

Family sociology journal

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There have been changes between generations of family structure and family roles over the years. Both my great grandparents are Ghanaian. They had twelve children, my grandma being the youngest. In those days, houses in Ghana were largely built and accommodated every member of the extended family. Their main idea and aim of living together under one roof was to give care, support and perpetuate their cultural heritage. They provided each other with physical needs, emotional and economic support, meeting the basic human needs for food, shelter and intimacy.

Since hunting and gathering could not feed the whole family, they resulted to farming. Agriculture was their main source of work and income. It brought a very significant amount of produce to feed the entire extended family. The men were actively involved in farm work, particularly in the growing of crops and rearing of animals. The men ensured that the supply of food was evenly shared to the family members, while the women stayed home and performed household duties like cooking, cleaning, caring for the children and the elderly among other functions.

My great grandparents made sure that the married couples procreate and socialize the next generation to perpetuate the society's cultural heritage, traditions, practices, values, language, and so on. In addition, they ensured that the security of every member of the family was achieved, as well seeing to it that the new generations were nurtured and rooted in the customs and norms of the society. My great-grandfather passed away at the age of 110, and my great-grandmother at the age of 115 respectively.

In their old age, my mother, among other siblings - including those from external branches of the family provided support for them in their daily activities such as personal care. My grandparents were both traders; they were into the exportation and importation of farm produce to various parts of the world. My mother being the eldest of six children helped my grandparents in the running of the business. Moreover, my grandparents, being the head of the family, provided moral guidance and ensured that members of the family lived harmoniously with each other.

This resulted in us spending more quality time with one another, promoting unity, integration and thereby fostering happiness. In addition to all these, my grandparents also assisted to the other mothers in the community in their support for the daily needs of the younger ones. My grandfather died peacefully, at the age of 96. His death really had a devastating impact on my grandmother since they performed various family functions together. She was later diagnosed with depression and dementia, which worsened with age.

My mother with her other siblings took turns in caring for her until she passed away at the age of 95. After the death of my grandparents, my mother married and divorced six years after. Her other five siblings also married and migrated from the village and are now scattered across Europe, America and Asia. Subsequently, my mother relocated to live in Germany and left me in the care of my father who later remarried twice and had two children with each woman.

Fifteen years ago, got married, moved out of Ghana and have since lived in Chocobates with my family. Though am now separated from my husband, I

still live in Choccolates with my four children. Although my father still resides in Ghana, my other half siblings are living in different countries around the world. Due to the distance between us all, our ability to see each other and provide care and support ; as was the case in my grandparent's generation has been greatly reduced.

In view of the above, agree to the fact that due to the recent changes in the enervation of family, there has been issues affecting the family such as divorce, smaller families, single parenthood, families scattered across the globe and greater number of people living alone. This has really decreased the family ability to care and support each other. In this journal, I will define what the term family means to me, and also how George Morocco and Talcum Parsons viewed the family and its roles from a functionalist perspective.

Furthermore, I will again explain the changes in the roles and relationship within the family in the last century, followed by a conclusion. The arrival of the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism were primary factors that resulted in the changes in family role and structure in this modern era. The family role has been an interest and focus by functionalists such as Tailcoat Parsons and Morocco George. Sociologist, anthropologist, historians, and economist have all defined " family/' from their various different perspectives.

One of the main institutions that can have the most impact on society is the family. The meaning of family is different to every one of us. Family to me; is the basic building block of society. It comprises a group of people who are

related by blood, such as great-grandparents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, parents children who live together or apart, thus representing a single household (see picture 1). The family could also be seen as an institution or a social group united through bonds of kinship, marriage or adoption that joins members as one (Mansions and Plumper, 2008, p. 80). Pictures 1 : Extended Family. Source: [http://www. Backslash. Com/De tutorial/05/08/edited](http://www.Backslash.Com/De_tutorial/05/08/edited) . HTML. Ideally, the family is an institution Of solicitation and nurturing. It ensures unity and cooperation among members, providing protection, companionship ND security. Some other may also view the family as a group of people living in love, protecting and supporting each other in spite of race, blood, gender, cultureetc. In order to further elaborate on this issue of family, I will look at how family was before and how much it has changed up until this date.

One of the main changes in the dynamics of families is the social changes in the Women's movement and the changes from the extended family unit tonuclear family, then to other forms of families such as the single parent family unit, cohabitation, homosexuals families and so on. Parsons identifies two oleos the family plays. The first is the primarily, the socializing of children. He argues that through solicitation, children acquire language; absorb the accumulated knowledge, attitude, belief and values of their culture; and learn the social and interpersonal skills they need if they are to function well and effectively in the society.

The second aspect of the role Parsons assets is the stabilization of adult personalities. Parsons stated that the different roles men and women play could lead tostressand strains, thus family is seen as functioning when it <https://assignbuster.com/family-sociology-journal/>

provides warmth, security and emotional support for ACH other (see picture 2) and thus, all family members benefit from the loving relationships that they share with each other. This process is also known as the " Warm Bath" theory where the family provides a very relaxing atmosphere at home to release stress and tension after a hard day at work (see picture 3).

Pictures 2: The Family Members Supporting Each Other. Source: [http://blob.Wellness. Com/blob/-not-set--vitamins-d-c-and-BBS-lend- each-other-helping-hands](http://blob.Wellness.Com/blob/-not-set--vitamins-d-c-and-BBS-lend- each-other-helping-hands) Picture 3: The Family Relaxing at Home. Source: <http://cytologist.Ham. Com/2008/06/27/functions-of-the-family- part-2/> George Morocco, arguably, took an entirely different approach in defining family as " a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and production" (Sitting, 1 985, p. 60).

He added that the family includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the social cohabiting adults. Morocco (1949) looked at 250 societies and came up with four basic functions of the family. He claimed that the family is universal because it fulfils the following essential functions for society. These uncti'on's focus on: sexual, reproductive, educative and economic roles Of the family.

Morocco believed that the sexual function serves to regulate sexual behavior. This function relates to the activity between the husband and wife, mating to bring forth children. This leads us to the reproductive function, which relates to bearing and raising the children for the next generation. The educational function serves as a platform for families to train and transmits

values and virtues to the younger generation, thus building human capital. This function socializes the children into the culture of their society thereby making them responsible adults.

As the Bible states in Proverbs 22: 16 "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (King James version).

Morocco fourth function of the family is how it serves as economic unit, which provides financial security and stability among members.

Undoubtedly, households do entail an economic relationship in different ways; it ensures that the production and allocation of resources are distributed equally among members (Kittens, 1985, p. 62).

Families supply each other with basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing and other essential resources that insure the emotional ties to one another. The men are the breadwinner of the house while the women perform various household duties and provide constant care and support for the children and the elderly. The functionalist perspective has focused on the role of the family in society and for its members. In other words, it looks at how the family, as an institution helps in maintaining order and stability in the society and the importance of the family for its members.

There are different kinds of family system, namely: the extended family, the nuclear family, single parent family, cohabitation family, gay and lesbian family etc. The extended family is defined as "a family system in which several generations live in household" (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2005).

Talcott Parsons believed that the extended family in the pre industrial era was the most beneficial as they were a unit of production. This means that

the work and home lives were combined and so each member of the family takes turns in helping and supporting each other in times of need.

One reason that the extended family was often not more prevalent than now is because of the lower life expectancy rate. Today, grandparents are in good shape and are living longer; this can be attributed to a number of factors including the improvements in public health, nutrition and medicines. The welfare system has also encouraged the De- institutionalizing of the elderly and created changes within the family structures giving rise to grandparents to assist in the caring of their grandchildren.

Grandmothers in today's world are playing a very vital role in caring for their grandchildren while their mothers and fathers go to work. It has been commonly believed that the nuclear family came about as a result of industrialization, with small families better able to meet the demands of an industrialized economy (see picture 4). From my point of view, the nuclear family comprises of two adults, male and female, with their offspring (see picture 5). Sitting (1985) suggest that the nuclear family consist of a parent and a child or parents and children.

Industrialization, urbanization, and capitalism were the main factors that led to the promotion of the nuclear family and household change (Sitting, 1985, p. 133). The main reason for this change was that industrialization saw the development of cities, which facilitated the rapid growth of large urban centers to support and supply labor for factory-based production.

Furthermore, these rapidly growing economic centers necessitated smaller family units in order to function optimally. Pictures 4: Extended Family.

Source: <http://YMMV.Ambulant.Com/about/family>. Tm Picture 5: The Nuclear Family. Source: <http://www.Preconditioning.Com/2013/03/13/parents-opinions-matter-win-prizes-with-parent-survey-panel-2/> Obviously, the structure of the family unit keeps changing, and with that, being a single mum or dad is much easier today than in previous years due to social acceptance and higher prevalence. Single parent families involve one adult and child (or children); most often the adult turns out to be female. This family unit is often derived from the nuclear family through the break-up of one family through divorce or death.

In the past, people got married and stayed married regardless of the problems and difficulties the marriage will be facing. A divorce procedure was difficult, expensive and could take ages to come to end, making it impossible for marriages to breakdown. However, the number of single-parent families is growing at length. Divorce parents with heir dependents do not bear the stigma they once did, as it has become a norm in this modern era. (Wolfing, 2005, p. 2) Nowadays, one can get married today and divorce tomorrow. More women are choosing to have children out of wedlock.

Functionalist like Parsons and Morocco have regarded the nuclear family as the best family unit for society since it fulfils many roles. Personally, I believe that the lone-parent family is still capable of socializing children into society. Gay and lesbian family unit is taking centre stage in today's words. In the Islamic society it is recognized as a taboo and loud lead to punishment by death (Mansions and Plumper, 2008, p. 392). This family unit consist of adults of the same sex with or without children; the children could be their own from previous marriages Or adopted.

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Society looks down on homosexuals for seeking sexual gratification from the same sex. This lifestyle is not seen as a social norm considered by the family and community where one lives. Due to recent changes in human right laws and regulations, same- sex marriage are seen as heterosexuals, given the same right and benefits as the nuclear family, overturning centuries of established radiation whereby homosexuals acts were kept out of the public domain and was seen as sin and a taboo. I will continue by outlining the changes in the roles of the family, how it has evolved and the impact on society since the twentieth century.

Despite the changing lifestyles and ever-increasing personal mobility that characterize modern society, the family still remains the central element of contemporary life; offering care and support, companionship, security and protection. But, the structure of the family, and society at large has undergone massive changes in terms of the roles they play. Before the industrial revolution, families were a unit of production and were considered to be multifunction. Members within the family (extended Family) had to work to support each other.

Agriculture was primarily their source of work and production. With the development of machine, equipment as well as the building of factories, which made the working process easier and increase in volume of production, people had to adapt to new conditions and lifestyle.

Industrialization required a move from rural areas to urban centers and precisely, to where the factories were located, this had a negative effect on the extended family since this led to higher geographic mobility reducing the kinship network.

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This changes brought about the nuclear family system, which was better fitted at that time. Men were the breadwinners and chief provider of the house and the women and kids were confined to the house performing household duties such as taking care of the children, cleaning of the house, cooking, among other functions (see picture 6 & 7) Pictures 6 & 7: The Misery of working conditions in the Early Periods of Industrialization. Source:

<http://www.Tepidity.Com/Genderless/How-Women's-Roles-in-the-Family-Have-Changed/> Source: <http://WV.Demutualization.Mom/business/bobcat/Family+will+prove+good+thing+business+lons/7939185/story.HTML>

However, functionalist like Karl Marx and Frederica Engel's interpret the effect of industrialization, arbitration and the existence of the nuclear family from a negative perspective. They argued that the role of the family benefited the ruling class, thus helping to maintain class inequality and capitalism. Marx and Engel's viewed the family as a unit of consumption, which promoted the products of the capitalist and generated profit for the capitalist businesses (Kismet, 2007).

Marx believed the family socialists its members especially the children to become the next generation of labor power to the capitalist system. Marx went on to argue that parents exert authority and control over their children thereby preparing them to abide by the capitalist authority in the work place (Goode, 1964, up. 219-224). Throughout the years, the family unit has changed drastically, the role of women have shifted from home based to outside of the house likewise the men. Women have now moved into the workforce, equaling the same right and privileges men have in the work place.

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Stacey (1987: 238) seems to have noted that 'the massive increase of female participation in higher education and the labor force are both cause and effect of this family crises; they both facilitate and are made necessary by family change' (cited in Jaeger and Wright, 1999: 4). At most majority of women in the workforce are highly positioned and managing various branches of the organizations due to their caring nature. Men's traditional roles have also changed. With working wives they are relieved from the burden of being the sole responsibility for supporting the family.

Aside Of being the breadwinner, men are nowadays participating actively in the running and managing of the household. They help in the caring of the children, like taking them to school, picking them up from school, preparing meals for the family among other duties. In my opinion, the new changes in the role of the family can lead to family harmony and happiness since the mother, father as well as the children share in almost all the household activities. However, the changing relationship to work is also undermining the pattern of rights and expectations in the marriage.

As women attachment to the paid labor force increases, they would require to exert the same power, control and rights in the making of family decisions as supposed to men. When these rights are not respected, most women find this intolerable leading to a break down of the marriage. Majority of women in full time employment continues to take responsibility of work in the household than the men, this is because they are pressured by the traditional sex roles duties in the past leaving them to work longer hours.

Women have been performing majority of household duties for decades, and they will continue to do so until should task becomes a paid profession. It is very obvious that the modern family has many changes and differences in comparison to the traditional family. In the past the family lived and worked together, so the family relationship was attached. The size Of the traditional family had two or more generations living together to provide care, warmth and support for each other. Children in this family unit are cared for not only by the parents, but other kindred.

In contrast with modern society today, children within the nuclear family unit often stay with child-minders and neighbors whiles their arenas are at work. When mothers are at the workplace or away from their children for various reasons, they sometimes feel guilty that someone is being responsible for performing their duty of caring and raising their child or children. There is limited time for solicitation in the nuclear family unit. Working parents may have less time for each other if they do not schedule a time for solicitation as a result of their hectic pace of family life.

This can have a significant effect on marriage and family life resulting in their life not being fulfilled. Relationship may become more stressful, family members will not feel as close and as involved with one another, and family living can become less enjoying. For this reason, the relationship of today's modern family system will not be close-knit as supposed to before. However, women who work outside the home report significant benefits associated with their job. They describe having high reputation and self-esteem and a greater sense of autonomy and respect.

When a mother enjoys her work and gains a sense of satisfaction from it as well as good earnings, her children can benefit more than if she stays home. There will be adequate income for the should decreasing financial pleasure, and promoting a healthy lifestyle and relationship. Marriage to me is the union between two people that is a man and a woman who show long time commitment for each other. From the beginning God revealed that marriage was a special union between a man and a woman to come together and replenish the earth. That was the only way to have children.

People marry for various reasons. These reasons could be based love, security, for protection, to procreation, financial benefit, among other reasons (see picture 8). Interestingly, people refuse to get aired for various reasons. Some people strive to stay single because they like freedom. Others would want to be free do anything they want and not have to feel the burden of a family. Some will remain single so they can have fewer responsibilities than a married person. Majority of people have the fear of getting divorce and this pushes them away from getting married.

This fear could be due to an experience the person has gone through or witnessed. From my standpoint, when parents or a relative of yours goes through an unpleasant marriage relationship, which ended in divorce when you were a nouns, this could have a negative impact on you thinking you will face that same experience and problems, thereby avoiding having a taste of marriage. Nowadays, marriage have become less of an important for women who are now able to undertake paid work outside the home and are able to fend for themselves and their dependents leading to their increasing ability to form separate households.

Adding to this, a divorce procedure doesn't take a significant amount of time and money like it was in centuries past. This has also resulted in the increase rate of divorce. Picture 8: Marriage: the union of love. Source: <http://manifoldness.com/2011/09/15/7-reasons-to-believe-in-the-power-of-marriage/> For centuries now, the issue of divorce and increased in divorce rate in this modern era is increasingly taking centre stage in the public domain (see pictures 9 & 10).

In Great Britain for instance in 1984, it was estimated that there were 940,000 lone parents families and half a million children living in these family unit (Snell and Millard, 1987, P. 389). Recently it is estimated that about one in two new marriages will fail (Wolfig, 2005, p. 2). Undoubtedly, divorce causes so much harm than good; however, it can be viewed from a costive angle. Parents being separated can be better for the children so that they will not have put up with so many quarrels and fighting among the parents.

Most often, the children are the ones who are being affected greatly when a divorce process begins. Quite interestingly, more than twenty studies conducted over the last thirty years confirmed, children of divorced are likely to end up the same way, thus they refrain from entering into marriage (Wolfig, 2005, p. 3). Many single parents are as a result of divorce, others could be the death of one of the spouse. Whichever way it comes, being a single parent with dependents from my own perspective is not an experience one should go through.

In most instances the men walk away leaving the women the sole responsibility in rearing and raising the child or children with very little help

from the absent father. This often leads to financial constraint on the women (Wolfing, 2005, p. 4). However, the Welfare System has provided social security benefits such as (e. G. Tax credit, child benefit, income support, healthy start vouches, NASH exemption certificate, housing and council tax benefit, among other benefits) to help ease their financial burden. Most often, after divorce, people turn to cohabitante rather than getting remarried due to previous experience.