

WORK-FAMILY RELATION IN THE GLOBALIZATION CONTEXT

A sociological study of the work-family relationship in the contemporary society

-SUMMARY-

In this study we have drawn attention to the relationship that is established between the two major scenes where adults are evolving - work and family. Each of the two areas benefit from the attention of the academic environment and the interest of the general public also. Each of the two domains can be a miniature lab, which makes the paper on the subject of family or work to be numerous. The novelty that we bring through this paper relates to the relationship between these two major spheres of existence, starting from the premise of mutual interactions between them.

The analysis of the work-family relationship is an actual theme and the importance of studying it is demonstrated not only by the research undertaken so far (especially in the Western countries and less in Romania), but also by the actions of information or legislation undertaken by some institutions in our country or other European states. We can draw attention on the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020 which encourages a better work-life balance for women and men or the recommendation of the Council of the European Union to Member States "to develop and develop Further research to identify the factors affecting the possibilities of women and men to reconcile work and family life, their desire to have children, and their attitudes within different age groups and generations."

Changing at an ever-increasing rhythm is a definite feature of the present that affects both nations, organizations, and family and individual relationships. In this context, social institutions are also forced to adapt continuously, just like the people who give them life. The evolution of mankind is and has always been the result of transformations, to which some people adapt more quickly, and others fail to keep up. Due to the fact that these changes are faster, it is up to scientific research and decision-makers to find the best solutions so that the percentage of those left behind is as low as possible.

Taking note of the shy attempts to surprise the work-family relationship in our country, in the present paper we have proposed the analysis of how the individual's personal and professional lives merge, by capturing the macro-social and the subjective-individual one. The proposed approach is an interdisciplinary one, concretized in a triangular study, which brings together the defining elements of qualitative research as well as quantitative analyzes.

In accomplishing the purpose of capturing the relationship between work and family, we first intended to identify the facets of the work-family relationship as they appear in the literature, because we needed a theoretical basis from which to debut the research. As the proposed approach is an interdisciplinary one, and the analyzed subject is a complex one that can not be confined within the boundaries of a single academic discipline, we have consulted sociology, law, psychology or economy papers, as shown in the bibliographic list, in physical and electronic format, from diverse categories such as treatises, theoretical research, field studies or acts of decision-making bodies at national, European or global level. The achievement of this objective is mainly mirrored in the theoretical part of the thesis, but has also largely influenced the empirical part by providing us with important information at each of the study stages.

Taking into account the two key elements of the relationship between private and professional life, we intend to highlight the characteristic features of family and work in the current context, as each of the two domains contributes specifically to the relationship between them. Considering the attention that work and family have enjoyed from several sciences, we consulted works of philosophy, anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, law and demography, and the acquired information is reflected in the theoretical section and chapter dedicated to statistical data analysis, mostly.

The theoretical foundation of the subject of the family was devoted to the first subchapter, in which we attempted a brief retrospective of the main scientific research concerning this domain, pointing the contributions of authors such as F. Le Paly, Emile Durkheim, William Thomas and Znaniecki, Frazier Talcott Parsons, for example. From a historical perspective, we associated an analysis of the functions and roles of the contemporary family, noting the increasing importance of the affective-emotional function to the detriment of the instrumental-material one.

In the analysis of work, we started from the perspective that work is not only an income-generating activity, and the organization is becoming more and more not just a job, a source of accomplishing financial needs. The interpersonal relationships established

here, the working environment, the organizational culture, the climate, the challenges and the achievements, the conflicts are particularly important elements with echo in the personal life of the individual also. In this subchapter we followed the evolution of the working relations from a historical perspective, the evolution of their legal regulations on the territory of Romania, the main theoretical orientations and the approaches specific to each academic discipline, with the punctuation of the various concepts on labor, from the expulsion of the man from Heaven and sending him to work in Christianity and the protestant work ethics (Max Weber), Constantin Rădulescu Motru's theory of vocation, self-actualization in Marxist terminology, or self-updating from the perspective of Maslow's motivation theory and humanistic psychology in general (Carl Rogers).

In order to analyze the work-family relationship at macro-social level, we have watched the contemporary demographic trends through statistical data. We have accessed official statistics issued by the Romanian Government, EUROSTAT, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Commission of Prognosis and other internal and international bodies that have conducted relevant studies for our research topic, with a significant confidence threshold, on representative samples. We analyzed and interpreted the data provided that were linked to the subject of study of this scientific approach from multiple perspectives, sociological, economic, legal, historical, and sometimes political. We carried out a secondary desk-research analysis of the most recent official statistical data relevant to the analyzed field, related to birth rates, divorce, marriage rate, labor characteristics, leisure time, etc., comparatively analyzed.

Another objective we have pursued during this study was to make a diagnosis of the work-family relationship in the present Romanian society, at both macro and micro-social level, by statistical analysis of data available at national level, statistical analysis of the answers given by the participants to this research and the study of particular cases. This triangulation aimed at obtaining a complex image that could capture as much as possible of the defining features of the studied phenomenon, as we have proposed, both at individual and group level, or in a larger community or even state.

The field research was carried out in two stages, that of the pilot study, in which a preliminary version of the data collection tools was developed and implemented, and the second, broader, in which scales, written and online questionnaires were applied. For some of the participants in this second phase the subject studied was deepened by carrying out case studies.

The results analysis phase focused on the statistical processing of the data obtained in the pilot study, the secondary statistical analysis of the available information from official sources, the analysis and the statistical interpretation of the data obtained from the subjects of this research and the analysis of the cases.

Regarding the research methods and techniques used, at the data collection stage, we used the sociological survey materialized by applying the biographical questionnaire and the scales, identifying and selecting the statistical information relevant to the study at national and European level and carrying the interviews with research participants.

In order to process and interpret the obtained data, we used descriptive statistics, inferential statistics methods, in some cases, analyzing the primary data obtained through Excel and Google Docs, the comparative analysis of the official statistical data, and the materials obtained from the interviews with the participants were interpreted using content analysis.

Given the links of the work-family relationship with several variables, we also wanted to highlight the connections of the work-family relationship with these relevant indicators. In the section on theoretical documentation, we identified these key concepts based on previous research that we consulted. We have implemented these concepts in order to translate them into measurable variables through the data collection tools we have used. Subsequently, using the scales, the questionnaires, the direct discussions with the participants in the study, we followed the concrete way in which the work-family conflict, the work-family facilitation, the quality of the professional or family role, the social support, the gender role ideology, self-efficacy, emotions and professional, family or general satisfaction interact.

Case studies facilitated the analysis, especially at the subjective level, contributing to a better understanding of the area investigated. By anticipating such advantages of using particular situations, we intended to capture the specificity of the work-family relationship at the individual level. This level of analysis has also allowed us to reach the challenge of undertaking a complex, multi-level research through direct addressing the micro-social level.

Following the trajectory of social sciences in general, it was natural that, after going through the descriptive and explanatory levels, to make some predictions about the evolution of the relationship between work and family life. This is especially important if we take into account the impact that this relationship has on each person, his/her family, the group he/she is involved in and the workforce, but also the wider communities. On

the other hand, state-level decisions, organizational policies, the group of friends and family influence the way in which each individual manages to harmonize the two areas.

Following, we intend to identify those viable solutions for the harmonization of the private and the professional life by tracking the strategies proposed in the researches surveyed and by identifying the strategies used by the participants in this study. Harmonization of the two areas can be facilitated through individual actions, through organizations, but also through legislative policies, each of them having different results, specific to each particular case. We believe that this goal can have a concrete purpose that brings direct benefits if optimal solutions are validated and implemented because, as the data show, people who develop a harmonious work-family relationship are more performing in their work, more pleased with the life they have, relate more with the others, which makes them enjoy better health and more willing to help others, compared to people living in a family-labor conflict.

Subsequent to identifying solutions to reconcile the private life with the profession, we considered it necessary to evaluate the results that other researches have identified. In the analysis of the case studies included in this paper, we highlighted the strategies that the interviewees reported, either from the fundamental theories in the field or from the results of other field studies. Thus, for our respondents, we noticed that social support from the family facilitates a harmonious work-family relationship, as well as a flexible working environment. We also identified personal characteristics that contribute to a balanced relationship between the two spheres, such as self-efficacy, the interpretation of one's own situation in a positive perspective, the clear delimitation of the roles of the two spouses in some cases, medium-term objectives and their ongoing assessment.

As mentioned, we do not attribute generality and representativeness to analyzed case studies, but we consider them to be effective for illustrative purposes, facilitating understanding of the research topic, but at the same time providing us with examples of balancing strategies for the two areas that can be taken over or analyzed and validated in further studies. Case studies once again demonstrated, that each of the established theoretical paradigms attempting to conceptualize the work-family relationship has its sphere of applicability, some particular situations being explained by the conservation theory, while others validate the expansionist thesis. Other important aspects mentioned and debated in the theoretical section of the paper are found in the analyzed situations, such as the influence of personality factors on the work-family relationship, the

importance of social support in the harmonization of the two areas, the efficiency of individual strategies such as time management, setting priorities and goals, mental switch-off, balancing work-family relationship.

From a formal point of view, the work is structured as follows:

The argument - the introductory part, a preamble of the scientific approach, in which we tried to discuss the purpose of this research, the opportunity to study the present theme, reviewing the current scientific and legislative concerns in the field. We also outlined the methodology elements that guided the research, listing the objectives pursued during the study and the defining points of the paper.

The first chapter of the thesis, divided into three subchapters, serves the theoretical foundation by addressing the family theme, the work and the relationship between the two.

In the second chapter we have leaned on all the methodological aspects, presenting broadly the purpose of the work, the objectives pursued, the research questions, the methods, the techniques, the tools used, the operationalization of the concepts targeted by the field research. We also presented how each data collection tool was built, the participants, the research steps, and the sources of information used.

Chapter 3 was dedicated to presenting and interpreting the current demographic trends related to the evolution of indicators regarding marriage, birth, divorce in Europe and Romania, the situation of childcare facilities, statistical differences between women and men in the workforce, the gender role ideology in Romania from the statistical perspective, the connections between the demographic changes and the labor force, the evolution of the labor force in Romania.

In Chapter 4 we described the deployment of the pilot study, with reference to the subjects of the research, the assumptions made, the tools used, the results obtained and the future directions of research here.

The next chapter, 5, was devoted to presenting the data obtained in the larger empirical research, namely the processing of the demographic data of the participants, the presentation and interpretation of the statistical information and the illustration of some case studies.

The paper finalizes through the section dedicated to conclusions and proposals, summarizing the main points of the paper and formulating possible future directions, followed naturally by the bibliographic list and annexes.

We appreciate that through this scientific approach we have largely come closer to the goal that all scientific research should aim, the one to provide more knowledge that improves human life, only when it is used to create something better, science becomes valuable. In an era when information is overwhelming, available quickly, easily, without restrictions and censorship, but without the possibility of verifying the authenticity of the source, sometimes possessing it doesn't mean so much, but the manner in which it is used, and the ability to discern.

The main bibliographic resources we have called can be grouped as follows:

- Sociological theory studies in which analyzed phenomena are studied, which can be books, articles or specialty studies;
- Specialized work in the field of psychology, law, management or other disciplines, which facilitates the approach of the studied topics;
- Internal and international normative acts aimed at legal regulation of the analyzed issues;
- Statistics published by the Statistical Office of the European Union;
- Statistical information provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania;
- Sociological field research and opinion surveys;
- Up-to-date information on the phenomenon under discussion that can be retrieved from newscasts or information portals.

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Dissemination of scientific research results contributes to solving some concrete problems, because this is the ultimate goal of knowledge in general, and social sciences, which take their study themes from social concerns, are even more to provide explanations and solutions to society. We appreciate that through this work and through the materials published or presented during the doctoral degree we have somehow approached this ideal, without claiming the exhaustion of the theme, but we hope to provide inspiration and information for future studies.

Keywords: work-family relationship, globalization, roles, role conflict, social capital, self-efficacy, gender ideology, professional satisfaction, personal satisfaction