

Scientific review of the book *Intergenerational relations of youth with their parents. Selected educational contexts* (Międzypokoleniowe relacje młodzieży z rodzicami. Wybrane konteksty edukacyjne) scientific ed. Ewa Karmolińska- Jagodziki, Publisher – King Stanisław Leszczyński College of Humanities in Leszno, Leszno 2016

The reviewed monograph attempts to consider and examine an important problem which affects modern families, namely: challenges and tensions which accompany the intergenerational relations between parents and children who grow up. The topic seems 'exhausted' on the face of it, since it has already been tackled in many publications and it seems impossible to postulate new or meaningful problems or discover gaps in the current state of knowledge. The entire monograph consists of two parts, both of which include six articles. The first part refers to the intergenerational relations with emphasis placed on the communication processes and identity building mechanisms among young people. The second part refers to the factors conditioning proper intergenerational relations. The publication is 252 pages long.

Scientific editor – Ewa Karmolińska- Jagodziki in *Intergenerational Relations – relevance and significance. An Introduction. (Relacjach międzygeneracyjnych- istota i znaczenie. Wprowadzenie)* explains the motivation for writing this book. She touches upon the topic of people who grow up and their parents. The author ponders what influences the young generation and wonders about the causes for the emergence of particular intergenerational relations. She notices a modern problem of the youth, namely the problem of how a growing up individual is supposed to find their place and mature in a reality full of contradictions. Such characteristics as individuality and exceptionality are emphasised and put to the forefront, yet seem achievable by following corporate rules. In such reality teenagers loses his orientation, she or he feels lost. The author underlines the relevance of the problem of dependence on other people, especially the young generation from the old one. The moment of entering adolescence is, therefore, a test of dependence and, by extension, family relations and bonds. This important, and yet difficult period is a time to reformulate these bonds, it is a process of gradually increasing independence of young people and creation of own, mature autonomic identity. The author stresses that the following publication touches only upon the topic of primary relations.

In the first part of the book *Intergenerational relations in the process of communication and reaching identity (Relacje międzygeneracyjne w procesie komunikacji i osiągnięcia tożsamości)*, the introductory article is the work of Waldemar Kmiecikowski entitled *Mutual understanding between parents and children as a problem and task. Several phenomenological insights (Porozumienie między rodzicami a dziećmi jako problem i zadanie. Kilka wątków fenomenologicznych)*. The author analyzes the phenomenon of parenthood. He considers parenthood through many aspects and perspectives- biological, axiological and ontic. He aptly captures the correlation of childhood with parenthood. He equates parenthood to 'giving' and childhood 'being given': 'there is no child without a parent, but there is also no parent without a child'. Holistic and

intergenerational aspect of the relation between the child and the parent is shown. The parent is not only giving wisdom, but is also receiving and modifying it through his interactions with his loved one. Not only is the parent a master, the child becomes it as well through intergenerational tension. It becomes also a reviewer and judge of his own caretakers. What is important in such an approach is showing respect and acceptance towards the parent. It is necessary in building understanding and a deeper relation with the parent just as it is important for the child to know that it is a receiver of his parents' gifts. Author emphasizes that acquiring wisdom by both sides is only possible in an environment of mutual fulfilment. The author should perhaps draw more on the riches of phenomenological philosophy, the aspect which was mentioned in the text does not exhaustively tackle the subject matter.

The second article in this part is entitled *Dialogues in the intergenerational space and the quality of the youth-parents relations (Dialogi w przestrzeni międzygeneracyjnej a jakość relacji młodziż-rodzice)* by Ewa Karmolińska-Jagodzik. The author starts by explaining the idea of a dialogue and defines it as a meeting having considered it through a philosophical prism. Through dialogue all skills, knowledge and values are transferred, however meeting is yet more important than dialogue. A meeting paired with dialogue allows for co-existence. Different perspectives are presented on the issue of communication only to define it in terms of a comprehensive systemic process. The family is also shown as a 'system', where the ways to communicate are a certain property of this system. An unquestionable analytical value of the paper is the backing of presented theories with clear, illustrative, practical examples. The conclusion of this chapter (not very inventive!) is the statement that every family is its own system, where every person has an influence on the progress of communication, where changes occur due to different life events or natural developmental phases. The author refers to research and reminds about an important issue by posing a question: does growing up 'have to' be a time when intergenerational conflicts occur, and what actually is this 'conflict situation'? The provided explanation clarifies that despite different perspective on the notion of conflict, the situation of family misunderstandings is treated as a regular occurrence, and its main reasons are, broadly understood, differences between older and younger generations. E. Karmolińska-Jagodzik strongly underlines that upbringing in dialogue positively influences the multifaceted development of children. She analyzes the nature of conflict in the face of trusting in different values and, in consequence – as she points out – it is a period of tempestuous and difficult intergenerational negotiations. The intergenerational crisis brings, however, certain benefits: it is conducive in shaping soft competence in youth, and helps parents change their (one might think 'rigid') convictions. It is worth expanding the paper by the notions of negotiations and mediations and describe this against the background of teenager-parent or adolescent-adult relations.

The third paper is the article *Failure to reach mental autonomy among youths in the context of their relations with parents, (Nieosiąganie autonomii psychicznej u młodzieży w kontekście relacji z rodzicami)* written by Justyna Jakubowska-Baranek.

The stage of adolescence is a breakthrough period for the life of an individual characterized by tempestuous crises intertwined with creative moments: creating own identity and autonomy as well as life goals. The author recreates the definition of the notion of 'autonomy' drawing on psychological literature. One might, however, sense the limitations of such an approach. It would, perhaps, be beneficial to expand the ponderings by utilizing knowledge from the field of sociology. The author observes, that the 'break-away' period of adolescence characterizes the parents-young man relation, when the former tries to become more self-reliant. The child feels conflict between the intention of becoming independent and the willingness to remain home. For parents the awareness of an 'empty nest' is not easy. For both parts the dominant conviction

is that the child will manage without parents and parents will manage without the child. If the parents and the youth will not 'work through' this problem within themselves, separation difficulties and tensions in decision-making will ensue.

A truly pathological situation might unfold when both sides do not positively solve their intra-mental conflict, which might result in a demand-oriented attitude and financial demands raised by one party towards the other. Such pathology occurs in internally difficult, overprotective and chaotic families. These mentioned types, especially if they overlap, do not generate positive bonds. The learnt patterns from childhood will translate into difficulties in adaptation and participating in social life. This involves problems of self-perception. In the reviewed paper the theories and conclusions are drawn clearly and lucidly. It might prove helpful in 'educating' parents.

The next paper by Paulina Peret- Drażewska, touches on the topic of *Child no more, not yet an adult- theoretical analysis of the difficulties in understanding the status of an adolescent*

(*Już nie dziecko, jeszcze nie dorosły- teoretyczna analiza przyczyn trudności w zrozumieniu statusu adolescenta*). In the beginning the author paid attention to the negative and stereotypical perceptions of teenagers by other age groups. She discusses different theories while presenting adolescence and underlines one issue: adults do not understand adolescents because they disregard the meaning of this developmental period. Such a perspective negatively influences the relation-building process. A teenager grows up in several dimensions – biological, mental, intellectual and social. However, the diverse tempo of growing up, causes that a young man/woman is not catching up with internal changes. The author broadly discusses the changes and problems regarding adolescence, considering many theories and scientific opinions. An important conclusion resulting from this publication is the thesis that there is an efficient way to avoid intergenerational misunderstandings. This may be achieved by understanding the knowledge regarding basic developmental phases and the specificity of developmental stage of the partner to these interactions. Obligation of acquiring this knowledge does not only regard parents but also pedagogues, trainers, coaches and other adults. Then, it is easier to understand that the intergenerational conflict might have a positive ring to it. This article is interesting and seems to be exhaustive, the subject matter is handled coherently and accurately.

The fifth article in this part is *Quality of intergenerational relations between high-school youth and their parents – a well-disposed youngster (Jakość relacji międzypokoleniowych między młodzieżą licealną a jej rodzicami. Dobrochny Młodak)*. In the beginning the author presents the types and functions of a family, educational style, upbringing and social roles, all of which carry important problems- disappearance of certain values, lack of social adaptation and adaptation-related difficulties, which become more and more common. This stresses the importance of good communication within the family. In the article new and interesting positions were presented, which stand in opposition to a very common and stereotypical way of perceiving the youthful rebellion by adults. The role of youthful rebellion in the adolescent period does not have to be perceived as a negative phenomenon, but rather as something completely natural. The author in this paper should put more emphasis on considerations about how adults perceive rebellion, how they can help parents and teenagers to transition from unnecessary tensions through this difficult, yet natural period. In this article, the intergenerational conflict is perceived positively as complementary with dialogue. Doubtless, a positive aspect of the paper is backing the theory with own research of the author. This research has revealed that high-school students positively evaluate their contacts with parents. (!)

The last article in this cycle is authored by Anna Sprutt-Szymelt and is entitled

Understanding without violence in the relations of the youth with parents and positive identity during the growing-up period (Porozumienie bez przemocy w relacjach młodzieży z rodzicami

a tożsamość pozytywna w okresie dorastania). The ponderings regard the book *Understanding without violence* by M. B. Rosenberg. The author discusses the growing up period in the mental sphere as well as the relevance of having an identity. Moreover, the publication in a detailed manner and insightfully describes the method of communication known as 'understanding without violence'. An important positive aspect of the analyses is the set of practical guidelines for adults. It is shown how this method can teach young generation to communicate properly and shape interpersonal skills. However, while acquainting oneself with the article one might venture a guess if the author is not trying to clarify the already classic paper by Rosenberg?

In the second part of the monograph entitled *Factors conditioning the proper conduct of inter-generational relations (Czynniki warunkujące prawidłowy przebieg relacji międzygeneracyjnych)* the first article, written by Bożena Kanclerze, was entitled *Family relations of youths in educational care facilities. Empirical analysis (Relacje rodzinne młodzieży przebywającej w placówkach opiekuńczo-wychowawczych. Analiza empiryczna)*. This paper starts with a deliberation devoted to the issue of the pro-socialization role of the family in the life of a teenager. Subsequent fragments depict the rich experiences of the author of the publication as an educator in the Youth House in Poznań as well as – analysis of the literature regarding the subject matter. The author points to and analyses the causes of placing children in orphanages. She draws attention to a relevant issue, i.e. state institutions do not provide, even to a minimal degree, a place where young people can start their independent and dignified life. Almost all pupils go back to their family homes, from where they were previously 'taken', so, to places where the situation has, by and large, not changed when the child was at the educational care facility. The research of the author proves that young people, who come back to their families still have material and housing problems. They still have problems with proper forming of social and family contacts. The experiences of B. Kanclerz do overlap with different reports and reveal the weakness and limitations of our social policy, as well as an additional voice calling for a multidimensional and long term systemic changes. This paper is another publication devoted to the problem of 'paths' of the children who stayed in educational care facilities. Although this text does not bring anything new, it is another voice bringing up a relevant problem persisting in our country.

Education towards the process of shaping identity of modern youth from patriotism to social activation (Edukacja wobec procesu kształtowania się tożsamości współczesnej młodzieży od patriotyzmu po aktywizację społeczną) – this is the title of the second article in this part written by Piotr Mosiek. The initial portion of the paper regards the idea of identity, theoretical concept of patriotism as well as studies how patriotism is perceived by citizens. The author shows what important role is played by family in patriotic upbringing of a child. An equally important role is played by local environment and educational institutions in civic education, fulfilling the social needs of the young generation. It also indicates the need of building and strengthening civic education, especially patriotic one in a newer mass media environment, globalization and transgression. The description of practical examples or, even, ideas to implement with the use of modern methods and means of civic and patriotic upbringing, would make this publication more useful for teachers and the topic would then be considered as exhausted.

The third text, authored by Monika Popow bears the title *Parents and youth in virtual space. Reconstruction of the concept of learning. (Rodzice i młodzież w wirtualnej przestrzeni. Rekonstrukcja koncepcji uczenia się)*. The first part of this publication constitutes a

description of the differences in teaching of adolescents and adults. The author shows the values of teaching in the space of the Internet for both discussed groups, however, not in the form of e-learning. She brings forth and analyses the results of own research. The research regarded blogs, fora and portals directed at parents or youth. Teenager-friendly internet media

focus on school learning, including ways of learning, exams, school as a place of acquiring 'useless' knowledge, but also as a place, where you can meet friends and gather memories for their entire life. The youth also treats the Internet as a space for learning through exchange of own experiences. Whereas, internet portals directed at parents aim at transferring knowledge, teaching how to raise a teenager, talk about methods of sharing news and learning from each other. The author draws a disturbing conclusion: virtual communities of parents and youths, which constitute spaces for learning and talking about learning, are, in fact 'separate', do not interact. The research unveils a lack (in the examined media) of intergenerational virtual space for learning. It is a shame that the author of the paper did not move farther in her deliberations: she did not venture to pose a thesis as to what should have been done, to alter the status quo.

The fourth paper entitled *Family environment as one of the factors affecting the professional choices of youth*, (*Środowiska rodzinne jako jeden z czynników oddziałujących na wybory zawodowe młodzieży*), is authored by Lucyna Myszka-Strychalska. She starts from discussing the theoretical concept of the notion of a career and presents several researches and concepts tackling how the family factor influences the professional development of youths. The author conducts an analysis of a diagnostic survey, examining a relatively numerous group, therefore their results might be translated into the general populace of this age group. What results from this research is that parents have a relevant influence on the self-esteem of their beloved children. The youths can, in a self-aware manner, choose their career path, only when they have big confidence in their own ability to influence things around them. Such factors as the quality of family life, parents' education, material situation of the family, the number of children all strongly affect the professional path of a teenager. An unquestionably valuable element of the paper are the empirical studies that were conducted, which help broaden the analyses by important aspects. The author could have attempted to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the obtained results.

The penultimate chapter is another text by Ewa- Karmolińska- Jagodzic entitled *Emotions in relations between youths and their parents* (*Emocje w relacjach między młodzieżą a jej rodzicami*). The author introduces the topic of her article by defining the notion of emotions, describing briefly the fundamental typology and nomenclature. She shows also how parents, as the embodiment of values and norms, can have significant relevance in the shaping of character and emotional construct of the child. Puberty, is a time of huge changes in the emotional sphere as well as significant re-formulation of the nature of the parents-children relations. This is indeed a difficult and very painful period. Shaping the social competencies in a teenager might contribute to better emotional and social maturity. Only emotionally mature parents are able to raise a child as an autonomous entity. The article lacks practical solutions on how to shape basic emotions and what patterns of behaviour might be pathological, moreover, the theme of 'good' and 'distorted' communication should be more broadly tackled.

The last article in the reviewed book is the paper entitled *Gender socialization of girls in the context of their relations with parents*, (*Socjalizacja rodzajowa dziewcząt w kontekście relacji z rodzicami*), which was written by Aneta Judzińska. The elaborations of the author have a clear theoretical nature. She touches upon the problem of social status of women and how women are perceived by the society. The position of women frequently depends on what culture, community, religion or nationality the family belongs to. Stereotypical perception within a given environment, to a large extent conditions the transfer of standards and models of behaviour by the mother to the daughter. Currently, numerous models are being created: model of a woman subdued to a man, sacrificing herself for the family, sensitive mother succeeding in her professional life. Such contrasting features are required from a teenage

girl entering adult life, which might disturb the balance and cause a crisis of autonomy and identity. The choice depends on the young woman.... The author notices the necessity to continue and elaborate on this theme, posing several important questions. Yet, what is lacking is an attempt at reflecting upon solutions or seeking an answer. The author stipulates that 'the answer is dependant upon the paradigm that the researcher assumes', which is slightly perplexing. The text, however, is not easy to read, for an average parent it might seem unattractive, in fact, the writing style might be described as 'not appealing to the reader', or indecipherable at times.

Summarizing the evaluation of the entire monograph, it's worth emphasizing the following matters.

From the analysis of the references it results that to prepare the monograph, numerous English language sources were used. From that point of view, the paper does not only cast light on the Polish but also international scientific achievements in the field of intergenerational relations.

The title of the paper is adequate to its content. Although the publication is written by different authors, is not repetitive in handling the subject matter. In truth, content-wise, one might point to a thematic link between the different texts.

The main advantage of the reviewed publication is a fresh look at the adolescent period and attention paid to the current social and cultural conditioning, which makes it possible to look at those problems in way that has not been done so far (at least not to such a degree).

This characteristic makes it unique and fulfils the gap in the literature of the subject.

Another positive aspect worth pointing out is the fact that Authors make references in their papers to both theory and practice. In the monograph, most scientific papers feature the assumption that theoretical stipulations must be backed by practical examples or empirical studies.

Moreover, a valuable element is the ability of perceiving problems from the perspective of an individual, family, society and the system of a state in relation to the pro-family and pro-social policy.

Yet another beneficial side of the monograph is the stylistic aspect of the written language used to produce this piece of scientific writing. Additionally, the papers themselves are always interesting, concisely written and logical (except for the aforementioned exceptions). Parts of the publications are a delight to read with the scientific portions elaborated on in a language that is clear to read and understand (that includes readers not well versed with the given subject matter). However, some articles (as mentioned above), despite touching upon interesting problems, are to a limited degree communicative and sometimes tiring to the recipient.

A weak point (fortunately affecting only some articles) is the fact that they lack practical references or conducted research, which would help for the given topic to be clearly and comprehensively presented.

The monograph is a valuable position in the literature of the subject: one can find in it topics and issues which required posing questions and seeking answers. Some articles tackle theoretical aspects regarding the subject matter and show the necessity to continue the topic and expanding it by empirical research. What is more, several articles seem to require an addition by incorporating a related topics like: *Gender socialization of girls in the context of relations with parents (Socjalizacja rodzajowa dziewcząt w kontekście relacji z rodzicami)*. This might be rendered more precise by adding e.g. *Gender socialization of girls and their relations with father, (Socjalizacja rodzajowa chłopców w relacjach z ojcem)*. As indicated by the second part of the main article- 'selected educational contexts', only the part of the problem dealing with intergen-

erational relations is tackled. This points to the necessity of seeking other contexts and issues in the discussed problems.

The publication brings many precious and fresh stipulations and thematic threads. Part of them constitutes valuable knowledge, which should reach a wider circle of recipients. It deals with important topics, which are, indeed, important and pressing problems requiring quick swift reaction and a search for solutions.

The above monograph is worth recommending as a lecture for parents, teachers, social workers, therapists, educators in educational care facilities, coaches and all those who work with youth in an institutional form, or other. The undertaken analyses, might contribute to a better understanding of the teenagers' world, huge importance of puberty, rebellion, emerging autonomy and identity, as well as understanding how it all affects further life, not only in personal and family life but also social and professional context.

Marlena Kaźmierska

Joanna Mizielińska, Justyna Struzik, Agnieszka Król, *Różnym głosem. Rodziny z wyboru w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, Warsaw 2017, 378 pages.

Social and cultural changes to the way we function across all aspects of life call for redefinition of terms such as family, motherhood and fatherhood. The study by Joanna Mizielińska, Justyna Struzik and Agnieszka Król is an important contribution to redefining the above-mentioned terms as it provides a detailed description and interpretation of living conditions in non-heteronormative families ("families of choice"), which do not fit in the current social order.

Różnym głosem. Rodziny z wyboru w Polsce is an innovative piece of research for the Polish research scene due to the scarcity of studies that explore family relationships in gay people. The available studies are based on quantitative data whereas the book in question uses qualitative input. Authors' extensive theoretical knowledge of the subject and object of their research as well as their research and interpersonal skills have all resulted in a project that is consistent and methodologically well structured. The quality of organization and execution owes much to the researchers' many years of experience in the field of gender and queer studies. The study is the fruit of a project entitled *Rodziny z wyboru w Polsce*, funded from public funds for research 2013-2016 and was developed under dr hab. Joanna Mizielińska at the Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The researchers provide readers with 7 chapters sub-divided into individual themes, as well as several pages of thematically organized conclusions and a glossary of essential terms.

The theoretical aspect of the research problem and methodological foundations are defined in the first chapter, where the researchers briefly summarize available scientific output dedicated to lives of same-sex families and their closest environment (families of origin), these being mostly produced by Western researchers. The methodological dimension of the project has been covered much more extensively, and apart from methodological characteristics (focus groups), this part of the chapter reports on the recruitment of the research sample, with particular emphasis on obstacles and ethical issues in working with a group seen as vulnerable and hard to access due to the social stigma it is affected with.