

Marriage & Divorce

Sociology

The demographic changes, and the explanations offered for them.

What changed, then the competing accounts of why.

What changed

Marriage later and less common.

Cohabitation now normal before marriage.

Divorce rose sharply, then plateaued.

More births outside marriage.

More remarriage and step-families.

Competing accounts

Legal change made divorce accessible.

Women's earnings reduced dependence.

Secularisation weakened religious sanction.

Higher expectations of a marriage.

Individualisation: Beck and Giddens.

Rising cost of housing delays formation.

Educational reference. A rising divorce rate can follow a legal reform without any change in how marriages are experienced.