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Review of the book: *Distant Love. Models of living in the global era* by Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. Cambridge 2014, 220 pp.

This book tackles a problem which is very important from the point of view of a contemporary researcher and observer of marriage and family relationships. It will also be of interest for an observer of social changes. More and more often one may hear about problems ensuing from breaking up of multi-cultural and multinational relationships. About problems with setting up the custody over minors, intra-family kidnapping and the discrepancies in parental rights in the parents' countries of origin. It is becoming an element of reality in the global world.

As the authors write, "*this book is about a new chapter in the social history, in which love, family and the presence of the world often create paradox connections*" (page 157). Two German sociologists undertake an important issue of relationship analysis of the family and marriage bonds in the time of important global changes. Those changes have a very strong impact upon the shape of such relationships. The opening of labour markets and state borders, easy access to travelling – all these factors bring about questions as to the shape of relationships in the new reality. The authors analyse in detail the idea of distant love. The functioning of distant relationships, is the subject of the authors' analysis. Relationships they write about are those of: binational couples, wage and matrimonial migrants or surrogate mothers. They also write about ordinary dramas of love relationships maintained via Skype.

Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim introduce the concept of the "global family" and make it the basis for presenting the reality of family life. Global families are understood as: love and kinship relationships between individuals living in different countries (and even continents), or coming from different countries or continents. According to the authors, such relationships – according to the authors – may take different shapes and be tied for many different reasons. Nevertheless, all types of global families have one common feature: the places, where differences of the globalized world take shape. The authors underline that "*global families are by no means autonomous or stable. Their fragile existence depends on many factors, first of all on stereotypes of a stranger and enemy in the majority society, but also on the rights such families are granted or declined*" (page 160).

U. Beck's and E. Beck-Gernsheim's book consists of ten chapters. In Chapter One, the authors refer to the concept of love, which they had already presented in their book titled "*Just an ordinary chaos of love*", published in 1990. In this chapter they also introduce a concept of "global families" – crucial for their dissertations. They outline a process, which might be observed in the globalized world. It is the process of family opening to the world and its participating in various cultures by means of migration. In Chapter Two the authors try to describe bicultural relationships from an autobiographical perspective. They analyse the past, the burden of upbringing and experiences from the childhood, as well as the presence and problems encountered by such relationships. In Chapter Three the researchers focus on the concept of love, which is discussed from various perspectives. The authors make references to love in a relationship where partners are far away from each other. There is no sexual contact here, which would consolidate the relationship; there is no common everyday life, either. The reference is also made to the motherly love, where a mother from her child (her departure is related to her job). There is no personal nor educational contact here, either.

The mother does not take direct part in bringing up the child. Such situations cause many serious difficulties and repercussions in the marriage and family life. They also create a new space, which the people involved try to cope with. The formation of global communities of fate is described in Chapter Four. The authors present the reasons for the modern migrations. According to them, the reasons are: transplantation

tourism, seeking for jobs and sending managers or specialists to different countries, where production is more profitable. In Chapter Five, the Becks focus on the fate of female matrimonial migrants. These women try to make the dream of a better life come true. The authors analyse lives of many women, who decided to migrate in search for happiness. Some of these stories end happily. Women regain material balance and the feeling of safety it brings. There are stories, however, which do not end so happily, as some matrimonial migrants become victims.

In Chapter Six, a detailed analysis of the situation of the mothers working as housemaids is carried out. The researchers describe experience and feelings of the participants of such a difficult reality. Mothers separated from their children, not taking part in their upbringing, using new communication technologies, as well as the children themselves, being brought up far from their mothers, in stable material situation instead. New spaces and workplaces, which are created for migrant mothers, are described as well. In Chapter Seven the authors ask such questions as: Is manhood weakening? Why in the global families it is the women that are the winners? Chapter Seven seems to be the most important in the book. It presents the women's attitudes, who, much better than the men, find themselves in a changing global, multicultural and cosmopolitan reality. Individualization of a family, multitude of models of family life, growing number of extramarital couples, declining number of births, normalization of homosexual relationships and growing number of single-person households all these factors testify to the fact that family values are defended not by European but rather by non-European countries.

In Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten, the authors turn to the analysis of the situation they describe, while certain elements of this changing reality are particularly exposed. The researchers see a chance in the emerging phenomenon: the generation which lives, loves and thinks multicultural, free from prejudices, superstitions, and hatred, both religious and cultural. The authors believe that despite many obstacles, it is possible to live and love while being apart. As they write: *"Global families don't possess the sense of time and consequences. Globalized families may profit from some imagined leftovers of their origin and past. However, as globalized families they cannot place themselves in history. Such "rigged-up imagination", imagined binder of a global family, is either trivial and superfluous or rooted in each other's lineage. Thus, such families create a second-hand cultural mix"* (pages 161–162).

The value of the reviewed book is not only dealing with the concept of love, relationship and family in the modern globalized world and analysing it in depth and through many layers. Its value lies also in making the reader reflex on the issues important for the modern world, and at the same time not answering all questions which arise. The researchers make use of contemporary methodology of research. Their afterthought relating to the problem analysis seems to remain somehow open. The analysis they made gives birth to subsequent questions, which would need to be answered. They are not answered, however. As they write: *"In the times of a constant social change, we promote differentiation between creation of explaining and diagnostic theories. Some authors understand theory as explanation of observed events and phenomena, which might be reduced to some general and universal "laws" of social life and action. It is however not the only one and dominant understanding of theory. We represent another one, presented in this book: its objective is to create conceptual orientation framework for historically rapidly changing relationships, with the use of instruments of generalizing diagnosis, in the chaotic environment of overwhelming social changes"* (page 20). It is a fresh look at the analysis of social research, very rarely undertaken by researchers in our country.