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Cultural Philosophy and the Effective Implementation of Policies to Build Happy Families in Urban Areas

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Abstract

This research will consider from both theoretical and practical sides the implementation of Criteria Framework for happy families in HCMC from the perspective of cultural philosophy. Specifically, in this work, the author will try to demonstrate that family not only should be regarded as the unit of society but as a “cultural cell,” where values are established, negotiated, transferred and reproduced [1, 2]. In view of urbanization processes, growing international integration, and cultural diversity, the Criteria Framework cannot be considered as an administrative tool only but as a tool fostering the consolidation of families and creation of urban cultural identity as a means of sustainable development. According to cultural philosophy, not the prosperity alone but the harmo-

nious development of the personality, values, and relations between people within families and outside them defines the notion of family happiness [3]. In this study, I will identify challenges that could impede the implementation of the Criteria Framework. The most crucial are cultural conflicts, reduction of spirituality, community irresponsibility, and age pressures in the city. This research concludes that construction of happy families in big cities should be conducted via integration of policy, culture, and philosophy. In such a way, it became evident that the values are vital for the sustainability of family evaluation criteria.

Keywords: criteria framework, cultural philosophy, happy families, urbanization, Ho Chi Minh city

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Ho Chi Minh City has been paying increased attention to the development of family policies based on the formation of «prosperous, progressive, happy, and civilized» families as an important basis of sustainable urban development [4]. In this connection, the Criteria Framework for building happy families has become a powerful tool for guiding family development, ensuring social cohesion and spreading cultural values in urban areas [5]. However, in addition to the need to implement policy instruments and indicators for family assessment, the question arises about the nature of family happiness and the factors that can facilitate or hinder its realization in the rapidly changing context of urban society.

Family happiness should not be considered a static concept and be reduced to formal adherence to certain criteria for evaluating the level of welfare and social activity in the family. In fact, happiness is generated by the processes of perception, adaptation, interpretation, acceptance, and application of criteria in concrete cultural realities. Thus, for example, the implementation of the Criteria Framework for building happy families in a large and complex urban center such as Ho Chi Minh City is a process influenced by many processes related to the ongoing processes of urbanization, migration, globalization, technological modernization, and international integration.

These processes open up new opportunities for personal and family development but also generate certain problems related to the collision of different cultures, the predominance of pragmatic interests over the principles of moral values, the erosion of traditional values and family ties, the weakening of collective consciousness, and other issues characteristic of the urban environment. In this regard, it becomes necessary to use the tools of cultural philosophy for the analysis of the problem of implementing the Criteria Framework and overcoming the problems arising in practice.

Ho Chi Minh City provides an ideal background for studying this issue since it is one of the most dynamic cities in Vietnam with respect to both cultural processes and socio-economic transformations. Due to its characteristics, Ho Chi Minh City is experiencing profound changes that affect family values, happiness, and other key aspects of cultural development. In particular, new forms of social stratification and migration, the growth of the middle class, gender and ethnic diversity, population aging, and a number of other trends require careful consideration of family happiness as a cultural category.

This paper explores the implementation of the Criteria Framework for building happy families in Ho Chi Minh City using the tools of cultural philosophy. This article will try to demonstrate that the implementation of policy criteria can and should be considered a cultural process aimed at creating a cultural and philosophical basis for promoting family development, nurturing personal values, maintaining positive family relationships, and preserving cultural continuity and integrity. First of all, this article seeks to clarify the cultural-philosophical basis of the effectiveness of implementing the Criteria Framework for building happy families in urban conditions. Next, the article identifies and analyzes the main problems and challenges facing families in Ho Chi Minh City. Finally, the paper offers several measures aimed at overcoming the identified challenges and promoting family development and happiness.

2. METHODS

The current research employs a qualitative and interpretive research methodology grounded in an interdisciplinary approach involving cultural philosophy, family studies, and urban studies. In particular, theoretical analysis, synthesis, interpretive analysis, and text analysis will be employed to analyze the Criteria Framework on constructing happy families in Ho Chi Minh City from the perspective of relevant policy papers, reports, and academic sources related to theories of family, culture, happiness, and urbanization. These research materials have been carefully selected in order to provide a basis for theoretical analysis of the concepts of social and cultural family happiness in light of their respective policy context and theoretical framework. To achieve this goal, the core values underpinning the Criteria Framework will be identified and interpreted using selected theoretical perspectives, namely Aristotle's ethical theory of virtue [3], Clifford Geertz's interpretive method of culture [6], family function theory [1], and family resilience theory [2]. The empirical measurement will not be conducted in this study as it is primarily focused on the conceptual analysis and theoretical interpretation of family happiness.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, CHALLENGES, AND POLICY DIRECTIONS

3.1. RESEARCH OVERVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

The international research on the issue of family happiness proves that the well-being of families is influenced by numerous factors. From the economic perspective, happiness is affected by financial stability, while the ability to cope with crisis is discussed by family resilience researchers [1, 2]. From the point of view of social psychologists, family well-being results from good interpersonal relationships within the family [7]. Moreover, some recent research has revealed the connection between the well-being of families, cultural values, and generation differences in global cities [7].

On the one hand, numerous researches consider the issue of happy families in terms of social sciences and psychology. On the other hand, there is still no cultural philosophical conception that could explain the process of the creation of happy families. However, since urbanization causes demographic changes, families' needs and cultural preferences change considerably in megacities of developed countries. Consequently, the implementation of the family policy and the development of family well-being do not depend exclusively on formal criteria established by law. They also require the understanding of cultural and philosophical peculiarities of families.

In this way, the article suggests adopting cultural philosophy as the key perspective of the analysis. From the point of view of cultural philosophy, the family is a social institution as well as a cultural space where values can be generated, communicated, and transformed over generations [1, 8]. Thus, happy families will be analyzed not as economically successful groups of people, but as morally happy families, the happiness of which is determined by the well-being of the members, their personalities, mutual respect, and social engagement.

From the point of view of cultural philosophy, urban families can combine both traditional values and modern values. Families in the city of Ho Chi Minh can adhere to traditional values related to respect for parents, faithfulness, responsibility, and unity. Modern values like equal status, personal dignity, autonomy, and democratic discussion also influence family life. As a result, happy families of Ho Chi Minh City will be considered in the context of the process of mediating the values inherited from previous generations with the help of modern social relations.

Thus, applying cultural philosophy to the study of happy families, the Criteria Framework for building happy families should be treated not as an instrument of assessment. Cultural philosophy allows considering the framework as an opportunity to make families think about proper behavior, mutual responsibility, equality, spirituality, upbringing of children, and community life. As a result, the Criteria Framework becomes a mechanism that promotes value consensus, humane family relations, and cultural identity.

3.2. CULTURAL-PHILOSOPHICAL MEANING OF THE CRITERIA FRAMEWORK

First, the Criterion of respectful and equal conduct in families is rooted in the moral foundations of family relations. According to the cultural-philosophical approach to happiness, relationships between people, families, and communities should be characterized by mutual respect, concern, responsibility, and acknowledgment of the human being. Thus, a family cannot be happy if relations among family members are filled with violence, oppression, discrimination, or constant conflicts. The application of this criterion should thus go beyond behavioral compliance and involve ethical education and humane communication practices within the family.

Second, material stability remains an essential element of the Criteria framework for achieving family happiness, yet it is insufficient when considered independently from spiritual and cultural aspects. Indeed, Aristotle believed that happiness was more than a feeling or temporary satisfaction with the current state – it was a form of human flourishing that required virtue, practical wisdom, and balance of life [3]. In terms of applying this idea to family relations, material stability is certainly important, but it needs to be accompanied by a person's moral development, ability to demonstrate responsibility, and willingness to care for family members.

Third, the criterion of spiritual harmony and child education is associated with family reproduction and the transmission of cultural traditions and values from generation to generation. As it was mentioned above, a family remains the primary environment for the acquisition of language skills, manners, affection, sense of responsibility, and cultural identity. However, if family life loses its spiritual component due to excessive economic pressure or competition among family members, it will be impossible to achieve happiness at the level of community and society. Accordingly, cultural philosophy emphasizes the need for a communicative and harmonious family environment in which members can exchange values, attitudes, and sense of responsibility to others and society.

Finally, the criterion of community responsibility implies the participation of the family in the broader social and communal processes. Family is not cut off from society – on the contrary, it is an integral part of community and contributes to the development of social and civilized urban culture. In such a highly populated megacity like Ho Chi Minh City, the implementation of the criteria framework should contribute not only to strengthening the family but also to community responsibility.

3.3. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE CRITERIA FRAMEWORK IN HO CHI MINH CITY

In its practical implementation in Ho Chi Minh City, the Criteria Framework faces various obstacles associated with fast urban development, economic pressure, changes in demographics, and cultural shifts. These obstacles, however, extend beyond technical difficulties and represent more profound contradictions within the value frameworks and daily practices of urban families.

Firstly, there exists an obstacle in the form of unequal and dangerous family practices. Culturally-philosophically

speaking, the family represents a sphere where one must develop virtues of character, respect, and mutual affection. Nonetheless, domestic violence, pressure, gender inequality, and intergenerational strife persist. These phenomena undermine the family foundations from the standpoint of moral values, directly contradicting the criterion of respect, equality, and civility. It is also evident that the framework's implementation is possible not only through successful public communications and instructions but also requires attitudinal and habitual change in family dynamics.

Secondly, there arises an economic obstacle of considerable importance. As a powerful center of Vietnam's economy, Ho Chi Minh experiences great pressure from the necessity to engage with urban economic conditions. Families encounter increasing pressure related to their professional success, employment, accommodation, childcare, medical assistance, and other factors. Economic pressure may undermine the process of family interaction, communication, and participation in cultural activities, depriving families of the opportunity to develop stable and harmonious relations based on mutual respect. From a culturally-philosophical standpoint, the problem is related to spiritual neglect caused by excessive attention to the matter of survival.

Thirdly, there appears to be a cultural obstacle of particular importance due to Ho Chi Minh's unique cultural situation. The city is known for the interaction between local, modern, national, global, collective, and personal value systems and practices. Different lifestyles, consumption tendencies, educational programs, working habits, family perspectives, and other factors may create substantial gaps in family value bases and lead to misunderstandings. While this obstacle does not mean the absence of family values, it implies that the framework must account for cultural-philosophical aspects of Vietnamese family interactions.

Fourthly, there is an obstacle related to the spiritual neglect of family responsibilities toward society and the spiritual life of community members. Urbanization results in faster and less personal lifestyles, reducing families' opportunities to engage in meaningful spiritual interactions. Moreover, an ageing population increases the requirement for family assistance and support and places additional stress on families and public organizations. Spiritually and philosophically, the problem lies in the question of continuity of Vietnamese virtue-based family culture.

As seen above, the obstacles facing the implementation of the Criteria Framework are diverse in nature but share common cultural-philosophical roots. Thus, in addressing these obstacles, one must focus not only on achieving certain practical goals but also on connecting with the lives of families.

3.4. POLICY DIRECTIONS FROM A CULTURAL-PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to make the Criteria Framework more effective, the city will need to approach happy-family policies as part of the cultural process, rather than purely administratively. In particular, there are three main directions to consider.

Firstly, it is necessary to create the conditions for the intergenerational dialogue of family members and people in the wider community. Instead of the imposition of the values of one generation on the other, this dialogue will be the key tool to establish the values needed in the family. This may be done by organizing community programs aimed at bringing generations together, including intergenerational family dialogues, helping elderly people gain digital literacy skills, cultural storytelling and education. This approach allows preserving the valuable aspects of the traditions of the older generation while engaging the young people in developing their new cultural knowledge and capabilities.

Secondly, in promoting family policies, one should pay more attention to the spiritual life and personality of its members. The cultural philosophical approach suggests that happiness is impossible without material wealth, spiritual development and caring relations. Families are to maintain common cultural traditions like reading, discussing the ideas, participating in public events, creative activities, and educational cooperation between parents and children. Libraries, parks, community cultural centers and public education programs can assist the families in implementing these values.

Finally, in realizing the potential of the Criteria Framework, it is necessary to ensure stronger collaboration between families, communities, and the government. While the family is an integral place for care, education, and value transfer, it cannot take responsibility for the development of children, migrants, elderly people or disadvantaged communities. Communities can offer necessary support networks in this situation, while the government will strengthen this process with the help of policies for welfare support, family education, old-age care, healthcare and cultural provision.

Overall, the analysis above shows that cultural philosophy makes it possible to understand how to create social conditions for building happy families, rather than focusing solely on checking whether families satisfy certain criteria.

4. CONCLUSION

Thus, the present article has attempted to examine the process of implementing the Criteria Framework for building happy families in Ho Chi Minh City from the perspective of cultural philosophy. On the theoretical level, this work has shown how the family could be perceived not only as an institution of social reproduction or as an economic entity, but also as a "cultural cell", where values are created, exchanged, negotiated and transferred to the next generation [1, 8]. In terms of cultural philosophy, the happiness of a family is more than material wealth and comfort; it refers to personality

growth, spirituality, ethics and balance between individuals, families and society.

In such a way, the findings demonstrate that the Criteria Framework is not only a tool for evaluation. It is also a cultural instrument that is capable of supporting the cohesion within families, promoting humane relations between people and helping form the basis of sustainable urban cultural identity. However, in the current situation in Ho Chi Minh City, the process of implementing the criteria framework encounters several serious challenges, such as domestic violence, gender discrimination, economic pressure, conflicts between generations, loss of spirituality, etc. They reflect the general transformation that takes place in the life of urban families due to their adaptation to modern realities and traditional values.

It is worth noting that overcoming the above-mentioned obstacles requires a combined effort of different spheres, such as policy-making, cultural development, philosophy, etc. Creating dialogue between generations, developing spirituality and moral standards in the family and creating family-community-state partnerships might be regarded as important steps towards successful implementation of policies aimed at happiness. This strategy could prove to be efficient because it will guarantee that the Criteria Framework becomes humane, flexible and adequate to the socio-cultural realities of Ho Chi Minh City.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this study has limitations caused by its qualitative and interpretive nature. Its main advantage is the possibility of deep theoretical analysis, interpretation of public policies and evaluation of texts. However, it is necessary to develop the topic further by using empirical techniques and conducting field surveys among urban families. Comparison with other large cities of Vietnam and other countries might also be helpful.

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