THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STATUS OF A PERSON IN OLD AGE

Teodor GERGOV

South-west University "Neophyte Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Address correspondence to: Teodor Gergov, Department of Psychology, South-west University "Neophyte Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Zip code: 2700, Bulgaria, Ph.: +359878337317; E-mail: teodor@swu.bg

Abstract

Objectives. This article aims to research the influence of the family on some basic psychological phenomena in old age, its ability to influence, stabilize and delay the psychological changes typical of old age. To this end, a number of research papers on this issue were checked, all being elaborated by authors working on such topics.
Material and methods. An extensive analysis of the literary sources on this topic from the last few years has been made. Articles, papers and books showing the role of the family for the psychological functioning of old people have been checked by hand. A search on keywords and phrases in the specialised databases was done.
Results. The analysis that was done showed some already expected tendencies. During the various stages of human life there are different relationships that predominate. When it comes to old age, these are companionship, care for the other, sharing, spiritual communication, etc. The family proves to be the main source of communication for the elders. The old person can most fully develop his repertoire of roles in it, and can optimally satisfy both his basic and higher order needs.
Conclusions. The family has a unique role for the psychological functioning of the aging people. Attention, respect and warmth are needed for being calm in elderly people. Taking care of the old person is an expression of care and faithfulness, and being around them really matters for them and contributes to their psychological balance.

Keywords: emotional balance, family, family environment, old age, psychological functioning.

Introduction

Many definitions of the category family have been proposed, ranging from the simple 'main cell of society' to some general and ideologically loaded terms. The common thing for all of them is that the family unit is seen as a free union of personalities that can interact among themselves on the basis of their personal wishes and needs. Therefore, the family should not be seen as a static institution but as a dynamic environment subjected to the influence of various influences and stimuli, something that allows the individuals to develop within the particular community (Lee, 2010). It is generally accepted that the family is an interdependent unit - the intrapsychological organisation of each family member is part of the psychosocial structure of the family itself, and the structure of the family always has the intrapsychological organisation of its individual members (Todorova, 1988). The family has an incredibly well developed ability to adapt not only to the changes in society but also to those changes that take place within the family members. For this reason, the relationships within the family are considered one of the most long-lasting human relationships (Ilieva, 1980).

Theories for family roles and their swapping are used to explain the dynamics of family relationships. The most common hypothesis is the one that these roles are the link between the interpersonal and the sociocultural, and that the personality has the potential ability to form them (Dragneva, 1990). On the one hand, this mediator function explains how, by using family roles, some very personal traits are shown in family communication, and, on the other, it explains how the family environment generates personal differences. Role is usually considered a component of the Self-concept and a crucial determinant of family relationships (Dragneva, 1990). Yankova (1979) researches the situations in the family which lead to family issues and conflicts by considering the theories of role swapping, and she points out that the understanding of social roles has a key role for the description and analysis of interpersonal relationships.

Very important for dialogic communication are the cultural level of development, the ideas, the ideals, the socio-cultural values and the moral system of each family member. These factors contribute to the formation of stereotypical I-concepts, roles, patterns and habits. It is generally accepted that these roles become one whole with the personality, they become an indivisible part of it and they modify its whole nature (Dragneva, 1990). They become a internal regulator of behaviour that works within the personality. In the family, the personality plays his roles in view of the circumstances and it tries to come out of the situation as clean as possible. As Dragneva (1990) claims, the crucial factors to improve family relationships are improving the understanding of family roles, understanding behaviour stereotypes and moral.

Material and methods

An extensive analysis of the literary sources on this topic from the last few years was made. A search on keywords and phrases in the specialized databases was done. The content of the articles, papers and books showing the role of the family for the psychological functioning of old people was analyzed qualitatively and classified. The information obtained was interpreted and structured logically and by topics. The method that was used was qualitative inductive content analysis of the materials related to old age and the topics that were extracted emerged from the content of the materials that were examined and compared. Some initial assumptions on the importance of family for the right psychological functioning of the elderly were confirmed by a number of research papers such as the one issued by Rada (2018), according to which the main support comes from the children and parents (around 80%), and from the partner (around 60%).

Results and discussions

It has been established that during the various stages of family life there are different relationships that predominate. For the period of old age these are companionship, care for one another, sharing, spiritual communication, among others, that form the vitality of the family unit. It acts as a mediator in the interpersonal relationships, on the basis of an image of the other that has already been formed. This image is quite constant in the period of old age and it is formed on the basis of combining cultural values, role expectations and the whole experience from one mutually covered life path for many years. The ability of different family members to appreciate this experience plays a crucial role for the personal interactions within the family. The family is the main core of psychological support for old people and when they get approval from other people, this contributes to the optimization of their I-concept. Rogers (1980) specifies the connection between the family environment and the personality's I-concept. As a result of the pressure that the family environment has put on individuals in the course of years, they aim to be considered as its family members more than as independent personalities.

The old person satisfies his basic needs within the family environment, and to be deprived of it will negatively affect his personality. Within the family environment he develops and

accomplishes himself, he gets security, intimacy and love, he asserts himself by instilling respect in people, and he gets noticed. The results of a research made in Bulgaria at the end of the previous century support this idea. The research shows that 43,9% of women and 44,7% of men claim that it is their partner who understands them as no one else does. A significant percentage of the respondents have also pointed out that their family helps them grow as personalities (Kyuranov, 1987). It becomes clear from the same research that in families with family members at a more advanced age, the grown up children appear to be the factor to stimulate and consolidate mutual bonds and mutual love.

The family calls for personal qualities like faithfulness, sincerity, self-control, responsibility, dignity and a sense of duty, the lack of which can make it very difficult for a person to cope with difficult situations in life and within the family. The richer and more versatile the relationship between the spouses is, the more likely it is to produce a new combination out of their manifestations. That would allow for a person to slowly enter the calm age of 'restored trust' (Ilieva, 1980). The question of how to stabilize and develop the family relationships as people age needs to be discussed. Being able to age with dignity, without capitulating to old age, appears to be a daunting task. To this end, it would help to accept the involuntary processes as natural. To be able to age with dignity depends on the personal qualities of the aging person and on the ability of the spouses to activate those qualities of their personalities that successfully neutralize and hide the growing number of deficits in them (Svetlik et al., 2005).

As people age, family life and the family-related relationships get increasingly more affective importance for the personality. Aging causes spouses to bond more and the importance of family roles increases at the expense of the social roles outside the family. The high emotional importance of the family environment becomes very obvious when dramatic events like the loss of a family member or being accommodated in a home for elderly people take place. The old person often experiences a nervous breakdown in such situations. The death of a spouse has its complex consequences starting from some financial difficulties and continuing until the person experiences loneliness and a feeling of being useless (Craig and Pham, 2006; Brandon and Flury, 2009; Havighurst, 1972).

Vachon (1976) regards widowing as a factor that can potentially accelerate the social disadaptation and cause serious somatic and psychological diseases. Alexandrova (2006) describes the crisis caused by the loss of a long-loved family partner as follows: "When the loved one is gone... Then life becomes terrible. You have been with this person for the most part of your waking life, your energy fields are as intertwined as if there is one soul in two bodies. You have lived in one room, you have been breathing one and the same air, you have shared one bed, and you have become one whole. And now one part of this whole has gone forever. Suffering is what is left for the other. No reasonable arguments can persuade the surviving person who feels cut in half, mutilated and half-dead, that this is a natural act..." (Alexandrova, 2006, p. 276)

The unity of emotions and feelings is at the core of the mutual understanding and harmony not only of the dyadic relationships (that of spouses) but of the relationship with children and grandchildren. The contact with the next generations is a necessary condition to successfully adapt to the new situation, as the circle of social interactions becomes narrower every day. As parents age, they start to depend on their children more and to reduce the number of their contacts outside their family. To the majority of them, the family is a cardinal value, a centre of their interests and a most important field of activity. By receiving the help from their children, they attribute meaning to their old age, they evade the fear of loneliness that is typical of old age and the depressing feeling that they are no longer needed to the environment where they have spent most of their lives (Kuyranov, 1987). The old person can still be useful in a home full of children and grandchildren. In fact, he is now entering an interesting and fruitful in its own way period of his life - that of reevaluation of everything and sharing the fruits of this life experience with those people who have sprouted from his root. He stays away from his bad thoughts in the company of his children and grandchildren

because life thrives around him all the time (Dinkova, 1976).

Aging people enjoying a full family status (marriage partners, children and grandchildren) usually have greater self-esteem compared to aging loners who feel insecurity and anxiety about their future (Terry, 2006). Nothings warms the heart of the old person like the presence of strong, well educated and hardworking children and grandchildren around him. A research made among retired people in Sofia shows that they see meaning in their lives when they try to be financially and morally useful to their successors (Iolov, 1982). They also link the most successful events in their lives with their children and marital partners which confirms the exceptional importance of the family for the retired people.

Topalova (as cited in Spasovska, 1985) studies the dynamics of the system of values in different life periods and she finds out that the happiness within the family is a primary value for the people not older than 65. In the following age periods it will be preserved as a primary value but then health and vital activity become important as well.

Despite the ever increasing popularity of the nuclear family, the extended family of three generations has preserved its activity in certain social environments. Bengtson's research (1975) among the population of various countries shows the positive influence of the populous patriarchal family for the psychological development of old people. It turns out that thanks to the populous patriarchal family some of the main family functions can be materialized, for example: reaching optimal organization of the consumption of goods; satisfying the emotional needs of the family members; developing a system of values; reaching spiritual continuity; supporting the family members; developing norms, prescripts and samples to regulate the behaviour of each family member.

Georgiev (2003) describes in detail the role of the old person in the family by emphasizing its significance in the past. The author points out that the patriarchal image of the old person determines his status as head of the family and root of the physical reproduction for the next generations. Along with this, he is directly responsible for the psychological continuity of his successors as he has to educate them, bring them up, and provide them with his experience and culture. It is often the case when all the movable and immovable property for long-term use by the whole family is owed to the old person. His contribution to everyday activities like going shopping, paying the expenses, cleaning and tidying up, looking after the grandchildren, etc, is also significant. The aging person is also responsible for developing criteria for the family members' actions and for evaluating them by pointing out which of them are acceptable and useful for the family community. He has the role of a mediator who regulates the attitude of the different family members and who terminates all conflicts. He also controls their behaviour and coordinates their efforts as they do various activities. The contact with grandchildren appears to be an endless source of positive emotions for both parties. The positive opinions expressed by the relatives also have a consolidating influence on the mind. The aging personality lives under the impression that he has preserved himself, that he is active and he expects to receive confirmation of this. Georgiev points out that 'the old man feels well among his relatives who respect him and provide him with enough attention and warmth. They let the old person join them on holidays, they give him presents and thus not only do they prove their love and respect to him but they indirectly suggest to him their faith in him that he shall live on and shall use or wear the presents' (Georgiev, 2003, p. 149).

Dinkova (1976) summarizes the advantages of the extended family consisting of three generations compared to the other family types by pointing out that because of the multi-sided and flexible help among family members, the extended family of three generations creates the best conditions to raise and educate the growing children. Parallel to this, the process of aging is more enriching, more diverse, more safe and more useful. In their majority, old people are good-natured and they preserve their energy and clear mind till very old age. They are usually able to adapt to a certain degree to the requirements and to the worldviews of the young people. Such wise people with great life experience are a real blessing. They make other people instinctively respect them

only with their presence. An indisputable advantage of living together is that it allows for help between different generations, it provides a better control over the growing children and it helps to prevent alienation from taking place. Well-meaning relationships have a stabilizing effect on the family and they sustain its social balance. The emotional solidarity finds expression in various forms of lively communication, gifts, spending free time together, etc. All these aspects have a positive effect on the old person's personality. The good mood, the increased vital tone, the raised spirits, the emotional fulfillment and the feeling of being useful, all make the old person happy and allow him to bear his old age with dignity and little efforts. Despite the obvious advantages for the old person, such a living hides a number of potential dangers. For example, if different generations don't understand one another well, that could worsen the microclimate within the family and make old age more difficult to bear.

Between 2011 and 2012, in a sample of 1215 subjects, aged between 18-74 years old, from Romania, Rada (2014) found that more than 50% of children have helped "a lot" their parents. Also, "Over 70% of respondents have offered help to their grandparents and received help from their grandparents. The main problem facing intergenerational support is care giving for elderly people. Their health conditions and ability to contribute to the household economy influences the intensity of support offered. Lonely elderly are most likely to be the receivers of support Here, there is no question of a lower intergenerational solidarity, but rather, it is an intergenerational participation issue caused by cycles of family life, income and marital status" (Rada, 2014, p. 301). Between 2016 and 2017, in a sample of 601 subjects from Romania, aged between 55-93 years old, Rada (2018, p. 142) found that "the most vulnerable elderly are those with health and low income issues, and these aspects are mentioned by most respondents. At the same time, the accounts have emphasized the fact that people with bidirectional support, with a sense of usefulness, with a positive view on life, the extraverts and the sociable ones have a better life".

In the last few years, some historical changes have taken place in the family structure that seriously affect the old person's status and functioning. The power and authority of the old generation have been limited, and the traditional relationships between the generations have been weakened. The patriarchal feeling of veneration of the old people is exterminated but this feeling is not always replaced with natural, deep feelings of love and respect. Sometimes the feelings to old people are measured in terms of a material equivalent and they are addressed to that old person who provides young people with more finances. Tufan (2010) sees one of the main conflicts between the generations in the concentration of material gains in the old generation at the expense of young people who get more and more educated. Spasova (1980) points out in this connection that it is not uncommon when young people start to exploit their old parents in a predatory fashion, under the presumption that they have already had their good days and now it is their children's turn. This can lead to feelings of being overstressed so that these selfless old helpers live the rest of their days very depressed. At another place in her paper, Spasovska (1985, p. 91, 92) points out that "The pathology of the connection between generations is such that it can reach the point where some children who have forgotten about their origin - some upstarts or predatory pragmatics - feel ashamed of their 'simple and uneducated' parents".

The same author describes in detail the different reactions of the elderly people to such attitudes directed at them. Some react with resignation and even tend to blame themselves for a million of reasons. They feel guilty for not being able to satisfy the ever growing demands and pretensions of their children. Many of them even feel that they are a burden to their children which puts them under even more pressure, misbalancing their internal homeostasis. These processes are even more painful when such a person has widowed while still young but managed to raise his children without any help. Children accept their parent's decision to remain alone as something natural, and sometimes they eliminate the danger of a second marriage while it is still a thought in progress. Some of them don't even realise that they have doomed their parent to be lonely because marriage in old age provides the vital need to communicate and it protects the personality from

social isolation. Having sacrificed their life in the name of their children, the disappointment from such demonstrations of hostile behaviour in such a sensitive age period is complete. Spasovska's description of this disappointment (1985, p. 92) is remarkable: "The old man, being with an easily hurt mentality by default, suffers, becomes despondent, and isolates himself, but he patiently carries his burden, he is usually reserved and does not argue with the young people, even if seriously offended". Even when they are in need, old people do not complain, they quietly accept the blows of life because they do not want to worsen the condition of their children. They are well prepared for an uneven requital from their children and don't expect to be looked after.

Others react in a protectionist fashion, defending their personal interests and freedom. Each intervention receives some counterarguments. What is more, sometimes the old generation brutally intervenes in the lives of young people with their never ending reprimands, rebukes and preaches. It is not uncommon when they make a parallel between their lives in the past and the relationship between the young family's members today. The conflicts between parents and their married children assume a different image during each stage of aging. As this process continues, the psychological features of old age start to show more and the states of heavy depression that are so typical of it (Chiang et al., 2010).

The aging person is likely to lapse into a psychological disadaptation under the influence of 'role swapping'. The once fragile child has unnoticeably become an independent person, a financially and socially more significant member of the family, and the parent has assumed the position of a more dependent and helpless person. The psychotraumatic consequences of the reversal of roles in the family are most discernible in the early period of aging. The feelings of being robbed, of weakness and inferiority can sometimes lead to a compensatory hyperactivity and manifestations of authoritarism (Petrov, 1978). In these cases, old age shows its most negative traits: increased irritability; discontent; endless murmuring for everything that cannot be approved by the old system of morals; making biting remarks, etc. The conflicts between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law have become proverbial and have become part of the history in literary works like that of Karaslavov *Tatul* and *Snaha*, as well as being part of the national literary heritage. Hadzhiiski described these relationships in the following way: "One of the great joys of old women is to sit under the sun and their daughters-in-law to start exterminating the lice in their hair. Sometimes they fall asleep under the sounds of this brutal extermination of lice. The greatest praise and the greatest reproach for the daughter-in-law at this age is whether she is checking the old lady's head or she hasn't covered her nails with blood in the old lady's hair yet" (Hadzhiiski, 1974, p. 52).

The words of Haytov are indicative of the disruption between the generations: Haytov: "If we listen to the voice of young age, we shall hear another thing: Old people are backward, old-fashioned, fossilized, slow; they don't understand us, they don't respect our juvenile feelings and aspirations...". This age-old battling between the generations has been witnessed by the walls of each home and each public building. It used to be heard in the streets, including the main street (Haytov, 1969, p. 3).

Brown (1974) discusses in detail the problem of the reasons for the conflicts between the generations. They are most often caused by the battling for power in the family, by the lack of tactfulness, restrain, responsibility and tolerance in conditions of a stressful and dynamic daily life. The primary cause can be looked for in factors like deformations in upbringing, character incompatibility, mismatch of worldviews, asserting one's own I-concept, incorrect adaptation, bad personal example, etc. Regardless of their genesis, such situations that bring about conflicts and crises have a deforming role upon communication within the family, and the family is the main core of communication in the early period of aging, as it is more important than the company of friends, relatives and neighbours. These deformations can have a different expression, for example, inadequate attitude, lack of sober judgment for certain events (overstating or neglecting things), lies, egocentrism, alienation, utilitarianism, etc. Brown (1974) points out that old people do not

withdraw from their children even when they are not satisfied with their mutual relationships. They prefer to be in a state of conflict than not to be committed to anything. When they have to choose between total absence of contacts and contacts that do not satisfy them, they choose the latter.

Porshnev (1986) points out that the presence of certain self-regulating mechanisms of stereotypical and role behaviour in the aging personality make it easier for it to become balanced in the process of interpersonal communication and in important life situations. Such balance could be achieved more easily in a family environment free of conflicts and contradictions. The states of stress and crises at this age affect the personality stronger and for longer periods of time, they often lead to erroneous steps when solving family problems and complex cases in life. They often co-occur with symptoms like increased criticism, apathy, aggression, euphoric states, depression, fear, anxiety, alcohol abuse and even suicidal intentions.

It is generally accepted that personality and its mechanisms are directed towards the search for good, truth and happiness. Despite this disposition, family conflicts often cannot be dealt with successfully and, as a result, people reach extremes. There are a significant number of cases when sons and daughters sue their parents so as to get their properties and then send them to a home for elderly people. As Semov (1979, p. 264) points out "The judicial proceedings and the homes for the elderly are the most monstrous and the most evil result of this excessive care. They are neither the typical, nor the mass thing that a person can see on our beautiful land. But it exists. It is before our eyes. It is a deep, horrific pain, the worst and the most powerful pain that nature could ever create - the pain experienced by a mother and a father".

It is still generally accepted that sending one's parents to an elderly people's home is an act of immorality and cruelty, that it is a demonstration of unfulfilled duty. There are cases when sons and daughters, after they dump their parents, don't go to visit them in the elderly people's home at all and they start to think about them only after they have passed away, and sometimes they don't even attend their parents' funeral. The society accepts this as something unnatural, as some kind of punishment and moral humiliation. There is no more natural scenario than that in which the sunset of one's life takes place in one's home, in a family environment and among relatives. The elderly should fly away at the place where they feel best (Kim, Cho and June, 2006).

Choi, Ransom and Wylli (2008) focus their attention on the effect that a home for elderly people has on the personality of an old person as they enter it. As they are admitted in this social institution, old people come across a completely new environment. The great disadvantage of these institutions is that they accommodate many aging people at one place, people who are isolated from their contacts with other age groups and, most of all, isolated from their family. The way of life is often different and does not coincide with the way of life that these people have had so far. The new daily regime, the new environment and some restrictions for the retired people frustrate them. The aging personality is a representative of other times, temperament and understanding that do not coincide with that of the much younger staff. Something more, such institutions are anything but clubs on the basis of certain interests. Clients are admitted at random and finding a suitable company for communication can be very difficult.

All these things make the elderly person retreat and be lonely. "Loneliness is not only the lack of an opportunity to communicate with relatives and friends but also a condition of being forgotten and disinterested" (Vasilyieva, 1975, p. 151). "Being lonely for a long time leads the person to heavy psychological states of depression, melancholy, reclusiveness, bitterness and even aggression. These states lead old people to social isolation and passivity, to insecurity when it comes to their future, and even to fear of the inevitable when the inevitable is about to happen. Loneliness is also the result of that depressing feeling that you are no longer useful neither to the society, nor to your relatives" (Spasovska, 1985, p. 97). The depression that comes as a result of loneliness is a scourge for the mentality of the aging person. It is the saddest balance of human life and its most desperate result (Graneheim and Lundman, 2010). The study also had some limitations. The survey showed that the influence of the family on mental functioning has been

studied mainly in younger persons. There are not many empirical studies that trace its influence in the elderly. This opens the field for future scientific research in this direction.

Conclusions

Studies have shown that the fullest reduction of loneliness and its complex impact on the psychological activity of the aging personality can be reached in a family environment, which is also the most wanted environment (Paul, Salma and Shah, 2006). There is no question that the family has a unique role for the aging people because, despite the good conditions and the specialised care provided, the homes for elderly people remain an unwanted place to be. Attention, respect and warmth are needed for being calm in old age. Taking care of the old person at home is an expression of care and faithfulness, and being around this person really matters for them (Georgiev, 2003). It's an illusion for young people to hope that they can change completely old people's opinions and habits and this most likely isn't necessary. It is just that old people have to be accepted for who they are. What can be deduced from these findings is that the administered tendencies and the findings and conclusions that have ultimately gained ground are one and the same for all developed societies. It turns out that family environment has some universal reductive features when it comes to negative psychological tendencies and it ensures optimal psychological state in old age.

Acknowledgements

References

1. Alexandrova, N., 2006. *Psychological features of loneliness in old age and adaptation mechanisms to overcome loneliness*. Blagoevgrad: University Publishing House Neophite Rilski.
2. Bengtson, V., 1975. Modernization, modernity and perceptions of aging. A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Gerontology,* 30(6), pp. 688-695.
3. Brandon, B. and Flury, E., 2009. Aging With Choice: Coping with a changing marketplace. *Long-Term Living: For the Continuing Care Professional,* 58(1), pp. 14-18.
4. Brown, A., 1974. Satisfying relationships for the elderly and their patterns of disengagements. *Gerontologist 3*, [e-journal] 14(3), pp. 258-62. http// doi: 10.1093/geront/14.3.258
5. Chiang, K., Chu, H. and Chang, H., 2010. The effects of reminiscence therapy on psychological well-being, depression, and loneliness among the institutionalized aged. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, [e-journal] 25(4), pp. 380-388. http://doi: 10.1002/gps.2350
6. Choi, G., Ransom, S., Wylli, R., 2008. Depression in older nursing home residents: The influence of nursing home environmental stressors, coping, and acceptance of group and individual therapy. *Aging & Mental Health*, [e-journal] 12(5), pp. 536-547. http//doi: 10.1080/13607860802343001
7. Craig, E. and Pham, H., 2006. Consultation–liaison psychiatry services to nursing homes. *Australasi Psychiatry*, [e-journal] 14(1), pp. 46-48. http//doi: 10.1080/j.1440-1665.2006.02238.x

8. Dinkova, M., 1976. *Savremennoto balgarsko semeystvo*. [The Contemporary Bulgarian Family.] Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otechestveniya Front, Patriotic Front Publishing House.

9. Dragneva, R., 1990. *Stereotipi na obshtuvane v semeystvoto.* [Communication Stereotypes in the Family.] Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otechestveniya Front, Patriotic Front Publishing House.

10. Georgiev, L., 2003. *Psychology of Old People*. Blagoevgrad: University Publishing House Neophite Rilski.

11. Graneheim, U. and Lundman, B., 2010. Experiences of loneliness among the very old: The Umea 85+ project. *Aging & Mental Health*, [e-journal] 14(4), pp. 433-438. http//doi: 10.1080/13607860903586078.

12. Hadzhiiski, I., 1974. *Compiled essays, volume II.* Sofia: Bulgarian Writer Publishing House.

13. Havighurst, R., 1972. The sociology and demography of the aged population. *Psychiatrie der Gegenwart*, pp. 952-976.

14. Haytov, N., 1962. *The Old People at Home*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Natsionalniya Savet na Otechestveniya Front, Patriotic Front Publishing House.

15. Yankova, Z., 1979. Городская семья. [Urban family.] Moscow: Science Publishing House. – there is Yankova cited in the text

16. Ilieva, N., 1980. Za semeynite otnoshenia. [For family relationships.] Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otechestveniya Front.

17. Iolov, G., 1982. Old age, *Nauka i Izkustvo, Science and art*, Sofia.

18. Kim, E., Cho, E. and June, K., 2006. Factors influencing use of home care and nursing homes. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, [e-journal] 54(4), pp. 511-517. http//doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03839.x

19. Kyuranov, Ch., 1987. The Bulgarian Family Today. *Nauka i Izkustvo, Science and art*, Sofia.

20. Lee, C., 2010. Families Matter: Psychology of the Family and the Family of Psychology. *Canadian Psychology*, [e-journal] 51(1), pp. 1-8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0018282.

21. Paul, C,. Salma, A., and Shah, 2006. Psychological distress, loneliness and disability in old age. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 11(2), p. 221-232.

22. Petrov, I., 1978. *Aging of the mind*. Sofia: Nauchni Obzori Publishing House.

23. Porshnev, V., 1986. Социальная психология и история. [Social psychology and history.] *Вопросы психолгии 1*, Москва.

24. Rada, C., 2014. Intergenerational family support in Romania. *Revista de Psihologie*, [e-journal] 60(4), pp. 293-303. http://revistadepsihologie.ipsihologie.ro/images/revista_de_psihologie/Rev.-Psihol.-4-2014.pdf.

25. Rada, C., 2018. Aging and intergenerational care. *Anthropological Researches and Studies*, 8, [e-journal] pp. 134-143. http://doi.org/10.26758/8.1.13

26. Rogers, C., 1980. *A Way of Being*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

27. Semov, M., 1979. Following the Steps of Life. *Nauka i Izkustvo, Science and art*, Sofia.

28. Spasovska, L., 1985. *Generations and family*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otechestveniya Front, Patriotic Front Publishing House.

29. Spasovska, L., 1980. *The Family*. Sofia: Partizdat Publishing House.

30. Svetlik, D., Dooley, W., Weiner, M., Williamson, G. and Walters, A., 2005. Declines in satisfaction with physical intimacy predict caregiver perceptions of overall relationship loss: A study of elderly caregiving spousal dyads. *Sexuality and Disability*, [e-journal] 23, pp. 65-79. 10.1007/s11195-005-4670-7

31. Todorova, E., 1988. Contemporary American Family Theories. *Nauka i Izkustvo, Science and art*, Sofia.

32. Terry, P., 2006. Terrors of growing old. *Therapy Today*, 17(3), pp. 8-11.

33. Tufan, I., 2010. Institutional Authority and Traces of Intergenerational Conflict. *Educational Gerontology*, [e-journal] 36(8), pp. 676-686. https://doi.org/10.1080/03601270903530414
34. Vachon, S., 1976. Grief and bereavement following the death of a spouse. Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal, [e-journal] 21, pp. 35-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/070674377602100107
35. Vasilyeva, E., 1975. Семья и ее функции. [Family and its functions.] Статистика, Москва.