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MILITARY FAMILY IN SHAPING OF THE SAFE ENVIRONMENT OF CARE AND EDUCATION

RODZINA WOJSKOWA W KSZTAŁTOWANIU ŚRODOWISKA OPIEKUŃCZO-WYCHOWAWCZEGO



ABSTRACT: The family, as the basic environment of human life, plays a key role in the educational process and building social bonds. In the military context, this role is shaped by unique challenges such as deployment, relocation, and operational stress. The quality of the functions performed by the family has a significant impact on the satisfaction of its members and their position in the wider social context. In the face of contemporary socio-economic changes and specific professional environments the military, family functions are being modified, which has a direct impact on family relations. The purpose of the article is to examine how the occupation of a professional soldier affects the shaping of the caregiving and educational environment of a military family. The analyses conducted were aimed at verifying the hypothesis: the profession of a professional soldier plays a key role in shaping the caregiving and educational environment of a military family. This article analyzes the function of the family in the context of the military environment from a family perspective. Key functions such as socialization, cultural, caring and educational, supporting personality development, moral-religious, economic and preventive functions were discussed. The importance of family relations for the functioning of the family as the basic environment of human existence is presented. The influence of the military environment in military families in the care and educational aspect in the form of their dysfunction was also described. This article examines the functions of families within military settings from a sociological perspective, emphasizing their influence on care and education. Additionally, the article discusses the impact of military-specific stressors on family bonds and the emergence of dysfunctions.

KEYWORDS: Military family, military, family safety, care and education military environment

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ABSTRAKT: Rodzina jako podstawowe środowisko życia ludzkiego, odgrywa kluczową rolę w procesie wychowawczym i budowaniu więzi społecznych. W kontekście wojskowym rola ta jest kształtowana przez unikalne wyzwania, takie jak misje, relokacje i stres po operacjach wojskowych. Jakość funkcji pełnionych przez rodzinę ma istotny wpływ na zadowolenie jej członków i ich pozycję w szerszym kontekście społecznym. W obliczu współczesnych zmian społeczno-ekonomicznych oraz specyficznych środowisk zawodowych, takich jak wojsko, funkcje rodziny ulegają modyfikacjom, co bezpośrednio wpływa na relacje rodzinne. Artykuł analizuje funkcję rodziny w kontekście środowiska wojskowego z perspektywy rodziny. Omówiono kluczowe funkcje, takie jak socjalizacja, kulturowe, opiekuńczo-wychowawcze, wspieranie rozwoju osobowości, moralno-religijne, ekonomiczne oraz prewencyjne. Przedstawiono znaczenie relacji rodzinnych dla funkcjonowania rodziny jako podstawowego środowiska ludzkiej egzystencji. Opisano również wpływ środowiska wojskowego na rodziny wojskowe w aspekcie opiekuńczo-wychowawczym w postaci ich dysfunkcji. Artykuł bada funkcje rodzin w środowiskach wojskowych z perspektywy socjologicznej, podkreślając ich wpływ na opiekę i edukację. Ponadto omawia wpływ specyficznych stresorów wojskowych na więzi rodzinne oraz powstawanie dysfunkcji.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Rodzina wojskowa, środowisko opiekuńczo-wychowawcze, wojskowość, socjologia.

INTRODUCTION

The family, as the basic environment of human life, prompts us to pay attention to its essential functions. The quality and importance of functions performed by the family determines the influence of the educational process that will take place in its environment.

Any disturbances lead to a decrease in the effectiveness of the educational family. At the same time, the proper fulfilment of functions in the family is the basis for building bonds in it, as well as the satisfaction of family members and of children. Family ties, which meet all the needs of its members, determine their place in the family and in other social groups.

The functions performed by the family change according to the socio-economic conditions in which the family exists. The family, as an institution and social group, is open to internal and external influences. The internal environment of the family, as well as the actual functions of the family built through dependencies, are influenced by many factors such as equality in marriage and family, the diversity of norms and values, the subjectification of family members, the reduction of family cohesion and disintegration of personal meaning, the increase in marital conflicts and divorces, the social and psychosocial pathology of individuals, leading to significant effects in family life, which to a large extent have their origins in distorted families are not always beneficial to its members and to modern families. Such a factor will also influence any environment, including military one. This creates a specific environmental group

aimed at the realization of the stated goals and tasks subordinated almost unambiguously to the professional and personal development of the soldier. This includes a continuous interaction related to the need to observe rules contained in regulations, guidelines, orders, regulations or laws.

The constant pressure associated with discipline and order, high expectations and constant readiness to carry out tasks associated with work outside of the country makes the military environment specific and unique¹. This environment influences the soldiers through external stimuli acting with different intensity due to a multitude of events and situations with varying emotional hues cause interactions in the family environment. The demands of military life—frequent relocations, prolonged deployments, and the hierarchical structure—create a specific environment that shapes family dynamics differently compared to civilian families.

The aim of the article is to indicate how important role of the family plays in shaping the environment of care and education, providing stability and emotional support in family relationships in the military environment. Emphasizing the analysis of the family environment, which influences the shade of family functions, shows many crucial elements for stability and well-being of members of the military family. Another goal was also to show the fundamental values of each family, and in particular the military family, where emotional stability and support are key to be able to face the challenges of military life, as well as to confront them with intra-family relationships, which on the basis of military life can cause. The dysfunctions of the family in the care-educational aspect were also presented.

This article is divided into three parts. The first part analyzes the function of the family in the context of the military environment from a sociological perspective. The key functions, such as socialization, cultural, caring and educational, supporting the development of personality, moral-religious, economic and preventive, are discussed. The second part describes the role of the family in building family relationships focusing on the specifics of the military environment. It presents the importance of family relationships for the functioning of the family as the basic environment of human existence. The last part describes the influence of military environment in military families in the aspect of care and education in the form of among other their dysfunctions. The article is an invaluable source of perception of the authors from the

¹ S. Jarmoszko, *Podstawy pedagogiki w kształceniu oficerów*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2002, pp. 149-150.

point of view of members of military family in the context of formation of care and education environment.

FEATURES OF THE FAMILY IN THE MODERN MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

Family function can be understood as consequences caused by actions and actions of family members that occur in or outside the family. These effects can take the form of material effects, aspects of biological character, psychological characteristics, beliefs or certain attitudes². Family functions are also treated as a set of tasks assigned to the family and resulting effects. The realization of family function depends to a large extent on the attitudes of family members by performing tasks assigned to this environment³. Multiplicity of divisions of family functions is justified by different approaches of sociological, pedagogical or psychological nature. For the purposes of the discussed topic, a division was adopted for analysis due to sociological aspect. In sociological terms, the family is defined as a basic collective, which is present in all known cultures and societies. It consists of two people connected by a marriage knot and their children (biological or adopted) and their relatives. The family in society is the first most important social cell and has many functions, among which one can mention the function: socializing, cultural, caring and educational, supporting personality development, supporting moral and religious development, as well as economic and preventive development. Allowing to approximate functions according to such a division, this will help to emphasize the role of the family in human life⁴.

The family is a socially recognized environment of legal and religious character, in which a new life is born. The procreative function of the family as a community, allowing the formal coming into the world of man using the best conditions for development, is a guarantee of the existence and continuity of a given community, nation, as well as a guarantee of the inheritance of culture, tradition and development of society, state and nation. The modern conditions of social life have caused the emergence of contraceptives, the desacralization of spouses and the abandonment of the Catholic duty to the state and nation⁵, which has caused to a great extent

² J. Szczepański, Podstawowe pojęcia socjologii, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1963, pp. 148.

³ K. Ostrowska, Podstawowe funkcje rodziny, [w:] K. Ostrowska i M. Ryś (red.), Wychowanie *do* życia w rodzinie. Książka dla nauczycieli, rodziców i wychowawców, Wydawnictwo CMPPP MEN, Warszawa 1999, pp. 137.

⁴ *Ibidem.*, pp. 137.

⁵ M. Biedroń, Realizacja funkcji rodziny w kontekście globalnych przemian socjokulturowych, [w:] A. Ładyżyńskiego (red.), Rodzina we współczesności, Wydawnictwo ATUT, Wrocław 2009, pp. 41-42.

the gap between the fulfillment of the procreative function and sexual, as part of the customary identity of man in the twenty-first century.

The socialization function in the family is identified with the provision of care, education and adaptation to social conditions through daily family life, the knowledge of values, norms, patterns of behavior and the process of teaching how to realize the intentions in life, allowing to achieve success. The process of socialization is the most difficult aspect of the developing new member of the community of a given nation. Internal conditions starting with the property status, family formation, ingrained learned behaviors, level of knowledge, and above all the awareness of the need to put effort into the educational process that allows in adult life for independent functioning and founding of a family, is an incalculable, huge effort that must be made in order to be able to properly shape the future citizen of the state.

The culture-creation function of the family is based on the cultural heritage affecting the spiritual, moral, social and economic character⁶. This function concerns, inter alia, the maintenance and cultivation of family traditions, customs and customs, the maintenance of ties in terms of attachment to certain professions, jobs or interests, the care of the culture of daily life, including fame, the care of cleanliness and aesthetics of the environment, involvement in artistic, scientific or creative work, as well as the care of family values⁷.

This function allows the formation of cognitive properties related to contact with the surrounding reality, touching problems and solving them, searching for answers to current questions, as well as acquiring the skills of interaction and coexistence with others, allowing to build the capacity to express thoughts and experience, communicate and form bonds with other people. The family being a caring and educational environment is characterized by: constancy, for example, through permanent emotional ties, procreation or stability of the relationship; corporeality dependent on successive biological cycles such as birth or death; uniqueness, which is a unique sphere of relationship and interaction, as well as the experience of family members and spontaneity of actions and tasks that allow to satisfy many needs together⁸.

⁶ J. Wilk, *Pedagogika rodziny. Zagadnienia wybrane*, Wydawnictwo Poligrafia Salezjańska, Lublin 2002, pp. 67-68.

⁷ K. Ostrowska, *Podstawowe funkcje rodziny...op.cit.*, pp. 140-141.

⁸ L. Dyczewski, *Mieć rodzinę – dom, [w:] Mieć taki dom. Ogólnopolski szkolny konkurs o rodzinie, Materiały informacyjne*, Wydawnictwo Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Nauczycieli „Warsztaty w Drodze”, 2001, pp. 38-39

The educational and caring function of the family is associated with the basic task of caring for its members⁹. It consists in creating suitable conditions for life through, among other things, the protection of health and life, as well as care and care in situations that require such actions¹⁰. The care function is associated with actions of a fundamental nature providing the conditions necessary for normal life; stimulating actions consisting in stimulating the family and other institutions of family members for intellectual or aesthetic development; insurance actions which are taken when it is necessary to protect members of the family from abnormalities that may threaten their development or their lives; compensatory actions “triggered” in the event of fluctuations in the process of development in order to eliminate deficiencies in the proper development of children; and rescue actions taking place when there is an excessive influence of persons, groups or institutions causing the distortion of life through its deformations of biological or moral development¹¹. The family constituting a care environment is characterized by: constancy, for example through permanent emotional ties, procreation or stability of the relationship; corporeality dependent on successive biological cycles such as birth or death; uniqueness that is a unique sphere of relationship and interaction, as well as the experience of family members and spontaneity of actions and tasks that allow to meet many needs together¹².

The function of supporting the development of personality, which is a compilation of psychic, social or spiritual characteristics, is characterized by the continuous formation of a person thanks to his activity and support from outside. The family is the main environment supporting the formation of personality through acquired behavioral knowledge, attitudes and behavior, also the provider of knowledge of the world allowing to build self-worth and thus lead to good self-esteem and self-acceptance¹³.

The function of supporting moral and religious development concerns a group of norms and assessments of behavior and conduct applicable to all people in a given community. It consists of transmitting knowledge about the values, norms and patterns of religious behavior

⁹ A set of phenomena that entirely consist of the existence of fundamental conditions for the educational process. J. Wilk, *Pedagogika rodziny...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 51.

¹⁰ M. Biedroń, *Realizacja funkcji rodziny w kontekście globalnych przemian socjokulturowych*, [w:] A. Ładyżyński (red.), *Rodzina we współczesności*, Wydawnictwo ATUT, Wrocław 2009, pp. 50.

¹¹ S. Kawula, *Funkcja opiekuńcza współczesnej rodziny*, [w:] S. Kawula, J. Brągiel, A.W. Janke (red.), *Pedagogika rodziny. Obszary i panorama problematyki*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2007, pp. 267.

¹² J. Biała, *Zagrożenia w wychowaniu dziecka we współczesnej rodzinie polskiej*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, Kielce 2006, pp. 26-27.

¹³ A. Stępnia-Łuczywek, *Rodzina jako system interakcji, „Małżeństwo i Rodzina”*, Warszawa 2004 nr 1, pp. 6-8.

related to the professed religion¹⁴. Thanks to a system of obedience, orders or prohibitions regulating family life and determining the functioning of society, a system of moral values and obligations to faith in God is formed.

The economic function of the family is reduced by the work performed by the members of this cell to provide its material and housing needs. It is the quintessence of the economic function, which allows the accumulation of financial resources and material goods, but above all to the existence of the majority of families¹⁵. Unfortunately, this function often plays a dominant role compared to the other functions of the family degrading or reducing their tasks. At the same time, the phenomenon of economic or earnings migration causes the lack of presence of some family members in the performance of their functions, often causing the breakdown of family ties, family crises, creating the seeds of manifestations of characteristics appearing in families with dysfunctions¹⁶. The lack of ability to perform this function by family members becomes a threat to its functioning, thereby affecting the reduction of the standard of living, family income, the strength of educational influence, thus causing tensions and conflicts¹⁷.

The preventive function is primarily to observe and eliminate factors that can threaten health and life, as well as the development of individual family members. Sources causing such a threat will include: emotional disorders of ties between family members, conflicts in the family, deviations in the conception of parental roles, illegible system of expectations and demands in relation to children, lack of discipline, lack of control, lack of consequences in fulfilling family functions or lack of personal role models¹⁸. Others that can be taken into account in the context of risk are: violence in the family, lack or low parenting skills, incomplete or disturbed family structure, breakdown of the marriage, abuse of means disrupting proper functioning, duration in conflict situations, use of unjustified and unjustified disproportionate

¹⁴ F. Adamski, *Rodzina. Wymiar społeczno – kulturowy*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2002, pp. 43.

¹⁵ K. Ostrowska, *Podstawowe funkcje rodziny...*, *op.cit.*, pp.148.

¹⁶ W. Danilewicz, *Sytuacja życiowa dzieci w rodzinach migracyjnych*, Wydawnictwo Trans Humana, Białystok 2006, pp. 31-33.

¹⁷ S. Kawula, *Pedagogika społeczna w społeczeństwie ryzyka*, Wydawnictwo Epistheme, Olsztyn 2004, pp. 20.

¹⁸ J. Szymańska, *Rodzina jako najważniejsza wspólnota w działaniach profilaktycznych*, [w:] red. K. Ostrowska, M. Ryś (red.), *Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie. Książka dla nauczycieli, rodziców i wychowawców*, Wydawnictwo CMPPP MEN, Warszawa 1999, pp. 290.

forms of punishment, lack of clear expectations for standards of behaviour, and lack of parental control or support¹⁹.

It is a system of family relations between family members, which should be based on a common awareness among spouses of the need to make an effort through mutual dedication to their roles in creating and maintaining the functioning of the basic social cell that is the family, proper interpersonal communication, openness in expressing feelings, feelings and awareness to others of their needs, skills and ability to resolve disputes and solve problems, as well as commitment to faith²⁰, which allows to strengthen family bonds in difficult times²¹.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY RELATIONS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FAMILY

The family constitutes the basic environment of human existence and remains a basic social cell throughout life. This cell is not a group of its members, i.e. mothers, fathers, children and grandparents or other persons living under the same roof, but above all family ties, which are connected by individual persons. Family ties are one of the most enduring forms of social interaction determining the identity of the individual, as a separate personality²². Family ties are a specific type of social bond. They can be ties resulting from their formal character, objective, independent of human will, such as blood ties, language or place of residence.

In turn, in a subjective aspect referring to their informal nature, bonds depend on the will and intentions of each person. They are expressed in spontaneous behaviors with high emotional intensity, in a sense of belonging to individuals or groups, as well as in a sense of separation from people outside the community²³.

With regard to such defined ties, the social tower can be defined as “an organized system of relations, institutions, means of social control that brings together individuals, subgroups and

¹⁹K. Duraj-Nowakowa, Między integracją a dezintegracją pedagogiki społecznej na użytek familio logii, [w:] K. Duraj-Nowakowa, U. Gruca-Miąsik (red.), Rodzina diagnoza, profilaktyka i wsparcie, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2009, pp. 22.

²⁰ The role of faith in human life can become a subject of discussion in situations where there are “moral concerns” on the part of the clergy, too much involvement of politics in the world of religion, and too loose an interpretation of the principles that should guide the family from the point of view of the clergy, detached from the realities of life.

²¹ J. Sakowska, Rola rodziny w profilaktyce uzależnień, „Studia na Rodziną (ATK)” 1998 nr 2, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Warszawa 1998, pp. 98.

²² J. Jagieła, Relacje w rodzinie a szkoła. Krótki przewodnik psychologiczny, Wydawnictwo Rubikon, Kraków 2007, pp. 7.

²³ J. Brągiel, S. Kawula, Więzi społeczne w rodzinie, [w:] S. Kawula, J. Brągiel, A. W. Janke (red.) Pedagogika rodziny. Obszary i panorama problematyki, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2007, pp. 115-116.

other constituent elements of the collective into a whole capable of lasting and developing”²⁴. Reflecting these considerations of family ties, it should be noted that the subjective element is the sense of connection with other family members and the sense of belonging to a separate social group, i.e. the family. It can manifest itself in actions or values, but also in thoughts, feelings or aspirations. The area of objective family ties is based on elements that contribute to the sustainability of the family of a legal, customary, religious, social or economic character. These elements can occur in different configurations, being mutually dependent and conditional, difficult to separate independently²⁵. The family bond is an accident of internal and external forces appearing in the family environment, at the same time affecting its members, which are the consequence of marriage, awareness of conditions, relationships and relationships, emotional experiences, cooperation and attitudes towards social, cultural and economic dependencies, as well as legal, religious and customs factors²⁶. It can therefore be assumed that the family environment and family relationships, defined as family bonds, is a set of conditions depending on the emotional, material, social and cultural factors in which the child develops²⁷. The formed family bond, which is different in each family, of the character of kinship, affinity, adoption or mental sphere, must meet the conditions appropriate to the given social cell. Family relations serve as the foundation of emotional support, which is particularly crucial in military families facing high stress levels.

The maintenance and development of these bonds will depend on the common presence in the life of other members, participation in duties and events of an occasional nature²⁸. These elements are particularly important for building parental attachment and for the educational process. The classification of family ties indicates the existence of two types: functional ties and subjective ties. Different types of family ties are distinguished in the literature of the subject. The first type are formal ties, which are formed by functions and specific roles filled by family members. The second type is an informal relationship of an intentional and personal nature, which evolves on the basis of personality traits²⁹. In a more

²⁴J. Szczepański, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1970, pp. 160-161.

²⁵J. Brągiel, S. Kawula, *Więzi społeczne...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 116.

²⁶L. Dyczewski, *Więź między pokoleniami w rodzinie*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2002, pp. 11..

²⁷M. Tyszkowa, *Rozwój dziecka w rodzinie*, Wydawnictwo UAM, Poznań 1985, pp. 62.

²⁸E. Sujak, *Klimat uczuciowy życia rodziny*, [w:] A. Podsiad, A. Szafrąńska (red.), *Spojrzenie na współczesną rodzinę*, Wydawnictwo PAX, Warszawa 1981, pp. 85.

²⁹J. Brągiel, s. Kawula, *Więzi społeczne...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 116.

extensive classification, three sets of ties can be distinguished, which affect the formation of the degree of coherence and the degree of durability of the family³⁰.

The first of these are structural-objective ties formed by relations between generations and family members, which are shaped by the roles and tasks performed by individuals and generations. Their content refers to raising children, running a household, supporting each other and cooperating in the performance of family functions. Military culture often imposes a hierarchical structure within families, influencing decision-making processes and interpersonal interactions.

Further ties are related to the personal sphere built through relationships and relationships created between family members and generations are based on the cognitive, emotional and consciousness plane. The content of these ties consists of thoughts, feelings and experiences, desires and aspirations, aspirations and mutual attitudes towards each other. They are the most important.

Cultural ties as a third type are formed by relations between family members and generations, on which the contents consist of uniform values, norms, patterns of behavior, attitudes towards people and social institutions, as well as cultural events and products. Analyzing the phenomenon of social adjustment and lack of unity in the family, four types of family ties can be distinguished³¹: sufficient ties, which occur in the case of strong family integration, and strong ties of family members and a sense of community and mutual help; a weak bond characterized by appearances of feelings, care, but also lack of understanding of the need for independence and independence, the requirement of exclusivity in family matters, ends when the child grows up; a lack of bonds characterized by isolation from the life of other family members, the treatment of the house as a temporary place of residence with a characteristic attitude of "taking" over the need for "giving"; and a negative bond associated with pathological families, with the dominance of hostility and mutual dislike towards each other and the existence of dependence consisting in the inability to adapt to the other person allowing to live with each other but also without each other. We can observe some similarities in case of pathological and military families in regards to cultural ties.

³⁰ L. Dyczewski, *Więź między pokoleniami...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-17.

³¹ N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Więź rodzinna u młodzieży społecznie nieprzystosowanej*, [w:] L. Wołoszynowa (red.), *Materiały do nauczania psychologii*, t. I, PWN, Warszawa 1986, pp. 308-310.

The occupation of a professional soldier also influences parental attitudes. According to the principles of the classical concept of career choice, individuals express themselves through their professional activities. An additional factor that reinforces authoritarian personalities and behavioral patterns in soldiers is the specific nature of military service.

In society, there exists a stereotype of soldiers as authoritarian individuals who impose their opinions on others. A principle specific to soldiers' interactions is the concept of leadership, where one dominates over others, and there is a strict requirement to obey those higher in the hierarchy. This principle often extends beyond professional relationships and is transferred to family dynamics, where soldiers attempt to organize family relations in a military-like manner. In the family system, authority lies with the parent, while the child is in a subordinate position. Parental authority can be abused, and soldiers may be particularly prone to such abuses of power³².

In military families, this hierarchical structure can lead to distorted perceptions of roles, where traditional family roles are redefined or skewed. For example, the parent serving in the military is often perceived as the primary or "important" figure in the family, while the other parent—frequently the non-military spouse—is seen as secondary or supporting. This imbalance can place undue pressure on the non-military parent to manage all domestic responsibilities, further exacerbating stress and feelings of inequality within the relationship.

Moreover, the presence of one dominant "important" parent often leads to over-dependence on that individual, leaving family members vulnerable during absences caused by deployments. Children, in particular, may develop attachment issues, struggling to cope with the parent's absence and exhibiting behavioral or emotional challenges. The elevated status of the military parent can also overshadow the contributions of the other parent, fostering a sense of inequality within the partnership and undermining mutual respect.

These dynamics contribute to power imbalances within the relationship, where decisions and authority are concentrated in one partner, often the military member. Such inequality may lead to resentment, reduced cooperation, and a lack of shared decision-making, which are critical for a healthy family environment. Over time, this can strain the marital relationship and diminish the family's ability to function as a cohesive unit.

³² A. Piotrowski, K. Kubacka: Autorytaryzm a postawy rodzicielskie żołnierzy. „Zeszyty Naukowe WSOWL” 2013, nr 4 (170), s. 28, 29.

Family ties shape a unique living environment and an atmosphere and climate that is impossible to replicate. Close relationships, love, care and care, as well as a sense of duty and responsibility, unite the family into one whole. The family in its own way creates a specific family atmosphere. The family environment is created by a set of circumstances and factors, both material and immaterial, and by people who live connected in original and unique ties in a way: by ties of blood and kinship. It is not a static and target system. All elements of the environment are intertwined in different kinds of connections, relationships and interactions. The result of these connections and the result of these relationships is the atmosphere or family climate³³. The formation of a special atmosphere depends on material factors, on a certain level of culture of life in the family, but in particular on the bonds of love that unite the members of the family. Thus, the main source of the family atmosphere are the people who form the family and their mutual relations with each other. The characteristic feature of the family atmosphere is emotional saturation taking into account the dominant moods of positive or negative shades³⁴.

By creating appropriate family ties, which are saturated with a good and joyful atmosphere, the members of this small community feel safe. As a result of such relationships, everyone becomes important and unique to each other, needful, supportive of each other, trusting and accepting their presence and behavior. and accepting each other. This allows for the possibility of a free, stress-free life and with margin for making mistakes. The family is the living environment of people who understand each other, need forgiveness, kindness, advice, encouragement and praise, under the right conditions and time, allowing for the gradual maturation of the personality of the family members³⁵.

FAMILY DYSFUNCTIONS IN THE CARE AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECT IN MILITARY FAMILIES

The family is a basic social cell that constitutes a natural environment for the child. It fulfills certain functions of a caring, developmental, educational or socialization character bearing responsibility for, among other things, meeting biological, psychological or social needs. Fulfilling these functions is the basis for creating a favorable educational, caring and social

³³ J. Wilk, *Pedagogika rodziny...*, *op.cit.*, pp.53.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp.54.

³⁵ D. Kornas-Biela, *Klimat domu rodzinnego*, [w:] *Mieć taki dom... Ogólnopolski szkolny konkurs o rodzinie*, Materiały informacyjne, Wydawnictwo Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Nauczycieli „Warsztaty w Drodze”, pp. 33.

environment for the youngest members of the family, allowing the development of personality traits, shaping values and norms applicable in society. Inappropriate situations of family life and parental attitudes and behaviors, intensifying negative situations devoid of emotional ties, cause the family to not properly fulfill its functions. Limiting care-educational and socializing functions, this family becomes dysfunctional, which is characterized by lack or lack of satisfaction of needs and biological, emotional and developmental sphere. In such a family, there is disorganization of the educational, social, emotional and structural environment. Dysfunctional family leads to disruption of emotional and interpersonal relations between spouses and parents and children themselves. Disrupted home order creates a traumatic atmosphere of family life, its disorganization and does not allow to satisfy the mental needs of the child. In the family dysfunctional care-educational methods are not consistently observed, enforced in a non-pedagogical way causing children to misalign with social, educational and life values and goals.

The family systems of military members are typically embedded within broader military cultures; "when one person joins the military, the entire family serves." Consequently, the families of service members indirectly experience the challenges associated with military life, leading to a higher level of psychosocial stressors compared to civilian families. The health and well-being of families and children whose parents serve in the military become some of the most critical factors influencing stress levels.

One of the most common factors in military families is the experience of frequent separations between parents and children due to military deployments, single parenting, geographic separation from loved ones, and relocations.

In military life we can observe that prolonged absences during deployments create a temporary but recurring "incomplete family" structure. This separation necessitates significant adjustments within the family, often leading to a matriarchal structure, as mothers assume dual roles in caregiving and household management. While this shift helps maintain the family's functionality in the short term, it often creates long-term challenges for family members.

Children, in particular, may struggle to form secure emotional bonds with the absent parent, as the deployment disrupts their sense of stability and connection. Upon returning, the soldier may feel alienated, unable to fully reintegrate into the family's established dynamics. This alienation can contribute to a cycle of misunderstanding and frustration, as the returning

parent attempts to reclaim their role within the family, which may have shifted significantly during their absence.

In some cases, family members experience a difficulty in finding their place within the family structure, leading to feelings of disorientation or inadequacy. The absence of one parent may force children to assume roles that are inappropriate for their age or development, such as becoming a caretaker for younger siblings or acting as an emotional support system for the remaining parent. This premature role assumption can have long-term impacts on their emotional and psychological well-being, often leaving them ill-equipped to navigate their own developmental milestones.

Children raised by a serving parent appear to be more susceptible to socio-emotional consequences, such as externalizing and internalizing mental health problems, compared to their peers who are not from military families³⁶. Childhood forms the foundation for later development, marking a period of profound biological, cognitive, and emotional maturation. The presence of parents is crucial for a developing child³⁷. Particularly in the context of later adaptation and social maladjustment, research highlights the central role of early parent-child attachment and caregiver sensitivity. Attachment is a unique relationship that connects the parent-child dyad, serving to protect the child, while caregiver sensitivity involves predictability, responsiveness, and attunement to the child, especially during moments of distress³⁸.

Military service, especially deployment, can result in prolonged separation between a parent and child. These separations may cause additional stress for a developing child, as they may question the physical and psychological availability of the parent. Military children may also experience “ambiguous loss” of the serving parent, where the parent is alive and well but not physically present. Due to the immature reasoning abilities of young children, this can lead to confusion and inconsistencies in their relationships. These experiences, in turn, can hinder the child’s ability to engage with their environment, as their focus shifts from learning and development to self-defense³⁹.

³⁶ Cramm, H., Aiken, A., & McColl, M. A. Mental health and children in military families: A scoping review of issues and needs. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70, 2016, pp. 1–1.

³⁷ McIntosh, J. E., Opie, J., Greenwood, C. J., Booth, A., Tan, E., Painter, F., Messer, M., Macdonald, J. A., Letcher, P., Olsson, C. A., & ATPG3 MAC Lab and Consortium. Infant and preschool attachment, continuity and relationship to caregiving sensitivity: Findings from a new population-based Australian cohort. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 65(1), 2004, pp. 64–76.

³⁸ Bowlby, J. *A secure base : parent-child attachment and healthy human development*, 1988, pp. 141–151.

³⁹ Paley, B., Lester, P., & Mogil, C. Family systems and ecological perspectives on the impact of deployment on military families. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 16 (3), 2013, pp. 245–265.

Additionally, the lack of a balanced family structure can sometimes affect a child's sense of gender identity or perception of traditional gender roles. For example, boys raised in predominantly matriarchal settings during their father's absence may struggle with societal expectations of masculinity, while girls may feel pressured to adopt traditionally "male" roles to fill gaps left by the absent parent. These dynamics can lead to confusion about one's identity or difficulty aligning with social norms related to gender, further complicating their personal growth and emotional stability. On the contrary, The living environment of such a family has disturbed emotional ties between individual members of the family, and social life is regulated by a group of rejected values, norms and patterns of behaviour, which are the subject of intergenerational transmission carried out within the framework of the socialization function, thereby contributing to the disorder of relations and interaction between family members. On the one hand, the dysfunctional military family is deprived of the ability to perform social tasks, on the other hand, it causes that pathology of social values and recognized norms and patterns of behaviour, causes social adjustment of young people.

The relationship between a child and the non-military parent can potentially serve as a buffer or an additional stressor during the absence of the serving parent. The parent-child attachment organization is specific to the individual, meaning that a child may have a secure attachment with one parent and an insecure attachment organization with the other⁴⁰. However, the parent-child relationship is complex. Whether a parent's military involvement alters the family's secure base in a way that compromises the child's sense of security depends on the nature of the parent-child attachment relationship and how both parties adapt to and respond to the separation⁴¹.

A dysfunctional family is characterized as members of a small community that cannot adequately fulfil its parental functions, i.e., one that cannot meet its tasks, functions and obligations towards children and other family members and solve problems and crisis situations without conflict. The dysfunction of the military families can be associated with its various tasks and the extent and strength of the disorders in the performance of parental functions. In the realities of everyday life, the family, being a cell of multilateral ties, interactions and material,

⁴⁰ Duschinsky, R. Disorganization, fear and attachment: Working towards clarification. *Infant Mental Health Journal* 39, (1), 2018, pp. 17–29.

⁴¹ Riggs, S. A., & Riggs, D. S. Risk and resilience in military families experiencing deployment: the role of the family attachment network, *Journal of Family Psychology* 25 (5), 2011, pp. 675–687.

biological, social and emotional conditions, causes that threats to the family in one basic function spread to dysfunctions in other areas of family life. One can distinguish economic, social, educational, caring or emotional dysfunction. Military families frequently experience secondary traumatization⁴², mirroring symptoms of PTSD seen in soldiers. This can manifest as anxiety, depression, or emotional withdrawal among spouses and children. Additionally, the constant fear for the soldier's safety exacerbates stress levels, leading to strained relationships and increased vulnerability to familial conflict and breakdown⁴³.

In a dysfunctional military families, negative behaviours are formed that cause the construction of an unfavourable caring-educational and socializing environment. Breaking of emotional ties, disruption of emotional relationships, nervous, traumatic home atmosphere, emerging family conflicts, as well as aggression and violence are negative manifestations of behaviours of dysfunctional family members. Disruption of emotional ties can take different forms, from loosening of emotional ties, through emotional indifference between family members, to the disappearance of emotional ties and hostile emotional relationships. In a dysfunctional environment, parents create the appearance of caring and nurturing over children, while denying any need for bonding or understanding when the child feels the need for emotional rapprochement, isolating them from themselves, as well as showing no interest in their school results.

Analysing the negative factors associated with the profession of a professional soldier and their impact on the caregiving and educational environment, it can be concluded that children in military families are significantly more exposed to a higher risk of negative psychological, social, and behavioural health outcomes compared to their civilian counterparts. Parental absence further increases this risk at all stages of development (i.e., early, middle, and late childhood).

⁴² Secondary trauma, also known as secondary traumatic stress, refers to the emotional and psychological impact experienced by individuals who are indirectly exposed to the traumatic experiences of others. This often occurs in professionals such as therapists, first responders, and healthcare workers who engage empathetically with trauma survivors. Symptoms can mirror those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including intrusive thoughts, emotional exhaustion, and hypervigilance. (Secondary Trauma: Emotional Safety in Sensitive Research)

⁴³ M. Krzemińska-Cieśla Służba wojskowa jako źródło sytuacji trudnych w rodzinach żołnierzy (skutki wtórnej traumatyzacji, style wychowania), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2022, pp. 3-7

SUMMARY

Poland's significant involvement in missions abroad has brought about changes in the functioning of military families, particularly in shaping the caregiving and educational environment, highlighting aspects crucial to the family as a fundamental social unit. In the context of research on this issue, it is evident that military families differ from others due to the specific experiences associated with military service. These experiences largely contribute to dysfunctions in family relationships and have an impact on children. Children from military families often exhibit high levels of anxiety, guilt, and aggression, making them more vulnerable to stigmatization at school and hindering their personality development.

Since family life is of great importance to soldiers, it can alleviate the impact of difficult situations, which undeniably contributes to the stability of military families. This is also significant in the context of relationships with the spouse, who often serves as a buffer between the child and the soldier-parent engaging in dysfunctional behaviors. The challenging life experiences of soldiers lead to excessive rigidity in their thinking and actions, which prevents them from creating a secure caregiving and educational environment for their children. This rigidity also hinders the development of a role model that children can base their values on, not only in terms of relationships but also in solving problems related to emerging threats. Ensuring a high quality of life for military families through preventive and corrective measures is crucial because well-functioning families contribute to a healthy society and form the foundation for soldiers' psychological adaptation to professional military service. Military families face specific circumstances that can affect their functioning and well-being. Providing support is one of the most important things we can do for families. These challenges can pose exceptional risks to children and the family as a whole.

The perspective of a professional parent-soldier on the care-educational environment surrounded by the family limited by tasks performed within the framework of service, time barriers, but also burdened with the psychological burden associated with the implementation of projects in the "unfriendly" environment is a wide source of information based on emotions and the need to "melt" again in the family environment. This is so difficult that the elements of the family in it in combination with everyday prose, as well as their own feelings and emotions interact with each other, rebuilding, creating a new or even contrary disrupting the state of care-educational stability. Therefore, it is worth noting the importance of social support, which plays a key role in shaping the positive, caring and educational environment in military families. A key

element of the effective functioning of a military family is the strong emotional bond between its members and the ability to adapt to changing conditions. Despite the stress and uncertainty associated with professional military life, these families are able to maintain healthy relationships and provide stable conditions for their children to develop. This is especially important in families where a professional soldier leaving for missions has contact with intense stress, fear for his life, but also with problems arising in the family left behind in the country, which often translates into mental health condition manifesting itself as post-traumatic stress disorder.

From the perspective of a child in a military family, it is necessary to note the impact of long-term separations. Their presence makes it significantly difficult to fulfill the basic functions of the family, especially that of socialization and assimilation of values from the authorities-parents. This was especially problematic in the days before universal access to the Internet, but over time, this information channel has greatly facilitated access to interaction between family members. However, of course, it does not allow for a full analysis of the other person, which makes it difficult to create a complete picture of values and principles in the context of collective family life. This can significantly hinder relationships, and if separations are repetitive, prevent the establishment of deep interpersonal ties. Looking at military families, an important element is also the memory of the transfer of values and military presence to the ranks of this social group. Apart from such obvious as permanent rules or assuming a “hard” upbringing, we can also observe a change in the culture of the family. There may be elements of hierarchy, whether in the case of tasks or decisions, but also such behaviors as delegating one’s tasks or giving limited functionality to people. Perhaps this can be called a conversion into a task group rather than a strict family one. An important action in this context is to decisively separate these values and embody oneself in another social role or possibly “enter” into another person’s skin. The dysfunctions of military families can appear many, mentioned earlier: difficult relationships, lack of mutual understanding, but also a certain kind of “functionalization” of people in family are just some elements. Of course, they do not have to appear in every such group, but they pose great challenges that can be solved by appropriate actions. Military communities often create integrated support environments that help families cope with the difficulties resulting from the nature of military service. However, an important aspect is also the institutional support offered by military organizations, which provide not only material assistance, but also psychological and educational one.

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