

Theoretical perspectives on the family

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Theoretical Perspectives on the Family • Way of viewing reality • Identify why family patterns and practices are the way they are

- 1) Family Ecology • How family is influenced by the society around it • Family choices/lives affected by economy, education, religion and other cultural institutions • Ex: Great Depression - economically, people can't afford children even if they wanted more kids
- 2) Family Development • How family changes over time • Family Life Cycle: Addition/subtraction of members (death in a family, moving out)
 - o Various stages children go through (children start school, go to high school, then college, then marriage)
 - o Changes in family connections with other social institutions (retirement, or getting fired)

• Developmental Tasks must be mastered in order to transition to the next • Role Sequencing - major transitions to adulthood • Normative Order Hypothesis - work-marriage-parenthood sequence is best for mental health and happiness)

Structure

Functional Theory • Functions performed by the family as a social institution

- 1) Raise child responsibly
- 2) Economical support
- 3) Emotional support

• Roles patterned by beliefs, values, attitudes, norms - serve as essential social functions that enables society to survive

- 4) Interactionist Perspective
 - Interactions within family members
 - Do they communicate effectively?
 - If they don't = doesn't allow for unique qualities to develop

• MAJOR CONCEPTS:

- o Self-concept - feelings people have about themselves
- Concepts of identity - sense of uniqueness, "the self is developed initially in a family setting"
- o Role taking - expected behavior for each family member (associated with a social position) - Children learn appropriate behavior roles that they may play in adulthood through watching their parents, siblings assume that role - INTERNALIZED AND INCORPORATED TO SELF

- 5) Exchange

Theory •Exchange of resources that affect formation, continuation, nature of a relationship •Rewards vs.

Cost – shapes power and influence in the family and commitment to the relationship •Should exchange resources outside the group. If not, develops materialism (dependence) instead of independence •Relationships based on exchanges that are equal or equitable (fair, if not equal) thrive •Whereas, those in w/c the exchange balance feels consistently one sided are more likely to be unhappy •Principle of Least Interest – partner w/ less commitment to the relationship is the one who has more power including the power to exploit the other •Person who maintain dominance – people who are willing to break-up/refuse to be the first to make up) Family Systems

•Use family as a whole more than the sum of its parts (members) •“Everybody knows what they need to do to make this work” – weakness: no room for change •A family functions regularly in a certain way; emotional expression and behavior of family tend to persist 7) Conflict and Feminist Perspective •Central Issue – feminist – gender issues specific to women •Because woman brings attention w/ woman duties -> it conflicts -> “Doesn’t mean because I’m a woman, I should be the one cooking. •Woman dispels tradition – conflict happens w/in the family •And/or woman is not getting to do traditional duties and causes conflict (Traditional homemaker wife now is going to work) 8) Biosocial Perspective (Charles Darwin) •Depending how you’re raised is how you survive •Individual Gene - determines if family is successful •“ You’re just like your father. ”