

## Trends

### 1: growth in the number of households

#### 1.1: rise of individualism

1.1.1: Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) They use the concept of individualism- where by the individual choose how to live. This contrasts the traditions that people were expected to follow in the past where roles more clear-cut. People now have increased educational prospects and they are also more mobile today. People move geographically as well as socially, potentially experiencing different opportunities that their parents had.

#### 1.2: risk society- leads to more choice and uncertainty

1.2.1: Beck (1995) a result people now have very high expectations of fulfilment from love in love in society which Beck and Beck Gernsheim argue is more of a risk to society is characterised by uncertainty. People now feel insecure and therefore they seek love as a form of emotional security. Love however become more difficult to sustain where both parent have high expectations of fulfilment.

#### 1.3: women's aspirations have changed

1.3.1: Sharpe (1984) she compared the attitudes of working class girls in London schools in the early 1970s and 1990s. (Sharpe 1979 and 1994) she found that the 1990 girls were more confident, asserted, ambitious and committed to gender equality. The many priorities of girls in the 1970s was love, marriage and children. By the 1990s this had changed to jobs, careers and being able to support themselves. Education was seen as the main route to a good job and financial independence. In 1994 she said girls were increasingly wary of marriage as they have seen adult relationships break up around them and seen women coping alone in a mans world. Girls was were not concerned about standing on their own two feet rather than depending on a man. As a result girls they were more likely to see education as a means of financial independence.

1.4: statistics- number of households increasing: 2006= 24.2m households in the uk. 30% increase from 1971

- changes in women's position
- changes to attitudes in families life and women's role
- more women in paid employment, plus laws outlawing unequal pay and sex discrimination

- increased educational opportunities
- access to abortion and reliable contraception

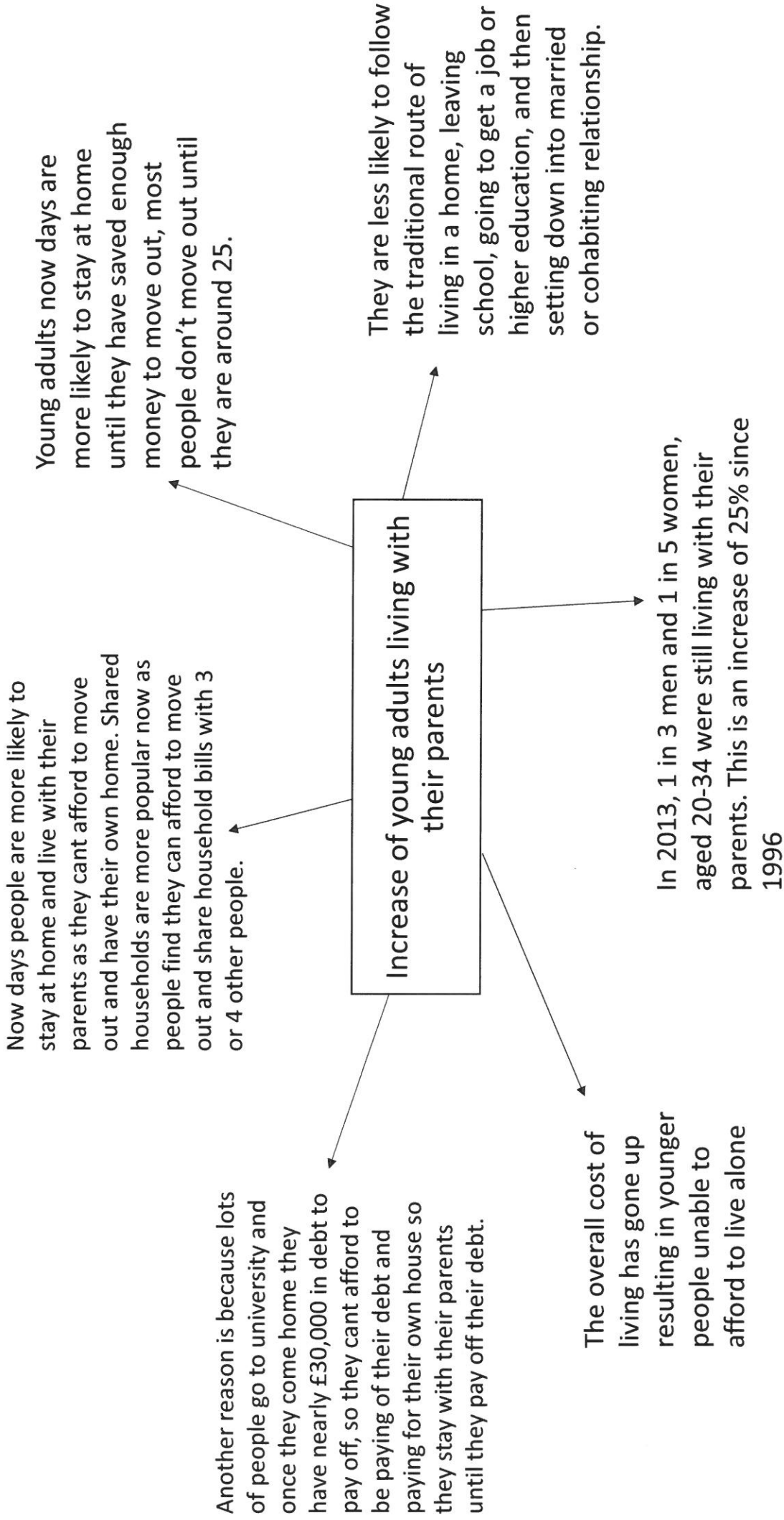
Rosenthal and Budgeon offered some insight into the lives of those who live outside of the nuclear family, such as single-parent families, they argue that the conventional family should not be taken for granted as the basic unit of society, as it no longer applies to western societies high rise in divorce rate and the last 20 years have in amount of children be brought up with lone parents.

**Child centredness:**  
 The increasing child centredness both of the family and of society meant that childhood is socially constructed as a unique important period of life. In terms of family size this has encouraged a shift from quantity to quality parents having fewer children = more attention.

Statistics  
 • Decreased in the past 30 years  
 • 2006 = 24.2m households in the UK  
 • 30% increase from 1971

Decline in family size

**The family:**  
 Smaller families mean that women are more likely to be free to go out to work, thus creating the dual earner couple typical of many professional families.



British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1992) has seen trends towards what he calls confluent love. This form of love is focuses on intimacy, closeness and emotion. It forms that basis of relationship rather than the feelings of duty and obligation reflected in the traditional marriage vows of 'for better or worse, for richer or poorer, 'til death do us part'. Intimate relationships based on confluent love tend to last as long as partners find satisfaction and fulfilment.

There are fewer marriages today than marriage today than there was 30 years ago. Marriage is still a relatively popular choice.

Couples co-habit because better contraception – Allan and Crow (2001) point out that couples can live together and have a sexual relationship without worrying about the risk of pregnancy. There has also been a decline in the stigma of 'living in sin' that existed in the past. This meant that couples that were not married and had children were view as living in sin by society.

Since the 1970's there was a decline in the number of marriages until the turn of the century, when the numbers started to rise again.

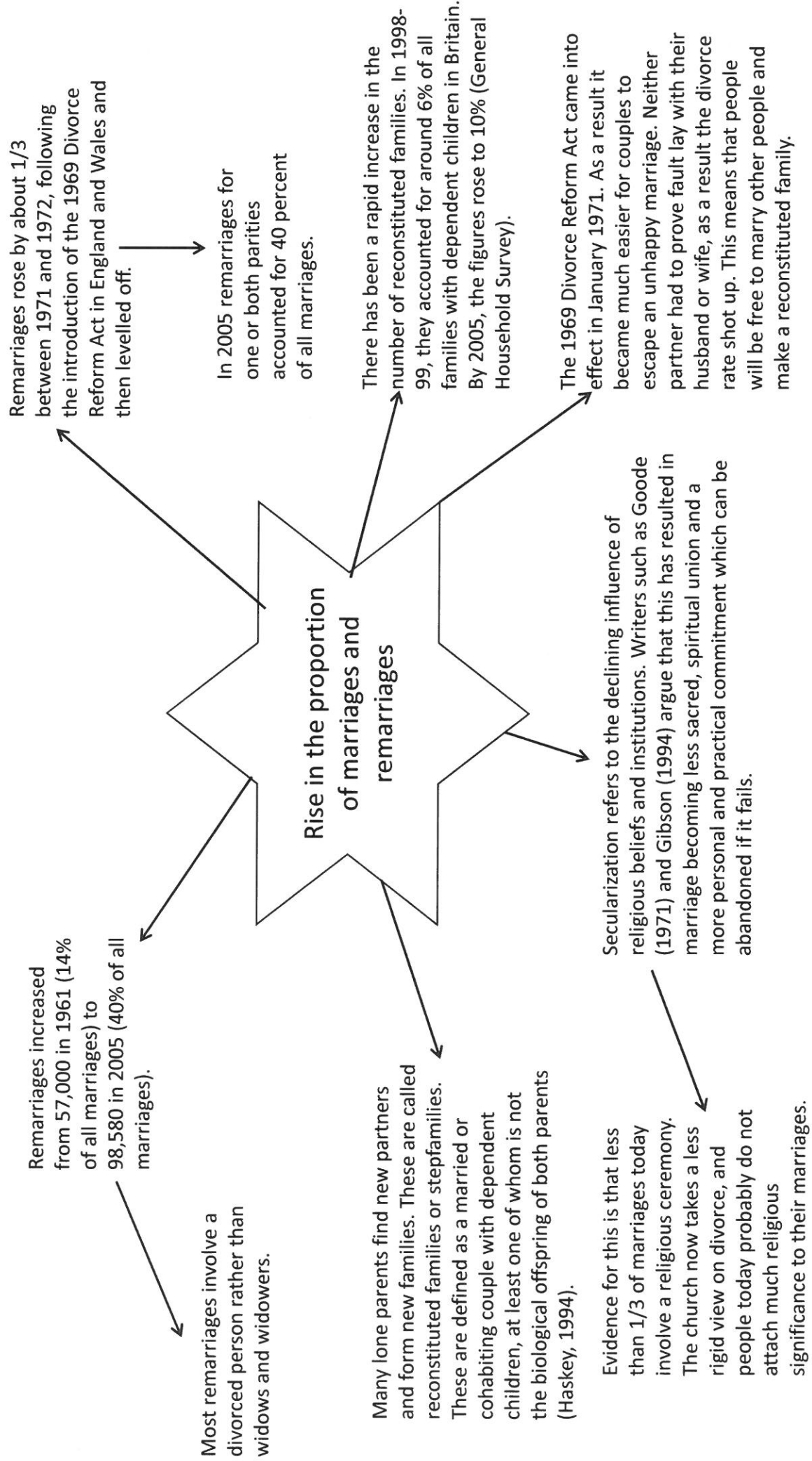
During 2004 and 2005, there was almost a ten percent decrease in the numbers of weddings in the UK, which was the first fall in three years (National Statistics, 2007).

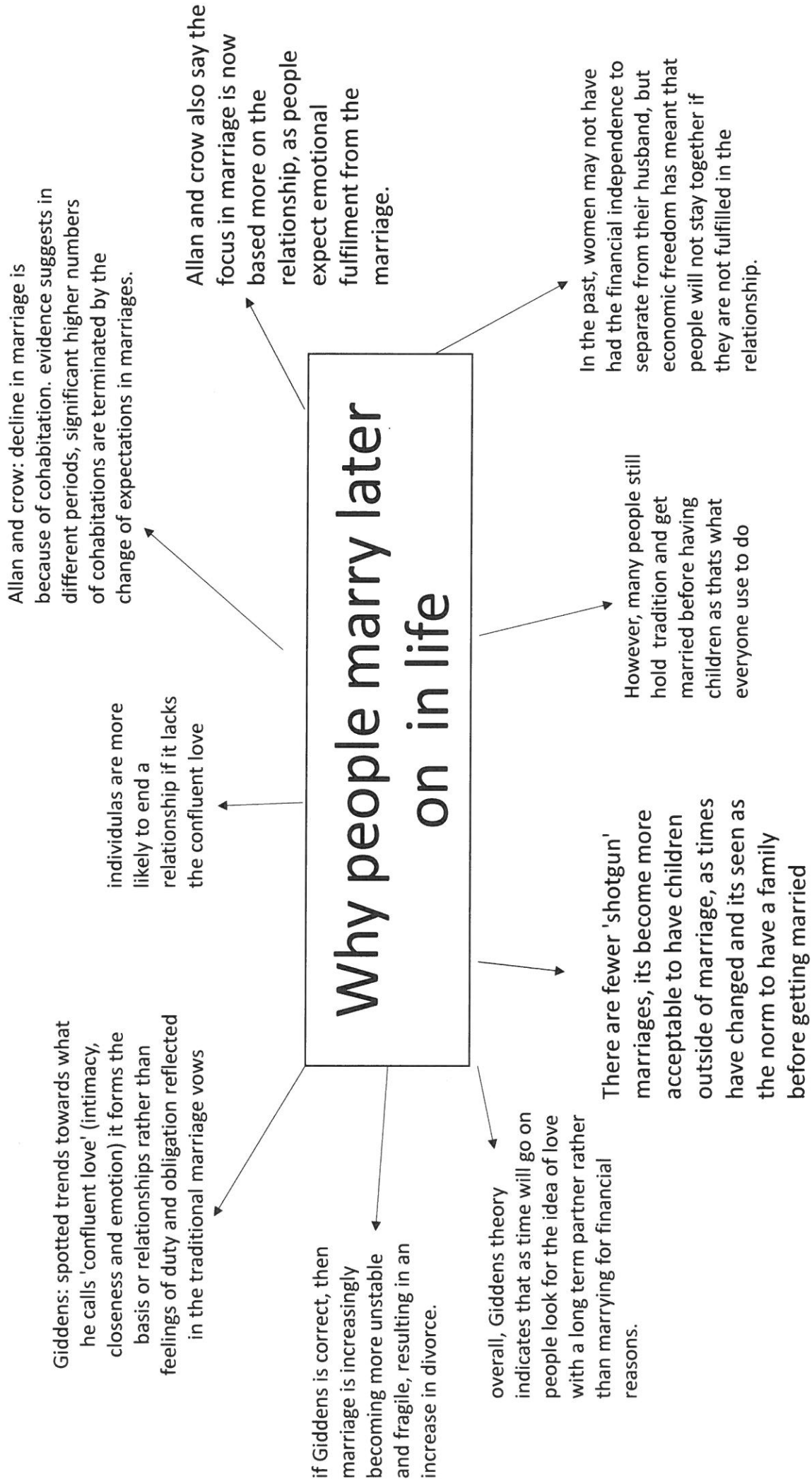
Some people choose to cohabit rather than, or prior to getting married. Some people also choose to live alone which they see as a positive lifestyle choice.

## Decline in the number of marriage

Marriage peaked in 1972 (approx. 480,000 marriages).

Although overall there is a decline in marriage = it is still a popular choice – in 2005 more than 50% of all men and women in the UK were married.





## *Increase in Rate of Divorce*

### *Laws:*

**1969/71 - Divorce reformation act-** This law meant you no longer had to prove who was the guilty party in a relationship in order to get divorced.

**1984- The matrimonial family proceedings act-** The period of time before divorce was possible was changed by this law from 3 years to 1 year

**2004- Children Act-** The act is based on maintaining the safety of children by protecting their welfare and rights by allowing the state the right to intervene if necessary.

**2004- Civil partnership act-** provided legal recognition for couples of the same sex who entered a civil partnership.

**2010- Equality act-** This act brought together laws that already existed to protect people from discrimination on grounds such as religion or gender.

**2012- Child Maintenance service-** This act requires the absent parent to pay from maintenance of the child it is used when a private family based arrangement is not possible.

**2013- Marriage (same sex couples) -** allows same sex couples to marry on the same bases as opposite sex couples.

### *Ideological Factors:*

1. **The changing role of women** –  $\frac{3}{4}$  of women now file for divorce. Women now have more respect with in society which reflect the increase in women filling for divorce as they now have the power to change their marriage if they are unhappy.
2. **Rising expectations of marriage** – Functionalist would say that people now expect more from their marriage this is said to be especially true for women.
3. Growing secularization – Religion is no longer as influential causing divorce to have greater acceptance.
4. **Change of social attitudes** – divorce now has greater acceptance. In the past divorce may have effected a career and could have left to public outrage.
5. **Growth of the nuclear family** – couples now expect more from each other and due to being away from their family they are not worried about their family's views.
6. **Reduced functions for the family** – Functionalist would argue the family has lost some of its functions to external sources.
7. **Increased life expectancy** – people now live longer increase the chance for a marriage to break down.

### *Statistics:*

#### *In the UK-*

- ❖ Number of divorced doubled between 1961 and 1969
- ❖ By the end of 2012, it was estimated that 42% of marriages end in divorce.
- ❖ 34% of marriages are expected to end in divorce by the 20th wedding anniversary.
- ❖ The average marriage is expected to last for 32 years.

*In America-*

- ❖ 41% of first marriages end in divorce
- ❖ 60% of second marriages end in divorce
- ❖ 73% of first marriages end in divorce

*Studies:*

***For:***

Post-modernist (Alan and Crow) - People now have a choice with in society so have the freedom to end a relationship if necessary.

Feminist- see a high divorce rate as desirable because it shows that women are breaking free from the repression of patriarchal nuclear families.

***Against:***

Functionalist (Talcott Parsons) - argues a high divorce rate is not necessary a threat to marriage it just reflects people higher expectations of marriage in today's society. A higher rate of remarriage shows people continuation of commitment to the idea of marriage.



## - Increase in the number of couples cohabiting

### - Changes in Values

Increased cohabitation rates are a result of the decline in stigma attached to sex outside marriage.

In the 1950's only 2% of couples cohabited before getting married, and by 2012 65% of couples cohabited, and agreed that there was nothing wrong with it.

The young are more likely to accept cohabitation.

Secularisation: young people with no religion are more likely to cohabit than those with a religion.

### - Legal Issues

Since Gay Marriage has just only been legalised in March 2014, it was common for same sex couples to cohabit as they were not legally allowed to be married so they did not have any other choice but to cohabit.

There is an estimated 69,000 same-sex cohabiting couples.

New legislation making it easier for couples to get divorced, have meant that couples are less likely to marry, and are more likely to cohabit.

For cohabiting couples, if one partner dies the other partner is not automatically entitled to any money or property, unless they are named in the will.

### - Technological Advancements

Allan and Crow (2001) found that there was a increase of cohabitation due to contraception. This allowed couples, particularly those who were relatively young, to cohabit without the need, or risk, of reproducing.

### - Sociological Studies

Giddens (1992) introduced confluent love, the idea that people were waiting for the right person and cohabitation was one way of doing this. It allowed couples to explore relationships before deciding whether they were willing to commit to marriage, unlike those in the early 1900's where couples married quickly without really being 'in love'.

Max Kimble and Daniel Millikin presents  
'Living Apart Together' (LATs)

- This term simply refers to partners who are together but live apart for usually reasons out of their control.
- Simon Duncan and Miranda Phillips found out through the British Social Attitudes Survey (2013) that **1 in 10 adults** are 'living apart together' – that is in a relationship but not married or cohabitating.
- It has been suggested that this may reflect a trend towards less formalised relationships and 'families of choice'.
- Duncan and Phillips did find that both choice and constraint play a part in whether couples live together.
- Only a minority however chose to live apart, for example because they wanted to keep their own home, because of a previous troubled relationship or because it was 'too early' to cohabit.
- Public attitudes towards LATs are favourable. A majority believe that 'a couple do not need to live together to have a strong relationship', while 20% see LATs as their 'ideal relationship' (more than the number who prefer cohabitation).
- Technological advancements have led for partners to still stay connected and see each other frequently through cheaper train fares, talking through social networks and being able to travel anywhere conveniently.



Lone Parent families	Childbearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lone parent families now make up 22% of all families.</li> <li>➤ 1 in 4 children live in a lone parent family.</li> <li>➤ Mothers head over 90% of these families.</li> <li>➤ Until the early 1990's, divorced women were the biggest group of lone mothers.</li> <li>➤ From the early 1990's single (never married) women became the biggest group of lone mothers.</li> <li>➤ A child living with a lone parent is twice as likely to be in poverty as a child living with two.</li> <li>➤ The reason for the number of lone parent families has risen is due to the increase in divorce and separation more recently and the increase of the number of never married women having children.</li> <li>➤ This is linked to the decline in stigma attached to births outside marriage.</li> <li>➤ Lone parent families tend to be female-headed for several reasons:</li> <li>➤ The widespread belief that women are by nature suited to an 'expressive' or nurturing role.</li> <li>➤ The facts that divorce courts usually give custody of children to mothers.</li> <li>➤ The fact that men may be less willing than women to give up work to care for children.</li> <li>➤ An increase in lone parent households (Alan &amp; Crow, 2001).</li> <li>➤ Alan &amp; Crow identified two factors to explain lone parent households, these are an increase in divorce – this has made a significant contribution to the rise in lone parent households. A significant rise in the number of never married women. Sometimes lone parenthood arises due to the death of a parent. However, choice is a key factor in contemporary society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Women are having children later between: 1971 and 2012, their average age at birth of their first child rose 4 years to 28.1 years.</li> <li>➤ More women are staying childless: it is predicted that a quarter of those born in 1973 will be childless when they reach 45.</li> <li>➤ The later age at which women are having children, smaller family sizes and the fact that more women are remaining childless, all reflect the fact that women now have more options than just motherhood.</li> <li>➤ Many are seeking to establish themselves in a career before starting a family, or instead having children at all.</li> <li>➤ Women's aspirations have changed (Sharp, 1984).</li> <li>➤ Sharp compared the attitude of working class girls in London schools in the early 1970's and 1990's. She found that the 1990's girls were more confident, assertive, ambitious and committed to the gender equality.</li> <li>➤ The main priority for girls in the 1970's were love, marriage, husbands and children.</li> <li>➤ By the 1990s this had changed to jobs career and being able to support themselves.</li> <li>➤ Sharp in 1994 said that 'Girls were increasingly wary of marriage, they have seen adult relationships break up around them and have seen women coping alone in a mans world.'</li> <li>➤ An increase in cohabitation due to better contraception (Allan &amp; Crow, 2001).</li> <li>➤ Allan and Crow point out that couples can live together and have sexual relationships without worrying the risk of pregnancy.</li> <li>➤ There has also been a decline in the stigma of living in sin that existed in the past.</li> </ul>

# One person households

## FACTS & STATS

There has been a big rise in the number of people living alone. In 2013 almost 3 in 10 households (7.7million people) contained only 1 person. 40% of all 1 person households are over 65. Pensioner 1 person households have doubled since 1961, whilst those of none pensioners have trebled. Men under 65 were the group most likely to live alone.

By 2033 over 30% of the adult population will be single.

## Reasons for changes

The increase in separation and divorce has created more 1 person households especially amongst men under 65. This is because following divorce any children are more likely to live with their mother.

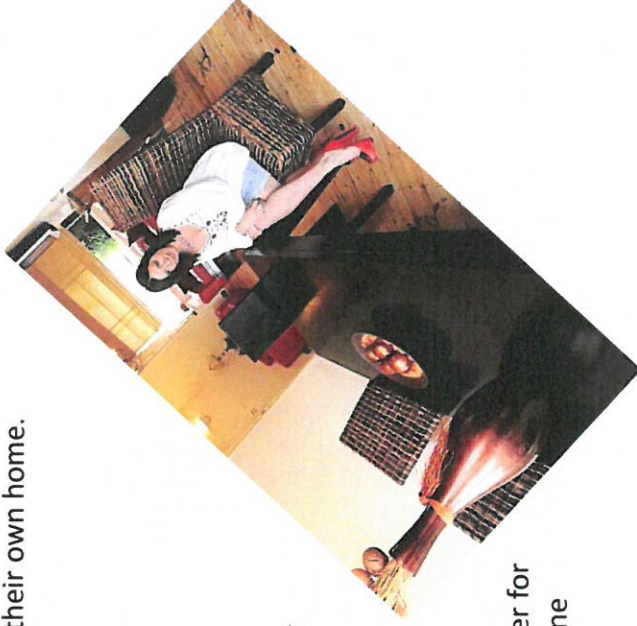
The decline in the numbers marrying and the trends towards marrying later also means more people are remaining single, the proportion of adults who are single has risen by half since 1971.

Many of these are living alone.

It is possible a growing number are opting for 'creative singlehood', a deliberate choice to live alone.

## Case Study

Although its assumed those not living with a partner do not have one, whether from choice or not. However, research from Simon Duncan and Miranda Philips for the British social attitude survey (2013) found that 1 in 10 adults are living apart together. However Duncan and Philips found that choice and constraint play a part in whether couples live together. For example, some said they could not afford to, however a minority actively chose to live apart, For example they wanted to keep their own home.



## Ideological

Living alone is now much more accepted for both men and especially women at later ages. Whereas post and pre war, women living alone were seen as 'past their sell by date'.

## Technological

Due to advances in technology it is now safer for elderly pensioners and widowers to live alone without 24hr care.

### **Increase of same sex partners (with children)**

- Civil partnership act 2004 – introduced by new labour, this gave gay couples rights and responsibilities equal to marriage (straight couples).
- Stonewall 2012 the campaign for lesbian, gay and bisexual rights estimates that about 5-7% of adult population has same sex relationships.
- Increased social acceptance of same sex relationships in recent years.
- Male homosexual acts were decriminalised in 1967 so consenting adults over 21.
- Since 2002 cohabiting couples have had the same rights to adopt as married couples.
- Weeks et al – 1999 stresses that there is a large degree of choice occurring in gay and lesbian families they have what he terms 'chosen families' which means that they have friendship within their relationships and can build a family that offer the same stability and security s same sex families.
- In homosexual families commitment can be negotiated as you have to think through the process of adopting a child.

This is where the family structure is extended in a particular direction they are long and thin.

- Brannen (2003) sees them as being as like a beanpole.

These are multi-generational families where there is more intergenerational contact. Such as, between grandparents and grandchildren.

High divorce rates; when partners split up there can be a breakdown of contact between extended family members.

Falling fertility rates; if people have fewer siblings than they used to there will be fewer relationships on this level as there were in the past.

Smaller family size; there will be fewer family members to build relationships within a generation, but also these smaller families can be geographically mobile.

People are living longer; grandparents and even great grandparents are alive for longer and are more physically fit.

Provision of practical and emotional support for elderly parents from grown up offspring.

Grandparents provide childcare for their grandchildren.

An increase in lone parents who may rely on support from their own parents to help with children.

They help their grown up children with childcare and also care for their elder parents. Research shows a growing number of women will be in this position as women see it as their duty.

- The reasons for fewer intergenerational ties include:

- The reasons for more intergenerational ties include:

Grundy and Henrietta (2006) used the concept of 'sandwich generation' refer to - women aged 55 and 69 who, sandwiched between their needy parents and their own children offer assistance to both.

## - Beanpole family

## Why life expectancy has increased?

- Refers to how long on average a person born in a given year can expect to live.
- Males born in England in 1900 could expect on average to live until they were 50 whereas males born in England in 2013 can expect to live for 90.7 years.
- Over the past 2 centuries life expectancy has increased by about 2 years per decade.
- One reason for low life expectancy in 1900 is because so many infants and children did not survive beyond the early years of life.
- Harper predicts that we will soon achieve 'radical longevity' with many more centenarians.
- In the 20<sup>th</sup> century more effective central and local government with power to enforce laws led to a range of improvements in public health and quality of the environment, these included improvements in housing, laws to combat the lack of food and drink and improvement sewage and disposal methods.
- Clean air acts reduced air pollutions such as the smog that led to 4,000 deaths in 5 days in 1952.
- The setting up of the NHS in 1948 improved maternity services and led to advances in antibiotics.

# - Fewer children born

## - Decline in infant mortality rate

This means the number of infants who die before their first birthday per 1000 babies born alive per year.

Harper argues that the fall in IMR is due to the fall in birth rate, this is because if children die parents have more children to replace the lost.

In the 1900s the IMR for the UK was 154 = 15% of babies died in their first year.

In the first half of the 20th century the UKs IMR began to fall. This is because ...

Improved housing and better sanitation

Better nutrition

Better knowledge of hygiene

Fall in the number of married women working

Improved health services for mothers and children

## - Children are now an economic liability

Laws banning child labour introducing compulsory schools and highering the school leaving age. This means that children remain economically dependant on their parents for longer.

Changing norms about what children have a right to expect from their parents in material terms, meaning that the costs of raising a child has risen.

## - Child centredness

Both in the family and society means that childhood is socially constructed as an important period in a persons life.

Families are more centred on quality rather than quantity, parents now have fewer children to have attention for the children they currently have.

## - Future trends in birthrates

Birthrates, fertility rates and family sizes have fallen over the last century. However, there has been an increase in birth since 2001.

The reason for this is the increase in immigration because mothers from outside the UK have a higher fertility rate. Babies born from mothers outside the UK accounted for 25% of all births in 2011.

## - The family

Smaller families means that women are more likely to be free to go out to work, creating a dual earner couple more common.

However, family size is only one factor, eg - better off couples may be able to have larger families and still be able to afford childcare which allows them both to work.

## - Dependency ratio

This is the relationship between the size of the working population and the size of the nonworking/dependant population.

Earnings, savings and taxes of the working population must support the dependant population. Children make up a large part of the dependant population, so a fall in the number of children reduces the 'burden of dependency' of the working population.

However, in the long run fewer children being born will mean fewer young adults and a smaller working population so the 'burden of dependency' may begin to increase again.

Falling fertility rates mean fewer children. As a result childhood may become a lonelier experience as fewer children will have siblings and more childless adults may mean fewer voices speaking up in support of childrens interests.

## - Public services and policies

A lower birthrate has consequences for public services. For example, fewer schools and maternity and child healthcare services may be needed. It also affects the cost of maternity and paternity leave and the types of housing that need to be built.

One effect of women having less babies is that average age of the population is rising; there are more old people to young people, this may also effect the dependency ratio.

## - Giddens: choice and equality (1992)

Contraception has allowed sex and intimacy rather than reproduction to become the main reason for the relationships existance.

Women have gained independance as a result of feminism and because of greater opportunities in education and work.

## - Beck 1992 negotiated family

Beck argues that we now live in a society were tradition has less influence and people have more choice.

This contrasts with an earlier time when people roles were more fixed on tradition and social norms dictated how they should behave.

The patriarchal family has been undermined by two trends.

Great gender equality, which has challenged male domination. Women now expect equality both at work and in marriage.

Greater individualism, where peoples actions are influenced more by calculations of their own self interest that by a sense of obligation to others.