# CHANGING FAMILY PATTERNS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*
*in partial fulfillment of the requirements*
*for the award of the degree of*

## MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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**2012**

Date: 16/07/2012

## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Changing Family Patterns in Contemporary Britain**" submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.
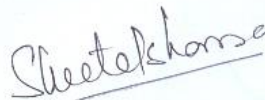
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## CERTIFICATE

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Dedicated

to

My Mother

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CE | Common Era |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CSA | Child Support Agency |
| DFES | Department for Education and Skills |
| EU | European Union |
| LAT | Live Alone Together. |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| USA | United State of America |

*Chapter One*

*INTRODUCTION*

## BACKGROUND

> Family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain socially accepted sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabit adult (Murdock 1949).

As individuals we all are members of a family group, birth gives each of us a set of blood relations that surround us during our most formative years. Marriage brings us a new set of familial relationship. Such relationship may be dissolved through death, divorce, or distance. Family plays a significant role in social life. All economic, political and social changes, which take place in a society, affect the structure of the family. In the beginning of the era of modernity, agriculture, industrial, and scientific revolutions were producing economic and political changes that threatened to create social chaos in Britain. The family was seen as one of the institutions that had to respond to these changes. In order to comprehend the changing patterns of family in British society, it is important to understand what a family does stand for. Broadly speaking, the family is a group of people related by blood or by law, living together or associating with one another to a common purpose, that purpose being the provision of food, shelter, and the rearing of children.

There are various approaches that highlight the structure and function of family, along with understanding the changing patterns of family system. Some of these approaches are discussed below:

Functionalists see family as the center of social system, which performs two most important functions in the society. These are (a) socialisation of the young and (b) stabilisation of the adult person. The functionalist approach supports the 'march of progress' view of the family, the idea that the family has reached its most advanced stage of development. Indeed, the main critic of functionalist approach of family

system is that, it is unable to explain historical perspective of family forms and they also failed to see how the family might develop in the future.

Feminist approach mainly argues that, most of studies about family had been done by men and it only shows male perspective and what men did. Feminist theorist gives us a view to understand the development of sexual division with the development of an industrial society through the historical perspective. Second thing which this approach points out is the historical evidence to shows that women's role both within and outside the family changes over time.

Marxists says that there was a series of stages in the evolution of mankind. Social institutions, such as the family changed in form alongside the changes in the nature of economic subsistence. The earliest family forms were communistic households, where women were seen as equal to men although there was certainly a sexual division of labor. But they failed to explain that how this sexual division of labor had developed.

Modernisation theory identifies four forces that induce societal changes such as (a) technological changes, particularly modes of production and distribution characteristic of an industrial and market economy; (b) ecological changes, like urbanisation in which people live in small residential units in high population areas; (c) changes in governance and institutions, such as laws, which may legislate the rights of mothers and children; And finally, (d) changes in norms and values, such as greater individualism. Convergence has been another relevant dynamic process of modernisation theory, that is, as nations become "modernised", primarily because of increasing industrialisation and affluence, they tend to converge in terms of these types of changes in production and consumption, ecology, social institutions, and values. With increasing economic level and industrialisation, countries reject traditional values and culture, and all countries inevitably converge towards a system of "modern" values and increasing individualisation. Modernisation theory predicts that traditional societies may be presently "underdeveloped" but economic wellbeing will inevitably result, as discussed above, in changes in its family system to predominantly nuclear with fewer kin relationships, more one parent families, more divorces. It is highly unlikely that these trends will regress to greater power of the extended families, clans, and lineages, or to increased male authority, growth in

percentage of marriages, or increase in multigenerational families. These trends in family change are perhaps some of the "most securely known in the social sciences".

Modernisation theory has predicated the eventual convergence of family systems in societies throughout the world, from the extended family to the nuclear and one person family systems. However this theory has little understanding of the processes of how psychological variables such as personality, values, interaction, communication, and emotional bonds with kin are related to family networks.

'As Doherty (1991) observed, Post modernism, by no means simple to define, is characterised by a "close reading" of small units rather than general theorizing about big ideas. The postmodern approach tends towards elaboration, eclecticism, ornamentation, and inclusiveness; it dismisses the existence of an absolute reality and is deeply suspicious of the concept of human progress. If we define the current ongoing effort to remake contemporary family life as the post-modern family, such a definition carries with it overtones from the definition of postmodern art and literature. In these fields the term post-modern signals the end of a familiar pattern of activity and emergence of new areas of endeavor whose activities are unclear and whose meanings and implications are not yet well understood. Thus the term post-modernism is characterised by uncertainty, insecurity, and doubt' (Zenitlin F.Marian et al 1995).

"Full consensus on the definition of the emerging post-modern family structure has not been reached, despite recognition of the need for better understanding of the variety of human families in the post-modern period and insight into how large-scale social patterns affect personal and domestic relationships. The post-modern world is shaped by pluralism, democracy, religious freedom, consumerism, mobility, and increasing access to news and entertainment. Residents of this post-modern world are able to see that there are many beliefs, multiple realities, and an exhilarating but daunting profusion of world views - a society that has lost its faith in absolute truth and in which people have to choose what to believe" (ibid).

"In the 1970s, Shorter (1975) may have been the first to describe the emerging post-modern family. He noted three important characteristics: adolescent indifference to the family's identity; instability in the lives of couples, accompanied by rapidly increasing divorce rates; and destruction of the "nest" notion of nuclear family life

with the liberation of women. At that time, Shorter noted little change in patterns of child socialization. The dramatic shift from mothers caring for young children in the home to the use of paid providers occurred soon after in the developed world, reflecting mothers' increasing workplace participation" (ibid).

'While single-parent, surrogate-mother, and gay and lesbian families, and other variants of the post-modern family may be viewed as the negative results of the trends described above, or as breakdown products, they also reflect firstly as disillusionment with the optimistic assumptions of human progress and with the universality and the regularity of the laws of science; hence, lack of faith in the previously established order. Secondly, the uncoupling of economic forces underlying social conformity, such as the need for women to marry advantageously to survive financially and to transmit their class status to the next generation, or the need to bear children in wedlock for them to inherit family land or other property that would be their source of livelihood. Finally, the electronic media influences both in reflecting and legitimising the diversity of family' (ibid).

While studying changing patterns of family, a single approach may not be sufficient as these approaches tend to be linked and share perspectives on family system. This work, by focusing on family patterns in Britain tends to study changes in family system and how these changes have shaped British family structure. 'Britain today is a much more complex society than in the past times, with great diversity in the types of households with in which people live. Much of this diversity has been gained at the expense of tradition and there has been a downward trend in the prevalence of certain types of family most particularly, the traditional two parents plus dependent children. For some, change means decline or more strongly the 'death of the family'. But household diversity does not by itself entail family decline. While there has been a reduction in the number of traditional family households, there has also been a growth in opportunities to live alone or to cohabit. However, it is also the case that not all that has changed in the families and households is harmful- nor it is necessarily new. Much of what we are seeing in Britain today is the continuation of trends briefly interrupted by the 'ideal family' of the 1950s and 1960s' (McRae 1999:1).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the purpose to understand family in Britain, it is important to review the available literature. There is a wide variety of literature available which deals exclusively with different aspect of family change in Britain, which provides a proper understanding of family, family in contemporary world, family in Europe and particularly in Britain.

Wilson Adrian (1985) provides a comprehensive introduction to the sociological perspectives on the family in his work titled *Family*. Wilson also considers the changing structure of the family and surveys the family types today. He also gives a broad concept of family theories that emphasise the importance of how social structures have a powerful influence on the development of the discipline, but have been challenged more recently by approaches that place the emphasis on the individual act.

Elliot Robertson Faith (1986) explains the debate about appropriate ways of ordering sexual relationships, child care and the roles of men and women, which are not simply private debates about personal values and conduct reproduction and child-care but a criticism to the social group as a whole and are a matter of public concern and social regulation in every society. Moreover, the 'moral' debate interweaves with 'academic' debates about the origin of 'the family', the forms it takes in different social classes and societies, how and why it changes over time and interests that particular arrangements serve. The primary intent is to provide a dispassionate review of the major sociological accounts of changes in the family. However in the study of the family boundaries between sociological, psychological and political (including feminist) thought are not easing drawn and this book refers to the insights of writers in all these fields. The introductory chapter of his book is concerned with basic concept of family. It looks at the problem of defining the family and highlights the way in which definitions of 'the family' incorporate ideas of what the family ought to be. It also gives a general view of family such as functionalism, Marxism and feminism, to understand structural changes in the family system.

James Georgas (2006) has tried to answer questions related to the function of the family changes and how have these changes have affected family roles in cultures throughout the world, through a psychological study of families in thirty nations, carefully selected to present a diverse cultural mix. He attempts to reviews the

theories and the findings on culture and family, based on the literature from primarily sociological and cultural anthropological studies. The definitions of family are presented and discussed with goal of seeking a universally applicable definition of family types across cultures. This is followed by discussions of the sociological family theories of the nineteenth century, and the findings of studies of family change and family networks in Western countries. The next section discusses the study of family history and the development of nuclear and extended families in western countries. The methodological problems related to determining types of families, primarily nuclear and extended, based on demographic data are then discussed. The final section discusses family change in non-western countries, followed by an examination of the predictions of modernisation theory and globalisation as possible explanations for family change in these countries and convergence of family structures and family functioning with those of Western societies.

Leslie R.Gerald's (1976) work is an extensive coverage of cross-cultural material. This work includes most of issues which are covered under titles such as, the Modern Family, the Sociology of the Family, and Marriage and the Family.  Part III of his book gives a good description on theories of family structure and family change. It could not include, of course, all the majored theoretical contributions to our understanding of the family that have been made. Essentially, the ideas of three men – William Ogburn, Carle Zimmerman and Talcott Parsons- who have had significant and lasting influence on our thinking about the family are treated in detail.

Angelique Janssens (2002) presents a quantitative study into the influence of the process of industrialisation on the nature and strength of family relationship in Dutch community between 1850 and 1920. There are two main sets of theoretical focal points in his work. The first one is structural-functionalist theory assuming an inevitable causality between the more loosely knit nuclear family system, and industrial society. The second set consists of historical assumptions about the resilience and tenacity of family relationships. First chapter of his book gives a detailed analysis of structuralism and functionalism.

In their work, Levin Irene and Torst Jan (1992), have attempted to simplify the complexity of the concept of family. First section of this article deals with "my family": what individuals mean when they talk about their own family. The

individuals mean when they use the term family more generally, not specifying their own. Other section of this article deals with the theoretical way of conceptualising the family.

Many authors have written about family system in Europe. One of the major works has been done by Marianne Gullestad and Martine Segalen (1997), which is a collection of essays by leading anthropologists and sociologist that considers western European societies along with manifestations of its cultural diversity. How nations do differs in the value they attribute to family life in this wider sense? How do the different generations communicate with one of the legacy of the past and to the role of memory been reassessed so that the continuity of the family can be assured? In the context of this wider perception of family, the importance of this book is twofold. First, it declines to accept predictions made on the basis of a common population projection that European family life will display a common pattern. Second, in a comparison of a number of case studies, it reveals a degree of diversity in European family values through a close look at the ways in which these values are transmitted.

Treas, Scott and R.I.Chards (2004) in their work titled *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology,* have tackle a range of question that are relevant to family life today and look ahead to changes which families have faced since the beginning of modern times. How is family life shaped by social inequality? How have parenting practices changed? Why has children's work been neglected in family sociology? What implication do the new reproductive technologies and genetic technologies have for family relations? What effect will changing patterns of citizenship have on family life? What challenges confront families in multicultural societies? The authors are experts in their fields and provide a selective overview of empirical research and address emerging issues. Together the chapters of this volume show why the study of social changes in families is a necessary key for understanding the transformation in individual and social life tackling across the globe. The book has organised the chapters to address five broad domains. The first five chapters examine families in the context of a global world. This companion gives a greater emphasis to European and North American research. In the first chapter Don Edgar examines issues of globalisation and western bias in family sociology. He suggests that western sociology has placed considerable emphasis on the rise of individualism. Individualism has been closely tied with stress on the risk society and with the need

for individuals to negotiate their own life course and family processes that open up or limit the options available to each individual. In his emphasis on family agency, Edger sets the scene for later chapters that stress the role of interlinked lives shaping the modern life course.

Second chapter of this book examine the patterns of family change in Europe and the United States. This chapter documents that how major demographic changes are directly influencing the relationship between the family and public policy and shows how changes in partnership and parenthood behavior vary across Europe.

Other parts of their book are dealing with life course perspective on families, inequality and diversity within families and examine family forms and relationship in the context of changing social contexts.

Erikka Onionen's (2008) work *Families in Converging Europe* examines common familial trends and differences between Northern, Southern and Eastern, Western Europe from 1960s to early 2000s and discusses the most common theoretical explanation  for convergence and divergence. The interest lies in macro-level social changes and in the interrelationship between the family and other social institutions.

Maren Balc et al (1989) in their edited work Changing *Patterns of European Family Life, A Comparative Analysis of 14 European Countries*, do a cross national study investigating the role and patterns of family life in fourteen countries in contemporary Europe. Providing a wealth of information on European families, it is a key source to understand the changes in the family of today. The contributors argue that, far from withering away, the family remains a very important social unit which continues to have considerable influence on other social institutions such as the state and the labour market. The central them is the interrelation between changes in production and working life on one hand, and changes in family life and reproduction on the other. The contributors highlight the division of functions between family and work, and on problems which have arisen as a consequence of the sometime incompatible and even conflicting demands of the two institutions. They show that evolution of the nuclear family model in Europe has led to a great diversity of family in modern European societies and it still has contribution to make which no other institution can provide.

*Women, Work and the Family in Europe*, edited by Eileen P. Drew et al (1998) outlines the similarities and differences between countries in terms of reconciling work and family. In doing so it questions the division of labor not just in the labour market but also in the home. Leading experts cover topics such family policies, gender roles, demographic trends and care of the elderly.

*Families across Cultures* edited by James Georgas (2006) gives a vivid description of family system in 30 different cultures. A chapter of this book titled "Britain" provides an overview of British history, geography, economy, polity and religion. It also analyse British familial structure, its roles and functions, changes in the family system as to how family values have shifted from the modern to post-modern period and how division of labor has changed from traditional pattern where husband is the bread winner and his wife looks after the home and children, to a neo-traditional pattern.

Susan McRae (1999) author of *Changing Britain: Families and Households in the 1990s* examines more generally the nature of economic and labour market change, Britain's place in Europe, and changing attitudes towards family life. In his work he also deals with issues such as older people's lives, non-heterosexual families, one person households, young mothers and single parents, and divorce.

Christopher Charles Harris's work (1984) *The Family and Industrial Society* is premised on the assumption that 'the family' is still a sign life, and on the other a complex of related issues, and that both are of fundamental importance for the study of social life and to humankind in general. One of the chapters of this book titled 'Official *Statistics and the Decline of the Family'* briefly considers aspects of change in the family in contemporary Britain. It is assumed that family life is, like other areas of social life, in the process of continuous change. The purpose of the chapter is to examine the nature and direction of this change, but not to evaluate it.

*English Family Law: Family Law System in England and Wales (2010)* refers to the laws, procedures and rules governing family matters as well as the authorities, agencies and groups which participate in or influence the outcome of private disputes or social decisions involving family law. The UK is made up of three jurisdictions: Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales. Each has quite different system of family law and courts. This article concerns only England and Wales. Family law

encompasses divorce, adoption, wardship, child abduction and parental responsibility. It can either be public law or private law. Family law cases are heard in both county courts and Family Proceeding Courts, both of which operate under codes of Family Procedure Rules. There is also a specialist division of the High Court of Justice, the Family Division law cases. A full analysis of the facts of any particular case heard in court is made difficult by the in camera rule that, until April 2008, prohibited any reporting of family law case in England and Wales.

*Families in Britain: An Evidence Paper (2008),* provides a framework to take stock of family life in Britain and map resent trends and changes as well as explore future pressures on families; understand what lies behind headline trends and changes and highlight the complexity and interdependencies of drivers and outcomes, understand the implications of these changes and trends for family and wider social outcomes, and define the role of Government in supporting and interviewing in families and derive policy principles to guide a modern family policy.

Jacqueline Scotte (1997) in her work titled *Changing Households in Britain: Do Families still Matter?* argues that the decline in traditional nuclear households and the marked increase in the proportion of people living alone or alone with dependent children have led some to claim that individualism has replaced the importance of family life. In this paper analysis of data which is collected from a large household panel study of Britain, shows that this is not true. Regardless of peoples own households circumstances, family issues and events are clearly top of the agenda of what people consider matter most in their lives. Moreover, in talking about events that mattered, people are almost as likely to talk about something that happened to other family members, as they are to talk about themselves. Surprisingly, people living alone or alone with children are as likely to mention other family members as those who live in family households. Yet the importance of family does vary considerably by gender and age. Women give more importance to family events and events in the lives of other family member than men do. Young people are far more self-centered than older people but whether this is a generational or life-stage difference is open to question.

Rodeny Clapp (1993) is assessing the status of the family in post modern western society. He argues that the "traditional" family is a reflection more of the nineteenth

century middle-class family than of any family one can find in scripture. At the same time, he recognises that many modern and postmodern options are not acceptable to Christians. Returning to the biblical story afresh to see what it might say to us in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. Clapp articulates a challenge to both sides of critical debate.

Lisa Polland and Lynne Allison (2003) give an important collection of original works to examine our understanding of family around the world and how that understanding of family around the world and how that understanding is shaped by state policy. Using examples from both historical and modern countries around the world, essays demonstrate not only how state policies shape what the family should look and out like, but also how governments have appropriated and regulated an approved "ideal" of the family to further their own agendas.

Deborah Lym Durham and Jennifer Cole (2007), investigate the impact of globalisation in the context of families, age groups, and intergenerational relations. The contributions offer an innovative approach that focuses on the changing dynamics between generations rather than treating changes in childhood, youth or old age as discrete categories. They argues that new economic and global flows do not just transform contemporary family life, but are in important ways shaped and constituted by it.

In the work titled as *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World, 1900-2000,* Goran Therborn (2004) provides a global history and sociology, and a comparative political analysis of the family as an institution, focusing on three dimensions of family relations: on the rights and powers of fathers and husbands; on marriage, cohabitation and extra marital sexuality, and on fertility and birth-control. Therborn's empirical analysis uses a multi-disciplinary approach to show how the major family system of the world have been formed and developed. His truly global scope covers the family in Europe and the New World of America and Australia, West Asia/ North Africa, South and East Asia, Sub-Sahara Africa, Creole America and Southeast Asia. Therborn concludes by assessing what changes the family might see during the next century.

The review of literature points to a substantial room for refinement of research undertaken in the subject. The proposed study shall seek to collate the relevant data

and information on the subject and present an analytical view on British family structure in the time period of 1960 to 2011 and also assessing future of family as an institution in Britain, which is not adequately researched upon as seen in the literature surveyed.

## DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The family structure in Britain is changing. The once typical British family headed by two parents has undergone substantial changes during the twentieth century. Modern social developments, particularly increasing industrialisation and urbanisation together with the greater mobility made possible by modern means of transport, have introduced very radical changes into the family. As Ronald Fletcher (1973) writes on the Family and Marriage in Britain, that the "extended family" – the large interdependence network of extended kindred is outmoded in a modern industrial society. The days of the clan and the village network of the extended family have gone. Instead of the old pattern, we find everywhere families are now living singl, frequently in isolation from, and largely independent of, their blood relatives.

A number of changes in the structure of family have occurred primarily during the past forty years in Europe. The number of nuclear family households has increased. The greatest increase in families is the single parent family, particularly unmarried mothers and divorced parents, primarily women. There appears to be a rupture between marriage and cohabitation. Young people prefer cohabitation then marriage, and may choose to marry only if they have children. The age of marriage has increased and the percentage of married couples has decreased. These trends are related partly to the entry of women into the workforce and to continuing their education for longer periods. The fertility rate has dropped to a point of no replacement. On the other hand, the mortality rate has decreased, resulting in longer lifespan of grandparents.

This study is an attempt to assess the changing patterns of British family system. How different changes, which have taken place in the last four decades, have affected the patterns of family system in Britain, to examine the role of families in contemporary

British society and to analyse that whether family is still playing an important role in changing societal scenario.

In the context of structural changes in family, it is important to analyse these questions: 1) does family still plays its traditional role? 2) to what degree will these changes in the family result in psychological changes in children and adults? 3) will children upon reaching adulthood, finding a partner and having children, become independent, isolating themselves psychological and socially from grandparents and other kin? 4) will the kin relationships of the extended family system inevitability shrink, leading to nuclear families in the societies throughout the world?

Proposed work is an attempt to analyse these changes in the special context of British society. This research will cover a time period from 1960 to 2011, considering the shift in the family system which has takeen place and the factors which lead to these changes.

**HYPOTHESIS**

- The structure and function of family have undergone radical transformation but family remains an important institution and family ties coexist with individualistic values.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the new unconventional family types emerging?

- How socio-cultural changes have influenced British family system?

- How migration and industrialisation have affected British family system?

- How changes in family related laws have changed traditional family structure in Britain?

- In the context of recent changes in British family system, what will be the future of family as a social institution in Britain?

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present research is an attempt to understand British family system. A variety of perspectives deal with family structures such as Functionalist, Feminist, Marxist, Modernist and Post modernist theories on family. This research uses modernist and post modernist theories on family. From a modernist perspective, there are four forces that induce societal changes – (a) technological changes, particularly modes of production and distribution characteristic of an industrial and market economy; (b) ecological changes, such as urbanisation in which people live in small residential units in high population areas; (c) changes in governance and institutions, such as laws, which may legislate the rights of mothers and children; (d) changes in norms and values, such as greater individualism.

Post-modernist theory defines the end of a familiar pattern of activity and emergence of new areas of endeavor whose meanings and implications are not yet well understood. Thus the post-modern theories are characterised by uncertainty, insecurity and doubt. The background of the study uses quantitative methods to collect statistics pertaining to family types, number of families, and number of households. In order to analyse the changes that have come about in family system qualitative method would be used. Case studies would be taken up in order to understand the reasons for transformation in family system and how family values have still remained intact. The data would be collected from both primary and secondary sources that include reports published by office of national statistics, Britain and Statistical Bulletins – (www.statistics.gov.uk, www.education.gov.uk, www.officialdocuments.gov.uk.) Secondary sources, such as published works in the form of books, academic journals, articles, internet sources are also used.

**A STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH**

This work is divided into following chapters:

The present chapter titled as **Introduction** gives a general background of the study; it reviews available literature, under four themes. These are theories of family, family in Europe, family in Britain and family in contemporary world. Next section of this chapter defined the rational and scope of the study. This chapter proposed a

hypothesis for the study. It also contented research questions related to the study which is supposed to be answered in the coming chapters. This chapter gives a methodology for the research.

Second chapter of the study is titled as **Understanding Families**. This chapter is divided in to three sections. First section of the chapter defines the word family, definition of family given by some famous sociologist, different types of family. Next section of the chapter deals with different approaches related to family which explains its structure and functions from different perspectives. Last section of the chapter explains family in Europe.

Third chapter of the research titled **Family Structure in British Society** talks about British family system since the beginning of Christianity. It argues that family as an institution has responded to all the significant changes that have taken place in any given society. This chapter also talks about some significant trends in British families during 1990s; these are teenage motherhood, divorce, lone parents and cohabitation. At the end, it discusses change and continuity in British family.

**Changing Family Forms in Contemporary Britain** is the fourth chapter of the study. It gives an account of British family system in the last ten years. New family forms have emerged in British society. This chapter also talks about policies of British government which have affected family system. In the last section of the chapter change in family laws has been discussed.

The **Conclusion** discusses the significant changes in contemporary family system in Britain. The research concludes by saying that despite the fact that the nature of family has changed across the world but importance of family as an institution still remains the same. Also family values as the core structure remains intact in present despite changes in peripheral normative structure.

*Chapter Two*

*UNDERSTANDING FAMILIES*

## INTRODUCTION

> "By all odds, the family is a most remarkable phenomenon. It has been praised, condemned and neglected, yet in one form or another it continues to show a basic, resilient strength" (Jain 1992:30).

One of the few widely accepted generalisations of social science is that "the family" is an institution found in all human societies. But at the same time, family is a kind of phenomena which can be describe in many different ways. It differs from one to another society but its basic character remains the same in all societies and cultures. In modern Euro-American societies it is accepted that the normal family is a co residential group which consists of a married couple and their own children and which lives apart from other kin.

The word 'Family' is a polyseme indicating both individuals and relationships. It refers both to the conjugal cell and offspring in today's society and to the households of former times. Family can be designated a very restricted group (parents or grandparents) or a wider one (uncle, aunts or cousins) of relatives. In other context it can be used of relationship between individuals or family units. Its meaning can be widened (as in, for example, the 'Smith family') to cover a dynasty of relatives who do not cohabit but share a joint patrimony.

'The classical definition of family was been given by George Murdock (2006). He defined family as a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain socially accepted sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabit adults'(Georgas et.al 2006: 5).

'During fifties and sixties, Talcott Parsons (1964), one of the pioneers in the field and one of the most respected family sociologists, argued that the family had been stripped to its essential functions, that of the socialisation of children and the stabilisation of the adult personality; these processes taking place in the privacy of the home, where the family conducts its emotional life and meets its emotional needs' (ibid: 11).

According to Stone (1977), contemporary family is 'intensely self centered, inward turned, emotionally bonded, sexually librated, child oriented.

Lasch (1977) described family as a 'haven in heartless capitalist world'.

For Morgan (1985), the family might be considered as any one of the following:

- The actual distribution of the population as households, within which the members share at least one meal.

- 'Relationships between persons which are understood' by them 'to be in terms of blood or marriage, or which are understood to have the same status as these relationships'.

- 'Ideals, images and understanding and evaluations of such terms as "family", "marriage", "parenthood", etc'.

As he points out, a more complex model would demonstrate that each of these separate components are constantly interrelating and influencing one another. Morgan (1985) considers that there is an intimate interconnection between the theoretical concerns and issues of public policy as well as practical applications.

There are different types of family. Among all the most typical is the *nuclear family*. This family typically consist a married man and woman and their offspring, although in some cases one or more additional persons may reside with them. Nuclear family is universal social grouping, either as the sole form of the family or as the basic unit from which more complex family forms are constructed. The second type of family is *polygamous family*. This type of family consists of two or more nuclear families that are affiliated because they have one married couple in common. Under polygamy for instance, one man plays the role of husband and father in several nuclear families and there by unites them into a larger familial group. Third type of family which is called *extended family* consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of parent child relationships. That is, the nuclear family of a married adult is joined to that of his or her parents. Family types which are discussed above are basically traditional types of families, but in contemporary time because of the changes in society there are some other forms of families emerging. For example *Single parent family*, headed by a divorced or unmarried person (male or female)

having children. There is a new trend in family type emerging in post-modern societies which is called *same sex families*, this type of family consist partner of same sex and some time their adopted child.

## THEORIES OF FAMILY

Family is one of the most important phenomena in human sociology. It is the basic unit through which any society can be formed. There are different approaches which describes its functions and structures. Through these approaches the concept of family can be well understood and they also help to analyse the evolution of family.

Family theories structure how we think about families, what we observe, how we interpret this knowledge, and how we use the information in programs and policies that affect family life. Consequently, theories have a profound effect on what we know about families.

There are some theories or approaches which highlight functions and structures of families.

**Functionalist Theory:** "functionalism came to dominant sociology in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly through the work of the American sociologist, Talcott Parsons (1956). Functionalist sociology developed a framework of ideas which outlined the major social systems of the society and the links that exist between these social systems. The family was seen as one of the core elements of the social system, providing a crucial link between the individual and the wider social group. Any change or decline in the family would have a major impact on the whole social structure" (Wilson 1985: 20).

"Functionalist sociologists developed an analysis which showed that the family had evolved into a superior form. Studies by Murdock(1949), Goode(1983), and others were able to show that the family, in changing its form, had been left free to concentrate on the most important functions" (ibid: 21).

Mclntrye (1966) states the scope of functional analysis of the family in this way: "A functional analysis of the family emphasises the relationship of the family and the larger society, the internal relationship between the family subsystems of the family,

and / or the relationship between the family and the personality of the individual member"[1].

'The functionalist approach supports the 'march of progress' view of the family, the idea that the family has reached its most advanced stage of development... Functionalists seem to describe the family form as it is and then imply that, because it exists in that form that is how it should be. The 'march of progress' view is essentially an optimistic statement of faith in the evolution of the family. This can be seen clearly in Fletcher's (1966) defence of the contemporary British family. He used historical sources to show that there was no golden age of family life in the past. Rather it was Fletcher's belief that the moral and social improvement of society had created a stronger and more functional British family. According to Fletcher, family performs five prime functions as an institution. First, it regulates sexual behavior. Second, it provided a responsible basis for the procreation and rearing of children. Third, it cared for its dependent members, whether young or old. Fourth, it was the earliest and most powerful socialising agency. Finally, it taught family members the roles they would play in society, helping them accept the rights, duties, and obligations linked to these roles'(ibid: 22).

'From Murdock's (1949) point of view 'the family' has four key functions. These are, sexual, economic, reproductive and educational. Functionalism lays down a general 'systems' theory of human society drawing on the ideas of biological imperatives such as reproduction and the maternal 'instinct' (Bernardes 1997:37).

The key element of functionalism that has been so attractive is that it provides a very clear value platform. Smith argued that, "this perspective views society as an organism that strives to resist change and maintain itself in some sort of balance or equilibrium…Stability and order are considered natural and desirable, whereas conflict and disorder are evidence of deviance and dysfunction in the system" (ibid: 37).

'The functionalist view of 'the family' was further developed by Parsons (1956), in the post war period. He identified two important functions of the family as childhood socialisation and the maintenance of adult personalities' (ibid: 37).

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[1] The Family: Structure and Interaction by F.Ivan Nye and Felix M. Berardo.

'The functionalist approach has been much criticised over last two decades. The functionalist approach has given an oversimplified view of relationships within the family, especially in relation to the role of women. The model also fails to allow for the great variety of family forms which exist in every society. This oversimplified view plays down the influence of social differences based on class, status, religious, regional, or ethnic background. Also this approach has failed to give a historical perspective on the evolution of family as an institution.

However, the functionalist view has provided a significant framework for a comprehensive view of family life. Second, it has generated a tremendous amount of research material, mostly in the positivist tradition, which still forms the basis of much of the comparative study of the family' (Wilson 1985: 23).

**Feminist Theory:** 'Feminist research has provided one of the most wide-ranging critiques of the functionalist view of the family. Feminism spread to Europe in the late 1960s, helping to raise the self-awareness of many women of their own social position. The move towards greater sexual liberation and the development of the gay movement were also attempts to reconsider some of the basic social attitudes of society. A parallel movement tried to make people aware of the problems of racial prejudice and to raise the self-consciousness of ethnic minorities' (ibid: 24).

Feminism has had considerable influence on the study of the family in recent years. Feminists have been critical of the effects of family life on women. Central point of the feminist approach is the idea of patriarchy or male dominance of society. It is argued that patriarchy is established and reinforced in family relationship. Feminist argue that men benefits from families at the expense of women both in their personal experience and broadly because the family sustains particularly in society.

To study family changes from feminist perspective, it requires first to examine history of our society, most of which has been written by men. Male historians were largely interested in what men said and what men did. This has made it appear that women were largely excluded from political, economic, and cultural life. Even social historians have underplayed the role of women by concentrating on the industrial and economic life of men. History has, therefore, given us a limited view of the world, a view which has ignored the experience and understanding of women. Feminism has encouraged historical research by women.

This new history of the other half of our world has produced many new insights into the role of women in society.

'Oakley (1979) has provided one of the most readable accounts of the historical changes affecting women in the family. She shows that before industrialisation women played a major economic role within the family. This historical perspective allows us to understand the development of sexual divisions with the growth of an industrial society' (ibid: 25).

The second major area of interest for feminists is the allocation of roles within the family. The historical evidence shows that women's role both within and outside the family changes over time. Feminist sociologists have also been interested in the way the role of women varies from culture to culture, and also within any society.

For most women, marriage and motherhood will be the dominant events of their lives. Housework and childcare continue to be predominantly the sphere of women. A feminist approach to the family asks why these roles are seen almost exclusively as women's work. The family socialises young girls into the traditional gender roles. Women are trapped by the patriarchal family, which is dominated by the demands of men.

Thompson and Walker (1995) argued that feminist have focused upon five themes: gender, social change and gender equality, feminist practice, the centrality of women's lives, and challenging 'the family'. With regard to family living, the work of feminists has been especially important in identifying, and making visible, the central importance of two topics that had been completely ignored by male scholars studying family living. Within a conventional model of 'the family', both motherhood and housework were assumed to be completely 'natural' and non problematic; feminist scholarship has begun to reveal these topics to be far more problematic and challenging than earlier work suggested.

Main problem with this approach is that it is basically focus on only one aspect of family which is women and ignore the other one. This study of family is not complete without studying the role of men as well.

**Marxist Theory:** 'Marxism has had a major impact on the development of sociology. Within the Marxist approach is an account of historical development, a

theory of social class, and an analysis of capitalist society. Economic relationships are considered to be the central force that drives the development of a society, while at the same time they are also the means of keeping control over the members of that society. Marxist argued that the earliest family forms were communistic households where women were seen as equal to men, although there was certainly a sexual division of labour. The domestication of animals and the cultivation of plants marked a major economic development. Men took control of this new source of wealth. Power and status went to the man. Property was passed from father to son. Man's work was seen as the most important, while the work of women was no longer seen as socially significant.' (Wilson 1985:26)

"For many years Marxists largely ignored the family as a political and social issue. It was believed that any faults in the family would be corrected by the creation of a Socialist society. The revival in the Marxist theory of the family came with the examination of the issues raised by feminists about the nature and causes of sexual inequality. At the same time, Marxist academics were writing about the detailed economic and social controls that exist in capitalist society. The importance of the family as part of this process of social control was quickly recognised" (ibid.27).

Marxists argued that the capitalist economy needs to have women working in the home. The housewife services the needs of her husband, feeding and comforting him so that he can go refreshed to work each day. In a similar fashion, the mother ensures that the young children of the community are brought safely through childhood to become workers in their turn.

Women are also part of what Marxists have called the 'reserve army of labour'. When the economy booms there is a need for more workers. Many women are available to be brought into industrial work as required. This was clearly illustrated by the way women were recruited into the factories during two world wars. Women have a second economic advantage to capitalism: they are cheap labour. Women are not seen as chief breadwinners of the family, therefore they can be paid a lower wage.

Marxists never see family as a main agent of socialisation. According to them the family transmits the dominant bourgeois culture of capitalist society, preventing people from seeing the world as it really is. One of the clearest accounts of this approach can be seen in the work of the French Marxist, Louis Althusser (1971). His

work on the way in which the state achieves social control clearly locates the family in what he calls 'the ideological state apparatus'. The state does not need to use physical force to control people. If it can control what people believe, then they will co-operate with a government dominated by the ruling class. Education, religion, the media, and the family are all central elements of the ideological state apparatus.

The Marxists see the working-class family socialised into a state of false consciousness. The small family encourages its members to think in individual terms, to try to obtain what is good for the family. In doing this it weakens the bond between the man and his working-class brothers. At the same time, the comfortable, welcoming home is a distraction for the worker. It helps the man relax and forget the problems of his position at work. The family becomes the psychological haven that weakens the workers' determination to stand and fight capitalism.

The family, according to the Marxist, becomes an obstacle to the revolution.

**Modernisation Theory:** 'The social and economic conditions of modernity began to emerge as early as the sixteenth century, with the expansion of international trade, the urbanisation of the peasant populations of Europe, and a steady rise in literacy. These social and economic conditions were reflected, and to some extent enabled, by superstructural phenomena such as the Protestant Reformation, with its emphasis upon individualism, literacy and the patriarchal nuclear family, and the Enlightenment, with its emphasis upon rationality, faith in human progress, the development of the scientific method, etc. The period of modernity was characterised by a high degree of centralisation of control of production, increasingly large scale capitalisation of industry, and a high degree of routinisation and standardisation of products and processes. There are some principal assumptions about modernisation theory. These are, a) modernisation is a total social process associated with economic development in terms of the preconditions, concomitants, and consequences of the latter; b) this process constitutes a 'universal patterns'. There are differences among thinkers, about the meaning of modernisation, partly due to its relation with or derivation from- that most contentious concept 'development'. Some thinkers stress on the structural aspects of modernity, while others for others 'the concept of modernisation has to do with a transformation of cultural and of personality in so far

as it is influenced by culture, rather than some aspect of social organisation or of human ecology.

'To study the changing patterns of family system modernists have identifies four forces that induce changes in the structure of family in the contemporary era. These changes are: a) technological changes, particularly modes of production and distribution characteristics of an industrial and market economy; b) ecological changes, such as urbanisation in which people live in small residential units in high population areas; c) changes in governance and institutions, such as laws, which may legislate the rights of mothers and children; and d) changes in norms and values, such as greater individualism' (George 2006:46).

'Modernisation theory has another relevant dynamic process: convergence. That is, as nations become more "modernised", primarily because of increasing industrialisation and affluence, they tend to converge in terms of these types of changes in production and consumption, ecology, social institutions, and values. With increasing economic level and industrialisation, countries reject traditional values and traditional culture, and all countries inevitably converge toward a system of "modern" values and increasing individualisation. Modernisation theory predicts that traditional societies may be presently "underdeveloped" but economic well-being will inevitably result, changes in its family system to predominantly nuclear with fewer kin relationships, more one-parent families, more divorces, etc. modernists argued that it is highly unlikely that these trends will regress to greater power of the extended families, clans, and lineages, or to increased male authority, growth in percentages of marriages, or increase in multigenerational families. These trends in family changes are perhaps some of the most securely known in social sciences' (ibid: 47).

Modernisation theory has predicated the eventual convergence of family systems in societies throughout the world, from the extended family to the nuclear and one person family systems. This theory has little understanding of the processes of how psychological variables such as personality, values, interaction, communication, and emotional bonds with kin are related to family networks.

**Post-Modernist Theory:** 'Post-modernism is a concept which can be characterisd with a "close reading" of small units rather than general theorising about big ideas. According to this approach, there is no as such absolute reality and it is not very

optimistic towards human progress. Postmodernism basically tends towards elaboration, eclecticism, ornamentation, and inclusiveness. When we talk about post-modernism in regards with art and literature, it can be identified with end of familiar patterns of activity and emergence of new areas of endeavor whose activities are unclear and whose meanings and implications are not well understood. Thus the post-modernism is characterised by uncertainty, insecurity and doubt' (Zenitin F.Marian et al 1995).

'There is no as such complete definition of post-modern family structure which can be accepted, despite recognition of the need for better understanding of the variety of human families in the post-modern period and insight into how large-scale social patterns affect personal and domestic relationships. The post-modern world is shaped by pluralism, democracy, religious freedom, consumerism, mobility, and increasing access to news and entertainment. Residents of this post-modern world are able to see that there are many beliefs, multiple realities, and an exhilarating but daunting profusion of world views - a society that has lost its faith in absolute truth and in which people have to choose what to believe'(ibid).

"The term postmodern family life was developed by Stacey (1990) 'to signal the contested, ambivalent, and undecided character of contemporary gender and kinship arrangements' , and Morgan (1975) has recently concluded that the focus on the issue of family practices gives some sense of the 'flow and fluidity [which] is probably part of a post modernist understanding" (Bernardes 1997: 39).

'Postmodernism is the area of theoretical work that has developed new tools and approaches that seek to understand family lives in new ways. Perhaps it is most easily thought of as looking at family lives 'in here' (in our heads). Postmodernism can be characterized as 'an approach that engages in skeptical reflection on the culture of modern society or, in other words, modernity and its dominant world view, namely modernism'. In exploring what might be involved in sociology of postmodern families, it is argues that 'Post modernist thought in sociology begins from contemporary experiences of pluralism, disorder and fragmentation, which were not predicted by the modern paradigm of universal reason' (ibid: 39).

'While single-parent, surrogate-mother, and gay and lesbian families, and other variants of the post-modern family may be viewed as the negative results of the trends

described above, or as breakdown products, they also reflect firstly as disillusionment with the optimistic assumptions of human progress and with the universality and the regularity of the laws of science; hence, lack of faith in the previously established order. Secondly, the uncoupling of economic forces underlying social conformity, such as the need for women to marry advantageously to survive financially and to transmit their class status to the next generation, or the need to bear children in wedlock for them to inherit family land or other property that would be their source of livelihood. Finally, the electronic media influences both in reflecting and legitimising the diversity of family' (Zenitin F.Marian et al 1995).


## FAMILY IN EUROPE

'The early modern family displays both parallels with and significant differences from the family today. The European family forms originated from Roman and Germanic-Nordic Europe. From the early eighth century on, a series of Muslims incursions occurred, strongest in Spain and Portugal and in the Balkan Peninsula but also present in southern Italy, which tended to bring back oriental family structures, so central to Islamic societies, that are based on the overriding importance of kin ties. At least in the Iberian Peninsula, repeated Berber invasion during the Middle Ages ended up emphasising this presence. Even where the Muslim occupation was short-lived, the geographical proximity of oriental family system in North Africa could not help but influence the development of the family in Southern Europe. What arose in those areas was a family system that in all likely hoods was hybrid in nature, with a basic Western structure but also with certain Oriental trappings centered on the importance of kin ties and extended family loyalties' (Reher 1998: 204).

'Reformation made a fundamental impact on the family system in Europe. It emphasised on the individual and self-reliance, on the value of work, on a this-worldly asceticism and on predestination, represented a sharp contrast to Catholicism, based on authority, the other-worldly, and spirituality. For Protestant reformers, marriage ceased being a sacrament and became a civil contract governed by matrimonial tribunals, and many of the traditional Catholic constraints on marriage were either relaxed or repealed. More important, perhaps, the home itself became a place of self-fulfillment and of sharing. Most notably in Calvinism, an emphasis was

placed on marriage, not so much as a context for reproduction, but rather as a partnership in the garden of the Lord, in the rearing of children in the faith, and the advancement of God's Kingdom. In so doing, the Reformation had laid the grounds for marriage as a partnership, so essential for Northern European marriage systems and for the full development of the potential of individuals in this world, all in sharp contrast to the Catholic world where parental authority and family loyalties tended to be far more hierarchically structured. By implication, the Reformation ended up enhancing women's position in society as opposed to the Europe of the Counter-Reformation where, despite luminous figures like St. Teresa of Avila and others, the position of women seems to have undergone comparatively little change before the eighteenth century or even later' (ibid: 213).

'It can be argued that the progress of the Reformation was itself facilitated and influenced by the differing attitudes toward the individual and family life existing in Europe during the medieval and early-modern periods. It is unquestionable, however, that the Reformation tended to deepen and solidify the age-old north-south contrasts in Europe. It is of interest that in Catholic countries of Northern Europe, forms of familial organisation tend to diverge at least partially from the prevailing patterns. Ireland is an excellent example of this: a decidedly Catholic country in Northern Europe whose forms of familial organisation often fit quite poorly with our north-south comparisons' (ibid)

'The effects of the Industrial Revolution were felt first and most profoundly in Northern Europe, and this can be interpreted both as cause and as consequence of its prevailing family system. Hajnal (1965) has discussed this process from one vantage point, arguing that family and marriage patterns contributed to the low-pressure demographic regimes existing there and ultimately to the flowering of northern European economic growth after the second half of the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution, based on an ethic in which the economic rationality and creativity of individuals was paramount, reinforced an individual-oriented family system in the industrialising areas well before this same process began to take effect in most of Southern Europe. Thus, at least in its origin, the entire process of economic modernisation would seem to have reinforced the prevailing family differences in Europe' (ibid: 214).

"Regardless of their historical origins, attitudes toward the family and the individual make up the cultural tapestry of societies, and thus they are models that are learned at very young ages and those societies-individuals, families, institutions-help perpetuate. Learning these behavior patterns is the cornerstone of the socialisation of children. They are attitudes shared by the society as a whole. Perhaps because of this, they have been so resistant to the otherwise corrosive effects of economic, political, social, and demographic modernisation. Even though the changes of this past century have tended to make cultures and mentalities more uniform, they have done little to erase the historic profiles of family systems in Europe" (ibid: 215).

'It would be incorrect to believe that familial forms are frozen in time. So family forms changes in the contemporary world. The two principle characteristics for 20th century family forms are-

1.      There has been a substantial reduction in morality, especially among adults and elderly ;

2.      The second characteristic is that in the past 20-30 years a drastic reduction in fertility has also occurred in most western societies because of which there is rapid declining numbers in birth.

And now everywhere families find themselves with ever fewer children and ever more elderly members. The demographic balance of the family group is now in rapid transformation.

It is unquestionable that in Europe certain external indicators of the family and family forms are converging, the importance of solitary household is increasing , the weight of extended families is decreasing, fertility and nuptiality are declining, and the number of children born out of wedlock is rising. Parental authority has diminished; improvements in health and social welfare have led the elderly to maintain their independence much longer before going to the state or to the family for help' (ibid: 215).

While describing family system in Europe, it is important to discus that how family forms are different from one geographic region to another in a continent.

Family types can be easily classified according to the region in Europe. North and Central Europe have been characterised by relatively weak family links and in the Mediterranean and Southern part of Europe by strong family ties. (Table 1 – Appendix 1)

'In Northern Europe young adults normally leave their parental household when they have acquired a degree of maturity and start living alone and take their own economic and social responsibilities. But in the southern part things were quite different. In these societies the definitive departure of young people tends to depend more or less closely with their marriage and finding a stable job. The years between adolescent maturity (aged18-20 years) and marriage are spent largely within the parental household. If a person gets a job during this period, he or she normally continues to live at home, a strategy that enables the young adult to save for his or her own marriage. From at least the latter part of the Middle Ages until the second half of the nineteenth century or the early years of this century, it was common in rural England for young adults to leave their parental households to work as agricultural servants in other households for a prolonged period. Servants might go to households of higher social and economic standing, although servant exchange among households of the same social status was widespread. In other words, it was common for a farmer to send his son out as an agricultural servant on a farm, say, in the neighbouring village, while he took other young servants into his own household as agricultural labourers. This practice appears to have affected the majority of young adults in rural England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the Northern part of Europe between 1850 and 1930, people set up their own households before their marriage but in southern part this situation contrasts, where setup their own households were less frequent. One of the implications of these differences was that in Northern Europe the need to cope with periods of economic difficulty fell squarely on the shoulders of these young adults, as opposed to the south where economic hardship was shared more equally by the entire family group. Generally marriage does not even enter the picture unless it is accompanied by the corresponding emancipation from the parental home and the formation of a new household. This entire process is aptly crystallised in the traditional Spanish aphorism *casada casa quiere*-"the bride (or groom) demands a home." In this way, in Spain and in many other Southern European countries, a stable job, access to adequate housing,

leaving the parental household, and marriage tend to be closely intertwined events. In fact, an excellent indicator of the labor market and unquestionably the best one for the rate of family formation in southern Europe would be the incidence of first marriages among young adults' (ibid: 208).

'But there are also some exceptions. In England, for example, young adults often remain at home past 20 years of age, while in Spain and Portugal some people leave home before marriage and others continue to live with their parents after marriage, at least for awhile. In fact, temporary co residence of parents and married children, and even prolonged periods of economic help; have never been infrequent, either in the past or today. Nevertheless, these moments of help were always considered as exceptional by everyone. These exceptions only underline the great differences between Northern and Southern Europe on this point. These divergent practices appear to have deep historical roots. Peter Laslett (1997) has pointed out that approximately half of all young people of both sexes between 15 and 24 years of age were servants. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in a large sample of English communities, between about 60 percent of all farmers had servants, and these represented about half the supply of non-family labour in rural areas and accounted for 10-12 percent of the total population. The extent of this practice implies that the great majority of young adults in England left their parental households more or less permanently between 15 and 19 years of age. There is also ample evidence of the importance of servants in other Northern European societies' (ibid: 212).

'In Southern Europe the family takes on many other roles that are largely foreign to its tasks in Northern latitudes. Perhaps the most important is the organisation of solidarity for the needy and vulnerable in society. Vulnerability to personal hardship in historic Europe was sharply constrained by prevailing demographic conditions, especially mortality. Apart from the type of hardship imposed initially and directly by economic factors, it is likely that the incidence of vulnerability in Southern Europe always tended to be somewhat higher than in Northern Europe because substantially higher levels of adult mortality in the south led to greater numbers of lone-parent households and to earlier breakups of the marriages of couples in and past the reproductive age. In other words, the "nuclear hardship hypothesis" so aptly described by Peter Laslett (1997) would always be more pertinent in high-mortality regimes than in low-mortality ones. Over the past 30 or 40 years, these structural differences

caused by mortality have all but disappeared in Western European populations. Traditionally in Mediterranean societies, much of the aid given to vulnerable members of society came from the family or from individual charity, while in Northern societies this was largely accomplished through public and private institutions. The classic example of the institutionalisation of solidarity in Northern Europe was the English Poor Laws, through which the collectivity came to the aid of the needy and the poor. In Mediterranean Europe the family was essential for the wellbeing of its more vulnerable members, while elsewhere it was much less so. Historically the situation of the elderly is a good example of these differences. Before the development of modern pension systems, everywhere a large part of the responsibility for the wellbeing of the elderly fell directly on the family and was based mostly on co-residence with offspring. Despite these similarities, however, the intervention of the family on this count was much more important in strong-family societies than in societies where weak-family systems prevailed. In Mediterranean Europe, the care of the elderly fell almost exclusively on the family, whether it was carried out by means of co-residence, the circulation of the elderly among the households of their offspring, or the spatial proximity between the homes of the elderly and those of their children: all of these alternatives entailed transfers of goods and services from the families of the offspring toward their elderly parents. For the vast majority of cases, the family alone took responsibilities for the material and personal wellbeing of its elderly.

'In weak-family areas, the value attributed to the individual and to individualism tends to predominate. Young adults leave home, encouraged by their parents, so as to acquire the experiences they need to handle life as autonomous individuals. Leaving home at an early age is considered an important part of their education. Where strong family flourishes, the familial group more than the individual tends to predominate in the socialisation of the young. In these contexts, the family is seen as defending its members against the difficulties imposed by social and economic realities. A child receives support and protection until he or she leaves home for good, normally for marriage, and even later. Faced with the transition to old age, in one context individuals attempt to prolong their physical independence as long as possible and, when this is no longer feasible, to conserve a measure of economic independence that will enable them to enter a nursing home or afford some other solution. They would

never give serious consideration to going to live with their children; nor would it enter the minds of their children to have their elderly parents at home with them. This attitude is so widely held in the United States, for example, that the elderly who do live with their children probably tend to come from strong-family ethnic backgrounds." In sharp contrast to this pattern, in areas of strong families, maintaining independence as a matter of principle would seem like nonsense, and this only happens when, for one reason or another, there is no family. In Spain it has always been said that the only truly poor person is one who has no family. Furthermore, the solidarity between the older and the younger generation never breaks down; it is a social obligation expected by individuals and by their families. The elderly who do not maintain regular contact with their children are a small minority of the population, much as are the aged in weak-family societies who receive regular weekly or daily visits from their children. In both situations there is intergenerational reciprocity, although it is understood quite differently. These are distinct modes of behavior, applied in each context with a maximum of good will' (ibid: 210).

The social, economic, and even demographic circumstances normally used to explain the origins of these diverse ways of family life are not convincing, even though their geography is fairly clear: the Mediterranean region has strong families, while the northern part of the continent is characterised by weak families. In between, countries like France and Germany to a lesser extent, do not fit easily into either system, and constitute a good indication that our portrayal simplifies a heterogeneous European experience. The transfer of productive tasks from families to enterprise has granted some rather simplified notions of linear change and overall declining.

Thus we see that family as the basic unit of society has although undergone transformation, yet its basic character remain the same. While tracing the origin of Euuropean family system from Roman and Germanic-Nordic Europe to contemporary times, we find that family system in Europe can be categorised as weak family and strong family zone on the basis of geographical regions. North and Central Europe have been characterised by relatively weak family links and in the Mediterranean and Southern part of Europe by strong family ties.

The next chapter will offer a historical description of family in last couple of centuries. It will analyse some distinctive features of British demography during 1990s, and change and continuity in the British family system.

Chapter Three

# FAMILY STRUCTURE IN BRITISH SOCIETY

## INTRODUCTION

'The evolution of family and of familial structures, like most other human institutions, shows a progression from the complex towards the simple. In Britain it was widely assumed that the 'modern' family (that is nuclear and flexible) was the product of industrialism, capitalism and urbanism. The family system in Britain had been changed dramatically in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the shrinking of the joint family to the nuclear family and growth of strong emotional relationships. Ronald Fletcher (1973) in his survey of the family and marriage in Britain, described the transition of Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from a traditional, extended household, arranged marriage, kinship based society, to the modern nuclear family system.' (Fletcher 1973: 45)

In this chapter, family system in Britain since Christianity will be discussed. Then it will also throw light on how family values and composition has been changed stepwise from the beginning of Christianity to the age of modernity (Figure 1- Appendix I).

## BRITISH FAMILY SINCE THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY

"With the conversion of the emperor Constantine in CE 313, Christianity was transformed from a persecuted minority sect into a church, the official established state religion of the Roman Empire and later of its successor states the empires and kingdoms of Europe. It became an immensely wealthy and powerful corporation, or set of corporations, which dominated European society and largely shaped European family life through its control of marriage and the very considerable influence it exerted over inheritance" (Goldthorpe 1987: 11).

The British society was marked by the primacy of the nuclear family since before the influence of Christianity. "Kinship was bilateral, and an individual's kindred consisted of a circle of kin whose extent varied according to circumstances, not a closely delimited and structural group" (ibid: 11).

'While it is difficult to be sure which features of family life in ancestral societies remained unchanged, it is possible to be more confident about those which the church

insisted on changing. Some of them were set out quite explicitly in an exchange of letters between Augustine, the Roman missionary in England, and Pope Gregory in CE 601: the marriage of close kin, adoption and fostering, and concubinage. All of these were found recorded in the Old Testament, and there seemed little or no scriptural warrant for prohibiting them. The church raises no particular difficulty about separation, especially on the ground of adultery, but divorce with remarriage was specifically forbidden' (ibid: 10-11).

'The changes brought about by the Church had the effect of increasing its own wealth and power, and weakening family and kinship influences. Especially during the most rapid build-up of the church's property from the 5th to the 8th centuries, Christians put the church's need before family affection and loyalties. But the Reformation in England achieved some important Protestant objectives in the translation of the Bible and the liturgy into English which profound implications for freedom of thought and expression. But Christianity remains a powerful influence, even though since the Reformation it has been represented by a plurality of churches, denominations, and sects rather than the universal western church of medieval times. Divorce law reform, family limitation, abortion, parents' rights and duties are among the issues upon which Christian opinion is passionately mobilised in contemporary western societies' (ibid: 14).

'It needs hardly to be said that life in the past was hard for many people in many ways, and that family life was lived in circumstances we should now regard as adverse. Like most preindustrial societies, English society was marked by disparities of wealth. Many people lived in poverty, whether in family households or perhaps even more so if they were old and alone. The houses of the poor were small, cold, insanitary, and in many cases overcrowded. For the rich too family life seems to have been lived in semi-public in house occupied also by their servants and often thronged with visitors' (ibid: 17).

'The mean household size in England between 1600 and 1799 was maximum of 7 member household (2 parents and 5 children). Some household in the past included three generations of the same family, especially when widowed parents lived with their married offspring and the latter's children. In England however, the proportion

of these three-generation households was remarkably low, only 5.8 per cent' (ibid: 21).

'In 19th century Industrial revolution made important impacts on family life with the decline of the centuries-old traditions of apprenticeship and living in service. This obviously went with late marriage, and strongly it dissuaded young adults from early and imprudent marriage. It acted as a preventive check to population growth. The rise of industry led to family members living together or in close proximity, and created bigger family groups and created bigger family groups and greater cohesion than in preindustrial times' (ibid: 32).

'Victorian Britain is often seen as a period of stability following the upheavals of the industrial revolution. It is also portrayed as the era where the family as an institution was at its strongest. Politicians still call for a return to the Victorian family values of thrift and discipline as an answer to current social problems. But some argue that there was nothing like Victorian family as such and family forms varied between and within social classes. Social status distinctions were very real in Victorian Britain. There were clear status differences among the wealthy, between members of the aristocracy, industrialists, and those in the professions with respect to education, attitudes, and life style. The working class was split according to levels of skill and standard of living. Country people lived in a different world from those who lived in the towns and cities. The aristocratic family was likely to be bigger than its lower-class counterparts, and wealth isolated the rich from many of the pressures of the real world' (Wilson 1985: 51).

"The male members of the upper-class family were not only concerned with their estates; they were often a major force in local and county politics. The aristocratic woman was left to cultivate her manners and her artistic talents, with perhaps some involvement in local charitable work" (ibid: 51).

'On the other side the middle-class family was dominated by the role of the man as the head of the household and as sole provider. The result for middle-class women was the 'emptying out' of her family role. Marriage and motherhood dominated her life. The wife was responsible for maintaining the order of the household, and she created order by being an example to her children, to the household, and to men. Her sexuality was denied, as it was for children and servants. The whole edifice of

Victorian middle-class respectability rested on double standards of sexual morality. Women's sexuality was denied; while male sexual licence was met by prostitution on a scale that sharply contradicted the public morality of the day. Middle-class women faced problems if they did not marry. The unattached woman with no income was a liability to her family. However, changes were in sight for middle class women. There was the slow growth of education of girls. As a result of this women started working in a wide range of jobs, from mining to textiles to farming, and work was combine with the cycle of family life. Because of these changes Victorian middle-class family sometimes defined as a 'domestic idyll', a heaven against the evil of the society' (ibid: 52).

With the turn of the century there were some significant changes took place in the demography in Britain. In the 1890s the infant mortality rate began to fall rapidly. 'The inevitable result of a rapid fall in infant mortality should be an increase in average family size, unless of course fertility is controlled. In fact we can see a fall in the birth rate from about 1870, a trend with major implications for family life. Women who married in the 1860s averaged 5.7 live births. By the 1920s the number of live births per married woman was down to 2.2. There was also a marked decrease in the number of very large families. In 1860, 63 per cent of marriages produced 5 or more children. By 1925 only just over 12 per cent of families had 5 children. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion of small families. In 1860s a mere 5 per cent of families had only one child, but by the end of the 1920s some 25 per cent of families had a single child. There are some significant factors which result these changes. These are changing attitude to children, the increased use of contraception, and the changing role and status of women' (ibid: 54).

"Children had become more expensive for both middle-class and working-class families. The social life of the urban middle class had become more expensive. The children of these families needed expensive schooling if they were to obtain the qualifications that had become necessary to maintain middle-class status. As a consequence, middle-class families concentrated their resources on fewer children. Working-class families were also under pressure to limit their families. They had lost the earning potential of their children with their exclusion from work and their compulsory attendance at school. It made equal sense for the working-class family to limit the number of children born. There was also widespread official concern with

the health and welfare of the population. The poor health of young men applying to join the armed forces led to a series of initiatives to improve the health of children. Academics were starting to take a more scientific view of child development. Higher standards of parental care were being demanded. The small family was seen as one possible solution to the problem of the quality of childcare" (ibid: 55).

'The fall in the birth rate that took place at the end of the nineteenth century was clearly related to the increased use of contraception. Birth control was not new. Condoms made of natural materials, vaginal sponges and douches, had been used for centuries. The use of birth control seems to have grown in the 1870s, particularly among the middle class. The Family Planning Association was formed in 1930, and by 1939 had sixty-six voluntary birth control clinics. There was, however, still resistance to the use of contraception' (ibid: 56).

'The major churches were opposed to the use of birth control. The Roman Catholic Church was, and still is, implacably hostile to its use. The Church of England was also opposed to the attempts to promote the use of birth control. In 1916 a church body, the National Birth Rate Commission, expressed its outright opposition to any form of contraception other than abstinence. The Church of England gave some recognition to birth control in 1930, but did not fully accept family planning as a parental responsibility. Of those women married between 1910 and 1919, 40 per cent used birth control, compared with 66 per cent of women married between 1935 and 1939. However, only a small proportion of the married population would have gone to clinics, read books on birth control, or consulted their doctor. Birth control remained a very private matter until the more open attitudes of the 1960s, and the development of chemical methods of contraception such as the pill' (ibid: 57).

The third change was, change in the position of women. "Demographic changes, particularly the decrease in the size of families, had a major impact on the role of women. Legal, educational, and economic changes led many politicians and writers to claim that the twentieth century had brought women near equality with men. While it must be accepted that women have made progress this century, feminist research shows that in many areas of life, including the family, women are seen to be of secondary importance to men" (ibid: 57).

"There have been a number of legal changes which have improved the position of women in relation to men. The main legislation seems to have come in two periods, the first wave following the end of the First World War, and the second wave in the 1970s. The main Acts are:

1918 – Votes for women aged thirty years.

1919 – Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act: women were allowed to exercise any public function, judicial office, or profession, and to serve as jurors.

1923 – Matrimonial Causes Act: this removed the sex-differentiated grounds for divorce, with infidelity becoming a ground for divorce for both sexes.

1925 – Guardianship of Infants Act: both parents now had equal rights in relation to the guardianship of their children.

1928 –Right to votes for women aged twenty-one and over" (ibid: 58).

"Legal changes have opened up opportunities for women in some spheres of life, particularly employment. Changing the law may not change public attitudes, however, and private areas of life may be untouched" (ibid: 58).

"The early part of this century saw the expansion of academic schooling for middle-class girls.

There have been major changes in work opportunities for women. At the end of the nineteenth century the biggest area of employment for women was domestic service. The two world wars gave women the opportunity to show that they could do almost any job. Since the end of the last war some traditional industries have declined. But women have benefited from the growth of jobs in the service industries. Many women are now employed in offices, local government, and the public services" (ibid: 59).

The interwar average British household size did not fall as much as completed family size but there was a decline from 4.36 in 1911 to 3.19 in 1951. (Figure 3-Appendix I) "Changing family and household size undoubtedly had an impact on life experience for the majority of the population and it seems likely that the result was a significant but unquantifiable improvement in the quality of life. This combined and interacted with other influences pushing in the same direction" (Booth and Glynn 1996: 38).

'Mortality also fell, continuing a trend from the 1860s onwards. This is usually attributed to improvements in nutrition, housing, dress and environment rather than to advances in medicine, but public health improvements played some part. Infectious diseases, notably tuberculosis, were the major cause of death in nineteenth- century Britain and improved resistance reduced mortality. Death rates for older age groups (45+) fell less than for the population as a whole so that, while life expectancy at birth grew enormously, there was less improvement after middle age. Infant mortality had improved dramatically from 154 per thousand births in 1900 to 60 in 1930, but this remained high by modern standards. In the interwar period death rates for people in middle life fell almost to modern levels and this can be largely attributed to better living standards. For infants and older age groups there remained much scope for improvement and this had to await advances in medicine and in the system of medical care. Also, there remained some significant horizontal and vertical variations in mortality with, for example, morality rates well above the national average in some older industrial centers and regions and a tendency for rates in increase sharply down the social scale' (ibid: 38).

'It has been argued that after 1920 the internal mobility of the British population was lower than in previous decades. This may seem remarkable in view of the high regional differentials in employment and it should be said that the internal migration is not easy to define and measure objectively. Certainly by the 1920s there was only limited scope for further rural- urban drift. Vestiges of the rural-urban drift of the nineteenth century survived into middle years of the twentieth in the form of movement, usually of recently married couples, from large cities to medium size towns. There was a fairly continuous flow from North to South. The population of Wales, Scotland and Ireland tended to stagnate and there were individual years of decline. Much of the external emigration in the 1920s appears to have been from these areas, especially Scotland. These changes clearly reflect economic circumstances, including industrial contraction in some regions and expansion in others' (ibid: 39).

"Postwar demographic experience has done much to undermine the rather apocalyptic views expressed in the 1930s on the effects of a stagnant or declining population. The UK population has been continued to grow from census to census, but the picture has been more varied at regional level" (ibid: 169).

*Natural Increase in population-*'The birth rates were initially very similar to those of the interwar years. There was a huge rise in 1947 (to 20.5 births per thousand women), occurring two years after the armistice just as had been the case after the First World War. The steep decline in the birth rates from 1947 to 1952 mirrors that in the five years after the 1920 peak. At this point, however the patterns diverge. Interwar birth rates remained broadly flat, apart from a small fall in the slump years and minor recovery thereafter. In the postwar period, on the other hand, there was along, unchecked rise in the birth rate from 1955 to 1964. Indeed, the number of postwar births peaked in 1964 (when it reached 18.5 per thousand women) as the baby boomers of 1947 produced their own offspring. Two factors underwrote this sustained rise in the birth rate. First, there was a definite trend to earlier marriage. Second, the full employment and rising real wages of the 'long boom' in the postwar economy provided a secure and optimistic climate that encouraged couples to have children. There were, however, also influences which pulled in the opposite direction. The full employment of the 1950s and 1960s increased the demand for female labour, bringing married women into employment in increasing numbers. There has been a trend of low fertility because of the availability of work for women. In addition, contraceptives have become much more readily available over time. The birth rate fell to a trough of 11.2 in 1977 and has not risen above 14 since' (ibid: 170).

'Family limitation was certainly not invented in 1948, but there have been two significant changes in the postwar years. First, the use of some type of birth control has 'saturated' the population. Between the wars, just under half of unskilled working class married couples did not begin to use contraception at marriage, by the 1960s only 7 per cent of middle-class and 11 per cent of working class couples did not start contraception as they embarked on married life.

The second change which made potential influence on the birth rate is the rise in the status of women in society. The Equal Pay Act of 1970[2] and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975[3] have opened carrier opportunities for women, albeit less dramatically than the architects of the legislation intended. For an increasing number of women in

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[2] The **Equal Pay Act 1970** is an Act of the United Kingdom Parliament which prohibits any less favourable treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions of employment.

[3] The **Sex Discrimination Act 1975** (c. 65) is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which protected men and women from discrimination on the grounds of sex or marriage.

the 1970s and 1980s, raising a family has had to compete with career development. Such pressures undoubtedly existed before 1939, but they have increased immeasurably since the mid-1970s' (ibid: 171).

"The baby boom of 1947 embraced mothers of all age groups (except teenagers) but from the 1950s into the late 1970s when the birth rate reached its postwar low, there was an increasing trend for women to produce their children relatively early in marriage. This pattern seems to consist with women responding to employment opportunities by restricting the span of child production and rearing in order to re-enter the labour market for relatively long time spells from their late twenties or early thirties. The trend to earlier births is most obvious in the dramatic rise of the birth rate among teenage marriages but also, and more fundamentally, by a rise in the economic, social and cultural status of young people, especially after the end of national services in 1960" (ibid: 171).

'After the peak in the birth rate in 1964 there began a long decline in fertility. Optimism about the economy began to wane in the later 1960s and was seriously jolted in the 1970s. Birth control pills become readily accessible in the 1960s and the fears about long-term side effects had not yet lodged in women's consciousness. These two factors, together with the expansion of employment and career opportunities for women after 1970, go some way to explaining why birth rate picked up again in the late 1970s. There has also been a major change in the impact of social class on fertility. The lowest unskilled families and the very poor still tend to have the largest families but, in a reversal of the trend of the first half of the twentieth century, most working class families were having the smallest number of children, whereas middle and upper-class parents have been having slightly larger families. The influences which have shaped the birth rate have changed substantially, not only since 1930s, but within the postwar period itself. In the 1970s and 1980s, women appear to have been planning their fertility according to rather different criteria than in the 1950s and 1960s' (Ibid: 171-72).

'Changes in mortality since 1945 have been much less complex. There were improvement in nutrition, better housing, clothing and public health advances in promoting lower mortality during the first of the present century. After 1945, the new drugs (sulphonamides, antibiotics), improved access to better health care and the

development of immunisation programmes for all the major childhood killer disease have helped to lower death rates still further. There has been a marked fall in deaths from bronchitis, reflecting improved environmental conditions and the decline of employment in heavy industries, such as coal mining, in which lung complaints were a notorious problem. The number of road accident deaths has not kept pace with the number of motor vehicles. Deaths from violence rose from the end of the war to a plateau in the 1960s and 1970s, and fell steeply in the 1980s. Despite the decline in industrial diseases and the rising affluence of postwar years, high class differentials in mortality have remained, though governments have been less than keen on having the matter debated' (ibid: 173).

*Migration and Rise in Population*-"Migration patterns also reveal continuity and change. Internal migration has continued the earlier pattern of a drift form Scotland, Wales and the northern English regions to southern England. The South East and the Midlands were the main receiving areas before 1960 and East Angila and the South West thereafter. The rural-urban drift continued into the 1950s, but was accompanied by movement away from the major conurbations into smaller towns and cities. From 1961, the rural- urban drift was reversed, though this had much less to do with the expansion employment in the countryside than with the growing ease of commuting by car from the countryside to urban employment" (ibid: 174).

"Britain supplied the rest of the world with a small flow of 'economic migrants'. In most postwar years the UK has absorbed approximately 200,000 immigrants, and up to half have been returning British citizens. There were also substantial outflows of population from UK throughout the period, initially to countries of the old Commonwealth and South Africa and latterly (since 1973) a growing tide to EU countries and the Middle East (especially in the early 1980s). The USA has also continued to be a popular destination for British emigrants" (ibid: 175).

"As the British economy began to run into labour shortages in the late 1940s migrant workers were attracted from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent in increasing numbers. There were also substantial inflows of Irish throughout the period, Poles in the late 1940s and Italians in the 1950s and 1960s, but comparative little attention has to be paid to them" (ibid: 175).

Changes which have occurred in the 1990s in British family system are the continuation of trends briefly interrupted by the 'ideal family' of the 1950s and 1960s. In the post-war period British family system has experienced changes. Age at marriage and first motherhood has risen, family size has fallen and childlessness has increased. Cohabitation has become common, both before marriage and between marriages. With rising cohabitation has come a sharp increase in births outside marriage, rising divorce rates, in their turn, have been accompanied by a near trebling in the number of lone parent families. These changes are frequently cited to demonstrate the decline of traditional family life.

Britain experienced substantial economic turbulence, with high inflation and high unemployment, periods of growth and of recession, and continuing restructuring of employment opportunities. A growth in labour market flexibility typified the 1980s and engendered heightened competition between individuals and families throughout the labour and employment markets, whose consequences for household and family formation are barely understood. One outcome of economic changes is fully understood, however: over two decades, Britain became a more unequal place in which to live. In the late 1990s, both unemployment and inflation fell sharply: nonetheless, inequality between families remained.

There are some distinctive features that affected British demography during 1990s.

**Teenage Motherhood – "**is one of the most distinctive features of British demography, without teenage pregnancies Britain's total fertility rate would fall from 1.8 to 1.68 (Item 1-Appendix 3). Teenagers throughout Europe both East and West-now engage in sexual intercourse at earlier ages than their parents or grandparents and for longer periods before they become either partners or parents. In large measure, this is a reflection of normative changes that encompasses not only teenage sex but also cohabitation and birth outside marriage" (McRa 1999: 8).

"For teenage men and women in Britain today, the average age at first intercourse is 17. But whereas in most of Western Europe, rates of teenage motherhood have fallen as teenage sexual activity has risen, this has not happened in Britain. Demographically, Britain more closely resembles Eastern Europe, where a tradition of early and near- universal, marriage has long meant high teenage fertility rates. Almost all of the east Europe births are inside marriage, however, while virtually all of the

Western ones are outside marriage, with a large number being outside partnership as well" (ibid: 9).

'Having an early birth damage life chances: there is evidence- that women who have teenage births are more likely to leave home early, to live in social or subsidized housing, to be in a manual job or unemployed, and to be welfare dependent. And although recent research on the long-term effects of teenage motherhood suggests that many young mothers have been able to escape from poverty, the experiences of their children reflect the obstacles arising from growing up in families with few economic and educational resources' (ibid: 10).

'However, the link between teenage pregnancy and economic disadvantage is not limited to the consequences of such pregnancies. Young men's employment opportunities and wage rates have deteriorated markedly over the past twenty years. Consequently, their abilities to support young families have been impaired. Furthermore, having a baby seemingly provides working- class teenagers more opportunities for self-fulfillment than staying in school, a dead-end job, or unemployment. Social norms constrain the effective use of contraceptive by teenage girls and so they become pregnant: economic circumstances constrain competing opportunities and so they become mothers' (ibid: 11).

**Divorce** – 'Britain is also distinctive for its high divorce rate. In 1960s, there were two divorces for every 1,000 marriages. Liberalisation of the divorce laws in the 1970s led to a sharp rise in divorce, a rate which has persisted throughout the 1990s. The rate of increase is slower now than in the 1970s and early 1980s, largely because the married population contains fewer of those at high risk. Nonetheless over 40 percent of marriage ending with divorce (per 1,000 marriages or per 1,000 population), puts Britain at the head of the European countries.

Moreover, people are divorcing after shorter period of marriage. One in ten marriages which took place in 1981 ended in divorce rate 4.5 years, compared with one in ten divorcing within 6 years in 1971 and after 25 years in 1951. Early marriage and early parenthood have long been understood to be strongly associated with marital breakdown: the younger the age at marriage, the greater the likelihood of that marriage ending' (ibid: 12).

"Between 1971 and 1996, people under age 25 experienced the greatest growth in divorce rates, with rates increasing fivefold for men and fourfold for women. Teenage marriages are particularly likely to break down. One result of this rise of youth divorce is that the children of divorce are increasing younger as well, and consequently more at risk of losing contact with their fathers. In 1995, almost 30 percent of children experiencing divorce were under 5 years old and over 70 percent were under age 10. The length of time that fathers and children have live together before divorce or separation appears to be crucial to their chances of maintaining contact, and the longer the time spent together, the more likely their relationship will continue after separation" (ibid: 12).

"There are clear link between divorce and economic disadvantage: not only are the deprived are more at risk of divorce, but divorce itself may compound deprivation. Unemployment, reliance on benefits and disabilities are the key characteristics of the currently divorced population, and, further, that economically disadvantaged, particularly the unemployed and those in receipt of benefits have higher probabilities of divorce" (ibid: 13).

'But even if unemployment is avoided, other deprivations may follow divorce. About one in every 65 children will experience divorce of their parents before they reach 16 – twice the proportion in 1971, the economic consequence for children can be profound. Lone parent families have repeatedly been shown to be more disadvantage than the poorest two-parent families. In 1992, more than three-quarters of children in lone parent families were living poverty. There are two factors from childhood and adolescence that are directly associated with higher probabilities of partnership breakdown in adulthood: parental divorce and poor emotional well-being. For some men and women, it seems, vicious circles of deprivation and divorced are handed down through generations' (ibid: 13).

**Lone parents** – 'the number of lone-parent families has more than trebled since 1970s, bringing Britain to the forefront of the European Union in both the proportion of children raised in such families. In the late 1990s, 1.6 million- or just over one in five – families in Britain with depended children was headed by a lone parent, almost invariably a lone mother, encompassing some 15 percent of children. There were number of factors which influenced the growth of lone-parenthood in Britain. During

1960s, divorce was primary source of lone-parent families instead of death, while throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, sharply rising divorce rates and falling remarriages rates furthered their growth. From, the mid-1980s, however, most of the growth of lone parent families has come from never married mothers, as changing attitudes towards premarital sex, shotgun wedding, and living together outside marriage have led to a sharp increase in birth outside marriage. Official statistics shows that never married lone-mother families grew faster than other family types, and more than doubled in the space of eight years to become one in twelve of all families with dependent children. Unmarried mother families account for over 80 percent lone-parent families in which the parent is teenaged or in their early twenties. About half of these 'official single' women, however, would have endeared lone parenthood following the breakdown of cohabiting relationship. Thus, official figures overstate genuinely single motherhood; nonetheless, there has been a substantial increase in the number of single women who become mother while not living with a partner, as well as in the length of the time that they remain lone mothers. Since 1990s women who had never married before becoming mother have outnumbered divorced lone mothers, and in 1997 accounted for nearly one in six lone mothers'(ibid: 14).

'The problem of lone mother hood is poverty. Lone mothers in Britain are less likely to be employed than in most other countries, and since the 1970s their employment rate has declined. The difference in economic activity between married and lone mothers is particularly sharp among women with children under age 5. In the 1970s, lone mothers with pre-school children were more likely to be in work or seeking work than married mother of similarly aged children' (ibid: 14).

"This changed during the 1980s and 1990s married mothers with young children have between twice as likely as lone mothers to be economically active. During the 1990s, one in two married mothers with pre-school children has been in employment compared less than one in four comparable lone mothers. Most of the fall in employment among lone mothers has come in full-time employment of married women has risen- with part time work remaining stable. About six in ten employed lone mother work part time" (ibid: 14).

"The majority of lone mothers, therefore, gain littlie income from employment. Nor do the majorities support payments from the father of their children. Before the

introduction of Child Support Agency in 1993, about 30 percent of lone mothers receive maintenance, a portion that appears to have remained stable throughout 1990s. In absence of paid work or adequate support from former partners, the majority of lone mothers in Britain rely on state benefits.[4] Research in the early 1990s suggested that more than two third of lone parents at any time receive income support, while many more have claimed it in the past. Even among employed lone parents reliance on benefits is not uncommon, with one-third in receipt of family credit, compared with fewer than one in twenty working couples" (ibid: 15).

'The receipt of benefits describes a 'fault line' between lone-parent families which has marked consequences for their marital well-being…Single or separated lone parents who live alone with their children in social housing are particularly vulnerable to the hardships that accompany dependence on benefits.  Often young and accounting for nearly one third of all lone parents, single or separated lone mothers routinely experience difficulty with debt and essential expenditures. They or their children may also experience health problems. Indeed, lone parents appear increasingly likely to have health problems of their own or other family members that prevent economic activity. Moreover, the deprivation these single or separated mothers experienced as adults will for many be a reflection of childhood deprivation, as more than one in four young, never married lone parents were themselves raised in lone parent household. There were few women plan to become single lone mother. As, however, social norms changed in ways that allow independent living, setting up a home with a man without a job or in low-paid work with few prospects seems a  poor alternative to lone motherhood'  (ibid: 16).

**Cohabitation** – 'the continuing growth of cohabitation in Britain- before marriage, between marriages, and instead of marriage- encapsulate the depth and breadths of changes in people's behavior and attitudes towards sexual morality and living arrangements.[5] In the mid sixties, fewer than 5 percent of never-married women

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[4] From Oct, 1998 all non parents in Income Support were eligible for the government New Deal programme, which is indented lone parents find work by providing support in finding and securing employment, training and child care. Result up to the end of Feb.1998 from the New Deal's introduction in pilot areas suggested that 6% of income support recipients among lone parents found work. (Family Policy Studies Center, 1998).

[5] The increase in cohabitation can also raise issues that cross the boundaries between heterosexual and non-heterosexual families. For example, legal issues surrounding parenting and inheritance can apply equally to gay and lesbian families and to heterosexual families.

cohabited before marriage; in the early 1990s, this goes up to 70 percent. For remarrying women, the rise was 50 percent in the mid-sixties to 90 percent in the early 1990s. As cohabitation has increased, the number of marriage has plummeted: in 1995, there were fewer than 200,000 first marriages in Britain, less than half the number that took place in 1970s, and the overall number of marriages (322,000) was the lowest record since 1926. As cohabitation has increased the number of birth outside marriage has soared: well over a third of births in 1996 were outside marriage- more than twice in the proportion in 1971. The rise in births outside marriage was particularly steep during the 1980s, as childbearing within cohabitation relationship became more common. By the end of the 1980s, 14 percent of births outside marriage were jointly registered by parents living at the same address; by 1996, this had risen to 20 percent. In one in five of all families with dependent children, the parents are cohabiting; one in sixteen dependent children lives with cohabiting parents. Indeed, most of the recent growth in cohabiting couple families has come among those with children, particularly among thirties. Consequently, the proportion of young children in cohabiting families has grown and in 1994 about half of the children in such families were under age 5, compared with only one-quarter in married-couple families' (ibid: 16)

"Britain does not lead Europe in the growth of cohabitation, but it may so in terms of the concentration of long-term cohabitation-particularly with dependently children- among the economically disadvantage. Some economic theory links the growth of cohabitation directly to male relative deprivation in employment and career opportunities, implying that the strongest tendency towards cohabitation will be found among working class men. Support of this situation can be found in Britain, where cohabiting couples with depending children have substantially lower income and more likely to receive Income Support or Housing Benefits and to live in council housing than is the case among married couple families" (ibid: 17)

'In its appearance and (for some) its ideology, cohabitation is no more than the modern equivalent to marriage. But there are some differences between cohabitation and marriage. Cohabitation is inheritably, more unstable than marriage and that couples who cohabit prior to marriage are more prone to marital dissolution. If cohabitation is being used by couples for testing their relationship, than higher rates of dissolution might be expected as partner decided that they have not chosen well after

all. Nonetheless, the apparently greater instability of cohabitation remains important, because cohabitation breakdown often throws women and children into poverty. In addition, formally cohabiting fathers have been found to be substantially less likely than formally married fathers to maintain a relationship with their children after separation' (ibid: 17).

## CHANGE AND CONTINUTY IN BRITISH FAMILY SYSTEM

'Despite the diversity in households, most people still have strong family ties—that families still matter. One of the more remarkable changes in the post war period, which would seem to imply a break with traditional family values, has been the growth of one-person households among both pensioners and younger people. In 1950, only about 3 per cent of the population in Europe and North America lived alone. Since then, there has been an increase in one-person households in every West European country: Sweden is at the top of the table with 40 per cent of households now one-person and Greece at the bottom with only 17 per cent. In Britain, 29 percent of households (or about 10 per cent of the population) in 1997 were one-person, a figure set to rise to 36 per cent by 2016, accounting for some 8.6 million people. The continuing increase in one-person households is being built upon gradual decreases in the proportion of traditional family households, both with and without children. Consequently, such households are sometimes seen to herald the demise of family life and the rise of 'non-families'. From another perspective, however, living alone at younger ages can show how lifestyles can be manipulated in order to enhance one's life chances. While among pensioners, in particular, the experience of living alone can demonstrate the strength of family ties in the context of change, and suggests that change is not necessarily for the worse' (ibid: 19).

*Young one-person household* – 'People live alone for a variety of reasons. For some, living alone may be a deliberate and permanent choice; for others, it may be a temporary arrangement in response to particular circumstances; for others still, it may be a matter in which they have no choice. While there are more people living alone at all ages, the largest increases since 1971 have come among men and women under retirement age, particularly among those aged fewer than 40. Increasing tendency of living alone of people under pension age, reflects the way in which household change is sometimes linked to economic change. The rise of one-person households has been

cited as evidence of 'the declining importance of the family and a consequence of changes leading modern societies not to "new families" but to "non families". Claims such as this need to be viewed with caution, however, as there is evidence that living alone is not synonymous with no family ties or with social isolation. Families or couples who 'live alone together' (LATs) are, like younger one-person households, an increasing feature of middle-class urban life. Recent research among dual-career 'work-rich' households in which both partners were employed in managerial, professional, or associate professional occupations found that the majority had lived apart for at least one period of up to six months on at least one occasion—one couple 'had married in 1988 but had only been living together since 1991.The family relationships of younger people who live alone or who live alone together remain relatively unexplored: are they 'non-families', as is sometimes suggested? Or do they offer evidence of the continuing importance of intimate ties in the face of changed economic opportunities, for women as well as for men? Whatever the balance of truth between these two explanations—and there evidently is truth in both—men and women in one-person households are without question developing lifestyles all but unknown in previous decades' (ibid: 22).

*The family life of older people* – 'Since the beginning of the century, the proportion of people in the UK aged over 64 has trebled. In 1996, almost 16 per cent of the UK population was over pension age; over the next thirty years, this figure is projected to rise to almost 25 per cent.

There has been growth in the proportion of older people living alone or with just their spouses, among both 'young' pensioners and the elderly. This was already observable in the 1970s when about a fifth of men and 40 per cent of women aged 75 and over lived alone. Between 1971 and 1981, there was a marked drop in the extent of intergenerational co residence and by 1991; over half of women and about a third of men in this age group lived alone. There has also been a recent decline in contact with older kin—mothers and fathers—in part because of increasing geographical distances between relations' (ibid: 22).

'But although living *near* is not the same as living *with*, older people still live in relatively close proximity to at least one of their children. that as many as two-thirds

of parents with grown-up children live less than an hour's journey from at least one of their sons or daughters, and around half live less than fifteen minutes away. Three-quarters of older parents talk to their sons or daughters by telephone at least once a week; half of British adults with a living mother see her at least weekly. Even in the face of increasing residential autonomy among older people, then, family and close kin remain important. Moreover, they retain particular significance as the givers and receivers of emotional, practical, and financial support. The networks of older people have changed, with couples and friends more prominent than they were fifty years ago, but close kin still count' (ibid: 22).

'Older people in Britain traditionally have shown a strong preference for independent living, for what has been called 'intimacy at a distance', a preference that substantial numbers have acted upon. These days in Britain, there are increased opportunities for older people to realize their wish to live independently: they are healthier and live longer, so there are more close friends with whom to socialize; there is better state support and more facilities (both state and private) to support independent living; and there is a significantly larger housing stock, so older people have somewhere to live. Had these conditions existed fifty or sixty years ago, it seems likely that many older people would have chosen to live apart from their adult children' (ibid: 23).

'This is not to suggest that the social and family lives of older people have not changed. Over the past fifty years, British have moved from an old age experienced largely in family groups to one that is lived within 'personal communities'(ibid: 23).

'In addition, the increase in divorce, cohabitation, and re-partnering has had an impact on the family lives of older people. While it is likely that these changes have led in some cases to poverty, solo living, and isolation (particularly among men) the evidence suggests that family breakdown can alternatively lead to stronger intergenerational ties and increased co-residence' (ibid: 23-24).

Modern structure of British family came in existence since 19th century. Prior to this people put the church's need before family affection and loyalties. In the 19th century industrial revolution changed the structure of the family in England as the affect of this the old traditions of apprenticeship has declined, late marriage became popular in the youth and strongly it dissuaded young adults from early and imprudent marriage, it acted as a preventive check to population growth. Then in the Victorian period

British family was at its strongest. It's defined as a 'domestic idyll', a heaven against the evil of the society.

In the period of two world wars British family has undergone significant changes. Attitude towards children has changed the increased use of contraception and change in the role and status of women. In the post-war period migration is one the significant factor which had its affect on family in Britain. In 1990s there were some distinctive features of British family system. These are teenage motherhood, lone parenting, rapid growth in divorce rate and cohabitation. Although there were diversities in the household but most people still have strong family ties- that family still matter.

Next chapter shall discuss the changes in the British family that have occurred at the turn of the century. It will also describe British government's family policy and family law and how it has affected nature and structure of British family system.

Chapter Four

# CHANGING FAMILY FORMS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

**INTRODUCTION**

The term "family" is traditionally used to denote a unit of one, two or more adults living together with at least one child. Society has changed significantly in recent decades so that these days the members of a family group may not necessarily be living together under the same roof. The family has changed to the point that it no longer seems to have the same definition that it had, of course it changed, but we do not think that is for the better. Families have changed in the last several decades, instead of getting married, many couples are living together or cohabite, some of those couples eventually get married, many of them break up, and very few stay together as cohabitant for long. What is so remarkable recently is that women are more likely to give birth before they turn 25 year than they get married, according to official statistics that illustrate how British family life has been transformed in a generation, more people are living alone, more children are being raised by single parents and more grown-up children are living with their parents than ever before.

In this chapter the change of family structure of Britain in the last decade, will be discussed and it also analyse policy of British government regarding family and English family law, that how changes in policy and law have affected British family.

**BRITISH FAMILY IN 21ˢᵗ CENTURY**

The structure of families in Britain has changed. In recent times we have seen changes in social norms and relaxations attitude towards sex, changes in legislations, divorce and civil partner-ship, more women working, furthermore, advances in science and technology.

*Household size*

"A household is defined as a person living alone, or a group of people living at the same address who have the address as their only or main residence and either share one main meal a day or share living accommodation (or both). A household can consist of more than one family.

There were 26.0 million households in the UK in 2010. The number of households has increased by 6.1 per cent since 2001, slightly faster than the 4.5 per cent growth in the size of the UK population over the same period. This is due to the trend towards smaller household sizes. The proportion of households containing four or more people decreased from 20.7 per cent in 2001 to 19.8 in 2010, while the proportion of households containing one person increased from 28.6 per cent to 29.0, or over 500,000, over the same period" (www.ons.gov.uk 2011:3).

*Household Type*

'The most common household type in 2010 was one family, consisting of a couple with or without children. There were 14.6 million such households, which represented 56 per cent of all households. This is an increase from 14.2 million households in 2001, but a reduction from 58 per cent of all households. The next most common household type was one person households, of which there were 7.5 million in 2010. Households containing one lone parent family increased by 0.4 million to 2.8 million in 2010' (Table 3- Appendix I) (ibid: 4).

*The decline of marriage and the rise of cohabitation*

'Although seven out of ten households are still headed by married couples this percentage has been declining for some time. Between 1996 and 2006 the number of married couple families fell by over 4%, while the number of cohabiting couple families increased by 2.3 million, representing 14% of all families. It is estimated that no more than seven out of ten men and women now in their mid-30s will marry compared to nine out of ten now in their mid-60s.10 By 2031, projections suggest that these trends will continue and there will be around 3.8 million cohabiting couples, as well as further increases in the number of single parents.'(Figure 5- Appendix I) (Jenkins and Evans 2008:10)

'Pre-marital cohabitation has dramatically increased and has become a norm. (Item 4- Appendix 3) In 1960, just 2% of couples were cohabiting before they married, compared to three quarters in 1998. Moreover, many people now marry later, often living with a partner, as a 'trial marriage' before making a formal commitment. In recent times people started cohabiting even if they have children. In the last decade people who have children cohabite more than the people who are married. This

suggests that fewer and fewer marriages are sustained with a record number of marriage break-up between couples who have been together for decades. This has been led by 'baby boom empty nesters' who, once their children have grown up and left home, decide there is no longer any reason to remain in a loveless marriage. Women who have been housewives are also starting to be recognised with respectable settlements in the divorce courts, allowing them to end unhappy marriages with greater belief that they will be financially secure on their own. Changes in the law have also made it easier to be able to get a divorce and Britain now has one of the highest divorce rates in Europe and the largest percentage of people in any European nation who have been divorced (around one in six adults).Consequently, the number of remarriages has increased as a result of the rise in the divorce rate' (ibid: 10).

*New Form of family composition –*

'In the recent years, new forms of families have emerged in British society. Changes in marriage, divorce and cohabitation have been the main causes for this. Two in five of all marriages are now remarriages, which makes stepfamilies one of the fastest growing family forms in Britain, currently making up one in ten of all families. Another form of family is single parent family, which is continuously increasing in recent years in Britain. Now more and more children are growing up in single parent families, and in stepfamilies.

A growing number of couples are also now living apart together, often following failed marriages or cohabitations. Initial estimates suggest that around two million people have regular partners in other households (excluding full-time students and people who live with their parents). In most cases this is either due to working in a different location to the family home or because the relationship is still in the early stages, rather than because couples have made a choice to remain apart. However, women's focus on their career may also be a factor.

As women choose to focus on their career before settling into a committed relationship, they are getting married and having children later in life. Finally civil partnerships between same sex couples have created a new type of family. By the end of 2007 there had been 26,787 civil partnerships since the law was introduced in December 2005' (ibid: 11) (Figure 3 – Appendix I).

**BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S FAMILY POLICY**

After an overview of demographic changes in British family system in the last ten years, it is important to have a look at policies of British government which have affected family system and structure in Britain.

'The post-war state policy on family in Britain was based on a strongly gender differentiated model of family life, in which men were the main bread-winners and women were full time careers. But demographic changes and mass mobilization of women in labour market has emphasized on the importance of re-examine the state policy and gender differentiated model of family' (Finch 2003:2).

"The new labour party victory in 1997 elections marked a transition from a 'familistic' regime towards a more 'individualistic' one. This involves the promotion of employment for all and thus has extended the right to access paid work and the capacity to form and maintain an autonomous household to women, as well as men. And, in March 1999 they made an historic commitment to end child poverty in 20 years, which recognised the economic rights of children. But to facilitate women's participation in the labour market, the state has to increase provision of services that enable women to balance home and work responsibilities, which inevitably means more public involvement with the organisation of care in the private sphere" (ibid:2).

There are some policies made by British government which have affected the nature and structure of family system. These policies are:

*The right not to have children*: "Increased choice of when and whether to have children has been an important facilitator to women's increased entry into the labour market. The right *not* to have children came about initially with the introduction of accessible contraception and, in a more direct way, with the introduction of legal abortion, which enabled women to make a real choice about whether or not to have a child" (ibid: 3).

'The Abortion Act of 1967 (which have implemented since 27th October 1967) has given the right to women to have an abortion in England, Scotland and Wales, and took effect six month later on 27 April 1968. This was the first time since 1861, when

the Offences against the Person Act made it illegal to procure a miscarriage, that abortion was legal. Regulations under the Act meant that abortions must be performed by a registered medical practitioner in a National Health Service Hospital or in a Department of Health approved location' (ibid: 3).

'In 1990, an important change was made to the 1967 Act. Section 37 of The 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act[6] was passed, which amended the 1967 Abortion Act by changing the upper time limit for abortions from 28 weeks to 24 weeks. Because the abortion has to be approved by two doctors, this effectively places the power to decide in the hands of the medical profession, and does not provide women with the legal right to choose. The UK differs from other European nations and the US in this respect. While in practice many doctors interpret the law liberally, they are nonetheless able to block access to services on the basis of moral opposition' (ibid: 4).

"In 1998, a campaign called Voice for Choice was launched on the 30th anniversary of abortion becoming legal. This aimed to fight for abortion on request in the first three months of pregnancy throughout the UK" (ibid: 4).

"The 1967 Abortion Act has never been extended to Northern Ireland, where the issue of abortion is still governed by legal ambiguity. It is generally accepted that abortion may be available if:

• The woman has a serious medical or psychological problem which would jeopardise her life or health if the pregnancy were to continue.

• The woman has severe learning difficulties

• Abnormality of the foetus is detected.

But doctors are operating in a legal grey area; they impose their individual judgment and so availability varies from area to area. Women in Northern Ireland, unlike women in the rest of the UK, have no access to safe legal abortion, even in the private

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[6] An Act to make provision in connection with human embryos and any subsequent development of such embryos; to prohibit certain practices in connection with embryos and gametes; to establish a Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority; to make provision about the persons who in certain circumstances are to be treated in law as the parents of a child; and to amend the Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985.

sector. As a result, women travel to Britain to obtain terminations. This means women in Northern Ireland have abortions later than in the rest of the UK, since it takes time to raise the money to enable them to do so" (ibid: 4).

*The right to have children*: 'The right to have children has been recently introduced by the British government. To adopt a child, an application must be made to the adoption agency. It will be for adoption agencies, and ultimately the courts, to decide whether someone is suitable to adopt. In 2002, New Labour introduced the Adoption and Children Act which included radical overhaul of the 1976 Adoption Act. Now unmarried couples are able to apply to adopt a child jointly – previously one partner could adopt and the other could apply for a residence order. However the residence order expired when the child was 16 years of age. Single people are also able to apply for adoption.

There is a lower but no upper age limit for adoption – people applying for adoption must be at least 21 years of age. Cultural and ethnic backgrounds are also taken into consideration. It is considered that placement with a family of similar ethnic origin and religion is very often most likely to meet the child's needs as fully as possible, safeguarding his welfare most effectively and preparing him for life as a member of a multi-racial society. However, the Government has made it clear that it is unacceptable for a child to be denied loving adoptive parents solely on the grounds that the child and adopters do not share the same racial or cultural background.

Unlike other areas of legislation, such as marriage, one's sexuality does not prevent someone from being considered as an adoptive parent and therefore gay and lesbians can apply for adoption' (ibid: 5).

*Parental rights and obligations* : 'New Right -Increasing anxiety in the 1980s and early 90s centered on the non residential father and the separation of marriage and parenthood, driven by an increase in lone parenthood, divorce and unmarried motherhood and the possible demise of the two-parent family, which was seen as the central building block of civilised society. The main concern was that a growing number of men were living apart from their biological children, and that a high proportion of lone mothers dependent on benefits as opposed to paid wages or maintenance paid by the father of the child. The Courts were opting to allow a non-resident parent, the father, to concentrate his resources on the second family, leaving

the first family to be supported by the state. The number of lone parents in receipt of state benefits consequently increased by 86% between 1981 and by 1988 only 7% of the cost of supporting lone families on benefit was being recovered from "liable relatives" (Davies, 1998). The government concern then was how to tie fathers into families. This culminated in the 1989 children's Act, which redefined parental responsibility to include responsibility towards the child; as "all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority, which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property" [7] (ibid: 6).

'Parental responsibility is conferred automatically on the mother of a child irrespective of her marital status. But, until 2003, whether the father also has parental responsibility depended upon whether he was married to the mother at the time of the child's birth. If he was married then he had automatic parental responsibility. Unmarried fathers could only obtain parental responsibility by registering a legally binding written agreement, subject to the mother's consent. If the mother refused her consent then an unmarried father could seek parental responsibility by making an application to the Court (The British Council). Without parental responsibility, unmarried fathers face many problems including the right to be respondent in court applications which affect their child and the right to consent to medical treatment of their child' (ibid: 6).

'The Conservative government's abhorrence of the so called "dependency culture" finally led in July 1990 to an announcement of proposals for change in the child support system, followed by the 1991 Child Support Act, which is seen as one of the most controversial recent social policy legislation. Its aim was to transfer the burden of the costs of the child from social security to the father. It therefore went against the grain of previous UK family policy, which maintained a divide between the public and the private. Under the *Child Support Act 1991* each parent of a qualifying child were made responsible for maintaining it and this maintenance assessment was to be enforced through the court if necessary. Non-residential fathers were now legally bound to provide financially for their biological children, regardless of whether they had parental responsibility or not. The Child Support Agency (CSA) was established

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[7] The Children Act, 1989, section 3(1).

to administer the maintenance, and begun operation on 4 April 1993. This transferred child support from a judicial to an administration setting' (ibid: 6).

"It has been argued that the child support agency was intended more as a tool of the treasury to return the cost of children to the private sphere rather than a tool to alleviate child poverty. Very few women and children have found themselves better off as a result of the new system. For the parent with care, there was no Income support disregard. Also, child support was not guaranteed, and non-compliance by the non-residential father was not an offence; if the father could not or would not pay, the parents with care and their children received nothing from the state to compensate" (ibid: 7).

"The main criticism of the legislation has been the tendency to reduce the men's second family to social assistance levels. The legislation gave all biological fathers, unmarried and divorced, a persistent obligation to maintain, and the long-established practice by which the state assumed that the man would maintain his second family while it would support the first was formally abandoned. The child support system thus increased required payments by non-residential fathers to their biological child and no allowance was made for their social children, who would suffer as a consequence. Only from 1995 was allowance made for some travel to work costs, and contact costs for the non-residential parent" (ibid: 7).

"The family, whether the parents were married or not, were being slotted into the traditional model of the breadwinner family with its gender role models, in which the mother was the carer and the father was the breadwinner. The father's role as carer was embedded in their role as financial provider – encouraging and granting access increases the likelihood that the father will fulfill his responsibility to maintain. The resulting policy has therefore been punitive rather than enabling, focusing upon obligations rather than rights" (ibid: 8).

*New Labour Policy*: 'New Labour social policy introduced link between civic responsibilities and rights. Under this social policy parenting brings with it particular duties and responsibilities- it is the state's role to enforce these responsibilities when parents fail to meet them. According to New Labour, it is the family, through parenting, that both requires and underpins individual responsibility in the community. This emphasis on parenting responsibility led to the Adoption and

Children Act of 2002, which came into effect in 2003, and made it easier for the biological, but unmarried father to obtain parental responsibility. An unmarried father who is the natural father of the child can now also acquire parental responsibility if they are named as the father on the child's birth certificate. However, their name must have been registered on the birth certificate after this new section of the Act comes into force' (ibid: 9).

*Children's Right*: 'In 1992 the UK government ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). The Convention sets out principles and standards for the treatment of children, and for laws, policies and practice which affect children… The principle of children's welfare rights, the idea that society has an obligation towards sharing the costs of children and supporting children as *individuals* in their own rights, has been poorly developed in the UK' (ibid: 11).

'In the year 2003, UK government introduced a Minister of State for Children in the Department of Education and Skills, and it is intended to provide integrated leadership and responsibilities for children's service and family. At the same time, responsibility for children's social services and the Teenage Pregnancy Unit has been transferred from the Department of Health to the Department for Education and Skills. The Family Policy Unit has been transferred from the Home Office to the DfES, and family law policy from the Lord Chancellor's Department.

It is intended that the integration of children's policy into DfES will create a single departmental focus for children, including disadvantaged children, improved co-ordination within children's services (including family and parenting support), and between these services and mainstream schools and education policy' (ibid: 11).

*Child Benefit*-"Child benefit is still the only benefit in the UK that is payable in respect of all children, regardless of their parent's income and labour market status. In 2003, over 12.7 million children living in around 7 million families were receiving Child Benefit. Universal child benefit exists for all children aged 16, or under, or 16 to 19 if in full time non-advanced education" (ibid: 12).

*Tax Credit* – 'in April 2003, a child and work tax credit has been introduced by the British government. The child tax credit include different elements of support for children previously paid via income support, jobseekers allowance, working families'

tax credit; disabled person's tax credit and the children's tax credit to create a seamless system of financial support for children, which will be paid to both working and non-working parents. The Working Tax Credit supplemented low wages, regardless of the presence of children. Through these two tax credits, government has been separated adult and child related support. At the same time support for children of working and non-working has been integrated. The new tax credits intend to build on trying to achieve the twin aims of promoting employment and tackling poverty' (ibid: 13).

*Baby Bond: Child Trust Fund* -'Under this policy children who are born after September 2002 are eligible to open an account when they become eligible in 2005. If they are from a family who is in receipt of unemployment benefits or eligible for the full tax credit, they will have £500 placed into their account. Those in household with higher incomes will get £250. This money van is added by all families, friends and later the child him/herself. This policy can reduce child poverty by redistributing asset wealth, the distribution of which is currently for more unequal than that of income' (ibid: 14).

*Education Maintenance Allowances* -'Education Maintenance Allowances were introduced in 2004. The aim of this allowance is to encourage children from low-income families to stay on in education to improve their skills and qualification and to enhance their future employability' (ibid: 15).

"The UK has a poor record of children's rights. But New Labour's aim to eradicate child poverty has refocused the economic rights of individual children within the tax and benefit system. New forms of financial support, increases in provision and greater redistribution of resource to children and their families have taken place. But the move is away from universal provision towards targeting provision, albeit at a larger group than the traditional mean-tested support. This move away from universalism towards what New Labour has dubbed 'progressive universalism' has important implications for the citizenship of children and the principle of welfare rights for all children regardless of parental income status" (ibid: 15).

*Family Friendly Labour Market* -'Because of the increasing numbers of working families and working women British government has introduced policy to balance family and work. Government recognized that mothers' disproportionately bear the

burden of care, even when both parents are in full time employment, and so to increase mother's employment men need to undertake a share of the unpaid domestic work. There is also recognition that caring is a right, and obligation; men miss out on their right, and responsibility, to share in the care of their children. But the extent that the government actively encourages men's involvement in care is still limited by the emphasis that the male breadwinner family has had upon the British Welfare state' (ibid.16).

'There are two ways that enable parents to combine work with care. The first is the 'defamiliarisation' of care, extra-familial child care. The second is 'refamiliarisation' of care in the form of policies such as parental leave schemes. The important difference between these two approaches is that policies designed to support the 'defamiliarisation' of care focus on the transition of the main career (usually the mother) into paid work by reducing their care responsibilities. In contrast, 'refamiliarisation' policies focus on parents' transition into care by reducing their employment responsibilities. They are a means by which both employed mothers and employed fathers are given the opportunity to undertake care for their children with some wage compensation' (ibid: 16).

'The UK welfare state is built upon the breadwinner family, a definition of social citizenship that encompasses the right and obligation to undertake paid work, and a line between the public and the private. A move towards a more individualistic state has been hindered because social policies are still based upon these principles. Women are still expected to be the main careers within the home, and men the main breadwinners. The emphasis on the male breadwinner is demonstrated by the obligation of non-residential father's to provide financially for their children, with little emphasis on caring. It is also demonstrated by the emphasis on maternal, rather than paternal, leave from paid work and by limited state provision of childcare. The organisation of care is still viewed as a private responsibility, and one that falls upon women. Whilst childcare is promoted, women are supplying the services. It is women who have to organise their working life around child care, and it is women who are expected to deliver care. When men have been encouraged to care, (such as through paternity leave) it has been as a secondary role, and to facilitate mother's employment rather than to facilitate the father's role of career in its own sake. Whilst this model may go some way to tackle child poverty, it will do so in a limited way by forcing

women to take on work designed to fit around their caring obligations. Whilst all this is being negotiated, children's rights as individuals are largely forgotten' (ibid: 25).


**ENGLISH FAMILY LAW**

'Family law has an important role to play in stabilising and supporting relationships within society. The family law impact human relationship both directly and indirectly.' (www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk 2009:37). "It has an explicit role in defining family as an institution:

> *"Governments set the parameters that define the family as a legal institution. These parameters define who is to be granted marriages, divorces, and parental rights, and articulate subsequent obligations. The law also provides a set of default property rights in case of separation or death, and a definition of the family for the purposes of taxation and government programs"* (ibid.37).

'Family Law in Britain is not codified, but the acts of Parliament are the primary source of the modern family law, as developed by judges over the years in cases coming before them for judgment' (Hamilton 1995: 97).

The most important law related to family is marriage law, because the basic and traditional family is formed by marriage.

"Under English family law marriage is a public and legal relationship between a man and a woman. It involves certain obligations between the parties concerned with regard to property, mutual care and financial support, sexual fidelity and children. It is voluntary in that both parties must agree to it" (www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk 2009: 46).

'Until the *Marriage Act of 1753* all that was necessary to establish a valid marriage was a private exchange of vows and that many if not most marriages were celebrated in this way. But actually marriage practice in 18th century was much different from

this. Evidence shows that most marriages were celebrated in church even before the 1753 Act. Canon law had long required that marriages be celebrated with due formality, i.e. the calling of banns or the obtaining of a license, followed by celebration in church. While the validity of a marriage did not depend on strict compliance with all of these formalities, only a ceremony presided over by an Anglican clergyman was sufficient to confer the legal rights of marriage on the parties. A private exchange of vows, while legally binding (assuming it could be proved), did not entitle the parties to such rights: the only right it conferred was that of compelling a reluctant lover to celebrate the marriage in church' (ibid: 47).

"The 1753 Act was explicitly intended to stamp out this practice. It gave increased force to the Church's requirements by stipulating that a marriage would be void if it was not preceded by banns or license, or if it was not celebrated in church. Only Jews, Quakers, and members of the Royal Family were exempt from the need to comply" (ibid: 47).

"Compliance with these statutory requirements was almost universal, if not always enthusiastic. But the huge increase in the number of dissenters and Catholics over the subsequent decades led to pressure for change. This coalesced with the perceived need for a new system of civil registration to meet the needs of a modern nation. The *Marriage Act of 1836* responded by introducing the option of civil marriage, as well as marriage according to non-Anglican religious rites" (ibid: 47).

"The popularity of formal marriage in previous centuries can be explained by the undesirability of the alternatives. Cohabiting couples were never treated in law as if they were married; the concept of 'common-law marriage' was unknown in the eighteenth century. Indeed, the modern use of the term to denote cohabiting relationships dates back only as far as the 1960s. Nor were the rights that marriage conferred of relevance only to those with property at stake: under the poor law, individuals were entitled to relief only from the parish where they had their 'settlement'. A wife took her husband's settlement, and legitimate children took their father's. If a family fell on hard times they would be entitled to relief together. Unmarried families, by contrast, could be split up, with father, mother and children each being sent to their own place of settlement" (ibid: 49).

'Living together without lawful marriage was illegal and it was a duty of neighbours and parish official to record if a baby was born out of wedlock. There was a great risk for couples living together to be punished by the ecclesiastical courts for'. As the control of the ecclesiastical courts waned, as urbanisation and industrialisation increased, it appears that at least some couples chose to live together unwed. Some cohabited because they could not marry, either because one spouse was already married or because they were related within the prohibited degrees' (ibid: 49).

'The situation began to change from the 1960s at first slowly and then more rapidly. From 1970s cohabitation became a significant family form. A study shows that only one percent of women who had married between 1956 and 1960 reported that they cohabit with their husbands-to-be. This figure was increased by nine percent for women who married between 1970 and 1975.

In the late 1970s, percentage of couples living together without marriage was 10 per cent, by the turn of the century it increased till 80 percent. From the beginning of twenty –first century both men and women were more likely to cohabit than to marry in their first relationship, and those who had been divorced were also more likely to cohabit with a new partner rather than re -embark on marriage. The number choosing to marry in the UK correspondingly fell from a peak of 480,285 marriages in 1970s to just 270,000 in twenty-first century' (ibid: 50).

'Despite of all these changes it is a fundamental fact that in twenty-first century Britain, marriage is the most common form of partnership for men and women. According to Office of the National Statistic 'The traditional family structure of a married mother and father with a child or children remains the most common family type. At the end of the first decade of $21^{st}$ century more than eight million dependent children lived with married parents in the UK' (ibid.50).

'Marriage appears to be very much a personal ideal in twenty-first century Britain…its symbolic significance has remained high and may even have increased. It has become a marker of prestige and personal achievement.' (ibid.51)

*Divorce Law in the UK*- "Divorce law is one of the founding laws of family law. The divorce law itself and divorce procedure and practice informs the thinking of many in any community about marriage, marriage stability and commitment within marriage

and what should happen when a marriage breaks down. The balance of evidence is that changes in the law do have an effect on family behavior…family law affects the likelihood that couples and children will enjoy the benefits of stable marriage" (ibid: 65).

'The Divorce Reform Act 1969 came in to existence in 1971 has been introduced solitary ground for divorce: the irretrievable breakdown of marriage. Through this Act the concept of the 'guilty party' and 'matrimonial offence' has been removed and introduced a single ground for divorce that the marriage has been broken-down irretrievably. But there some condition for this. These conditions are:

- The adultery of the other spouse,

- The unreasonable behaviour of the other spouse,

- two years' desertion,

- the couple has lived apart for two years and the other spouse consents to divorce,

- The couple has lived apart for five years (no consent needed)' (ibid: 67).

"The first three (adultery, unreasonable behaviour and desertion) are the former matrimonial offences and are known as 'fault' grounds. The two separation criteria were introduced for the first time by the 1969 Act. Despite Parliamentary hopes during passage of the 1969 Act that most would use the non-fault-based 'two year separation by consent,' the reality is that approximately 75 per cent petition on the fault grounds to provide immediate access to the divorce courts, often to obtain its ancillary powers to deal with the financial consequences of separation and divorce" (ibid: 67).

'In 1984, The Matrimonial and Family proceeding act of 1984 came into existence. It introduced three basic changes. The first one is time bar for divorce – under the former law the minimum interval between marriage and that of being able to file a petition for divorce was three years with discretion.  This was reduced to 12 month with no discretion. No petition can now be file under any circumstances within the first year of marriage' (ibid: 67).

"The second change was that the Act no longer required the courts to try to place the divorced spouses in the financial position they would have enjoyed had the marriage not broken down. However, crucially in retrospect, no other objective of financial provision in law was provided by Parliament: it was left to judges' discretion. The third change is that when considering orders for financial relief, courts are required to place greater emphasis on the desirability of the parties becoming self-sufficient, with the court making so-called clean break orders. England is one of the few advanced jurisdictions which still retains fault as a basis for divorce. It was condemned by the Law Commission in the early 1990s. After both Parliament and society were riven apart by the surrounding debate, legislation was eventually passed in 1996 to produce no-fault divorce which was then (a few years later) dropped by secondary legislation" (ibid: 68).

To get divorced in Britain is generally straightforward, uncontentious, undefended and quick.

'This easy and quick divorce in any society or in any countries jurisdictions gives a massage that marriage can be treated lightly, commitments given to marriage will not be highly regarded, that there are no significant incentives to work at the marriage and that marriage can be easily set aside. (Figure 7- Appendix I) Unrealistically restricted opportunities for divorce discourages some from marriage and may not necessarily encourage reconciliation. It may also encourage cohabitation and new relationships before the divorce is finalised. This non-serious attitude towards marriage also shows the easy breakdown of family in British society' (ibid: 66).

*Cohabitation Law in Britain* -Following the *Civil Partnership Act 2004*, cohabitation is now any domestic, usually sexual, relationship other than marriage or civil partnership.

'According to English Family Law, unlike marriages or civil partnerships, when cohabitants separate the courts do not automatically, by virtue of their relationship itself, have the power or discretion to adjust a couple's assets by way of property adjustment orders, lump sum orders or periodical payments to meet maintenance needs. In short, cohabitants have no such entitlements.

In the matter of property again currently there are no statutory provisions governing agreements between cohabitants. The courts' powers are also limited to establishing equitable principles of property law and the possible interest in the family home. In Britain cohabitants have to rely on general law of contract and property for issues related to financial matters and property' (ibid: 77).

'Although there is no as such straightforward laws related to cohabitation in Britain but despite this fact over the last ten years the proportion of cohabiting couple families in the UK has increased to 14 per cent from 9 per cent. The proportion of married couple families has decreased over the same period, from 76 percent to 71 percent' (ibid: 74).

*Civil Partnership* –"The *Civil Partnership Act 2004* permits same-sex couples to enter into a relationship recognised by the state, publicly registered, with the requirements regarding formality and capacity, and creating duties and obligations on the dissolution of the civil partnership. It is specifically not, in law, marriage. It came into force on 5 December 2005" (ibid: 81).

'Because of the act same-sex couples who had been living together and waiting for the new act had register themselves as civil partner, and in the first year of this act there were 18,059 civil partnerships in UK' (ibid: 82).

*Children Law in Britain* –

Any change which occurred in the family has affected children the most, whether it's a breakdown of a family or formation of a new family. The idea that the culture of family relationship breakdown has in fact created a divide in British society that affects children across the spectrum. Because of this English Family Law has special consideration regarding children's right and laws related to a child within the family.

"The major piece of legislation affecting children is the Children Act 1989, covering both private and public law applications relating to children. The law relating to adoption is contained in the Adoption Act 1976, while child abduction legislation is to be found in the Child Abduction Act 1984 and Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985" (Hamilton 1995: 136).

A new act has been passed in 2002 which restated and amended the law related to adoption.

The law relating to maintenance is laid down in the Child Support Act 1991. The courts retain an inherent jurisdiction in relation to children which may be exercised by the High Court.

General Principles related to Children Act-

"Section 1 of the Children Act of 1989 sets out principles which should guide a court in making any decisions under the Act. These principles are:

*The welfare principle*: when a court is determining any question with respect to the child's upbringing or administration of the child's property or the application of income from a child's property, the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration.

*The 'no-delay principle'*: in any case involving the upbringing of a child, the court must consider that any delay in determining the question is likely to prejudice the welfare of the child.

*The 'no-order principle'*: when the court is considering whether or not to make an order under the Children Act 1989, it must not make an order unless an order would be better for the child than making no order at all" (ibid: 136).

'Parental responsibility: English law does not mention parental rights, but it does talk about parental responsibilities. This is 'all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by aw a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property.' There is no list of parental responsibilities; they vary according to the differing ages, needs and circumstances of the child' (ibid: 136).

"Guardians for children: under section 5 of the Children Act 1989, the court may appoint an individual to be a child's guardian, where the child has no parental responsibility for him, or a residence order has been made with respect to a child in favour of a parent or guardian who has died while the order was in force" (ibid: 137).

"Paternity: in any civil proceeding in which the paternity of a person needs to be determined, the court may order a blood test to determine paternity. This may be done

on the application of any party proceedings, or the court may decide to make such an order" (ibid: 139).

"The inherent jurisdiction of the court and wardship: Under an ancient jurisdiction, emanating from the king's duty to protect those unable to look after themselves, the High Court may act to protect minors under it's *parens patriae* jurisdiction. The jurisdiction takes two forms: wardship and inherent jurisdiction. The wardship jurisdiction may be exercised over any living child under the age of 18 who is a British subject, irrespective of whether or not the child is physically within the jurisdiction and regardless of his place of birth, domicile, or habitual residence. There is also jurisdiction to ward an alien child who is present or ordinarily resident in England and Wales" (ibid: 139).

"Since the Children Act 1989, a wardship application will only be appropriate where a question relating to the child's upbringing or property cannot be resolved by statutory procedures in such a way as to preserve the child's best interests" (ibid: 139).

In this chapter we have seen that how various policies have influenced the nature and character of family system in Britain. It is not only the structure of the family but the formation of family as an institution has also undergone transition in contemporary Britain.

*Chapter Five*

*CONCLUSION*

This research intended to understand British family system and probed into the socio-cultural changes; policies and laws which have influenced British family system, emerging unconventional family types, and also the future of British family system.

To explore nature and structure of family system in any society it is imperative to define family and understand various approaches to the study of family. Defining family as the basic unit of society, the present study discussed perspectives on family, various theories, family system in Europe in general and family system in Britain in particular. While discussing family in Britain it primarily focuses on the changing nature of British family since the begging of modernity till today and explains that how different socio-economic, political and legal changes have affected British family's structure and functions. Based on secondary literature and empirical data, it can be said that the nature of family system has been changed gradually as an impact of various changes which have accrued in British society.

The family is one of the most commonly defined phenomena. It indicates both individual and relationship. Family can be looked both as a restricted group as well as a wider one. As a restricted group it contents parents and their children and as a wider group, uncle, aunt and other relatives are part of a family. In some other sense the word 'family' can be uses for relationship between individuals or family units. Some time 'family' refers to a group of people who live under one roof. On the other side, it can also cover a dynasty of descendants who do not live together but share a joint patrimony.

In contemporary times the basic structure of family has changed. The typical family which was common in the past was a kind of group in which two or more than two generation of people live together and the group is headed by a couple, in which male plays a breadwinner role and female is a homemaker. As society has changed this basic structure family has also changed. Now these days there are different types of families that coexist together. Single parent family, and same sex families are the new emerging family types. Cohabitation is also a new type of relationship emerging in recent times in which people live together, they can have children, but they are not formally married.

European family system can be easily identified according to geographical region. North and central Europe is characterised as a weak family zone and southern and Mediterranean Europe as a strong family. In weak family areas family values are not so strong. Young people normally leave their parental household when they have acquired a degree of maturity and start living alone. But in southern part things were quite different. In these societies the definitive departure of young people tends to depend more or less closely with their marriage and finding a stable job.

Apart from geographical differences, the nature and composition of European family has changed through times. In twentieth century the importance of solitary household is increasing, the weight of extended families is decreasing, fertility and nuptiality are declining and the number of children born out of wedlock is rising. Parental authority has demised; improvements in health and social welfare have led the elderly to maintain their independence much longer before going to the state or to the family for help.

British family system belongs to weak family zone, where traditional family values are not much important. Nuclear family was the only prominent family form in Britain since industrialisation.

From second demographic transition[8] British family system has seen some radical changes in pattern. Because of the changes of women's status in society, they became more careers orientated, marrying late and having child in their late thirties. In1960s another factor which affected British family was migration. In the period because of the lack of labour Britain had absorbed approximately 200,000 immigrants, and up to half have been returning British citizen.

Modern trends in British family system started becoming visible from 1990s. Teenage motherhood, divorce, lone-parenting and cohabitation characterised British family during modern times. 'BBC commission's survey shows that in recent years Britain has highest proportion of lone parents in Europe.'(BBC 2007) Because of these changes new family types have emerged in Britain.

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[8] Second demographic transition refers to the change to modern societies that seems to be occurring to nation today. These changes include delayed marriage, postponed and more rare childbearing.

State policies have also affected institution of family in modern times. As welfare state British government has implemented number of policies related to family. These policies basically deal with having children or not, parental rights and obligations, children's right and family friendly labour market policy. British government's family policy is based upon the breadwinner model of family in which women are still expected to be the homemaker and men the main breadwinner. But this policy has failed to provide proper care for children, it forces women to take on work designed to fit around their caring obligations. When men have been encouraged to care, it has been a secondary role.

Like policies, law has also affected family system and family trends have also made some changes in family laws. Family law basically combines laws related to marriage, divorce, cohabitation and children. British family law has influenced family structure significantly. There was a growing trend of leaving together without getting married during 1960s in Britain. This tendency has reached on its peak in twenty-first century. *Civil Partnership Act of 2004*[9] has legalised this kind of relationship and provide them some legal rights similar to marriage. (Figure 5- Appendix I) It also permits same-sex couples to enter into a relationship recongnised, this resulted rapid increase in non-traditional family forms in Britain.

There is no as such typical British family in today's time. Rather there is a wide range of families have been emerging in the contemporary British society .these are partly because of the demographic changes and partly because of the change in social outlook. In the past, marriage was the predominant relationship between couples, divorce was very difficult expensive and took long time. But these days' people generally cohabit in their twenties and thirties. And only about 60% of them eventually get married. Divorce Reform Act 1969 (came in to existence in 1971) acted as a catalyst to the process of divorce and family breakdown as it make the divorce procedure easy.

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[9] The Civil Partnership Act is an act of the Parliament of The United Kingdom. The Act grants Civil Partnership in the United Kingdom with rights and responsibilities identical to civil marriage.

## FAMILY AS AN INSTITUTION

The twenty-first century has witnessed remarkable change in family structure and society. The average household size has decreased but number of households containing one person has increased in Britain. One family household[10] is the most common household type, which represent 56 percent of all household in Britain. Pre-marital cohabitation has become the norm in contemporary British society. As a result of this new family forms are now emerging in Britain.

Jacqueline Scott (2006) in her study titled *Family and Gender Roles: How Attitude are Changing* claimed that the family as an institution has become individualised in contemporary British society. There has been a qualitative shift in terms of the understanding of family. From the 1960s onwards, in the era that some social theorists have termed the 'second modernity', the very notion of a 'normal family' has become redundant. Of course it is not to say that the traditional British families with heterosexual parent-child have vanished. Rather, that this particular family type is now one among many divorce family types.

The general patterns of change in household and family structures in British families has seen marriage rates fall, divorce and cohabitation on the increase and a marked drop in overall fertility, despite the increased numbers of children born out of wedlock. Such trends are used as evidence that the importance of family life is declining, with dire consequence for social integration. Despite these trends in Britain today, seven in ten households are still headed up by married couples; this portion has been in decline for some time. Families are now a mix of cohabiting parents, stepfamilies, single parent families, those living apart together and civil partnerships, as well as the traditional nuclear family. (Item 3- Appendix III)

In a work done by Jenkins Sarah et al (2009), titled *Families in Britain: The impact of changing family structure and what public think,* it has shown that in today's British society four out of five people say that their family is more important for them than to friends. 'The family' is a source of persistent contradictions and tradeoffs both in public opinion and as a policy area. The traditional single male bread winner family is

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[10] Family type which consisting of a couple with or without children.

declining and single-parent families and other new kinds of families are now increasing.

The last 100 years have seen changes in attitude, technology, legislation and expectations that have led to the families less stable than in the past. Children often grow up in different parents-in stepfamilies, or with one figure missing. Families will go on evolving. As more women have careers and seek more egalitarian relationship, men and women frequently need to negotiate their roles with the family.

Despite all these changes which have affected family system, it can be assumed that family as an institution has a significant role in today's society. Maren Balc et al (1989) in their study titled *Changing patterns of European family life, a comparative analysis of 14 European countries,* suggested that far from withering away, the family remains a very important social unit which continues to have considerable influence on other social institutions such as the state and the labor market. They show that evolution of the nuclear family model has led to a great diversity of family in modern societies still has contribution to make which no other institution can provide.

There is a significant difference between family decline and family diversity. *Changing Britain: Families and Households in the 1990s,* Susan McRae's (1999) study stated that complex and changing household structures do not mean that individuals have no permanent family relationships or ties. In order to understand families, it is necessary to look beyond changes in family household composition to the relationships within which families live.

There seems to be something enduring in the idea of family which underpins not only the 'flexible, interconnecting' relationships, but also the 'families of choice' established by non-heterosexual men and women as they seek values commonly associated with the traditional ideal of the family – a sense of involvement, security, and continuity.

BBC commission's survey on families in Britain has suggested that as compared with historical polling people are now more optimistic about their family's future as close and they are more likely to say their parents did their best for them. British people remain remarkably happy with family life- 93% of them describing it as fairly or very happy. (Item 4- Appendix III)

Because of these changes we find individualisation and pluralisation everywhere in today's world. The family is weakening in the sense that individual family groups are decreasing in size and becoming more unstable, with a shorter life span, and people are members of such groups for a smaller percentage of their life course.

Family household are becoming smaller in size, nupitality is increasing, divorce or separation are now much common than in the past. Families are now showing increasing diversity and complexity in structure and dynamics. In recent years deinstitutionalisation of relational and reproductive behavior has increased because of people's changing attitude towards sexuality, marriage and reproduction. Many individuals experience more complex family-related life courses with a limited number of successive unions

In conclusion  it can be stated that family have experienced very significant changes across the world through age, its structure and function have changed but family values remains intact and it still plays an important role in every society. Appreciating the strength, flexibility, and its resilience, the modern family continues to be essential for a viable understanding of society.

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*indicate a primary source.

*Appendix I*

*TABLES AND FIGURES*

**Table: 1**

**Composition of Households in Europe (%)**

|  | Living alone | Couples with children | Couples without children | Lone parents | Living with parents | Other situation | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Norway | 20.5 | 33.1 | 34.2 | 3.6 | 5.9 | 2.7 | 100 |
| Sweden | 21.2 | 35.3 | 29.2 | 3.9 | 8.3 | 2.0 | 100 |
| Finland | 23.1 | 32.9 | 27.8 | 3.9 | 10.3 | 2.0 | 100 |
| Denmark | 18.1 | 37.8 | 29.9 | 4.2 | 7.0 | 3.0 | 100 |
| UK | 18.4 | 31.9 | 28.9 | 4.4 | 11.3 | 5.2 | 100 |
| France | 12.9 | 28.7 | 39.5 | 5.3 | 9.2 | 4.5 | 100 |
| Germany | 19.1 | 32.9 | 28.3 | 4.5 | 10.7 | 4.6 | 100 |
| Austria | 11.5 | 23.3 | 38.2 | 3.7 | 12.3 | 10.9 | 100 |
| Netherlands | 11.2 | 31.9 | 39.9 | 3.1 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 100 |
| Belgium | 14.5 | 27.8 | 31.0 | 6.0 | 15.6 | 5.1 | 100 |
| Luxembourg | 12.5 | 18.9 | 37.4 | 2.4 | 20.7 | 8.3 | 100 |
| Switzerland | 15 | 30.2 | 34.9 | 2.9 | 13.4 | 3.7 | 100 |
| Ireland | 10.2 | 16.0 | 39.3 | 5.9 | 20.2 | 8.4 | 100 |
| Hungry | 11.2 | 20.3 | 32.7 | 5.3 | 17.6 | 13.0 | 100 |
| Czech rep | 12.2 | 27.9 | 35.6 | 4.9 | 10.6 | 8.8 | 100 |
| Poland | 8.2 | 14.8 | 33.3 | 3.5 | 22.4 | 17.4 | 100 |
| Sloventa | 7.9 | 14.1 | 34.1 | 4.4 | 23.2 | 16.4 | 100 |
| Italy | 8.8 | 18.4 | 40.3 | 4.2 | 22.0 | 6.3 | 100 |
| Spain | 6.2 | 20.1 | 34.0 | 3.5 | 25.1 | 11.2 | 100 |
| Portugal | 6.9 | 24.8 | 34.5 | 3.0 | 16.1 | 14.7 | 100 |
| Greece | 8.1 | 22.8 | 36.2 | 3.4 | 16.8 | 12.7 | 100 |
| Mean | 13.3 | 26.4 | 33.9 | 4.3 | 15.0 | 7.1 | 100 |

Source: - Torres et.aL (2008), Families in Europe [Online: Web], URL:
www.analiatorres.net, accessed: 1st Feb 2012

**Figure: 1**

**Average Household Size, Britain 1574–2026**
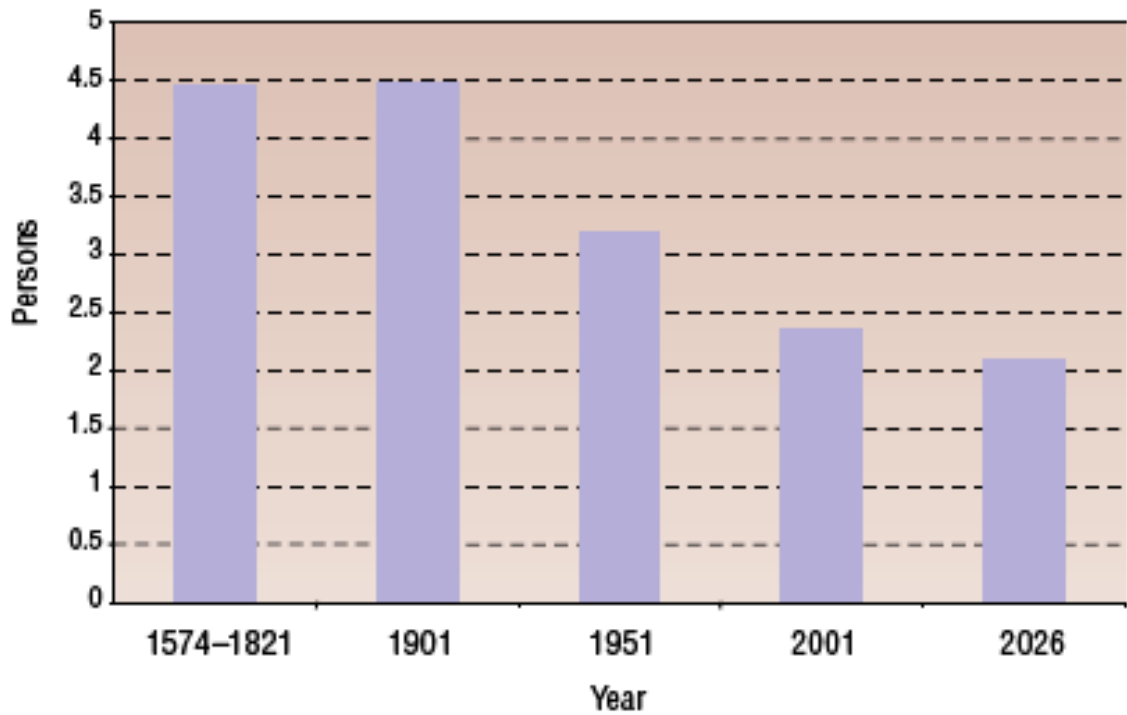


Source: Murphy, Michael (2006), Measuring and Analysing Household and Families in Contemporary Societies, [Online: web], URL: www.cas.uio.no, Accessed: 19 Sep 2011

**Table: 2**

**Family Changes in Britain: Mid-Thirties to Mid-Nineties**

|  | Mid – 1960s | Mid – 1990's | Mid-1930s |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mean age at first marriage | 22 | 26 | 26 |
| Mean age at first birth | 23.9 | 26.5 | 26.7 |
| Fertility Rate (TFR) | 2.93 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Childlessness (%) | 10 | 20 | 23 |
| Divorces Per 1,000 Marriages | 2 | 13 | - |
| Birth outside Marriage (%) | 5 | 35 | - |
| Cohabitation before Marriage (%) | 5 | 70 | - |
| Lone-parent families | 570,000 | 1,500,000 | - |

Source: McRae, Susan (1999), *Changing Britain: Families and Households in the 1990s,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Table: 3**

**Family Types: 2001 to 2011**

| Family type | 2001 | | | 2011 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | With dependent children | Without dependent children | Total families | With dependent children | Without dependent children | Total families |
| Married couple family | 4,833 | 7,447 | 12,280 | 4,514 | 7,505 | 12,018 |
| Civil partner couple family | N/A | N/A | N/A | 5 | 54 | 59 |
| Opposite sex cohabiting couple family | 808 | 1,321 | 2,129 | 1,097 | 1,755 | 2,853 |
| Same sex cohabiting couple family | .. | 44 | 45 | 3 | 60 | 63 |
| Lone parent family | 1,745 | 767 | 2,512 | 1,958 | 925 | 2,883 |
| All families | 7,386 | 9,580 | 16,966 | 7,576 | 10,299 | 17,875 |

Source: Office for National Statistic (2011), Families and household in UK, 2001 to 2010, *Statistic Bulletin* April 14, Newport: Office for National Statistic, [Online: web], Accessed – 26 Aug 2011, URL: www.ons.gov.uk
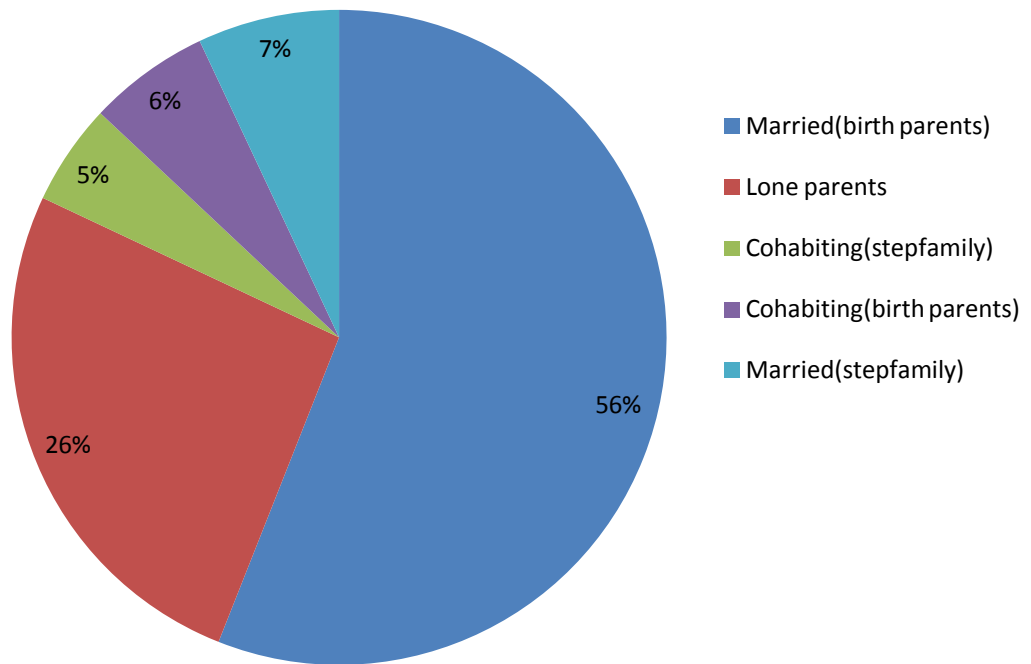
**Figure: 2**

**Projected Cohabiting Population 2003-2031**
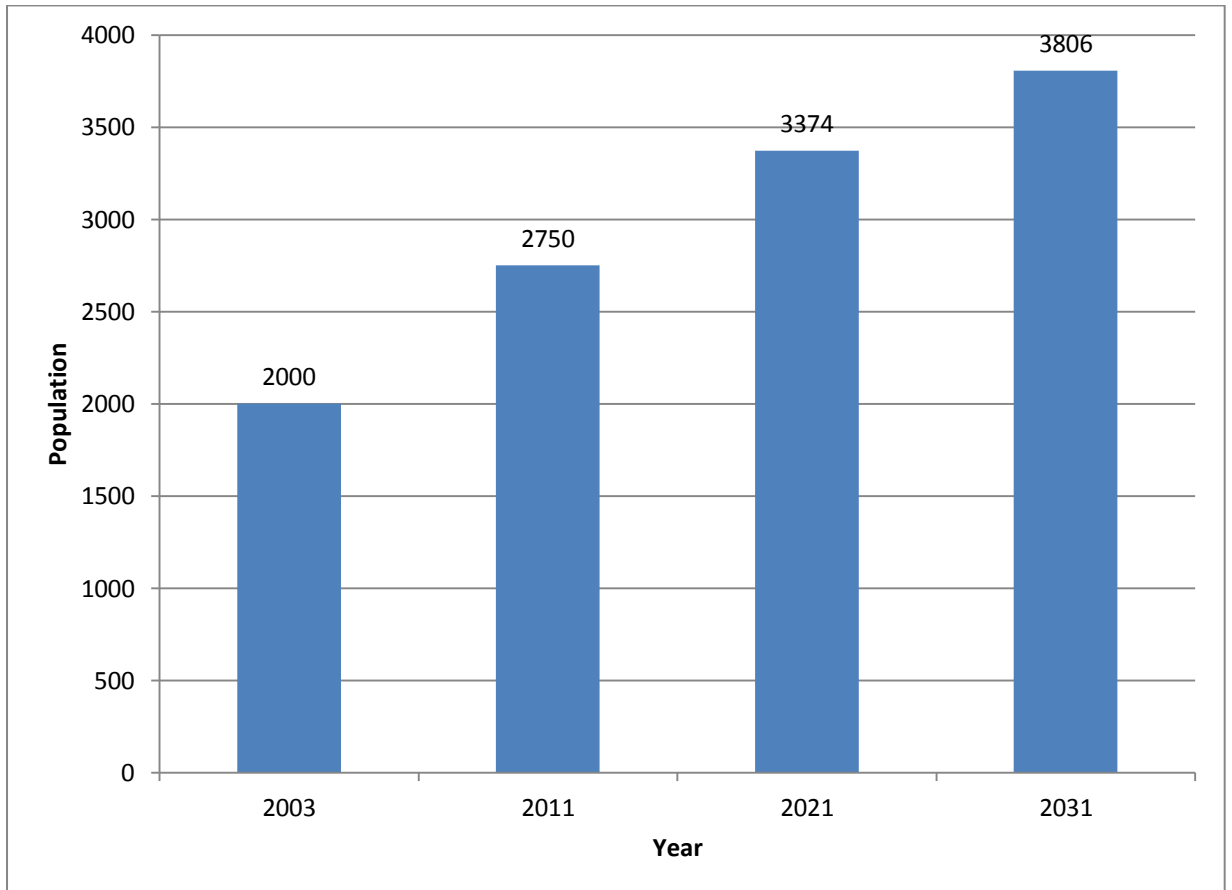


Source: Jenkins and Evans (2008), Families in Britain, [Online: web], URL: www.education.uk, Accessed: 13 Aug 2011.

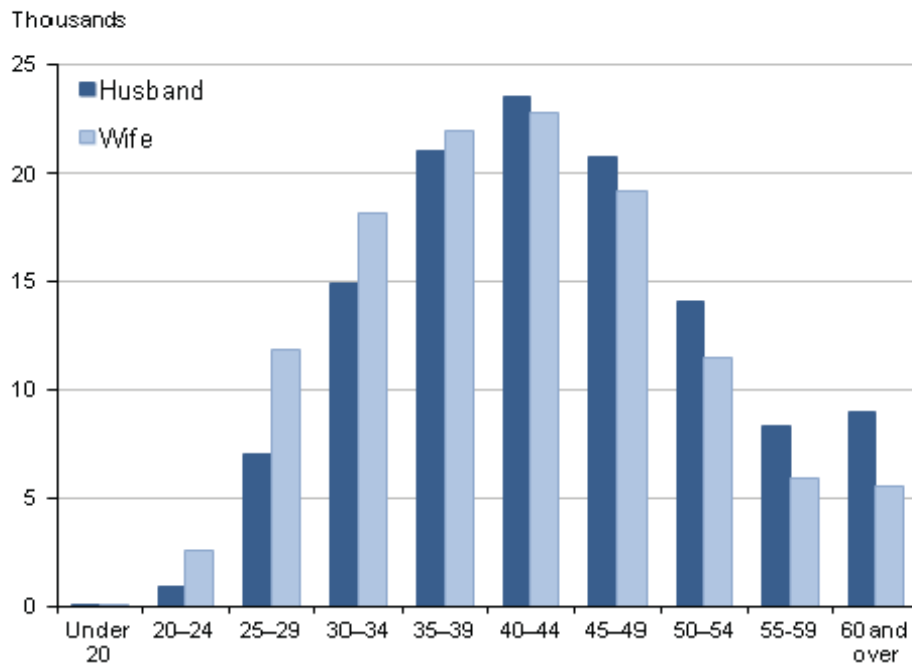**Figure: 3**

**Family Structure in Britain**



Source: Jenkins and Evans (2008), Families in Britain, [Online: web], URL:
www.education.uk, Accessed: 13 Aug 2011.

**Figure: 4**

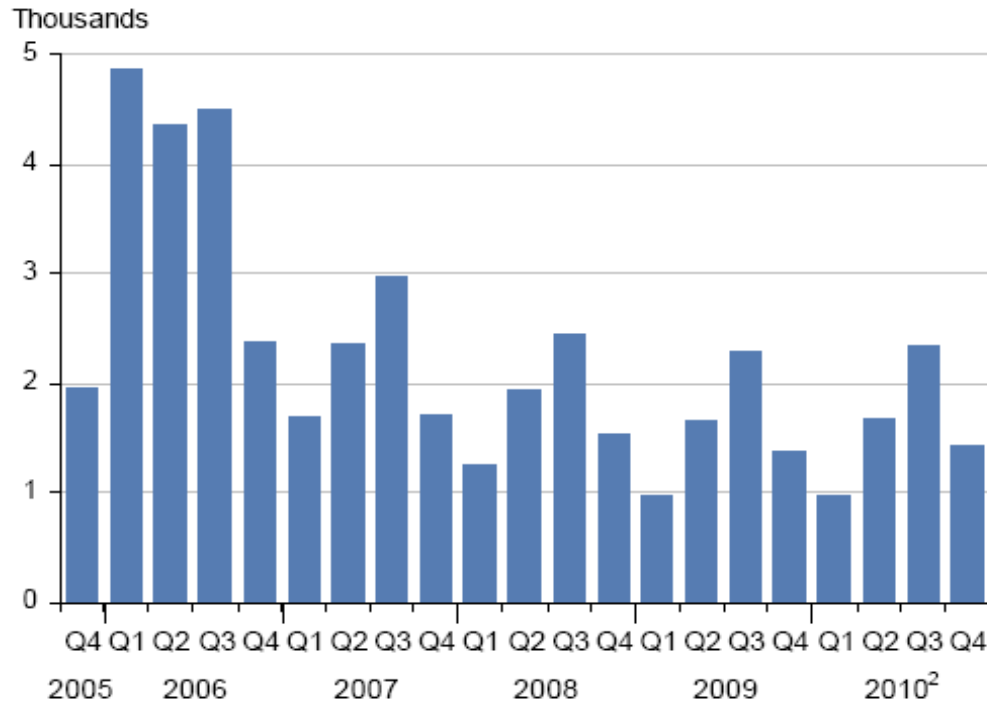**Number of divorces by age at divorce, 2010**

England and Wales

Thousands



Source: Office for National Statistic (2011), Divorce in England and Wales 2010, *Statistic Bulletin* December 8, Newport : Office for National Statistic [Online : web] Accessed : 2 June 2012.

**Figure: 5**

**Number of Civil Partnerships[1] in the UK by quarter of occurrence, 2005-2010[2]**

Thousands

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   Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4
  2005  2006       2007       2008       2009       2010²
```

1 The Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into force on 5 December 2005.
2 Figures for 2010 are provisional.

Source: Office for National Statistic (2011), Civil Partnership in the UK 2010, *Statistic Bulletin* July 7, Newport: Office for National Statistic, [Online: web], Accessed: 30 May 2012, URL: www.ons.gov.uk
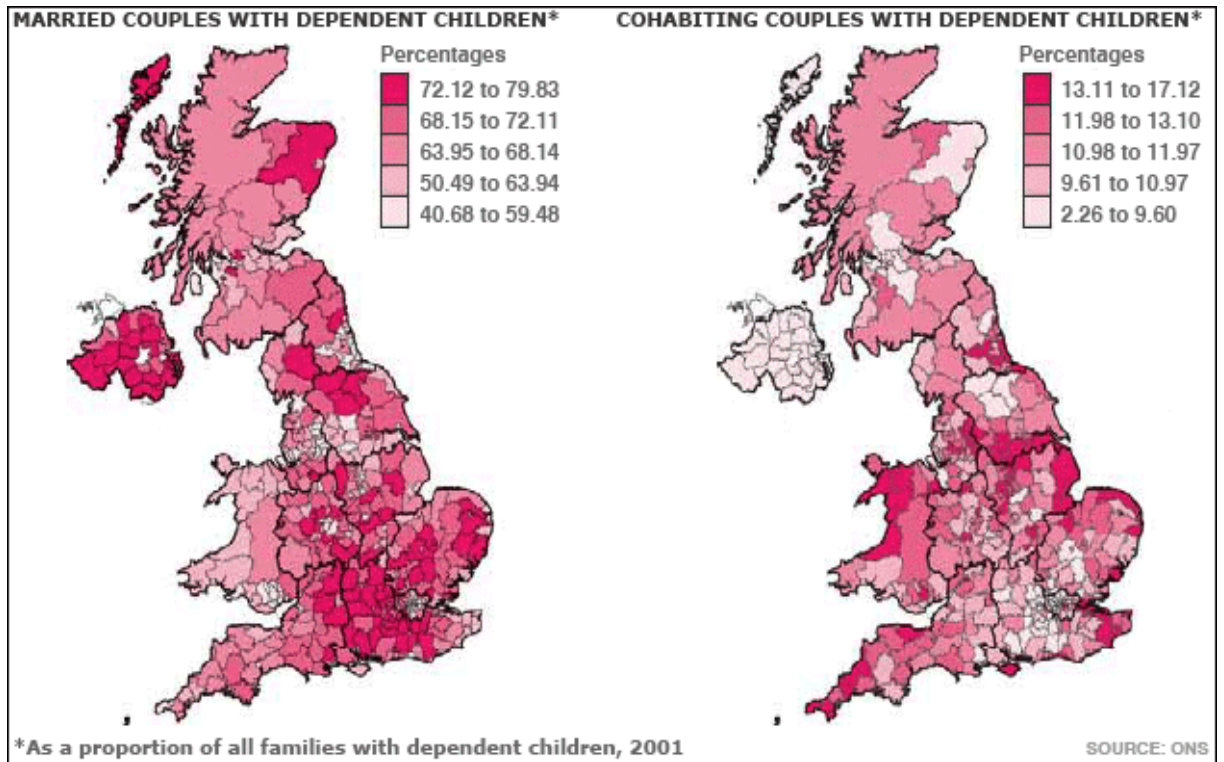
# Appendix II

# MAPS

# Map 1

# Family Types and the Persistence of Regional Disparities in Europe



Absolute Nuclear
Egalitarean Nuclear
Stem Family
Incomplete Stem Family
Communitarian
Indeterminate
NUTSII Borders

260  130  0  260  520  780  1,040 km
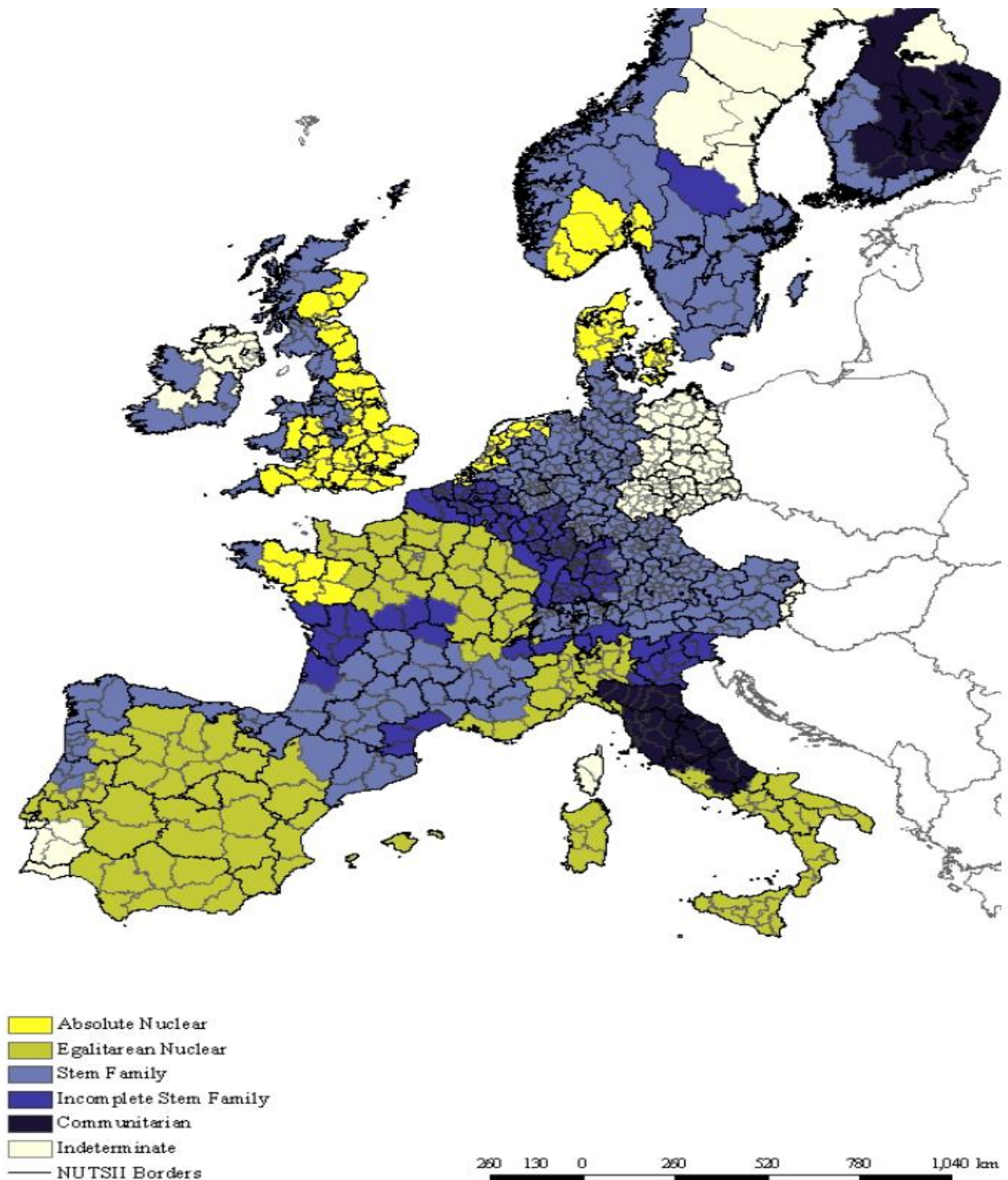
Source: Duranton and et.al (2007), Family types and the Persistence of Regional Disparities in Europe, [Online: web] Accessed: 12 Feb 2012, URL: http://www.coleurop.be/content/studyprogrammes/eco/publications/beer/beer10.pdf

**Map 2**

**A Comparative Representation of Married Couples with Dependent
Children and Cohabiting Couples with Dependent Children in UK**



MARRIED COUPLES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN*

Percentages
- 72.12 to 79.83
- 68.15 to 72.11
- 63.95 to 68.14
- 50.49 to 63.94
- 40.68 to 59.48

COHABITING COUPLES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN*

Percentages
- 13.11 to 17.12
- 11.98 to 13.10
- 10.98 to 11.97
- 9.61 to 10.97
- 2.26 to 9.60

*As a proportion of all families with dependent children, 2001

SOURCE: ONS

Source: BBC (2007), Cohabitating Family Increase (in Italics), October 4 [Online
Web], Accessed 9 June 2012, URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7027518.stm

*Appendix III*

## NEWS CLIPPINGS

**Item 1**

# Mail Online

# Granddad at 29... but hospital staff demand his ID because they think he's too young to be the FATHER!

- He thinks the teenage father of the child is a 'decent young man'
- Young mum Tia admits 'she wouldn't be happy' if newborn Gracie became pregnant at 14

By Daily Mail Reporter
UPDATED: 09:57 GMT, 1 August 2011

A 29-year-old man who has become one of Britain's youngest grandparents was left red-faced after nurses asked him to prove he was over 16 as he tried to visit his daughter's baby.

Unemployed Shem Davies was overjoyed when 14-year-old Tia gave birth to Gracie earlier this month.

But when he tried to visit the ward, maternity nurses thought the fresh-faced granddad was in fact the teenage father of Gracie and asked him to prove his age.

Shem and former girlfriend Kelly John, 30, became parents to Tia at the age of 15. Their daughter's boyfriend, Jordan Williams, is 15.

Shem said: 'It is an absolute joy to see Gracie thriving. I'm incredibly proud of Tia. She'll be a brilliant mum. At first I wasn't overly pleased that she was pregnant but I soon got over than. Now it's all about being positive.

'I've got to know Jordan and he's shaping up to be a decent young man,' Shem told The People.

But the arrival of Gracie wasn't easy as Tia was diagnosed with pre-eclampsia, seven weeks before her due date.

Worried doctors decided their best option would be to deliver the tot by Caesarean section.

The condition, which often leaves expectant mothers with high blood pressure and protein in their urine, could lead to life-threatening symptoms for both mother and baby.

Tia said the contrast between the carefree fun of the school playground and then the fear of death for her and the baby was something she would never forget.

Happily after a 25 minute operation Gracie was born but only weighed 2lb and was rushed to the special care unit at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend, which is close to the family home.

Little Gracie is still being kept in an incubator but has managed to put on enough weight which means she will be allowed home in a few weeks.

A week after Gracie was born Tia celebrated her 15th birthday in the ward surrounded by friends and family.

The teenager, who has been dating Jordan for 18 months and wants to be a hairdresser, said she didn't plan on celebrating her birthday in hospital but added that her baby daughter was the best present she could ask for.

Once mother and daughter have been released from hospital they will be staying with grandmother Kelly so that Tia can finish school.

Grandad Shem, who has a young son of his own, said he is keen to get stuck in and help Tia and Jordan settle into life.

Jordan, who sat his final GCSE just weeks before Gracie arrived, said he understands responsibility. 'I'm captain of the school rugby team and that's like having 14 kids.'

Despite her young age, mother Tia says that she would not be happy if newborn Gracie became pregnant at 14 but that she would do as her mum did, which is respect her choice to have a child.

She also paid tribute to her mother, who was 15 when she was born, saying that she could not have wished for a better parent and role model adding that they have a very close relationship.

Britain's high teenage pregnancy rate means that many more young people in this generation are set to become grandparents in their late twenties and early thirties.

The latest figures show in 2009 38,259 girls under 18 became pregnant, but nearly 50 per cent had a termination.

The UK still leads the way when it comes to young mothers, and our rate is five-times higher than in the Netherlands and twice that of France and Spain.

Source: Daily Mail (2011), *Britain's youngest grandparents*, August 2011 [Online: web], Accessed: 4 June 2012, URL: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2020801/Britains-youngest-grandparents-Shem-Davies-granddad-29-Kelly-John-granny-30.html

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# Item 2

## Cohabiting families 'increasing'

**Cohabiting couples with and without children are the fastest-growing UK family type, official figures show.**

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) study found the number of cohabiting families increased by 65% in the 10 years up to 2006.

It also found that during the same period the number of married people with or without children fell by 4%.

*Younger people are more likely to cohabit*

The study said family types varied according to age, with young people more likely to cohabit with a partner.

The Focus on Families study found cohabiting families increased in the decade up to 2006 from 1.4 million to 2.3 million, while the number of married families fell to 12.1 million.

But despite the rise, married couples with or without children are still biggest family group - accounting for 71% of the UK's 17.1 million families.

Younger people were more likely to cohabit, the ONS said, with half of cohabiting families in 2001 headed by a person under the age of 35.

<u>See a graph of age distribution by family type</u>

Some 21% of women aged 25 to 29 between 2001 and 2003 had lived with a partner before they were 25, the study found.

This compared with 1% three decades ago.

This increase in cohabitation did not fully explain the decline in marriage, the ONS said, because its research found fewer women aged between 25 and 29 were forming any union - either marriage or cohabitation - before the age of 25.

"This suggests a delay in partnership formation for younger generations of women," it said.

The proportion of married and cohabiting couples with children varies across the UK

🖰 Open Enlarge Map
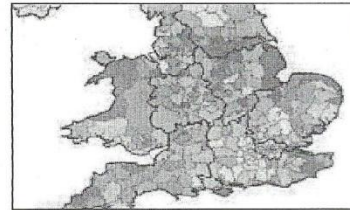
### Health effects

The two groups least likely to have got married before the age of 45 are men with no qualifications and highly-qualified women, the ONS said.

The report suggested such living arrangements could have an effect on health.

"Partnership continues to be the healthiest state in general. There are

HAVE YOUR SAY

❝ House prices are currently the main obstacle to stable family life and stable

Continued on next page

health benefits associated with
partnership, especially marriage, but
there are variations by sex," it said.

"In particular, older single women have
better health then married women on many indicators of health status."

Meanwhile, the research found lone parents increased by 8% to 2.6 million,
with lone mothers tending to be younger than lone fathers.

One in three lone mothers and one in ten lone fathers were under 35, the ONS
said.

The study also found that by 2006, the average number of children in a family
had fallen to 1.8 - down from 2.0 in 1971.

Married couples were found to have larger families, with 1.8 children, while
cohabiting couples had an average of 1.6.

**UK FAMILY TYPES ACCORDING TO AGE**
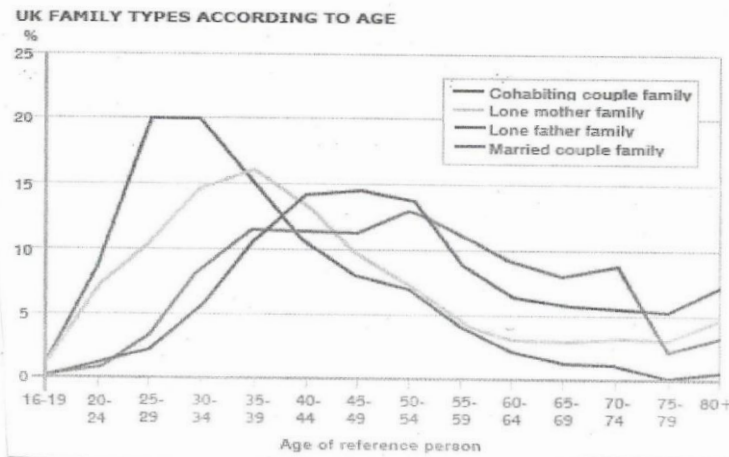


Source: BBC News (2007), URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-2/hi/
uk_news/7027518.stm, Published: 2007/10/04, 11:01:21 GMT.

# UK now has 35 types of family but traditional households prevail
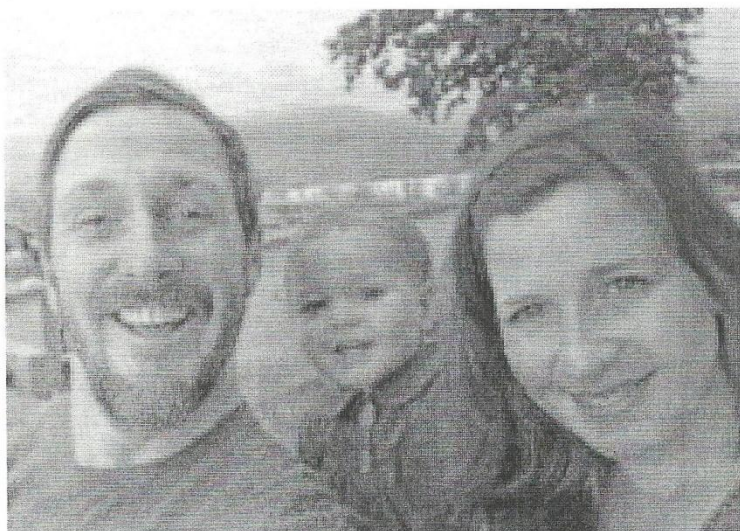


*The traditional 'nuclear' family.*

Published on **Friday 18 May 2012 01:23**

THE number of "nuclear" families is continuing to fall, with less than two thirds of British households now consisting of married couples living with their own children, according to a new survey.

Only 61 per cent of families live in traditional households, a figure which is down from 77.6 per cent in the previous generation and 89.3 per cent in the one before that.

The survey, conducted by the parenting website Netmums, found there are now 35 different family types in Britain, an increase of a quarter from a generation ago.

These include 20.5 per cent of homes with an unmarried couple living together, and just under 1 per cent of families headed by gay, bi-sexual or transgender parents.

The figures are in dramatic contrast to the picture of family life two generations ago, when just 1.5 per cent of homes consisted of unmarried parents living together and one in 1,275 was headed by gay or bisexual parents.

The proportion of mixed race families today has doubled to 5 per cent.

But despite their decline, the nuclear family remains the most common, the study of 2,600 parents showed, with four in five UK children still living with their natural parents.

Netmums founder Siobhan Freegard said: "The number of family set-ups in the UK is amazing and it looks likely it will continue to rise as people become more accepting of different ways of parenting.

"Many people may be surprised the nuclear family is still the bedrock of family life, but what's clear is it isn't necessarily the type of family you grow up in that matters, but whether you have the love, support, warmth and security of people who love you in that family."

The figures reinforce research from last year by Scottish Widows think tank, the Centre for the Modern Family, which showed that 16 per cent of people considered themselves part of a traditional family.

Parenting expert Liz Fraser, said that despite these figures, there was still a "deep-rooted" attachment to the idea of a traditional family.

# How much is family life changing?

By Mark Easton
BBC home editor

**A BBC poll suggests that three-quarters of Britons are optimistic about their family's future – a much higher figure than when people were asked more than 40 years ago.**

Family life is changing in the UK – but not in the way we might expect.

When the BBC commissioned its survey of families in Britain, I think our expectation was that we would be measuring the extent to which people's closest relationships were suffering as a result of the decline in traditional family structures.
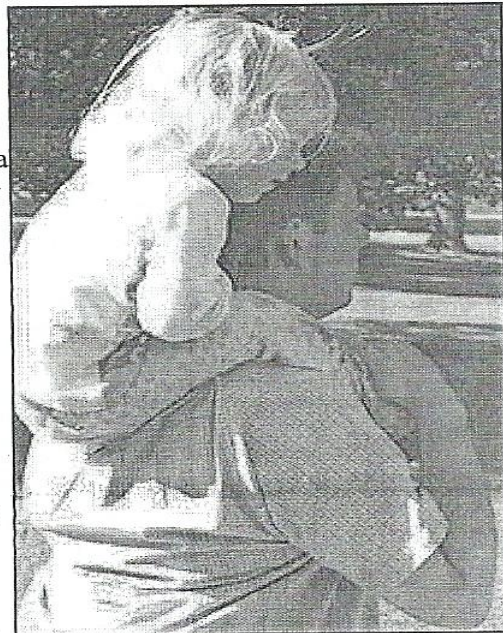
When the results came in, we had a surprise.

Compared with historical polling, people are more optimistic about their family's future, more people describe their family as close and they are more likely to say their parents did their best for them.

Despite all the changes, we remain remarkable happy with family life – 93% of us describing it as fairly or very happy.



Most people described family life as fairly or very happy

The results don't seem to make sense when we look at academic data which links looser family structures to poorer health and happiness.

Marriage levels in Britain are at an all-time low. For every three weddings there are now two divorces – the highest rate in Europe.

Cohabitation has risen 64% in a decade, with almost half of children now born outside wedlock.

## Lone parenting

We also have by far the highest proportion of lone parents in Europe - a quarter of children now live with a single mum.

Academic studies consistently find that such children do less well at school and at work than the offspring of cohabiting or married couples.

So how does one explain this apparent contradiction?

It may be that our expectations of family life have changed, that we are content with arrangements that would have dissatisfied our forebears.

Perhaps our optimism reflects contemporary affluence and stability rather than a confidence in the strength of family structures.



**WHO ARE YOU HAPPIEST WITH?**
Colleagues 2% | Don't know 2%
On own 6%
Friends 17%
Family 73%
SOURCE: ICM/BBC

## Families' future 'looks brighter'

After all, increasing numbers of people - now seven out of 10 - believe that family life is generally becoming less successful, even if they are optimistic about their own.

## Technology's role

Another possible factor is technology. Most people have access to a car or good public transport making increased distance between family members less problematic than it would have been 50 years ago.
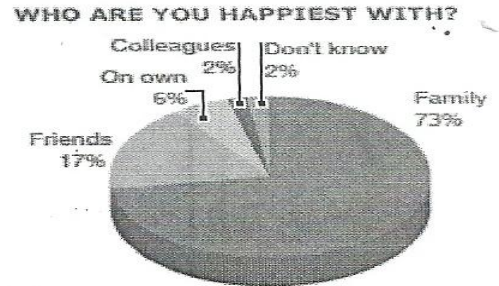
The ubiquitous nature of telephony - particularly mobile phones - has made family contact easier, although the internet has not yet become a major method of family communication.

In the poll less than a third of internet users said they used it to contact their family every week and only 8% made contact every day.

Perhaps the most intriguing explanation for the up-beat view of family life discovered in this poll is that it reflects the increasing importance we place upon it.

**HAVE YOUR SAY**
66 **Certainly children should be in proper families** 99
Jackson

**Send us your comments**

The global fascination with genealogy and family trees may stem from the same psychological need to understand who we are in a world where identities can easily become blurred.

Despite the changing nature of family life, perhaps we value those ties more than ever.

Sources: BBC NEWS: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/7078004.stm

Published: 2007/11/05 08:18:36 GMT

## The UK family: In statistics

Families are changing shape and facing up to new lifestyle challenges. The facts and figures below give an idea of what the typical UK family looks like in the early 21st century.

WHAT IS A 'TYPICAL' FAMILY?

There were 17.1 million families in the UK in 2006 - up from 16.5 million in 1996.

Most were still headed by a married couple (71%), although the proportion of cohabiting couple families had increased to 14%, from 9% 10 years earlier.

Although two children remains the most common family size, the average number of children per family in the UK has dropped - from 2.0 in 1971 to 1.8.
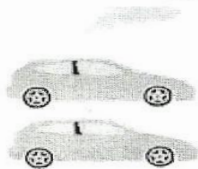
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**THE AVERAGE FAMILY**
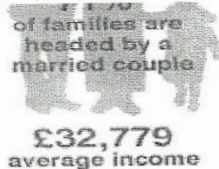
**17.1million**
families in the UK
in 2006

71%

**1.8**
Is the average
number of children
per family

BBC NEWS | UK | The UK family: In statistics

of families are
headed by a
married couple

**£32,779**
average income

**40%**
have two cars,
one likely to be a
Ford Focus

Who goes out to work?
**90%** **68%**
dads mums

**52%**
own a pet*

**79%**
have a
mobile phone*
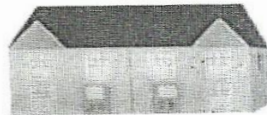
**79%**
live in a mortgaged house

**65%**
have a
home computer*

*Figures based on household

SOURCE: ONS, PFMA, Sheffield University

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WHERE FAMILIES LIVE

More young people are living at home for longer. In 2006, 58% of men and 39% of women aged 20-24 in England still lived at home with their parents.

There is a larger than average concentration of single people living in London, whereas married couples and families tend to be concentrated in the centre of the country and around the outskirts of major cities, according to research by Professor Danny Dorling of Sheffield University.

His map is based on data drawn from the 85 constituencies used for the European parliamentary elections in 1999, each containing roughly half a million people over the age of 18 in a similar geographical area.
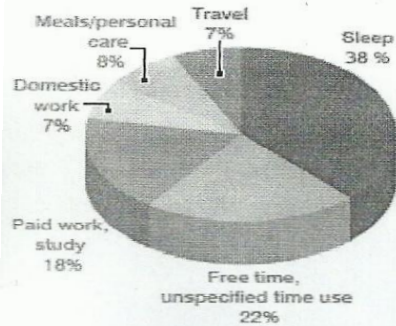
The areas are categorised, for example as predominantly single, where the number of people living on their own is the most unusually large group compared with the national average.
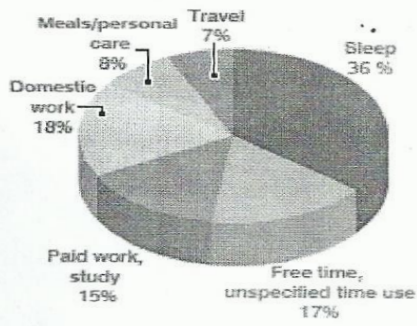
In most families with dependent children, the father is still the main wage earner and the mother often works part-time.

According to the BBC/ICM poll, 33% of women still do the bulk of household chores, but 35% of respondents said both parents shared childcare duties.

**AVERAGE TIME SPENT BY HOUSEHOLD WITHOUT CHILDREN**

Meals/personal care 8%
Travel 7%
Sleep 38 %
Domestic work 7%
Paid work, study 18%
Free time, unspecified time use 22%

**AVERAGE TIME SPENT BY FAMILY WITH CHILDREN AGED 10 AND UNDER**

Meals/personal care 8%
Travel 7%
Sleep 36 %
Domestic work 18%
Paid work, study 15%
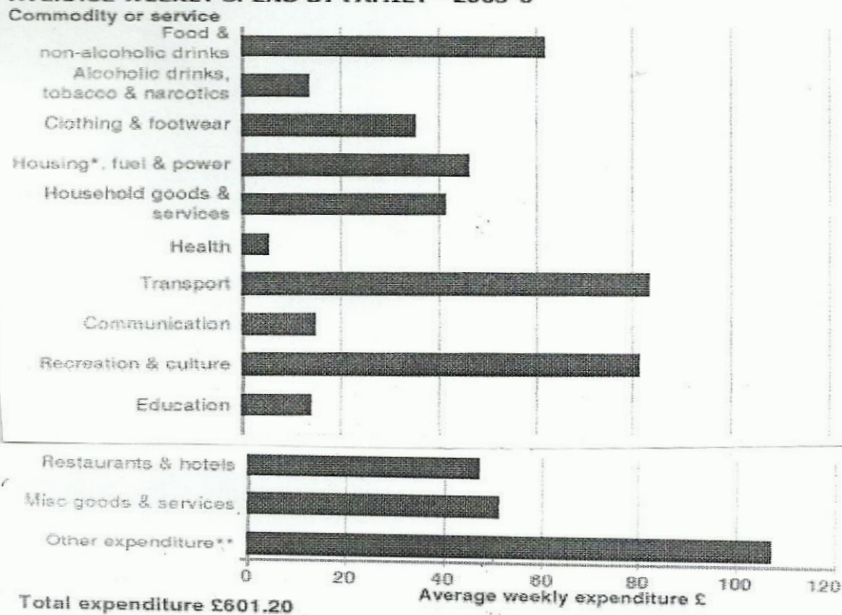Free time, unspecified time use 17%

SOURCE: ONS

SPENDING HABITS

The average family income is £32,779 before tax.

According to ONS figures, an average household - made up of 3.9 people - spends £601.20 a week, compared with a couple's average spend of £527.30. In other words, the household spends £155.60 per head, compared with a couple's spend of £263.60 per head.

**AVERAGE WEEKLY SPEND BY FAMILY – 2005-6**

Commodity or service

Food & non-alcoholic drinks
Alcoholic drinks, tobacco & narcotics
Clothing & footwear
Housing*, fuel & power
Household goods & services
Health
Transport
Communication
Recreation & culture
Education

Restaurants & hotels
Misc goods & services
Other expenditure**

0   20   40   60   80   100   120
Average weekly expenditure £

Total expenditure £601.20

\* Excludes mortgage interest payments, council tax and Northern Ireland rates
\*\* Includes mortgage interest payments, holidays, fines, licences etc
Note: Average number of persons per household 3.9

SOURCE: ONS

Source: From BBC News: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/7071611, Published: 2007/11/06 11:46:09 GMT.