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FAMILY FUNCTIONALITY IN CONTEXT OF SYSTEMIC FAMILY THERAPY AND FAMILY CONSTELLATIONS METHOD

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Abstract: This paper analyses family functioning from the perspectives of family systemic therapy and family constellations method. In explaining family functionality Olson (2000) describes this phenomenon from the point of view of present situation, analyzing current patterns of family functioning, whereas Hellinger (2014) describes it from the perspective of transgenerational transmission. Both approaches emphasize the importance of differentiation from the family of origin. They find the problem of pathological loyalty to the family of origin important for understanding the dysfunctional patterns of family functioning, although they analyze it from different perspectives. Both methods can fully contribute to the healing of family and the individual: family constellations by successfully resolving the problems in the unconscious sphere, and systemic approach by helping development of awareness and understanding of family functioning. Systemic family therapy and family constellations can represent a good synthesis of therapeutic methods that, when used together, can significantly contribute to the harmonious family functioning.

Keywords: *family constellations, family functionality systemic approach, transgenerational transmission.*

Introduction

Family functioning is conditioned by patterns and expectations that exist in a particular culture. Through its historical development family was changing its functions in accordance with changes in a particular community. In the past, the most important function of the family was economic function, but development of civil

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society and capitalist economy changed the family experience and the experience of childhood. Family has become the emotional communion of parents and children. In the last hundred years family life is oscillating among traditional, patriarchal and egalitarian distribution of family roles. Development of socialist society made a significant contribution to those changes by promoting emancipation and establishing egalitarian relations in family functioning. Simultaneously, in the background of contemporary trends in establishing egalitarian relationships, continues the process of transgenerational transmission and distribution of patriarchal family roles and family relations. These two processes determine family functioning in a very specific way and influence understanding the patterns of family functioning. Social constructivism and beliefs on the acceptability of certain patterns of family functioning in a particular culture, additionally contribute to the complexity of the problem of family functioning. Functioning of the family system in the current social context is also marked by a social crisis and processes of transition, which intersect with the inner transition of every family. External and internal transitions can be damaging for the functionality of the family system, because the crisis that exists in society often reflects on family functioning. In these complex and demanding circumstances, some families show adequate capacity for growth and development, but many others function in pathological homeostasis, without sufficient capacity to change and without adequate support to overcome the problems they face.

This paper analyses possibilities of using two systemic based approaches as a means of professional support and help to dysfunctional families. One of them is systemic therapy and the other is family constellations method. Both methods gained considerable interest in the second half of 20th century, but they are still proving their efficacy and reliability. For example, systemic therapy gained recognition in Germany as an evidence-based treatment in 2008, and made its way into academic circles, but it is still striving for recognition of public and private health insurance systems. In therapeutic circles, it has gained even more recognition with developing increasing interest in children and adolescents, who were somehow put aside during 1980s and 1990s, and with developing programs of parents coaching, which proved to be a necessity in the circumstances of changes in social structures and parenting style (Retzlaff, 2013). The other approach is family constellations, which was developed by Bert Hellinger in Germany, and which gained a great popularity during 1990s among therapists and health practitioners, as well as among patients. From the start, it almost became a movement, but there were some controversy about it regarding methods, applicability, and qualifications of facilitators. At the end of the 20th century those controversies split German family therapists into opposing groups of those who were fascinated by it and those who were loud opponents. Systemic therapists, may have felt threatened by rapid development of this method, and officially distanced from family constellation work, naming that it violated many professional standards. Today, this controversy is largely reconciled (Retzlaff, 2013; Hunger et al., 2014). Eventually, the movement became less intense, but it maintained as technique and currently there are many attempts to prove its effectiveness as a therapeutic tool. As such, it came to be widely accepted and integrated, and there are many anecdotal and

case study data that suggest that participants benefit from using this method (Cohen, 2006; Hunger et al., 2014).

The aim of this paper is to emphasize the importance of both of these methods in dealing with family dysfunctionality, to analyze some of their basic theoretical stances on this problem, and to contribute to acknowledging and recognition of these methods, which should lead to wider application or greater academic support. Finally, the paper argues the possibility of complimentary use of these methods and calls for academics and practitioners to open up to this idea.

Family functioning in Systemic therapy and Family constellations

According to systemic approach to the family, family functioning cannot be understood as the sum of the individual functionings of all family members. Family is the system made up of subsystem components: partner/parents, subsystem and the subsystem formed by children. At the same time, as a whole, family is part of the ecological suprasystem with which it exchanges energy and information. In order to understand the ways in which particular family functions, it is very important to understand the relations that exist between these subsystems, as well as the relationship that exists between the family system and the environment in which it operates. If we apply a general system theory on the family system and its functioning, it becomes obvious that parts of the family or subsystems are in constant interrelation, and the behavior of individual members, or subsystems cannot be understood in isolation from other subsystems. Family as a system operates through transactional patterns that consist of repeated interactions that determine the pattern of behavior. These patterns, according to Minuchin (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981), are completing the family structure, allowing it to manage functioning of family members, inscribing their behavior scale and facilitating interaction between them. It is necessary for the family structure to be viable so that it could meet the core tasks of the family: supporting individuation while providing the sense of belonging.

Family as a system plays important role in socialization, education, psychological and biological sustaining of family members, which includes three types of tasks that it has to fulfill: (a) basic tasks are related to the provision of nutrition and protection of family members, and to basic needs on the emotional level, including support, love and understanding for all members; (b) developmental tasks are related to encouraging growth and maturation of family members, and providing support on all stages of individual and family life cycle, and (c) the tasks related to help for all family members in adapting and reacting to unexpected situations and events, such as illness, death and, divorce. Finally, family should amortize disruptions in economic and social developments and provide continuous support for painless growth and development of its members, as much as it is possible (Goldner & Vukov, 1989).

Family constellation method also indicates specific tasks that families need to accomplish in order to be considered functional and able to meet goals that family

as a system sets. Family constellation supports the concept that there is an optimal constellation among the members within every family. The optimal constellation order is the one that allows family members spend the least amount of energy needed, in order to keep the family function as a unit and they develop as individuals. Optimal order is the one in which the father has the function of an external protector of the family. He is the person who protects the family in terms of its physical, financial and emotional wellbeing, whereas the wife, or mother of a family, has the function of feeding family in physical and emotional terms (Ilic, 2014).

According to Hellinger and Havel (2012), the man is in advantage because he takes care of the grounds, but considering the goals of the family, the woman is in the center. According to the traditional model of a family, there is always, as a rule, man on the first place, then a woman, and the children are at end of order, older come first and then the younger. Hellinger, supports this order and considers the family functioning dysfunctional when the order is reversed and a woman is put on the first place before the man. It is because she can then easily despise him, and he would probably feel that and want to leave the family and his wife, and the whole system will suffer. At the end, the woman will feel abandoned, anyway. If the man is set in the first place, which is right next to a woman in the constellation, then he feels responsible, and woman feels relaxed and supported. Hellinger denies that his attitude is patriarchal, because he does not put the man in the first place, just because of his gender, but because he contributes to the harmony and prosperity of all members within a family when he is in that position. Hellinger rejects his role in setting social norms, and claims that he always remains in the field of therapeutic action, where the outcomes can be easily checked. He finds that his attitude is always confirmed by his practice in constellation workshops. When working with family problems, he asks: Where and how all members of a family feel the best? How is it when a man stands in front and how all the members feel when the woman is ahead? He gets the answers by placing family constellations. In 70% of cases, the family feels better when the man is in front and in 30% of cases, when a woman is ahead (Helinger & Hevel, 2012).

The answer to the question why this constellation proves to be most functional for the most families, may be simple. It is due to the transgenerational transfer. The patriarchal model is recognized as the most adequate, because it was functional and acceptable in the past, and it probably needs to be repeated, as well as some other forms that exist in our family's unconscious. However, Hellinger says that men and women do not have the same weight in the system. As a rule, women have more weight, they are in the center, and the man is in the service of a woman, rather than the other way around, and it stands so for the most families (Helinger & Hevel, 2012). With such attitude, he assures us that he does not promote the patriarchal model of family functioning, but only complies with the one showed as the most desirable and adequate in constellations. It only stays somewhat unclear, what is the relation between man and woman, father and mother. In regard of this, systemic therapy approach clearly distinguishes partnership from parental functioning and intensifies the diversity of these roles, acknowledging that the partnership reflects on the parental

functioning, thus maintaining the systemic perspective. Systemic approach points to the importance of social constructivism, which means that patriarchal relations in one context may be functional, but in a different social context egalitarian distribution of power should be promoted as a feature of functional patterns of family functioning.

We can, thus, conclude that family constellations insists on the realization of basic tasks that are essential for the growth and development of personality and for reaching the goals of the family as a whole, but in a very specific way. The question is whether the adequacy of the patriarchal model of family functioning is associated with transgenerational transmission and beliefs that we accept from our ancestors, or is it something else. The context we live in establishes a different system of values and aspires toward an egalitarian distribution of power in the family functioning.

Over time, every family develops its own patterns of interaction. They draw the scales of behavior of family members and facilitate interaction among them. There should always be a functional family structure if the family is to fulfill its tasks of supporting individuation and at the same time providing a sense of belonging and community. The context of family interaction is of a great importance because it provides family members with experience that helps them draw maps of the world. They learn that some areas within the family functioning are marked with “do as you like,” some with “proceed with caution”, and there are some others, marked with a “stop”, which means that beyond those limits, a member of the family may encounter some regulatory mechanisms of the family system. Some family members, by gaining such knowledge, at various levels of consciousness and specificity, are introduced in understanding the geographical layout of their territory (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981).

In order to understand the functionality of family it is very important for us, to understand and acknowledge the balance between commitment to family and space for individual development, as well as to understand the balance between stability and change. The family begins with the formation of subsystem of spouses, which in functional families is the main support, safe haven and shelter from external stresses. The creation of this shelter means engaging both partners in establishing the rules relating to intimacy, hierarchy and forms of cooperation. Understanding of differences and accepting the existence of different values and different beliefs, is a very important part of this effort. It will help making the functional family and prevent imposing or promoting one’s own values as the only possible. The perspectives of the origin families are very important in this sense, because they may often sound as the only possible or right perspectives and people often tend to build their own beliefs and expectations on them. They, on the other hand, often do not coincide with the beliefs and expectations of partners. Social constructivism is also very important for understanding the functioning of the family system. We should recognize its importance, and understand that family roles and rules of family functioning are inseparable from a particular cultural framework. Only then, we will fully understand the patterns of family functioning that exist in a particular social milieu. This construct also builds the basis for theory of transgenerational transmission and family loyalty, and opens the problem of inadequate differentiation of the family of origin as one of the factors for the impossibility of building constructive loyalty.

Bowen was, according to Minuchin and Fishman (1981), impressed by the power of patterns of functionality of the subsystems of origin family and their symbolic efficacy, even after people have left the home they were born into and started their own family according to their own rules of functioning. Transgenerational transmission of values through the culture of origin family can make it impossible for the new partners to build the new, common system of values, because of their loyalty to the origin family and inability of differentiation. This problem will reflect on family functioning because the rules are first established in the partner subsystem. If the rules of this subsystem are rigid, then the experiences which partners gain in transactions outside the family cannot be incorporated, and it would result in trapping both of them in inadequate rules for surviving. Eventually the partner subsystem will become impoverished and lifeless, and it will no longer represent the basis for development of all its members. What really is important here is the fact that this subsystem is of crucial importance for the development and growth of children. What the child sees in its origin family will become the resource for its own values and expectations in contact with the outer world. If there is any dysfunction in the subsystem of partners, it will spread out through the whole family, and even further through generations by transgenerational transmission. Parental functioning is always connected with partner functioning, and the tension in partner relations is transferred to parenting.

Hellinger similarly draws attention to the great power and intensity of bonding in family systems. Those bonds are so powerful that they can make everything in the system move. Family gives the individual life with all its possibilities and boundaries. It is through family that a person comes to a specific nation, specific milieu and encounters specific destinies he has to deal with. There is nothing stronger than family, states Hellinger (2015). He emphasizes the role of parents and talks about parenting with great respect. Systemic approach in the similar way approaches hierarchy in family systems and the power of parental union. In Hellinger, everything starts with the parents, who have their own parents and come from the families with their own destinies. All of it together influences the new family. As a result of bonding, destinies are made common burden to carry and deal with. If something bad happened in a family, there is constant need from generation to generation to right the wrong deed. In systemic approach transgenerational transmission is also continuous and encompasses the following contents: value and beliefs of the family system, the mode of establishing and sustaining emotional relationships, family understanding of loss, family secrets and myths. The roads of transgenerational transmission are deeply unconscious and we can judge about them on the basis of their consequences (Goldner & Vukov, 1989). Transgenerational transmission is achieved by the way of modeling and associative learning. Modeling is the strongest in the period of intensive development of the child, up to the eighth year of life, because the children have the great power of adoption outside impressions in that period. It is, also, the period of great connectedness between children and parents. Behaviors, beliefs and customs are imprinted in the child's brain, which has the great potential for learning. The bonds established during this process can be modified later in life, but they

can never be changed or erased after the period of maturation. Modeling is one of the methods of preserving, and transferring deeply rooted influences to coming generations. The effects of modeling are coming close to the effects of biological factors. Such power is explained by the depth and fixedness of the connections in the brain (Goldner & Vukov, 1989).

Hellinger offers the family constellation method as a means for solving problem caused by transgenerational transfer. The knowledge of transgenerational loyalties are held not in the conscious mind but on a deeper level of systemic, genetic, or even cellular consciousness. It is ruled by three principles that Hellinger identified and named the orders of love (Cohen, 2006). In their simplest articulation, these principles are (a) parents give and children receive, (b) every member of the family system has an equal and unequivocal right to belong to the system, and (c) each family system has an unconscious group conscience that regulates guilt and innocence as a means to protect the survival of the group (Cohen, 2006). Hellinger believes that there exists the power that directs the whole system toward alignment and balance. For example it strives to bring back the expelled from the family, or to allow everyone take responsibility for his own actions and the consequences of his own deeds, and it does not allow the guilt to be transferred to the children or to the grandchildren. Family constellations method can bring order into the system and release the members from hard destinies, or ease their consequences. It stimulates individual and systemic change by using spatial arrangement of members within a dysfunctional family system, it externalizes inner relationships and make them visible, observable from outside. But it also makes them “experienceable” (from within), which allows insights, as well as transformation of “problem constellation” into a less burdensome “solution constellation” (Hunger et al., 2014). It helps patients externalize that deeply rooted knowledge, apply the above mentioned principles during the constellation, and thus, make the right order and achieve the balance that family system needed. In a family that reached this order and balance, an individual can differentiate from the family, and still feel its support. Only after acknowledging connection to the family, and clearly understanding and accepting his own responsibility, a person can be relived and can continue following his own road without being burdened and haunted by the past. Intimacy and closeness as well as detachment and conflicts, reflect on functioning of a family as whole, on establishing interactions between parents and children and give the specific tone to the functioning of a family.

Systemic therapy introduces two very important concepts referring to intergenerational transfer. One of them is the concept of spillover the effects of which Erel and Burman (1995) confirmed in their research based on the analysis of 68 research findings. They concluded that there is a correlation between quality of marriage and quality of parenting, and that marital functioning “spills over” to parenting and influences it in a positive or negative way. The other concept is intergenerational coalitions. Systemic perspective points out the importance of intergenerational coalitions for parental functioning and the role of a triangulated child in them. Triangulation is the process during which the conflict between parents

is redirected, and evaded by involving a child. It can help lower the tension between parents, but it can endanger the relation between parent and a child. The couples who try to avoid facing marital problems, focus on the problems concerning the child and often direct their hostility toward the child, and thus their parental functions become dysfunctional. The same dysfunctionality develops in cases of forming intergenerational coalitions in which a child and a parent become allies against the other parent. This kind of coalition brakes the borders between parental and siblings subsystem and creates the tension between the child and the parent excluded from the parental subsystem. In the root of these processes the problem of inadequate borders can be found. Marital tensions change the nature of child – parent relation and promote inadequate parental functioning. Even when involving the child in some way helps to solve the disagreements between parents, it is basically maladaptive behavior, because it leads to direct hostility or aggression of one parent toward the child. One of the first researches which dealt with this problem is Christensen and Margolin study (Grych, 2002), and it confirmed that marital anxiety and founding of intergenerational coalitions influence the development of problem behavior in children. Kerig (1995) proved in her research that the families with triangulation, which has the form of intergenerational coalitions, have more marital conflicts and greater dissatisfaction with marriage. In families with triangulation, expressed through avoiding conflicts between parents and directing the hostility toward the child, there was not dysfunctionality on the level of marital relations, but this pattern had maladaptive influences on child's development. The children in such marriages had distinct, internalized behavior problems.

Systemic approach to family functioning is emphasizing that marital conflict can influence child development because some parents initiate forming of intergenerational coalitions inside the family. In these cases the children are drawn into the conflict from one or both parents. For example, the father who has not achieved emotional closeness with his wife can form the close alliance with a child in order to fulfill those needs. But, often intergenerational coalitions result in coalition of a parent and a child against the other parent. Minuchin (1974) suggested that triangulation of a child into a partner functioning presently relieves the stress, but tension in partner relations prevents solving the problem on the long-term basis, and eventually leads to problems in child development. The families with mechanisms of triangulation, show presence of marital conflicts, negative influences and a small amount of marital satisfaction. Coalitions between fathers and daughters during the childhood are correlated with the higher levels of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem in young adult women. Sometimes may seem that the child can gain some benefits from triangulation in the sense of building close relationship with one of the parents, but their relation with the other parent slowly turns into conflict, and finally results in negative outcomes. This leads to conclusion that it is very hard to achieve adequate interaction between parents and the child in families where conflict in marital relations exists.

In Hellinger's view of family system there is also hierarchical structure, parents come before children and their partnership has the advantage over parenting.

In this way he points out the importance of partner functioning and its reflection on the parent functioning. He also, in a specific way, shows that it is important that the borders between parent and sibling subsystems are maintained. Parents have to stand on the first place, before their children. It is only then that children feel everything is in order. Parents who try to equal in their partnership with children, or who hesitate and try to avoid the impression of being superior or dominant over their children, make the wrong effect on their children (Hellinger & Hevel, 2012). Hellinger with this attitude promotes the patriarchal model in which children have the submissive position in relation to parents. In Serbian patriarchal culture (Trebješanin, 1991) relations between parents and children have always represented the relation of superior toward subordinate, and the children had to show in many different ways that they are aware of their subordinate position. The role of a father in education was in the realm of moral education, and it included punishments, and although mother was allowed to be mild and permissive, father had to be severe, even ruthless. Some recent researches (McGillicuddy-De-Lisi & De Lisi, 2007) have, in a way, confirmed this hypotheses, and have shown that more adequate family functioning was achieved when there was complementarity between father and mother roles. The results showed that adolescents believed that families were happier and functioned better when fathers were authoritative and mothers permissive. The research conducted with families of adolescents in Serbia showed the opposite results. The dominant parenting style in mothers was based on neglect, whereas fathers' style was based on emotional warmth (Matejević, 2012). These results were fairly unexpected, especially in comparison to expectations and patterns present in Serbian culture, understanding that mother is the spring of tenderness and warmth. In Serbian patriarchal culture the role of a mother implied emphasized tenderness and love. This protective attitude of a mother toward a child and their firm alliance was understandable, because women, as well as children had a very low social status in patriarchal culture. New results can be understood in the light of the process of emancipation and the changed position of women in contemporary society, to which the socialist society made a significant contribution. Still, the results are causing concern because of the impact emotionally cold mothers could have on the development of their children. Many researches, as the one conducted by Muris and his associates (2000), show that neglecting parental styles are very unfavorable for the adolescent development. The mentioned research proved that adolescents with neglectful parents were more prone to anxiety. Similar results obtained Markus and associates (2003) and showed that primary and middle school children who show anxiety, had rejecting parenting style mothers. The results of research organized by Herba and associates (2008) showed that adolescents with parents who prefer rejecting parental style, were more prone to have suicidal thoughts. Finally, Arrindell and his associates (2005) found correlation between rejecting parenting styles of fathers and mothers and high neurosis and low self-esteem in adolescents. Rejecting parental styles form a distance between children and parents, emotionally cold and rejecting parents use dominantly negative tone and choose negative reinforcement and punishment, and these can be impetus for depressive reactions.

As previously mentioned, the significant number of researches confirmed the effect of spillover between marital and parental functioning, which implies that marital relations are the primal spring of support for parenting. The greater closeness, warmth and better communication parents show in their mutual, marital functioning, the more warmth and attachment they show toward children, and they act as parents more adequately. This attributes to creating healthier and supportive circumstances for the development of children. Parents who reported greater closeness and open communication in their mutual relationship, were more open and responsive to children's needs and showed empathy and tenderness toward children. Parenting programs which are meant to develop parenting skills should be connected with marital functioning, because marital satisfaction is the avenue that leads to competent parenting. Offering support and intervention in fixing communication problems in marriage are the instruments for developing competent parenting (Matejević & Todorović, 2012).

Hellinger also analyses competent parenting as a means for better outcomes in child development, but in a bit different way. He believes that honoring parents and respecting the importance of parenting is the key for successful development. And it does not matter who the parents are and what have they done. The one who despises his own parents will become in his own life just the same as the object of his contempt, and it is the contempt itself that will lead him into becoming just the same as his parents. The one who respects his parents and accepts them as a whole, accepts all the good in them and it flows into him. And the important, yet unusual process happens here, the person who accepted his parents as a whole is spared from all their weaknesses and hard destinies. By accepting his parents as they really are, the child accepts itself as it really is, and it brings peacefulness and soothing, which is above every evaluation, it is not bad, not good, and it is a value by itself (Helinger & Havel, 2012).

Circumplex model of family functioning and family constellations

One of the models of monitoring the patterns of family functionality is Cicumlex model, in which the important dimensions of family functioning are family cohesion and family adaptability and flexibility. Family cohesion (Olson, 2011) refers to emotional connectedness between the members of the family. Cohesion is focused on the ways family makes balance between communion and differentiation. In well-balanced family systems there is a balance between dedication to family and communion and, individuality. Contrary to that, we could see very unbalanced systems which can have their levels of cohesion on both extremes (from very high to very low) (Olson & Gorall, 2003; Olson, 2011). The disengaged family systems often show very extreme emotional separation. Members of such family systems associate with other family members very rarely, and develop separation and independence at the expense of closeness and communion. In difference to these, enmeshed families

are characterized by the feeling of emotional closeness to the extreme measures and by insisting on family loyalty. Individuals in such systems are very dependent on each other and maintain perpetual contact. Also, there is a lack of personal differentiation and the private space is usually brought to a minimum. The energy of the individuals of these families is focused on family itself, and they usually have a small number of friends and interests outside the family. According to Hellinger, the family entanglement means that someone in the family is still unconsciously taking over and living the same destiny as someone from the previous generations (Hellinger & Havel, 2012). Hellinger explains entanglement through the acting of family conscience, which means that there is, inside the whole family group, an insuperable need to even the injustice, one of the family members from the previous generations has suffered. It means that someone from the present generation will suffer the same injustice, someone from his ancestors has suffered, in order to make balance and get things into order. Family conscience tells us what we have to do to reconnect and belong to our parents, lovers, religion, nationality, or any group. Its basic function is to bond us to our family and to the group that is essential for our survival, and it does not take care about how we feel. In other words, if the suffering is what connects us, our family conscience will make us suffer (Cohen, 2006). The members of the family will repeat their ancestor destiny as long as it keeps the balance, and keeps them connected to the family. It is so-called systemic forced repetition (Hellinger & Havel, 2012). But, unfortunately, this kind of repetition never brings balance and order. Those who had to take someone else's destiny upon themselves, are unfairly burdened with group conscience, and are in essence completely innocent. On the contrary, those who were really responsible, because they, for example, expelled someone from the family system, feel mostly very good. Group conscience does not recognize justice for the descendants, it cares only for the ancestors, and it obviously comes from the basic order and organization in family systems. Group conscience works in accordance with the following principle: who has once became the part of the system, has the same right on belonging as all the other members of the system. When someone is accused or rejected, it is as if he gets the message from someone from the system who says: You have less right to belong here than me. This is the injustice that has to be fixed by group conscience and by the way of involving some other member of the family without his conscious consent (Hellinger & Havel, 2012). Therefore, sometimes, when we think we follow our conscience, it is not a personal conscience; it is the conscience of our group. The family constellation process can serve to externalize those deep unconscious beliefs and thus, serve as an adjunct to a conventional course of psychotherapy. The insights that come to light through the process can inform and illuminate the background and be integrated with conventional interventions (Cohen, 2006; Hunger et al., 2014).

There is similarity in the notions of Olson's enmeshed families and Hellinger's entangled families, because both of them point out the family dysfunctionality. The difference seems to be in the respect of time, because Olson looks on the problem in the context of family functionality in present time, and the patterns of family functionality, whereas Hellinger looks upon it in the context of transgenerational transfer. What is

important is that both approaches emphasize the process of differentiation as a way of solution. Although they study it from different perspectives, they open the space of looking at this problem in the way of synthesis of these two perspectives. In the healing of individuals and families both methods, when used complementarily can fully contribute. What needs to be solved on the unconscious level can be solved very successfully by the family constellation, and what is in the realm of consciousness and understanding of the family functionality can be successfully dealt with by systemic approach. We could conclude that complementary application of these two methods brings to success and that these two ways of solving the problem lead to overcoming family dysfunctionality.

The next dimension, which is of great importance for family functionality, according to Olson (2000) is family adaptability or flexibility. Family flexibility is defined as the amount of change in family leadership, role relationships, and rules concerning family relations. It refers to the balance between stability and change. Functional family system enables maintaining stability, but at the same time opens the possibilities to adapt to the new life circumstances and needs of the family members. Unbalanced family systems tend to be either rigid or chaotic in nature. Rigid systems are characterized by the dominance of one person who enjoys the great amount of control, and limits the possibility for the agreement, because many of family decisions are imposed. The rules are strictly defined and never subject to change. Chaotic systems are those in which leadership is inconsistent or limited. Decisions are made impulsively and are never well thought about, and the roles are not clearly defined and are often transferred from one family member to another. Chaotic family systems are characterized by disorganization and inconsistency, the roles are unclear and changeable and there are no clear rules. Chaotic families have the problem of parental authority, and find it hard to fulfill the educational role of the family.

According to Hellinger, it is very important to have a hierarchical structure in family functioning. In the same way as the systemic approach, he emphasizes that parental communion has to have the greatest power in the family system and that intergenerational coalitions can be the source of the problems in functioning of the family system. He also draws attention to the fact that the areas of parents and children were significantly more divided in the past than they are today. Partnership that we can today often see between parents and children is very bad for children, he warns. Parents need to separate the spheres of parental and children lives, because they have the responsibility for their children. Permissive parenting is the act of renouncing that responsibility and leads to many problems in child development. It can lead, for example, the children to feel responsible for their parents and make them take a great burden on their weak shoulders. It is two-folded damage: first, the burden is too heavy for them to carry it, and the second is that they do not help their parents, but on the contrary they take away their dignity and opportunity to carry their own burden themselves. In turns to be hard for both: children and parents (Ilić, 2014).

Systemic family therapy and family constellations can make a good synthesis of therapeutic methods that can together contribute to achieving harmonious family

functioning. Systemic family therapy tries to help clients develop the awareness and understanding of patterns of family functioning and different transactions that happen in the life circle of family. Family constellation is more concerned with transgenerational transmission and patterns that clients accepted on the unconscious level from their ancestors, and it does not try to work on awakening awareness about them, since it believes that the roads of transgenerational transfer are deeply unconscious. But it believes that family constellation therapy can help clients achieve externalization of deeply unconscious patterns, and consequently be relieved from pathological loyalty toward the origin family. It helps clients differentiate from their ancestors by embracing and respecting them, what results in building constructive loyalty and achieving balance in partner, parent and family functioning.

Conclusions

Systemic family therapy and family constellations can make a good synthesis of therapeutic methods that can together contribute to achieving harmonious family functioning. Systemic family therapy tries to help clients develop the awareness and understanding of patterns of family functioning and different transactions that happen in the life circle of family. Family constellation is more concerned with transgenerational transmission and patterns that clients accepted on the unconscious level from their ancestors, and it does not try to work on awakening awareness about them, since it believes that the roads of transgenerational transfer are deeply unconscious. But it believes that family constellation therapy can help clients achieve externalization of deeply unconscious patterns, and consequently be relieved from pathological loyalty toward the origin family. It helps clients differentiate from their ancestors by embracing and respecting them, what results in building constructive loyalty and achieving balance in partner, parent and family functioning.

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PORODIČNA FUNKCIONALNOST U KONTEKSTU SISTEMSKE PORODIČNE TERAPIJE I METODA PORODIČNIH KONSTELACIJA

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Apstrakt: U radu se analizira funkcionisanje porodice iz ugla porodične sistemske terapije i metode porodičnih konstelacija. U sistemske terapiji, porodičnu funkcionalnost Olson (2000) opisuje sa stanovišta sadašnje situacije, analizirajući trenutne obrasce funkcionisanja porodice, dok je kroz porodične konstelacije Hellinger (2014) opisuje iz perspektive transgeneracijske transmisije. Oba pristupa naglašavaju važnost diferencijacije od porodice porekla. Iako ga analiziraju iz različitih perspektiva, oba autora smatraju da je problem patološke lojalnosti porodici porekla važan za razumevanje disfunkcionalnih obrazaca funkcionisanja porodice. Obe metode mogu u potpunosti doprineti izlečenju porodice i pojedinca: porodične konstelacije uspešnim rešavanjem problema u nesvesnoj sferi, i sistemski pristup pomažući razvoju svesti i razumevanja funkcionisanja porodice. Sistemska porodična terapija i porodične konstelacije mogu predstavljati dobru sintezu terapijskih metoda koje, kada se koriste zajedno, mogu značajno doprineti harmoničnom funkcionisanju porodice.

Cljučne reči: *porodične konstelacije, porodična funkcionalnost, sistemski pristup, transgeneracijski prenos.*

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