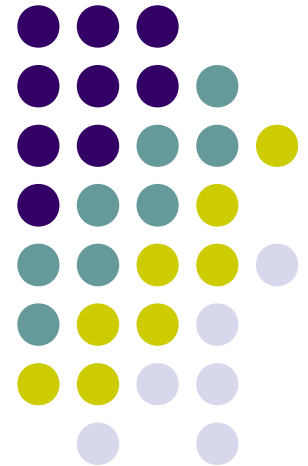
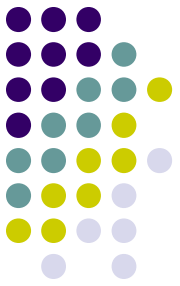


Chapter 3

THE FAMILY

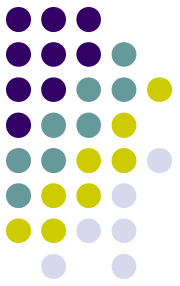




FAMILY STRUCTURES

- Nuclear
- Extended
- Lone parent
- Reconstituted/step
- Same sex

Nuclear Family



“ a small unit derived from the relationship between a man and a woman legally bound together through marriage as husband and wife. The nuclear family is created when a child is born to this couple. The unit shares a common residence and is united by ties of affection, common identity and support.”

Muncie and Sapsford(1995)

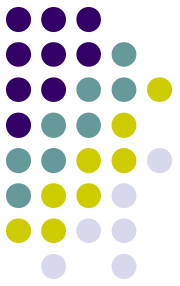
Extended Family



“ a family group consisting of close relatives extending beyond the couple and their children, living either within the same household or in a close and continuous relationship with one another.”

Giddens(2001)

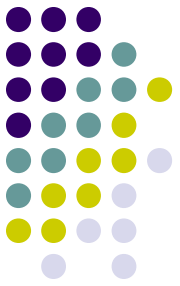
Lone Parent Family



“one parent, frequently the mother, living alone with the children, with a greater proportion of responsibility for caring for children financially and emotionally.”

(Dallos and Sapsford, 1995)

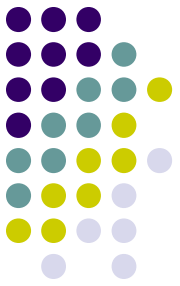
Reconstituted Family



“ a family in which at least one of the adults has children from a previous union, either living in the home or nearby. Reconstituted families are also known as stepfamilies.”

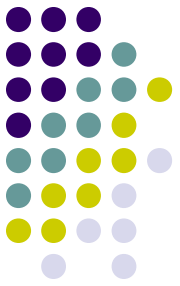
(Giddens 2001)

Same Sex Family



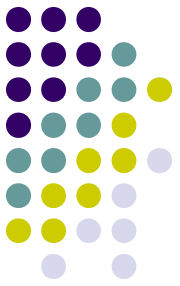
A same sex family is defined as two parents of the same sex living together and sharing the parenting of the children of the family.

Construction of Gender Roles



- Socialisation
- The Family
- School
- The Media

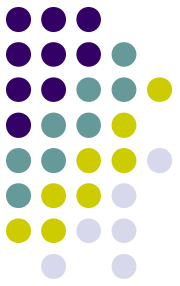
How Gender Roles are Learned



Childhood

- parents` expectations
- imitation
- identification
- group pressure

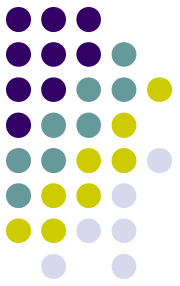
How Gender Roles are Learned



School

- teachers` expectations
- hidden curriculum
- pupils` expectations

How Gender Roles are Learned



Work

- types of employment
- rates of pay
- attitudes to women in the workplace

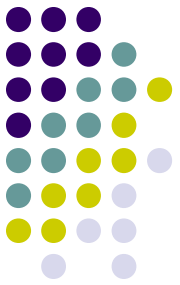
How Gender Roles are Learned



Parenthood

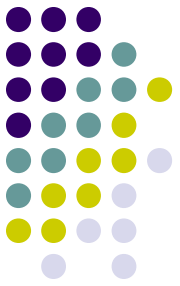
Leisure

Media



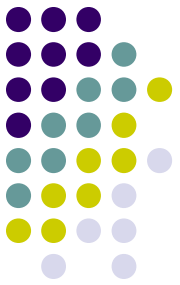
SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES and THE FAMILY

Functionalism and the Family



The analysis of the family from a functionalist perspective involves three main questions.

1. What are the functions of the family?
2. What are the functional relationships between the family and other parts of the social system?
3. What are the functions of the family for its individual members?

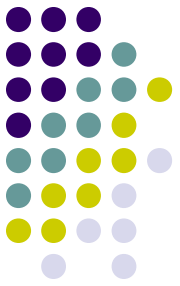


Functions of the Family

It has been suggested that the family (nuclear) must be universal and, as such, must be necessary. Murdock(1949) argued that the family is to be found in every society and has four main functions:

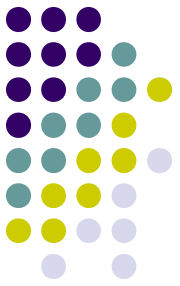
- Sexual
- Reproductive
- Economic
- Educational

The Roles of Family

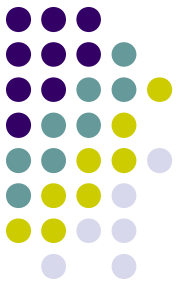


- Socialization: teaches young children what they need to know to participate in society
- Socioemotional Support: family is a place where one is generally unconditionally accepted and loved
 - Without this children won't develop normally (low self esteem, fear of rejection...)
- Reproduction: society needs reproduction to survive, family offers an organized means for producing new members

The Roles of Family cont'



- Regulate Sexual Activity: All societies have rules about mating and marrying. Regardless of the culture it is up to the family to enforce the culture's rules about sexual activity
- Transmit Social Status: Families transmit their social status to their children as well as the values that affect that social status
- Economics: In today's societies families usually need to pool their resources to buy what they need

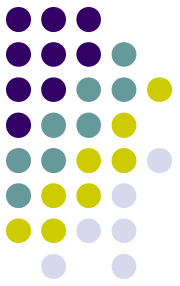


Functions of the Family

Parsons(1959) has argued that there are two basic and irreducible functions of the family:

- 1 Primary socialisation – early childhood socialisation which serves to internalise culture and develop personality.
- 2 Stabilisation of adult personalities through emotional security and the performance of appropriate roles

Criticisms of the Functionalist Perspective



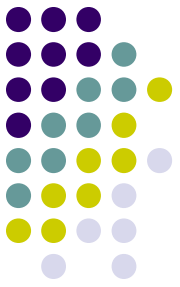
- A preoccupation with the positive aspects of the family, which is presented in a rather idealised way – implication that families are harmonious and integrated.
- Little consideration given to the problems experienced by many families.
- Emphasis upon the way in which the family meets the needs of the social system.

Criticism of the Functionalist Perspective



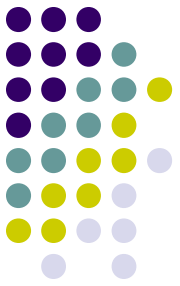
- Justified the domestic division of labour between men and women as something natural and unproblematic.
- Neglects the role that other social institutions, other than the family, such as government, media and schools, play in socialising children.

Conflict Perspective and the Family



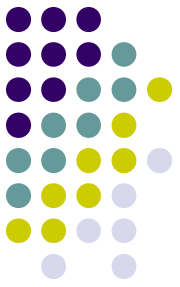
The family is seen as a unit which produces one of the basic commodities of capitalism – **labour** (the family produces and rears cheap labour).

Conflict Perspective and the Family



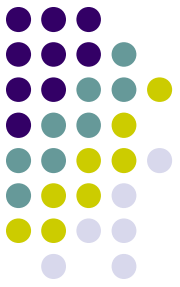
Within the family, children learn to conform and submit to authority. In this way, the foundation is laid for the obedient and submissive workforce required by capitalism.

Conflict Perspective and the Family



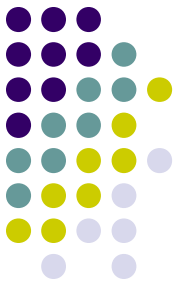
Change in the family is illustrated by such developments as increasing divorce rates, step families, lone parent families, same sex families. These changes are neither functional nor dysfunctional but part of the inevitable move and shift which is always taking place in society.

Conflict Perspective and the Family



Constraint upon the family is imposed by external factors – the promotion of norms and values through the law and social policy. Promotion of family values encourages people to behave in certain ways, which may be seen as constraint. People have legal responsibilities to their children – Children

Conflict Perspectives and the Family

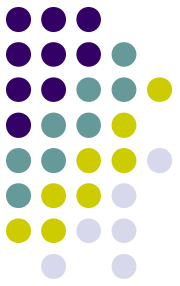


Conflict is illustrated through the occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse.

“Far from being the basis of the good society, the family, with its narrow privacy and tawdry (grubby) secrets, is the source of all our discontents.”

(Leach 1971)

Conflict Perspectives and the Family



Dobash and Dobash (1980) in a Scottish study of domestic violence said:

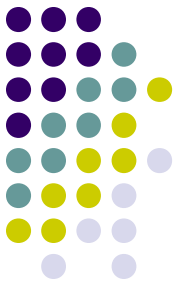
“For most people, and especially for women and children, the family is the most violent group to which they are likely to belong. Despite fears to the contrary, it is not a stranger but a so-called loved one who is most likely to assault, rape or murder us.”

Conflict Theorists



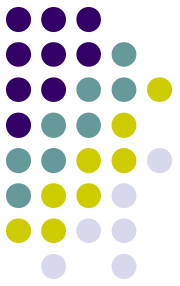
- Conflict Theorists focus on how family members compete and cooperate
 - Because throughout history most family structures were based on patriarchy and patrilineal lines, family systems have been built on gender inequality
- Gender Relationships in the Family
 - According to conflict theorists, males are dominant and in control
 - Females were typically expected to be submissive
 - Women were wageless and dependent on their husbands
- Feminists and the Conflict Theory
 - Feminists state that women are undervalued in an industrial society
 - Attempts by women to gain power in the family structure results in conflict.

Symbolic Interactionists



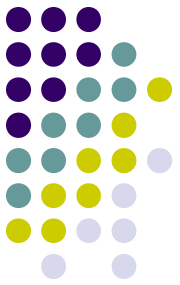
- According to Symbolic Interactionists, the key to understanding family is to look at the interactions among family members and the meanings family members assign to these interactions
- Family's Role in the Development of Self-Concept
 - Socialization begins with the family
 - As families share meanings and feelings, children develop their self-concepts
 - Relationships within the family are constantly changing as the family develops and grows

Feminism and the Family



The feminist perspective focused upon the relationship between women, the family and society.

Gender is the starting point for examining what happens in the family, and a key area of study is that of the distribution of power within the family.



Feminism and the Family

- Women are socialised to perform certain roles.
- Continues to be in the interests of men to keep women in these roles.
- Women still perform most of the housework, most of the childcare and still experience violence in the home.
- Women are far from equal in their status as family members.
- Paternalism and oppression are alive and well.