Trends in families/households:

Family households:
-Most individuals in the UK live in family households of some form from the majority of their lifetime.
-1961: 9/10 people lived in a family household, 2004: 8/10 people lived in a family household.
-(Social Trends, 2007) found that by 2006 there were 24.2 million households in the UK, 30% increase from 1971. Increase partly explained by the growing trend of single person households.

Family diversity:
-Average family size in the UK has decreased in the past 30 years, declining from 3.1 people in 1961, to 2.4 people in 2006.
-Family size affected by 3 things:
1. Woman's employment, more women going out to work.
2. Daycare Trust (2004) found that childcare costs nearly a ¼ of average household income (Williams, 2006).
3. Lifestyle choice, materialistic society based on consumption, mean there are many different kinds of lifestyle and life choices people can choose from.
-In 2006: 50% of men, 39% of women aged 20-24 in England live with their parents (National Statistics, 2007), this was an increase of about 8% since 1991.
-Increase in living costs make it difficult for young people to get into the living market, also increased cost of education, cheaper to live at home with the parents.

Marriage:
-Peak for marriage, 1972 when about 480,000 people wed.
-Since the 1970's, there was a decline in the number of marriages until the turn of the century, where it rose again.
-Recent change, between 2004-2005, 10% decrease of wedding in the UK (National Statistics, 2007).
-People chose to cohabit or live together instead of marriage as a positive lifestyle choice.
-2005, more than ½ of all men/women in the UK were married, still a very popular choice.
-In 2005, remarriage made up around 40% of all marriages.
-40 years ago, average age for men to marry was 25, in 2006 it was 31.
different ethnic, national or religious backgrounds.

3. **Class diversity**: difference in families of upper/middle/working class origin. This may include relationships between adults and the way children are socialized.

4. **Stage in life cycle**: there is clear difference between married couples without children and couples with dependent children.

5. **Cohort diversity**: A cohort is a group of people born over the same period of time (for example, the baby boomer generation born in the period of 1946-1968).

**Reasons for diversification:**

-(Allen and Crow, 2001) believe that since the Rapoports were writing, diversity has continued as there is no longer a fixed set of stages in the life cycle and each family follows a more unpredictable course complicated by cohabitation, divorce, remarriage etc. This represents your individual choice and the increasing separation of sex, marriage and parenthood.

-They give the following reasons for increasing diversity:
  1. A rising divorce rate caused by factors such as changes in the divorce law, rising social acceptance of divorce and greater independence for women.
  2. Increase in lone-parent households, partly resulting from increasing divorce, but also greater acceptance of births outside marriage.
  3. Declining marriage rates as people marry later and an increasing minority choose not to marry at all.
  4. Decline in religion allows cohabitation to become increasingly more acceptable.
  5. Rise in stepfathers as a result of increasing divorce.
  6. The formation of more reconstituted families owing to the number of people remarrying (¼ of marriages are remarriages).

**New types of diversity:**

- Over recent decades new types of diversity has emerged because because of liberalization in attitudes to sexuality and the introduction of new reproductive technologies.

-(Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan, 1999) see the increase in openly gay and lesbian households and families to their increase in diversity.

- They say that homosexuals see their households/fixed resources as “chosen families”, say social change is taking place in that who they see as a member of their family extends beyond blood ties/marriage.

-Friendship networks can now function as if they were families, part of a general move towards a greater expansion on individual choice rather than
4. Have more choice in their partner.
   -(Ballard, 1982/1990) has experienced South-Asian families in Britain:
   1. Many children had the experience of 2 cultures. Behaved in a way that
      conformed to wider society, but than at home conformed to their ethnic culture.
   2. Children expected to have some say in their partner, but did not reject the
      principle of arranged marriage.
   3. Despite the distance involved, most families retained links with their village
      of origin in Asia.
   4. Close family ties remained, by living close together were able to maintain
      them.
   -(Bhatti, 1999) found that the ideas of Izzat (family honour) remained very
      strong, as did traditional gender roles. In a minority of families there were
      generational clashes, especially where you sought to marry outside their ethnic
      group. Overall, distinctive patterns of family life still remain.
   -(Reynolds, 2002) emphasizes diversity of African-Caribbean family and the
      importance of visiting relationships, where a female head of the household has
      a male partner but they do not cohabit.

   -The British Neo-conventional family: (Chester, 1985) argues that the changes
     to family life in modern day Britain have not been very major:
     1. Most people still get married.
     2. Most children are raised by their actual parents.
     3. Most people stay married.
     4. Most people live in a household headed by a married couple.
     5. Nearly ½ of the population still live in nuclear families.

   -(Somerville, 2000) argues that decline in traditional families is exaggerated,
     but there are important changes taking place:
     1. Sex outside marriage.
     2. More couples who choose not to have children.
     3. Increasing number of lone parents.
     4. Greater diversity in family life as a result of different ethnic groups.

Class diversity:
-Social classes can be defined in a number of ways, but all definitions are based
upon the idea that the groups in society can be divided according to their
economic circumstances.
-3 main classes:
  1. Upper class: own significant areas of wealth e.g land, business or shares.
  2. Middle class: non-manual jobs, relatively high pay and job security. Also
     usually have higher level qualifications.
  3. Working class: manual jobs, usually to higher level qualifications and on
Stacey believes that homosexual families are more nurturing for the child due to them being based on negotiating families within the family. According to Stacey, USA has more than 6 million children being brought up in homosexual families, making them a significant addition to the variety of family types within the country. Diversity in homosexual relationships, some want to bring up children in a conventional manner through recognized legal status, others in less conventional ways.

However, Stacey's research can be criticised for a number of reasons:
1. Research based on a very small sample of families.
2. Exaggerating the degree of fluidity and uncertainty in family life by picking untypical examples.
3. Underestimating the continuing appeal of heterosexual nuclear families.

(Pakulski & Walters, 1996) claim that contemporary family roles as a matter of choice. The roles interact with consumption and media images.

Postmodernism does provide explanations for the increasing diversity of family life in today's society.

New Right:
Increasing family types seen as undesirable as nuclear family is the most stable type of family and are useful to society.

New Right hold this view, often associated with the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher and John Major 1979 and 1992.

New Right's perspective strongly supports free market capitalism (state should intervene as little as possible in the economy leaving private enterprise to generate wealth). See markets as based on choice and encourage individual liberty.

New Right do not see choice and liberty as important in family life, see traditional nuclear families as the cornerstone of society for the following reasons:
1. Encourage self-reliance, family help one another rather than relying on the state.
2. Help to reduce state expenditure on welfare (e.g. lone parents).
3. Encouraging shared moral values and is the best way to pass morality to children.

See the family as increasingly unstable, leading to increases in social problems.

Some sociologists such as (Morgan, 2001) believe that there is some strong evidence of a decline in traditional nuclear family as diversity increases, causing an increase in the proportion of children born outside and marriage and decline in fertility rate.

Some of Margaret Thatcher's policy were introduced to try to support
**Coalition government:**
- Strong and stable families were considered the bedrock of society, therefore society must become more family friendly and protect children from excessive commercialisation and premature sexualization.
- Plan to reduce couple payments in the tax credit system as we make savings from our welfare reform pays.
- Support the provision of free nursing care for pre-school children provided by a diverse range of providers.
- Investigate a new approach to helping families with multiple problems.
- Considered giving tax cuts to married couples, suggest they support the nuclear family structure.
- Dual earner families can earn much more than single-earner families without losing benefits.

**Liberal:**
- Large emphasis on bringing up children, and help with bringing children.
- Liberal democrats believe that all parents should be able to spend meaningful time with their children and more help so childcare is affordable.
- They believe that both parents should be able to equally share leave between them, so they can have an average family life in what is fair.
- Liberal democrats don’t favour any one type, instead believe in helping all families.
- No income tax on the first £10,000 you earn, meaning 3.6 million working people and low income pensioners will no longer pay income tax at all, while millions more will have an income tax cut of £700.
- Mothers will have too much responsibility to look after baby-get equal leave for both of them.
- We will fix payments of tax credits for 6 months at a time so payments are stable and predictable for families.

**Conservatives:**
- Cut immigration, made it difficult for extended families to migrate to the UK.
- Pledging to cut benefits in the UK from EU immigrants.
- Also planning to introduce child benefits of only the first two children in a family unit.
- Want to cap child benefits at £26,000.
- Margaret Thatcher and John Major in 1979-1997 did not introduce tax or benefit policies to encourage mothers to stay at home.
- Made divorce easier to obtain in 1984.
- Gave illegitimate children’s that same rights as those who had been born within marriage.
2. Only people over the age of 16.
3. Subject to interpretation whether or not abuse has taken place.

-(United Nations Women's Conference, 1995) reported that 25% of women worldwide experience domestic violence.

The broad definition is domestic abuse, whereas a specific definition for violent and sexual abuse but not emotional or financial abuse is domestic violence.

-(Stank, 2000) found that:
1. A woman is killed by her current or former partner every three days in England and Wales.
2. There are 570,000 cases of domestic violence reported in the UK every year.
3. An incident of domestic violence occurs in the UK every 6-20 seconds.

-(Nazroo, 1999) suggests that domestic violence perpetrated by men against women tends to be more serious than that perpetrated by women on men, and women are likely to be much more fearful of the violence than men are.

Explanations:

Radical Feminism:

-(Dobash & Dobash, 1979) found that the police in the UK usually didn't record violent crime by husbands against their wives.

Since 1979 the police have set up specialist domestic violence units, but still the conviction rate is low compared with other forms of assault.

Before 1991, British law said a husband was entitled to have sex with his wife against her will. In 1991, the rape law changed to say that a husband could be charged with raping his wife.

Evidence like that above is used by radical feminists to support their argument that laws and social policies in society have traditionally worked to control women and keep men's power in society going.

-Radical feminists such as (Pizzey, 1974) see domestic violence as resulting from patriarchy. In male-dominated or male-controlled society, men use violence or the threat of violence in order to control women. Pizzey argues that domestic violence is not often a very seriously taken offence, and patriarchal values lead to men seeing women as property, so is perfectly acceptable to use violence.

-(Brookman, 2008) believes that the nature of masculinity is partly to blame. In British culture masculinity values control over others so men can resort to violence if they feel they are losing control over their female partner. Her research was based on in-depth interviews with violent men.