**Question 4: Outline and explain two ways in which the functions of the family may have been affected by changes to its structure [10 marks]**

**Example1**

One way is in the change to gender roles. Parsons argued men used to have the instrumental role (going out to work) and women had the expressive role (housewife). Whereas today these roles are more shared with women going out to work. This has changed the function of the family.

Another way is that socialisation may have changed in the family because of the increase of lone parent families where there may not be a male role model.

Level 1 – top of band

*Discussion – the first point doesn’t identify or explain what the function is that has changed. Gender roles would need linked to the stabilisation of adult personalities. The second point has a change in function and a change in structure but doesn’t explain this in any great depth. It needs to apply who would see this function as significant and how other sociologists might view this change.*

**Example 2**

One way in which the functions of the family have been affected by changes to its structure is due to the rise in divorce and the creation of new structures, such as lone parents. Functionalist sociologist Parsons believed that every family should be nuclear which means there are two parents of opposite genders having children and bringing them up. He also argued that both parents are in charge of providing effective socialisation for the next generation. When parents split up when children are at a young age it may jeopardise their futures as they aren’t socialised how they should be.

*Discussion - Could be an opportunity here to include New Right views about the problems with the absence of fathers as role models for boys*

Alternative to this paragraph

One way in which functions of the family may have been affected by changes to its structure is the socialisation of children into their gender roles. In the past, as outlined by Parsons, the family unit was used to socialise girls into their expressive roles and boys into their instrumental roles. He saw this as a key element of primary socialisation within the family. However, in more modern society, gender roles have become less relevant, due to the increase in dual earner households and what Young and Wilmott see as symmetrical structures, where men and women both work and share domestic tasks. This change to the structure could be the result of the rise of the feminist movement and the impact of social policies such as the equal pay act. This shows how the change in the structure of the family affects its functions, according to Functionalists. Although it could be argued that Parsons’ views of socialisation of children into appropriate gender roles is now outdated and sexist, with liberal feminists arguing that all he did in the first place was present a social construction about the expectation of the different sexes.

**Example 3**

One function of the family is reproductive. Functionalist, Murdock names reproduction as one of his four functions of the family. Modern changes to the family mean that many families however don’t contain children, through the choice of the couple, or may contain non-biological children, for example in blended family. Personal life perspective sociologist Smart studied the concept of chosen family, which means today a family could include a favourite pet or non-biological children. She studied same sex ‘chosen families’ who were not blood related but followed a family structure nonetheless. The ability of couples to conceive via IVF or a surrogate also challenges the reproductive function as Murdock saw it. However, the majority of families follow Murdock’s reproductive function and include biological children despite increased diversity.

Another way in which functions of the family may have been affected by changes to its structure is through economic role. The growth in the number of single parent families means it cannot fulfil the economic function envisaged by Murdock. He argued that a key function of the family was to provide economically for members of the family. Using a traditional view of gender roles, he saw this as being the man’s main responsibility. This is very similar to Parsons’ view of the instrumental role a man takes on in the family. However, families don’t always have this nuclear structure with traditional gender roles anymore. Women are far more likely to work now which means they don’t have to be economically dependent on their husband. Postmodernists such as Alan and Crow point to a greater degree of choice for people which has led to far higher rates of divorce and subsequently higher numbers of lone parent families where there is either one earner or the parent may rely on benefits. In the majority of cases the parent is the mother. This goes against the economic function that Murdock saw. New Right thinkers in particular have been critical of how lone parent families may not be economically viable and they criticise their higher use of the benefits system than nuclear families.

Top of level 3

**Question 5: Applying material from Item C, analyse two ways that family diversity in the UK has been influenced by government policy [10 marks]**

**Example 1**

One way is through the introduction of equality laws like the equal pay act which has led to more diversity in gender roles in the family.

Another way is through rates of divorce which have increased since the 1960s. Divorce has become easier as you no longer have to prove a guilty party.

Level 1 – middle of band

*Discussion - The explicit hooks in this item were divorce and same sex couples increasing. However, the first point could work if it was linked to the hook ‘family diversity has been influenced by government policies’ – this link to the item would need to be explicit. It doesn’t answer the second part of the question though about diversity. The second point also doesn’t explain how it influences diversity and only makes one new point beyond what was already in the item.*

**Example 2**

One way in which family diversity in the UK has been influenced by government policies is the Divorce law, which has made an ‘increase in divorce’, as stated in the item, where it makes it easier for people to get divorced which has made it more common and more of a norm, as stated in the item. This has also changed the way people think of marriage, it has influenced that people now get married for ‘love’ instead of status and if they therefore don’t find love will not therefore get married.

Another way that families have become more diverse is introduction of the law the legalises same sex marriage which means ‘there are also more same sex couples than in the past’, as stated in the item. Moreover, there have also been technological changes such as IVF which have allow partners such a same sex couples to become parents and full fill a family which makes the families more diverse.

Level 2 – middle of band

*See how the next example expands and develops points from this example. The key element missing from this example is a depth of understanding of the legal changes and analysis of how much the law had an impact on this change in diversity.*

**Example 3**

One way in which family diversity in the UK has been influenced by government policies are divorce laws which has lead to an ‘increase in divorce’, as stated in the item. These laws included the Divorce Reform Act (1969) which resulted in partners not having to prove a guilty party, leading to divorces significantly rising in number in the early 1970s. In 1984 the Matrimonial Family Proceedings Act reduced the amount of time a couple had to be married from 3 years to 1, again making it easier to divorce. It could be said that these laws have been crucial to the increase in divorce which has impacted family diversity, not least with the increase in lone parent families, with ¼ children now living in this type of family. And with the much larger number of reconstituted families. However, it may not be the law that was the most significant aspect leading to this change. Instead our changing values towards marriage and divorce could be more key, with the decline in religion being particularly important. We now get married for ‘love’ instead of status and if we fall out of love we divorce. However, without the law divorce and the changes in structure of the family would not have been able to happen.

Another way that families have become more diverse is introduction of the law that legalised same sex marriage which means ‘there are also more same sex couples than in the past’, as stated in the item. In 2003 Civil Partnerships were introduced, which gave homosexual couples the same legal protection as heterosexual couples. The Marriage Act in 2013 gave the same recognition to these relationships. In doing so these policies helped to legitimise same sex couple families, with more families developing over the past 20 years. Other policies which have allowed same sex couples to adopt children have led to these families, which historically would have been seen as morally wrong. In fact being gay was illegal until the late 1960s, so these laws were key to creating this form of diversity. Moreover, there have also been technological changes such as IVF which have allow partners such a same sex couples to become parents and fulfil a family which makes the families more diverse. Yet, it could still be argued that without changes in attitudes in wider society these laws would not have been created. Dimensions like positive presentations of same sex couples in the media could be seen as more important to making these families more acceptable and therefor higher in number.

Level 3 – top of band

**Question 6: evaluate the view that gender roles and relationships within the family are still unequal in society today [20 marks]**

**Example 1 – extract from a level 3 essay**

Gender roles in the family are the conjugal roles than men and women typically take on, the man working and providing money, and the woman cleaning and raising the kids. Recently it is clear that there are changes in this stereotype as more men take on the domestic role and more women focus on their work life.

*This intro isn’t bad but it doesn’t address the debate in terms of showing who would support the view in the question and what evidence they will provide to argue this.*

One way in which gender roles and relationships within the family are still unequal in society today is that women now have to take on more work. Ann Oakley says women take on a triple shift, which includes working, cooking and taking care of their husbands emotionally. This would mean that gender roles are more unequal in society today as women do so much and men only work and then just relax. Men tend to still dominate in terms of power and income however it is much closer and in some cases, the woman earns more than the man in the relationship.

*Reasonable points are made and there is some attempt to evaluate at the end. There is some inaccuracy – Duncombe and Marsden discussed the triple shift and cooking needs replaced by domestic work and emotional work also includes child care.*

Another way in which gender roles are unequal in the family today relates back to the view of Marxists, where the typical gender roles inside the family ideally boost capitalism, as the man can go out and work and then be looked after and well rested to be efficient and productive at work again the next day, which is exactly what people at the top of the capitalist hierarchy would want. Because of this theory, families are often pushed towards the man working and the woman staying at home, this is achieved by some companies paying women less or making it more difficult for them to work and encouraging time off during and after pregnancy. This ends up resulting in the woman staying at home and not working, letting the man have all the power and financial control, while she takes responsibility for housework and childcare. In contrast with the other point where women take on all those roles both of these points are very common in families today and show gender role inequality.

*This paragraph is not supported effectively by evidence e.g. Ansley’s argument of women acting as a safety valve. It also needs some criticism of whether this actually occurs in the same way today – what about a postmodern view about the level of choice today? A consideration of the growth of dual career families would also be important. Many students made paragraphs like this, with more generalised application of Marxist or Functionalist theory which felt quite outdated and wasn’t challenged for being such. When using older theory it’s important to either challenge it if you use it, or consider whether it is as relevant to include.*

*Level 3 essays tend to be reasonably accurate but lacking in depth and detail – the debate might get a bit lost in making generalised points that are not supported by evidence.*

**Example 2**

Gender roles have been changing as different laws such as equal pay act (2010) are introduces and new norms and values are forming where ‘men now take on a more domestic role. However, feminists such as, Ann Oakley, Ansley and Bernard still believe the ‘gender roles and relationships within the family, remain unequal’ as they argue that women act as sponges, and ‘are takers of shit’.

There have been a lot of changes in society, however some sociologists still argue that gender roles are unequal. As stated in the item, ‘feminists sociologists argue that gender roles and relationships within the family remain unequal’ for example , Ann Oakley argues that when people are younger young socialisation is infused with manipulation and canalisation which further determines what they think their later jobs and roles in society are which could influence their gender roles as the stereo typical man has the instrumental role and the women has the instrumental role meaning that women are disadvantaged from childhood in to an unequal society. Moreover, Parsons argues that women are there to comfort the man and make sure that they are released of stress so they therefore make sure the house is clean and looked after and the children are in bed by the time the husband gets home, this is called the ‘warm bath theory’ where women act as a metaphorical bath for their husbands. However, one problem with this theory is that it’s very outdated and was studied when people would marry for status and not love.

However, Beck and Beck argue that there have been changes in society and gender roles are becoming more equal. They have studied different places around the UK looking at family life and found a change in the stereo typical roles where men have decided to stay at home and therefore the wife goes and erns for the family which shows that there has been a ideological change in society and that norms and values have change and therefore contradicts the idea of gender roles and relationships within the family being unequal. However, this theory only looks at places in the Uk so it can’t be generalised to the rest of the world as there could still be places that haven’t changed their norms and still have an unequal society between men and women.

Similarly, although society is changing women are working more in the instrumental role, however, by them choosing the instrumental role they could still be stuck doing the expressive role as well crating a ‘triple burden’ where they have to go to work, look after the children and do house work which makes gender roles even more unequal and therefore supporting that society is still unequal for a lot of mothers. A contradicting point however, is that although women are thought to have maternity leave after they give birth and therefore can’t work for ages and then get trapped at home, there have been new laws where both partners can have maternity leave allowing women to go back to work and gives the man an opportunity to have full time care at home in which they wished to have but couldn’t, which shows that society is becoming more equal for men and women.

Middle of level 4

*Discussion – a good essay that covers a range of theoretical views and provides a detailed evidence. Analysis is provided by a comparison of approaches and a discussion of how some views may be more outdated. A conclusion would have helped push the mark of this essay up.*

**Example 3**

Throughout the history of the family, there has traditionally been strict gender roles that members of the family adhere to: the man takes on what the functionalist Parson calls the instrumental role which involves going out to work, and the woman takes on what he calls the expressive role. This involves taking care of the home, and raising children. There are some sociologists, such as feminists, who argue that “gender roles and relationships within the family remain unequal”, and the burden falls disproportionately on the woman, whereas there are other sociologists such as some postmodernists, who believe that the family structure has changed, and conjugal roles have become equal.

The first way in which some sociologists argue that “gender roles and relationships are becoming more equal” is the impact of the feminist movement on society. Sociologists such as Catherine Hakim, argue that women are now being afforded the choice to make their own decisions about what kind of family they want to live in. She presents this as the preference theory. Most women are choosing more equal conjugal roles, and those who live in a traditional nuclear family, have chosen to do this because it suits their lifestyle and their preferences. There are some “feminist sociologists”, however, who believe that although there have been advances in making the family more equal, gender roles and relationships within the family are still unequal today. The feminists Delphy and Leonard argue that women do much more work than men, because they do both housework and paid work, but men typically get all the benefit of it. This is through things such as a clean house and home-cooked meals, that they do not have to work for, but women do.

Another way in which it can be argued that gender roles and relationships have become more equal is that “men now take on a more domestic role” (item) within the family. This produces a family where both partners work, and both partners also do the housework and child rearing; this is what the postmodernists Young and Willmott describe as the symmetrical family. They argue that families are increasingly choosing to live symmetrically with each other in today’s society and that this produces equal gender roles as well as a more equal and fulfilling relationship. This is debated, however, by radical feminists who argue that women’s workload has not been aided by men, but it has instead been added to by being able to have a career. Duncombe and Marsden present what they describe as the triple shift theory: this includes paid work, housework and looking after elderly relatives. The ‘feminist advancements’ that allow women to be involved in paid work, instead add to what women have to do; in addition, the ageing population of the UK also increases their time taken having to take care of elderly relatives. This triple shift is seen the be experienced by only women and is becoming more prevalent in modern society, demonstrating why feminists believe that gender roles and relationships in the family are still unequal in society today.

Changes in UK legislation is another reason that some sociologists argue that gender roles and relationships have become equal. With the feminist movement there have been many developments to make women more equal in society, as well as in the family. Things such as the 1970 equal pay act have made women equal in the workplace, and therefore encouraged the increase in dual earner households. This consequently makes the tasks that need to be completed in the home more equal, because both men and women have the same length of time to do them. Since women are more likely to go part-time or leave their jobs with the introduction of children into their lives, changes to contraception has also made the family a more equal place. This includes things such as the 1974 introduction of the contraceptive pill on the NHS and the 1967 legalisation of abortion up to 24 weeks. Introducing the woman’s right to choose how many children are going to be in her family, makes her decide how much time off work is going to be needed to be taken. There are, however, debates by some feminist sociologists that “women still take responsibility for housework and childcare”, regardless of their position on the workforce. Fran Ansley argues that women continue to act as an emotional “safety valve” for men when they come home from work, regardless of their career status. Contradictory to Parsons warm bath theory, she views this as a negative aspect of the family, and argues that this aids the oppression of women because they continue to have to do more of the domestic role. This makes gender roles and relationships continue to be unequal in modern society.

In conclusion, despite much progress towards equality within the family, there are still many unequal aspects of it. This includes how women still do more of the domestic work regardless of their employment status. Ann Oakley describes this as the dual burden put on women, which continues their oppression. There are also some sociologists who argue that the family is still unequal, but this is a good thing. New right theorists such as Chester, argues that most families default back to the traditional nuclear family with separated conjugal roles, because it is the most stable and ideal within society. In addition, it is worth noting that these arguments don’t address cultural differences where greater expectation may be placed on women to fulfil domestic tasks. The debate also neglects family diversity, in the form of same sex relationships which are far more negotiated. Most sociologists will agree that there is still much more progress to be made before true equality is reached within gender roles and relationships within the family in modern UK society.

Top of Level 5