KEY TOPIC AREAS TO REVISE

1. Theories of the family
2. Family policies
3. Changes in marriage and divorce rates
4. Family diversity
5. Gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships
6. Childhood
7. Demography

STRUCTURE OF PAPER 2 – TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY

Families and Households (you will have 1 hour to answer this part of the paper)

- 10 MARK QUESTION (15 minutes)
- 10 MARK QUESTION WITH ITEM BOX (15 minutes)
- 20 MARK ESSAY QUESTION WITH ITEM BOX (30 minutes)

COMMAND WORDS

Outline and explain...means to set out the main characteristics and develop these purposes or reasons. For each reason a paragraph is probably enough.

Applying material from an Item...is used as a preface to a command telling students to draw on material from a selected piece of information provided as part of the exam question. The key here is relevance. How appropriate is the selection and presentation of knowledge to the question posed?

Analyse....means to separate information into components and identify their characteristics. It is the ability to discuss in detail such things as a study or a sociological concept.

Evaluate...means to judge from available evidence.

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10 MARK QUESTIONS

Outline and explain two changes that New Right theorists might see as undermining the traditional family.

Outline and explain two ways in which industrialisation has changed family structure.

Outline and explain two areas on inequality in conjugal relationships other than household chores.

Outline and explain two reasons why domestic labour is often not regarded as real work compared to paid employment.

Outline and explain two changes in society which may have contributed to women’s changing roles within families.

Outline and explain two ways in which relationships are becoming more equal.

Outline and explain two household types that have increased in the UK in recent years.

Outline and explain two reasons for the significant increase in lone-person households.

Outline and explain two reasons for the growth of one-parent families.

Outline and explain two reasons for the recent decline in the number of divorces.

Outline and explain two ways in which changes to gender roles have affected diversity of family structures.

Outline and explain two reasons for the increase in the proportion of births taking place outside of marriage.
Outline and explain two ways in which family life may vary between ethnic groups.

Outline and explain two reasons for the decline of marriage in the UK.

Outline and explain two ways in which changes in society may have weakened the traditional nuclear family unit.

Outline and explain two ways in which social policies have shaped family life.

Outline and explain two ways in which an ageing population can affect society.

Outline and explain two reasons why the UK population is ageing.

Outline and explain two reasons for the increase in life expectancy.

Outline and explain two ways in which the ageing population may contribute to family diversity.

Outline and explain two ways in which globalisation is affecting population levels in the UK.

Outline and explain two ways in which it could be argued that British society is now more child-centred than before.

Outline and explain two reasons for the changes in the position of children over the past 100 years.

Outline and explain two ways in which it could be argued that childhood is not a protected and privileged time.

Outline and explain two ways in which it could be argued that childhood is disappearing.
Outline and explain two reasons why children have less power in society than adults.

Outline and explain two reasons why the experience of childhood may differ between children in contemporary British society.

Outline and explain two ways in which the state protects the rights of children today.

Outline and explain two changes in society which may be reducing the distinction between ‘childhood’ and ‘adulthood’.

Outline and explain two reasons for the decline in the infant mortality rate in Britain since 1900.

Outline and explain two factors that might have led to the declining death rate.

Outline and explain two factors that might have led to the declining birth rate.
10 MARK QUESTIONS WITH ITEM BOX

ITEM A
Sociologists have commented on the functions that the nuclear family performs for its members and also for society. Some argue the structure of the family enables norms and values to be passed on generation to generation with parents performing key roles. It also functions and exists within a media saturated consumerist society.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two functions that the nuclear family performs. (10 marks)

ITEM A
The death rate has dropped from 29 per 1000 of the population in 1901, to 12 per 1000 of the population in 2013. The cause of the decline includes better health care, improved sanitation and safer working environments. This has had a number of effects on the family, both in terms of the size of the family and the roles and relationships that exist within the family too.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two effects of the declining death rate on the family. (10 marks)

ITEM A
Social policies have greatly shaped family life over the past 40 years. For example, there have been policies to increase inequality between men and women. Policies have had a number of intended and unintended effects on family structures as well as the roles and relationships in families.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two ways in which policies encourage the nuclear family. (10 marks)
20 MARK ESSAY QUESTIONS

ITEM A
According to the conflict view of childhood, children today are likely to be controlled by adults. As well as this, conflict theorists argue that children remain exploited and unhappy. However, march of progress theorists take a different view and argue that today children are more protected and valued, which is linked to their closer relationships with family members.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that the experience of childhood has improved. (20 marks)

ITEM A
Some sociologists suggest that contemporary families have become more child-centred than in the past. Parents today spend much more time with their children, and spend a great deal of money to ensure they give their children the most fulfilling upbringing possible. Many parents want their children to have opportunities that they never had themselves as children. Critics of this point to children’s lack of control over their lives, child abuse and other problems that children today may face.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that contemporary families have become more child-centred. (20 marks)

ITEM A
According to research carried out by Jonathan Gershuny (2008) relationships are gradually becoming more egalitarian. Gershuny claims that as women are increasingly working full time, men gradually begin to increase their contribution to housework. However, feminists suggest that women today experience a dual burden and continue to take responsibility not simply for housework but for many other areas of family life as well.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the ways in which relationships have changed over the past 40 years. (20 marks)
Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that the nuclear family is in decline. (20 marks)

ITEM A

One reason for the increase in family diversity is that the majority of women now participate in paid employment. Some now claim that the nuclear family is in decline, being replaced by other family structures. For instance, there has been an increase in reconstituted families.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that the main role of the family is to reinforce and maintain capitalism. (20 marks)

ITEM A

Marxists take a conflict view of society and argue that the main role of the family is to reinforce and maintain capitalism. Others, however, disagree and take a more positive view of the role of the family, both for the individual and society.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the contribution of feminist views to our understanding of the family. (20 marks)

ITEM A

Feminist approaches to the family tend to emphasise the harmful effects of family life upon women. They provide a healthy antidote to functionalist and New Right accounts, which stress the functional and beneficial side of family life, and downplay the way families may have negative consequences for the lives and opportunities for women.
**ITEM A**

In Britain, the traditional family life cycle and life course have changed dramatically. There have been huge changes in family formation, and young people face growing uncertainty as they encounter a range of choices in their personal lives, and are less guided and constrained by traditional norms and values surrounding family life and relationships.

**Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that changing norms and values have contributed to growing diversity in personal and family life today. (20 marks)**

**ITEM A**

In contemporary Britain, families are often thought to be more ‘symmetrical’, whereby the relationship between married or cohabiting couples has become less patriarchal, or male-dominated, and much more an equally balanced partnership. Both partners share household chores, child-care and decision-making, and both partners are more likely to be involved in paid employment.

**Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that contemporary families have become partnerships of equals. (20 marks)**

**ITEM A**

Since 1900, there have been significant declines in birth and death rates, and greater life expectancy in the UK. More women are choosing to have fewer or no children, and many delay having children until they are older. Such demographic changes are influencing the size and shape of families and households, and contributing to greater family and household diversity.

**Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the view that demographic changes are leading to more family and household diversity in contemporary UK. (20 marks)**
Outline and explain two ways in which women’s involvement in paid work has affected family structures. (10 marks)

Women’s involvement in paid work has affected family structures in many ways. Women’s involvement in paid work has led to greater independence, which has affected family structures.

With more women’s involvement in paid work, means that they put off having a family. This is shown through 34% of women now choosing not to have children. This is because they are more career driven, they want to earn money and be independent so they put off having children meaning there is no set family structure.

However, women are in paid work and still have children, however gender roles in the family structure are different to the ‘traditional’ family structure. If a woman is involved in paid work, the husband may have the expressive role instead of the instrumental role. This means they do the housework, emotional and childcare, whilst the mother works. This means the family structure is different to what it would normally be.

7/10 – the answer has two applications of relevant material – putting off having a family and changes to gender roles – analysis is basic.

- the first point shows some application but does not give a full analysis in relation to change in family structure.
- The second point also shows some limited analysis.
Outline and explain two ways in which changes to gender roles have affected diversity of family structures. (10 marks)

The Equal Pay Act has allowed women to get higher pay than they did previously, and supposedly equal to men. This allows women to be economically independent and get their own jobs without relying on men to fund the household. This has also meant that women can live alone and support themselves. This has meant that women may now choose to delay marriage and live alone rather than having to get married and have a man to support her. For women who are already married, being able to work may mean that they can afford to get divorced if they choose. This leads to an increase in lone parent families.

Changes in social attitudes have meant that different family structures are now more acceptable. The impact of feminism has enabled women to be aware of their social position and to seek to reject patriarchy. Women now look to men to share domestic tasks with them in the home. For some couples this has meant a change to joint conjugal roles where both partners undertake domestic and childcare duties. Critics may argue that it is more likely that in these families there is a dual burden as men fail to take their full share of domestic duties. In some cases, the role in the family may reverse with women taking the breadwinner role and men staying at home and being househusbands. These changes to gender roles may continue as more children are socialised in families with more equal gender roles, giving them an awareness of the need for equality. The impact of feminism may also mean women delay having children as they do not feel the same pressure. In some cases, this may mean women choose to remain childless.

10/10

The answer shows good knowledge and understanding of gender roles and family diversity. The material is appropriately applied to the question by linking the change in gender roles to the differences this makes to family structures. In the first paragraph, this is linked to women being able to work and how this can lead to either single person households or lone parent families. In the second paragraph application shows how feminism can impact on attitudes and how this may then lead to different structures.
Applying material from Item C and your knowledge, evaluate the contribution of functionalist views to our understanding of the family. (20 marks)

Functionalist sociologists believe that the family benefits society and the individual within it. They believe that society is based on value consensus and shared norms and values. Functionalists also see the family and other social institutions as working together like the organs of the body. However, other sociologists disagree. Feminists see the family as oppressive to women rather than being beneficial for all.

Functionalist Murdock agreed that the nuclear family was so important that it occurred everywhere in all societies. He believed it was a universal institution. However, today there are many different types of families like single parent families and homosexual families which do not fit in with Murdock.

Murdock also believed that the family performed 4 functions. These were socialisation, economic, reproductive and sexual. For instance, he believed that the family was where sex should take place. This would limit tension caused by jealousy and anger if people slept with many partners. Thus conflict is avoided and harmony is created. In many ways the family in pre-industrial societies was like a Swiss army knife – it was multifunctional.

However, Parsons disagrees with Murdock and argues that after industrialisation the family has lost its functions. It now only provides socialisation of children and the stabilisation of adult personalities. These functions are very important to help society to continue. Other institutions have taken over the roles which used to be performed by the family. The NHS now provides sick care. This means that the family has fewer functions and the smaller nuclear family is more able to move – geographically and socially. The small nuclear family benefits the economy. Marxists would agree that the nuclear family benefits the economy but would criticise the view that it is beneficial to the family members. The family acts as a unit of consumption and so helps to maintain capitalism and with it the continues exploitation of workers.
The instrumental and expressive roles of men and women respectively mean that the family can perform the socialisation function. Men come home from work and can be cared for by their family and wife. This will enable them to work better tomorrow and it is good for them and society. However, feminists argue that this isolated nuclear family is not good for everyone. Women who are married are sicker and live less long than women who are not married and Ansley said that women are ‘takers of shit’.

Parsons ideas about socialisation are also criticised. The New Right would argue that many modern families socialisation is not done by parents. Children are left to sit in front of the TV and many are ruled by the electronic babysitter. They get their views from the television and the internet rather than their families. The New Right are particularly critical of diverse family structures as lone parent families and their lack of male role models.

Overall the functionalist view presents life in the family as a happy one based on the ideal of the nuclear family. But it is too rose-tinted. Families are often full of conflict. In addition, families are not all nuclear. In today’s post-modern world families come in all shapes and sizes, and this causes problems for functionalists. Parsons warm bath theory cannot work in a single parent family.

18/20

Examiner comment:

A conceptually detailed account which shows knowledge and understanding of two functionalist views. Murdock’s functions could be explained in more detail. Some aspects of Parsons could be analysed more, such as the instrumental and expressive roles. This material used is appropriate to the question.

The answer shows analysis and explanations of points. Evaluation is shown through contrasting of the functionalist view with feminism and Marxism. Internal evaluation is illustrated by comparing different functionalist views.