Cheatography

Postmodernist views of family Cheat Sheet

by asweetnam673 via cheatography.com/203589/cs/43383/

Introduction

-postmodernism is a socological theory that arose as a consequence of advanced modernization.

-postmodernists argue we should look at the family as a fluid and changing concept.

-therefore they disagree with theories such as functionalism, which argues that there is one 'ideal' or 'normal' family type (the nuclear family).

-in 1993 Cheal theorized that the family has undergone major change because society is no longer predictable.

Conclusion

-to conclude, postmodernists claim that family is unique for everyone and that family dynamics or interactions cannot and should not be generalised

-this is evident in the increase in alternative family types, such as single-parent families and same sex parent families ect.

-postmodernist views may be criticized by functionalists as they would agree that the nuclear family is the ideal.

-However it is a strong perspective as it offers an explanation of family change and family diversity.

Criticisms

-NR would criticize them as they believe these alternative family types are determental.

Individualism

Individualism means that people choose to act on the basis of what is good for them and not a sense of what others may expect or think

-in contrast to collectivism.

-a individual is always part of the family, community, society or nation. When an individual is corrupt it leads to corruptions everywhere.

-when an individual works for themselves, they only benefit themselves but when they consider the community they help in social growth.

-the individual approach urges a person to pursue goals which may be hard to do in a family or sometimes even impossible.

-for example, if an individual parents wants them to take over a family business they may not be able to pursue their dream career.

Criticisms: Functionalists may criticize this as in order for social solidarity to happen individuals must have a collective conscience where all members share norms and values.

Modern society is fragmented

The Rapoports types of family diversity

The Rapoports described and listed the variety of types of family diversity in modern society.

They explain there are 5 types of family diversity:

1. Organizational- how a family might organise the roles people perform for example the ales in the family will perform traditional tasks.

2. Cultural- families differ in terms of their beliefs and values.

3. Class- family life as experienced in a middle-class family is not the dame for other social classes. For example resources, housing and opportunities all impact the nature of families.

4. Life course- we dont live in the same family structure our whole life for example we might be born into a nuclear family which may change to a lone parent family ect.

5. Cohort- there is a change over time of what is the norm in terms of family life, for one generation is not for the next.

Criticisms: Since Rapoports wrote about the family in 1982, families have become even more diverse e.g same sex families

Characteristics of postmodern family

Characteristics of postmodern family (cont)

5. Crisis of masculinity- Mac en Ghaill suggest postmodern society is experiencing a crisis of masculinity as menus futures no longer involve skilled, highly paid work. This has led to emergence of significant alternative masculinities which challenge dominance in families and traditional masculinities.

6. Consumption- Families are no longer solely influenced by what significant others may think may be more concerned with what a wide range of insignificant other i.e their fellow consumers think of them. Goods and services are more important than family interaction and intimacy.

Criticisms: Postmodernists may have exaggerated the degree and diversity of choice avaible in personal relationships. In particular PM have neglected to recognise that structural forces such as social class, patriarchy and ethnicity still exert influence.

Modern society is fragmented. There are a few connection between various groups or between some members of our society so the influence of society on behaviour has weakened.

-functions that were previously performed solely by the family have now been replaced with other institutions.

-for example the NHS now carriers out care for the family members and the media keeps family members up to date on news and also passes on norms and values.

-people create their identify from a wide range of choices, such as youth subcultures, sexual preferences movements such as environmentalism.

Criticisms: Functionalists would criticize this as they believe that although society is fragmented it is still interconnected and dependent. Parsons organic analogy, different institutions rely on eachother in order for society to function.

Postmodernists do not believe that the family should be regarded as a concrete fixed concept

Postmodernists argue that there are six characteristics which make the postmodern family different to families that existed in modern or even late modern families.

1. Liberated sex attitudes- women are less likely to view romantic love and therefore marriage as their primary goal.

2. Voluntary childlessness- increasing number of young women choosing not to have children.

3. Reproductive technologies- lesbians, single hero women and women in their sixties can receive fertility treatments. Surrogacy has meant that homosexual couples can now be parents and have families.

4. Diversity in parenting arrangements- Parenting now shared with the father and non parental care givers is becoming poppular as dual worker families increase in number.

By **asweetnam673**

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