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sous la direction de  
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**Family in the scientific literature of British Journal of Sociology of Education : Tendencies and perspectives for the field of Sociology of Education during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this paper is the detection of issues concerning the relationship between family and education as they have been presented in the literature of the British Journal of Sociology of Education (BJSE) during the first decade of the 21st century. Specifically, in this paper we investigate and discuss the following research questions : (a) what is the orientation and the subject matter of the articles published in BJSE in the mentioned period concerning family, (b) what are the theoretical and methodological tools used by the authors for carrying out these studies, (c) which is the gender identity of the authors of these papers, and (d) which are the geographical areas in which these studies have been carried out and referred to and what is the position held by Greece and Cyprus among them. For approaching and analyzing our data and finding answers to the above questions we used the method of content analysis as the most proper for this kind of research.*

### **Keywords**

Family, Sociology of Education, British Journal of Sociology of Education

### **Introduction**

Family constitutes the first, determinative and fundamental socializing factor of young person (Hughes & Kroehler, 2007 ; Nova-Kaltsouni, 1998). In fact, from the view of Sociology of Education, it is recognized that family relationships, influences and contributions are decisive for the educational course and the future professional outlets and choices of children (Kyridis, 1996, 1997 ; Papakonstantinou, 2007 ; Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2005, 2010 ; Pyrgiotakis, 1998).

In this paper we focus our interest on the approach, study and analysis of the scientific literature which refers to family and has been published in the content of the most significant – from the side of scientific prestige – journal of Sociology of Education in Europe. In particular, our purpose is to assess, by taking into account the content of the valid scientific journal British Journal of Sociology of Education (BJSE), the contemporary scientific theoretical and research interest about the relationship concerning the triangle : family, school and child during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The purpose of BJSE is the development of a worldwide dialogue about issues of sociological theory and research during the almost 34 years of its function as it has been published every year since 1980 (British Journal of Sociology of Education, n.d.).

### **Theoretical considerations**

According to Bernstein (1999), scientific knowledge belongs to vertical discourse and is distinguished from horizontal discourse which belongs to everyday knowledge. Vertical discourse, namely scientific knowledge, is divided into two distinguishable categories of knowledge :

(α) In hierarchical knowledge structures which relate to physical sciences. This category of knowledge constitutes “coherent structures of knowledge which are

systematically organized according to clear notions and principles" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 157). And,

(β) In horizontal knowledge structures that "take the form of *specialized languages, each one of which includes specialized ways of systematic research and specialized criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as it happens in the case of social and anthropological sciences*" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 157). The science of Sociology is placed in the category of horizontal knowledge structures (Bernstein, 1999) since the theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches are different between scientists who, for instance, work on the basis of structure-functional scientific paradigm, the Marxist conflict approaches, the hermeneutical approaches, the weberian or the combined approaches (Hughes & Kroehler, 2007 ; Giddens, 2002 ; Lampiri-Dimaki, 1990 ; Lamnias, 2002 ; Moore, 2004 ; Moore & Muller, 2002).

Sociology of Education, which constitutes organic part of the science of Sociology, was actually born as a result of the conditions emerged after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War with the aim of studying educational and social inequalities and the analysis of the relationship between education and society (Nova - Kaltsouni, 2010 ; Fragoudaki, 1995). Sociology of Education as a scientific branch is placed in the horizontal knowledge structures with "weak grammar", that is, with not so stable principles and rules, since it is characterized by a multiparadigmatic character and multitype methods and techniques in approaching social and educational reality, often differentiated according to the adopted scientific paradigm (Blackledge & Hunt, 2002 ; Kelpanidis, 2002 ; Lamnias, 2002 ; Mihalakopoulos, 1990). In this case it is interesting to examine if the theoretical and methodological approaches of the papers related to family and published in BJSE at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century shape the picture of an horizontal knowledge structure with weak grammar, in other words, to what extent they correspond to the scientific multitype of the field of Sociology of Education.

### Research Questions – Methodology

In this paper we are going to deal with the following research questions :

- What is the orientation and the subject matter of the articles published in BJSE concerning family during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ?
- What are the theoretical and methodological tools used for carrying out these studies ?
- Which is the gender identity of the authors of papers, published in BJSE concerning family ? And...
- Which are the geographical areas in which these studies have been carried out and referred to and what is the position held by Greece and Cyprus among them ?

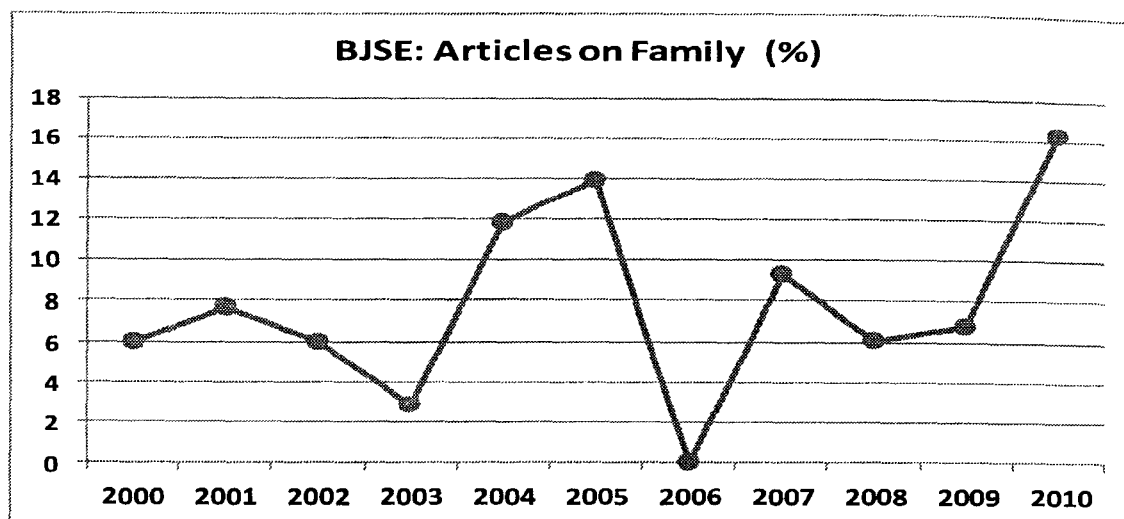
For approaching and analyzing our data and finding answers to the above questions we used the method of content analysis. As unit of analysis there is taken the "scientific article" in the content of which it is presented the contribution of family to the analysis and explanation of the relationship between education, family and child (Krippendorff, 1980). The location of these papers became through the examination of the issues of BJSE published during the period 2000-2010. The research and elaboration of the content of the mentioned units of analysis was carried out through the effort to answer to each one of the above research questions. The findings of this research are going to be presented afterwards.

### Results - Discussion

From the study of the research material during the mentioned period there were found 33 units of analysis concerning family. During the mentioned period there were published 410 scientific papers in BJSE and the papers referred to family represent the 8.04% of them.

In Figure 1 there is presented the distribution of the papers concerning family in the content of BJSE according to the year of their publication.

Figure 1: Distribution of scientific literature concerning family in the scientific journal BJSE.



The study of the elements of Figure 1 shows that in relation to the sum total of the scientific material of BJSE the percentage of published scientific papers concerning family is not stable during the mentioned period. Specifically, the highest percentage of published papers concerning family is found in the years 2010 (16.3%), 2005 (13.9%), 2004 (11.8%) and 2007 (9.3%). On the contrary, it is found that in the 2006 scientific production there are no published papers concerning family and in 2003 there are limited papers concerning family (2.8%). We should notice that the sum total of the scientific literature in BJSE concerning family is composed of research articles.

In Table 1 there is presented the distribution of the papers published in BJSE during the period 2000-2010 according to their subject matter.

Table 1 : Subject matter of the scientific papers concerning family.

Subject matter of the articles	Frequencies	Percentage %
Communicative interactive relationships between family and school	10	30.3
«Capital», family and education	9	27.3
Social inequalities, social discriminations, family and education	7	21.2
Socialization in family and school destination of pupils	5	15.1
Family and New Technologies	2	6.1

The study of the elements in Table 1 shows that a large number of papers approaches the subject matter of "Communicative interactive relationships between family and school" (10 papers, 30.3%), as well as the subject matter of the relationship between different forms of "Capital, family and education" (9 papers, 27.3%). In

addition, the subject matter of social inequalities and discriminations (7 papers, 21.2%) as well as the socializing effect of family, which determines to a large extent the school course of pupils (5 papers, 15.1%), occupied the researchers. Also, two papers (6.1%) focused their interest on the examination of the relationship between family and use of New Technologies.

Particularly, in the case of scientific papers which focus on "Communicative interactive relationships between family and school" as a significant section of scientific interest appears the investigation of the effort of parents' involvement and participation in educational processes either with the aim of influencing the teachers in shaping their educational practices (Archer, 2010 ; Borg & Mayo, 2001 ; Dahlstedt, 2009 ; Edwards & Alldred, 2000), or with the aim of cooperation between teachers and children, something that is expected to be helpful to children (Forsberg, 2007 ; Levine-Rasky, 2009 ; McClure & Walker, 2000). The relationship between parents - teachers is often proved to be difficult and prompts researchers' interest to try to understand and explain it (Bæck, 2010 ; Macfarlane, 2009 ; Ranson et al., 2004).

The papers which focus on the unity "Capital, family and education" use to a large extent the theoretical views of Pierre Bourdieu and try to approach the effect of different forms of "capital" in shaping the views and practices of parents as well as their educational and cultural choices concerning their children (Brooks, 2003 ; Hanafin & Lynch, 2002). Such significant forms of capital detected in research concerning family, are cultural capital (Bodovski, 2010 ; Symeou, 2007), linguistic capital (Yoon & Gulson, 2010), emotional capital (O'Brien, 2008) and social capital (Green & Vryonides, 2005 ; Heath et. al., 2010). The family capital is also approached through Coleman's relevant theory (Li, 2007).

In the case of the category "Social inequalities, social discriminations, family and education" the examined papers focus on the investigation of unequal access and discriminations, pupils are suffered in school, according to : a) the ethnotic and racial origin of their family (Connolly & Keenan, 2002 ; Crozier, 2005 ; Crozier et al., 2008) ; b) their social origin with emphasis on the treatment of children from un-privileged social classes (Broadhurst et al., 2005) as well as the choice of suitable school for children from urban families (Levy & Massalha, 2010), c) the influence of religious factor, which results in educational discrimination against girls in countries such as Turkey (Rankin & Aytac, 2008), and d) the discriminating treatment of children with special needs (Rogers, 2007).

The subject matter of the approach of the factor of childrens' socialization in family and its effect on the educational course of children occupied some researchers. Particularly, research focused on the detection of the educational career of children from divorced families (Colpin et al., 2004), on the role of "good mother" (Vincent et al., 2010) and on the effect of upbringing children from middle-urban social classes on their educational course and success (Neves & Morais, 2005 ; Vincent et al., 2004).

Finally, two scientific papers (6.1%) approach the category "Family and New Technologies". In these papers it is investigated the use of Technology of Information and Communication from technologically literate and illiterate parents and their children (Angus et al., 2004) as well as the attitudes and perceptions of parents about the use of New Technologies by young people (Facer et al., 2001).

In the case of papers concerning family published during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in BJSE, a large part of them (13 papers, 39.4%) develops its scientific

speculation and argumentation based on the survey of the relevant with the subject matter research bibliography without relying on specific theoretical notions of specific social scientists. These papers reveal the existence of multitype strategies to the scientific field of Sociology of education about the approach and elaboration of research data. And this appears from the fact that some papers choose the application of quantitative approaches (Broadhurst et al., 2005 ; Matěakejů & Straková, 2005 ; Rankin & Aytac, 2008 ; Vincent et al., 2010), many others choose qualitative research hermeneutic approaches (Angus et al., 2004 ; Colpin et al., 2004 ; Connolly & Keenan, 2002 ; Crozier, 2005 ; Crozier et al., 2008 ; Facer et. al., 2001 ; Hanafin & Lynch, 2002 ; McClure & Walker, 2010) and in a small number it is adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of research data (Levy & Massalha, 2010).

In Table 2 there is presented the distribution of papers concerning family, which have a clear theoretical framework (20 papers, 60.6%), according to the scientists from the theory of whom there are derived notions about the construction of their theoretical framework.

Table 2 : Theoretical notions about the construction of the theoretical framework of papers in BJSE concerning family.

Used theories by :	Theoretical notions	Number of papers to which are referred :
Bourdieu	Habitus, forms of capital (cultural, economic, symbolic), game, field, power relations	9
Foucault	Power, governmentality, truth, discourse	3
Ball	Performativity and propriety, class strategies	2
Coleman	Cultural capital, family capital	2
Lareau	Cultural capital, parental strategies, linguistic patterns, race	2
Putnam	Cultural capital, social networks	2
Rose	Responsible citizen, advanced liberal society	2
Allatt	Emotional capital	1
Apple	New right ideology	1
Austin	Communicative action	1
Bakhtin	Communicative action	1
Bastiani	Home-school relations typology	1
Bernstein	Code theory	1
Crompton	Professional jobs	1
Davies & Harre	Positioning theory	1
Epstein	Home-school relations typology	1
Freire	Critical education	1
Habermas	Active communication	1
Hage	Spatial theory of nationalist practice	1
Hallway	Positioning theory	1
Parsons	Natural carer	1

Popkewitz	Pedagogicalization	1
Reay	Emotional capital	1
Savage	Middle class (Weberian approach)	1
Tomilson	Communication home-school	1
Warnock	Inclusive education	1
Wittgenstein	Communicative action	1
Woods	Home-school strategies	1

Studying the elements in Table 2 we notice that the theoretical framework of the papers concerning family, published in BJSE during the period 2000-2010, is constructed by notions derived from the work of social scientists who apply different scientific paradigms such as structural-functionalism (e.g. Parsons, Coleman, Putnam), conflict – critical approaches and theories of social reproduction (e.g. Apple, Freire, Habermas), post-structural approaches (Foucault), hermeneutic approaches (e.g. Bastiani, Epstein, Woods) and combined approaches (e.g. Bernstein, Bourdieu, Savage who adopts a weberian analysis of social classes). So, through the theoretical and methodological choice of papers concerning family there emerges a picture of a scientific field, which belongs to vertical discourse and, specifically, to horizontal knowledge structures with weak grammar (Bernstein, 1999). In addition, the construction of the theoretical framework of papers concerning family is based to a large extent on notions mainly from Bourdieu's theory (in 9 papers, 27.3%) and to some extent from the theoretical views of Foucault (in 3 papers, 9.1%) as well as Ball, Coleman, Putnam, Lareau and Rose (from 2 papers, 6.1% for each case).

In Table 3 there is presented the distribution of papers concerning family published in BJSE during the period 2000-2010 according to the methodological tools used for their realization.

Table 3 : Methodological tools used for the realization of research papers concerning family published in BJSE.

Methodological Tools	Frequency of papers	Percentage %
Interview	24	72.7
Observation and interview	3	9.1
Observation, questionnaire and interview	2	6.1
Questionnaire	2	6.1
Questionnaire and interview	1	3.0
Historical analysis, micro and macro-analysis	1	3.0

The study of the elements in Table 3 shows that almost all research papers concerning family published in BJSE applied the technique of interview for the collection of their research data (30 papers, 90.9%). This technique was used either alone (24 papers, 72.7%) or in combination with other techniques (6 papers, 18.2%). Particularly, interview was used in combination with questionnaire (1 paper, 3%), observation (3 papers, 9.1%), as well as in combination with questionnaire and observation (2 papers, 6.1%). Only in two scientific papers (6.06%) the collection of empirical data was carried out exclusively with the use of questionnaire. Finally, in the case of one paper (3%) there was applied the historical approach in combination with micro and macro-sociological analysis with the aim of understanding and explaining the cooperation between parents and teachers in the case of Queensland in Australia



(Macfarlane, 2009). Consequently, from the observation data in Table 3 there is inferred a multitype of methodological choices for the realization of papers concerning family and a strong tendency towards the application of research focused on micro-level, conducted by means of the researchers' personal contact with specific social subjects (parents and their children).

In Table 4 there is presented the distribution of the authors' papers concerning family published in BJSE according to their gender.

Table 4 : Presence of women authors in papers of BJSE concerning family.

Authors in each paper	Authors in each case	Sum total of authors	Women authors	Women authors (%)
One	13	13	9	69.23
Two	11	22	12	54.54
Three	7	21	17	80.95
Four	1	4	3	75.00
Five and above	1	7	6	85.71
Sum total	33	67	47	70.14

The study of the elements in Table 4 shows that the largest part of authors occupied with family in papers positively evaluated from critics of BJSE and published in that journal are women (47 cases, 70.14%). The tendency of quantitative supremacy of women is being preserved in all papers' cases concerning family regardless of the number of authors who cooperated for their creation. Such a thing reveals, on the one hand, the existence of an engendered habitus, which seems to energize the dispositions of many women, social scientists, and drives them to engage in issues that belong traditionally to a specific "scientific field" of preferences and interests, such as family (Bourdieu, 2007). On the other hand, such a thing makes obvious the fact that there are no neutral research questions or neutral research records and drives us to understand their social definition (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 2007).

In Table 5 there is presented the distribution of papers concerning family, published in BJSE, according to the country from which research data were drawn.

Table 5 : Countries on which research concerning family focused.

Countries	Frequencies	Percentage %
United Kingdom	13	39.40
Canada	4	12.12
Ireland	3	9.09
Cyprus	2	6.06
Australia	2	6.06
Sweden	2	6.06
Malta	1	3.03
U.S.A.	1	3.03
Norway	1	3.03
Israel	1	3.03
Turkey	1	3.03
Democracy of Czech	1	3.03
Portugal	1	3.03

The study of the elements in Table 5 shows that the largest part of the studies concerning family is found in United Kingdom (13 studies, 39.39%), the country where

BJSE is published. Next, there follows Canada (4 studies, 12.12%), Ireland (3 studies, 9.09%), and Cyprus, Australia and Sweden (2 studies each, 6.06%). One study (3.03%) draws data from the reality of the countries Malta, U.S.A., Norway, Israel, Turkey, Czech and Portugal. Consequently, the findings in Table 5 reveal that the majority of the research papers concerning family, correspond to the first composite of the title of the journal BJSE, namely British (25 papers, 75.8%). And that comes about, because it has to do either with papers which focus on Britain itself or on countries which belong to the British Commonwealth and they have close historical relations with this country.

In addition, the choices of the papers' subject matter concerning family are interrelated with the specific social, economical, political and cultural conditions of the countries in which the research was conducted. This is evident particularly in papers focused on Israel (Palestine issue and education of children from Arabic families : Levy & Massalha, 2010), on Turkey (religiousness, Muslim and handkerchief : Rankin & Aytaç, 2008) and on Czech (post-communism period and social reproduction : Matěakejů & Straková, 2005). The immigration of population mainly from countries of British Commonwealth to United Kingdom, as well as the issue of social discriminations and educational inequalities, which they entail, to countries such as Britain and Ireland influenced the papers' focus of interest in family (Broadhurst et. al., 2005 ; Connolly & Keenan, 2002 ; Crozier, 2005 ; Rogers, 2007). Also, the issue of multiculturalism in countries such as U.S.A. and Canada resulted in the approach of matters concerning the correlation of factors, which constitute the triangle : immigrants' family, pupil and school (Bodovski, 2010 ; Levine-Rasky, 2009 ; Li, 2007 ; Yoon & Gulson, 2010). Finally, two studies from the Helladic space are found in the content of BJSE, which were carried out in Cyprus. In these studies there are detected the relationships and the cooperation between family and school (Symeou, 2007) and the influence of social capital on shaping the views of Greek-Cypriot parents about the choices regarding the education of their children (Green & Vryonides, 2005).

### Conclusions

According to the issues examined above we result in the following conclusions :

- During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the content of the scientific journal BJSE there has been published a small number of papers, in which it is analyzed the relationship between family and education (33 papers, 8.04% of the sum total of the journal's literature). These research papers shape their subject matter by taking into account the particular characteristics and the conditions of the societies on which they focused their attention. Characteristic example constitutes the subject matter of specific papers which refer to Canada and are related to the issue of multiculturalism (Li, 2007; Yoon & Gulson, 2010), to Israel where exists the Palestine issue (Levy & Massalha, 2010), to Turkey where it comes to the surface the handkerchief and girls' education (Rankin & Aytaç, 2008), and to Czech where there is interest for social inequalities during the post-communism period (Matěakejů & Straková, 2005).

- The theoretical and methodological choices of the papers about family published in BJSE, shape a picture of a field which belongs to vertical discourse and specifically to horizontal knowledge structures with weak grammar (Bernstein, 1999, 2000). This is inferred from the fact that the construction of their theoretical framework relies on notions derived from many social scientists, who use different

scientific paradigms (e.g. structural-functionalism, theories of social reproduction, hermeneutic approaches, etc). Particularly, the theoretical framework of the papers concerning family is formed by the derivation of ideas from 28 scientists among which the ideas of Bourdieu are dominant (use of its theory in 9 papers, 27.3%). In addition, in most papers there are chosen micro-level analyses since data are collected from a specific and relative small number of parents and pupils mainly through interview, while in some cases there was applied the triangle method (6 papers, 18.2%) combining interview with questionnaire and observation. Finally, the subject matter of papers concerning family is found : a) in the effort to analyze the relationships that parents develop with school and teachers and the impact on the educational course of their children, b) in the detection of the effect of different forms of “capital” that family possesses on the educational perspectives of its children, c) in the investigation of issues that concern social inequalities and school discriminations according to the family origin of pupils, and d) in the detection of the effects of children’s socialization in families with special characteristics, such as single-parent families, on their educational career.

- The majority of authors in papers regarding family matters are women (47, 70.14% and 20 men authors, 29.86%). Such a fact implies possibly the existence of an engendered habitus (Bourdieu, 2007), which is related to preferences about the engagement in specific sections of research interest.

- The majority of papers concerning family published in BJSE come from Great Britain itself (13 papers, 39.4%) and from countries which have close historical connections with this country as they belong to the frame of countries of British Commonwealth (11 papers, 33.3% from : Canada, Ireland, Australia and Cyprus). Consequently, the number of papers concerning family (9 papers, 27.3%) which come from U.S.A. or from countries related to European continent is smaller (Sweden, Norway, Malta, Portugal, Czech, Turkey and Israel).

In conclusion, we would like to mention that it would be scientifically interesting the continuation of detection and sociological analysis of papers concerning family in the scientific journal BJSE as well as in other European and American journals, which belong to the field of Sociology of Education and have scientific prestige.

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