

TOPIC 2: Families

LI: Research in focus – What did Ann Oakley say about the conventional family?

Starter – Retrieval Quiz

1. What is the main name for the 'conventional' family.	
2. What does 'patriarchy' mean?	
3. How do functionalists feel about the typical family?	
4. How have relationships between parents and children changed?	
5. Why are the extended family becoming used more in current society?	

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Starter - Answers

1. What is the main name for the 'conventional' family.	Nuclear
2. What does 'patriarchy' mean?	Men in charge
3. How do functionalists feel about the typical family?	They like it
4. How have relationships between parents and children changed?	Less authoritarian
5. Why are the extended family becoming used more in current society?	Childcare

Learning Intentions

4/5 (All) – Explain the feminist view on the conventional family.

6/7 (Most) – Explain Oakley's opinion on conventional families with reference to strain.

8/9 (Some) – Critique Oakley's thoughts with opposing views and applied evidence.

Low

High

What is your initial confidence towards the LIs?

Ann Oakley

Ann Oakley is a feminist sociologist who studies families.

We have already learnt that feminists do not like the typical nuclear/conventional family.

Why not?



Ann Oakley

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We have already learnt that feminists do not like the typical nuclear/conventional family.

Why not?

They believe that it encourages negative stereotypes for young girls about becoming a housewife.



Ann Oakley

Oakley said that the nuclear/conventional family causes married couples and families to be unhappy.

Thinking about the stereotypical family, why might there be unhappiness?

Think about the traditional role of the man and woman. (Instrumental/Expressive)



An 'Unhappy' Family

1 - Strain

The first reason that the conventional family leads to an unhappy family is because of **strain**. Strain basically means stress and pressure on each other.

Oakley said that the conventional family puts unnecessary stress on both the wife and husband in families:

- Mothers are always at home – this leads to depression and dissatisfaction.
- Men are always at work – this leads to stress and health issues as he worries about providing for his family.

How far do you agree that living in a conventional family can cause stress and health issues?

An 'Unhappy' Family

2 - Financial inequality

The second reason that the conventional family leads to an unhappy family is because of **financial inequality**. As the man earns the money, the couple do not get equal say on how the money is spent.

Examples of financial inequality:

The woman depends on the man's wages – this means she can't be independent.

The man thinks he has power as he earns money, especially when children are young and mum stays home full time – this causes arguments.

If a woman gets a job, it is usually to help pay bills and they don't get to keep as much for themselves as the man – this means she can't treat herself.

Summary

As you can see, feminists and Ann Oakley really do not like the nuclear/conventional family!

Challenge

How are Oakley's views different to functionalists?

On the next page, we will have a go at some questions to check your understanding.

Checking Understanding

1. What type of sociologist is Ann Oakley? (1)
2. Identify how traditional feminists (not Oakley) feel about the family and explain one reason why they feel this way. (3)
3. Explain two criticisms Oakley made of the conventional family. (4)
4. Identify one sociologist who supports the nuclear family and explain one reason why they feel like this. (4)

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Consolidation

What changes to the conventional family do you think would make Oakley happy?

Remember, 'equal work jobs' might not work as you may end up with the triple shift!