



# The Social Function of the Family as a Suitable Way for the Promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: The Family and Its Role in Reducing the Side Effects of the Consumer Society

Júlio César Bernardes, Ph.D\*

University of Vale do Itajaí

\*Corresponding Author: Júlio César Bernardes, Ph.D, University of Vale do Itajaí, Brazil

**Abstract:** This article aims to present the family as an important agent in achieving the Goals for Sustainable Development of Agenda 2030, based on its social function. It is also proposed that the Social Function of the Family be the appropriate way to reduce the side effects of the current Consumer society, characterized by individualism, anthropocentrism and the unconditional desire to acquire goods. It is concluded that the family can and should, through its social function, provide the necessary elements for the desired change in the 2030 Agenda, implementing family education based on the ethics of sustainability, solidarity and fraternity, towards the transformation of unsustainable consumption patterns. The effects of these actions will have an impact on social pacification, with a reduction in family conflicts and consequently in crime rates. As for the methodology, the inductive method and qualitative research were used. Referring techniques, category, operational concepts and bibliographic research were used.

**Key words:** Family. Family Social Function. Consumer society. Juvenile legal system. Sustainability

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To a certain extent, Contemporary Society lacks human virtues such as ethics, solidarity and fraternity, adjectives cultivated, to a greater extent, within the family. At the same time, it is unlikely to obtain a harmonic increase in these virtues outside the family education, as in the family they flourish, driven by support in affection [1]. Members of a family nucleus must provide reciprocal support. The family is by nature an open system that can influence and be influenced by its components. However, it is important that there is adequate cohesion, so that everyone respects and shares objective and true criteria, without prejudice to the individuality of each member. [2]

Following this line of thought, this scientific article aims to present the family as an important agent in achieving the Goals for Sustainable Development of the 2030 Agenda, based on its social function. It is also proposed that the Social Function of the Family is the appropriate way to reduce the side effects of the current Consumer Society, characterized by individualism, anthropocentrism and the unconditional desire to acquire goods.

The Social Function of the Family is understood as the task performed by the family entity that brings together several actions aimed at valuing the being, through the bonds of affection, the Dignity of the Human Person and Intergenerational Solidarity. The promotion of sustainability, ethics, social justice and citizenship are part of the duties attached to this social function. [3]

Among other rules of transnational content, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights highlights the importance of the Family in its art. 16, 3, mentioning that it is an essential nucleus that must be protected by the State and by Society (UN, 1948). The relationship between the Social Function of the Family and the 2030 Agenda consists exactly in the nature of the latter: it is an action plan for people, the planet and prosperity, whose intention is to promote the social inclusion of the needy, eradicate poverty and hunger, in all its shapes and dimensions and ensure the dignity and equality of all, in a healthy environment.

Therefore, the uniqueness of the theme is to expose the theoretical framework, which signals the important role of the family in contemporary society and the reflection on the implications of the

Consumer Society for the increase of juvenile delinquency.

As for the Methodology, the inductive method and qualitative research were used. Referring Techniques, Category, Operational Concepts and Bibliographic Research were activated

## **2. THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY AND ITS REFLECTION IN JUVENILE CRIMINAL JUSTICE. THE FRAGMENTATION OF FAMILY STRUCTURE AS THE SOURCE OF YOUTH ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

In accordance with the functionalist view, the Society comprises a list of social institutions that perform their own functions, with the objective of ensuring perpetuity and social consensus. For this conception, the Family has an important attribution to subsidize the basic needs of the Society and to favor the conservation of the social order. It is understood that the nuclear family, under the functionalist perspective, plays specialized roles in modern societies. The emergence of industrialization has changed the social destiny of the Family, becoming more important for the reproduction, creation and socialization of children, ceasing to be an economic production unit. [4]

It is pointed out that juvenile crime has its origin, as a rule, in the instability of the Family and in the absence of affection, which also affects school performance. For this reason, many countries are decreasing the requirement for their students' education level. These facts give rise to reflection on the human bases of family life in society, currently linked to consumerism and materialism. [5] Specialists in juvenile delinquency maintain that the adoption of defeated educational actions to introduce and consolidate individual responsibility in young people is more positive in preventing this behavior. These actions are essentially up to the parents, as the first education agents for their children. [7]

Children and adolescents develop themselves in the Family which is a primary group and immediate Community of human beings, in which they can obviously witness improper behavior by parents. Such improper behaviour can harm or be a risk factor for their healthy growth. Violent behaviors, gender discrimination and the promotion of intolerance support the imitation of inappropriate conduct. This undue exposure accentuates aggressive behavioral patterns and dissociated from the social order. In this syllogism, for Chinoy, the presence of the family in all civilizations stems from the nature of the society itself: the maintenance of organized social existence are functions attributed to the family. [8]

Psychoanalysts say that a life dedicated to crime begins at an old age only. That is due to studies on the past life of adolescents in conflict with the law, which indicate that before having their first contact with the Juvenile legal system, in most cases, the juvenile delinquency are derived from antisocial behavior practiced in childhood. For this reason, the child's education with the Family is essential, because in the family environment the antisocial and anti-legal impulse will be prevented, taking into account the negative influence of external factors that predispose them to the development of such impulses. [9]

Studies indicate that the motive for juvenile crime is in the parental context, warning that the weakened family structure gives rise to this crime. They even point out that the number of adolescents in conflict with the law is twice as high in families that have a fragile parental structure, understood as lack of affection, material and moral support, lack of the presence of one parental figures (mother or father), although they may include other factors. The re-education of young people is often accomplished by modifying the behavior of parents, especially the paternal characteristics that are causing the children's antisocial reaction. If the training provided by parents has an antisocial bias, with no possibility of change, reeducation will only occur through a new socio-affective relationship, even if it is absolutely exceptional. [10]

The arguments raised above by the scientific community, in fact, often correspond to the cases presented to juvenile criminal justice. [11] This reality is confirmed in the first hearing of the adolescent's judicial presentation in conflict with the law, in which the adolescent informs his social context [education level, if he carries out any paid work, with whom he resides, etc.]. The work in the Juvenile courts revealed that the absence of the father figure and the family breakdown are present in more than 80% of the cases. [12] Adolescents who never knew their biological parents or who did not have the opportunity to establish a close relationship with a subject who occupied this position.

Although other circumstances can also interfere, such as personality, psychosocial disorders and the desire to consume; family breakdown is the first factor in the order of elements that coincide in the multiple processes presented.

This observation was confirmed in a study carried out in Spain, in which 45 families participated, with adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age, composed of a group of 15 youths admitted to Juvenile detention centers with indicators of antisocial disorder and a second group, formed by 30 young people, students of a high school education institute, who did not have indicators of antisocial personality disorder. The investigation analyzed the family regarding the quality of the marital relationship and parenting, using quantitative instruments. It was found that families with teenagers who are in Juvenile detention centers had family conflicts in the marital relationship, showing a statistically significant perception of less affection and harmony. With regard to parenting, a greater lack of affective bond was observed in teenagers who are in Juvenile detention centers, coinciding with a greater representativeness of the absence of the father figure. The study shows the importance of working on basic family relationships, both in prevention and in intervention with teenagers. [13]

Also Redondo et al., in investigation carried out, pointed out that attachment is a fundamental variable to establish differences between young offenders and non-offenders. Non-offenders experience significantly higher attachment to their parents than offenders. Regarding family cohesion and conflict, it is observed that families of teenagers offenders are characterized by a low level of cohesion and a high level of family conflict. [14]

In the same sense, according to Giddens, sociologists, based on contrasting perspectives, point out that the increasing number of Families without the father figure is the origin of several social problems, such as the increase in the crime rate and the allocation of public funds for social assistance aimed at children. [15]

Among the alternatives presented to combat juvenile crime, there are those who argue that adolescent detention is the best alternative, isolating the problem. Many countries, following this movement of law and order, have reduced the age of criminal responsibility. However, the need for multidisciplinary work in favor of the Family is defended, through the state's social assistance structure, integrating the teenager and his family in an attempt to adapt him to the rules of social coexistence. Finally, there are those who argue treatment in freedom, which, in practice, achieves satisfactory results, as in the case of France (supervised education) and Spain with the figure of the "family educator". [16]

Cachorrón believes that it is more appropriate to keep the teenager in conflict with the law in his own Family, if he has one and, if possible, with financial support from the State. However, if it is not possible, you should put him in a welcoming family, recognized as suitable by the government. Ultimately, if any of these measures becomes impracticable, he explains, it will be necessary to intern the adolescent in institutions for this purpose. It concludes that with an adequate family environment, in which it is possible to learn and apply religious, ethical, moral and social values, with an integral education of the children, juvenile delinquency will be removed. However, if this happens, the teenager will also have a favorable environment for their re-education, so that they can be inserted in the society again. This context does not detract from the duty of the government to take the necessary measures so that families can fully assume their educational role. [17]

Many satisfactory alternatives can be applied to prevent and reintegrate young people into society, such as support and understanding projects, which are suggestions to minimize or even extinguish juvenile delinquency. On another side, the segregation of adolescents favors the perpetuation of antisocial behaviors. [18]

Although the different social segments have an influence on the individual, the family nucleus builds a model that will accompany the person throughout his life. In this sense, the role played by parents in fulfilling their social function is significant for the maintenance of social order and the development of society in a harmonious way. The Social Function of the Family is fundamental in this aspect, as it develops in the young person the necessary skills to adapt socially, reproducing behaviors and ethical values. A solid family structure and aware of its obligation to the planet is an essential condition for the prevention of behaviors that are contrary to the rules of good coexistence in society.

### **3. UNSUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE. THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA**

Based on anthropocentrism, the environment, provider of all wealth, is treated in a secondary way, with no minimum zeal, favoring its degradation for the benefit of a few. In this process of destruction of the planet, natural resources are extracted from biota, without any concern for the fate of future generations. Individualism [19], which complements this dark period of human civilization, has harmful effects on the eradication of poverty in its various forms, including extreme poverty, considered by Agenda 2030 to be the greatest global challenge and indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

It is precisely from this scenario that the behavior established by the consumer Society is approached [20], based on the limitless desire to consume products and the accumulation of goods, with antisocial behavior, motivated by the seduction of the market, which guides the frantic search for products and services. Based on the Ethics of Sustainability, the Social Function of the Family can be the key to changing global awareness and reducing anti-social and anti-legal behavior.

Associated with this construction, Bauman [21] maintains that the increasing delinquency is the product of the Society of consumers, legitimate and inevitable. The greater the market's lure in the search for products, the greater the prosperity of the consumer society. The divergence is that, at the same time, more comprehensive and profound is the gap between the people who desire (seduced by the market) and those who can satisfy their desires. The seduction of the market is both the great equalizer and the great divider. The current system exposes abundant consumption as a sign of success and a way to achieve public admiration and fame.

According to Bauman, this significant increase in the conduct defined as criminal is not an obstacle for the Consumer Society, but its natural monitoring and prerequisite. Comparing the system with a "card game", Bauman explains that "failed players" (people who cannot afford to buy their wishes or who refuse the opportunity to win in the game) should be excluded from the game, isolated in slums and severely punished. These "incapable and indolent" players are the refuse, but also the product that the game cannot stop producing without getting stuck, because they serve as an example for those who think about leaving the game.

In consumerism, Morin identifies two related and antagonistic approaches: offering the satisfaction of personal needs and generating anguish and frustration. The first contributes to individualism and drives consumer dependence on purchasing more products and services. The second provides the malaise and frustration, inherent in contemporary civilization, which provoke compulsive shopping and the various chemical dependencies and intoxications. These intoxications, which he defines as civilizational, contribute to the waste of energy and the degradation of the planet in broad terms: ecological and living conditions. [22]

At that point, in line with the Goal for Sustainable Development of Agenda 2030 n. 12, one of the commitments assumed by the signatory countries of the 2030 Agenda was precisely to effect the necessary changes in the way societies produce and consume goods and services. All sectors, governments, international organizations, the business sector and other non-state actors as well as people must collaborate to change unsustainable consumption and production patterns. [23] Compliance with SDG no. 12 will also result, indirectly, in a benefit for the reduction of social problems resulting from the seduction of the market, such as crime, changing the culture of overconsumption.

On the other hand, the criminal enforcement system is questionable in all countries, as it does not fulfill the objective established by law, which, at the Brazilian level, is to provide conditions for the harmonious social integration of the convicted and the interned. [24] Likewise, the implementation of socio-educational measures for the teenager offender does not meet the objectives of accountability, social integration of the adolescent and the disapproval of the offending conduct. [25] The prospect of segregation being the only solution to repress the uncontrollable desire, provided by market seduction is limited, because it does not see the full dimension of the problem, especially its origin. Criminal justice is developed, in this syllogism, to contain an impasse produced by the economic system itself, in the culture of consumption and social inequalities. In this sense, it is Andrade's reflection, for

which Criminal Law reproduces the liberal ideologies of the current economic model, which qualifies it as a Differentiated Criminal Law, as it is produced to preferentially protect private property, restricted to a few. [26]

From another point of view, the prospect of bringing the current economic model greater benefits than losses to the Society is fallacious, as it hides the side effects of adopting this production and consumption system connected to the context of economic development. [27] This system presents in its structure the mandatory exploitation of peripheral countries by countries with a consolidated economy. [28] Vulnerable populations in peripheral countries are the most affected and experience discomfort - economic, social and environmental - by adopting this process of economic development. The degradation of the environment, the excessive use of natural resources in favor of a reduced number of inhabitants of the planet, the exploitation of labor and all the damage resulting from social inequality in these countries are some of the latent losses. [29]

Economic development without a sustainable basis fosters individualism and self-centeredness in the human being, weakening the use of solidarity and fraternity, which are essential for the promotion of the poorest and of people in vulnerable situations. This is the public, according to statistics, that occupies, to a large extent, the penal and detention facilities for teenagers in conflict with the law. It is for this reason that Agenda 2030 reiterates the importance of the global partnership, with a spirit of solidarity, to guarantee its implementation. [30]

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The hypotheses that are presented in the elaboration of this article are: a) the model of life turned to hyper consumption is an important factor for the increase of crime and behavior that are contrary to the rules of good coexistence in contemporary society; b) The Social Function of the Family can collaborate significantly to reduce these crime rates, fulfilling the objectives of Agenda 2030.

Through the bibliographic survey carried out during this investigation, the above hypotheses are confirmed. The unsustainable economic development drives a lifestyle based on overconsumption, which in turn, fuels the desire to purchase these products and services at all costs. Consequently, this lifestyle acts as a determining factor for the insertion of the person to criminality.

For this reason, the Social Function of the Family must be protected and stimulated by the public authorities, in order to modify the global thinking, regarding the forms of access to capital, use of natural resources in a sustainable way and adequate distribution of the sources of wealth. This Social Function will be decisive in order to develop environmental awareness among the inhabitants of the planet and their role in the community. The support of the State and society is fundamental in this process to guarantee, through distributive and social justice, the access of all to citizenship and the quality of life, which, we believe, will reduce crime and juvenile delinquency.

The family can and must, through its social function, provide the necessary elements for the desired change in the 2030 Agenda by implementing family education based on the ethics of sustainability, solidarity and fraternity, towards the transformation of unsustainable consumption patterns. The State and the society must provide the indispensable conditions to facilitate the exercise of this task by the family, through the mobilization of financial resources, aiming at strengthening scientific, technological and innovation skills to achieve more sustainable consumption and production patterns. The effects of these actions will have an impact on social pacification with a reduction in family conflicts and a consequent crime rate.

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#### **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

**Bernardes**, is PhD in Law from the Universidad de Alicante - UA, Spain (2020); PhD in Legal Science from the University of Vale do Itajaí - Univali (2020); Master in Legal Science from the University of Vale do Itajaí - Univali (Capes 6); Master by the Master in Derecho Ambiental y de la Sostenibilidad en la Universidad de Alicante - UA, Spain (2015). Specialist in Law and Judicial Management by the Judicial Academy of the Santa Catarina Court of Justice (2010). Specialist in

Labor Law and Process from UNIDERP (2008), holds a degree in Law from the University of Extremo Sul Catarinense (2002). He is currently a Judge of Law - Santa Catarina State Court of Justice–Email: jcb22164@gmail.com

#### **AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY**



Bernardes is PhD in Law from the Universidad de Alicante - UA, Spain (2020); PhD in Legal Science from the University of Vale do Itajaí - Univali (2020); Master in Legal Science from the University of Vale do Itajaí - Univali (Capes 6); Master by the Master in Derecho Ambiental y de la Sostenibilidad en la Universidad de Alicante - UA, Spain (2015). Specialist in Law and Judicial Management by the Judicial Academy of the Santa Catarina Court of Justice (2010). Specialist in Labor Law and Process from UNIDERP (2008), holds a degree in Law from the University of Extremo Sul Catarinense (2002). He is currently a Judge of Law - Santa Catarina State Court of Justice

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