

## *Trends and Trade Offs in the Work-Family Tension*

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A society in balance is a society in which the five basic tasks are all accomplished: the task of family (the next generation), the task of religion (grappling with God and with good and evil), the task of school (learning and understanding), the task of getting the material wherewithal to do the rest (marketplace) and the task of government (the common good). These draw on five much basic capacities of man: sexuality (companionship and fertility), reflection (in the search for meaning), persistent pursuit of understanding, hard physical or mental work, and the use of force to protect people and goods.

When all these tasks (our five basic institutions) are pursued simultaneously our society is in balance and the interdependence between each task is respected. The first three tasks (family, church and early school) are primarily relational; the last (late school, marketplace and government) are primarily instrumental in orientation. They are all massively interdependent.

The relational tasks need lots of time. But it is with time that we earn more money and produce more goods in the marketplace. Thus there are trade-offs and a constant tension between the instrumental institutions and the relational ones. However the deficits we suffer in the major institutions come indirectly through a breakdown in fundamental relationships rather than in direct trade off of family time for family income (though there certainly is a good amount of that tension in society, perpetually). The big societal trade off comes not in the belonging family but in the family built on rejection between the biological parents.

Rejection between male and female after they have cooperated in bringing a child into the world, such is the greatest contributor (though by no means the only great contributor) the imbalance. This rejection pattern has now reached epidemic proportions across the developed West and is increasing world-wide. Contraception and the severing of the child from the sexual act have upset the balance between male and female and deep into the family. The dynamics of rejection play their way out in fertility rate crises, in family role tensions but especially in family structure fracturing and all the social exclusion that follows from it. With it also comes a decrease in religious attendance. Indeed there is a rather tight relationship between the orientation towards the sexual act and the orientation towards the transcendental, towards God and much of the moral order. A look at the fall out in education, marketplace and government (safety and crime) outcomes illustrates some of the costs.

Resetting the balance in society involves rebuilding in family, church (synagogue or mosque) and in local communities cultures of belonging rather than cultures of rejection. The belonging couple and their children have major benefits of productivity in family life (raising the next generation) through their specialization of roles and optimizing talents. There is not a single outcome on which they do not do better. For this to happen there is a need for the second type of belonging – the belonging to God, which is exteriorly visible in the worship of Him. With that belonging then society's most foundational virtue (the "sine qua non" virtue) of chastity becomes possible. Chastity's impact on the marketplace and governmental costs are massive.

The academy has a significant role in making all this very visible to people and institutions who no longer see it. One strategic project would be the development of a sociological model of society analogous to econometric models of the economy. Such a model will have at its core the theoretical formula of a society in balance (the perfectly running society) onto which is added the distortions away from that balance induced by the ways that man routinely upsets his own life and that of those around him. IESE is well situated to be a key partner in such a project. However something very practical and very noble beckons beyond such academic endeavors.

In family, church, school and the entertainment industry the restoration of the ideal of chastity is fundamental. Without it comes rejection between male and female, father and mother, husband and wife, and with that rejection so many of the compounding intergenerational costs that we all wish to avoid. All this could be said to be a great campaign to restore romance and true love. What a calling such is and what an impact it will deliver on learning, productivity and the work of governments.