

# FAMILY DIVERSITY



Key questions	Content	Learners should:
1. How diverse are modern families?	<p>The diversity of family and household types in the contemporary UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nuclear families</li> <li>• extended families</li> <li>• lone parent families</li> <li>• reconstituted families</li> <li>• same-sex families</li> <li>• non-family households</li> </ul> <p>Aspects of and reasons for family and household diversity in the contemporary UK, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation</li> <li>• demographic changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ birth-rate</li> <li>◦ family size</li> <li>◦ age at marriage</li> <li>◦ age of child-bearing</li> <li>◦ ageing population</li> </ul> </li> <li>• family diversity in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ social class</li> <li>◦ ethnicity</li> <li>◦ sexuality</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The ideology of the nuclear family and the theoretical debates about the role and desirability of the nuclear family in contemporary society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• functionalism</li> <li>• New Right</li> <li>• Marxism</li> <li>• feminism</li> <li>• postmodernism</li> </ul> <p>Debates about the extent of family diversity in the contemporary UK</p>	<p>also consider newer/emerging types of families and households.</p> <p>have an overview of trends over the last 30 years and consider the key reasons for these changes. Detailed knowledge of statistics on marriage, divorce and demographic changes is not required.</p> <p>consider issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control in relation to theoretical views of the role of the family in contemporary society. A theoretical approach to considering the extent of family diversity should be taken.</p>



‘The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually co-habiting adults’

George Murdoch

Murdoch was arguing that the nuclear family was the basis of all family units in all cultures (even if in many societies they might include other relatives, i.e. extended family, or that in some place polygyny is accepted).

**Can you think of any examples to support or oppose Murdoch’s argument?**

# Changes to the family

Changes in the family reflect wider changes in society in the past, the family was stable, nuclear and roles were largely traditional with men going out to work and women caring for the children. Ideas about the family were based on religious and traditional ideas, in contrast to this, in the postmodern era, the family became far more fluid and flexible and based on individualism.

**Sort the statements below into the correct column of the table.**

Grandparents living longer and playing more of a role in their grandchildren's lives as both parents

Stability: Formal, distant, based on women's economic dependence on men, empty shell marriage are likely to work

Instability and Choice: Closer and deeper, confluent love (Giddens) greater individualism

1900-1970's

Traditional, expressive and instrumental roles, the development of the housewife role

1980's to today

Negotiated, dual worker families, dual burden, gender scripts, egalitarian

Grandparents: less involved in grandchildren's lives. Less able in old age.

Nuclear (two generation family, heterosexual couple, married with one or more children)

Diverse: nuclear, Single parent families, cohabitating couples and families, homosexual families, co-parenting, reconstituted families, beanpole families, lone person households, LATS, empty nest families, class and ethnic diversity, extended families

CHARACTERISTIC	MODERN FAMILY	POSTMODERN FAMILY
Approximate dates		
Family structure		
Roles within the family		
Relationships		
Role of extended family		

# The Ideology of the Nuclear Family

## The Role and Purpose of the Family: The functionalist approach

Read pages 127-128

1. Explain Murdoch's 4 functions of the family.
2. Does this fit with family life today? Why not? Refer to Murdoch's views on family as the "universal institution".
3. What is Parson's response to this?
4. Explain the criticisms of the work of Murdoch and Parsons

5. Explain, with examples, what is meant by the “fit” between family type and society.
6. Explain what is meant by the “instrumental” and “expressive” needs of society
7. What are the criticisms of this?



## TOPIC 2

# The role of the family in society

### Getting you thinking



- 1 Examine the photographs carefully. What functions are family members performing?
- 2 How do you think your family functions to benefit you?
- 3 In your opinion, can family functions be performed just as effectively by other agencies?

It is likely that you have identified several family functions after examining the photographs and discussing your own families. You have probably concluded too that very few social institutions can perform these functions as well as the family. You will no doubt be pleased to see that your conclusions parallel those of many sociologists. However, it

is important to understand that the experience of family functions is not the same for all of us. There may be very different experiences shaped by social class, ethnicity, age, gender and religion. Furthermore, some of these experiences may be damaging rather than beneficial.

## The functionalist theory of the family

For many years, the sociology of the family was dominated by the theory of functionalism. Functionalists assume that society has certain basic needs or **functional prerequisites** that need to be met if it is to continue successfully into the future. For example, a successful society is underpinned by social order and economic stability, so the role of the social institutions that make up society is to make sure this continues by:

- transmitting values, norms, etc., to the next generation in order to reproduce **consensus** and therefore the culture of a society
- teaching particular skills in order that the economy – the engine of society – operates effectively
- allocating people to family and occupational roles which make best use of their talents and abilities.

Functionalists see the family as playing a major role in achieving these social goals. They view the family as the cornerstone of society because it plays the dominant role amongst all social institutions in making individuals feel part of wider society. Furthermore, the family is seen as meeting the needs of individuals for emotional satisfaction, social support, identity and security. Overall, then, functionalists see the family as extremely **functional**, i.e. its existence is both beneficial and necessary for the smooth running of society and the personal development of individuals.

### The work of G.P. Murdock

Murdock (1949) compared over 250 societies and claimed that the nuclear family was universal, i.e. that some form of it existed in every known society, and that it always performed four functions essential to the continued existence of those societies:

- **Reproductive** – Society requires new members to ensure its survival – **procreation** generally occurs within a marital and family context.
- **Sexual** – This function serves both society and the individual. Unregulated sexual behaviour has the potential to be socially disruptive. However, marital sex creates a powerful emotional bond between a couple, encourages fidelity and therefore commits the individual to family life. Sex within marriage contributes to social order and stability because marital fidelity sets the moral rules for general sexual behaviour.
- **Educational** – Culture needs to be transmitted to the next generation, so children need to be effectively socialized into the dominant values, norms, customs, rituals, etc., of a society.
- **Economic** – Adult family members show their commitment to the care, protection and maintenance of their dependents by becoming productive workers and bringing home an income. This underpins the family standard of living with regard to shelter or housing, food, quality of care, etc. It also benefits society because it is assumed without question that family members should take their place in the economy and the **division of labour** as specialized wage-earners, thereby contributing to the smooth running of the economy and society.

### Evaluation of Murdock

Interpretivist sociologists argue that Murdock fails to acknowledge that families are the product of culture rather than biology, and that, consequently, family relationships and roles will take different forms even within the same society. For example, a range of different attitudes towards bringing up children can be seen in the UK which have their roots in different religious beliefs, access to economic opportunity, belief in particular child psychology approaches, etc. Think about how the educational function may differ in an upper-class White family compared with a Muslim family or a White family living on a deprived inner-city estate.

Murdock's definition of the family and its functions is also quite conservative in that it deprives certain members of society of family status; it implies that certain types of parenting – single, foster, homosexual and surrogate – are not quite as beneficial as the classic two heterosexual parents' model. In this sense, Murdock's model is political because it is clearly saying there are 'right' and 'wrong' ways to organize family life.

## Family functions

Despite these doubts about the universality of the nuclear unit, functionalist sociologists have focused their attention on the functions of the family in order to assess its benefits for both the social structure and its members. Several functions have been identified that allegedly contribute to the wellbeing of society as well as parents and children.

### Primary socialization of children

As we saw in Topic 1, Parsons (1955) saw the pre-industrial extended family as evolving into the modern nuclear family which specialized in the primary socialization of children. Parsons believed that personalities are 'made not born' – for Parsons, a child could only become a social adult by internalizing the shared norms and values of the society to which they belonged. He therefore saw nuclear families as 'personality factories', churning out young citizens committed to the rules, patterns of behaviour and belief systems which make involvement in social life possible. In this sense, the family acts as a bridge between children and their involvement in wider society.

As Cheal (2002) puts it, more simply: 'Parents today are encouraged to believe they have a special responsibility to ensure every child grows up happy, strong, confident, articulate, literate and skilled in every possible respect.'

Other sociologists point out that the family is important in terms of both political and religious socialization. Many of our beliefs, prejudices and anxieties may be rooted in the strong emotional bonds we forge with our parents during childhood.

Parsons saw mothers as playing the major role in the process of nurturing and socialization in families. Mothers, he claimed, were the 'expressive leaders' of the family who were biologically suited to looking after the emotional and cultural development of children. Such ideas reflect the dominant domestic arrangements in the UK where women have long held primary responsibility for looking after children and housework. These arrangements will be further explored in Topic 5.

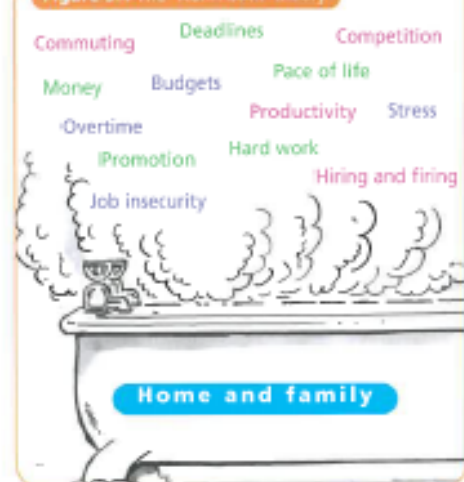


Although the family is viewed as the main agent of socialization, it is important to remember that socialization is a life-long process. It does not end with the onset of adulthood or when a child leaves home. We acquire experience and knowledge throughout our lives from a range of different sources. It is therefore important to acknowledge the existence of secondary agents of socialization, such as the educational system, religion, the mass media and the workplace. Such agencies also strongly support what goes on in families. Fletcher (1988), for example, argued that childrearing in families is made more effective by the support offered by state institutions in the form of antenatal and postnatal care, health clinics, doctors, health visitors, social workers, teachers and housing officers.

### Stabilization of adult personality

Parsons argued that the second major specialized function of the family is to relieve the stresses of modern-day living for its adult members. This theory, often called the 'warm bath' theory, claims that family life 'stabilizes' adult personalities. Steel and Kidd note the family does this by providing 'in the home a warm, loving, stable environment where the individual adults can be themselves and even "let themselves go" in a childish and undignified way. At the same time, the supervision and socialization of children gives parents a sense of stability and responsibility' (Steel and Kidd 2001, p.42). This emotional support and security, and the opportunity to engage in play with children, acts as a safety valve in that it prevents stress from overwhelming adult family members and, as a result, it strengthens social stability. In this sense, Parsons viewed the family as a positive and beneficial place for all its members – a 'home sweet home', a 'haven in a heartless world' and a place in which people can be their natural selves (see Fig. 3.4).

Figure 3.4 The 'warm bath' theory



### Gender-role socialization

A further important aspect of socialization is that children learn the cultural patterns of behaviour expected of their gender, i.e. what is regarded as appropriate masculine or feminine behaviour. From an early age, people are trained by their parents' childrearing practices to conform to social expectations of how males and females should behave. Chapman (2004, p.200) notes that traditionally:

«girls, through play, through the chores they did and through formal schooling would learn the right kind of attitudes and skills to perform their adult role of homemaker and mother. Boys, by the same token, were aimed squarely at the role of breadwinner by tuning down their emotionality so that they would have what were presumed to be the right kinds of skill for work.»

In this sense, then, gender differences are not biological or natural but are socially constructed by society. These differences too are further reinforced by secondary agents of socialization, such as education and the mass media.

### Social control

The family serves as an important agent of **social control** and, alongside secondary agencies such as religion, the criminal justice system and the mass media, polices the behaviour of society's members in order to maintain value consensus and social order. As Murdock pointed out, the family is generally regarded as the moral centre of society and sets the rules with regard to how people should behave, particularly with regard to sex and sexuality, e.g. it is generally regarded as deviant to engage in adulterous behaviour.

Setting the boundaries of deviant behaviour is an important consequence of primary socialization. Effective childrearing involves the development of a moral conscience that trains children to know the difference between 'right' and 'wrong'. This is backed up through parental use of positive sanctions (e.g. rewards) and negative sanctions (e.g. punishments). In this sense, the family contributes to the maintenance of other social institutions by ensuring the moral education of children who usually grow up to become decent, law-abiding citizens and workers.

### Social status

Being born into a family results in the acquisition of a number of **ascribed statuses** – i.e. status allocated by age, gender, birth order, ethnicity, religion and social class. There is some evidence that the socio-economic status of our family provides us with a sense of family identity. It also has a profound influence over the quality of opportunities that we experience as we grow up. For example, the social and cultural supports we receive from parents with regard to education, e.g. nursery education, private tuition, attendance at private schools, access to computers and so on, are often dependent upon the economic supports our parents can offer us. Some families are able to offer their children considerable economic support, not only during their early years of dependence, but often well after they have flown the family nest, e.g. to go on to university or to set up homes of their own. Bernardes argues that such

inequalities in economic maintenance result in helpless newborn infants being channelled into becoming a wide range of very unequal mature adults.

### Economic consumption

In Topic 1, we saw that the pre-industrial family was responsible for the production of goods. Industrialization, however, led to factories taking over this function. Family companies, farms and shops continue to exist in the 21st century, but it can be argued that the family's economic function today is as a unit of **consumption** – goods and services provided by the economy are mainly consumed by the family unit. As Day Slater notes:

«from ready-made meals, through washing machines and cars, to telecommunication services, the advertisers on our TV sets and in magazines clearly regard families as providing the main market for the goods and services they promote. Family income is expended largely on things for the family.» (Slater 2000, p.24)

### Recreation and leisure

During the 20th century, the family became an important centre for recreation and leisure. This was especially true for children in the 1990s, when parents started to interpret the world as a much riskier place for children and children began to spend more time in the home. Evans and Chandler (2006) note how homes, and specifically children's bedrooms, are often now furnished with media and technological entertainment, such as televisions, DVD players and computer games.

### Protective and welfare function

Unlike many newly-born animals, the human baby is generally helpless and requires adult physical support and protection for a prolonged period of time. However, the welfare support that a child receives from its parents, e.g. shelter, diet and education, very much depends on the family's socio-economic status. This, in turn, is dependent on the occupation and income of the major wage-earners.

The welfare function also takes the form of family members being cared for and supported by other family members if they are ill, disabled, elderly or in poverty. The family, therefore, makes an important contribution to the health and welfare of the more vulnerable members of society, and works alongside social institutions such as the National Health Service.

Functionalists, therefore, see the family as a crucial social institution functioning positively to bring about healthy societies and individuals.

### Criticisms of functionalist views of the family

Functionalists tend to view the family as very harmonious but as we shall see in Topic 5, this view has been challenged by accounts of child abuse, domestic violence and the fall-out from divorce. As Cheal notes, functional relationships can easily slip into **dysfunctional** relationships, and love can often turn into hate in moments

## Focus on research

### Morrow (1998) Children's views of the family

A qualitative study of 183 children aged between 8 and 14, carried out by Morrow



in 1998, found that children's views of the functions of the family do not necessarily conform to stereotypical images of the nuclear family. The research asked pupils to draw and write about 'who is important to me?', and to complete a sentence on 'what is a family?' and 'what are families for?' They were also given a short questionnaire asking whether or not five one-sentence descriptions of family type counted as family. Group discussions also took place which explored their responses to the questionnaire. The children were found to have a pragmatic view of family life – love, care and mutual respect were regarded by them as the essential functions of family life. They also had a very inclusive view of who was family – absent relatives and pets were regarded as family members. This research can be downloaded from [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk).

- 1 In what ways did the children's views agree with sociological views about the functions of the family?

of intense emotion. He notes that 'we have to face the paradox that families are contexts of love and nurturance, but they are also contexts of violence and murder' (Cheal 2002, p.8).

Functional analyses of the nuclear family tend to be based on middle-class and American versions of family life, and they consequently neglect other influences, such as ethnicity, social class or religion. For example, Parsons does not consider the fact that wealth or poverty may determine whether women stay at home to look after children or not. Since Parsons wrote in the 1950s, many Western societies, including the UK, have become **multicultural**. Religious and ethnic **subcultural** differences may mean that Parsons' version of the family is no longer relevant in contemporary society.

Social and cultural changes may mean that some of the functions of the family have been modified or even abandoned altogether as demonstrated in Table 3.1.

### The Marxist critique

Marxists are very critical of the process of primary socialization in the nuclear family because they argue that it reproduces and maintains class inequality. They argue that the main function of the nuclear family is to distract





# Criticisms of the Functionalist view:

Who?	Criticism	What specifically is being criticised?

# Marxist View on the Role of the Family

Marxists take a conflict view of the family, arguing that it functions to maintain and reinforce capitalist society. Capitalism is the type of society that we live in today. It is based on the ownership of private property and the nuclear family reinforces capitalist ideology and keeps people in their class positions, either working class or middle class. The nuclear family does this through preventing children and adults from questioning the unfairness of the system and providing a place where the frustrations with the system can be vented.

How does the Marxist view support  
Functionalist theory?

How does the Marxist view challenge  
Functionalist theory?

## **New Right View on the Role of the Family**

The New Right regard the nuclear family as the ideal family form. They argue that traditional roles and relationships provide positive socialisation for children who have clear role model. Within the family, New Right thinkers argue that the mother should take the caregiving expressive role while the father should take the instrumental or breadwinning role. The New Right are critical of alternatives to the nuclear family and express strong concerns with the breakdown of traditional family life, seeing it as leading to problems in wider society such as an increase in antisocial behaviour and crime. **ALSO READ PAGES 81-83 OF TEXTBOOK**

**Discuss the following issues from the perspective of that social theory. What is the cause of each change or issue? What solutions or suggestions might each theory offer?**

- **High divorce rates**
- **Antisocial behaviour (such as the cause of the riots that took place in the UK in 2011)**
- **Women choosing not to have children**
- **Increase in same sex families**
- **Domestic violence within the family.**

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**Discuss the following issues from the perspective of that social theory. What is the cause of each change or issue? What solutions or suggestions might each theory offer?**

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## **Feminist View on the Role of the Family**

Feminists regard the nuclear family as the key site for the reproduction of gender inequalities, reflecting patriarchal ideology. There are various forms of feminism, however feminists share the view that the family is oppressive and damaging for women who end up taking responsibility for domestic work and the mundane jobs and at the same time having less power than their male counterparts. Feminists are in favour of family diversity as they regard new forms of relationships as providing women with a chance to negotiate their roles and relationships in a more egalitarian way. **ALSO READ PAGES 85-88**

**Discuss the following issues from the perspective of that social theory. What is the cause of each change or issue? What solutions or suggestions might each theory offer?**

- High divorce rates
- Antisocial behaviour (such as the cause of the riots that took place in the UK in 2011)
- Women choosing not to have children
- Increase in same sex families
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## **Individualisation Theory on the Role of the Family**

Individualisation theory argues that as a result of high modernity, there are no longer fixed roles or identities. Therefore there is no longer a necessity to live in nuclear families. In our current society we constantly make choices about how we choose to live. **(And page 88-89)**

**Discuss the following issues from the perspective of that social theory. What is the cause of each change or issue? What solutions or suggestions might each theory offer?**

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- **Increase in same sex families**
- **Domestic violence within the family.**

## **Postmodernist View on the Role of the Family**

Postmodernists focus on post industrial society and argue that there is no such thing as 'the family' today. Instead, people can make a range of decisions about the kinds of relationships and family structures which they prefer as individuals. They claim that there is less social pressure on people to conform to expected norms of what is considered appropriate or acceptable. Postmodernists do not regard the family today as positive or negative, rather, they reflect on some of the changes that have occurred. Some postmodernists reflect on the changes and argue that greater choice and individualism has resulted in greater risk or instability within the family.

### **ALSO PAGES 89-90 OF TEXTBOOK**

**Discuss the following issues from the perspective of that social theory. What is the cause of each change or issue? What solutions or suggestions might each theory offer?**

- High divorce rates
- Antisocial behaviour (such as the cause of the riots that took place in the UK in 2011)
- Women choosing not to have children
- Increase in same sex families
- Domestic violence within the family.

# Assess the view that the nuclear family is the ideal family

<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Define nuclear family</p> <p>State which theories agree with the view.</p> <p>State which theories agree with the view.</p>	
<p>For point 1:</p> <p>Study (identify, explain and link to Q)</p>	<p>Against point 1:</p> <p>Study (identify, explain and link to Q)</p>
<p>For point 2:</p> <p>Study (identify, explain and link to Q)</p>	<p>Against point 3:</p> <p>Study (identify, explain and link to Q)</p>
<p>For point 3:</p> <p>Study (identify, explain and link to Q)</p>	<p>Against point 3:</p> <p>Study (identify, explain and link to Q)</p>
<p>Conclusion: Overall how far does the evidence suggest that the nuclear family is the ideal family type?</p>	

# Family diversity

Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) (The Rapoports) identify five types of family diversity:

**Organisational diversity** – which is due to different patterns of work outside and inside the home, and to changing marital trends. This category includes ‘reconstituted families’ as a result of divorce and remarriage, and dual career families, some of which have resulted in a greater democratisation of domestic labour.

**Cultural diversity** – which accounts for much family diversity from the indigenous population to migrant households from diverse regions such as Western Europe, Southern Europe, Middle Eastern and many groups from East and Southeast Asia bring with them aspects of family and household composition.

**Social class diversity** – which is demonstrated in the material resources of families, the relationships between couples and between parents and their children, and the socialisation and education of children.

**Life cycle diversity** – which exists between families whose members are from different historical periods. The impact of the Depression and the experience of war were defining influences for many Australian parents of the baby boomer generation. Baby boomers, in their turn, have tended to rear their children differently because of the greater economic prosperity and rapidly changing social morés of the 1960s and 1970s.

**Family life course diversity** – which refers to the difference that occurs when a family has a baby, when the children reach their teens, and finally when (or, increasingly, if) they leave home. At each of these stages, families have different priorities, and may organise themselves in terms of work and domestic labour, rather differently than at other times. (Bernardes 1997: 11–12)

## What other types of family / household are there in the UK?

Nuclear family:

Household:

# Reason for change: Social policy

There have been some significant changes in the law, which have had impact on family life. These are known as social policies. Social policies can be defined as a law, guideline or plan of action, created by the government which seeks to address a social problem in society.

Place these laws into chronological order on your washing line and suggest the impact they may have had on family life. You may need to look up the dates on the Internet as well as the intentions of the policy. Write your work up on the worksheet which follows.

See  
page 10

## Civil Partnership Act

Similar to marriage, a legally binding relationship for same sex couples. Non-religious.

## The Equality Act

This law makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against employees because of their gender.

## Divorce Reform Act

Made it possible for people to divorce to occur on the basis of 'irretrievable breakdown' rather than there having to find one partner at fault.

## Same Sex Marriage

Full marriage rights extended to same sex couples.

## Working families tax credit

Designed to encourage women back to work after having children, by giving low income families tax breaks.

## Rape made illegal in marriage

Challenging domestic violence and turning it into a public issue.

## Adoption for Gay couples

Making it possible for gay couples to adopt children.

## The Child Support Agency

Set up to make sure that parents take responsibility for their children, financially. Very controversial.

## Children's Act

Prioritising the needs of the children over adults, with an emphasis on the desirability of traditional nuclear families.

You need to be able to explain reasons why families have changed. We will study 3 reasons:

1. Social policy – i.e. things that the government
2. Second wave feminism
3. Secularisation – i.e. the decline in the importance of religion



**Reason for change: Changes to social policy**

Definition of social policy:
------------------------------

Policy & year	Description	Effects on family life/family diversity
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		

# Reason for change: Changes to social policy

In the earlier part of the 1900's, women were effectively squeezed out of the \_\_\_\_\_, and made responsible for the care of children while men earned the \_\_\_\_\_. During the Second World War, women were seen as a \_\_\_\_\_; they were used to work in factories and in other positions to support the war effort. However, women found themselves back in the home in the \_\_\_\_\_, when the ideology of the housewife role was at its height. This set of ideas encouraged women to see themselves as caregivers whose priorities were in the home, known as the \_\_\_\_\_. The man continued to be considered as the primary breadwinner, supporting the family financially, known as the \_\_\_\_\_.

It was not until the 1960's when there was a shift in social attitudes towards relationships and gender. This was partly due to the second wave of \_\_\_\_\_, which resulted in greater legal rights for women as well as changes to the way women perceived roles and relationships in the family and beyond.

For the past 30 years, men and women have begun to have \_\_\_\_\_ of relationships, for example, expecting marriage to be based on \_\_\_\_\_ rather than practical arrangements alone. \_\_\_\_\_ became more of a norm, which means to have one faithful relationship after another. Divorce \_\_\_\_\_ as women in particular felt less obliged to stay in unhappy, oppressive relationships. This is reflected by the fact that two thirds of divorces are petitioned by women. This coincided with the fact that women were participating in \_\_\_\_\_ at a much higher rate.

At the same time, children's rights were expanding and families were becoming smaller. This reflects \_\_\_\_\_ society where children are valued and listened to. This is due to the fact that parents have much closer relationships with their parents. Also, childhood takes place over a much longer period today.

The increasing focus on individual fulfilment has led to the search for emotional fulfilment. There is less pressure on people to conform to \_\_\_\_\_ which were previously upheld by \_\_\_\_\_, the state and other institutions. Today there is a greater tolerance towards \_\_\_\_\_, for example. This represents a significant shift away from the recent past. For example, it was not until 1967 that homosexuality was decriminalised.

**work place**  
**increased**  
**Serial monogamy**  
**Reserve army of labour**

**child centred**  
**Same sex relationships**  
**higher expectations**  
**family wage**

**religion**  
**feminism**  
**instrumental role**  
**paid labour**

**1950's**  
**expressive role**  
**emotional intimacy**  
**traditional family values**

## Reason for change: Second Wave Feminism

Second-wave feminism of the 1960s-1980s focused on issues of equality and discrimination. Second wave feminism saw the family as the root of all oppression. Shulamith Firestone, a founder of the New York Radical Feminists, published *The Dialectic of Sex*, insisting that love disadvantaged women by creating intimate shackles between them and the men they loved—men who were also their oppressors. Ti-Grace Atkinson, a radical feminist who helped to found the group The Feminists, is credited with the phrase that came to embody a movement towards political lesbianism stating that 'Feminism is the theory; lesbianism is the practice.' Although not all feminists agreed on this, the work of second wave feminism did challenge traditional expectations of women.

What changes to family types may have been encouraged by Second Wave Feminism.

The movement was instrumental in bringing 'womens' issues to the fore. The scope and the strength of the movement was such that the government could not ignore the demands of the feminists and was forced to take actions. The movement thus contributed to major transformations of institutions through the passing of landmark laws notably: The Equal Pay Act of 1970 that came into force in 1975; The Employment Protection Act of 1975 which made provisions for the protection of pregnant women in terms of maternity leave and pay; The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 which aimed to promote equality between women and men and to provide equal opportunities to both sexes. It also established the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) to which grievances could be taken in case of unequal treatment; The Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act of 1976 which enabled married women to obtain a court order against their husbands; The Housing Act (Homeless Persons) of 1978 which provided accommodation for battered wives.

### Nuclear family goes into meltdown

Generations learn to link up to cope with lonely lifestyle

[John Arlidge](#) Sunday 5 May 2002 00.48 BST

THE nuclear family of mum, dad and 2.4 kids is splitting up. Researchers have coined a name for the emerging British household - the Beanpoles. They 'live together' and have 1.8 children. As Britons live longer, divorce rates rise and couples have fewer children, the traditional family - married parents with two or more children - is giving way to cohabiting couples with a single child.

A new study by the London-based research group Mintel shows family groups are getting 'longer and thinner - like a beanpole'. While 20 years ago the average extended family comprised three 'nuclear' generations, family groups are now made up of four generations of often co-habiting couples, each with an average 1.8 children.

'The family is undergoing radical changes under the pressure of an ageing population, longer lifespans, increased female working, the tendency to marry later in life, the falling birth rate and the rising divorce rate,' the study says.

'Twenty years ago, family groups were "horizontally broad", comprising two or three generations with many children in each nuclear family. The next 20 years will see the rapid growth of beanpole families - long, thin family groups of three or four small generations.'

More than half of the adult population lives in 'beanpole' structures, the study says. With fewer brothers and sisters and cousins, children are growing up faster. 'Children are being starved of the companionship of family members of their own age. Individualism is of growing importance,' the study says.

'This could lead to greater social dislocation, with children growing up isolated from other children and younger adults. It could also encourage greater social isolation, with teenagers adopting a more selfish attitude towards life.'

Pressure on 40 to 60-year-olds is growing sharply. This 'sandwich generation' is caught between children, who need financial help, and elderly relatives, who need looking after.

The rising divorce rate, the study predicts, 'will make family structures more fluid and lead to a rise in "boomerang children" - children who leave the family home only to return at a later date after a marriage or long-term relationship breaks down.'

While the growth of the 'beanpole' family may promote more contact between different generations, Mintel says it will make it even harder for the middle-aged to strike a work/life balance.

This generation 'will feel that their quality of life is being reduced due to time pressures. The strain will be particularly acute for women, more and more of whom are working at senior levels but still carry out most of the caring responsibilities.'

The rising divorce rate partly explains the growth of the 'beanpole' family. With almost one in two marriages ending in divorce, many adults have at least two families, each with a single child. While the number of married couples will fall over the next 10 years, the number of cohabiting couples - who have been married before - is set to double, the study says.

Medical advances, which mean the elderly live longer, explain why four-generation extended families are now the norm.

The Mintel study is backed by leading family researchers. Julia Brannen, professor of family sociology at the Institute of Education at London University, said: 'People are living longer, but family units are small and they are getting smaller and thinner all the time, just like a beanpole.'

'Soon the issue will be: will young people miss the boat and not have families at all? We are already down to one child and soon for many people it may be none. Nuclear Family, RIP.'

**New Family Types: Beanpole families**

**New Family Types: Beanpole families**

## New Family Types: LAT

### **Living Apart Together: A New Family Form**

Traditionally, according to Irene Levin (2004), marriage has been the social institution for couples that have been together for a long period. However, some decades ago, non-marital cohabitation began to appear in the western world as a new social institution. 'Living apart together' – the LAT relationship – is the most recent development, which seems to have the potential of becoming the third stage in the process of the emerging forms of close emotional relationships. In contrast to couples in 'commuting marriages' who have one main household in common, couples living in LAT relationships have one household each. Levin carried out research on data on the frequency of LAT relationships in Sweden and Norway, and explores the variation which exists within LAT relationships. Levin argues that the establishment of LAT relationships is the natural progression from a society where cohabitation has been established as a family structure.

*Adapted from Current Sociology March 2004 vol 52 no. 2 223-240.*



# Have couples who live apart discovered the secret to a happy relationship?

More and more partners are choosing to commit but not cohabit. What can we learn from them?



**L**iving apart together (LAT) by choice is seen by sociologists as a new facet to an old arrangement. With new research showing that couples are increasingly likely to live in separate homes, what can people who cohabit learn from those who don't?

The psychotherapist and broadcaster Lucy Beresford is the author of the book *Happy Relationships*. She thinks successful LAT relationships achieve a balance between independence and emotional commitment. "It allows for something called individuation," she says. Some people might like a "calm space to go to, or a little meditation room" - a more extreme version of the garden shed bolt hole. But presumably some have more mundane wishes, such as a space where lids are replaced on bottles and jars, and the toilet flushed. Either way, living apart together "gives you breathing space", she says.

Nurturing self-reliance is a skill that cohabiters can learn from those in LAT relationships. "When people complain, 'My husband doesn't support me', or 'My wife isn't there for me emotionally', those are very important observations in a relationship," Beresford says. "But we must never expect someone else to rescue us. Emotionally, we need to be resilient. It's the opposite of

codependency and collapsing on your partner."

Living apart together can make it easier to find breathing space in a relationship, but sustaining a support network, and pursuing outside interests can create the same sense of space and individuation in a cohabiting dynamic.

Beresford also thinks that LAT scenarios show a healthy realism away from the traditional fairytale of lasting love under one roof. "If we are going to live to 110, some of our relationships might have a life expectancy of more than 80 years," she says. Practical changes might be necessary to make a relationship endure.

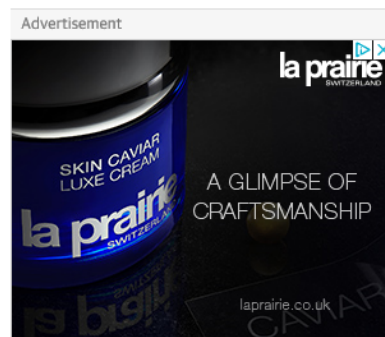
But Simon Duncan, emeritus professor in social policy at the University of Bradford, who has written about LAT relationships in the book *Reinventing Couples*, sounds a note of caution. Often the choice to live apart can be a "negative preference" - a choice to preserve the relationship when living together is unbearable. He cites one woman whose partner's "hardcore" green lifestyle meant a lack of washing and no central heating.

As Beresford points out, the possibility of escape that a separate home provides can mean that "nothing gets resolved, nothing gets processed. Millions of people make it work," she says. "But there are important skills that no one should run away from - around compromise, respect and accommodation."

Paula Coccozza

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Tue 7 Jan 2020 15.49 GMT



## How have families changed?

McGlone et al studied changes raised by the Social Attitudes Surveys of 1986 and 1995. They suggested a number of changes that might affect family life.

Brainstorm the impact each might have on the family

1. a rising proportion of elderly people in the population
2. increasing levels of divorce
3. increasing levels of cohabitation
4. increasing levels of lone parenthood / births outside marriage
5. decline in male unskilled jobs / rise in female employment
6. some young people staying reliant on families for longer

A rising proportion of  
elderly people in the  
population

Increasing levels of  
lone parenthood

Increased cohabitation

Some young people  
staying reliant of  
families for longer

increasing levels of  
divorce



Decline in male  
unskilled jobs / rise in  
female employment

## Family diversity: Class diversity

	Working class	Middle class	Upper class
Family structure			
Child rearing			
Conjugal roles			
Culture			

**Explain how Marxists say that the family leads to class reproduction.**

- ◆ grandparents provide childcare for their grandchildren
- ◆ an increase in lone parents who may rely on support from their own parents to help with children.

Grundy and Henretta (2006) use the concept of the 'sandwich generation' to refer to women aged between 55 and 69 who, sandwiched between their needy parents and their own children, offer assistance to both. They help their grown-up children with childcare and also care for their elderly parents. Research shows a growing number of women will be in this position of helping in both directions. Women see it as their duty.

#### Activity 2.18

Why are women rather than men part of the sandwich generation referred to by Grundy and Henretta? Discuss.

## Reconstituted families

A reconstituted family is when families merge together and form a new family. For example, a couple with children split up, the children remain with the mother who later meets a new partner, who also has children. The combining of both groups together forms a reconstituted family. In 2004 an estimated 10 per cent of all families were reconstituted (Office for National Statistics, 2004).

This type of family has a different structure from the conventional nuclear family, although extended families may be a little different from nuclear families in many other ways.

## Co-parenting

Co-parenting refers to situations where children are cared for separately by each of the birth parents for approximately half the time. This situation arises when parents separate. The arrangement could work on a weekly basis, where children spend half of the week with each parent. It could, however, be split over the year, with the children spending time in each family household, perhaps with a less even split in terms of time. The children live in two homes and the structure of each family home can of course vary. For

example, both of the parents could be lone-parent families, or their mother and/or father could have met a new partner, possibly one who also has children, thus forming a reconstituted family.

Smart et al. (2000) researched children's experience of co-parenting. They found that children valued having both parents in their lives. Children tried to treat their parents in a way that they saw as fair too, such as spending time with each parent, almost as if they were the parents. Moving between houses was routine for those who had been doing it from a young age. Those who found it a difficult way of living had parents who were hostile towards each other. Some children were enthusiastic about having 'two of everything'.

## Cultural diversity

### Religion

There are links between religion and family. Some religious people are more likely to have children living with them than others. Religion can also influence the way that children are socialised in families.

#### Activity 2.19

Look at Figure 2.10. The followers of which religion are the most likely to have children living with them?

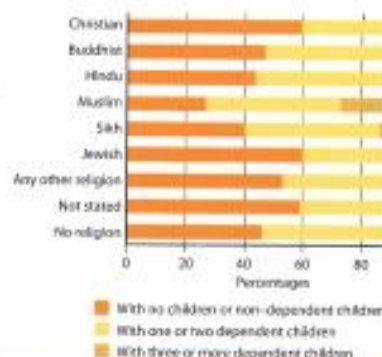


Figure 2.10 Family presence and number of children and religion in Great Britain, April 2001

(Source: National Statistics, 2007)

## Ethnicity and family structure

The 2001 Census shows that in the UK families of Asian and Chinese origin with dependent children living with them are most likely to be married and least likely to be lone-parent families. Mixed, black Caribbean and white families with dependent children have the largest proportion of cohabiting-couple families. Over 45 per cent of black Caribbean, black African and mixed families were headed by a lone parent in 2001. These differences mean that children in these diverse families will be influenced by different role models in the family during the process of socialisation.

Some research on ethnicity and families compares families from different ethnicities within the UK. Other research compares minority ethnic group families in the UK with families in the countries of origin of those ethnic groups.

Berthoud and Beishon (1997) analysed data from the fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI). The survey compares different ethnic groups within the UK. The results of their analysis found:

- ◆ a higher rate of divorce and separation in British African-Caribbean people than in other ethnic groups. There were also more lone mothers in this group, but the mothers were more likely to be in employment than lone mothers in other ethnic groups.
- ◆ British south Asian people are more likely to marry, and get married at an earlier age, than other ethnic groups. Separation and divorce were rare.

### Change over generations

Research by Modood et al. (1997) shows how young south Asians are less likely than their elders to speak a southern Asian language. This shows a cultural shift over generations.

Singh (2003) reports how changes are taking place within the value system of the Sikh community. The strong value placed on mutual help and assistance within and between Sikh families is being replaced by a value of individualism. Sikh parents are worried by the lack of facilities in Britain for their children to learn Punjabi and fear that their children are taking a pragmatic approach to their family duties. The film *Bend It Like Beckham* highlights some of the cultural

conflict between generations. A young Sikh girl playing football is not what this child's family regard as appropriate. The daughter challenges her parents' values, navigating her way through two cultural systems. The notion of choice is a central aspect of postmodernism. However, critics stress that these choices are not made in a vacuum, as cultural conflict illustrates.

Bose (2003) studied the Bangladeshi community living in Tower Hamlets in London and portrays a picture of a changing community. The community is subject to the dual forces of maintaining traditional Bangladeshi values, such as the importance of kin, women as homemakers, and izzat (family honour), and to the changing external environment, which includes dual-career families, individualism and religious choice. A useful example of this is hijab, the practice of covering the body and the wearing of a veil which many young women have chosen to do as a central part of their identity, while rejecting the predominantly homemaker role for women in the family. The novel *Brick Lane*, by Monica Ali, now also a film, highlights these dual forces.

Archer and Francis (2006) showed the crucial role played by the family in the educational achievement of British Chinese children. They interviewed thirty pupils, their parents and teachers and concluded that the families used their skills, networks and money to further the educational achievement of these children. Their conclusion was that the educational achievement of British Chinese children is 'hard won', meaning that families made considerable sacrifices to ensure success. However, the children did not blindly follow the guidelines of their families. They were not simply passive. It is likely that young people conform to some expectations whilst rejecting others.

Further recent changes in relation to ethnicity and the family are in terms of divorce and single parenthood of which there are now some cases in minority ethnic groups in the contemporary UK. These groups are also having fewer children than before, and expect to have more say in their choice of partner.

### Women and employment

Dale et al. (2004) found differences in women's economic activity between ethnic groups; they also observed changes over time. They found that black women tended to remain in full-time

employment when they had children. However, white women and Indian women with children were more likely to work part-time. The economic activity of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women fell significantly when they had a partner and then fell again when they had children.

## Class diversity

Family life may differ according to social class in a number of ways.

## Family structures

Early sociological research on the family had a strong focus on the family and social class. For example, analysis of the maintenance of kinship networks contrasted working-class and middle-class social networks. Middle-class families were more geographically mobile. However, this does not necessarily mean contact with kin dissolves. More contemporary research reveals extended kin to be important in working-class communities. For example, Foster (1990) found extended family members living close to each other in an East End London community. However, extended networks of support remain important across social classes as the evidence on beanpole families highlights.

## Child-rearing practices

There is a tendency for middle-class families to be more child-centred. This could be to compensate for the tendency of middle-class work to be more flexible, but anti-social, thus affecting relationships between parents and children.

## Conjugal roles

'Conjugal roles' refers to the roles between men and women in the household: these can be shared or unshared, the same or different. Oakley's (1974) research showed class to be a relevant factor in the division of labour in the home. (This is examined further in subsection (iv).) Her research showed class to be a factor, with middle-class domestic roles being more shared, but in neither class could they be defined as equal. Contemporary roles are affected by class. For example, middle-class dual-career families are more likely to be able to pay for domestic

labour. In terms of money management, Pahl (1989) found that a situation of women controlling the family finances and spending patterns was not a typical arrangement. However, it was more common in working-class families.

## Cultural differences

The children of the upper class/middle class acquire what the Marxist sociologist Bourdieu (1986) termed 'cultural capital'. Their mannerisms and values are distinct from those of other social classes. These mannerisms and values correspond with teachers' notions of what is positive when they go to school. Upper-class children are also socialised into **high culture**, for example, being taken to the opera and experiencing classical music in the home. This contrasts with the **popular culture** of the working class, which might include watching celebrity television programmes, listening to pop music, a day out roller skating or tenpin bowling, and a McDonalds meal. The upper classes learn to speak and express themselves differently. Along with the middle classes, they learn to speak with, what is termed by Bernstein (1961), an 'elaborated code' in contrast to a working-class 'restricted code'.

Postmodernists would, however, be critical of such claims, arguing that there is much more choice available to families, irrespective of their class background. They maintain that people are no longer constrained by their class.

At the other end of the scale is the underclass, comprising people in very low-paid work or the long-term unemployed. Some single parents also fall in this class. Saunders (1996) is critical of this group whom he claims has a work-shy culture. Critics, however, challenge him and point to the difficulties faced by families trying to bring up children in conditions of poverty.

## Sexual diversity

Weeks et al. (1999) stress that there is a large degree of choice occurring in gay and lesbian families. They have what he terms 'chosen families'. Some homosexual relationships have a high degree of choice, and commitment is negotiated in these relationships. The expectations of roles that are pre-set in heterosexual relationships have not been set in the same way for newly evolving gay



Figure 2.11 Sir Elton John formed a civil partnership with David Furnish at Windsor Guildhall in December 2005

relationships. Weeks et al. see this in the context of the wider society where choice is valued and diversity is increasingly accepted. For example, civil partnerships, where same-sex couples are able to obtain legal recognition of their relationship, came into force in December 2005 with The Civil Partnership Act, 2004. There were 5700 civil partnerships formed in the UK between December 2005 and September 2006 (National Statistics, 2007).

## Recent developments

### The importance of friendship

Rosenell and Budgeon's (2004) research focuses on people who do not live with a partner. This is a further development to family diversity in the contemporary UK. They carried out in-depth qualitative interviews with 51 people aged between 24 and 60 in three locations in Yorkshire. They found a new emphasis on friendship. Most people were part of complex networks of intimacy and care. Their homes were opened up to their friends, people who are not part of a conventionally defined family.

Friends would stay during periods when they were homeless, unemployed, depressed or lonely. The interviewees chose to de-emphasise the importance of the couple relationship and centre their lives on their friends. Of those with partners, few saw cohabitation as the necessary or desirable next stage.

## Changing households

Subsection (i) highlights the growing trend in the number of one person households and the increase in the number of young adults living with their parents. These are referred to as KIPPERS (Kids In Parents' Pockets Eroding Retirement Savings).

## The importance of choice

By 2001, Allan and Crow (2001) had rejected the notion of a clear family cycle that people pass through, which the Rapaports had found to be an important element of diversity in the 1980s. Allan and Crow attribute this change to the fact that things are more unpredictable in the

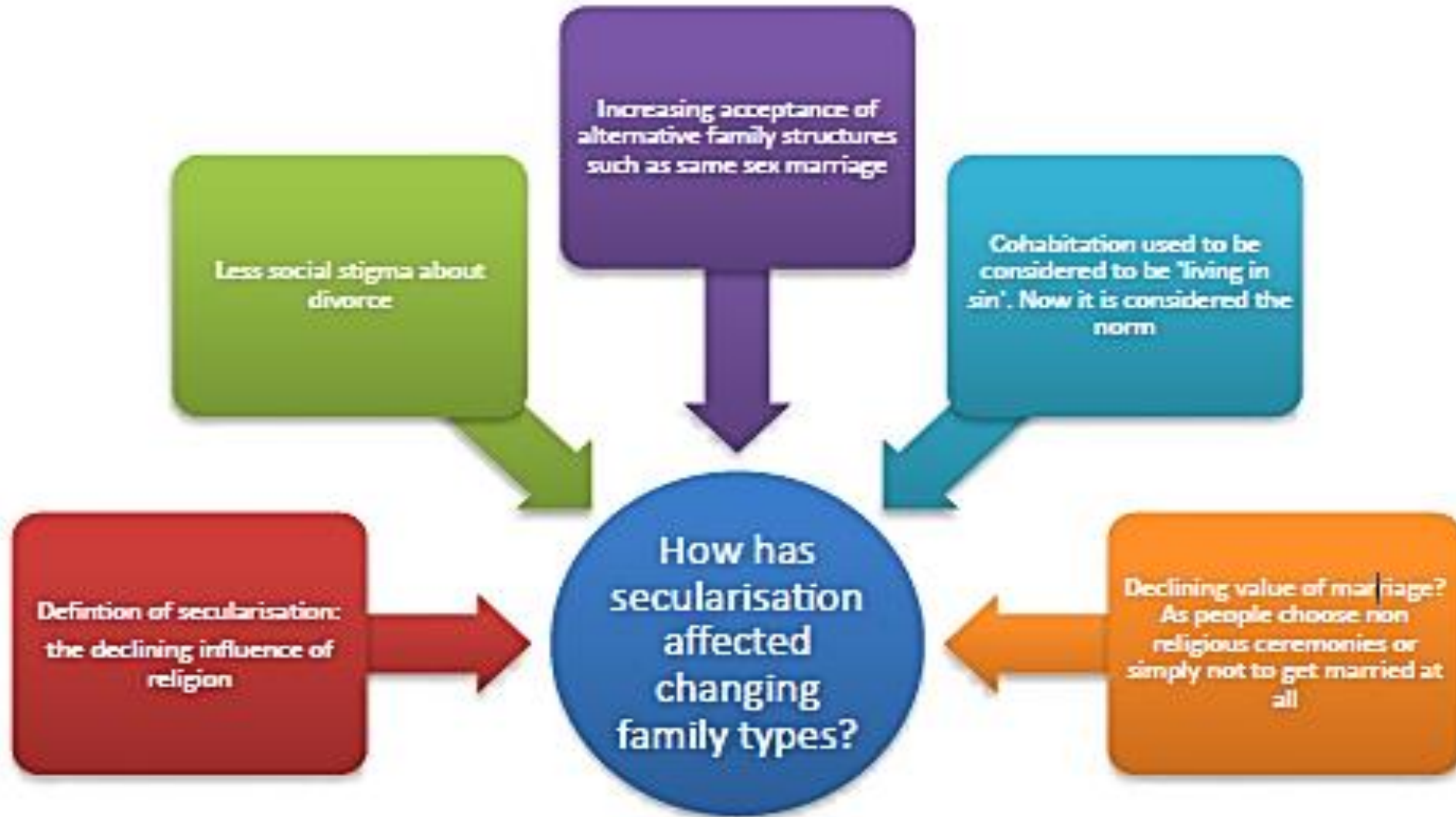
# Sexual diversity

1. Explain what Weeks means by 'chosen families'.
2. What has facilitated sexually diverse families?
3. Explain the findings of Roseneil and Budgen
4. Explain Calhoun's feminist response to sexual diversity
5. What proportion of couples were same sex couples in the UK?

# Cultural diversity



## Reason for change: Secularisation



## Reason for change: Secularisation

1. Explain what impact secularisation might have on family structure

1. Explain why this might have a different impact depending on ethnic background



## Reason for change: Individualisation

### Pg 89 – **Giddens Reflexive Modernity**

- Explain what is meant by reflexivity
- Explain what is meant by confluent love
- Explain how this is different to traditional relationships
- Explain why this might contribute to changing family structures

# Trends and changes to the family

You will investigate 2 areas of changes to the family

- Changes to family structure
- Demographic changes

## What is demography?

Demography is numbers of births, deaths, net migration (how many people leave / enter the country).

The study of demography focuses on how these factors will affect the size, sex and age structure of the population.

## Contemporary views on family diversity

Identify criticisms of diversity

Identify strengths of diversity

Explain why, despite increased diversity, Feminists suggest that patriarchy still dominates family types

## Contemporary views on family diversity

Explain the argument that the nuclear family remains the dominant family type (refer to Chester, Somerville, Gittens and Leach (Cereal packet family) in your response)

Explain what Carol Smart means by 'personal life'.

# Functionalism

Make notes on:

Key writers

Key concepts

Views on nuclear family

Views on family

diversity

Roles in the family

Evaluation

## New Right

Make notes on:

Key writers

Key concepts

Views on nuclear family

Views on family

diversity

Roles in the family

Evaluation

# Marxism

Make notes on:

Key writers

Key concepts

Views on nuclear family

Views on family

diversity

Roles in the family

Evaluation

# Feminism

Make notes on:

Key writers

Key concepts

Views on nuclear family

Views on family

diversity

Roles in the family

Evaluation



## Individualisation theories

Make notes on:

Key writers

Key concepts

Views on nuclear family

Views on family

diversity

Roles in the family

Evaluation

# Postmodernism

Make notes on:

Key writers

Key concepts

Views on nuclear family

Views on family

diversity

Roles in the family

Evaluation

## Homework:

1. Re-read pages 49-78

2. Using this information, your booklet and the fact sheets you have been given about changes to the family to make flash card revision notes on Family Diversity.

3. I WILL BE CHECKING THE FLASH CARDS

Key questions	Content	Learners should:
1. How diverse are modern families?	<p>The diversity of family and household types in the contemporary UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nuclear families</li> <li>• extended families</li> <li>• lone parent families</li> <li>• reconstituted families</li> <li>• same-sex families</li> <li>• non-family households</li> </ul> <p>Aspects of and reasons for family and household diversity in the contemporary UK, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation</li> <li>• demographic changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ birth-rate</li> <li>◦ family size</li> <li>◦ age at marriage</li> <li>◦ age of child-bearing</li> <li>◦ ageing population</li> </ul> </li> <li>• family diversity in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ social class</li> <li>◦ ethnicity</li> <li>◦ sexuality</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The ideology of the nuclear family and the theoretical debates about the role and desirability of the nuclear family in contemporary society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• functionalism</li> <li>• New Right</li> <li>• Marxism</li> <li>• feminism</li> <li>• postmodernism</li> </ul> <p>Debates about the extent of family diversity in the contemporary UK</p>	<p>also consider newer/emerging types of families and households.</p> <p>have an overview of trends over the last 30 years and consider the key reasons for these changes. Detailed knowledge of statistics on marriage, divorce and demographic changes is not required.</p> <p>consider issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control in relation to theoretical views of the role of the family in contemporary society. A theoretical approach to considering the extent of family diversity should be taken.</p>

All: To identify structure of family section questions. Most: To implement structure of family questions. Some: To meet criteria for family questions.

## Answering Section B questions Sociology of the family