

# The structural functional theory on divorce



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The main principles of the structural functionalism theory are that society is composed of integral parts that perform vital roles which ensure the continuous operation of society in an organized manner (Delmar 2007).

Radical change in these parts will result in general discord so that in order to be functional, society should accommodate minimal changes only. Conflicts within society are identified primarily between majority and minority groups and are regarded as damaging and the reason why there is inequality in society is mainly because of characteristics that are innate to the “ minority” group (Delmar 2007).

There are various mechanisms in society that serve to produce stability – laws for instance. The family is an institution that is central to society and functions to satisfy the sexual needs of adults, as a unit for human reproduction and subsequently for the socialization of children into the norms, beliefs and values of society as well as a unit for the acquiring the needs of its members (Delmar 2007).

Divorce, where husband and wife decide to dissolve their marriage and live separately is seen as a form dysfunction, a drastic attack on the family and society and implies the lack of capacity of married couples to keep to their status. Because of the way the family is defined, the burden in making the marriage work mainly rests on the woman because her concern is on the reproductive affairs of the family (sex and raising children).

This follows that the failure of marriages is attributed to the failure of the woman to perform her roles. In order then for make marriages work, woman first should function according to what is expected of her in marriage. There

are moral sanctions on divorce in the form of traditions and laws. This is especially true in countries where divorce is not legal. Stigma is also directed on divorced women because of the notion that women should be monogamous.