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International Advocacy Workshop  
5th September, 2023

It's rather strange for me to be dealing with this issue of work-life balance today, because yesterday was the start of the new school year at my children's school. I had to make a choice between taking my children to school and going to work.

Actually, this experience is fairly universal. It can become problematic. The following short story is significant of this problem.

A boy comes to see his busy father and asks for \$5. His father is generous and took out a note and give it to him. The next day, the son asks for \$5 again. The father argued, but finally agreed. On the third day, the same thing happened. The father, intrigued, came to see his son at bedtime. "Why do you ask me for money every day?" The son replied, "Dad, how much do you get paid per hour? The father did a quick calculation and replied: "About \$20". The son lifted his pillow and counted out 20\$, handing them to his father and saying: "Dad, here's \$20. Would you like to spend 1 full hour only with me?"

Although a little naïve, this story is a good illustration of how work-life balance is a problem today.

Before starting the reflection, it's important to note that this problem of integrating work and family is extremely recent on a human scale. For a very long time, most economic activity took place within the family. Etymology tells us that "eco" refers to "oikos", the home. The family was "the Place to Work" par excellence. You only have to watch a few episodes of Downton Abbey to see the last vestiges of this way of life in the West.

I note that the title of today's workshop is "Work and Family Integration". I would like to comment on this expression because I think it's particularly relevant.

Indeed, the terms usually chosen to pose the problem point in the wrong direction. The traditional expression is "Work Life Balance". As it happens, the term "balance" refers to a mutual exclusion of the two elements involved. As if work were no longer part of life. We're looking for a compromise between two heterogeneous elements. Our language reveals our culture, particularly when it contrasts expressions like "being at work" and "being at home". Home (oikos) is the place where we no longer work. Under these conditions, whatever compromise is reached, the family will always be a hindrance to professional development, a constraint that prevents fulfilment in the workplace. For its part, work will always be what tears the individual away from his or her family.

The organizers of this workshop, on the other hand, have chosen not to talk about balance but about integration. This way of posing the problem seems more relevant, because it recognizes that work is part of life.

From this point of view, there is one reality that is very important to take into account: work that is done in the context of a paid job is still less important today compared to what some philosophers and economists call "shadow work". Today, people say that a father who takes paternity leave stops working for a while. This is a misnomer. In fact, the nature of his work changes, but the activity is no less.

When you think about it, this "shadow work" is an ocean in the middle of which emerge a few islands of paid work. I'm talking first and foremost about domestic activity. Washing clothes, cooking, fixing a picture frame, changing a light bulb, mopping the floor, and so on. In the past, and in some parts of the world today, this domestic activity represented the totality of work.

In shadow work, there is also voluntary work in associations or local communities. Internet activity, for example, has opened up a huge area for volunteer work, with contributions to self-help forums, the creation of online encyclopedias and open-source software. Finally, what is known as "consumer work" represents a growing proportion of working activity. Filling your petrol tank or your tax form used to be done by a petrol pump attendant or a tax officer. All this activity (domestic work, voluntary work or consumer work) is called shadow work, because it disappears from the control dashboard of those who think up public policies.

It is important to understand that there is a strong tension between paid work as part of a job and shadow work. This tension explains why the integration of work and family is such a problem.

For the production of most goods and services, it is possible to do it oneself, or to use an external device that can be a technology or an institution. To find out if I have a fever, I can feel my pulse **or** use a thermometer. When I'm ill, I can self-medicate **or** go and see a doctor. To dry my clothes, I can hang them out **or** use a tumble dryer. To teach my children to read, I can teach them myself, **or** send them to school. I can cook **or** buy ready-made meals. The same goes from the beginning to the end of our life. For childbirth, which can take place at home **or** at the maternity hospital, and for burying the dead, which can be done by a mortician instead of the family. In theory, a family should be able to choose between producing most of these goods and services itself, or subcontracting them to industrial, commercial and administrative structures. In many parts of the world today, local communities made up of families provide for most of their needs themselves. In highly developed countries, on the other hand, families do not produce their own food, apart from a few aromatic herbs that grow on the windowsill of their flat, they do not travel without elaborate means of transport, and they dress in clothes from far away.

The philosopher Ivan Illich has highlighted the way in which these external devices operate. At the beginning, we entrust them with the task of producing the good or service for us. But after a certain stage of development, the institution develops autonomously, diverting more and more of the energy it was originally given to produce the good or service into its own operations. For example, in some countries, the money given by parents to the Ministry of Education is used less to educate children than to run the bureaucracy of education administration.

Finally, the institution ends up removing any possibility of autonomous production of the good or service in question. The law of development of the heteronomous system leads it to gradually acquire a monopoly on the way in which the good or service is produced. Who can make their own cheese these days? What family raises chickens for eggs? What father knows how to repair his own house? Who can sew, garden or repair a tool?

The way in which heteronomous systems operate generates is the following. Beyond a certain stage of development, a centrifugal force deprives the family of the possibility of providing for a certain number of needs itself. This centrifugal force increasingly distances paid work from domestic work, because heteronomous production systems require a workforce that can no longer be employed in the direct production of goods and services for the family. The time spent working to buy eggs cannot be used to maintain a small farmyard. Time spent working to pay a plumber's bill cannot be spent learning basic plumbing skills.

I'm stressing this point because the ecological implications of this phenomenon are obvious. The issue of integrating professional and personal life is linked to the preservation of our resources.

It is important to note that these heteronomous production systems open up great possibilities for individual development. But it also undeniably closes doors once a certain level of growth has been exceeded. Industrial development promises to *reduce* the constraints of life. In many cases today, it consists more in *shifting* the constraints than in reducing them.

From this perspective, the history of industrialization can be read as a process that gradually expropriates the family's capacity for autonomy.

In this way, work and life have become antagonists that we are trying to reconcile as best we can.

A first line of thinking for public policies that promote this integration would be to enhance the value of domestic work in two ways: Firstly, by making it visible. From a cultural point of view, highlighting domestic work helps to relativize the monopoly of paid work on the possibility of personal fulfilment. There is a desirable cultural shift towards valuing the capacity of domestic work to fulfil people. In some circles, for example, a young woman working as a street educator is more admired than one who educates her own children.

However, it seems to me that there is a pitfall in this valuing of domestic work. It is tempting, in order to highlight domestic work, to count it so that it can be translated into financial terms. However, this operation of quantification is more a re-embodiment of domestic work within the logic of paid work than a valorization of domestic work for what it is. Indeed, the values that govern domestic work are largely based on the free nature of the service provided. To put a price on this service is to run the risk of undermining the ethical values that underpin domestic activity, in much the same way as announcing the cost of a gift that is being given risks removing the gratuity of the gift.

The second way of valuing domestic work is to enable families to reclaim the resources for producing goods and services. I'm convinced that a truly original public policy would, for example, provide training for individuals in vegetable growing, tax

credits for the purchase of gardening tools and tax exemption for the purchase of small livestock. It would be a truly innovative way of reintegrating work into family life. This may seem a fanciful consideration, but I think it deserves to be taken seriously.

Of course, this is not the only way to unify work and family, but it is necessary to explore this path also.

After the first line of thinking, which consists of valuing the family as the first place of work, a second line of thinking is opening up to harmonize paid work and family life. Philosophy is very useful for this, because it provides the following principle: in order to unify two opposing elements, they must be given a purpose that transcends them both. From this point of view, providing work that can serve the common good of the family is the best way of integrating work and family life.

The notion of the common good as the purpose of the company is now developing in the academic literature on business ethics. It is possible to use it as well for public policies determination. The idea of the common good is that it is a cause that goes beyond the good of the individual. By serving the common good, the individual surpasses himself and becomes a better person. Consequently, the common good is a person's highest good, the best way to flourish.

From this perspective, a job that unites work and family is also a job that serves the common good of society, making the worker better, so that his or her family benefits.

As we can see, it's not only a question of putting in place policies that provide adequate remuneration for the family, or that allow time for the family.

Because work benefits the family not only through the remuneration, but also through the fact that it enables the members of the family to become better, to fulfil their humanity by placing themselves at the service of the common good of society, which reflects on the family. In fact, the common good of society is the environment in which the family is embedded. Therefore, a job that authentically serves the common good fosters a supportive environment for the family. Consequently, having a job that serves the common good of society is a condition for unifying work and family life.

Conversely, family life can promote fulfilment at work. The family is the place where people learn about work. Admittedly, it is not the professional skills developed in the family that are directly exploitable on the labor market. But the sense of a job well done, creativity, rigor, perseverance, a sense of service, self-sacrifice and team spirit are skills that the family is best placed to provide children with.

Work is an experience of interdependence. Customers, suppliers, colleagues, shareholders - without others, my work can do nothing, is worth nothing, it serves no purpose. To work is to experience being useful to others. This learning about service and interdependence takes place in the family.

There's a trap here too. Because I'm convinced that the role of education is not primarily to prepare people for a job. It's about developing your personality. Otherwise, we implant the feeling that man is made for work, and not work for man.

Consequently, education in the liberal arts, literature and history, should be a concern of families, if public policies foster and spur this kind of educative choice.

In this way, a young adult can enter the labor market with the certainty of human dignity. This is the best way to direct their choices and their work towards human fulfilment.

To conclude, the family is therefore at the service of fulfilling work when it is also a place of production of what is necessary for life, and when it is the place of learning *about* work and learning *through* work. A public policy that promotes this role of the family must take this into account.