

THE DUSTON^{TDS}₄₋₁₉ SCHOOL

Curriculum
Knowledge
Sociology
Families



GCSE SOCIOLOGY FAMILY KEY TERMS

Adolescence	The period of time following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult.
Arranged marriage	A marriage in which parents choose a bride or groom for their child.
Beanpole family	A family whose living members come from many generations, but with few members in each generation.
Bigamy	The offence of marrying someone while already married to another person.
Canalisation	The way in which parents channel their child's interests in activities or toys to reflect stereotypical views of gender – e.g. a boy being encouraged to play with cars instead of dolls.
Cohabitation	Partners who live together without getting married.
Commune	A group of people living together and sharing possessions and responsibilities.
Conjugal relationships	The relationship between marriage partners.
Conjugal roles	The roles typically associated with husbands & wives.
Divorce	The formal (legal) ending of a marriage.
Domestic division of labour	Household tasks divided between family members.
Domestic violence	Is behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power & control over an individual. This behaviour is considered abusive because it is unwanted & unwarranted by the person who is being abused. Such abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial or psychological.
Double shift (dual burden)	Working women who continue to perform the bulk of domestic labour are said to work a 'double shift' of paid employment followed by an unequal share of household work.
Dual career family	A family where both heads of the household pursue careers & at the same time maintain a family life together.
Dysfunctional family	A family in which conflict, neglect and even abuse are common experiences.
Empty nest family	A stage in the life cycle of a family when children have reached adulthood and have left the parental home.
Expressive role	A woman's role within the family to provide care and emotional support to other family members.
Extended family	Parents, their children & other more distant relatives, e.g. grandparents, aunts & uncles.
Family	A group of two or more people linked by birth, marriage, adoption or cohabitation based on a long-term relationship.
Family diversity	The many different types of family structure that exist in contemporary society.

Family life cycle	The type of family & household that each individual is likely to experience during their lifetime.
Fertility rate	The average number of children that women of child-bearing age (usually 15-44 years) have in society. This has fallen since the 1960s.
Household	Describes a group of people who live together in the same residence, sharing a kitchen & bathroom. E.g. a student house share.
Instrumental role	The family provider (usually associated with the traditional role of the male as 'breadwinner').
Joint conjugal roles	Husband & wife share household tasks.
Kibbutz	A collective community in Israel that was traditionally based on agriculture.
Lone parent family	A family with only a mother or father as a consequence of death, divorce or individual choice.
Marriage	A cultural phenomenon that gives legal status to a union between two partners and any children they may produce.
Matriarchal family	A female dominated family group.
Monogamy	The practice of being married to one person at a time.
Nuclear family	A family group consisting of parents and their children.
Patriarchal family	A male dominated family group.
Polyandry	A woman has more than one husband at a time.
Polygamy	Having more than one husband or wife at the same time.
Polygyny	A man has more than one wife at the same time.
Power	The ability to exercise control over one's own life &/or the lives of others.
Primary socialisation	The family is the agent of primary socialisation where the norms, values & culture of a society are first taught.
Reconstituted (or blended) family	When two adults with children from previous relationships remarry (or cohabit) to form a new family.
Same sex family	Families headed by a couple of the same sex.
Secularisation	The decline in religious beliefs.
Segregated conjugal roles	Husband & wife perform different & clearly defined activities.
Serial monogamy	A pattern of divorce & remarriage found in monogamous societies where an individual marries several times but only one partner at a time.
Symmetrical family	A family where responsibilities are equally shared between husband & wife.
Traditional nuclear family	A family consisting of parents & their children, following segregated conjugal roles and patriarchal. Leach recognised the power of this image & called it the 'cereal packet image of the family'.
Triple shift	The three types of work that create a burden for women: paid work, domestic work & emotional work.

Families Knowledge Organiser

Functionalism	<p>The family is a key social structure as it performs several essential functions for individuals and society. Murdock (1949) argues four vital functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sexual Function: regulates sexual behaviour that is approved by society. 2. Reproductive function: New family members- procreation & childbearing. 3. Economic function: providing shelter, food & clothes. Economic cooperation between husband & wife. 4. Educational function: primary socialisation and disciplining.
Marxist	<p>The family is one of the key institutions that social inequalities are passed on through the generations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bourgeoisie pass on their wealth to family members • Educational advantages are passed down as people from wealthy backgrounds can afford to send their children to private schools • Through the socialisation process people learn to accept their position.
Feminist	<p>Families have a negative impact on the lives of women. Families socially construct gender differences- canalisation. Children also learn gender expectations through the division of domestic labour e.g. Mum cleaning up.</p>

Segregated conjugal roles:

Clear division of tasks divided into male and female tasks. Husband & wife spend little time together.

Joint conjugal roles:

Do not have a rigid division of household tasks. Husband & wife spend time together.

Parents are now less **authoritarian**

Families used to rely on children's income until the **Education Act of 1918** and childhood began



Children are seen as important members of the family and their opinions are listened to.

Household:

Consists of one person who lives alone or a group of people living at the same address.

Reasons for increase in one-person households:

- Remain single and childless
- Divorced
- International migrants
- Living alone through choice
- Cohabiting (potentially before marriage)
- Choosing to live apart from partner.



How have families changed?:

- Smaller (less children)
- Marriage is less likely
- Parents are older
- Joint Conjugal roles
- Family diversity
- Increase in divorce, rise in reconstituted.

Why have families changed?:

- Laws (gay rights, divorce is easier.)
- Rise of feminism
- Diversity
- Technology (contraception, fertility)
- Changing norms & values
- Secularisation- religion is less of an influence.



Boomerang children:

Young people who leave home (for university or travelling) & return to living with their parent(s)

Contemporary social issues:

- The quality of parenting
- Relationships between teenagers & adults
- Care of the elderly.



Patterns of marriage:



- Decline
- Later in life
- Civil partnership/same-sex
- Increase in cohabitation
- Increase in births outside of marriage

Patterns of divorce:

- Changes in the law
- Changing social attitudes & values
- Impact of secularisation
- Changes in the status of women
- Influence of media.



Consequences of divorce:

- Emotional distress
- Financial hardship
- Remarriage

Nuclear Family

(Cereal packet)

Father, Mother & Children

Same-Sex Family

Gay or lesbian couple living in a house, possibly with children.

Extended family

Includes relatives beyond the nuclear family

Beanpole Families

Multiple generations of older people and few children

Lone-Parent Families

One parent and child(ren) who live together

Reconstituted Families

Sometimes referred to as a step family. Children from a previous relationship so one adult is a biological parent, the other is a step-parent.

The Rapoport's (1982) – Family diversity



The Rapoports carried out ground-breaking research into family life. They identified a number of ways in which family life was diverse, in contrast to the idea that the nuclear family was the clear norm.

They identified 5 clear types of family diversity. The 5 types of family diversity they identified were:

1) **Organisational.** This refers to the way a family might organise itself in terms of the roles people perform (e.g. traditional maledominated families and more symmetrical ones).

2) **Cultural.** Families differ in terms -of their beliefs and values. One example of this is between different ethnic groups, with some ethnicities placing a greater emphasis on family than others, some preferring different gender roles, etc.

3) **Class.** Much writing about the family assumes that family life as experienced in a middle-class family is the same for other social classes, but this is not the case. Availability of resources, quality of housing, leisure opportunities, etc. all impact the nature of families and family life.

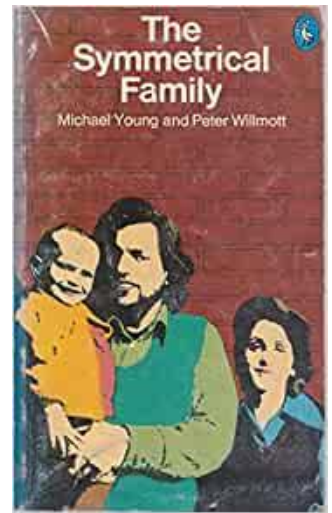
4) **Life course.** Rapoport and Rapoport point out that we do not live in the same family structure, family set-up or type of household for the whole of our lives. We might be born into a traditional nuclear family. This might change later in our childhood (for example it might become a lone parent family and then a reconstituted family). When we leave home it might be to live on our own, or with flat mates. It might be to live with a partner as a couple without children. A couple with or without children might live with their parents in an extended family, or move away and form their own nuclear family.

5) **Cohort.** There is also change over time and what is the norm, in terms of family life, for one generation, is not for the next. As such, great grandparents and grandparents may have had several siblings, and later generations have far fewer; more recent generations are more likely than their parents and grandparents to divorce or to be single parents. Since Rapoport and Rapoport were writing family has arguably become more diverse, e.g., same-sex parent



Young & Willmott (1973) (Functionalist)

Peter Willmott and Michael Young carried out groundbreaking research into family life in the UK over a long period of time. One concept they developed, the subject of a 1973 book, was the symmetrical family.



Willmott and Young developed their ideas about family life, following on from the functionalist ideas of sociologists like Talcott Parsons. From their research (much of it based on social surveys) of families in East London, they developed an idea of the family developing through a number of stages through history: a march of progress.

They argued that in 1973, families had become symmetrical - that is, that men and women performed similar roles. Rather than the traditional nuclear family described by Parsons where men and women had very separate roles in the family (segregated gender roles) Willmott and Young argued that in modern families men and women both did paid work and both did work around the house, including childcare. They did not find that men and women did exactly the same type of jobs - whether in the workplace or at home - but (compared with earlier periods) family life was becoming more shared and equal. Part of this was also that men and women and children spent more time together in the home rather than separately outside the home (e.g. men going to the pub).

Another important concept for Willmott & Young was stratified diffusion. They argued that changes in norms and values tend to start among the wealthier in society and then others start to behave in the same way (the behaviour is "diffused" from one strata - class - to another).

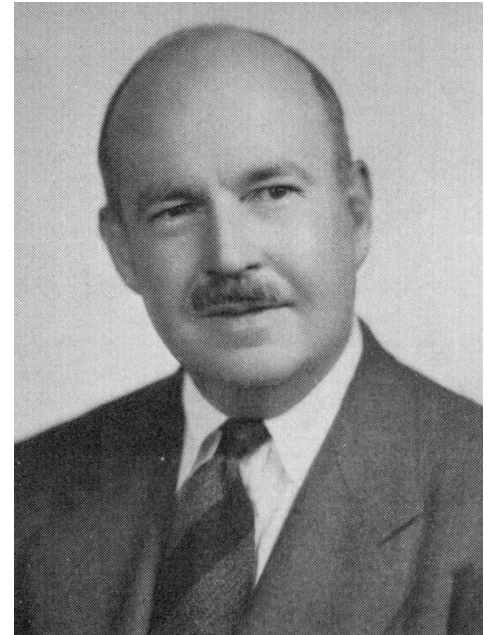
This led them to a perhaps surprising conclusion that they predicted that the next stage of the family would be the asymmetric family. They found that richer families spend more time apart and had more segregated roles, with wives not needing to work, and men spending time on the golf course rather than at home. This prediction has clearly not turned out to be accurate, with - if anything - family life becoming more symmetrical since 1973.

However, the research was quite widely criticised, particularly by feminist sociologists such as Ann Oakley. She argued that the concept of the symmetrical family was flawed, as was Willmott and Young's data. For example, quite small contributions to housework by men was deemed by the research to mean that housework was shared and therefore the family was symmetrical. Instead Oakley argued that women had now had a dual burden. Yes, more women were going out to work, but they were also doing the bulk of the housework and childcare. As such, she argued that increased female employment had not made the family more equal but just meant that women had to work two jobs.

A further criticism is that, certainly in the 1970s and even today, while both men and women went to work, men were paid more than women and women experienced a glass ceiling and were unable to gain promotions. It also presupposes a nuclear type of family with a husband and wife, rather than other diverse households that exist in contemporary society. Despite the criticisms, Willmott & Young's theory has remained influential and the concepts of the symmetrical family and shared and segregated gender roles remain useful ways to consider the gender division of labour in families

Talcott Parsons (1956) (Functionalist)

Talcott Parsons is one of the best known functionalist sociologists. His work features in many topic areas in sociology. In 1959, he wrote a classic text on the sociology of families and households.



Functionalist sociologists have taken an interest in the functions of the family: what are families for? While some identified several functions, Parsons suggests that there are two irreducible functions: 1) primary socialisation and 2) the stabilisation of adult personalities.

1) For functionalists, socialisation is the process through which people learn how to behave in society - what is normal and what is important. This is an essential process for society to work: there needs to be broad agreement about these things to prevent people behaving in an antisocial way. Parsons divides socialisation up into primary and secondary socialisation: primary socialisation takes place in the family, where we learn the particular norms and values of our family and community. Later, we learn universalistic values through school, the media and other agents of socialisation.

So parents teach children the norms and values of society, through pre-school education and by example. For Parsons this also strongly involves learning our gender roles. Parsons argued that men were the instrumental leader while women were the expressive leader and that both were necessary. So men carried out discipline and earned money, while women cared and nurtured and raised children. Boys saw the example from their fathers, and girls saw the example from their mothers, and ensured they continued to behave in the same way and give the same example to the next generation.

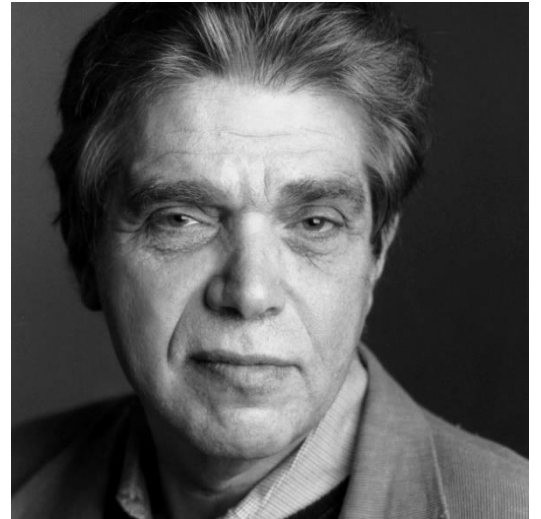
Of course this idea is now seen as rather outdated. In 1950s America, married women were much more likely to be housewives than to pursue their own careers, and the idea of a clear gender division of labour (men and women performing very different roles) was not controversial.

2) Parsons argued that families performed an important role for individuals and society in keeping people stable. Life is difficult and challenging and frustrating: the family can help to deal with this. Family members give each other care and support and help each other through difficult times. Parsons particularly described this in terms of a man coming home from a difficult day at work and relaxing into his family, like a warm bath.

Marxist sociologists like Zaretsky agree that the family can perform this psychological role but see it much less positively. They see it as benefiting not society or the individual but the bosses: instead of going on strike, rebelling or having a revolution, discontented workers are restored to return to work by their loving wives. Similarly, feminists see this process differently, as men taking out their frustrations on their wives. Again it could also be seen as rather outdated, as it assumes men will be the breadwinners and women be in the home. It has also been suggested that Parsons was really describing middle-class families and ignored the different experiences of families from different social classes.

Eli Zaretsky (1976)-Marxist

Zaretsky's Marxist analysis of the role of the family in capitalist society provides a fascinating contrast with the work of Parsons and Delphy & Leonard. He concluded that the family worked in the interests of capitalism.



Zaretsky argues that in society today, there is an illusion that the family is a private space, separate from economics and capitalism. Zaretsky argues that the nature of capitalist society means that this is not really true: in fact it helps to keep capitalism going.

Zaretsky was interested in psychology and the idea that the family might perform a psychological function. That is, that people could be nurtured, supported and have their individual needs met by the family. A similar concept to Parsons' warm bath. However, Zaretsky said that the family was unable to perform this function under capitalism. This was because, rather than helping and nurturing individuals, the family cushioned the damage caused by capitalism. The working class were exploited at work. Traditional Marxists argue that the working class needs to have a revolution and overturn capitalism and establish a socialist system. However, Zaretsky says that one of the things that stops them doing this is the family! Parsons argued that the family helps relieve the stress of the working day and prepare an individual to function the next day and Zaretsky agrees. However, Zaretsky sees this as a negative thing: people need to recognise that they are being exploited in order to be able to do something about it. The family doesn't really compensate for the bad effects of capitalism, it just seems to. It also helps support capitalism in other ways too: it provides lots of free labour. Women (housewives) work for the capitalist system for free, keeping the workers fed and clothed and reproducing the next generation of exploited workers by having children. Also, workers who have families are less likely to rebel against their bosses (e.g. go on strike) because loss of earnings does not only effect them, but also their dependents.

For Zaretsky, the family could only really start to provide psychological support for its members when there is an end to capitalism.

Zaretsky's ideas now seem rather outdated as the nature of both work and families has changed, particularly in relation to women's role in the workplace. Also, some feminist sociologists, such as Delphy & Leonard argue that it is the patriarchy - a male-dominated social system - that benefits from family life, rather than capitalism.

Delphy & Leonard (Radical Feminists)



Delphy & Leonard - who are feminists - looked at the role of women in families and particularly at housework and the idea that women were exploited by their husbands.

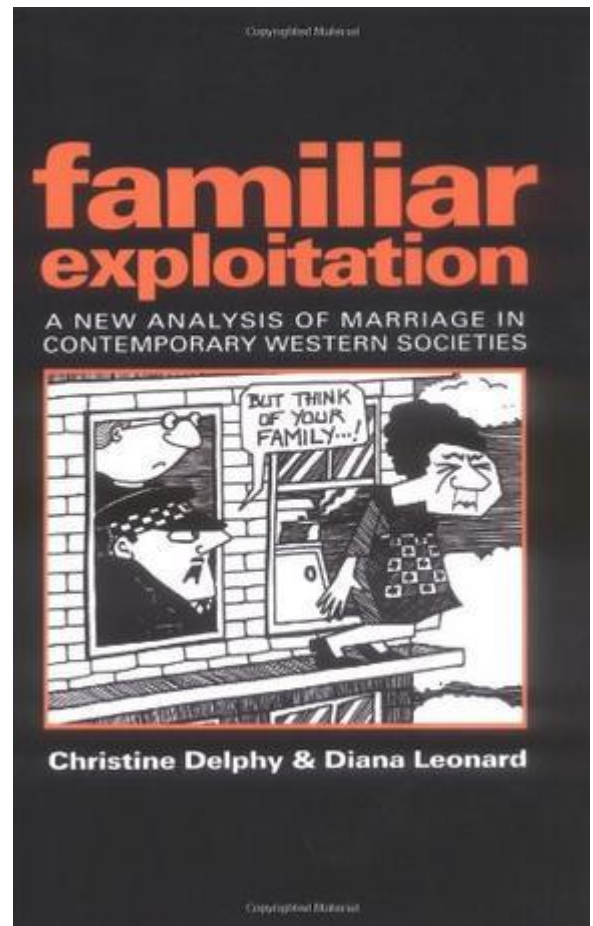
Delphy and Leonard took a feminist look at the family and particularly at the work of women in the home. Some existing sociology - particularly Marxist and Marxist-feminist - looked at how women's work benefited capitalism: the bosses had their workers clothed and fed and looked after for free. But Delphy and Leonard argued that the people who most benefited from women's work were not the ruling class but men.

Housework benefited the patriarchy. Patriarchy means a male-dominated society. Indeed they saw the main role of the family as maintaining patriarchy: keeping men in charge.

Delphy and Leonard looked at the family as an economic system: who did the work and who benefited from it? It was clear to them that it was women who were exploited in this system. They did the bulk of the domestic labour - regardless of whether they also went out and did paid work outside the home too. Time at home for men was leisure time, whereas time at home for women was also work time. This contrasts strongly with Willmott & Young's idea of a symmetrical family.

There is also a contrast with Marxist-feminists such as Fran Ansley who saw the unequal division of labour in the family as benefitting the ruling class and capitalism. They also concluded that men tended to make the big decisions about the family.

Delphy and Leonard's work does build on earlier research, such as that of Ann Oakley, who concluded that working women had a dual burden of paid work and unpaid domestic work. Later, Duncombe and Marsden developed the idea of a triple shift where emotional work is added to domestic work and paid work.



Ann Oakley (1974) (Feminist)

Feminist sociologist Ann Oakley is well known for her extensive research on housework and on childbirth, both using unstructured interviews to gain deep, valid data about families and women. In this article, she investigated the nuclear family, and its place as the "normal" or "conventional" family of the time.



Ann Oakley defined the conventional family as "nuclear families composed of legally married couples, voluntarily choosing parenthood of one or more children". This is otherwise known as the cereal packet family: the image of a normal family that was portrayed in television advertisements and soap operas at the time when she was writing. Oakley critically examines this idea. She looks at the work of other sociologists and considers where the idea that this was the "normal" way to live came from, and the influence it has over society and individuals. She considered the way the conventional family worked as a form of social control: people were expected to live in these families, and this controlled them by making it harder to live alternative lives. As people got older - especially women - they would be regularly asked when they were going to get married and have children, as though alternatives to this life plan were unthinkable.

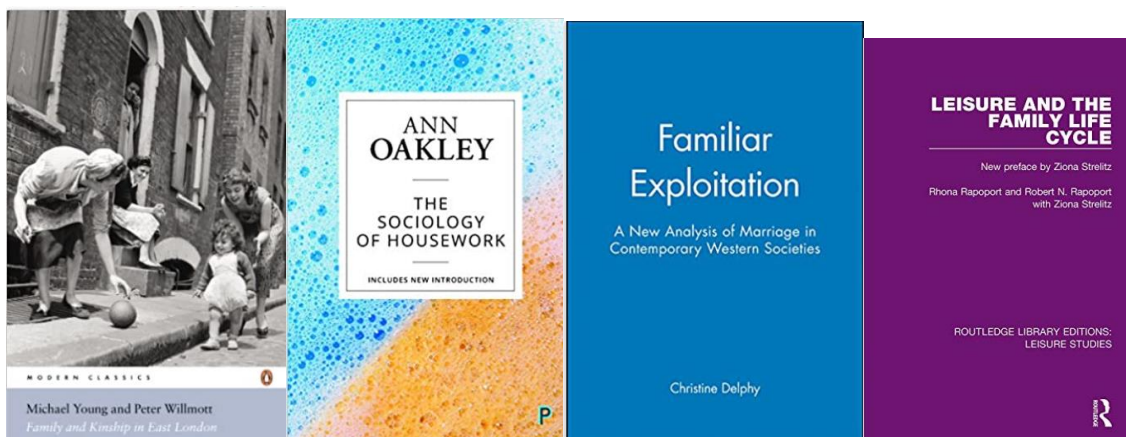
Oakley noted that, even in the early 1980s, the conventional family was being challenged. People were exploring different ways of living and different arrangements that worked for them and did not conform to convention. She noted that people increasingly saw the conventional family as a stereotype and an archaic one. Instead some groups understood that they could organise their families differently and, indeed, that they did not have to live in a family at all, but could choose some other form of household or living arrangement.

Since the 1980s this challenge to the conventional family has increased and, today, there are a great deal of diverse family forms and structures we can choose to live in. Chester (a functionalist) however suggests that we still live in neo-conventional families. That is, that while fewer people are getting married, and people may live with step-siblings, etc. most people still live in a family that is effectively nuclear and most people want to live in that family structure.



Reading / media resources relating to the family topic

	
https://www.newstatesman.com/uk	https://www.bbc.co.uk/
	
https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/sociologyreview	https://www.theguardian.com/uk



- Louis Theroux – Love without limits - Polyandry <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0br9vrX>
- Wife swap - <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/wife-swap-usa>
- Rhona Rapoport obituary - <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2012/jan/10/rhona-rapoport>
- Toxic Childhood
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/sep/14/children.familyandrelationships>
- Grandparents- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/26/grandparents-active-todays-ipad-generation-says-national-trust/>
- Decline in marriage - <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/dating/marriage-rates-decline-reason-economically-attractive-men-jobs-income-a9098956.html>
- What challenges do blended families face? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07815p4#>
- Did your relationship with your ex partner improve after divorce? -
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jan/07/did-your-relationship-with-your-ex-partner-improve-after-your-divorce>
- Put a ring on it? Millennial couples are in no hurry -
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/29/well/mind/millennials-love-marriage-sex-relationships-dating.html>
- The ageing population-
https://www.economicsonline.co.uk/Global_economics/The_ageing_population.html
- 13 reasons why your friends are your new family <https://metro.co.uk/2017/06/20/13-reasons-why-your-friends-are-your-family-6710884/>
- Divorce continues to be a psychological burden on kids
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/jul/31/divorce-psychological-toll-on-kids-children>

Example exam questions with examiner feedback

Describe the double shift experienced by women in marriage.

[3 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 3 marks

Level	Marks	Descriptor
3	3	A coherent description with few inaccuracies. Demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods. (AO1)
2	2	A partial description based on a mix of relevant and irrelevant material with some inaccuracies and omissions. Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods. (AO1)
1	1	Fragments of knowledge, some inaccurate or irrelevant. Demonstrates limited understanding of relevant sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods. (AO1)
0	0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Double shift (women in marriage): working women who continue to perform the bulk of domestic labour are said to work a 'double shift', paid employment followed by an unequal share of household work.

Indicative content AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods.

- Women in employment who also shoulder the main responsibility for many domestic tasks.
- The expectations placed on women to take responsibility for domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and child care.
- The traditional role of women as carers.

Student response 1

The double shift experienced by women in marriage refers to the idea that some women take on the role of breadwinner and have a domestic role. For example, a woman may go out to work during the day and then come home and complete all the domestic chores such as cleaning the house and looking after the children. This means that the woman is expected by their husband to be both a traditional housewife and also bring money into the family.

This is a level 3 response.

Whilst this student does not begin their answer with the best possible definition of the double shift they do go on to clearly make the point that women in paid employment often return home and take primary responsibility for 'domestic chores'. The answer also highlights the 'traditional' expectations of the husband clearly establishing the context of the answer as referencing the experience of women within a marriage.

3 marks

Student response 2

The double shift is when the woman is also a mother to at least one dependent child. The mother is in paid employment while dealing with a domestic role in the household. For example the woman may be working from 9 am to 3 pm then go to pick up her children from school, then cook their dinner and still have time to do housework such as cleaning the house.

This is a level 2 response.

This student clearly has some understanding of the double shift, but the answer could be read as exclusively referencing the experience of a single parent. The question clearly intends to focus the student on women who experience the double shift within a marriage.

2 marks

Question 06

Question

Item A

Despite concerns over the increase in the number of children in single-parent families, recent research has found that children raised by a single parent are no less happy than those living with two biological parents. Rather, it is the quality of relationships at home which are most strongly linked to a child's well-being.

Researchers analysed data from the Millennium Cohort Study, which was made up of 12,877 children aged seven, in 2008, from across the UK. The children came from three family types: those living with two biological parents; those living with a step-parent and a biological parent; and those with just a single parent.

The seven year olds were asked the question: "How often do you feel happy?" Of the children living with a lone parent, 36 per cent said they were happy "all the time" while the remaining 64 per cent reported being happy "sometimes or never".

Exactly the same percentages were recorded when the question was put to children from the other family types.

The results were largely unchanged when other factors which could influence a child's well-being were taken into account, such as their parents' social class or the affluence of the area in which they live.

Identify and explain **one** factor that may have led to an increase in the number of children raised in single-parent families referred to as a concern in **Item A**.

[4 marks]

AO1 = 1 marks, AO2 = 3 marks

'Context' here refers to the increase in the number of children raised in single-parent families.

Level	Marks	Descriptor
4	4	Relevant factor selected (AO1) and an appropriate, detailed and well-developed explanation of relevant sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods offered with a good application to the context. (AO2)
3	3	Relevant factor selected (AO1) with an explanation of relevant sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods containing some inaccuracies or omissions but which has some application to the context. (AO2)
2	2	Relevant factor selected (AO1) with a largely inaccurate or irrelevant explanation of relevant sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods that is only weakly applied to the context. (AO2)
1	1	Relevant factor selected.(AO1)
0	0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Student response 1

The research shows little difference between the happiness of children who come from three different family types – two biological parents, one step-parent and one biological parent and those living with just a single parent. One factor as to why lone parents families are becoming more common might be changes in attitudes towards marriage over the last forty or fifty years. Women do not look to get married as soon as possible but rather try to build a career first. This can be seen as a concern because only one parent is looking after the child.

This is a level 1 response.

The student identifies a relevant factor (changing attitudes towards marriage) but their explanation is largely irrelevant (the context of the question refers to the increase in single-parent families). The final sentence could be seen as a failed attempt to address the question, the student is presumably thinking about stay-at-home fathers but again this is not relevant to the question. Note that the first sentence is unnecessary 'padding', the student simply lifts information from the source which is not directly linked to the question.

1 mark

Student response 2

One factor that may have led to an increase in single parent families is the fact that over the last 50 years traditional views of the importance of marriage have become more relaxed. Changing social attitudes have meant that the idea of marriage as an important part of life has decreased. Many people no longer see marriage as essential and they may even have children before getting married. Without the formal legal contract of marriage families may split up more easily, creating an increase in the number of single-parent families.

This is a level 4 response.

The student identifies a relevant factor (changing attitudes towards marriage) and suggests a plausible (if controversial) links between the increase in the number of cohabiting couples with children and the greater likelihood that such relationships will breakdown:

Using the Millennium Cohort Study, Benson (2009) finds that around 27% of couples that were cohabiting when their child was born have separated by the time the child is aged 5, compared with 9% of couples that were married when their child was born.

A. Goodman & E. Greaves *Cohabitation, Marriage and Relationship Stability*, I.F.S. 2010.
(H. Benson *Married and Unmarried Family Breakdown: Key Statistics Explained* Bristol Community Family Trust 2009.)

4 marks

Discuss how far sociologists agree that feminism has changed marriage in modern British society.
[12 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 4 mark, AO2 = 4 marks, AO3 = 4 marks

'Context' here refers to the work of Marx on socio-economic class in nineteenth century capitalist society.

Level	Marks	Description
4	10-12	<p>Detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods presented in a well-developed answer. A wide range of specialist terms used with precision. (AO1)</p> <p>Sustained application of relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods to the issues raised by the question. Few if any inaccuracies or omissions. (AO2)</p> <p>Developed critical analysis and evaluation of the relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods. Well-constructed arguments with supported judgements and evidence based conclusions. (AO3)</p>
3	7-9	<p>Good evidence of relevant knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, evidence and methods but elements lacking detail and development. A good range of specialist terms used appropriately. (AO1)</p> <p>Good application of relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods to the issues raised by the question. Some inaccuracies or omissions. (AO2)</p> <p>Good evidence of analysis and evaluation of the relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods. A logical argument, but judgements and conclusions may be indistinct and/or lacking in appropriate development. (AO3)</p>
2	4-6	<p>Limited evidence of relevant knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, evidence and methods. A limited range of specialist terms used appropriately. (AO1)</p> <p>Limited application of relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods to the issues raised by the question. Significant inaccuracies or omissions. (AO2)</p> <p>Limited attempt at analysis and evaluation of the relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods but lacking in appropriate development. There may be inconsistencies in the argument made and reasoning may be inaccurate leading to false or contradictory judgements and conclusions. (AO3)</p>
1	1-3	<p>Fragments of basic knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, evidence and methods relevant to the topic. Specialist terms generally used inappropriately if at all. (AO1)</p>

		<p>Little or no application of relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods to the issues raised by the question. (AO2)</p> <p>Little or no analysis of the relevant theories, concepts, evidence and methods, assertion rather than evaluation, poorly constructed argument with little or no evidence of substantiated judgements and only cursory conclusions. (AO3)</p>
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Examiners are reminded that AO1, AO2 and AO3 are regarded as interdependent. When deciding on a mark all should be considered together using the best fit approach. For example, a level 3 mark could be awarded for level 3 evidence against each objective, or a mixture of level 4, 3 and 2 evidence across different objectives.

Student response 1

Some sociologists would argue that in modern Britain there have been some significant changes to marriage and that feminism has been an important reason for many of those changes.

One reason for believing this is due to the more equal role that women have in society today. Many women no longer consider marriage to be as important as it once was and they no longer see the need to be dependent upon a man. However, it is also important to recognize that there have also been other important changes in social attitudes, for example secularisation (the decline in the importance of religion). Hand in hand with the growth of feminism have been social changes such as the introduction of laws to ensure equal pay for women and end to discrimination in employment. Within marriage roles have also changed, married couples are now more likely to have joint conjugal roles; they share domestic tasks and responsibility for the care of children (another example of the influence of feminist ideas).

However, some sociologists would argue that feminism is not very important and that many women still feel a need to get married in order to fit in with traditional expectations about the role of women in society. Functionalist and New Right ideas about the importance of stable family life are still influential. For many women getting married and bringing up children remains their idea of how to live their lives. Feminists argue that many women who wish to follow their careers after marrying and having children face a 'double shift' (going out to work and then coming home to look after the house and children) suggesting that for some women feminism has not changed society very much.

In conclusion, although feminism has made a significant contribution to changing attitudes towards marriage, for many women British society remains one where women are expected to marry (even though more are cohabiting).

This is a level 3 response.

This student demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological evidence, they make some reference to other sociological perspectives and they use a good range of specialist terms appropriately. Their argument is logical and relatively well constructed. However, their conclusions are insufficiently developed and peripheral to their main argument.

9 marks

Student response 2

According to the Office of National Statistics nearly one in two marriages ends in divorce. One possible reason for this increase in divorce and a decline in the popularity of marriage could be feminism.

Feminists believe that men and women should be equal. However, there is evidence that men and women are still not equal for example the continuing gender pay gap. Whilst more women are going out to work and are economically independent they still earn less than men. Feminists attempt to empower women to believe that they can be independent of men but the evidence indicates that men still have a greater share of available wealth. Feminists could be responsible for women having unrealistic expectations of marriage leading to increased divorce and a decline in the popularity of marriage.

There are other reasons for the high rate of divorce and a decline in the popularity of marriage. For example secularisation, most people no longer believe that marriage is 'till death do us part'. In conclusion Feminism could be said to have had a negative impact on marriage but there are other factors to be considered.

This is a level 2 response.

This student demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological evidence, although some of their points are of questionable validity and they are incorrect to simply assert that divorce has 'increased' (between 2001 and 2011 the rate of divorce actually decreased). They make no reference to theoretical perspectives other than feminism but they do use a limited range of specialist terms appropriately. They reach relatively clear if underdeveloped conclusions and their argument although limited in scope is neither inconsistent nor contradictory.

4 marks

Student response 3

Some sociologists would agree that feminism has changed marriage in modern Britain. However, other sociologists would say that the influence of feminism has been limited or even that it has had a negative impact.

Feminists believe that the nuclear family is patriarchal and mainly benefits men. Functionalist sociologists like Willmott and Young have suggested that families in modern Britain have become more symmetrical, with men and women sharing equal responsibility for employment and domestic duties. However, feminists like Anne Oakley have been critical of Willmott and Young. Oakley believes that they collected insufficient research evidence to support the idea of the symmetrical family.

In her own research Oakley found little evidence of men participating in domestic tasks. She found that women continued to take on the major responsibility for housework and childcare, even if they were in full-time employment. More recent research continues to show that women spend more time than men on child care and domestic tasks, with women experiencing a double shift (paid employment and then taking on the main responsibility for housework/child care). This would suggest that for many women feminism has not had much of an impact on traditional roles within marriage.

Some New Right sociologists are critical of the feminist approach to marriage. They believe that women who have taken advantage of increased educational and employment opportunities often have unrealistic expectations of marriage and that in reality many women are unable to adequately care for their children and pursue a full-time career.

In conclusion whilst feminism has had some impact on marriage, in reality even if they have jobs many women continue to be expected to fulfil traditional roles as housewives and mothers. This would suggest that feminism has had only a limited impact on marriage.

This is a level 4 response.

This student clearly responds to the question with a detailed answer demonstrating a sustained application of relevant theories, concepts and evidence. The answer provides a well-developed critical analysis and evaluation of the impact of feminism on marriage. The student's argument is well supported, references various sociological perspectives and reaches evidence based conclusions.

12 marks