CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF MARITAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS (FACES III) IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. Useful for clinical evaluation as well as to evaluate the efficacy of marital and family therapeutic intervention is *Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III;* the functional family models have moderate scores in cohesion and flexibility. Objectives: Identifying the influence of residence environment, age and gender on *Adaptability and Cohesiveness* the evaluating power of FACES III on a sample of 1215 subjects aged between 18 and 74 in comparison with the results obtained by interview with 324 subjects. Mid-range and Balanced type families are the most frequent. Families from urban environment tend to lack somewhat in cohesion, showing increased flexibility. For Romanian cultural space some of the items should be reworded because in the case of the extreme scores the evaluation should be verified by interview.

Keywords: family, adaptability, cohesiveness, circumplex model

INTRODUCTION

A presentation of the Family Adaptability and Cohesiveness Evaluation Scale III, or the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems

One modality of conceptualizing the family is using the cohesion, flexibility and communication constructs, proposed by Olson and collaborators as the *Family Adaptability and Cohesiveness Evaluation Scale III, (The FACES III),* or the *Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems.* Very high scores, in the extremes, are indicative of dysfunctional families (Olson, 1991). Other extensive studies have indicated a higher correlation between high scores and functional families (Green et al. 1991). Due to the model's reduced capacity to precisely represent the very high cohesion and adaptability levels, Olson and collaborators realized FACES IV that seems to have more power in diagnostics (Olson & Gorall, 2006; Olson, 2011).

D.H. Olson designed FACES III to be useful for clinical evaluation, treatment, as well as to evaluate the efficacy of marital and family therapeutic intervention (Olson, 1993; Olson, 1996:59-80).

The cohesion parameter, from low to high, is expressed via the following four functioning sub-models of the conjugal and family system: disengaged, separated, connected and enmeshed. The flexibility parameter, from low to high, is expressed via the following four functioning sub-models of the conjugal and family system: rigid, structured, flexible and chaotic.

16 conjugal system models result from the combination of these eight sub-models, which can be constrained – from center to periphery – within three types: Balanced, Mid-range and Unbalanced.

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In principle, when referring to the family, we consider its members as animated by an emotional bond, that is to say by cohesion. Very high cohesion scores indicate a symbiosis between family members which, contrary to expectations – at least in the long term, is not exactly a good indicator of family functionality (Figure 1).

Conjugal and family system cohesion			
←			→
−			+
DISENGAGED	SEPARATED	CONNECTED	ENMESHED
Maximum emotional separation			Maximum emotional closeness
Low interaction			Little personal space, independence
Conflicting interests			Fusion, symbiosis

Figure 1. Representation of the cohesion in the conjugal and family system

Family members need autonomy, a certain space for harmonious personal development. Two trees with conjoined trunks will not develop very well in the contact areas. The infant and the mother have a symbiotic relationship, it is understood, but later on it is necessary for the situation to change. When a partner depends on the other member, we are talking about a symbiotic relationship.

The family system requires leadership, rules, discipline, but also the capacity for negotiation, to change leadership, roles and norms, within certain circumstances. Flexibility was defined in FACES III as the sum of changes in family leadership, role relationships and relationship norms. Flexibility may vary from very low to very high (Figure 2).

Conjugal and family system flexibility			
←			→
−			+
RIGID	STRUCTURED	FLEXIBLE	CHAOTIC
Maximum authority			Maximum permissiveness
Precise and strictly applied rules			Frequent change of rules
Decisions imposed by parents			Decisions negotiated at length

Figure 2. Representation of the flexibility in the conjugal and family system

As in the case of the cohesion, as far as flexibility is concerned, the capacity of the family to change obsolete rules that became counterproductive in relation to the life cycles of the family members, as well as changing roles and leadership if the situation so requires, is very important (Drăghici, 2015). Structured and flexible conjugal relationships are democratic – all family members participate in the decision making, children being actively involved as well. The change of one rule in favour of another, more age appropriate rule, is explained.

Communication, being a parameter which facilitates the other two parameters, is not graphically represented. The communication parameter helps the families modify their cohesion and flexibility levels. It is not only about clarity, but also about the ability to share with other

family members, the capacity to empathically listening, with respect and appreciation, to the emotions generated by their joys and sorrows (Olson & Gorall, 2003:514-542; Popa, 2013).

These models become more obvious during the transitions within life cycles, such as the emergence of the parent status after childbirth, or as a result of an unpleasant, stress-generating event, such as illness or accident. During stress, the Balanced systems tend to change the model type in order to adapt; on the contrary, the Unbalanced systems tend to remain stuck in the extreme system (Olson, 1999).

Some studies which have used FACES III

A study on two groups of mothers was conducted using FACES III. The first group consisted of 15 mothers which were summoned by the local authority because their children aged 12 to 15, skipped school, due to fear, for up to 6 months. The second group consisted of 25 mothers, suffering from depression, involved in a program for preventing the problem development in their own children. Mothers whose children refused to go to school predominantly saw their families as Flexibly Enmeshed, whereas mothers suffering from depression saw their families as Rigidly Disengaged. But, although the mothers of the children who refused to go to school were also clinically depressed, they saw their families differently (Flexibly Enmeshed). The study shows that the child's refusal to go to school acts more strongly on the dynamics of the family relationship than the mother's depression (Place et al. 2005).

Nevertheless, studies indicate that mothers suffering from depression reported a higher degree of emotional detachment within the family, a fact that must be considered in the intervention programs (Brownrigg et al. 2004). Thus, it is imprudent to consider in an a priori manner that a child who refuses to go to school is part of, or the product of a moderately involved family environment.

A study conducted on a sample of 2087 American subjects of Asian descent investigated the power of influence of the generational rank and of the family cohesion on those who have used mental health services between 2002 and 2003. The family cohesion and the generational rank in Asian-Americans influenced the call for mental health services. Thus, the need for medical assistance, in general, and for mental health assistance, in particular, is higher among the first generation of Americans coming from Asia than it is in the third. This indicates the importance of the family system support and that the public health programs should take into consideration immigrants, as well as individuals lacking family support (Ta Van M. et al. 2010).

In a study conducted in Greece (Tsibidaki & Tsamparli, 2009) on 30 families which were raising children with severe disabilities, the Family Adaptability and the Cohesion Evaluation Scale, FACES-III (Olson, 1986) were used, along with semi-structured interviews, in order to compare these families with those without children suffering from disabilities. The study did not any discover significant differences between the two family types regarding the cohesion and the flexibility, both functioning within Balanced parameters, or in the "healthy zone", as it is called in the revised Circumplex Model (Olson, 1991).

A study undertaken on 79 women who were subjects to domestic violence and required care or shelter utilized the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems.

The first conclusion was that women who were victims of violence perceived their relationship at the time with their partners in such a way that it conformed to the rigid-disengaged model, according to the Circumplex Model. Furthermore, the abused women had expectations for an ideal relationship so that from this perspective they fitted into the chaotic-enmeshed model, at the other end of the spectrum. It is a fact which should be considered in support therapies for these abused persons. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the perception of the current family and that of the ideal family may be indicative of the degree of satisfaction of the individuals in the current family system (Shir, 1999).

A study undertaken on 87 sociology students from the USA aimed to find a correlation between the type of family evaluated via the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems and religiosity. Inter-confessional marriages registered lower functionality levels than marriages within the same faith. It is possible that, due to differences regarding religious convictions, conflicts arise, conflicts which may influence the cohesion levels, which, in turn, lead to reduced functionality levels of families (Coldwell, 2004).

METHODS

Designing the sample

The data has been collected between 2011 and 2012, in the following cities: Bucharest, Craiova and Satu Mare, as well as in the rural area, in the communes of Cioroiaşi (Dolj County), Stolnici (Argeş county) and various communes in Satu Mare county. When choosing these locations it has been taken into account that these statistical units have certain socio-demographical and cultural characteristics, such as the age of the settlement, the density of the population, the access to transportation by car, by train and by plane, its rank according to the Plan for national territory arrangement – all of these features offering them a certain specificity (Figure 3).
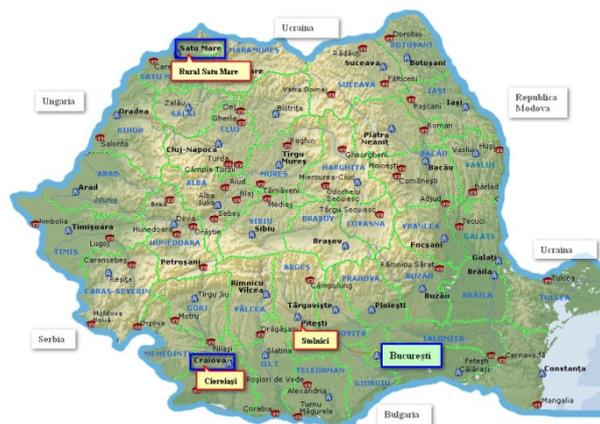

Figure 3. The localities from which research subjects were selected
<http://www.rovt.ro/romania_map_ro.htm>

The sample, unrepresentative for the entire country, is comprised of N=1215 subjects, 672 from the urban environment, and 543 from the rural environment. The subjects are 18–74 years old; the draw up of these age limits has been done taking into consideration the official age of adulthood and the average life span at the national level in 2008, which was 73,03 years (women – 76,68 years, men – 69,49 years) (***The annual Romanian statistic directory, National Statistics Institute, 2009).

Random sampling stratified according to gender and age group was used. Subjects were selected relatively homogenously within these layers (Table 1).

Table 1

Subject distribution according to gender, residence environment and age group

Basic structure of the sample		Age groups (years)					Total
		18–24	25–34	35–49	50–59	60–74	
Male	N	51	97	110	44	39	341
	%	15.0	28.4	32.3	12.9	11.4	100
Female	N	59	93	108	44	27	331

	%	17.8	28.1	32.6	13.3	8.2	100
Total Urban	N	110	190	218	88	66	672
	%	16.4	28.3	32.4	13.1	9.8	100
Male	N	55	48	73	47	42	265
	%	20.8	18.1	27.5	17.7	15.8	100
Female	N	77	59	56	51	35	278
	%	27.7	21.2	20.1	18.3	12.6	100
Total Rural	N	132	107	129	98	77	543
	%	24.3	19.7	23.8	18.0	14.2	100

Furthermore, the obtainment of a balanced configuration according to the educational level was pursued throughout the sample group.

Of the 672 subjects from the urban environment which answered the FACES III questionnaire, 324 subjects were selected to participate in focus group type interviews, 108 from each settlement – Bucharest, Craiova and Satu Mare. Each interview group comprised 9 subjects. In order to allow the delineation of the family models according to generation, the choice was to pursue a distribution as even as possible, with respect to gender and age group. The individuals which were widowed or divorced, in consensual union or which have received counseling or psychotherapy services were not interviewed. 72.8% of the subjects were married. 197 persons with children, married or in a consensual union of over three years described their current family (family of procreation). 127 persons without children (married or not married) recounted and answered thinking of the family in which they grew up (family of origin).

Measuring instruments

FACES III is comprised of 30 items, 16 of which evaluate cohesion, and 14 of which evaluate adaptability (Olson 1993; Olson 1991; Ravi & Shirali, 1992; Rodick & Henggeler, 1986).

The cohesion parameter is evaluated through two items at a time, which correspond to the following eight concepts: emotional bond, family bond, coalitions, time management, space, friends, decision making and interests (leisure, relaxation, hobbies). The flexibility parameter is evaluated through two or three items at a time, corresponding to the following concepts: assertiveness, leadership, discipline, negotiation, rules and roles. The item answer variants are displayed on a Likert type scale of 5 intensities, starting from 1 (Never) to 5 (Almost Always).

Through the structured (focused) interview, the interlocutors were asked to recount about communication, cohesion and flexibility in their families, based on an interview guide with specific questions regarding: boundaries between family members, availability to share space and time with other family members, the emotional bond and the ability to adapt to change. For the interview guide, ten questions concerning cohesion, five concerning flexibility and six concerning communication within the family were used, inspired by FACES III. The scale used within the interview guide to evaluate cohesion and communication ranged from 1 to 8, where 1 was very low and 8 was very high. The flexibility scale represented the inverted version of the one designed to measure cohesion and communication.

The objectives of the study are: 1) Analysis of family types according to FACES III. 2) The influence of residence environment, age and gender on adaptability and cohesiveness. 2) Identifying the evaluating power of FACES III in comparison with the results obtained by interview.

The study fills a vacuum, due to the fact that only a few studies have been identified in the scholarly literature which would evaluate the conjugal and family systems in Romania, based on FACES III. Furthermore, this study represents the introduction to the following study, which will be undertaken using FACES IV.

RESULTS

Analysis of family types according to FACES III, within the entire sample

The registered scores within the cohesion parameter are indicative of a relatively egalitarian distribution of disengaged 28.5%, separated 29.6% and connected families 28.6%, enmeshed families being the least frequent 13.3%. Concerning the flexibility parameter, the highest share was registered by the chaotic families 37.6, with relatively equal shares concerning the structured (27.2 %) and flexible families (24.4 5%). The rigid family is the least represented 10.9%.

The distribution of the family models according to the Circumplex Model within the entire sample it is represented in Figure 4. Are predominant the Chaotically Connected model (234 families) and Structurally Disengaged model (156 families).
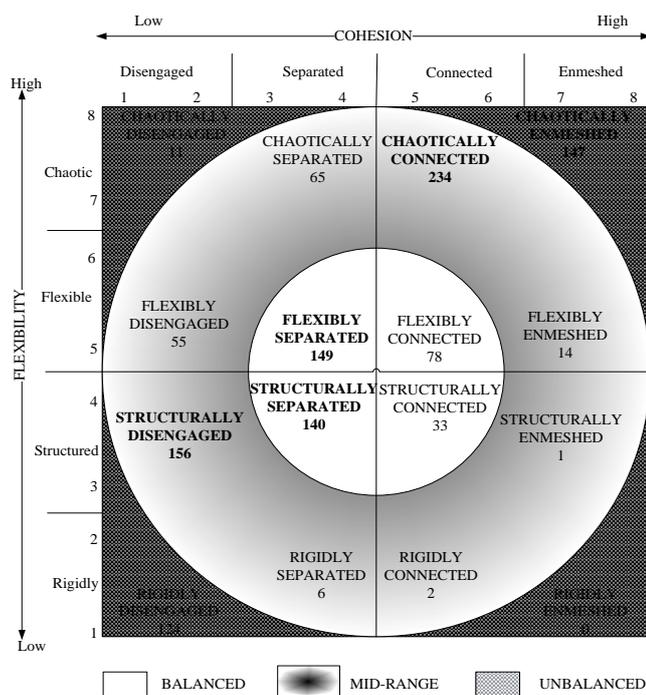

Figure 4. The distribution of the family
models according to the Circumplex Model
within the entire sample

Throughout the sample, most families function according to the Chaotically Connected model. The average to high cohesion score is indicative of a bonded family, which would be characterized by emotional closeness with a certain degree of separation, loyalty being expected. The involvement is strong but personal distance is allowed, affective interactions being preferred. The conjugal relationship is described as close, with a certain degree of separation. The parent-child relationship is close, with clear generational demarcation. The family is more often together than separated, more often inside than outside the family. The very high Flexibility score is indicative of a chaotic family, which would be characterized by limited

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leadership, unsuccessful parental control, and laissez-faire leadership, very tolerant, with lengthy negotiations or impulsive decisions, less clear roles, often changed or inconsistently applied. Table 2 shows a predominance of the Mid-range and Balanced functional families

Table 2
The distribution of FACES III family functioning types

Family functioning types according to FACES III	N	%	% Cumulative
Balanced	400	32.9	32.9
Mid-range	533	43.9	76.8
Unbalanced	282	23.2	100
Total	1 215	100	

Analysis of family type according to FACES III, based on residence environment and age groups

Represented on the histogram, the 16 family models are indicative of a higher concentration within the urban environment of the Structurally Disengaged model (Figure 5). Families in the urban environment tend to do less well concerning the cohesion and more well concerning flexibility (adaptability).
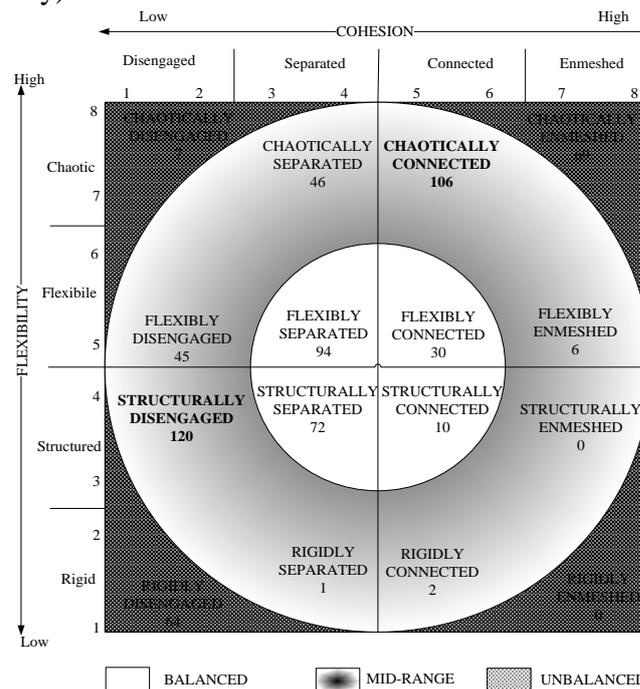

Figure 5. The distribution of the Circumplex Model family models in the urban environment

The family functioning model which prevails throughout the sample, Chaotically Connected, predominates in the rural environment as well. Mainly, it is characterized by healthy cohesion (low to average scores) and too high flexibility scores (Figure 6).
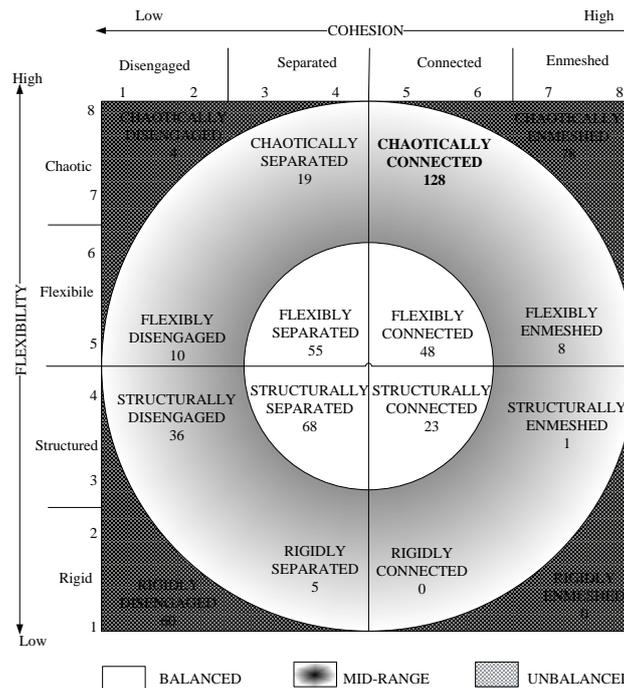
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Figure 6. The distribution of the Circumplex Model
family models in the rural environment

The Mid-range type families and Balanced type families is larger in the urban
environment (p<0.01) (Table 3).

Table 3
The distribution of the family functioning types, according to FACES III, based on residence
environment

Family functioning types according to FACES III	Residence environment		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Balanced	51.5	48.5	100
Mid-range	61.2	38.8	100
Unbalanced	49.6	50.4	100
Total	55.3	44.7	100

At the beginning of the study, we launched the hypothesis that within the conjugal and the family systems, the two parameters – cohesion and flexibility – would be different in a statistically significant way, according to the age groups of the subjects. However, when analyzed separately, the hypothesis was confirmed only regarding the flexibility (adaptability) parameter. Thus, the intensity of the cohesion tends to be distributed homogenously within age groups, throughout the sub-models. From a cohesion point of view, the largest share – 58.2% – is held by the connected sub-model family type, identified in individuals over 35 years old.

The statistic is indicative of significant differences (Pearson Chi-Square=16.504, df=3, p=0.001), the rigid sub-model family type being characteristic for persons aged 35 or younger (Table 4).

Table 4

The distribution of the flexibility sub-models according to the Circumplex

Flexibility sub-models according FACES III	Age groups (years)		Total
	<=35	>35	
Chaotic	42.2	57.8	100
Flexible	45.3	54.7	100
Structured	47.0	53.0	100
Rigid	62.1	37.9	100
Total	46.4	53.6	100

Model (FACES III), based on age group

Concerning functionality, the family type differs according to the age group, the Unbalanced type holding a larger share in families comprised of individuals aged 35 or younger (Pearson Chi-Square=7.815, df=2, p=0.020) (Table 5).

Table 5

The distribution of the family functioning types, according to FACES III, based on age group

Family functioning types according to FACES III	Age groups (years)		Total
	<=35	>35	
Balanced	47.5	52.5	100
Mid-range	42.4	57.6	100
Unbalanced	52.5	47.5	100
Total	46.4	53.6	100

Cohesion, Flexibility and Communication within the sub-sample used to conduct the interviews

According to FACES III, within this sub-sample, which took part in the focus groups, the Structurally Disengaged and the Chaotically Connected family models are predominant (Figure 7).
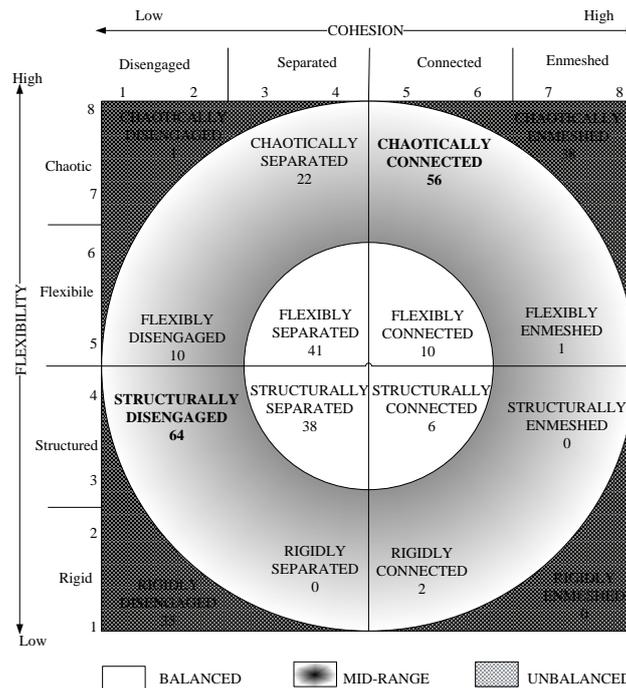
Low   COHESION   High

| Disengaged 1 2 | Separated 3 4 | Connected 5 6 | Enmeshed 7 8 |

High

Chaotic 7

| CHAOTICALLY DISENGAGED | CHAOTICALLY SEPARATED 22 | CHAOTICALLY CONNECTED **56** | CHAOTICALLY ENMESHED |

6

Flexible 5

| FLEXIBLY DISENGAGED 10 | FLEXIBLY SEPARATED 41 | FLEXIBLY CONNECTED 10 | FLEXIBLY ENMESHED 1 |

4

Structured 3

| **STRUCTURALLY DISENGAGED** **64** | STRUCTURALLY SEPARATED 38 | STRUCTURALLY CONNECTED 6 | STRUCTURALLY ENMESHED 0 |

2

Rigid 1

| RIGIDLY DISENGAGED | RIGIDLY SEPARATED 0 | RIGIDLY CONNECTED 2 | RIGIDLY ENMESHED |

Low

☐ BALANCED   ■ MID-RANGE   ▨ UNBALANCED

Figure 7. The distribution of the family models according to
the Circumplex Model, within the interviewed sub-sample

Almost half of this sub-sample is part of the Mid-range family type.

Within the interviews, it can be observed that circa half of the interviewed individuals described a family with very high cohesion, very low flexibility and average to high communication (Table 6).

Table 6
The distribution of cohesion, flexibility and communication scores obtained via the interview

Intensity	Cohesion		Flexibility		Communication	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very low	4	1.2	166	51.2	12	3.7
Low, To medium	34	10.5	102	31.5	52	16.0
Medium, To high	126	38.9	33	10.2	186	57.4
Very high	160	49.4	23	7.1	74	22.8
Total	324	100.0	324	100	324	100

Almost three quarters of the interview participants described their families as very cohesive, regarding the following four aspects: 1) emotional-affective closeness; 2) family member interaction; 3) relationships between parents/spouses/partners; 4) relationships between parents and child/children. In most discussions, the evaluation tended towards a scale with very high scores (7, 8). The introduction of the symbiotic attachment concept into the discussion, by the moderator, highlighted the fact that they feel love towards the family and its members, a healthy, secure attachment and belief that they find love within their family, they find the affective environment which they need and that they are not dealing with symbiosis. The Balanced cohesion did not correlate with the satisfaction within the couple. The interviews were indicative of the fact that high couple satisfaction levels were correlated with extremely cohesive

couples, with balanced flexibility. Furthermore, all those who awarded maximum scores to the four relationship aspects describing cohesion, affirmed the presence of the inter-generational support, the perception of the family as a nurturing environment of affection and the fact that they had not seen their parents hitting each-other or heard them quarrelling.

The other six items used to determine cohesion within the family system, regarded the family members' internal and external demarcations. The scores drop to 5-6. Thus, the following aspects tend to be average to high: the physical and emotional space, intimacy, communal decision making, communal interests, and reference for communal rather than separated activities.

Regarding the settlements, within groups, a low cohesion expression was evident in Bucharest and very high cohesion expression in Satu Mare. The tendency for men to describe less emotional involvement between family members than women was noticed. Once more, no specific elements based on age group regarding cohesion intensity were identified in communication transactions during interviews.

Also, in the case of the individuals with children, an enmeshed type of cohesion was expressed, the subjects focusing the discussion towards their children, their importance and their dedication to them. The average age was 46, and for most of them, the happiest events of their lives were "the birth of their children, grandchildren" and "my marriage, my children's/grandchildren's marriage".

The individuals without children, homogenously expressed a very high enmeshed type cohesion and average to high connected type cohesion, highlighting however more personal autonomy. The average age was 25, and for most of them, the happiest events of their lives were "getting into college, graduating from college, academic and professional achievements".

Over half of the participants in the interview described their families as displaying a very low flexibility regarding control, discipline, negotiation and rules, which corresponds to the rigid sub-model. This was expressed throughout the discussions through a remarkable respect towards rules, which once established, must be respected. The children's position is subordinate to the parents, their role being to execute, the parental control being of authoritative type. These opinions were expressed just as strongly by individuals with and without children.

Within the groups, the most traditional in respecting discipline, roles and rules was the group from Satu Mare, followed by the group from Bucharest. In Craiova, a tendency towards negotiation and democratization was identified.

Regarding the couple and the family, women expressed more flexibility and tolerance, whereas men exhibited a more pronounced tendency towards imposed decision and authoritarianism. Circa half of the interviewed individuals confessed that they have occasionally used corporal punishment in order to correct behaviours and to impose discipline. The group from Satu Mare expressed greater agreement regarding the statement that "the woman must take care of the household and raise the children, because that is the custom". "The woman is better than the man at these activities, what would a man do surrounded by pots and pans, he'd be more of a bother..." Also, the group from Satu Mare expressed total agreement with the statement "a woman cannot make a decision without the husband's approval, because he is the head of the family". The interchangeability of roles between the partners, identified within the Bucharest and Craiova groups, had different motivational expressions. In Bucharest, the situational motivation was expressed in a natural way, whereas in Craiova, the motivation of the egalitarian role distribution and the interchangeability were expressed rather in a more vindictive fashion, from positions denoting gender frustrations. In the case of the Bucharest group, comments such as these were recorded: "Of course we help each-other; he does the shopping according to a list drawn by me, I cook, he does the dishes, I lay the table; I like it for us to be complementary in what concerns certain things and alike regarding others; I wouldn't like staying in a relationship in which I would have to ask the other one to do something just because I liked it." "We have

days in which we meet common friends, and days in which I meet up with the girls and him with the boys, and when we see each-other again, we have more energy." "In our household, my parents are very particular about respecting schedules and rules; this taught me to be methodical, which helps me gain time, so I don't regret having been scolded, punished, when I would break promises."

In the case of the Craiova group, comments such as the following were recorded: "Gone are the days when the woman would tend the pot and be a servant, let them pull their weight around the house too, football games and beer won't cut it anymore." "If he has fun, I have fun too, if he works, I work too, but I like it when he admires me, when he appreciates how well I'm doing."

The discussions based on the six items which evaluate communication have shown that more than half of all participants described an average to high communication within the conjugal system. Only 12 persons described a very low communication in their family. Men and women thought similarly with respect to communication, considering that their family promoted respect, appreciation, confessions about oneself and one's feelings. However, women complained that often their partners would not listen carefully and empathically, often feeling they were doing monologues rather than establishing a dialogue with their partners. On the other hand, most men considered it quite tiring for them, even frightening, to speak about emotions so much. The highest communication potential was recorded within the Craiova groups. Communication within the families of procreation of older persons with children was described in the same positive terms the younger persons without children, used when describing their families of origin. The main theme of communication within the families was the raising and the education of children and the attributing and distribution of domestic roles. The interview participants, who were married with children, mostly stated that they had discussed the number of desired children and aspects of family planning with their partner, as well as selecting the preferred contraception method.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The results of applying FACES III on the entire sample are indicative of the lowest representation of the families belonging to the enmeshed and rigid sub-models, which denotes a democratization and autonomy of parental, communication and role exertion styles, a transition from the traditional to the modern family. The fact that over three quarters of the subjects described their family as FACES III Balanced and Mid-range denotes the fact that the Romanian family has good closeness and adaptability potential and a healthy functioning method.

2. Results following the application of the interview guide indicate, in almost ½ of the sample, low-to-medium and medium-to-high scores regarding the cohesion and flexibility, which would correspond to the Mid-range type; for the Romanian family, this is also indicative of good emotional and adaptive resources. A good communication potential of the contemporary Romanian family is indicated by the fact that over ¾ of subjects obtained average-to-high and low-to-average scores regarding this parameter.

3. The small size of the population, the ethnographic and folkloric traditions, smaller challenges regarding interior displacement etc. have determined that, habitually, the rural environment be regarded as more poetic, emotional, cohesive, settled, quiet, etc. Contrary to expectancies, this study shows that the Mid-range and Balance functioning potential is higher in the urban environment. A possible explanation is the massive migration abroad of the adults in the rural areas, in search of employment. An overwhelming majority of children and adolescents are being raised by grandparents, and authentic physical contact with parents is established only about twice a year, at Easter and Christmas (Gulei, 2011).

4. Some details are necessary regarding higher rigidity among younger persons between 18 and 35 years. Probably they adopted a lifestyle with strict rules and roles. Statistically, for most people, this interval is concentrated on professional and family adaptation, intensifying professional experience, emergence of the parent status, and only around the age of 35 does certain stability occur. Another challenge is finding a balance between the career and the family life, which can lead to difficulties within the couple.

Secondly, it may be that this rigid family sub-model, resulting from a description of low flexibility intensity, is apparent precisely due to the perception of the external pressure in order to record and manage these new identities to the best of one's ability. Just as there is a biological clock, there is also a social clock, represented by social norms connected to each stage of development to which the individual relates in order to evaluate the degree of similitude of one's own evolution. An event occurring prematurely or with delay most often creates discomfort, which explains this rigidity, be it self-perceived or self-imposed (Neugarten, 1979; Barrett, 2005; Ciobanu, A.M., Popa, C., 2013).

Thus, it seems that the difference between the families' functioning modality is not defined by cohesion, but rather by the measure of the status and role changes taking place during this time, by the amount of flexibility.

5. The fact that, during the interviews, the highest share of uninvolved, emotionally disengaged families with very low cohesion scores, named via FACES III as the disengaged sub-model, was recorded in Bucharest may be an indicator of marital dissatisfaction (Craddock, 1991). This very low cohesion within Bucharest groups may also be a risk factor for heart health, studies showing an association between arterial hypertension and low marital cohesion (Baker et al. 1999). A possible explanation is the throbbing rhythm of the Romanian capital, with the highest number of inhabitants, the most important educational center and the most important national and international road, railway and air transport node in the country (Institutul National de Statistică, 2009).

The fact that in Satu Mare a very high expression of cohesion was recorded, along with the affirmations regarding the domestic roles, is more an indicative of a traditional family model (Fowers &Olson, 1993).

Satu Mare County is located in a border area with a high rate of prevalence of the temporary migration abroad. In this context, expectations would have leaned towards a modern and postmodern family model, with more autonomy and less cohesion. In spite of this, the area is one of the most steadfast keepers of the ethnographic and folkloric traditions, the local population's solidarity being well known (Direcția Județeană de Statistică Satu Mare).

Furthermore, along with the Romanians and the Orthodox Christians in the Satu Mare area, a large part of the population is comprised of ethnic – mainly Hungarian – and religious – mainly reformed, Roman-Catholic and Greek-Catholic – minorities. As a result, another aspect which should be considered and should represent a research subject in the future is the influence of the religious and ethnic allegiance on the family type (Walsh, 2010). Being sensitive to ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, FACES III is especially useful in the comparative research on immigrant families.

Gender differences concerning woman's increased need for emotional closeness and higher tolerance may be explained via the traditional distribution of the affective role of the woman within and without the family unit.

6. The main problems which the FACES III evaluation raises on one hand, and highlights in comparison to the interview scores and the descriptions within the interview discussion, on the other hand, are those concerning the cohesion and the flexibility extremes. Around half of them have obtained very high scores with respect to cohesion and flexibility, and the majority of the interviewed individuals described their family as cohesive and rigid, but, through FACES III, the

majority of the families are recorded as moderately cohesive and chaotic. Thus, yet again, the highest difference is due to perception of flexibility.

The results obtained through interviews seem to contradict Olson's statement that very high cohesion, corresponding to the enmeshed sub-model, is unhealthy. This is only partially true, because in this model the types of families are combinations between cohesion and flexibility sub-models and are not taken separately. Only very high (enmeshed) or very low cohesion (disengaged), in combination with very low (rigidity) and very high flexibility (chaotic) indicate an Unbalanced family.

Thus, we can affirm that the relevant family is situated in one of the 16 family categories, but not that the four extreme family models are Unbalanced or unhealthy families. It might be that these four family types (high scores, very low scores) are faced with a difficult life event, which determined them to be that way in order to "function". For Romania, a good example is represented by the grandparents who are required to completely replace the absent parents, left to work in other countries. The parents - children contacts only occur during the two great religious celebrations – Christmas and Easter, when they can afford to return to Romania. On the one hand, through a desire to cope, grandparents may adopt a rigid educational system. On the other hand, the grandparents may adopt a very close emotional style, in order to compensate for the absence of the parents. Additionally, the grandparents are also parents with children situated very far away which can lead to them projecting all the love they cannot offer their children towards their grandchildren. In Romania, the situation of the families with members working abroad, as a result of the lack of resources, has been a way out of poverty, or a means to survive, but has had unwanted effects on the relationship between family members and most of all, on children.

The partial inconsistency obtained between the data collected via interviews, when compared to the data obtained from the FACES III family subtypes, shows the importance which should be given to doubling the application of the evaluation scale with interviews. For example, in the current case, marital satisfaction was associated with very high cohesion and positive connotations were attributed to very low flexibility. Also, the fact that marital satisfaction was correlated with very high cohesion suggests that a family will function well if its members' expectations are met by that family, even if it exhibits an extreme model.

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