

NAME

# Family and Households Revision Booklet

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John Williams

## June 2009

Examine the ways in which childhood can be said to be socially constructed. (24 marks)  
(e) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the view that the nuclear family is no longer the norm. (24 marks)

## Jan 09

Examine the reasons for changes in birth rates and family size since 1900. (24 marks)  
**10** Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the view that gender roles and relationships have become more equal in modern family life. (24 marks)

Jun 2010 Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the view that in

Jun 2010 Examine the reasons for, and the consequences of, the fall in the death rate

Jan 11 Examine the reasons for changes in the patterns of marriage and cohabitation in the

[Year]

Specification	Content
Family structure	The relationship of the family to the social structure and social change with reference to the economy and state policies.
Patterns	Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, child bearing and the life course and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures.
Changes within the family	The extent to which gender roles and domestic labour and power relationships.
Childhood	The nature of childhood and changes in the status of children in the family and society.
Demographics	Trends in UK since 1900 reasons for changes in birth rates, death rates and family size

## Jan 2010

Examine the ways in which government policies and laws may affect the nature and extent of family diversity. (24 marks)  
(e) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the Marxist view that the main role of the family is to serve the interests of capitalism.

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## TOPIC 1 to what extent is there equal division of domestic labour? 24

The DDOL refers to the roles that men and women play in relation to housework, childcare and paid work.

**Parsons** Argues that in a traditional **nuclear family** the roles of husband and wife are segregated, in his view the husband plays an **instrumental role** geared towards achieving success at work so he can provide for the family financially. The woman has an **expressive role** geared towards primary socialisation of children and meeting the family's emotional needs.

Parsons argued this division of labour is based on **biological differences** between men and women as women are naturally suited towards nurturing role and men to a powerful role. However **Willmott and Young** argue that nowadays men are taking a greater share of domestic chores.

Feminists argue that parsons view of the domestic division of labour benefits men. **Elizabeth Bott** distinguishes between two roles within a marriage; **segregated conjugal** roles where the couple have separate roles i.e. the man is the breadwinner and the wife is the homemaker. They HAVE SEPARATE LEISURE ACTIVITIES and spend spare time apart. **Joint conjugal** roles where the couple share tasks such as housework and spend their leisure time together. **Young and Willmott** identified a pattern of segregated conjugal roles in their study of traditional working class extended families in Bethnal Green, east London in the 50's. Men were the breadwinners, most often working in the docks. They played little part in home life and spent their leisure time with work colleagues in pubs. Women were more likely to be homemakers with sole responsibility of childcare helped by their female relatives.

**Young and Willmott** argue that family is progressing equally for all members as it is becoming more democratic and equal. They argue that the segregated conjugal roles are become less common and families are becoming more **symmetrical**. Women now go out to work whether it is part or full time. Men now help in childcare and housework finally Couples spend more time together rather than separately.

In this study they found that younger couples were more symmetrical especially if they were more affluent and had moved away from Bethnal green. Also more likely to be symmetrical if they moved away from extended family

They argued that certain social changes in the past century have caused this. These include the Decline of the **extended family** meant women can no longer rely on their female kin for support. Also increased **geographical mobility** meant younger couples moving away from their extended kin. There are also **increasing employment opportunities** for women this financial independence gives women greater equality with men. In addition the Influence of the **Feminist movement** gave women aspirations. The introduction of **Contraception** gave women power over their bodies they can limit the number of children they have and have the freedom

to obtain employment. Finally the **Development of home based entertainment** moved the leisure pursuits from places such as the pub to the home as many families chose to stay in at night and watch TV. As men spent more time at home, they became more involved in household tasks.

**Feminists** argue that little has changed; men and women remain unequal in the home with women still doing most of the work. They argue this is because society is male orientated and patriarchal, with women being subordinate and having a dependent role in society.

**Ann Oakley** Criticises symmetrical families and argues they have exaggerated the changes. She argued that they claim men help but this would mean cooking once a week or taking children for a walk. Not equal distribution of chores. Oakley found in her own research some evidence of men helping but it was not by any means symmetrical. Only 15% had a high level of involvement and only 25% had high involvement with childcare. Also Husbands are more likely to share childcare than housework but again only it's more pleasurable aspects i.e. play, and mother was still in charge of feeding, cooking, bathing etc. **Boulton** Found that fewer than 20% of husbands had a major role in childcare. She argues that young and Wilmot exaggerate the contribution of men by focusing on the number of tasks rather than the responsibility of that role **Warde and Hetherington** Found sex typing of domestic tasks remains strong. For example women were 4 times more likely to have last washed the dishes and men more likely to have washed the car last. Men seemed more likely to only do female work when they were left to their own devices and women were not around. However men are not as old fashioned and do not necessarily believe it is a woman's job to do all the tasks.

**Finally The future foundation study** Looked at 1000 adults Found that 60% of men claimed to do more housework than their father and 75% of women do less housework than their mother. However women still spend about 2.5 hours a day on housework compared to the 1 hour men spend on average

In conclusion though there is evidence for progress in the domestic division of labour it is still far from equal. This may be due to the biological predispositions between genders which enables them to divide labour accordingly or due to the social pressures women face to maintain their role as the home maker.

## Impact of Paid Work

**Intro:** Most of the women in the previous studies were full time housewives. Today 3 quarters of cohabiting or married women work. Sociologists wonder if this leads to more equal division of household labour or do women just get a dual burden of doing household chores and bringing in an income

Mee ya kan Found that better paid, better educated younger women did less household chores. For instance for every **10,000** increase in her wages this led to a reduction by 2 hours on her weekly household on chores. Wives that did not go to work or worked part time did around 82% of the work. Wives that worked full time did 73% of housework. The longer hours she worked the more work her husband did. Couples whose parents had equal division of labour were also more equally divided

He concluded that society is more accepting of the fact that women are also breadwinners which has increased equality in household chores. However men still tend to take responsibility for different tasks.

Sullivan Analysis of nationally representative data in 1975-87, 97 and found a trend towards greater equality with men doing more domestic chores and this included doing more female tasks

**Crompton** argues as women's earning power increases relative to men this leads to an increase in equality of domestic chores. But when earnings remain unequal so will the division of labour, with women earning  $\frac{3}{4}$  of men the housework will still be more upon the women

**Silver and Schor looked at the commercialisation of housework they argues**

There are two economic developments that reduce the burden of housework on women. 1. Housework has become commercialised- i.e. microwave meals, appliances, dry cleaners etc all reduce the amount of work required to do. 2. Women working- means women can buy these goods and services. Schor argues this has almost led to the death of the housewife role. However even if women are getting help from these points it does not mean there is equality in what chores are left

Many feminists argue that the increase in women working has simply increased the burden of women and men benefit from the extra income and the household responsibility still falling on the women. This is known as the dual burden. **Ferri and Smith**- found increased employment of women has led to little increase in household equality, based on a sample of 1,600 33 year old fathers and mothers they found fathers took main responsibility of childcare in 4% of families

Morriss Found that men who had suffered a loss of their masculine role as a result of becoming unemployed saw domestic work as women's work and therefore avoided it. In many cases families require child care because of their work; however

this can only be afforded by middleclass families. As a result in working class families they remain tied with domestic child caring and work

Emotion work Describes the work whose main feature is the management of one's own and other people's emotion such as airline hostesses, nurses and these jobs are more likely to be done by women. So women are not only expected to do the double shift of work and household chores but a triple shift that also includes emotion work- Marsden.

In terms of lesbian couples Gender scripts are expectations of norms that set out the different gender roles men and women in heterosexual relationships are expected to play. Dunne looked at 37 cohabiting lesbian couples with dependent children and found evidence for more symmetry in their relationships. Relationships are more equal in share of housework, Give equal importance to both partners' careers **and** View childcare positively.

In conclusion there is evidence that women being paid leads to more equality in domestic chores. Many feminists argue that in reality the effect is limited as women have the double burden. Feminists argue the root cause of this is patriarchy with gender scripts that shape societies expectations about domestic roles

## Resources and Decision Making

Psychologist	Findings
Barrett and McIntosh	Men gain far more from women's domestic work than they give back in financial support. The financial support that husbands give to their wives is often unpredictable and with strings attached. Men usually make decisions on spending in important decisions
Kempson	Found that in low income families women denied their own needs, seldom going out eating less to make ends meet Graham study over held the women who were living on benefits after separating from their husbands said that they and their children were actually better off. They found that benefits were a more stable form of income
Decision making and paid work	One reason why men take greater share of family resources because they contribute more to the income due to higher earnings. Feminists identify two main types of control over family income. Pooling- where both partners have access to income and joint responsibility for expenditure
Allowance system-	where men give their wives an allowance out of which they have to budget to meet family needs and retaining surplus for self
Voglar	Samples of over 1000 couples with their parents and found an increase in pooling from 19-50% and a sharp decrease in allowance falling from 36 - 12% Pooling was more common when both couples work. But even then men make major financial decisions
Hardill	30 dual career couples and found that most important decisions were usually taken either by man alone or jointly and that his career tended to take priority. She found that women's lives tend to be structured around a man's career
Edgell	Study of professional couples Very important decisions- taken by husband or discussed by husband having the last say. Important decisions- made jointly but rarely made by women alone Less important decisions- made by wife Argued this is because men earn more so have less power in decision making. Feminists however argue this is due to the cultural bias in society which promotes a gender inequality and patriarchal society this is why women are ignored.

## Examine the patterns of and reasons for DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 24m

*DV can be defined as Physical, psychological and sexual violence that takes place within an family relationship and forma a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. It can involve current or former partners.*

For many years people assumed that domestic violence was committed by disturbed sick individuals however sociologists take a different view. There are 6.6 million cases of domestic violence a year half of which involve physical injury. This suggests that it is far too widespread for it to be only amongst the sick and disturbed. It also does not occur randomly instead it follows a series of events. More so it tends to be initiated by men and directed towards women.

Most victims are women as 99% of all incidents of women being assaulted are by men also nearly one in four women has been assaulted by a partner at some point, one in 8 repeatedly so

**Dobash and Dobash** conducted a Scottish study based on police and court records, and interviews with women in refuges. They cite examples of wives been slapped, pushed and punched raped and even killed by husbands. These incidents could be set off by challenge to his authority

**However one must be careful when relying on official states** as these are not always accurate because men do not always report the violence inflicted on them. **Also** not everyone reports their incidents to the police; Yearnshire found that women are on average abused 35 times before she reports it. Police and prosecutors are reluctant to record investigate or prosecute those cases that are reported. This is because they feel that family issues are private and should not be interfered with. **Finally** Agencies see family as a good thing so ignore the dark side of family as Women are free to leave so do not require their help.

**Radical feminists** argue Millet and Firestone argue that all societies have been founded on **patriarchy**. They see the key division in society as that between men and women. Men are the enemy they are the oppressors and exploiters of women. They argue that men dominate women through domestic violence or the threat of it. They argue that widespread violence is inevitable feature of patriarchal **society** and serves to preserve the power that men have over all women, so they give a sociological rather than a psychological explanation for why domestic violence occurs. It is because society maintains a patriarchal society which allows men to dominate over women. However not all men are violent and many men are against violence this explanation ignores them. Also ignores child and spousal abuse that women conduct on their partners and children.

Other groups at risk include Children and young people, those from Low social class, those living in rented accommodation those with Low incomes and those consuming High levels of alcohol

**Wilkinson** Sees domestic violence as the result of stress on family members caused by social inequality. Inequality means that some families have fewer resources than others, such as income and housing.

Those with low income and poor houses are likely to experience more stress this reduces chances of maintaining a stable caring relationship. This may lead to tempers frayed and violence. Lack of money reduces leisure and social time reducing the social support. However this still does not explain why women are more likely to be women.

In conclusion it will always be difficult to conclude on the causes and consequences of domestic violence however trends show that certain groups always have and always will be at risk.

## Topic 2 Discuss the view that Childhood is a social construct 24m

**The modern western view of childhood** argues that childhood is **socially constructed**, i.e. something created by society. Sociologists argue what childhood means changes over time, places and culture. Children in most cultures are seen as **physically and emotionally** vulnerable not yet ready to organise their own lives. This means that during this time adults are expected to nurture and socialise the children before they are ready for adult society and responsibilities **Jane** pilcher Argues what defines childhood is **separateness**, that is children are seen as separate members of society to adults and childhood is a distinct stage in our life. This can be seen in our legal system which has different laws for children, dress sense and even products aimed at children are different to those aimed at adults.

Childhood is seen as **the golden age** of happiness and innocence. So children are seen as vulnerable and in need for protection from the dangers of the real world so childhood is orientated towards family and education, and excluded from responsibilities and paid work.

Wagg argued *Childhood is socially constructed it is what members of societies, cultures and times say it is. There is no single universal childhood experienced by all, so childhood is not natural and is simply a state of biological immaturity.* While all human beings go through biological stages they do not all have a childhood as different cultures define childhood differently

**Benedict** Said in non industrial societies children take responsibility at an early age, less value is placed on showing obedience to adult authority **and** Children sexual behaviour is viewed differently

**In terms of Responsibility** **Punch** found children in Bolivia: that once children were 5 years old they were expected to work responsibilities in home and community. **Holmes** looked at Samoan village found that too young was never a reason for not permitting a child to undertake a particular task even if it involved holding heavy things or danger **finally** Firth found that among the Tikopia of the western pacific, doing as you are told is a concession to be granted by the child, not a right to be expected by the adult

**In regards to Sexual behaviour** In south west pacific parents took a attitude of tolerance and amused interest towards children sexual behaviour, these findings all show that childhood is not universally similar instead variable across cultures

**Some sociologists would argue that Childhood is a recent invention.** In the Middle Ages childhood did not exist. Children were not seen as different to adults at least not after infancy anyway. Children entered wider society almost immediately and began work from an early age often in the household. They had they same rights, duties and skills as adults and laws were not protecting children

**Shorter** found High death rates encouraged indifference and neglect towards infants for instance it was common to name a child it or not know how many children you had. Aries believed Schools came to specialise in educating the children, which protected them from social evils. Dress sense began to reflect age so children no longer dressed as adults and Handbooks on childrearing became more available.

**There are several Reasons for changes** for instance laws restricting child labour and they became an economic liability rather than having paid work. **In addition** Compulsory schooling in 1880, and rising the compulsory age of school rises the period of childhood. Also Child protection and welfare legislation, such as the 1889 prevention of cruelty meant children had more rights. The growth of the ideas of child rights. They are entitled to health education, protection from abuse etc. Declining family size which increases the financial and emotional attachment to the child meant children had more value. **Finally** changes have occurred due to industrialisation and increased standards of living. Modern society needs an educated workforce and so young have to be schooled. Higher standards also lead to lower mortality rates. So the real cause of change is industrialization.

In conclusion the above evidence suggests that childhood is indeed a product of social forces as it changes depending on time and culture.

# Has the Position of Children Improved?

## 24m

We can see that childhood is socially constructed and varies between times, places and cultures. There is a significant difference between childhood today and what it was in the past.

These differences raise the question of whether the changes in status of childhood represent an improvement. The march of progress view argues that the position of children has been improving. These Sociologists argue that children today are more **valued and better** cared for, protected and educated. They enjoy better health and have more rights than those before them. Children today are protected from exploitation laws, child abuse and the government spends billions on education and health for children. Babies also have a better chance of survival now than they did a century ago. In 1990 the mortality rate for infants was 154 per 1000 births and this is 5% of 1000. Smaller family sizes also means parents can afford to provide needs of children properly. By the time a child reaches 21 parents spend £186,000 on them. The march of progress sociologists argue that children have become the centre of the family and are no longer subject to the seen and not heard effect. They are now consulted with, invested in and a strong emotional attachment with parents. This is not only parents but society as a whole seen by more films, crèche, games leisure activities etc

Conflict sociologists such as Marxists and feminists argue that there are still inequalities amongst children in terms of the risks they face as many today remain badly cared for and unprotected. The inequality between adults and children are greater than ever. Children from different nationalities are likely to experience different childhoods and different life changes. 90% of the worlds low weight babies are born in the third world. There are also **many gender differences** with boys having more freedom to cross roads, allowed late and in lone parent families girls are 5 times more housework than boys. **Ethnic differences:** Brannen study 15-16 year olds found that Asian parents were more likely to be strict towards their daughters, and the concept of honour could be a restriction for the behaviour of girls.

**Firestone and Holt** argue that many of the new laws are not a march of progress but just a way of maintaining control and oppression. Not allowing them to work is not protection but inequality, making them more dependent and powerless to adult control

**Neglect and abuse are still prevalent in society in 2006-** 31,400 children were on children protection registers because they were seen as at risk of significant harm. Childline receives 20,000 calls a year from children saying they have been physically or sexually abused

**Adults still have control over space as** In many shops there are signs that state “no school children” or “no ball games” there is increasing surveillance over children in public spaces such as shopping centres especially when they should be in school. The increased idea of stranger danger means most children are driven to school. In 1971 80% of 7-8 year olds were allowed to go school alone this dropped to 9% in 1990. In Sudan children are allowed to roam within the village and several km. Adults also control the children’s time. When they go to school, when they come back, when they play, go out, watch TV etc. adults even control the speed at which children grow up as they decide whether or not a child is too young or too old for an activity. Compared to Samoan children who have never been told they are too young to partake in a particular activity. Adults also control children bodies often telling them what to wear, when to bathe, whether they can get ear pierced tattoos etc. they are also directed not to do certain things i.e. sit inappropriately, suck their thumbs, even when to engage in sexual activities. **Finally** Labour laws- Compulsory schooling excludes children from paid work limiting their access to financial resources. Child benefits go straight to parents and not the child. The pocket money a child gets usually depends on Childs behaviour and is not always given.

Diana Getting uses the term age patriarchy to describe the inequality between adults and children. Gittins argues there has been adult domination and child dependency. This is exhibited in the violence directed towards children and women. So domestic violence is not solely directed towards women, in fact women that eventually leave a violent partner do so for the safety of their children.

Evidence for the idea that children feel oppressed is the strategies they use to resist the status of child. For example children often “act up” meaning they engage in behaviours they are not supposed to such as swearing, smoking etc. another strategy is “acting down” this refers to acting younger than expected i.e. baby talk, tantrums etc.

However critics argue this view is exaggerated as children still have many rights and are protected by the law. In addition children are still growing so require supervision and support; failure to do so is usually the reason why children end up in foster care.

## **The Future of Childhood.**

**Neil Postman (1994)** argues that childhood is 'disappearing at a dazzling speed'. He points to the trend towards giving children the same rights as adults, the disappearance of children's traditional unsupervised games, the growing similarity of adult and children's clothing, and even to cases of children committing 'adult' crimes such as murder. In his view, the cause both of the emergence of childhood, and now its disappearance, lies in the rise and fall of print culture and its replacement by television culture. **Television blurs** the distinction between childhood and adulthood by destroying the information hierarchy. Unlike the printed word, TV does not require special skills to access it, and it makes information available to adults and children alike. The boundary between adult and child is broken down, adult authority diminishes, and the ignorance and innocence of childhood is replaced by knowledge and cynicism.

However, unlike Postman, **Iona Opie (1993)** argues that childhood is not disappearing. Based on a lifetime of research into children's games, rhymes and songs, conducted with her husband Peter Opie, she argues that there is strong evidence of the continued existence of a separate children's culture over many years. Their findings **contradict Postman's** claim that children's own unsupervised games are dying out their studies show that children can and do create their own independent culture separate from that of adults.

Some writers suggest that children in the UK today are experiencing what **Sue Palmer (2006)** calls 'toxic childhood'. She argues that rapid technological and cultural changes in the past 25 years have damaged children's physical, emotional and intellectual development. These changes range from junk food, computer games, and intensive marketing to children, to the long hours worked by parents and the growing emphasis on testing in education.

Concerns have also been expressed about young people's behavior For example, Julia **Margo and Mike Dixon (2006)**, drawing on recent studies, report that UK youth are at or near the top of international league tables for obesity, self-harm, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, early sexual experience and teenage pregnancies. A UNICEF survey in 2007 ranked the UK 21' out of 25 for children's well being. Such concerns reveal an anxiety that the modern notion of childhood as an innocent and protected stage is under threat. However it is hard to draw firm conclusions about this, for two reasons. **Firstly**, not all children are affected equally by these negative trends. There are clusters of young people, namely those growing up on the poorer end of the social scale, who live desperate lives, while others do not. Secondly, it depends on which aspect of childhood we look at, some aspects suggest the continuation of childhood as a separate age-status, while others suggest it may be disappearing or changing. For example children have more rights today; however they are still unequal to adults in many respects. There is a growing similarity between children and adults in terms of dress, activities etc, and children have greater access to communication i.e. social networking sites, and children are somewhat over exposed to sex and violence on TV. Finally childhood may be disappearing because of falling birth and death rates; this produces an ageing population with more old people and fewer youths.

Therefore it is difficult to predict how our notion of childhood will develop in the culture as there are a number of trends that can re shape their future positions. Therefore childhood is definitely not fixed but in fact socially constructed.

### Topic 3 Assesses the usefulness of **functionalism in understanding what the purpose of a family is. 24m**

**Murdock** argues that the family is a universal institution (it exists everywhere) that performs four major functions: **Stable satisfaction** of the sex drive with the same partner, preventing the social disruption caused by sexual 'free-for-all', Reproduction of the next generation, without which society would not be able to continue, Socialisation of the young into society's shared norms and values and Meeting its members' economic needs, such as shelter and food.

*However, other sociologists have criticised his functionalist approach. Marxists and Feminists reject his 'rose-tinted' consensus view that the family meets the needs of both wider society and all members of the family. They argue that functionalism neglects conflict and exploitation: For example, feminists see the family as serving the needs of men and oppressing women. Similarly, Marxists argue that it meets the needs of capitalism, not those of family members or society as a whole.*

Parsons believes that every family in every society has two 'basic and irreducible' functions: the primary socialisation of children and **the stabilisation of** adult personalities. The initial or primary **socialisation** takes place in the early years of a child's life within the family group. During this period the child learns the basic elements of the culture into which she or he has been born.

.The second basic and irreducible function is **the stabilisation of the adult's personality**. The family gives the individual adult a 'safety valve', a place where she or he can relax, escape the stresses and strains of the world outside and feel emotionally secure

*However, Parsons View of the socialisation process can be criticised for being too **deterministic**, with children being pumped full of culture and their personalities being moulded by all-powerful adults. He ignores the possibility of socialisation being a two-way process in which roles are negotiated or that attempts at socialisation can be resisted by children*

**Parsons** argues that the dominant structure of the family best suits the needs of the economy at the time. This means that nuclear families '**fit**' an **industrial economy** because they are geographically mobile and not reliant on wider kin. This is because family members can easily move to new centres of production. Parsons concludes that only the nuclear family could provide the achievement-orientated and geographically mobile workforce required by modern economies.

*However, according to **Wilmott and Young**, the pre-industrial family tended to be nuclear, not extended as claimed by Parsons, with parents and children working together in cottage industries such as weaving. They also argues that the hardship of the early industrialised period gave rise to the mother-centred working class extended family, based on ties between mothers and their married daughters, who relied on each other for financial, practical and emotional support.*

*Similarly, **Tamara Hareven** concludes that the extended family, not the nuclear as claimed by Parsons, was the structure best equipped to meet the needs of early industrial society. Her research showed how extended migrant families in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century acted as a source of support and mutual aid, as well as promoting geographical mobility by helping newcomers to find work.*

**Overall the Functionalist analyses** of the nuclear family tend to be based on middle class and American versions of the family and they consequently neglect other influences such as ethnicity, social class or religion. For example, Parsons does not consider the fact that wealth or poverty may determine whether women stay at home to after children or not. Since parsons wrote in the in the 1950s, many western societies, including the UK, have become multicultural. Religious and ethnic **sub cultural** differences may mean that Parsons' version of the family is no longer relevant in contemporary society. Feminists argue that as a result of this picture of the family, functionalists tend to ignore the 'dark side' of the family – conflict between husband and wife, male dominance, child abuse, and so on. They give insufficient attention to the **dysfunctions of the family** – the harmful effects it may have on the wider society. From an interpretive point of view, functionalists tend to neglect the meanings families have for individuals and how family members interpret family relationships

## Assess the Marxist perspective that the main role of the family is to serve the interest of capitalist. 24m

**Marxism is a conflict theory** which sees all society's institutions, such as the education system, the media, religion and the state, as helping to maintain class inequality and capitalism. For Marxists, therefore, the functions of the family are performed solely for the benefit of the capitalist system. This view contrasts sharply with the functionalist view that the family benefits both society as a whole and the individual members of the family.

**Engels** argued that the need for the family arose when societies started to value private property. With the rise of private property an organised system of inheritance became necessary - fathers needed to know who their offspring were in order to pass their property down the family line.

With this, argues **Engels**, the need for monogamy arose - one man married to one woman - and hence the family was created. Therefore the family serves the interests of the economy - in this case the creation of ownership of property – while subjecting women to unequal power relations in the home. *However, modern research has suggested that Engels' interpretation of the development of the family is historically inaccurate. For example, monogamous marriage and the nuclear family are often found in hunter-gatherer groups. Since humans have spent the vast majority of their existence as hunter-gatherers, the idea that the nuclear family emerged as a response to private property is unlikely. Functionalists such as Parsons would reject Engels view of the development of the family. Rather than being a vehicle for passing down inherited wealth, the family plays an important role in socialising the young and stabilising adult personalities. Moreover, the division of labour in families reflects the natural expressive, nurturing and caring roles of women, and the more instrumental, providing role of men.*

**Zaretsky** suggests that the family serves capitalism by offering emotional security from the oppressive world of work, thus allowing such oppression to continue. However, in reality, it only provides emotional warmth to encourage its members to continue to live another day under the harsh realities of capitalism. *However, the liberal feminist Jennifer Somerville argues that Zaretsky exaggerates the importance of the family as a refuge from life in capitalist society. She suggests that Zaretsky underestimates the extent of cruelty, violence and incest within families. She also argues that Zaretsky ignores the fact that during the early stages of capitalism most working class women had to take paid work in order for the family to survive, and relatively few stayed at home as full-time housewives*

**Althusser and Poulantzas:** the ideological role of the family. The family can be seen as serving the functions of an ideological state apparatus by socialising both pro-capitalist ideology and its own familiar ideology in order to maintain such family patterns over time. For example the family socialises its members into accepting gender roles, into accepting that it is 'natural' for men and women to get married and engage in separate roles and jobs in the home: an attitude that is passed down from generation to generation. *However, feminists argue that Althusser and Poulantzas ignore the fact that such a family ideology supports patriarchy since it suggests that men and women*

*should have different roles in the family and society - roles that lead to the subordination of women to men. Similarly, functionalists reject the view that the family socialises children into capitalist ideology. Instead, the family enables children to internalise the culture of society to enable them to become effective functioning adults.*

*Overall the **Marxist views of** the family follow logically from Marxist theory. If, for example, the family provides emotional support for workers, then this helps them to accept the injustices of the capitalist system. This makes sense if capitalism is seen as essentially unjust. However, many sociologists reject this view of capitalism and, as a result, Marxist view of the family. **Feminists argue** that the Marxist emphasis on social class and capitalism underestimates the importance of gender inequalities within the family. For feminists, the family primarily serves the interests of men rather than capitalism. By contrast, functionalists argue that Marxists ignore the very real benefits that the family provides for its members, such as intimacy and mutual support. From an interpretivist point of view, Marxists tend to neglect the meanings families have for individuals and how family members interpret family relationships. For example, Marxists ignore accounts of family life in which some females suggest motherhood is a fulfilling and rewarding experience.*

### Topic 3 **Feminist theories**

Feminists take a critical view of the family, arguing that it oppresses women and reproduces patriarchy. As such, they have focused on the unequal division of domestic labour and domestic violence against women. They do not regard gender inequality as natural or inevitable, but as something created by society.

Marxist feminists suggest that the nuclear family meets the needs of capitalism for the reproduction and maintenance of class and patriarchal inequality. It benefits the powerful at the expense of the working class and women.

The Marxist feminist, Margaret Benston (1972), argues that the nuclear family provides the basic commodity required by capitalism, i.e. labour power by reproducing and rearing the future workforce at little cost to the capitalist class. It maintains the present workforce's physical and emotional fitness through the wife's domestic labour. Finally, women in families can be used as a reserve army of labour to be used in times of economic growth and pushed back into the home during times of economic slow-down. *However, difference feminists would criticise Marxist feminists for assuming that all women are exploited equally under capitalism. For example, lesbian and heterosexual women, black and white women, middle class and working class women have very different experiences from one another. Black feminists would argue that Marxist feminist's emphasis on women's role within capitalism ignores black and Asian women's experience of racism which is not faced by white women.*

Radical feminists such as Kate Millett (1970) see modern societies and families as characterised by patriarchy - a system of subordination and domination in which men exercise power over women and children. They argue that the family is the root of all women's oppression and should be abolished. The only way to do this is through separatism – women must live independently of men.

Diana Gittens refers to the concept of age patriarchy to describe adult domination of children, which may take the form of violence against both children and women. Similarly, Delphy and Leonard see the family as a patriarchal institution in which women do most of the work and men get most of the benefit. Moreover, this patriarchal ideology stresses the primacy of the mother housewife role for women and the breadwinner the family as legitimating violence against women. *However, some would argue that this model is dated in that it fails to consider recent trends such as the feminisation of the workforce and women's use of divorce laws. The liberal feminist Jenny Somerville also argues that separatism is unlikely to work because heterosexual attraction makes it unlikely that the conventional nuclear family will disappear.*

*Overall the Feminist perspective has been criticised by Hakim (1995) who argues that this model fails to consider that females might be exercising rational choices in choosing domestic roles. By contrast, functionalists argue that radical feminists ignore the very real benefits that the family provides for its members, such as intimacy and mutual support.*

*Feminist theories of the family have dated fairly badly, because they fail to account for recent economic and social changes, such as the feminisation of the economy, the educational success of*

*young females, women's use of divorce and many women's rejection of domestic labour as their unique responsibility. Feminist also tend to ignore the positive aspects of family life. Critics argue that feminists are preoccupied with the negative side of family life. They ignore the possibility that many women enjoy running a home and raising children. Feminists tend to assume that families are manipulated in some way by the structure of society to reproduce and reinforce patriarchy through the gendered division of labour within families. Postmodernists, for example, would argue that feminists ignore the possibility that we have some choice in creating our family relationships. In fact, the diversity of family types found today reflects the fact that we can choose our domestic set up for ourselves. From an interpretivist point of view, feminists tend to neglect the meanings families have for individuals and how family members interpret family relationships. For example, feminists ignore accounts of family life in which some females suggest motherhood is a fulfilling and rewarding experience.*

*Difference feminists would criticise feminists for assuming that all women share similar experiences. For example, lesbian and heterosexual women, black and white women, middle class and working class women have very different experiences of the family from one another. Black feminists would argue that by solely regarding the family as a source of oppression, white feminists neglect black and Asian women's experience of racism. Instead, black feminists view the black family positively as a source of support and resistance to racism.*

**Discuss the reasons for changing patterns of Birth rates**

Birth rate is the number of live births per 1000 of the population per year. There has been a long term decline in the number of births since 1900's and in 2007 it had fallen by 10.7%. Birth rates have fluctuated with it declining while men were at war and booming when they returned. This depends on the number of women who are of childbearing age, how fertile they are i.e. the total fertility rate the average number of women will have during their fertile years.

The TFR has risen since 2001 it is still much lower than in the past. More women are remaining childless now than in the past. Women are postponing having children. The average age of having children is 29 this gives them less remaining years of fertility and thus they produce fewer children

Reasons for changes in birth rate include the Changing positions of women, for instance there is now Legal equality with men i.e. vote. There are more Educational opportunities and more Paid employment laws. There is also a Changing attitude of women's role in the home with fewer women wanting to become housewives. It is also easier access to divorce making women less dependent on men and having a family and finally easy Access to abortion and contraception makes it easy to control the amount of children.

Birth rates have also been affected by the Decline in mortality rate. This is number of infants that die before the age of 1 per thousand babies born. The decline in mortality means decline in birth rate as more children are not being born to replace the children. In 1900 IMR was 154 i.e. 15%. But this rate began to fall because of improved housing, healthcare and sanitation means less chance of disease. Better nutrition, Better knowledge of hygiene and Improved services for mothers and children.

The third reason for changes in birth rates is that children have become an economic liability. Laws meaning children have to be in full time education and they can not work until 16 means they become an economic liability. Changing norms of what children expect from their parents materially means they are more expensive

Fourthly there is a rising notion of child centeredness with more parents having fewer children who they spend more money and resources on

**than before. Parents are now focusing on quality rather than quantity and paying more attention to the needs of the child. As a result there are fewer births.**

**The changes in the number of babies born affect several parts of society including the family, dependency ratio and public services. In terms of the family- smaller families means mothers are more likely to go out to work and thus make it dual earner couples. Or on the other hand the double income can mean they can afford to have more children. Dependency ratio is the relationship between the size of the working or productive part of the population and the size of the non working part of the population. The taxes of the working population are used to support the dependent population. As children are the dependent population a decline in children leads to a decline in dependent population. However in the long term this means fewer adults in the future so fewer propelpaying taxes. Public services - are also affected as decline in broth rate means fewer schools and maternity and child health services may be needed**

## Discuss the reasons for changing patterns of death rates

### 24m

The death rate is the number of deaths per thousand of the population per year. In 1900, the death rate stood at 19, whereas by 2007 it had almost halved, to 10. There are several reasons why the death rate declined during the 20th century. Thomas McKeown (1972) argues that improved nutrition accounted for up to half the reduction in death rates, and was particularly important in reducing the number of deaths from TB. Better nutrition increased resistance to infection and increased the survival chances of those who did become infected. However, others have challenged McKeown's explanation. For example, it does not explain why females, who receive a smaller share of the family food supply, lived longer than males, nor why deaths from some infectious diseases, such as measles and infant diarrhoea, actually rose at a time of improving nutrition.

However, after the 1950s, improved medical knowledge, techniques and organisation did help to reduce death rates. More recently, improved medication, bypass surgery and other developments have reduced deaths from heart disease by one-third. In the 20th century, more effective central and local government with the necessary power to pass and enforce laws led to a range of improvements in public health and the quality of the environment. These included improvements in housing (producing drier, better ventilated, less overcrowded accommodation), purer drinking water and laws to combat the adulteration of food and drink.

Other social changes also played a part in reducing the death rate during the 20th century. These included: The decline of more dangerous manual occupations such as mining, smaller families reduced the rate of transmission of infection, Greater public knowledge of the causes of illness and Higher incomes, allowing for a healthier lifestyle.

The average age of the UK population is rising. In 1971, it was 34.1 years. By 2007, it stood at 39.6. By 2031, it is projected to reach 42.6. There are fewer young people and more old people in the population. The number of people aged 65 or over is projected to overtake the number of under-16s for the first time ever in 2014. Older people consume a larger proportion of services such as health and social care than other age groups. This is particularly true of the 'old' (usually defined as 75 or over) as against the 'young old' (65-74). However, we should beware of overgeneralizing, since many people remain in relatively good health well into old age. In addition to increased expenditure on health care, an ageing population may also mean changes to policies and provision of housing, transport or other services. The number of pensioners living alone has increased and one-person pensioner households now account for about 14% of all households. Most of these are female, both because women generally live longer than men, and because they are usually younger than their husbands.

Like the non-working young, the non-working old are an economically dependent group who need to be provided for by those of working age, for example through taxation to pay for pensions and health care. As the number of retired people rises, this increases the dependency ratio and the burden on the working population. However, it would be wrong to assume that 'old' necessarily equals 'economically dependent'. For example, the age at which people retire can vary — about one in ten men in their 50s is no longer working, while recent changes mean that women will soon have to wait until they are 65 to access the state pension (previously women's pensions began at 60, men's at 65). Others carry on working into their 70s. Also, while an increase in the number of old people raises the dependency ratio, in an ageing population this is offset by a declining number of dependent children.

Age statuses are socially constructed. This also applies to old age. Much discussion about old age and ageing is negative and has constructed it as 'problem'. For example: The Griffiths Report (1988) on the care of the elderly saw society as facing the problem of meeting the escalating costs of health and social care for the growing numbers of old people. Recently, there have been concerns about the 'pension's time bomb', with fears about how society will meet the cost of providing pensions for the elderly. More broadly, in modern

societies, 'ageism' — the negative stereotyping of people on the basis of their age — often portrays the old as vulnerable, incompetent or irrational, and as a burden to society. This contrasts with the view of the elderly found in traditional societies. In these cultures, the old are revered and respected; ageing is associated with a rising status. According to Peter Townsend (1981), one reason for negative attitudes to the elderly in our society is that old age has been socially constructed as a period of dependency by creating a statutory retirement age at which most people are expected or required to stop working and are forced to rely on inadequate benefits that push many into poverty.

According to Hirsch the main problem of an ageing population will be how to finance a longer period of old age. This can either be done by paying more from our savings and taxes while we are working, or by continuing to work for longer, or a combination of both. Hirsch therefore argues that we need to reverse the current trend towards earlier retirement. One way of doing this is by redistributing educational resources towards older people so that they can retrain and improve their skills and so continue earning. Similarly, there may need to be changes in housing policy to encourage older people (who are more likely to be living in larger houses than they need) to 'trade down' into smaller accommodation and retirement homes. This would release wealth to improve their standard of living and free up housing resources for younger people.

# Migration

## Definitions

- Migration refers to the movement of people from place to place. It can be internal, within a society, or international.
- Immigration refers to movement into an area or society.
- Emigration refers to movement out.
- Net migration is the difference between the numbers immigrating and the numbers emigrating, and is expressed as a net increase or net decrease due to migration.
- For most of the 20th century, the growth of the UK population was the result of natural increase (more births than deaths), rather than the numbers of people immigrating and emigrating.

## Patterns and Trends

- From 1900 until the Second World War (1939-45), the largest immigrant group to the UK were the Irish, mainly for economic reasons, followed by Eastern and Central European Jews, who were often refugees fleeing persecution, and people of British descent from Canada and the USA. Very few immigrants were non-white.
- By contrast, during the 1950s, black immigrants from the Caribbean began to arrive in the UK, followed during the 1960s and 1970s by South Asian immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and by East African Asians from Kenya and Uganda.
- One consequence of this immigration was that it produced a more ethnically diverse society. By 2001, minority ethnic groups accounted for 7.9% of the total population. One result of this has been a greater diversity of family patterns in Britain today.
- However, as noted earlier, throughout this period, more people left the UK than entered. Nor did non-white immigrants make up the majority of settlers. During the 1950s, the Irish were the largest single group (with over a third of a million) and almost as many again arriving from continental Europe

- **Emigration**

- From as early as the mid-16th century until the 1980s, the UK has almost always been a net exporter of people: more have emigrated to live elsewhere than have come to settle in the UK.
- Since 1900, the great majority of emigrants have gone to the USA and to the Old Commonwealth countries (Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and South Africa.
- The main reasons for emigration have been economic— both in terms of ‘push’ factors such as economic recession and unemployment at home, and even more so in terms of ‘pull’ factors such as higher wages or better opportunities abroad.
- In the earlier part of the century, there were often labor shortages in the destination countries, while after 1945, the relatively poor performance of the British economy compared with that of other industrial countries acted as an incentive to emigrate.
- These economic reasons for migration contrast with those of some other groups, who have been driven to migrate by religious, political or racial persecution.

## The dependency ratio

The effect of migration on the dependency ratio is complex.

- On the one hand, the fact that migrants are mainly of working age reduces the dependency ratio.
- On the other hand, immigrant women tend to have higher fertility rates, which in the short term contribute to a higher dependency ratio by adding more children to the population.
- However this also reduces the average age of the population and in due course produces more workers, thereby lowering the dependency ratio as these children grow up and reach working age.
- Finally, to complicate matters further, evidence suggests that the longer an immigrant group is settled in the country, the closer their fertility rate comes to the national average.

# Topic 5

## Discuss reasons for changing patterns of divorce

In the past 30 or 40 years, there have been some major changes in family and household patterns. Since the 1960s, there has been a great increase in the number of divorces in the United Kingdom. The number of divorces doubled between 1961 and 1969, and doubled again by 1972. The upward trend continued, peaking in 1993 at 180,000. Since then, numbers have fallen somewhat, but still stood at 157,000 in 2001 — about six times higher than in 1961. This rate means that about 40% of all marriages will end in divorce. About 7 out of every 10 petitions (applications) for divorce now come from women. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in the past. For example, in 1946, only 37% of petitions came from women — barely half today's figure. The commonest reason for a woman to be granted a divorce is the unreasonable behavior of her husband. Some couples are more likely than others to divorce. Couples whose marriages are at greatest risk include those who marry young, have a child before they marry or cohabit before marriage, and those where one or both partners have been married before.

Sociologists disagree as to what today's high divorce rate tells us about the state of marriage and the family: The New Right sees a high divorce rate as undesirable because it undermines the traditional nuclear family. Divorce creates an underclass of welfare-dependent lone mothers and leaves boys without the adult role model they need. Feminists disagree. They see a high divorce rate as desirable because it shows that women are breaking from the oppression of the patriarchal nuclear family. Postmodernists see a high divorce rate as giving individuals the freedom to choose to end a relationship when it no longer meets their needs. They see it as a cause of greater family diversity.

Functionalists argue that a high divorce rate does not necessarily prove that marriage as a social institution is under threat. It is simply the result of people's higher expectations of marriage today. The high rate of re-marriage demonstrates people's continuing commitment to the idea of marriage. Divorce was very difficult to obtain in 19th-century Britain, especially for women. Gradually, changes in the law have made divorce easier. There have been three kinds of change in the law:

- Equalizing the grounds (the legal reasons) for divorce between the sexes;
- widening the grounds for divorce;
- Making divorce cheaper.

The widening of the grounds in 1971 to 'irretrievable breakdown' made divorce easier to obtain and produced a doubling of the divorce rate almost overnight. The introduction of legal aid for divorce cases in 1949 lowered the cost of divorcing. Divorce rates have risen with each change in the law. *Yet although changes in the law have given people the freedom to divorce more easily, this does not in itself explain why more people should choose to take advantage of this freedom. To explain the rise in divorce rates we must therefore look at other changes too. These include changes in public attitudes towards divorce.*

Juliet Mitchell and Jack Goody (1997) note that an important change since the 1960s has been the rapid decline in the stigma attached to divorce. As stigma declines and divorce becomes more socially acceptable, couples become more willing to resort to divorce as a means of solving their marital problems.

In turn, the fact that divorce is now more common begins to 'normalise' it and reduces the stigma attached to it. Rather than being seen as shameful, today it is more likely to be regarded simply as a misfortune

*However, despite these changing attitudes, family patterns tend to be fairly traditional. Most people still live in a family; most children are brought up by couples; most couples marry and many divorcees re-marry.*

*Also, some sociologists have suggested that these changes have led to a 'crisis of masculinity' in which some men experience anxiety about their role. As such, the result of this could be an increase in domestic violence in an attempt to re-assert their traditional masculinity*

Secularization refers to the decline in the influence of religion in society. As a result of secularization, the traditional opposition of the churches to divorce carries less weight in society and people are less likely to be influenced by religious teachings when making decisions. For example, according to 2001 Census data, 43% of young people with no religion were cohabiting, as against only 34% of Christians, 17% of Muslims, 11% of Hindus and 10% of Sikhs.

At the same time, many churches have also begun to soften their views on divorce and divorcees, perhaps because they fear losing credibility with large sections of the public and with their own members. *However, some sociologists challenge whether secularisation is occurring, and point to the number of first-time marriages taking place in a religious context, and the changes made by the Church of England to allow divorced people to remarry in Church. This suggests that there is still a demand for religious weddings, even amongst those who have been divorced before.*

Functionalist sociologists such as Ronald Fletcher (1966) argue that the higher expectations people place on marriage today are a major cause of rising divorce rates. Higher expectations make couples nowadays less willing to tolerate an unhappy marriage.

Functionalist sociologists such as Ronald Fletcher (1966) argue that the higher expectations people place on marriage today are a major cause of rising divorce rates. Higher expectations make couples nowadays less willing to tolerate an unhappy marriage. *However, despite today's high divorce rates, functionalists such as Fletcher take an optimistic view. They point to the continuing popularity of marriage. Most adults marry, and the high rate of re-marriage after divorce shows that although divorcees may have become dissatisfied with a particular partner, they have not rejected marriage as an institution.*

*Feminists argue that the oppression of women within the family is the main cause of marital conflict and divorce, but functionalists ignore this. Although functionalists offer an explanation of rising divorce rates, they fail to explain why it is mainly women rather than men who seek divorce. One reason for women's increased willingness to seek divorce is that improvements in their economic position have made them less financially dependent on their husband and therefore freer to end an unsatisfactory marriage.*

The availability of welfare benefits means that women no longer have to remain financially dependent on their husbands. These developments mean that women are more likely to be able to support themselves in the event of divorce. *However, many feminists also argue that the fact that women are now wage earners as well as homemakers has itself created a new source of conflict between husbands and wives and this is leading to more divorces. Feminists argue that marriage remains patriarchal, with men benefiting from their wives' 'triple-shifts' of paid work, domestic work and emotion work.*

# 1. Discuss reasons for changes in Marriage patterns

The number of first marriages has significantly declined since the 1970s: from 480000 in 1972 to 306000 in 2000. Remarriages increased from 57000 in 1961 to 126000 (46% of all marriages) in 2000. Most remarriages involve divorced persons rather than widows and widowers. The largest increase occurred between 1971 and 1972 following the introduction of the Divorce Reform Act of 1969. People are marrying later: the average age of first marriage rose by seven years between 1971 and 2005 when it was 32 years for men and 30 for women.

There is less pressure to marry and more freedom for individuals to choose the type of relationship they want. The postmodernist David Cheal argues that this greater choice over the type of family we create has led to an increase in family diversity. *However, some sociologists point out that greater freedom of choice in relationships means a greater risk of instability, since these relationships are more likely to break up.*

The decline in influence of the Church means that people no longer feel they should get married for religious reasons. People are free to choose what type of relationship they enter into. *However, the majority of first-time marriages take place within a religious context, which suggests that religion still has some influence over the decision to get married.*

Cohabitation, remaining single and having children outside marriage are all now regarded as acceptable. In 1989 70% of respondents to the British Social Attitudes Survey believed that couples who wanted children should get married. By 2000 this had dropped to 54%. *However, despite this, most couples who cohabit do tend to get married. It is just that the average age of getting married has risen.*

Many women are now financially independent from men because of better education and better career prospects. This gives them greater freedom not to marry. *However, changes to the position of women in society do not necessarily mean that they don't get married; they merely put off marriage until their careers are established.*

The fear of divorce and the experience of seeing or going through a divorce have led to some women rejecting marriage.

The growing impact of the feminist view that marriage is an oppressive patriarchal institution may also dissuade women from marrying.

*Many feminists also argue that the fact that women are now wage earners as well as homemakers has itself created a new source of conflict between husbands and wives and this is leading to more divorces. Feminists argue that marriage remains patriarchal, with men benefiting from their wives' 'triple-shifts' of paid work, domestic work and emotion work*

# Social Policy

Although sociologists agree that social policy can have an important influence on family life, they hold different views about what kinds of effects it has and whether these are desirable. We shall examine a range of different sociological views or perspectives on the impact of social policy on families.

Functionalists see the state as acting in the interests of society as a whole and its social policies as being for the good of all. They see policies as helping families to perform their functions more effectively and make life better for their members.

For example, Ronald Fletcher argues that the welfare state supports the family in performing its functions more effectively. For example, the existence of the National Health Service means that with the help of doctors, nurses, hospitals and medicines, the family today is better able to take care of its members when they are sick. *However, functionalists assume that all members of the family benefit from social policies, whereas feminists argue that policies often benefit men at the expense of women.*

*Similarly, functionalists assume that there is a 'march of progress', with social policies steadily making family life better and better whereas Marxists argue that policies can also turn the clock back and reverse progress previously made, for example by cutting welfare benefits to poor families.*

The New Right criticizes many existing government policies **for undermining the family**. In particular, they argue that governments often weaken the family's self-reliance by providing generous welfare benefits. These include providing council housing for unmarried teenage mothers and cash payments to support lone-parent families.

Charles Murray (1984) argues that these benefits offer 'perverse incentives' - that is, they reward irresponsible or anti-social behavior. For example, the growth of lone-parent families encouraged by generous benefits means more boys grow up without a male role model and authority figure. This lack of paternal authority is responsible for a rising crime rate among young males. *Feminists argue that New Right views are an attempt to justify a return to the traditional patriarchal family that subordinated women to men and kept them confined to a domestic role. It wrongly assumes that the patriarchal nuclear family is 'natural' rather than socially constructed. Also cutting benefits would simply drive many poor families into deeper poverty.*

Feminist argue that social policy simply reinforce patriarchal ideas about the roles and status of men and women. For example, tax and benefits policies may assume that husbands are the main wage-earners and that wives are their financial dependants. This means women can find it difficult to claim benefits in their own right. This then reinforces women's dependence on their husbands.

Similarly, Diana Leonard argues that although maternity leave policies benefit women, they also reinforce patriarchy in the family, by encouraging the assumption that the care of infants is the responsibility of mothers rather than fathers. *However, not all policies are directed at maintaining patriarchy. For example, equal pay and sex discrimination laws, benefits for lone parents, refuges for women escaping domestic violence and equal rights to divorce could all be said to challenge the patriarchal family.*

*Similarly, whether or not social policy promotes patriarchy often depends on the country. Eileen Drew found that in more equal societies family policy is based on the belief that husbands and wives should be treated the same. In Sweden, for example, policies treat husbands and wives as equally responsible for both income-earning and childcare.*

Unlike functionalists, Marxists do not see social policies as benefiting all members of society equally. They see the state and its policies as serving capitalism. For example, they see the low level of state pensions as evidence that once workers are too old to produce profits, they are 'maintained' at the lowest possible cost.

Similarly, Marxists do not accept that there is a steady march of progress towards ever better welfare policies producing ever happier families. They argue that improvements for working-class families, such as pensions or free healthcare, have often only been won through class struggle to extract concessions from the capitalist ruling class. *However, functionalist would disagree that social policy works in the interests of the ruling class. They see social policy as benefitting all members of the family, and allow the family to perform its essential functions more effectively.*

*Feminists would argue that Marxists ignore the detrimental effect of family policy on women in particular. For example, maternity leave policies reinforce patriarchal assumptions that childcare is women's work*

Like Marxists and feminists, Jacques Donzelot sees policy as a form of state power over families. He argues that social workers, health visitors and doctors use their knowledge to control and change poorer families. Donzelot calls this 'the policing of families'. For example, the state may seek to control and regulate family life by imposing compulsory parenting orders through the courts. Parents of young offenders, truants or badly behaved children may be forced to attend parenting classes to learn the 'correct' way to bring up their children. *However, Marxists and feminists criticize Donzeiot for failing to identify clearly who benefits from such policies of surveillance. Marxists argue that social policies generally operate in the interests of the capitalist class, while feminists argue that men are the main beneficiaries.*