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Socio – 120

5/6/17

Word Count: 1174

Stratification and the Social Institution of the Family:

A social institution can be described as a complex group of interdependent positions that, together, perform a social role and reproduce themselves over time.ⁱ There are many different, and widely varying types of social institutions but most have two main parts that can be found in any example. The first is that they are networks of ties that work to socialize the people within them, and the second is a set of ideas about a way that a specific important social need ought to be addressed.ⁱⁱ The educational system, military, and legal system are all examples of social institutions, but the one this paper will focus on is the family. The family's main task in society is to reproduce the next generation, but also socializes the members according to widespread norms and values of the given society. A structural-functionalist Talcott Parsons said that the traditional nuclear family, consisting of a mother, a father, and one or more children, is a functional necessity in modern industrial society.ⁱⁱⁱ The reason for this, Parsons says, is because it is most compatible with society's need for productive workers and child nurturers. The problem with this argument, as well as similar ones like it, is that it doesn't take into consideration the fact that even though one social institution performs a function for society, it doesn't mean that it is the only social institution that does so.^{iv} Many types of family's exist throughout the world and all take shape depending on various social needs and values of the society. Marriage, and the value placed upon it, has been especially influential on the nuclear family which has dominated the western world since the industrial revolution. <<good insights and points

Although various types of family's exist throughout the world, the nuclear family of the United States is particularly stratified in ways that might not seem obvious at first glance. Social stratification is the system by which society ranks and rewards people, a hierarchical arrangement based on relative value of its members.^v These can also be described as systematic inequalities between groups of people that arise as intended or unintended consequences of social processes and relationships.^{vi} At first glance the obvious assumption is that children are stratified based on age. Which is true to a certain extent, although not as prominent as one might expect. The appearance of this particular stratification is more subtle at second glance. While one might think that in almost all situations the eldest child would fare better, it isn't necessarily so. In two child families, the eldest born doesn't have too much of an advantage over their younger sibling.^{vii} <<unless the eldest is a lot older than the younger, but even then, the resources tend to be pretty evenly split—the stratification then would be based more on power than resources... In reality, birth position is really only a determining factor in large families or families with limited resources. While it may seem obvious that the oldest child would fare best, also in fact does the youngest, with the middle children being shorted on attention, money for college, and other resources that become more limited as the family size grows. This can be seen demonstrated in the Hinkston family, more notably in the interplay between Doreen, the mother, and her daughter Patrice. At the beginning of Evicted, Patrice is living upstairs in her own apartment but when she is evicted she moved back in with her mother. Patrice then claimed her own room, splitting the limited resource of space even further and claiming a bigger share as eldest, and because she was paying rent. But this move also further limited the amount of time Doreen had to spend on her other children, the money for food, as well as all the other resources available to the family. The largest portions of these going to first the oldest and youngest, before finally getting to the

middle children of Natasha, CJ, and Ruby. C.J. most notably is impacted in his ability to complete his homework from school thus impacting his ability to become better educated. ^{viii} really good connections to Evicted here

Further stratification can be seen in the family by observing the interactions between husband and wife, or mother and father in a non-married family. Over the course of the industrial revolution, men left the household in favor of wage work in factories and other jobs. This changed the way the family worked as a unit, before most of the household including children and wives would help in the production of various homemade items which would normally be exchanged with other families to get what was needed. Now instead, the husband or father was the sole bread winner in the family and became more important in the view of society which in turn viewed home care and child rearing as almost solely the responsibility of the wife or mother. As time passed and women entered the workforce these views persisted and stayed normative, further stratifying the family so that the women was responsible for more work??in the home? Or does this refer to the “second shift” as proposed by Arlie Hochschild? than the man. ^{ix} This illustrates an example of one of the three things stratification systems all have in common, they are reinforced by legitimating rationales or widely accepted beliefs that the inequality that exists is fair and just. ^x The other two things in common with various types of systems of stratification are that they are persistent over time, and resistant to change. Society views the role of male breadwinner as more important, and as such, it is fair for the father to be expected to participate less in home care as he spends his time and energy on working to sustain the family and society in general through his job. This rationale has change over time because of the fact that women in general and the mother in particular are more expected and accepted to become part of the workforce, further straining them in their time as they are still expected to maintain the household and care for the children. >>>new paragraph should start here>>>A structural functionalist would view these stratifications as necessary and inevitable for the family. They might point to the fact that the father’s position in the family is more important to the family as a unit. Also that the older and younger children deserve more attention and resources due to the nature of the youngest being most fragile and susceptible to stress and environmental dangers, and the eldest is the most established and therefore deserving of excess resources. A conflict theorist would view these stratifying factors as exploitive and would say that the older child would be leveraging their individual power over the other younger children, and the father exploiting his position of leadership and sole provider for the family to get out of work that might have once fallen into their domain in previous times.<<interesting application to the family, but it does fit the theories... All in all the family is an intricate social institution that takes many forms across societies and cultures, and motivations for the individuals inside of them may differ but all types perform very similar functions upon those within.

These citations are OK, but it should have the full end-citations. They are in D2L, so it should be easy to copy-paste them in the paper...

Grading Criteria: 100 points total

<p>Using the sociological imagination and fluency in sociological terminology = 25 points</p> <p><u>Related Assignment Component:</u></p> <p>1) How are people with different statuses affected differently by or within the institution(s)? This question relates to social location. Y</p> <p>2) Define the sociological terms from Unit 3 (at a minimum). Y</p>	24
<p>Incorporating stratification concepts <u>and</u> sociological theory = 25 points</p> <p><u>Related Assignment Component:</u></p> <p>1) How would a fundamental sociological theory explain social processes in the social institution you chose? These could be stratification processes in the social institution or other processes. Y</p> <p>2) How does the institution(s) include stratification components that we have encountered in class? Y</p>	24
<p>Supporting examples = 20 points</p> <p>Use examples from <i>Evicted</i> and textbook chapter (and lecture) to illustrate and support the sociological concepts. Y</p>	19
<p>Structure, flow, and conclusion that is supported by the paper = 15 points</p> <p>This relates to the rubric for the assignment</p>	15
<p>Grammar and spelling = 10 points</p> <p>This relates to the rubric for the assignment</p>	10
<p>Citations = 5 points</p> <p>Are <i>Evicted</i> and a chapter from 11—18 cited? Y</p>	4
<p>10 points (10% of 100) deduction if late n/a – on-time submission</p> <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL</p>	96

This is a very good response to the assignment's prompts and tasks.

ⁱ Conley. Pg 13

ⁱⁱ Socio-120 Notes - Social Institutions

ⁱⁱⁱ Conley. Pg 453

^{iv} Conley. Pg 453

^v Soco-120 Notes - Social Stratification

^{vi} Soco-120 Notes - Social Stratification

^{vii} Conley. Pg 481

^{viii} *Evicted*: Chp 6 - Rat Hole

^{ix} Conley. Chp 12 – Family

^x Socio-120 Notes – Social Stratification