

## CHAPTER 11: THE FAMILY

### **Family and Marriage Across Cultures**

family - a group of people related by marriage, blood or adoption

marriage - a legal union based on mutual rights and obligations

nuclear family - family structure composed of one or both parents and children

extended family - two or more adult generations of the same family whose members shares economic resources and a common household

patrilineal - descent and inheritance is passed through the male line

matrilineal - descent and inheritance is passed through the female line

bilateral - descent/inheritance passed equally through both parents

patriarchy - the pattern in which the oldest man living in the household has authority over the rest of the family members

matriarchy - " " oldest woman " " " "

equalitarian - family structure in which authority is evenly shared between husband and wife

patrilocal - refers to the pattern in which married couples live with or near the husbands' parents

matrilocal - same def. as above, but for wives' parents

neolocal - pattern in which newly married couples set up their own households

monogamy - marriage = one man + one woman

polygamy - marriage of a male or female to more than one person at a time - two kinds:

1. polygyny - one man + 2 or more women
2. polyandry - one woman + 2 or more men

exogamy - practice of marrying outside one's group

incest taboo - a norm forbidding marriage between close relatives

endogamy - marriage within one's group as required by social norms

homogamy - tendency to marry someone similar to oneself

heterogamy - marriage between people with differing social characteristics

### **Theoretical Perspectives and the Family**

Functionalism - family is primary socializer of children (language, values, norms, members can be role models)

- socioemotional maintenance - provision of acceptance and support - without family's unconditional love and acceptance, children won't develop normally
- reproductive function - family provides orderly means for producing members of society, generation after generation
- family regulates sexual activity - provides rules about mating, marrying - norms regarding sexual activities vary from place to place
- social status - families provide economic resources that can open or close occupational doors - the pass on values that affect social status
- economic function of the family - modern American family is a unit of consumption rather than production

Conflict Theory - focuses on the way family members compete and cooperate

- gender relationships in the family - traditionally, males are dominant, in control/ females expected to be submissive helpers - men support family (work outside the home), women care for children + household - families have fostered social inequality
- feminists - many today view family from this perspective - family structure is the source of inequality - attempts by women to gain more power within family structure can result in conflict

Symbolic Interactionism - focuses on interactions among family members, meanings that member assign to these interactions

- as family members share meanings and feelings, kids develop self-concepts, put themselves mentally in the place of others
- family relationships are constantly changing - pass through many phases, stages

### **Family and Marriage in the United States**

marriage rate - number of marriages per year for every 1,000 members of the population

- rate peaked at over 16.0 following World War II (late 1940s)
- rate today: 8.0 - 8.5

divorce rate - same def. as above, but for divorces - 1960: 2.2      1981: 5.3

- rate has declined slightly since 1985

societal forces affecting marriage:

1. divorce rate rises during economic prosperity, decreases when times are hard
2. rise in divorce rate after 1960 followed the growing up of the baby-boom generation
  - "boomers" didn't attach a stigma to divorce like previous generations
3. increasing financial independence of women - they're more willing to end bad marriages
4. American values and attitudes about marriage and divorce are changing - society is much more forgiving of divorce and remarriage

the future of marriage in the U.S.

1. average age at first marriage is increasing - the later people marry, the less likely they are to divorce
2. average age of U.S. population increases as baby boomers grow older
3. couples having fewer kids - kids are spaced farther apart (reduces pressure on marriages)

**Family Violence** - recent national survey states that almost 1/4 of adults in the U.S. report having been physically abused as children

- recent estimates - one of every four girls, one in ten boys are victims of sexual aggression (inside or outside the home)
- 1976-1997 - number of reported child abuse cases rose from 662,000 to over 3 million
- at least 4 million women are battered by their husbands each year
- over 4,000 women each year are beaten to death
- extent of physical abuse is underestimated - 3/4 of spousal abuse/violence occurs during separation or after divorce
- some studies show that husbands and wives assault each other at about the same rate
- females are less violent than males - much of the violence committed by women involves self-protection and retaliation
- verbal/physical abuse also a part of many families
- over 9 million children in the U.S. suffer from neglect (being ignored rather than abused)
- sibling violence - most frequent and tolerated form of violence in the family - based on rivalry, jealousy, disagreements over personal possessions
- elder abuse - 0.5-2.5 million cases annually - neglect, physical violence, psychological mistreatment, economic manipulation

**Changes in Marriage and Family**

**blended family** - formed when at least one of the partners in a marriage has been married before and has a child or children from a previous marriage

- 3 major problems facing blended families:
    1. lack of money - legal obligations to support children from a previous marriage
    2. stepchildren's dislike of the new spouse
    3. uncertainty about roles played by stepparents
  - 1/4 of American families are headed by a single parent
  - 90% of single-parent households are headed by women
  - effects of single-parent families on children:
    - adolescents (kids ages 12-17) from single-parent families, regardless of income, race or ethnicity, have much higher rates of deviant behavior (delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy)
- childless marriages - 1970 - 15% of American women who have been married don't have kids - 2000 - 19%
- social stigma against childless married woman are disappearing
  - research shows that couples who choose not to have kids appear to be happier/more satisfied with their marriages + lives than married couples with kids
- dual-employed marriages - both spouses work outside the home
- disadvantages - married women work 15 hrs. more a week than men (job + kids + household), role conflict for women
  - advantages - women - higher standard of living, more outlets for self-expression
    - men - freedom from being sole provider, more job/education opportunities
- cohabitation - marriage-like living arrangement without legal obligations/responsibilities of formal marriage
- 1970 - 500,000 adults - 2000 - 7 million - 25% of these couples stay together more than 4 years - women face higher rate of abuse

same-sex domestic partners - Massachusetts - only state to recognize same-sex marriages  
boomerang kids - adult children who return to the home of origin or continue to live with parents