

Access sociological explanations of the increase in the number of divorce since t...

[Family](#), [Divorce](#)



Divorce is the legal separation between couples. Nowadays 40% of all marriages end up in divorce. Divorce is an important issue as it is very common in society and it affects many families, including most importantly, the children from a marriage. This commonly known increase in divorce, is leading to an increase in cohabitation. A reason for this could be that couples are afraid if they marry it will end up in divorce so they cohabit instead. Sociologists find the increase in number of divorces since the 1960s is an important issue to society so with research they have developed sociological explanations as to why this has happened. One main explanation is the changing of the law as it has precipitated to the increase of divorce rates as since 1971 "The Divorce Law Reform Act 1969" had been present. This law stated that there was no need to express that a partner was guilty of offence of marriage all that was needed was evidence that showed the marriage had "broken-down" for a divorce to take place which in effect made it easier to get a divorce and the impact of this was an increase in divorces. Other laws followed including "The Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 and the" Family Law Act 1996" which again made divorce more easier that lead to a bigger increase in divorce. Another explanation of why divorce has increased since 1960's is Secularisation, as people are less religious now than people before the 1960's, so as people are less religious they don't share strong religious views against divorce so people are more likely if they are need to file for divorce which causes the increase between now and 1960. One other sociological explanation is the impact of Feminism as women have a more respected place in society now than before 1960, so with this new position in society and their independence, women have the

right to petition for divorce. So which in effect causes higher divorce rates compared to divorce rates before 1960. Increase of life expectancy, rising expectations of marriage, welfare state and changing social attitudes are all sociological explanations of the increase in the number of divorce since the 1960's. As between 1970 and now society has changed as people are reaching older ages due to better standard of living, which causes married couples to be married longer which some people can't commit to. Before 1960 there was no support for people including divorce women and now there is more help for them which can decrease the worry of how divorce could affect them by the worse. Reasons for this change could be due to the fact people's attitudes have changed as well as society. The law changing has developed an increase in divorce, is a significant sociological explanation and reify this the date when "The Divorce Law Reform Act 1969" came into effect was in 1971 which reflects how there was an increase in divorce from the 1960's. As the law made it easier and it was supported for this act especially by Feminists as women who felt trapped could find a way out of a marriage. Feminism is an accurate sociological explanation as we are shown from the statistics that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the divorce petitions are from women, and before 1960 women didn't have the law independence to do this and the laws. A disadvantage to this is that some people could think that there are still women in marriage who haven't filed for divorce even if they do want this, like empty shell marriages so not all divorces are in the act of feminism. Secularisation is a sociological explanation which may be less accurate than the others as the evidence to support this is more opinion and the knowledge of people that think not as many people practise a religion, though using this

explanation we do know more people were devoted to their religion before 1960s which is a contrast between now as has now a more relaxed approach to religion. These sociological explanations are all slightly related. I think the change in the law affects the divorce rates more even though it wasn't the only factor that contributes to the increase in divorce rates but the law is the factor that has developed divorce to be easier and approachable. It might of also benefited people who were influenced by what others attitudes were as it is now a common and acceptable.