

Functionalism vs marxism : a family case study assignment

[Sociology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The family unit is thereby viewed by functionalists as essential to the welfare of the individuals. Marxist theory, on the other hand, takes a negative look at the family. Seeing it as an exploitive system developed by ruling classes in order to serve the needs of a capitalist nation.

It therefore sees the existence of the nuclear family as being determined by the economy. Men of the family are exploited at work into serving the ruling class, and women, at home by doing domestic work for no pay. The family propagates this inequality since children, on seeing their parents fulfill these roles are socialized into believing that such exploitation is to be expected. Moreover it provides a means by which men may vent the frustrations of working class life and feel they have power and control thereby avoiding revolt in the workplace.

As stated at the start of this essay, the family under examination seems to best fit functionalist theory. The Smith family are the ideal nuclear family, consisting of a male and female married couple and their two children. The Smith family live in the London suburbs and are white and middle class. When the children were young the mother stopped working in order to adopt the role of primary caregiver, thereby using her time and energy to provide for their children's needs. At the same time the father fulfilled the role of breadwinner and ensured that the children and his wife were well cared for when it came to physical and material wellbeing. When the time came of age the father later financed the children's private education, thus ensuring that the children were educated and socialized in the best possible way. This family thereby fits best to a functionalist theory. However, this may be because of the focus of the two theories.

<https://assignbuster.com/functionalism-vs-marxism-a-family-case-study-assignment/>

Functionalist theory was developed through work on white, middle class females, like the Smith family. The Inequalities facing working class barnacles as stated by Marxism are not applicable In this situation since the Smith family are if anything, part of the oppressive ruling class which Marxist theory states Torte ten creation AT Tamely unlit In conclusion, although on the surface the Smith family seem ideal candidates for a nationalist theory tag is only because the range of families observed by functionalist theorists was narrow.

Although the Smith family may provide physical and psychological support to each other this does not mean that the existence of the family is born out of this. The functionalists have created a chicken and egg problem. What came first the family or the functions fulfilled by the family? Correlations can not be taken as evidence. Therefore even though the patterns shown by the Smith family correlate with functionalist theory it is too large a jump to say that this means functionalist theory applies to this family.