

- THE FAMILY

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- FAMILY STRUCTURES

- Nuclear

- Extended

- Lone parent

- Reconstituted/step

- Same sex

- Nuclear Family

“ a small unit derived from the relationship between a man and a woman legally bound together through marriage as husband and wife. The nuclear family is created when a child is born to this couple.

The unit shares a common residence and is united by ties of affection, common identity and support.”

Muncie and  
Sapsford(1995)

- Extended Family

“ a family group consisting of close relatives extending beyond the couple and their children, living either within the same household or in a close and continuous relationship with one another.”

Giddens(2001)

- Lone Parent Family

“one parent, frequently the mother, living alone with the children, with a greater proportion of responsibility for caring for children financially and emotionally.”

(Dallos and Sapsford, 1995)

- Reconstituted Family

“a family in which at least one of the adults has children from a previous union, either living in the home or nearby. Reconstituted families are also known as stepfamilies.”

(Giddens 2001)

- Same Sex Family

A same sex family is defined as two parents of the same sex living together and sharing the parenting of the children of the family.

- Construction of Gender Roles
- Socialisation
- The Family
- School
- The Media
- How Gender Roles are Learned

## **Childhood**

- parents` expectations
- imitation
- identification
- group pressure
- How Gender Roles are Learned

## **School**

- teachers` expectations
- hidden curriculum
- pupils` expectations
- How Gender Roles are Learned

## **Work**

- types of employment
- rates of pay
- attitudes to women in the workplace
- How Gender Roles are Learned

## **Parenthood**

## **Leisure**

## **Media**

- SOCIOLOGICAL  
PERSPECTIVES and THE  
FAMILY

- Functionalism and the Family

The analysis of the family from a functionalist perspective involves three main questions.

1. What are the functions of the family?
2. What are the functional relationships between the family and other parts of the social system?
3. What are the functions of the family for its individual members?

- Functions of the Family

It has been suggested that the family (nuclear) must be universal and, as such, must be necessary. Murdock(1949) argued that the family is to be found in every society and has four main functions:

- Sexual
- Reproductive

- Economic
- Educational

## ● Functions of the Family

Parsons(1959) has argued that there are two basic and irreducible functions of the family:

- 1 Primary socialisation – early childhood socialisation which serves to internalise culture and develop personality.
- 2 Stabilisation of adult personalities through emotional security and the performance of appropriate roles

## ● Criticisms of the Functionalist Perspective

- A preoccupation with the positive aspects of the family, which is

presented in a rather idealised way  
– implication that families are  
harmonious and integrated.

- Little consideration given to the problems experienced by many families.
- Emphasis upon the way in which the family meets the needs of the social system.
- Criticism of the Functionalist Perspective
- Justified the domestic division of labour between men and women as something natural and unproblematic.
- Neglects the role that other social institutions, other than the family,



such as government, media and schools, play in socialising children.

- Conflict Perspective and the Family

The family is seen as a unit which produces one of the basic commodities of capitalism – **labour** (the family produces and rears cheap labour).

- Conflict Perspective and the Family

Within the family, children learn to conform and submit to authority. In this way, the foundation is laid for the obedient and submissive workforce required by capitalism.

- Conflict Perspective and the Family

**Change** in the family is illustrated by such developments as increasing

divorce rates, step families, lone parent families, same sex families. These changes are neither functional nor dysfunctional but part of the inevitable move and shift which is always taking place in society.

- **Conflict Perspective and the Family**

**Constraint** upon the family is imposed by external factors – the promotion of norms and values through the law and social policy. Promotion of family values encourages people to behave in certain ways, which may be seen as constraint. People have legal responsibilities to their

children – Children (Scotland) Act  
(1995)

- Conflict Perspectives and the  
Family

Conflict is illustrated through the  
occurrence of domestic violence  
and child abuse.

“Far from being the basis of the good  
society, the family, with its narrow  
privacy and tawdry (grubby)  
secrets, is the source of all our  
discontents.”

(Leach 1971)

- Conflict Perspectives and the  
Family

Dobash and Dobash (1980) in a Scottish study of domestic violence said:

“For most people, and especially for women and children, the family is the most violent group to which they are likely to belong. Despite fears to the contrary, it is not a stranger but a so-called loved one who is most likely to assault, rape or murder us.”

- Feminism and the Family

The feminist perspective focused upon the relationship between women, the family and society.

Gender is the starting point for examining what happens in the

family, and a key area of study is that of the distribution of power within the family.

- Feminism and the Family
- Women are socialised to perform certain roles.
- Continues to be in the interests of men to keep women in these roles.
- Women still perform most of the housework, most of the childcare and still experience violence in the home.
- Women are far from equal in their status as family members.
- Paternalism and oppression are alive and well.