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časopis pre teóriu, výskum a prax mediálnej a marketingovej komunikácie

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No. 1-2 /2013

dot **comm**



Európska Akadémia  
Manažmentu, Marketingu a Médii

2013

## **Dot.comm**

Časopis pre teóriu, výskum a prax mediálnej a marketingovej komunikácie / Journal for the theory, research and practice of media and marketing communication

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European Academy of Management, Marketing and Media, Znievska 22, 851 06 Bratislava, Slovakia

e-mail: strbova@eammm.eu

ISSN 1339-5181

Ročník 1, rok 2013, číslo 1-2

[www.eammm.eu/casopis-dot-comm/](http://www.eammm.eu/casopis-dot-comm/)

Vychádza 2 krát ročne

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## DESIGNING THE INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE WITHIN THE SPACE OF A MODERN FAMILY IN THE TIMES OF PREFIGURATIVE CULTURE<sup>1</sup>

Arkadiusz Wąsiński, Michał Szyszka

### Abstract

The paper deals with the issue of conscious designing an intergenerational dialogue in a family, in the pedagogical perspective. The starting point is the analysis of psychosocial conditions and threats to modern family, especially the distance between generations. The next matter discussed is the one of the character and quality of communication within the family in the context of prefigurative culture. The main thesis concentrate around dialogue and cooperation as more or less consciously used strategies. The authors present the model of family communication based on the levels of community dialogue for which the basis is common language, the ability to talk, readiness to reach solutions together, participation in events important for family members. Realising such model involves broadly understood "being together" and gives all family members the sense of important contribution they make.

### Key-words

communication in families, modern families, intergenerational dialogue, prefigurative culture

Nature and quality of communication  
in a family in the face of prefigurative  
culture

Margaret Mead introduced a tripartite typology of culture into the analysis of changes in modern culture. In this typology she distinguishes between postfigurative, cofigurative and prefigurative culture<sup>2</sup>. Each of these types corresponds to different social formation and with reference to multiple analogies can be discussed in combination with traditional, industrial and information society accordingly<sup>3</sup>, or, using To-

ffler's terminology, with first, second and third wave<sup>4</sup>. What is significant in Mead's typology is the exposition of differences manifested in the intergenerational sphere, which are important from the point of view of analysis of changes in family functioning and new threats that appear<sup>5</sup>.

In the first chapter of *Culture and Commitment* Margaret Mead indicates that „The division I wish to introduce into *postfigurative cultures*, where children learn mainly from their parents, *cofigurative*, where both children and adults learn from their peers, and *prefigurative* where adults

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<sup>1</sup>The article has been written as a part of the Projekt VEGA: 1/0195/11 Stereotyped genderization of media space

<sup>2</sup>M. Mead, *Kultura i tożsamość. Studium dystansu międzypokoleniowego*, translated by J. Hołowska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2000. [Original title: *Culture and Commitment. A Study of the Generation Gap*]

<sup>3</sup>See. T. Goban-Klas, *Żeglując ku społeczeństwu informacyjnemu: prądy, rafy i mielizny*, [In:] *Nowoczesne media w kulturze, nauce i oświacie*, Eds. W. Strykowski, A. Żajac, Tarnowska Oficyna Wydawnicza, Tarnów

<sup>4</sup>A. Toffler, *Trzecia fala*, translated by E. Woydyłło, M. Kłobukowski, Wydawnictwo KURPISZ S.A., Poznań 2006, pp. 35-42. [Original title: *The Third Ware*].

<sup>5</sup>J. Holtkamp, *Co ogłupia nasze dzieci? Nowe media jako wyzwanie dla rodziców*. Kraków 2010, Wydawnictwo SALWATOR, s. 171-183 [Original title: *Verblöden unsere Kinder? Neue Medien als Herausforderung für Eltern*].

learn from their children, is the reflection of time we live in. Primitive communities, closed religious groups and ideological enclaves are mainly postfigurative - they are based on the authority that comes from the past. Great civilizations, which compelled by necessity worked out the techniques for adapting change, had to make use of cofigurative learning to some extent, that is learning from peers, from people who constituted their environment while playing, learning or working<sup>6</sup>. Now we are entering the era that has not been known in the history, when the young gain exceptional authority in its prefigurative meaning of future that nobody yet knows<sup>7</sup>.

Focusing on the quality of intergenerational relationships, understood as the relationships between the elders (seniors and parents) and youth (children and adolescents) casts a new light upon social, psychological and communicative phenomena in family environment<sup>8</sup>. Their quality is influenced by the growing number of "actors" participating as subjects in the process of educating, upbringing and socialization<sup>9</sup>. As a result of transformations of social relationships referring to the reality of particular social groups, what changes is the position of the elders, their authority, attractiveness and value of their life experience, strength and effectiveness of the educational influence, which is in turn transferred onto their meaning and role in the lives of young people. New „actors” appear

ring on this stage, who spontaneously take part in shaping social reality, considerably changes the Real significance of the elders and the nature of their participation in the process. One might say the elders are overthrown and situated in the role of an equal partner<sup>10</sup>.

Weakening of the position of the elders is reflected in specific meanings that constitute the category of *figurativeness*. In *postfigurative* cultures the authority was bestowed on few members of the community, the seniors who act wisely, due to their abundant life experience and axiological sensitivity, natural in this stage of life, which shapes the thoughts and actions directing them towards what is important and makes life meaningful. They are like an open book of wisdom for other members of the community. The members of the community learned the rules of social life, tradition, rituals and customs, by multiplying models cultivated by the elders, who were given utmost authority and the highest social status because of their age<sup>11</sup>. *Postfigurativeness* is therefore connected with exposing the social meaning of one's personal maturity. The prefix *post* points to the natural order defining that only those who have considerable life experience and understand a lot, can become authority for others, since they are spiritually and morally mature. Only then do they have moral right to bring up younger people, who are less experienced, to define the standards of

<sup>6</sup> See: CH. Taylor, *Nowoczesne imaginaria społeczne*. Kraków 2010, Wydawnictwo Znak, s. 211-212 [Original title: *Modern Social Imaginaires*]

<sup>7</sup> M. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> See: M. Szyszka, K. Walotek-Ściańska, *Wizerunek medialny osób starszych* [in:] *Starzenie się i starość w dynamicznie zmieniającym się świecie /Stárnutí a stáří v rychle se měnícím světě*, eds. K. Walotek-Ściańska et al., Sosnowiec – Praga 2013, pp. 87-98.

<sup>9</sup> See: T. Goban-Klas, *Cywilizacja medialna*. Geneza, ewolucja, eksplozja, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 2005, pp. 191-199.

<sup>10</sup> See: CH. Handy, *Wiek paradoksu*. W poszukiwaniu sensu przyszłości. Warszawa 1996, Dom Wydawniczy ABC, s. 29-31 [Original title: *The Empty Raincoat. Making Sense of the Future*]

<sup>11</sup> See: E. Fromm, *Współczesne społeczeństwo technologiczne* [w:] *Nowe media w komunikacji społecznej w XX wieku*, M. Hopfinger (red.), Oficyna Wydawnicza, s. 592-593 [Chapter of the book: *The Revolution of Hope*]

behaviour, to explain and evaluate attitudes worth emulating, to indicate the meaning of values, rules and standards of social coexistence.

When we turn to *cofigurative* cultures, we have to mention that due to the radical qualitative change in family life, peers gained considerable significance as far as socialization and education are concerned. The development of industry and urban and industrial agglomerations gave rise to the process of family atomization, which in turn means splitting large family and neighborhood communities and reducing them to so called two-generational families, created by parents and children<sup>12</sup>. Functioning of such families has changed considerably when compared to traditional family communities. What changed is the rhythm of life – it used to be natural, regulated by sunrise and sunset, and it transformed to urban, regulated by shift work in factories. Real possibility to spend time with family members has been reduced. The necessity for parents to become professionally active and for children to take up educational activity has led to the lasting division of the day into working time, relaxation time and leisure. The division is tantamount to maintaining the situation where separated family members spend the time of the greatest activity at work, in unfamiliar setting, unknown to others. Parents are in their colleague groups, children in their school and outsider school peer groups. *Cofigurativeness* is therefore connected with parallel socialising and educational influence that take place in the family and in the peer groups.

Weakening the authority of the elders is rooted in the systematic, long lasting parti-

cipation of children in peer groups, which takes place every day and does not depend on family reality. This is when the young generation gains relative independence in learning and reinterpreting social and cultural order as well as in defining their own autocreative goals and evaluating facts and events considered in their social environment. Parents, even if they are involved in their children's affairs, can participate in the life of peer groups only indirectly. However, they lose direct control and influence on the nature, content and progress of socialisation and education in peer groups. At the same time peers gain „generational” authority that is not recognized by the elders, though. The prefix *co* stands for breaking the order that was sanctioned by tradition. Among insufficient criteria one has to enumerate the age of the senior, great life experience and personal maturity, which are not enough to become authority for others and to exert effective social and educational influence. It is therefore necessary to come up with new criteria of interpersonal attractiveness within a group, communicativeness, originality and competitiveness. These are therefore criteria typical of the “generational” authority.

*Prefigurative* cultures promote young generation to the level of intergenerational authority, which means it is also recognized by the elders. Prefigurativeness is connected with a deep mental change of modern man, caused primarily by the process of information technologies permeating into social reality. Dynamism and multiple aspects of this process trigger the creation of New forms of human existence in the social dimension<sup>13</sup>. The feeling of expanding opportunities for subjective and crea-

<sup>12</sup> See. Z. Tyszka, *Z metodologii badań socjologicznych nad rodziną*, Zakłady Graficzne, Poznań 1991, pp. 241-249.

<sup>13</sup>H. Jenkins, *Kultura konwergencji. Zderzenie starych i nowych mediów*. Warszawa 2007, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, s. 7-15 [Original title: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*].

tive activity in nearly all spheres of social life quickens the pace of living and causes the awareness of growing competitiveness as far as the effectiveness of updating the competences conditioning the access to information, its interpreting, processing and creating is concerned. In prefigurative reality we distinguish between two categories of product identified with information and of affluence identified with knowledge<sup>14</sup>. The primacy of knowledge over capital and land, which were recognised as affluence in previous social formations, is conditioned by the equal access to information in the space of interactive network media<sup>15</sup>. What counts is new strategies of thinking, which Edward de Bono describes as projecting thinking based on multi-contextual perception, free from ready made formulas<sup>16</sup>. Originality and attractiveness of such thinking are influenced not only by updated skill of independent learning but also by activity aimed at perfecting informative, technological and communicative competences.

The meaning of “intergenerational” authority is therefore manifested in the quality and effectiveness of strife for knowledge through original and creative information processing. The superiority over older generations is connected on one hand with natural curiosity of new technologies and fascination with the chance of acting in virtual dimension, and on the other hand with mental sphere, which en-

tails treating the space of media as integral component of the world. What is new and strange for the elder generation and as such requires “colonisation”, is for the younger generation a natural and attractive part of their world, which they have always been “inhabiting” of their own free will<sup>17</sup>. What follows is the reversal of roles. Considering the growing pace of technological development, the elders need constant instructions and support from the most competent people, i.e. from the youth. The prefix *pre* thus symbolizes the process of socializing, educational and tutorial activity of those who have paradoxically not yet been personally formed due to age and insufficient experience. Fixing such nature of intergenerational relationship is projected onto the character of social relationships and the participation of the youngest generation in the social sphere.

#### Family in dialogue and cooperation

The reflection on creating favorable conditions for the dialogue between family members Cannot be disconnected from social and cultural reality because it is more and more marked with prefigurativeness. On one hand it is impossible to escape or ignore this reality if one is to attempt to create dialogue within a family. On the other hand, parents, who want to adapt to qualitative changes triggered by the shaping of prefigurative cultures, realize the

<sup>14</sup> In configurative reality these categories are identified with mass productivity and capital accordingly. See T. Goban-Klas, *Żeglując ku społeczeństwu...*, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> See: K. Fichnová, P. Mikuláš, L. P. Wojciechowski, Similarities and Differences between social Networking Services in Poland and Slovakia, 2012, “*Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis*”: *Studia Linguistica VII. Dialog z tradycją*, Vol 115, no. 7, part. 2 (2012), pp. 94-105

<sup>16</sup> E. de Bono, *Z nowym myśleniem w nowe tysiąclecie*, translated by M. Karpiński, Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, Poznań 2001, pp. 277-278.

<sup>17</sup> See A. Wąsiński, „Cyfrowi imigranci” versus „cyfrowi autochtoni”, czyli aksjologiczne i pedagogiczne aspekty międzygeneracyjnego dyskursu o roli wychowawcy we współczesnym odkrywaniu świata znaczeń i sensów, [In:] *Edukacja w społeczeństwie wiedzy. Niejednoznaczność rzeczywistości edukacyjnej, społecznej i kulturowej*, Ed. S. Juszczak, M. Musioł, A. Watoła, Wydawnictwo Agencja Artystyczna PARA, Katowice 2007, pp. 348-349.



dilemma manifested in the insecurity, how to strengthen the authority in relationship with the children, how to shape interpersonal relationships within a family or how to educate? An interesting suggestion of constructively solving the dilemma is a model of family communication identified by Kazimierz Jankowski as the art of the community<sup>18</sup>.

Key categories in the abovementioned model are the notions of personal space and territory<sup>19</sup>. The difference between the two notions is that personal space is like “an invisible ‘bubble’ which surrounds us, moves with us and constitutes the expansion of our physical existence, while territory does not change its location”<sup>20</sup>. Personal space is susceptible to change and is associated with individual space that symbolises current mental states of a human being manifested in the physical distance spontaneously regulated with respect to others during interactions. Territory, on the other hand, corresponds to relatively stable divisions of “geophysical” area, a flat (house) inhabited by family members. It therefore symbolises social stratification of the community manifested in the way of dividing the space of social life understood as the family area of dialogue and cooperation.

Personal space and territory define the character and quality of interpersonal relationships between family members. It is illustrated by the correlation between distance and happiness in marriage, which

shows on the basis of empirical research that statistical distance during everyday interaction declared by married couples describing their relationship as happy is 25% smaller than in the case of couples who describe their relationship as failing<sup>21</sup>. The size of the distance in interpersonal relationship defines the meaning and intensity of emotional relationship between family members. The larger the distance the greater emotional chill and the smaller trust between them. Greater distance in this context expresses the reluctance to share personal and intimate issues (such that are usually hidden from others) with the other person<sup>22</sup>. The division of specific rooms within the flat/house into territories belonging to particular family members reflects relatively stable stratification of the community. Distinguished position of a family member is unequivocally connected with occupying the largest space in the house or such rooms that are considered the most prestigious. What is more, an attempt to occupy the territory by other people is treated as “territorial invasion” aimed at degrading the significance of an individual in the relationship with other family members<sup>23</sup>.

Referring this information to the previously mentioned model one has to emphasize that each family member tries to establish the borders of one's own territory, at the same time keeping his or her own personal space. Apart from this task, the-

<sup>18</sup>K. Jankowski, *Nie tylko dla rodziców*, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1983.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 72-77

<sup>20</sup>R. B. Adler, L. B. Rosenfeld, R. F. Proctor II, *Relacje interpersonalne. Proces porozumiewania się*, translated by G. Skoczylas, Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, Poznań 2006, p. 164 [Original title: *Interplay. The Process of Interpersonal Communication*]

<sup>21</sup>The authors of *Interpersonal relationships* give the following statistics: approximately 28,9 cm – happy married couples and 37 cm – failing married couples. See R. B. Adler, L. B. Rosenfeld, R. F. Proctor II, *op. cit.*, p. 161

<sup>22</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 162-163; See also E. Hall, *Ukryty wymiar*, translated by T. Hołówka, Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA S.A., Warszawa 2003, pp. 149-154 [Original title: *He Hidden Dimension*]

<sup>23</sup>K. Jankowski, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

re is still the necessity to define common areas – such places in the house that do not belong to any one member of the family. Such division can therefore be in accordance with demarcation lines defined with the criteria of interest and domination.

For instance, a small workshop in the garage or in the basement can be the father's territory, which he shares with the younger son, the kitchen might be considered the mother's territory sometimes shared with elder sister, children's rooms belong to the siblings, while the bathroom and hall are special places because they belong to all family members. In the category of one's territory we can also take into consideration particular pieces of furniture, objects such as remote control, books, CDs, pictures, toys or clothes. This is why territorial divisions can also appear in the following borders: computer and home video can stand for the territory „gained” together by the sister and brother, armchair in the living room and remote control are regarded as exclusively belonging to the father, while for example another armchair and dining table belong to the mother. It is easy to notice that territories used together with other family members might become a potential source of conflict. The reason for this is the awareness of defining the conditions for using the space and objects that go with it according to the wish of the person who “rules” this territory. It usually corresponds to the possibility “(...) to decide and take responsibility for everything that takes place within the territory. Each family witnesses various ‘battles’ and has its own ‘imperialists’, ‘lieges’ and goes through rebellions, coups d'état and uprisings”<sup>24</sup>.

The nature and progress of interaction within a family are influenced by the actions of the family members caused by the

awareness of existing divisions. According to the classification suggested by K. Jankowski, one distinguishes the following groups of behavior<sup>25</sup>:

- autonomous, aimed at satisfying basic physiological needs connected only with the territories of particular family members; this includes all activities realized individually that satisfy the needs such as sleep, eating, taking care of health, cleanliness, dressing adequately to weather conditions, etc.

- destructive, connected with behavior that is conducive to the intrusion on someone else's territory and according to the family requires a direct ban, e.g. verbal or physical aggression towards other family members or wrong handling of the objects meant for common use, as a result of which they are destroyed;

- negotiative, also connected with behavior that intrudes on other people's territories, but does not require an explicit ban, but is treated as conditionally accepted; this includes the instances of temporary intrusion on someone else's territory with the consent of other family members, e.g. an adolescent child holding a party for peers at home without the presence of parents, or a parent using for professional purpose a room normally occupied by other family members;

- potentially destructive, is the behavior that requires a ban from the family, it does not intrude on other family members' territories; this includes the lack of consent for such behavior that is considered threatening for the health or life of other family members or threatening the integrity of the family, e.g.: drug taking, a child drinking alcohol, a parent abusing alcohol, premature sexual initiation of chi-

<sup>24</sup> K. Jankowski, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, pp. 76-79.

ldren, sexual promiscuity of the parents or addiction to computer or Internet;

- Learnt, i.e. such behavior that is connected with socially accepted intrusion on someone else's territory and is a result of education, upbringing or socialization in the community, aimed at socially important goals connected with the desired way of fulfilling roles specific for a given age (senior, parent, child), position in the family (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter), gender (boy, girl, man, woman), social relationships with the environment (neighbor, friend, colleague).

Perceiving a family from the point of view of actions aimed at defining one's own territory as well as respecting the territories of others facilitates the ordering of issues and problems that arise every day in the space of family life. Thinking in the category of territories of family members allows us to refer accurately to the process of particular interactions, which in turn forms the basis for a differentiated and adequate interpreting and solving conflicts. One can therefore distinguish basic levels of interaction within a family, which correspond to separate, as far as territory is concerned, groups of problems<sup>26</sup>:

- intrapersonal, identified only with the family members' individual territories,  
- interpersonal, connected with territories shared by two people (parent and a child, child and another child, or between spouses)<sup>27</sup>,

- group, extending onto the whole community, i.e. taking place in the territory common for the whole family<sup>31</sup>.

Correct interpretation and solving conflict situations depends on the „territorial” sensitivity of family members, which is translated onto the relationships between them. It is, however, worth mentioning that „territorial” sensitivity can be shaped in the family members only through internalizing values that subjectivize and introduce harmony into the space of community life<sup>29</sup>. Among these values we have to list reciprocity, partnership and openness<sup>30</sup>.

Reciprocity defined on one hand the accepted division of duties within the family, which if clear and „fair” – which means it is connected with proportional share of duties and tasks among family members – then from pedagogical point of view constitutes an important factor in shaping correct models of family functioning<sup>31</sup>. On the other hand, reciprocity is identified as flexible family relationships, characterized by the rotation of roles and tasks that is adequate to circumstances. That is to say that despite fixed competence division, which becomes the source of habit formation in everyday life, family members are at the same time ready for unconventional action that correct any difficulties in satisfying conscious needs. Flexibility in the field of temporary role switching caused by unplanned events, such as Bad state of health of one family member, sickness, work

<sup>26</sup>Ibidem, pp. 79-82.

<sup>27</sup>see: E. Aronson (ed.), *Człowiek istota społeczna. Wybór tekstów*. Warszawa 2001, Wydawnictwo PWN, s. 576-577. [Original title: *Readings About the Social Animal*].

<sup>28</sup>In the case of a family made up of three people one can distinguish 7 problem groups which contain: 3 sets of intrapersonal problems, 3 interpersonal connected with the territories of the mother and child, father and child as well as the husband and the wife, and one set of group problems considered in the context of all family members, i.e. common territory of mother, father and child.

<sup>29</sup>Por. K. Chałas, *Wychowanie ku wartościom. Elementy teorii i praktyki – godność, wolność, odpowiedzialność, tolerancja*, Volume I, Wydawnictwo „Jedność”, Lublin-Kielce 2003, pp. 56-57.

<sup>30</sup>Ibidem, p. 83

<sup>31</sup>M. Ryś, *Psychologia małżeństwa w zarysie*, Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej MEN, Warszawa 1999, pp. 28-32.

trip, New tasks resulting from increasing the family or change in professional roles, organizing an important family event etc strengthen the feeling of support and stability among family members<sup>32</sup>. Interchangeability of roles and tasks in this context leads to creating mechanisms that introduce harmony into family relationships by maintaining balance in the share of duties of particular family members according to their age, health and capability. Reciprocity is thus based on the dialogue within the family since the interchangeability of roles and tasks is only possible in the situation of mutual understanding and expressed will to this form of coexistence. At the same time this kind of dialogue is strengthened because each experience of this sort brings the family members closer together and induces other people, who temporarily take on their duties, to understand them even better.

Partnership involves the recognition of rights and privileges of particular family members as well as their duties and responsibilities within the community. It is therefore connected with subjective and equal treatment of each family member. Each person, since childhood, is made aware of the rights bestowed by the community and the duties one has to perform for other family members<sup>33</sup>. Partnership refers symbolically to the personal space of each family member. It strengthens both the awareness of borders set by the subject in relationship with others, and the expectation of self-limiting expansive behaviour, i.e. understanding and respecting the borders set by a subject. Partner relationships in a family are thus based on the community dialogue that makes family members sensitive to the

care for mutual limitation of the tendency to shrink personal space referring to each family member regardless of their age at the same time inducing everybody to establish the privileges and responsibilities continually and together. It is worth emphasizing that in such common defining all members of the family have to participate, at the same time learning to discuss important events and issues in the atmosphere of willingness to understand and respect others, which in turn leads to agreement. Partnership is therefore identified as the space of mutual dialogue where both children and parents acquire and master the competences of mature participation in family life<sup>34</sup>.

Openness depends on the quality of reciprocity and partnership in a family. It is connected with the process of democratic participation of all family members in establishing, defining and redefining rules and norms on which the community is based. In openness one pays particular attention to two aspects of organizing a community in the axionormative dimension. What matters is both the content that forms the basis for community functioning and who defines this content and how. If the community accepts openness in its relationships, the space of family dialogue is then used for recognizing particular norms together, and for deciding what is good and what is bad for the family, what is worthy and what is unworthy of a family member, what is beautiful and what is foul and punishable. Only after recognizing the meaning of these can one reasonably follow them in everyday life and redefine them accordingly or complete with new standards. Openness of family life prepares its members for mature participation in

<sup>32</sup>J. Mastalski, *Samotność globalnego nastolatka*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej Krakowie, Kraków 2007, p. 494.

<sup>33</sup>Zob. A. Kozłowska, op. cit., pp. 57-60.

<sup>34</sup>Por. M. Ryś, op. cit., pp. 24-27.

the community. It is not only a challenge for the children, who are yet to acquire the image of axionormative framework of social existence, but also for the parents, who learn how to treat their children subjectively. This is when they experience the significance of reciprocity and partnership, on the basis of equal participation of all community members in the process.

### Conclusion

The model of family communication defines the levels of community dialogue, for which the basis is common language, the ability to talk, readiness to reach solutions together, participation in events important for family members, spending free time together and performing tasks for the community. Realizing such model involves broadly understood "being together"<sup>35</sup> and gives all family members the sense of important contribution they make.

Referring to the analyses of intergenerational barriers to communication and social existence one has to notice that the model breaks depending divisions in the consciousness of parents and children. What in prefigurative cultures was perceived as a challenge exceeding their educational capability and manifested as helplessness in relationship with a child, is now different in the reality of a community functioning on the basis of reciprocity, partnership and openness. Parents who adopt these values do not treat New challenges in the context of losing control over children and gradual increase of distance, but they see them as a chance to create a new level of relationship with a child. Paradoxically, the process of strengthening the authority of the

younger generation in prefigurative cultures corresponds to the Basic assumptions of the model of family communication. Young people want to participate actively and equally in public space and contribute to it. They do it consistently and without any complex. The real stronghold of the young generation are now network media, which open up the possibility of participation in social debate and through which young people can effectively modify the content and process of this debate. What is also manifested is the expectation of young people that the elder generations will see them as a subject in the debate and will accept them as equal participants, so that they will not only be able to present their own interpretation of various issues that are sometimes imposed on them, but will also create conditions for presenting their own problems and influencing the range of issues important for them.

What can be the answer of the adults (parents) in this situation? Definitely any attempts to reduce the role of the younger generation in the public space ruled by the media will be less and less effective. Transforming this experience onto the level of education and upbringing within a family, one has to conclude that the strategy of exclusion is pedagogically incorrect because it triggers the tendency for antagonism on both sides and it does not favor the development of new forms of dialogue and cooperation. Adopting this strategy will not only limit the parents' chance to communicate with the child, but will also weaken the real possibilities to gain knowledge on the child's interests and longings and to control his/her actions. On the other hand, adopting the strategy open

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<sup>35</sup>That is to differentiate the coexistence of family members, which can take the form of "being next to one another" understood as living under the same roof, but disconnected from active creation of the level of cooperation, as well as no attempt at dialogue taken by family members and no common participation in everyday issues.

for dialogue creates the possibility for the child to be able to participate together with them in the public space ruled by the media. Parents who open up for the child's suggestions on different forms of social existence in the network not only learn about the child's world from another perspective, but stand a chance to direct his/her way of thinking and acting. They are still together! What is also valuable is that both parents and children have many opportunities to create their own language and to experience together everything that is funny and serious, at the same time avoiding negative consequences of what is dangerous and destructive in the network.

Adopting the open strategy is not connected with the risk of rejecting the authority of parents. Only through dialogue and cooperation can parents create a convenient opportunity to eliminate the fears connected with upbringing. The parent has the opportunity to learn what the child is thinking, how he/she interprets situations, what he/she longs for and expects in connection with his/her activity also in the space of network media. The child, on the other hand, can show the parents his/her competence and knowledge on information technology, which is the domain where the parents will probably always be less proficient than children. It is worth emphasizing that open strategy liberates both sides from the necessity to compete, which antagonizes the child and the parents alike. What is more, this strategy is connected with projecting a New area of issues, which are now seen as opportunities for common ground that directs both parents and children towards constructive updating of one's potential within cooperation that is characterized by partnership and openness. This is when the parents feel that the need for control is decreased, as far as orders and bans are concerned, because

the parents simply know more about the child's actions and plans and what follows, they are aware of greater influence they can have on the direction and nature of the child's activity also in the net. The child, for his part, is aware of greater freedom of action and trust of the parents, and because of this he/she can independently decide whether he/she wants to follow what has been decided together with the parents or to reject this option. One has to think that a child free from coercion and treated as a partner – as has already been stipulated – will try to become a responsible person who sticks to what they have defined together with the parents. A child treated seriously and with respect will feel induced to make a deep insight into the meaning of moral obligation to respect all decisions made beforehand. Remaining in agreement with his/her own reflections and free will, and not constrained by the fear of punishment, the child wants to stand by the decisions.

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<sup>37</sup> Por. M. Ryś, op. cit., pp. 24-27.

<sup>38</sup> That is to differentiate the coexistence of family members, which can take the form of “being next to one another” understood as living under the same roof, but disconnected from active creation of the level of cooperation, as well as no attempt at dialogue taken by family members and no common participation in everyday issues.