

Marriage and Family

Family

- What does family mean to you?
- Broad definition: a group of 2 or more people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage, or adoption and live together (or have lived together)
- A household is different- consists of all people who occupy the same housing unit

Types of families

- Nuclear family- husband, wife, and children
- Extended family- a nuclear family plus other relatives who live together
- Family of orientation- family in which you grow up
- Family of procreation- family that is formed when a couple's first child is born
- Marriage is a group's approved mating arrangement, usually marked by a ritual

Common themes among marriage and families

- Each group establishes norms to govern who may and may not marry
 - Endogamy- marrying within your group
 - Exogamy- marrying outside your group
- Patriarchy- male dominated society
- Matriarchy- female dominated society
- Egalitarian- authority equally divided

Theoretical Perspectives

- Functionalists- families contribute to the well-being of a society
 - Economic production, socialization of children, care of the sick and aged, recreation, reproduction
 - Incest taboo helps family avoid role confusion and forces people to look outside the family for marriage partners

Theoretical Perspectives

- Conflict- within a family the conflict over housework is really about control over scarce resources- time, energy, leisure
 - Most men resist doing housework, women end up doing almost all, even though men believe it is equal
- Arlie Hochschild found that after an 8 hr work day, women come home to a “second shift”
 - Wives work an extra month of 24 hour days each year

Theoretical Perspectives

- Symbolic interactionists- interested in how husbands view housework
 - Research indicates that the less difference between a husband and wife's income, the more likely they are to share responsibilities
 - When husbands are laid off from work, their contributions decrease
 - Husbands who earn less than their wives do the least housework
 - Contributed to gender roles and the “threat to their masculinity”

Romantic Love

- Provides the context in which the United States seek mates and form families
- 2 components:
 - Emotional- feeling of attraction
 - Cognitive- the feeling we describe as being “in love”
- Social channels of love and marriage include age, education, social class, race and religion
 - People tend to marry others with similar characteristics
 - Interracial marriage is exception

Marriage

- Marital satisfaction usually decreases with the birth of a child
 - Social class influences how couples adjust to children
 - Working class are more likely to have kids 9 months after marriage and have major interpersonal and financial problems
 - Middle class are more prepared because of more resources, postponement of children and more time to adjust to one another

Raising children

- Traditionally fell on the mother, but this pattern is changing
- For married couples, almost 1 in 4 children is cared for by the father
 - Single mothers compensate for child care gap with help from grandparents
- 1 in 6 kids are in day care
- Birth order is significant
 - First borns tend to be more disciplined and often competes to maintain attention

Empty Nest

- Can be a difficult adjustment
- Lillian Rubin argues that most women feel relieved at being able to spend more time on themselves
- Couples report a renewed sense of companionship
 - Freedom from responsibilities
 - Increased leisure
 - Higher income
 - Fewer financial obligations
- But we know that nowadays kids are leaving home later....

Widowhood

- Women are more likely than men to face the problem of adjusting to widowhood
- Women tend to live longer than men, but also tend to marry men who are older