

## Decline in the number of Marriages:

### Changes in values:



#### The reduced function of the family

- Some functionalists argue (Merdock and parsons) that a number of family roles have been transferred to or shared with other social institutions.
- Young people are more likely to cohabit than older people.
- This may reflect that older people believe that living together outside of marriage is always wrong.
- There is a more easygoing attitude to cohabitation in young people.

#NOT MARRIED!



#### Growing secularisation

- The influence of Religion has declined
- Marriage and cohabitation are more about individual and practical choices than sacred, spiritual unions.
- Less than a third of marriages today involve a religious ceremony (although this is because many are second marriages arising from divorce).



### Key Statistics:

- In 2014, there were 247,372 marriages which is 6.2% lower than 2012
- In 2016, there were 106,959 Divorces which is a 5.8% increase compared to 2015
- From 1996 to 2016, the amount of cohabitating couples almost doubled from 1.5 million to 3.3 million (this includes cohabitating families).

## Changes in social issues:



#### The changing role of women

- Women are now more successful than men in education which is gradually being reflected in the labour market.
- They have grown in economic independence.
- Women's expectation of a life and marriage has risen.
- Less women are prepared to be a housewife ÷ mothers, which as feminists point out, still seem to dominate a woman's role in marriage
- Their financial independence means women do not need to rely on the support of their husbands, and have less need for the security of marriage.



#### The rising divorce rate

- This may make couples fear getting a divorce, and therefore stop them from marrying.
- High number of second marriages



#### Reducing the risk

- Beck (1992) suggests we are living in what is called a 'risk society'.
- Individuals are less controlled by traditional structures and institutions like the family.
- There is less loyalty and commitment demanded by society in marriage and in the family.



He might see us!



## Legal acts / changes:

16th June 2014

- This legislation made forced marriages a crime, enforcing a maximum penalty of 7 years
- The civil marriage act of 1836 allowed for non-religious civil marriages to be held in a registry office.
- The divorce act of 1969 made irrevocable breakdown the sole basis for obtaining a divorce.



### Sociological Studies:

Bemard (1982)

- Has long presented evidence for feminist claims about marriage as a social institution that oppresses women.
- 40% of marriages end in divorce and re-marriage is on the increase.

#FEMINISM!

Gibson

- Increase in individualization means some are not happy with their current partners and want to change, therefore marriage is no longer as important.

Mitchel and Goody

- There has been a decrease in the stigma around divorce so it has become more socially acceptable to divorce and remarry in present day.



- Education and health awareness have seen significant improvements such as medical websites including NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx) providing special guidance on how to prevent and treat ill-health.

- Public are educated about the benefits of exercise, eating a balanced diet and giving up smoking.

Average life expectancy  
 - 2012-13 - men = 79 years  
 women = 83 years

Infant mortality rate = Number of deaths of babies in their first year per 1000 births per year

there'll be 2041 as many 78 5 year olds as

- 1902 - infant mortality rate = 142 per 1000  
 - 2012 = 4.1 per 1000

- 1902 - death rates = 18 per 1000  
 - 2012 - death rates = 4 per 1000

Facts and statistics

- Hygiene and sanitation have significantly improved such as the construction of public sewer systems and more homes having access to clean drinking water.

- It will see an increase in the dependency ratio (2015 = 3.2 people for every pensioner 2033 = ~~3.2~~ 2.3 people for every pensioner.

According to McKeown rising living standards i.e. higher wages, better food, improved housing conditions have reduced death rates.

Why death rates have fallen

Fall in death rates / increase in life expectancy

Consequences

of life expectancy ~~has increased~~ increasing

- Children are able to be delivered a lot more safely such as the support of midwives and the choice of IVF (In-vitro fertilisation) treatment.

- Medicine and science (e.g. vaccines, development of penicillin, antibiotics etc...) have advanced as well as surgery and medical technology (e.g. transplant surgery).

- The average age of the population is getting higher / older in Britain.

- Older people will more likely require care and financial assistance (such as pensions being paid by younger people's taxes who are currently working) than people of working age.

- A greater proportion of the population are over retirement age than ~~there are~~ it is for young people.

- Working conditions have dramatically improved since the 20th century as technology has taken over many dangerous jobs and tasks that can damage people's health. Factory machinery is much safer than it was 100 years ago.

- Standards of health and safety are higher at work, working hours are shorter and more leisure time have made work less physically damaging to health.

# Increase in lone-parent families

○ CHANGING IN SOCIAL ATTITUDES - there is less stigma/social disapproval attached to lone parenthood today. Women (or men) are therefore less afraid of the social consequences of becoming lone parents

○ GREATER ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OF WOMEN  
- In today's society women have greater economic independence which means they can afford their own family without being supported by a husband.

○ RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON LOVE - not just a binding contract. People only want to get married for personal fulfillment so they are not obliged to get married.

○ THE DIVORCE REFORM ACT - enables people who are unsatisfied with their marriage to divorce and raise their children alone

New Right blames the generosity of the welfare state:

Charles Murray (1990) argue that generous welfare benefits encourage women to have to have children they could not otherwise afford or support - linked to idea of underclass

New Right sees lone-parent families a sign of the decline in conventional family life and disapprove calling this a promiscuous lifestyle.

# Increase in LATs (Living Apart Together Relationships)

○ MODERN TECHNOLOGY - which means contact can be maintained between 'apartners'. This can also create LATs, as people may form virtual relationships which may turn into a long-term LATs.

○ CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET - meant it is more difficult for partners to find or retain their existing jobs and incomes in other areas.

○ GROWING INDIVIDUALIZATION and choice in relationships, and as people live longer and healthier lives, they may become more prone to seeking out new partners - Beck & Beck

Haskoy (2005) - around 2 million couples in 2002-3 in Britain in LATs

Levin (2004) sees the growth of LATs arising from social changes and changing of norms. The widespread acceptance of divorce & cohabitation itself contributes because people have become more open to new styles of relationships