THE FAMILY

This unit examines the family and how the processes of social change have affected it. The aim is to explore the diverse forms of family life and to understand the role of the family in relation to individuals and the social structure.

1. The family and social change
   • The distinction between households and families and between types of families: lone parent, nuclear and extended.
   • Changes in family and household structure and their relationship to industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation.
   • Diversity in family forms according to class, ethnicity, religion, family size, marital status, age and family life cycle.
   • The debate about the postulated universality of the nuclear family.
   • Different theories about the relationship between the family and the economy.

2. Family roles, marriage and changing relationships
   • Changes and continuities in family functions; debates about the relationship between the family and the state.
   • Roles and responsibilities within the family, including the roles of parents, children and grandparents.
   • Conjugal roles and debates about gender equality within the family.
   • Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, civil partnership, separation, divorce and child bearing; the causes and consequences of these changes.
   • The impact of family life on individual members.

3. The social construction of age
   • The social significance of divisions based on age groups.
   • Childhood as a concept that is socially constructed.
   • Class, ethnicity and gender as factors affecting the experience of childhood.
   • Debates about the social position of the elderly in different societies.
Unit 1

The Family

1. The Family and social change:

Households:

A household consist of one or more people residing in a single house, condominium or apartment. They may or may not be related by blood or marriage. Not all the households contain families.

Family:

A group of people living together who are either related by blood, marriage or adoption. Murdock claimed that some sort of family existed over all times.

Types of Families:

Nuclear Family: Smallest family unit which consists of a Father, Mother and their children (either own or adopted).

Extended Family: A large family unit extending beyond the nuclear family, consisting of other members related by birth, marriage or adoption. For example, Grandparents, grandchildren, aunt, uncle and other relatives living residing together.

Lone-parent Family: Families with dependent children headed by a single parent who is widowed, divorced, didn’t remarried or never married. The children must be under 18 years of age.

Reconstituted Family: A family unit where parents who have children with different partners live together with their own children. A family comprising of step-children and step-parents.

Universality of family:

George Peter Murdock (1949) who has studies 250 societies across the world, both traditional and industrialised, has defined the family as follows:

"The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation 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 cohabiting adults."

Murdock has also claimed, based on his findings, that the family is a universal institution, that is, the family exists in every society worldwide in one form or
another. He acknowledged the variations in family structure, but he also asserted that the nuclear family, as described above, forms the basis of every other form of family structures.

As an initial definition, we can note three points that derive from the above:

- The concept of family is not necessarily linked to the concept of marriage. In the above view, it is the social relationship between individuals that is important, not the legal framework to their relationship.

- Family groups can involve any number of adults who maintain socially-approved sexual relationships. This means that families may involve a number of men related to a single woman (or vice versa) and the "sexual relationship" does not necessarily have to be heterosexual (between people of the opposite sex), since children may be adopted into the family group.

- The family group involves both adults and children. This means, presumably, that a husband and wife, for example, who do not produce children are not considered to be a family.

Changes in the Family Structure:

According to Parsons, during the preindustrial societies the extended family system was very common and typical. Agriculture was practiced and people owned or rented land. The land was farmed by the whole family thus sustaining the need for the extended family to continue.

The Isolated nuclear family was a product of the modern industrial society. The wider kin are a matter of choice rather than obligation in this family system. There are a few reasons for its fittingness in the industrial societies:

- Individuals are required to move to places where their skills are recognized and demanded. Nuclear family makes geographical mobility easier.

- Structural differentiation took place over time. Several institutions specialized in fewer functions. This meant that specialized institutions such as Schools, hospitals, daycare units took over many functions of the family.

- Status is being Ascribed (assigned) rather than Achieved (fixed at birth).

On the other hand, Urbanization also had impacts of the family structure:
THEORY AND METHODS

This unit contains two central aims. Firstly, it introduces candidates to the key concepts and theories associated with a sociological understanding of human behaviour. Candidates begin to explore the nature of sociological enquiry and the insights that it provides into the relationship between individuals and social structures. Secondly, the unit introduces candidates to the basic concepts and issues in research design and evaluation. The aim is to make candidates aware of the way in which sociologists can claim that their findings are truthful and worthwhile.

1. The sociological perspective
   • Sociology as a reasoned and rigorous study of social life.
   • Sociology as a science: positivist, interpretivist and post-modernist perspectives.
   • The uses of sociological knowledge; the role of values in sociology.
   • Sociology and social policy; the differences between sociological problems and social problems
   • The diversity of human behaviour and cultural variation.
   • The nature of social order, social control and social change.

2. Socialisation and the creation of social identity
   • Structuralist and interactionist views of the relationship between the individual and society.
   • The processes of learning and socialisation; how the individual becomes a competent social actor.
   • Agencies of socialisation: family, education, peer group, media, religion.
   • Culture, roles, norms, values, beliefs, ideology and power as elements in the social construction of reality.
   • Social class, gender and ethnicity as elements in the construction of social identities.
   • Theories of culture and identity with reference to modernism and post-modernism.

3. Methods of research
   • The distinctions between primary and secondary data and between quantitative and qualitative data.
Unit 2

Theory and Methods

- The different quantitative and qualitative methods and sources of data, including questionnaires,
- interviews, observation techniques, experiments, longitudinal studies, case studies, content
- analysis, semiology, documents and official statistics.
- The stages of research design: deciding on research strategy; formulating research problems
- and hypotheses; sampling and pilot studies; conducting the research; interpreting the results and reporting the findings.

4. The relationship between theory and methods

- Positivist and anti-positivist approaches.
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing the choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.
- The strengths and limitations of different sources of data and methods of research.
- Validity, reliability, objectivity and representativeness as key concepts in assessing the value of different methods of research.
- Triangulation and methodological pluralism.
1. The Sociological Perspective

**MacroPerspectives:** also known as Structural theories looks at large scale social processes such as social stability or change. They examine society as a whole. For example, Marxism and functionalism. They argue that the society casts an impact on the individuals.

**MicroPerspectives:** Also Known as Social action theories. Looks at small-scale interactions between individuals, such as conversation or group dynamics. For example, Weber’s theory and Symbolic Interactionism, they believe that the individuals shape the society.

However, there are some theories which fits neither of the mentioned above. For example, Postmodernism, which condemn all forms of objective truths.

**Functionalism:**

Views the society as a system with interconnected parts.

Functionalists uses the Biological Analogy-comparing the parts of the human body with the different institutions of the society. They argue that like a human body to run properly, all the institutions need to work and coordinate with each other for a society to run smoothly. For example, brain could be compared with the government. They also argue that like human’s societies also have certain need known as Functional Prerequisites that must be met for survival.

*FunctionalPrerequisites:* the basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, and money) that an individual requires to live above the poverty line.

**Emile Durkheim:**

He believed that the people were constrained with *socialfacts,* norms, values and shared moral codes which shape the individual consciousness.

Social facts could be explained in terms of the various functions they perform for the society.
EDUCATION

In this unit candidates examine an important source of secondary socialisation and study in more detail the issues of inequality, power, control and ideology that were introduced at AS Level.

1. Education in social context

- Theories about the links between education and the economy.
- Explanations of educational achievement and intelligence.
- The relationship between education and social mobility.
- Debates about the links between social inequality (class, gender, ethnicity) and educational opportunity and achievement.

2. Structures and processes within schools

- The social construction of knowledge and learning; power and social control as factors influencing the structure, content and development of the curriculum.
- Language, deprivation and knowledge.
- Teacher/pupil relationships: streaming, labelling, hidden curriculum and the gendered curriculum.
- Pupil sub-cultures and attitudes to education.
Unit 3

Education

1. Education in social context

Education and Economy:

The link between the formal education and economy is both multi-dimensional and complex. Education is the process of learning, that is, the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Education takes place in a variety of ways; at schools, through family discussions, a film, reading newspapers, during leisure activities, and so on. Hence, there are both formal and informal agencies, which contribute to the process of learning. In modern societies, a central component of education is the school, that is, a formal institution under the direction of specially trained teachers.

Several reforms have been made since the start of the industrial era. By 1870s the Free State education in Britain had started. By 1918 school attendance was made compulsory up to the age of 14, rising to 16 1972. Recently, by 2005 76% of 16-18 years old were attending school in England and Wales. By 2013 it became compulsory for everyone to stay in education until the age of 18. Around 13.5% of the government spending was on education in 2002. Industrialization emphasized the importance of education where people worked in factories and the demand for an educated workforce increased. From the above facts we can conclude that educations systems are very closely linked to economic systems.

Educational Achievement and Intelligence:

One of the primary purposes of the education system in our society is to differentiate children, as part of the social process of their passage into wider society. These differences in educational achievement are among social classes, genders, and different ethnic groups.

The most obvious explanations for differences in educational achievement is the intelligence of the individual. Since intelligence is seen as inherited, we can explain differences in educational achievement by arguing that these difference reflect "natural" aptitudes and abilities. Upper class Children, for example, achieve most because they are the most intelligent. Hernstein and Murray (1994) sees American society as moving toward meritocracy. People’s social class is determined through their intelligence level.
Giddens (1989) argues that one definition of intelligence is that it is "what IQ tests measure". In Britain, students were allocated to one of the three kinds of school according to their performance in the eleven-plus intelligence test. A strong correlation between the results and social class was found; middle class students gaining more positions at 'grammar schools'.

This idea relates to the fact that the cultural setting within which IQ tests are created involves assumptions familiar to that culture. These assumptions may not hold true for other cultures and, therefore, such tests cannot, by definition, provide an objective comparison of "intelligence" across different cultures. These tests are favored in way of those who are in power or the better class.

Within the same culture one might expect such tests to provide an objective measurement of intelligence. However, just as different cultural groupings hold different assumptions about the world, so too do different sub-cultural groupings. Vernon, argues that all IQ tests reflect sub-cultural values, ideas, beliefs and attitudes; those of middle-class professionals who devise such tests and therefore define what is meant by “intelligence”. He further argues that since such tests are, by definition, culturally-biased, we have no way of knowing the extent to which they reflect "innate intelligence" differences.

It can be argued that the intelligence a person possess is due to inheritance from parents and environment in which he grows up. As soon as a child is born, their environment comes into play. Children are socialized in accordance with norms, values, customs, beliefs that reflect their cultural setting. It is theoretically impossible to separate "innate intelligence" from levels of intelligence developed through the socialization process.

There is a potential method for measuring the relative influence of genetics and environment and this involves identical twins separated at birth and raised in totally different environments.

Identical twins develop from the same egg that separates in the womb and they therefore share the same genetic inheritance from their parents. If they are subsequently raised in different environments - yet can be shown to have very similar levels of intelligence - then this would demonstrate that intelligence is largely inherited. Cyril Burt claimed to have discovered that the intelligence
MASS MEDIA

In this unit candidates examine how the media are organised, how they represent different issues and social groups, and what effects they have on individuals and societies.

1. Ownership and control of the media

- Trends in the organisation and control of the media; ownership patterns.
- Different perspectives on the relationship between ownership and control of the media.
- Pluralist, Marxist and Post-Modernist theories of the nature and role of the media.
- Different explanations of the processes of selection and presentation of media content.
- Debates about the relationship between the media and the State; the impact of the media on the political process in democratic and authoritarian states.
- The impact of the ‘new media’ on society

2. Media representation and effects

- The role of the media in the representation of social groups and ideas, with particular reference to class, gender, ethnicity, and age.
- Social patterns in listening, viewing and reading.
- Different theories of the effects and uses of the media; hypodermic syringe; uses and gratification; cultural effects studies.
- Impact of the media on behaviour, violence, deviance amplification.
- Problems of researching the effects of the media on audiences.

1. Ownership and control of the media

Recent trends in media ownership and control suggest that the number of companies controlling global mass media has significantly shrunk in recent years. Bagdikian (2004) notes that in 1983, 50 corporations controlled the vast majority of all news media in the USA, but by 2004 media ownership was concentrated in seven corporations.
Curran (2003) notes that ownership of British newspapers has always been concentrated in the hands of a few powerful ‘press barons’, e.g. in 1937 four men owned nearly one in every two national and local daily newspapers sold in Britain. Today, seven powerful individuals dominate the ownership of British national daily and Sunday newspapers.

The content of commercial terrestrial television is mainly controlled by one company, ITV plc, whilst access to satellite, cable and digital television in Britain is generally controlled by two companies – News Corp, (owned by Rupert Murdoch) which owns BSkyB, and Virgin Media (owned by Richard Branson).

Global conglomeration - The major difference in media ownership and control compared with forty years ago is the movement of media corporations into the global marketplace. The major media companies are now global conglomerations – transnational corporations (TNCs) with a presence in many countries.

Horizontal and vertical integration

Ownership and control of the mass media is a complex business as the following examples illustrate. Some media companies are characterized by horizontal integration or cross media ownership – this refers to the fact that global media corporations often cross media boundaries and invest in a wide range of media products. News Corp, for example, owns newspapers, magazines, book publishers, terrestrial and satellite television channels and film studios in several countries.

Some media companies have focused on increasing economic control over all aspects of the production process in order to maximize profits, e.g. film corporations not only make movies, but distribute them to their own cinema chains. This is referred to as vertical integration.

Diversification, synergy and technological convergence

Some media corporations are not content to focus on media products, but have diversified into other fields. The best example of this is Virgin which began as a music label and record shop chain, but has expanded into a wide range of products and services including cola, vodka, banking, insurance, transport, digital television, cinema and wedding dresses.
Media companies often use their very diverse interests to package or synergise their products in several different ways, e.g. a film is often accompanied by a soundtrack album, computer game, ring tone or toy action figures. A company may use its global interests to market one of its own films through its television channels, magazines and newspapers in dozens of countries at the same time.

Technological convergence is a recent trend which involves putting several technologies into one media product. Companies that normally work in quite separate media technology fields are joining up or converging in order to give customers access to a greater range of media services across technologies such as interactive television, lap-tops, MP3 players and mobile phones.

Theories of media ownership and control

Doyle (2002) suggests that examination of ownership and control patterns is important for two reasons. All points of view need to be heard if society is to be truly democratic. Abuses of power and influence by elites need to be monitored by a free media.

Doyle argues that too much concentration of media ownership is dangerous and unhealthy because the media have the power to make or break political careers and have a considerable influence over public opinion.

The pluralist theory of media ownership

Pluralists argue that media owners are generally responsible in the way that they manage information because media content is mainly shaped by consumer demand in the marketplace. They therefore only give the buying public what they want. Moreover, editors, journalists and broadcasters have a strong sense of professional ethics which act as a system of checks and controls on potential owner abuse of the media.

Pluralists suggest that the mass media are an essential part of the democratic process because the electorate today glean most of their knowledge of the political process from newspapers and television. Pluralists argue that owners, editors and journalists are trustworthy managers and protectors of this process.