

Sociological Perspectives on Divorce and Family

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The effects of divorce on the family structure are one of the major problems in society. In the USA children grow up with a variety of family structures. Divorce has affected the children adversely, both physically and mentally. Most children are brought up in single-parent families, including unmarried mothers. It is commonly observed in American society that most children are growing up in single-parent and two-parent families, which result from marriage, remarriages, births without marriage, and divorce (Cox & Desforges, 2017). In modern society, the single-parent family structure is rapidly growing. When a couple divorces each other, the decision about the children is highly critical; it can decline the relationship between the children and parents. After the divorce, most of the parents have two major challenges, first is their adjustment to their psychosocial conflict and their role as divorced parents. It can weaken and even damage the relationship between parent and child for divorced mothers. Children of divorced parents are less likely to receive financial and emotional assistance from their parents. Children of these parents were found with a decrease in pride, encouragement of social maturity, affection, stimulation of academic behavior and relationship with peers. It has been perceived that physical punishment is increased, and the presence of toys and games is decreased. Here, we will discuss the effects of these family structures on the children.

Functionalism And Divorce

According to the functionalist perspective of the family, marriage is the fundamental building block of society. From this angle, marriage can play a vital role in a stable society. Marriage and the family structure perform various necessary functions. A successful marriage has the important function of socializing the younglings and meeting the emotional needs of its members. The stable family systems underpin economic stability and social order. Functionalists consider divorce as a negative action; they blame divorce as a failure of the social institutions as they do not investigate the people involved in this action. According to functionalists, institutions do not provide sufficient instructions through which the partners should perform higher standards of society (Afrasiabi & Jafarizadeh, 2015). Functionalism is to promote uniformity, communication, and cohesiveness. It backs modern family standards to decrease the increasing rate of divorce in modern societies. In sociology, the term functionalism states that societies are basically structured in a way to maintain their stability and survival. The main concept of functionalism is to ensure harmony, balance, and evolutionary change in the existing scheme. According to this system, society is a complex structure to promote stability in society and guide people in the given social structure. Divorce, poverty, and domestic violence etc are examples of dysfunction in the existing social structure. When a part of the society is not contributing to the existing harmony and stability of the system it will not remain. Social theories are

trying to find ways to overcome the causes of divorce and other dysfunctions in society to reduce its adverse effects. Functionalism theorists argue that fewer divorces are dysfunctional as they serve a purpose. For instance, it can result in employment for many lawyers, judges, and other officials involved in this process. Moreover, it can employ social workers, psychiatrists, doctors and nurses to treat and care for these vulnerable people of the society who have lost a lot due to this decision. Some theorists view it as a factor of employment, and if the growth rate of divorce is controlled, it can destabilize the societal structure. However, its impact on the family can not be ignored, it can affect the self-esteem, and behavior of children, and affect the parents.

Conflict

The theory of conflict refers to the culture as the group which is struggling for power and resources. The basic perceptions of this theory are unfairness, tension, and radical change. Society is highly influenced by inequality, which should be opposed by members of that society. The present situation of society is due to inequality, which consequently causes conflict and changes. These theorists are interested in change and rank it as a positive force for society. They are concerned about the reason why some people have limited resources and others have so many resources. This approach is similar to the feminist approach, which deals with inequality in society. The conflict perspective of divorce must be analyzed as a microcosm of society. The Conflict theorists view divorce as the competition for power and resources among the couple. According to Petren et al. (2017), divorce occurs when the partners do not agree upon the sharing of power and resources. Divorce occurs when one of the married partners is trying to hold all the powers and control the other partner. In most cases, the male spouse wants to keep the authority and power and control his counterpart. The severe case of this inequality consequently causes divorce and separation of the married couple.

Symbolic-Interactionism

The symbolic interactionism perception usually simplifies the social interaction of a person to see society as a whole. The fundamental concepts of this perspective are relationship, interaction, and symbolic meanings. According to this concept, society is basically made of everyday interactions. From this perspective, divorce is examined as the choice that each individual has made, the communication between the couple and the symbolic meaning of divorce. There is no such thing which is right or wrong. However, it depends on the way a person looks at society on a minute scale to decide how to interact with a large group. Marriage is considered as a symbolic contract between the husband and spouse which can influence the community at large (Churchill, 2017). The decision of divorce can influence the interaction of parents and children, their children are mostly suffered by this decision and facing many behavioral issues including communication and low self-esteem.

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