

These two pieces of research are important to show how family life and relationships have changed over recent years.

How Do They Fit into Theories of the Family?

Structural Theories

Functionalists believe that the family performs important functions for society and for individuals. Murdock and Parsons (functionalists) believe that the family is important for social stability and for socialising individuals.

Marxists believe that the family supports capitalist society by producing the next generation of workers for capitalist society.

Feminists believe that women are exploited within the family because they are expected to fulfil many of the jobs that a family unit needs to perform.

Postmodernists believe that individuals have choices on how they live, and family diversity gives people lots of choices. People can live in whatever type of family they choose because many different types of family are accepted in society today.

Activity
Make sure you know the key aspects of all four of these approaches.
What do they say about family diversity?

Complete a table similar to the one below showing the key aspects of each of these approaches:

Functionalists	Marxists	Feminists	Postmodernists

The Sociology of personal life sits in between the structuralist approaches of the functionalist, Marxist, feminist, and postmodernist view. They recognise both external (structural) influences and individual choice when choosing family and relationships.

Activity
Think about how LATs fit into these theories?

Exam Hint: Using one example, briefly explain how individuals may have significant personal relationships besides those relationships with family members.

There are many possible answers to this questions:
People have a personal relationship with God where they seek moral guidance and advice.
People have a pet where they have a 'special' relationship and receive comfort from the pet.