

FAMILIES – FAMILY DIVERSITY

FAMILY TYPES

Nuclear: Male/female parents and their children – presented as the ‘best’ and ‘normal’ family type.



Reconstituted/blended: One or both partners with children from a previous relationship – fastest growing type of family.

Lone parent: One parent with their dependent children – about 1/4 of families in the UK (90% of lone parent families are headed by women).



Same sex: Couple of the same sex who have been legally able to marry since 2014, and adopt since 2002.



Extended: Consists of relatives as well as immediate family.

GLOBAL FAMILIES

Polygamy: One partner is married to several partners at the same time – usually the man has more than one wife (widespread across West/Central Africa).



Polyandry: When a woman has more than one husband.

Extended: Consists of relatives as well as immediate family.

Kibbutzim: Communal villages in Israel where people share all resources and work, including child-rearing.

Arranged marriage: Parents choose who their children are going to marry – agreement between two families of similar economic and social standing, but children do have a choice (common in India and Pakistan, and amongst these communities in the UK).



Forced marriage: Where one or both people do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage – often involves child brides (most common in poorer countries)

KEY TERMS

Monogamy: Being faithful to one person, i.e. spouse (the norm in most countries).



Bigamy: Being married to more than one person (illegal in the UK).

THE RAPPORTS

Identified 5 types of diversity within UK families:

Organisational: Different types of family structure, also refers to domestic division of labour.

Life course: Reflects choice or circumstance, e.g. the number of children, the spacing of the children, divorce, remarriage, widowhood, etc.

Class: Wealth and income have an impact on type/size of housing, financial stability, holidays, etc.

Cohort: Those born around the same time may have a shared experience, e.g. introduction of birth control.

Cultural/ethnic: People from ethnic minorities may follow the customs and norms of their ethnic group, e.g. arranged marriages and larger extended families amongst British Asian families, and Caribbean families often being matrifocal – this may be diluted when mixing with other groups, so might combine practices from both cultures.



BUT, Robert Chester claimed this diversity has been exaggerated, arguing that...

- Most people live in a nuclear family at some point in their lives
- The nuclear family is the type that most people aspire to
- Many people who get divorced then go on to re-marry
- Most co-habiting couples do go on to marry
- More married couples stay together than divorce
- The traditional nuclear family has been replaced with a modern version, where both parents go out to work



FAMILIES – CHANGING FAMILIES

SMALLER FAMILIES

Contraception: More control over family size.

Careers: More women focus on careers so have children later – therefore have fewer.

Cost: Around £150,000 to bring a child up to 18 and meet their minimum needs – particularly childcare.

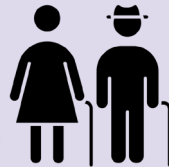


OLDER PEOPLE

Childcare: Support parents and enable them to focus on careers and kids.

Boomerang children: Adults who return home to live with older parents following a relationship break-up.

Sandwich generation: Adults (usually women) who have to look after elderly parents whilst bringing up their own children.



CHANGING CHILDHOOD

'Golden age': Age of innocence that protection from adult life – whereas seen as economic benefit in previous generations.

Internet/social media: Children are exposed to adult content – 'growing up too quickly'.

Increasing rights: Parents more likely to include children in family decision-making – more likely to express their opinions and be listened to.

Young carers: Many children look after younger siblings or sick parents



DECLINE IN MARRIAGE

Marrying later: Only 1/3 of women and 1/4 of men are married by the age of 30 (late 70s – 90% of women and 80% of men were married by 30).

Independence: More women can financially support themselves.

Growth in singlehood: Many women value career over marriage and kids that is shared across society.

Secularisation: Many couples don't value marriage from a religious perspective – so cohabit instead.

Cost: It's too expensive – average £18K!



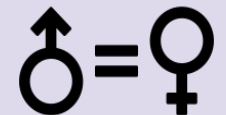
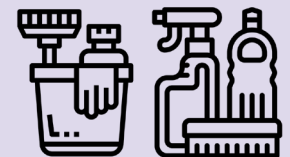
WILLMOTT & YOUNG – CONJUGAL ROLES

Stage 1 - Pre-industrial family: Worked together in agriculture and cottage industries – no separation between home and work.

Stage 2 – Early industrial family: Men 'drawn' into industrial work while women did the domestic duties – caused the family to be 'torn apart'.

Stage 3 – Symmetrical family: Male and female roles similar and balanced – wage earning, childcare and housework shared (emergence of 'new man') – better living standards mean men are happy to spend time at home.

Stage 4 – Asymmetrical family: The more wealthy (e.g. managing directors) are likely to centre their lives around work, not the home, and spend their leisure time away from home (e.g. on the golf course) – women don't need to work to stay at home with the children.



INCREASE IN DIVORCE

42% of marriages end in divorce.

Legal changes: Easier and cheaper to obtain a divorce, e.g. 'no blame'.

Welfare state: Financial support for lone parents.

Secularisation: Less stigma attached to divorce – couples no longer staying together for 'appearances sake'.

Increased expectations: Couples now expect intimacy, closeness and emotional satisfaction – not prepared to remain in 'empty marriages'.



FAMILIES – FUNCTIONALIST VIEW

CONSENSUS VIEW

People agree on the same values and want the same things out of life.

Functionalists believe the family is vital for society – teaches its members core values and helps them to become good members of society.



G.P. MURDOCK

Family performs 4 universal functions...

Education: Socialising children into society's norms and values

Economic: Providing resources and financial stability.

Reproduction: Ensuring new members of society.

Sex (within marriage): Stabilises couples and therefore society



TALCOTT PARSONS – WARM BATH THEORY

Family performs 2 basic functions...

Primary socialisation: Teaching children the shared norms and values of society

Stabilisation of adults: Married couples provide comfort and emotional support for each other – sanctuary from the stress of everyday life (like a warm bath).

He argued that a clear division of labour was needed to do this – men were more suited to being breadwinners and women more suited to being homemakers. And that the nuclear family was the best environment for this.



LOSS OF TRADITIONAL FUNCTIONS

- The family was the only source of care when people were ill, unable to work, or elderly
- The family was responsible for the health and education of its members as many couldn't afford to see doctors or send their children to school.
- Modern family no longer needs to perform these functions as other institutions have grown up and taken over responsibilities from the family



NEW RIGHT VIEWPOINT – CHARLES MURRAY

Shares functionalist view of the family – but very conservative (traditional).

- Belief that the nuclear family is the only correct family type
- Important for children to have stable home with married mum and dad
- Ideally wife stays at home to look after children



Decline of nuclear family: Has caused social problems such as...

- Higher crime rates
- Declining moral standards



Introduction of the welfare state:

- Has led to a culture where people have become dependent on hand-outs...
- ...and has made being a single parent financially 'doable'...
- ...which has led to more deviancy and further decline in moral standards



CRITICISMS OF THIS VIEWPOINT

- These views are outdated and not relevant to modern society
- Parson's views on the division of labour don't fit families where both partners go out to work, or same-sex families
- **Feminists** argue that family works well for men, and that men benefit from it more than women – ignores inequality in the home
- Too positive and simplistic about how families work and ignores the 'dark side' of family life – e.g. violence against children and partners is widespread



FAMILIES – FEMINIST VIEW

CONFLICT VIEW

Feminists argue that there is inequality in society between men and women, and that women are oppressed by men.

Patriarchy: Men have power over women and society is organised in a way that benefits the interests of men at the expense of women.



GENERAL VIEW THE FAMILY

Belief that the family is organised to benefit men – men get more out of family life – they wield the power and make the significant decisions.



Nuclear performs 2 functions that oppress women:

- Socialises women into accepting 'housewife' role as the only possible/acceptable role for a woman
- Socialises girls into accepting subservient roles with the family, and socialises boys into believing they are superior

CRITICISMS OF THIS VIEWPOINT

- Many women have the nuclear family in their aspirations for the future
- Feminists ignore the benefits of family life for women, such as the pleasure many have from bringing up children in a safe and stable environment
- **Functionalists** would argue that the family is organised in a way that benefits both society and its members
- **Marxists** would argue that the family benefits capitalism and the upper class, not men in particular



ANN OAKLEY

From birth, children are taught that men and women are different and that the male role is superior. Supports a family system where men are dominant – they have the power and women take on most of the housework and childcare

Canalisation: Girls toys pass on the message that they are suited to homemaking roles.

Dual burden: Women still do the majority of housework as well as doing paid work.

Triple shift: Duncombe and Marsden added 'emotional work' to this, e.g. listening to and sorting out personal problems for the kids



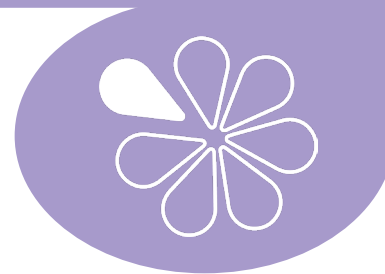
DELPHY AND LEONARD

- Argued that women contribute most to family life – domestic work and emotional support
- Women also support men in their leisure or work activities, e.g. doing the accounts if a man is self-employed
- Women help men unwind through 'trouble-free sex'
- They also argued that men contribute very little to their wives' well-being



SYLVIA WALBY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Argued that we live in a culture that devalues and undermines women
- Men can dominate women through domestic violence and abuse
- Argued that violence against women is a consequence and a cause of women's inequality
- Extent of domestic abuse against women is hugely underestimated...
- One in four women in England and Wales will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes
- On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police
- Two women are murdered every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner



FAMILIES – MARXIST VIEW

CONFLICT VIEW

Marxists emphasise the clash of interests amongst different groups in society. Society and the family are organised to benefit capitalism, and the upper classes. Marxists argue that capitalism is unfair for the workers – and they should fight for change.

Proletariat: The workers

Bourgeoisie: The ruling class – they own the means of production



GENERAL VIEW ON THE FAMILY

- Families serve the interests of capitalism
- Families are organised to benefit capitalism – the structure and activities of the family helps to keep capitalism going
- Children are brought to follow instructions which trains them to be obedient workers

Capitalism: This means that the means of making wealth (e.g. land, factories, machinery) are owned by individuals, companies or families, who run them for a profit.



ELI ZARETSKY

'Cult of private life': Where people bury themselves in family life and close their eyes to the injustices of capitalism.

Families are the target of consumerism:

- Buying good is central to most people's lives – Zaretsky says this keeps capitalism going
- Adverts persuade families that their happiness will increase by buying goods – and they pass this message onto their children
- Adverts put pressure on parents and make them believe that their children must have the latest products to be acceptable to their peers...
- ...Some parents with very little money will
- go without food and clothes so that their
- children can have the latest toys and gadgets



ZARETSKY ALSO ARGUED...

Family keeps capitalism going in other ways:

- The family also provides emotional support for workers, so they are more able to cope with unfulfilling tasks, stress or general unhappiness at work...
- ...'revolution' doesn't happen as workers are persuaded that their happiness/fulfilment is down to family life, rather than working for a fairer society
- If a worker has a family to support, they are less likely to complain about pay and conditions in case they lose their job
- Children are brought up to 'do as they are told' by their parents – makes them accept authority (less likely to question bosses in the future)



CRITICISMS OF THIS VIEWPOINT

- **Functionalists** argue that Marxists ignore the benefits that families provide for their members and for their communities
- They would also argue that it is hard to bring up a child without some form of rules – most people think adult instruction is beneficial and needed
- **Feminists** argue that Marxists ignore the power men exercise over women of whatever class
- **Postmodernists** argue that family consumption of goods can be enjoyable and offers people a lot of choice and a good standard of living