

Families & Households (Paper 2)

Ms Agnihotri – Booklet 3

Social Policy and the Family



Teacher's Workbook Checklist	
Date	
There are no gaps in workbook; all activities/ boxes are complete	
All AO3 points are well explained and written in full sentences (50-100 words for each point)	

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Families and Social Policy

By the end of this topic you should:

- Know some of the main ways in which social policies may affect families.
- Understand the different sociological perspectives on families and social policy.
- Be able to analyse these perspectives and evaluate their usefulness in explaining the relationship between families and social policy.

Social policy refers to the plans and actions of state agencies, such as health and social services, the welfare benefits system, schools and other public bodies.

Most social policies affect families in some way or another. Some are aimed directly at families, such as laws governing marriage and divorce, abortion and contraception, child protection, adoption and so on.

Key terms:

Social problems/ issues:

Social policy:

Public sphere	Private sphere

1. A comparative view of family policy (p235 TB)

The actions and policies of governments can sometimes have profound effects on families and their members. Cross-cultural examples from different societies and historical periods can show us some of the more extreme ways in which the state's policies affect family life. This can help us to see the relationship between families and social policies in a new light.

China's one-child policy



Communist Romania



Nazi family policy



Democratic societies



Families and social policy- cross cultural examples- Nazi Germany

The sterilization Law enacted in 1933

Under the Nazi rule, millions of people were subjected to involuntary sterilization in the name of racial hygiene, an effort to purify the German bloodline and establish internationally their superiority as a nation.

Nazi leaders believed that only a genetically pure “racial” body would prosper. Thus, state intervention should ensure that only “valuable” and “Aryan” Germans married and reproduced, while others should be prevented from reproducing. Under the Nazi rule, millions of people were subjected to involuntary sterilization in the name of racial hygiene, an effort to purify the German bloodline and establish internationally their superiority as a nation.

Source B: Outlines of Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People, 1935 (Marriage Health Law)

1. Remember that you are a German.
2. If you are genetically healthy you should not remain unmarried.
3. Keep your body pure.
4. You should keep your mind and spirit pure.
5. As a German choose only a spouse of the same or Nordic blood.
6. In choosing a spouse ask about his ancestors
7. Health is also a precondition for physical beauty.
8. Marry only for love.
9. Don't look for a playmate but for a companion for marriage
10. You should want to have as many children as possible.
2. If you are genetically healthy you should not remain unmarried.

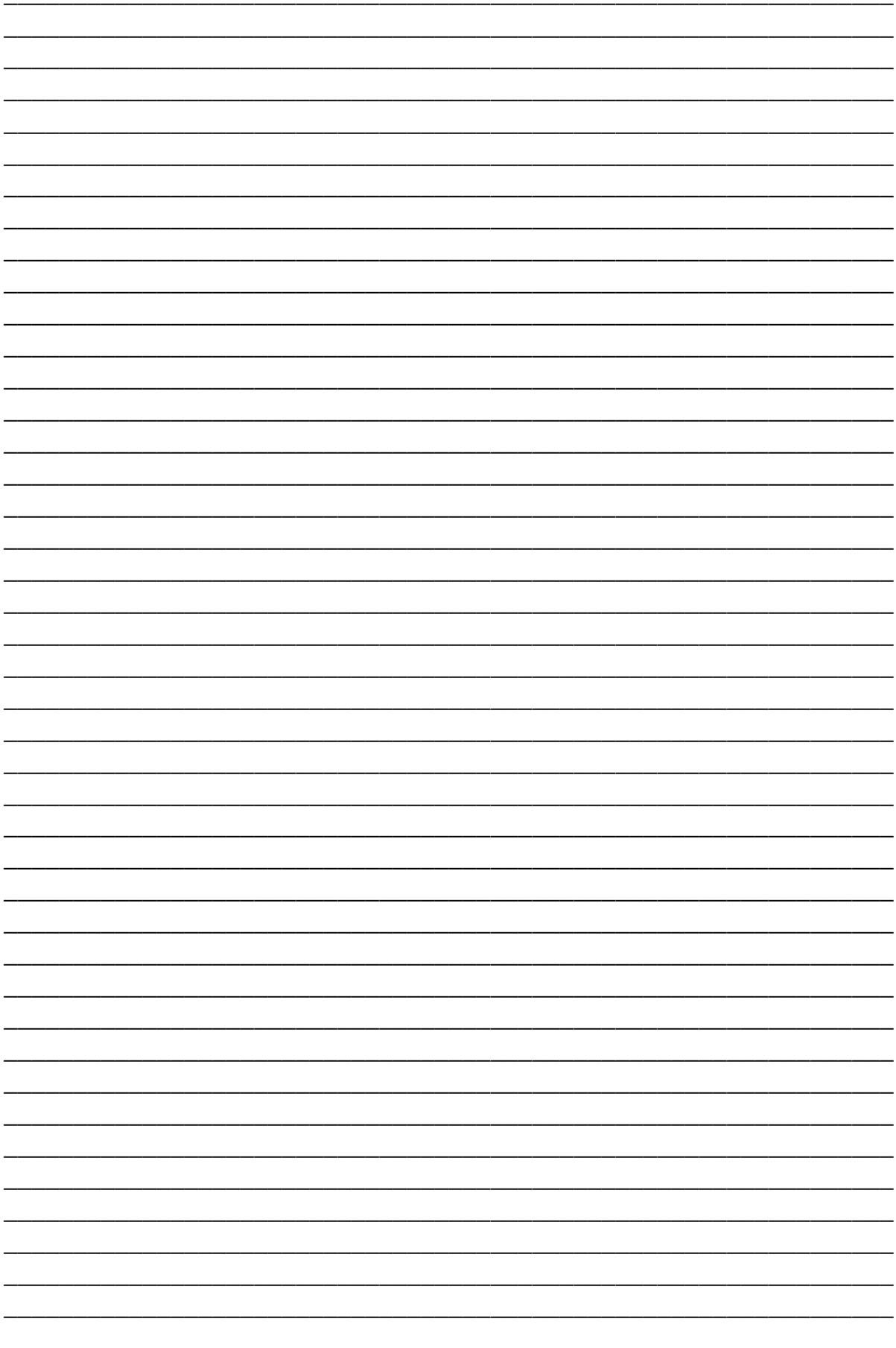
Source D: Extracts of the text of the Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring, 1933 (The Sterilization Law)

1. (i) Anyone who has a hereditary illness can be rendered sterile by a surgical operation if, according to the experience of medical science, there is a strong probability that his/her offspring will suffer from serious hereditary defects of a physical or mental nature.

(ii) Anyone is hereditarily ill within the meaning of this law who suffers from one of the following illness:

- (a) Congenital feeble-mindedness.
- (b) Schizophrenia
- (c) Manic depression.
- (d) Hereditary epilepsy.
- (e) Huntington's chorea.
- (f) Hereditary blindness.
- (g) Hereditary deafness.
- (h) Serious physical deformities.

(iii) In addition, anyone who suffers from chronic alcoholism can be sterilized.



2. Perspectives on families and social policy (p236-240 TB)

Although sociologists agree that social policy can have important effects on family life, they hold different views about what kinds of effects it has and whether these are desirable.

Functionalism:

Criticisms of the functionalist view (A03 – Evaluation ()):

Donzelot: Policing the family

Criticisms of Donzelot (A03 – Evaluation):

The New Right

The New Right are strongly in favour of the traditional nuclear family based on a married, heterosexual couple, with a division of labour between a male provider and female homemaker. In their view, the changes that have led to greater family diversity, such as increases in divorce, cohabitation, same-sex partnerships and lone parenthood, are threatening the conventional family and producing social problems such as crime and welfare dependency.

For the New Right, state policies have encouraged these changes and helped to undermine the nuclear family. For example, Brenda Almond (2006) argues that:

Laws on divorce:

Introduction of civil partnerships and same-sex marriage since 2014:

Tax Laws:

Similarly, the New Right point out that the increased rights for unmarried cohabitants, such as adoption rights and succession to council house tenancies and pension rights when a partner dies, begin to make cohabitation and marriage more similar. This sends the signal that the state does not see marriage as special or better.

AO1 - Lone parents, welfare policy and the dependency culture

A02 & A03 Analysis - The New Right's solution

A03 - Evaluation of the New Right view

The New Right's influence on policies

The New Right is a conservative view of the family that first developed in the 1970s. Therefore we might expect it to have had a strong influence on the Conservative Party's policies towards the family. However, Conservative policies since the 1970s show a more mixed picture. We can also see some similarities between New Right ideas and New Labour policies.

Conservative governments 1979 - 97	
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<p>The Coalition government 2010-15</p>	
<p>New Labour governments (1997-2010)</p>	

Feminism

Feminists take a conflict view. They see society as patriarchal (male-dominated), benefiting men at women's expense. They argue that all social institutions, including the state and its policies, help to maintain women's subordinate position and the unequal division of labour in the family.

A01 - Policy as self-fulfilling prophecy

A02 & A03 Analysis - Policies supporting the patriarchal family

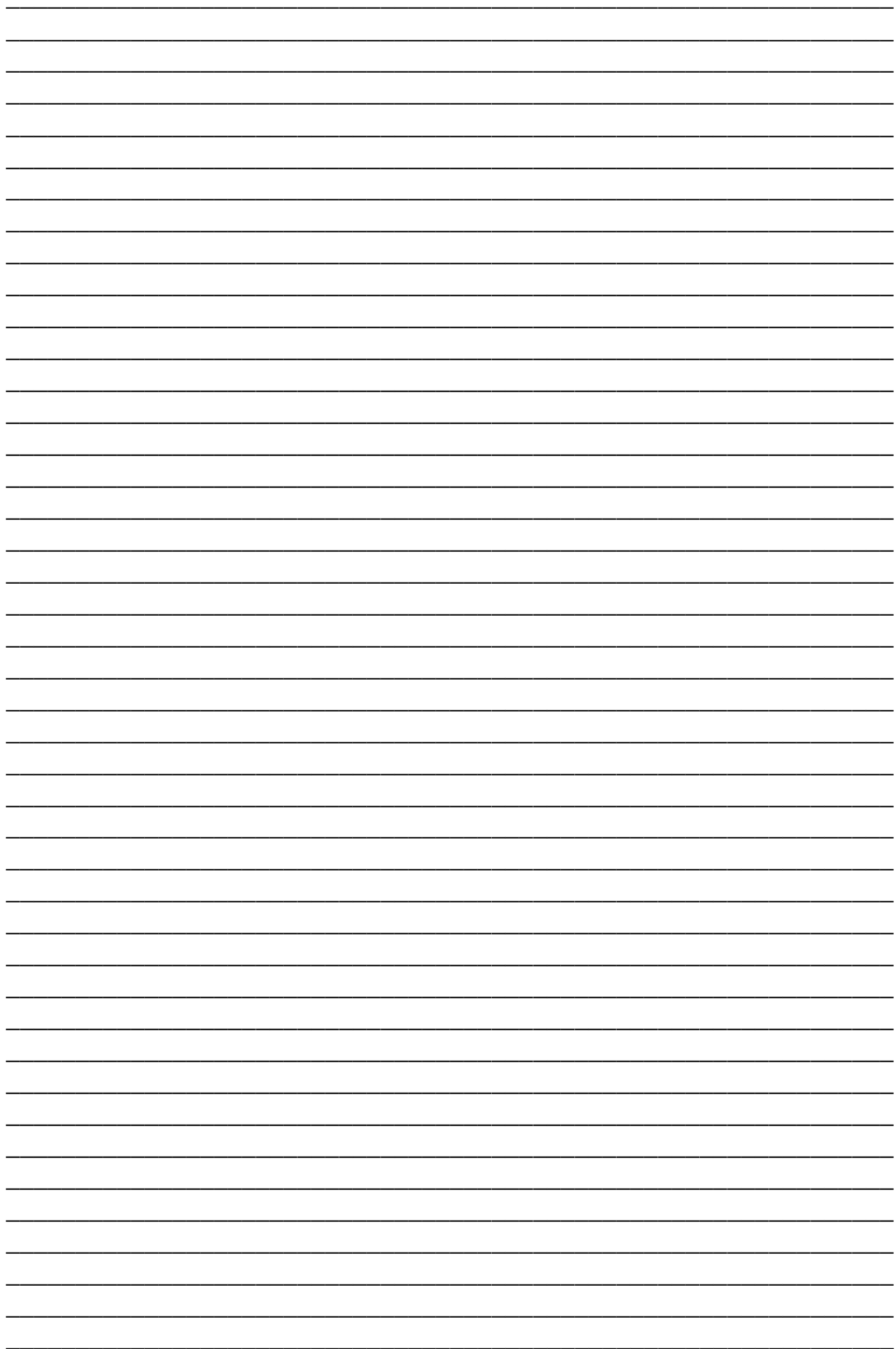
Feminists identify numerous examples of policies that help to maintain the conventional patriarchal nuclear family and reinforce women's economic dependence. These include the following:

Tax and benefits policies:

Care for the sick and elderly:

Childcare:

A03 - Evaluation of the feminist view:



3. Gender regimes (p240 TB)

As we have seen, feminists argue that social policy reinforces the patriarchal family. By examining policy from a comparative perspective across different societies, we can see whether this is inevitable, or whether different policies can encourage more equal family relationships.

For example, a country's policies on taxation, childcare, welfare services and equal opportunities will all affect whether women can work full-time, or whether they have to forgo paid work to care for children or elderly relatives.

Eileen Drew (1995) uses the concept of 'gender regimes' to describe how social policies in different countries can either encourage or discourage gender equality in the family and work.

Outline the two types of gender regime following two types of family policies identified by Drew:

Familistic gender regimes	
Individualistic gender regimes	
<u>Application (A02): In what ways might individualistic gender regimes undermine the patriarchal family?</u>	
<u>State vs market:</u>	

AFL Practice

Remember, Families is part of **Paper 2** and has a:

Q4. **10 marker** (without item),

Q5. **10 marker** (with an item and **must** use the item)

Q6. **20 marker** (with item)

so this practice for all 3 type of questions

Q4. Outline and explain two ways in which social policies or laws may affect household or family size

[10 marks]

Q5. Read **Item C** below and answer the question that follows

Item C

Many people see childhood as a natural stage of life that is determined by biology. What is expected of children is shaped by their age. However, sociologists suggest that childhood is a social construction. For example, changes in the laws regarding compulsory education and access to the labour market have shaped the experiences of children today.

Applying material from **Item C**, analyse **two** ways in which government policies and/or laws may shape the experiences of children today.

[10 marks]

Q6. Read **item D** below and answer the question that follows

Item D

According to feminist sociologists, the main function of laws and policies on families and households is to support the conventional heterosexual nuclear family and reproduce patriarchy. For example, policies concerning the care of the children or the old often make the assumption that these are women's responsibility.

Even policies seemingly designed to benefit women, such as paying child benefit to the mother, may have the effect of reinforcing their gender role.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge evaluate the view that the main function of laws and policies on families and households is to reproduce patriarchy.

[20 marks]

Here is an answer to a 20 marker question to help you with your paragraph writing and AO3 connectives:

Evaluate the ways in which government policies and laws affect the nature and extent of family diversity. (20 marks)

Some sociologists have suggested that social policy has caused families to become more diverse while others disagree. Social policies are the laws and practices put in place by the government that effect social issues, in this case the family. For example, in the 1930's the Nazi government in Germany wanted to encourage Aryan families and put in place policies that involved sterilising certain groups to prevent them from having children. More recently in China they have a one child policy, if individuals have more than one child the government have put in place a series of penalties try and control their population. In the UK sociologists are interested in if social policy has caused families to become more diverse or different. What this means is has social policy caused more families to be non-nuclear families such as same sex families, single parent families, etc?

In the paragraph below, I have pointed out the 'PEAC' paragraph structure to help you understand it better and apply it to your own work:

(Point) One way in which families have become more diverse is an increase in same sex families. This is lesbian and gay couples living with children. **(Explain/Analyse)** Social policies that can be linked to this type of family diversity are, laws to do with homosexuality in the UK. For example, in 1967 male homosexuality was legalised in the UK this has made homosexuality more socially accepted; this would allow gay individuals to start a family. However, other social policies have made same sex families even more accepted. **(Apply example & back to question)** For example, in 2002 the UK adoption laws were changed, these changes meant that gay couple were now allowed to adopt children meaning that they could have a family of their own without relying on surrogates or reproductive technology. Furthermore, in 2004 the Civil Partnership Act meant that gay individuals could now have a type of marriage; this may have meant that gay people felt that they had the stability and long term commitment that may be linked to starting a family. All these changes could be linked to the growth of same sex families. **(Criticise)** However, the New Right perspective did not support Labours approach to introducing policies that support alternatives to the conventional heterosexual nuclear family.

Some sociologists are really happy with these changes. For example, feminists believe that society is patriarchal, that men dominate and exploit women. They suggest that many laws in society are unequal and oppressive to women and campaign for all women to have equal rights. Before the introduction of civil partnerships this meant that homosexual women were denied the same rights as heterosexual women and this could be evidence of patriarchy. However, things like civil partnerships and changes in adoption laws give women an equal basis to form a committed relationship and a family free from the patriarchal control of men. This would particularly appeal to radical feminists some of which are lesbian separatists. However, some sociologists are deeply unhappy with these changes; the New Right believe that the nuclear family is needed for the correct socialisation of children. They believe male and female role models are required for children to become functional adults. They would reject other family types such as same sex families as they damage children's upbringing. However, the New right are often criticised for sexist and outdated views as they suggest that women would best suited to staying at home and raising children.

Some sociologists have suggested that other family types have been encouraged by social policy. For example, in the UK around 33% of Asian families live in extended families, while 48% of Afro Caribbean families live in single parent families. These trends could be linked to immigration laws that encouraged these groups to come to the UK in the 1960's. One other way in which families have become more diverse is that there has been a great increase in single parent families. There are a range of social policies that could be linked to this trend. For example, in the UK over time divorce laws have changed and divorce has become easier and cheaper over time. What this means is that more marriages may break up leaving a single parent families this could also be linked to the increase in reconstituted families that have been seen in the UK. Furthermore, there are now a range of welfare benefits that are available to single parents that may mean that they are now in a position to support children on their own. These include housing benefits, child benefits and tax credits. This could encourage some individuals to have single parent families.

The New Right are opposed to this type of diversity, suggesting that single parent families produce an underclass in society. This is because they are mainly headed by women and are welfare dependent, without a male role this produces irresponsible and antisocial young men that do not go out and be a breadwinner. This pattern is passed from one generation to the next. However, feminists would be highly critical of these arguments as sexist as it suggest women cannot successfully bring up children free from the patriarchy of men. They suggest that the benefits that women receive as single parents can help them escape domestic violence and abusive relationships. A single parent environment could be far better for a child than a nuclear family where domestic violence occurs at the hands of men.

In contrast to all of the above arguments some sociologists have suggested that social policies encourage the nuclear family and discourage diversity. For example, marriage laws in the UK only allow you to marry one person, encouraging the nuclear family. Furthermore, the coalition government intend to introduce a married person tax allowance to encourage marriage and the nuclear family. Similarly recent changes to the child benefit system, would seem to penalise single parents in particular. As a single parent earning over £44,000 will no longer receive the benefit whereas a couple earning £80,000 between them still will. In conclusion, even though some policies have tried to encourage the nuclear family the majority of social policies have caused diversity.