

# Knowledge Organiser – A Level World Sociology:

## Explanations for patterns and trends – Part two

### Feminist explanations of inequality

Feminists support the modernisation view that gender equality is central to economic and human development. However, the reality is that women are victims of underdevelopment; because, although women account for half the workforce and perform 2/3 of all working hours, they only receive 1/3 of the world's income and own just 1% of property.

### Post-modern feminists

Post-modern feminists appeared in the 1990s; a mixture of feminists from the developed and developing countries, aiming to put forth a global agenda to explain and tackle gender inequality.

Post-modern feminists say that we cannot generalise women's experiences across the developing world. Women in the developing world tend to be seen as 'poor, ignorant, uneducated, domestic and stuck in tradition', which they argue is an ethnocentric view. Postmodern feminists state that it is globalisation that has been the cause of gender inequality. This has led to three common problems for women:

- sex tourism and prostitution
- environmental degradation
- the international debt crisis.

### Radical feminists

Radical feminists disagree with postmodern feminists in that globalisation is the single cause of inequality. They argue that inequality starts in the home; the family is the key to women's oppression. This can be seen in terms of childbearing, few reproductive rights, and women's limited access to abortion (religious and patriarchal). However, women are at an increased risk of physical violence if they campaign for these rights.

They do argue that globalisation may be leading to new forms of exploitation of women and that, despite globalisation generally improving the lives of women, there are still significant areas for improvement. Two examples of this include the emergence of the global sex industry and the persistence of violence against women.

### Marxist feminists

Marxist feminists argue that the cause of women's inequality is global capitalism. Marxist feminists argue that class must be included when we examine women and inequality. They argue that Western transnational corporations (TNCs) exploit developing countries for increased profit, and this particularly affects women. This is because most jobs in this sector involves mass production, which tends to be boring, repetitive work needing little training. Women are chosen because they are young, cheap, and unlikely to rebel. They are paid less and expected to work longer hours than men.

Marxist feminists argue that to be rid of such inequalities, we need to be rid of this patriarchal society and move to a communist society where everyone is equal.

### Marginalisation

To be marginalised is to be distanced from power and resources that enable self-determination in economic, political, and social settings.

There are many factors that cause marginalisation. Some of the important factors that are responsible for marginalisation are exclusion, globalisation, displacement, and disaster – both natural and unnatural.

Globalisation can be said to be a cause of marginalisation for those in least economically developed countries (LEDs) due to the influx of capitalism, information technology, company outsourcing, job insecurity and the widening gap between the rich and the poor.