

## Key Ideas

## Couples and Children

### Marriage, Divorce, Separation, Cohabitation, Illegitimacy:

- Definition, trends, patterns, causes, consequences:
- Example: UK marriage
- Pattern: Declining number of marriages. Declining rate of marriage.
- Trend: Long-term decline in popularity of marriage
- Causes: Demographic (population changes)
- Cohabitation ("consensual unions")
- Religious decline (secularisation)
- Female emancipation
- Availability of divorce
- Consequences: Increased illegitimacy
- Development of "Underclass"?
- Moral decay (New Right)?
- Family decline / breakdown (New Right)?
- Range of social problems related to single-parenthood
- Poverty (esp. single-parents)
- Increasing divorce, single-parenthood, cohabitation and illegitimacy.

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### Gender relationships and Conjugal roles. Need to understand:

- Changing gender roles and relationships (including gender socialisation).
- The domestic labour debate (who does it and why - including problems of measurement / validity).
- Power relationships within family (adults and children).
- Concepts of patriarchy and symmetry:
- **Symmetrical family debate:**
- **Pro:** e.g. Wilmott and Young (family Stages, stratified diffusion)
- **Bot:** empirical study of family networks: Joint conjugal / segregated conjugal and relationship to age, class, ethnicity.
- Privatised nuclear family (e.g. Goldthorpe and Lockwood).
- Class differences in conjugal roles.
- **Anti:** e.g. Oakley, Heidensohn, Elston ("Half our future doctors?" - significant empirical study of conjugal roles).
- Private and Public spheres - ideological associations / assumptions.
- Concept of leisure - different for men and women?
- Dual-systems theory (women and double-discrimination: sex and class)

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### Gender Socialisation

- Sex = biological categorization; Gender = social characteristics we attribute on the basis of biological sex). E.g. Stoller
- Nature / Nurture debate (e.g. Will, Self and Datan experiment)
- Dunn and Dobzhansky: "biology and culture inseparable".
- Oakley, "gender" = a set of learned social attributes.
- Helen Hacker: females and blacks as "minority groups" (discriminated against) and given stereotyped characteristics (patriarchal ideology)
- Gender socialisation as ideological process (learning of Roles, Status, Values and Norms).
- Agencies and Agents of socialisation (who or what does the socialising): Adults (parents, friends, teachers, etc.), Peers, Media, Toys, Books, etc.
- G.H.Mead: process of socialisation (role play, game play)
- The Self ("I" and "Me" - see Nature / Nurture)
- Hartley / Oakley - Gender Socialisation involves: Imitation, Identification, Role Learning, Conditioning (Manipulation, Canalisation, Language, Activity Exposure)

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### Childhood (Problem of definition? - Biological? Social? Psychological?)

- Historical Dimension (e.g. Aries (+ Shipman - critical of Aries)
- Child-centred family structure (Aries = modern development, related to: Industrialisation and Capitalism, Changes in the structure of family life):
- Separation of home from the workplace.
- Loss of the family's economic function / role.
- Increase in the sexual division of labour (especially home and work).
- Economic marginalisation of women.
- Pollack. Childhood / parenthood 1500-1900. Then, as now:
- Most parents were affectionate and kind to their children.
- They showed grief when children died.
- Many resorted to physical violence to control their children.
- There were serious cases of physical and emotional abuse.
- Willmott and Young ("stratified diffusion") to explain class differences in concept of childhood - upper classes developed concept first...
- Note: Reliability and validity of historical evidence?

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