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Normative affectivity as the foundation of domestic authority in the digital society

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Abstract

Introduction. From an interdisciplinary perspective, we studied whether or not the incorporation of Internet into the home is a reason for the decline in parental authority. **Method.** After comparing theoretical and legal sources using the hermeneutical analysis of five panel discussions among specialists in family mediation and edu-communication, we found that the “affective” factor is specifically relevant for testing the hypothesis. **Results.** Family authority is a moral process that transforms full subjection to the power of parents into a unit of norms generated by mutual affection. If the norms generated during cohabitation strengthen affectivity, they gradually transform the original power into moral authority. **Conclusions:** Authority becomes firmly established if the behavior of parents merits trust due to its exemplarity and is consistent with the norms generated by the process of affective relationships. The difference in digital competence may be an influencing factor in the process, but it is not decisive.

Keywords

[affectivity; family authority: duty of care, exemplarity, parental authority, digital literacy.

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1. Introduction to the hypothesis

We have some knowledge about how the role of parents is affected by the fact that children may have a higher level of digital skills than themselves. The generally held belief is that children learn better than their parents. It was even assured that children, being “digital natives”, are the ones who know (Prensky, 2001), and that the so-called “immigrant” parents are the ones who do not know how to develop these skills. This distinction between “natives” and “immigrants” is now rejected. The European Agenda has replaced it with “digital literacy levels”. Bennett, Maton and Kervin 2008, are the common reference for the critical discussion of the concept of “digital natives”. In order to mitigate generational differences, e-inclusion programs for the elderly have been encouraged (Abad, 2014 and 2016).

Parents are frequently led by their children with regard to technological literacy. This leads to the hypothesis that questions whether or not this knowledge that the child possesses, to the extent to which he or she gains existential and cognitive autonomy, can contribute to undermining family authority based on the assumption that parents have greater knowledge of life than their children. If parents need to be trained in the use of technology, and by contrast the child learns these skills by living with technology, the assumption that a parent is better-prepared than the child can be challenged. Various questions are then raised in relation to the proposed hypothesis: How does communication technology influence this situation of endless changes to which children spontaneously become familiar while adults try to adapt? How do parents manage their guardianship and care obligation when the child becomes aware that he can outwit them, not only because their work obligations make it difficult to fulfill such obligations, but also because the child realizes that his parents lack the knowledge of how routine technology works while they master it without effort?

Given these questions, we set the objective of the research: how this situation affects family relationships, and specifically, how it affects the assumption of *auctoritas* in the family as well as the incorporation of Internet and new communication technologies into the household. From these objectives, the generic hypothesis is reformulated: we ask whether or not the difference in digital competence between parents and children can alter the trust of the child with regard to that fact that the experience, capability, or life knowledge of the parents is the foundation of their authority; and whether or not this difference manifests itself as a specific reason for the weakening of authority in the home.

There are recent references to indicate that the influence of ICTs on minors can be the cause of family problems, as can be seen in the (Center for Sociological Research) CIS barometer:

Influence of ICTs on the education of children

(Base: 2.476)	%
The influence of ICTs on the education of children is inevitable	46.8
In general, the information that young people receive through ICTs has more influence than what their parents tell them	32.3
Young people are dependent on new technologies and this is a problem for education within the family	46.6
Parents should know how to use ICTs competently in order to utilize them in educating their children	49.8

Source: CIS, March 2015 Barometer

There are very few people who subscribe to the terminology of Prensky that makes the distinction between “natives” and “immigrants.” On the contrary, there is a general consensus that the influence of technologies in the family environment is open to a variety of nuances, situations and degrees. Our point of view is based on the recommendations promoted by the European Digital Agenda, which in its glossary alludes to the terms “gap”, “immigrants”, and “natives”. It is advisable to distinguish between different degrees of MIL “Media and Information Literacy” and to employ a “common framework of digital competence” (Pérez Tornero, 2015). If one accepts that these are the updated terms for the discussion of the topic, our objective now is to specify a criterion of family authority that may be operative for the research we propose: whether or not the incidence of digital literacy between parents and children manifests itself as a specific reason for the weakening of domestic authority. However, in addressing the literature related to family authority, we find it to be highly complex. The very concept of “authority” raises suspicion. Its theoretical treatment encompasses diverse perspectives and approaches, often in conflict with each other. In the case of “family authority”, this is also terminology regulated by the legal concept of “parental authority.”

2. Hermeneutical framework of family authority

Let us first look at the reasons why the term “authority” is suspicious, as the motives have special relevance in understanding the meaning of the current regulation of “parental authority” in the Civil Code and the social changes that have been suffered by the family as an institution. Therefore, we are confronted with both a teleological and hermeneutical problem.

The concept of authority implies a hierarchical relationship. Therefore, it does not combine well with the tendencies of liquid societies whose characteristic feature is the fluid nature of communicative relationships between equals (Bauman, 2007). The socially predominant value is equality (Taylor, 2014). The research group to which the signatories of the text belong has studied the current scope of the notion through the work of the main thinkers who have dealt with the postmodern debate on the concept of authority to apply it to the specific field of family environments and school (Núñez

Ladevéze and Torrecillas, 2016). The hermeneutical framework designed here is indebted to these works and refers to the sources used in them.

Nevertheless, two points must be made regarding the suspicion that the notion of authority raises. Firstly, the reluctance to accept it is limited to the “post-Enlightenment” society, or in other words, to western democratic societies. In the age of global connection through Internet, what has occurred is that social conceptions, which are increasingly influential and active, not only are different, but also reject the perfectly understood values that nourish the process of postmodernism, a process to which these social conceptions are technologically adapted as much as they resist accepting those same postmodernist principles with their undeveloped hierarchical values opposing the value of equality. What this means is that the politically correct language about equality and descriptions of the “fluid society” are confined to a specific context that has undergone a certain process of historical change. Western suspicion of authority and hierarchy does not usually take into account the virtual convergence of concurrent civilizations with very different conceptions. We have not dealt with this issue specifically, but it is important to note this point when discussing this and other issues for the purpose of expressing the limitations of the diagnosis.

On the other hand, even today, in spite of the fact that there are areas that still adhere to the post-Enlightenment context, they cannot be interfered with by the pretensions of egalitarian symmetry, such as those related to school authority, and more clearly, to family authority. At school, the didactic tendency to accentuate egalitarianism between teacher and student has gained ground, sometimes more for pragmatic reasons than for conceptual reasons. The tendency to conceive of the teacher as a “facilitator” who guides rather than an “authority” figure is also more convenient in fostering initiative, creativity and innovation in the student. In the transmission of practical knowledge it is unavoidable that the person who manages the learning also controls the key to the door (Núñez Ladevéze and Núñez Canal, 2016). This egalitarian trend has been strengthened in the family environment as well, although with particular nuances. We turn now to this issue, which is the main topic of this work.

2.1. Teleological framework of the civil regulation of parental authority in Spain

The regulation of authority in the Western family has undergone continuous evolution. This change is expressed in Spanish legislation. Paradoxically, the legal language used in regulating relationships between parents and children is based on institutions inherited from Roman law. The term “parental authority” is maintained, but its content does not reflect in any way its origins. Article 154 of the Civil Code [1], currently in force, refers to the function of the *patria potestas* (paternal authority). In ancient Roman law, the *potestas* of *paterfamilias* (patriarchy) was an absolute power that only citizens possessed. It even included *ius vitae at necis*, which gave the right of life or death over the son. What was originally an exclusive attribute of the Roman citizen spread with Christianity to every person who is a biological father. This expansion was explicit in the Etymologies of San Isidoro (Book V, 4, I: 510.), which compiled this dissemination from unspecified patristic sources, such as: “Ius naturale est commune omnium nationum, and quod ubique instinctu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur, ut viri et Feminae, coniunctio, liberorum successio et educatio, communis ómnium possessio, et ómnium a libertas...” (“The law of nature is common to all nations, and has its origins in nature, but not in any constitution, so that men and women, in a union, with a succession of births and the raising of children, the common possession of all, and freedom from all...”). As it is based on natural instinct, parents' authority over their offspring is prior to the

positive law. As the *potestas* of the *paterfamilias* became Christianized, the hierarchical power of the *paterfamilias* that characterized the old Roman *potestas* (Suárez Blázquez, 2014) was limited.

It is enough to follow the change in the regulation of “family authority” from the code of *Las Partidas* to the different corrections of the Civil Code in order to see how the Christian influence gradually softened this concept. Strongly influenced by a teleological orientation, the subsequent dispossession of power of the original *potestas* was progressively displaced by the recognition of a moral *auctoritas* (authority). Referring to Fraga (2012) and Pous de la Flor (2014), codification reduced the power of the *potestas*: *ius punire* is excluded from the educational function. Furthermore, if “the duty to educate” goes hand in hand with the “duty to obey on the part of children”, contained in Article 155 [1], there is doubt as to whether or not this filial duty implies the paternal *ius corrigere*, at the risk of being void. In this stripping-away process, the dominant power of the old *potestas* is transformed into its opposite, which is a set of parental affective obligations (Bourdieu, 1997: 131), which the current wording of Article 154 lists as follows: “to watch over them, to keep them in your company, feed them, educate them and provide them with comprehensive instruction”. A teleology of paradoxical results: the expression “parental authority” deprived of all attributes of dominion over the child is preserved. In this evolution, domination over children has become the opposite. The domain, or power, refers to the sum of “duties” and “obligations” toward them.

2.2. Hermeneutical framework of the parental authority in Spain

To understand this concept, its evolution demands an interpretative effort. If the legal faculty of the parents consists only of obligations and duties, what motives can induce parents to accept these responsibilities? If there are no children, there are no “duties” or “obligations”. From the legal point of view, the child is only a source of “burdens.” Just as the law cannot force people to have children, neither does it impose obligations if they do not have children. Why complicate life by assuming burdens without benefit? Logically, the code does not give explanations when there is no obligation to do so. There is no more compensation than the unspoken presumption that having children only results from the desire to have them. Thus, this perfectly understood value is based on the socially-shared experience of cooperating in the survival of a child and in seeing him grow, and this in itself provides some kind of psychological gratification, existential compensation or emotional satisfaction only accessible by the fact of being a parent. This conclusion fully conforms to current trends in political anthropology, which looking back at Aristotle, legitimize both the affectivity and emotions in the management of that which is public, and reject “an anthropologically unjustifiable separation between reason and affectivity” (Arias, 2016, 36). Such a “separation” does not occur in the Aristotelian tradition in which emotions are embedded in the cognitive component of beliefs (Nussbaum, 2001; Atienza, 2009). The fight to retain them, especially in cases of marital breakdown, is proof that the son, being a burden, is above all a subject that is desired. In the previous work to which we have alluded, we confront this subject in depth, but here we only offer an outline in order to explain how the hierarchical relationship between parents and children is combined with the general assumption of the principle of equality.

As such, this dialectical game must be explained: What kind of power over another is that of an “authority” that consists only of “obligations” for the one who exercises the power? How do you explain that parents see “this as a right and not as a burden for the purpose of having a child in their

company”? (Rivera, 2005: 143). As the child grows, the plan to which cohabitation adjusts is that the child gains autonomy so that subjection to the parent will be gradually reduced and finalized, and then will be transmuted into mere moral ascendancy over the child. This is the paradoxical legal way of adjusting family power as a result of trying to reconcile the principle of authority with the principle of equality in an environment that fears all authority and promotes its replacement by egalitarian relationships.

Legislation must combine the principle of anthropological reality on which the power of *paterfamilias* is based with the demand for equality as an ideal assumption of cohabitation in postmodern society. Egalitarian relationships between parents and children must be asymmetrical. Relationships must be compatible with the objective of ensuring, through dissolvable contracts, a mutual coexistence that may or may not have as its purpose the procreation of new individuals that only generate obligations. Or, in cases that are no less frequent, if the agreement is broken, the children are turned into an object of dispute. Why dispute a burden rather than feeling relieved when free from it?

2.3. Delimitation of the theoretical framework

In order to confirm if this teleological and hermeneutical framework corresponds to the social perception of the sense of domestic *auctoritas* in Spanish society, which is already highly digitized (Fundación Telefónica, 2016), we set forth a second hypothesis to contrast it with the first in order to see whether differences in digital competence could have an impact on the loss of parental authority. At this point, we are not going to clear the path that led us to raise this theoretical assumption. Through an examination of reliable literature, this hypothesis was the most compatible with the paradoxical conferment of “obligations” that someone always assumes for the benefit of another, into which the authority of *paterfamilias* has been converted in the current digital society.

If legislative evolution is a teleological transition from Roman authority to parental moral authority, then Article 154 is also teleological: it attributes to the father an authority, the end of which is not the domain of the son, but his emancipation. The authority of the father is a starting point based on an anthropological realism: How can we compare a defenseless being, unable to subsist, with the person who has the obligation... in fact, the ability...! to take care of him? Thus, the question proposed is this: What makes it possible to have a type of community that can set as a condition of cohabitation that those who possess the authority, dominion or power, only assume “obligations” and give up any compensation that could be provided by the beneficiaries of their concern? The parents are the ones who rule, decide and orient the life of the child, and who are, therefore, a hierarchical authority. For that reason, the law considers parents to have authority over their children, or in other words, they have a type of governmental power or dominion over them; however, what type of authority does not offer compensation for whoever holds it? It is essentially an altruistic power, composed only of “duties” and “obligations” and “it will always be exercised for the benefit of the child”. Article 155 imprecisely hints that in return, the son has a “duty” to obey and respect his parents while “he lives under their authority”, and “to contribute equitably according to his possibilities in helping the family (sic) as long as he lives in the household”, which is nothing more than an indirect way of asserting that children are part of the “burden” to be lifted, and that whatever suspicion is aroused by authority in a fluid society, its system of organization cannot be anything other than hierarchical.

Civil regulation seeks to reconcile two antithetical principles, that of authority and that of equality. What is relevant is that the principle of authority is legally inherent in the principle of cooperation (or “solidarity” in the current dominant language). To rule over the defenseless is a necessary condition to be in solidarity with them. In this way, the research hypothesis is framed in a type of “family as community”, so to speak, in which the assumption of domination from which authority is derived is applied by law as a component of its opposite, which is the principle of cooperation with the needy. In this way, a dialectical relationship is established between the efficient cause and the final cause, to put it in Aristotelian terms. The teleology of the process requires a gradual transformation that begins with the recognition of the child’s inability to provide for himself and the ultimate goal of his emancipation. The dominance of the parents in this situation of a child’s dependence is the starting point imposed by the physical need to cooperate with an unprotected being on his way to an autonomy that can only be obtained through the authority of the parents.

Although it is encompassed, the debate on how to conceive of authority in the digital society goes far beyond how the family balance between the anthropological principle of reality upon which the hierarchy is based and the ideal principle of equality demanded by the aspiration to create social symmetry can be achieved. As far as our research is concerned, we have focused only on the family unit, which in the Aristotelian tradition and thereafter, as will be seen, allows us to understand the will to dominate as a demand of the necessity for cooperation, and the two concepts must be compatible (Núñez Ladevéze, 1997). We intend to examine how the bond between parents and non-emancipated children is perceived socially, with this being understood as a stable situation of physical and mental dependence of people, in this case children, with respect to others, their parents. It is the anthropological basis implied legally in its judicial regulation. In this relationship, dominion over the defenseless is inseparable from cooperation with the helpless. It occurs in many other cases of physical and moral dependence, such as those involving the sick or injured, or in cases of neglect, which the law defines as “omission of aid” (Article 195 of the Penal Code).

The different levels of digital competence between parents and children may be the novel factor that could break the set of rules and presumptions related to the delicate social and legal balance between the mistrust of the principle of authority and the promotion of equality. According to the hypothesis, if the child is the one who skillfully manages an essential environment in everyday relations, with the digital context being an example, then egalitarianism may gain ground that authority loses –another step in a process that could alter the social balance achieved by legal regulation.

3. Method

This research intends to verify whether or not social perception, analyzed in five panel discussions, recognizes factors that confirm, counter or rectify this hypothesis. For the analysis of the interventions, the adaptation carried out by Núñez Ladevéze (1993) of the strategy analysis model of the discourse of Kintsch and Van Dijk (1983) was applied, based on the isolation of macro semantic propositions organized in thematic hierarchies. Compilation of applications to types of discourse in the compilations of Van Dijk (2000).

In order to deal with this issue, a discussion was held with different groups of experts [2] regarding the motives that may induce people to start a family in order to assume the responsibility of caring for a child and administer parental authority, not for their own benefit, but always for the benefit of

the child. Do they find some compensation in exchange for accepting that obligation, and if so, where do they find it? How does the difference in digital competence affect, or how can it affect, the administration of parental authority? In short, does this difference cause difficulties in maintaining the principle of authority and the “duty of respect” as the child becomes aware of his autonomy? The specialists and professionals of each group were selected from areas related to family and digital literacy as follows:

1. Specialists in didactic areas and family institutions
2. Academics specializing in edu-communication
3. Executives of companies of innovation and exploitation of communication technology
4. High-level school administrators
5. Professionals in family mediation

In the introduction, the moderator initially asks if “the existence of different levels of knowledge, usability and digital skills between parents and children significantly affects parental authority.” Although polarity existed in the criteria, the moderator proposed in each group to distinguish between “ability to use”, understood as skill or technical skill, and “teaching to live”, which is existential and communicative competence used to channel learning. This perspective was inspired by the classification of competences proposed by the *European Reference Framework for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001), which distinguishes between general competences such as existential expertise and specific competences, such as linguistic expertise used in language teaching. This classification is consistent with the distinction of “competency dimensions” of digital learning, Area Pessoa (2012) and Area Moreira, M., Gutiérrez Martín, A. and Vidal Fernández, F. (2012).

4. Comments on results

There were nuances in the combination of “user knowledge” and “existential competence” (National Institute of Educational Technologies and Teacher Training, INTEF, 2013). A child may have more ability in using technology but that capability does not necessarily lessen the existential competence of parents in “teaching about life.” In the digital society, this presumption can be tested, because “for adults the categorization between devices and activities is adequate due to the fact that the majority use each device for a different purpose”, while for children, Internet “is part of their life, something normal. They cannot make a distinction between life online and offline. It's a continuation of everything.”

4.1. Existential competence and digital competence

However, for the “competence” specialists at Table 1, the difference in ability to use technology does not necessarily affect authority. “An illiterate father may not teach you how to read, but he can teach you how to live.” Another panellist abounded in the argument, because “authority cannot be based on technology that is constantly changing and new.”

It was argued that life is also prone to change and restoration, but it was agreed that this occurs in a different way, being the common substratum for all technological renewal. Teaching to live encompasses aspects that “digital competence” cannot comprehend. It is an indirect way of distinguishing between “existential” and “digital” competence. In the same way that a parent who does not know how to ride a bicycle should have no problem transmitting rules or basic guidelines to the child who knows how to do it, the “ability to use the internet” does not have to affect *auctoritas*, which is based on “*deeper and more essential issues*”.

Apart from that,

“ *auctoritas* is important for the illiterate as well as the literate. Having the knowledge to navigate in social networks or to use Instagram within the context of what we call *auctoritas*, I find to be of little relevance, just as there is little importance in knowing how to fry an egg or drive a car.”

Overall, the groups assumed without reticence that the new technologies are not decisive, but are more influential as the adolescent becomes aware of his own autonomy, because

“...naturally, that does not mean that you would surely be a better father or mother if you were better educated”

The initial relationship of subordination evolves into a relation in which technological knowledge becomes more relevant in the mutual recognition of paternal authority and filial autonomy if parents do not increase their knowledge:

“Such ignorance creates a void in which power, the authority of parents, is blurred. Why does it blur? Simply because they do not know how to correct it.”

Parents must be trained digitally, not so much for gaining authority as for strengthening their role in guiding their children as they grow up:

“When parents do not know what to correct, that is the big risk. They are not able to warn their own children of the dangers and risks to which the youngsters may be exposed”.

According to the panelists at Table 2, composed of educommunication experts with experience in media education workshops with children 8 to 11 years old, youngsters are able to notice very early when parents lack digital skills. It is often a cause of non-communication. Parents often do not have time to raise their level to that of their children, which causes a loss of trust in the guidelines they are able to convey. There are parents whose children take advantage of their ignorance in a context in which respect for authority seems blurred:

“I have met parents who are pressured by their children, even blackmailed by them, in order to force the parents to cede in the purchase of technological products, and children sometimes even resort to deception by taking advantage of their parents’ lack of knowledge.”

As a result of examining areas of agreement of the panels, what emerges is that domestic authority is

initially based on “knowing how to live” in order to “know how to be”, rather than on specific knowledge or skills that will appear during the process of acquisition of filial autonomy. Initially, “existential competence” covers all competences (INTEF, 2013). In this situation of “knowing how to live together”, parents have to gain the trust of the son as they lose their physical control over him. The basis of authority is shifting from an initial relationship of absolute dominance to a desirable relationship of trust in which “respect” for authority is pledged.

4.2. Authority in the affective family group

Very recent research on competencies and phenomenology of family cohesion confirm that contrary to many widespread topics on Internet, “*the post modernization of the family enhances the identification of the family mainly as an emotional unit...* New technologies allow greater fluidity in communication between parents and children, making it easier to express feelings (feeling cared for, loved, protected or simply communicating)” (Ayuso, 2015: 77). “Social networks generate emotional ties of belonging” (Area, 2012: 23).

Consequently, there is no initial incompatibility between fulfilling the principle of family authority based on affection and the use of technology. Recent trends in political anthropology and current trends in phenomenology and emotional psychology reinforce this view. In reality, there is nothing new under the sun. These concepts entail a return of Cartesian dualism to traits more typical of the Aristotelian concept of the rational and emotional uniqueness of human nature. We will return to this idea when we put forth the concept of *hexis afectiva*.

This condition of “the family as mainly an emotional unit” is also congruent with the change produced in scientific literature since the work of Damasio (2011), which is a return to a nuanced Aristotelianism that integrates emotions as hosts of feelings together with beliefs and reasoning in the constitution of personality (Nussbaum, 2001). This scientific perspective converges with phenomenologically-oriented social studies that have highlighted the importance of emotionality in the axiological evolution of Western society. Modifying Aristotle through a young Hegel and Mead, Honneth, in his theory of recognition (1997), puts forth the origin of ethics as “forms of social integration established by emotional ties.” Affective recognition remains circumscribed to the environment of sensitive and immediate interaction. It is a different plane from the legal recognition of equality that encompasses an area of recognition that may be universal. We use his approach to point out that in the family, and more specifically, in the mother/child relationship, there can be no equal, or symmetrical, affective recognition. Taylor specifically refers to the family as an environment of asymmetrical affective relationships: “the child is being led by the hand of a parent along the path of growth. But it is not just a service rendered from one human being to another. It only succeeds when there is something more involved, and moreover, where a bond of love develops. It is a bond in which each person is a gift to the other, where both give and both receive...” (Taylor 2015, II: 630-1). Although our approach is not clinical, the notion of “affectivity” is also assumed by sources in neuropsychiatry, such as Ciompi's “logic of affectivity” (1997 and 2007): “an affection constitutes a psychosomatic phenomenon ...manifests itself in the psyche and... in the body” (2007: 429) and is the center of intersubjective cooperation.

The panelists' assessments confirm these descriptions of the role of emotions in the digital society for family cohesion:

“In my opinion, the affective function dominates others. Training is essential to improve family communication. And it is also important that authority is exercised with affectivity, or in other words, with a sense of companionship”.

4.3. Authority in the process of generating norms of mutual affection

This is the answer to the first question posed: In the social perception, what can be the source of gratification that compensates the sacrifice of administering to the benefit of others without obtaining any social reward? What compensation is awarded to the parents, who act as administrators of authoritarian management with an altruistic goal: to seek the emancipation that makes parents and children equal? Later we will verify how, in the opinion of the panelists, the difference in digital competence influences this basic relationship of domestic cohabitation.

“The age variable is a determining factor. For children who are, let’s say, 8 or 9 years old, the affective world is the focus of their lives. Their parents are the point of reference, the core of the protection. Also, children are very impresionable.”

Affection becomes the main foundation of harmony as we eventually see knowledge as the life experience of parents through the normative cohesion of the home as a center of coexistence until the children arrive to adolescence.

“Everything that parents say is accepted without question, unlike teenagers. Adolescence marks a turning point, because the cognitive aspects begin to exert considerable force.

The relationship of dependence of the child to the parents integrates the orientation of maternal and paternal actions during childhood, the most vulnerable phase of life, around a cooperative intention motivated solely by affection whose purpose is to ensure the child's survival.

"The work of the parents in gaining trust and educating their children is something that we must do during childhood, or if we can call it by another name, in “early childhood”, before reaching adolescence”.

4.4. Normative exemplarity and digital skills

For the second question that was raised regarding the relevance of the asymmetry of digital skills between parents and children who are now adolescents, panelists agreed that it is less relevant than moral qualities such as exemplarity or congruence between rules and behavior.

“Naturally, if you're telling your son not to cross the street when the traffic light is red, but you cross it, then you are teaching him badly, because you are telling him not to do something that you are openly doing. There must be coherence between what we say and what we do, and furthermore, this behavior must be reflected in the world of Internet or Internet access devices. I think that's one of the keys that make us lose authority to minors. If we tell our children to behave in a certain way but we do the opposite, then we lose all authority”.

Upon this foundation, it is fitting to contrast the hypothesis and to consider whether or not stability, based on the assumption that the intensity of the affective relationship sufficiently protects the principle of authority in the family unit, corresponds to the different degrees of digital literacy of parents and children. For the panelists, this cognitive aspect is important in enabling parents to carry out their corrective tasks as authority figures.

“Such ignorance creates a vacuum in which power, the authority of parents, is blurred. Why does it blur? Simply because they do not know how to correct. When parents do not know what to correct, that is the big risk. They are not able to warn their own children of the dangers and risks to which they may be exposed.”

5. Discussion and conclusions

This legal conception and social perception of parental authority are the products of a particular evolution (Núñez Ladevéze y Torrecillas, 2016) that differs from that of societies (which can no longer be called traditional if one takes into account their confluence in the globally-digitalized world) in which the patriarchal family comes first, and where the authority of the father has legal force, an imposing value, and is not reduced to mere moral ascendancy, although it also has an affective component. Types vary. Discipline, administered by paternal authority, is a social rule. The family unit may possess a pattern of cohabitation for the management of interests, transactions and precepts regulated by political/religious mandates demanded by public exigency, with such obligations being seen as socially-binding norms.

Phenomenological social studies have noted the ability of the family to “produce, through a kind of continuous creation, the mandatory affections and affective obligations of the family feeling (conjugal love, paternal and maternal love, filial love, brotherly love, etc. (Bourdieu, 1997: 131).” Because of this labor of maintaining feelings, the child survives. He would not be able to do so without unconditional help. He survives because the conduct of his parents is a behavior directed by the affectivity they have experienced. Parents watch, censor, condition, reprimand, protect and pamper. In short, they teach in order to protect and provide care to those who need, *sine qua non*, the help of others.

This does not imply that cohabitation within this type of family authority situation lacks normative consistency. It means that it generates its own system of rules to which behavior may or may not tend to adjust. Motivated by affectivity rather than by the desire to impose authority, religious conceptions, social pressure, or concern over continuing the family lineage or carrying on the family name, it is proposed that authority over the child, which is recognized in the function of *patria potestas*, is only motivated by the subjective purpose of strengthening affective ties. The “family is a place of trust and a gift ... where self interest is postponed” (Bourdieu: 1997: 128). Excluding any compensation, the family is regulated in the Civil Code as a type of community that presupposes the affective integration of its members. If the administration of affectivity is persistent, it generates an environment of normative relations to which domestic authority must also adjust. Only by setting an example can parents ensure the child's adherence to the rules of cohabitation dictated by a power stripped of disciplinary and corrective authority, reduced to moral influence.

The situation is paradoxical: at birth, the child cannot recognize authority because its conscience is not yet formed. His existential incapacity obliges him to be subjected, not to moral authority, but to parental dominion or power. His life depends on how his parents apply their original power to help him survive. Care, protection and affection aimed at ensuring that the child can take care of himself legitimize this domestic power. By leaving him at their mercy, the law admits that parents are not advantageously substitutable by any other institution. The purpose of that initial authority is to be reduced. The legislative process of the Spanish legal system expresses all of the enlightened suspicion toward the principle of authority. Dominion must be gradually transformed into moral authority as the subject who was originally dependent gains the discernment and autonomy to recognize such authority.

As *potestas* is reduced to *auctoritas*, and the empowerment of *paterfamilias* is converted into obligations with no other compensation than the affection experienced by family cohabitation, we question from the beginning how parents can turn their duty of care into the child's obligation of obedience to an authority that only applies if that authority is acknowledged. Furthermore, the function of that authority is to transform itself into a moral duty of "respect".

In reality, it is not really a question; it is a dialectical situation produced by contrary tendencies to which the function of parental authority in the postmodern digital society is subject. In family interactions, the dialectic of authority must act to repress as much as to care. It must prohibit when it rewards, and scold to guide the child to his emancipation. While moving toward that goal, the disparity in digital competence may be an increasingly important factor that could deteriorate affective cohesion, which is the only guarantee for carrying out the moral exercise of authority.

To preserve that guarantee, the behavior of parents must be consistent with the interlaced norms built around affections. Cohabitation does not always fully conform to its own rules, and sometimes it does so poorly. The family produces rules while learning to share them and live them in common. The child receives the rules, incorporates them and makes them his own, and is also aware of consequences, either repressive, punishing or admonishing, or possibly a prize or a caress. He responds to the pattern of that spontaneous action, dictated by physical necessity and transmitted by cultural inertia: what and when confirms it, what or how contradicts it.

The Aristotelian expression of *hexis* (Aristotle 8b, 25-9a, 14), the Latinized *habitus* (Sánchez, 2000), serves well to express the way in which affective relationships are taking shape within domestic guidelines, constituting a more or less congruent pattern of affection and reprimand, "by establishing differences between what is good and what is bad" (Bourdieu, 1997: 20). The infant's consciousness during its development comprehends and incorporates these guidelines as a set of rules not previously regulated, which originated in practices conditioned within cooperative cohabitation. Learning in common, or in other words, learning from each other, forms a *habitus* in the normative sense defined by Bourdieu (1997), the roots of which go back to Aristotle, and which reached Bourdieu through the phenomenology of Merleau Ponty. It is a moral habit, a modality of the *aretè ethikè* (Araiza, 2014: 155), not a physical habit acquired through repetition.

For the purpose of establishing normative relations, the fact that we speak of affective "ties" to refer to this type of relationship is significant. The bond is not a transitory link. It has duration. Its persistence creates the *hexis* as a specific environment of affective exchange within the family unit. The actions of parents on which the survival of the child depends respond to processes of interaction

that express the continuity of acting in accordance with affections, and they are translated into bonds of cohabitation. Norms that express or distort the continuity of cooperative intentionality. It is not a prior rule of duty that induces parents to sacrifice for the child. It is a *continuum* of actions aimed at obtaining a climate, an atmosphere, or an environment that is conducive to the formation of conscience, which evolves from absolute dependence to full autonomy. It is not a presumption. The proof that the affective habit supports cohabitation is expressed by the fact that the child's own survival offers no more compensation to the parents than the satisfaction of seeing him grow. Moreover, if in fact the child survives and grows when he can only do so through that transaction, his life cycle is the extent to which the parents have acted in accordance with affections that they themselves have experienced.

In a situation of family cohabitation, the child perceives an affective *hexis* or habitual disposition of behavior (Araiza, 2014: 151), as a process of learning that leads toward an independent condition of “knowing how to live”. According to experts, the degree of recognition of family *auctoritas* depends on the congruence between the behavior of parents and the regulatory and expressive guidelines of affectivity that generates norms. The child perceives degrees of congruence or incongruence between the repressive aspects of the protective action and its foundation in affectivity through a guided upbringing that leads to his autonomy. He perceives the behavior of his parents as an exemplary testimony of the normative system that expresses affectivity: care, attention, affection, duties, and prohibitions. As his conscience develops, he becomes aware of whether or not there is congruence between the paternal behavior that has served as an example and guided him in his education in how to live, and the normative system derived from affective relationships. As he gains autonomy, digital competence acquires a higher value, although it does not determine the recognition of paternal authority by the now-emancipated son.

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Http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/stfls/eSede/Ficheros/2014/Anexo_I_Ayudas_Concedidas_Proyectos_I_D_I_Retos_2013.pdf

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6. Notes

[1] Article 154 of the Civil Code: Children under the age of 18 are under the authority of their parents. Parental authority will always be exercised for the benefit of the children, according to their personality and with respect to their physical and psychological well-being. This authority includes

the following duties and powers: 1. To watch over them, to keep them in their company, to feed them, to educate them and to provide them with a comprehensive upbringing. 2. To represent and manage their assets. If children have sufficient judgment, they should always be heard before decisions are made that affect them. Parents may, in the exercise of their power, seek the assistance of legal authority.

Article 155 of the Civil Code:

Children must: 1. Obey their parents while they remain under their authority and always respect them. 2. Contribute equitably, according to their ability, to help carry the burdens of the family while they live in the household.

[2] Five panel discussions with experts were held with a specific topic at each table; four of the panels were held in April, May and June, and the fifth was held in September 2015, coordinated by the following project researchers:

Table 1. *Competences and family dialogue*. Carmen Fuente Cobo (UCM Villanueva) April 20, 2015.

Table 2. *Media literacy*: Max Römer Pieretti (UCJC) May 5, 2015.

Table 3. *Point of view from technological companies*. José Antonio Irisarri Núñez (UCM Villanueva) June 6, 2015.

Table 4. *Authority and school*. Tamara Vázquez Barrio: July 2, 2015.

Table 5. *Family mediation*. Miguel Ángel Rumayor and Celia Camili (UCM Villanueva), September 24, 2015.

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