Nidhi Gulati
University of Delhi, Indie
arnav24g@gmail.com
DOI: 10.17399/HW.2017.163702

Autonomy of the Family in the Modern World

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this article is to understand autonomy of the family in the 'modern' world by locating the family in the historical changes that led to its present form. The autonomy of the family was shaped in two ways, as collective *mentalitiés* and as private space.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The present research problem concerns an important inquiry into the private space of the family and the role of the state in shaping and governing the individual by intervening in the family. The paper uses the method of historical inquiry and analysis of reference literature.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: After having defined the aim of the study and the fundamental concepts (modernity, autonomy, *mentalitiés*) there has been presented the psychogenic history of the family in the context of France. This is followed by the presentation of changes in *mentalitiés* and private space in the family, with a special emphasis on the changing focus on the child in the family. The essential part of the argumentation was also to build the concept of autonomy through the changes in *mentalitiés* and private space that unfolds in three stages of the psychogenic history of the family.

RESEARCH RESULTS: The result of this argumentation is the autonomous space of the family in the modern times, which is impacted by the state and popular culture.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: This analysis confirms the changes of autonomy in the family from the middle, to the modern and across the contemporary times through the conceptions of (i) collective *mentalitiés*, (ii) private space and sociability *and* (iii) governmentality. It argues that ever since the turn of the modern, the family has never been autonomous, though in law it appears to be a 'private space'. Family in the contemporary times is insidiously governed by messages and images that circulate in media. Autonomy of the modern family has always been under threat. The arguments point to the necessity to question and problematize the contemporary conceptions of family and the child as mirrored in the domain of popular culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to explore the underlying meanings associated with autonomy of the family in the modern world. The conceptualisation of the modern often implies break, a detachment from the continuity that history gives us. This break is characterised by the alienation from the social-ethical bonds and the community at large along with the de-sanctification of spaces that were once shared with the community.

To delve into the nuanced understanding of this dynamic, the chapter explores three differentiated but interrelated strands. The first strand explores 'modern' as understood in the works of Foucault and Ariés. The second strand attempts to delve into the history of 'what is thought about' (or the *mentalitiés*) the family and the child in social and cultural worlds. This is traced through three evolving frameworks – Middle Ages, the Modern and the Late Modern. The discussion is primarily centered on the examination of the family with particular focus on the contemporary family. The third strand examines in depth the gradual separation of private and public space vis-a-vis the family in the modern. What was once demarcated as a closed space, that is the family, began to be recognized as a 'private space' and the café as the 'public space'. Sociability in both these spaces gradually decreased. These two aspects are discussed with reference to the work of the demographic historian, Phillipe Ariés. Further, the third strand focuses on one of the *mentalitiés* which is that of 'governmentality'. This attempts to understand the relation between state and the family. It draws upon Foucault's conceptions and later research on his work which show the ways in which the state, directly or indirectly interferes, regulates and controls the family.

2. The conception of the 'modern' and 'mentalitiés'

Before we proceed to the basic ideas of family in the modern times, there should be made two significant points:

a) In order to best argue about family in the modern, it is important to theoretically understand the conception of the modern. Modernity as

Foucault traces in his works, is defined by the development of new power techniques which exercised control on the individual and not the group or community. This technique to make/create/develop/identify individual subjects first originated in Christianity. Foucault calls this power technique Pastoral power.

> This is due to the fact that the modern Western state has integrated in a new political shape an old power technique which originated in Christian institutions. We can call this power technique the pastoral power (Foucault, 1982, p. 783).

Foucault, thus, paradoxically traces the birth of modernity in the sacred spaces of the religion. This pastoral power of Christianity, whose one example is that of confessions, was different from what religions had offered till then. It was a form of power which looked after/the individual rather than the whole community and was ready to sacrifice itself for the community rather than asking sacrifice from the community.

According to Foucault (1982), the concept of pastoral power had twin essential aspects: one being that of its sacred religious nature and the second that of its functions. He writes,

> ...but I think we should distinguish between two aspects of pastoral power – between the ecclesiastical institutionalization, which has ceased or at least lost its vitality since the eighteenth century, and its function, which has spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution.

Foucault traces this genealogical history in such a way that losing this religious nature actually worked better for perfecting these power techniques. This resulted in the establishment and development of the modern-nation state, compensating for the lost socio-ethnic bonds. Religion and sacredness gave way to the universal rational moral claims adopted by the judicial-legal processes. Thus, modern institutions could no longer be sacred and ritualistic overtly and thus they became de-sanctified. This de-sanctification helped in the spreading out of these insititutions This compartmentalization, is visibly evident in the case of family.

b) The family in history can best be approached through changing attitudes to the family through the past few centuries. This is what Ariés terms as *mentalitiés*.

Ariés belonged to the *School of the Annales* and was the pioneer in ushering in history in the form of the *'mentalité'* strand (the history of

ideas). Mentalitiés (Fr. *Mentalité*', translated as sentiment) refers to the attitudes and sentiments towards families and children. Mentalitiés, is an Arien framing of the social and cultural problems and issues of everyday life, like the dynamics of the family relations, sexual habits and morals, attitudes towards, dying, death, grieving and the rise of the concept of privacy, which are important for understanding the history of the family. He later reframed the history of the family within the context of 'private life'.

Ariés imagined this kind of historiography as 'a new kind of intellectual history for our times' (Hutton, 2004, p. 3), or the history of *mentalitiés*. It was a revisiting of the historical past of the family in the context of changing everyday life in the family to frame an approach towards the dilemmas of the then present time. Ariés showed how history could help in acknowledging both – the unchanged and the changing aspects of human life, especially in connection to the family. According to Ariés, *mentalitiés* was not just about the ways of everyday life. It also included changes in a more expansive cultural life which impacted everyday life.

In the History of Childhood and the Family, Ariés highlighted the 'modern' family and continued it in his later work, along differing lines of enquiry: the crisis of the contemporary family, changing relationship between love and marriage, and historical wedging of the private and public life. In his later writings, the sentiment approach (or the collective *mentalitiés*) made room for the 'private life'. Through this extension Ariés extended the scope of cultural history. Ariés' interrogation of the emergence of the division between private and public life is the larger frame within which the history of the family was placed. Thus, we establish that autonomy can be understood as 'privacy' (or private space) as he locates the present of the family in how it has shaped over the centuries, with changes unfolding gradually.

After having established the two important assumptions about interrogating the family, by peeking into attitudes towards it, and effects of power in the context of the modern, we now dwell on the psychogenic history of the family.

3. Psychogenic history of the family

The magnum opus of Aries' work is 'Centuries of Childhood' first published in 1962. Childhood, in Ariés' work was only one aspect of his broader interests in the family, and the family in turn one theme among many in his wider interest in the history of private life (Hutton, 2004). In his initial years, Ariés attempted to build a history of the family through examining

attitudes towards the child. He was particularly concerned with, 'family as an idea' rather than 'family as a reality' (Ariés, 1962, p. 9). He further explored relations within a family, and 'ideas entertained by these relations', which may be 'separated by lengthy periods of time' and the 'history of the concept of the family' (Ariés, 1962, p. 9-10). Ariés wrote at a time when the family was threatened and decadent with the spread of modern ideas. In the 1960s, during the aftermath of the wars, the family began to be seen as ancient but was threatened as divorces were on the rise and parental authority had weakened. However, Ariés argued that family was never as important as it became in the modern times. He argued that 'family occupied a tremendous place in industrial societies and that it had perhaps never before exercised so much influence over the human condition' (Ariés, 1962, p. 10). He asserted that the 'idea of the family, which was 'one of the greatest forces of our time, family freed itself from law and biology and became necessary, and became a value, an expression, an occasion of emotion' in modern times (Ariés, 1962. p. 11).

Ariés demonstrated that the concept of childhood is a recent invention, arguing that it emerged slowly between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Ariés related this development to changes in society, especially the family. The family was gradually deprived of its economic functions but was strengthened and isolated as a unit of affection and love after industrialization.

Family in the modern transitioned from an open unit in a closed community to a closed unit in relatively open communities. These can be seen as trade-offs that constitute the modern condition and globalisation is but one effect of it. This did not imply that there was no idea of family before, or the sentiment of family is completely different from the pre-modern. According to Ariés, there exist two aspects of family, one being biological and the other social (1962). In the shift from the middle ages to the modern times, it is the social function of the family that has changed. This change is inherently linked to the desanctification of spaces in which family existed making it possible for law to share a relationship with the community at large. This void that desanctification has left has been filled by affection, love and sentiment.

The functions of love and affect which were shared among the community members came to be located within the space of the family. Thus the family, for Ariés, came to be a 'prison of love' where a child had to love his/her parents and a 'refuge' from the outside world. He further points out how discussions of emotional compatibility would have been seen as immoral in the middle ages. It was not just romantic love between the

conjugal couple, but even with children the feelings of love and affection were not considered necessary (Mousseau, 1975, p. 54). This change was egged by the secular conception of the family that the state needed. This secular conception was made possible by the dropping of the ecclesiastical aspect of pastoral power as Foucault (1982) points out; and secluded the family from the community, making it a closed unit that needs these other things like love, affection and the figure of the child, which compensate for the loss of community roots.

3.1. Family and community, and the construction of childhood

Ariés' work spreads across a vast historical canvas of seven centuries. He examines children's dress, games, and past-times; art and paintings; tenets of sexual behavior; educational policy; social and economic activities. All these are analyzed within the ambit of family and childhood. He uses voluminous data to arrive at his thesis. He writes,

> However, how was I to discover, in the documents of the past, references to things which were too ordinary, too commonplace, too far removed from the memorable incident for contemporary writers to mention them? Our experience of the modern demographic revolution has revealed to us the importance of the child's role in this silent history. We know that there is a connection between the idea of childhood and the idea of the family. We were entitled to suppose that this connection also existed in a more distant past and to estimate one with the help of the other (Ariés, 1962, p. 10).

Ariés examines attitudes towards the child at the centre of the study of the family. This unfolded gradually, as in the modern the child found no legitimate space either as a thinking rational being or as a contributor to the industrial production. This unrecognised space of 'deviance' that child came to occupy, was filled with 'love' and 'emotions' instead. The child was placed at the centre of the private space of the family, where the parents fussed over the bringing up of the child, invested emotions and affection in the child. Aries' work on *mentalité* spurred a lot of research. For instance, deMause (1995) peered into history to look at adult-child relationships to argue that the history of childhood is a history of progress regarding parent-child relations and attitudes towards children. According to deMause,

> The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the

level of child care, and the more likely the children are to be killed, aban-doned, beaten, terrorized and sexually abused (p. 1).

The progress, thus was the location of the child at the centre of the family, which became as sanctum of 'private space'.

3.1.1. Segregation of child from other adults

At the end of the 18th century and during 19th century, family was considered a means of separating the child from society in order to se-cure social advancement through education. Ariés shows in Centuries of Childhood that the conception of the child as innocent and in need of protection from contamination by society is a modern invention which emerged in Europe in eighteenth century. According to Ariés, the concept of childhood as a special stage of human life did not exist in the medieval age (Ariés, 1962).

For Ariés, the segregation of the young is an important aspect of how family developed its private domain. A significant way in which Ariés dis-tinguishes modern childhood is by arguing how children were not kept away from games and past-times of the adults as well as sexual matters.

In the middle ages, children participated in games, past-times of the adults without any differentiation. Ariés writes,

> A compromise was arrived at in the course of the seventeenth and eig-hteenth centuries which foreshadowed the modern attitude to games, an attitude fundamentally different from the old. It concerns us here because it also bears witness to a new attitude to childhood: a desire to safeguard its morality and also to educate it, by forbidding it to play games hence-forth classified as evil and by encouraging it to play games henceforth recognized as good (Ariés, 1962, p. 81-82).

In discussing games and pastimes, Ariés argued that it is through the objects that the nature of the individual and profanity get linked. With the loss of sacredness, individualism rose, and in this backdrop, the notion of the self gained significance.

> Later this game (boys jumping on skins filled with wine and girls swinging) lost its religious symbolism and its communal character to become at once profane and individual. In the process of becoming profane and individual, it was increasingly confined to children, whose repertory of games beco-mes the repository of collective demonstrations which were henceforth abandoned by adult society and deconsecrated (Ariés, 1962, p. 68-69).

To show how the child in the middle ages was not segregated from adults especially with reference to sexual matters, Ariés dwells at length on the socialisation of the aristocratic child in France, Louis XIII. The child's doctor, Heroard maintains a diary in which he describes in detail the everyday life and activities of young Louis XIII. As a young child, Louis is learning to dance, play the violin and play tennis. He enjoys singing songs, playing with dolls, having fun with soldiers and also gambles in games of chance. Louis has many servants and maids including a nanny to tend to his needs and care for him. His interactions with them are free, open and uninhibited. In these interactions, he is also learning the secrets of his body. Ariés (1962) writes,

> Louis XIII was not yet one-year-old: 'He laughed uproariously when his nanny waggled his cock with her fingers.' An amusing trick which the child soon copied. Calling a page, 'he shouted 'Hey, there!' and pulled up his robe, showing him his cock.
> He was one year old: 'In high spirits,' notes Heroard, 'he made everybody kiss his cock.' This amused them all (p. 100).

In the first three years of Louis' life, everyone at the palace, which included servants and family did not feel reticent in touching his 'sexual parts.' Louis knew how babies were made, had made everyone at the court laugh with his first erections and had 'explored' private parts of some men and women (Ariés, 1962).

The data about Louis XIII and other children that Ariés presented reveals that in medieval society children were not kept away from sexual matters. Ariés talks especially about the boys who were played around with till age seven. The children did not live in 'an age of innocence' and the parents, nannies, staff and servants, courtesans all interacted with the child freely. In fact, the (male) child was more or less expected to take his place in adult society at a very young age. The Sex was accepted as natural, and an inseparable part of life and sexual matters were not to be hidden away from children. Moral vicissitudes did not exist to bother a child below the age of seven years. These realities changed in the modern world. By the eighteenth century, firm rules were established to show what was considered appropriate behaviour with children, and that they were to be kept away from low social classes and servants. Concomitantly, changes in the school and college organization, segregation of children and adolescents, the advocacy of monastic-like lifestyle among the scholars gained momentum and contributed to change in these attitudes (Schnell, 1977).

The child learnt the tricks of his trade or craftsmanship by being an apprentice of other adults in the community. At the beginning of the 15th

century this situation changed, and in the contemporary times, the separation from adults is extreme. In the middle ages, the school was not meant for children but had religious functions, and produced trained clerks and clergy, and scholars. Students of all ages mingled in classes and groups were not decided according to age. The modern times, were the time of beginning of school, where the child was separated from adult society and put in a school.

Foucault (2006) refers to this phase of transition as the great confinement, which includes schools and psychiatric hospitals, a place where social misfits or deviants were sent to. Schools were invented for shutting away children.

This began in 17th century, whereafter the family was completely transformed, as its economic function remained but educating and socializing functions gained importance. Attention to children and affection was placed above other functions. Ariés argued that the family in the modern times, had set for itself high standards for the preparation of the young for the adult life, a 'high pedagogical mission' (Hutton, 2004, p. 153).

3.2. Family as a 'prison of love' and a refuge

The first argument that Ariés puts forth are two opposing conceptions of the family in the modern world, which are: family as a prison of love and family as a refuge. After changes in the family for many centuries, Ariés positions the family in the modern as struggling between two opposing ideas. The family is growing tighter and becoming more limiting and narrow in its emotional claims. The opposing stress to this growing closeness is more like a prison revolt. These aspects are discussed at length after first highlighting the changes in the family between the middle ages and the modern.

The family till the seventeenth century provided neither education nor love, but was planned around various other functions, which included participation of family members in activities of daily life, viz. farm-work, craftsmanship or trade; the defense of the family in troubled times; and the protection of family name and honour. After the initial years of being taken care of by the family during which children needed a lot of care; community took over the care of the children. The child was always with other adults, beyond the family, and was free to choose who he/she could be attached to. There was no compulsion to love one's parents. Thus, the major function of the family was 'economic'.

Ariés illustrates this by citing instances where women who were wives of master craftsman, married the chief craftsman in case their husbands died, so that the work would not suffer. When a tax collector or inspector visited the family, everyone in the family would speak for the family as safeguarding the honour of the family was paramount. The affection towards family members was important but it was not a priority amidst other functions that the family performed. The child inherited property from the family members. One of the most important function of the family was economic, and not emotional. The family wanted to further their trade, craftsmanship, and conserve and transfer property, to have stability and continuity in the working community. Love or affective ties were not the mainstay of the family, and its sustenance (Mouseeau, 1975)

In this period, the child was not segregated from other adults in the community. This mingling coupled with the lack of both privacy and importance to conjugality of a couple had pertinent implications. Sex, or sexual knowledge was not a taboo, till the authority of the church deemed sexual matters as discretionary, and forbidden in presence of children.

Community life was felt through common bonds, where relatives, neighbours, customers and clients formed distinctly close social groups. The community did not share the same house as the family, but was geographically closely knit. The child lived and grew up in an extended group, which was more spread out than the family. The family extended into a group. The Western patriarchal family, according to Ariés traced its lineage through the mother or the father, and the collective was not formed through generations of families.

An important change in the modern family is the conception of the family as a closely knit unit, where a child doesn't have the option to choose who he/she can love. The child lives in the 'prison of love', and is not left with choices but to reciprocate the affection and attention of the parents towards him. The conjugal couple comes to occupy a space as an essential unit of everyday life. The family in the modern times, is thus, closed as compared to its previously warm hearted human community.

In the middle ages, society was not a space of violence and aggression, but was easy to live in. Violence rose only in the 20th century; where in response to social aggression, family became a refuge from the outside harsh public world.

The wife's space in the family of the middle ages, where she was husband's companion and associate, also included important socializing and educating functions. The wife's role changed with the change in the nature of the agrarian family in the modern where she became more confined to the home. This is in contrast to the modern period, where the

relationship between parents and specifically mother centered around the child and in his care, education and social advancement. In return for their emotional investments in the child, they demand child's affection. The reciprocity in the relationship is thus, implicit.

3.3. The family in the modern times: emergence of family as a private space

The changes that unfolded in the family from the middle ages to the modern opened it up to recognise and provide for the contrary needs of private and public life. The family, within the ambit of the private life, had a unique task before itself, which was the socialisation of the child that nurtured their initiative so that they become responsible adults who contribute to society, in the public sphere.

The task was onerous as it was antithetical to the new nature of the family as a private space. Concomitantly, the family, in the ambit of its private space, also had set before itself the task of continuity of community knowledges, traditions and ways of living. Thus family had to foster both 'individualism' and 'sociability', and tread constantly between these two spaces. Individuality had to be fostered without stifling community bonds. The small communities, corporate guilds and groups bound by religion were dissolving. Ariés argues that the modern family began to be shaped like a micro-community, which tried to replicate the 'sociability' that was waning in the public realm. The family as a unit, in the modern, was imbued with responsibilities and accountability to society. Ariés writes that the family in the modern, was a shrine of private space amidst distant and detached public spaces; and had to figure out ways in which to make linkages with the larger social spaces, so that the aggression and violence in them were controlled and contained (Mousseau, 1975).

Ariés revisited his model of the modern family in the 1970s to locate the pressing issues which tended to pull the family apart. These were the increasing permissiveness of parents, adolescents had begun to feel estranged and lost, the rise of disenchantment in women regarding domesticity, domestic violence and increase in breaking up of families (Hutton, 2004). This family of the 1970s was increasingly invaded by mass culture, which also thwarted its autonomy (Aries, 1979). Unable to protect its autonomy and 'private' space, the family appeared vulnerable and. The increasing consumerism and the general belief that 'good living' is modern living, full of affluence and domestic possessions has changed the family significantly. The family sought its own pleasure and indulgence.

These changes further make the family turn 'inward'. The initial roles and responsibilities of socialisation and preparation of the young ones were relegated as not so important.

The contemporary family, of the 1970s and 1980s brought the locus of attention back to the adult, who pursued their own lives, without compromising themselves for the sake of bringing up children. The child was thus ousted from its prominent place in the family, which was claimed by the adults for themselves. The child became more and more a load, a weight, and parents wanted to spread their own wings. Individuality of the adults was at the centre-stage; personal wants took privilege over responsibilities towards society. This ebb was accompanied by another withdrawal – that of the adults from the civic sphere. The modern family had a significant function to reconcile the wedge between private and public life, which was threatened in the contemporary family (Aries, 1962; Hutton, 2004).

The contemporary family no longer had a stake in the public realm, and thus became increasingly subject to governmentality, and came to be positioned at the receiving end of policy of the state (which claimed to be a welfare state). The modern family felt autonomy and valued its private space. The state in the modern has configured its role in dealing with delinquencies and did not interfere with the family per se. In the contemporary family, this began to change, and the state acquired policing functions and came to define norms and standards for the family. Ariés located the state within the ambit of the dominant culture, which had a role in 'planning, organisation and calculation' (Aries, 1977). Within this role, the state exerted a relentless pressure on present day social conduct, standards and thus, reconstituted and refigured what life in the family looked like.

3.4. Governing the Family

Two illustrative examples are being provided here to argue first how the state and later, the dominant culture governs the family. First, is the emergence of certain disciplinary areas, viz. psychology in the nineteenth century. Within psychology, a trajectory began to focus on children and their development through the twentieth century (Burman, 2007). The description of the progressive development of child from immature to mature, from savage to civil, from dependent to independent further reified the ideas of ideal, normative childhoods and has been called the developmentalist order. Further, the ideal/normative child contained and

embodied the gradual acquisition of intelligence, reason, emotion, morality, and stable attachment(s) to primary caregivers; all of which were to be developed in interactions with adults and in formal and informal settings of care and education. Burman (2007) argues that the research focus on 'attachment' and other such family based topics helps maintain psychology's gaze on particular units of people, without further locating them in the larger purview of social action and responsibility.

In keeping the idea of the 'ideal/normative' child as its center, developmentalism has produced newer categories in which children now began to be placed as: (i) categories of deficit: learning disabled, attention deficit, slow learners, mentally disabled; (ii) categories of deprivation: poor and abandoned children, rural children (lack of access to resources and institutions) and (iii) children lacking a 'childhood': street children, working children (Baker, 1998).

Deviance from the norms and values posited in developmentalism is construed as 'loss of childhood' or a 'deficit' and needing intervention. Thus the new disciplines, like developmental psychology produced not only definitions of the normal, and the standard, but by corollary produced what was deviant and deficit. Through an analysis of social practices using Foucault's technologies of power, Rose (1999) shows how conceptions of control and discipline of populations in modern societies can be juxtaposed with the disciplines, which include psychology, medicine, psychiatry and criminology. He refers to these as the 'psy' disciplines, as these disciplines frame and take forward the knowledge claims and practices of these new human sciences. The knowledge in these disciplines helps define what is 'normal'.

The second illustration to support this argument comes from how ideas and practices of social control travelled and operated through the family. Sexual waywardness is labelled and control maintained through ridicule. Every culture has swear words which serve this function, some of which are bastard, urban waste, driftwood, base and pigs reek of this control. These swear words carry the ridicule by operating on the child who is borne out of wedlock and carries connotations of the stigmatised identities. The memory and stigma of their mothers' acts of sexual and social transgression and sin travel with the children all their lives.

Popular culture has deceptive impact on families as they spread trite, predictable categories and examples of what it means be a good woman, a good man, a good citizen and also what it means to have a 'good life'. The need for social order and its efficient heightened the sense of organisation, time, order and pace, which affected everyday family life. In the contemporary decades, the banal, easy life of casual living changed

and instead got replaced by complexity which included acquisition of consumer goods and creating a private space based on consumerism.

In the modern world, privacy gradually diminished. Ariés dwells at length on the historical emergence of private space emerged in the modern world. In the middle ages, the community did not demarcate private and public life and there was sociability in open community spaces. Ariés terms this sociability as a milieux, which saw the mixing of work and play. In the modern world, social life assumes disjointed forms of work and home. Both at work and at home, there was scope for sociability, which had now divided to the private and the public sphere. The sociability in private was relegated to the family or the space of the home; and in the public sphere was assigned to the café. Conviviality thrived in the modern society of the 19th century. Both the spaces of the home and the café escaped social gaze. The modern scheme of scrutiny, social control and regulation included most social and cultural aspects of life, but excluded the home and the café (Ariés, 1981). The family was granted this privileged space by right, and the café claimed this space in actual life (Mousseau, 1975).

In the 1970s, or the time of contemporary family, with the increase in social order and efficiency, sociability waned. This can be seen in the lack of spaces for free mingling of people, and indulging in socializing or play. The street became a space to travel between work and home, and each of the latter, there was an increase in order. Cafés disappeared and diminished in their significance; thus changing the landscape of autonomous spaces in the public realm. Concomitantly, Ariés argues that in the contemporary family, the desire for consumption is strong in the private life which is coupled with an equal rise of tenacious work in public life; both marked by an absence of sociability (Aries, 1979; Mousseau, 1975). Thus, Ariès offers a structuralist account of how the distinction between private and public life gradually came to be, through gradual change in mentalitiés'.

Thus, the parent's authority shrank considerably, with the family's role and responsibilities in the socialisation of the young ones declining. Instead the family became an object of open scrutiny and governmentality. The family came to be seen as an instrument of authority.

3.5. Governmentality: Link to the child and the family

The second argument that this paper puts forth is that of a certain kind of mentality, in Foucauldian terms 'governmentality' had become 'the common ground of all modern forms, of political thought and action'

(Rose, Malley, & Valverde, 2006, p. 86). Governmentality, he argued, was an "ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power... " (Foucault, 1979, p. 20).

Rose uses Foucault's notion of governmentality to argue that psychology and its knowledges has acted as a form of regulation (Rose, 1999). Foucault developed the notion of governmentality in his later work. It refers to the "contact between the technology of domination of others and those of the self" (Foucault, 1988). These are ways in which the state exercises control over, or governs, the body of its populace. Where technology of domination of others refers to power systems which dominate the individuals and lead them to particular ends and those of the self is the individual's ability to effect themselves in order to attain certain states like happiness, wisdom, perfection etc. (Foucault, 1988). It is this technology which puts these external modes of power inside the self of the individual controlling his body, not by putting this external power out on the body directly, which require excess of pain, but by internal modes of power, that discipline the body to attain particular external ends. Modern nation-states have perfected this technology which has its roots in pastoral power. Governing in 'modern societies' – is based on knowledge, and scientific knowledge more specifically, this knowledge is based on *historical a priori* – which are preconceptions arrived at historically, over time. This knowing comes from historical archives of knowledge.

The concept of governmentality is directly linked to the freedom of the subject, as in modern societies freedom doesn't merely mean freedom from powers that act on the body but also freedom from modes of power that become internal, disciplining us, by making contact with the technologies of the self that take us to happiness and wisdom. The freedom of the subject has its relationship to others, thus, it constitutes the ground that ethics covers. Political power has been understood as a state of domination, which lies in the relationship of the self to the self, as explained by Foucault:

> I am saying that 'governmentality' implies the relationship of self to itself, and I intend this concept of 'governmentality' to cover the wide range of practices that constitute, define, organize and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other (Foucault, Rabinow, & Faubion, 1997, p. 67).

Foucault uses the concept of government or 'governmentality' as a 'guideline' for his analysis, by historically reconstructing the period starting from Ancient Greek through to modern neo-liberalism (Foucault). The semantic linking of governing ('*gouverner*') and modes of thought ('mentalité')

indicates that study the technologies of power cannot be studied without an analysis of the political rationality that form its foundation. This is understood to include agencies, procedures, institutions, legal forms, etc., that are intended to enable us to govern the objects and subjects of a political rationality. Governmentalitiés is thus, a political rationality itself and it constitutes the intellectual processing of the reality which political technologies can deal with. In his text, 'Governing the Soul' Rose critiques that it is the 'psy disciplines and psy expertise have had a key role in constructing 'governable subjects'. Psy, here, is not simply a matter of ideas, cultural beliefs or even of a specific kind of practice.' He says that these knowledges have led to the practical management of human beings, helping organise and administer individuals and groups within schools, reformatories, prisons, asylums, hospitals, factories, courtrooms, business organizations, the military, the domesticated nuclear family. Each of these practices depends upon the co-ordination of human conduct and the utilization or reform of human capacities in relation to certain objectives 1. Rose (1999) argues how we govern our souls is linked deeply to how we become political subjects, and these practices are not innocent of power.

He carries out an analysis of the problematizations, explanations (theories and truth statements), technologies (assessment, reform and pedagogic procedures) and practices (knowledge practices, webs of representation and regimes of truth) to show how psy disciplines have produced the "particular, and often novel, ways of understanding the human beings who are the subjects of regulation'. He further argues how actual subjects are fabricated, human men women and children who are 'capable of bearing the burdens of liberty' (Rose, 1999, p. viii).

Rose (1999) shows how childhood is the most intensively governed part of personal lives. Varied aspects of lives, such as health, welfare, socialisation have been in varied ways and different routes linked to the development of the nation and the responsibilities of the state. The 'modern child' is the center of many projects that aim to protect the child from physical harm, danger, sexuality. The state and society continually make efforts to make sure that the development of its children is 'normal' and 'healthy' and to help augment the capacities of intelligence, educability and emotional stability.

---

[1] See Nikolas Rose, (1999). Rose provocatively asks, "What kinds of creatures have we become, the men and women who inhabit our present? How do we understand ourselves, and how are we understood by those who would administer, manage, organize, improve, police and control us? What kinds of presuppositions about human beings are built into our practices of production and consumption, of pedagogy and reform, of pleasure and erotics? And what images, values, beliefs, norms do we employ when we think about, enact and assess our existence?" (p. 8)

These projects have been motivated by anxieties concerning children, and have worked by moulding the domestic lives of their parents. The child, as an idea and as a target, has become inextricably connected to the aspirations of authorities.

The ways in which the families and the state are regulated are:

a) Through financial regulation, which include allowances to family, pedagogically through programmes directed at parents-to-be.

b) Through legislative obligations imposed upon the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children in order to instruct in conduct and to supervise, evaluate, and rectify childhood pathologies, labour laws.

c) Through the visit of health visitors to exercise a surveillance, in principle comprehensive and universal, over the care of young children, the health and family welfare machinery, immunizations and maintenance of health records.

d) Through child protection legislation (Rose, 1999).

Through these varied and unequivocally accepted interventions, families are subject to medical, health, sexual and conjugal norms imposed by the state. Deviance from these is considered as 'loss of childhood' or a 'deficit' and needing the intervention of the state. These interventions have simply been assimilated in the agenda of the welfare state in the third worlds, without first examining their relevance, or the implications that such adoptions may have. Theorizing in the third world has now begun to problematize these developmentalist and regulatory notions and practices.

An illustrative instance from research of this concept is discussed here. Donzelot (1979b) deployed Foucault's conception of governmentality to understand the technology of 'insurance' and how it is linked to the development of the social. 'Insurance' produces a mathematical algorithm in order to diffuse the cost of redressal or compensation of injury or loss of life to 'all social partners through a calculated distribution'. It thus, changes the social and political imaginary and augments it to security. Within the ambit of this new technology, mechanisms such as social service and social security are invented (Donzelot, 1979a; 1979b; Rose, Malley, & Valverde, 2006).

3.5.1. Production of normal and deviance

In the 1970s and 1980s many instances of children's physical and sexual abuse and neglect within the family came to limelight, further highlighted in court cases and media. At the same time, there were lot

of protests against the increased surveillance on the family by powers of the state. Proponents of the family argued for the right of the family towards its 'private' space and 'autonomy'.

Today, the role of the family is therapeutic and pedagogical responsibilities towards the children, and cases of abuse and neglect point towards the psychopathology of the individuals in these families. Expression of violence and sexual desire towards children of the family are considered 'abnormal' and not just a consequence of ignorance of certain families. The family can then be healed and contained by a 'loving devoted mother' in a normal home, where the therapeutics of normality are operated. As Rose (1999) writes,

> The family is simultaneously allotted its responsibilities, assured of its natural capacities, and educated in the fact that it needs to be educated by experts in order to have confidence in own capacities. Parents are bound into the language and evaluations of expertise at the very moment they are assured of their freedom and autonomy (p. 208).

The counter discourse, steeped in the liberating, humanistic arguments of child welfare has been critiqued stating that it is couched in paternalism of the state. Critiques of welfare came from the proponents of welfare themselves arguing that it did not work, and that the control and regulation over families often heightened their problems. The very mechanisms that intended to 'help', 'assist' and 'provide welfare' dubiously worked to label, marginalise, stigmatise and vilify abnormality, delinquency or deviance. This further often led to the aggravation of aberration. Children who were pulled from families were placed in foster families or reformation centers, which further heightened the complications for the child. Rose (1999) writes, "It seemed that the state, by its intrusion into the family, could actually make good situations bad and bad situations worse" (p. 210).

Freud, Goldstein and Solnit (1980) also argue that law does not have the capacity to deal with the intricate complex family relationships especially between the family and the child. As a consequence of the widespread critique Social Security laws across US and UK were modified in the 1980s so that the state does not appropriate the rights of the family in the interest of welfare. The rights of the parents to speak for their children were protected in these legislations and amendments.

After the direct intervention of the state was limited, the modern state found newer languages, images and ways to continue its gaze on the family. The family continues to be fiercely governed, not overtly, but through the furtherance of certain subjectifications. These subjectifications, *mentalities* and sensibilities circulate and travel in our social and cultural

worlds, thus impact how children and families are seen, understood and imagined. Some such spaces are the media images circulating around.

As the documents of popular culture, media, films, internet, public speeches, magazines lay bare the cultural policies of which children form a subject. The representations of poor destitute delinquent children and families persist in the plethora of images around us. The wide-eyed faces of these children and families stare at us from magazines, covers of the reports of non-governmental organizations, bill-boards, television screens, newspapers, and posters and cards appealing for sympathy and funds. Aesthetics operates through evoking emotions like guilt, desire and fear by managing expectations, which find their way into our sensibilities about the child and the family as governable subjects (Ranciere, 2004).

However, governmentality is not just about regulation, surveillance and social control. It is also about freedom. Governmentality is about the protection of freedom in the private space. Rose argues for the bringing back the constructive space that governmentality offers more than just a site of resistance; by deploying it for the production of freedom. Rose writes that,

> Subjects were obliged to be free and were required to conduct themselves responsibly, to account for their own lives and their vicissitudes in terms of their freedom. Freedom was not opposed to government. On the contrary, freedom, as choice, autonomy, self-responsibility, and the obligation to maximize one's life as a kind of enterprise, was one of the principal strategies of what Rose termed advanced liberal government (Rose, Malley, & Valverde, 2006, p. 90-91).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Autonomy of the family is a tenuous notion, which carries within it inherent paradoxes. The further back in history we travel, there appears to be more autonomy in the family. This is specifically seen more when the bonds between the family and the community are not so rigid and tight. Thus progress towards modernity though it appears to have more freedom, has in reality increased interference on the family and the 'gaze' upon it. The family, as a space in the modern is subject to governmentality which is not apparent at the surface. The autonomy of the family has been threatened by both, the policing functions of the state, and the indirect governmentality of the family.

A close understanding of the cultural politics of the modern world requires a teasing apart of the meanings that policy, popular culture, specifically media portrayals carry and circulate. These meanings may have originated in the

policing function of the state, but were strengthened by 'regimes of power' and 'knowledge systems' of the modern world. The knowledge claims create the 'ideal family', and within it, the 'good woman' 'the perfect man' and the 'ideal child' are generated in popular media forms. Inherently lurking behind these are messages of normality, deviance within the discourse of modernity. It is thus, necessary to question and problematize the contemporary conceptions of family and the child as mirrored in the domain of popular culture.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ariés, P. (1962). *Centuries of childhood*. London: Harmondsworth.
Ariés, P. (1977). Apropos de *La Volonte´de Savoir*. *L'Arc* no. 70, 32.
Ariés, P. (1979). The Family and the City. *Crite`re* no. 25 (Spring 1979), 251-255.
Ariés, P. (1981). *The Hour of our Death.* (Helen Weaver Trans.) New York, NY: Alfred Knopf.
Baker, B. (1998). *Childhood-as-rescue and Teacher-as-redeemer: a history of the present*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Burman, E. (2007). *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*. New York: Routledge.
Donzelot J. (1979a). *The Policing of Families.* New York: Pantheon Books
Donzelot J. (1979b). The poverty of political culture. *Ideol. Conscious*, 5, 73-86.
Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage books.
Foucault, M. (1982). Subject and Power. *Critical inquiry* 8.4.,777-795.
Foucault, M. (2006). *Madness and Civilisation* (English Translation). France: Pantheon Books.
Foucault, M., Rabinow, P., & Faubion, J. (1997). *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, 1954-1984. London: Allen Lane.
Goldstein, J., Freud, A., & Solnit, A. (1980). *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child*. London: Burnett Books.
Hutton, P. (2004). *Philippe Ariès and the politics of French cultural history*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
Mousseau, J. (1975). The Family, a Prison of Love: An Interview with Phillipe Ariés. *Psychology Today*, September 1975, 53-58.
Rancière, J. (2004). *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. (Gabriel Rockhill Trans.) New York, NY: Continuum.
Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self.* 2nd edition. London, New York: Free Association Books.
Rose, N., Malley, P., & Valverde, M. (2006). Governmentality. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science 2*, 83-104.
Schnell, R.L. (1977). Integrating Concepts of Childhood and the History of Education. *The Irish Journal of Education / Iris Eireannach an Oideachais*, *12*(1), 51-68.