


## Chapter 12: Marriage and Family

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## Marriage and Family in Global Perspective

- **Family**—consists of people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage, or adoption.
  - Nuclear vs Extended families

Which is most prominent in the U.S.?


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## Descent

- A **patrilineal system**—descent is traced only to the father's side.
  - **Patriarchy**—men dominate women.
- A **matrilineal system**—descent is traced only to the mother's side.
  - **Matrarchy**—women dominate men.

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## Marriage and Family in Theoretical Perspective

How might a functional theorist view the family?

The family is universal because it fulfills basic needs or functions within society.

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## Marriage and Family in Theoretical Perspective

What are some of the functions fulfilled by the family?

- socialization of children
- care of the sick and aged
- recreation
- sexual control
- reproduction
- continuation of the society

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## Marriage and Family in Theoretical Perspective

- **Functionalists**—believe the nuclear family has some disadvantages when compared to the extended family.

What might these be?

- Nuclear family does not provide the social supports provided by extended families
- May create isolation and emotional overload

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## Marriage and Family in Theoretical Perspective

### How might a conflict theorist view the family?

within the family there is a struggle over scarce resources.

- Power struggle between men & women
- Women pull a "second-shift" at home.

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## The Second Shift

### What is the second shift?

—the household duties that follow the days work for pay.

- Typically, this is seen as the wife's responsibility.
- Men "help out" when they feel like it.
- The strains from working the second shift affect not only the marital relationship, but also the wife's self-concept.

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## Research at UNT

- Dr. Seward of the sociology department is an international figure in the study of the family and in particular fathers.
- **Men's behavior lags behind their attitudes** (for example: Many men believe in sharing work equally but still resist doing housework.)

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### Research at UNT: Why don't men help more?

- Playing dumb



## Research at UNT

- Gail Markle—Masters Degree Work: Research on young women's preparation for work and family
- Young women (and men) do not anticipate the difficulties in juggling the two

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## Symbolic Interactionists

### What might a symbolic interactionist focus on when studying marriage and family?

What people perceive to be a "marriage" and a "family."

What people define as "love", "marriage", "family"?

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## The Family Life Cycle

1. Love
2. Marriage
3. Childbirth
4. Childrearing
5. The empty nest
6. The not-so-empty nest

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## The Family Life Cycle: Love

### 1. Love:

- **Romantic love**— people being sexually attracted to one another and idealizing the other.
- Often it is thought of as the only basis for Western marriages.
  - In the U.S. love produces marriage but in India marriage often produces love

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## The Family Life Cycle: Marriage

2. **Marriage** —a group's approved mating arrangements, usually marked by a ritual.

- **Mate selection** —each human group establishes norms to govern who marries whom.

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## The Family Life Cycle: Marriage

What are the most common causes of divorce in the U.S.?

- Money
- Children

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## The Family Life Cycle: Childbirth

### 3. Childbirth:

- Marital satisfaction decreases with childbirth.
- For the average working class couple, the first baby arrives just 9 months after marriage.

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## 4: Childrearing

### Working Class:

- Physical punishment
- Sets limits but gives freedom (wild flower)
- Stresses conformity

### Middle Class:

- Withholds affection
- Provides guidance thru planned activity (garden grown)
- Stresses curiosity and self expression

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## The Family in Later Life: Empty Nest

5. **The empty nest** —when the last child leaves home, and the husband and wife are left.

- Women's satisfaction generally increases when the last child leaves home.
- U.S. children are leaving home later.

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## The Family in Later Life

6. **The not-so-empty nest**

—children often return home for an extended period of time

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## Trends in U.S. Families

- **Postponing Marriage**
- **Cohabitation** — adults living together in a sexual relationship without being married.
  - Eight times more today than thirty years ago.

**Why has cohabitation increased?**

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TABLE 12.2 • The Meaning of Cohabitation: What a Difference It Makes

What Cohabitation Means	Percent of Couples	After 5 to 7 years			
		Split Up	Still Together	Of Those Still Together	
				Married	Cohabitating
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: By the author. Recomputed from Bianchi and Casper 2000.

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## Trends in U.S. Families

**Why has cohabitation increased?**

- pre-marital sex not stigmatized
- young persons' experiences with divorce and the desire to avoid it

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## Trends in U.S. Families

- **The sandwich generation** — people who are responsible for both their children and their aging parents.
- **Grandparents as parents**

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## Divorce and Remarriage

- A couple's chances of still being married at the end of one year are 98%.
- The United States has the highest divorce rate in the world.

Why is divorce so high?

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## Two Sides of Family Life

- **The Dark Side**
  - **Family Violence**—each year about 3 million children are reported victims of abuse or neglect.
- **The Bright Side**
  - **Successful Marriages**—two of every three married Americans report they are very happy with their marriages.

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## Children Adapting to Divorce

What factors do you think contribute to a child **successfully adapting** to divorce:

- Child feels close to both parents
- Child experiences little conflict and feels loved
- Lives with a parent who is making a good adjustment
- Has consistent routines

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## The Future of Marriage and Family

- Two out of three married couples report they are very happy with their marriages.
- Marriage is in no danger of becoming a thing of the past.
- Marriage is functional and exists in every society.

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## The End



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**BLONDIE** by Dean Young & John Marshall

