

### **What is meant by the term single person household?**

Single-person household includes those who are living alone in an individual, separate housing unit

### **Describe two examples of household units that are not based on cohabitation**

Examples include, single person households, students living together, children's homes, homes for the elderly, families, including nuclear, headed by married couples, reconstituted, extended families etc. Can also accept civil partnerships. Nuclear families must include

'married' for two marks – otherwise = 1 mark. Empty shell marriages with explanation. Do not accept 'modified extended family'.

One mark for identification and one mark for explanation of each type. (Maximum of two examples)

If more than two types credit the two correct examples. (2 × 2)

### **Explain the reasons for the rise in single households in modern industrial societies.**

**AMBITION** - Sue Sharpe found a difference between the ambitions of girls in '76 compared to '94 with those previously valuing marriage and the family and those currently valuing their education and work life more

**SECULARISATION** - Wilson argued the church has now lost its power and society no longer sees marriage as necessary, resulting in less stigma towards these alternative family types.

**INDIVIDUALISATION** - Postmodernism argues society has shifted to become more individualistic with individuals now focusing on their own needs and wants as opposed to those of the collective, which has especially affected women in contemporary society

This newfound singlehood may be caused by the changing values of women causing them to be more work-orientated and less stigmatised by religious society facilitating the freedom for individuals to choose this lifestyle however, it has been seen to cause feelings of isolation and loneliness whilst also leading to a more equal and diverse society

### **Assess the view that the increase in cohabitation is a threat to the institution of marriage and family.**

With the advancement of the society there has been a remarkable shift in the way societies are organized. Traditional family norms have drastically changed over the past half century (Carmichael, 2000).

Rise of pre-marital cohabitation is one of these significant changes which have altered the dynamics of the traditional nuclear families all over the world.

Cohabitation poses numerous threats to the institute of marriage. It wouldn't be a threat to marriage if it is deemed as a temporary phase before marriage or a strategy for moving into a union gradually (Manting, 1996)

Studies conducted in the Western societies show that the numbers choosing to marry at all are declining, while there is a sharp rise in couples choosing to cohabit without marrying (Anne Barlow, 2004).

Recent trends indicate that 'cohabitation is being chosen more frequently as an alternative to marriage' and many of these people have 'no plans to marry in the future.' (Bumpass, Sweet, & Cherlin, 1991).

It is not necessary that people in the developed countries cohabit only to delay marriage or use it only as an alternative to marriage. Studies suggest that many people cohabit to 'test their compatibility before marriage' (Bumpass, Sweet, & Cherlin, 1991).

Acceptance of single person house hold

Causes of divorce..

Assess the view that the conjugal relationship is characterized by equality in the symmetrical family

### **Domestic division of labour**

#### **Parsons: instrumental and expressive roles**

Traditional nuclear family, roles segregated.

**Talcott Parsons** (1955) functionalist model of family clear division of labour between spouses.

- **Husband instrumental role, achieving success at work and breadwinner**
- **Wife expressive role, primary socialization of children and carer**

Argues division of labour based on biological differences, women 'naturally' suited to nurturing role and men provider.

Division of labour beneficial to men and women, their children and wider society. Conservative and New Right thinkers also hold this view.

Other sociologists criticized Parsons:

- **Young and Willmott (1962) argue men greater share of tasks and wives wage earners**
- **Feminists reject division of labour natural and only benefits men**

#### **Joint and segregated conjugal roles**

**Elizabeth Bott** (1957) distinguishes two types of conjugal roles within marriage:

1. **Segregated conjugal roles where couple separate roles**
2. **Joint conjugal role where couple share tasks**

**Young and Willmott** identify segregated conjugal roles in study of traditional working-class extended families in Bethnel Green, East London. Men working on docks- breadwinner, women- sole responsibility for children and housework.

#### **The symmetrical family**

**Young and Willmott** (1973) take 'march of progress' view of history of family, gradually improving for all members- becoming more equal and democratic.

Argue long-term trend away from segregated conjugal roles and towards joint- 'the symmetrical family.'

Symmetrical family means roles of husbands and wives although not identical area more similar:

- **Women go out to work**
- **Men now help with housework**
- **Couples spend leisure time together**

Found symmetrical more common in young couples- geographically and socially isolated and the more better off.

See rise in symmetrical nuclear family result of major social changes during past century:

- **Changes in women's position**
- **Geographical mobility**
- **New technology**
- **Higher standards of living**

### **A feminist view of housework**

Reject 'march of progress' argue little's changed, men and women still unequal.

Society still patriarchal and women occupy subordinate and dependent role within family and wider society.

**Ann Oakley** (1974) criticizes **Young and Willmott** argues claims exaggerated, although found husbands interviewed helped at least once a week- could include simply taking children for a walk/making breakfast.

Oakley says hardly convincing evidence.

In own research found evidence of husbands helping but no evidence of trend towards symmetry.

### **Oakley: the rise of the housewife role**

Describes how housewife role become dominant role for married women, industrialization and rise of factory production led to separation of paid work from the home.

Women initially part of labour force, gradually excluded from workplace- confined to home.

Enforced women's subordination and economic dependence on men, housewife role socially constructed rather than 'natural.'

In Oakley's view increase in married women working, housewife role still primary role. Women who work concentrated to low-paid jobs often extension of housewife role e.g. nursing/secretarial/childcare.

## *The impact of paid work*

### **Gershuny: the trend towards equality**

Some sociologists argue women working full-time leading more equal division of labour in home.

**Jonathan Gershuny** (1994) found wives worked full-time less domestic work:

- **Wives who do not work did 83% of housework and who did work part-time 82%**
- **Wives worked full-time 73% housework, longer wife in work more housework husband did**
- **Couples parents had more equal relationship likely to share housework more equally**

Explains trend towards greater equality, gradual change in values and parental role models, argues social values gradually adapting to women working full-time- similar to Young and Willmott.

### **The commercialization of housework**

**Hilary Silver and Juliet Schor** stress importance of two major economic developments in reducing burden of housework on women:

- **Housework becomes commercialized goods and services housewives had to produce now mass-produced and supplied by supermarkets etc.**
- **Women working means can afford to buy these goods and services**

As result argue burden of housework on women decreased, Schor goes as far to claim developments led to 'death of housewife role.'

Critics argue many poorer women, expensive goods and services not an option.

### **Summary**

- Evidence women being in paid work leads to more equality in division of labour
- Feminists argue in reality effect of this limited, still continue to shoulder dual or triple burden even if men doing more in home, domestic tasks remain gendered
- Feminists argue root of problem patriarchy, gender scripts (expectations/norms set out different gender roles men and women in heterosexual couples expected to play)
- Patriarchy also ensures women earn less at work and so less bargaining power in home, until patriarchy challenged in home and workplace domestic division of labour likely to remain unequal

## *Resources and decision making in the households*

**Michelle Barrett and Mary McIntosh** (1991) note:

- **Men gain more from women's domestic work than give back in financial support**
- **Financial support husbands give to wives unpredictable**
- **Men make decisions about spending on important items**

**Hilary Graham** (1984) study over half women living on benefits after separation actually better off, although husbands earning not low found benefits more reliable source of income.

In many households woman no entitlement to share of household resources in own right, result likely to see anything she spends on herself as money that should be spent on essentials. Even households with adequate income, resources shared unequally leaves women in poverty.

### **Decision-making and paid work**

**Jan Pahl and Carolyn Vogler** (1993) focus on how partner's contribution to family income affects decision-making within family, identify two main types of control over income:

- **Pooling where both partners access to income and joint responsibility for expenditure**
- **Allowance system men give wives allowance out of which have to budget to meet family's needs with man retaining surplus income**

**Stephen Edgell's** (1980) study professional couples found:

- **Very important decisions such as involving finance, change of job/moving house either taken by husband or taken jointly with husband having final say**
- **Important decisions such as children's education/where to go on holiday usually taken jointly, or by wife alone**
- **Less important decisions such as choice of home décor, children's clothes/food purchases usually made by wife**

### **Domestic violence**

'Physical, psychological, sexual or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. May involve partners, ex-partners, household members and other relatives.'

Common view is that it's the behaviour of few disturbed or 'sick' individuals, causes psychological rather than social. Sociologists challenged this view:

- **Domestic violence too widespread to simply be work of few disturbed individuals, British Crime Survey domestic violence accounts for almost sixth of all violent crime**
- **Domestic violence not occur randomly but follows particular social patterns that have causes, most striking of these patterns that it's mainly violence by men against women**

**Mirrlees-Black** found:

- **Most victims women**
- **99% all incidents against women committed by men**
- **Nearly 1 in 4 woman been assaulted by partner at some time in life, and 1 in 8 repeatedly**

Confirmed **Dobash's** (1970) research based on police and court records and interviews with women in refuges. Cite examples of women being slapped, pushed about, beaten, raped or killed by husbands- found violent incidents set off by what husband saw as challenge to authority.

Argue marriage legitimates violence against women by conferring power and authority on husbands and dependency on wives.

### **Official statistics**

Understate true extent of problem for 2 main reasons, firstly may be unwilling to report to the police and secondly police and prosecutors may be reluctant to record/investigate/prosecute cases reported.

**David Cheal** (1991) reluctance due to fact police and other state agencies not prepared to become involved in family, make 3 assumptions about family life:

- **Family private sphere so access should be limited**
- **Family good thing and so agencies tend to neglect 'darker side'**
- **Individuals free agents so assumed if woman experiencing abuse free to leave- not true as male violence often coupled with economic power and abused women financially dependent on husbands, unable to leave**

### **Radical feminist explanation**

Radical feminists interpret **Dobash and Dobash** as evidence of patriarchy.

Radical feminists see family and marriage key institutions in patriarchal society and main source of women's oppression- within family, men dominate women through domestic violence/threat of it.

Widespread domestic violence inevitable feature of patriarchal society and serves to preserve power all men have over all women.

Radical feminists help explain why most violence committed by men, argue violence against women part of patriarchal system that maintains men's power. Sociological explanation rather than psychological- explain linking patterns of domestic violence to dominant social norms about marriage.

**Faith Robertson Elliot** (1996) rejects claim all men benefit from violence against women, not all men aggressive and most opposed to domestic violence- radicals ignore this.

Radicals also fail to explain female violence, including child abuse by women and violence against male partners.

### **Other groups at risk**

Other patterns of domestic violence, social groups at greater risk of domestic violence include:

- **Children and young people**
- **Lowest social classes**
- **Living in rented accommodation**
- **Low incomes/financial difficulties**
- **High levels of alcohol consumption/use of illegal drugs**

### **Wilkinson: domestic violence inequality and stress**

**Richard Wilkinson** (1996) offers explanation of patterns, sees domestic violence as result of stress family members caused by social inequality.

Means some families fewer resources than others, such as income and housing. Low incomes/overcrowded accommodation likely to experience higher levels of stress- reduces chance of stable relationships and increase conflict and violence.

Findings show not all people equally in danger of suffering domestic violence- less power, status, wealth/income at greatest risk.

**Wilkinson's** approach useful showing social inequality produces stress, triggers conflict and violence in families- lower classes greater hardship and stress helps explain class differences in statistics.

Unlike radical approach Wilkinson does not explain why women rather than men are main victims.