

Family Life – between Charism and Institution. Signalling Multidimensionality and Complexity of Human Interactions for Business Institutions and Society

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Abstract

This paper analyses the complexity of family life, which includes both its charismatic and institutional aspects. Deepening the understanding of this basic social group can be useful in explaining how human beings in their decisions and actions, as well as organizations, unceasingly transcend different oppositions and dimensions.

Undertaking this topic is not only important in the context of understanding the fundamental and complex experience of family life in the process of preparing and introducing new members to society, but also from the organizational perspective. It means that exploring the role of both dimensions – charismatic and institutional – which are somehow complementary, is crucial for understanding and harmonizing the different relationships and interactions within organizations, including business ones. In this way the article shows the connection between the functioning of the family and society (including organizations within it).

Keywords: family, charism, institution, business, social interactions

JEL Classification: D10, D13, Z13

1. Introduction

This paper discusses how observation of family life can help us understand the meaning of charismatic¹ and institutional dimensions – their mutual interdependence and cooperation – in our social (including economic) life. To begin, it is necessary to indicate the way the term ‘family’ is understood. According to the definition chosen in this paper, the family is the community of love and life based on the marriage of man and woman².

When we look at this institution from one side we see the natural human relationship of marriage oriented towards the mutual exchange of spiritual and material goods. With the coming of children this community grows, opens its boundaries and changes. What is more, through the sacramental bond³ (in the case of Catholic marriage, which serves here as an exemplary case) this natural institution becomes something much more as it transcends this earthly dimension of existence and becomes a spiritual (religious) community of supernatural character. This sacramental dimension of marriage (and the family built upon it) means a lively relationship to the Holy Spirit – the giver of all gifts. From now on this human institution is engaged in constant cooperation with supernatural grace and without doubt becomes a charismatic institution.

All the family’s existence – seen in such a perspective – can be described as a continuous effort to find harmony between the institution and charism. For example, when we look at the traditional roles of men and women in marriage it tells us a lot about institutional nature of the family; but on the other hand, we see that, in practice, family life would be difficult to imagine without common effort and a possibility of replacement of one spouse by the other. It means that although the formal – i.e. determined by the biological nature of human beings – division of tasks inside the institution is important and necessary, it is hard to imagine that some of these roles and boundaries between them will not be modified or exchanged occasionally in case there is need for it. This shows that without a certain spirit of sensitivity and openness to change, a kind of charismatic principle, which in the case of marriage and family is love, it is impossible for an institution to function.

That is why I believe that observation of the family teaches us how these two aspects of social existence – charismatic and institutional – can cooperate fruitfully for the common good of all. Also, understanding of family life in this perspective is a necessary beginning for the proper description and construction of other

¹ In the literature one can find two forms of that term: charism (*pl* charisms) and charisma (*pl* charismata).

² This way of defining ‘family’ – more or less – reflects the characteristic understanding of this institution not only in the West but also throughout other cultures for centuries.

³ Although sacramental marriage may seem to be extraordinary in the perspective of different cultures, there is a similarity between understanding of marriage as an exceptional and unique relationship within most societies (the rites of passage accompanying wedding ceremonies worldwide show well the special character of marriage).

social roles of managers, leaders, citizens, workers, neighbours, etc. Additionally, if we consider family love as necessary for the well-being of this community, we can use it as a reminder of the forgotten category of social love, as the charism necessary for a society to flourish.

The ‘family lesson’, as it might be called, has yet another advantage: it is available to everyone and all of us share this experience, though not exactly in the same way. Of course families are different and for this reason it is impossible to rely on an abstract, general idea of the family. That is why it is proposed to reflect on the relationship between charismatic and institutional aspects on the basis of the Catholic understanding of family. It seems to be a suitable model that illustrates the interdependence of the dimensions analysed here. It has a deep reference to metaphysics and ethics and is also widely described and discussed in literature.

Another incentive to pay attention to the family comes from contemporary findings in the theory of management, although it is rarely formulated in such a manner. The popularity of so-called ‘soft skills’, regarded as a crucial source of competitive advantage of companies, focuses our interest on the family. It is this primary social group where such interpersonal skills such as ability to cooperate, share, communicate, negotiate and compromise are developed. Today organizations more often try to improve their employees’ social competence through intense training but what needs to be discovered is the fact that this kind of ‘emotional and spiritual wealth’ cannot be simply learned at university or school, but it has to be patiently and gradually developed at home. It is right there in the family where charismatic and institutional dimensions work together and it can be assumed that the well-being of families influences the condition of society in different aspects.

2. Family according to sociology

In the beginning the family, this basic ‘social cell’, will be described in different ways. A thorough look at this fundamental social group can be an interesting lesson and model of the cooperation between an institution and charism. Family can also be seen as the kind of community where ‘natural’ meets ‘cultural’. In this group it is evident that culture is always related to nature, and their common combination results in a completely new reality. Of course, it is not an independent and self-organized process but it is ‘designed’ and performed by *homo sapiens*, who in this context can be described as *homo familiaris*⁴.

It is worth seeing how sociology understands family. Of course it is impossible to present or even summarize the whole knowledge that has been developed in this discipline, but we will signal at least a few approaches that may be useful

⁴ Although such terms are attractive and popular, as they communicate in a short way what we want to express, one should be careful because such terms as *homo economicus*, *homo reciprocans*, etc. somehow reduce the human person and may mislead us if used uncritically.

here. We will start with Charles H. Cooley, who described the family as a primary group. His view is well expressed by Coser, who wrote, that

the most important groups in which the intimate associations characteristic of primary groups have had a chance to develop to the fullest are the family, the play group of children, and the neighborhood. These, Cooley believed, are practically universal breeding grounds for the emergence of human cooperation and fellowship. In these groups men are drawn away from their individualistic propensity to maximize their own advantage and are permanently linked to their fellows by ties of sympathy and affection⁵.

We see here how the fact that the family mediates between individual and society is emphasized. For the sake of our perspective it is necessary to say that Cooley was also criticized for his exaggerated interest and the stress put on the mental aspects of human being. Those who did not like it

(...) were to criticize Cooley's excessively mentalistic view of the constitution of the self, but none would deny that he should receive credit, along with such major figures as William James, Sigmund Freud, Emile Durkheim, and George H. Mead, for having succeeded in destroying the Cartesian disjunction between mind and the external social world. Cooley elaborated in convincing detail the notion that man and society, the self and the other, are linked in an indissoluble unity so that the quality of one's social life, of one's relations with his fellows, is a constitutive element of his personality⁶.

What is more, he also analysed the question of balance in social structure as a compromise between rigid forms and flexibility. Coser, describing this part of Cooley's work, writes:

[c]onsider, for example, Cooley's discussion of the twin evils of formalism and disorganization. The first, he avers, 'is mechanism supreme'; the second, 'mechanism going to pieces'. 'The effect of formalism upon personality is to starve its higher life and leave it the prey of apathy [and] self-complacency (...). Disorganization, on the other hand, 'appears in the individual as a mind without cogent and abiding allegiance to a whole, and without the larger principles of conduct that flow from such allegiances⁷.

The above fragment shows that Cooley somehow was trying to show the relationship between the institutional and charismatic dimensions of the family. He clearly understood that an individual is a lot more than merely an element of a social structure.

⁵ L.A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York 1977, pp. 307-310, quoted after: <http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/DSS/Cooley/COOLW3.HTML> (accessed 13th April, 2010).

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

Another thinker interested in the problem of understanding different social realities and how they are interrelated was Ferdinand Tönnies. He is known for showing how a community (*Gemeinschaft*) is different from an association (*Gesellschaft*). His findings are presented in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Differences between community and association (society) according to Ferdinand Tönnies⁸

	Community (<i>Gemeinschaft</i>)	Association (Society) (<i>Gesellschaft</i>)
Character of a group	older, natural (‘primary’ according to Cooley*)	younger, result of social contract (‘secondary’ according to Cooley*)
Strength of bonds	stronger bonds	weaker bonds
Longevity	lasting and genuine	transitory and superficial
Kind of reality	living organism	mechanical aggregate and artifact
Characteristics	intimate, private, exclusive	public, official, not exclusive
A person is a member of a...	from birth on bound to it in weal and woe	on the basis of own/his relatives’ decision

* Additional information on Cooley’s view made by author of this paper.

The distinction proposed by this author became an important inspiration for others. Although the family is understood by Tönnies as a community, later it was shown that in fact the family in its nature is at the same time a community and an association.

This interesting perspective is well described by Polish sociologist Franciszek Adamski. In his book *Rodzina. Wymiar społeczno-kulturowy (Family. Socio-cultural Dimension)* he writes that as a community – which is dominated by charismatic dimension – the family takes its origins in human nature, and not in a social contract. Among its foundations one can find a natural distinction between the sexes, age differentiation, sexual impulse, and paternal and maternal instincts. It demands from its members an integrated unity of objectives and aspirations realized on the basis of free will, with awareness of internal necessity. It is ruled by love (which is reminiscent of Weber’s charismatic rulership) and not by law, which is only a result and security of the marital and familial bond. It gives its members communal joy and pleasure that cannot be found elsewhere. It collectivizes the feelings and ambitions of its members, so they learn to give up individual liberty for the sake of the good of the family⁹.

When it comes to the dimension of the family as an association, Adamski says that it is visible in the rational aspect and arbitrary will of the family as an

⁸ Created on the basis of: F. Tönnies, *The Contrast between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* (Excerpts from F. Tönnies *Community and Association*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955, pp. 37-9) [in:] P. Worsley, *Modern Sociology*, Penguin Education, 1970, pp. 295-296.

⁹ F. Adamski, *Rodzina. Wymiar społeczno-kulturowy*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Cracow 2002, p. 32.

institution formed on the basis of law. From this stems its own legal structure which guarantees its stability, longevity and denominates in a formal way the character of relationships with other groups or institutions. The next thing that has to be mentioned is that a family has its own internal organization which describes the rights and obligations of spouses, parents and children, cooperating in unity. The family also accomplishes many secondary goals (e.g. economic), which are lower in the hierarchy of objectives of a family¹⁰.

All this proves that the family is very special and unique group. By merging all the dimensions of human existence – physical, intellectual and spiritual – it is the only place where a person can fully develop in harmony. For this purpose it seems obvious that neither the institutional nor charismatic dimension alone will suffice – it is necessary that both of them are involved.

As we are exploring the question of the charismatic and institutional dimensions of the family we have to look to Max Weber. He is an author associated very often with charism¹¹ – although we will hardly find the notion of ‘family’ in his *Economy and Society*. Probably we can treat as an explanation of this approach his statement that ‘historically, the concept of the family had several meanings, and it is useful only if its particular meaning is always clearly defined’¹².

What is more, in his writings he does not regard the family as natural, although he does treat the sexual sphere between spouses as taking its origins in nature. He does mention figures of family members, yet he remains on the level of the individual relationships between them. In the book mentioned above we read: ‘the relationships between father, mother and children, established by a stable sexual union, appear to us today as particularly “natural” relationships’¹³. It also seems that for Weber the foundation of – what we call – ‘family’ is strictly material – and its main functions are biological and economical¹⁴. This all leads us to the conclusion that in Weber’s perspective the family does not have a charismatic dimension.

That is why I suppose that this sociologist was not really thinking of the family as a charismatic reality and thus the approach I am trying to present is somehow new. A possible explanation for this can be the fact that Weber perceived charism as an attribute of an individual and not of a community¹⁵, although

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ ‘The term ‘charisma’ will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as not to be accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a “leader”’. M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1978, vol. 1, p. 241.

¹² Ibidem, p. 357.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ ‘However, separated from the household as a unit of economic maintenance, the sexually based relationship between husband and wife, and the physiologically determined relationship between father and children are wholly unstable and tenuous’. Ibidem.

¹⁵ Although Weber agrees that charism is not always individual he writes that when it is taken on by a community it does not stay the same: ‘In its pure form charismatic authority has a character specifi-

he uses a term ‘charismatic community’. It is true that, in fact, it is the single person that is a ‘vehicle’ for charism, but when it comes to family we should accept that it is more complex and ask whether the family does actually form a kind of personality. On the one hand, we have a group of people which as family members don’t cease to exist as individuals, and on the other hand we have a community in which these people become something different than a single sum of the individuals¹⁶. In meaning from Weber, family is not a charismatic community (*Gemeinde*) which is ‘an organized group subject to charismatic authority’¹⁷. This perspective concentrates on the relationship of power – understood as rulership – of a charismatic leader over his charismatic community. This view does not conform to the nature of the family as we understand it. Of course we do not mean that the relationship of power is absent in the family, but that it is not exactly identical with ‘rulership’ and it is not the central attribute of this group.

Even though there is a difference between our approach and Weber’s, I believe that when we look at his definition of charismatic authority we will find how it corresponds with the nature of parental (in our Western culture it is mainly with paternal) authority. We read in *Economy and Society*, that

*charismatic rulership in the typical sense described above always results from unusual, especially political or economic situations, or from extraordinary psychic, particularly religious states, or from both together. It arises from collective excitement produced by extraordinary events and from surrender to heroism of any kind. This alone is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the faith of the leader himself and of his disciples in his charism – be it of a prophetic or any other kind – is undiminished, consistent and effective only in statu nascendi, just as it is true of the faithful devotion to him and his mission on the part of those to whom he considers himself sent*¹⁸.

Now we can try to analyse how parental authority in a family conforms to this image. First, Weber writes that charismatic rulership results from ‘unusual situations’. In the case of the family, the act of marriage, which is the foundation on which the family is built, is a special and exceptional fact. The man and woman

cally foreign to everyday routine structures. The social relationships directly involved are strictly personal, based on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities. Of this is not to remain a purely transitory phenomenon, but to take on the character of a permanent relationship, a “community” of disciples or followers or a party organization or any sort of political or hierocratic organization, it is necessary for the character of charismatic authority to become radically changed. Indeed, in its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only *in statu nascendi*. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both”. *Ibidem*, p. 246.

¹⁶ A convincing argument for this may be found in John Paul II’s *Letter to Families*: ‘In the first place, the family achieves the good of “being together”. This is the good par excellence of marriage (hence its indissolubility) and of the family community. It could also be defined as a good of the subject as such. Just as the person is a subject, so too is the family, since it is made up of persons, who, joined together by a profound bond of communion, form a single *communal subject*’. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, n. 15.

¹⁷ M. Weber, *Economy...*, vol. 1, p. 243.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 1121.

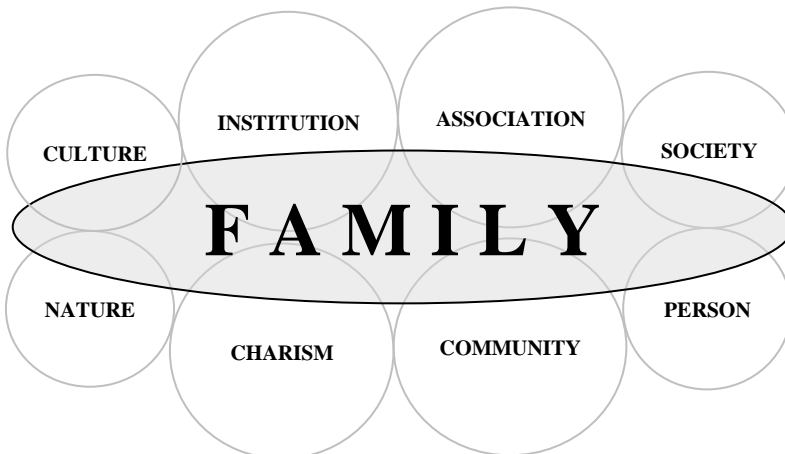
who get married from this moment are no longer the same members of their society but in a way they form a distinct community. In the case of sacramental marriage this exceptionality is enhanced by the fact that the bond between spouses stems from supernatural grace (and Weber mentions ‘religious states’ as the source of charisma). Marriage changes not only the relationship between spouses – who from now on are ‘one flesh’ – but it also has serious consequences for the families of the husband and wife. People who were strangers until then are connected now in a new way through the institution of matrimony. The family becomes bigger, not only through biological means but also through the creation of new spiritual bonds – through charisma.

The rest of what Weber says about charismatic authority in my opinion conforms to the reality of the relationship between parents and children. Father and mother are expected to be heroic and faithfully devoted to their kids, and children to surrender to their parents with faith and trust that this is the right and functional relationship from which all the family benefits.

3. Family as the Sphere of Encounter

In this part we concentrate on the unique character of the family as a special sphere of encounter. It can be understood as an accelerator and catalyst of different social processes. It is presented in the diagram below.

Diagram 1. Family as the sphere of mediation and encounter



Source: Own elaboration.

What is presented in Diagram 1 is a kind of combination of the intuitions described earlier. The order of their presentation is not a hierarchy of importance. The first ‘encounter’ means that the family is a place where nature is transformed into culture, and it does not mean that what is natural disappears. It is more that something new is created in the dynamic process of merging what is natural and what is cultural – a new ‘building’ is being created where nature is the foundation and source of ‘materials’, while culture helps to provide the design and vision.

The second ‘encounter’ is between charism and institution and it is the central question of this paper. It is connected to the first ‘encounter’. Family as an institution is already prepared for human beings by nature as a form that in the case of every family is filled with unique content. When we accept the view of a human being as a person we see that every man contributes to his family in a different and exceptional way, not only in a physical but also in an spiritual sense. It means that into the institutional ‘ground’ of a family are thrown different charismatic ‘seeds’ from which will grow different ‘plants’ giving miscellaneous ‘fruits’. The nature of this relationship can be better understood if we try to imagine how neither the ground alone nor the seed alone are able to bear fruit. From a religious (e.g. Catholic) perspective this process is completed with supernatural grace which is necessary for growth.

The third encounter means that two different social ‘natures’ are present in the family, which at the same time is a community and association – as described earlier.

The fourth situation refers to the ‘meeting’ of a person with society. In this perspective the family is understood as a reality that is irreplaceable, as it is the basic group where society takes its beginning. It is well known that one of the most important processes that takes place in the family is socialization. It means that there is no other way for a person to enter society. There is an abundance of evidence available that shows how difficult it is for individuals to perform their social roles when the family they were born into didn’t prepare them well. Of course it has to be mentioned that society is also responsible for the families in their vocation to socialize and as a bigger group it participates in this process in other ways¹⁹.

In the light of this last ‘encounter’ the family seems to be undervalued or ignored in contemporary science. This approach that understands human beings in a radically individualistic perspective is quite characteristic of economic and management theory. What one recognized author who specializes in these disciplines writes represents this problem well. Kenneth J. Arrow in *Limits of Organization* says that he wants to analyse the relationships between society and the individual in a rational spirit as an economist²⁰. In this approach there is no family as a link

¹⁹ The relationship between a person and society is interestingly described in *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 25.

²⁰ See: K.J. Arrow, *Granice organizacji*, translated by A. Ehrlich, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw 1985, p. 8 (English edition: K.J. Arrow, *The Limits of Organization*, Norton, New York 1974).

between the individual and society – a link that is necessary for a person to live and for society to exist.

4. Catholic understanding of the family as a charismatic and institutional reality

Today, I would like to cry out to all of you gathered here in St Peter's Square and to all Christians: Open yourselves docilely to the gifts of the Spirit! Accept gratefully and obediently the charisms which the Spirit never ceases to bestow on us! Do not forget that every charisma is given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church.

John Paul II²¹

Since charisms, in the widest sense, are simply concretizations of the life of grace, a Church without charisms could only be a Church without grace. Such a Church would be a false sign; it would betoken the presence of what is absent; it would be a pseudosacrament, and for this reason it would not be truly Church.

Avery Cardinal Dulles, 1982²²

Charisms are essential to Catholic understanding, not only of faith and the Church, but human beings and society as well. They are the necessary elements of the ecclesial community. They are in its origin the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of wisdom, science, intellect, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear. They are the subject of longing of Christians, for Jesus Christ has promised to send His Spirit who will comfort and instruct the disciples after their Master is gone. This may be expressed in the statement that there is no Church without the Holy Spirit and His gifts. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* we read that

the Holy Spirit, while bestowing diverse ministries in Church communion, enriches it still further with particular gifts or promptings of grace, called charisms. These can take a great variety of forms, both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history²³.

²¹ John Paul II, *Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II*, Meeting with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, 30 May 1998, n. 5, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980530_riflessioni_en.html (accessed 9th April, 2010).

²² <http://catholicanalysis.blogspot.com/2010/03/another-guest-blog.html> (accessed 9th April, 2010).

²³ *Christifideles Laici*, n. 24.

In the next verses we read: 'The description and the classification given to these gifts in the New Testament are an indication of their rich variety. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor 12:7-10; cf. 1 Cor 12:4-6, 28-31; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Pt 4:10-11).'

When it comes to understanding the meaning of these gifts, we read in the same document that

*whether they be exceptional and great or simple and ordinary, the charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit that have, directly or indirectly, a usefulness for the ecclesial community, ordered as they are to the building up of the Church, to the well-being of humanity and to the needs of the world*²⁴.

When it comes to the reality that is the central point of our reflection, in the teaching of the Church great attention is paid to family as the basic community where the life of the Church takes place. This point of view is well explained in the *Letter to Families*. In the second point of this document which is entitled *The family – way of the Church* we read that

*among these many paths, the family is the first and the most important. It is a path common to all, yet one which is particular, unique and unrepeatable, just as every individual is unrepeatable; it is a path from which man cannot withdraw. Indeed, a person normally comes into the world within a family, and can be said to owe to the family the very fact of his existing as an individual*²⁵.

On this basis we can say that according to Catholic vision, marriage and family – being a part of the ecclesial community – are not only important social institutions but charismatic realities as well. It is expressed by Hans Urs von Balthasar, who believed that a purely sociological analysis of the Church may be dangerous as it belittles and undervalues the fact that it is a community build upon the foundation of love²⁶.

This appreciation of the role of the family is expressed in many documents and speeches. We have already mentioned the *Letter to Families* written by John Paul II. Another significant example can be found in the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World entitled *Gaudium et Spes*. In this document we read that

authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and may aid and strengthen them in sublime office of being a father or a mother. For this reason Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfil their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, n. 2.

²⁶ See: J. O'Donnell SJ, *Klucz do teologii Hansa Ursa von Balthasara (Hans Urs von Balthasar)*, translated by A. Wałęcki, Wydawnictwo WAM, Cracow 2005, p. 171.

*personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God*²⁷.

Further in this document we find a description of marriage as a reality consisting of institutional and charismatic dimensions. This conjugal love

*is an eminently human one since it is directed from one person to another through an affection of the will; it involves the good of the whole person, and therefore can enrich the expressions of body and mind with a unique dignity, ennobling these expressions as special ingredients and signs of the friendship distinctive of marriage*²⁸.

Gaudium et Spes leaves no doubt that matrimony is a charismatic community, because in the eyes of God it is ‘worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting and exalting gifts of grace and of charity’²⁹. This love that merges ‘the human with the divine (...) far excels mere erotic inclination, which, selfishly pursued, soon enough fades wretchedly away’³⁰. In these fragments we find justification that the very nature of Catholic marriage, and the family built upon it, shows the necessity of cooperation between the natural and supernatural spheres.

The Church’s teaching also describes the complexity of the relationship between the individual, the family and the whole social reality. It not only sees a given society as a form of community, but the Church treated the whole of humanity as one big family long before the term ‘global community’ became so popular³¹. When it comes to relationships within society, Catholic teaching connects it with the general vision of natural and supernatural order. It means that it surpasses strictly the earthly horizon, which means that the final destination of a human person is not any worldly society but membership in the heavenly society of saints. It means that both dimensions of family life – institutional and charismatic – as they were created by God are oriented towards helping a person to reach the communion with the Creator of all things. *Gaudium et Spes* describes this reality when it says that

the intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. Hence by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their offsprings as well as of society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends

²⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 48.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, n. 49.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ See: John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, n. 2 and Augustin Cardinal Bea, *Unity in Freedom. Reflections on the Human Family*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1964.

*on human decisions alone. For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes*³².

On the basis of what we have just presented it is justified to say that in the Catholic vision of the family one can clearly see how the institutional and charismatic dimensions cooperate and complete each other.

5. Family, Work, Management and the Charismatic Perspective

Monir H. Tayeb, one of the authors doing his research in the field of intercultural management, which is a very popular topic these days, described the family as the cradle of culture³³. It means that for those authors who are interested in a cultural explanation of economic activity the family should be regarded as a very important sphere where a company's reality is shaped. Although the above example may suggest that the family is appreciated in management theory, our opinion is that family is rarely taken into account when analysing managerial problems, as signalled earlier.

I believe that in fact understanding family nature and functioning may be very helpful for those who look for better solutions in the sphere of work and organization. What's more, analysis of cases of good and bad 'family careers' can serve as simple and comprehensive lessons for bigger and more complex organizations who look for ways to improve their performance. In this perspective, the family appears as the sphere where the charismatic and institutional dimension of individuals and groups as well are creatively merged. In fact, it is the first school of every working man because it develops the necessary skills for fulfilling professional roles. It happens through regular and continuous interpersonal 'training' with other members of the family. What they do – although it is rarely seen this way – is look for harmony between form and substance, the expected and unexpected, old and new, material and non-material. When it comes to interaction between people in the family it is worth mentioning that the popularity of different training sessions in the field of so-called *soft skills* is yet more proof of the influence that the family has on organizations of every kind.

Of course, links between family and company are very old, because it was families that at the beginning of human history played economic roles – households were small companies. Enterprises that are now so common are much 'younger' than the family is. Although family life is still connected to the economy, these links are not as visible and tight as they were in the past. We still do have a lot of companies that are owned and managed by single families. I would

³² *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 48.

³³ See M.H. Tayeb, *The Management of a Multicultural Workforce*, J. Wiley&Sons, New York Toronto Brisbane Singapore 1996, p. 38.

even risk the statement that there has not ever been a company that at least in its initial phase wasn't a family business.

When we discuss the relationship between these two realities it is worth mentioning the managerial problem of shaping a company's style and structure. It is somehow natural that the family becomes a pattern for designing a company. There are a lot of similarities that would justify such an approach. No matter what, it should be stated that we do not mean to say that a company is what a family is. They both are groups, but their nature and character are different. And it should not be forgotten. A tendency to build and develop relationships inside a company as if it were family can be found. It is often undertaken in order to increase the loyalty of employees and strengthen competitive advantage. This may be risky and raises doubts when it comes to the sincerity of intentions. Tayeb describes this managerial dilemmas interestingly:

to be effective in western, or any other non-Japanese culture, the work-team should be transferred together with at least some of its 'siblings'. For example, you cannot set up work teams and ask people to co-operate with one another as team members, and yet reward people on the basis of individual performance, thus encouraging competition among team members. Another example. You cannot expect employees to consider themselves as members of a 'big happy family', with a high level of commitment to their workplace, and yet when economic down turn comes you lay off workers and low-level employees or reduce their pay, and leave jobs, salaries and bonuses of senior managers and directors intact³⁴.

As we have said, family roles may serve as the models for organizational life and be of great assistance in managing a company (e.g. understanding a manager's role as similar to a father's). Still, one has to remember that this analogy has its limits.

Now we will look at another question that involves the problem of institutional and charismatic dimensions. The theory of management has always been interested in entrepreneurship and analysed different ways of building competitive advantage and its sources. Many times the findings in this area point at something that can be called a spirit of innovation – which is a kind of charisma³⁵. Without it companies are unable to deliver value to their customers and compete effectively on the market. One may ask, if it is so obvious, why then this is not so widely accepted and implemented. The findings in the literature tell us that there is often strong opposition against changes. McConnel in *Economic Behavior* shows three rules that constitute a certain attitude that is contrary to innovation-driven activity and stops it. The first of them is that people do not like to lose the jobs and posts they have, the second says that those who have possessed certain skills are reluc-

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 196.

³⁵ I find here an analogy to family that is open to life, which means that it is ready to risk in order to advance and develop.

tant to changes, and third reason is that those who got used to having a certain kind of power do not want to renounce it³⁶.

This paradox – characteristic of human beings in general – can be better understood when we analyse it in the perspective that we concentrate on here: resistance of an institution to charism in fact may appear, and often does, and the tension between the institutional and charismatic dimensions of an organization in fact is life-giving and development-fostering.

This awareness slowly grows as more emphasis is put on the role of knowledge and values as factors important in creating economic wealth. In other words it can be said that today we begin to be more and more aware that apart from formal rationality, which has dominated economic and managerial thinking for many years, there is substantial rationality which cannot be neglected if we hope for a better future. This last notion of substantial rationality corresponds well with what we call the charismatic dimension. This positive turn is not against institutions of any kind but is in fact oriented towards making them more effective and humanized in long and short-term perspectives.

One of the heralds of this change certainly is the economy of communion. This approach to management – and work in general – differs in a very special way from other perspectives. As Leo Andringa puts it, it leaves space for God's intervention even in the field of economic actions; after making a choice which may be surprising from the point of view of dominating business logics, God never forgets to give this 'something', which Christ has promised. In this way God becomes the company's co-operator³⁷. It seems to be a good example of the balance between the institutional and charismatic dimensions.

6. Conclusion

Indeed, the family is more a subject than any other social institution: more so than the nation or the State, more so than society and international organizations. These societies, especially nations, possess a proper subjectivity to the extent that they receive it from persons and their families.

John Paul II³⁸

We have come to the end of our reflection. We have tried to show how institutional and charismatic dimensions are present in the family. We believe that thorough observation of this primary social group can be an interesting lesson and model of cooperation between these two spheres.

³⁶ D.W. McConnell, *Economic Behavior*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1939, quoted after: T. Abel, *Podstawy teorii socjologicznej*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw 1977, p. 79.

³⁷ See: L. Andringa, *Chrześcijanin a pieniądze*, Zjazd Gnieźnieński, Gniezno 2004, <http://www.zjazd.eu/teksty/24.html> (accessed 12th April, 2010).

³⁸ John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, n. 15.

Not only in this perspective, but in general, can family be seen as a source of priceless lessons to any society and association, including those engaged in business. This group is a unique place where an individual encounters society and there is no other way for a person to be prepared for fulfilling social roles. When a family fails to do what it is called to do, the whole of society feels and receives the results of this malfunction.

When we read Weber's description of the routinisation of charisma³⁹ one can see that it is the family (as the basic community of a society) that keeps and preserves the charisma for the common good of all. It should be advice for all those who are interested in true social development – pay attention to families, because the spirit of innovation and other charisms live there, and it is there where one can find an integral, authentic and dynamic reality where the charismatic dimension has a chance to survive. This is guaranteed and secured in the family, which is the first of the social structures where we can best see that 'the mark of a community is that one's life may be lived wholly within it'⁴⁰. This lesson about the nature and irreplaceable position of a family gives basic instruction about what our societies need to develop and respect to function properly. It is certainly worth remembering since we seriously lack a social balance between charisma and institution.

Probably our efforts to bring back the awareness of the charismatic and institutional dimensions of social life and reunite them in order to cooperate better would n't be so necessary if we were not the successors of the Cartesian revolution. It is this important change in the thought of Western culture that has led to the 'disjunction between the mind and the external social world'⁴¹. We better understand today that it is impossible to build human culture on such a breakable foundation. We need to bring back the personalistic vision of man as the integral perspective of an individual born and socialized within the family – which is based on the marriage of a man and a woman – for the common good of the whole of society and the person himself.

That is why it should be clearly admitted that 'what we need is institution and charismata. The institution must not kill the charismata, so they can develop. (...) diversity builds the institution, and thanks to its charismata people grow, everyone is himself in as much as it is possible'⁴².

³⁹ See: M. Weber, *Economy...*, vol. 2, p. 1121.

⁴⁰ R.M. MacIver, C.H. Page, *The Mark of a Community is That One's Life May Be Lived Wholly Within It*, (Excerpts from R.M. MacIver and Ch. Page, *Society: An Introductory Analysis*, Macmillan Co., 1961, pp. 8-10) [in:] P. Worsley, *Modern Sociology*, Penguin Education, 1970, p. 296.

⁴¹ L.A. Coser, *Masters...*, pp. 307-310.

⁴² E. Ruman, *Biznes i chrześcijaństwo potrzebują gwałtowników. Interview with Fr. Jacek Stryczek* "Frona" 2009, No. 52, p. 105.

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