



## **Editorial:** **Family in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period witnessing frequent and rapid transformations affecting material, economic, cultural, and political aspects of social life, in which only the family seemed to have maintained its significant role, remaining a specifically unchangeable and permanent social group. The family was supposed to guarantee the preservation of the decades-long *status quo* existing between its members: parents and children, husbands and wives. However, industrialization and urbanization were the factors which substantially influenced the changes taking place in the nineteenth-century society, including also its smallest social group, the family, which underwent gradual alterations in its structure (a shift from the multi-generational to nuclear family), functions and tasks. A new attitude to the role a woman played in the family and the tasks she performed, along with her co-responsibility for the welfare of the family, was observed. Interest in children and their development increased noticeably and their individuality began to be respected. The family continued to be a natural upbringing environment, because the upbringing of the next generations remained its most important goal, even in the dynamically changing nineteenth-century society.

Unfortunately, the changes taking place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in its second half, also exerted a negative impact on the family, particularly in the area of its everyday life. Such factors as, among others, poorly paid employment or an almost incessant need to search for work, were conducive to family breakdown, alcoholism, or burdening children with household chores, and – as far as the situation of children was concerned – too many duties, hunger, diseases, and a lack of access to education. Thus, it became necessary to provide help to families, a task which was undertaken by numerous associations and charity organizations as well as various pedagogical institutions.

The changes of the family model taking place in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century constituted a transition period between the previous epochs and the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was in the second part of the previous century when the family model based on partnership was gradually established, thanks to, among others, the dynamic development of science and technology. To a large extent, this development led to changes in the lifestyle and interpersonal relations. Undoubtedly, transformations of the family model and changes in the functioning of families in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were also influenced by systemic transformations and social and economic novelties (such as the labour market or market economy).

Transformations of the family model occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries triggered changes in the structure of the family: from large to small, from multi-generational to two-generational. These changes can also be noticed in the scope of the functions performed by families: a multifunctional family was increasingly replaced by a family with a considerably reduced number of functions.

Despite these numerous changes and transformations to which the family has been subjected for the last two centuries, the fact that it has been, is, and will continue to be an “important area of personal and community life” (Błasiak, 2019, p. 9) for man – the one from the past, the present and, hopefully, the future – remains unshaken.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Beata Topij-Stempińska  
theme issue editor