L024 Domestic labour - DepthNotes

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • Couples • 90 minutes

Depth teaching notes

This resource deliberately reteaches theory and named studies so learners are not expected to rely on prior memory.

Functionalism: family roles may be presented as complementary, but this risks treating inequality as natural.

Feminism: unpaid work can reproduce patriarchy when women do more routine work and carry responsibility.

Interactionism: couples negotiate meanings in everyday routines, but negotiation happens within structural constraints.

Young & Willmott: Symmetrical family thesis: more companionate marriage, shared leisure and gradual movement toward joint roles. Evaluation: Useful for analysing change, but “more shared” is not the same as equal responsibility.

Ann Oakley: Challenged the symmetry claim: housework remained gendered and routine domestic labour still fell mainly to women. Evaluation: Powerful for exposing hidden inequality, but must be updated using contemporary evidence.

Jonathan Gershuny: Lagged adaptation: men may increase domestic work as women’s employment rises, but household practice changes slowly. Evaluation: Explains change without assuming full equality; still needs evidence about care and mental load.

Oriel Sullivan: Time-use studies can show gradual change in men’s participation, but measurement choices matter. Evaluation: Encourages methodological evaluation: minutes do not capture responsibility alone.

Sources: AQA specification: https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/a-level/sociology-7192/specification/subject-content/topics-in-sociology; ONS Time Use in the UK 2023: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/timeuseintheuk/23septemberto1october2023; ONS Families and the Labour Market: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021; British Social Attitudes gender roles: https://natcen.ac.uk/publications/british-social-attitudes-40-gender-roles; AQA assessment materials: https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/a-level/sociology-7192/assessment-resources