

# Marriage relationships are increasingly more equal

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It is true that marriage relationships are becoming increasingly equal, but to an extent. Since the early 1900's the stereotypical 'housewife' role has changed, dramatically. This allowed men to try out, on what would have been seen as 'Women jobs' such as childcare, cooking and cleaning, and also women to do some 'Men jobs' which were mainly 'behind the computer' jobs and more leisure time, women also had a say in purchases and money matters, something which would have not been possible without this experience in change of gender roles.

Young and Wilmott were functionalist sociologists who came up with a theory that; 'Marriage roles are becoming more equal.' They called this the Symmetrical family, this is when the husband and wife have similar roles and share tasks and work equally. They claimed to have proven this theory by interviewing 1700 or more women and only asking them one question which was " Did your husband contribute to housework at all this week?"

Ann Oakley criticised Young & Wilmot's methodology as her personal views were extremely diverse to theirs. She concluded it could vary from a miniscule to a large amount, making it unfair. The people who get interviewed are only allowed to answer 'Yes Or No' this makes it really hard to know as no additional details are included such as; when did they do this, how often do they do this and how they contribute to the change in stereotypical gender roles.

After Ann Oakley Criticised Young & Wilmot's theory, she made her own theory. She divided her questionnaires into four groups, which consisted of; Housework, Childcare, Decision making and leisure.

Ann Oakley states that women are increasingly becoming more equal to their husband, but they are unfortunately still doing 70% of all housework. This portrays that, women are more equal in decision making, work and the outside life but still in their stereotypical gender role at home, with housework and child care.

She also states that men only contribute to nice, easy, clean and enjoyable things within the household and childcare; such as playing with the children, purchasing them toys or gifts, sending them to parks, washing one plate once in a whilst and may also cook occasionally. However, they never seem to be cleaning up the house, changing dirty nappies or even cleaning up the children's sick or mess. These are all unfortunately left for the 'housewife' to do.

Overall, Ann Oakley has successfully proved that Young and Wilmott are incorrect in their conclusions on 'marriages becoming more equal within the household,' because of their imprecise interviewing techniques on collecting data. However, research shows that marriages are increasingly becoming more equal in the household, even though it is increasing slowly.