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The Family in Twentieth Century England

A Social, Cultural and Religious Approach

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Introduction

It is common knowledge that family represents one of the most important units of the society and an essential form of human life organization. The attempt to write about family and family life is extremely interesting and challenging as it requires a great volume of work and a certain availability towards finding this institution's roots, its very first end, its most inner values and meanings.

This paper has an ambitious aim because it encompasses a rich cultural space – England – and an even richer period of time – the twentieth century. During the last two centuries, family underwent significant changes in terms of structure, forms and relationships between its members. But no period in the modern history has brought as many transformations in the field of family as the twentieth century. And this shift in family life is a particularity of most Western developed societies, not only the English one.

This paper will focus on presenting some of the most important factors which have influenced the evolution of family during the last century. My approach will combine cultural and religious aspects with sociological data and information. The main objective of this paper is to present the evolutions and transformations of the family model in twentieth century England by taking into account not only the political, economic and social changes, but also significant cultural and religious aspects that have played a major role in this process. In other words, what this paper aims to prove is that the shift in English family structure is also the result of cultural and religious factors.
From the theoretical point of view, this paper resorted particularly to a sociological perspective, as well as to some cultural, philosophical and religious aspects. I consider that for a scientific approach dealing with such a complex theme as family, interlacing these dimensions would prove to be extremely useful, as it offers a background wide enough to allow us to understand the issues presented.

From the methodological point of view, this scientific approach is predominantly a qualitative one, based on the study of many theoretical papers and researches on issues related to family and family life. Many of these works and studies have proved to be extremely generous in observations and conclusions, and have helped me better understand the studied issues. The reasons I have resorted to this methodological approach are strictly determined by the limited access to other instruments.

Any scientific approach of this kind has to start from drafting a conceptual framework able to provide some fundamental tools of any further analysis. Therefore, the first chapter of my paper focuses on presenting definitions of the term “family”, the basic forms of this institution, as well as its functions.

The second chapter presents historical milestones in the evolution of family in Europe, so necessary to understand the factors which have played a major role in the development of this institution across the continent, in general, and in England in particular. Within this part of my paper, I have focused on the emergence of Christianity and its impact on family life, as well as on particularities of the family understanding and its fundamental values. There are many theories concerning the influence of Christianity on family structures and family relationships, and most of them emphasize the attribute of restoring the family as a holy entity. The religious influences – particularly the influence of the Christian Church – are fundamental for understanding family and the nature of its transformations during time.

The third part of my paper gets closer to the problematic of the English family, and deals with some historical, social, cultural and religious aspects of family life in
modern times England. The aspects presented within this chapter try to draw the background and factors which have led to the twentieth century's changes in family structure and family life.

The last chapter focuses on the changes undergone by the English family during the last hundred years. This historical period was extremely important for the evolution of family in England, as well as in most Western developed societies. The twentieth century was marked by important events and seismic shifts: the end of the British Empire, the baby boom, the sexual revolution, new waves of feminist movements, etc. All these issues have been presented and analysed in a concise manner within the last chapter of this paper.

There are a great number of studies and relevant researches pointing out the fact that during the last century, changes in family life and family structures have been dramatic in most Western societies. Due to fabulous technological developments – like the ones which have made household activities less time consuming – cultural movements, increased school attendance, and a continuous process of re-evaluating traditional values, attitudes and behaviours, family life has changed significantly during the last century.

The most relevant conclusions and observations are presented within the last section of the paper which will also allow me to present some personal considerations regarding the analysed issues. I hope that all the aspects presented within this scientific approach will manage to broader the perception on the phenomena presented and to open new interpreting horizons.
Chapter 1
The Family – A Theoretical Approach

As I have already mentioned within the introductory part, this paper aims to present the evolutions and transformations of the family model in twentieth century England, by taking into account not only the political, economic and social changes, but also the myriad of social, cultural, and religious aspects which have played a significant role in this process.

There are many voices announcing, in a very Nietzschean way, “the death of the family”, its dissolution being caused by different social, economic, political, philosophical, cultural or religious factors, which influenced the evolution of family life especially during the last century. Even if one cannot deny the dramatic changes undergone by the family institution, such assertions must be regarded with maximum circumspection as the family – regardless of its structure and functions – remains indispensable to any present or future society. In other words, there is no death of the family, but a dramatic, profound transformation.

The industrialisation and the women’s emancipation movement are only two of the most important phenomena which have led to dramatic changes in the structure of the family of Western European countries, and not only. Issues like abortion, contraception, monoparental families, or even relationships between individual of the same sex
determine us to reflect on the family life and the transformations that the twentieth century brought not only in England, but in other countries too.

My theoretical approach will focus on examining these aspects not only from a sociological perspective, but also in connection with cultural and religious values. In fact, within the second and the third chapters of this work I will discuss intercultural and religious aspects of family life in twentieth century England, and will try to outline that the transformation of the family models is also the result of cultural and religious factors.

A scientific approach of the kind could not start but from drawing up a conceptual framework of the term “family”. Therefore, the first chapter of this paper will focus on clarifying the meanings of the term “family”, as well as on presenting the evolution of family forms and models during time.

The Family – Definitions, forms and functions

During time, family represented an important institution in all societies, no matter the period or the place. Therefore, we cannot agree with certain researchers who claim that family is a European invention. The family is a fundamental universal human institution which knew a variety of forms, structures and manifestations. The study of this subject is thus placed at the confluence of various disciplines: sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, ethnology, demographics, etc. In Great Britain, a specific study field has emerged: the history of family.

The term „family” comes from the Latin nouns famulus (servant) and familia (household servants). According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, within the Roman period, the term familia seldom included the parents or the offsprings. As for the English term “family”, it was used to describe all the persons belonging to a domestic circle:
parents, children, and servants. More recent usage of the term totally excludes servants and “restricts the word family to that fundamental social group formed by the more or less permanent union of one man with one woman, or of one or more men with one or more women, and their children. If the heads of the group comprise only one man and one woman we have the monogamous family, as distinguished from those domestic societies which live in conditions of polygamy, polyandry, or promiscuity.”

From the sociological point of view, the family is the purest form of manifesting the human social nature, while shaping the first traits of collective cohabitation. Many scholars depicted the early human communities – clans, tribes, primitive hordes – as large familial structures that have generated the early forms of community life.

Usually, the definitions offered to the term “family” emphasize on the blood or marriage ties which knit the group. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, a family is “a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually those of spouses, parents, children, and siblings. […] Frequently the family is not differentiated from the marriage pair, but the essence of the family group is the parent-child relationship, which may be absent from many marriage pairs.”

A more personal and empirical approach towards this term would point out that the family is a specific type of human cohabitation composed by individuals, connected by consanguinity or kinship ties, living together, cooperating and supporting each other. The size of a family group is generally determined by the social and economic functions it performs, as well as by different historical and cultural contexts. Regardless of the myriad of definitions offered by historians, sociologists, or anthropologists, the family is a fundamental institution without which societies would have not be able to function and evolve. Many scholars regarded the “family” as the basic unit of society, its importance

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and fundamental roles transcending the ones of other institutions, such as religious, economic or political ones.

Across history and different cultures, various types of families have emerged. According to the Romanian sociologist Constantin Schifirnet, there are three major types of families: a). the large groups’ family; b). the extended family; and c). the nuclear family. Further on, I will focus on presenting the characteristics of each.

The first type of family includes groups of married couples who live together under the same household. Schifirnet indicates here the “zadruga” specific to the Southern Slavs, or the Chinese form of cohabitation.

The extended family represents the enlargement of the nuclear family “built around a unilineal descent group (i.e., a group in which descent through either the female or the male line is emphasized)”\(^4\). This form is specific to regions where the nuclear family meets significant economic difficulties in achieving “self-sufficiency”\(^5\). It is the case of traditional China, where the extended family “ideally consisted of the nuclear family of the head of the household, his unmarried daughters, his sons and their families, his sons’ sons’ families and unmarried daughters, and so forth”\(^6\).

Therefore, a key feature of this family form is cooperation within its members. In this way the family can overcome the shortcomings. Another important characteristic of the extended family is that the relationships between spouses are mediated by each one’s relationships with the other members of the family (parents, grandparents, uncles, etc.).

The nuclear family consists in “a group of people who are united by ties of partnership and parenthood and consisting of a pair of adults and their socially recognized children. Typically, but not always, the adults in a nuclear family are married”\(^7\). Though present in most societies, this type of family knew a great variety of forms which leads us

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\(^3\)Constantin Schifirnet, *Sociologie, societate si comunicare*, comunicare.ro, Bucharest, 2000, pg.124
\(^5\) Ibidem.
\(^6\) Ibidem.
to conclude that “it is safer to assume that what is universal is a ‘nuclear family complex’ in which the roles of husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, and sister are embodied by people whose biological relationships do not necessarily conform to the Western definitions of these terms”8.

There are two other forms of families closely related to the nuclear one: the conjugal family and the consanguineal family. The first one is brought together by the ties of marriage and is formed by the two spouses, the children and a few close relative, while the second one “typically groups itself around a unilineal descent group known as a lineage, a form that reckons kinship through either the father’s or the mother’s line but not both. Whether a culture is patrilineal or matrilineal, a consanguineal family comprises lineage relatives and consists of parents, their children, and their children’s children”9.

In the rise of this family form, a very important role was played by the industrialization and urbanization processes. They have reshaped the architecture of marriage relationships within the nuclear family by the transformation they have generated. In pre-industrial societies the major role played by the family was a productive economical one. The family was regarded as a basic unit of production ensuring by all productive means possible the subsistence of its members.

The process of industrialization has generated a major shift by taking away the family’s economic function and reducing it to “a unit of consumption and socialization”10 as the production “moves away from the household to the factory”11. This transformation led to further changes in the structures and the basic functions of the family which became dependent on external actions. This form of family – nuclear family – is still predominant within the contemporary society.

8 Ibidem.
9 Ibidem.
11 Ibidem.
In regards to the structure, a family can include from 2 or 4 individuals (in the case of nuclear family) up to 30 or even more individuals (the extended family). This number is strongly connected with the type of the society, the historical era and the geographical determinations. Also, related to the family structure is the division based on roles and status. Each member of the family has a certain position in relation with the other members of the group. The family’s hierarchy is clearly settled on criteria such as age, sex, or kinship.

As basic unit of the social life, the family fulfils various distinct functions. These functions arise from the social, economic and historical context in which a family group carries out its existence.

One of the elementary functions of the family is the reproductive function, generally associated with the basic necessity to ensure the perpetuation of human race, as well as to develop a global society. The family is the place of procreation and birth and, through this function it contributes to the survival of society and humanity. If in early times, the reproductive function was profoundly assimilated to the sexual one, later on, the Christian Church’s interference in standardizing procreation had a dramatic impact on the manifestation of the former (reproductive function).

The Christian Church established a new approach on fertility, infertility, procreation, abortion or contraception methods which offered a strict description of this function. Within the Christian marriage, the two were friends, not lovers; therefore the final goal of the reproductive function was closely to the Biblical meaning stated in the first chapter of Genesis: “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

It is easy to notice that, in the Christian perspective, the family is meant to procreate and ensure continuity of human society.

In nowadays societies, the relation between procreation and sexuality – understood in the context of a family – is reversed. Modern developed societies begun to

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12 *The Christian Bible*, Genesis 1:28
considered sexuality as a fundamental social category which, due to the recent contribution of psychology, has been invested with fundamental social values. In fact, many scholars tackle the sexual function as a specific, distinct function of the family.

The economic function is a result of the necessity to survive, to ensure all the material conditions so that the family group could carry on its life. Therefore, the traditional family is an economical subsistence unit; in this type of families, the husband used to bring the main revenues – this is why he enjoyed that much authority -, while the wife was in charge with the household, and was economically dependent on the husband. This economic function was even more obvious within the preindustrial societies, where all the members of a family were engaged in producing goods, and all the revenues came from these activities.

The industrialization has brought along a significant change as both spouses had remunerated jobs, so both of them were contributing to the family’s revenues. Further on, the development of several services (also a consequence of industrialization) has significantly reduced the women’s housekeeping activities. The industrialization process has brought not only a shift in the economic function of the family, but also it has established new roles and economic statuses, and has represented the starting point of a much profound and change generating phenomenon: the emancipation of women. Though the movement of women’s emancipation is an extremely vast subject, within this paper there will be a great number of references to the issue, as the movement itself – along with other important events of the period – has played a major role in changing, during the twentieth century, some fundamental aspects of family and family life.

Maybe one of the most important and most basic functions performed by the family is the socialization. In this way, the family participates to the development of society. According to sociologists, the socialization of children is a fundamental process of transmitting cultural and social organization norms from one generation to another ensuring thus the continuity, the stability and the perpetuation of society.
Thanks to this function, within a family, the individual learns the language, assimilates norms and values, and assumes the tradition, the common values and the beliefs of the society he/she belongs to. All these prepare the individual for participating to the society’s life where all its members share and accept the same values. From a psychological point of view, the socialization is a process within which the human being learns to control his/her instincts, thus assimilates a social behaviour. In the absence of such a framework (usually ensured by the family), the individual risks to develop a different behaviour, generally unaccepted and considered to be the opposite of a social behaviour.

Recent studies and sociology works distinguish between two types of socialization: the primary socialization and the secondary one. The first term refers to the early period of life when individuals assimilate the fundamental norms of a society, and represents a process which takes place inside the family. The second term refers to a process which takes place outside the family and it is performed by other social institutions such as schools, universities, political or professional groups, etc.

The education of children is another important function and it is usually assimilated, by most authors, with the socialization process. Within a family, the children are educated according to rules which are specific for a certain family group – these rules or norms are the result of the parents approach on aspects such as religion, politics, existence, etc. – with the aim to prepare the young individuals for life in general, as well as for life within a certain society, in particular.

In *Dictionnaire de Sociologie* (published in Paris, in 1991), the term “education” is defined as “any social activity aiming the remittance of collective heritage of a society within which the individuals are introduced”\(^\text{13}\). According to this definition, the process of education includes the socialization function performed by the family (primary socialization) or by other social institutions or groups (the secondary socialization).

\(^{13}\) *Dictionar de Sociologie, Editura “Stiinta si Tehnica”, Bucuresti, 1998, pg.62*
Many authors consider that the family also plays an important ethical and juridical function as within the family the individual assimilates a dominant social and cultural model. The family is imposing this model while supervising the application of the rules. Specific regulations and sanctions systems are developed within a family, and it is the duty of those who represent it’s the authority (usually the parents, especially father within traditional families, or the oldest members of the family) to watch over the youngest so that they observe these rules and adapt their behaviour.

The latest modern psychology and sociology attempts emphasize on the emotional function of the family which provides the necessary framework for an individual to develop his/her personality and acquire his/her own identity within a warm and safe environment. This emotional dimension of the family is also outlined by the Encyclopaedia Britannica’s definition: “Perhaps most important of all, it provides for emotional and psychological security, particularly through the warmth, love, and companionship that living together generates between spouses and in turn between them and their children”\(^{14}\).

Perhaps the most important of all, “the family may serve to promote order and stability within society as a whole”\(^{15}\). This assertion must be understood in relation with the family's socializing function. As prime socializing agent, the family shapes and establishes the most important values within a society: and this process is extremely important for the desirable functioning of the social system as whole. In the light of these facts, the family and its functions are very important for the formation and evolution of individuals as citizens.

In nowadays societies, especially in the developed Western ones – with mature democracies and well established public institutions – many of the above mentioned functions are performed by public authorities. In present time, these institutions “have assumed many of the functions that the family used to provide, such as caring for the

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\(^{15}\) Ibidem.
aged and the sick, educating the young, and providing for recreation.”

This has contributed more to the transformation of the family model.

16Ibidem.
Chapter 2

Historical milestones in the evolution of family in Europe

After presenting and clarifying some theoretical aspects regarding the family, its forms and its structure, further on this chapter I will focus on presenting historical milestones in the evolution of the family. The historical dimension is a very important one as it allows us to understand the nature of the changes that have reshaped the family, as we know it today. The geographical space analysed is also Europe, because I consider it of utmost importance to maintain the background in which the English society has evolved. Therefore, any reference to other cultural spaces or civilisations would be simply comparative.

Among the scholars who have shown a great interest in the evolution of family forms, the question regarding the necessity to isolate Europe when studying this institution was highly debated. The answer offered by Jack Goody, a prominent British social anthropologist, was offered within his work called The European Family. An Historico-Anthropological Essay, despite stating that Europe is a not really a continent, the author emphasizes on the importance of this cultural and geographical space as the cradle of Christianity, and as global leader of various important processes, such as modernization, industrialization and capitalism.
For it is only a fictional continent, not bounded in any decisive geographical way but only by an imaginary frontier along the Bosphorus and the Urals. The basic reason has to do with Europe conceived firstly as the Christian continent and secondly as leading the world in modernization, industrialization and capitalism. Both notions suggest a search for unique factors, including the family, in the former case as consequence, in the latter possibly as cause of its lead.\textsuperscript{17}

Most authors agree on the fact that there are three distinct stages (periods) in the evolution of family. According to the 1991 French Dictionary of Sociology, the first period is characterized by the prevalence of the agricultural economy, which begins to fade out along with the development of industrialization during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The patriarchal family dominates this period – the family is a production association within which every member fulfils specific productive tasks according to their age and sex. The patriarchal family is “strongly hierarchical”\textsuperscript{18} and this hierarchy is meant to ensure its survival, its subsistence. As its name / denomination suggests, the patriarchal family is male dominated; it is a “social system in which the father or a male elder has the absolute authority over the family group”\textsuperscript{19}.

The evolution of family and family forms was much disputed, especially within the nineteen and the twentieth centuries’ scholars (sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, etc.). There were many scholars who claimed that early societies were men dominated therefore standing for the idea of patriarchal societies, while other scholars asserted that women were the ones dominating the first society forms, and that the patriarchal model was specific for the 19\textsuperscript{th} century period.

\textsuperscript{18}Dictionar de Sociologie, Editura “Stiinta si Tehnica”, Bucuresti, 1998, pg.73
\textsuperscript{19}Encyclopaedia Britannica - http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446604/patriarchy (consulted 19 Deecember 2008)
Henry Maine is one of the scholars who have posited the first approach. For him, the first human communities were “a state of ‘patriarchal despotism’ in which society consisted of an aggregation of families, each under the rule of father”\(^{20}\).

It is important to outline at this point that, thanks to Darwin’s evolutionary theory, many scholars have been tempted to regard human evolution as unilinear. This approach – suggesting that “human social organization “evolved” through a series of stages: animalistic sexual promiscuity was followed by matriarchy, which was in turn followed by patriarchy”\(^{21}\) – was contested and rejected by modern researchers.

Among the scholars who have contested Maine’s theory there were Johannes Bachofen, John Ferguson, and Lewis Henry Morgan. In their opinion, the evolution of family forms begun with a period of “primitive promiscuity”,\(^{22}\) characterized by unregulated sex and marriage relationships, to matriarchy and, later on, to patriarchy.

The next period is marked by two connected processes: the industrialization and the urbanization. The emergence of the remunerated work accelerates the transition to a different type of family: the conjugal one. Within this type of family, the woman is still in charge with housekeeping activities, while any external work is a “complementary activity”\(^{23}\). The connected urbanization process created a great number of workers from the usually unmarried youngsters who left the country side for the big urban centres. According to many sociologists and anthropologists these two processes not only have generated significant changes, but have also led to “the dissolution of many extended families”\(^{24}\).


\(^{23}\)Ibidem.

The social, philosophical and cultural changes of the twentieth century have contributed to the emergence of a different type of family – the associative family – characterized by a more precise and balanced assignment of roles. The appearance of this family form was made possible by both juridical (for example, laws and regulations stipulating the equality of chances) and cultural (a higher degree of education) factors.

“The modern family that emerged after the Industrial Revolution is different from the earlier model. For instance, patriarchal rule began to give way to greater equality between the sexes. Similarly, family roles once considered exclusively male or female broke down. Caring for the home and children, once the exclusive duty of the female, is often a shared activity, as, increasingly, is the earning of wages and the pursuit of public life, once the exclusive domain of the male.”

The changes brought by the twentieth century’s social, economic, political, philosophical and cultural context will be in detail presented within the second chapter of this paper where I will focus on the transformation of the English family model during the past century.

Historically, the first roots of the European family are found in the classical Roman and Greek civilizations, as well as in the Celtic and Germanic tribal societies which have dominated the Western part of the continent, as the British anthropologist Jack Goody explains in his work The European Family. An Historico-Anthropological Essay (1999), that each of these civilizations has brought its significant contribution to the evolution of later European family. Among these major contributions he names the Roman family law and the emphasis of the “individualism”, a peculiarity of the Germanic culture.

“Both strands have been held responsible for significant aspects of the family in later Europe, especially Rome for family law and the Teutonic tribes for features such as the bilateral reckoning of kin and the stress on ‘individualism’”.26

Coming from a different cultural and theoretical context, the French historian Andre Maurois also underlines in his History of England (Histoire d’Angleterre) the importance of the Roman and Celtic heritage in the evolution of the European family.27 In his opinion, the Celtic tribe was not a totemic clan, but a familial one. According to Maurois, this is both an advantage, and an obstacle as this characteristic “creates stronger ties, but represents an obstacle in developing wider societies. In countries of Celtic origins, the family remained the most important unit of social life”28 – personal translation. No matter what theoretical approach one decides to follow, the great majority of theorists have accepted the fact that old European civilizations have exerted significant influences on the later family structures.

The emergence of Christianity

An extremely important event with great influences and consequences for the evolution of the European family is the emergence of Christianity. The new Christian norms and settlements have profoundly reshaped the family life. The introduction of this new set of

26 Jack Goody, op.cit., pg. 2
27 It is true that this observation, made by Maurois in the first chapter of his work, refers particularly to the later modern family in England. The French author underlines that, in the countries of Celtic origins, the family remained the body, the basic unit of the social life. This major characteristic of the family is also present in other European societies and countries.
Christian rules had a specific goal and was strongly connected to “the obtrusion and maintenance of the Church’s statute as major organization within the society”\textsuperscript{29}.

Within this sub-chapter I will focus on presenting some of the relevant aspects related to family in which the Christian Church's influence has produced significant effects, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, family life, sexuality etc. In the view of the Christian Church, the comprehension of the above-mentioned terms is profoundly determined by the Old Testament. According to the Old Testament, marriage was “primarily concerned with the establishment of a family, rather than sustaining the individual happiness of the marriage partners.”\textsuperscript{30} Therefore, the role of marriage was basically meant to ensure a certain social stability and cohesion, as the family represented a place where individuals accomplished their social role, and not necessarily their personal fulfilment.

In what regards love, the Christian Church opposed the old Hellenistic concept of “eros”, the biblical concept of “agape”, emphasising the spiritual dimensions of Christian love and disapproving the meanings of sexual desire and lust which are specific to the Platonic term. In Latin, the term “agape” was translated using the word “caritas” which gives the English notion of “charity”.

Therefore, the Christian conceptualization of charity represents the highest form of love built on the values of “reciprocal love between God and man that is made manifest in unselfish love of one’s fellow men.”\textsuperscript{31} The Christian acceptance of the term emphasizes values like generosity, selflessness, “human mutuality and reciprocity within the context of God’s self-giving love, which creates value in the person loved. “We love, because he first loved us. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love

\textsuperscript{29}Jack Goody, \textit{op.cit.}, pg.11
\textsuperscript{30}In \textit{Encyclopaedia Britannica} – \url{http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115240/Christianity/67602/Church-and-family#ref=ref301814}, consulted at 12 January, 2009
\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Encyclopedia Britannica} – \url{http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/106513/charity}, consulted at 12 January, 2009
his brother also” (1 John 4:19–21).\textsuperscript{32} The highly spiritualized Christian understanding of love depletes the notion of all passion and emotion associated to the Greek \textit{eros}.

Therefore, the first thing we have to notice is that the two terms – \textit{eros} and \textit{agape} – represent, in the view of the Christian Church, two different experiences, two different ways of understanding life and love. While the Greek \textit{eros} might be used to characterize the essence of a love specific to the human beings, the Christian \textit{agape} reveals the divine love, these two terms being usually regarded as opposite by most philosophical approaches.

The \textit{eros} is egocentric, self-sufficient and self-oriented, while the \textit{agape} is beneficent, altruistic and great-hearted. The former represents the man’s pursuit of God, while the latter is indeed God’s way towards humans. “The first term represents the tenseness of rising, while the second one is gentleness which descends. \textit{Eros} is an attempt of salvation through one man’s powers, while \textit{agape} is a real gift of healing power. […] The \textit{eros} is the eternal discontentment coming from acknowledging the lack of worthiness and from the tightness of rising, \textit{agape} is pure joy coming from offering kindness.”\textsuperscript{33}

I am not going to go any further with the explanation on what concerns the differences between \textit{eros} and \textit{agape}, as such an attempt goes far beyond the purposes of this paper. Thus, I will focus further on presenting other areas of family life that have been exposed to the influences of The Christian Church.

The Church has also introduced new rules regarding marriage, forbidding also the union between close relatives, not only the consanguineal marriage. The new settlements went as far as prohibiting marriage between in-laws or persons connected through spiritual bonds, such as baptism or wedding parentship. Jack Goody underlines in his \textit{The European Family. A Historico-Anthropological Essay} that the prohibitive measures adopted by the Christian Church which have produced significant effects on the European

\textsuperscript{32}Ibidem.

\textsuperscript{33}Izidor Todoran, “Eros si agape – uman si divin”, 
http://www.crestinortodox.ro/Eros_si_Agape__uman_si_divin_14203.html; consulted at 12 January 2009
family, started with the prohibition of the levirate\textsuperscript{34} - in 315 A.D., as a consequence of the acts adopted during the Council held in Neocaesarea – and continued, two centuries later, with the prohibition of ascending to clerical position of those who “had married the wife’s sister after the death of the former (surorate) or the brother’s daughter.”\textsuperscript{35}

The Christian missionaries have focused their efforts to fight the old “pagan” practices of marriage and introduce the new ones based on the moral values of Christian love. Referring to this issue, Jack Goody underlines in the above-mentioned work, that Saint Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, have asked the advice of Pope Gregory in matters regarding the marriage between those who were converting to Christianity. “The Pope’s answer has circulated across a great part of Western Europe, representing a guide for solving problems resulted from implementing the new dispensation’s settlements.”\textsuperscript{36} In a nutshell, all the new rules prohibited marriage within family whether we refer to consanguinity or other forms of alliance.

Of course, behind the so much preached Christian moral concepts and values, these prohibitive measures regarding marriage between persons who are near of kin are obviously founded on the Christian Church’s interest to weaken extended family or tribal ties which could have represented a real danger, putting in danger its control over population. In this way, it would have proved to be extremely difficult for the Church to benefit from donations or grants. Moreover, marriage between relatives maintained the family and the property together “instead of fragmentizing ties and crumbling properties.”\textsuperscript{37} This is the reason why the Christian Church have militated so much against this kind of marriages, considering it “pagan” and unworthy of the values of the Christian moral.

\textsuperscript{34}The levirate is, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, “a custom or law decreeing that a widow should, or in rare cases must, marry her dead husband's brother”. The term comes from the Latin word “levir” meaning “husband's brother”. This custom is applicable both to a biological brother and to a person who is “socially classified as such”.
\textsuperscript{35}Jack Goody, op. cit., pg.42
\textsuperscript{36}Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{37}Jack Goody, op. cit, pg. 43
Furthermore, also for reasons related to accumulation of funds, the Christian Church has modified the dowry systems and has encouraged the maternal affiliation; the women used to live longer than men and thanks to the dower they received at the beginning of their marriage, as well as to the legacy they inherited after the husband’s death, “the most wealthy of them could control a significant part of the community’s fortune.”

Also, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the principle of dower within Western Europe finds its roots in the influence exerted by the Church and can be regarded as one of its greatest victories. “Dower is an outcome of the ecclesiastical practice of exacting from the husband at marriage a promise to endow his wife, a promise retained in form even now in the marriage ritual of the Established Church in England.”

During time, the Church has shown a great interest towards the family institution. Many scholars have tried to deny the fact that the attention manifested by the Church in matters related to family was based on its interest to gain control over properties. Even if we tend to stand for the much more profound moral role played by the Church, we cannot deny the fact that, at its very beginning, the Christian Church had no properties, no fortune. Along with all the responsibilities it begun to appropriate and exert, there was also a more and more urgent need to acquire the necessary material support.

In the light of this need, it becomes even more difficult to deny that the Church’s interests were exclusively moral oriented, and that the attention paid to aspects related to family was driven by many other ends than the already assumed ones.

The Christian Church has also introduced new norms regarding the concubinage, the divorce and the remarriage. If we take into account all the arguments presented above concerning the Church’s interest on property and funds, we would be tempted to state that all the settlements imposed by the Church in matters of divorce, concubinage, etc. are profoundly determined by this material aim, either than being based on moral values. The

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38 Jack Goody, op. cit., pg. 45
prohibition of divorce by the Christian Church has influenced the “structure of interpersonal relationships in Europe”\textsuperscript{40} for a very long period of time, until the twentieth century. I will come back to this issue within the next part of my paper, the one focusing on presenting the transformations undergone by the family structure during the twentieth century, and the various factors which made these changes possible.

**Particularities of the Christian family**

There are many theories concerning the influence of Christianity on family structures and family relationships. Most of them emphasize the attribute of restoring the family “to its original type as something holy, permanent, and monogamous”.\textsuperscript{41} These attributes are fundamental for understanding the very essence of the Christian approach towards family.

Finding its roots in the Old Testaments writings, the Christian family’s fundamental strength lies in the idea of “indissolubility of marriage”\textsuperscript{42} which represents at the same time its major ideal. In the light of these aspects, it is easy to understand why issues like divorce, fidelity or polygamy were given so much attention within the Christian approach of family. What is also worth mentioning, is that the Christian understanding of family offered women a rare gift – if I may use this term in this context – namely: a certain equality with men. “Because of these qualities of permanence and unity, the Christian family implies a real and definite equality of husband and wife. They have equal rights in the matter of primary conjugal relation, equal claims upon mutual

\textsuperscript{40} Jack Goody, op. cit., pg. 49
\textsuperscript{41} *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, [http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm), consulted on 12 January 2009
\textsuperscript{42} *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, [http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm), consulted on 14 January 2009
fidelity, equal obligations to make this fidelity real. They are equality guilty when they violate these obligations, and equally deserving forgiveness when they repent.”

The woman (or, more precisely, the wife) is not her husband’s property, nor is she his slave, but his companion, his friend.

The Christian family is also sacred as it is shown by the Catholic Encyclopaedia, because it originates in the sacrament of matrimony. As the very essence of the marriage – thus, the fundamental fact of the family – is to be found in a sacrament of holly origin, we can assert than the Christian family itself is of holly origin.

At a higher and more spiritualized level, through the matrimony sacrament each union between a man and a woman – thus, each Christian family - symbolizes and honours the union between Christ and His Church. “Husband Love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it.”

It is easy to notice here that, apart from the inviolable nature of the marriage, in front of God the woman and the man are not only equal, but parts of the same body.

Christianity applies almost the same “rules” when it comes to love between a man and a woman. As I have already mentioned within the above lines, love is not understood in its physical or emotional aspects, but in a very rational and, one can say, calculated manner. Love, according to the Christian thinking, is gentle, selfless and kind; it is also invested with a divine nature, as it represents God’s way towards human beings. Therefore, another important aspect of the Christian family is that it has to be based on mutual love between the two beings who decide to join in holy matrimony.

One of the lights of these aspect, is that it is easy to notice that the relationships which prevail within the members of the Christian family are based on this fundamental understanding of love as a noble, mutual, unbiased and unselfish feeling which implies – as a sine qua non condition – the ability to sacrifice oneself, to guard and care for the

43 Ibidem.
other as it was for yourself, to forget about your own person and seek for the other one’s welfare. It is in this understanding of love where we can find the inner essence of the Christian family, its fundamental values, and its inner philosophy.

Despite the equality between the two spouses – to which I have referred above – within the Christian family women and men fulfilled specific functions. The man was the head of the family, therefore the supreme authority and the one capable to manage almost all the aspects of the family life except, of course, for the ones related to care and household management which were the responsibility of the wife.

Another particularity of the Christian understanding of the family is that it pays a very important attention to the relationship between family and society. The family is the basis of society, its primary and most important unit. Within a family, and as a member of the family, each individual contributes to the welfare of society, as, at its turn, the family contributes to establishing order and normality within society. The family is the place where an individual achieves the most fundamental values which prepare him/her for life and allows him/her to understand his place and the role he/she has to play within society. Not only does the individual assimilate these values, but he/she is also taught how to use them in a proper manner so that he/she respects the state’s laws and the state itself. In other words, within the family, the individual receives the whole set of values which will help him/her become both a good Christian and a good citizen.

This sub-chapter aimed to present only a few aspects related to the Christian approach to family and family life. I prefer to use the term “particularities” as I consider that the Christian understanding of love, marriage, or issues like fidelity, respect or equality within spouses has brought significant changes in the understanding of the

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45 “Being the provider of the family and the superior of the wife both in physical strength and in those mental and moral qualities which are appropriate to the exercise of authority, the husband is naturally the family’s head, even “the head of the wife”, in the language of St. Paul. This does not mean that the wife is the husband's slave, his servant, or his subject. She is his equal, both as a human being and as member of the conjugal society, save only that when a disagreement arises in matters pertaining to domestic government; she is, as a rule, to yield. To claim for her completely equal authority with the husband is to treat woman as man's equal in a matter in which nature has made them unequal. On the other hand the care and management of the details of the household belong naturally to the wife, because she is better fitted for these tasks than the husband.” (in The Catholic Encyclopaedia, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm)
family as a whole. Despite the fact that the first chapter of my paper was conceived as a profoundly theoretical one, I consider of utmost importance to combine, from the very beginning, the theoretical aspects with a religious, cultural and historical approach. After all the purpose of this paper is to underline those cultural, religious and spiritual factors that have played a significant role in the evolution and transformation of family structures and family forms in the European space, with a particular interest on twentieth century England. Therefore, I consider all the aspects I have presented, analysed or referred to within this chapter as being extremely relevant for the general scientific goal of my paper.
Chapter 3

The evolution of family in modern England – historical, social, cultural and religious aspects

A few general considerations

This chapter examines the evolution of family systems in England, with a particular focus on the twentieth century and the significant changes undergone in this period. This part of my paper will not present an exhaustive history of the family in England, but it aims to outline the most important periods and stages in the evolution of family life in England, their specificity and significant events.

There are many major events which have shaped the human history and the history of the European space (which is of utmost importance for this paper) and which have brought important changes in the inner structure of family life. Therefore, the historical causality is extremely important when trying to present the evolution of family forms. Of course, one should take into account other important dimensions, such as the political, economic and religious aspects.
Due to the fact that such a theoretical approach could not prove fruitful without being based on the scientific works of some well-known scholars who have shown a great interest on the history of the family and family life, I have focused on briefly presenting some of their main ideas and contributions. It is true that during the twentieth century, especially in the second half of this period, many scholars from various fields have shown a great interest in this direction.

Even political scientist became aware of the importance of studying the evolution of the family, as the family itself represents the most important socializing agent in almost all societies. According to sociology, the family is the prime socializing agent, therefore the one that shapes the most important values within a society – whether we refer to spiritual, cultural or political ones. Therefore the family life begun to be regarded as very important for the formation and evolution of the individuals regarded as citizens. The space of political ideology no longer belonged exclusively to the “public sphere”, but also to the private one.

The political scientists begun to pay more attention to the primary political socialization process that begins within the family. Within the family children learn the basic information which helps them form their opinion. This political socialization process – defined as “the means by which people come to acquire political attitudes and values”\(^\text{46}\) – varies from one individual to another even if we refer to individuals who, during their childhood and adolescence – have been exposed to the same influences, to the same socializing agents (family, school, community, groups of friends etc.).

In regards to the family, it is within this structure that children acquire a wide range of values: social, spiritual, moral, economic or political. These values play an extremely important role in the process of opinion making. One of the most important political dimensions that individuals acquire as children within the family is the party

\(^{46}\)Dicționar de politică Oxford, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2001, pg. 419
identification⁴⁷. According to Janda and Kenneth this process has similar mechanisms as the one of religious identification.

“Party identification is learned in much the same way as religion. Children (very young children, anyway) imitate their parents. When parents share the same religion, children almost always are raised in that faith. When parents are of different religions, children are more likely to follow one or the other than adopt a third. Similarly, parental influence on party identification is greater when both parents strongly identify with the same party.”⁴⁸

It is, of course, redundant to indicate here why studying the evolution of family life became so important for scholars from various fields, and especially for the ones interested in politics. As this paper does not focus on political sociological or other related field, I will confine at presenting only those aspects which I consider of utmost importance for understanding the evolution of the family making use of a background as illustrative as possible (and I refer here to a background capable to recreate the significant political, economic, social, religious, etc. atmosphere).

But what is even more important for the study than the influence of the family on politics, is the influence of politics and political actions on family life. This is the point that should generate the greatest interest because “thanks” to this political influence and to the consequences of various political actions, the family life and the family structure begun to change.

According to some scholars, and I will mention here the historian Christopher Lasch and his work *Heaven in a Heartless World*⁴⁹, during the nineteenth and twentieth century, the political actions materialized in social measures directed to help families, succeeded in destroying its integrity and fundamental values. Lasch’s approach on the

⁴⁸Janda, Kenneth et al., *op.cit.*, pp.161-162
consequences of outside factors on family life underlines the same idea I have articulated in the above lines, and that Mary Lyndon Shanley synthesized when referring to Lasch’s analysis: “the "public" and "private" spheres are not separate but interdependent in fundamental ways.\(^{50}\)

Within this part of my paper, I will come back to the relation between the “public” and the “private” as it cannot and should not be neglected when presenting the history of the family. The nature of this relation is deeply reflected by the family structures.

**Milestones in the evolution of English family**

Many scholars distinguish between various stages or models in the evolution of family life in England. Regardless the space or the social, economic or political context we may refer to, family as basic unit of the society, cannot be reduced to a single pattern or to a single set of characteristic. Therefore, any attempt to classify the evolution of family – in no matter what time or geographical space – would certainly prove to be a difficult approach which should take into account a myriad of factors and events.

Any study or theoretical approach aiming at presenting the evolution of the English family in modern times could not neglect the early, ancient periods where the present English family structures finds their roots. One could definitely not deny the Celtic influence on the family system in England. Early documents certify the existence, within the present English territory, of the Celtic Britons cultural group, the one submitted to Rome’s colonial power and which, soon after the fall of the Roman control, was “replaced” by the dominant presence of the Germanic Saxons who have become the main identity group within this territory.

\(^{50}\)Ibidem.
It is extremely important to include here a brief ingression in the ancient Roman institutions which have profoundly shaped the early English family structures and whose influences were also reflected by the subsequent family forms.

There are few historical documents concerning early English family forms and structures. But many researches indicate that Celtic and Saxon societies were relying on “cognatic kindreds” forms of organization which represented the basic social institution. In Britain, the Celtic family system underwent dramatic transformations thanks to the influence exerted by Rome which was strictly imposed, with inflexible relationships within the social group or the community.

The Roman authority also anchored an administrative and hierarchical order which was not common within the traditional Celtic structures. The Roman institutions influence on the British family system was stronger than in the rest of the island – for example, in Ireland – and continued to produce its effects long after the decline of Roman authority, along with the fall of the empire, around the year 476. “Roman notion of both property and patriarchy left an indelible mark on the British family system via both legal and religious codes. In Ireland, which lay beyond the farthest extent of the Roman Empire, the influence of Roman institutions was less pervasive, of patchy distribution, and of a later date.”

Further on, the more and more dominant Saxon presence within this geographical area has brought along a family system characterized by stronger independence, and rigid gender relations. “A distinctive feature of Germanic social organizations in general, was the emphasis on the sanctity of the individual and the strong ranking of gender relations. All men who had passed the age of majority had full legal status. Sons ceased to be

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52 According to the English scholar David Herlihy, there are no classical Greek or Latin terms to correspond exactly to the term “family”. I will continue though to use the collocations “family system”, “family structure” and “family forms” also when referring to early periods in the evolution of the English family. Most scholars and authors cited within my paper use the term “kinship”.
53 Donna Birdwell-Pheasant, op. cit, pg. 19
subject to their fathers at this point, although they might continue to live with their fathers and work jointly in the pursuit of livelihood until the son married. After marriage, the son’s independence was more complete.”54

Other aspects of the Saxon system’s influence on the British family structure are reflected on matters related to marriage, such as monogamy and establishing the joint property within marriage. Many of these characteristics were endorsed due to the Church’s intervention in aspects related to marriage, family, divorce etc.

In what regards the evolution of family forms during most recent periods of time – since Middle Age, for example – there are many scholars who have proved to be successful in their efforts to distinguish between different periods or models in the evolution of the English family. According to Lawrence Stone in his work *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, published in 1977, England knew three successive modes of family life: "the open lineage family," "the restricted patriarchal family," and "the closed domesticated nuclear family."55 All these three modes have their distinctive features. The first model – *the open lineage family* – represents the heritage of feudal times as the author himself shows, and presents the following characteristics:

"Its members had a strong loyalty to ancestors and living kin, and their main concerns with respect to the family were to keep intact and if possible expand the family estates. Neither personal autonomy nor privacy was valued very much in this family system. Individual happiness in marriage was similarly of little importance. "William Stout's comment on a marriage in 1699 could stand as an epitaph for many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century couples: 'they lived very disagreeably but had many children""56

54Ibidem.
56Ibidem.
Late 1500 and the first half of 1600 announce the decline of the *open lineage family*, and the rise of the *restricted patriarchal family* which was also accompanied by “the hierarchy of state and church.” As Mary Lyndon Shanley points out, this was definitely the patriarchy age in what regards both the state and the family.

In the patriarchal period the family is seen as a production association within which, every single member carries out his/her specific productive tasks assigned according to his/her age and sex. It is also important to outline at this point that the *restricted patriarchal family* is, as I have already mentioned within the previous chapter, strongly hierarchical. This hierarchical order has a very precise goal: to ensure the family’s survival, to guarantee its subsistence. This family model is, of course, male dominated, the father or the eldest male in the family group having the absolute authority over it.

Stone argues that “the patriarchal households were marked by constant reminders of hierarchy and signs of deference” as children had to “knelt for their parents blessing and stood in their presence.” There are also other distinctive traits of this English family type. The same Stone claims that within the patriarchal family, women were not educated and they were usually submitted to their husbands. Marriages were arranged by parents, and there was little place for love and affection. As Stones underlines, the arranged marriages indicate women’s status within the society and their subordination to both the husband and the parents. Therefore marriage, as well as the family, was a fundamental institution, so much needed for the sake of the society and the common good in general, and in very few cases a reunion of two soul mates who freely decided they want to spend the rest of their life together in “perfect harmony” and love.

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57 *Ibidem.*
59 *Ibidem.*
“Marriages were arranged by parents with more regard to wealth and station than to affection or mutual attraction, and children were expected to accept gratefully the spouse chosen for them. Once married, a woman was similarly expected to defer to her husband's wishes concerning matters as diverse as domicile, frequency of intercourse, and whether she should nurse their children.”

The transition to the nuclear family, the third model according to Stone, was possible because of a great variety of factors among which the author cites the warmer inter-individual relationships translated in a series of activities seldom performed before, such as women belonging to the upper class nursing their own children, or in closer and more passionate and even sensual husband and wife relationships, Stone also mentions that arranged marriages ceased to be a parents’ job, being “initiated by the romantic interests of their children.” This is what Stone refers to as the rise of the affective individualism and by this he means that within a family, individuals begun to understand that each member of the family is unique, has his/her specific place, has to fulfil distinctive tasks and plays an important unique role. Stone explains that it is the rise of affective individualism that pushed forward the emergence of the nuclear family.

Moreover, Stone underlines that this change was also the result of some important external factors, and that changes in the family structure mirrored significant changes at the society level. He considers that the most important external factors were of philosophical or ideological nature. The author considers that these changes “cannot be explained except in terms of changes in the macrocosm of the total cultural system, a major reorientation of meaning among those sectors of the society which experienced the changes.” By this reorientation he understood the rise of individualism and the focus on

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61 Ibidem.
the uniqueness of each personality, and he claims that this movement affected all levels of society, not only the upper ones, generating significant effects on behaviour.

Analysing Stone’s work, Mary Lyndon Shanley considers that at this point his approach becomes debateable: “According to Stone, it was the internalization of upper-gentry values of affective individualism which eventually altered the very different practices of both the aristocracy and the working classes and brought their behaviour into conformity with the ideals of the domesticated nuclear family.” Since Shanley is not convinced by the arguments offered by Stone, she orients herself towards Randolph Trumbach’s work which appeared approximately in the same period, some of his results being similar to the ones presented by Stone.

Despite using a different anthropological method than Stone, Trumbach came to the same conclusion – that the eighteen century witnessed the transition from the patriarchal family to the nuclear family, and he as well states that the changes regarding the nature of family relationships were generated by the new approach of the individual values. But what is different in Trumbach’s approach is that he considers that these changes are the result of a mixed series of factors - “the rise of a market economy, limited monarchy, Christianity, and kindred structures”. His approach differs from Stone’s also because he claims that the aristocracy was the one setting a new trend in regards to family and family relationships.

Neither of these authors was successful in presenting the way change in mentality within the eighteen century affected the inner dimensions of the family. Moreover, their work does not offer explanations regarding how the natural equality between men and women – an idea present in England yet from the seventeen century through the work of John Locke – influenced the women’s position within society generating significant changes at the family level.

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63Mary Lyndon Shanley, op. cit., pp. 743-744
64Ibidem.
What we can learn from the works of these two authors, according to Shanley, is that nevertheless the women’s domestic condition changed during the eighteen century. Most of them had more access to education that they did in the past, many of them had the possibility to express their opinion regarding marriage, and, as I have already mentioned above, many of them begun nursing their own children.

Other authors emphasize less philosophical directions and focus on different factors when referring to the changes of English family life during the last centuries. For example, the work of Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott underlines the effect of other types of factors – such as urbanization and industrialization and the process of re-lying values they have brought along – on the inner structure of family life in England. The authors claim that the continuities of family values are more important than the changes these processes might have brought, and they insist that the fundamental values of family life stood out.

Within their Women, Work and Family, published also in 1978, Tilly and Scott put the accent on the women’s condition and their specific role within the family. The authors offer a compared analysis between family structures in France and England between the beginning of the eighteen century and the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, they separate different periods in the evolution of the family structure taking into account the role played by women within the family group.

During the late seventeen century and the beginning of the eighteen century, the women were regarded as parts of the family enterprise, fulfilling specific tasks in order to contribute, ensure its subsistence. In other words, all activities performed by women had a rather strict productive aim. As I have already mentioned in the first part of this paper, in preindustrial societies the major role played by the family was a productive, economical one; the family was regarded as a basic unit of production, ensuring by all productive means possible the subsistence of its members. Industrialization put an end to
this family model, profoundly reshaping its architecture. The family is no longer a productive association, but “a unit of consumption and socialization”\textsuperscript{65}.

Within industrial societies, the production moves to another place – the factory – therefore, outside and usually far from the home. Another key aspect of industrialization, the development of several services, has dramatically changed the family life by reducing the housekeeping activities performed by women. As a consequence, the process of industrialization has brought not only a transformation in regards to the economic function of the family, but also it has established new roles and economic statuses, converging on the starting point of a much more profound and change generating phenomenon: the emancipation of women

Tilly and Scoot refer to this stage in the evolution of English family life as "the family wage economy"\textsuperscript{66}, and underline that the family changed form a productive unit to a wage-earning unit. Even if they admit that more and more women begun to work for wages, the kind of activities fulfilled by a woman did not suffer significant change during the industrialization period. Women continued to be the ones responsible for managing and maintaining the household even if they were employed and received wages for their work.

Another significant transformation was produced during the twentieth century, with the emergence of what the above-mentioned authors call “the family consumer economy”\textsuperscript{67}, which came out as a result of family response to the new economic environment. Women have begun to approach jobs in the field of services - such as sales, administrative or even clerical. They started working more and more away from home, thus separating the two parts of their life: the home, and the working place. And this is

\textsuperscript{65}Encyclopaedia Britannica -


\textsuperscript{67}Apud Mary Lyndon Shanley, op. cit, pg. 748
only one aspect of a more complex process. These jobs required a certain degree of formal education; therefore we can place here the beginning of a process that has reshaped the twentieth’s century social architecture: women’s emancipation movement.

As we can easily see, for Tilly and Scott the transformation that took place between the eighteen and the nineteen century is the result of the ways in which family – regarded as a structure – put up with the changing economic contexts, in other words with subsistence, and not the result of philosophical ideas regarding social, moral or other similar aspects.

In the light of the same approach, the authors considered that the role of the parents in arranging marriages was also determined by the emergence of “job wages” and working far from home, and not a result of philosophical ideas related to individualism and autonomy. But we have to take into account the fact that Tilly and Scott carried out their research focusing on the life of working-class families, while the other authors mentioned before, studied the upper English classes. While the former family life was, in general, strictly determined by material aspects and the need to earn a living, the later had access to philosophical works and their behaviour was certainly influenced by the new ideas concerning personal development and individualism.

What is important to keep in mind is that, unlike many other authors, Tilly and Scott underline that continuity is what characterizes the evolution of English family life in modern times, and not change. This is because in their attempt to keep pace with significant economic transformations, the individuals (of course, seen as members of a family) have turned to the old, fundamental values of family life. They believe that women begun working outside the home in times of financial difficulties, thus making all necessary efforts that would contribute to the survival of their family, and not because the family values had suffered dramatic changes.

In what regards this issue, I hope I will be able to offer a satisfactory answer within the following chapter of my paper which will focus on the transformations that English
family life underwent within the twentieth century, a period when, without any doubt, significant social, cultural and religious changes came across.
Chapter 4

The English family in the twentieth century

Ten decades of change

When referring to the English family in modern times the great majority of scholars (see Stone's and Trumbach's approach as presented within the previous chapter) underline the significant changes undergone - in terms of structures, values and forms – by the family group. There are also voices (for example, Tilly and Scott, their approach being also briefly presented in the second chapter of this paper) who claim that continuity is what characterizes the evolution of English family within the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, because in their attempt to keep pace with all social, economic, and political transformations, individuals (regarded as member of a family group) turned to the old, fundamental values of family life.

If the dispute transformations – continuity is debatable for the nineteenth century, in what regards the twentieth one there are no doubts that profound changes affected the tradition family and traditional family life. And the changes which affected the English family do not represent a characteristic of the English society, but a reality which characterized almost all modern societies of the last century.
Presenting the social, spiritual, cultural, religious, economic or political events which shaped the twentieth century is no at all an easy attempt. Nevertheless, a rich image of the English family in the twentieth century cannot be drawn without taking into account all major factors that have played a significant role in profoundly transforming this institution.

The third chapter of this paper focuses on presenting some of these changes, trying to offer some explanations regarding “why” and “how” they influenced the evolution of the English family. I consider that a scientific approach of this kind has to take into account the fact that the twentieth century was not at all an homogeneous one, but rather a puzzle of social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political events and movements which can easily depict the tensions of the last century which, in the end, lead not only to transformations, but to the emergence of new realities and models. The twentieth century represents indeed an amalgam of various paradigm changes, regardless of the field we may refer to.

This last chapter will focus on some of the most important factors which have contributed to profound transformations of the English family. Therefore, I will refer to women's emancipation movement, to the sexual revolution of the sixties, as well as to other religious or cultural factors.

Family in an ever changing society

As basic unit of society, the family cannot be analysed but in connection with the world and the changes of the world it belongs to. As parts of society, families are as well parts of a bigger, much more complex system; any change which takes places within the
systems will definitely affect any of its components. I have to agree with Margret E. Argus who asserts: “Families live in a changing world, and as a result of their interactions with that world, families themselves are changing. These changes create strains and tensions for families at the same time that they provide opportunities for individual and social growth and improvement.”68 The family responds to all changes, more or less significant; it is an extremely sensitive organism which responds to transformations within its environment.

The twentieth century has brought important social, cultural, political and economic changes within all western societies, including England. It is of course redundant to say that I will try to present and explain only some of them, as the twentieth century was one extremely rich in events and transformations.

From a historical point of view, it has to be said that the twentieth century brought the end of the British Empire. This had an incredible significance for the development and the evolution of English society. During the eighteenth and the twentieth century the “British Empire circled the globe”69 and exerted a great cultural and religious influence, being, at its turn, influenced by the cultures and societies it interacted with. Scholars disagree regarding the beginning of British Empire’s decline, but they agree with the fact that, by the end of the Second World War, Britain has ceased to be a great power.

Family life begun to change dramatically in England, as in other Western developed countries, between the end of the Second World War and the middle of the 70s. The factors that have made possible the baby boom were mainly of economical nature. Two decades prior to the baby boom, there was difficult to have children as a consequence of the Great Depression and also of the two wars which significantly affected Europe and Western societies. The impact of social and economic restraints begun to diminish, and people started to reconsider the idea of starting a family.

The war years proved to be long and very difficult, and the 1945 peace brought people an along waited feeling of ease, which, in most countries, has been characterized by a re-orientation towards family and relationships which have been postponed all this time. After the difficult war years, couples returned to their traditional roles; thanks to the return in the working field, women left their jobs (I refer here namely to wartime jobs) and focused on rearing children. Marriage was again an important social norm, and the fact that most women begun to consider it mandatory, this was reflected in the number of marriages, and had great impact on birth rate which increased dramatically. The boom was most noticeable in America, where more than 75 million babies were born during 1946 and 1964\(^70\). In Britain, the number of births reached almost 900,000 by the end of the 1940s – significantly higher than the number of birth during wartime.

The baby boom represents more than a re-orientation towards family values and family life which made possible the increase in the number of birth. The baby boom represents the beginning of a period which led to further social and cultural changes. The “baby boomers” impact on society begun to be noticeable during the 1960s, and continued to dominate the social, cultural and economic landscape. At a governmental level, the baby boom meant that the British government had to build new schools and introduce new measures.\(^71\)

The baby boom continued during the 1950s, and slowed down once with the 1958 economic recession. Another factor which had a significant contribution to a decrease in the number of birth is the birth control pill. The impact of the birth control was noticeable during the 1960s, when it begun to be considered a very reliable contraceptive method.

“Baby boomers” (“these well-educated, well-fed youngsters”) begun to rebel against the desuetude of their parents values and attitudes which, according to them, were

\(^70\) [http://uktv.co.uk/history/item/aid/571171](http://uktv.co.uk/history/item/aid/571171)

\(^71\) “In post-war Britain, the government built new schools and introduced other measures such as free school milk and child benefit to cater for the boomer generation.”, on [http://uktv.co.uk/history/item/aid/571171](http://uktv.co.uk/history/item/aid/571171)
too old, too much belonging to the pre-war period. The 1960s were, from the point of view of social and cultural transformations, definitely the baby boomers’ period. The sexual revolution profoundly shifted the understanding of family life and family values.

“When there are rapid increases in educational attainment, an education generation gap develops. Since educational systems transmit technological and cultural innovations, children often have more access than their parents to the latest idea and skills. The superior levels of education and knowledge provide children with resources for interacting with their parents at home and superior opportunities in the developing labour market. This may allow them more autonomy in relationships with parents, greater independence in living arrangements, and more freedom in mate selection.”

This was the social and educational context which – combined with other cultural, economic, political and even religious factors – prepared and made possible the sexual revolution, generating changes in the family life.

**Family and the sexual revolution**

The work and ideas of Sigmund Freud had a significant contribution to what was called the sexual revolution of the sixties. According to several scholars, the sexual revolution represents the expression of the Freudian approach to life and human nature, understood in their most intimate aspects. Sexuality – in the most profound Freudian meaning – is natural, is unashamed and sincere. Manifested through various forms and ways, sexuality is human and real.

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This new approach towards sexuality and sexual life – combined with other cultural and social factors, such as the baby boomers re-evaluation of values and attitudes towards life, family and society – generated significant shifts in social attitudes and behaviours. As Freud opened the door to the most intimate area of human relationships, the twentieth century placed sexuality in the centre of public debate, unclothing this subject from ancient taboos.

The late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s were marked by “students protests, counter culture movements and medically prescribed contraceptives” which were profoundly opposed to the preceding values concerning marriage, family life, sexuality, etc. The sexual revolution brought independence for both men and women, though for the latter the process was more significant taking into account that it was during the twentieth century women became more and more emancipated, and aware of their power and capabilities. More aspects related to the movement of women’s emancipation will be presented in a different sub-chapter.

The sexual revolution was influenced by the work of new left writers, such as H. Marcuse and W. Reich who “fused Marxism and Psychoanalysis to forge a revolutionary sexual radicalism which argued that capitalism sexually repressed the masses in the interests of its life negating and exploitative goals.” They explained that capitalism was built on values and moral concepts that made impossible any spontaneous, natural expression of sexuality.

For Wilhelm Reich, the sexual revolution was a normal consequence of people’s reaction against the restraints of capitalism which brought even the sexual libido into the service of production and consumption. Moreover, the revolutionary 1960s and their movements regarded these restraints, the compulsive work and the moral Puritanism imposed by capitalism as an expression of class domination. The author of The Sexual Revolution considered that the Western civilization “had made people sick by imposing

on them an unnatural, destructive sexual morality”\textsuperscript{74} and that, thanks to both social and scientific transformations, “the natural human life functions were finally awakening after a sleep of thousands of years”\textsuperscript{75} He also consider that future movements and developments will be able to bring human autonomy by restoring sexuality and sexual health.

In a nutshell, the most significant changes brought by the sexual revolution of the 1960s are: politicizing sexuality which emerged as “an axis around which new social movements organised” \textsuperscript{76}; a dramatic change in woman-man relationship; mobilisation of gay and lesbian movements; “a destabilising of the rigid boundary between the private family and the individualistic orientated public realm”\textsuperscript{77}, reforms in both legal and medical regulation of sexuality; and last, but not least, an increased commercialization of sexuality though mass media and pornography.

All of these generated a major shift in understanding and approaching family and family life values. Women’s increased presence in the public life, as a consequence of women’s emancipation and liberation movements, also had a great impact on family life.

There are other aspects of the sexual revolution also. We have to agree with those scholars who emphasize the fact that the sexual revolution, as any other revolution, was made possible by the technological development. For example, the mass production of condoms which was, obviously, possible because of the technological development, people begun planning their family size and, this way, they started another revolution: the contraceptive revolution.

In England, family planning, and birth control begun early in the twentieth century as a result of Marie Stopes’ efforts in this direction. She wrote a brief guide to

\textsuperscript{74} On \url{http://www2.hu-berlin.de/sexology/ATLAS_EN/html/the_sexual_revolution.html}
\textsuperscript{75} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{76} Sexuality and Morality, \url{http://www.isis.aust.com/stephan/writings/sexuality/revo.htm}, consulted on 17 January 2009
\textsuperscript{77} Ibidem.
contraception entitled *Wise Parenthood* (1918) which bothered the Church representatives who believed it was not healthy – from the moral point of view – to preach for birth control. The Roman Catholics were also against her ideas regarding contraception, not to mention the fact that, at that time, the Pope condemned all forms of contraception.

It was only during the second part of the century that birth control was regarded as something really necessary, and begun to gain ground. The Catholic Church’s approach to birth control excludes any possible benefits, considering it wrong, and, during the first decades of the twentieth century, using birth control methods was somehow similar to disobeying Christian rules and disregarding some fundamental Christian values.

We have to understand that this type of transformations had profound religious impacts. Birth control represents, from a religious point of view, the expression of human beings denying the miracle of birth as a holly gift, and, most importantly, it means denying one of the family’s basic functions –which is procreation. As I have already presented within the previous part of my paper, the Christian understanding of family finds its roots in the Christian understanding of love, which is neither physical, nor emotional, but rather rational. According to the Christian values, “any contraceptive act – including the one between spouses – was considered a capital sin and was much more drastically punished than seducing a virgin, kidnapping, incest or even sacrilege”78. From the Church’s point of view, the finality of any sexual intercourse was procreation, and not the physical pleasure.

It is obvious that the religious approach towards abortion was similar to the one towards contraception. The individual was not the one to decide upon life and death, but the one to conform to divine fatality. Abortion is considered a capital sin, as it is synonymous to murder. According to the Christian faith, life must be respected and protected, and it is not up to human beings to decide who lives and who dies. Going even

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deeper into this issue, we can say that this approach towards abortion can be translated as rejecting the idea of man playing God. Most confessions do not make exceptions when it comes to specific situations, such as abortion intended for saving the life of the pregnant woman, or in case of pregnancy resulting from a rape or even incest.  

If in the first part of the twentieth century, all these issues were sort of taboos and people often chose not to discuss them in public – even if, for example, in private, many of them were using traditional or modern contraception methods – around the 1960s, along with the sexual revolution – English society became more permissive, more liberal; Abortion, divorce and homosexuality were more and more accepted in England. During the 1970s, England faced with a “tremendous expansion of higher education […] and the number of universities rose to 46 from only 17 in 1945”80. Of course, this means also that more and more women had access to higher education, thus the women’s emancipation movement begun to produce its effects also within the English society. All these events have led to the dissolution of the traditional family. Depleted of its most intimate values, the family ceased to be regarded as a fundamental human institution. It seems that, during the twentieth century, the selfish, individualistic values get beyond the spiritual and moral ones.

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79 For example, the Catholics make no exception for rape or incest, but the Catholic Church dosen’t oppose to medical procedures that are performed in order to save the pregnant woman’s life, even if they might result in the loss of the fetus.

80 On http://www.england.net/history/20th_century_england.php
Consequences of women’s emancipation on family life

As I have already mentioned before, the movement of women emancipation finds its roots in the industrialization process which, apart from the economic and social changes, represents also the starting point of this profound and change generating phenomenon. The industrialization changed the understanding of the economical function of the family, and also established new roles and economic statuses for both women and men.

I consider that the movement of women’s emancipation is responsible for profoundly changing the family and family life. The first wave of feminism expanded during the nineteenth and early twentieth century and was focused on obtaining legal rights for women. These movements prepared the path for a second wave of feminism, unfolded during the second part of the twentieth century. This second wave reshaped women’s life in many aspects, including its sexuality, work and, of course, family.

The years which followed the Second World War brought within almost all developed countries, a significant change in women’s life. The factors which contributed to such transformation were mainly related to technological evolution – “household technology eased the burdens of homemaking”81 – as well as to the emergence of different jobs accessible to women, especially in the service sector.

The women’s emancipation movement didn’t develop at the social level only, but it was doubled by several cultural manifestations. We have the example of Simone de Beauvoir’s Le Deuxième Sexe. Published in 1949, the book quickly became an international best-seller which contributed to the feminist movement as it “raised feminist consciousness by stressing that liberation for women was liberation for men too.”82 Another book that brought further women’s enlightenment is Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique. Betty Friedan underlines other issues, such as “utter boredom and

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82 Ibidem.
lack of fulfilment”\textsuperscript{83} of suburban wives who are domesticated by being told that they have it all.

This type of cultural manifestations awoke women’s consciousness and led them to a higher level of emancipation manifested through legal claims such as equal pay and protection against employment discrimination.

The twentieth century has the great merit of ending the perception according to which women were “form that half of a species of animals that are meant to breed.”\textsuperscript{84}, and disengaged from an existence whose determinations are strictly biological and proved, \textit{in extenso}, that women are capable of more than just give birth and educate children, that there are other ways in which they can participate to the evolution of society as a whole.

Moreover, the twentieth century made the emancipation process accessible to most women, and, according to some scholars, the next century is going to be a feminist one. This hypothesis seems to confirm day by day, if we take into account the myriad of feminist phenomena and developments that mark the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first one. I refer here to the remarkable role played by women in various fields such as political life, social life, economy, etc., especially in countries with developed, mature democracies, such as England’s.

Were we to name the most important impact of the emancipation movement in what regards the family life, I will dare say that it is the stigma of maternity which affected women’s approach towards giving birth. The stigma of maternity is, according to Julia Kristeva, an unfavourable consequence of the excesses of the women’s emancipation movement because it was regarded as “the last proof of women’s exploitation by all patriarchates possible and imaginable from the beginning of times”.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{83} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{84} Julia Kristeva, \textit{Female Genius Life, Madness, Words: Hannah Arendt, Melanie Klein, Colette: A Trilogy}, vol.1, Paralela 42, Bucharest, pg. 7
\textsuperscript{85} Julia Kristeva, op. cit., pg 9
Thus women begun to reconsider their role in the evolution and the welfare of society, trying to free themselves from the position of animals meant to procreate.

But feminism succeeded in freeing women from an existence islanded with problems like childbirth or child-rearing or household issues. Women began to be aware of their abilities and power, and they began to speak out for themselves and express their so much awaited and recently gained liberties. This sort of behaviour affected the family life and the overall understanding of family values. By this, I don’t intend to say that the feminist movement had nothing but a negative impact on family life, and it is the only factor responsible for the dissolution of family, but one cannot deny the fact that women’s emancipation played a major role in changing the family.

Thanks to their recently gained rights and freedoms, women begun to concentrate more and more on their careers. If in the aftermath of the Second World War marriage used to represent an important cultural and social norm, only a few decades later it lost its social significance. In their quest for freedom and power, women gave up their traditional role of mothers and wives for successful careers and independence.

The picture of a feminist twentieth century which had profoundly influenced and changed family life is not only an English particularity, but a reality which characterized the great majority of Western societies. The transformations undergone by the family are related to different aspects of the family life, such as distribution of authority, roles’ division and fulfilment of main family functions. According to the Romanian sociologist Cristina Stefan, the family underwent changes mainly in the following directions: atomization and decrease of certain functions like children socialization, child-rearing, instating social status. These functions began to be performed by other institutions such as the school, the media etc., while the traditional family has been replaced with what Jack Goody called the “emotional family”86.

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86 Jack Goody, op. cit., pg. 183
The English Family in a wider context

This part of my paper focuses on synthesizing some observations regarding the particularities of the English family in present. They are the result of a personal approach towards the studies and the books I have read on this issue.

One of the authors so much quoted within this paper, Jack Goody, in his The European Family. An Historico-Anthropological Essay, agrees with Laurence Stone and asserts that the rich and subtle cultural changes which found their reflection in the way family members related to each other started in England, during the nineteenth century and that the most radical one was the transition from “detachment, consideration and patriarchy to […] «affective individualism»”87 which represents the most important shift in mentality at the beginning of the modern era.

The present English family is the result of these transformations initiated in the nineteenth century, and which continued to affect its structure within the last hundred years. Despite different approaches on the issue, most scholars agree that the English family – as well as family in most Western societies underwent major changes in structure, form, and relationships. Most of the factors which influenced the evolution of the English family during the last two centuries have been presented within the previous two chapters: industrialization, economic growth, higher educational levels and school attendance, technological developments, scientific discoveries, cultural and social movements which allowed women to free themselves along with a so long awaited change in their social position.

Religion and religious institutions also had a great influence on family during the last century. Arland Thornton claims that not only religious institutions and values had an

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87 Apud Jack Goody, op. cit., pg. 183
impact on family life in modern Western societies, but the changes in family life substantially influenced religious doctrines and teachings, and that “the varying responses of the churches to these family changes modified the influence of religion in the life of individuals and their families”.

Apart from underlining the reciprocal determination of this relationship, this assertion also underlines the fact that the evolution of family cannot and should not be understood but as strongly connected to the religious life and the religious influences. Religion and family appear as two interconnected bodies which have evolved together, influencing one another. In other words, when referring to changes in the wide context of family, we should also take into account the fact that, at its turn, the family had influenced other aspects of social life.

As for other factors which have shaped the English family’s structure, bringing it to its over-emphasized and debated present characteristics, I consider that the following fragment from Mary’s Abbott *Family Affairs. A History of the family in 20th century England* illustrates in a perfect manner the way in which English family evolved within the last century:

“In the course of the three-score-years and ten between 1920 and 1990 machines inside the home and out of it made the house-hold skills of making, mending, washing, cleaning and even cooking obsolete. In the Twenties the two-child family was already the norm in the expanding middle classes; by the 1990s parenthood had become a ‘lifestyle choice’. The consequences were seismic. But families have their own milestones and markers, tragedies and triumphs, births, matings, and death.”

This doesn’t mean that the history of the English family – as well as the history of the family, in general – has to be approached and understood apart from social, economic, political, cultural or religious aspects, apart from history itself. The changes in family

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structures and relationships in England are nevertheless the result of a several different factors – some of them being presented in detail within this paper. Whether family has or has not become a question of ‘lifestyle’ is hard to say. Moreover, the very end of this paper was not to offer a suitable answer to this question, but to present some of the major transformations underwent by the English family.
Conclusions

This paper offered me the possibility to interact with a different cultural space: the English one. At the end of this approach, I consider I have reached an important objective of this paper: the experience of interculturality, the possibility to present and analyse a generous subject (as family is) resorting to an exterior, personal approach. As for the other objectives, I do hope this paper managed to outline the most important factors which have contributed to the transformation of the family institution in nowadays England.

The norms of organising a scientific work requires that conclusions and observations to be phrased within the last section. Therefore, the last sections of my paper present some of the conclusions I have reached, as well as some personal observations on this issue. Moreover, I would like to emphasize that this scientific approach is not at all an exhaustive one, capable to cover all the aspects and all the factors that contributed to the transformations undergone by the English family during the twentieth century. Nevertheless, analysing and presenting some of these aspects and factors – with a particular focus on the last two centuries – was a challenge itself. This approach has generated many other questions which could represent the starting point for further researches.

The changes undergone by the family institution in England represent the focus of many scholars and many scientific researches during the last decades. The great majority concluded that this fundamental institution underwent dramatic changes during the last centuries, especially during the twentieth one. Some scholars went as far as announcing
the end of the family, and all their explanations resorting to different factors (social, cultural, economic, political or religious). I personally consider this Nietzschean perspective a little bit too audacious and much too fancy. In a world of continuous change – such as the twentieth century – which seems to have lost all its fundamental values, it seems convenient to announce the end of the family.

As I have already mentioned within the first part of this paper, despite the seismic changes Mary Abbott referred to when presenting the image of the present-times English family, such assertions have to be treated in a precautious manner as the family remains indispensable to any present or future society, regardless further evolutions and transformations of human life overall. That means that family – as a fundamental unit of society – will continue to play a major role within present (or future) times societies, it will continue to perform its elementary functions and it will never cease to be a capital human institution no matter what other changes the future will bring.

One of the main conclusions of this paper underlines the fact that the changes in the English family structure and family life began before the twentieth century. The industrialization process which began long before the above-mentioned period represents the starting point of these significant changes in the structure of the English family. Industrialization was only the beginning of a long and complex transformative process which reached its highest peak during the last century.

There is no doubt that, during the twentieth century, profound changes affected the traditional English family. As I have already mentioned, the changes which affected the English family aren’t a peculiarity of the English society, but a reality which characterized the great majority of Western developed societies during the last century.

Apart from various social, economic and political factors, the fundamental transformations undergone by the English family are also the result of different cultural and religious factors. The twentieth century brought a new understanding of family and marriage, as well as a new approach on issues like abortion, contraception, divorce, not to
mention the acceptance of relationships between individuals of the same sex. As I have mentioned in the end of the fourth chapter, these radical transformations and new meanings forced religious doctrines and religious institutions to respond. It becomes clear that not only religions influenced / influences family life, but, at its turn, the evolution of family life and structure influenced and continues to influence religion.

The twentieth century was not at all a linear one, but rather an amalgam of different social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political events and movements which wore down the fundaments of family life generating profound shifts which lead to new realities and models. As a fundamental part of society, the family was susceptible to be influenced by any change that might have occurred at any level of society. Family was forced to respond to the strains and the tensions of a continuously changing environment, and it evolved along with all these more or less significant transformations. And the twentieth century proved to be extremely affluent in all kind of changes: social, political, economic, cultural and religious.

Between the end of the Second World War and the middle of the 1970s, family life changed dramatically in England. The factors responsible for this change are mainly of economic and social – economic growth, increased number of marriages, increased births rate, increased school attendance – but they were doubled by cultural and religious ones. Within the last chapter of this paper, I have presented some of the cultural developments which have influenced family life in twentieth century England.

The revolutionary understanding of sexuality and the new approach towards sexual life and sexual freedom, combined with a general re-evaluation of traditional values of life, family and existence, deepened the gap between the old idea of family – still valid at the beginning of the century – and the family realities emerging from this conflicting, tensioned environment. Who would try to deny that the dramatic transformation in woman-man relationships germinated along the sexual revolution have significantly influenced the inner structure of the family?
This paper has been intended to offer only a brief overview of the main changes affecting family life in twentieth century England. The entire social, cultural, economic and religious aspects presented within this paper were meant to demonstrate that the present -time English family is the result of multiple influences and factors, and that religious and cultural aspects played a significant role in the twentieth century family shift. The changes brought by the last hundred years have implications at all levels of society and have remodelled its entire architecture.

In the end of this approach, I can only hope that the future will confirm my very first assertion: in the aftermath of such a difficult century as the twentieth one, rich in events and profound changes, the family is not confronting its end, but it is re-evaluating and re-establishing its values in an attempt to keep pace with the new norms and the new society models.
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