



<https://doi.org/10.26520/mcdsare.2018.2.168-175>

MCDSARE: 2018
International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the
Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education

BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL'S
POSITION TOWARDS STATE AND FAMILY IN
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract

A major issue in contemporary society, one that engenders debates and disputes among philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, jurists and other specialists refers to the drastic change of the structure and functions of the traditional family. Due to the great number of people who prefer to live alone, divorce, in single-parent families or consensual unions, the values of the traditional family are questioned and often seem totally outdated. In this article we aim to analyze the changes produced into the content of the notion of family in the contemporary society in contrast to the traditional family ideas and values. We believe that, as society and the state evolved becoming increasingly complex, the role of the state in the individual's life grew and the family's influence diminished. From our point of view, one of the reasons why the contemporary family is so different from the traditional family is due to the increased influence of the state in the individual's life through its institutions and the legal order: social protection, ensuring a decent living standard, education etc. In order to support this idea, we will present a series of philosophical and legal arguments through which we will try to demonstrate that the major influence of the state and the law in the individual's life constitutes an essential element that has led to a decrease in the influence of the traditional family.

Keywords: traditional and non-traditional family; state; philosophy of law; legal frame; social protection; human rights;

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous centuries, the traditional family had a certain structure, stability and influence in the individual's life as the state intervened much less in the private lives of people than it does today (welfare, child protection, free education, free medical services, etc.). For a long time throughout history, it was the family that exclusively decided the children's destiny, education and marriages and the state did not intervene in this process. A few centuries ago a child separated from his family, without its support, had nearly no chance to survive (in some states of the world, unfortunately this is still happening). A

similar fate had women. Today the state is providing social assistance; there are institutions that protect all vulnerable social categories. Through education, each person can acquire one or more vocational qualifications and can earn a living. For the most part, individuals no longer depend on families to live and have the necessary living. Notwithstanding, the family is still remaining an important emotional and material support so that one cannot speak of its disappearance, but only of its conversion into a non-traditional family.

At the current time, as always, the family is a fundamental social institution, a core cell of the society. This is because we spend most of our lives within the family, and failure in family life affects the successes on other (professional, financial, etc.) plans. Each family has its mysteries which, in certain cases cause tragedies and misfortunes (violence, adultery, inadequacies, psychic abuse, etc.) whose secrecy is kept, even at the expense of great suffering, sacrifice and psychic impairment.

According to the law doctrine in Romania, "the family is [...] the natural and fundamental element of the society generated by the legal act of marriage, concluded under the law, between a man and a woman, made up of spouses, children without full exercise capacity, as well as other persons expressly provided by law, where the relations between its members are legally regulated and governed by the principle of solidarity." (Dariescu, Nadia Cerasela et al., 2009, p. 15).

Thanks to its special social importance, the family institution has been legally regulated since ancient times. The family is prior to the state, and the development of human communities from tribes and tribal communions to states (from the initial form to the extremely complex present form) has always protected this institution, even though, over the years, it has taken some of its prerogatives. Depending on mentalities and religious beliefs, most legislations only allow heterogeneous monogamous marriage, others also monogamous homosexual marriage, polygamous marriage (a husband and several wives) and, very rarely, polyandry marriage (a wife and several spouses).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Clearly, our society needs to understand the causes that led to the modification of families in modern society. Nowadays, traditional family is still considered as the most suitable and appropriate type of family but non-traditional family gains more and more territory every day. This situation has been analyzed, criticised or simply accepted by communities and scientist. The changing which take place in the law system, society, technical evolution affect and modify the structure of the traditional family and this is not necessarily a bad thing as long as children are being raised safely (emotionally and physically) and with healthy attachments towards their natural parents, adoptive parents or tutors. The growing of the state's influence and the multiplication of laws has a very important role in the apparition and evolution of non-traditional family.

3. THE FAMILY FUNCTIONS AND THE STATE ATRIBUTIONS

This study aims to analyze the structure and role of traditional and non-traditional family and the way that the number of non-traditional families increased to the detriment of classical, traditional one.

Today, the family origins are still being a mystery, being hidden somewhere in our DNA and the prehistory of mankind (a period when there were no written sources or other types of evidence to explain its appearance). If by family we understand a relatively steady social unit made up of parents and their children (Mihăilă A., 2010, p. 204), then the first thing noticed by a researcher refers to the fact that this form of social organization is not exclusively specific to the people, being also found in other species (e.g. primates). The remarks of experts have revealed that, within the primate groups, there are social behaviours similar to those human (for example, prohibition of incest).

As for the family evolution, from primitive to contemporary forms, some authors believe that the changes were due to the economic evolution of the communities and ideas relating to property rights and, implicitly, we add, the manner in which the community/state in question these have been regulated. Thus, according to Friedrich Engels' view (Engels, Friedrich, 1987), the first type of family that appeared (in chronological order) was the blood-related family, "in which the spousal groups are divided into generations - all grandparents being the spouses of grandmothers, all fathers being the husbands of

mothers, and the children constituting a third circle of common spouses" (Mihăilă A., p. 206), incest between parents and children being forbidden. The next type of family appeared was the punalua family, within which incest between brothers and sisters was prohibited; only those who belonged to the same generation and were not close relatives were allowed to conclude marriages. The couple family was the next in the order of appearance, being the effect of strengthening the emotional bonds between the couple partners; in this type of family only men were entitled to occasional extra-marital relationships, dissolution of the marital relationship was allowed, and, in such situations, the children remained at the mother. These families were matrilineal and had a low stable character. Subsequently, the patriarchal family (which could be both monogamous and polygamous) appeared, within which the woman lost many rights, and the man having even the right to kill her for infidelity. The nuclear family is composed of mother, father and children, without other relatives, unlike the molecular family being formed of "all relatives with common hereditary lineage who lived on a property" (Mihăilă A., 2010, p. 208).

If initially the molecular family had a greater weight in society as it evolved, people's need to live in the extended family decreased. The state gives individuals the right to education, thus there are kindergartens and nurseries where small children can be left to be supervised and educated, the professional activity of parents allows them to earn enough money to pay for babysitters etc. The extended family, the presence of grandparents, uncles, aunts and other relatives in the same house is no longer necessary. The nuclear family is able to become independent thanks to education, economic development, the development of large urban settlements, etc.

Furthermore, the functioning way of modern society has also led to a decrease in the need of nuclear family to live and manage together and has generated an unprecedented increase in the number of divorces, with the consequence of an increasingly large volume of single-parent families. But, in our view, the increase in the number of single parent families should not be interpreted as a decline of the family concept or as a threat of extinction in the future of the family of any kind. It is happening that the traditional family loses its character of typical, majority model in the society. We consider that the current way of life in society will not had the consequence of family disappearance, but only the disappearance of a certain type of family - the traditional one, much-idealized, where appearances mattered more than the frustrations and needs of individuals, and divorce was considered a social stigma.

The functions and advantages of family life are currently a controversial issue, especially as the traditional family has lost much of its specific weight and responsibilities. Thus, the specialists, starting from the premise of the universal nature of the nuclear family, have shown that it has four functions: sexual, reproductive, economic and educational or socializing (Murdock, G. P., 1949). It has also been considered that the fundamental and exclusive functions of the family are those of primary socialization of the descendants with the purpose of their proper integration into society and of ensuring the emotional security of adults. (Talcott, P., 1951). The family functions identified both by legal experts and by sociologists include a number of aspects that we will discuss in what follows. The function of reproduction ensures the perpetuation and survival of human species by permanently replacing the society members who get old and die. The family is considered to be the most conducive environment for child procreation because, as a rule, it is easier (financially, social protection, etc.) that the two persons who conceived the child to actually raise and educate him or/her. At the same time, within the family, incest is forbidden, thus being prevented the birth of children with malformations, mental illnesses, etc.

The perpetuation of human species within the family has progressively become less important following the economic and social changes. Thus, the growth of economic means and resources has made the single parent status not seem so frightening anymore. An increasing number of single women are choosing to parent alone and have children through donor insemination. These mothers, often referred to as "single mothers by choice" or "solo mothers", have not experienced marital conflict and are less likely to have experienced the economic hardship or psychological problems that commonly result from marital breakdown and unplanned single parenthood. Nevertheless, their children often grow up not only without a father but also without knowing the identity of their sperm donor. There is little research on this new family form. However, a comparison between solo mother families and two-parent families, all with donor-conceived children, found no differences in parenting quality apart from lower mother-child conflict in solo mother families (Golombok S., Zadeh S., Imrie S., Smith V., Freeman T., 2016).

Although the children in solo mother and two parent families did not differ in psychological adjustment, parenting stress and financial difficulties were associated with children's psychological difficulties in both family types.

On a different note, as a consequence of adopting in the legislation of some states the marriage between persons of the same sex, this family type no longer fulfil its primary function, of reproduction. Studies of parenting by lesbian mothers were initiated in the 1970s. At that time, it was argued that lesbian mothers would be less nurturing than heterosexual mothers and would show higher rates of psychological disorder, and that their children would develop psychological problems as a result. It was also thought that the children of lesbian mothers would show atypical gender development such that boys would be less masculine in their identity and behaviour, and girls less feminine, than boys and girls from heterosexual homes. In a comparison of adoptive gay father, lesbian mother and heterosexual parent families with 3–9 year-old children, the differences identified between family types indicated more positive parental wellbeing and parent–child relationships, and lower levels of children's externalizing problems, in gay father families (Golombok S., Zadeh S., Imrie S., Smith V., Freeman T., 2016). As stability and continuity of care are widely accepted to be prerequisites of children's secure attachment relationships with parents, it is noteworthy that adoptive gay fathers were less likely to dissolve their relationship in the first 5 years of parenthood than were comparison groups of lesbian and heterosexual adoptive couples (Goldberg A., Garcia R., 2015, 29:394-404).

Responding to the pressure of social change, the new Romanian Civil Code establishes a new institution, that of the medically assisted human reproduction with a third party donor (Chapter II, Section II of the Civil Code), showing that parents, in the meaning of the Section in question, can only be a man and a woman or a single woman (Article 441 par. 3 of the Civil Code)

Since the birth of the first baby through in vitro fertilization in 1978 (Steptoe PC, Edwards RG: 1978), more than 5 million children have been born through assisted reproductive technologies (Adamson D: ICMART world reporting: preliminary 2008 data. 28th ESHRE Annual Conference; Istanbul: 2012). In vitro fertilization involves the fertilization of the mother's egg with the father's sperm in the laboratory and the transfer of the resulting embryo(s) to the mother's womb.

It has often been suggested that the creation of families through reproductive donation may be detrimental to positive family functioning (Cahn N., 2009). Contrary to the concerns that had been raised, the findings indicated more positive parent–child relationships in these families when the children were in their preschool years than in the comparison group of natural conception families, irrespective of the type of reproductive donation used (Golombok S., et al, 2004, 2005). The children themselves showed high levels of psychological adjustment but did not differ from the naturally conceived children in spite of their experience of highly involved parenting.

In a study dedicated to the consequences of new types of families on parenting, S. Golombok concludes that new family forms are characterized by positive parenting and well-adjusted children. This is perhaps not surprising as the children were much-wanted by their parents and, by necessity, planned. From a theoretical perspective, what these studies tell us is that the number, gender, sexual orientation and biological relatedness of parents to their children are less influential in children's psychological development than are family processes such as the quality of family relationships and the social environment in which the children are raised.

The function of socialization is equally important for the individual as biological reproduction since the human species children have few adaptive mechanisms at birth. Thus, they must be permanently taken care of, taught to walk, speak, and interact with other members of society. This role is accomplished by the family, which must teach the child everything he/she needs to become functional and live a satisfying and independent life as an adult. Along with the family, the child acquires social skills in schools, libraries, theatres, concerts, socializing groups. Through them, the cultural values of an individual can become different from those of the home family.

Relatively recently, the society evolution has been indicated to be among the factors that negatively influence the family as it has caused the development of social differentiation, which has led to the genesis of individual aspirations, to the disadvantage of those of group/family (Radu D. D, 2018). In other words, individual aspirations, potentiated inclusively through the guarantee and protection of

complex individual freedoms by the state, have the downside of diminishing the degree of family cohesion and blurring the traditional family model. Also, against the background of economic growth, which allowed the state to grant in various forms allowances, aid, or subsidies, the parental authority or clan, which relied on it, appeared as irrational.

Ensuring protection and emotional support is achieved by protecting the child from the dangers of any kind in the environment (children must be fed, dressed and protected from dangers and accidents, educated, etc.) The emotional support of the family is permanent, not being limited to childhood. Throughout the state development, the protection of the individual began to be ensured by the public authority, which replaced in this way the role of the family in this regard.

Following the recognition of family problems specificity and the need for the state to contribute effectively to solving them, within the traditional judicial systems there have been created courts specialized in settling the disputes arisen related to minors and family problems.

The adversarial system is often unsuited for unravelling and remedying societal ills that spill into the courtroom, especially when rehabilitation rather than punishment is the goal. The result has been a proliferation of specialized courts, including family treatment courts (FTCs), drug courts, and mental health courts, that deviate from the adversarial model and use a problem-solving approach, often relying on therapeutic jurisprudence techniques. (Lens, Vicki, 2016)

Problems such as substance abuse, child maltreatment, and criminality connected to mental illness require a court to do more than decide a dispute or assign guilt. Often, they require behavioural interventions, especially if recidivism is to be avoided or families repaired. In recognition of this, specialized courts were created with a very different mission and approach than traditional courts (Lens, Vicki, 2016). The first such specialized court was the family court, established in the early part of the twentieth century, first to adjudicate juvenile delinquency cases, and then in the 1960s expanded to cover other family issues, including private matters involving divorce and custody and public matters regarding child maltreatment. (Babb, Barbara, 1998). While the first problem-solving courts, drug courts, were initially envisioned as a solution to case overload in traditional criminal courts, over time they shifted to a more therapeutic approach (Spinak J. M., 2008), and while not all problem-solving courts are guided by the philosophy of therapeutic jurisprudence, this approach exemplifies some of these courts' best practices, notably in them mental health courts. (Lens V., 2016)

A common feature of therapeutic courts is the use of psychological insights and methods to motivate behavioural changes. Instead of treating individuals as deviant and condemning their behaviour, therapeutic courts employ healthy doses of respect, empathy, and forgiveness. This approach is bolstered by enhanced access to treatment resources, individualized treatment plans, and a collaborative team of community-based and institutional professionals. Traditional courts suffer from a dearth of all of these, and the additional burden of high caseloads. Lacking both time and resources, judges in a traditional courtroom seemingly have little incentive to employ a therapeutic approach. (Lens, Vicki, 2016)

The decrease of necessity to accomplish the functions of socialization and of ensuring protection and emotional support within the family is also indirectly established through the adoption legislation which enables it to be carried out either by a single adopter or by an adopting family (Article 2 (b) and (i), Article 12, Article 36 of Law No. 273/2004 on the legal regime of adoption).

The economic function is of particular importance in the family, which is the social group where there are provided to the children (but also to their parents or grandparents when they are in need) the incomes necessary for the survival and satisfaction of the physiological and spiritual needs.

In the traditional family, the woman was kept by her husband; she did not work outside the house, her occupations consisting of doing the housework and taking care of the children. Family policies not only oblige (and at the same time: enable) the family to meet the care needs of its members, they also enforce the dependence of people in need of care on their family. In this perspective, de-familiarization means not only taking away care responsibilities from the family. De-familiarization also reduces the extent to which the satisfaction of individual care needs is dependent on the individual's relation to the family (McLaughlin E., Glendinning C., 1994).

This function of the family was, perhaps, to the largest extent affected by the society development and, in some aspects, supplied by the state. During the last 15–20 years, European welfare

states increasingly have taken the value of unpaid care work into consideration, at least partially. With regard to the care of young children, most European countries have installed or extended parental leave regulations, many in connection with cash benefits for the carer. A trend towards low level, conditional payments has emerged. In addition, the quality of social rights granted to the care provider has been improved, e.g., protective labour market legislation for carers and pension recognition of care periods. As far as caring for elderly, ill and disabled people are concerned, European welfare states increasingly subsidise private informal care arrangements. (Leitner S., 2003).

If originally the large majority of economic activities were carried out in the family, at present, it has been reached a separation of the occupational economic activities, in the sense that they are performed in offices, stores, factories, workshops, etc. In this way, the family, from producer of goods, becomes predominantly a consumer unit. The function of sexual behaviour regulation is another important task of the family. In most traditional societies, the sexual relations legitimate were those maintained within the family, and usually men had a larger freedom than women, to them being allowed temporary extra-marital relationships. The loss by the religion of a share of the influence, at the same time with the development of the secular state, has also caused important changes at the social level in this respect. The 19th century sexual revolution broke the link between marriage and sexual relations. Currently, in many countries, in the public school system there are disciplines such as Sexual Education, which has the role of educating future adults also in this respect.

Achieving a social status implies two aspects: the social position of the parents which, if high, it helps children to better obtain a superior social status (in politics, in certain professions, etc.) and the status of a married person which gives the individual a easier access to certain important positions (for example, in politics). Despite the openness of the social mentality, encouraged by the state, it is probably one of the functions that cannot be replaced by non-traditional families. Cloaked by an illusion of shared meaning, employees with alternative family structures are often marginalized for not engaging in common workplace communication. In most workplaces, people talk about family (Dixon, Jenny; Dougherty, Debbie S., 2014). Lewis explains that “‘normal’ information exchanged by organizational members includes the ability to speak publically about one’s primary relationships, friends and activities” (Lewis, A. P. 2009, p. 191). LC/MD suggests that if one’s family differs from what is expected within the “normal” exchange of information, such communication would keep certain co-workers on the margins of everyday conversation.

Exclusion from workplace conversation and family-friendly policies represent little D-discourses that produce subtle forms of marginalization. Whereas earlier gay and lesbian research examined work environments in which employees felt obliged to keep non-straight sexual orientation a secret (Spradlin, A. L. 1998), later research depicts workplaces as both accepting and discriminatory at the same time (Schilt K., 2010). The mixed bag of acceptance and discrimination gains complexity because workplace policy can be at odds with “little d-discourse” within the workplace (Kirby E. L. & Krone K. J., 2002).

According to the Dixon's relatively recent study (2014), working mothers and non-traditional families are allied in that they both violate the straight male breadwinner norm. Programs designed to create work/family balance have been effective at allowing middle-class women to have both employment and a family, and allows women who have children to retain their place in the middle class. The goal of this project is not to regress the programs that have done so much to improve the lives of women but rather to open up the policies to ensure that there is not a double standard that negatively impacts others. To avoid double standards in the policy, it is important to recognize that women are not always the primary caregivers of children, adult parents, or other family members. Therefore, it is necessary to not only complicate the meaning of family, but also to create a more complex formation of work/family balance.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is based on the research method of the document analysis. This method is often used in social sciences in order to support the fact that the state, through its prerogatives, has influenced the

structure and functions of the family. For the purpose of formulating our arguments, we used the literature, Romanian legislation, statistics etc.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study we analyzed the modification of the contemporary (non-traditional) family functions in order to determine if the state's prerogatives influenced the structure of family so that the number of traditional families decreased and the non-traditional family is more and more powerful in society. From our analyses we can draw the conclusion that the apparition and development of non-traditional family was made possible mostly by the changes of legal norms and that several family functions were taken over by the state (child care, education, social protection etc.). We agree that, in contrast to many other fields of public policy, such as foreign policy or labour market policy, family policies usually do not constitute a distinct policy area. Rather they comprise such fields as maternity, parental-leave, and child-care policies and family law. Elements of family policies are often incorporated into other policy areas like health care, social security, housing, welfare, taxation, civil law, and so forth. Family policies may thus be spread over a number of political fields, each of which may be characterized by a different historical and institutional development (Neyer G.; Andersson G., 2008).

In many ways, the contemporary state gave people (especially women) the possibility to raise and educate children on their own, without the father' or extended family' contribution. Through education and well paid jobs, a single parent can provide for children enough money in order to ensure their survey, health control, clothes, toys and everything else they might need. By giving these possibilities to the citizens (not only the state' citizens) the state made it possible for more independent persons to take control of their lives and stop depending of unpredictable, violent, rigid, strict or abusive in any way family members. The emotional family support probably remains problematic in such context, but in any situation the lack of emotional support from one parent is always better than any form of abuse.

Also, the tolerant legal frame allows, in many contemporary states, that the people with sexual orientation other than the heterosexual one form their own families and live in peace with them. So, the non-traditional family brings along a lot of advantages and if it seems to threaten the traditional family, in fact it is an alternative for avoiding abuses of any kind and too much compromise that may lead to personal frustrations or other dangerous situations.

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