
Module 2533: Culture and Socialisation
Option B: Family
Unit 1: The Family and Recent Social Change

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Explain basic sociological concepts surrounding the family
2. Identify the main theoretical approaches to debates about the function and structure of families
3. Evaluate debates about 'family values'
4. Assess the effectiveness of social policy towards families and children

Key Skills

The activities in this study guide will give you the opportunity to develop the following key skills:

1. Communication: oral presentation, report-writing, discussion
2. ILT: using the Internet, CD Roms, word-processing software
3. Working With Others: paired work, group research, small group presentations
4. Improving Own Learning: self-evaluation, target-setting

Use this box for important information - personal targets, deadlines, assessment etc

Planning your work

The activities in this guide will help you to cover all the key ideas in this unit. You may not have to do them all. You will discuss activities with your teacher to determine which can be done as a class, in groups, or individually. You will also discuss how your work is to be presented and assessed.



Resources

The following resources are suggestions only. Your teacher may wish to add to or amend the list. You will find that particularly useful resources are indicated in the margin, e.g. R1 means use resource 1.

Books:

- R1 Taylor et al *Sociology In Focus*
- R2 Kirby et al *Sociology in Perspective*
- R3 Haralambos and Holborn *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*
- R4 O'Donnell *A New Introduction to Sociology*
- R5 Jorgeson *Investigating Families and Households*
- R6 Best et al *Active Sociology*
- R7 Jorgeson et al *Sociology: An Interactive Approach*

Internet

- R8 Hewett School <http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/curric/soc.htm>
- R9 Sociology Site <http://www.hartland64.freemove.co.uk/socindex.htm>
- R10 Sociology Central <http://www.freemove.virgin.net/chris.livesey/home.htm>
- R11 ATSS <http://www.atss.ac.uk>
- R12 Sociosite <http://www.pscw.uva.nl/sociosite/TOPICS/index.html>
- R13 UK Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase>
- R14 Office of National Statistics <http://www.ons.gov.uk>
- R15 Family Policy Studies Centre <http://www.vois.org.uk/fpsc>
- R16 Joseph Rowntree Foundation <http://www.jrf.org.uk>
- R17 Kinship & Social Organisation <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle>
- R18 Feminist Online <http://www.csulb.edu/~persepha/cyberfem.html>
- R19 Feminist.com <http://www.feminist.com>

CD Rom

- R20 Social Trends
- R21 The Guardian and Observer

Extracts

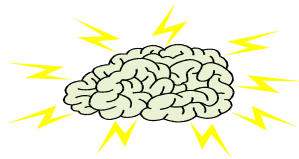
- R22 Contrasting views on the functions of the family
- R23 Four views of the traditional family model
- R24 Social Policy and the Family
- R26 Family and Social Change
- R27 Marriage Issues
- R28 Marriage Breakdown

Articles

- R29 Same Sex Couples
- R30 Modern Family Diversity
- R31 The family and industrialisation worksheet
- R32 The Family and Ideology
- R33 The Family and Social Policy worksheet

ACTIVITY ONE: Introducing the Family

Margin Notes



The aim of this activity is to introduce you to the idea of the 'family' and to some of the concepts sociologists use when discussing it.

Task One

1. Working in pairs or small groups, complete the following statement:
The family is.....
2. When you have completed your definition, identify its core components and make a list of them.
3. Now, on your own, complete the following statement:
My family is.....
4. List the key features of your family and compare them to your first list.
5. Return to your small group and exchange ideas about the differences, if any, that you have found between your two lists.
6. Summarise the key points that emerge from your discussion and briefly present them to the rest of the class.

Task Two

Read through the two different definitions of the family in the boxes below.

George Murdock (1949)	Anthony Giddens (1993)
<i>The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults.</i>	<i>A family is a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for children.</i>

Think about the two definitions of the family above. Consider whether those authors would consider the following arrangements as constituting a family:

- Married couple with their own children
- Cohabiting couple with own children
- single-parent with three children
- cohabiting gay couple living with the biological children of one of the adults.

Use this space for ideas

ACTIVITY TWO: Debates about the role of the family

IMPORTANT:

If you are working individually you will need to produce:

1. a word-processed report

If you are working as a small group you will need to produce

**3. A word-processed
handout/document**

**4. A summary OHT of your
area to present to the rest
of your small group**

The aim of this activity is to enable you to produce a word-processed report on a range of sociological theories on the role of the family in modern societies. You can complete this activity individually or in small groups, sharing the tasks amongst you.

1. Functionalist views on the family

You will need to investigate the following sociologists' views:

(a) GP Murdock:

- The family's functions for society

Margin Notes

R1, R2, R3

- ❑ The family's function for individuals and society
- ❑ Evaluation of Murdock

(b) Talcott Parsons

- ❑ The role of primary socialisation
- ❑ The stabilisation of adult personalities
- ❑ Evaluation of Parsons

2. Marxist views on the family:

You will need to investigate the views of the following sociologists:

R1, R3

(a) Engels

- ❑ Reasons for the creation of the family
- ❑ Evidence for his views

(b) Eli Zaretsky

- ❑ The functions of the family for capitalism

(c) Marxist feminist views

- ❑ The social reproduction of labour power
- ❑ The family as an ideological conditioning device
- ❑ Evaluation of Marxist feminist views

3. Radical feminist views on the family

You will need to investigate the views of the following sociologists:

R3

(a) Delphy and Leonard

- ❑ The family as an economic system and the role of domestic labour
- ❑ Empirical evidence to support their views
- ❑ Evaluation of Delphy and Leonard

(b) Laura Purdy

- ❑ The disadvantages of motherhood
- ❑ Evaluation

4. Difference feminist views on the family

You will need to investigate the views of the following sociologists:

R3

(a) Linda Nicholson

- ❑ Traditional and alternative families
- ❑ The merits of different family types

(b) Cheshire Calhoun

- ❑ Criticism of conventional feminist views on the family

Margin Notes

- The crises of heterosexual families

If you are working individually you will need to produce:

1. a word-processed report

If you are working as a small group you will need to produce

1. A word-processed handout/document
2. A summary OHT of your area to present to the rest of your small group

Use this space for planning

Task Three

Make a large A3 copy of the table below. Using the material from your presentations, identify evidence for and against the following view:

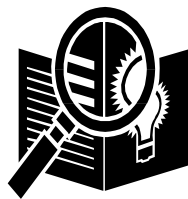
'The family continues to perform a vital and positive role for society'.

<i>'The family continues to perform a vital and positive role in society'</i>	
Evidence For	Evidence Against

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ACTIVITY THREE: Is the nuclear family 'normal' ?

Margin Notes



R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6
R8, R17, R29

Margin Notes

The aim of this activity is to examine the extent to which the nuclear family is a universal institution - in other words, is the nuclear family accepted as the norm throughout the world ?

Task Four

Using any of the resources available to you, define in your own words the following key terms used by sociologists to describe different types of families:

- Nuclear family
- Extended family
- Household
- Monogamy
- Serial monogamy
- Polygamy
- Polyandry
- Patrilineal
- Matrilineal
- Kinship

Task Five

The functionalist-inspired sociologist GP Murdock believes that the concept of the nuclear family is universal, meaning that the traditional two parent family (in some form) is the accepted norm throughout the world. In this task you will investigate the evidence for and against this claim.

In your research you should investigate:

- The evidence on which Murdock bases his claim
- Alternative systems to the nuclear family:
 - The Navar

- Same sex families
- Single-parent families

You could present your findings as a word-processed report or as a wall display showing contrasting views and evidence.

Use this space for planning

ACTIVITY FOUR: Changes in the structure of the family

R1, R2, R3, R4
R5, R31

Many sociologists have argued that the coming of the industrial revolution brought about huge changes in society, including changes to the structure of the family and kinship networks. The aim of this activity is to examine the extent to which industrialisation had an effect on family structure.

Task Six

Complete R31 - the family and industrialisation worksheet.

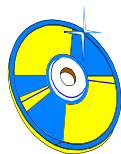
Task Seven

In task six you should have come across arguments and evidence to suggest that the extended family has largely been replaced by the nuclear family. However, some sociologists argue that despite changes in family structure, extended kinship ties still remain important, particularly in working class areas.

R3 (5th Ed)

Investigate the extent to which the extended family remains important in contemporary society. You should focus particularly on studies by McGlone (1995), Finch (1989), Allan (1985) and Willmott (1988).

ACTIVITY FIVE: Statistical Patterns in Family Life and Divorce



R13, R14, R20

R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6
R7, R8

The aim of this activity is to enable you to investigate recent trends in various areas of family life.

Task Seven

Using CD Roms and the internet, examine recent trends in the following areas:

- Types of household
- Marriage rates
- Divorce rates
- Cohabitation
- Reconstituted families
- Single-person households (look at R20 for 17 October 1999, and outline the projected profiles of single men and single women in 2010).

Task Eight Explanations for marital breakdown

Make a large A3 copy of the table below and complete in it evidence and arguments for and against the following view:
'The main reason for the recent increases in divorce is that divorce is becoming easier.'

<i>The main reason for the recent increases in divorce is that divorce is becoming easier</i>	
Evidence and arguments for	Evidence and arguments against

ACTIVITY SIX: Social Policy and the Family

The aim of this activity is to examine the increasing involvement of the state in family life, especially over the last 50 years. You will examine the ideology of the New Right (that the state should take a minimal role in the lives of the family) with examples of greater involvement than ever before, such as the Child Support Agency. You will also investigate the family policies of New Labour as seen in their approach since 1997.

Margin Notes

Task Nine

You may be moved around for this task, depending on who has completed the preceding activities.

In groups of four, complete the task in R32 'The Family and Ideology'

Task Ten

Complete R33 'The Family and Social Policy' worksheet.

SUMMARY

By the end of this unit you should have your notes organised under the following headings:

1. Definitions of the family

Notes from Activity 1

2. Debates about the role of the family

You should have:

- Word-Processed report. Check yours against the check-list in Activity Two to make sure you have the full set.
- An A3 table on evidence for and against the view that the family plays a positive role for society

3. Is the nuclear family normal ?

You should have:

- Notes on Murdock's view that the family is a universal institution
- Notes on alternative family structures such as the Nayar, the Kibbutz system, and 'New World' black matri-focal families

4. Changes in the structure of the family

You should have:

- A completed worksheet on the effects of industrialisation on the structure of the family
- Evidence to suggest that extended kinship networks are still important in contemporary society

5. Statistical patterns in Family Life and Divorce

You should have:

- CD Rom and Internet evidence of a range of trends to do with family life. Check yours against the check-list in task seven.
- An A3 sheet showing the evidence for and against the view that divorce is increasing because it is getting easier

6. Social Policy and the Family

You should have:

- ❑ A copy of your discussion notes from R32
- ❑ A completed worksheet on aspects of social policy towards the family and children.

FINAL ACTIVITY : Evaluation

I feel confident in the following areas of this unit	I need to improve my understanding of the following areas of this unit	I am going to improve my understanding of these areas by doing the following

KEY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Key Skill	Evidence
Communication	
Working with others	
Information Technology	
Improving own learning	

Margin Notes

Now read through Item 3, which is written by the former Labour Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman. Discuss the following in groups of four, and record your points.

- ❑ Is it a good idea to try to help lone mothers, even those with young children, to go out to work? Why or why not?
- ❑ What kind of family is Harriet Harman referring to when she talks about the 'fifties straitjacket'?
- ❑ Does Harriet Harman provide a convincing rebuttal of Melanie Phillips' points? Why or why not?

Use this space for ideas and planning

Task Ten

Now complete R33 - the worksheet on the family and social policy.