

SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTION OF FAMILY RELATIONS IN THE ERA OF NETWORK SOCIETY: EAST VS WEST

The article analyzes the nature of family ties in a globalized network society. Despite allegations about an absence of convergence between different cultures on a global scale, the author is inclined to believe that Eastern and Western civilizations still undergo changes under the influence of each other. Recently, the "selfish and materialistic West" has changed, losing its materialistic-oriented understanding of the nature and value of family, and becoming more tolerant to a lack of legitimate recognition of family relationships. This may indicate that family relationships are undergoing a process of idealization, where they will obtain a higher level of importance than before, when attention was concentrated on the benefits of marital status.

On the contrary, the "traditionally wise East" has been strengthening its traditional legal norms, focusing on material/structural family features. For example, family stability is ensured by kinship.

In both cases (West and East), people look for stability in family relationships, but the stability comes from different factors –from the ideal and the material features, respectively. The tradition of "serial monogamy" (divorce followed by the subsequent creation of a new family) in the West and the creation of the family once and forever in the East are actually actions of the same order: they both are focused on bond formation, which would guarantee stability and support. In search of stability, families in the West are likely to be destroyed, and families in the East stay together due to an extraordinary tolerance.

Globalization enables us to look at and compare things that happen great distances from each other, and only because of distance do we perceive these things as different. The interconnected network of the modern world allows us, first of all, to make a large scale assessment of families in different parts of the world, bringing the hidden family world from the periphery to the center of interest. Secondly, due to common global activity, it provides us with proof that the same essential ideas and values regarding family are present in different parts of the world. Families of the East and West have many more commonalities than differences.

Key words: family, family relations, globalization, network society, East, West.