

# A Level Sociology Knowledge Organiser

## Gender roles (Family)

### Sociological views of gender roles

#### Are gender roles more equal today?

##### Yes

**Symmetrical family:** Young and Wilmott – families have become more symmetrical with joint conjugal roles, both in paid work, help with childcare, more privatised, likely to be nuclear  
 More symmetrical due to changes in society – position of women and changing attitudes  
 × Not all families are more symmetrical – common in younger couples  
**New man:** Caring, sharing man, helps with housework, childcare, rejects sexist attitudes, rise in ‘househusbands’ and those helping with childcare  
 ✓ Man Yee Kan: younger men do more housework supporting the ‘New Man’  
**Sullivan:** Survey data over 25 years shows progress towards symmetry  
**Gershuny:** Women who work full time do less housework  
**Time use survey 2015:** Fathers are taking increasing responsibility for childcare  
**Postmodernism:** Less pressure to conform to traditional roles, individualisation thesis, creates ‘pure relationships’ based on individual needs

##### No

**Parsons:** Biologically men are suited to ‘instrumental’ role and women are suited to the ‘expressive’ role  
**Feminists:** Gender roles are still segregated, promote patriarchy, radical – men benefit from women’s unpaid domestic labour  
**Oakley:** Men cherry-pick easier tasks, blames gender socialisation (25% men childcare, 15% housework)  
**Dual burden:** Women responsible for paid work and unpaid housework  
**Triple shift:** Women responsible for paid work, unpaid housework and emotion work  
**The new man could be a myth:** Women still do 1 hour more unpaid labour per day on average than men, 2/3 women still responsible for laundry  
**Time use survey 2015:** Women still perform approximately 60% of unpaid work in the home

#### Factors affecting gender roles / division of labour

##### Sexuality

**Dunne:** Roles more equal in lesbian couples, evidence of symmetry (no set gender roles)  
 Domestic violence may be more common in same-sex couples

##### Age

**Man Yee Kan:** younger men do more housework, changing attitudes, changing gender socialisation

##### Class

M/C may be less equal – men may do less housework (Lyonette)  
**‘Managing director’ family** (Young and Wilmott) which are less symmetrical (stratified diffusion)  
**Commercialisation of housework** – M/C can afford products to make housework easier

##### Culture

Afro-Caribbean men take part in more housework than white British/Asian men

##### Women’s working status

Gershuny: women who work do less housework  
 Dual burden/triple shift – working women still responsible for majority of housework/childcare

**Functionalists** - Roles are segregated and based on biological differences  
 Parsons – males perform instrumental role (breadwinner), females perform expressive role (carer, nurturer)  
 Segregated roles are beneficial to stabilise society and socialise children correctly

**The New Right** - Traditional gender roles are beneficial in society, prevents welfare dependency and promotes strong socialisation

**Feminists** - Traditional gender roles are undesirable and promote patriarchy, gender roles should be equal/joint, power and domestic division of labour should be distributed equally

**Postmodernists** - Traditional gender roles have become less important, there is more freedom to construct roles that suit the individual (less pressure to conform to traditional ideals)

#### Power relationships

##### Power is more equal

**Money management:** Vogler and Pahl – more couples use pooling system (more common in dual worker couples)  
**Decision making:** 70% of couples have an equal say in decision making (Laurie and Gershuny)

##### Power is not equal

**Money management:** Men still make most important financial decision  
**Decision making:** Most important decisions taken jointly or by man alone, his career takes priority (Hardill)  
**Domestic violence** – women are more likely to be victims

##### Domestic violence

**Statistics:** 1/4 women, 1/6 men are victims in their lifetime  
**Radical feminist explanation:** Men use violence to control their partners, result of patriarchy and gender socialisation. Crisis of masculinity – males use violence to show/exert masculinity  
 ✓ Dobash and Dobash: violence often followed challenges to male authority  
 × Statistics may not be accurate – men underreport being victims  
 Alternative explanation: Caused by inequality/stress (not patriarchy) - Wilkinson