



The Family : A Dynamic Interpretation

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Abstract: *The social institutional of the family is one of our oldest institution, family is a major social institution that is firstly important to role personnel development, for the self and social change. The fundamental building block and centre of social institutionalism is the family, like many other social institutions, has seen significant changes throughout the history of humanity. Due to quick evolutions, the family's functions have altered, but it hasn't lost its significance or worth in any community. The purpose of this article is to analyse the "family" as the fundamental unit of society, to highlight the relevance of its functions and changes to those roles, and to examine the family as a social design institution.*

Keywords: *Family, functions, socialisation, social, organization, significance*

Introduction

The family is the smallest and closest-knit unit of society, and it is here that humanity's deepest needs for cohesion and love are fully satiated. The family is a small social unit that typically consists of a father, a mother, and one or more children. It is a place where affection and responsibility are equally shared and where children are raised to be self-reliant and driven by others. The fundamental psycho-social component that results from a parent, mother, and child expressing their difficulties out of respect and love. The family is "a group constituted by a sex relationship sufficiently specific and lasting to provide for the reproduction and upbringing of offspring," according to Mac Iver and Page's definition of the family from 1950. The definition of a family given by Burges and Locke (1945) is "a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household, interacting and intercommunicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating and maintaining a common culture." Although this statement has numerous dimensions, the interaction of people who are acting out various social roles in a fundamental group relationship may be its most crucial one. The unique culture complex that each new family develops is one of the family's most fascinating aspects. Because it is the fundamental main group and the organic matrices of personality, the family is significant to sociologists. A family is a group of two or more people who live together and are connected by blood, marriage, or adoption. The family cycle may be described roughly as threefold. First comes the period between marriage and the birth of the first child. This is basic adjustment period in which each Spouse is much in love with the other and when doing things together is extensive. The second stage to the childbearing and chilbearing one when the mother is tied to her home duties and the husband experiences an increasing financial responsibility. The love of husband and wife for each other changes into the love of father and mother for each other, and the love of each parent for the childraising develops, although something of the earlier husband-wife affection. continues. The third stage comes after the children grow-up become married, leave home. Husband and wife have more time for each other, and more time to do things as just two persons. Affection has matured and ripened.

The family-cycle can be studied in two ways. One is the cross-sectional method and the other is retrospective history taking method. In the former method, information is secured on family composition and structure and other related data at a given point of time. One interesting fact during observation made by Bailey (1960), Hammel (1961), and Karve (1963) is that the family follows a cyclical development. Through death of the household or partition, the joint family may become deplated or restricted in its composition or become residentially nuclear. Through the marriage of sons, a joint-family may become extended, or a nuclear family may develop into a joint family.

Early History of the Family:

One may join an understanding of the significance of the family group by considering its early history and development. Elemental forms of the family go back to the higher types of animal life. The mother and her brood or flock are everywhere evident from the domestic barnyard in America to the wilds of Africa, Here and there the father stands guard. Occasionally father and mother have effected a division of labour. Here and there the same mating lasts season after season, "till death do us part". The development among higher animals has been called the protohuman family.

If the family has existed a million years, dating back to the early history of higher animals, it must be a highly significant type of social group. If it sprang up in response to need without being foisted upon any individual, it must be well founded. IP



nature prior to the advent of man instituted the family we may well treat it seriously. If it has continued in one form or other in an unbroken history since its first advent, we may ask : what is this marvellous institution ?

The mother and kid are the stable units of the family group among some prehistoric peoples. In this kind of circumstance, the father travelled widely, arriving home erratically, and departing for extended periods of time. The mother was forced to live at home because the baby was so helpless. The mother had to harvest fruit, plant seeds, and establish hoe-culture due to the father's erratic behaviour. The father had a more fascinating life, more social contacts, and a wider variety of new experiences because he was actively involved in the hunt and pursuit.

In some early human families the mother rather than the father was the leader a great deal of the time she stayed on the job "Hence this special type has been called the metronymic family, which means literally," named after the mothers." The child took the mother's name the father was not always known. Property was some time transferred to the mother, since she was the stable member of the parental group. Some Native American tribes in North America, for instance, developed the metronymic family to some extent. The Iroquois Indians are known as a metronymic tribe because the clans were largely governed by matrons, who served as women councillors chosen by the males of the respective clans. The father was the most important element in the family unit wherever the pastoral way of life existed and flocks and herds grew. Since grazing flocks and herds required a sizable area, the humans travelled in tiny groups that were far apart from one another. The mother and wife were expelled from their family's sphere of influence. Because she was alone, her husband had complete control over her. In pastoral circumstances, the flocks belonged to and were governed by new. The family was physically owned by the person who owned the family's land. The kids adopted the father's name and received the inheritance through him. The leadership of the family group was often inherited by the oldest living member. Men's power over women rose as a result of warfare. Women who were taken prisoner during battle were kept by their captors as slaves and spouses. The patronymic family structure is one in which the father is the head and has control, if not ownership, over the wife and children (named after the father). It is the most popular kind. The family named after the mother (metronymic) was generally matriarchal, that is one in which the mother exercised control. The family named after the father (patronymic) was usually patriarchal, that is, one in which father exercised control, although in many patriarchal families the mother has exercised considerable control within the house hold circle.

The patriarchal family of the early Hebreus has become world famous. The old Testament affords many descriptions of patriarchal families, such as those of Abroham, Issac, and Jacob. The ancient Hebrew family is noted for the attention and care given to the children." It has been claimed that because of the unity of the Hebrew family the Hebrews, although national orphans, have survived through the centuries.

Out of the early emphasis upon the family group came two universal principles of the Jewish and Christian religions. The role of the patriarchal father seems to have suggested the concept of the fatherhood of God. The social responsibility developed within the Hebrew family is the apparent antecedent of the ideal of brotherhood of man.

Ancestor worship results from a focus on parental control that is too strong. This pattern states that the welfare of the living is dependent upon the good intentions of the dead. A man's first responsibility is to raise a family that will carry on the ancestral line intact in order to ensure his happiness. It is frequently claimed that China's emphasis on strong families and ancestor worship contributes to the country's long human history.

We learn that the early Roman family, which existed in the seventh century B.C., was patriarchal. It kept going in part because of the religion's ancestor worship foundation. The family unit was centred on the ancestors' deities, and the home in which it resided was essentially a temple, with the patriarchal head having divine authority over the women and little ones. However, he was constrained by what he took to be the ancestors' will, thus he was unable to always act arbitrarily.

The family's oldest living male member owned property in trust for the benefit of the whole group. Early Roman law prohibited this oldest male member or house father from making a will. The oldest son who was still alive received the property automatically upon his death.

At the period, divorce was unheard of, and marriage was essentially indissoluble. The village allegedly experienced no divorces for five centuries following the establishment of Rome. This Roman family unit was remarkably stable.

But over time, the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme, and the family group started to disintegrate. Rome herself dissolved when this breakdown got out of hand.



A number of intriguing things occurred as the family group broke apart. (1) The family's religious significance started to wane. The family was treated casually when marriage was seen as little more than a legal arrangement. (2) The father's power was overthrown. A will's ability to be created was recognised. Prior to being granted the freedom to bequeath his property to whomever he chose, the father initially had the opportunity to split it among his children. The family as an institution lost respect when the family's property was divided up into pieces and dispersed. (3) In the second century B.C., women received the freedom to own property. the ability to end their marriages. The women in the higher social classes attained "emancipation" and had freedom to act wherever they pleased. (4) For many men and women, personal freedom turned into personal licence. Personal freedom defeated self-control over one's sexual desires. Marriages were freely formed and disbanded; companionate unions were frequently tried out, as were short-term unions, loose sexual encounters, and sexual immorality. (5) The social contexts in which the family had been the primary social unit tended to be destroyed by the changes in economic conditions, such as the emergence of cities and the expansion of trade and manufacturing. Roman young men frequently engaged in vice, especially sexual vice, and young ladies winked at them while they did so. These factors combined to transform the family from a powerful fundamental social organisation into a loose agreement of two persons temporarily linked for sexual pleasures. In swinging from extreme to extreme the pendulum bore first the fruits of suppression and rigidity and then of inefficiency and decay. In moving away from domination and slavery the momentum attained allowed the family group to stop at no position of balanced integration. Neither domination nor license was satisfactory. Balanced integration was rare.

Functions of Family:

The family may be conceived as "the Cradle of the Personality". The institution of the family has profound and all-pervasive socio-psychological significance for the person and society as a whole. Man is not born sociable or human; rather, he develops these traits through association and communication. His "Cultural conditioning" in this direction is primarily influenced by his family, which serves as a living example of his "earliest behavioural patterns and standards of conduct." At birth, the newborn is essentially biological in nature. The family is where it makes its first connections and develops into a social psychological creature. Within the home, societal definitions are all around the youngster. There are moral attitudes to fit every circumstance. There is constant emphasis on the concepts of good and wrong. The child uses pre-made solutions that are given to him nearly before the need for them arises. Attitudes formed toward particular objects and behaviours take on significant roles in people's life. Sentimental attitudes are directly tied to ritualistic performances on special occasions and family traditions that have become sacrosanct. There are possible factors in the home environment that come from political, religious, and social ideas. Every day, the family's patterns of behaviour and attitudes reflect the norms of the larger group in which they are immersed.

Although formal religious education now extends into children's early years, families still provide the foundation for religious beliefs, attitudes, and outings. Children's faiths and moral education have always been intertwined with the home. Children learn the fundamental beliefs about God, salvation, and morality in the family.

Although play groups offer significant contacts with the outside world, the home also offers the child's earliest recreational habits. In the past, the family as a whole enjoyed recreational activities frequently, such as games, picnics, and family reunions. Although the individualistic nature of entertainment nowadays tends to almost fully eliminate this function from the house, the radio, television, and automobile have helped to bring the family together for recreational purposes. The family lays the foundation for all of the child's later formal education. The majority of a child's intellectual and emotional conditioning is based on the interactions between parents and their offspring. The child receives a foundational education from the family in the social attitudes and behaviours necessary for adult participation in social life.

The primary role of the family is to raise up good citizens, neighbours, and parents. When interacting with one's parents, one picks up habits for taking care of one's body, relating to others, and maintaining their possessions. In the same way that the inevitable presence of material possessions causes him to consider impersonal power, mother and father serve as symbols of personal power to the youngster. In the face of requests for submission and conformity to these powers outside of him, the child's own desires must give way. His interactions with school administrators, church leaders, the police, and other social control agents will reflect how he learns to get along with his family. Likewise, a child's future interests and attitudes toward art, science, and religion will be influenced by how he learns to deal with the material forces around him. As a child gets older, he typically gains the ability to handle situations outside of his home and family, broadens the scope of his interests, and develops his intelligence, his emotions, and his social skills until he weans himself off of his initial reliance on his mother, father, and other family members.



No child has a home if he or she cannot find it in the attitudes of a supportive and cooperative mother and father, it has been said. The qualities of a true home can only be found in the attitudes of two parents who are joined in sincere affection for one another. He may have a caring guardian, a wise father, or a loving mother.

"The earliest human school" was the family unit. Despite these flaws, it has frequently been the top school. The best education takes place within and within the family. Everybody's informal education often starts in the family; a child spends the majority of his or her formative years there, regardless of how formal they may be. Parents may be the greatest people to teach youngsters the fundamentals of health and sex hygiene. There is no place where a youngster may learn obedience, discipline, and socially acceptable behaviour better than their own home. There are wonderful opportunities for ethical behaviour training at home. The family may end up having the biggest socialising impact on the planet.

The family's role in helping the youngster develop a sense of self is another crucial one. It is crucial that the child establishes a sense of security from his initial interactions with family because he is helpless and unable to control his own behaviour from the moment of birth. The first step in establishing a child's sense of security is to show them love, care, and protection. Next, teach them normal eating, sleeping, personal care, and play routines. Consistency in training is also crucial because it creates the framework for future learning. Making the child's world approachable, comprehensible, and predictable is essential. He must learn that his interactions with his mother, father, siblings, and other people follow more or less predictable patterns that are characterised by both affection and authority.

The child's definition of his own function and sense of security are related. The child's place in relation to his parents, siblings, and other family members will affect all of his future relationships with others in groups outside of the house. In the family, sentiments of rejection, difference, and inferiority frequently manifest and may persist into later life. It is inevitable that the youngster would develop a perception of his parents based on how they interact with him and how they behave in general. Since honesty, integrity, perseverance, and other cultural characteristics are frequently spoken by parents, it is their actions rather than their words that will serve as an example for their children. The child's interactions with his parents will have an impact on his self or ego-ideal, which is crucial in setting a goal toward which to work.

The family is where the child first learns what it is to be socially responsible, how important sportsmanship is, and how important collaboration is. The family is the best primary group in terms of norms, values, and living arrangements.

The family, which passes on the cultural inheritance to him and so preserves a cultural continuity between the individual and his society, as well as between generations of the community, is where the individual's first fundamental personality qualities are created. It serves as their best bridge for adjusting to one another's cultures. A newborn is born into a world that includes social interactions as well. The infant interacts emotionally and mentally with its mother from the moment of birth, followed by the other family members. The initial structure of personality, which is the distinctive configuration of an individual's pattern of responses to others and to himself as defined by psychogenic conditioning, is definitively shaped by these emotional costs, which are psychological rather than cultural in character. The biologically inherited features and characteristics known as "genetic traits" serve as the building blocks for personality development. They offer both the potential and the boundaries within which a person's attributes may grow, improve, or alter. However, their actual "meaning and function arise through the social experience and psychogenic interaction." They develop while a child's early emotional development takes place, in the context of the family's interpersonal interactions. They consist of "tendencies to extraversion and introversion, dominance and submission, optimism and pessimism, emotional independence and reliance, self-confidence and lack thereof, and egocentrism and sociocentrism." Burgess and Locke refer to the interactions of family members in their psychogenic forms as "the family psychodrama," which has a psychological stage on which "the players take roles determined by the interplay of the emotions of love, fear, and hate, of the feelings of superiority and inferiority, of the reactions of security, insecurity, adequacy, and inadequacy." In such a psychodrama, the individual's psychogenic reaction patterns are progressively formed, fixed, and unlikely to change subsequently. They typically develop in accordance with the patterns established in early infancy.

The psycho-social influence of the family environment on the child is so deep and so quick, that in the view of the psychologists the child acquires almost all its personality and character traits of later adulthood before five, and according to some even earlier. Allport tells us, of a careful observational study made by two psychologically minded parents of their infants, keeping records of its behaviour, from the moment of its birth onwards up to four months, on the basis of which the following prophecy was made as to its future character: "ready laughter, well adjusted i.e. 'normal' and 'introverted' capable of considerate temper, active, sensitive of rhythm, adaptable, wiry and muscular, tall, mischievous, with linguistic superiority." These qualities, of course, could not have been actually observed in the infant at four months, but indications were noticeable in the child which suggested the beginnings of these qualities. Later, other teachers also co-operated in making analysis and records of the character



and personality of the child without any knowledge of the previous records and without any knowledge of each other's records. These records, which were continued upto the age of nine of the child, corroborated in an astonishing manner the early prophecy regarding the child's prospective character. Allport concludes that vague and variable indications of distinctive traits are evident at as early an age as even four months, and that from early infancy there is consistency in the development of personality. This study and other studies have been cited by Allport to show that the innate determinants of personality- since, at birth and upto four months, only innate tendencies would be manifest to a large extent - are very important. but he further observes that they do not imply that the family environment has no effect on the development of the child's personality. Indeed, it is possible that the original tendencies may be supported, modified or even destroyed according as the family environment is supporting, modifying or destructive of these tendencies, though, the limits and scope of such changes are set by the innate tendencies. Environmental forces are bound to affect the child's character and personality development particularly during the first three to five years, by which time its psychogenic personality traits will have been nearly fixed and, no change in the environment later will appreciably alter these basic traits. If a personality appears to have changed dramatically in later life, in further examination and analysis it would be found to have been changed not in its basic psychogenic traits, but in Social Type, i.e. expressions and manifestations of the traits.

The foregoing analysis also indicates the functions which the family institution performs in a society. Among its most important functions are regulating and disciplining the sex impulse and giving it stability and durability, which is principally a function in relation to the two founders and the principal actors in the family psycho drama. Without completely suppressing sex, society uses marriage and families to regulate promiscuous sex expression and the waste of a man's energy that could be channelled and employed in many other productive ways.

The fulfilment of what Thomas refers to as the four "fundamental" wishes or desires—wants for new experiences, security, recognition, and response—is one of the family's most important functions because these and their combinations may include all other desires and thus be used to explain the inner motivations of all social behaviour. These aspirations are shared by all people and serve as the cornerstones of all interpersonal connections. The family is the most significant field where every individual takes his first lessons in the satisfaction of these wishes.

As a result, the kid's family environment, as well as its mental and social development, are affected by the new experiences, stimuli, and associations the child makes. Beginning with the physical and emotional security, which is provided to it from both by hugging, caressing, nursing, and other types of individualised attention, the demand for security is first satisfied." Most of the time, the family serves as a safe haven where members can retreat from the pressures and difficulties of the outside world while making adaptations to it. The purpose of family security is to facilitate rather than obstruct the change from the dependent to the independent stage." The child's duties in the family, the attention he receives, and the statuses he achieves there satisfy his need for acknowledgment. The love and support he receives in the family satisfies his need for a reaction. In fact, the responses in the family are more intimate than elsewhere and are always reciprocal, between the husband and the wife, between parents and children. Ogburn has rightly stressed the affectional bond as a very important one that holds the family together, and the one bond on which the family must continue to rely for its solidarity even if all the others fail or are reduced in strength. Through the affectional bond in the family, man woman and child learn the technique and expression of affectional virtues which stand them in service in dealing with the outside world.

Apart from economic security, the family in many societies affords a religious security to its members. This is particularly true of the Hindu family. The Hindu parents find a spiritual immortality through their sons. Their future life here and here after is blessed through sons and their sons and their religious and social behaviours. Family prayers and rituals have to be gone through by elders with children. The family, the home, is the place to which one can look for personal psychological peace and security. It is the retreat to which man retires after the day's work and his dealings with the outside world to relax, to recoup, and to regain his physical and psychic balance in order to be able to deal effectively with the outside environment again.

We may conclude it with one or two general observations: The family must have had its origins in the biological phenomenon of reproduction, but it gradually developed into a socio-psychological phenomenon of the highest significance. On the other hand, several of its functions have been taken away from it by various agencies, and on the other, despite this, its central function of affectional unity has become stronger and stronger in the more complex and civilized societies.



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