

# **Family values and the young people: state and dynamics after 1989**

## **Summary**

The deep structural changes in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria in the years of transition have impacted the socio-economic and demographic development of the country. Trends of severe population decline have been observed reflected in decreasing rates of fertility and marriage and in increasing of cohabitations, divorces and separated unions. A large number of sociological and socio-demographic surveys conducted over the last 2 decades clearly reveal changing attitudes towards family, marriage, partnership and parenthood.

The main goals of the thesis are two: 1) to reveal changes in attitudes towards familial and marital values across different socio-demographic groups (by age and education) during 1990-2008 with a special focus on attitudes' dynamics in young ages; 2) to delineate Bulgarian pattern in value dynamics in family area in comparison with Poland and Norway during the same period.

The methodology is based on the data analysis of the 3 national representative surveys carried out within the network of the European Values Study (1990, 1999, 2008) and of the 2 national representative surveys carried out within the network of the World Values Study (1997, 2005). Additionally, data from the Polish and the Norwegian samples in two waves are analysed.

The empirical analysis unfolds across three perspectives: age/cohort (constructed three age groups 18-29, 30-49, 50+); period (3 survey waves 1990, 1999, 2008), education (3 educational groups).

The dissertation (314 pages) consists of an Introduction, three chapters, Conclusion and Bibliography of 300 references (91 in Bulgarian and 209 in English). The thesis includes 35 tables, 4 figures and 144 charts in the narrative and 58 tables in the annexes.

The first chapter presents the theoretical grounds of the study. It reveals the main points of the two influential theories related to changes in family life, namely the theory of the Second Demographic Transition (R. Lesthaeghe and D. van de Kaa) and R. Inglehart's concept of materialism / post-materialism. In the next section methodological problems of

separating age-period-cohort effects are discussed. In the last section issues of youth as a stage of life cycle are raised from a sociological perspective.

The second chapter presents the main results from the empirical analysis of the Bulgarian data in order to reveal period and cohort effects in the values dynamics in the family area. In the first section of this chapter a review of the main characteristics of family attitudes and orientations during socialist time is completed using survey data from the 80s. In the second section a detailed cross sectional analysis of the attitudes of the Bulgarian respondents towards family and marital institution, partnership relations, abortion and homosexuality, gender roles, intergenerational relations and qualities in children's upbringing is provided. People's value profiles according to the materialist/post-materialist axis are presented and the calculated indexes show the predominance of the mixed value profile during the three periods -1990, 1999, 2008.

The third chapter presents a comparative analysis based on the empirical data from the different waves of the Polish and Norwegian value survey. Differences and similarities between the three countries in terms of value orientations towards family, partnership, parenthood, gender roles, intergenerational relations are discussed along the traditional-modern-postmodern continuum and in a temporal perspective.

In Conclusion main generalizations are drawn. During the last two decades pro-family and pro-partnership orientations are predominant among all ages but more tolerance towards cohabitations, lone motherhood and divorce is observed especially among young and highly educated people. Shift in people's attitudes toward more independence in relations between generations is registered but on the other hand parents stress on more traditional values in children's upbringing. The results from a comparative cross cultural analysis show that the Norwegian respondents are less supportive of family life unlike the Poles who demonstrate the greatest support for family. The Bulgarian and Norwegian societies are more liberal towards abortion compared to Poland. On the other hand, despite an increasing tolerance towards homosexuals during the last 20 years, skepticism and disapproval of homosexuals is the predominant orientation in both post-socialist countries. In the area of gender relations, shifts towards modernization of women's roles are observed in both post-socialist countries, however in Bulgaria, traditional orientations towards women's identity are more widely presented than in Poland.