FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Family as a concept is flexible, thus prone to changes concerning the needs of the modern industrial society. Roles within the family are structured following the contemporary conditions, following the emancipation of women, reduction in the male workforce due to mechanization, and increased presence of grandparents as caregivers, due to increased life expectancy. The main objective of this scientific work is to analyse relevant standpoints regarding the function and sustainability of family, while taking into account external influences such as economic status, political situation, as well as societal norms and values. The identification of these challenges helps us determine the extent to which family structure and function is able to adopt to rapid globalisation that is taking place. Globalization is opening many doors, giving us freedom of choice in terms of family structure and roles, while simultaneously forcing us to find our identity through labeling ourselves as "this", "that", or "the next best alternative". Higher living standards constrain our possibility of choice, as fewer children mean less economic burden, but more attention is spent on them. The boomerang effect of childhood is what emphasizes the importance of a stable home.

Keywords: family roles, function of the family, social change, concept of childhood, gender equality, age and family life

1. INTRODUCTION

The following work includes the testing of the hypothesis "Family function and structure is ajusted to the needs of modern industrial societies." The process of primary socialisation, in depth descibed by Parsons (1959b), epmhasises the importance of family for psyschological development of a child, as self-development is encouraged as a foundation for further advancement. Theories regarding family vary from the ones claiming that it causes personality to be blurred, to the ones highlighting child's social superiority as a result of proper bringing.

As a result, family should be looked upon as a bio-psyschological community, but also a basic cell of a society, where the relatioship with society is established through primary socialisation. This means that family represents "a bridge" between the individual and the wider social community, helping the social integration be achieved. The process of development of the individual must be provided in the family and in nature, where self-development is the core of education.

First theories for education individual education gradually begin to lose the cult of childhood personality, others (the second) the child's social superiority, and the third as they are called in science anthropological theories which try in the most scientific way to explain the family in the realization of its educational functions. The essence of such thought is therefore maintained that the family should not be understood as a separate bio-psychological community but even as the basic cell of society, but as a primary community core of voluntary union of people, where in particular and natural way is accomplished socialization and at the same time establish relations between the wider social community.

This means that the family is the cause with the help of which creates relationships between the individual and society, thus, it is neither out of society but even within it, but it appears as transmission between the individual and society and at the same time become an integral and creative part of society. The process of development of the individual must be provided in the family and in nature, where self-development is the core of education.

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2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The functionalist view regarding family and any other institution, such as religion and education is based upon the fact that society is a complex, dynamic system in which all the parts are inter-dependable. They see family as "the basic building block" of any society, as it performs fundamental functions of primary socialization, thus helping social order and economic stability.

Parsons (1959b) and Goode (1963), as functionalists, provided evidence for "fit thesis", as an explanation for a decline in the number of extended families in industrialized areas. They claim that extended family existed in the pre-industrial times, as it was multi-functional, kinship-based, and economically productive, as labor-intensive subsistence farming required multiple family members to take a part in the provision of income (Boss et al., 2009).

Later on, the industrial era required nuclear, more mobile families, while the development of institutions caused the family to lose its functions: homeschooling was replaced by educational institutions, care-giving with kindergarten, etc, Parsons and Bales (1956) and Widmer and Jallinoja (2008) claim. Durkheim (1893) claimed that people do not simply exist in a society, they are bonded by what he named as "social solidarity". In traditional society, she claims, mechanic solidarity existed, as people were bonded by what they are (family or a clan), while in modern industrial society, people are bonded by what they do. This modern, organic solidarity requires the integrating mechanism such as democracy, in terms of, for example, pledging allegiance to a flag (Durkheim, 2019).

On the other hand, Marx (1844) claim that nuclear family acts a basic unit of consumption and represent an institution through which weathy (Bourgeoisie) pass down capital, thus reproducing inequality amongst classes. The Bourgeosie gain capital and wealth by exploiating the Proleteriat, causing a conflict to occur and help maintain capitalist society (kirby, 2000). Atlhusser (1970) claims that the family has a consumption role, as it is targeted

by advertisers (Benton, 1985). In addition, by encouraging consumption a family becomes a source of profit, thus indirectly aiding capitalism.

Moreover, Weber (1978) explained the phenomenon of "Iron Cage", as a constraint of capitalist societies towards all family members, due to freedom restriction (Mitzman, 2002). Generally speaking, feminists, such as Anne Oakley, agree with functionalists and Marxits that family represents an institution which helps social order be established and maintained. However, they clash with functionalists and agree with Marxists that by doing so, it aids only the powerful. For Marxists, it's the Bourgeoisie, but for feminists its men. Feminists claim that nuclear family values and norms help preserve patriachy and translate it to next generations. Liberal feminists aim to legally equalise men and women.

As for example, in the UK, marital rape was not considered a crime until 1991, due to the fact that marriage gave men, conjugal rights" that are impossible to be withdrawn though divorce or annulment. Liberal feminists claim that majority of lebal battles are won, while still there is inequality in terms of domestic work and the pheonomenon of men being, kings of the castles". As such, families opress women, giving them less choice, thus resulting in lower ambition and motivation to work and/or raise children.

In addition, Ducombe and Marsden (1993), claim that women perform triple shift, in terms of emotional work, and investment and time for the osychological well-being of other members. On the other side of the spectrum, radical feminists claim that changing the laws on their own, will never result in equal position within the family, and later on the workplace. They claim that girls are socialised in a manner that they accept opression and ineqality as a characteristic of the society, not a phenomenon to be observed and adjusted to thei needs and wants.

Radical feminist Firestone (1970) claimed that biology represent a fundamental difference between genders, upon which cultural differences stem from. In contrast, Marxist feminists argue that inequality is enhanced by the family, as women perform a role of "unpaid servants". Postmodernists take a very different approach, in terms of the definition of family.

They see family as whatever people want it to be, while rejecting the idea of "the family", they emphasise the importance of contructing relationships in the ways people believe are appropriate and aaceptable. As Stacey (2002) claims, "Every family is an alternative family" (Rudolph, 1995). This approach disregards the importance of Murdocks four family

functions, Parsons "fit thesis" and any other relevant concept of the family structure, diversity and definition.

3. PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

Sociologist Gutman (1976) and Fraser (2012) discovered that among black slave families in the USA, it is very frequent for husband and wife to see each other once a week, as they work on different plantations. Soliende de Gonzalez (Kistler, 2018) claims that this household type was very common among Black Caribbean families: 'there are groupings which I have called "dispersed families" in which the father, although absent for long periods, retains ultimate authority over a household for which he provides the only support, and where affective bonds continue to be important between him and his wife and children'.

Giddens (2006) claims that family is defined through members linked by kin, and adult members take care of the youth. Still, this is not the case in families with a nurturing child, who usually takes care of younger siblings in cases of the parent(s)' death. This definition includes a variety of family relations but can be considered as too broad, as groups we do not often see as family, are included in this definition. Here, Giddens suggests an alternative definition concerning Murdock's one, as he introduced a definition that focuses on kinship, suggesting that single parent and homosexual households represent a family.

Functionalists observe the ways family aids its member and the society, and the fluid nature of its functions through time. Besides, the phenomenon of "loss of functions" remains a debate. Anthropologist Murdock (1949) defined family, based on the data gathered on 250 different societies he investigated. The conclusion was that family, in some form, exists in every society and that every form has four fundamental characteristics: "The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation, and reproduction.

It 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 sexually cohabiting adults" (Kirby, 2000) Such a definition can be recognized as flexible, as it encounters different family types (monogamous, polygamous) polygyny (one man can be married to several women) or polyandry (one woman married to several men).

Sociologist Fletcher (1973) argued that contemporary familes have two basic functions they perform: core functions, which could not have been performed by an individual or an institution alone, including childbearing and child-rearing while ensuring psychological and

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physical advancement through primary socialisation. Peripheral functions, however, include aspects which are to an extent overtaken by the institutuions, such as education and helathcare.

Parsons and Bales (1956) claim that nowadays, family is becoming less multi-functional, and more specialised. The development of schools, for example, caused families to lose the function of education. Moreover, Parsons (1959b) believed that such a loss is actually followed by an advancement in terms of fundamental functions of primary socialisation and the stabilisation of adult personalities (adults providing emotional and physical support).

4. DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Trends in modern industrial society show a general decline in the number of marriages and the rate of marriage. Such a situation is partially due to the career development of both males and females, causing later marriages, thus less of them in a given year. Moreover, many people refuse to marry at all, due to their opinion regarding it, or a simple act of not be willing to marry. In the UK, there has been an overall decrease in marriage and a steady decline in first marriages. This, however, has been balanced to an extent, by remarriages. The number of remarriages showed a peak in the 1980s and decreased since, but in the past 50 years, remarriage as a percentage of total marriage doubled.

Gillis (1985) was one of the first sociologists to recognise the common-law marriage, where couple lives in cohabitation, "as if they were married". This type of household has been very common in the past decades in the UK, but cohabitation is not legally registered, so the statistics have low reliability. Hudges and Church (2010) through survey, identified a rapid increase in cohabitation from 10% of couples in the 1986 to 25% in 2006.

Reasons for an increase vary, but can generally be catogarised as: lower stigma levels attahed to cohabitation, lower social pressure to marry, increased availability of contraception and legalised abortion in many countries. In addition, a decreased influenece of religion (secularisation) in some ethnic groups, lead to an increase in cohabitation, a decline in marriage significance and an increase in divorce rates, as well as an ability to remarry.

Nowadays, both LICs (low-income countries) and HICs (high-income countries) are facing family structures that are much more complex and diverse than it was the case ever before. Even though some sociologists claim that a variety of family types existed in the pre-industrial era, it is certain that today, there is greater diversity. Still, the media frequently represents the nuclear family as the only kind of family. Moreover, the number of same-sex

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Reasons for increased diversity include social changes, in terms of less bureaucracy and the ability to divorce, leading to more single-parent/reconstituted families. Globalization and increased awareness about different cultures, norms, and values, also lead to an increased acceptance of same-sex families, contributing to diversity. Welfare systems providing healthcare for the elderly resulted in increased life expectancy. As a result, family structures started including grandparents as caregivers to children. Such a trend lead to the beanpole family, identified by Brannen (2003). This family structure is common in areas of low or decreasing birth rates and increasing life expectancy. Intra-generational extensions become weak, as fewer children are born. Simultaneously, the vertical extensions are becoming stronger, due to increased life expectancy.

Additionally, there is also an increase in single person households. Beaumont (2011) recorded that 29% of UK households contain one person. This is a case due to four main reasons: more elderly live alone after partner's death, increased number of people can afford to live alone, while for women it is more acceptable to live alone and staz single, and due to an increase in divorce rates, people are moving out of the original family home.

5. GENDER EQUALITY AND EXPERIENCES OF FAMILY LIFE

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Domestic labor includes the maintenance of family and household and includes a variety of daily tasks, including taking care of a child, cooking, and cleaning. Gershuny et al. (2006) and Craig (2012) reported that females of all classes, ages, and ethnicities on average, do more domestic work than males. As stereotypical as it sounds, women spend more time on domestic tasks, while men take care of gardening. Such a situation is a reflection of the patriarchal norms regarding roles, but also the fact that men spend more time as a paid workforce.

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Kan (2001) and Syed and Kramar (2017) noted that for women, there is a negative correlation between household work and paid job. In contrast, retirement and unemployment increased the burden to women in terms of housework. Ramos (2003) and Mogensen (2015) reported that equality in terms of housework is most likely to be established when both parents are working full time.

Varying cultural beliefs in terms of male and female roles and abilities are also a cause of differences in domestic labor. Pilcher (1988) and Silverstein and Giarrusso (2013) found that the elderly, unlike younger generations, did not talk about gender roles and equality, but simply followed the footsteps of their parents. Sullivan et al. (2008) suggest that developed countries faced a quiet revolution during industrialization, in terms of acceptability of equality (Loveless & Holman, 2007).

Functionalists, in general, emphasize the benefits of family, claiming that advantages usually overweight the potential disadvantages. They are aware of the "darker side" of the nuclear family in terms of child abuse and domestic violence but claim that these cases are *exceptions* to the general rule. Functionalists focus on the stabilization of adult personalities, identified by Parsons (1959b).

In contrast, postmodernists investigated psychological stability, thus questioning the identity and our position in society. Cultural globalization certainly brought a variety of choices that sometimes questions our identity. It seems that this increased choice is pressuring us even more, to fit into a certain mold, due to the increasing desire to label who we are. So, the traditional norms and values should not guide us, but there are new ways of how to behave appropriately in a role, making our identity even more unstable. Families have been affected by this, as now there are different ways to be "a father", giving men an ability to choose between given ideal versions of that role.

UNDOC (2018) reported that 70% of women murder victims are assasineted bz trher male parter and that aouund 25% of women wolrdwide "'experience sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime". The figures vary for different countries, but what's interesing is that economical development is not strictly followed by stable, helathy family relations. Welfare systems, such as the Swedish one, provide full protection of single-mothers, which encouraged women to marry, have a child and divorde afterwards. This questions the value the family holds. Then again, protection for single mothers and fathers is mandatory.

6. AGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Sociologist Archard (2004) claims that every society had or is having a concept of childhood, but the definition of it varies among different cultures and societies. In case childhood was a biological concept, we would have expected little difference among different cultures. However, childhood is thought of as socially constructed, and not biologically established, just because of these variations in definitions.

Robertson (2001) claims that blurred transition from childhood to adulthood, and the apparent disappearance of childhood us a result of media. Children are nowadays consumers, encouraged to purchase what used to be aimed for adults, such as mobile phones. Advertisements are even aimed at children, targeting them in a sophisticated manner and leading to the formation of consumption culture among youth – thus helping childhood seem like adulthood.

Philipee Ariès claims that childhood as a concept of social and psychological development was invented three centuries ago. He also claims that childhood is connected to the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society. This is because, in the pre-industrial era, there were only adults and non-adults, who were not recognized as "children" and they were not treated as innocent and the ones in need to be taken care of. Pre-industrial society was characterized by children living and working with their parents, while the process of industrialization made a distinction between children and adults. In the late 19th century, the education system in the UK was established, so children spent less time working as subsistence farmers, while more time was spent on socializing in schools. Ariès constantly claims that childhood did not exist in the pre-industrial society, contrary to the belief of many sociologists.

Victor (1987) and Durst and MacLean (2010) claims that there is a variety of factors involved in influencing the status of the elderly. The impact is certainly exerted by social organizations, as what is the clearest case with nomadic societies, where the elderly are incapable of following the route of younger generations, this is considered as a problem, and in some cases, left behind. In well-established societies, the knowledge and the experience of the elderly are considered as valuable, while older people are usually employed as CEOs, thus giving them the power of control.

Kagan (1980) did a study in a Colombian village and claimed and elderly remained socially and economically active as long as they were physically capable of doing so. She claims that it is not a case due to gerontocracy, where older people are valued because of their

age, but they were seen as equally capable members of the society, progressing in some aspects to a greater extent, comparing to the younger generations.

In the 1980s the concept of "New Man" arose. Media represented this type of man as gentle, sensitive, anti-sexist, and committed to child bearing. Since then, people are increasingly approving this idea. Men who find themselves criticizing this idea, are most likely to be raised in a patriarchal environment. Still, this must not be the case, as patriarchal norms could provoke rebels against them, so the child decides not to follow the father's footsteps. The will of fathers to be included in child bringing is usually constrained by the need to provide income. So, they have to balance between paid work and bringing up a child, which can b quite demanding in the capitalist society, where the only free thing is air.

7. CONCEPT OF CHILDHOOD: BOOMERANG EFFECT

Childhood is important. If you don't want to take my word for it, simply observe the drastic example of Anders Breathing Breivik. Gullestad (2017), a Norwegian psychologist, wrote a paper called "Anders Behring Breivik, master of life and death: Psychodynamics and political ideology in an act of terrorism"(Behring, 2017). In this writing, she explicitly concluded that the reason for violence, lack of empathy, political and moral ideologies stemmed from early childhood trauma. "What the world notices, confronted with his ill deeds, is not what he wants us to see. What we see is unfathomable evil".

This shows that his subconscious intentions were to prove himself and be under the spotlight, not to represent evil. This shows the boomerang effect of the childhood experience;eventually everyone facing trauma will feel the backlash of their childhood. The trick is that you never know when and how the individual will express the trauma.

Even before the 21st century, psychologists connected violent, adult behavior with childhood trauma. Sociologist Fallon did a neurological research brain structure of psychopaths is not always significantly different from people who did not engage in violence, while the crucial difference was the environment where raised. This presents the idea that childhood is a dominant theory according to which we analyze behavior. Not every deviant behavior is connected to childhood trauma. But, every childhood trauma will cause deviant behavior (Fogel & Melson, 1988).

However, sociologist Aries (1962) claims that according to the historical paintings and documents (secondary data), childhood is a recent invention. This point of view matches with the functionalist "fit thesis"; as, before industrialization and globalization, subsistence farming

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was the major occupation. As a result, children were brought up to work as soon as they were capable of doing so. Such a "concept", can be seen in Jenk's definition of dionysian childhood - adults having control over children to prevent harm.

Such a concept was present during the organic solidarity in the modern world. Durkheim explained it as a bond by what they do, which indicates a number of integrating mechanisms, such as democracy. Shared ideologies bring common behavioral patterns, which reflected on the way children were raised; little adults, unready to provide for the family.

Alongside any other concept, childhood practice varies majorly between different cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities. Traditional, patriarchal families are what we majorly see in the former command planned economies, such as China and Russia, and in conservative places such as Sicily. As defined by Archard (2015) and Margrain (2019), every society has a concept of childhood, but the definition varies. That is why you will see children in America driving at the age of 16, while in Japan they live in the same house as their parents for the whole life.

As culture becomes a commodity, which we can buy and sell (Plumb) O'Malley (2018), postmodernism expands the number of options. On the other hand, Scandinavian countries are often talked about when it comes to childhood. As a welfare state, Sweden has a law in which "Both parents together receive 480 days' parental allowance per child. In the case of multiple births, an additional 180 days are granted for each additional child". In the US, a pregnant woman gets zero paid hours, not to mention months. However, we often forget the welfare system that was present in Lybia, during the late 20th century.

Lupri (1983) Muammar Gadafi was the first president in the world who implemented free education for both sexes alongside free healthcare. This was a foundation for the Nordic countries. However, in 2011, the civil war broke out, and Lybia became a forme-welfare state. The media started representing the situation as "Arab Spring". I see no spring here.

8. CONCLUSION

Family, as a concept or a phenomenon, has been observed since the need for it arose. Still, the dynamic nature of it and its ability to adapt its nature to the globalized requirements are not fully understood. Further research upon the topic could be based on the correlation between the demands of capitalist society and the ability of new concepts, such as female emancipation and the "New Man", to adapt to it. The extent to which families can be adjusted could take into consideration indicators of life standard, such as GDPppp, life expectancy, and

literacy rate, as well as the influence of cultures and religions on the decision. Postmodernist and Social Democratic views suggest that increased ability to chose family roles gives an ability for gender equality to be obtained. Still, capitalist society works as a constraint.

Moreover, research done to test the hypothesis "Family function and structure is adjusted to the needs of modern industrial societies" is not fully confirming whether this hypothesis is true or false. According to the research done, we can conclude that the extent to which families have adopted the needs of modern industrial society is great. Still, there are many indicators such as domestic violence and child abuse that are present in those, more affluent societies.

As the aim of hypothesis testing is to determine whether there is sufficient reliable evidence to support a claim or belief, we can conclude that further research should be conducted. More investigation is needed in terms of comparison between quantitative indicators such as world happiness, Human Development Index (HDI), and economic status. In this way, we will find out how different cultures, nations, and tribes adapted to the needs of society, and the extent to which "modern industrial society" is the most desirable and logical step in the country's further development. Even though qualitative data is sometimes hard to measure, as it seems intangible – it can give a clearer insight into the efficiency of different family structures in relation to societal norms and values.

Conducting a research based upon quantitative, but also qualitative data produces an outcome for which reliability and validity can be questioned. To prevent this, data and perspectives were withdrawn from various perspectives, ranging from Marxist to Postmodernist view, which prevents bias and ensures reliable claims. In addition, fluid concepts, such as family, vary according to number of factors within and around the family. As a result, changes in the definition of childhood, family structure and role can be hard to follow. Still, this work focuses upon the timeline, emphasising the change that has occurred in the past decades or so.

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