

A Level Sociology (9699)

Unit Four: Families and Households

Recommended Prior Knowledge

This unit builds on the understanding of functionalist, Marxist and feminist perspectives from unit one. Basic knowledge of nineteenth century social history and the process of industrialisation would be useful.

Context

This unit links with unit three by providing further illustrations of the contribution that class, ethnicity and gender make to the constitution of modern industrial societies. It may also be used to deepen understanding of the main sociological theories that were introduced in unit one.

Outline

The unit examines the family and how it has been affected by the processes of social change. It focuses on the diverse forms of family life and the role of individuals within the family. The relationship between the family and wider society is also reviewed.

| AO | Learning outcomes | Suggested Teaching activities | Learning resources |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 4.1 | <p>The Family in Social Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between different types of family unit. • Recognise the debates about the universality of the nuclear family. • Assess the relationship between the family and the economy. • Discuss changes and continuities in family functions. | <p>Begin the unit by distinguishing between households and families. Emphasise the diversity in family forms and pay particular attention to the differences between the nuclear family and the extended family.</p> <p>Summarise the debate about the postulated universality of the nuclear family. Outline the main functions of the family and how they are affected by the change from traditional to industrial society. Discuss the relationship between the family and the state, making appropriate links with particular areas of social policy.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Invite the class to use the internet and other sources to research the diversity of family forms globally. Use their findings to compile case studies that illustrate the different types of family unit and the cultural contrasts in family life within and between different societies.</p> | <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp121-126, distinguishes between households and families and provides examples of different forms of family unit.</p> <p>The family and social policy is discussed in Barnard, A. et al, pp139-141.</p> <p>For a review of anthropological studies of marriage and family life, see:</p> <p>www.anthro.palomar.edu/marriage</p> <p>A useful site for general information about the sociology of the family is:</p> <p>www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/</p> |

| AO | Learning outcomes | Suggested Teaching activities | Learning resources |
|-----|--|--|--|
| 4.2 | <p>Changes in the Family and Marriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the relationship between industrialisation and changes in family and household structure. • Discuss gender roles and the division of labour within the family. • Recognise changes in the status of children and childhood. • Describe changing patterns of marriage and divorce and discuss the causes and consequences of these changes. | <p>Discuss the process of industrialisation and how it affected the structure of the family in countries such as the UK. Refer to appropriate historical research, such as that by Laslett and Anderson, to establish the nature of the changes affecting the family during the early stages of the industrial revolution.</p> <p>Discuss the nature and extent of changes within the family, with references to gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships. Use the work of Oakley and more recent studies to consider how far sexual inequality exists within the home. Also examine changes in the status of children and use this part of the syllabus to illustrate the socially constructed nature of childhood (reference to the work of Philip Aries would be particularly relevant in this context).</p> <p>Conclude the unit by illustrating the changing patterns of marriage and evidence of the increase in divorce and marital breakdown. Discuss the causes and consequences of the rising divorce rate in modern industrial societies.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to prepare a case, based on sociological evidence, for the claim that marriage is in decline in modern industrial societies. Invite the other group to present a case for the opposing view, i.e. that marriage remains important and respected in contemporary society.</p> | <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp132-136 examines the relationship between industrialisation and the changing structure of the family.</p> <p>The concept of patriarchy and the nature of conjugal roles in the modern family is discussed in Barnard, A et al., pp136-139.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp141-143, summarises the main changes in marriage and divorce and assesses whether the institution of marriage is breaking down.</p> |