



The Family

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The Family

Family: people related by blood marriage or adoption.

Family ideology: ideas of what a family should be like.

Socialisation: learning the norms and values of society.

The family is an **agency of socialisation** because it socialises children and adults. Adults are expected to behave in certain ways and have special roles so they are being socialised. Children may affect parents' behaviour, e.g. parents not smoking in the same room to protect their children's health.

Kinship: a sense of duty and feelings for family members, e.g. a duty to look after each other.

Cultural universals are social behaviours found in all cultures, e.g. some form of family is found in all cultures.

What cultural variations exist in the family?

Monogamy: marriage to only one person at a time.

Polygamy; marriage to more than one partner at a time (illegal in Britain - called bigamy).



Polgyny: a husband with more than one wife. Example: In some African cultures men have many wives. Men took a second wife to increase the number of children he could have and help the first wife. It also ensured all women were cared for, e.g. in American Plains Indians following the death of a husband whilst hunting or at war.

Polyandry: A wife with more than one husband. Tends to happen where resources are scarce/ Example: in the Himalayas in the past a woman often married a man and his brothers to prevent fragmentation of family farms by limiting the number of children born.

Attitudes towards family life

In **collectivist cultures**, communities and kinship are more important than individuals so family needs are put before your own and **arranged marriage** is sometimes practised, e.g. many British Asian families believe in **izzat**; a form of honour and reputation that must be protected.

In **individualist cultures**, e.g. Britain, individual needs are important, so people usually choose who they marry and which family members they keep in contact with.

Attitudes to divorce differ; some cultures see it as normal, whereas others insist on marriage for life.

Family members who make the important decisions can vary. In lots of cultures men control the family (patriarchy), in others, mothers are in control (matriarchy).

The roles of men and women

In many cultures men dominate women in the home. Looking after the home and children is seen as a female task, e.g. traditionally in Korean culture men went in the kitchen. In Western cultures, men and women are usually expected to have more equal roles in the home.

The nuclear family - a man, a woman and their children.

In the 1950s **Talcott Parsons, a functionalist**, said that the nuclear family is essential for the proper socialisation of children and of parents. Modern **Conservative politicians** agree but also state that fathers should financially support their children and mothers should look after the children, old people and those who are ill. They see family breakdown as a problem for society.

Feminists state that the lone parent family is best as it does not exploit women, e.g. by expecting them to work and take most of the responsibility for housework and childcare. They say that other types of family are good if everyone is supported.

Extended families

In some parts of Britain this family type is common. It includes wider family, e.g. grandparents or aunts and uncles, who have close or daily contact with the nuclear family and share family life.

How has the family changed?

1950s families

In 1950s Britain most households (groups of people sharing a house) were nuclear or extended families. Poor people usually started married life living with their parents. Women married earlier, had children at a younger age, had more children and had low-paid jobs outside the home. Divorce, sex or children outside of marriage were shocking. Contraception was not easily available to women.



1970s families

1970s - ideas about the family changed rapidly. Divorce, sex and children outside marriage were not generally acceptable but were more common. More women worked outside the home and began delaying having children or

worked when the children were grown up. Men and women experimented with new ways of living in families.

Modern families

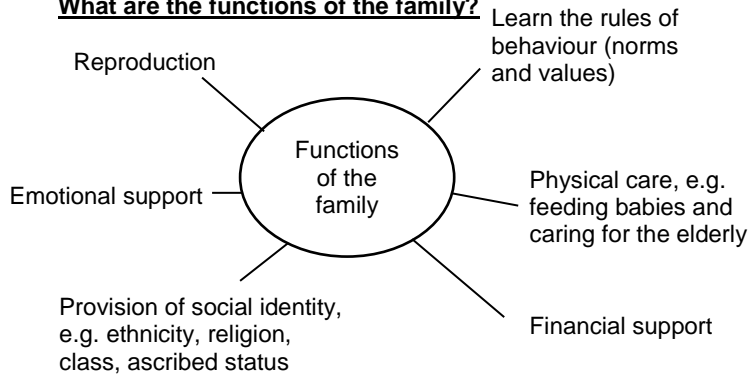
There is no typical family; people are free to live as they wish, e.g. fewer marry, many live together without marriage, remain single, or have same sex partners. It is acceptable to have children without a partner and childbirth outside marriage is acceptable unless the parents are very young. The fewer children are born due to contraception. People can choose not to stay in unhappy relationships. Divorce is common and many children are brought up in single-parent families. However, many people still live in nuclear or reconstituted families.

Test your knowledge:

1. What is: a family?
family ideology?
socialisation?
2. Why is the family an agency of socialisation?
3. Give an example of how children change the way that adults behave.
4. What is: kinship?
a cultural universal?
5. Why is the family a cultural universal?
6. What is: monogamy?
polygamy?
7. What country has some citizens that practise polygamy?
8. Give two reasons why polygamy might have started.
9. In collectivist cultures which is more important the individual or the family?
10. What type of marriage is often practiced in such communities?
11. Many British Asian families believe in izzat. What is izzat?
12. What is an individualist culture?
13. What evidence is there that Britain is an individualist culture?
14. How do attitudes differ towards divorce in different cultures?
15. What is: patriarchy?
matriarchy?
16. What is the difference between the roles of men and women in the family in Korean and British culture?
17. What is a nuclear family?
18. Why do functionalists believe that the nuclear family is essential?
19. What other functions do modern Conservative politicians think that the family should perform?
20. Why do feminists think that the lone parent family is best?
21. What is an extended family?
22. Describe the family in Britain during the 1950s, 1970s and today. Include: types of family
number of children
the roles of men and women
marriage and divorce rates

The Family

What are the functions of the family?



Family and household structures in modern Britain

Cohabitation - People choose to live together before or instead of marriage. Some have children outside marriage. Why? Due to changing social norms and because weddings are expensive.

Singlehood - More people live alone by choice or after relationship breakdown / divorce or the death of a partner, e.g. the elderly.

Couples and the childfree - People may live in empty nest families; children have grown up and left home. Increasingly, couples choose not to have children living freer, wealthier lives.

Gay families - Homosexual couples of both genders may choose to bring up children. This is happening because laws have legalised homosexuality, gay adoption, civil partnerships and gay marriage.

Reconstituted families - are common and include children from more than one relationship e.g. from a previous marriage.

Lone (or single) parenthood - can be the result of divorce, separation, choice or the death of a partner.

Apart/together - Some parents may be in a relationship, or have had children without being in a relationship but they remain in friendly contact. They may live in different homes allowing the children to move between them.

Multiple parenting - where a child has a birth parent, and social parents who bring up the child. This can be as a result of adoption, or IVF involving sperm and egg donation or surrogacy.

Is single parenthood a problem for society?

Most of the 2 million single parents in the UK are women in their late 30s whose relationship has broken down. Fewer than 2% of lone parents are under the age of 20. Approximately 6% of births are registered in the mother's name alone. A further 10% are registered to parents who do not share an address.

Single parents and poverty

Children in single-parent households are more likely to be poor; about a quarter are in low income families. Why? The lone parent does not work, works part-time or in low paid work. Many get little (average is £40 a week) or no money from former partners. Single parents often rely on benefits and so cost taxpayers a lot of money.

Why some people think lone parenthood is a problem

Government reports and other studies state that the children of lone parents are more likely to have behavioural problems, do less well in school, be ill, use drugs or become criminals.

What is the debate?

Are problems faced by lone parents are caused by:

1. Family background. Children need a nuclear family.
2. Children being poor, or by parental conflict.

Changing attitudes to divorce

Divorce is increasing:

1970 - 25% of marriages ended in divorce. 1994 - 33% ended in divorce.

Now - 42% of marriages end in divorce.

Some people argue that people are less happy now than in the past. However, they could not divorce easily until recently and so may have had to stay together in empty shell (loveless) marriages.

How are the roles of children in the family changing?

Childhood - a period when you are dependent on parents.

Childhood in the 1950s

Childhood was shorter. Children left school at 15, were expected to work and help support the family. Families had 2.4 children; mothers were younger, had more children and did not work outside the home unless cleaning or cooking. Homes were more crowded, less well heated, few had televisions and there were no computers. Children had few toys and spent more time outside playing with their friends. Family discipline was harsh.

Childhood now

Writer, Sue Palmer claims that modern childhood is toxic because of higher risk of mental illness and obesity, limited freedom and opportunities to play. Parents are child-centred focusing on the safety and care of their children. This results in excessive control of them due to fears of paedophiles and stranger danger, even though child abduction and murder are rare. Children stay in and play computer games rather than going to parks and playing outside. Parents lack time to cook so they eat more processed foods. Families are smaller; 1.7 children. Children do not talk to adults as much as they should. They are aware of fashion, style and even sex well before they are mature enough due to media pressure to buy things. Further pressure comes from the exam system; parents & schools push children to do well rather than relax and enjoy learning for learning's sake.

Test your knowledge:

1. What are the six functions of the family?
2. What is cohabitation?
3. Give two reasons for the recent increase in cohabitation?
4. Give three reasons why more people live alone.
5. What is a gay family?
6. Give four changes in the law that have helped to create gay families.
7. What is a reconstituted family?
8. Give three ways in which lone parent families are created.
9. What is an apart / together family?
10. Explain why some children have multiple parents.
11. Give a profile of a typical single parent in the UK, e.g. number of them, age, how well off they are.
12. Give three reasons why many single parents are poor.
13. Give five reasons why some people believe that lone parenthood is a problem.
14. Give details of the two reasons given in the debate why children from lone parent families face problems.
15. The divorce rate has risen dramatically in recent years. What is the current divorce rate?
16. What two reasons are given for the high divorce rate?
17. Describe childhood in the 1950s. Include school leaving age, size of family, the role of women in the family and workplace, where play took place and a description of a typical 1950s home.
18. Give four reasons why Sue Palmer describes modern childhood as toxic.
19. Explain why modern parents often excessively control their children.
20. What pressures do children face from the media and as a result of the exam system?



The Family

What is the role of men in the family?

In the 1950s men and women had **segregated conjugal roles** - different roles.

Men were traditionally family **breadwinners** earning and controlling the money. They would **discipline the children**. Men did not do house work; it was shameful for them.

Women looked after the men, **cooking and cleaning**.

Why have men's roles in the family changed?

1. Women now work and so men help in the home. Women may earn more than men.
2. There are fewer traditional male jobs so some men stay at home.
3. Changing norms and values so it is normal for men to be caring and involved in bringing up children.
4. Men work fewer hours and so have time for their children.

The new man – a man who helps in the home and takes on traditional female roles.



House husbands - men who stay at home and look after the family whilst women work outside the home.

Non-resident fathers – fathers who do not live with the mother but still expect or wish to provide money, care and emotional support for their children.

Gay fathers.

Gay fathers who share children often divide domestic work, and can be effective parents.

What is the role of women in the family?

1950s women

In the 1950s women would have low paid jobs in factories or as cleaners to help support the family. Their main role was cooking, shopping and cleaning for the family.

Modern women

Women have a choice of not having a family, being part of the family structure of their choice, or bringing up children on their own. As most work they do not have to rely on men to live.

Is the family under threat?

Some people argue that the family is under threat as divorce rates are higher, there is a movement away from

traditional family forms; people have fewer children, there is more singlehood and a greater variety of family structures.

Arguments used to say that families are dying out

Some Conservative politicians say that high divorce rates and lower marriage rates are evidence that family life is not as good as in the past. They claim that people lack family values and are selfish. They also state that children brought up in single-parent families have worse lives and develop social problems. Church leaders such as the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke out against gay marriage in 2012.

Arguments used to say that families are just changing

Anthony Giddens, a British sociologist, stated that in the past people married and were stuck with each other. He now claims that whilst divorce and family relationship breakdown rates are high most people form new relationships. Now, people are in families of choice, e.g. gay people can openly have relationships and children. Feminist sociologists say that traditional marriages are not good for women or children who are often controlled by men.

How lives of older people in the family have changed.

Life expectancy - people are healthier and live longer. Many single person households are elderly people who have lost a partner, or who have chosen not to remarry following divorce.

Positive effects of older people in families

Free childcare for children of working parents particularly from grandparents in their 60s and 70s. When families break down grandchildren often become the responsibility of grandparents. Adult children in their 20s and 30s often return to the family home due to financial problems or relationship breakdown. This situation is described as a boomerang family. Grandparents are often a source of family history as they have more time than working parents. They often offer financial support for families providing money for education of grandchildren or buy luxuries.



Negative effects of old people in families

Approximately one in three people over 80 needs support, e.g. for health reasons, such as dementia, or physical illness. Family members, typically a daughter who is in her 50s or 60s, usually provide support. These women are called the sandwich generation if they also care for children or grandchildren.

Increasing numbers of older people are demanding divorce when they retire and find out that they have little in common with their partners.

Test your knowledge:

1. In the 1950s men and women had different roles. What sociological term is used to describe this?
2. What were the two main roles that men carried out in the family in the 1950s?
3. What was the role of women in the family in the 1950s?
4. Give four reasons why men's roles in the family have changed.
5. What is a new man?
6. What is a house husband?
7. What is a non-resident father?
8. What sort of jobs did women do outside the home in the 1950s?
9. What was women's main role in the family in the 1950s?
10. What choices are available to modern women?
11. Give at least four reasons why some people argue that the family is under threat.
12. Give at least three reasons why some people argue that the family is not under threat but instead is just changing.
13. Why are people living longer?
14. Give two reasons why there are more single person households.
15. Give three ways in which older people in families are able to help their children.
16. What is a boomerang family?
17. What ratio of people in their 80s need support from family members?
18. Why are daughters in their fifties and sixties often called the sandwich generation?
19. Why are an increasing number of people who retire divorcing?
20. Make a table using the information from the table on the next page showing which factors brought about more lone parent families, reconstituted families and same sex families.
21. What evidence in the table suggests that the family is under threat?

What brought about changes in the family?

What brought about change?	Explanation and examples	What changes happened?	How did this change the family?
Secularisation	This is the declining influence of the church. Only 5% of the population attend church. Change happened because people no longer felt that they had to obey church rules stating: men and women should marry no sex or children outside marriage marriage is for life homosexual relationships and sex are wrong	People choose not to marry 47% of children are now born outside marriage dramatically increased divorce rates – now 42% people are now openly gay	Increased numbers of cohabiting families due to reduced social stigma. Fewer families as marriage is a choice. People can choose to be lone parents. Many lone parent and reconstituted families and reduced numbers of empty shell marriages as now little or no social stigma is attached to divorce. Greater sexual equality in marriage. Same sex couples and families.
Legislation	1969 Divorce Reform Act 1970 Equal Pay Act 1975 Sex Discrimination Act 1967 legalisation of homosexuality. 2004 Civil Partnership Act and 2013 Marriage (same sex couples) Act 2002 Adoption and Children Act	Divorce was cheaper and easier. For the first time women no longer had to ask their husbands for a divorce. Children of divorced parents are more likely to divorce if they are unhappy as it has become a social norm with little or no stigma attached. Employers had to pay men and women the same wage for similar work. Employers could not refuse to employ or promote people on the grounds of their sex. Homosexuals can no longer be sent to prison for being homosexual. Same sex relationships could now be given legal recognition and therefore a higher status Made it legal for unmarried and same sex couples to apply to adopt a child.	Increased divorce rates and incidence of lone parent families either by choice or as a result of relationship breakdown. This is because women could now obtain a divorce and were able to support themselves and their children. Greater sexual equality in marriage and new family types and roles. More boomerang families as children under financial pressure return to the parental home. Increased extended families as grandparents support and help in bringing up grandchildren whilst parents work. More reconstituted families as lone parents formed new relationships. Increase in same sex families. Increase in same sex families More cohabiting and same sex families.
Advances in technology	The pill was developed in the 1960s. Development of IVF in 1977	Women could control if and when they had children. Before the 1960s contraception was only used if the man was willing. Enabled then to delayed conception or have biological children without a partner or via a surrogate.	Smaller families. Women delay child birth. Women could have sex outside marriage without fear of unwanted pregnancy. More older, single and same sex parents.
The impact of feminism	Women began to take on careers and pointed out the dark side of the family in highlighting domestic abuse.	Norms and values regarding the roles of men and women in the family changed dramatically. Men and women expected to be more equal.	More equal roles in the family. Couples experimented with different family roles. More women got jobs and no longer relied on their husbands for money. Women were not expected to stay at home after marriage and could divorce if they wished.