młodego człowieka. Jej rola i znaczenie nieznacznie różnią się w zależności od pokolenia. Rodzina jest ważnym celem życiowym dla młodych dorosłych reprezentujących pokolenie Z. Na przestrzeni czasu znacząco zmieniły się determinanty warunkujące strukturę rodziny i zadania w niej panujące. Niegdyś praca, jasno określone role społeczne oraz kultura stanowiły filary funkcjonowania. Dzisiaj tradycyjne modele rodziny coraz częściej ustępują miejsca bardziej elastycznym i zróżnicowanym formom życia rodzinnego, a role kobiety i mężczyzny nie są traktowane szablono. Życie ułatwiają technologie, które coraz częściej stają się ścianą pomiędzy rzeczywistymi relacjami.

Słowa kluczowe: wartości, cel życiowy, rodzina, młodzi dorośli, cyfrowy świat.

Introduction

A central postulate of individual existence is the need to harmonise with other people. This involves the process of procreation and the satisfaction of fundamental needs such as the need for love, belonging, security, respect or understanding, the fulfilment of which enables adequate development, growth in the professed system of values, and the achievement of set life goals. The analysis of human needs is a crucial aspect in the context of a dynamically changing reality. In the 21st century, lifestyles, perceptions of work and interpersonal relationships are also changing. Even the family is understood differently than it was just a dozen years ago.

Information and communication technologies, migration, systemic change, and globalisation are all influencing the fact that people have different needs from those of a few decades ago. Changes can also be seen in the updated and scientifically analysed pyramid of needs, created in 1943 based on Abraham Maslow's theory. The modernised pyramid shows that physiological needs remain unchanged in the first step, while self-defence has been added to the second step – security. According to research, it is a human need to have the ability to cope with threats (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010). The third step of the pyramid was the combination of love, acceptance and belongingness, but for modern society, these are not necessary for survival, so this position was replaced by the need for belongingness, which consists of social attachment, but also a strong need to be with and function with someone. The next steps in the pyramid under discussion are appreciation and self-realisation, which have been replaced by the need for status and respect. This is followed by three reproductive goals: getting and keeping a partner and raising children. The humanistic current has oriented society towards the need for self-fulfilment as an integral part of individual development. However, modern times indicate that it is not a functionally distinct human need, but merely a realisation of status (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010). The interpretation of the updated pyramid depicts that it is extremely important to take care of one's own health and safety, the feeling of being accepted by society, but above all to strive for life stability through adequate material security, finding the right life partner and raising children. Based on needs, humans generate the values and goals that guide them in life. The new classification of human needs has its foundations in modern times and reflects current trends, which is confirmed by the research described later in this article on what factors determine the establishment of a family. This research focuses on the roles fulfilled by a woman and a man in a relationship and what values, needs and goals guide young Poles.

Evolution of the concept of *family*

Researchers representing different disciplines, such as pedagogy, psychology, sociology or law, when they undertake scientific analyses of the family, search for factors determining changes in its structure (Włoch, 2017). The family, as a common theme of scientific research, enjoys a multidirectional interest. Its roles, child-rearing aspects, dysfunctions, the relationships and bonds that build it, partnerships within it, its economic and historical functions and much more are examined (Ostrouch-Kamińska, 2019). Due to the intensely changing world, an adequate explanation of the term *family* needs to be updated and searched for just as quickly, resulting in an increasing number of publications on the subject.

The well-known proverb: “What a shell soaks in its youth, trumpets in its old age” invites us to reflect on the family environment, in which the child, in the process of development, creates its own definition of life, just as the shell soaks in what the parents and environment bestow on it. In my interpretation, this proverb emphasises the essence of the period of youth, indicating that it is an important time in the formation of personality, as well as pointing to the role of personal role models in the formation of attitudes. A fundamental role in the construction of a young character is played by family ties, the values in which the child grows up, the parenting style and parental attitudes (Sozańska, 2014). The family is the basic form of social life (Kryńska, 2022), and the first environment in which a child grows up (Filipowicz, 2017). Among other things, it influences the formation of the child’s skills and the building of a value system (Hoffmann, 2019). Each family is the building block of the whole society and the one who grows up in it begins to form his or her identity and personality (Szlendak, 2010). According to John Paul II, spouses who build the family are internally mature individuals (Kryńska, 2022). The family is based on marital ties, kinship, affinity or adoption (Tysza, 1976). It is formed by genetic and emotional ties, certain behavioural patterns, norms, rules, names and, above all, loved ones (Sozańska, 2014). Its task is to care for, nurture, provide appropriate living conditions, guide towards independence and responsibility, and nurture certain ideals, goals and attitudes. Bringing up children is not only a duty and a right but also a life mission (Filipowicz, 2017). Henryk Cudak (1999) proposed a scientific definition of the family – he pointed out that it constitutes the basic and at the same time primary care and socialisation environment of the child. From the moment of an individual’s birth, the family participates in the individual phases of his/her development (Cudak, 1999). According to Stanisław Kawula (1997), the family is an inner world, which is subject to constant external influences (Kawula, Brągiel, & Janke, 1997). In the administrative view, a family is a permanent legal relationship linking a man and a woman who have performed the legal act of marriage, thus becoming equal subjects of marital rights and obligations (Ziółkowska, Gronkiewicz, 2015). On the other hand, in a religious context, a family is defined as a married couple who have and raise at least one child (Sozańska, 2014). The family is the signpost and centre of new life (Filipowicz, 2017). Tomasz Szlendak (2010) defines family as a group in which at least one of the following diads is present: parent-child, partner-partner. Based on this definition, a single mother fully deserves to be called a family and is not subject to terminological rejection (Szlendak, 2010).

Updating the definition of family is a dynamic and multifaceted process. Its understanding is influenced by the needs of individuals and social, cultural and economic conditions. The growing need for acceptance and equality requires a flexible approach to family structure. Increasingly, family is being defined as a variety of arrangements among people living together, which are not necessarily formalised or based on genetic ties.

Roles in the family through the ages as a factor influencing relationship building in the family – an overview

The family in the 19th century was most often patriarchal, with the male as the only breadwinner (Kalinowska-Witek, 2014). The father and mother had clearly defined functions. The man had a dominant role, exercising authority, making decisions and representing the family to the outside world. The woman, in contrast, was seen as a “life-long minor,” could not make independent decisions and was obliged to submit to her husband’s decisions (Kalinowska-Witek, 2014). The thriving industry initiated changes in the employment system, which resulted in people running their craft workshops giving up their position as “boss” and starting to work for someone else. Thus, the life of the family was disorganised, as one had to adapt to the workplace. At the turn of the 20th century, the situation changed when employers began to hire willing women, who were less resistant, easily adaptable and profitable, as they often worked longer hours than men for less pay. As a result, a woman could feel less dependent on her husband. This was the beginning of the transition from a patriarchal type family towards a partnership family (Kalinowska-Witek, 2014). With changing working conditions and industrial progress, a woman’s work became lighter. The woman began to play an important role in supporting the family, which allowed her to gain a greater awareness of her social and cultural position and a sense of her distinctiveness. As a result of the industrialisation of the state, the function of the family changed. Gradually, the characteristics of the traditional family began to disappear. The introduction of modern machinery reduced the number of workers’ responsibilities, which provided them with more leisure time that could be used for culture and integration with family members.

Over time, we began to see an increase in divorce rates, a decline in the authority of the husband and father, an increase in extramarital sexual intercourse, an increase in the number of working women, and the transfer of caring and child-rearing functions to the state. Gradually, respect for religious norms declined, ties with distant relatives weakened, a preference for the two-generation family began, and freedom and autonomy in choosing a partner or mate increased. Through the spread of contraceptives, the birth rate decreased. The social and material costs of raising and educating children also changed, with the result that large families began to be replaced by small families. The family ceased to be authoritarian, stable, multifunctional and multigenerational and became two-generational, with weakening community microstructures. Family norms broke down and relationships became more intimate, understanding and tolerant (Czekajewska, 2014). The typical family model became the nuclear, self-centred, love-based, planning and mobile family, consisting of two generations – parents and their children. It was characterised by low childbearing, openness to change and sometimes reorganisation of life and family roles (Slany, 2002).

Postmodern times require of everyone what in the past few were expected to do – lead independent lives (Slany, 2002). From the 1970s the role of the woman underwent a significant change, highlighted by nomenclature – the woman was referred to as superwoman, and in the 1990s as an invisible woman. This gave rise to the blurring of the line separating the two sexes (Baniak, 2010). Nowadays, the woman is no longer just a “good mother and wife,” but becomes an individual independent of the man.

In describing the roles of family members, which are now no longer the same as they were a few decades ago, and the values and relations prevailing in the family, I would like to focus on what determines the aforementioned division of functions (Brzezińska, Janiszewska-Rain, 2005). Following Mariusz Jędrzejko (2015), I believe that the factors that generate moral chaos and influence the destabilisation of family life in the 21st century include consumerism, the pursuit of money and success, and technologisation (Jędrzejko, 2015). The child's education is extremely important, which is why the parent wants to help the child achieve the competencies they dream of, provide affluence, a sense of security and intimacy, and organise leisure time through a selection of extra-curricular activities. Sometimes, however, the effect of this illusory pursuit of happiness is to pull the child away from the heart of the home (Brzezińska, Janiszewska-Rain, 2005). The tablet or smartphone is playing an increasingly important role in the life of the young individual, replacing traditional forms of interaction with parents, grandparents or uncles in the face of a flurry of responsibilities, and relieving loved ones of the need to “tell the child a bedtime story” (Zdun, 2016, p. 84). Electronic devices have become a way to occupy a child's attention. Nowadays, new technologies and inventions are taking over some of the parental roles, becoming an incorporated element in the family structure and at the same time a hybrid wall between family relationships. The result of excessive media use in the family may be difficulties in establishing conversation in the real world, stabilisation of family life and even its breakdown (Andrzejewska, 2008 Janota-Palusińska, 2004).



Figure 1. The family in a digital world.

Source: Nygard, 2016.

Krystian Nygard created the graphic *A cry for help* in 2016, which depicts the modern family as seen through the eyes of a child. In the digital age, the birth of a child is not only accompanied by parents and immediate family members but above all by smartphones. They have become an inseparable part of everyone's life. The child grows and every step is photographed. The child is deprived of natural eye contact with the parent, who does not reciprocate his or her smile. The first step must necessarily be documented. The telephone is a constant companion in the child's growing up process. With every success, the child sees a flash or hears the sound of a photo being taken, which is similar to behavioural conditioning. The introduction of technology into the family structure can cause the aforementioned blurring of the lines between the real and virtual worlds in family ties. The child cannot or does not feel the need to identify the parent's face, as it covers it, or "absorbs" the phone screen. As a result, the child draws robot-like figures with phones instead of heads. This drawing should provoke reflection on where the modern world is going and encourage the building of healthy and valuable family relationships, without the significant influence of phones, so that life does not resemble the functioning of machines. It is important that a child who wants to gain the approval of a parent does not have to pose for a photo and act out emotions, and that in the process of self-identification (from the graphic: ME with an inverted E), the child does not have to struggle for help in understanding his or her own self.

Starting a family as a life goal – a review of GUS and CBOS surveys

The first stage of building a house is the decision, then the design and then the foundations. The family, as a cohesive organism uniting those closest to each other, begins its construction with relationships. In the engagement of the old, a large role was played by intermediaries through whom relationships were formed. The family was the main deciding factor, and the betrothal itself was a prestige for the family. As Andrzej Ładyżyński points out, in 2011 the choice of a spouse was characterised by autonomy and the absence of intermediaries (Ładyżyński, 2011). Currently, the fashionable intermediary in the search for a partner or mate has become the algorithm used in dating apps and portals. These solutions promote what many would like to lose themselves in – romantic love at first sight. The ritual of engagement today is also a prestige but in a different sense than before. It is less about family and more about the organisation of the wedding – choosing the right venue, organising the surroundings and achieving the visual impact.

Based on a survey report by the Central Statistical Office – CSO (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny* [GUS]) – in 2021 and 2022, the number of marriages performed and dissolved in 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2019–2021 is as follows (GUS, 2021) (Figure 2).

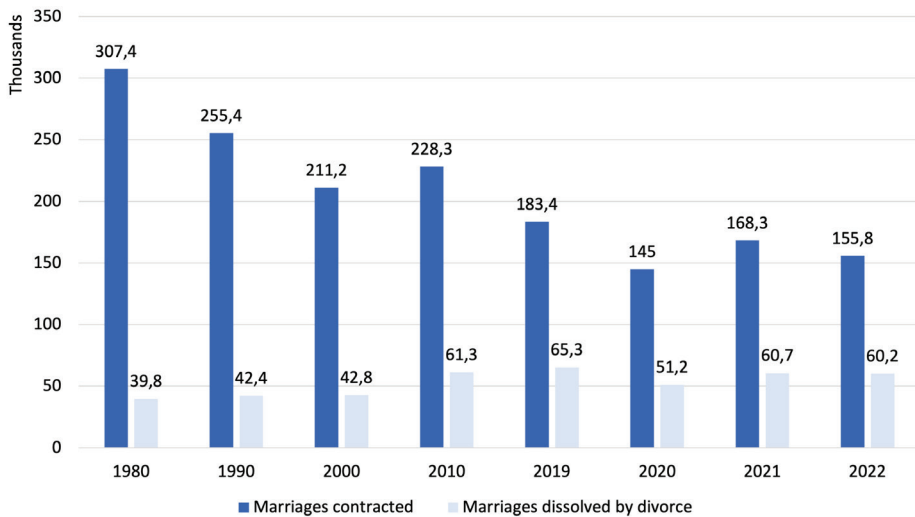


Figure 2. Marriages concluded and dissolved by divorce.

Source: Author's own study based on the results of a survey conducted by the GUS (2021).

In 1980, the number of marriages was 307,373, while 39,833 were dissolved by divorce. From 1980 to 2019, the number of divorces had a significantly increasing trend. In 2022, 60,162 divorces were recorded, 20,329 more than in 1980. From 1980 to 2022, the number of marriages is decreasing. This is probably due to the spread of new forms of marriage and family life that do not assume permanence. Young people are increasingly opting for cohabitation relationships, as this is a safer and less binding form for them, while not identifying with fulfilling the traditional roles of wife or husband. Increasingly, marriage is preceded by the birth of a child and the formalisation of the relationship itself is not always a priority. This phenomenon is favoured especially among postmodern societies. The change in norms and values is accompanied by the phenomenon of globalisation, called “westernization” (Slany, 2002).

This trend is confirmed by research conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (*Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej* [CBOS]) in 2013, which showed that, according to secondary school students, the most important life goals are love and friendship (49%), followed by a successful family life in second place (48%) and a high professional position in third place (35%) (Boguszewski, Kowalczyk, 2013) (Figure 3).

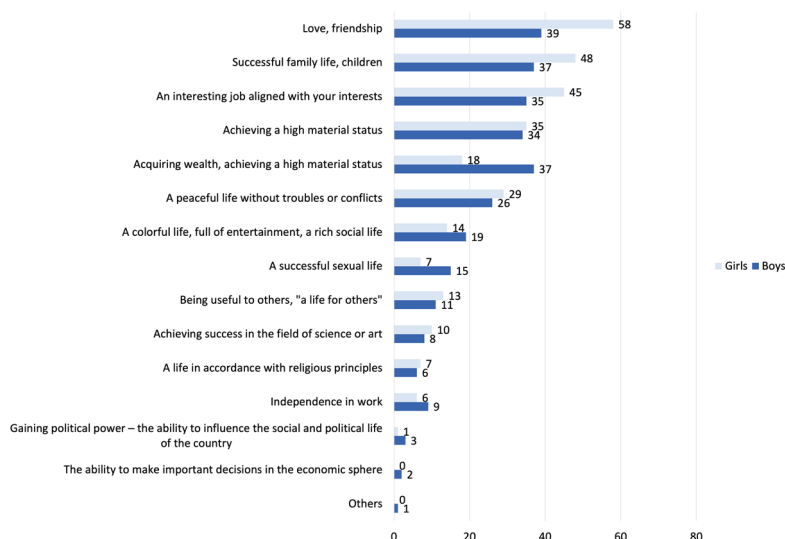


Figure 3. Aspirations, goals and life plans of young people.

Source: Boguszewski, 2016.

In 2016, the CBOS survey indicated that 48% of those surveyed chose love and friendship as their most important life goal, 42% a successful family life, and children, and 40% an interesting job related to their interests (Boguszewski, 2016). Interpretation of the graph indicates that girls chose goals consistent with the overall survey result (Figure 3). In contrast, differences appear among boys, which may be due to the role played by men in the industrial family. For boys, love and friendship appeared to be the most important goals, equally successful family life, children, and only then acquiring wealth, achieving a high material position, followed by interesting work in line with interests.

Regarding the presented research and the pyramid of needs, it is noticeable that the three main goals change their hierarchy. Starting a family becomes less important than making friends and experiencing love, which is not a factor in formalising a relationship. Another important goal is to work to support a partner or partner and family, allowing for high status and respect.

Procedure for own studies

The aim of the author's research conducted in 2023 was to find out the life goals of young Poles and the values that guide them in life. The following research problems were formulated: What is the importance of starting a family in the lives of young Poles? What is the importance of formalising a relationship in the lives of young Poles? What life

goals do young Poles set for themselves? What values guide young Poles? To gather statistical data answering these questions, necessary for solving the research problem, quantitative research was conducted. A diagnostic survey method was used. The survey technique was used, and the tool was an online survey questionnaire. Respondents filled in the questionnaire using new technology – a Google form. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous and included young adults who were divided into two generational groups.

A total of 172 respondents between the ages of 18 and 40 took part in the survey, including 147 women and 25 men. Women made up 85.5% of the group, while men made up 14.5%. The group was divided into two subgroups. The first was made up of people who were born between 1983 and 1999, this group was represented by 85 respondents, which accounted for 49.4% of the total respondents (representatives of Generation Y). The second group consisted of people who were born after 2000, this group was represented by 87 respondents, which represented 50.6% of the total respondents (representatives of Generation Z). To organise the data on the characteristics of the research sample, a chart was drawn up (Figure 4).

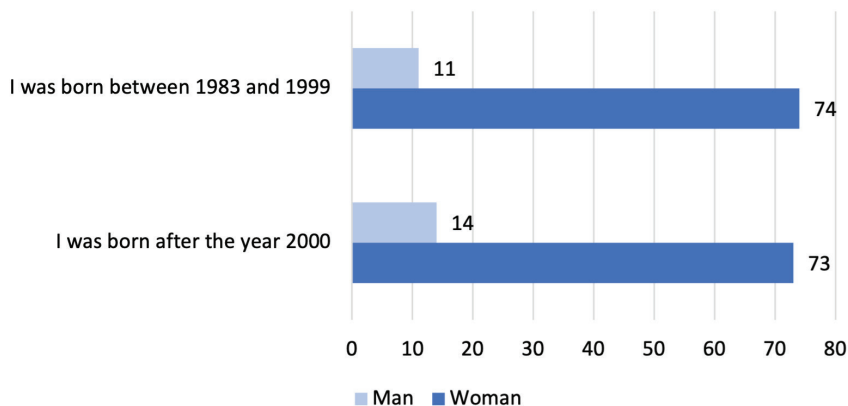


Figure 4. Study group by Generations Y and Z.

Source: Author's own study.

Results

Among those surveyed, 86.6% of respondents indicated that they had not yet formalised their relationship. To determine the importance of starting a family among these people, a so-called "Likert scale" was used. Respondents were asked to answer from 1 to 5, where 1 meant "strongly disagree" and 5 meant "strongly agree" that I would like/want to start a family. Of this group, 35.6% said they would definitely want to have a family, 18.8% of respondents would like to have a family, 28.2% of respondents have an indifferent

attitude, 9.4% of respondents would rather not want to have a family and 8.1% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they would like to have a family. The computational method of Spearman’s rho correlation ($r_s = -0.183$, $p = 0.025$) was used to test the relationship between the variables of age group and the importance of starting a family for those who had not yet formalised a relationship. The results indicate a weak, but statistically significant, negative relationship between the age group and the importance of starting a family among those who have not yet formalised a relationship. This means that older people assign slightly less importance to starting a family compared to the younger age group. Conversely, when subjected to the correlation of all respondents ($r_s = -0.057$, $p = 0.454$), Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient indicates a very weak, negative correlation between the study group and the weight attributed to family, meaning that as age increases, the weight attributed to family decreases slightly.

Examination with the same scale of the importance of formalising the relationship among the total respondents shows that it is very important for 33.1% of the people to formalise the relationship, for 25.6% of the people it is important to formalise the relationship, 20.3% of the respondents have an indifferent attitude towards it, for 9.3% of the people it is rather not important to formalise the relationship, while 11.6% declare that it is not important. It can be noted that in terms of differentiation between generational groups, the results differ minimally, however, there is a weak negative correlation between age group and the importance of formalising a relationship by the respondents as a whole, which suggests that there is a slight tendency for the importance of formalising a relationship to decrease with increasing age, however, this correlation is not statistically significant ($r_s = -0.120$, $p = 0.117$). The importance of relationship formalisation according to young Poles relative to age group is presented in the figure below (Figure 5).

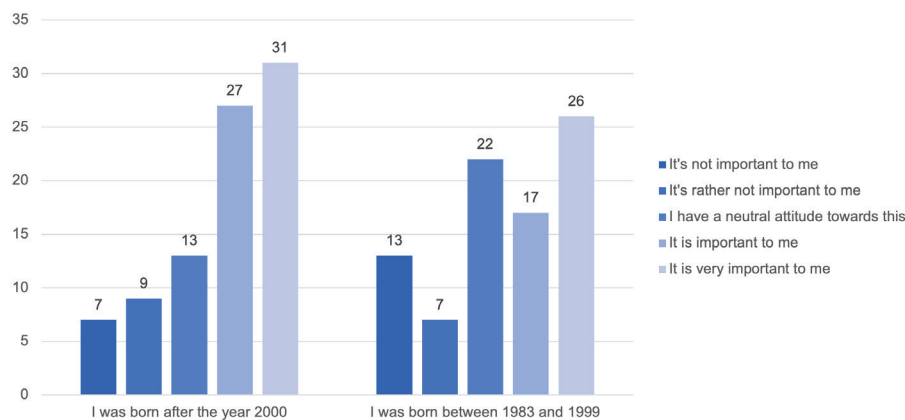


Figure 5. Importance of formalising a relationship according to young Poles.
Source: Author’s own study.

The next question in the survey questionnaire was a closed one-choice question. As many as 72% of the total number of respondents felt that the formalisation of a relationship does not play the most important role in starting a family. These people indicated that starting a family occurs when a suitable partner is found. Meanwhile, the second most frequently indicated answer was to formalise the relationship. This answer was chosen by 55% of respondents. Although there are differences in preferences between age groups, as can be seen in the graph (Figure 6), the results of the chi-square test suggest that these differences are not statistically significant ($p = 0.130$), there was found to be no relationship between variable X and variable Y, for which Cramér's $V = 0.181$.

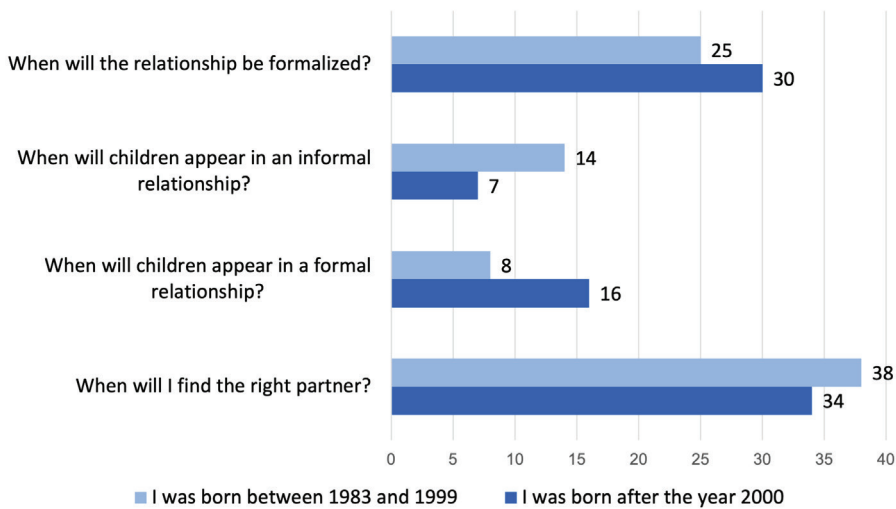


Figure 6. When does family formation occur according to young Poles?

Source: Author's own study.

In the third research question, respondents indicated three components defined as a life goal. Overall, respondents considered achieving the awareness of being happy to be the most important life goal, which accounted for 51.2% of the group, followed by establishing a family or nurturing family life 47.7% and wealth well-being 41.9%. The life goals of young Poles were differentiated based on the indicated generation groups. Among the group representing Generation Y, the most important life goal is to realise that one is happy, followed by living in harmony with oneself and one's needs, and then establishing a family or nurturing family life. Among the group representing generation Z, it is the establishment of a family or the nurturing of family life that is the primary goal, followed by the achievement of the awareness that one is happy and then wealth well-being (Figure 7).

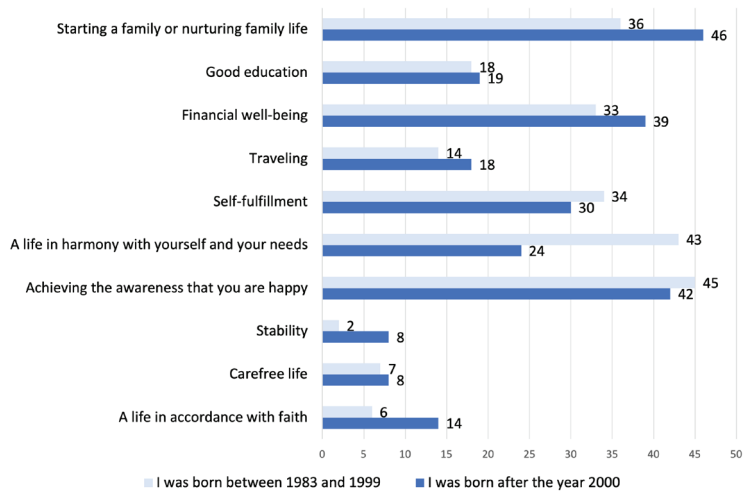


Figure 7. Most frequently indicated life goals of young Poles.

Source: Author's own study.

The fourth research question posed was open-ended. Among the respondents, the three most frequently indicated values for both Generation Y and Generation Z representatives were identified. These were, successively, love, family and health. The most frequently indicated answers are shown in Figure 8.

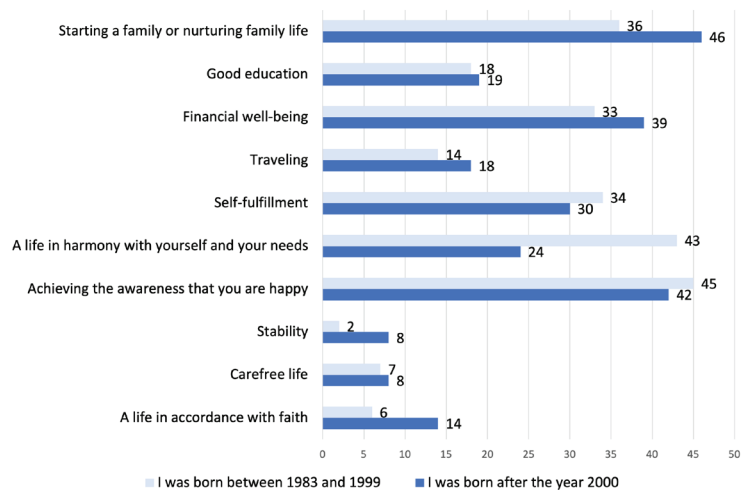


Figure 8. Most frequently indicated values of young Poles.

Source: Author's own study.

Based on the research that was conducted based on the associations given by the people interviewed, I developed a definition of family: a family is a group of people who are closest to each other and are characterised by common bonds. It is one of the most important values and the foundation of our lives. It provides a sense of security, love, warmth, support and home. It is a relationship of people interacting with each other. It is a loving team that, above all, lives together and not side by side, with all family members working as one organism.

Conclusion

Throughout time, an increasing number of factors can be observed that have a significant role in the construction of the family structure. These factors have evolved with social, technological and cultural advances. The traditional family-building process was based on several crucial elements, which included the formalisation of the relationship, clearly defined gender roles, religiosity and generational patterns. Parental authority and professional work played an important role. Today, the family structure is changing significantly. The number of divorces is increasing, the number of marriages is decreasing and technology is increasingly entering not only professional but also family structures and even taking over some parental responsibilities. As a result, these relationships are becoming more intimate, which is linked to the weakening of traditional community microstructures. These processes accompany young Poles in redefining the notion of family and building a new model of it.

The analyses conducted based on two generational groups indicated the importance of establishing a family and formalising a relationship, as well as life goals and values which have their foundation in the creation of a young person's path. The paper aimed to find out what role the family plays in this vision. In response to the stated aim and research problems, based on Spearman's rho correlations results were obtained indicating a negative correlation between the importance of founding a family and age group, from which it follows that the importance of founding a family is higher the younger the age group. Nevertheless, in both study groups, the formalisation of the relationship is perceived as very important. As the research indicated, in both Generation Y and Generation Z the importance of formalising the relationship reached the highest level. However, there is a very slight trend indicating that the younger the group is, the higher the importance of relationship formalisation. Young Poles indicate achieving the awareness of being happy as the most important life goal, followed by establishing a family or nurturing family life and, in turn, material well-being. However, in the group representing Generation Y, young Poles indicated achieving awareness of being happy as the most important life goal, followed by living in harmony with oneself and one's needs, then establishing a family

or nurturing family life. In Generation Z, on the other hand, young Poles considered establishing a family or nurturing family life as the most important life goal, then achieving awareness of being happy, next – material well-being. These results are interesting in terms of the diversity of choices of both groups, which may serve as an inspiration for further research. Among the respondents, the three most frequently indicated values for both Generation Y and Generation Z representatives were identified. These were love, family and health, which shows the universal nature of these life values for young people.

In the 21st century, digital reality shapes the dynamics of everyday life. We live in a world full of diverse stimuli, offering ever more interesting offers to make life and work easier. We can focus on single propositions while giving up what is permanent. Families want to adapt to reality, but they cannot keep up with choosing the right target. As Krystyna Slany (2002) points out, the natural order that has existed over the centuries has been dominated by new technologies that are influencing the way people think. Changes are realised on four levels identified by this author: technological-informational, economic, social and cultural. K. Slany emphasises the role of values and puts forward the extremely important thesis that without moral priorities, conflicts between economic, political and cultural goals become irreconcilable (Slany, 2002). I believe that the subject matter of the research I have undertaken allows us to reflect on the meaning of our existence and on what are the priorities in the lives of young Poles, what expectations they have and what they do to achieve their goals. William J. Goode explains that the family is a sensitive instrument reflecting the various changes taking place in society as a whole (following: Tyszka, 1976). Based on the article and especially the thought-provoking graphic, it is easy to see the aforementioned social changes in the family structure. Lacking clearly defined goals and values, this chaos is increasingly creeping into family structures and causing relationships to weaken. In the context of increasing information chaos, it is worth reflecting on the impact of these changes on identity, family community and moral values and priorities. It is crucial to nurture moral values, which should be optimised in both family, school and academic environments. Young Poles consider love, family and health to be the most important values, which should form the basis for establishing lasting and understanding family bonds. The aim should be to build relationships full of empathy, warmth and support, which will foster authentic being, not just functioning within the family.

To reduce the intrusion of technology into interpersonal relationships, the pedagogical and academic community must pay attention to developing digital hygiene and implementing it in the communities of universities, schools and alumni homes. This should become one of the priorities of education and upbringing in the 21st century. Integrating moral development with digital hygiene knowledge can contribute to a more informed and sustainable use of technology, building healthy and sustainable family bonds, a healthy approach to technology, growing in love and nurturing family relationships.

References

- Andrzejewska, A. (2008). Negatywne aspekty odbioru telewizji przez dzieci [Negative aspects of television viewing by children]. *Lider*, 213(10), 27–30.
- Baniak, J. (2010). *Małżeństwo i rodzina w świadomości gimnazjalnej na tle kryzysu jej tożsamości osobowej: Studium socjologiczne* [Marriage and family in the consciousness of middle school girls against the background of their personal identity crisis: A sociological study]. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos.
- Boguszewski, R. (2016). *Młodzież 2016: Prezentacja wybranych wyników badania: Aspiracje, dążenia i plany życiowe młodzieży* [Youth 2016: Presentation of selected survey results: Aspirations, goals, and life plans of young people]. Retrieved from: https://www.cbos.pl/PL/wydarzenia/57_konferencja/Mlodziez_2016_prezentacja_Fundacji_CBOS.pdf.
- Boguszewski, R., Kowalczyk, K. (2013). *Aspiracje, dążenia i plany życiowe młodzieży* [Aspirations, goals, and life plans of young people]. Retrieved from: <http://bibe.ibe.edu.pl/7010-aspiracje-dazenia-i-plany-zyciowe-mlodziezy-mlodziez-2013.html>.
- Brzezińska, A., Janiszewska-Rain, J. (2005). *W poszukiwaniu złotego środka: Rozmowy o rozwoju człowieka* [In search of the golden mean: Conversations on human development]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak.
- Cudak, H. (1999). *Znaczenie rodziny w rozwoju i wychowaniu małego dziecka* [The importance of the family in the development and upbringing of the young child]. Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Higieny Psychicznej.
- Czekajewska, J. (2014). *Przemiany życia rodzinnego: Studium etyczne* [Transforming family life: An ethical study]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Tako.
- Dyczewski, L. (2005). Wiąż rodzinna a media elektroniczne [Family bonding and electronic media]. *Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny*, 67(1), 225–242.
- Filipowicz, M. (2017). Rodzina jako pierwsze środowisko wychowawcze: Zadania i ideał wychowawczy – z perspektywy nauczania Kościoła [Family as the first educational environment: Educational tasks and ideal from the Church's perspective]. *Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne*, 26(1), 127–146.
- GUS. (2021). *Rocznik Demograficzny* [Demography Yearbook]. Warszawa: Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych.
- Hoffmann, B. (2019). Nieformalna grupa rówieśnicza a proces socjalizacji [The informal peer group and the socialisation proces]. In: M. J. Szymański (Eds.), *Krótkie wykłady z socjologii edukacji* (pp. 277–307). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wolters Kluwer.
- Janota-Palusińska, M. (2004). O oddziaływaniu telewizji [About the impact of television]. *Wychowawca*, 137(5), 16–17.
- Jędrzejko, M. (2015). „Zawirowany” świat ponowoczesności: W poszukiwaniu etiologii zaburzeń, dysfunkcji, zachowań kompulsywnych, ryzykownych i dewiacji

- [The 'convoluted' world of postmodernity: In search of the etiology of disorders, dysfunctions, compulsive, risky and deviant behaviour]. Warszawa – Milanówek: Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR.
- Kalinowska-Witek, B. (2014). Rola, zadania i pozycja społeczna mężczyzny i kobiety w rodzinie w świetle wybranych czasopism kobiecych z lat 1864–1914 [The roles, tasks and social rank of a man and a woman in a family on the basis of selected women's journals from the years 1864–1914]. *Wychowanie w Rodzinie*, 10(2), 177–189. DOI: 10.23734/wwr20142.177.189.
- Kawula, S., Brągiel, J., & Janke, A. W. (1997). *Pedagogika rodziny: Obszary i panorama problematyki* [Pedagogy of the family: Areas and panorama of issues]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- Kenrick, D. T., Griskevicius, V., Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2010). Renovating the pyramid of needs: Contemporary extensions built upon ancient foundations. *Perspectives on Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, 5(3), 292–314. DOI: 10.1177/1745691610369469.
- Kryńska, E. J. (2022). Pojęcie i znaczenie rodziny w kontekście rozważań bł. Ks. Michała Sopoćki [The concept and meaning of family in the context of the reflections of Blessed Michael Sopoćko]. In: A. Proniewski, D. Steć, & J. Jabłoński (Eds.), *Rodzina w myśli bł. ks. Michała Sopoćki: Na podstawie pracy doktorskiej ks. Michała Sopoćki z 1926 roku: „Rodzina w prawodawstwie na ziemiach polskich (studium etyczno-prawne)”* (pp. 52–68). Białystok: Wydawnictwo św. Jerzego.
- Ładyżyński, A. (2011). Narzeczeństwo – dawne i współczesne: Zmiana w sposobie przygotowania się do małżeństwa [Engagement in the past and in the present. Change in the way of preparing for marriage]. *Wychowanie w Rodzinie*, 3, 193–217. DOI: 10.23734/wwr20113.193.217.
- Nygaard, K. (2016). *A cry for help* [graphic]. Retrieved from: <https://www.optipess.com/comic/a-cry-for-help/>.
- Ostrouch-Kamińska, J. (2019). Family socialisation and the transformation of contemporary family roles and relationships. In: M. J. Szymański (Eds.), *Krótkie wykłady z socjologii edukacji* (pp. 244–275). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wolters Kluwer.
- Slany, K. (2002). *Alternatywne formy życia małżeńsko-rodzinnego w ponowoczesnym świecie* [Alternative forms of marriage and family life in the postmodern world]. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos.
- Sozańska, E. (2014). Rodzina jako środowisko wychowania w wartościach [Family as the environment of values education]. *Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne*, 23(3), 39–51.
- Szlendak, T. (2010). *Socjologia rodziny: Ewolucja, historia, zróżnicowanie* [Sociology of the family: Evolution, history, and differentiation]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

- Tyska, Z. (1976). *Socjologia rodziny* [Sociology of the family]. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Włoch, A. (2017). Przemiany we współczesnych rodzinach a nowe wyzwania w kształceniu nauczycieli [Transformations in contemporary families and new challenges in teacher education]. In: B. Szluz, A. Szluz, & M. Urbańska (Eds.), *Współczesna rodzina w ujęciu interdyscyplinarnym: Przemiany, wsparcie, rozwój* (pp. 46–56). Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego.
- Zdun, M. (2016). Rodzina w świecie nowatorskich technologii – szanse, zagrożenia, wyzwania [The family in a world of cutting-edge technology - opportunities, threats, and challenges]. In: D. Gizicka (Eds.) *Małżeństwo, rodzina rodzicielstwo* (pp. 79–92), Lublin: Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego.
- Ziółkowska, A., Gronkiewicz, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Rodzina w prawie administracyjnym* [The family in administrative law]. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.