

Discuss the sociological evidence and arguments for the nuclear family being the 'basic family unit'

Definitions of different family structures

Nuclear Family

The Nuclear Family which consists of a man and woman committed to each other in Marriage whilst living in a moral and ethical framework is considered as being the best environment in which to raise children. This Unit is usually composed of only father, mother and their immature child/children and is separated in some instances by hundreds of miles from their kin often by the needs of employment, housing and other economic factors.

The Nuclear family may also be extended through the marriage of more than one spouse. (Polygamy and polyandry) Polyandry is where a woman can take more than one husband and is still practiced in parts of Tibet. This type of marriage limits the number of births. Polygamy on the other hand is where a man can take more than one wife. This type of marriage maximises the number of births and is often practised in Countries with a high infant mortality rate. Societies that have a high mortality rate in children have less incentive to invest time and energy in raising children that may not survive to be adults. Warmth security and moral support and learning the values of living in their particular society. Who grow up respecting their parent's welfare of partner and children. The development of the individual child.

Extended Families

Extended families are nuclear families plus others to whom they are related to either by descent marriage or adoption

It is the residence of two or more married couples and their children or of several generations connected in the male or female lines that live in a small -scale community. Extended families were the norm in pre industrial society.

The extended family is no longer in the majority in Britain widespread through in many parts of the world and is not only exclusive in agricultural and non-industrial economies.

Lone Parent Families

The smallest family unit consists of a man or a woman and their children own or adopted. Families headed by woman are matrifocal and ones headed by a man are Children from lone parent families tend to have to grow up quicker as they have more adult responsible which can cause problems when defining their role in life. This circle continues with children undisciplined and in many cases unloved and uncared for, creates a multi generational sub culture. Young men and women often having had no parenting input as children become parents themselves at increasing young ages and raise children like themselves which lack in parenting skills and standards of social behaviour. Many children from lone parent families do not have the quality of opportunity that nuclear and extended families do which can leave them socially and educationally deprived. The vast majority of single parent families did not start of this way and are the result of divorce or separation of the parents. Increasing numbers however are considered the norm in some subcultures and children born into this are normally living on or below the poverty line.

Constituted Families

Emotional devastation to the children involved. Research has proven that children, who come from

broken backgrounds, divorce parents, etc are much more likely to be involved in anti social behaviour and criminal behaviour. Also known as serial monogamy

Single Sex Families

Single-Sex parental couples whom raise children in an unnatural and unbalance 'Family'

Communes and Kibbutz

Is the collective rearing of children. Evidence points to children, which are conformist, dependant personalities having shallow relationships between individual adults and children and do not form strong personal bonds

Describe Nuclear family

Functional and easier to bond, close family, Financial support, equality between males and females with both partners sharing the full range of domestic tasks, self sufficient, helps to socialise children into the values of society. Economic and emotional security, better society. Monogamy

Research commissioned by Parentline indicates the nuclear family will soon be in a minority by 2010 which suggests more children will be raised by step parents or single parents than by Married couples. The result is Children having to grown up with no stable home, an absent or uncaring father or stepfather, unsuitable role models. This has disastrous effects on the social and cultural place of children in our society. Functional for its members, society and culture.

Changes in Basic Family

Traditional family of the early 20th century of father, mother children and grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins all living within reasonable distance of each other. In preindustrial societies individuals were bound together with families and the orientatation into which they were born. In the past the smallest families unit was recognised as the nuclear family, but with many more divorces over the last twenty (check dates) years the lone parent family is now the smallest family unit.

Murdock argues that the family performs four basic functions in all societies, which he terms the sexual, reproductive, economic and educational and also states that the it is most readily, and satisfactory achieved by persons living together. In order for society to work it is important that children are socialised and their personality learnt and shaped. In the past 150 years as mortality rates have fallen as greater importance is placed on the care and well-being of children

Conclusion