

Urszula Kempńska, Poland

The Family Environment of The Teenage Married Couples and its Impact on Children's Access to Education and Vocational Training

The family creates its own hierarchy of norms and values which are transmitted to the next generation. In this intergenerational transmission of the important standards and principles the processes of social learning, modeling and identification play the predominant role. Social inheritance may occur in both the positive but also negative directions. Children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and dysfunctional families becoming parents reveal quite often tendencies to reproduce the same patterns of behaviour as well as the preference for a similar set of values which they got to know in the families of origin. It is to remember that children are both good observers of their parents' behaviour resulting from the adopted system of values and participants, as family members, of the whole family life; they are also dependent on it. The process of internalization of values in the family depends on the overall emotional atmosphere (the level of quality of marriage, parenting styles and attitudes) and on the level of intellectual development of both, parents and children. It is worth underlining that the value system with which young people meet in the family is not the only model, since many of other proposals are provided by the peer environmental groups or the media.

The family shapes the human idea of marital relationships, parenting, leisure activities or career choice. A young man making life choices is often guided by the experiences learned at home. Many of these transfers are made unconsciously, automatically.

The dynamics of the family line of succession which consists of such factors as traditional, cultural and intellectual advancement in the family, the current social status of parents and the level of their educational ambitions determines, to a large extent, the educational, professional and social start of the youth. According to researchers, the professional and social position tends to get self-strengthened. [Kawula 2009, cf. also Sztompka 2002] Problems experienced by unskilled workers are often inherited by the next generation. The percentage of youngsters who drop out before the end of secondary education and who come from families with low qualifications is twice as high as compared with young people from well-off families [Hamburg 1994]. Children raised in families of poor and unskilled workers have almost no chances to escape the spiral of poverty. The comparison of the pupils who continue their education and those who give it up revealed essential differences as for the following issues: socio-economic status, parents' attitude towards the problems of education, family

structure, student's abilities and skills. Students who dropped out of school came from underprivileged families having low economic status, which were not able to provide their children with appropriate educational aids or create opportunities to attend extra school activities. Such children were rarely reared by both biological parents, their mothers were less educated and had lower educational expectations, [McWhirter 2005, cf. also Kawula 2009] earlier than their peers they also started their own families [Kempińska 2012]. However, the increasing level of education results in a shift in the hierarchy of values. A good profession, university degree, and later well-paid work come before matrimonial and procreative decisions. [Royer 2006, Kempieńska 2012]

After passing the final examinations and getting the high-school certificate almost three quarters of young Poles wanted to take higher studies. Having higher education is, in the eyes of the youths and their parents, beneficial from the point of view of the possibilities of achieving high professional standing. [Wciórka 2009] However, the proverb "nothing is impossible to a willing mind" does not always come true. In 2011, only 29.1% of men and 33.8% of women with secondary education continued their education [CSO 2012].

While speaking about the current material and intellectual poverty one should mention some of its most significant factors, namely the problem of the so-called reproduction of poverty, the vicious circle of poverty and deprivation, social and economic mechanisms which eliminate the whole categories of people on the margins of society, causing their permanent marginalization and exclusion as well as the formation of the so-called *underclass*, which is perceived as the result of multi-dimensional deprivation and cumulative, concentrated and well-established poverty. The dramatic character of contemporary poverty does not always mean that it threatens the health and life, but it often turns into the dangerous poverty fixation and therefore to its transmission from one generation to the next, or simple inheritance of the economic circumstances of poverty and all negative effects related to it. Oscar Lewis in 1959 for the first time used the term *culture of poverty* [Lewis, 1964]. Culture of poverty popularized by Oscar Lewis is the thesis according to which poverty is not due to shortage of material goods in the lives of individuals but to social and cultural atmosphere in which the socialization of children takes place. "The culture of poverty" consists in sharing amongst people some common values, beliefs, lifestyles, habits and customs. Poverty is not the result of social maladjustment of individuals, but depends on the general cultural climate that is passed down from generation to generation Ch. Murray includes into the category of persons belonging to a culture of learned helplessness all those people who, instead of trying to search

opportunities on the job market , prefer to live only on social assistance benefits. [Giddens 2008] The consequence of family poverty for the child's future is, acquired in such a situation, certain fatalistic mentality , manifesting itself in an attitude of resignation of all efforts which would aim at obtaining any relevant qualifications and raise one's own social status [Mierzwiński 2004 , Majkowski 2010]. One possible solution is education through labour. Education through work should be initiated as soon as possible, preferably within a family in which children learn the principles of the functioning of the house, rules for maintaining order in home and helping others; they also have the first serious interest in the work of parents as well as of those close to them.

The main tasks of education through work may include, inter alia:

- 1) Motivating children, youngsters as well as the adults to get and develop the basic knowledge on human work and on its inherent value, need and necessity for each man.
- 2) Getting children and young people involved in the mainstream of human everyday activity.
- 3) Shaping individual character features such as diligence, carefulness, meticulousness. [Wiatrowski 2005].

The fact that young people are not well prepared to take responsibility for their own families is a consequence of their upbringing in childhood and adolescence. The problems of the faulty organization of family life, children made to learn and concentrate only on school education and, at the same time, not having any duties and being beyond problems of everyday life result in their social immaturity and , in consequence, their reluctance to continue education or take up work.

In modern societies, having a job is important for self-esteem. A. Giddens [2008] lists several aspects of the work:

- 1) Money - remuneration for work is for many people a source of subsistence;
- 2) Level of personal activity - work provides an opportunity to acquire and use different skills and abilities;
- 3) Entertainment - work allows to go out of the house, to change surrounding and to get a break from the chores;
- 4) Structure of the time - the day of people working full-time is usually organized with regard to the rhythm of the work. The biggest problem for unemployed people is boredom;

5) Social contacts - making friends in the workplace gives people an opportunity to participate in various activities as well as to share views and feelings ;

6) Sense of self-identity - work is appreciated because it helps individuals develop the strong social identity.

In modern Europe, people can no longer count on a secure job for life since global economy fosters more frequent mergers and unemployment. The quest for efficiency and profit maximization means that individuals with narrow or unsuitable qualifications can expect to be offered only marginal, not very important positions, which are the most vulnerable to the effects of global economic restructuring.

From year to year the unemployment rate increases, especially among young people, for instance in 2000 this rate amounted to 18 % and in 2012 to 22.5 %. The largest unemployment rate among people aged 15-24 in 2012 was recorded in Greece - 53.8 % , Spain - 53.7 % , Portugal - 36.4 % , Italy - 34.3% whereas the lowest rate was reported in Austria and Germany - 8.8%. By comparison, the U.S reported 14.5% [Faget 2012], Poland - 12.5% [GUS – Central Statistical Office of Poland]. The unemployment rate among young people is two times higher than among those aged 30-40 [*Le chômage des jeunes (15-24 ans) dans l' UE- 27, 2011*]. 40 % of young people in the European Union in 2009, were working on temporary contracts, so-called " junk contracts" . [*Le chômage des jeunes (15-24 ans) dans l' UE- 27 , 2011*].

The first and most immediate effect of unemployment is worsening of financial situation of the unemployed, which decreases the quality of marriage and family life. Unemployed people in the family are not only the cause of a significant reduction of its budget; such a situation has also a critical impact on the relationships with the environment : friends and neighbours. The effects of unemployment in the family can also be seen in the implementation of multiple functions such as the educational function (reduction of parental authority, transfer of inappropriate patterns of behaviour , intergenerational conflicts , poor parenting ,low aspirations of children, limited education expenses - the purchase of learning aids, extra school activities), cultural function (reduction of social life, the level of readership , institutional barriers strengthening cultural status) and the social and recreational functions - cutting expenses on recreation, preserving irrational forms of leisure activities, passive recreation at home, weakened peer relationships in the environment. The conditions under which the family performs the tasks and responsibilities in the upbringing and education of the children relate actually to the real economic, social and cultural circumstances affecting the lives of its members. The families of the unemployed or those of low economic status feel

the need to deliberate abandonment of extra-curricular activities which would aim at developing children's interests. Parenting plans about how their offspring should be reared and educated are correlated with the degree of their own education.

Materials and methods

The first stage of research " Juvenile marriages - causes and consequences " was carried out in 1997-1998 among 125 people who entered into a marriage (in the period from 1978 to 1996) with the permission of the Court of Guardianship in Wloclawek. The married couples who took part in research were subject to the provisions of law of *the Family and Custody Code* from February 25,1964, according to which marriageable age for a man was set at 21 and for a woman at 18. The Guardianship Court could , in certain circumstances (pregnancy, birth of a child) allow the marriage of a man below 21, but not younger than 18, and a woman under the age of 18, but not less than 16, with judicial approval.

In the second stage of the study, which was re-taken 10 years later (in July 2008) the researcher managed to reach only 60 people who participated in the first stage of research work. This time, the study included the participation of parents (also 60), and 39 children. It appeared however that it had been impossible to re-interview all the participants taking part in the first research because of:

- refusal of some to participate in the study,
- departure abroad or to another city,
- change of residence
- In the case of children, the significant variable was their age (only adults were invited to take part in the study, mainly due to the questions included in the questionnaire referring, among others, to educational and occupational aspirations.). The research was based on the methodological analysis of documents (Marriage Records at the Register Office)as well as on the diagnostic survey. The researcher herself elaborated her own interview questionnaire for married adolescents, their parents and children. Each interview was conducted in the respondent's home , after finding a convenient time to talk with the teenage spouse who took part in the first stage of the study, and separately with her/his parent and the child. Once the questionnaire was carried out, it got its number (the same number was marked on the answer sheet of spouses, parents and children for the purpose of further analysis of different factors and correlations, for example in the field of career aspirations).

This paper presents the results of studies based on the interviews with respondents coming from three generations: the first generation - grandparents , the second generation - parents and the third one - children. The analysis included 39 sheets of questionnaire answers prepared for each generation.

The aim of this study was primarily an attempt to draw attention to the need for interdisciplinary reflection on the inheritance of a "culture of poverty " and therefore inheritance of attitudes relating to the selection of family lifestyle and educational opportunities for children of the teenage spouses. During the study the researcher sought an answer to the question: ' How does education of past generations affect educational and professional aspirations of the third generation ? '

Study results:

Educational opportunities created by parents for their children are among the most significant determinants of their successful career, and social advancement. Home education of the young generations begins at birth, later on it is determined on the further steps of school education, so as to be at last manifested at the moment of taking the job and the use of cultural goods. The level of achieved learning outcomes not only correlates with students' actual knowledge ,but also with professional career of parents, the standards of their education and aspirations.

Tab.1. Grandparents' and parents' level of education on research

Grandparents' education	Parents' education				Total
	Elementary	Vocational	Secondary	Higher	
Elementary	6	1	1	-	8
Vocational	2	11	3	-	16
Secondary	-	1	3	4	8
Higher	-	2	1	4	7
Total	8	15	8	8	39

Source: own data.

In the first generation - grandparents : 8 subjects completed primary education , 16 - vocational education ,8 - secondary, 7 - higher education. In the generation of parents educational advancement was achieved by 9 people, 24 people remained in the same standard of education, regression concerned 6 subjects.

The respondents in the second generation who achieved a lower level of education than the previous generations, in majority came from broken families, began sexual activity at the age of 17 or earlier, have entered into marriage at the age of 17-18, did not have any deeper interests (3 of them spent their time on having sex and going to discos) .

However, the subjects who succeeded in educational advancement in the majority came from nuclear families. They initiated their sexual life when coming of age, married at the age of 19-20 and could rely on the support of their generational families.

Tab.2. Parents' and children's level of education on research

Parents' education	Childrens' education				Total
	Elementary	Vocational	Secondary	Higher	
Elementary	2	3	3	-	8
Vocational	-	11	4	-	15
Secondary	-	-	5	3	8
Higher	-	-	5*	3	8
Total	2	14	17	6	39

Source: own data

*4 people are still studying

As for children, an important factor correlated with the implementation of social stratification in the generational families was their parents' marriage concluded with the consent of the Court of Guardianship. Parents suffered the consequences of the early marriage because they were often forced to give up their school education. 12 respondents from the third generation taking part in the study came from families in which one of the parents on their wedding day was a pupil or student; 8 subjects came from families in which both parents continued their

education; 8 parents after giving up their education never returned to school again. The decision to start family too early had a much stronger impact on wives than on husbands when it regards their further education and professional qualifications. It resulted from the traditional order of things that women were mainly responsible for childcare and child's upbringing and therefore they suffered more social consequences on the grounds of maternity - they had to move from day to evening school, and when they could not rely on a partner or parents, feeling unable to reconcile the duties of a student with the role of mother, they dropped out of school. Lack of education, profession or too low qualifications as well as short professional training or changing various schools forced the parents to take poorly-paid jobs on one hand and on the other, to live with their in-laws under one roof and, ipso facto, depend on their financial and childcare help.

In the third generation 13 respondents succeeded in educational advancement, 21 people stayed at the same level as their parents, 4 people are still studying. Only one person lowered his/her level of education, (*as I can remember my father always kept telling me to do nothing but study - I had no free time for myself but I had to spend all my days on learning. For his part, he also constantly increased the level of his knowledge, he never had time for mum and for us; finally, he left us when I was 12 years old. I did not finish my studies just to annoy my father, I have a high school diploma and for the time being that is sufficient for me - opinion of one of the respondents*).

Two women who have completed only their elementary education:

- came from families without intellectual aspirations; both parents and grandparents had also completed only primary school;
- both grandparents and parents divorced; the respondents described the atmosphere at home as bad;
- mothers and grandmothers spent their free time mostly at home watching the series, not having any other interests. In those homes there were no books, newspapers, learning aids, because ... *what for... after all, the books just collect dust and you have to clean up afterwards*;
- at school, the respondents had difficulties with going into the next year, but the family did not see the need to pay for tutors;
- the respondents started their sexual initiation at the age of 15;
- they got married at the age of 16 -17 but divorced a year after;

- one of the women is presently working , the other lives on her cohabitant.

The research shows that the educational advancement correlates with :

- **The age of initiation.** Boys and girls studying long and at a higher level initiated their sexual activity later. Those who have completed mainly primary or vocational education started their sexual life at the median age of 15.9 , while those who completed at least high school - at the age of 16.8;

- **Interests of their parents and grandparents.** Most grandparents did not have any hobbies or deeper special interests; after work they usually watched TV, rarely went on trips or took up gardening, almost nobody read books, went to the cinema. Therefore, they passed such a model of spending free time down to their children. *On Tuesdays, we always sat in front of TV to watch "Isaura The Slave Girl"* (opinion of one of the mothers). In most of the families, each person spent free time on his/her own. No wonder that the respondents coming from the third generation spent their free moments on ... having sex , or simply got bored. Only 8 respondents had hobbies such as sports, movies, or learning foreign languages. It should be noted that not all of the surveyed families were financially limited as for the choice of leisure activities; many parents just did not feel the need and did not see the point in changing habits. The past generations left such a passive model of leisure activities (watching TV) to their children;

-**The educational aspirations and the history of generational families.** Only members of families of the intelligentsia) completed high school or higher education;

-**The setting house rules and completing household tasks.** Each family member, regardless of age should have their duties and responsibilities and carry them out. In the third generation of people taking part in the present study, every other person with primary education or vocational training did not have any responsibilities or chores to do at home whereas among the respondents who completed at least high school this problem concerned every 10th individual.

Wloclawek has already been an industrial town in the XIXth century. Therefore, it is nothing surprising that in the first tested generation (respondents born in the 30's and 40's of XXth century) as well as in the second one (those born in the 60's and 70's), more than half of the respondents completed only primary school or vocational training. Until 1989, every person, even without professional qualifications could get a job in one of the well-run manufacturing

plants and factories: Celuloza, Azoty, Nobiles, Faience Factory , Drumet, or Manometry, where they often earned more than highly educated specialists. The problem was that more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents in each generation, when they got the job, were not willing to continue their education. In the first generation, only seven respondents, in the second one - eight people and in the third one - four respondents completed the post-graduate studies or training courses.

Globalization brought about profound changes in the working world. Some traditional industries became obsolescent in view of the development of new technologies. In the past, the employee remained tied to one employer, nowadays more and more people plan individually their own professional future. This means frequent changes of job, development of new skills and abilities and using them in different professional contexts. In the modern times, job opportunities and career depend largely on education and skills. It is hard to imagine an efficient worker who does not continue learning or does not deepen the acquired knowledge. The lack of aspirations of the preceding generations is also seen in the implementation of care and educational functions and stratification, namely by: inappropriate patterns of behaviour, intergenerational conflicts, reducing children's life aspirations, limiting the purchase of learning aids, missing extra-curricular activities at school, poor cultural and book-reading habits, promoting irrational or passive forms of recreation. Families with low life aspirations deliberately abandon additional activities which could contribute to developing children's interests: sports, science, languages or music. Parents' plans regarding the education of their offspring are correlated with the degree of their academic knowledge as well as with their tendency towards reproducing well-known patterns of lifestyle in the next generation. The drama of intellectual stagnation and living from day to day as well as minimalism of higher order needs lies in the fact that this way of life is passed on to future generations together with all accompanying negative side effects. "Culture of lack of aspirations" means in this case a reproduction of some values, beliefs, habits and customs within the family. The lack of aspirations is not only the result of maladjustment of individuals to social reality, but it comes from the general cultural climate. Children and young people are brought up and taught that having aspirations does not make sense. While living in families without passions and interests, they inherit, in a manner often unaware, the behaviours of their parents. The consequence of the family passiveness or intellectual laziness for the child's future is a sort of mental attitude manifesting itself in giving up efforts to achieve the relevant qualifications and raise the social status. People poorly educated and unemployed have no chance to avoid the vicious circle of poverty.

Bibliography:

A. Giddens, *Sociologia*, PWN, Warszawa 2008, p 767

Hamburg DA, *Today's children: Creating a future for a generation in crisis*, New York Times Books, New York, 1994, p 376

Kawula S., *Pedagogika społeczna, dokonania-aktualność-perspektywy*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2009, s. 669

Kempińska U., *Małżeństwa młodocianych. Cięża, ślub I co dalej...?*, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit, Toruń 2012, s.204.

Lewis O., *Sanchez i jego dzieci. Autobiografia rodziny meksykańskiej*, PIW, Warszawa, 1964, s. 643

Majkowski W., *Rodzina polska w kontekście nowych uwarunkowań*, Wydawnictwo Księży Sercanów, Kraków 2010, s.319.

JJ McWhirter, McWhirter BT, McWhirter AM, EH McWhirter, *Zagrożona młodzież., Ujęcie kompleksowe dla nauczycieli, pracowników poradni, psychologów i pracowników socjalnych*, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne PARPA, Warszawa 2005, s.527.

Mierzwiński B., *Kościół wobec problemu bezrobocia : studium z zakresu teologii pastoralnej*, Apostolicum , Ząbki, 2004, s. 443

Rostowska T. *Rola rodziny w kształtowaniu się systemu wartości u młodzieży*, w: *Rodzina polska u progu XXI wieku*, Cudak H. (red.), Mazowiecka Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Pedagogiczna, Łowicz 1997, s. 368

Royer , Ch . *Voyage au coeur des valeurs des adolescents : la famille grand pillier d'un système* , « Enfances , Familles , Génération » , No. 4/2006 .

Sztompka P., *Socjologia* , Znak , Kraków 2002, s. 653

Wiatrowski Z. , *Podstawy pedagogiki pracy* , Wydawnictwo Akademii Bydgoskiej, Bydgoszcz , 2005, s. 547

Legal acts and other documents :

Kodeks Rodzinny i Opiekuńczy Dz.U. 1964, Nr. 9 , poz . 59 z 25 lutego 1964 r.

Kodeks Rodzinny i Opiekuńczy, Kodeks postępowania cywilnego, Prawo o aktach stanu cywilnego, ustawy o stosunku Państwa do Kościoła Katolickiego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz niektórych innych ustaw . Dz.U. 1998 Nr. 117 , poz . 757 ustawa z dnia 24 lipca 1998 r o zmianie ustaw.

Internet:

GUS (CSO) 2012

Faget D. , *La jeunesse européenne vue par le " Washington Post "*, Le Monde 04.09.2012
www.lemonde.fr .

Le chômage des jeunes (15-24 ans) dans l' EU -27 , eurostat

Wciórka B. *Aspiracje zawodowe Polaków*, CBOS 2009 , www.cbos.pl

Streszczenie

O starcie oświatowo- zawodowym młodzieży decyduje w znacznym stopniu aktualna pozycja społeczna rodziców ora ich poziom aspiracji. Procent młodzieży niekończącej szkoły średniej a pochodzącej z rodzin niskich kwalifikacjach jest dwukrotnie wyższy w porównaniu z młodzieżą z rodzin dobrze sytuowanych.

W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań przeprowadzonych z osobami, które co najmniej 20 lat temu zawarły związek małżeński z powodu ciąży partnerki oraz ich rodzicami i dziećmi. W każdym pokoleniu analizie poddano 39 arkuszy wywiadu.

Celem badań była przede wszystkim próba zwrócenia uwagi na konieczność podjęcia refleksji interdyscyplinarnych dotyczących dziedziczenia « kultury biedy » i co się z tym wiąże dziedziczenia postaw dotyczących wyboru drogi edukacyjno- rodzinnej przez dzieci małżonków młodocianych.