

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF PATTERNS OF CHILD BEARING AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

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Abstract:

Fertility and childbearing, in addition to the biological aspects, has always been regarded as a social phenomenon and, therefore, to understand the incident, values and beliefs, norms, and in short, the culture of any society should be scrutinized. Since the concept, condition, and value of childbearing is associated with cultural, social, political and economic dimensions, it has undergone various transformations during passage of time from past to present. The sociological approach of the current study investigated the evolution of the concept and value of fertility and childbearing in light of historical, social, cultural and economic upheavals. This study shows that the methods of rationalizing and legitimizing decisions about fertility and childbearing are defined and specified in the context of society. The rationale for selecting the decisions is intermingled with social, cultural, economic, and political evolutions of the society like modernization, urbanization and the level of development in human communities.

Keywords: *Childbearing, cultural change, individualism,.*

INTRODUCTION

The topic of birthing has generally received a very small amount of attention from mainstream sociology. This demonstrated a widespread disregard for the work that Franklin (2013: 1) describes as "creating, nurturing, and fostering new humans." This paper examines the development of work on the sociology of birthing within this tradition of neglect, as well as some of the influences that have shaped such work, and it does so within the context of this neglectful tradition. The report is based on my participation in a variety of research projects and activities in this subject over the course of four decades, beginning in 1974 and ending in 2013. Women's domestic work, experiences of childbirth and becoming a mother, the evolution of obstetric technology, comparative cross-cultural studies of reproduction, and midwifery and social support are some of the projects and issues that are explored in this article. Methodology, namely the ways in which qualitative, quantitative, and experimental approaches to gaining an understanding of childbirth have evolved over time in response to unique intra- and inter-disciplinary stimuli, is one of the overarching themes of this book. The topic of the paper is childbirth, as opposed to motherhood in a more general sense, as well as the evolution of the sociology of childbirth in the United Kingdom.

A case study of how the path of sociological work is tied to social context can be gleaned from the use of autobiography as a strategy for mapping a field of work. The examination of certain sociological careers gives markers of the field and its use over the course of time (Crow and Takeda 2011). This technique demonstrates how the "I" is also the "we": transformations in thinking come occur as a result of communal efforts, which means that the links between various autobiographies are what ultimately matter. During their time together as husband and wife, a couple's ability to conceive a child is considered to be a significant life event. Fertility is seen as both a necessary and desired accomplishment in every culture on the planet, to the point where it is considered the pinnacle of human achievement.

(1). In the course of the development and evolution of societies, various aspects of reproduction have been generated. This is the reason why, despite the expansion and development of societies, economic growth, and technological advancements, inability in childbearing is still, in many places, a justifiable reason for the disruption of couples' and families' relationships with one another.

The idea that people have had throughout history, that having children is one of the most important purposes of creation, has evolved into a societal expectation and is a critical component in determining how individuals fit into society and how their position is determined. A survey of the history of various societies and civilizations reveals that a significant portion of mythology, religion, rituals and traditions (cultural norms), literature and art, all of which are reflective of the values and cultural norms of specific societies, are devoted to concepts and symbols of reproduction and childbearing. This was found to be the case regardless of the society or civilization in question.

(2). The significance and position of pregnancy and reproduction as the everlasting human yearning for survival and immortality is revealed via such a large volume of works and a wide range of cultural ideas about fertility in all regions of the world. These come from all around the world.

Objective:

[1] to study of patterns of child bearing as a social phenomenon

[2] to study of the development and evolution of societies

SOCIALIZATION

Mark Holster, a police detective, accompanied an investigator from the Department of Children and Families to a residence in Plant City, Florida, during the summer of 2005. They went there to investigate a complaint made by a neighbor about a run-down property on Old Sydney Road. The complaint centered on the condition of the house. It was alleged that a young girl was looking in through one of the building's smashed windows. It was strange that no one in the neighborhood had seen a youngster of that age in or around the house, which had been occupied for the previous three years by a woman, her boyfriend, and their two adult sons.

People acquire the skills necessary to function effectively as members of a society through a process known as socialization. It defines the processes through which individuals come to comprehend the rules and expectations of society, to embrace the beliefs held by society, and to be aware of the values held by society. It also outlines how people learn to become conscious of them and how they begin to reflect on whether or not their behavior is appropriate in their relationships with other people. People develop their social skills

during the course of their lives as they take on and relinquish a variety of jobs. The behaviors that are considered appropriate for a person to exhibit in a given position, such as those required of a son or daughter, student, friend, employee, etc., are what characterize each individual role.

In the following sections, we will investigate the significance of the intricate process of socialization and discover how it develops as a result of interaction with a wide variety of people, groups, and social organizations. We are going to look at the ways in which children's development depends on socialization, as well as the ways in which socialization is a process that continues throughout a person's life and helps them adapt to new social contexts and expectations at every stage of their lives. But before we get into that, let's take a look at some research on self-development, which is the process of coming to recognize a sense of "self" that can then be socialized with other people.

Theories of Self Development

Mark Holster, a police detective, accompanied an investigator from the Department of Children and Families to a house in Plant City, Florida, during the summer of 2005. They were there to investigate a complaint made by a neighbor about a run-down residence located on Old Sydney Road. There were reports of a young girl looking in through one of the building's smashed windows. This looked strange because no one in the neighborhood had ever seen a little child in or around the home, which had been inhabited for the previous three years by a woman, her boyfriend, and two of her adult sons.

The process of teaching people the skills necessary to function effectively as members of a society is referred to as socialization. It explains how individuals come to comprehend the rules and expectations of society, how they come to accept the beliefs of society, and how they become conscious of the values that society upholds. It also covers how people come to be conscious of themselves and how they come to reflect on the appropriateness of their behavior in their relationships with other people. People develop their social skills during the course of their lives as they take on and relinquish different jobs. Each role, such as that of son or daughter, student, friend, employee, etc., is determined by the behavior that is expected of a person who occupies a particular position in society.

In the following parts, we will discuss the significance of the intricate process of socialization and discover how it takes place through interaction with a wide variety of people, groups, and social organizations. We are going to look at the ways in which children's development depends on socialization, as well as the ways in which socialization is a process that continues throughout a person's whole life, preparing them for new social contexts and new social expectations at every stage. But before we get into that, let's take a look at some academic research on self-development, which is the process of coming to recognize a sense of "self" that is then able to be socialized.

Throughout the course of human history, the functions of the family have been intricately linked to the means of subsistence and the economy as a whole, including production, distribution, and consumption. During the time when people subsisted mostly on hunting and fishing, families tended to be close-knit and large. There were a large number of people living under the same roof (40–50), and they consumed the food resources that they had gathered, as well as the prey, and defined their sexual connections. In cultures that are based on agriculture, more economic activity leads to higher levels of productivity, which in turn leads to the formation of extended families.

During this time, there is a rise in the total number of family members, which results in an increase in the number of farmed fields and a bountiful harvest (5). During this time period, individual families were established, and as a result of shifts in the types of jobs available, men and women began to assume responsibility for the various economic duties. In addition, throughout this time period, women were the ones who were responsible for bearing children. However, during the industrial age, the function of humans

as the primary source of workers in the economy shrunk to an insignificant level. At the same time, family sizes shrank and there were fewer children in each family (6).

During the contemporary and postmodern eras, investing in the family's progeny has become an important component of social promotion for the family. Higher levels of fixed income in families with two children, in comparison to families with more children, provide better recreation, nutrition, and educational facilities, which ultimately results in better nurture of children. This is because families with two children are able to better manage their financial obligations. In point of fact, the shift in the economy from one focused on agricultural to one based on industry, with a complex nature that is based on modern services, and the relevance of the level of skill of people as working resources were the motivation for changing the priorities. As a result, the significance of having a large number of children was replaced with an emphasis on the quality of the care that was provided for those children, as well as the knowledge and abilities that are necessary for each person to function well in the workforce.

There is a connection that needs to be made between the household and the agricultural production organization in any civilization that is predicated on agriculture. To be more specific, the family unit as a whole and the organization for agricultural production are combined into a single cohesive team. This helps to ensure that the family's needs are met. Every member of the family, as well as the community as a whole, contributes to the making of the product, and everyone is held accountable for their share of the collective labor. In this kind of society, the burden of providing for all of life's expenses in accordance with the requirements falls on the family's shoulders (7), and it would appear that the primary responsibility of a rural family is having children. Therefore, in the rural community, having children is seen as a form of social pride for the family.

Families in rural areas tend to be less developed than those in urban areas. In an urban way of life, it is usual to have traits like having greater privacy, having fewer neighbors, and having a separation between one's place of employment and one's place of dwelling. Consumption, luxury, and independence, along with a focus on the media and a virtual environment, are the defining qualities of the urban lifestyle. In point of fact, modern families are characterized by the same characteristics that are typical of the modern world, most notably urbanization. It would appear that the effects of infertility and a lack of children are less detrimental to urban households than they are to rural ones (3).

The biological process of reproduction is influenced by a complex web of social and environmental elements. These factors are in turn surrounded by social organizations, beliefs, conventions, and practices. Reproduction manifests itself in a variety of ways, depending on the culture in question. In addition, the process is manifest in areas such as politics, economics, the legal system, religion, and family relationships. The societal value of having children has evolved with time, and unlike in the past, having children is not regarded as a method for increasing the available labor force. The meaning of the term is contingent on the cultural, economic, and political conditions that exist during certain eras (8). Women who are unable to bear children are stigmatized as having an unfinished sexual identity and are seen to be worthless in traditional societies. These women are at risk of physical assault, social exclusion, and the possibility that their husbands will remarry or divorce their other partners.

Marriage is honored as a virtue in Iranian and Islamic culture, and having children is regarded as the pinnacle of a successful relationship between a man and a woman within the context of the family.

The act of having children breathes new life into the idea of a family. In this manner, infertile women would be subjected to a multitude of restrictions, difficulties, and emotional pressures. Women who are unable to become mothers are considered to be unsuccessful females and to lack femininity; as a result, these women put out significant effort in an effort to find a solution to the issue by any means possible. Such immense pressures on women may be traced back to one of the most significant works of current fiction, "a stone on a tomb," and the tale of the writer and his wife for the purpose of having a child displays such tortures in a masculinity told manner (9). Obviously, in many modern civilizations, the significance of having children as a criterion for deciding whether or not a person is a woman has been diminished to some degree. This is the case in a number of different contexts.

Theoretical approaches to the concept of child-bearing:

The concept of childbearing and fertility are encircled by religious values and beliefs, norms and, in short, the culture of any society. In fact, it is influenced by social, cultural, and political factors in each society, so that even in times of war or peace, increase or decrease in birth rate are affected by social and political philosophy of that specific society. In the following part, the proposed theoretical approaches, each focusing on a determining factors involved in fertility, are scrutinized.

Philosophies and religious convictions:

According to sociologists like Durkheim, religious orientation is one of the most important cultural elements in the process of childbearing. But in the modern world, particularly with the emphasis on personal relationships and the saliency of privacy, individualistic interpretations of religion become prominent; as a result, the deep ties, faith, belief, and conscience as collective characteristics with relatively strong religious characteristics are less seen among individuals (12). In such an environment, day-to-day life loses its spiritual sense, and as a result, the family, along with other social institutions, undergoes a transformation from its original state. Additionally, past religious views and viewpoints would be altered (13). Weber defines religion as a belief system that develops the essence of powers. Religion is an independent and emotional variable that has influence on all social components other than individual and social life. Weber's definition of religion (6). According to the theory put forward by Durkheim and Weber, the fertility rate in a society is predicted to shift in response to shifts in the population's religious views. Childbearing is held in high regard throughout Iranian society, both religiously and historically. This is reflected in the public culture.

It is unfortunate to not have any children because people believe they are a blessing from God. According to one study, the failure of the government to control the population in the years 1968–1976 is attributed to the lack of approval regarding the policy by scholars and clerics. On the other hand, according to the same study, the success of the government in the policy for controlling the population in the years after 1981 is attributed to the role of religious leaders and their support in using birth control methods (14).

The theory of exchange according to utilitarianism:

Both utilitarianism and exchange theory describe economic factors as being a factor in affecting the tendency in childbearing and regard personal advantage to be the reason for the practice. Utilitarianism also specifies that economic factors are a factor in affecting the tendency in childbed According to this theory, a social group is nothing more than a collection of individuals who come together for the purpose of furthering their own individual interests. Furthermore, according to this theory, predicting and explaining the behavior of individuals is dependent on their motivations, which are founded on their own self-interest. People are viewed as reasonable, calculative persons in terms of costs and advantages when viewed from the standpoint of the school. They are mindful of their own best interests in the course of their ongoing interactions with others.

Therefore, any kind of relationship with other people might be considered an exchange of some sort. The social exchange theory demonstrates that the interaction that takes place between two people can change depending on the estimations of the rewards that are received and the costs that are incurred. According to this point of view, the connection that exists between a man and his wife is one that can be traced back to the very first moments of life.

Consequently, all human interactions are founded on an individual's subjective evaluation of the relative costs and benefits of the various options. When the couples calculate the advantages of having children based on the costs and evaluate the benefits of having children based on the calculation of profit and costs, they decide to have children despite the fact that this decreases the possibilities of their social engagement. If, on the other hand, the couples believe that the expenses of having children are going to be higher than the advantages, their likelihood of having children will be lower. The indicators of economic satisfaction and the costs of child care are important in this approach to estimation. Parents evaluate the results of these indicators and estimate the costs and benefits for making a rational decision about the number of children they will have in addition to the total number of children they will have. In point of fact, according to this idea, the behavior of having children is the consequence of logical choices about the economy

Participation in the community:

Participation in one's community is still another important aspect of having children, and the researchers focused on how this aspect's influence might alter the ways in which people live their lives. René Koenig, a German sociologist, identifies a concern with the diminishing roles that families play in society. According to his point of view, the internal structure of the family has been destroyed as a result of the development of industry, and its secondary functions, including financial, educational, and medical functions, the care for the elderly, and even the family's leisure time, have been granted to institutions as well as governmental, social, and economic organizations .

On the other hand, the decline in the size of families and the inability of family members to support for themselves economically becomes a barrier to the protection of ailing and ageing family members. In contemporary civilizations, the members of the family devote a significant amount of time to their free time, and as a result, members are able to pick a separate career in addition to their traditional hereditary jobs on the basis of their talents and levels of knowledge. People now have the ease and comfort they need to actively participate in society and social activities as a result of the reduction in the importance of the function of childbearing brought about by friendly clubs and associations. Women's increased participation in the labor force and the structural shifts that result from their employment often result in a postponement of their parenthood within the context of modern social interactions. As a result, the participation of women in society is a significant role in the decrease in the number of children being born .

Conclusion

As a social practice, childbearing, having a small number of children, or being childless through no fault of one's own is subject to the effect of institutional resources and the organizational framework of society (Attitude and religious beliefs and Utilitarianism and exchange theory). On the other hand, the practice is determined by the people's perceptions of the forces and situations that exist inside the community. The institutional resources that are used to define the practice can be found locally or internationally, and such resources have linkages with people's perceptions of the practices and acts that they engage in. As a consequence of this, people rely on these resources and use their imagination as well as their awareness of the necessities to determine whether or not they should have children.

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