

THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY?/DEFINING AND MEASURING DEVIANCE

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WHAT ABOUT THE 1950S?

- 1950s weren't as we remember them
 - < 60% of children lived in "traditional" family
 - Many women were unhappy with non-work role
 - Blacks faced worse discrimination than later decades
- 1950s family was "experimental," not "traditional"
 - Dad-works, mom-stays-home model began in 19th century
 - Women began entering office jobs in 1920s
 - After WWII many women left factories for home
 - But female labor market participation began rising again in 1950s

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WHAT ABOUT THE 1950S?

- What was different about the 1950s?
 - Divorce rate, high during Depression & WWII, dropped
 - Age of marriage fell to 100-year low
 - Birth rate soared (Baby Boom)
- What led to the 1950s family experiment?
 - Women were forced out of jobs after WWII
 - Economic growth and government programs allowed for prosperity with one wage earner
 - Ideal of dad-works, mom-stays-home family established
 - New ideal was supported by experts and media

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WHY DID THE 1950S EXPERIMENT END?

- 1950s conditions allowed both preferred family form and preferred family lifestyle
 - Form: dad works, mom stays at home
 - Lifestyle: requires purchasing latest consumer goods
- By 1970s many families changed form to maintain lifestyle, e.g., two wage earners, postponing marriage
- During 1970s and 1980s, economic changes resulted in fewer families able to afford preferred form at all

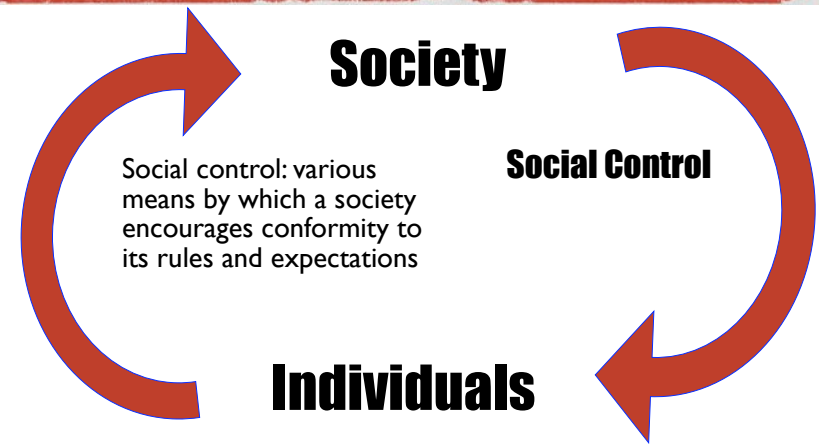
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SIGNS THAT MARRIAGE WILL PERSIST

- Percentage of women who never marry is lower now than at turn of 20th Century
- Higher divorce rates may indicate higher expectations for marriage
- Most divorced people re-marry; “serial monogamy” is common pattern
- Many gays and lesbians want to marry (and can in three states)

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SOCIAL CONTROL



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BART AND THE BOOT

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DEFINING DEVIANCE

- Deviance: behavior, belief or condition that violates social norms
 - By defining what is normal, society defines what is deviant (relativist approach to deviance)
- Origin of term is in statistics—“deviation” is the difference between the value of a given case and the group average
- Sociologists began using “deviance” in 1950s to encompass four major topics—crime and delinquency, mental illness, drug use/addiction, sexual misbehavior
- Different approaches to studying deviance:
 - Why do people commit deviant acts? (causation approach)
 - Why are some people labeled as deviant and what are effects of label? (labeling theory)
 - Why do rules and punishments benefit some groups more than others? (conflict theory)
 - Why are some forms of deviance considered problems and others are not? (social problems approach)

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FEARING “RANDOM CRIME”

- People most fear “random crime” (Joel Best)
 - Patternless: It can happen to anyone
 - Increasing: Crime is getting worse
 - Pointless: Criminal motives make no sense
- But none of these claims are true
 - Crime is not random: it is stratified by gender, race, class and age
 - Official crime has been declining over the past decade or longer (but may have risen slightly in recent years)
 - Criminals have reasons for committing crimes

