

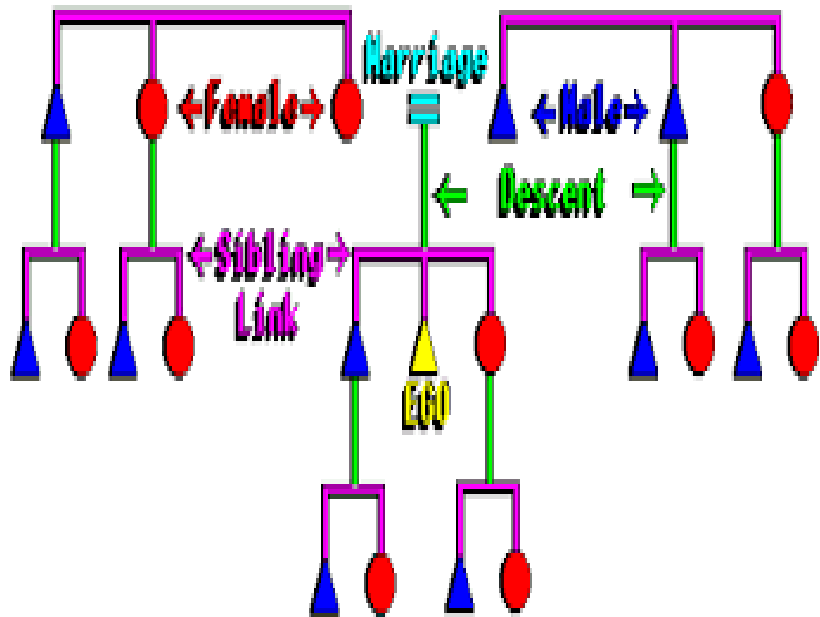
FAMILIES AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

Family: Group of people linked by kin/blood connections, a social institution exists in all societies and unites people in cooperative groups to oversee the bearing and raising children.

There are two crucial aspects to the definition of the family:

- a) members must be related and
- b) they must customarily maintain a common residence.





- Kinship: A social bond based on blood, marriage and adoption. Its ties connect individual through marriage or through line of descent that connects blood relations. Parents, brother sisters become relatives of the partner through marriage.
- Marriage: Marriage can be defined as a commitment and ongoing exchange. In noting that marriage includes a commitment, we wish to stress that it involves a more or less explicit contract that spells out rights and obligations between partners. Marriage includes ongoing exchange.

*Issues of Equality in Family

- The modern social structure sees both men and women as equal partners of the society with equal rights, status and responsibility. This is a sudden change of concepts of a male dominated society. In the families, people who have observed authoritarian father and submissive mothers may expect the same when they setup their own families.
- The equal status may disturb the husbands as the laid-underneath superiority elements may require certain amount of time to dissolve themselves and accept the new socio-cultural setup. The aspect of equality will give rise to certain issues too. Who is to direct and who to be directed? Who is the authority in family related issues? etc., may put the family in trouble. If not accepted well and handled appreciably, the family may become like a vehicle steered to different direction at the same time by many drivers.

*Clash in Family Responsibilities

- Family is not just an institution of many people living together under one roof; but the union of similar minded or mutually loving people bound with certain duties and responsibilities. The gender role structure was deliberately designed by the initial social setups to help the people accept and realize the specific duties each gender bound to.
- But today, in many societies both the parents work and earn for the family and both father and mother enjoys equal social statues and financial independence. At this point, the role of homemaker becomes no one's responsibility and both the partners may insist the other one to be the homemaker. Adjustments, understanding and empathy are the advised aspects that may help a smooth running family. Clinging to the century old concepts and lifestyles may help only to worsen the situation.

*Kids and Gender Roles

- Traditional family system had enough time dedicated for the kids as the mother was responsible for the entire process of childcare. The father had to bring in the essential food supplies.
- But modern lifestyle makes both the parents busy working for the family and earning the amount to meet the demands of life. Kids many a times are left with caretakers.
- It is quite difficult for any parent to balance between the modern lifestyle and parenting or homemaker tasks. Kids need to be trained to cop up with the family roles. This will help them to be more understanding and affectionate to parents.

*WHAT ROLE DOES THE STATE PLAY IN SHAPING FAMILY LIFE?

- It may be thought that the politicians chief concern is with the economy and provision of services. However the state does have the power to intrude into what we call our personal lives and it can be seen to regulate our personal behaviour.
- “The state sets the framework within which couples live in a legal relationship called marriage, it determines the age of consent to sexual intercourse, it makes certain kinds of intercourse criminal acts, it forbids or regulates the grounds on which abortions can be undertaken legally.
- The courts set precedents and rules which determine what happens when a marriage breaks up. All of these functions profoundly affect the quality of peoples lives and are part of social policy” (Glennister 2000:137).
- *In other words, the personal is political.*

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FAMILY

From Functionalist Sociology Perspective

- Society has a set of institutions including family.
- Family performs important tasks to contribute to society's basic needs like biological reproduction, economic production, child rearing and socialization, material and emotional security, the basic division of labor.
- According to Talcott Parson modern nuclear family has two basic functions such as primary socialization and personality stabilization.
- Nuclear family fits to the modern industrial society's needs perfectly in terms of inside and outside responsibilities of household between men and women.

From Feminist Sociology Perspective

- Family is not harmonious and egalitarian locus.
- The experiences of women in the nuclear family is worth to investigate sociologically.
- Women in the family are under the oppressions of family relations not happy with boring child-care and domestic responsibilities.
- Existing unequal power relations in the family give privileges to some family members, men.
- *Domestic Division of Labour*: It may be as a result of industrialization or patriarchy. It is the fact that industrialization had divided men's and women's spheres inside and outside the family. Women's unpaid labour still contributes to the overall economy.
- *Unequal Power Relations*: Domestic violence and abusive side of the family life are ignored in academic, legal and policy making areas.
- *Caring activities*: Women care for children, the ill and elder members of family and perform heavy emotional works.
- Marxist feminists argue the main cause of women's oppression in the family is not men, but capitalism. Women are a 'reserve army of cheap labour' – if women's primary role is domestic, and they are restricted from working, this also means they are in reserve, to be taken on temporarily as necessary.

From radical feminist point of view

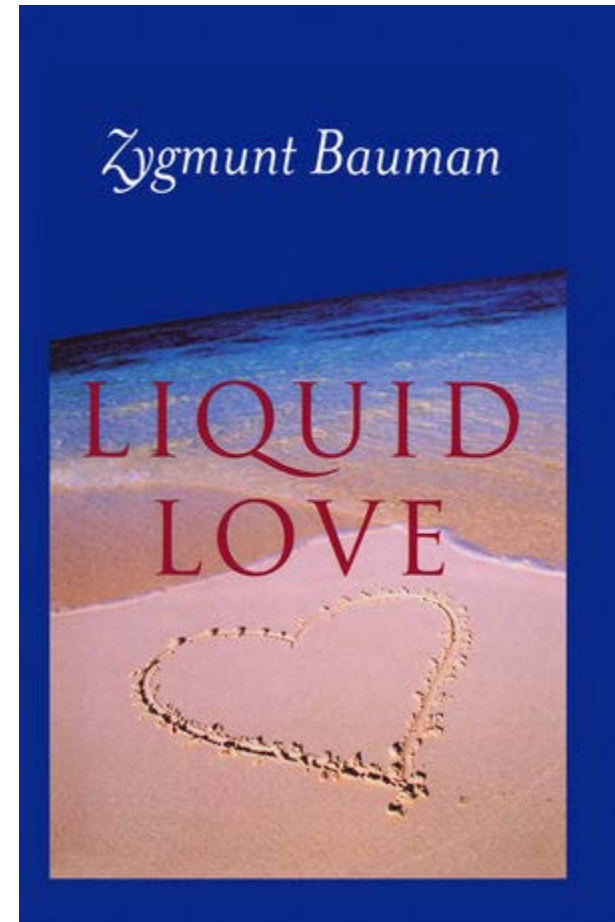
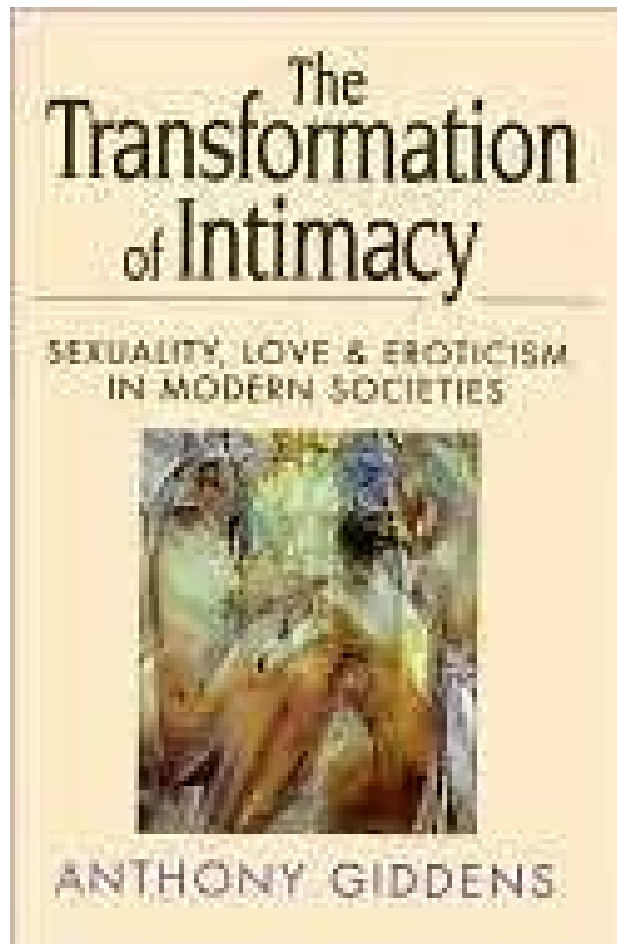
- Radical feminists argue that all relationships between men and women are based on patriarchy – essentially men are the cause of women’s exploitation and oppression.
- For radical feminists, the entire patriarchal system needs to be overturned, in particular the family, which they view as root of women’s oppression.
- Against Liberal Feminism, they argue that paid work has not been ‘liberating’. Instead women have acquired the ‘dual burden’ of paid work and unpaid housework and the family remains patriarchal – men benefit from women’s paid earnings and their domestic labour.



Anthony Giddens: the pure relationship

Giddens argues that in recent decades families are characterised by equal relationship between men and women.

1. The couple are free to define the relationship themselves rather than simply acting out roles that have been defined in advance by law or tradition. For example, couples today can chose to cohabit rather than marry.
2. Couples stay together because of love, happiness of sexual attraction rather than tradition a sense of duty or for the sake of the children (pure relationship).
3. Relationships become part of the process of self-discovery or self-identity trying different relationships become part of establishing who we are part of our journey of self discovery.
4. Giddens notes that with more choice, personal relationships inevitably become less stable and can be ended more or less at will by any partner!



Giddens: Transformation of intimacy

- Romantic love is a product of is associated with ‘romance,’ not only as a form of storytelling in which self is narrated.
- In the pre-modern era there was no intimacy in love relationship because “most marriages were contracted, not on the basis of mutual sexual attraction, but economic circumstance”(38).
- Intimacy is “incompatible with lust, and with earthy sexuality” because “it presumes a psychic communication, a meeting of souls which is reparative in character”
- In order to talk about intimacy, it is prerequisite for us to acknowledge that the self is incomplete being and that love is a communication between the self and the other – both of them are incomplete.

Transformation intimacy

- Thus, as Giddens argues, “clear boundaries within a relationship are obviously important for confluent love and the sustaining of intimacy”(94). Sustainment of love, which was enabled in the modern era, is coincident with the emergence of self and its reflexivity. Without the concept of self and its reflexivity, there would not have been love and acknowledgement of other. Self-identity lies in setting up the relationship with others, i.e. establishment of boundaries. It is in this point that mutual intimacy is important in building a certain relationship.
- Consequently, the problem of intimacy is deeply related with the process of democratization of the private sphere. As political democracy is concerned with free and equal relations between individuals in the public sphere, intimacy is structurally correspondent to the private sphere. Democratized relationship between men and women, children and parents.



Liquid love: Bauman

- In our 'liquid modern' times definition and self-assertion to come to a rest.
- the man or woman with no bonds, and particularly with none of the fixed or durable bonds that would allow the effort of self.
- Having no permanent bonds, the denizen of our liquid modern society must tie whatever bonds they can to engage with others, using their own wits, skill and dedication. But none of these bonds are guaranteed to last.
- Moreover, they must be tied loosely so that they can be untied again, quickly and as effortlessly as possible, when circumstances change.
- The uncanny frailty of human bonds, the feeling of insecurity that frailty inspires, and the conflicting desires to tighten the bonds yet keep them loose, are the principal themes of liquid love.

U. Beck and E.Beck-Gernsheim: The Normal Chaos of Marriage in the risk society

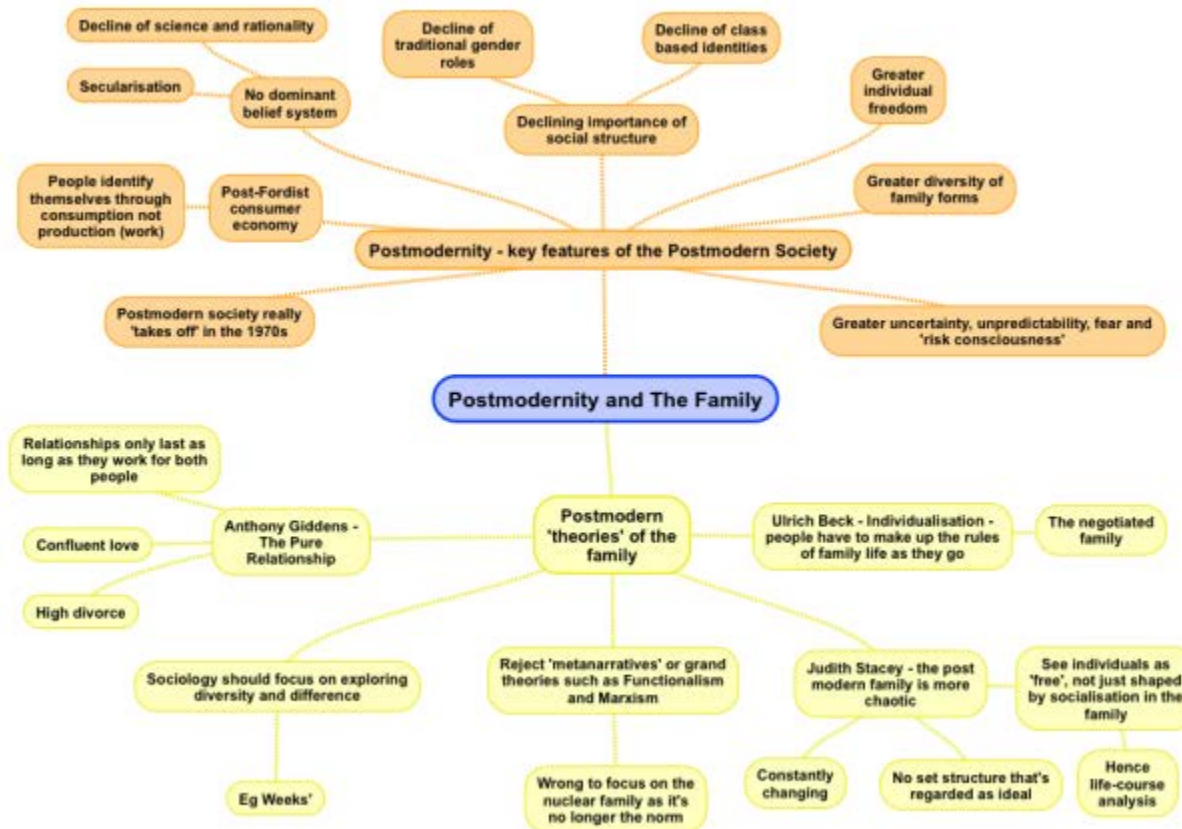
- Today's risk society contrasts with the modern society of the past with its stable nuclear family and traditional gender roles. Beck argues that even though the traditional patriarchal family was unequal and oppressive, it did provide a stable and predictable basis for the family by defining each member's role and responsibly.
- Family as a union is not an economic unit but it is volunteer and emotional. In modern families people encounter clash of interests between family, work, love and freedom.
- Greater Gender Equality – which has challenged male domination in all spheres of life. Women now expect equality both at work and in marriage.
- Greater individualism – where people's actions are influenced more by calculations of their own self-interest than by a sense of obligation to others.
- Partners have to fulfill their professional and personal needs.
- Today's relationships are not just about love, sex, children, marriage and domestic duties but also about work politics, economics, professions and inequality.
- Family life is still very important for people. People are still 'hunger for love'. People get married and divorce for the sake of love with the hope and faith in the possibility of finding "true love" and fulfillment.
- Love rescues us from impersonal, abstract and rapidly changing world. It is the only place where people can truly find uncertainty and risk love is real.

Postmodernist interpretation

- We no longer live in the modern world with predictable orderly structures but a new, chaotic postmodern era.
- In postmodern society, family structures are incredibly varied and individuals have much more freedom of choice.
- Two key characteristics: a) diversity and fragmentation to construct identities; b) rapid social change in the information society.
- As a result of these social changes, family life has become very diverse and there is no longer one dominant family type such as the nuclear family.
- Metanarratives like by Parsons or



Postmodernity and the family



***THE FUTURE AND THE ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS**

- Silverstein and Auerbach (2003) offer a definition of the post-modern family as “two or more people who are in a relationship created by birth, marriage or choice”. They suggest that we are in a period of transition whereby we are struggling to detach ourselves from gendered ideology around family, despite many of us living lives that clearly do not conform i.e. struggling to manage gendered roles in our own families, same sex couples, single parent families, extended families, reconstituted families etc.
- Gender inequality in the family appears a particularly stubborn problem and must be tackled on all levels. The representation of and support for a diverse range of home situations and family life will offer both women and men the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Stacey (1998) “The Divorce-Extended Family”

- Judith Stacey argues that women have more freedom than ever before to shape their family arrangement to meet their needs and free themselves from patriarchal oppression. Through case studies conducted in Silicon Valley, California she found that women rather than men are the driving force behind changes in the family. She discovered that many women rejected the traditional housewife role and had chosen extremely varied life paths (some choosing to return to education, becoming career women, divorcing and remarrying). Stacey identified a new type of family “the divorce-extended family” – members are connected by divorce rather than marriage, for example ex in laws, or former husband’s new partners.

Hareven (1978) “Life Course Analysis”

Tamara Hareven advocates the approach of life course analysis, that is that sociologists should be concerned with focus on individual family members and the choices that they make throughout life regarding family arrangements. This approach recognises that there is flexibility and variation in people’s lives, for example the choices and decisions they make and when they make them. For example, when they decide to raise children, choosing sexuality or moving into sheltered accommodation in old age.

Figure 1. A representation of the *lifecourse perspective*



*Gayle Kaufman

- Research by consisting of interviews with 70 American fathers with at least one child under the age of 18 found that between 1977 and 2008 the average American man increased the amount of time spent on household chores and childcare by more than 2 hours per day on average each workday. Statistics suggest that increasingly men are performing a 'second shift' when they return home from work, spending on average 46 hours a week on on childcare and housework, which suggests that it is increasingly men rather than women who face the 'dual-burden'.
- **Kaufman** identified two new types of dad based on how they responded to the challenges of balancing work and family life.
- 'New Dads' which were by far the largest category placed a high priority on involvement with children and made some minor adjustments to their work practices – such as getting to work later or leaving earlier, or 'leaving work at work' or bringing work home with them, and trying to juggle that and family duties.
- Superdads actively adjusted their work lives to fit in with their family lives – by changing careers, cutting back work hours or adopting more flexible working hours. These dads saw spending time with their children as the most important thing in their lives, with money and career as less important.

Intensive Motherhood

- **The Emergence of 'Intensive Motherhood'** suggests things might even be getting worse for some mothers...
- According to Sharon Hays (1996) it is still mothers, rather than fathers who remain the target of most parenting advice, and today all mothers are expected to live up to a new norm of 'intensive mothering' – a style of mothering that is 'expert-guided' and child centred as well as emotionally absorbing, labour intensive and financially expensive, requiring a 24/7 focus on the child.
- Hays suggests that intensive mothering has become the taken for granted 'correct' style of mothering , and the the focus is typically on the mother and not on the father.
- **Radical Feminists** also remind us that 9/10 single parents are female.

Divorce and Separation in the West

- Divorce is a relatively new fact when we compare it's history of marriage.
- Most countries are making divorce easier in law than before. In Turkey, in the last decade, some amendments were approved by the Parliament. The first: no fault divorce laws were introduced in 1960s. Between 1960-1970 some laws were amended according to new social needs to make divorce easier.
- Divorce is not always indicator of marital unhappiness. The reasons of divorce;

- *Marriage is not the only way to keep property and status,
- *Women are relatively more economically independent now,
- *Marriage is becoming a way of meeting personal satisfaction,
- *Even married couple may prefer to live in separate houses.

Recent Changes in Family and Marriage

- Lone Parent Household: After divorce or separation, fathers have limited relations with rest of the family. Some unmarried women are single parents. Female headed, single parent families contributed *feminization of poverty* in most countries.
- Remarriage: Divorced people may be more ready to dissolve new marriages than those only married ones.



Recent Changes

- Step Families and Reconstituted Families: Adoption is a method to become non-biological parents of any children without genetic connection. Adoptive parents have legal rights on children. Step-parents have no legal rights on their step children. Being step-parent maintains only as long as the marriages lasts.

Member of these families are developing their own ways of adjusting to the relatively unchanged circumstances in which they find themselves.

- Women Remaining Childless: The value and cost of children has been changing. Many women do not prefer to have a baby. They usually prefer success in working life or autonomy in private life. Especially in Europe fertility rate is declining.

Alternatives to Marriage

Cohabitation: A couple can prefer living together in the same house in a sexual relationship without a marriage.

Gay-Parent Families: Homosexual men and women have children or adopt children and then build up a marriage. In some countries they have a legal right to get married.



Three features of homosexual marriage

- Equality between partners: They are not engaged with power relations that exist in heterosexual marriages.
- Negotiate: They do not have traditional gender roles, everything within the marriage can be the subject of negotiation.
- Commitment: Their common rules are not originated by institutional support. They develop deliberately different set of commitment.



The Dark Side of Family: Violence and Abuse in Family Life



- Family is not always peaceful. There are many social, emotional and economic oppressive sides of family.
- Incest is sexual relations between close kin or 'sexual contact between a child and kin adult for the purpose of the adults' sexual gratification'.
- Incest is also child abuse because most of the children who face it are under 18 years old.
- Child abuse may cause long term hazards in adulthood. Child abuse includes parental immaturity, unrealistic expectations, lack of parental knowledge, social isolation, unmet emotional needs.

The Dark side of family

- Domestic violence is physical abuse directed by one member of family against another or others. It is generally directed by men against women and children. In modern societies any member of family may face any kind of domestic violence within home. Most violent cases happen by husbands against their wives.



The Dark Side of family

- Feminists sees the domestic violence as a major form of men's power used over women. Women also use violence against their children but not physically.
- The important point related with domestic violence is not the number of them but its meaning, context and effects. Men's violence causes more physical injury.



The situation in Cyprus

- The law establishes clear mechanisms to report and prosecute family violence and provides that the testimony of minors and experts such as psychologists may be used as evidence to prosecute abusers.
- The law also provides for prison terms for the abuse of family members; however, very few court cases resulted in convictions.
- Doctors, hospital workers, and education professionals are required to report all suspected cases of domestic violence to the police. Many victims refused to testify in court, and, under the law, spouses cannot be compelled to testify against each other.
- The law criminalizes rape and spousal rape with a maximum sentence of life in prison. Most convicted offenders received considerably less than the maximum sentence.

Why domestic violence occurs?

- Emotional intensity of family life. Family has strong emotional ties both love and hate.
- Family members can be less tolerant towards the member of their own families than strangers.
- Domestic violence could be tolerated socially. They are probably not even thought of as “ violence”.
- Biting and hitting are not accepted as natural in public sphere. But it is not the case with the family.
- Rape within marriage is also defined violence against women.

Directions of the Changes

- Extended families and other kin groups are declining in their influence.
- There is a general trend towards the free choice of spouse.
- The women's rights are becoming more widely recognized, in respect to both the initiation of marriage and decision –making within the family.
- Kin marriages are becoming less common.
- Higher level of sexual freedom developing. Pre-marital and extra - marital sex are increasing.
- Understanding of children's right is becoming more widely accepted.
- The level of divorce has gone up drastically, but remarriage is the mode for divorced persons.

Debate about Family Values

- Family is collapsing:
 - liberal sexual attitudes
 - seeking for personal happiness
 - unstable and confusing relationships cause problems. Therefore the traditional family values should be followed.
- Family is diversifying.
 - Variety of families should be encouraged.

***WHAT ROLE DOES THE STATE PLAY IN SHAPING FAMILY LIFE?**

- Welfare, tax policies and legislation have historically favoured married couples but moves towards embracing equality through legislation and policy e.g. Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act, divorce legislation, increased availability of contraception, decriminalising of homosexuality, New Deal for Lone Parents, Civil Partnerships Act, Adoption legislation and Tax Credits have enabled Families (largely women) to make more choices.
- The new Commission for Equality and Human Rights in the UK emerging from the Equality Act 2006 promises to provide a more comprehensive protective and supportive mechanism for issues of inequality and discrimination.
- However discrimination and oppression (including benevolent oppression) persist ensuring that appearance, traits, roles and responsibilities ascribed to women are consistently undermined and marginalised in comparison to typically masculine attributes and roles.
- Legislation regarding gender equality issues in some countries is well established, it is principally concerned with employment issues and the provision of goods and services. Women's integration into the labour market and Higher Education has been largely successful although inequity exists with regards to women's occupational position and earnings overall though the same cannot be said of the private sphere.

*WHY THE CHANGES?

- Increased divorce rates (the vast majority of petitions are instigated by women),
- Less stigma attached to different family choices e.g. cohabitation, same sex relationships, children without Fathers, elected childlessness,
- Women have more economic freedom so are less dependent on men,
- Legislation and policy reforms give women more power e.g. Domestic Violence Act, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit (as outlined above),
- Advances in reproductive technologies,
- The effects of globalisation resulting in exposure to different cultural norms in relation to family.

Evidence of women going into paid work and the gendered division of labour

- **Evaluations – To what extent are gender roles becoming more equal?**
- It seems obvious that women going into paid work has resulted in greater equality. As most women are now in paid-work this means they have more financial independence than ever before.
- Statistics (see the next topic, link below) clearly show that the gendered division of labour has become more equal since the 1950s
- **However**, Radical Feminists argue that paid work has led to the dual burden and triple shift
- One argument used to support this view is that paid work has not been 'liberating'. Instead women have acquired the 'dual burden' of paid work and unpaid housework and the family remains patriarchal – men benefit from women's paid earnings and their domestic labour. Some Radical Feminists go further arguing that women suffer from the 'triple shift' where they have to do paid work, domestic work and 'emotion work' – being expected to take on the emotional burden of caring for children.

As British Political Commentator Polly
Toynbee wryly notes:

- *“Young women outshining boys at school have a habit of thinking all of the great feminist causes are won; but once they become Mothers are shocked to find out it isn’t so, they are too exhausted to do anything about it”.*
- Guardian 6/6/03

The Way Forward

- Personal responsibilities- consider your language, challenge sexism stereotyping and discrimination in self and others. Discuss roles and responsibilities with family members (language and humour reflect dominant ideologies and normalise discrimination and oppression thereby reinforcing inequality e.g. just a housewife, breadwinner, sexual objectification of women etc
- Professional responsibilities – evaluate company's/professions code of conduct/mission statement/equal opportunities policy – is it real? Consider diversity in interactions with customers.
- Organisational responsibilities –flexible-working arrangements for all? Maternity/paternity options. Equal opportunities recruitment and selection procedures support for women returning to work, parenting classes for men. Self-development activities. On site childcare. Appropriate marketing?

Future of the Family

- Divorce rate is likely to remain high.
- Alternative family types are increasing.
- Men are devoting themselves to child-care and domestic responsibilities than before.
- Career partners may advance the goal of gender equality.
- New reproductive technology will increase and alter the traditional meaning of parenthood.

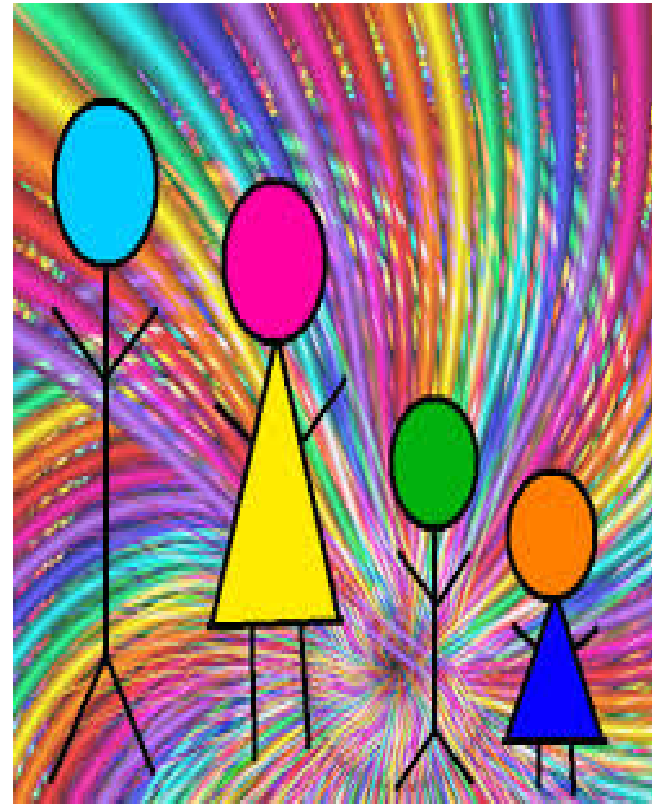
A sketch of the average family's world to 2025/30 by OECD

At risk of considerable generalisation, their environment could look roughly as follows:

- Many more grey-haired people will be in their vicinity than is currently the case; They will find themselves with at least four and possibly even five generations in the family alive at the same time, though not all under the same roof;
- Young families themselves will tend to be small, interacting with other small families; many of them will be single-parent and cohabiting-couple households;
- More young people will be preparing for higher education, especially girls;

A sketch of the average family's world to 2025/30 by OECD

- Young families living in urban centres will find themselves interacting much more with families of different ethnicity or of mixed origin;
- This will be felt especially at school and college as the numbers and shares of such children increase, exposing all children to a much richer range of cultural values and points of view (some consensual, some conflictual) in the classroom;
- Overall economic situation will not be conducive to expectations of higher incomes, with overall economic growth rates quite modest over the period in question;



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A sketch of the average family's world to 2025/30 by OECD

Slow reform of pay-as-you-go social security systems will weigh heavily on young-peoples pay packets, just as energy, food and possibly housing costs will weigh heavily on family budgets;

- Competition for jobs among young people will not be as intense as today, given the smaller cohorts, but there will be an abundance of more precarious job openings, so that competition for the “quality” employment opportunities will remain fierce;
- Security will remain a concern for parents in many countries, with alcohol and drug abuse increasingly an established part of the scene.

