*Conjugal role HAVE become more symmetrical (equal)*

Intro:

Husbands were seen to be increasingly helping with domestic chores, child rearing and involved women in decision making.

 ∙Education Reform Act (1988) - Women furthering their education therefore meaning that they are more likely to work as well as men.

∙Parents responsible for primary socialisation

∙Feminist movement (1960’s-70’s)

 ∙New technology

∙Higher standards of living.

Evidence:

∙Wilmott & Young (1970) agree with the statement ‘that conjugal roles have become equal.’ They also found that 72% of husbands helped with these household tasks. Willmott & Young in 1970- Believed that the arrival of the symmetrical family, a [family](http://www.123helpme.com/search.asp?text=Family) in which the roles of husband and wife were similar. When conducting his research he found there was shift from a stage two family (Traditional nuclear family where women would carry out expressive role and man would carry out the instrumental role) to the stage three family which is also known as the symmetrical family.

∙Ferri & Smith (1996) – fathers took responsibility for childcare

∙ Dex & Ward (2007) – noticed a high level of involvement in childcare responsibility for three year olds. Along with 78% actively played with their children.

∙ Braun, Vincent & Ball (2011) – 70% of families they studied, 1 in 3 of them was the father was the main carer.

∙ Dermott’s study of ‘Intimate Fatherhood’ suggests that the relationship between men and their children has been of particular concern to sociologists in recent years. The shift away from an exclusively “breadwinner” ideal for fathers has signalled what Dermott has referred to as the rise of intimate fatherhood-with an attempt to develop a more effective work/family balance and greater involvement with children. This was based on 25 semi-structured interviews with fathers with at least one child of primary social age. This study supports the fact that conjugal roles within the family in terms of parenting are becoming more equal as the breadwinner role is become less common as women also start to take on industrial responsibilities.

∙ It may seem as if these conjugal roles are only just becoming more equal but according to Michael Young and Peter Willmott in 1979 the symmetrical family arrived and this is when they claimed that the roles between men and women were becoming increasingly similar. As well as beginning to share domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning, the responsibility of child care was also gradually becoming more of a joint responsibility. Another study that supports this was one carried out by Thompson ‘The decline of the breadwinner role’. This is similar to Dermott’s study however the research was directed more towards the question of whether or not fathers would be willing to sacrifice the breadwinning role to take responsibility for child care. In 2005 he carried out a survey and found that 39% of the fathers surveyed felt that the breadwinner role was the most important aspect of fatherhood, however a further 80% of fathers surveyed said that they would be happy to stay at home to care for their children.

*Conclusion:*

Over time gender relations have evolved, and men are now also required to adapt to new demands, new expectations, and new roles. Being authoritative and ensuring the family’s economic well-being was once enough to define a good husband and father. Now men also are expected to share child-care tasks. A good husband today according to Moldova is able “*to be able to balance his job with family life, a good husband should have a better time management, and love enough his family in order to be open to spend much time with his family members*”.