

Families' Key studies

- ❖ Emphasise the importance that work plays in gender inequalities
- ❖ Men gain the most from the exploitation of women's labour, not **capitalism**
- ❖ The family plays a major role in maintaining and reinforcing **patriarchy**
- ❖ Family is an economic system involving a **division of labour** which exploits women but benefits men
- ❖ Women are oppressed as their work is adopted within the family
- ❖ For example, women may be employed outside the home but still expected to do domestic chores when they get home – work is not share equally with their male partners

Delphy and Leonard 1992

What perspective were Delphy and Leonard writing from? (circle) New Right Marxism functionalism Feminism

Conflict or consensus?

Willmott and Young The Symmetrical Family, 1973 Writing from a functionalist perspective and based on a large scale social survey (nearly 2,000 people were interviewed in Greater London and surrounding areas) Young and Willmott used the term symmetrical family to describe the Stage 3 (home centred) nuclear family. In such families 'symmetry' refers to the similar contributions made by each spouse to the running of the household e.g. shared chores and shared decisions.

From item B identify and describe the research method used by Young and Willmott including what you know about their perspective on the family (4 marks)

- ❖ Addresses idea of **conventional families** – '*nuclear families composed of legally married couples, voluntarily choosing the parenthood of one or more children*'
- ❖ Explores the power of this idea on gender inequalities
- ❖ Examines the strains of being conventional and social control
- ❖ Research was before civil partnerships and same sex marriage
- ❖ However, she notes that conventional family stereotypes are increasingly seen as dated and some groups are looking towards alternative ways of living

Ann Okaley 1982

What type of feminist was Ann Oakley? Marxist feminist Radical feminist Liberal feminist

Conflict or consensus?

- ❖ Focused on middle class nuclear family in USA
- ❖ Nuclear family performs two **basic and irreducible functions** – common to all societies:

Talcott Parsons 1959

1. **Primary socialisation**

2. **Stabilisation of adult personalities**

- ❖ **Warm bath** analogy – family seen as a place of refuge, created by the mother whereby being part of a family is like stepping into a warm bath
- ❖ Argues that father and mother's roles in the family are complimentary:
 - **Instrumental role** of the father – men are suited to this role as breadwinner and provider for family's physical needs
 - **Expressive role** of the mother – women are suited to this role as carer and nurturer, providing for emotional needs
- ❖ **Conflict theorists** - are critical as it presents an **idealised picture of the nuclear family and ignores the dark side of family life**

What perspective was Parsons writing from? (circle) New Right Marxism functionalism Feminism

Conflict or consensus?

- ❖ Highlighted 5 different aspects of family diversity:

1. **Organisational** – e.g. divisions of domestic labour
2. **Cultural** – values and beliefs
3. **Class** – e.g. how social class affects resources etc
4. **Life course** – stage in life cycle
5. **Cohort** – period in history

- ❖ **Their study was before the more open and accepting view of gay and lesbian families**

Name the sociologists

- ❖ **Capitalism** has created an illusion that the economy is separate from the 'private life' of the family
- ❖ The family is unable to provide psychological and social needs of the individual: *'it...cannot meet the pressures of being the only refuge in a brutal society because it perpetuates the capitalist system'*
- ❖ The family supports the capitalist economy:
 - ✓ **It relies on the housewife role as unpaid labour and reproducing the next generation of workers**
 - ✓ **It acts as an vital unit of consumption**
- ❖ Only socialism will end the artificial separation of family and public life, making personal fulfilment possible

Zaretsky 1976

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Conflict or consensus?