

# Are relationships becoming more individualised?

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AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L014 • v1.0

CONNECT & CHECK | SHARE | PRESENT | APPLY | RECALL & REVIEW

Connect & Check → Share → Present → Apply → Recall & Review. Explain the key concepts, apply them accurately to the supplied case and answer the enquiry with a qualified, evidence-led judgement. Use fictional examples; no personal family disclosure is required.

## Recall and connect

Missed the preparation? Why do feminist approaches not form one explanation? They place different emphasis on discrimination, capitalism, patriarchy and intersecting structures. What is agency? Capacity to interpret and act within social constraints. Why might a formal opportunity be difficult to use? Money, time, dependence, discrimination or inaccessible services may restrict practical options.

Retrieve the previous lesson, then record a view you can revisit.

### R1

Why do feminist approaches not form one explanation?

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### R2

What is agency?

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### R3

Starting judgement: “Having more relationship choices means everyone is free to choose equally.”  
Explain your view.

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## Giddens: negotiated intimacy

Giddens's pure relationship is sustained through what the relationship provides to the people involved, rather than only through external tradition. Pure does not mean morally superior or conflict-free. Confluent love is contingent: continuation depends on an ongoing relationship rather than an unconditional promise of permanence. Negotiation may create opportunities for equality, but the model does not establish that every relationship already operates this way.

### D1

Define the pure relationship and correct one possible misunderstanding.

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### D2

How does confluent love differ from an unconditional permanence ideal?

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## Individualisation and risk

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim examine tensions as people increasingly construct biographies while depending on close relationships. Choices about work, place and commitment must be coordinated, and responsibility for managing uncertainty can become individualised. Individualisation is not the same as selfishness or living alone. People may have to make choices while remaining materially and emotionally dependent on others.

### D3

Explain individualisation without using selfishness as a synonym.

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### D4

Why can greater choice increase uncertainty?

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## How much choice, and for whom?

Late-modern accounts emphasise transformations within modernity. Postmodern interpretations give greater weight to plurality and less uniform pathways; Stacey's US research explores changing family arrangements. Neither label proves unlimited freedom. Housing costs, care responsibilities and unequal resources can constrain negotiation or exit. Comparing ideals, actual practices and structural conditions makes evaluation more precise.

### D5

Distinguish a late-modern from a postmodern emphasis.

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### D6

Explain how an economic constraint can limit apparently free relationship choice.

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## Apply the evidence

Fictional case: Erin and Dev regularly discuss how to divide care and whether their partnership meets their needs. Dev is offered work in another city. Erin's local caring commitments make moving difficult, and two homes would be unaffordable. They negotiate a temporary arrangement and plan a review. The account illustrates negotiation and constraint; it does not establish a national trend.



Observe the visible activity and identify what further evidence is needed. This photograph also appears on slide 19.

### A1

Describe what is visible in the photograph. What further evidence would be needed to apply this lesson's concepts?

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## Apply the case evidence

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### A2

Use Giddens and individualisation to interpret two details.

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### A3

Explain how two constraints affect the choices available.

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Optional scaffold: Name the concept → select a precise case detail → explain the connection → state what the detail cannot establish. Rehearse aloud, then write independently.

## Challenge and judge

Make a precise claim, connect it to evidence and state its limits.

**C1**

What evidence would test a claim that relationships are becoming more negotiated?

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**C2**

Improve: “Tradition has disappeared, so couples can choose anything.”

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## Prove and improve

Complete retrieval, then write independently for eight minutes.

### P1

Explain two features of individualised relationships. [6 marks]

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### P2

Identify the two points in your response. Improve one missing explanation or example.

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### P3

Return to R3. Give a qualified judgement and identify one piece of evidence still needed.

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## Prepare for Lesson 15

Read the three short passages and answer the preparation questions.

### Smart: connected lives

Carol Smart's personal life perspective examines how people remain connected through memories, emotions, obligations and shared histories. It questions accounts that treat each person as freely constructing a life independently. Connections can be supportive, difficult or ambivalent. Investigating what a relationship means to participants does not require assuming that all attachments are freely chosen or beneficial.

### Two connected concepts

Personal life: A perspective examining meaningful relationships, attachments and lived connections. Connectedness: The ways a person's life is bound up with other people.

### A question to bring

Explain how connectedness challenges an isolated-individual account. People's decisions are bound up with obligations, memories and other people's lives. A choice cannot be understood solely as a preference made by a detached individual.

### F1

Summarise the main idea in the first passage in one or two sentences.

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### F2

Define personal life and give an original fictional example.

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### F3

What evidence would you need to test the opening claim? Retrieve two current-lesson concepts tomorrow and next week.

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## Retrieval check for self study

Complete before the extended response. Cover the key while answering. One mark per correct answer; total 6. Correct insecure ideas and retry tomorrow. Extended writing needs teacher review.

### Q1

Which meaning best fits individualisation?

A Giddens's idea of active, contingent love dependent on a continuing relationship. B The pattern and story of a person's life over time. C A process in which people must increasingly construct and manage their own biographies.

### Q2

Which meaning best fits pure relationship?

A Giddens's model of a bond sustained for the satisfaction the relationship itself provides. B The pattern and story of a person's life over time. C Coexistence of multiple forms, meanings or ways of living.

### Q3

Which meaning best fits contingency?

A Approaches emphasising fragmentation, plurality and limits of one overarching account. B Dependence on conditions rather than guaranteed permanence. C A process in which people must increasingly construct and manage their own biographies.

### Q4

Which meaning best fits postmodernism?

A Weakening of the taken-for-granted authority of inherited traditions. B Giddens's idea of active, contingent love dependent on a continuing relationship. C Approaches emphasising fragmentation, plurality and limits of one overarching account.

### Q5

Does a pure relationship mean a morally perfect relationship?

A Yes: pure means superior and conflict-free. B No: it describes the basis on which the bond is sustained. C The question can be answered from a person's appearance alone.

### Q6

What can the supplied fictional case establish?

A It illustrates a mechanism to examine with further evidence. B It proves what all UK families do. C It establishes a causal law without further evidence.

## Self marking key

Q1: C. Q2: A. Q3: B. Q4: C. Q5: B. Q6: A.