

Marriage and Family: Perspectives and Complexities



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Family life has been radically transformed over the past three decades. Half of all households are unmarried, while only a quarter of all married households have kids. A third of the nation's births are to unwed mothers, and a third of America's married men earn less than their wives. With half of all women cohabitating before they turn thirty and gay and lesbian couples settling down with increasing visibility, there couldn't be a better time for a book that tracks new conceptions of marriage and family as they are being formed.

The editors of this volume explore the motivation to marry and the role of matrimony in a diverse group of men and women. They compare empirical data from several emerging family types (single, co-parent, gay and lesbian, among others) to studies of traditional nuclear families, and they consider the effect of public policy and recent economic developments on the practice of marriage and the stabilization& mdash;or destabilization& mdash;of family. Approaching this topic from a variety of perspectives, including historical, cross-cultural, gendered, demographic, socio-biological, and social-psychological viewpoints, the editors highlight the complexity of the modern American family and the growing indeterminacy of its boundaries. Refusing to adhere to any one position, the editors provide an unbiased account of contemporary marriage and family.

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