• **The functionalist perspective** believes that the family is one of the key institutions required for the continuation of a harmonious society as it is able to carry out four important key functions as put forth by George Murdock. These are the reproduction of the next generation, socialisation of the young, meetings its member's economic needs and stable satisfaction of an adult's sex drive. He believes that the nuclear family is the family best equipped to do this as it is universal and provides the correct social agenda required to reduce social disruption, for example adequate socialisation prevents the formation of subcultures, leading to antisocial behaviour and crime. Parsons strongly reinforces this view believing that the family is able to act as a warm bath by providing a loving and caring environment which is able to relieve emotional and psychological stress of its individuals which helps keep an individual healthy in turn keeping society healthy and smooth functioning.

• Parsons also put forth the idea of functional fit which is the idea that a family will fit the type of society it is placed in. In preindustrial society the extended family was the norm and this was because a third generation was required to provide additional emotional and psychological support. However in modern industrial society the nuclear family began to emerge and this was because a socially and geographically mobile workforce was required. However both families are able to meet the functional prerequisites as mentioned above. However Parsons believes that in the conversion into the nuclear family the family loses many functional for example It ceased to continue to act as a unit of production but only acted as a unit of consumption as additional support is no longer required. However Young and Wilmott believed that the nuclear family emerged due to higher standards of living and the welfare state which was able to replace the financial support which was previously provided by a third generation.

• The Marxist perspective of the family is one that believes that the family is required for the continuation of capitalism as it is able to fulfil key functions including teaching ideology to younger generations which trains them to believe that class inequality is unfair and that there is nothing they can do to change their social position so that they accept their place in a hierarchy unquestioningly, they act as a unit of consumption and buy the products advertised by the middle class in an attempt to remain modern whilst the inheritance of property ensures that an individuals and their family wealth never change as their wealth is passed from one generation to another. This cycle movement up and down the social scale so that the working class remain in a position where they are forced to sell their labour to the bourgeoisie which maintains their wealth which allows the capitalism to thrive and continue.

• The feminist’s perspective of the family differs as the type of feminism differs. Liberal feminists take a march of progress view and believe that the family is evolving more equal due to changes in the law which has given women equal rights and access to economic independence and thus led to a shared domestic role and labour amongst women and raising their children more equally. However Liberal feminists are negatively stereotyped as being naive and not challenging the actual cause of patriarchy which are men themselves. Marxist feminists believe that the oppression of women is required for the continue of capitalism as women when placed in a subordinate role are able to fulfil key features; they reproduce a new generation of worker which are then socialised into unthinkingly accepting their place within a hierarchy in a workforce and thus sell their labour force to the bourgeoisie, they are a reserve army of labour and can be employed at short notice when workers are needed before being deployed back into their unpaid housewife role and they are able to absorb their husbands anger and thus their husbands are able to release their frustration at being alienated and exploited which then results in domestic violence uncovering a dark side of family life previous ignored by feminists. Radical feminists believe that men are the causes of patriarchy and that the family and marriage thus act as patriarchal institutions as they keep women in a subordinate position as the generic housewife which benefits men and they do this through the threat of domestic violence. Thus so radical feminist believe that the only way to end patriarchy is for there to be complete social and separation from men and as a result they advocate political lesbianism. However there approach is likely to fail due to heterosexual attraction; difference feminists also believe that the inequality that women face and the experiences that revolve this should not be generalised as each is different. For example middle class feminists often fail to acknowledge the racial abuse the black women have to face as well as sexism. However there is the dispute that all women face some of the same problems such as low paid employment and the threat of domestic violence.

Conclusion: The problem with using these studies to understand and explain the functions of the family are that they are all structural theories and so assume that indivuals have no choice and freedom and they also assume that the dominant family type is the nuclear family. However this is not the case in a modern society and so individually these theories should not be used as the basis of a conclusion as they are all relatively outdated.