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THE PHILOSOPHICAL MODEL OF THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES WITH A VIEW TO KANT, HUSSERL AND HEIDEGGER – A FOCAL POINT SKETCH

Summary: When we talk about anthropological and social problems, we usually methodologically assume an epistemically stable structure of thought "human-family-society". This creates a basis for the philosophical model of the family, which is characterized by causal hermeneutics. One cannot talk reliably about the family without referring to the individual and you cannot speak reliably about the society without referring to the family, which then enables the family to be "communion personarum". This constellation takes on a transcendental configuration at Kant, phenomenological at Husserl and existential at Heidegger. The reference to mandatory ethics, living world and concern is taken. This establishes the methodological framework, where the ontological-epistemic and ethical structure of the family can be analyzed, looking back at the value of life.

Keywords: Family, society, duty, living environment, care, value of life.

Introduction

If you want to understand the individual and society objectively and describe them plausibly, the term "family" is usually used. This creates the context of understanding and describing. It is said, among other things, that individuals are raised in a family. But this also forms the smallest cell of any society. With this one can gain an anthropological-social access to the world and then scientifically describe it. Different approaches are conceivable and lead to various family models that can hardly be reconciled structurally or functionally in today´s scientific discourses. Consider, for example, the increasingly clear social appearance of the so-called LGBT movement in the traditional Christian culture

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and life context. So, today the questions are discussed, how a family should be structured, and which basic function it must fulfill. The space for rational discourses is both factually comprehensive and, at the same time, purposeful, depending on which interests are pursued and how they are justified.

Apart from the individual interests pursued by the actors participating in the discourse and the accents they set, an epistemically stable thinking structure can always be recognized: *"human-family-society"*. From a methodological point of view, we can also talk about the *philosophical (or universal) model of the family,* which is characterized by a *causal hermeneutic.* This is, you cannot speak reliably about the family without referring to a single person, and you cannot speak reliably about society without referring to a family. This tendency has both theological and philosophical implications. For example, we read in Pope Francis´ post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Amoris laetitia" about the danger of escalating individualism, (Franziskus, 2016, p. 26f) and in Hegel´s "Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences" about the spirit of the family as a person. (Hegel, 1986, §518f) In this respect one could also talk to Karol Wojtyla about the family as *"communio personarum",* whereby both the interpersonal and the social dimension of the human come into play. (Rynkiewicz, 2002, pp. 231f)

In this lecture we will try to develop a justification for the thesis "Family as communio personarum" – looking back on Kant, Husserl and Heidegger. This takes three methodical perspectives: *transcendental, phenomenological* and *existential.* It will be shown that these perspectives are fundamental pillars of the philosophical model "human-family-society."

1. The transcendental dimension of the family

It does not have to be emphasized that the causal relationship in the "person- -family-society" structure goes beyond the philosophical framework of reflection. So, you can talk about it not only from a philosophical point of view, but also from a sociological, theological, cognitive, scientific, etc. However, the philosophical perspective is a special one because it asks directly *why the model "human-family-society"* should be considered seriously. Regarding Kant, we can then say that it is the transcendental perspective of observation, that reveals the conditions of the model "human-family-society." (Kant, [2]1787, B 25) According to Kant, there are obviously many conditions in this regard. In the following I will name *the duty* that will then result in *the state of happiness*.

The term "duty" is not only decisive for Kant´s practical philosophy because it grounds the entire structure of his duty ethics, but also for the model "human-

-family-society." Kant convincingly fulfills the expectation of a philosophical ethics that it sets up a criterion for moral obligations. This criterion is developed out of the thing. From the concept of morality, which is characteristic of sensual moral beings and represents unconditional bindingness or the categorical imperative, the strictly universal validity follows as its distinguishing feature. The basic formula of the categorical imperative is: *"Only act according to the maxim by which you can at the same time want it to become a general law."* (Kant, [2]1787, B 52)[1] With the categorical imperative, Kant provides a top assessment criterion for morality. The associated judgment, the pure practical judgment guarantees the distinction between immoral and moral maxims. The categorical imperative therefore consists in a demand that prompts action. When I ask myself in a specific situation what I should do, the following moral consideration arises: I am considering various options for action, between which I must decide. Then I wonder which maxims of action underlie the individual options for action. Finally, I check these maxims for action against the idea of the general law (i.e. the categorical imperative) and see that I can only choose the option that can withstand this check. (Höffe, 2012, p. 106f)

According to Kant, moral observance based on universal ethics can lead the person to a state of happiness. The term "happiness" is therefore considered to be a morally effective entity that motivates the person to perform their duties beforehand, but then leads to a good life. For Kant, happiness is an indispensable necessary goal of man: To be happy is the desire of every sensible finite being, an inevitable reason for determining his desire. Happiness is the ultimate goal that every person strives for, because he is a need being and has the necessary desire that his needs be met. Man is an end in itself as a reasonable nature and need being. I cannot treat man as an end in itself without considering that he has the necessary desire to be happy. According to Kant, bliss is not only a factual goal, but also a goal in the judgment of an impartial reason, i.e. it is the sensible goal of a sensible need. Kant distinguishes between the *highest good* (i.e. virtue) and the *perfect good,* for which happiness is required in addition to virtue. Both together form the highest good. It is therefore a requirement of reason that a being who is needy and worthy of happiness is also happy. Reason must also recognize the justification for an orderly striving. (Kant, [3]1998, p. 163f)

Kant´s transcendental commitment is therefore borne by the factors that are also required for the current model "human-family-society." On the one hand, duty and happiness have a semantic impact not only on the individual, but also on the family and society, regardless of which form is assigned to them. On the

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[1] As is well known, there are other sub-formulas of the categorical imperative: (1) the natural law formula (B 52); (2) the end in itself formula (B 66f); and (3) the formula of the realm of ends (B 80). For Kant, maxims are subjective practical principles.

other hand, the causal link between the duty to be performed and the happiness to be expected must be emphasized. This causal link can be justified transcendental well but has clear phenomenological gaps. So, one can assume that if a sensible person tries to fulfill his duties well, then he can rightly expect to achieve a state in the world in which everything goes as desired and willed. (Kant, 1788, A 224) The question is whether Kant´s transcendental perspective would be sufficient to describe this world so that the real profile of the human being, to which the current family also belongs, could be enforced in the context of existing antimetaphysical expectations.

2. The phenomenological dimension of the family

The transcendental access to the entities which are fundamental for the family as a community of human persons will ultimately have to result in establishing themselves metaphysically. One can observe this well with Kant, for example, when he postulates the existence of God, who alone can guarantee the highest good. (Kant, 1788, A 223f)

A different perspective can then be gained if, for example, you bring some phenomenological factors into play with Husserl, all of which are included in the term *"living world"*. At the beginning of the analysis, however, there is the transformation of the transcendental. Because Husserl uses the term "living world" in the broadest sense for the original motive of inquiring about the last source of all cognition formation, of the knower reflecting on himself and his cognitive life, in which all valid scientific structures occur. This source is *the ego itself* with its entire real life of knowledge, with the concrete life in the family and society in general. (Husserl, 1962, §26)

The term "living world" has become a central subject of Husserl´s philosophy and includes entities such as factuality, strangeness, intersubjectivity, tradition, normality, etc. These build the basic human structures, including family and society. However, I will not deal with these entities, but will use the term "living world" in the context of *pre-scientific* and *scientific experience* where the above entities appear. It is important to make it clear that the Husserlian term "living world" contains both the pre-scientific and the scientific experience. This means that the living world primarily means – ontologically speaking – the pre-scientific and vividly given world of experience. What is meant is the everyday life, which is necessary for all human subjects. However, this world remains open to the inclusion of scientific theories. Because science is based on the living world, so that it ultimately sinks into the ground on which it stands. Over time, theoretical assumptions are incorporated into daily practice. In this

way they become part of the living world. We all assume that the earth is round, although only a few of us have seen it. The living world is also characterized by the possibility of an explanatory assessment. So, Husserl realizes that the living world has an unchangeable morphological basic structure. This structure is explained by the distinction between morphological and ideal beings. Contrary to a morphological term "cat", which refers to something of which we can see a concrete example, the concept of a perfect straight line is an exact and abstract concept. This concept does not occur in nature really. (Husserl, 1962, §§142f)

With a return to the living world, Husserl wanted to overcome the crisis in science that occurred at the beginning of the 20ᵗʰ century. According to Husserl, this crisis is due to the mathematical activity of the natural sciences triggered by Galileo, and it also had an impact on the political and social sphere. So, one can say that this addresses the problem of the family, which must always be seen in a complex frame. This means that the anthropological-social model "human--family-society" can be made more understandable based on the living world as Husserl envisioned. It is primarily about the relevance of pre-scientific and scientific experience par excellence. So, these two types of experience have a systematic impact on people, family and society. It is a kind of specific impact that affects the whole "communio-personarum." This is to say that the concrete needs and obligations of the individual, the family and society must also be valued rationally. It is therefore not only about the metaphysically well-founded conviction of the need for happiness and duty in the life of human beings, but also about the existentially well-founded perception of concrete concern. Every precise analysis of people, family and society must take this path rationally.

3. The existential dimension of the family

The characteristic of the existence of the individual and society is that existence is always threatened and can be destroyed. The last moment of existential annihilation is death. This also happens in the real living world, in which pre-scientific and scientific factors come together, as was seen in Husserl. This creates the space for understanding complex *ontological concern (or care)* that we find in Heidegger. The term "concern/care" (Sorge) is relevant for a philosophical reflection insofar as it has a broadly applied semantic-predictive structure. For example, individuals, and society all have concerns about the risk associated with the corona virus.

People are therefore generally in mutual concern relationships. They worry, even if they worry about themselves and other people, but also about things, developments, plans and living conditions. In his work "Sein und Zeit" Heidegger

speaks of *concern as the structural whole of existence.* By this he means no intended actions, also no mental states, but *"being in the world"* (In-der-Welt--sein). The concern is therefore not viewed individually, but ontologically and intersubjectively. Heidegger calls the ontological relationship to things "getting" (Besorgen), the relationship to other people "care" (Fürsorge). It is also important that the concern is understood in terms of time, prospectively and as a condition of existence and free action. In Heidegger´s language, concern is to be understood as "being ahead" (sich-vorweg-sein) and as an existential-ontological condition for the possibility of being free for actual existential possibilities.[2] This view of concern reveals the *intersubjective structure of responsibility.* Because each individual person can only understand their own existence as "enabled" and then as "enabling". We as individuals are neither the sources of our existence nor the conditions of our freedom. This means that our freedom is also possible. Freedom and responsibility are not arbitrary as positive options. We can only deny and reject them because they are given to us. The conditions in which we live are at the same time the conditions under which we are free and in what we do, fully respect responsibility as a concern. (Heidegger, [18]2001, §39f; see too Vossenkuhl, 2006, p. 166f)

In the context of Heidegger´s reflection on concern, the existential dimension of the family can also be examined from an anthropological and social perspective. This shows that the dynamically acting factors of concern and responsibility, which are intentionally dependent on each other because both relate to human persons, are decisive for determining the function of the family. The Apostolic Exhortation "Familiaris Consortio" therefore reads: *"Family, become what you are!"* On the one hand, it is about the role of the family in forming a community of people, in serving life, in participating in social development, and in the life and mission of the Church. (Johannes Paul II, 1981, p. 21f) On the other hand, it releases a kind of existential dynamic, for which the predicate "become" stands. In the context of becoming, the fundamental structure of concern is being of existence and the structure of responsibility, which reinforces this concern dynamically and existentially from an ethical point of view. For Heidegger, this ontological constellation has important real consequences, which are further thought with a view to epistemic moments (i.e., openness [Erschlossenheit] and truth). (Heidegger, [18]2001, §43f.) These moments can also have a creative effect on the "human-family-society" model by enabling a causal balance in this model.

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[2] As is well known, it is important to distinguish between „existentiell" (=illuminating everything in terms of is individual existence, cf. Jaspers for example) and "existential" (=aiming for existence and also for being as such).

4. The critical dimension of the family: the metaphysical indefiniteness

Everything does not always have to be successful in the family. Rather, there are sometimes serious family crises of various types and provenances. Pope Francis emphasizes this in the first chapter of "Amoris laetitia" – with a view to the theological-anthropological perspective of the Bible. (Franziskus, 2016, p. 13) So, today the question about the anthropological foundation of the family is raised. Various factors and facts are brought into play, such as the contingency and creation of human existence, the personality and vocation to love. (Kobak, 2018, pp. 107–121, 107f)

This establishes the methodological framework, where the ontological--epistemic and ethical structure of the family can be analyzed, looking back at the *value of life*. To determine the value of life, three perspectives are used: subjective, objective and deontological. From a subjective point of view, the value of life for most people is always infinitely.[3] The objective perspective, on the other hand, combines the value of a person´s life with diverse utilitarian expectations of others. Finally, the deontological perspective relies on various categorical prohibitions to establish a consensus area of moral convictions. (Nida-Rümelin, 2005, pp. 886–914, 887f) In principle, the family can take advantage of these three perspectives in order to fulfill their tasks and thus achieve their goals. We briefly saw how this can be done within the causal model "human-family-society" in Kant, Husserl and Heidegger. The only question is how the Kantian view of things relates to the value of life. Because without the right appreciation of the worth of life, a family cannot develop.

It is therefore necessary for Kant to take the transcendental path that is thought in the deontological framework. The categorical imperative plays a special role here. Kant thus criticizes that right and wrong in the sense of utilitarianism only ever depend on what the world is like. So, the utilitarians strive to put usefulness morality into the world. Kant´s conviction, on the other hand, is that right and wrong – based on concrete examples – need a *general rule* that does not depend on how the world is made up. For Kant, the thesis applies: Only act according to principles that you can want to make valid law worldwide. The categorical imperative (CI) must therefore first guarantee the general validity of the action, then the purpose that everyone can reasonably want. It (CI) must also be out of duty and free of self-interest. After all, other people should never be just a means to an end. (Kant, [2]1786, B 406f)

According to Kant, the deontological strategy is indispensable for the problem of the family, which must always be viewed in the context of the

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[3] Of course, there are cases where a person is already sacrificing their life for others.

individual and society. The whole thing requires a philosophical perspective. The deontological strategy should also ensure that the space for a happy life is "created". On closer inspection, however, we find that this cannot always work, primarily because of the *metaphysical indefiniteness* that arises in connection with the categorical imperative. Two simple examples should make this clear to us. Kant would say that both "you shouldn´t lie" and "you should help people in danger" are true. But what if you can save a person in mortal danger only by lying? This shows the weaknesses of the categorical imperative, because both actions are just right, and you must prefer one action. This creates the space for the so-called "metaphysical indefiniteness" of the respective epistemic-ethical constellation. In addition, it can be said clearly: Today, what everyone reasonable wants can be discussed. In the age of postmodern expectations, (Rynkiewicz, 2016, p. 1f.) where different opinions are accepted as equivalent, Kant´s deontological thesis is by no means clear.

In order to overcome the metaphysical indefiniteness of thinking one must rather be prepared to use other methodological strategies at the same time, such as the phenomenological and the existential. Then not only would the family appear in a different light, regardless of its structural relationship, but also the value of life. That must have been close to Kant´s heart too.

5. Outlook

In his "Philosophical Studies" Wittgenstein uses the word *family similarities.* (Wittgenstein, 1984, §67) This word is used here as a methodological factor to overcome the metaphysical indefiniteness of thinking and then to philosophically substantiate the thesis "Family as communio personarum". This is to make it clear that each philosophical model of the family only refers to specific family similarities without wanting to make any concrete suggestions. Because that is above all the task of the so-called "science about family". So, it can also be said that the predicates that are decisive for the transcendental, the phenomenological and the existential perspectives usually have the task of establishing the anthropological-social structures as family similarities. The core of this reasoning is the preservable value of life. But this value is the visible expression of a concrete concern in a concrete time crisis, which can be triggered by the worldwide danger of the corona virus.

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Zarys filozoficzny modelu rodziny w kontekście wyzwań antropologicznych i społecznych – spojrzenie na Kanta, Husserla i Heideggera

Streszczenie: Gdy mówimy o problematyce antropologicznej i społecznej, zakładamy metodycznie w większości przypadków pewną epistemologicznie stabilną strukturę myślową „człowiek-rodzina- -społeczeństwo". W ten sposób wyrasta podłoże dla filozoficznego modelu rodziny, nacechowanego swoistą kauzalną hermeneutyką. Nie można przekonująco mówić o rodzinie, nie uwzględniając przy tym pojedynczego człowieka oraz nie można przekonująco mówić o społeczeństwie, nie uwzględniając przy tym rodziny. Umożliwia to ujęcie rodziny jako *communio personarum*. Kant nadaje tej konstelacji wymiar transcendentalny, Husserl wymiar fenomenologiczny, Heidegger zaś wymiar egzystencjalny. Uwzględnione zostają przy tym etyka obowiązku, życie środowiskowe i troska. Skutkuje to również określeniem metodycznym obszaru myślowego, gdzie można potem analizować ontologiczno-epistemiczną i etyczną strukturę rodziny, uwzględniając przy tym wartość życia.

Słowa kluczowe: rodzina, społeczeństwo, obowiązek, środowisko życiowe, troska, wartość życia.

Das philosophische Modell der Familie im Kontext anthropologischer und sozialer Aufforderungen rückblickend auf Kant, Husserl und Heidegger – ein schwerpunktmäßiger Entwurf

Zusammenfassung: Wenn wir über anthropologische und soziale Problematik reden, dann setzen wir methodisch in den meisten Fällen die epistemisch stabile Denkstruktur „Mensch-Familie--Gesellschaft" voraus. Damit entsteht eine Grundlage für das philosophische Modell der Familie, das durch eine kausale Hermeneutik gekennzeichnet ist. Man kann nicht über die Familie zuverlässig sprechen, ohne den Bezug auf den einzelnen Menschen zu nehmen, und man kann nicht über die Gesellschaft zuverlässig sprechen, ohne den Bezug auf die Familie zu nehmen. Das ermöglicht die Auffassung der Familie als *communio personarum*. Diese Konstellation bekommt bei Kant eine transzendentale, bei Husserl eine phänomenologische und bei Heidegger eine existentiale Ausgestaltung. Es wird der Bezug auf die Pflichtethik, die Lebenswelt und die Sorge genommen. Damit wird der methodische Denkrahmen etabliert, wo dann die ontologisch-epistemische und ethische Struktur der Familie analysiert werden kann, und zwar rückblickend auf den Wert des Lebens.

Schlüsselwörter: Familie, Gesellschaft, Pflicht, Lebenswelt, Sorge, Wert des Lebens.