



# 12

*Chapter*

## Marriage and Family



“Hold still. We’re going to be late,” said Sharon as she tried to put shoes on 2-year-old Michael, who kept squirming away.

Finally succeeding with the shoes, Sharon turned to 4-year-old Brittany, who was trying to pull a brush through her hair. “It’s stuck, Mom,” Brittany said.

“Well, no wonder. Just how did you get gum in your hair? I don’t have time for this, Brittany. We’ve got to leave.”

Getting to the van fifteen minutes behind schedule, Sharon strapped the kids in, and then herself. Just as she was about to pull away, she remembered that she had not checked the fridge for messages.

“Just a minute, kids. I’ll be right back.”

Running into the house, she frantically searched for a note from Tom. She vaguely remembered him mumbling something about being held over at work. She grabbed the Post-It and ran back to the van.

“He’s picking on me,” complained Brittany when her mother climbed back in.

“Oh, shut up, Brittany. He’s only 2. He can’t pick on you.”

“Yes, he did,” Brittany said, crossing her arms defiantly as she stretched out her foot to kick her brother’s seat.

“Oh, no! How did Mikey get that smudge on his face? Did you do that, Brit?”

Brittany crossed her arms again, pushing out her lips in her classic pouting pose.

As Sharon drove to the day care center, she tried to calm herself. “Only two more days of work this week, and then the weekend. Then I can catch up on housework and have a little relaxed time with the kids. And Tom can finally cut the grass and buy the groceries,” she thought. “And maybe we’ll even have time to make love. Boy, that’s been a long time.”

At a traffic light, Sharon found time to read Tom’s note. “Oh, no. That’s what he meant. He has to work Saturday. Well, there go those plans.”

What Sharon didn’t know was that her boss had also made plans for Sharon’s Saturday. And that their emergency Saturday babysitter wouldn’t be available. And that Michael was coming down with the flu. And that Brittany would follow next. And that . . .

“Yes, he did,” Brittany said, crossing her arms defiantly as she kicked her brother’s seat.

## Marriage and Family in Global Perspective

To better understand U.S. patterns of marriage and family, let's first look at how customs differ around the world. This will give us a context for interpreting our own experience with this vital social institution.

### What Is a Family?

The family is so significant to humanity that every human group in the world organizes its members in families. But the world's cultures display so much variety that the term *family* is difficult to define. Although the Western world regards a family as a husband, wife, and children, other groups have family forms in which men have more than one wife (**polygyny**) or women more than one husband (**polyandry**). How about the obvious? Can we define the family as the approved group into which children are born? Then we would be overlooking the Banaro of New Guinea. In this group, a young woman must give birth *before* she can marry—and she *cannot* marry the father of her child (Murdock 1949).

What if we were to define the family as the unit in which parents are responsible for disciplining children and providing for their material needs? This, too, is not universal. Among the Trobriand Islanders, it is not the parents but the wife's eldest brother who is responsible for providing the children's discipline and their food (Malinowski 1927).

Such remarkable variety means that we have to settle for a broad definition. A **family** consists of people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage, or adoption. A **household**, in contrast, consists of people who occupy the same housing unit—a house, apartment, or other living quarters.

We can classify families as **nuclear** (husband, wife, and children) and **extended** (including people such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in addition to the nuclear unit). Sociologists also refer to the **family of orientation** (the family in which an individual grows up) and the **family of procreation** (the family that is formed when a couple has its first child).

Often one of the strongest family bonds is that of mother and daughter. The young artist, an eleventh-grader, wrote "This painting expresses the way I feel about my future with my child. I want my child to be happy and I want her to love me the same way I love her. In that way we will have a good relationship so that nobody will be able to take us apart. I wanted this picture to be alive; that is why I used a lot of bright colors."

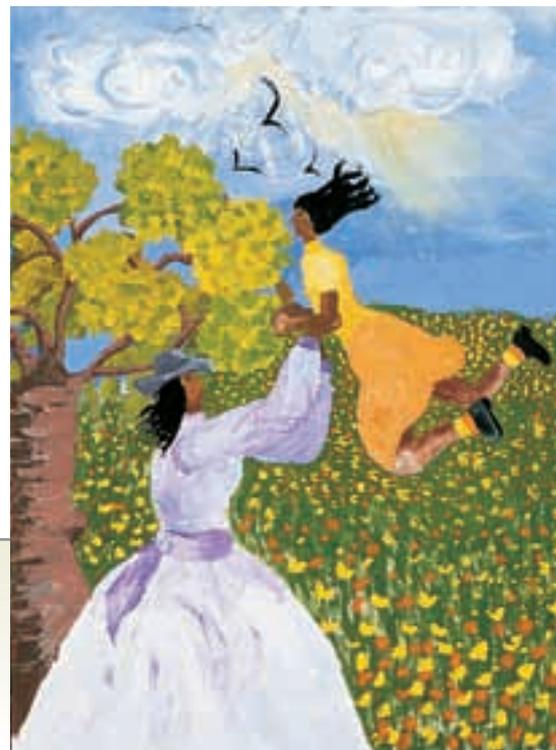
### What Is Marriage?

We have the same problem here. For just about every element you might regard as essential to marriage, some group has a different custom.

Consider the sex of the bride and groom. In several countries, people of the same sex can marry. Even sexual relationships don't universally characterize marriage. The Nayar of Malabar never allow a bride and groom to have sex. After a three-day celebration of the marriage, they send the groom packing—and never allow him to see his bride again (La Barre 1954). (In case you're wondering, the groom comes from another tribe. Nayar women are allowed to have sex, but only with approved lovers—who can never be the husband. This system keeps family property intact—along matrilineal lines.)

At least we can be certain that those who marry have to be alive—or so you would think. But even here, we find an exception. On the Loess Plateau in China, if a man dies without a wife, his parents look for a dead woman to be his bride. (Some parents sell their dead unmarried daughters.) The dead man and woman are married and then buried together (Fremson 2006).

With such cultural variety, we can conclude that, regardless of its form, **marriage** is a group's approved mating arrangement—usually marked by a ritual of some sort (the wedding) to indicate the couple's new public status.



## Common Cultural Themes

Despite this diversity, several common themes run through marriage and family. As Table 12.1 illustrates, all societies use marriage and family to establish patterns of mate selection, descent, inheritance, and authority. Let's look at these patterns.

**Mate Selection** Each human group establishes norms to govern who marries whom. If a group has norms of **endogamy**, it specifies that its members must marry *within* their group. For example, some groups prohibit interracial marriage. In some societies, these norms are written into law, but in most cases they are informal. In the United States most whites marry whites and most African Americans marry African Americans—not because of any laws but because of informal norms. In contrast, norms of **exogamy** specify that people must marry *outside* their group. The best example of exogamy is the **incest taboo**, which prohibits sex and marriage among designated relatives.

As you can see from Table 12.1, how people find mates varies around the world, from fathers selecting them, with no input from those who are to marry, to the highly individualistic, personal choices common in Western cultures. Changes in mate selection are the focus of the Sociology and the New Technology box on the next page.

**Descent** How are you related to your father's father or to your mother's mother? The answer to this question is not the same all over the world. Each society has a **system of descent**, the way people trace kinship over generations. We use a **bilineal system**, for we think of ourselves as related to *both* our mother's and our father's sides of the family. "Doesn't everyone?" you might ask. Ours, however, is only one logical way to reckon descent. Some groups use a **patrilineal system**, tracing descent only on the father's side; they don't think of children as being related to their mother's relatives. Others follow a **matrilineal system**, tracing descent only on the mother's side, and not considering children to be related to their father's relatives. The Naxi of China, for example, don't even have a word for father (Hong 1999).

**Inheritance** Marriage and family—in whatever forms are customary in a society—are also used to determine rights of inheritance. In a bilineal system, property is passed to both males and females, in a patrilineal system only to males, and in a matrilineal system (the rarest form), only to females. No system is natural. Rather, each matches a group's ideas of justice and logic.

**Authority** Historically, some form of **patriarchy**, a social system in which men dominate women, has formed a thread that runs through all societies. Contrary to what some think,

**TABLE 12.1** Common Cultural Themes: Marriage in Traditional and Industrialized Societies

Characteristic	Traditional Societies	Industrial (and Postindustrial) Societies
What is the structure of marriage?	<i>Extended</i> (marriage embeds spouses in a large kinship network of explicit obligations)	<i>Nuclear</i> (marriage brings fewer obligations toward the spouse's relatives)
What are the functions of marriage?	Encompassing (see the six functions listed on p. 333)	More limited (many functions are fulfilled by other social institutions)
Who holds authority?	<i>Patriarchal</i> (authority is held by males)	Although some patriarchal features remain, authority is divided more equally
How many spouses at one time?	Most have one spouse ( <i>monogamy</i> ), while some have several ( <i>polygamy</i> )	One spouse
Who selects the spouse?	Parents, usually the father, select the spouse	Individuals choose their own spouse
Where does the couple live?	Couples usually reside with the groom's family ( <i>patrilocal residence</i> ), less commonly with the bride's family ( <i>matrilocal residence</i> )	Couples establish a new home ( <i>neolocal residence</i> )
How is descent figured?	Usually figured from male ancestors ( <i>patrilineal kinship</i> ), less commonly from female ancestors ( <i>matrilineal kinship</i> )	Figured from male and female ancestors equally ( <i>bilineal kinship</i> )
How is inheritance figured?	Rigid system of rules; usually patrilineal, but can be matrilineal	Highly individualistic; usually bilineal

## SOCIOLOGY and the NEW TECHNOLOGY

### Finding a Mate: Not the Same as It Used to Be

Things haven't changed entirely. Boys and girls still get interested in each other at their neighborhood schools, and men and women still meet at college. Friends still serve as matchmakers and introduce friends, hoping they might click. People still meet at churches and bars, at the mall and at work.

But technology is bringing about some fundamental changes. Americans are turning more and more to the Internet. Numerous sites advertise that they offer thousands of potential companions, lovers, or spouses. For a low monthly fee, you, too, can meet the person of your dreams.

The photos on these sites are fascinating. Some seem to be lovely people, attractive and vivacious, and one wonders why they are posting their photos and personal information online. Do they have some secret flaw that they need to do this? Others seem okay, although perhaps a bit needy. Then there are the pitiful, and one wonders if they will ever find a mate, or even a hookup, for that matter. Some are desperate, begging for someone—anyone—to make contact with them: women who try for sexy poses, exposing too much flesh, suggesting the promise of at least a good time, and men who try their best to look like hulks, their muscular presence promising the same.

The Internet dating sites are not filled with losers, although there are plenty of them. A lot of regular,

ordinary people post their profiles, too. And some do find the person of their dreams—or at least good matches. More and more, Internet posting is losing its stigma, and couples are finding mates via electronic matchmaking.

A frustrating aspect of these sites is that the “thousands of eligible prospects” that they tout are spread over the nation. You might find that a person who piques your interest lives in another part of the country. You can do a search for your area, but there are likely to be few from it.

Not to worry. More technology to the rescue.

The latest is dating on demand. You sit at home, turn on your TV, and search for your partner. Your local cable company does all the hard work for you. They host singles events at bars and malls and help singles make three-to-five minute tapes talking about themselves and what they are looking for in a mate (Grant 2005).

You can view the videos free. And if you get interested in someone, for just a small fee you can contact the individual.

Now all you need is to hire a private detective—also available online for another fee—to see if this engaging person is already married, has a dozen kids, has been sued for paternity or child support, or is a child molester or a rapist.

### For Your Consideration

What is your opinion of electronic dating sites? Have you used one? Would you consider using an electronic dating site (if you were single and unattached)?



there are no historical records of a true **matriarchy**, a social system in which women as a group dominate men as a group. Our marriage and family customs, then, developed within a framework of patriarchy. Although U.S. family patterns are becoming more **egalitarian**, or equal, some of today's customs still reflect their patriarchal origin. One of the most obvious examples is U.S. naming patterns. Despite some changes, the typical bride still takes the groom's last name, and children usually receive the father's last name.

## Marriage and Family in Theoretical Perspective

As we have seen, human groups around the world have many forms of mate selection, ways to trace descent, and ways to view the parent's responsibility. Although these patterns are arbitrary, each group perceives its own forms of marriage and family as natural. Now let's see what picture emerges when we view marriage and family theoretically.

### The Functionalist Perspective: Functions and Dysfunctions

Functionalists stress that to survive, a society must fulfill basic functions (that is, meet its basic needs). When functionalists look at marriage and family, they examine how they are related to other parts of society, especially the ways they contribute to the well-being of society.

**Why the Family Is Universal** Although the form of marriage and family varies from one group to another, the family is universal. The reason for this, say functionalists, is that the family fulfills six needs that are basic to the survival of every society. These needs, or functions, are (1) economic production, (2) socialization of children, (3) care of the sick and aged, (4) recreation, (5) sexual control, and (6) reproduction. To make certain that these functions are performed, every human group has adopted some form of the family.

**Functions of the Incest Taboo** Functionalists note that the incest taboo helps families avoid *role confusion*. This, in turn, facilitates the socialization of children. For example, if father-daughter incest were allowed, how should a wife treat her daughter—as a daughter, as a subservient second wife, or even as a rival? Should the daughter consider her mother as a mother, as the first wife, or as a rival? Would her father be a father or a lover? And would

the wife be the husband's main wife, a secondary wife—or even the “mother of the other wife” (whatever role that might be)? And if the daughter had a child by her father, what relationships would everyone have? Maternal incest would also lead to complications every bit as confusing as these.

The incest taboo also forces people to look outside the family for marriage partners. Anthropologists theorize that *exogamy* was especially functional in tribal societies, for it forged alliances between tribes that otherwise might have killed each other off. Today, exogamy still extends both the bride's and the groom's social networks by adding and building relationships with their spouse's family and friends.

**Isolation and Emotional Overload** As you know, functionalists also analyze dysfunctions. One of those dysfunctions comes from the relative isolation of today's nuclear family. Because extended families are enmeshed in large kinship networks, their members can count on many people for material and emotional support. In nuclear families, in contrast, the stresses that come with crises such as the loss of a job—or even the routine pressures of a harried life, as depicted in our opening vignette—are spread among fewer people. This places greater strain on each family member, creating *emotional overload*. In addition, the relative isolation of the nuclear family makes it vulnerable to a “dark side”—incest and various other forms of abuse, matters that we examine later in this chapter.



This January 1937 photo from Sneedville, Tennessee, shows Eunice Johns, age 9, and her husband, Charlie Johns, age 22. The groom gave his wife a doll as a wedding gift. The new husband and wife planned to build a cabin and, as Charlie Johns phrased it, “go to housekeeping.” Is this an example of gender age as symbolic interactionists might say? Or, as conflict theorists would say, of gender exploitation?

## The Conflict Perspective: Struggles Between Husbands and Wives

Anyone who has been married or who has seen a marriage from the inside knows that—regardless of a couple’s best intentions—conflict is a part of marriage. It is inevitable that conflict will arise between two people who live intimately and who share most everything in life—from their goals and checkbooks to their bedroom and children. At some point, their desires and approaches to life clash, sometimes mildly and sometimes quite harshly. Conflict among married people is so common that it is the grist of soap operas, movies, songs, and novels.

Throughout the generations, power has been a major source of conflict between wives and husbands: Husbands have had more power, and wives have resented it. Power differences show up throughout marriage, from disagreements over responsibilities for doing housework and taking care of children to quarrels about spending money and the lack of attention, respect, and sex.

As you know well, divorce is one way that couples try to end marital conflict. Divorce can mark the end of hostilities, or it can merely indicate a changed legal relationship within which the hostilities persist as the couple continues to quarrel about finances and children. We will return to the topic of divorce later in this chapter.

## The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective: Gender and Family Responsibilities

**Changes in Traditional Orientations** Throughout the generations, housework has been regarded as “women’s work,” and men have resisted getting involved. Child care, too, has traditionally been considered women’s work. As more women began to work for wages, however, men came to feel pressure to do housework and to be more involved in the care of their children. But no man wanted to be thought of as a sissy, under the control of a woman. That would conflict with his culturally rooted feelings of manhood and the reputation he wanted to maintain in the community, especially among his friends.

As women put in more hours at paid work, men gradually began to do more housework and to take on more

responsibility for the care of their children. When men first began to change diapers—at least openly—it was big news. Comedians even told jokes about Mr. Mom, giving expression to common concerns about what the future would be like if men continued to be feminized.

Ever so slowly, cultural ideas changed, and housework, care of children, and paid labor came to be regarded as the responsibilities of both men and women. Not all segments of the population have accepted these changes to the same degree, and we have not reached equality, but let’s examine these changing responsibilities in the family.

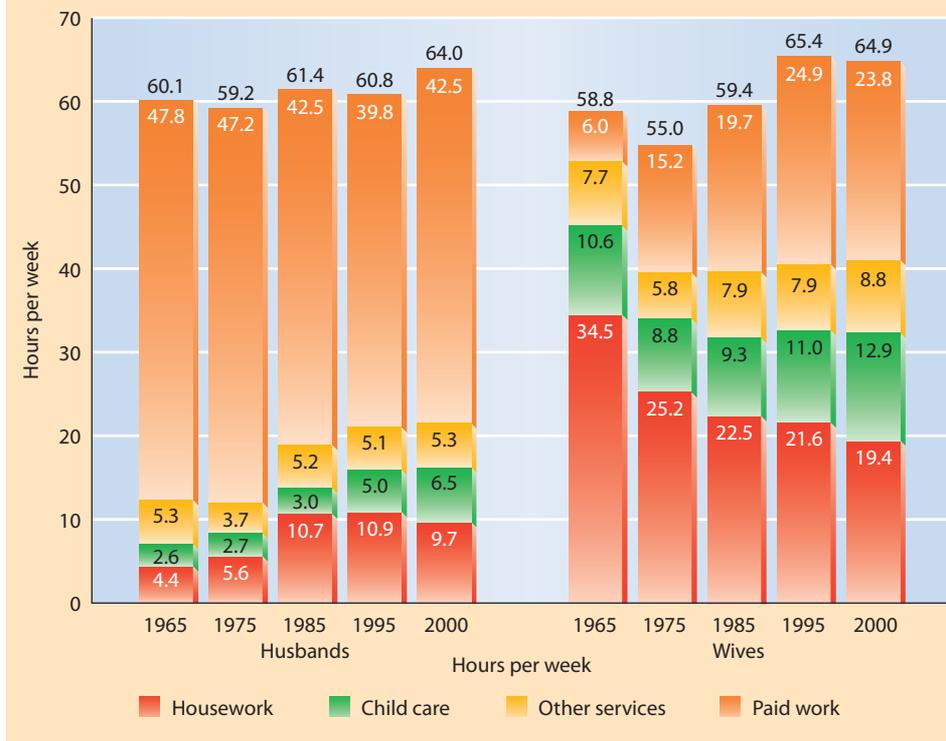
**Who Does What?** Figure 12.1 on the next page illustrates several significant changes that have taken place in U.S. families. The first is likely to surprise you, as it contradicts common ideas. If you look closely at this figure, you will see that not only are husbands spending more time taking care of the children but so are wives. This is fascinating: *Both* husbands and wives are spending more time in child care.

Contrary to popular assumptions, children are getting *more* attention from their parents than they used to. This



In Hindu marriages, the roles of husband and wife are firmly established. Neither this woman, whom I photographed in Chittoor, India, nor her husband question whether she should carry the family wash to the village pump. Women here have done this task for millennia. As India industrializes, as happened in the West, who does the wash will be questioned—and may eventually become a source of strain in marriage.

**FIGURE 12.1** In Two Paycheck Marriages, How Do Husbands and Wives Divide Up Their Responsibilities?



Source: By the author. Based on Bianchi et al. 2006. Housework hours are from Table 5.1, child care from Table 4.1, and work hours and total hours from Table 3.4. The total for “other services” is derived by subtracting the hours for housework, child care, and paid work from the total hours.

flies in the face of the *Leave It to Beaver* images of families we carry around in our heads, part of our mythical past that colors our perception of the present. But if parents are spending more time with their children, just where is the time coming from?

Today’s parents have squeezed out more hours for their children by visiting other couples less and by reducing their participation in organizations. But this accounts for only some of the time. Look again at Figure 12.1, but this time focus on the hours that husbands and wives spend doing housework. Although men are doing more housework than they used to, women are spending so much less time on housework that the total hours that husbands and wives spend on housework have dropped from 38.9 to 29.1 hours a week. This leaves a lot more time to spend with the children.

Does this mean that today’s parents aren’t as fussy as their parents were, and today’s houses are dirtier and

messier? That is one possibility. Or technology could be the explanation. Perhaps microwaves, dishwashers, more efficient washing machines and clothes dryers, and wrinkle-free clothing have saved hours of drudgery, leaving home hygiene about the same as before (Bianchi et al. 2006). The time savings from the “McDonaldization” we discussed in Chapter 5, with people eating more “fast foods,” are also substantial. It is likely that this is not an either-or situation and both explanations are true.

Finally, from Figure 12.1, you can see that husbands and wives divide their time differently. In what sociologists call a *gendered division of labor*, husbands take the primary responsibility for earning the income and wives the primary responsibility for taking care of the house and children. The trend, however, is a shift in these responsibilities, with wives spending more time earning the family income and husbands increasing the time they spend on housework and child care. It is also significant that when you add everything

up, today's husbands and wives put in about the same total number of hours per week in supporting the family. With shifting responsibilities and changing ideas of what is appropriate for husbands and wives changing, we can anticipate greater marital equality in the future.

## The Family Life Cycle

We have seen how the forms of marriage and family vary widely, looked at marriage and family theoretically, and examined major changes in family relationships. Now let's discuss love, courtship, and the family life cycle.

### Love and Courtship in Global Perspective

Until recently, social scientists thought that romantic love originated in western Europe during the medieval period (Mount 1992). When anthropologists William Jankowiak and Edward Fischer (1992) surveyed the data available on 166 societies around the world, however, they found that this was not so. **Romantic love**—people being sexually attracted to one another and idealizing each other—showed up in 88 percent (147) of these groups. The role of love, however, differs from one society to another. As the Cultural Diversity box on the next page details, for example, Indians don't expect love to occur until *after* marriage.

Because love plays such a significant role in Western life—and often is regarded as the *only* proper basis for marriage—social scientists have probed this concept with the tools of the trade: experiments, questionnaires, interviews, and observations. In a fascinating experiment, psychologists Donald Dutton and Arthur Aron discovered that fear can produce romantic love (Rubin 1985). Here's what they did.

About 230 feet above the Capilano River in North Vancouver, British Columbia, a rickety footbridge sways in the wind. It makes you feel like you might fall into the rocky gorge below. A more solid footbridge crosses only ten feet above the shallow stream.

The experimenters had an attractive woman approach men who were crossing these bridges. She told them she was studying “the effects of exposure to scenic attractions on creative expression.” She showed them a picture, and they wrote down their associations. The sexual imagery in their stories showed that the men on the unsteady, frightening bridge were more sexually aroused than were the men on the solid bridge. More of these men also called the young woman afterward—supposedly to get information about the study.

You may have noticed that this research was really about sexual attraction, not love. The point, however, is that romantic love usually begins with sexual attraction. Finding ourselves sexually attracted to someone, we spend time with that person. If we discover mutual interests, we may label our feelings “love.” Apparently, then, *romantic love has two components*. The first is emotional, a feeling of sexual attraction. The second is cognitive, a label that we attach to our feelings. If we attach this label, we describe ourselves as being “in love.”

### Marriage

In the typical case, marriage in the United States is preceded by “love,” but, contrary to folklore, whatever love is, it certainly is not blind. That is, love does not hit us willy-nilly, as if Cupid had shot darts blindly into a crowd. If it did, marital patterns would be unpredictable. An examination of who marries whom, however, reveals that love is socially channeled.

**The Social Channels of Love and Marriage** The most highly predictable social channels are age, education, social class, and race–ethnicity. For example, a Latina with a college degree whose parents are both physicians is likely to fall in love with and marry a Latino slightly older than herself who has graduated from college. Similarly, a girl who drops out of high school and whose parents are on welfare is likely to fall in love with and marry a man who comes from a background similar to hers.

Sociologists use the term **homogamy** to refer to the tendency of people who have similar characteristics to marry one another. Homogamy occurs largely as a result of *propinquity*, or spatial nearness. That is, we tend to “fall in love” with and marry people who live near us or whom we meet at school, church, or work. The people with whom we associate are far from a random sample of the population, for social filters produce neighborhoods, schools, and places of worship that follow racial–ethnic and social class lines.

As with all social patterns, there are exceptions. Although 93 percent of Americans who marry choose someone of their same racial–ethnic background, 7 percent do not. Because there are 60 million married couples in the United States, those 7 percent add up, totaling over 4 million couples (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Table 58).

One of the more dramatic changes in U.S. marriage patterns is a sharp increase in marriages between African Americans and whites. Today it is difficult to realize how norm shattering such marriages are, but in some states they used to be illegal and carry a jail sentence. In Mississippi, the penalty for interracial marriage was life in prison (Crossen 2004b). The last law of this type (called

## Cultural Diversity around the World

### East Is East and West Is West: Love and Arranged Marriage

After Arun Bharat Ram returned to India with a degree from the University of Michigan, his mother announced that she wanted to find him a wife. Arun would be a good catch anywhere: 27 years old, educated, well mannered, intelligent, handsome—and, not incidentally, heir to a huge fortune.

Arun's mother already had someone in mind. Manju came from a middle-class family and was a college graduate. Arun and Manju met in a coffee shop at a luxury hotel—along with both sets of parents. He found her pretty and quiet. He liked that. She was impressed that he didn't boast about his background.

After four more meetings, including one at which the two young people met by themselves, the parents asked their children whether they were willing to marry. Neither had any major objections.

The Prime Minister of India and fifteen hundred other guests came to the wedding.

"I didn't love him," Manju says. "But when we talked, we had a lot in common." She then adds, "But now I couldn't live without him. I've never thought of another man since I met him."

Although India has undergone extensive social change, Indian sociologists estimate that parents still arrange 90 to 95 percent of marriages. Today, however, as with Arun and Manju, couples have veto power over their parents' selection. Another innovation is that the prospective bride and groom are allowed to talk to each other before the wedding—unheard of just a generation ago.

Why do Indians have arranged marriages? And why does this practice persist today, even among the educated and upper classes? We can also ask why the United States has such an individualistic approach to marriage.

The answers to these questions take us to two sociological principles. First, *a group's marriage practices match*

*its values.* Individual mate selection matches U.S. values of individuality and independence, while arranged marriages match the Indian value of children deferring to parental authority. To Indians, allowing unrestricted dating would mean entrusting important matters to inexperienced young people.

Second, *a group's marriage practices match its patterns of social stratification.* Arranged marriages in India affirm caste lines by channeling marriage within the same caste. Unchaperoned dating would encourage premarital sex, which, in turn, would break down family lines. Virginity at marriage, in contrast, assures the upper castes that they

know the fatherhood of the children. In the United States, where family lines are less important and caste is an alien concept, the practice of young people choosing their own dating partners mirrors the relative openness of our social class system.

These different backgrounds have produced contrasting ideas of love. Americans idealize love as being mysterious, a passion that suddenly seizes an individual. Indians view love as

a peaceful feeling that develops when a man and a woman are united in intimacy and share common interests and goals in life. For Americans, love just "happens," while Indians think of love as something that can be created between two people by arranging the right conditions. Marriage is one of those right conditions.

The end result is this startling difference: *For Americans, love produces marriage—while for Indians, marriage produces love.*

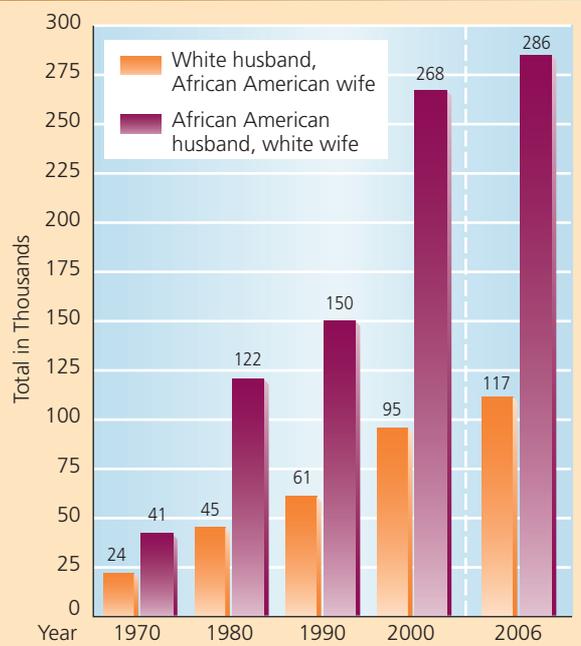
Sources: Based on Gupta 1979; Bumiller 1992; Sprecher and Chandak 1992; Dugger 1998; Derne 2003; Easley 2003; Berger 2007.

### For Your Consideration

What advantages do you see to the Indian approach to love and marriage? Do you think that the Indian system could work in the United States? Why or why not? Do you think that love can be created? Or does love suddenly "seize" people? What do you think love is?



*This billboard in Chennai, India, caught my attention. Even though India is industrializing, most of its people still follow traditional customs. This billboard is a sign of changing times.*

**FIGURE 12.2** Marriages Between Whites and African Americans: The Race–Ethnicity of the Husbands and Wives

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract 1990*: Table 53; 2008: Table 59.

*antimiscegenation* laws) was not repealed until 2000. It had been a part of the Alabama constitution (Lee and Edmonston 2005). There always have been a few couples who crossed the “color line,” but the social upheaval of the 1960s broke this barrier permanently.

Figure 12.2 illustrates this increase. Look at the race–ethnicity of the husbands and wives in these marriages. You can see that here, too, Cupid’s arrows don’t hit random targets. If you look closely, you can see an emerging change. Since 2000, marriages between African American women and white men are increasing faster than those between African American men and white women.

## Child Rearing

As you saw in Figure 12.2, today’s parents—both mothers and fathers—are spending more time with their chil-

dren than parents did in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite this trend, with mothers and fathers spending so many hours away from home at work, we must ask, Who’s minding the kids while the parents are at work?

**Married Couples and Single Mothers** Figure 12.3 on the next page compares the child care arrangements of married couples and single mothers. As you can see, their overall arrangements are similar. A main difference is the role of the child’s father while the mother is at work. For married couples, about one of five children is cared for by the father, while for single mothers, care by the father drops to one of ten. As you can see, grandparents help fill the gap left by the absent father. Single mothers also rely more on organized day care.

**Day Care** Figure 12.3 also shows that about one of four or five children is in day care. The broad conclusions of research on day care were reported in Chapter 3 (pages 74–75). Apparently only a minority of U.S. day care centers offer high-quality care as measured by whether they provide stimulating learning activities, safety, and emotional warmth (Bergmann 1995; Blau 2000). A primary reason for this dismal situation is the low salaries paid to day care workers, who average only about \$15,000 a year (*Statistical Abstract 2007*: Table 561, adjusted for inflation).

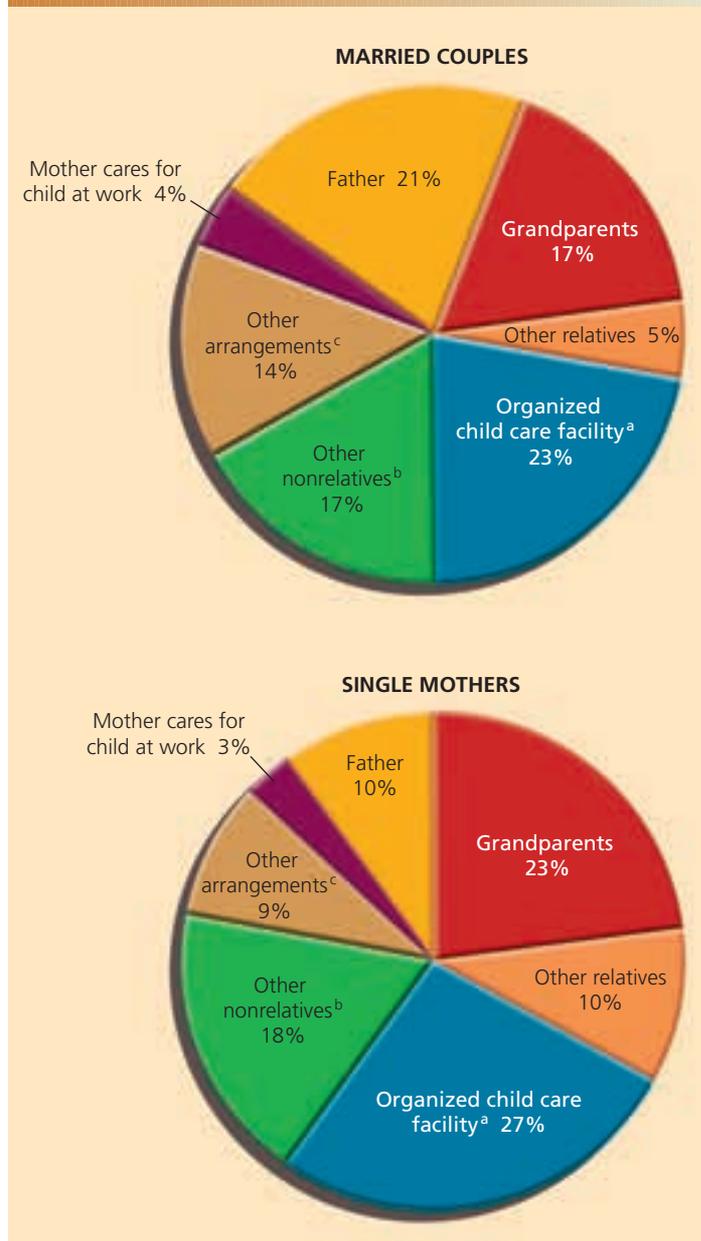
It is difficult for parents to judge the quality of day care, since they don’t know what takes place when they are not there. If you ever look for day care, two factors best predict that children will receive quality care: staff who have taken courses in early childhood development and a low ratio of



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One of the most demanding, exasperating—and also fulfilling—roles in life is that of parent. To really appreciate this cartoon, however, perhaps one has to have experienced this part of the life course.

**FIGURE 12.3** Who Takes Care of Preschoolers While Their Parents Are at Work?



<sup>a</sup>Includes in-home babysitters and other nonrelatives providing care in either the child's or the provider's home.

<sup>b</sup>Includes self-care and no regular arrangements.

<sup>c</sup>Includes day care centers, nursery schools, preschools, and Head Start programs.

Source: *America's Children 2005*: Table POP8.B.

children per staff member (Blau 2000; Belsky et al. 2007). If you have nagging fears that your children might be neglected or even abused, choose a center that streams live Webcam images on the Internet. While at work, you can “visit” each room of the day care center via cyberspace and monitor your toddler's activities and care.

**Nannies** For upper-middle-class parents, nannies have become a popular alternative to day care centers. Parents love the one-on-one care. They also like the convenience of in-home care, which eliminates the need to transport the child to an unfamiliar environment, reduces the chances that the child will catch illnesses, and eliminates the hardship of parents having to take time off from work when their child becomes ill. A recurring problem, however, is tension between the parents and the nanny: jealousy that the nanny might see the first step, hear the first word, or—worse yet—be called “mommy.” There are also tensions over different discipline styles; disdain on the part of the nanny that the mother isn't staying home with her child; and feelings of guilt or envy as the child cries when the nanny leaves but not when the mother goes to work.

**Social Class** Do you think that social class makes a difference in how people rear their children? If you answered “yes,” you are right. But what difference? And why? Sociologists have found that working-class parents tend to think of children as wildflowers that develop naturally. Middle-class parents, in contrast, are more likely to think of children as garden flowers that need a lot of nurturing if they are to bloom (Lareau 2002). These contrasting views make a world of difference. Working-class parents are more likely to set limits on their children and then let them choose their own activities. Middle-class parents, in contrast, are more likely to try to push their children into activities that they think will develop the children's thinking and social skills.

Sociologist Melvin Kohn (1963, 1977; Kohn and Schooler 1969) also found that the type of work that parents do has an impact on how they rear their children. Because members of the working class are closely supervised on their jobs, where they are expected to follow explicit rules, their concern is less with their children's motivation and more with their outward conformity. These parents are more apt to use physical punishment—which brings about outward conformity without regard for internal attitude.

Middle-class workers, in contrast, are expected to take more initiative on the job. Consequently, middle-class parents have more concern that their children develop curiosity and self-expression. They are also more likely to withdraw privileges or affection than to use physical punishment.

### Family Transitions

The later stages of family life bring their own pleasures to be savored and problems to be solved. Let's look at two transitions.

**“Adulthood” and the Not-So-Empty Nest** When the last child leaves home, the husband and wife are left, as at the beginning of their marriage, “alone together.” This situation, sometimes called the *empty nest*, is not as empty as it used to be. With prolonged education and the high cost of establishing a household, U.S. children are leaving home later. Many stay home during college, and others move back after college. Some (called “boomerang children”) strike out on their own, but then find the cost or responsibility too great and return home. Much to their own disappointment, some even leave and return to the parents' home several times. As a result, 42 percent of all U.S. 25- to 29-year-olds are living with their parents (U.S. Census Bureau 2006:Table A2).

Although these “adulthood” enjoy the protection of home, they have to work out issues of remaining dependent on their parents at the same time that they are grappling with concerns and fears about establishing independent lives. For the parents, “boomerang children” mean not only a disruption of routines but also disagreements about turf, authority, and responsibilities—items they thought were long ago resolved.

**Widowhood** As you know, women are more likely than men to become widowed. There are two reasons for this: Women usually marry men older than they are—and most

outlive their husbands. For either women or men, the death of a spouse tears at the self, clawing at identities that had merged through the years. When the one who had become an essential part of the self is gone, the survivor, as in adolescence, is forced once again to wrestle with the perplexing question “Who am I?”

Most of the widowed adjust well within a year of the death of their spouse. Some even experience a gain in self-esteem, especially those who had been the most dependent on their spouse. They apparently feel better about themselves because they learn to do things on their own (Carr 2004). Deaths that are unexpected are more difficult to adjust to. Spouses who know that death is impending are able to make preparations that smooth the transition—from arranging finances to preparing themselves psychologically for being alone (Hiltz 1989). You can see how saying goodbye and cultivating treasured last memories would help people adjust to the impending death of an intimate companion. Sudden death, in contrast, rips the loved one away, offering no chance at this predeath healing process.

## Diversity in U.S. Families

It is important to note that there is no such thing as *the* American family. Rather, family life varies widely throughout the United States. The significance of social class, noted earlier, will continue to be evident as we examine diversity in U.S. families.

### African American Families

Note that the heading reads African American *families*, not *the* African American family. There is no such thing as *the* African American family any more than there is *the* white family or *the* Latino family. The primary distinction

There is no such thing as *the* African American family, any more than there is *the* Native American, Asian American, Latino, or Irish American family. Rather, each racial-ethnic group has different types of families, with the primary determinant being social class.



is not between African Americans and other groups, but between social classes (Willie and Reddick 2003). Because African Americans who are members of the upper class follow the class interests reviewed in Chapter 8—preservation of privilege and family fortune—they are especially concerned about the family background of those whom their children marry (Gatewood 1990). To them, marriage is viewed as a merger of family lines. Children of this class marry later than children of other classes.

Middle-class African American families focus on achievement and respectability. Both husband and wife are likely to work outside the home. A central concern is that their children go to college, get good jobs, and marry well—that is, marry people like themselves, respectable and hardworking, who want to get ahead in school and pursue a successful career.

African American families in poverty face all the problems that cluster around poverty (Wilson 1987, 1996; Anderson 1990/2006; Venkatesh 2006). Because the men are likely to have few skills and to be unemployed, it is difficult for them to fulfill the cultural roles of husband and father. Consequently, these families are likely to be headed by a woman and to have a high rate of births to single women. Divorce and desertion are also more common than among other classes. Sharing scarce resources and “stretching kinship” are primary survival mechanisms. People who have helped out in hard times are considered brothers, sisters, or cousins to whom one owes obligations as though they were blood relatives; and men who are not the biological fathers of their children are given fatherhood status (Stack 1974; Fischer et al. 2005). Sociologists use the term *fictive kin* to refer to this stretching of kinship.

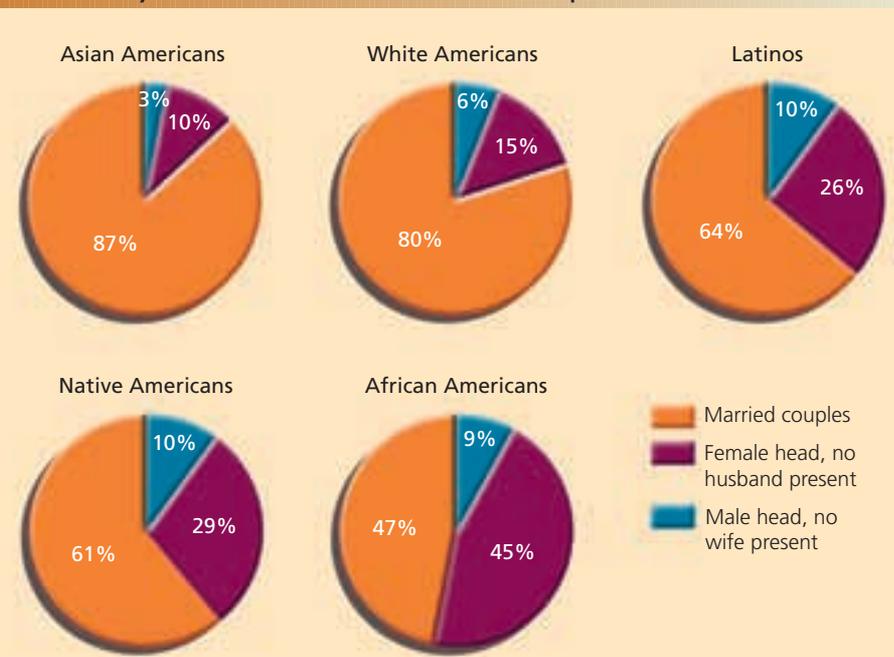
From Figure 12.4 you can see that, compared with other groups, African American families are the least likely to be headed by married couples and the most likely to be headed by women. Because African American women tend to go farther in school than African American men, they are more likely than women in other racial-ethnic groups to marry men who are less educated than themselves (South 1991; Eshleman 2000).

## Latino Families

As Figure 12.4 shows, the proportion of Latino families headed by married couples and women falls in between that of whites and African Americans. The effects of social class on families, which I just sketched, also apply to Latinos. In addition, families differ by country of origin. Families from Mexico, for example, are more likely to be headed by a married couple than are families from Puerto Rico (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Table 44). The longer that Latinos have lived in the United States, the more their families resemble those of middle-class Americans (Saenz 2004).

With such a wide variety, experts disagree on what is distinctive about Latino families. Some point to the Spanish language, the Roman Catholic religion, and a strong family orientation coupled with a disapproval of divorce. Others add that Latinos emphasize loyalty to the extended family, with an obligation to support the extended family in times of need (Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez 2002). Descriptions of Latino families used to include **machismo**—an emphasis on male strength, sexual vigor, and dominance—but current studies show that *machismo* now characterizes

**FIGURE 12.4** Family Structure: The Percentage of U.S. Families Headed by Men, Women, and Married Couples



Sources: By the author. For Native Americans, “American Community . . .” 2004. For other groups, *Statistical Abstract* 2007:Tables 41, 44, 62. Data for Asian Americans are for families with children under 18, while the other groups don’t have this limitation. Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

As with other groups, there is no such thing as *the* Latino family. Some Latino families have assimilated into U.S. culture to such an extent that they no longer speak Spanish. Others maintain Mexican customs, such as this family, which is celebrating quinceañera, the “coming of age” of girls at age 15 (traditionally, an announcement to the community that a girl is eligible for courtship).



only a small proportion of Latino husband-fathers (Torres et al. 2002). *Machismo* apparently decreases with each generation in the United States (Hurtado et al. 1992; D. B. Wood 2001). Some researchers have found that the husband-father plays a stronger role than in either white or African American families (Vega 1990; Torres et al. 2002). Apparently, the wife-mother is usually more family-centered than her husband, displaying more warmth and affection for her children.

It is difficult to draw generalizations because, as with other racial-ethnic groups, individual Latino families vary considerably (Contreras et al. 2002). Some Latino families, for example, have acculturated to such an extent that they are Protestants who do not speak Spanish.

### Asian American Families

As you can see from Figure 12.4 on the previous page, Asian American children are more likely than children in any other racial-ethnic group to grow up with both parents. As with the other groups, family life also reflects social class. In addition, because Asian Americans emigrated from many different countries, their family life reflects those many cultures (Xie and Goyette 2004). As with Latino families, the more recent their immigration, the more closely their family life reflects the patterns in their country of origin (Kibria 1993; Glenn 1994).

Despite such differences, sociologist Bob Suzuki (1985), who studied Chinese American and Japanese American families, identified several distinctive characteristics of Asian American families. Although Asian Americans have adopted the nuclear family structure, they have retained Confucian values that provide a framework for family life: humanism, collectivity, self-discipline, hierarchy, respect for the elderly, moderation, and obligation. Obligation means that each member of a family owes respect to other family members and has a responsibility never to bring shame on the family. Conversely, a child's success brings honor to the family (Zamiska 2004). To control their children, Asian American parents are more likely to use shame and guilt than physical punishment.

The ideal does not always translate into the real, however, and so it is here. The children born to Asian immigrants confront a bewildering world of incompatible expectations—those of the new culture and those of their parents. As a result, they experience more family conflict and mental problems than do children of Asian Americans who are not immigrants (Meiers 2006).

### Native American Families

Perhaps the single most significant issue that Native American families face is whether to follow traditional values or to assimilate into the dominant culture (Garrett 1999). This



To search for *the* Native American family would be fruitless. There are rural, urban, single-parent, extended, nuclear, rich, poor, traditional, and assimilated Native American families, to name just a few. Shown here is an Onondaga Nation family. The wife is a teacher; the husband a Webmaster:

primary distinction creates vast differences among families. The traditionals speak native languages and emphasize distinctive Native American values and beliefs. Those who have assimilated into the broader culture do not.

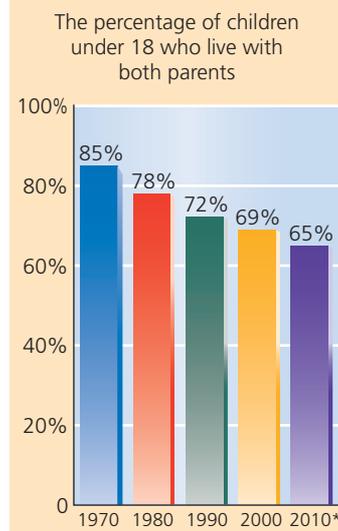
Figure 12.4 on page 341 depicts the structure of Native American families. You can see how close it is to that of Latinos. In general, Native American parents are permissive with their children and avoid physical punishment. Elders play a much more active role in their children's families than they do in most U.S. families: Elders, especially grandparents, not only provide child care but also teach and discipline children. Like others, Native American families differ by social class.

**In Sum:** From this brief review, you can see that race-ethnicity signifies little for understanding family life. Rather, social class and culture hold the keys. The more resources a family has, the more it assumes the characteristics of a middle-class nuclear family. Compared with the poor, middle-class families have fewer children and fewer unmarried mothers. They also place greater emphasis on educational achievement and deferred gratification.

### One-Parent Families

Another indication of how extensively U.S. families are changing is the increase in one-parent families. From Figure 12.5, you can see that the percentage of U.S. children who

**FIGURE 12.5**  
The Decline of  
Two-Parent Families



\*Author's estimate

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1995:Table 79; 2007:Table 62.

live with two parents (not necessarily their biological parents) has dropped sharply. The concerns that are often expressed about one-parent families may have more to do with their poverty than with children being reared by one parent. Because women head most one-parent families, these families tend to be poor. Most divorced women earn less than their former husbands, yet about 85 percent of children of divorce live with their mothers (“Child Support” 1995; Aulette 2002).

To understand the typical one-parent family, then, we need to view it through the lens of poverty, for that is its primary source of strain. The results are serious, not just for these parents and their children but also for society as a whole. Children from one-parent families are more likely to drop out of school, to get arrested, to have emotional problems, and to get divorced (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Menaghan et al. 1997; McLanahan and Schwartz 2002; Amato and Cheadle 2005). If female, they are more likely to become sexually active at a younger age and to bear children while still unmarried teenagers.

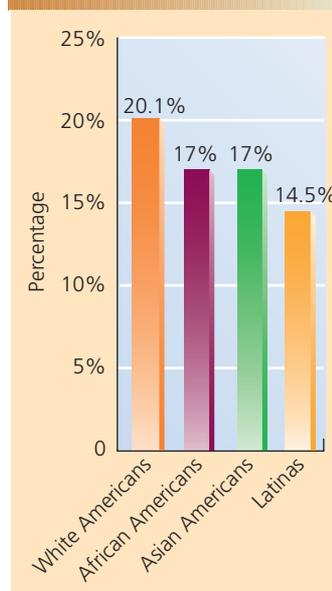
### Families Without Children

While most married women give birth, about one of five (19 percent) do not (DeOilos and Kapinus 2003). The number of childless couples has *doubled* from what it was twenty years ago. As you can see from Figure 12.6, this percentage varies by racial-ethnic group, with whites and Latinas representing the extremes. Some couples are infertile, but most childless couples have made a *choice* to not have children. Why do they make this choice? Some women believe they would be stuck at home—bored, lonely, with dwindling career opportunities. Some couples perceive their marriage as too fragile to withstand the strains that a child would bring (Gerson 1985). A common reason is to attain a sense of freedom—to pursue a career, to be able to change jobs, to travel, and to have less stress (Lunneborg 1999; Letherby 2002).

With trends firmly in place—more education and careers for women, advances in contraception, legal abortion, the high cost of rearing children, and an emphasis on possessing more material things—the proportion of women who never bear children is likely to increase. Consider this statement in a newsletter:

We are DINKS (Dual Incomes, No Kids). We are happily married. I am 43; my wife is 42. We have been married for almost twenty years. . . . Our investment strategy has a lot to do with our personal philosophy: “You can have kids—or you can have everything else!”

**FIGURE 12.6** What Percentage of U.S. Married Women Never Give Birth?



Source: By the author. Based on Bachu and O’Connell 2000:Table A.

### Blended Families

The **blended family**, one whose members were once part of other families, is an increasingly significant type of family in the United States. Two divorced people who marry and each bring their children into a new family unit form a blended family. With divorce common, millions of children spend some of their childhood in blended families. One result is more complicated family relationships. Consider this description written by one of my students:

I live with my dad. I should say that I live with my dad, my brother (whose mother and father are also my mother and father), my half sister (whose father is my dad, but whose mother is my father’s last wife), and two stepbrothers and stepsisters (children of my father’s current wife). My father’s wife (my current stepmother, not to be confused with his second wife who, I guess, is no longer my stepmother) is pregnant, and soon we all will have a new brother or sister. Or will it be a half brother or half sister?

If you can’t figure this out, I don’t blame you. I have trouble myself. It gets very complicated around Christmas. Should we all stay together? Split up and go to several other homes? Who do we buy gifts for, anyway?

## Gay and Lesbian Families

In 1989, Denmark became the first country to legalize marriage between people of the same sex. Since then, several European countries, Canada, and the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and California allow people of the same sex to marry. Other states recognize “registered domestic partnerships.” Walking a fine conceptual tightrope, they give legal status to same-sex unions but avoid the term *marriage*.

At this point, most gay and lesbian couples lack both legal marriage and the legal protection of registered “partnerships.” Although these couples live throughout the United States, about half are concentrated in just twenty cities. The greatest concentrations are in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlanta, New York City, and Washington, D.C. About one-fifth of gay and lesbian couples were previously married to heterosexuals. Twenty-two percent of female couples and 5 percent of male couples have children from their earlier heterosexual marriages (Bianchi and Casper 2000).

What are same-sex relationships like? Like everything else in life, these couples cannot be painted with a single brush stroke. As with opposite-sex couples, social class is significant, and orientations to life differ according to education, occupation, and income. Sociologists Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz (1985) interviewed same-sex couples and found their main struggles to be housework, money, careers, problems with relatives, and sexual adjustment—the same problems that face heterosexual couples. Some also confront discrimi-

nation at work, which can add stress to their relationship (Todosijevec et al. 2005). Same-sex couples are more likely to break up, and one argument for legalizing gay marriages is that the marriage contract will make these relationships more stable. If they were surrounded by laws, same-sex marriages would be like opposite-sex marriages—to break them would require negotiating around legal obstacles.

## Trends in U.S. Families

As is apparent from this discussion, marriage and family life in the United States is undergoing fundamental shifts. Let’s examine other indicators of changes.

### Postponing Marriage and Childbirth

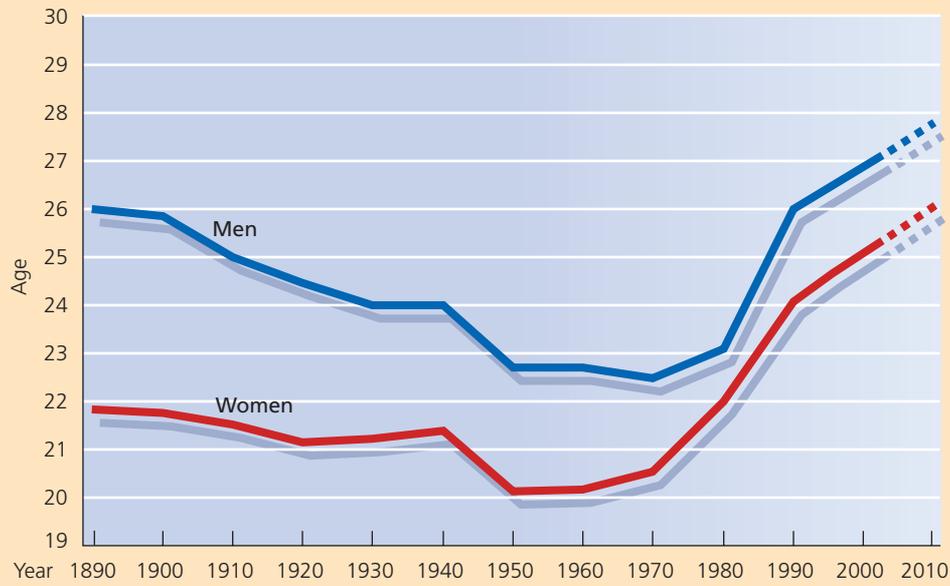
Figure 12.7 on the next page illustrates one of the most significant changes in U.S. marriages. As you can see, the average age of first-time brides and grooms declined from 1890 to about 1950. In 1890, the typical first-time bride was 22, but by 1950, she had just left her teens. For about twenty years, there was little change. Then in 1970, the average age started to increase sharply. *Today’s average first-time bride and groom are older than at any other time in U.S. history.*

Since postponing marriage is today’s norm, it may come as a surprise to many readers to learn that *most* U.S. women used to be married by the time they reached age 24. To see this remarkable change, look at Figure 12.8 on the next page.



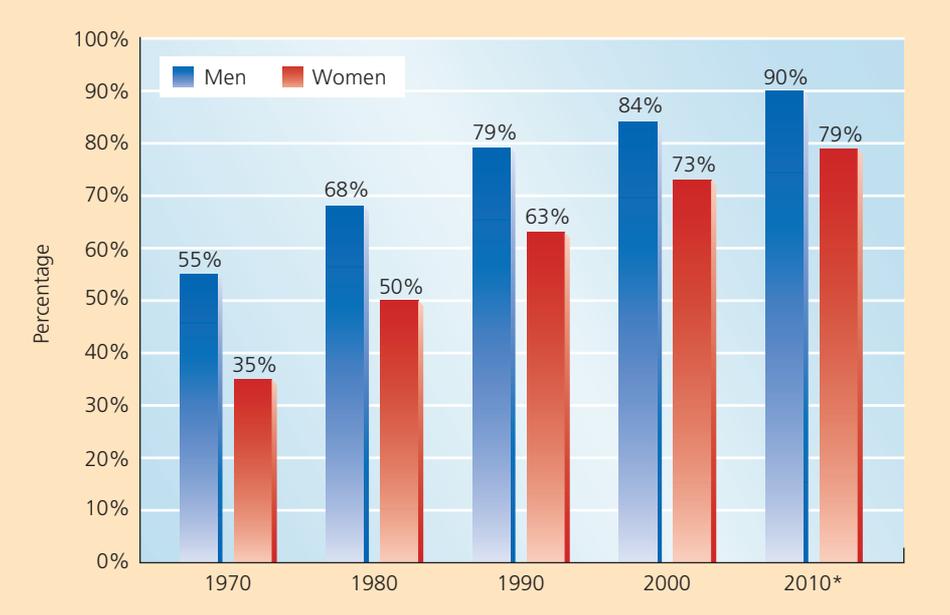
A major issue that has caught the public’s attention is whether same-sex couples should have the right of legal marriage. This issue will be decided not by public protest but by legislation and the courts.

**FIGURE 12.7** The Median Age at Which Americans Marry for the First Time



Note: The broken lines indicate the author's estimate.  
 Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1999:Table 158 (table dropped in later editions); U.S. Bureau of the Census 2003; Fields 2004.

**FIGURE 12.8** Americans Ages 20–24 Who Have Never Married



\*Author's estimate.  
 Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1993:Table 60; 2002:Table 48; 2007:Table 55.

Postponing marriage has become so common that the percentage of women of this age who are unmarried is now more than *double* what it was in 1970. Another consequence of postponing marriage is that the average age at which U.S. women have their first child is also the highest in U.S. history (Mathews and Hamilton 2002).

Why have these changes occurred? The primary reason is cohabitation (Michael et al. 2004). Although Americans have postponed the age at which they first marry, they have *not* postponed the age at which they first set up housekeeping with someone of the opposite sex. Let's look at this trend.

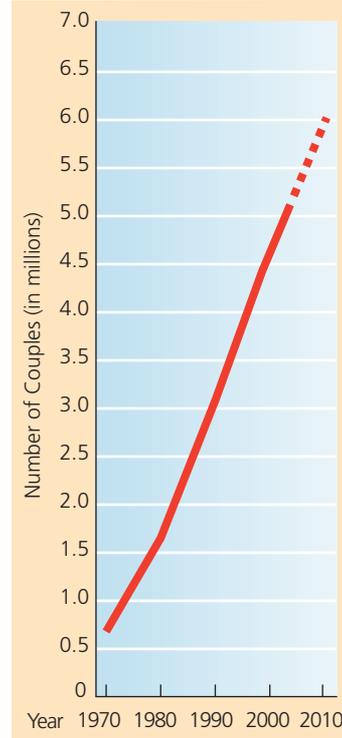
## Cohabitation

Figure 12.9 shows the increase in **cohabitation**, adults living together in a sexual relationship without being married. This figure is one of the most remarkable in sociology. Hardly ever do we have totals that rise this steeply and consistently. Cohabitation is *almost ten times* more common today than it was 30 years ago. Today, 60 percent of the couples who marry for the first time have lived together before marriage. A generation ago, it was just 8 percent (Bianchi and Casper 2000; Batalova and Cohen 2002). Cohabitation has become so common that about 40 percent of U.S. children will spend some time in a cohabiting family (Scommegna 2002).

*Commitment* is the essential difference between cohabitation and marriage. In marriage, the assumption is permanence; in cohabitation, couples agree to remain together for "as long as it works out." For marriage, individuals make public vows that legally bind them as a couple; for cohabitation, they simply move in together. Marriage requires a judge to authorize its termination; if a cohabiting relationship sours, the couple separates, telling friends that "it didn't work out." Perhaps the single statement that pinpoints the difference in commitment between marriage and cohabitation is this: Cohabiting couples are less likely than married couples to have a joint bank account (Brines and Joyner 1999). As you know, some cohabiting couples do marry. But do you know how this is related to what cohabitation means to them? This is the subject of our Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page.

Are the marriages of couples who cohabited stronger than the marriages of couples who did not live together before they married? It would seem that cohabiting couples might have worked out a lot of problems prior to marriage. To find out, sociologists compared their divorce rates. It turns out that couples who cohabit before marriage are *more* likely to divorce. This presented another

**FIGURE 12.9**  
Cohabitation in the  
United States



Note: Broken line indicates author's estimate.

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1995:Table 60; 2007:Table 61.

sociological puzzle. The key to solving it, suggest some sociologists, is the greater ease of ending a cohabiting relationship than a marriage (Dush et al. 2003). As a result, people are less picky about whom they live with than whom they marry. After they cohabit, however, they experience a push toward marriage. Some of this "push" comes from having common possessions, pets, and children. Other comes from pressure—some subtle and some rather direct—applied by friends and family. Many end up marrying a partner that they would not otherwise have chosen.

## Unmarried Mothers

Births to single women in the United States have increased steadily during the past decades, going from 10 percent in 1970 to 37 percent today (*Statistical Abstract*

## Down-to-Earth sociology

### “You Want Us to Live Together? What Do You Mean By That?”

**W**hat has led to the surge of cohabitation in the United States? Let’s consider two fundamental changes in U.S. culture.

The first is changed ideas of sexual morality. It is difficult for today’s college students to grasp the sexual morality that prevailed before the 1960s sexual revolution. Almost everyone used to consider sex before marriage to be immoral. Premarital sex existed, to be sure, but it took place furtively and often with guilt. To live together before marriage was called “shacking up,” and the couple was said to be “living in sin.” A double standard prevailed. It was the woman’s responsibility to say no to sex before marriage. Consequently, she was considered to be the especially sinful one in cohabitation.

The second cultural change is the high U.S. divorce rate. Although the rate has declined since 1980, today’s young adults have seen more divorce than any prior generation. This makes marriage seem fragile, as if it is something that is not likely to last regardless of how much you devote yourself to it. This is scary. Cohabitation reduces the threat by offering a relationship of intimacy in which divorce is impossible. You can break up, but you can’t get divorced.

From the outside, all cohabitation may look the same, but not to the people who are living together. As you can see from Table 12.2, for about 10 percent of couples,

cohabitation is a substitute for marriage. These couples consider themselves married but for some reason don’t want a marriage certificate. Some object to marriage on philosophical grounds (“What difference does a piece of paper make?”); others do not yet have a legal divorce from a spouse. Almost half of cohabitants (46 percent) view cohabitation as a step on the path to marriage. For them, cohabitation is more than “going steady” but less than engagement. Another 15 percent of couples are simply “giving it a try.” They want to see what marriage to one another might be like. For the least committed, about 29 percent, cohabitation is a form of dating. It provides a dependable source of sex and emotional support.

Do these distinctions make a difference in whether couples marry? Let’s look at these couples a half dozen years after they began to live together. As you can see from Table 12.2, couples who view cohabitation as a substitute for marriage are the least likely to marry and the most likely to continue to cohabit. For couples who see cohabitation as a step toward marriage, the outcome is just the opposite: They are the most likely to marry and the least likely to still be cohabiting. Couples who are the most likely to break up are those who “tried” cohabitation and those for whom cohabitation was a form of dating.

### For Your Consideration

Can you explain why the meaning of cohabitation makes a difference in whether couples marry? Can you classify cohabiting couples you know into these four types? Do you think there are other types? If so, what would they be?

**TABLE 12.2** What Cohabitation Means: Does It Make a Difference?

What Cohabitation Means	Percent of Couples	After 5 to 7 years			
		Split Up	Still Together	Of those still together	
				Married	Cohabiting
Substitute for Marriage	10%	35%	65%	37%	63%
Step toward Marriage	46%	31%	69%	73%	27%
Trial Marriage	15%	51%	49%	66%	34%
Coresidential Dating	29%	46%	54%	61%	39%

Source: Recomputed from Bianchi and Casper 2000.

1995:Table 94; 2008:Table 85). Let's place these births in global perspective. As Figure 12.10 shows, the United States is not alone in its increase. Of the twelve nations for which we have data, all except Japan have experienced sharp increases in births to unmarried mothers. As you can see, the U.S. rate falls higher than average but not at the extreme.

From this figure, it would seem fair to conclude that industrialization sets in motion social forces that encourage out-of-wedlock births. There are several problems with this conclusion, however. Why was the rate so much lower in 1960? These nations had all been industrialized for many decades by that time. Why are the rates in Japan and Italy so much lower than those of the other nations? Why does Japan's rate remain low? Why is Sweden's rate so high? Why have the rates of some nations leveled off—and all at about the same time? Industrialization is too simple an answer. A fuller explanation must focus on customs and values embedded within these cultures. For those answers, we will have to await further research.

### The “Sandwich Generation” and Elder Care

The “sandwich generation” refers to people who find themselves sandwiched between and responsible for two other generations, their children and their own aging parents. Typically between the ages of 40 and 55, these people find themselves pulled in two compelling directions. Many feel overwhelmed as these competing responsibilities collide. Some are plagued with guilt and anger because they can be in only one place at a time and have little time to pursue personal interests.

Concerns about elder care have gained the attention of the corporate world, and half of the 1,000 largest U.S. companies offer elder care assistance to their employees (Hewitt Associates 2004). This assistance includes seminars, referral services, and flexible work schedules to help employees meet their responsibilities without missing so much work. Why are companies responding more positively to the issue of elder care than to child care? Most CEOs are older men whose wives stayed home to take care of their children, so they don't understand the stresses of balancing work and child care. In contrast, nearly all have

aging parents, and many have faced the turmoil of trying to cope with both their parents' needs and those of work and their own family.

With people living longer, this issue is likely to become increasingly urgent.

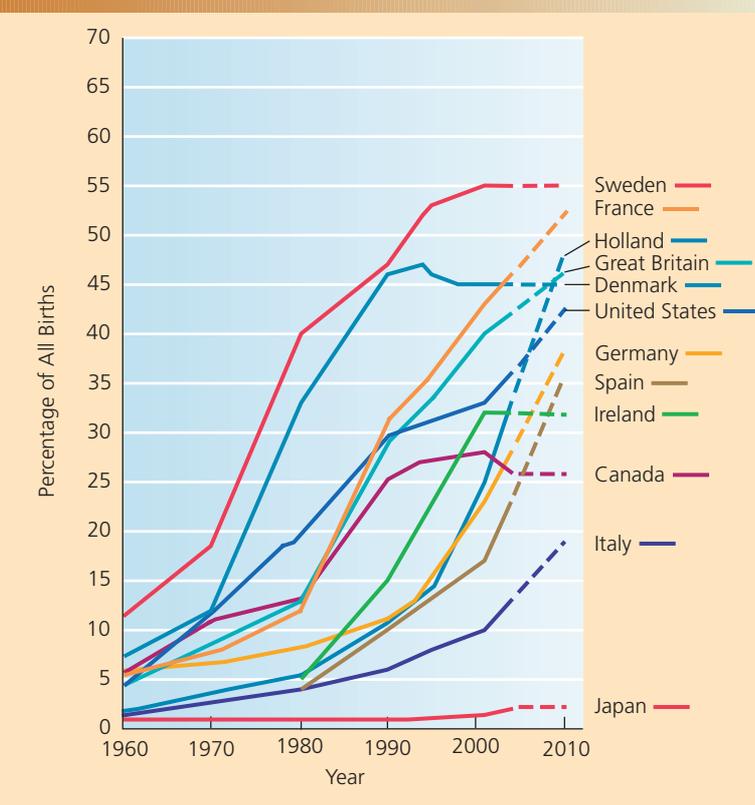
## Divorce and Remarriage

The topic of family life would not be complete without considering divorce. Let's first try to determine how much divorce there really is.

### Problems in Measuring Divorce

You probably have heard that the U.S. divorce rate is 50 percent, a figure that is popular with reporters. The statistic is true in the sense that each year about half as

**FIGURE 12.10** Births to Unmarried Women in Ten Industrialized Nations



Note: The broken lines indicate the author's estimates.

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1993:Table 1380; 2001:Table 1331; 2007:Table 1311.

many divorces are granted as there are marriages performed. The totals are 2.2 million marriages and about 1.1 million divorces (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Tables 17, 76, 119).

What is wrong, then, with saying that the divorce rate is about 50 percent? Think about it for a moment. Why should we compare the number of divorces and marriages that take place during the same year? The couples who divorced do not—with rare exceptions—come from the group that married that year. The one number has *nothing* to do with the other, so these statistics in no way establish the divorce rate.

What figures should we compare, then? Couples who divorce are drawn from the entire group of married people in the country. Since the United States has 60,000,000 married couples, and only about 1 million of them obtain divorces in a year, the divorce rate for any given year is less than 2 percent. A couple's chances of still being married at the end of a year are over 98 percent—not bad odds—and certainly much better odds than the mass media would have us believe. As the Social Map below shows,

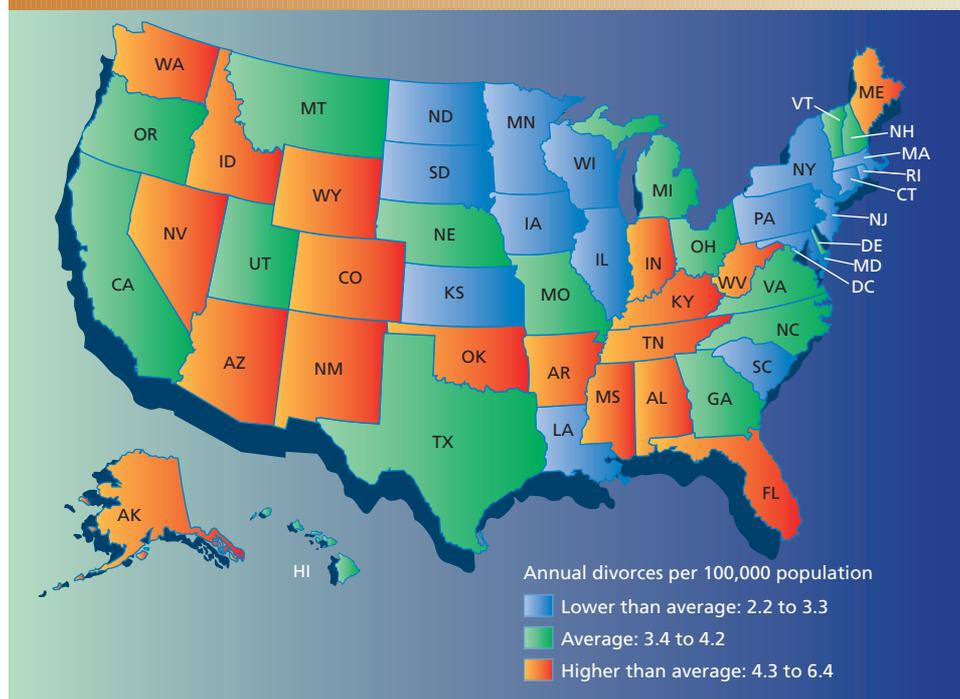
the “odds”—if we want to call them that—depend on where you live.

Over time, of course, each year's small percentage adds up. A third way of measuring divorce, then, is to ask, “Of all U.S. adults, what percentage are divorced?” Figure 12.12 on the next page answers this question. You can see how divorce has increased over the years and how race–ethnicity makes a difference for the likelihood that couples will divorce. If you look closely, you can also see that the rate of divorce has slowed down.

Figure 12.12 shows us the percentage of Americans who are currently divorced, but we get yet another answer if we ask the question, “What percentage of Americans have *ever* been divorced?” This percentage increases with each age group, peaking when people reach their 50s. Forty percent of women in their 50s have been divorced at some point in their lives; for men, the total is 43 percent (“Marital History . . .” 2004).

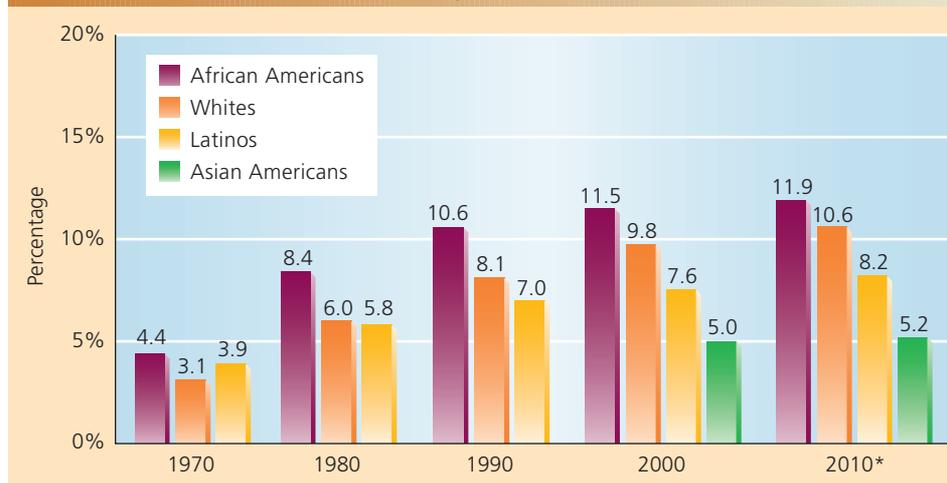
What most of us want to know is what *our* chances of divorce are. It is one thing to know that a certain percentage of Americans are divorced, but have sociologists found

FIGURE 12.11 The “Where” of U.S. Divorce



Note: Data for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, and Louisiana, based on the earlier editions in the source, have been decreased by the average decrease in U.S. divorce.

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1995:Table 149; 2002:Table 111; 2007:Table 119.

**FIGURE 12.12** What Percentage of Americans Are Divorced?

Note: This figure shows the percentage who are divorced and have not remarried, not the percentage who have ever divorced. Only these racial-ethnic groups are listed in the source. The source only recently added data on Asian Americans.

\*Author's estimate

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1995:Table 58; 2007:Table 54.

out anything that will tell me about *my* chances of divorce? This is the topic of the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page.

### Children of Divorce

Each year, more than 1 million U.S. children learn that their parents are divorcing. These children are more likely than children reared by both parents to experience emotional problems, both during childhood and after they grow up (Amato and Sobolewski 2001; Weitoft et al. 2003). They are also more likely to become juvenile delinquents (Wallerstein et al. 2001) and less likely to complete high school, to attend college, and to graduate from college (McLanahan and Schwartz 2002). Finally, the children of divorce are themselves more likely to divorce (Wolfinger 2003), perpetuating a marriage-divorce cycle.

Is the greater maladjustment of the children of divorce a serious problem? This question initiated a lively debate between two researchers, both psychologists. Judith Wallerstein claims that divorce scars children, making them depressed and leaving them with insecurities that follow them into adulthood (Wallerstein et al. 2001). Mavis Hetherington replies that 75 to 80 percent of children of divorce function as well as children who are reared by both of their parents (Hetherington and Kelly 2003).

Without meaning to weigh in on either side of this debate, it doesn't seem to be a simple case of the glass being half empty or half full. If 75 to 80 percent of children of divorce don't suffer long-term harm, this leaves one-fourth to one-fifth who do. Any way you look at it, one-fourth or one-fifth of a million children each year is a lot of kids who are having a lot of problems.

What helps children adjust to divorce? Children of divorce who feel close to both parents make the best adjustment, and those who don't feel close to either parent make the worst adjustment (Richardson and McCabe 2001). Other studies show that children adjust well if they experience little conflict, feel loved, live with a parent who is making a good adjustment, and have consistent routines. It also helps if their family has adequate money to meet its needs. Children also adjust better if a second adult can be counted on for support (Hayashi and Strickland 1998). Urie Bronfenbrenner (1992) says this person is like the third leg of a stool, giving stability to the smaller family unit. Any adult can be the third leg, he says—a relative, friend, or even a former mother-in-law—but the most powerful stabilizing third leg is the father, the ex-husband.

As mentioned, when the children of divorce grow up and marry, they are more likely to divorce than are adults who grew up in intact families. Have researchers found any factors that increase the chances that the children of divorce will have successful marriages? Actually, they have. They are more likely to have a lasting marriage if they marry someone whose parents did not divorce. In these marriages, the level of trust is higher and the amount of conflict is less. If both husband and wife come from broken families, however, it is not good news. Those marriages tend to have more distrust and conflict, leading to a higher chance of divorce (Wolfinger 2003).

### Grandchildren of Divorce

Paul Amato and Jacob Cheadle (2005), the first sociologists to study the grandchildren of people who had divorced, found that the effects of divorce continue across generations. Using a national sample, they compared

## Down-to-Earth Sociology

### “What Are Your Chances of Getting Divorced?”

It is probably true that over a lifetime about half of all marriages fail (Whitehead and Popenoe 2004). If you have that 50 percent figure dancing in your head, you might as well make sure that you have an escape door open even while you’re saying “I do.”

Not every group carries the same risk of divorce. Some have a much higher risk, and some much lower. Let’s look at some factors that reduce people’s risk.

As Table 12.3 shows, sociologists have worked out percentages that you might find useful (Whitehead and Popenoe 2004). As you can see, people who go to college, participate in a religion, wait to get married before having children, and earn higher incomes have a much better chance that their marriage will last. You can also see that having parents who did not divorce is significant. If you reverse these factors, you will see how the likelihood of



divorce increases for people who have a baby before they marry, who marry in their teens, and so on. It is important to note, however, that these factors reduce the risk of divorce for groups of people, not for any certain individual.

Here are two other factors that increase the risk for divorce (Aberg 2003). For these, sociologists have not computed percentages. Having co-workers who are of the opposite sex (I’m sure you can figure out why) and working with people who are recently divorced increase the risk of divorce. Apparently, divorce is “contagious,” following a pattern like measles. Perhaps being around divorced people makes divorce more acceptable. This would increase the likelihood that married people will act on their inevitable dissatisfactions and attractions. Or it could be that divorced people are more likely to “hit” on their fellow workers—and human nature being what it is . . .

**TABLE 12.3** What Reduces the Risk of Divorce?

Factors that Reduce People’s Chances of Divorce	How Much Does This Decrease the Risk of Divorce?
Some college (vs. high school dropout)	–13%
Affiliated with a religion (vs. none)	–14%
Parents not divorced	–14%
Age 25 or over at marriage (vs. under 18)	–24%
Having a baby 7 months or longer after marriage (vs. before marriage)	–24%
Annual income over \$50,000 (vs. under \$25,000)	–30%

Note: These percentages apply to the first ten years of marriage.

### For Your Consideration

Why do you think that people who go to college have a lower risk of divorce? How would you explain the other factors shown in Table 12.3? What other factors discussed in this chapter indicate a greater or lesser risk of divorce?

Why can’t you figure your own chances of divorce by starting with some percentage (say 30 percent likelihood of divorce for the first 10 years of marriage) and then reducing it according to this table (subtracting 13 percent of the 30 percent for going to college, and so on)? To better understand this, you might want to read the section on the misuse of statistics on page 355.

grandchildren—those whose grandparents had divorced with those whose grandparents had not divorced. Their findings are astounding. The grandchildren of divorce have weaker ties to their parents, don’t go as far in

school, and don’t get along as well with their spouses. As these researchers put it, when parents divorce, the consequences ripple through the lives of children who are not yet born.

## The Absent Father and Serial Fatherhood

With divorce common and mothers usually granted custody of the children, a new fathering pattern has emerged. In this pattern, known as **serial fatherhood**, a divorced father maintains high contact with his children during the first year or two after the divorce. As the man develops a relationship with another woman, he begins to play a fathering role with the woman's children and reduces contact with his own children. With another breakup, this pattern may repeat. Only about one-sixth of children who live apart from their fathers see their dad as often as every week. Actually, *most* divorced fathers stop seeing their children altogether (Ahlburg and De Vita 1992; Furstenberg and Harris 1992; Seltzer 1994). Apparently, for many men, fatherhood has become a short-term commitment.

## The Ex-Spouses

Anger, depression, and anxiety are common feelings at divorce. But so is relief. Women are more likely than men to feel that divorce is giving them a “new chance” in life. A few couples manage to remain friends through it all—but they are the exception. The spouse who initiates the divorce usually gets over it sooner (Kelly 1992; Wang and Amato 2000) and also usually remarries sooner (Sweeney 2002).

Divorce does not necessarily mean the end of a couple's relationship. Many divorced couples maintain contact because of their children (Fischer et al. 2005). For others, the “continuities,” as sociologists call them, represent lingering attachments (Vaughan 1985; Masheter

1991; author's file 2005). The former husband may help his former wife paint a room or move furniture; she may invite him over for a meal or to watch television. They might even go to dinner or to see a movie together. Some couples even continue to make love after their divorce.

After divorce, the ex-spouses' cost of living increases—two homes, two utility bills, and so forth. But the financial impact hits women the hardest. For them, divorce often spells economic hardship. This is especially true for mothers of small children, whose standard of living drops about a third (Seltzer 1994). Finally, as you would expect, women with more education cope better financially.

## Remarriage

Despite the number of people who emerge from divorce court swearing “Never again!” many do remarry. The rate at which they remarry, however, has slowed, and today only half of women who divorce remarry (Bramlett and Mosher 2002). As Figure 12.13 on the next page shows, most divorced people marry other divorced people. You may be surprised that the women who are most likely to remarry are young mothers and those with less education (Glick and Lin 1986; Schmiege et al. 2001). Apparently women who are more educated and more independent (no children) can afford to be more selective. Men are more likely than women to remarry, perhaps because they have a larger pool of potential mates.

How do remarriages work out? The divorce rate of remarried people *without* children is the same as that of first marriages. Those who bring children into a new marriage,



Me alone in the park . . .  
All alone in the park.  
My Dad and Mom are divorced  
that's why I'm all alone.



This is me in the picture with my son  
We are taking a walk in the park.  
I will never be like my father.  
I will never divorce my wife and kid.

It is difficult to capture the anguish of the children of divorce, but when I read these lines by the fourth-grader who drew these two pictures, my heart was touched:

**FIGURE 12.13** The Marital History of U.S. Brides and Grooms

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract 2000*: Table 145. Table dropped in later editions.

however, are more likely to divorce again (MacDonald and DeMaris 1995). Certainly these relationships are more complicated and stressful. A lack of clear norms to follow may also play a role (Coleman et al. 2000). As sociologist Andrew Cherlin (1989) noted, we lack satisfactory names for stepmothers, stepfathers, stepbrothers, stepsisters, steppaunts, stepuncles, stepcousins, and stepgrandparents. At the very least, these are awkward terms to use, but they also represent ill-defined relationships.

## Two Sides of Family Life

Let's first look at situations in which marriage and family have gone seriously wrong and then try to answer the question of what makes marriage work.

### The Dark Side of Family Life: Battering, Child Abuse, and Incest

The dark side of family life involves events that people would rather keep in the dark. We shall look at spouse battering, child abuse, and incest.

**Spouse Battering** To study spouse abuse, some sociologists have studied just a few victims in depth (Goetting 2001), while others have interviewed nationally representative samples of U.S. couples (Straus and Gelles 1988; Straus 1992). Although not all sociologists agree (Dobash et al. 1992, 1993; Pagelow 1992), Murray Straus concludes that husbands and wives are about equally likely to attack one another. If gender equality exists here, however, it certainly vanishes when it comes to the effects of violence—85 percent of the injured are women (Rennison 2003). A good part of the reason, of course, is that most husbands are bigger and stronger than their wives, putting women at a physical disadvantage in this literal battle of the sexes.

Violence against women is related to the sexist structure of society, which we reviewed in Chapter 10, and to the socialization that we analyzed in Chapter 3. Because they grew up with norms that encourage aggression and the use of violence, some men feel that it is their right to control women. When frustrated in a relationship—or even by events outside it—some men become violent. The basic sociological question is how to socialize males to handle frustration and disagreements without resorting to violence (Rieker et al. 1997). We do not yet have this answer.

### Child Abuse

I answered an ad about a lakeside house in a middle-class neighborhood that was for sale by the owner. As the woman showed me through her immaculate house, I was surprised to see a plywood box in the youngest child's bedroom. About 3 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 6 feet long, the box was perforated with holes and had a little door with a padlock. Curious, I asked what it was. The woman replied matter-of-factly that her son had a behavior problem, and this was where they locked him for "time out." She added that other times they would tie him to a float, attach a line to the dock, and put him in the lake.

I left as soon as I could. With thoughts of a terrorized child filling my head, I called the state child abuse hotline.

As you can tell, what I saw upset me. Most of us are bothered by child abuse—helpless children being victimized by their parents and other adults who are supposed to love, protect, and nurture them. The most gruesome of these cases make the evening news: The 4-year-old girl who was beaten and raped by her mother's boyfriend, passed into a coma, and then three days later passed out of this life; the 6- to 10-year-old children whose stepfather videotaped them engaging in sex acts. Unlike these cases, which made headlines in my area, most child abuse is never brought to our attention: the children who live in filth, who are neglected—left alone for hours or even days at a time—or

who are beaten with extension cords—cases like the little boy I learned about when I went house hunting.

Child abuse is extensive. Each year, about 3 million U.S. children are reported to the authorities as victims of abuse or neglect. About 900,000 of these cases are substantiated (*Statistical Abstract* 2007:Table 333). The excuses that parents make are incredible. Of those I have read, one I can only describe as fantastic is this statement, made by a mother to a Manhattan judge: “I slipped in a moment of anger, and my hands accidentally wrapped around my daughter’s windpipe” (LeDuff 2003).

**Incest** Sexual relations between certain relatives (for example, between brothers and sisters or between parents and children) constitute **incest**. Incest is most likely to occur in families that are socially isolated (Smith 1992). Sociologist Diana Russell (n.d.) found that incest victims who experience the greatest trauma are those who were victimized the most often, whose assaults occurred over longer periods of time, and whose incest was “more intrusive”—for example, sexual intercourse as opposed to sexual touching.

Who are the offenders? The most common incest is apparently between brothers and sisters, with the sex initiated by the brother (Canavan et al. 1992; Carlson et al. 2006). With no random samples, however, we do not know how common incest is, and researchers report different results. Russell found that uncles are the most common offenders, followed by first cousins, fathers (stepfathers especially), brothers, and, finally, other relatives ranging from brothers-in-law to stepgrandfathers. From the studies we have, we can conclude that incest between mothers and their children is rare, more so than between fathers and their children.

## The Bright Side of Family Life: Successful Marriages

**Successful Marriages** After examining divorce and family abuse, one could easily conclude that marriages seldom work out. This would be far from the truth, however, for about three of every five married Americans report that they are “very happy” with their marriages (Whitehead and Popenoe 2004). (Keep in mind that each year divorce removes the most unhappy marriages from this population.) To find out what makes marriage successful, sociologists Jeanette and Robert Lauer (1992) interviewed 351 couples who had been married fifteen years or longer. Fifty-one of these marriages were unhappy, but the couples stayed together for religious reasons, because of family tradition, or “for the sake of the children.”

Of the others, the 300 happy couples, all

1. Think of their spouse as their best friend
2. Like their spouse as a person

3. Think of marriage as a long-term commitment
4. Believe that marriage is sacred
5. Agree with their spouse on aims and goals
6. Believe that their spouse has grown more interesting over the years
7. Strongly want the relationship to succeed
8. Laugh together

Sociologist Nicholas Stinnett (1992) used interviews and questionnaires to study 660 families from all regions of the United States and parts of South America. He found that happy families

1. Spend a lot of time together
2. Are quick to express appreciation
3. Are committed to promoting one another’s welfare
4. Do a lot of talking and listening to one another
5. Are religious
6. Deal with crises in a positive manner

Sociologists have uncovered two other factors: Marriages are happier when couples get along with their in-laws (Bryant et al. 2001) and when they do leisure activities that they both enjoy (Crawford et al. 2002).

### Symbolic Interactionism and the Misuse of Statistics

Many students express concerns about their own marital future, a wariness born out of the divorces of their parents, friends, neighbors, relatives—even their pastors and rabbis. They wonder about their chances of having a successful marriage. Because sociology is not just about abstract ideas, but is really about our lives, it is important to stress that you are an individual, not a statistic. That is, if the divorce rate were 33 percent or 50 percent, this would *not* mean that if you marry, your chances of getting divorced are 33 percent or 50 percent. That is a misuse of statistics—and a common one at that. Divorce statistics represent all marriages and have absolutely *nothing* to do with any individual marriage. Our own chances depend on our own situations—especially the way we approach marriage.

To make this point clearer, let’s apply symbolic interactionism. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, we create our own worlds. That is, because our experiences don’t come with built-in meanings, we interpret our experiences and act accordingly. As we do so, we can create a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, if we think that our marriage might fail, we are more likely to run when things become difficult. If we think that our marriage is going to work out, we are more likely to stick around and to do things to make the marriage successful. The folk saying “There are no guarantees in life” is certainly true, but it does help to have a vision that a good marriage is possible and that it is worth the effort to achieve.

## The Future of Marriage and Family

What can we expect of marriage and family in the future? Despite its many problems, marriage is in no danger of becoming a relic of the past. Marriage is so functional that it exists in every society. Consequently, the vast majority of Americans will continue to find marriage vital to their welfare.

Certain trends are firmly in place. Cohabitation, births to single women, and age at first marriage will increase. As more

married women join the workforce, wives will continue to gain marital power. As the number of elderly increase, more couples will find themselves sandwiched between caring for their parents and rearing their own children.

Our culture will continue to be haunted by distorted images of marriage and family: the bleak ones portrayed in the mass media and the rosy ones perpetuated by cultural myths. Sociological research can help to correct these distortions and allow us to see how our own family experiences fit into the patterns of our culture. Sociological research can also help to answer the big question: How do we formulate social policies that will support and enhance family life?

## SUMMARY *and* REVIEW

### Marriage and Family in Global Perspective

*What is a family—and what themes are universal?*

Family is difficult to define. There are exceptions to every element that one might consider essential. Consequently, **family** is defined broadly—as people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Universally, **marriage** and family are mechanisms for governing mate selection, reckoning descent, and establishing inheritance and authority. Pp. 330–333.

### Marriage and Family in Theoretical Perspective

*What is a functionalist perspective on marriage and family?*

Functionalists examine the functions and dysfunctions of family life. Examples include the **incest taboo** and how weakened family functions increase divorce. P. 333.

*What is a conflict perspective on marriage and family?*

Conflict theorists focus on inequality in marriage, especially unequal power between husbands and wives. P. 334.

*What is a symbolic interactionist perspective on marriage and family?*

Symbolic interactionists examine the contrasting experiences and perspectives of men and women in marriage. They stress that only by grasping the perspectives of wives and husbands can we understand their behavior. Pp. 334–336.

### The Family Life Cycle

*What are the major elements of the family life cycle?*

The major elements are love and courtship, marriage, childbirth, child rearing, and the family in later life. Most

mate selection follows predictable patterns of age, social class, race–ethnicity, and religion. Child-rearing patterns also vary by social class. Pp. 336–340.

### Diversity in U.S. Families

*How significant is race–ethnicity in family life?*

The primary distinction is social class, not race–ethnicity. Families of the same social class are likely to be similar, regardless of their race–ethnicity. Pp. 340–343.

*What other diversity in U.S. families is there?*

Also discussed are one-parent, childless, **blended**, and gay and lesbian families. Each has its unique characteristics, but social class is significant in determining their primary characteristics. Poverty is especially significant for single-parent families, most of which are headed by women. Pp. 343–345.

### Trends in U.S. Families

*What major changes characterize U.S. families?*

Two changes are postponement of first marriage and an increase in **cohabitation**. With more people living longer, many middle-aged couples find themselves sandwiched between rearing their children and taking care of their aging parents. Pp. 345–349.

### Divorce and Remarriage

*What is the current divorce rate?*

Depending on what numbers you choose to compare, you can produce almost any rate you wish, from 50 percent to less than 2 percent. Pp. 349–351.

*How do children and their parents adjust to divorce?*

Divorce is difficult for children, whose adjustment problems often continue into adulthood. Most divorced fathers

do not maintain ongoing relationships with their children. Financial problems are usually greater for the former wives. The rate at which divorced people remarry has slowed. Pp. 351–354.

### Two Sides of Family Life

*What are the two sides of family life?*

The dark side is abuse—spouse battering, child abuse, and **incest**. All these are acts that revolve around the misuse of

family power. The bright side is that most people find marriage and family to be rewarding. Pp. 354–355.

### The Future of Marriage and Family

*What is the likely future of marriage and family?*

We can expect cohabitation, births to unmarried women, and age at first marriage to increase. The growing numbers of women in the workforce are likely to continue to shift the balance of marital power. P. 356.

## THINKING CRITICALLY *about* Chapter 12

1. Functionalists stress that the family is universal because it provides basic functions for individuals and society. What functions does your family provide? Hint: In addition to the section “The Functionalist Perspective,” also consider the section “Common Cultural Themes.”
2. Explain why social class is more important than race–ethnicity in determining a family’s characteristics.
3. Apply this chapter’s contents to your own experience with marriage and family. What social factors affect your family life? In what ways is your family life different from that of your grandparents when they were your age?

## BY THE NUMBERS: Changes Over Time

- Number of marriages between a white woman and an African American man in 1970: **41,000**
- Number of marriages between a white woman and an African American man today: **287,000**
- Age of average first-time bride in 1970: **20**
- Age of average first-time bride today: **25**
- Percentage of children living with both of their parents in 1970: **85**
- Percentage of children living with both of their parents today: **65**
- Number of cohabitating couples in 1970: **500,000**
- Number of cohabitating couples today: **5,000,000**
- Percentage of births to unmarried women in 1970: **10**
- Percentage of births to unmarried women today: **37**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What can you find in MySocLab?  [www.mysoclab.com](http://www.mysoclab.com)

- **Complete Ebook**
- **Practice Tests and Video and Audio activities**
- **Mapping and Data Analysis exercises**
- **Sociology in the News**
- **Classic Readings in Sociology**
- **Research and Writing advice**

### Where Can I Read More on This Topic?

Suggested readings for this chapter are listed at the back of this book.