

# Divorce

More detail

# Divorce statistics

- Need to be careful
- Divorce statistics do not show:
  - No. separated but not divorced
  - No. of “empty shell” marriages
  - No. of unhappy/unstable marriages before changes in law & social attitudes
- Question of whether stats represent a *real* increase in marital instability

# Changes in Society

- Changing role of women
  - Most divorces initiated by women
  - Rising expectations of life/marriage
  - Rising independence
- Rising expectations of marriage
  - Higher divorce rate indicates higher quality marriages?
- Growing secularisation

## Changes in Society (2)

- Changing social attitudes
- Greater availability of contraception
- Growth of privatised/isolated nuclear families (functionalist view)
  - Increased tensions/conflict
- Reduced functions of the family
- Increasing life expectancy

# Variations in divorce rate

- Some sections of population where marriage more likely to end in divorce
  - Teenage marriages
  - Working class
  - Childless couples
  - Inter-class/inter-religion marriages
  - Couples separated by work for long periods