



***Family Spaces of Socialisation Dialogue
 in the Times of Digital Revolution
 Rodzinne przestrzenie socjalizacyjnego dialogu
 w czasach cyfrowej rewolucji***

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The aim of the article is a theoretical diagnosis of the influence of the pace of recent civilisation changes on a selected fragment of the socialisation process in the family. The course of analysis is the specificity of the relationship between parents and adolescent children (aged 15-18), including an attempt to explore the modifications occurring in these areas resulting from the development of information technology.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The research problem of this paper is an attempt to answer the question: To what extent do new inter- and intra-generational divisions – appearing as a result of rapid civilisation changes generated by the development of information technologies – modify the socialising dialogue in relations between parents and adolescent children? The research method used was a selective analysis of theoretical works and research reports from sociology, psychology, psychiatry, neurobiology and information technology, combining it with the results of my research work.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The article presents selected elements of the conceptual model used to analyse the world of contemporary generations. It includes the new division into the world of the present past and the world of the present future, together with their new inhabitants – people of the past and people of the future. The new relationships that have emerged in recent years and the difficulties in constructing a socialising dialogue between parents and growing children are then analysed.

RESEARCH RESULTS: As a consequence of the increasingly deepening division of the world of generations, constructing a socialisation dialogue in the relationship between parents and adolescent children has become more complicated. The confrontational-verifying influence of intra-familial socialisation concerning the areas of secondary socialisation (today transferred mainly to the parallel virtual reality) is noticeably losing its significance.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The modifications of intergenerational relations within the family, occurring as a result of rapid civilisation changes, result in an

“unfinished”, incomplete socialisation process of adolescent children, heading towards an unknown form of adulthood with this new cultural capital.

→ **KEYWORDS:** **SOCIALISATION, INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS, FAMILY, CIVILISATION CHANGES, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**

STRESZCZENIE

CEL NAUKOWY: Celem jest teoretyczna diagnoza wpływu tempa współczesnych przemian cywilizacyjnych na wybrany fragment przebiegu procesu socjalizacji w rodzinie. Tok analiz ukierunkowano na specyfikę relacji rodzice – dorastające dzieci (15-18 lat), w tym na próbę eksplanacji pojawiających się w tych obszarach modyfikacji stanowiących efekt rozwoju technologii informatycznych.

PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE: Problem badawczy zawiera się w pytaniu: W jakich zakresach nowe między- i wewnątrzpokoleniowe podziały – pojawiające się na skutek szybkich przemian cywilizacyjnych generowanych rozwojem technologii informatycznych – modyfikują socjalizacyjny dialog w relacjach rodzice – dorastające dzieci? Jako metodę badawczą zastosowano selektywną analizę prac teoretycznych oraz raportów z badań z zakresu socjologii, psychologii, psychiatrii, neurobiologii i technologii informatycznych, łącząc ją z efektami własnych prac badawczych.

PROCES WYWODU: W artykule zaprezentowano wybrane elementy modelu pojęciowego wykorzystanego do analiz świata współczesnych pokoleń, w tym nowy podział na świat teraźniejszej przeszłości i świat teraźniejszej przyszłości wraz z zamieszkującymi je nowymi mieszkańcami – ludźmi przeszłości i ludźmi przyszłości. Następnie analizie poddano kształtującą się w ostatnich latach nową jakość relacji i utrudnienia w konstruowaniu socjalizacyjnego dialogu pomiędzy rodzicami i dorastającymi dziećmi.

WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ: W konsekwencji wciąż pogłębiającego się podziału świata pokoleń konstruowanie socjalizacyjnego dialogu w relacjach rodzice – dorastające dzieci staje się trudniejsze i coraz bardziej skomplikowane. Konfrontacyjno-weryfikujący wpływ socjalizacji wewnątrzrodzinnej wobec obszarów socjalizacji wtórnej (dziś w znacznej mierze przeniesionych do równoległej rzeczywistości wirtualnej) zauważalnie traci na znaczeniu.

WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE: Pojawiające się w następstwie szybkich przemian cywilizacyjnych modyfikacje wewnątrzrodzinnych relacji międzypokoleniowych skutkują „niedokończonym”, niepełnym procesem socjalizacji dorastających dzieci, które z takim nowym kapitałem kulturowym zmierzają w stronę nieznaną nam formy dorosłości.

→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **SOCJALIZACJA, RELACJE MIĘDZYPOKOLENIOWE, RODZINA, PRZEMIANY CYWILIZACYJNE, TECHNOLOGIE INFORMATYCZNE**

Introduction

We are living in times of significant acceleration of civilisational change, primarily generated by the development of information technologies. Starting with the creation of a single telephone and Internet space at the beginning of the 21st century and the introduction of a set of capabilities known as Web 2.0, our everyday life has become divided, with most of us functioning simultaneously in two realities – the real and the virtual.

The Internet is not the only arena for change. Thanks to our increasingly complex online activities, we have become providers of vast amounts of information, and their complicated analyses (Big Data), facilitating the work on ever more perfect forms of artificial intelligence (*deep learning* in machine learning), have provided the impetus to set in motion the next stages of the technological and civilisational digital revolution unfolding before our eyes. Today, artificial intelligence technologies (AI) (Bostrom, 2016; Kaplan, 2019; Ito, 2019), algorithmic decision-making systems (ADM) (O'Neil, 2017), as well as new ideologies based on technological progress, such as technological singularity theory, dataism or algocracy (Vinge, 1993; Kurzweil, 2006; Tzezana, 2017; Ito, 2019, Bloom, 2000; Kelly, 2010; Hidalgo, 2015; DuBravac, 2015; Harari, 2018; Aneesh, 2009; Danaher, 2016), contribute to deep changes in the reality of our lives.

The acceleration of civilisational change is also accompanied by „a withdrawal of allegiance from conventional norms and weakening of these norms' guiding power on behavior" (Passas, 2000, p. 20), both on a macro and micro scale, and modernity is becoming not only fluid and fragmented, but moreover very fast, overflowing with content, images, information, and consequently chaotic, illusory and temporary (Bauman, 2006; Beck, 2002; Giddens, 2001).

In this new reality, a new division is becoming increasingly clear. Today's "new world" is divided into the world of the present future and the world of the present past, which is inhabited by its "new" residents. The above-mentioned trends lead to noticeable modifications of intra-family socialisation, including such socialisation in its late stage, which is of particular interest to me: in the relationships between parents and their adolescent children. This stage, first of all, is associated with the construction of the foundations of intergenerational socialisation dialogue between (soon) two equal adult interaction partners, and it constitutes the "final touch" before the children become independent adults. Its quality is of considerable importance for the shape and functioning of both modern and future societies.

The world of people of the past and people of the future

The sub-worlds of the present past and the present future are spaces inscribed within various, surrounding us realities constructed in contemporary times, starting with the world of everyday life on a micro-structural scale and ending with the sub-worlds of politics or business on a global scale. On the one hand, they are specific "schemata" for perceiving the realities that surround us and are co-created by us; on the other, they

are specific perspectives that modify the course of action taken. The sub-world of the present past does not imply the dominance of a traditionalist or extremely conservative orientation, nor does the sub-world of the present future imply a pro-futurist orientation of actions taken. Instead, both spaces symbolise the positioning of individuals in the face of rapid civilisation change.

In this way, the shaping spaces of the “new world” today are increasingly inhabited by “new people” and, in essence, their ways of defining situations and taking action are being modified. I call them “people of the future” and “people of the past” and treat them in terms of ideal types (Weber, 2004). Both, despite living “in the same” present-day, live, as it were, side by side, in two parallel, albeit interpenetrating spheres: the present past and the present future.

The most significant differences between “people of the past” and “people of the future,” in the context of the intergenerational socialisation dialogue in the family that interests me, are marked in several areas.

What is typical of the “people of the future” is their constant participation in the internet and telephone space. Their world of everyday life is not divided into the real and virtual one. It is replaced by one real-virtual reality in which the fluidity of boundaries creates the appearance of their absence. For the “people of the future,” what they can experience through online activity is as important as experiences in the real world.

On the other hand, the attractiveness of virtual spaces isolates “people of the future” from the real world and causes them to increasingly lose the ability to experience it, without electronic gadgets (smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc.). As numerous studies indicate, the benefits of the rapid development of information technology can carry many risks. “People of the future,” due to their intensive involvement in virtual world spaces, are more vulnerable to them.

An important role is played here by the constant exposure to an unprecedented, intense, multi-source impact of external stimuli, resulting in changes in the functioning of the brain, which has never been exposed to such a large number of sensations. The brain’s adaptive mechanisms, which are activated as a remedy to the situation, clearly alter the realities of social life. Analytical and reflective thinking skills are weakened, the level of empathy lowers, and tolerance decreases. Distraction, problems with expressing emotions and interpersonal communication emerge. Reaction time increases. Efficient memorisation of even very large amounts of information is not matched by the ease of use in practice (Carr, 2012; Morańska & Jędrzejko, 2013; Klingberg, 2008; Heersmink, 2016; Sanbonmatsu et al., 2013).

Yielding to new addictions, among which internet and smartphone addiction come to the fore, is the second threat of modern times that may affect “people of the future.” Modern technology, which provides a constant flow of new stimuli, is an omnipresent necessity for “people of the future.” When it is missing (lost telephone, broken internet connection, etc.), irritability, restlessness, anxiety and panic attacks occur (Guerreschi, 2010; Weinschenk, 2012; Cash et al., 2012; Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014; Cheng & Li, 2014; Lopez-Fernandez, Kuss, 2019).

Due to a specific, constant immersion in the internet space, “people of the future” have poorer abilities for direct communication. They use the “internet language,” and its elements, which are transferred to speech, introduce into the communication styles in the real world. They prefer brief, simple messages; they like communicating through e-mails, SMS, social media communicators, chats, forums, etc. They replace words with acronyms, emoticons and likes with which they express their emotions, approval or disapproval.

“People of the future” are also characterised by a specific perception of “people of the past.” They treat “people of the past” as if they were unwanted guests or intruders in “their world.” The younger the “people of the future” are, the more strongly this tendency manifests itself.

“People of the past,” in turn, do not record and share everything in which they participate, and they do not care about the number of likes they get. This does not mean that they reject participation in the process of civilisation change. They also become active on social media, and use smartphones. However, they use the new opportunities provided by technological innovations to functionally enhance their quality of life, and they do not get too excited about them. This is why, in their case, the boundaries between the real and virtual spaces are not blurred.

“People of the past” find themselves better than “people of the future” in face-to-face communication spaces. Although they use email, social networks, texting, etc., face-to-face relationships (and phone calls) are still their preferred type of interaction.

The necessarily abbreviated division sketched above is another phase in the development of inter- and intra-generational relations in the Western world (of which I include Poland), previously diagnosed and explained by Margaret Mead (1970) and Marc Prensky (2001). The trends discussed above shape a new dimension of the process of generational differentiation, which, being part of the process of generational change, defines internal differentiations within broader generational communities. These differentiations transcend the boundaries of existing generations, adding a “third dimension” that is being shaped alongside the vertical and horizontal differentiations diagnosed so far (Wrzesień, 2003).

Socialisation dialogue in the relationships between parents and adolescent children

In social sciences, socialisation is sometimes perceived and analysed in different manners. For this article, I assume that socialisation is a process “through which an individual implements themselves into the way of life of their group and wider society by learning the rules and ideas contained in culture” (Sztompka, 2002, p. 416), creates and develops a personality and becomes “a subject capable of social action” (Tillman, 2013, p. 6). If we look at socialisation from the perspective of the philosophy of dialogue (Baran, 1991; Buber, 1992; Żółkowska, 2013), adapting the considerations contained therein,

we can treat dialogue as one of the many mechanisms of socialisation. In this sense, it is a specific form of negotiating and shaping one's place in the world of everyday life, in its numerous realities, from primary groups to global systems.

The socialisation dialogue in relationships between parents and adolescent children (aged 15-18) is an important element of the late phase of the socialisation of children in the family. Its essence includes mutual confrontation and verification interactions in which the multitude of norms, values and patterns of behaviour internalised by children in the spaces of secondary socialisation are subjected to a kind of normative negotiation. At this stage, the knowledge and experiences accumulated by adolescent children are confronted with the knowledge and experiences of their parents. The emerging dialogue focuses on the elements of the same spaces of the present time, but perceived from different points of view. Consequently, on the one hand, the interaction partners strive for a common definition of negotiated situations and orientation towards recognised norms and values. On the other hand, adolescent children, while forming their own identities, pay more and more attention to the prospect of impending adulthood and their own adult place in the world.

The intra-family axiological and normative systems differ, and therefore the effects of the socialisation dialogue thus understood may also differ, but even so, its main goal has always remained the final shaping of adult characteristics under societal expectations. After all, the intra-family socialisation of children is first and foremost a process of socialisation to/for society – the preparation of the next fully-fledged adult members of it, capable of fulfilling the tasks that society expects of them.

Those specific "last adjustments" of the coming independent adulthood are nowadays faced with rather complex complications, which are the result of the ongoing process of rapid civilisation changes. Such complications result from the changes in the socialisation patterns implemented by parents, which were initiated in the decade of the active parent in the 1990s (see Wrzesień, 2014), as well as from the progressive global anomie (Passas, 2000), the dominance of the culture of consumer capitalism (Barber, 2009), the promotion of individualism and cultural modifications of the characteristics of adulthood (Wrzesień, 2017). They are also a consequence of the dynamic development of information technologies and the spaces they create.

Until relatively recently, the consequence of the socialisation dialogue in the relationship between parents and adolescent children was (carried out with variable success) the formation of a set of traits guaranteeing the constancy of cultural transmission and the smooth continuation of societies. The new adult entering adulthood possessed sufficient cultural capital to take on the responsibilities associated with the realisation of a variety of social roles – from family and professional to those associated with public life.

The contemporary distancing of 'people of the future' and 'people of the past' from each other introduces a new dividing line in the family, resulting in the disruption of the socialisation dialogue and, consequently, also in the 'incomplete' formation of the cultural capital responsible for the perception of adulthood and the realisation of the social roles associated with it.

The most important present-day features of adulthood are self-responsibility and the ability to perceive the consequences of one's actions; the ability to reflectively select and choose the most advantageous areas of reality for oneself and the actions taken within those areas; independent decision-making; the ability to rationally limit emotional decisions; and self-reliance in action (see, inter alia, Arnett, 2000; Koch, 2016; Winterhoff, 2017; Hagler et al., 2019; Grzywa, 2010; Firestone, 1988).

Today, the parties to the family socialisation dialogue of interest are most often the "people of the past" (parents) and the "people of the future" (children). In this case, the complications of conducting a socialisation dialogue are greatest. For the children – the "people of the future", their parents – the "people of the past", are unattractive interaction partners. When determining the relationships in which they participate, children prefer to choose similar ones – "people of the future" – mainly peers. As a result, they "close themselves off" in their world, and the realisation of the socialising function of the family in the relationship between parents and growing children is significantly weakened. The young not only acquire knowledge mainly from peers but often there is no confrontational verification of this knowledge with parents at all.

Parents' attempts to establish a socialisation dialogue encounter serious difficulties. This is where the limitations of the "people of the future" become apparent: weakened analytical and reflective thinking skills, reduced levels of empathy, lower tolerance, distractibility, and problems with expressing emotions and communicating in interpersonal relationships. For children growing up addicted to virtual lands and the quasi-relationships experienced there (mainly with peers), parents – "people of the past" with their "incompatible" views of the present – are intruders to be kept at a distance. The foundations are therefore not being laid for the formation of mutual parent-child (soon adult-adult) relationships on a full partnership basis, a relationship of two equal actors.

This is the first imperfection of socialisation in the shaping of the characteristics of adulthood, which entails further ones. The weakening of the basis for building partnership relations with parents is at the root of the difficulties in socialising support for the formation of self-responsibility or the perception of the consequences of one's actions. Up to now, the socialisation dialogue between parents and adolescent children has constituted a kind of "buffer," a symbolic barrier against crossing boundaries that socially accepted norms ordered not to be crossed. When it is missing or its effectiveness is reduced, the self-correction of potential deviations from existing norms (internal control) may lose its regulatory power.

In turn, the weakening of analytical and reflective thinking skills of "people of the future" may result in problems in independent decision-making and, consequently, in young people's increased susceptibility to manipulation, especially originating in the virtual world, which may contribute to a deepening of the divide between parents and their growing children. The constant immersion in online spaces also creates the illusion that all questions can be answered on the Internet, and the increasing penetration of artificial intelligence systems into our lives in the form of personal assistants such as Siri, Cortana or Alexa, for example, is likely to reinforce this illusion soon, with the

effect of further undermining the authority of parents and weakening the effectiveness of dialogue.

The socialising dialogue between parents and growing children can also take place between “people of the future” (parents) and “people of the future” (children), and the number of such relations will increase in the coming years. In such a case, parents and adolescent children will be situated in one space – the world of the present future, nevertheless, due to the characteristics of the “people of the future” (now of both parties), the construction of effective courses of socialising dialogue may also encounter difficulties.

Conclusion

Apart from introducing undeniably positive innovations that improve the quality of our lives, the rapid development of modern information technologies has its darker side. In the context of the often alarming findings of neuroscientists, psychiatrists and psychologists carried out in recent years, it seems that the civilisation revolution reached the point where the need to reflect on where we are going is becoming ever more pronounced. Today, it seems that the failure of socialisation in shaping socially desirable characteristics of adulthood in adolescent children mainly results from the distance which is being created along the dividing line: “people of the past” (parents) vs. “people of the future” (adolescent children). Well-known developmental processes have been overlaid with the recent effects of the process of civilisation changes, which has led to the collision of two new, significantly different sub-worlds.

Nevertheless, the pace and direction of the changes taking place suggest that soon, the “people of the future” will constitute the vast majority of Western societies. The observations made suggest that to save the effectiveness of dialogue, it is advisable, I believe, for parents (especially “people of the past”) to be more open to the world of their growing children, to get to know it better and to shorten the distance between them. This is an area where professional psychological and pedagogical counselling can become active. In light of the considerations presented in this text (which should be treated as hypotheses requiring further empirical verification), training in the ability to conduct dialogue despite differences is highly advisable nowadays, both for parents and adolescent children.

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