Your notes

GCSE Sociology: revision notes

Family diversity

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Types of family and household

- Nuclear: two parents and their dependent children.
- Extended: includes relatives beyond the nuclear family, such as grandparents (vertically extended) or aunts and uncles (horizontally extended).
- Lone-parent: one parent and their children, most often headed by a mother.
- Reconstituted (step) families: formed when adults with children from previous relationships form a new family.
- Same-sex families, and beanpole families (several generations, but few people in each).
- **Households** include people living alone, which is increasingly common, and people living together who aren't a family.

Rapoport and Rapoport

- Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) argued families in Britain had become diverse, and identified five types of diversity.
- Organisational (how roles are organised), cultural (ethnic and religious differences), class, life course (such as young couples or retired people) and cohort (the time period people live through).

Why families have become more diverse

- More divorce and remarriage, increased **cohabitation**, more acceptance of same-sex relationships (including civil partnerships and same-sex marriage, legal in Guernsey since 2017), people living longer, and migration bringing new family forms.

Global family forms (Eduqas)

- Eduqas asks about family forms around the world, not just in the UK.

- **Polygamy** is marriage to more than one partner at once (usually one man with several wives). It is legal in some countries but not in the UK.
- In an arranged marriage, families help choose a partner, and both people agree. It is different from a forced marriage, which is illegal in the UK.
- China's **one-child policy** (from 1980) limited most couples to one child to slow population growth. It led to many 'only children', more boys than girls and an ageing population, and was replaced by a two-child policy in 2016 and a three-child policy in 2021.

Your notes

Key terms

Extended family	A family including relatives beyond parents and children.
Lone-parent family	One parent living with their children.
Reconstituted family	A family formed when adults with children from previous relationships join together.
Beanpole family	A multi-generation family with few people in each generation.
Household	A person or group of people living at the same address.
Family diversity	The variety of family types in society.
Cohabitation	Living together as a couple without being married.
Polygamy	Being married to more than one person at the same time. (Eduqas)
One-child policy	China's rule, from 1980 to 2015, limiting most couples to one child. (Eduqas)

Quick questions

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

1. What is a reconstituted family?
2. What is an extended family?
3. What is a beanpole family?
4. Who identified five types of family diversity?
5. Which is one of the Rapoports' types of diversity?
6. What is a household?
7. What is cohabitation?
8. Who most often heads a lone-parent family?

Answers

1. A family formed when adults with children from previous relationships join together
2. A family including relatives beyond parents and children
3. A multi-generation family with few people in each generation
4. Rapoport and Rapoport

5. Cultural diversity
6. A person or group living at the same address
7. Living together as a couple without being married
8. A mother

What to do next

Practise 11 questions on this topic

Try 5 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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