FORMING OF MORAL AND CIVIC MATURITY IN THE FAMILY

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Ve svém příspěvku seznamuji s přehledem základních poznatků o mravní a občanské vyspělosti a jejich formování v rodině. V rámci příspěvku je na morálku pohlíženo v kontextu občanské zralosti. Využitá empirická data pocházejí z výsledků studie ELSPAC (Evropská dlouhodobá studie těhotenství a dětství) a výsledků několika disertačních nebo diplomových prací, které byly vypracovány pod mým vedením.

Klíčová slova: Morální dospělost; občanská dospělost; rodina

Introduction

In this message I will present an overview of basic findings about the moral and civic maturity and its formation in the family. In the context of the presentation, morals will be viewed as a component of civic maturity. I will support my assertions with research results that have rather orientational, exploratory nature and define the antecedents and probabilities of the level of civic maturity rather than unique causal factors. There is much more unknown in the area of formation of the personality than hard facts. When arguing by the empiric facts I proceed from the results of the ELSPAC (European Longitudinal Study of Pregnancy and Childhood) survey and the results of several dissertations/theses prepared under my supervision.

Research Goal and Existing Findings

Let us define the family as a small social group whose members usually live in a particular place, in a particular psycho-social climate, or relationships network, and are connected by particular spiritual ties. As the definition shows, three basic dimensions are essential for our family lives – though different for various families and their members – that specify the way of our earthly lives. To simplify the miscellaneous nature of the viewpoint we can say that we live (1) in the world of things, (2) in the world of people, and (3) in the world of the spirit. This tripartism was formulated in other consequences by K. Popper (1995) and as the starting point of logotherapy (treatment using the renewal of the life sense) worked out by V. Frankl (1994).[1]

To think of a family from the complex point of view it is necessary to come out of this opinion and to lead people towards the harmonic cultivation of physical, psychosocial as well as spiritual culture of personality and of the relationships to life. People who believe in God ask, or should ask themselves, a question about how to live in this world with people with whom they share their family, working as well and social lives and to "live with God" at the same time.

Moral and Civic Maturity

The moral and civic maturity has mainly been discussed in the studies and theses on sociological, politological and psychological and educational topics (some characteristics of the civic maturity at schools are discussed mainly in the subjects of Civics, or Foundations of social

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[1] POPEK, K.: *Věčné hledání*. Praha: Prostor, 1995; FRANKL, V. E.: *Vůle ke smyslu*. Brno: Cesta, 1996.

sciences, however as the results of pilot studies show – mainly in the form of dictating the theorems from the area of law and ethics, and exceptionally in the form of interactive practices developing the personality).

The civic maturity has unquestionably been a breakthrough component that goes through social, moral, political, legal as well as spiritual culture of the personality, as well as the health situation of a person and environmental conditions.

But society has been formed by individuals. That is why the civic maturity of a person represents complex of features and states or cognitive and action schemes that have traditionally been treated as part of the character.

From the socio-psychological point of view it can be said that civic maturity represents a basic condition of productive as well as participative social co-existence within the community of the village, workplace, and associations as well as within participating in generally beneficial activities of broader activities on the local, national as well as federal levels.

To understand the lifestyle of the citizens on the local as well as whole-society and national level it is therefore important to become aware of the civic maturity genesis and what is supported or inhibited by its positive formation, both in the family, and in the school as well as out-of-school education and life conditions in the broadest sense, including health, and cultural-historical conditions with emphasis on medical and environmental impacts.

The civic maturity structure as a complex disposition of the personality includes: the empathy, awareness of solidarity, commonality, responsibility, judiciousness, respect for fairness, tolerance. A great role in the integration of the civic maturity components is played by the spiritual culture of the personality.

It can be said without exaggeration that the quality of the civic maturity as a whole depends on the quality of the civic maturity of individuals. **But also the political culture of citizens elected to political functions at the basic as well as state level.**

What is Civic Society?

We can define civic society as a group of people who know their rights and duties as well as responsibilities towards their fellow citizens as well as the society and state whose citizens they are. For a civic mature person basic human decency is typical, he/she does not threaten the justified interests of the others, their privacy, he/she does not act in a way that provokes public displeasure or that disrupts the order and neatness of the places where he/she lives, works and rests.

Civic society was dealt with by several conferences initiated by Václav Havel called Fórum 2000. Václav Havel formulated his concept of the civic society as follows: *„I myself treat the civic society as something that is created through the self-structuring of society, usually through foundations and associations. Of course, it is natural human association in non-governmental and non-profit organizations, clubs and civic initiatives. They are very important and form the backbone of civic society. ... This civic society is essential, it is a mycelium, culture medium, background of democracy."*

In his opinion, democracy in the civic society wastes away and decays due to political parties that become estranged from the citizens. *"...politics starts to be boring, close to itself, strange, unpleasant to people in the end and it is not altered by the fact that everyone can vote."*

As Havel's further words show, Havel understands precisely the interconnection of civic maturity and civic society. In Václav Havel's opinion the *"civil society is one of the ways through which our humanity is or can be followed through as a whole, i.e., in the more delicate, worse understandable, but probably most important of which it is formed ... It is completely*

fundamental way of participation in public life. It is the first and most fundamental way of how a man voluntarily, himself from his own need oversteps the framework of his private living.

Sociology normally says that citizenship has been *"a social relationship between an individual and a political society (state) where the individual offers loyalty and the state offers protection. This relationship between individuality and the state is given by the law"* (Mohamad, 1995).[2] Bashir (1998) defines citizenship from the psychological viewpoint as a *"feeling of solidarity and loyalty with the state and political leaders who satisfy basic needs and provide protection".*[3] The citizenship is based on positive emotional relationship to the state. It is an emotion that attracts the individual to his/her homeland and supports him/her to work hard and develop creative effort to ensure a good international position for his/her nation. This opinion on citizenship has been formulated by Antwan (1994) in his political dictionary: *"The love for one's own country bears a readiness to protect it. It is much more than a political idea that stimulates a person to work for the welfare of his/her country, mainly in the periods of wars."* [4]

Citizenship often comprises of activities that lead to improving the community by way of participation, voluntary work and endeavour leading to the improvement of life conditions of all the citizens. Schools in the UK provide lessons of citizenship in this relationship frame, in Wales a program of personal and social education is used.

The concept of citizenship has three main components or dimensions (Cohen, 1999):[5]
- Citizenship is a legal status defined by civil, political and social rights. A citizen is a legal entity who has freedom in accord with the law and has the right to require protection by law. It does not mean that the citizen takes part on acts formulation, neither does it follow that the laws should be the same for everyone.
- The citizens are considered political officials who actively participate in the political institutions of the society.
- Citizenship means membership in political society and thus serves as a source of identity for the citizen.

"The Spirit of the Age" as a Risky Factor of Civic Maturity Development

"The most important problems of the coming ten decades are of a global nature, and thus their resolution should also be on global level. The factors that prevent the solution seem to be similar globally and are mostly independent of nationality and culture," says J. Kalous (2004) in his study *Global problems and social capital*. He refers to the conclusions of an international panel devoted to this topic (see: Glenn, Gordon 2002).[6]

The international panel considers most serious the following facts:
- Lack of interest in the needs of future generations
- Caring for the welfare of one group or one nation
- Corruption of the representatives of the decision-making sphere (politicians)
- Waste
- Gluttony and selfishness

Can we go even deeper and find one common denominator? In accordance with the given analysis we think that the denominator has been an increasing egoism of an increasing number

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[2] MOHAMAD, G.: *The Dictionary of Sociology*. Cairo: University Press, 1995.
[3] BASHIR, R.: *Citizenship and Behaviour Phenomena.* The Journal of Social Science, 15, 1998, 1, pp. 32–48.
[4] ANTWAN, H.: *The Dictionary of Sociology*. Damascus: Press of Ministry of Culture, 1994.
[5] COHEN, J.: *Changing Paradigms of Citizenship and the Exclusiveness of Demos.* The Journal of International Sociology, 14, 1999, 3, pp. 248–268.
[6] GLENN, J. C. – GORDON, J. T. (eds.): *Budoucnost světa, Vybrané kapitoly z let 1999–2001*. Olomouc: UP, 2002.

of people. It is a form of individualism in which a man is a goal for himself, sense of life for himself and everything else is marginal. In some relationships (maternal love) and some situations (revolutionary surge) the expressions of individualism are set straight, but so called "normal" periods are environments serving as a breeding ground for individualism and consumerist values and activities.

The general social climate is characterized by a double moral.

When thinking of the importance of forming civic maturity in family life, let us state one historical argument. One of the greatest world historians Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) mentions the following five main reasons for dissociation and decline of the Roman Empire:

- Collapse of the family structure
- Weakening of the sense for personal responsibility
- Undue taxes, strict control and governmental interventions
- Finding such entertainment that becomes yet more hedonistic, violent and amoral
- Decline of religion

Two hundred fifty years later Mahátma Gándhí denounced *seven modern social sins*:

- Policy without principles
- Business without moral rules
- Wealth without work
- Education without character
- Science without humanity
- Delight without conscience
- Religion without restraint

The Characteristics of Civic Maturity:

In this preliminary message, a list of characteristics and prerequisites of civic maturity will be enumerated, without any deeper justification. We treat them as variables that would be subjected to empirical surveys in sub-studies. First of all let us mention some characteristics of civic immaturity.

We can see many examples of civic immaturity, but also developing civic maturity in societies that convert from dictatorship to the system of democratic states.

Examples of civic immaturity:

The motorcyclist or car owner goes across a field or garden of his/her neighbour, when walking a dog does not remove the faeces from roads or public spaces, is noisy in the street, burns plastic bags and other toxic materials, pours harmful stuff in waters and lakes, takes domestic waste to unapproved places etc.

The Symptoms of Immaturity
- Unscrupulousness
- Egoism
- Egocentrism
- Social indifference and low sensitivity to needy people
- Anhednonia, value pragmatism

Examples of civic maturity:

Providing material or social, psychological and spiritual help to needy people, active membership in voluntary organizations, founding communities serving to unify people

connected by valuable educational as well as recreational goals (e.g. the establishment of community schools).

Components of Civic Maturity

The will for the sense and awareness of the sense, or the sense for sense.

Freedom (treated as investigating the reasons for decision-making and choosing the way respecting legitimate interests of the others).

- Responsibility. Respect for the laws and endeavour for their keeping.
- Consideration and judiciousness.
- Solidarity (the awareness of commonality).
- Social interest (Belongingness, Togetherness).
- Pro-social orientation and social perspective.
- Respect for the others.
- Empathy.
- Participation.
- Tolerance of differences (and the awareness of its boundaries).
- Absence of xenophobia.
- Fulfilment of duties.
- Wisdom.
- Moral culture of the personality.
- Spirituality – Samaritan attitude, Mother Teresa,
- The need of self-cultivation and knowing the methods of self-formation.
- Accepted and developing personal plan and lifestyle.
- Identity – positive identity that is neither self-centred nor reconciled to any movement or guru.
- Legal culture of the personality. An effort to abide by orders and prohibitions formulated by moral codices (religious, Charter of human rights etc.) supporting the positive quality of life of human beings, or the regard for the spiritual dimension of being. Based on existing surveys it can be proved that some of the characteristics stated above are also identified in the analyses of spiritual culture of the personality that can be legitimately considered to be an integrative core of civic maturity, mainly as far as the reflection of the life sense is concerned.

Civic maturity intermingles with the more generally accepted **social maturity**, whose full development is localized by E. Goldberg (2006) in the individual's development up to the third decade of his/her life and from his point of view of neuropsychologist he states that it is connected with the biological maturation of the frontal lobes.[7] In his opinion it is formed by the following characteristics:

- Ability to control the impulses.
- Foresight.
- Critical self-evaluation.
- Accepting of the whole range of "mature" rights and responsibilities
  (Like driving a motor vehicle, voting, ability to get married, possibility to buy alcohol, serving in the army, criminal responsibility etc.)

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[7] GOLDBERG, E.: *Paradoxy moudrosti*. Praha: Galen, 2006.

Formative Factors (Prerequisites) of the Civic Maturity:
- Social and economic family situation.
- Family education – problem of the family educational role crisis.
- Completeness of the family and the position of a child in the family.
- The structure of the school class.
- After-school and after-class education.
- Associational activities
- Leisure time activities
- Volunteer activities or their support.
- Environment
- State of health and nutrition
- The quality of ethical education not only in school, but also in medial presentations of political dealings and presentation of the events.

How can the Level of Civic Maturity be found?

The available materials usually mention the criteria of civic society only from the point of view of politology, law and macro economy.

From the point of view of psychology the basic indicator is the **quality of life** of individual citizens and groups.

It is desirable to look at the quality of life from the point of view of:
- psychology,
- sociology,
- pedagogy,
- public health,
- spirituality,
- politology,
- Environment (urban).

Existing questionnaires for value orientations, lifestyle, pro-social behaviour, etc. can be used for carrying out the surveys. Depending on the instantiation of the individual concerned variables, the battery of survey techniques will be specified and replenished.

Research Results

We will take a look at the findings of two research studies that lead to cognition of protective and risky factors of forming civic maturity.

Role of the Father when Forming Social Characteristics of the Child
Balharová, J., Šporcrová, I. (2001) and my consultation (Smékal, V.)

The questionnaires *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (R. Goodman, 1997) were used to evaluate the social behaviour of children.[8] They were filled in by teachers of the eight-year pupils. Social behaviour, or the process of the child's socialization has been accepted in the broader sense as forming the child's relationships with other people. A total of 190 schools was addressed, of which 189 cooperated – 86 from Brno and 104 from other locations. (The survey was carried out in almost every school in Brno and its surroundings.) We personally asked the

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8 POPIELSKI, K.: *Noetyczny wymiar osobowości*. Lublin: KUL, 1994.

schools from Brno and its surroundings (88), the remaining schools (102) were addressed in writing.

We gathered the information about the total of 2707 children, of which 1385 were boys and 1322 girls. These children simultaneously take part in the ELSPAC study. 42 mothers suffered from the absence of the father, more than 200 mothers from the sample felt a lack of his emotional support.

The results of the survey show that even the endouterine period is important for the child's life. It sets the prerequisites for positive or negative development of a new personality. In this phase, the father's role has a provable importance. Based on the data, it is not possible to determine precisely which evolutionary period affected the child most, however it was recorded from which period the father was missing in the family.

In addition to the father's absence during the monitored periods the child's development could have been influenced by many other factors (e.g., broader relatives or people who are or were in close contact with the child, the child's health status etc.).

In addition to this we must suppose that in the course of the children's lives there are changes in their families, including the real fathers' functions. (In this case we mean psychological fatherhood).

For example this means that where in the early phases of the child's life the father was not present, in further periods his function can be accomplished by another man (e.g. mother's partner). On the other hand, in the families, where both parents were present in initial phases of the child's life, the father can be absent later.

It was confirmed that the children whose mothers missed the partner or his emotional support, behaved socially differently from the children whose mothers had emotional support from the partner. It was proved that the absence of the father and lack of emotional support for the mother was reflected in children's worse behaviour. It shows that the real presence of the father in the family, though he does not provide the emotional support to the mother, is generally more beneficial than his total absence.

In most of the characteristics the worst positions were occupied by children without a father, better evaluation was achieved by children from the group where the father was present, but did not provide the mother with emotional support, and the best by children where the father was present and provided support to the mother. Also, of great importance is the trend of less socially sensitive behaviour in boys from the group where the father did not provide the emotional support to the mother in the first period of the survey. It questionable whether this fact can be partially ascribed to the psychological discomfort of their mothers during pregnancy.

The boys reacted to impaired family background differently than the girls, i.e., they showed differences in other characteristics than the girls. The boys tended to express outward aggression, while the girls through differently expressed rivalry (e.g., jealousy, envy, etc.). This finding can be explained by the peculiarities of male and female development, i.e., from the point of view of gender. When evaluating the groups in gender line a sample of characteristics typical for boys was set aside, and another sample of characteristics typical for girls.

In the groups without a father boys to a greater extent expressed hyperactivity, psychomotor instability, venomousness, disobedience, mischievousness, aggression, on the other hand they were more attacked and provoked by other children.

On the other hand, girls without fathers had these characteristics: inability of empathy, reclusion, unwillingness to lend things to others and unwillingness to help them, envy, effort to attract attention and further on significantly better relationship with adults than with the contemporaries.

In general, teachers evaluated boys as more problematic than girls.

It was proved that the absence of father in the family as well as his unsatisfactory relationships with the mother have negative impacts to the child's socialization and it can be therefore assumed that even in adulthood for civic maturity.

In the dissertation (made under my supervision) ***The sense of life as a determinant for the quality of moral action***, a survey was carried out using the questionnaire by K. Popielský (1996) on 115 students of the last classes in secondary schools (46 boys and 69 girls), of which 56 were from the grammar school in Hradec Králové (Biskupské gymnázium) and 59 from the state grammar school in Pardubice. Their average age was 17; 11 years.

A Frankl's pupil K. Popielski (1996) used the name of noodynamics for the spiritual layer of the personality from the point of view of logotherapy. He created a questionnaire of 100 items to investigate it (translated by V. Smékal) identifying 36 units that group into four categories by his intention: noetical qualities (realizing value, sense, trust etc.), noetical temporality (orientation on the past – present – future), noetical activity (the acceptance of the self and the others) and noetical attitudes (to success, death etc.).

The scales proposed by Popielský appeared in our surveys as not very reliable. Therefore we have made a factor analysis of the scales and the questionnaire items collected from 123 high-school students. The factors specified by both factor analyses provide 4 distinctly differentiable factors. (1) The feeling of life meaningfulness, (2) will to the sense, (3) awareness of transcendence and (4) rational or emotional way of carrying out the sense. In addition to the questionnaire of noodynamics by Popielsky, the investigated people were presented with the nomination technique of 15 ways of moral negotiations created by us in which the students were asked to enumerate the classmates who acted in the defined ways. The nomination technique included, for example, the following items: If he/she promises something, he/she keeps it, does not spread gossip and slanders, willingly helps with curriculum I do not understand etc.

The gathered data was processed using a multivarial analysis and in the gathered correlation relationships matrix between the noodynamic factors scores and percent frequencies of the ways of moral dealing nominations we have searched for correlations significant for the importance levels equal to or greater than 0.01.

We will only mention the factors correlating with the variables of moral dealings from many significant correlations of individual variables of noodynamics.

The factor **feeling of the meaningfulness of life** correlates with nomination items of 10. He/she is polite and considerate of other people (0,281, P = 0,01) and 13. It can be said he/she is a person of good character (0,299, P = 0,01).

The factor **awareness of transcendence** significantly correlates on P = 0,01 with the item 10. He/she is polite and considerate of other people.

The factor **will to the sense** does not significantly correlate on P = 0,01 with any nomination item.

The factor **ways of realizing the sense** correlates on the level P = 0,01 with three nomination items: 9. He/she is not a hell raiser, 10. He/she is polite and considerate of other people and 11. I do not remember he/she has ever lied. We note that the correlation express the fact of emotional involvement on moral acting.

The partial correlations through that we have eliminated the influence of the school type does not reduce correlation coefficients indicating supposed associations.

As the significant correlations show, the noodynamic factors as aspects of spiritual life are connected with significant components of moral dealings concerning decency, consideration and truthfulness and that are concentrated in the person's character. These are also significant components of civic maturity that have their roots in family education.

Discussion, Conclusions and Suggestions

Formative Factors of Forming Civic Maturity
As our surveys and investigations show, in addition to the educational and social factors the following factors also influence the formation of civic maturity:

- Constitutional, temperament and health conditions
- People with whom children identify or contra-identify
- Attribution and scenarios
- Community principle of co-existence in the scope of family relationship and neighborly relations
- Membership and activities of parents in volunteer helping institutions
- Care for ill or socially needy family members and neighbors
- Internalization of the "golden moral rule"
- The principle of the scouts: "One for all, all for one"
- Practicing the principle "Unity in diversity"
- Drama plays

Summary

- The topic is highly topical, however psychologically less followed. The suggestion of the project should encourage an increase in interest in this topic.
- On the pedagogical and generally praxeological level it is educating citizens to identification with positive values that are the foundation of the quality of life and human dignity.
- It would be desirable to focus the survey on searching for the antecedents of civically mature and immature people.
- In the longitudinal data of the ELSPAC (Europena Longitudinal Study of Pregnancy and Childhood) project that is available at the proposer's workplace it would then be desirable to possibly follow the characteristics of social environment and personalities who were present in the childhood of mature and immature personalities from the point of view of citizenship.
- It shows that it is highly desirable to heal the family – to restore its educational and positive stimulation valuable function.
- To establish Schools for parents at advisory centres.
- To support multi-generation families exercising respect for old age.
- To build playgrounds for children and create conditions for constructive spending of time of parents with their children.
- Cooperation of the school and family (– experience of Malta).
- Value of religion.

Shrnutí

Formování morální a občanské dospělosti v rodině

Ve svém příspěvku seznamuji s přehledem základních poznatků o mravní a občanské vyspělosti a jejich formování v rodině. V rámci příspěvku je na morálku pohlíženo v kontextu občanské zralosti. Využitá empirická data pocházejí z výsledků studie ELSPAC (Evropská dlouhodobá studie těhotenství a dětství) a výsledků několika disertačních nebo diplomových prací, které byly vypracovány pod mým vedením.