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THE FAMILY  
AS A RESOURCE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

A b s t r a c t. This article refers to research that has been carried out in Poland in 2010-2012 in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for the Family. The study concerned the family and its functioning in the social conditions in Poland. Their goal was to diagnose the needs of families, the possible areas of support and to answer the question how the present family is resource for civil society. Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church, defines the family as marriage of woman and man which have children. This definition should be perceived in the context of the Church's social teachings, the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI in particular. In the sociological approach, the whole society is based on the family, which is understood as the most important basic social group, as an intimate relationship, based on mutual feeling, cooperation and mutual responsibility; reinforcement of the internal relations and interactions are the main focus of the family. According to the systemic approach, the family should be treated as a system, in which a change in his one part brings on a change in its other parts. The presented study is considering the issues concerning the family as a social institution in the context of the following main points: 1. Family – sociological approach; 2. The idea of *civil society*; 3. Spheres of *civil society*.

**Key words:** family as a social institution, civil society, sociological approach, Catholic social teaching.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Pontifical Council for the Family, whose president in 2008-2012 was H.E. Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, initiated in 2010-2012 the international socio-logical research on contemporary family. The study also joined the Polish Bishops' Conference. The Pastoral Polish Family Counseling has undertaken the organization of the Polish part of the project. Bishop Stanislaw Stefanek SChr, responsible for the program 'The Family as a Resource for Society' on behalf of the Polish Conference of Bishops, wrote: "To the family is entrusted the task of striving, first and foremost, to unleash the forces of good, the source of which is found in Christ the Redeemer of man, so that these forces be the property of all families [...]."<sup>1</sup> This task given to families is realized by them in various social, economic, moral conditions. The understanding of these conditions becomes an important duty of the Church, caring for the future of every family and especially for families that are based on the indissoluble union with Christ in the sacramental sign of matrimony."<sup>2</sup>

Development of this research has been done in the Department of Family Social Life, headed by Rev. Prof. Dr. habil. Jerzy Koperek in the Institute of Family Studies and Social Work at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in cooperation with the Department of European Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wroclaw, headed by Prof. Dr. habil. Wiesław Bokajło.<sup>3</sup>

The study concerned the family and its functioning in the social conditions in different countries (Italy, Spain, USA, Mexico, Brazil and Poland). Their goal was to diagnose the needs of families, the possible areas of support and to answer the question how the present family is resource for civil society.

The considerations in this article refer to the analysis of the above problems. So, the presented study is considering the issues concerning the family as a resource for civil society in the context of the following points: 1. Family – sociological approach; 2. The idea of *civil society*; 3. Spheres of *civil society*.

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Families "Gratissimam sane". Year of the Family – 1994*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> S. Stefanek bp., *Preface*, in: W. Bokajło, J. Koperek, *The View of Polish Family as a Social Institution in the Light of Empirical Research (2011-2012). Report of the Research Project: The Family as a Resource for Society*. Vatican City: Pontifical Council for the Family–Fundacja Vita Familiae 2012, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Bokajło & Koperek, *The View of Polish Family*.

## 1. FAMILY – SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church defines the family as marriage of woman and man which have children.<sup>4</sup> This definition should be perceived in the context of the Church's social teachings, the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI in particular. In the sociological approach, the whole society is based on the family, which is understood as the most important basic social group,<sup>5</sup> as an intimate relationship, based on mutual feeling, cooperation and mutual responsibility; reinforcement of the internal relations and interactions are the main focus of the family. According to the systemic approach, the family should be treated as a system, in which a change in his one part brings on a change in its other parts.<sup>6</sup>

The understanding of family as social institution assumes that in the sexual intercourses in this unit should be so long-lasting and normalized enough to guarantee of the renewable reproduction sphere, what requires fulfillment of the sexual–procreative needs of the couple.<sup>7</sup> The family should fulfill two other institutional functions: creation of the economic community and security community. The fourth function is connected with the idea of *civil society*. It means that ‘on the *output*’ from family as a system, and ‘on the *input*’ to the social system there should occur the young person who meets the requirements of adaptation

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<sup>4</sup> *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* (KKK), Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum 2002.

<sup>5</sup> A. Comte cited by: Z. T y s z k a, *Rodzina w świecie współczesnym – jej znaczenie dla jednostki i społeczeństwa*, in T. P i l c h & L e p a r c z y k (Eds.), *Pedagogika społeczna*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Żak 1995, p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> I. K o ł b i k, *Procesy emocjonalne w rodzinie*, in B. de B a r b a r o (Ed.), *Wprowadzenie do systemowego rozumienia rodziny*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ 1994, pp. 31-44.

<sup>7</sup> P a u l VI, *Encyclical Letter “Humanae vitae” on the Regulation of Birth*, 1968; J o h n P a u l II, *Kościół wobec potrzeb współczesnej rodziny. Do biskupów europejskich, przewodniczących krajowych Komisji Duszpasterstwa Rodziny i Ochrony Życia – 26.11.1992*, “L’Osservatore Romano” 2(1993), pp. 42-43; J o h n P a u l II, *Encyclical Letter “Evangelium vitae” on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*, 1995; K. W o j t y ɼ a, *Amore e responsabilità. Studio di morale sessuale*, Traduzione italiana di A. B. Milanoli, Torino: Marietti 1969; *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, “L’Osservatore Romano” 10(1983), pp. 6-7; T. S t y c z e ń, *Nienarodzony miara demokracji*, Lublin: Instytut Jana Pawła II 1991, Biblioteka „Ethosu”, vol. I; M. S c h o o y a n s, *Aborcja a polityka*, Lublin: Instytut Jana Pawła II KUL 1991; J. S z a c k i, *Wstęp. Powrót do idei społeczeństwa obywatelskiego*, in *Ani książę, ani kupiec: obywatele. Wybór tekstów*, Warszawa–Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak & Fundacja Stefana Batorego 1997, pp. 5-62.

to social life and culture of given society, in the case of contemporary participatory democracy – of the *civil society*.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Synthetic model of civil society could be based on the philosophy of Aristotle, continued by Thomas Aquinas, philosophy of Scottish Enlightenment (Locke, Ferguson, Smith, Millar, Hume), sociology of A. de Tocqueville as well as the Habermas's concept of public sphere.<sup>9</sup> In this model the *civil society* ('political society for itself'), should be 'community of active' citizens, as distinguished from „civic society”, that is to say, a set of all 'formal citizens' of the state (Pain, Th.). It requires 'denationalized economy" and „nationalized state” as well as creating legal conditions of influence of independent citizen organizations on the shape of state.<sup>10</sup>

So created model of civil society should be combined with the philosophy of subsidiarity, naturally way linked to the principle of solidarity.<sup>11</sup>

In the contemporary democracy a „formal” citizen should be oriented on values: freedom, equality, justice, tolerance, and respect of the rule of law, what decide about their 'citizenship'. In the context of idea civil society, citizenship should be additionally marked by comprehension of freedom, connected with dignity, awareness of 'common agreement about law and rights', 'desire to participate in mutual advantages' and most at all, activity in society (Cicero) as well as an attitude defined by Scottish moralists as 'civility' (Bryant). Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas put emphasis on the relationship between freedom of the humane being *in actu* with his dignity and responsibility. Thus, the "autonomy" of the "person *in actu*" as a social human being should enable him to go

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<sup>8</sup> Th. Pain cited by: S z a c k i, *Wstęp. Powrót do idei społeczeństwa obywatelskiego*, in Ani książki, ani kupiec: obywatele. Wybór tekstów. Warszawa–Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak & Fundacja Stefana Batorego 1997, pp. 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> W. B o k a j ł o, *Z teoretycznych problemów społeczeństwa obywatelskiego*, in W. B o k a j ł o & D z i u b k a (Eds.), *Spoleczeństwo obywatelskie*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2001, pp. 17-80; Ch.G.A. B r y a n t, *Civil society and pluralism*, in E. Wnuk-Lipiński (Ed.), "Sisyphus. Social Studies", 1(1992), No 8, pp. 103-119.

<sup>10</sup> Ch. T a y l o r. *Kiedy mówimy: społeczeństwo obywatelskie*, in *Europa i społeczeństwo obywatelskie. Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo*, Warszawa–Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak 1994, pp. 77-80.

<sup>11</sup> *Charter of the Rights of the Family* 1983.

about his business of everyday live, capable of organizing themselves in higher forms of society, up to *civitas perfecta* (= the state), perceived as ‘common good’.<sup>12</sup> These social characteristic of the ‘person–citizen *in actu*’ is complemented by consequences of the philosophy of subsidiarity, rooted in the Aristotelian-Tomistic tradition, developed by Althusius (summarized by Pope Leo XIII, “*Rerum novarum*” 1891) and Pius XI,<sup>13</sup> as well as applied to the modern Catholic social teaching.<sup>14</sup> The sense of subsidiarity principle focused on two aspects:

- the negative: power in general, and the state in particular should not prevent people and social groups from undertaking their own actions, i.e. from the most complete use of their energy, for the sake of completing works through which they gain self-realization for general usefulness as well as for particular interest;

- the positive: the mission of every authority is the stimulation, maintenance and finally, in case of need, the complementation of efforts that are not self-sufficient. ‘For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them’.<sup>15</sup>

- the subsidiarity principle implies thinking in categories of divided sovereignty; it assumes devolution of power, i.e. building of authorities structures „from the bottom”, from local, through regional to state power, and even supra-national level. The persons, oriented on the philosophy of subsidiarity,

<sup>12</sup> Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae*, p. Ia-IIae. Romae–Taurini: Marietti, 1952; K. Wójtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków: PTT 1985<sup>2</sup>; J. Koperek, *La concezione personalistica della coscienza*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Pius XI, *Encyclical Letter „Quadragesimo anno” on Reconstruction of the Social Order* 1931, pp. 79-82.

<sup>14</sup> John XXIII, *Encyclical Letter “Mater et magistra” on Christianity and Social Progress*, 1961; I dem, *Encyclical Letter “Pacem in terris” on Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty*, 1963; Vatican Council II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World “Gaudium et spes”*, 1965, No 86; Paul VI, *Encyclical Letter “Populorum progressio” on the Development of Peoples*, 1967; I dem, *Apostolic Letter “Octogesima adveniens”*, 1971; John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter “Laborem exercens” on Human Work on the ninetieth anniversary of “Rerum novarum”*, 1981b; I dem, *Encyclical Letter “Sollicitudo rei socialis” for the Twentieth Anniversary of “Populorum Progressio”*, 1987; I dem, *Encyclical Letter “Centesimus annus” on the Hundredth Anniversary of “Rerum novarum”*, 1991; Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter “Deus caritas est” on Christian Love*, 2005; I dem, *Encyclical Letter “Spe salvi” on Christian Hope*, 2007; I dem, *Encyclical Letter “Caritas in veritate” on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Pius XI, *Encyclical Letter “Quadragesimo anno”*, p. 79.

organize themselves into *civil society* not only in order to open up possibility of fulfillment of their dynamically developing needs (economic, culture, security), but also to create a new freedom environment, in which every ‘smaller community’ and every person *in actu* could improve their life; in which the natural egoism of individuals is linked to the natural need for social friendship and solidarity. In this way the subsidiarity principle works as an ethical principle of *civil society*.<sup>16</sup>

So developed notion of ‘citizenship’ in the context of civil society idea, linked to philosophy of subsidiarity, should be closely connected to virtues, attitudes and abilities underlined as components of human capital, social capital as well as *civic culture* according to Almond/Verba’s theory of political culture. That theory underlines the *cognitive orientation* of individuals as one of most important component of humane capital. The possession of human capital (knowledge, experiences and ability to put those attributes of the mind into practice), by citizens, even more than physical capital, determines the rational activity of citizens in economic sphere as well as their participation in *civil society*.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> J. K o p e r e k, *Nowe demokracje i spór o naturę wychowania do udziału w społeczeństwie obywatelskim*, Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo „Educator” 2007, pp. 88-94; A. K o p e r e k, *Zaangażowanie społeczne obywateli*, Łódź: Editor Adam Koperek 2008.

<sup>17</sup> cf. A r i s t o t l e, *Etyka nikomachejska*, Transl. D. Gromska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 2007; B e n e d i c t XVI, *Encyclical Letter “Deus caritas est”*, 2005; I d e m, *Encyclical Letter “Spe salvi” on Christian Hope*, 2007; I d e m, *Encyclical Letter “Caritas in veritate” on Integral Human Development in charity and Truth*, 2009; J o h n P a u l II, *Apostolic Exhortation “Familiaris consortio” of Pope John Paul II on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, 1981; I d e m, *Encyclical Letter “Laborem exercens” on Human Work on the Ninetieth Anniversary of “Rerum novarum”*, 1981; I d e m, *Encyclical Letter “Sollicitudo rei socialis” for the Twentieth Anniversary of “Populorum Progressio”*, 1987; I d e m, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Christifideles laici” on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World*, 1988; I d e m, *Encyclical Letter “Centesimus annus” on the Hundredth Anniversary of “Rerum novarum”*, 1991; I d e m, *Kościół wobec potrzeb współczesnej rodziny. Do biskupów europejskich, przewodniczących krajowych Komisji Duszpasterstwa Rodziny i Ochrony Życia – 26.11.1992*, “L’Osservatore Romano” (wyd. pol.) 2(1993); I d e m, *Encyclical Letter “Fides et ratio” on the Relationship between Faith and Reason*, 1998; K o p e r e k, *Zaangażowanie społeczne obywateli*, 2008; J. K o p e r e k, *Educazione morale come formazione della coscienza*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2009; I d e m, *La concezione personalistica della coscienza*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2009; H. S k o r o w s k i, *Być chrześcijaninem i obywatelem dzisiaj. Refleksje o postawach moralno-społecznych*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Salezjańskie 1994; I d e m, *Problematyka praw człowieka*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego 2005.

In turn, thanks the social capital, citizens have a wide variety of quite specific benefits resulting from trust, reciprocity, consensual approach, and cooperation associated with social networks. The trust (not only to trust, but to believe that others trust me) is the main condition of general agreement on ‘common good’.<sup>18</sup> It is perceived in strong connection with another social norm, namely – reciprocity. The norm of reciprocity assumes that the good that we do to someone now will be rewarded to us in the future. It has positive social effects, if the citizens act in the full confidence that their trust will not be abused. It is of special importance in the case of *the citizen engagement bonds*, through which information is transmitted – in particular concerning of reliability of the community’s members. It guarantees one would keep their word/promise/contract, and reinforce citizens’ beliefs about the honesty of other community’s members, which supports social solidarism, build around ‘common good’.<sup>19</sup> In the process, an integral part of humane capital is the awareness of benefits from participation in community (‘common good’), rejecting mercenary egoism, what is not possible without the spirit of subsidiarity’s philosophy.

Without an attitude of trust, social solidarism, reciprocity or even in some specific situations a spirit of generosity, the relations between authorities and citizens, inter-relation among citizens could be regulated only by low (acts), fear of the power and egoistical interest.<sup>20</sup> It requires the third important component of humane capital: the *consensual inclination* which determines a way of person’s leading to cooperation with others, which is about the character of the citizen engagement bonds (mainly horizontal), in particular in the framework of public associations. The consensual inclination is determined by politeness or ‘*civility*’ (manners, education and cultivation, according to Scottish moralists), what requires conflicts to be resolved not by force and violence, but by legal solutions and negotiation (discourse). Then, in opposition to traditional society, which was marked by the ‘warmth of the close-knit (cordial) community’, ‘*civility*’ based on an awareness of individual freedom (individual identity) limited by the freedom of others (tolerance), has ‘to do with relations be-

<sup>18</sup> R.D. Putnam, *Demokracja w działaniu. Tradycje obywatelskie we współczesnych Włoszczach*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Znak 1995, pp. 15-17, 217-246, 276.

<sup>19</sup> John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter “Sollicitudo rei socialis”*.

<sup>20</sup> Hobbes cited by: R. Tokarczyk, *Hobbes*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna 1987, p. 105.

tween people of different interests and sensibilities'.<sup>21</sup> Such created citizen engagement bonds permit not only 'input', but also 'output' from community without sanctions (loss of life, social status, etc.).

The germ of a humane capital of a person is formed in the private sphere, in family, and then is developed through the system of the public education, as well as through an independent political network of the social communication. What is the most important for the idea of civil society, is *participatory orientation* of citizen indicated by theory of political culture. That orientation is manifested by the will of 'grass-roots' and courageous influence of citizens on the political system – not only through participation in parliamentary election, but also on a daily basis. Civic culture allows a certain measure of *affective orientation* manifested by emotional attitude of citizens towards their communities (pride in achievements of their region, country, etc.). Also a small dose of *evaluative orientation* is enabled, and in consequence, an upturn of the system should be included in the *civic culture*. But that orientation cannot be based on non-reflective faith in solutions prepared by authorities represented the particular interests of some individuals and social groups. That's why the idea of *civil society* rejects:

1. parochial/tribal orientation, because it determines that individual is not aware of the relationship between his immediate environment (village, tribe, etc.), and 'common good' of region, country, etc.; this orientation forms the basis for a "closed circle" culture and creates attitudes of indifference/hostility towards "what is strange, because it is external";

2. subject/authoritarian orientation, which determines that politically educated individual coop themselves up, ceding full responsibility for their fate and state's fate on authorities. They do not believe in their capabilities to organize themselves in order to fulfill their economic and social needs.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Bryan, *Civil society and pluralism*, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup> W. Bokajło, *Niektóre teoretyczne i metodologiczne problemy kultury politycznej*, in W. Bokajło (Ed.), *Studia z teorii polityki, kultury politycznej i myśli politycznej*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 1996, pp. 71-92; T. Zieliński, *Historia kultury antycznej w zwięzłym wykładzie*, Warszawa-Kraków 1937, pp. 36-72.

### 3. SPHERES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The wants, needs and benefits of citizen *in actu* are accomplished in the private, public and political sphere of *civil society*.

The private sphere is based on household (*oikos*), which means that in this private environment, family satisfies their material, spiritual and security wants and needs, as well as an acts to ensure building next generation.<sup>23</sup> Family is the first stage of the socialization process which determines the *citizenship* of the future citizen.<sup>24</sup> The culture type depends on climate and education level in family:<sup>25</sup> if it is a culture closed on society and political world or *civic culture*, linked to the philosophy of subsidiarity, closely connected to virtues, attitudes and abilities underlined as components of human capital, social capital, creating citizen engagement bonds. The family, as a ‘spiritual union’ of persons, clustered around the household by ‘acts of common assistance and care’, bonded together by blood ties, as well as family and social tradition, cannot be ‘warmth of the close-knit community’.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, by principle of participation, as well as protection of individual identity and emotional needs and wants of the family’s members, the relations and inter-relations inside a family require a bigger measure of *parochial* and *affective orientation* then public and political spheres. Without *affective/emotional orientation* the sex-drive would be merely technical act and the procreative function of the couple would be deprived of emotional ties connected with fatherhood and motherhood.<sup>27</sup> For family members, their

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<sup>23</sup> A. Koperek, *Ochrona prawa do pracy i godnego życia podstawą bezpieczeństwa społecznego rodziny*, in J. Koperek (Ed.), *Rodzina europejska. Filozoficzno-polityczne i społeczno-ekonomiczne uwarunkowania*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2011, pp. 365-386; Koperek, *Zaangażowanie społeczne obywateli* pp. 115-158.

<sup>24</sup> Koperek, *Zaangażowanie społeczne*, pp. 23-50, 115-158.

<sup>25</sup> cf. John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation “Familiaris consortio”*; Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter “Laborem exercens”*; Benedict XVI, *Encyclical letter “Centenimus annus”*; Benedict XVI, *Letter to Families*; Koperek, *Educazione morale*; Benedict XVI, *La concezione*.

<sup>26</sup> F. Adamski, *Rodzina, wymiar społeczno-kulturowy*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 2002, p. 31; S. Jakubiec, *Mediacje jako metoda pracy z rodziną*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WSFP Ignatianum 2011, p. 7; M. Płop, *Rodzina u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia: perspektywa badań*, in M. Płop (Ed.), *Człowiek u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia*, vol. III, Elbląg: Wydawnictwo Elbląska Uczelnia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna 2009, p. 229.

<sup>27</sup> K. Wójtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, Lublin: TN KUL 1960.

family home is *sui generis* asylum in the social and political environment where they can recover their mental and emotional equilibrium.

The public sphere should be filled by self-governed associations of citizens *in actu*, independent from political authorities. They create the network of citizen engagement bonds, oriented on the philosophy of subsidiarity, gaining the effectiveness of realization their needs and expressing their will of participation in the whole system of *civil society*. That is why the public sphere rejects first of all the authoritarian and parochial orientation with its ‘closed circle’ culture. The public sphere is ‘the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction’.<sup>28</sup>

In turn, the political sphere, a nation-wide, is the realm of public authorities. It is created by relation and inter-relation among central government, authorities of the self-governed communities and citizens. A constitutional state should support the *civil society* by guaranteeing of civil rights and *pax et securitas*.

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<sup>28</sup> Bryant, *Civil society and pluralism*, p. 112.

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**RODZINA BOGACTWEM  
DLA SPOŁECZEŃSTWA OBYWATELSKIEGO**

**S t r e s z c z e n i e**

Artykuł odnosi się do badań, które zostały przeprowadzone w Polsce w latach 2010-2012 przez Radę ds. Rodziny Konferencji Episkopatu Polski we współpracy z Papieską Radą ds. Rodziny. Badania dotyczyły rodziny i jej funkcjonowania w warunkach społecznych w Polsce. Ich celem było zdiagnozowanie potrzeb rodziny, możliwych obszarów wsparcia i odpowiedzi na pytanie, w jaki sposób obecna rodzina stanowi bogactwo społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego, definiuje rodzinę jako małżeństwo kobiety i mężczyzny, mających dzieci. Definicja ta powinna być postrzegana w kontekście nauki społecznej Kościoła, nauczania Jana Pawła II, a w szczególności Benedykta XVI. W ujęciu socjologicznym całe społeczeństwo opiera się na rodzinie, która jest rozumiana jako najważniejsza, podstawowa grupa społeczna zbudowana na intymnej relacji, wzajemnym uczuciu, współpracy i wzajemnej odpowiedzialności; wzmacnienie stosunków wewnętrznych i interakcji są głównym celem rodziny. Zgodnie z podejściem systemowym, rodzina powinna być postrzegana jako system, w którym zmiana jednego elementu prowokuje zmiany w innych jego częściach. Przedstawione w artykule badania podejmują kwestie dotyczące rodziny jako instytucji społecznej w kontekście następujących aspektów: 1. Rodzina – podejście socjologiczne; 2. Idea społeczeństwa obywatelskiego; 3. Obszary społeczeństwa obywatelskiego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina jako instytucja społeczna, społeczeństwo obywatelskie, podejście socjologiczne, katolicka nauka społeczna.