

Assess functional and new right view of the family



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Assess functionalist and the New Right views on the family

Functionalists believe that the family have specific or traditional functions within the family. One function of the family would be reproduction or having children as this is imperative for the world as they will be the future workforce. For example family businesses will need to pass down the factories/shops to the next generation in the family for the continuing of the ancestors business. Other functions include economic maintenance this is where the family provides necessities for all the family members for example shelter, food and clothing. Another is that the family helps teach children how to socialise with others and also educate them with the correct norms. An important function of the family is that it gives a sense of identity and belonging for example the family allows people to be able to rely on because they are connected through family. Talcott Parsons is one of the key functionalists that strongly argued that the nuclear family fits the needs of the contemporary family and so believes that that extended family, which could involve divorce, will prevent the family from growing and being taken care of.

He supported the traditional functions of the family and spoke about how the modern family is changing a lot of the former functions. Parsons identified two remaining functions within the family one being primary socialisation of young which is when the parents raise the children and educate them about the norms and values for example the rights and wrongs so they are able to pass them on. For example in abusive families negative norms are passed on. However how they act in other ways depend on their school life.

The other main function is the stabilisations of adult personalities which is where children turn into adults and are forced to 'grow up' and get a job and

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buy a house etc. they are made to take things more seriously in the world so they are able to achieve a sense of belonging on their own and actually have a purpose. Overall Parson's view of the family is centred around the middle and upper classes and focuses on the male's purpose and ignores the female perspective. This suggests that Parsons believes women are happy to be housewives and don't aspire to be anything else but loyal to their husbands.

A few positive functions of the family is that they are much more financially stable as the husband and father have a stable job and are able to earn enough money to support the whole family. The nuclear family also results in a much closer relationship between family members as they are with each other daily and so relationships are created. For example siblings are taught to share with each other and so form a bond of trust with each other. Children in the family are more likely to stay on a positive path if they are in a nuclear family as disruption could cause difficulties with school life and social life.

Married parents are seen to be very good role models when they are part of a nuclear family. However a disadvantage of the nuclear family is that functionalist advertises it so it seems to be very isolated and private and therefore they are seen to have a poor social life because they keep to themselves and don't concern themselves with wider groups of people. The family becomes attached to home leisure with TV the internet and games resulting in them becoming more home-centred. The family makes little contact with neighbours and is very self-contained.

The family as a result of being private becomes reliant on support from the welfare state. Alternatively functionalists are said to idealise the family life <https://assignbuster.com/assess-functionalism-and-new-right-view-of-the-family/>

too much. Therefore ignore the rising divorce rates. They refuse to acknowledge the negatives about the changing family life, and the growing family diversity. Another view would be those functionalists don't take in account the abuse that can occur within any families. That is a reason as to why the modern family is changing, it's due to the fact that the laws against domestic violence have become much stricter.

This leads to the feminists who argued against this nuclear family as it portrayed women in a way that was very sexist. Ronald Fletcher a British sociologist who agreed with the functionalist's perspective but argued that modern societies are changing and that there is an increase in modern functions in the family such as regulating sexual behaviour and the increase in parental involvement in their education. Other includes the being responsible in the rearing of children and caring for dependent people whether young or old. All these factors contribute to the changing family life and their morals.

More and more people are starting to argue like Fletcher that the nuclear family is the dominant family structure but that its modifying over time for example mothers are now getting jobs as well as husbands so they both support the house hold and aren't dependent on just one person for the whole family. Charles Murray a social scientist says ' the traditional family life is under threat'. His main concern was with the welfare benefits that single women were being given. He thought that it was too easy for them to leave the nuclear family and live alone and just depend on benefits.

Murray also argues that being or living with a single parent on benefits is giving the wrong role models to children as they are able to see that they

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can live alone and live off benefits so don't strive to achieve any goals. There are fewer father figures to show discipline as the mother could lose control so the children go down a path of drug dealing vandalism and crime which gives a very positive look on the new right approach. Halsey and Dennis who agrees with what Murray argues saying that single parenthood and absent fathers is one of the key issues with the decrease in nuclear family lives.

Due to the lack of jobs and rise in unemployment men are starting to struggle to maintain their title of bread winners and the industries are changing from heavy workloads so women are more likely to find a job in modern times. As a result men may be rejected by the women as they can't financially depend on them so would rather be given benefits than struggle to keep a roof over them and their children's heads. Halsey debates that being in a one parent family with the factors of unemployment and poverty being high could inevitably lead to crime and vandalism by the younger members of the family.

Against a nuclear family with a stable income and stable household would again lead to any crimes and vandalism by the offspring in the family. Abbott and Wallace's critically judge the new right about how women are being exploited in the families and how a lot of frustration and unhappiness is able to be experienced by living in this environment. The new right also disagrees to acknowledge the violence that can be caused in a nuclear family life and the abuse a family can actually suffer from being forced to stay and live with them as it isn't socially acceptable to be a one parent family.

Some of the ideas that Abbott and Wallace criticised are that the new right are opposed to having an easy availability to a divorce; this again goes <https://assignbuster.com/assess-functionalism-and-new-right-view-of-the-family/>

against women having the right to leave a violent family life and actually possibly saving theirs and their children's lives by leaving. Again the new right disagrees with abortions as they say the foetuses have a right to life but Abbott and Wallace criticise this because bringing a baby into the world is a big thing and some people are unable to care for the baby correctly.

The new right makes men have a very stressful life as they have a whole family dependent on them as a role model of a breadwinner and the same with women being role models for the girls and showing how much work goes into being involved in a family. Abbott and Wallace favour letting people take control of their own lives by living alone or being involved in a homosexual relationship or even women being the breadwinners while men are in charge of the household and children.

Some of the traditional family values that the new right followers agree on bringing back involve that a woman's place is in the home and shouldn't be working as a bread winner as that's the man's job as head of the household. This is associated with gender patriarchy as women are treated completely different to the way men are, and so it's seen as unfair and sexist in the modern day. Gender patriarchy would be one of the main factors that feminists would argue about as they say women are oppressed by the nuclear family and its rules and values.

Different feminist groups argue about different factors, liberal feminists argue about sex discrimination and want changes in the law to be made. However radical feminists argue against men patriarchy, where men are seen to have more power for example women are considered to be responsible for raising the children and choosing and cooking the food and keeping the home as

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welcoming as possible. Traditionally a man would never be seen do to the cooking or cleaning as it was seen as a wife's job but in modern times it's a much more equal task.

There are however some positive aspects as to why many people agree with the new rights theory as Brigitte Berger, who defends the nuclear family by saying it's a very positive feature of modern societies as it helps the youth of the world understand decency, common sense, politeness and respect for others. These values and morals will help make a better life for the person as common decency is seen as a norm and many people agree that in a single parent family the mother might find it s a struggle to teach the children all of that on her own due to the lack of help from the father figure.