Your notes

GCSE Sociology: revision notes

Changing family patterns

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Divorce

- Divorce rose sharply after the Divorce Reform Act 1969 (in force from 1971) allowed divorce for "**irretrievable breakdown**" of the marriage.
- Other reasons: less **stigma**, **secularisation** (religion having less influence), women's greater financial independence, and higher expectations of marriage.

Marriage and cohabitation

- Fewer people marry, and those who do marry later. Cohabitation has increased, and more children are born outside marriage.
- Civil partnerships were introduced in the UK in 2004, and same-sex marriage became legal in England and Wales in 2014; in Guernsey same-sex marriage became legal in 2017.
- Reasons: changing attitudes, the cost of weddings, **secularisation** and women's independence.

Other changes

- Families have become smaller, as people have fewer children and have them later, partly because of contraception, careers and the cost of raising children.
- An **ageing population** means more grandparents and more older people living alone, and more beanpole families.
- Children are more **child-centred** today: they are seen as individuals with rights, and families spend more time and money on them.

Boomerang children and the sandwich generation (Eduqas)

- **Boomerang children** are adult children who leave home, often for university, then move back, usually because housing is expensive or they have debts.

- The **sandwich generation** are adults who care for their own children and their ageing parents at the same time, as people live longer and have children later.

Key terms

Divorce rate	The number of divorces per thousand married people each year.
Secularisation	The decline in the influence of religion.
Irretrievable breakdown	The legal ground for divorce: the marriage can't be saved.
Ageing population	A population with a growing proportion of older people.
Child-centred	Focusing on children's needs and rights.
Stigma	Negative social attitudes towards something.
Boomerang children	Adult children who move back in with their parents after leaving home. (Eduqas)
Sandwich generation	Adults caring for both their children and their ageing parents. (Eduqas)

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Which law made divorce easier from 1971?
2. What is secularisation?
3. How has marriage changed?
4. When did same-sex marriage become legal in Guernsey?
5. Why have families become smaller?
6. What is an ageing population?
7. Why has divorce become more common?
8. What does child-centred mean?

Answers

1. The Divorce Reform Act 1969
2. The decline in the influence of religion
3. Fewer people marry, and later
4. 2017
5. Contraception, careers and the cost of raising children
6. A population with a growing proportion of older people
7. Less stigma and women's greater financial independence
8. Focusing on children's needs and rights

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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