# THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN INTO THE SOCIETY

**Maria PESCARU**
Ph.D., Assoc.Prof, University of Pitești

**Abstract:** *The family constitutes a distinct social reality. The characteristics specific for the family originate from its different function: physiologic, moral, educational, economic or emotional. It can also be added the juridical role, which is not always related to the other functions. Yet, the complexity of the family life overpasses all these aspects, reaching different levels of social development. If the moral role is, as well, fulfilled (love, affection, understanding and mutual respect), we can talk about a strong family, emotionally connected, which is translated into the reciprocal satisfaction of the two partners' needs and aspirations. This family generates a favourable climate, in which the children can be brought up and educated. For these reasons, the family is a special form of the human community, permanently related to the social reality, which cannot be separated from the numerous phenomena and processes that characterise the society at some point.*

**Key words**: *family; parental responsibility; family functions*

### Introduction

At social level, the structure of the traditional family, in which our parents and grandparents held well-defined positions, has faced a crisis. The family structure was based on the affective role of the mother. The participation of the woman at the professional life generated many social changes inside the family; such is the family planning and the possibility of the woman to carry out activities from the circle outside the maternity. Therefore, the fathers started to also integrate their affective component in their family position, which has not always been an easy thing for them.

The family is the place where the individuals evolve, where he builds up an important share of his relations, and that determinates him, eventually, as a social being. The human being spends the biggest part of their life inside the family. Consequently, here is the place where they learn to connect with the others.

Whatever the family organisation and ethnic, religious or political identity, it represents a dynamic organisation, which is specific to it and through which a wide network of interdictions assure a continuous mobility for it. The family is the first unit, which the children have continuous contact with, and the first context in which the socialisation patterns develop. It is a

world where nothing can be compared and, altogether, the most important "socialising agent".

Generally, it is said that the family is the basic cell of our society. We do not certainly know if this assertion is still valid nowadays, but we can unquestionably say that any human being has a connection with the family life, and the desire to bring up and educate a child, or many children, is an innate feature, because the nowadays children will be the tomorrow educators.

The statute of natural or professional educator is a difficult one, requiring adequate training that can be obtained from the natural family, from the good upbringing and, later, from school. A simple notification should be made; the terms of natural or professional educator, along with that of parent – mother, father, grandfather, grandmother etc. – are not present in the dictionary of pedagogy. When they appear, they are explained through what they represent, inserted into the notions of family and education, although their place and importance have become inseparable.  When we talk about the legal or parental status, it is specified that, regardless the category, it implies "the assembly of stipulations, rules, rights and obligations that are associated with the position that a certain person holds inside the family"(Mitrofan, 2008, p. 316).

It was defined in many ways, but *"the family, in any society, is a means of human communication, between at least two individuals, related through marriage and/or paternal connections, which imply, more or less, the biological and/or psychological aspect"* (Mitrofan, 2010: 17).


**The family - a psychosocial subject matter**

Given the conditions of the modern life, especially in the big cities, the nuclear family builds its own lifestyle, characterised through affective, communicational and acting concentration, gradual and, sometimes, rapid separation from the entire kinship relation, conferring independence to it, with preponderant possibility for self-correction and self-development. The detaching of the conjugal family from the extended family, leads to a modification of its relations with the external environment, and especially with the natural family (of orientation or consanguine).

The consanguine family, in which the primary relations are between parents and children, is related, in a repetitive succession, to the procreation family, in which the roles are of the husband and wife, and the primary relations between spouses and children (Mitrofan and Ciupercă, 2003: 125).

Essential for the both forms of family is the endless transmitting of the cultural and social experience of the behavioural patterns-of gender, attitudes and mutual expectations of genders, on one side, and of the parents regarding their children, along with those of the children regarding their parents, on the other side.

The nuclear family is preferred by most people, in the highest share around the world, because it is able to assure at least four essential functions: the economic cooperation between spouses, sexual relations, reproduction and socialisation of children (Mitrofan and Ciupercă, 2008: 78).

From the psychological point of view, the nuclear family assures the emotional support, the satisfaction of the security, protection and belonging needs of each member, along with the needs of communication and developing of the personality. The interpersonal creativity in the marital couple becomes an indispensable condition for the development of the family capacity to cope with the external and internal stress, to solve with success the common issues of the daily life, here and now (Mitrofan, 2000: 325).

• *The consensual union* is the way in which the heterosexual couples live together, outside the contract of marriage. It is not very different from the nuclear family, because it includes the majority of the functions and faces the same problems that the married couples do (Mihăilescu, 2000: 235).

The people who cohabit might conclude an agreement of consensual union at a notary. The partner who severely injured the other, who caused invalidity or inability to work for the other, has to take care of that partner, according to the law, as it is stipulated in the legislation of the cohabitation, as form of living together. Between the two partners, there can be concluded a consensual union agreement in front of a notary public, signed by the two of them and registered in a special record, being also issued a registration certificate. The recording is made according to a fee pre-established by the local authorities. A new agreement of this type cannot be concluded again by one of the partners, but six months after the notification regarding the ceasing of the anterior relationship. These provisions can be enjoyed only by the people of full age, who are not legally married and whose relation was of at least a year long, uninterruptedly. The partners have to share, according to their income, the common expenses for maintenance of the dwelling place too, here being included the education of children in support. The goods obtained during the cohabitation, are not equally divided, if this was a special stipulation of the agreement.

The cohabitation tries to satisfy, through conjugation, the need for dependence and identification, along that of autonomy. The couple who decide for the consensual union chooses the quality of the relation, in spite of its durability, under any circumstances. Not long before legislated in our country, the consensual union emerged as a defending reflex for the people who join their destinies, against the social restraints, certain requests imposed by the tradition, often worn in time, and many times absurd. His and her option for such a form of cohabitation, as an alternative for the traditional family, represent an attempt to satisfy the need of independence, autonomy and liberalisation of the relation between the two, and, concomitantly, refusal of certain perceptions, rigid norms and requests, sometimes contrary to the direction in which the natural evolves, and burdens our existence (Petroman and Drăgan, 1998: 112).

While behind the image of marriage, some expectations regarding the mutual fidelity have become increasingly uncertain for the last decades, for both genders, the consensual unions promote the rule of free consented fidelity.

**The family system and the education**

The family represents a form of organisation characterised by integrity, a moral and affective environment, a bio-psycho-social structure that generates continuity and complete affirmation of the human being, a way for the inter-shaping and synchronisation, unity in the personal interactions and inter-communications, a background that assures the creation and the maintaining of the psychic balance.

Similar to other major institutions, the family, regardless the way it is organised in the different cultures, represents a group of statutes, roles and values necessary for achieving important social purposes. These include the social control of reproduction, the socialisation of the new generation and their integration into institutions. Nevertheless, the ability of the family to fulfil these purposes is greatly influenced by the rapid social change. Consequently, as in other institutions too, the family has to continually adapt to these changes, to become acquainted with them, meet, stimulate or, on the contrary, avoid or manage them.

The family is the natural background in which the personality of the children in shaped, but also a factor for the perfecting of the parent's personality, even if its essential function is to provide security for its members and the education of the children, in this environment obtaining the language, habits and traditions of the group. They form their personality, their character and go from egoism to altruism, by imitating and identifying with their parents. The quality of the children's development depends on the values cultivated in the family, and its cohesion is an important factor in the ulterior evolution of its members.

Considered as the most profound space of the affective relationships, a refuge against the adversities, the family is the most active centre of aggressiveness, maybe because this is the place where each member can reveal their true personality.(Păunescu, 1983: 90) The authority is equally baneful as non-intervention: in the first situation there are created frustrating circumstances, from which repressed aggressiveness and anxiety can emerge, in the other case, people can experience insecurity, indolence and spoiling.

The familial atmosphere presents a special importance among the causes of the aggressive manifestation of a child, and, according to Andre Berge, the family environment satisfy the child as far as it can answer his basic needs, is it is an affective and protective environment, a double indispensable condition for the young individual to learn to create himself, and to positionhimself in relation with the others. (Berge, 1970: 28)

There are familial climates constantly agitated or constantly warm, of harmony or misunderstanding, climates of solidarity or hostility. There are calm climates, along with the permanently tensioned ones, which can be caused by children too, but that depend essentially by the general attitude of the parents, by their capacity to understand and correctly lead the children. A perpetually tensioned environment, deformed by the defects of the parents, by their vices or misunderstanding, by arguments, acts of violence, distorted by the mutual lack of affection of their members, constitutes a traumatising environment for the child's conscience. According to some specialists, in these circumstances, the children are transformed into over-saturated individuals, who pile up neuro-psycho-affective traumas that will generate, during his teenage period, and especially adulthood, a great quantity of inflammatory aggressive elements. (Păunescu, 1983: 93)

The coherent, equilibrated, secured climate satisfies the needs of security, love, affirmation, the needs for belonging and prestige. Certain stressing events, misunderstandings, failings, illnesses, put to test the unity, the balance and the harmony of the family life, but the resources of cohesion, emerged from the basic quality of the inter-personal relations; allow the surpassing of the dilemmas, and the re-establishing of unity and equilibrium.

The family is the nearest and the most adequate environment of intellectual, affective and connective structuring of the children's personality, the climate becoming the background of material, spiritual and moral features, in which the children will be brought up. Therefore, the material, moral and spiritual lacksof this family environment influence negatively the psycho-behavioural and development of the children, especially when these deficiencies generate an unstable, increasingly tensional and conflictual atmosphere, presented scarcely in the legally organised families (problem families) and in severe forms, in the disorganised families.

Therefore, the family climate represents the intellectual and etic atmosphere inside a family. The conditions that generate agreement, affective security, diachronic human relations, harmony and equilibrium, contribute to the increase of efficiency, maintaining and consolidation of family, unlike their antonymscorroborated with feelings of frustration and insecurity that gradually deteriorate everything and lead, most of the times, to the denuclearisation of the family.

As a rule, most of the children who do not obtain good school results live in a psychologically deteriorated atmosphere – misunderstanding between partners, hostile teachers, bullying colleagues etc. In consequence, regardless the nature of the family, the creation of the favourable climate for the maintaining and the consolidation of the couple, the procreation, the giving birth, the upbringing and education of the children is, and must be, the focus point of a family or of the counsellor. In the situations that lack understanding, collaboration, coordination in all the areas, it appears, or can appear, the danger of the affective climate deterioration and, eventually, the braking up of the family.

The deficiencies of the familial environment disadvantage the normal and equilibrated development of the children, even if, without determining exclusively negative consequences on the development of the social maturity, these deficiencies involve an imminent risk: the projected unfulfilment of the social and professional abilities and aspirations, the resort to delinquency and the imitation of the parents' faults and vices. Yet, most of the times, these situations are infirmed. In such circumstances, it is usually affected the psychical integrity of the partners too, who become unable to manifest according to their maximum potential. The repercussions are multiple, unpredictable and incalculable.

**The influence of the familial climate on the development of the children**

The family constitutes the main factor for the development and socialisation of children; the first and the most important intermediary is the society. The family exercise the most persistent influence on the children's life, offering protection, affection and role models for the social integration.

The role of the parents is a decisive one, because each child can be educated in an environment of affectivity and love; the children who lack the love of their parents become more fragile and more vulnerable than those whose parents give them the entire affective support. The affective character of the family must be made complete by the protective one, which provides the security of the child against the dangers of the exterior world, preparing him for the living in collectivity. On the other hand, the exaggerated affective dependence can stop the process of maturity, autonomy and independence.

The wide majority of the abandoned children come from disorganised or supposedly organised families, the deviant behaviour being often a way of behaviour that hides the existence of serious educational deficiencies. Nevertheless, there are children and young people who enjoyed good educational conditions; they belong to the difficult to educate category for whom the average time and the environment for education and training were not sufficient, and, in consequence, the educative means were not adequately adapted. Coming all from abusive family relations, in which the physical and moral suffering constitutes a rule, the abandoned children develop provoking, perturbed and perturbing ways of behaviour, for the other people. They are aggressive, making use of the behavioural patternsthat they had seen in their families, for solving the conflicts.

The contact between unity and culture, on one side, and child, on the other side, take place firstly with the parents and in their homes. From this point of view, one can assert that the features of the family environment act as a supplier and organiser or the child's physical personalities.

The possibility to observe, at home, people who read, listen to records, play the piano or garden, do the housework or gymnastics, is not an unimportant thing for the child, all these represent stimuli, activities which he

is more or less connected to, areas that reveal themselves in front of him, for exploration. It is not a thing to ignore, if the father decides to read a newspaper instead of dedicating to the child or, even better, doing an activity that he is keen on, either carpentry, pigeon keeping, rod fishing or archaeology; it is not also unimportant, if the mother is concerned only with the household, or she reads to the child, or teaches him to play an instrument.

Unquestionably, there are families that initiate their children only in the common activities or teach them how to behave properly, and the child will be, probably, well educated, but, in the same time, there are families where, at different levels, the child is put in touch with all kinds of sources for his satisfaction, sources of values and humanisation means, which is ideal.

A place of individualisation (the school) of the feeling, the individual relation, each of these terms imply by default the presence of a background, a system of values that the family introduce to the child, and that is, unavoidable, the expression of a culture. The family takes the child into the material world and, to the same extent, into that of objects, their handling, along with the world of the current human activities, teaches him to live, to connect with the surrounding environment. Without this considerable assembly of acquisitions and experiences – that includes, nevertheless, limitative and perturbing elements – is less likely that the school education can be operant. The family presents to the child human patterns that he will imitate and from which he will differentiate, becoming, gradually, not only human, but also a characteristic autonomous personality.

Even if the adults are the fundamental models that constantly show to the child the purpose itself of his bringing up, the world is not reduced only to adults. The child has to be initiated into other social relations, different from those with his role models, and in other changes than those practiced with individuals, whose superiority is unavoidably experienced; he has to know the relations with his peers. From this point of view, the help of his brothers and sisters, on addressing the child's education, is not less important than that of the parents. The fact that a child has other brothers and sisters makes him willing to develop richer and more diverse human relations, as comparing to the only child of a family, for example, to become acquainted with the experience of rivalry, competition, collaboration, solidarity and mutual help.

The family must orientate to child towards the exterior, towards society and it is important that the educated to have his own extra-family life too, usual mates, to get in touch and in competition with the people of his age and friends, whose existence he shares entirely. A reason for which children of close age are important, results from the fact that they provide the child with the feeling that he belongs to a certain group, they are an appropriate barometer of the aspects that include the way of living and that define the notion of belonging or not to that group.

The parents have to know, and most of them do, that they cannot satisfy all the initiating needs of their children; they recognize their limitations

and cannot be representative, in front of the child, for the entire human behaviour and the whole human culture; besides this, they realise that a child can develop his personality following other routes too, others than those offered by them. Therefore, they help the children to get in touch with their visitors, their friends, people from the extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins), who can bring what the parents are not able to, to the young person that is offered the possibility to extend his variety of human beings that he can meet, and gives him the opportunity to enrich the area of possible role models that he can have. Yet, it is also important for the parents to make sure that these possible models to have affective value and to take into account the fact that they can be valuable, even if they differ from the patterns offered by parents.

In order to promote the involvement into the community, the parents have to make sure that their son (daughter) are affectively involved in all the phases of the community life and, for that, it is necessary that the family participate together to all the cultural (films, concerts, conferences) and social events. There are too many situations in which a child, having familial characteristic for the wide majority of people (for example, a child in disabled trolley, who cannot talk, see, hear, does not participate to the family life outside the family). We might then ask the question, if the parents do not include their children in the events outside the family, how will the members of the society accept these children as equal?

Moreover, a way in which a child can be integrated into a group is to find someone to introduce him in that group. The oldest member of the group can make the way of the new member easier. It is always better to have someone who can introduce you into a new grouping, instead of trying to become a member, by coming from outside. When we help a child to become an integrant partof a group, we must automatically think to all the issues that this child might face and to find a way to solve them, as close to the needs of the child as we can.

During his development and growth as a human being, the child comes into contact with other forms of community organisation too, which are outside his family. If the family represents the starting point for the ulterior evolution, then the institutions and the organisations that he meets, define his social background, the limitations of hi becoming and establish landmarks in his existence, by proposing him generally valuable norms. Inside a community, there are governmental institutions and organisations that offer the individual two different types of services: sanitary (hospital, polyclinic), educational (kindergartens, schools, high schools, universities), social protection, transportation etc. Furthermore, there are community organisations (for example, the church) and non-governmental and non-formal organisations that are constituted in groups of reference for the members of the community, offering community models, the security of the Self, the source of values, the valorisation of the personality.

The community offers a set of values to the child, that he will use as guidance, during the formation of his own personality, and that will help him

to integrate into the society. Consequently, the child must be encouraged to learn the difference between right and wrong, this creating in time the self-control, which enables him to tell the truth and to despise the lie. He has to always keep his promises, to take into consideration the others, to help the less fortunate and weaker, and to take responsibility for his deeds. Actually, this means that it must be invested effort for the child to develop his own set of values, along with the sense for the cultivation of these values. He has to learn according to the standards, about what it is and is not acceptable, and to think to the manner the other present themselves, not only the way in which he is.

The aspects and the stages for the creation and the defining of a child's system of values, start from the protection offered to the child, with the purpose to help him to avoid harming himself, getting to moment when his own autonomy and responsibilities can be seen, at the end of an evolution that includes as stages: the detachment, the example and responsibilities, the good communion, the explanation and the reproach, the correspondence between thinking and acting, the shared responsibility, the mutual affection and esteem, the family cohesion.

Although the successive and stimulating educative means that are used during the growing up converge, or should converge, towards the same purpose, that of the child's meeting with himself, of the meditation over his own person, representing the possibility of the child to contribute to his own education, to the development by himself.

The group or family talking, the watching of educative television shows are ways in which a child's beliefs can be developed, who has to understand that there are people with different values than his (for example, religious values) and, nevertheless, he has to respect them and try to understand them too.

The child must develop his moral sense that will stop him from cheating his fellow people, from discriminating against races and genders, or from being intolerant. Moreover, there is a set of notions that he has to define during his development and to realise the bad side of: alcohol consumption, smoking, drugs abuse, and to define his own path as regarding his sexuality, faithfulness in couple, abortion and divorce.

A major part in the interiorisation of these values, to a child, is held by the family pattern. Thus, the child, even if he finds out that it is not right to do something, if he sees his parents doing it, he will do the samein his turn, even if he observes that this thing is not accepted by the society.

For all the children, to have a community a family in which to be involved, are the component of their becoming as active citizens. What is more, it is for them to be involved in common activities, with common people, using all the chances for becoming a part of their community. This means to have contacts with the others, to try new activities, new things, but also to continue enjoying the old activities and situations. The community is not just a place for meeting new people, but it is also a circumstance to learn new things.

For a lot of reasons, we need the communities that include all the people. Indeed, a community that does not accept and does not actively look for diversity and the distinctions between its members, is not a community in the most desired meaning of this word. Not all the communities are perfect, but, first of all, they are reflections of the human existence. The inclusion into a community is not only the best aspect to work on, but it is also the eating heart of the human being.

Love represents a condition for the integration. But love is not always kind and tender. Sometimes, it is harsh and rough, without stopping from being love. As a parent, you love your child, but the same parental quality asks you to be harsh and merciless with those who infringe the moral rules of the family. In a marriage, there is not accepted the physical aggressiveness, infidelity, sexual abuse, alcoholism or drug addiction between the partners, but if the same adult wish to be consider true parents, they will be, for the same reasons, merciless as regarding their children. Only this way, their deeds, operations and actions are motivated by love. Only the person who has no love, accepts the repeated compromises as a principle in the children's education. Love must defy. This is the rough love, de facto, the true love (Chapman, 2001: 76).

## Conclusions

The stability and the actions of the family depend, in a great extent, on the relations of communication and the interaction of its members. Human interaction represents a fundamental process of reciprocal dependency, among individuals, through which, the actions of a member, have consequences of the other one's behaviour.(Ciofu, 1995: 173)

Due to the fact that the partners influence each other, each of them tries to adapt and identify the effects exercised on the other. Thus, in the familial interaction, the perceptive-cognitive confrontation is important, on it being based the evolution and the reciprocal assessment, through a correctional feed-back succession that have an inter-adaptive meaning. (Mitrofan, 1989: 52)

The parents-children interaction is an indispensable factor for a normal development of the child, the family being a system of communication and development environment, for the child, during his first years. This interaction, parents-children, must be analysed not only as regarding the intra-family relations that provide the functionality and the stability of a family. Even though the relation between mother and child is the most important, we must consider the other ones too, especially the relation between a child and his grandparents.

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