

# chapter 6

## Marriage, Intimate Relationships, and Society

### KEY TERMS

adultery  
banns  
betrothal  
bride price  
cohabitation  
common-law  
companionate  
marriage  
conjugal  
relationship  
dower rights  
dowry  
egalitarian  
relationships  
expressive role  
instrumental role  
marriage  
marriage contract  
matrilocal  
pair-bond  
patrilocal  
polyandry  
polygyny  
spouse

### CHAPTER EXPECTATIONS

While reading this chapter, you will:

- explain changing marital forms in various societies throughout history, and describe contemporary marital forms
- analyze factors influencing the transition of the family from an economic unit to a psychological unit
- analyze the historical and ethnocultural factors affecting variations in mate selection, marriage customs, and marital roles
- demonstrate an understanding of the role of intimate relationships in the lives of individuals and families, considering the similarities and differences for males and females, and traditional and non-traditional relationships
- describe current perceptions, opinions, and demographic trends relating to intimate relationships, and speculate on the significance of these trends for individual and family development
- select and access secondary sources reflecting a variety of viewpoints
- identify and respond to the theoretical viewpoints, the thesis, and the supporting arguments of materials found in a variety of secondary sources
- distinguish among, and produce examples of, the following: an essay arguing and defending personal opinion; a reaction paper responding to another person's argument; a research paper reporting on an original investigation

## RESEARCH SKILLS

- accessing information from academic journals
- identifying theoretical perspective, thesis, and supporting arguments
- writing an argument using a specific theoretical perspective



Although fewer Canadians are getting married, couples continue to be the basic human bond and the focus of our social organization.

## CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, intimate relationships and marriage will be studied from a sociological perspective. Marriage will be defined and its history will be examined to understand its cultural diversity and that of other intimate relationships. Marital norms will be determined, and the role of marriage for men and women in Canada in a post-industrial society will be discussed. The controversies surrounding marriage and cohabitation in a changing society will be explored so that you will be better prepared for the decisions you will soon face concerning the intimate relationships in your life.

## The Purpose of Marriage

**M**arriage can be defined broadly as “a socially legitimate sexual union, begun with a public announcement and with some idea of permanence, and assumed with a more or less explicit contract” (Schlesinger, 1984, p. 78). In Canada, most individuals today form their first sexual union, or **conjugal relationship**, by cohabiting, not marrying. Some have a relationship with someone of the same sex. Since the practice of marriage varies widely, it is necessary to examine its diversity to fully understand how Canadians form couples. Despite the predictions of cynics for hundreds of years, marriage in all its forms has survived as the primary relationship and the rite of passage that signifies transition into adulthood, in almost all societies.

Helen Fisher, an American anthropologist, suggests that the durability of the **pair-bond** is essential to the survival of humans. She explains that the only way people can ensure their continued existence is by reproducing and then protecting their children. She also proposes that both men and women have a biological urge to produce children. Fisher concludes that the desire to form an enduring pair-bond between a man and a woman is a basic biological drive (Fisher, 1992, p. 72):

Human beings almost never have to be cajoled into pairing. Instead, we do this naturally. We flirt. We feel infatuation. We fall in love. We marry. And the vast majority of us marry only one person at a time.

Pair-bonding is the trademark of the human animal.



Marriage is the primary social group and the foundation of the family. However, people who are in love marry for personal reasons, not to fulfill a role in society.

The pairing of men and women may be the result of a natural biological desire, but marriage is a social invention. Functionalists describe marriage as a social institution that developed as an important part of the organization of society to meet humans' basic needs. The diversity of marriage reflects the various ways that societies organize to meet the functional requisites of sexual reproduction, socialization of children, and division of labour. Individuals are socialized into the appropriate roles for men and women in their societies and are expected to marry into complementary roles. Moreover, because men and women serve useful purposes for society when they are married, functionalists argue that people are happiest if they marry. Therefore, sociologists are interested in the norms that regulate the institution of marriage and the stability of the social group formed by marriage (Whyte, 2001).

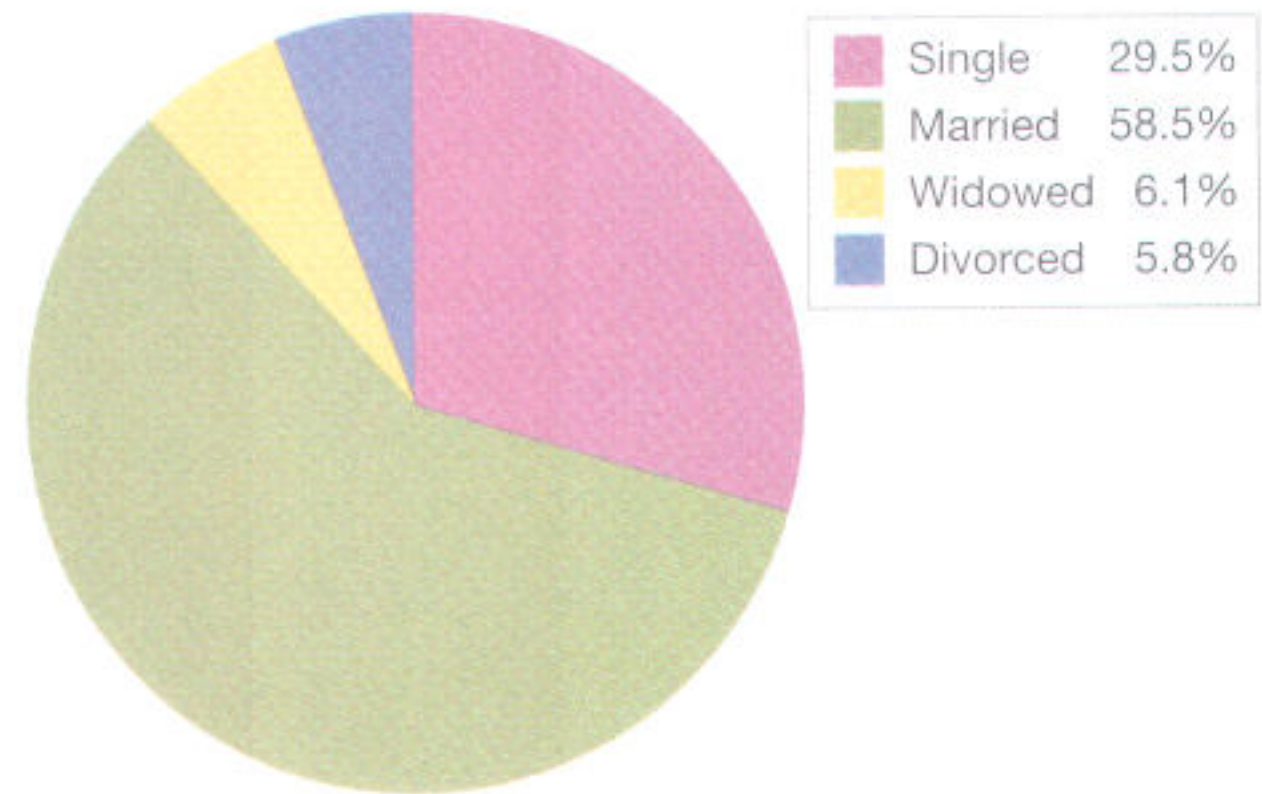
Most people, however, choose to marry for more personal reasons. Many individuals feel that getting married confers upon them adult status within their society and, more importantly, within their families. Until recently, marriage provided and limited access to sexual partners and ensured the bearing and raising of children. Today, people might have sex before marriage, but they might marry because they want to have children. On a more practical level, marriage allows individuals to share resources to improve their standard of living. Marriage may also help form an individual's identity by providing a sense of purpose. For most Canadians, marrying is a cultural expectation that they will fulfill at least once in their lives simply because it allows them to commit their unfailing love and support to the person they love (Ward, 1994).

People marry for both social and psychological reasons. Contemporary social life is based on couples, so marriage continues to be a convenient primary relationship, offering friendship and companionship for men and women. The ideal of marriage conveyed in many cultures and contemporary media suggests that it is a happy state in which one can love and be loved, even for those individuals in arranged marriages. From the perspective of the social exchange theory, the desire to marry reflects a belief that being married will be better than being single. Monica McGoldrick suggested that men and women marry because it is just the natural thing to do (McGoldrick, 1989, p. 210):

In most societies to talk of the choice to marry or not would be almost as relevant as to talk of the choice to grow old or not: it has been considered the only route to full adult status. To marry has simply been part of the "natural" progression through life, part of the inevitable, unless catastrophe intervened.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is evident that many people are not marrying. The marriage rate has declined, yet men and women continue to form conjugal relationships. Consequently, it is necessary to expand the study of marriage to include other intimate relationships, such as **common-law** marriages or **cohabitation**, in which a male and female live together as husband and wife without legally marrying, and to consider the choice of being sexually active singles.

### Marital Status of Canadians, 15 Years and Older, 2000



Source: Created from data in the Statistics Canada, CANSIM II database at <http://cansima.statcan.ca/cgi.win/CNMSEI.EXE>, Table 051-0010.

# The History of Marriage

Marriage as a binding relationship between a man and a woman was probably one of the earliest developments when human societies began to organize themselves. It regulates sexual activity so that the biological father can identify his offspring. Consequently, adults become mutually responsible for nurturing and socializing their children. Since marriage unites men, women, and children into a family unit that can share resources and own property, it has been viewed primarily as an economic unit. In fact, for most of history, love was seldom a consideration in the decision to marry, and most women had little to say in their choice of partner (Yalom, 2001). **Polygyny**, the practice of a man having more than one wife, appears to have been the preferred form of marriage in most societies historically, since 84 percent of recorded cultures have allowed it (Kelman, 1998). However, monogamy has been and continues to be the most common custom. Some anthropologists suggest that in the societies that permit polygyny, monogamy occurs only when it is not feasible for men to support more than one wife. **Polyandry** occurs, on the other hand, when a culture, such as rural Nepal, is so poor that several men are required to support a wife and children (Kelman, 1999).

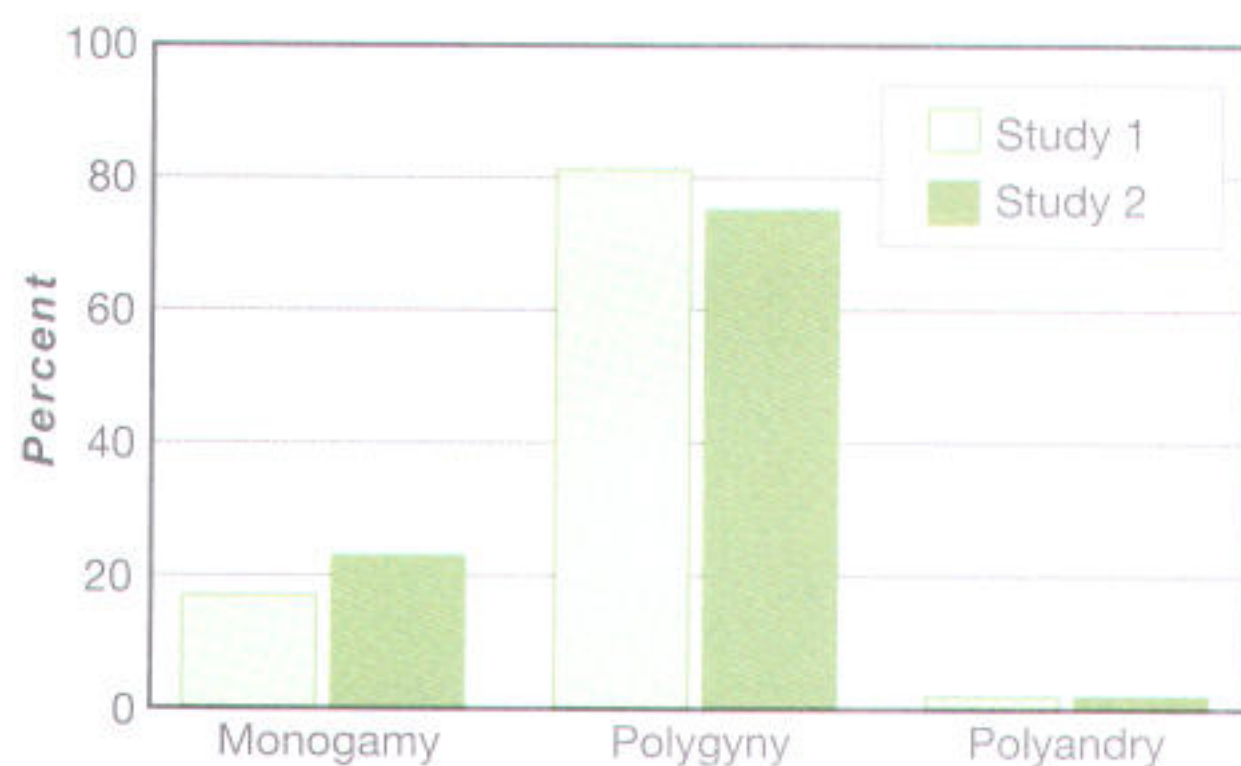
The historical roots of marriage traditions and legal practices in Canada can be traced back to the Ancient Romans, Greeks, and Hebrews. To understand the diversity of intimate relationships in Canada, the historical roots of Canadian Aboriginal Peoples and immigrants from non-European cultures also need to be

considered. The study of history allows people to determine marriage expectations as described in recorded rules, but it does not always provide insight into married couples' personal relationships. For better or for worse, there is no way to legislate the feelings of individuals (Yalom, 2001). There is usually a gap between the ideals of those in power and the common practice of various social classes within any society (Kelman, 1999).

An analysis of marriage in history or in contemporary Canada focuses on several questions:

- How are marriages formed?
- What are the obligations of spouses?
- What are the expectations of the marriage relationship?
- How can an unsatisfactory marriage be ended?

Forms of Marriage in Societies Throughout History



Source: From *The Living Family: A Canadian Perspective*, 1st edition, by F.E. Jarman. © 1991. Reprinted with permission of Nelson Thomson Learning, a division of Thomson Learning. FAX 800-730-2215.

## Marriage in Ancient Times

The marriages of the ancient Hebrew people over 4000 years ago were usually arranged between patriarchal extended families for the purpose of producing sons. A **betrial**, or promise to marry, might have been agreed upon when a boy and a girl were quite young, but the marriage might not occur until many years later. Although marriages were arranged, the views of the young man and woman were probably considered. The bride's value as a potential mother was symbolized by the payment of a **bride price** by the groom's family to the bride's family. The bride's family gave her a **dowry** in the form of money, household items, or land, so that she was able to establish a home for her new family. She also gained **dower rights** to property from her husband for her support. The mutual obligations of husband and wife were recorded in a

**marriage contract**. A wife was expected to obey her husband, and she could be divorced if she could not bear sons (Yalom, 2001). The Old Testament marriage records suggest that the relationships between partners were usually very affectionate, although love was seldom a consideration during the initial betrothal.

Marriages in Ancient Rome during the Early Roman period resembled Hebrew marriages in that they were the basis for a household or kinship group that was patrilineal, patriarchal, and **patrilocal**, or located near the husband's family. One major difference, however, was that Roman society was strictly monogamous (Queen & Habenstein, 1974). Later, as Rome became larger and the Roman Empire expanded and became wealthier, the Roman family system changed. Men were away for long periods of time, leaving women to run the households. This resulted in a less patriarchal and more equal society. As patrician or prominent families acquired wealth, marriage was seen less as an enduring union and more as an opportunity to attain riches and political advantage. Divorce, initiated by men and women, became widespread, which led to an increase in family disorganization and instability. It was common for a member of the patrician class to marry several times over a lifetime. The historic figures Cleopatra and Anthony were married four times each (Queen, Quadagno, & Habenstein, 1974). This family and marriage system was the norm in Rome at the time of the early Christian apostles, who regarded it as degenerate and destabilizing. The early Christian movement, upon which the Western family value system is primarily based, looked to the early Roman and the ancient Hebrew patriarchal system as the standard for the Christian system of marriage.



Roman marriages were monogamous and equal partnerships for the wealthy, as shown in this painting "Roman Wedding" by J. Saint Saver.

## FYI

### Consanguinity and Children of the Israeli Kibbutz

Virtually all cultures have an aversion to marriage between relatives too closely related genetically. It is known that there is a higher risk of disease and early death for the offspring of parents who are closely related. A Czech research study of 160 children born to women who had an incestuous sexual relationship with a father, brother, or son revealed that more than half the offspring did not survive long enough to have children themselves. Of 95 children born to the same mothers by non-related fathers, over 90 percent were healthy enough and lived long enough to have their own children. So strong is the taboo against consanguinity that the aversion to marrying siblings can also apply to those who are like siblings. On Israeli kibbutzim, non-related children were raised as if they were siblings. Children of both sexes shared dormitories and washrooms and studied and worked together. In one study of 2769 second-generation kibbutz members raised together as if they were siblings, not one marriage among them occurred (Kelman, 1999). The biological rationale for limiting marriage partners is the basis of social norms and laws forbidding marriage with close relatives.

The marriage system of the early Middle Ages was informal, loosely organized, and casually enforced. Common-law marriages were widespread and were as legal as church marriages. The Catholic Church did not attempt to regulate marriage until the twelfth century. By then the feudal system, its economic and social influence on the organization of medieval society, and the importance that it placed on inheritance laws, necessitated the regulation of marriage for social stability. It was during this period that marriage became a witnessed public event and a sacrament in the Catholic Church. The reading of marriage **banns**, a public announcement three weeks prior to the marriage ceremony that a couple are to be married, and the priest's question as to whether anyone has good reason to object to the marriage, were also initiated (Carroll-Clark, 1994). This was done to ensure that both the man and the woman were entering the contract willingly and that there were no reasons to invalidate the marriage, such as consanguinity or other existing betrothals, both of which created problems for inheritance and disposal of property.

### Marriage in Canada

When Europeans began to colonize Canada in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they encountered Aboriginal Peoples who were still primarily living a hunter-gatherer existence. Since the men were away from home for long periods of time and the women remained in their temporary settlements looking after the children, most Aboriginal tribes were matrilineal and **matrilocal**. Families lived at or near the home of the woman's family because it was the women who provided stability to the social organization of the society. In traditional Huron society, marriages occurred only when a couple had a child. In both Ojibwa and Iroquois social organization, marriages were usually arranged and were expected to be enduring. Men and women in these hunter-gatherer societies had a clear division of labour, with complementary roles that were both highly valued. The matrilineal organization of their societies was changed to a patrilineal one long after the nineteenth century conquest, when husbands and fathers were given legal authority over their wives and children (Baker, 1993).

The marriage system brought to Canada by both French and British colonists was the patriarchal, patrilineal system of the Christian church. The first colonizers were mostly men from France and England who came to make their fortunes as fur traders for the Hudson Bay Company or as soldiers, and whose stay was temporary. Since European women were in short supply, they turned to Aboriginal women for what became known as *marriage à la façon du pays*, a temporary marriage arrangement. By 1821, the Hudson Bay Company introduced marriage contracts between their employees and Aboriginal women that declared the husband had a binding responsibility to support his wife and children, even if he returned to Europe. This marriage practice declined with the arrival and influence of the Jesuits and the increase in eligible European women in Canada, so that Aboriginal women who formed relationships with European men were regarded more as prostitutes or, at best, mistresses, not wives (Eichler, 1997).

During the history of Canada since the European conquest, men have often outnumbered women during times of high immigration as well as in frontier communities. Records from New France indicate that prior to 1700, male colonists outnumbered females by two to one. The average age of a first marriage for women was 20 and for men, 28 (Kelman, 1998). By the nineteenth century, most immigrants were from northern and western Europe. One of their traditions was that children who were not heirs to the family estate would leave the family homes. Consequently, these immigrants brought with them the custom of living in primarily nuclear households. Since these families were the primary unit of economic production in the nineteenth century, a large financial investment was needed to establish an independent home. To afford marriage, young people often had to save for several years. As a result, most people were older when they first got married or, in some cases, they remained single. Although many nineteenth-century marriages were arranged, most were free-choice marriages. Couples who were exploring the possibility of



Most Aboriginal families were matrilineal and matrilocal to maintain stability while the men were away hunting.



A shortage of marriageable women in early Canada resulted in women marrying young and men marrying later, when they could afford to set up a home.



## web connection



[www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12](http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12)

To learn about marriage in Canada, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

marriage tended to socialize in their family homes under the supervision of the parents. This gave parents some control over the marriage choices of their offspring. A young woman's selection of a **spouse**, or marriage partner, was especially subject to the approval of her parents, since marrying against their will risked estrangement from the family (Ward, 1990). After the emancipation movement of the 1880s and 1890s, women began to enjoy the same relative freedom as men over their choice of marriage partner.

The timing for marriage ceremonies tended to correspond to the agricultural cycle. June was a popular month because it was after spring planting; another popular time was after the fall harvest. Census records reveal that among those born in colonial Canada between 1821 and 1830, the average age for a first marriage was 26 for men and 23 for women. Forty years later, the average age for a first marriage had risen to 29 for men and 26 for women. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the percentage of unmarried men in Canada fluctuated between 13 and 15 percent, while that for unmarried women was about 11 or 12 percent (Kelman, 1998). By the middle of the twentieth century, this percentage dropped to 10 percent for both men and women.

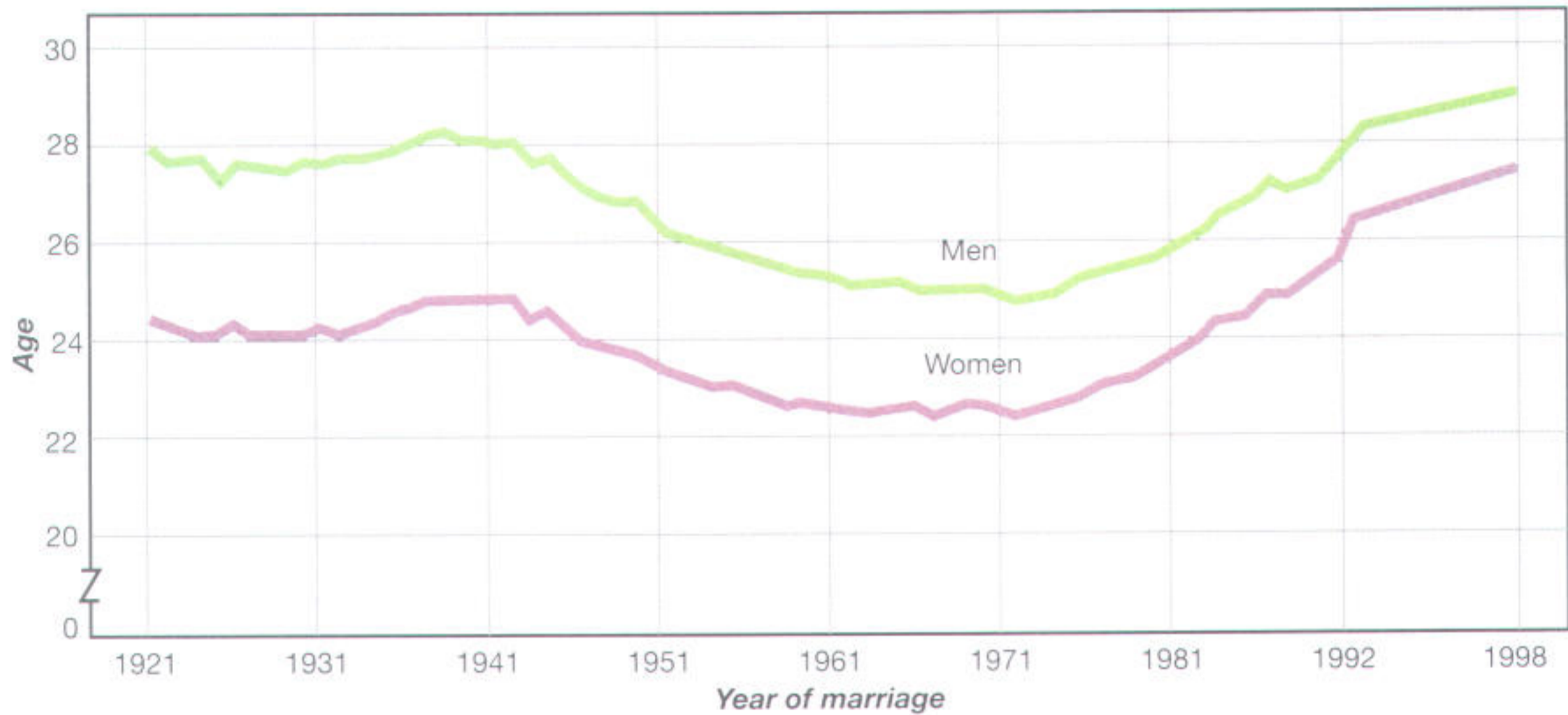


Prior to the Divorce Act of 1968, which allowed divorce for irreconcilable differences after a three-year separation, Canada had one of the lowest divorce rates in the world.

Generally, divorce was rare in nineteenth-century Canada. Marriage was seen as a sacrament by Catholics and as a sacred institution by Protestants. In Québec, divorce was illegal, since the province maintained a different civil code from the English civil law of the rest of the country. Even after the British North America Act was passed in 1867, in which the issuing of a divorce became a provincial jurisdiction, divorce was illegal in Ontario until 1930 and in Québec until 1968 (Kelman, 1998). In fact, historically, Canada has had one of the lowest divorce rates in the Western world. Access to divorce was extremely limited in Canada until the change in divorce laws enacted by the federal government in 1968 (Ward, 1994). Prior to 1968, divorce was granted for few reasons, with proof of adultery being the most usual.

Canadians who were born in the early twentieth century tended to marry at a later age, like their nineteenth-century counterparts. During the economic hardship of the Depression in the 1930s, most young Canadians postponed marriage. According to census data, among those born between 1906 and 1914, the average age of a first marriage was 28 for men and 25 for women. World War II changed this. The generation of Canadians who married from the mid-1940s until the 1960s were younger at their first marriage than previous generations were, as young as 25 for men and 22 for women. Less than 5 percent

Average Age at First Marriage, 1921–1998



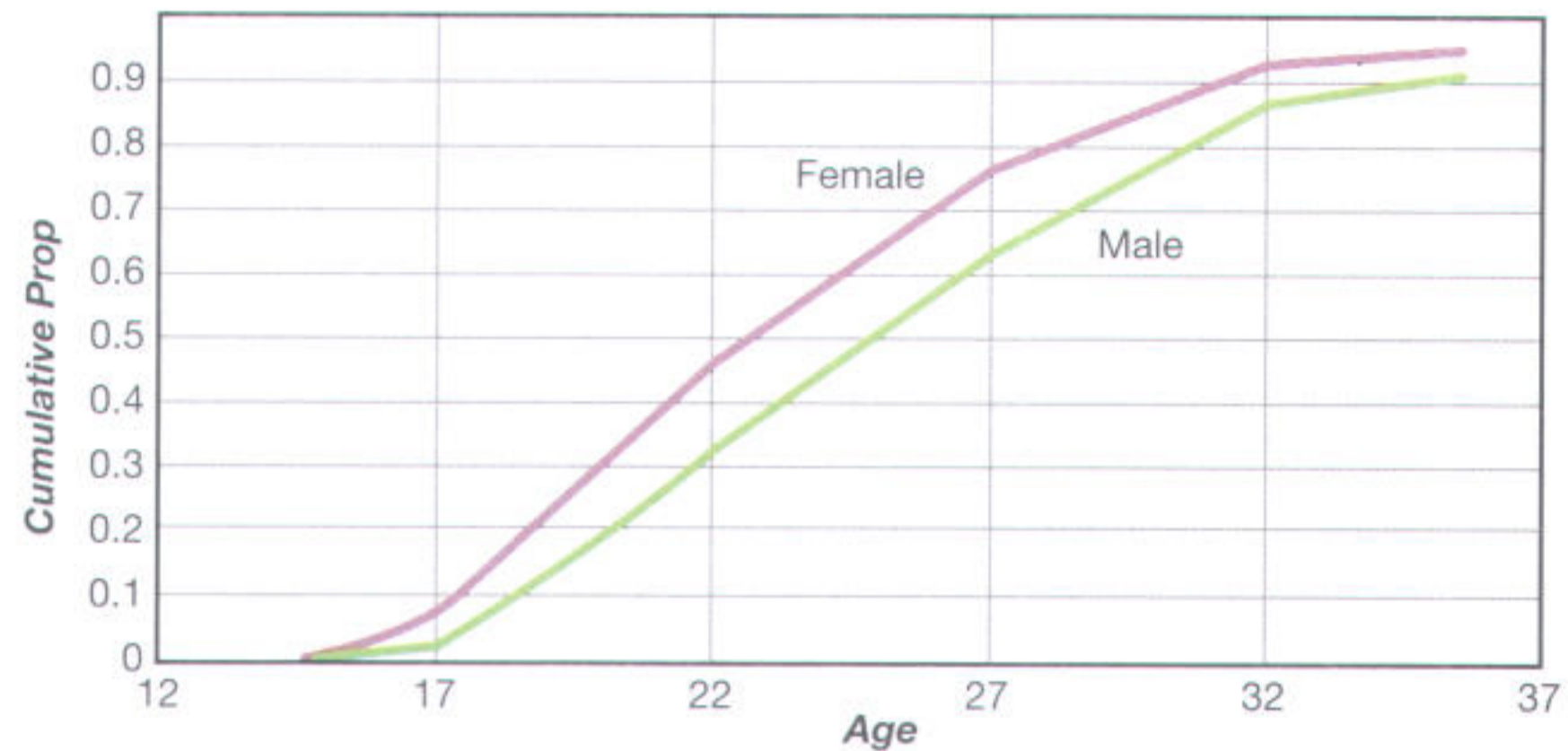
**Source:** Created from data published in the Statistics Canada publications *Marriage and Conjugal Life in Canada*, Catalogue 91-534, April 1992 and *Canadian Social Trends*, Catalogue 11-008, Spring 2000.

of Canadians born in the 1930s and the 1940s had not been married by the time they had reached the age of 50 (Kelman, 1998). These Canadians reached marriageable age during a time of economic prosperity, when they felt very optimistic about their financial future.

## Contemporary Marriage and Intimate Relationships

Almost all Canadians form marriage or other conjugal relationships at some point in their lives. A study by Statistics Canada using the 1995 General Social Survey found that 94 percent of women aged 30 to 69 had formed at least one union. The proportion of women who had married was highest for those aged 40 to 69. The proportion of women aged 20 to 29 who had married was lower, but it is assumed that some would still marry. Few women reported no conjugal unions at all, but an increasing number had formed a second union after a separation or a divorce, if they had been married. Although this study focused on the behaviour of women, men and women, by definition, marry at almost the same rate (Le Bourdais, Neill, & Turcotte, 2000). Since

## Life Table Estimates of First Marriage: Canada, 1990



Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication *General Social Survey*, 1990.

### FYI

## Statscan Would Sooner Count Marriages Than Complaints

by Michael Jenkinson

Faced with mounting public opposition, Statistics Canada decided the agency would continue to compile annual statistics on marriage and divorce. The agency announced early in 1996 it would drop the tally to save \$150 000 annually; it argued these statistics were no longer useful given the number of common-law unions. Critics maintained Statscan was trying to undermine the importance of marriage. Statscan was inundated by so many complaints it had to hire a part-time secretary to keep up with the mail volume. "It was one of those things that seemed like a good idea at the time," said Janet Hagey, director of the agency's health statistics division.

Source: *Alberta Report/Western Report*. (1996, December 2). (23), 43.

Bibby (2001) found that 88 percent of adolescents aged 15 to 19 expect to marry and stay with the same partner for life, either the number of young women that marry will increase, or some young men and women will change their minds about whether to marry. There are several research questions that arise concerning marriage and intimate relationships in Canada:

- At what age and rate do Canadians marry or form other intimate relationships?
- What is the purpose of marriage?
- How has the changing role of women affected marriage?
- What role does cohabitation have in Canadian society?

Despite the popularity of marriage, Canada's marriage rate was at an all-time low of 5.1 per 1000 population in 1998. This rate is similar to the marriage rates of Germany and the United Kingdom; higher than that of France, Italy, and Sweden; and substantially lower than the U.S. rate. Both men and women seem to be rejecting marriage, but it is difficult to gather data about choices that do not have to be registered, such as remaining single or living together. Some sociologists argue that people want to marry but they are unable to; others suggest that people are less willing to marry (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). For example, an increasing divorce rate is often cited as a deterrent to marriage. The lifetime risk of divorce for

Canadians is about 31 percent, compared to the rate of 44 percent in the United States (Ambert, 1998). However, the divorce rate has declined at the same pace as the marriage rate in Canada during the 1990s.

In the past, almost all men and women married; now, many are choosing to live in common-law relationships. Fewer women aged 20 to 29 are married, but the decline is almost offset by the greater number of younger women who reported at least one common-law union. The proportion of women who had married was highest for those aged 40 to 69, but more than 1 in 4 women in this age group had cohabited at least once. Common-law relationships have become so widespread that they were the first conjugal relationship for 52 percent of women under 30. Although cohabitation begins less formally than marriage, the spouses are still subject to some legal obligations, as the term “common law” implies, and they are more likely to separate than if they were married (Le Bourdais, Neill, & Turcotte, 2000).

**The Conjugal Relationships of Canadian Women**

Age in 1995	Born in				
	60–69	50–59	40–49	30–39	20–29
<b>Proportion of all women experiencing</b>					
	1926–1935	1936–1945	1946–1955	1956–1965	1966–1975
At least one union	96	97	96	94	87
At least one marriage	96	95	92	84	66
First union starts with marriage	95	91	78	56	35
At least one common-law union	8	22	35	49	59
First union starts with common-law union	1	6	18	38	52
At least one separation	25	32	40	43	—*
At least two unions	14	27	34	39	—
At least two separations	8	13	16	—	—

\* — Sample too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication *Canadian Social Survey*, Catalogue 11-008, Spring 2000.

## The Time for Marrying

The timing of significant developments in life is determined by a culture’s social clock and by an individual’s readiness to make the change. When asked for their opinions about the appropriate time for starting a family, Canadians believe the best age to marry is 24 and the best age to have the first child is 25

(Gee, 1995). However, according to Statistics Canada, Canadians are now waiting until their late twenties to get married. The average age of first-time brides in 1998 was 27.6 years; the average age for grooms was 29.6 years. Three-quarters of all marriages in 1998 were first marriages for both bride and groom (Statistics Canada's *The Daily*, 2001, November 15). Young adults are delaying marriage, but they are not postponing sexual activity. Most cohabit before they marry, but it is not clear whether cohabitation is a cause or an effect of delayed marriage (Gee, 1995).

Marriage is no longer the significant rite of passage into adulthood that it once was. Several adjustments in the social clock accommodate these changes. Marriage has been delayed to allow for post-secondary education for men and women, and to give young people time to find jobs in their chosen careers. Marriage might also be delayed until the man's employment is secure and he feels that he can afford to marry, which might take several years after the completion of post-secondary education (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Those who do not have a stable job or who do not think they can afford to marry are likely to cohabit instead (Clarkberg, 1999). Since many young couples are living together before marriage, they might delay marriage until they are ready to have a child. Women today expect to establish a career for themselves before taking time out from the labour force to have a baby (White, 1992). Currently in Canada, most young people plan to complete their education and become financially independent before they marry and have children.

## Why People Marry

In Canada, the romantic dream is that individuals will fall in love and marry some day. Even many people whose marriages are arranged believe they will fall in love after the ceremony. Spouses are expected to be close friends and companions and to love and support each other (Broderick, 2002). In the National Fertility Study of Canadian women conducted in 1984, 75 percent of women considered "love strongly" as absolutely necessary for marriage, and 55 percent believed that love should become at least "deep affection" for the marriage to last. The women were almost unanimous in feeling that "having a lasting relationship as a couple" was necessary for happiness (Balakrishnan, Lapierre-Adamczyk, & Krotki, 1993). In Russell Wild's 1998 survey in which "150 Guys Reveal What Prompted Them to Pop the Question," two-thirds of the men married for love and companionship. Generally, marriage in Canada is assumed to be a relationship based on an enduring romantic attraction.

*"The real issue isn't making love; it's feeling loved."*

— William H. Masters and  
Virginia Johnson

### Why Men Marry

Friendship/companionship	66%	Escape loneliness	12%
Children	32%	Sex and romance	12%
It was just the thing to do	16%	Cooking/housekeeping	8%
To avoid dating	16%	She gave me an ultimatum	8%
Gain respectability/ social acceptability	15%	Fear of growing old/ dying alone	6%
Personal growth	14%		

**Source:** Adapted from Wild, R. (1999). *Why men marry: 150 guys reveal what prompted them to pop the question*. Lincolnwood, Illinois: Contemporary Books, 6–7. Reproduced with permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Husbands and wives are expected to express their love for each other in an exclusive sexual relationship. That a marriage must be consummated by sexual intercourse to be valid emphasizes the role that sexual activity should play in a marriage, and husbands and wives assume they will enjoy an active sex life (Ward, 1994). In the National Fertility Study, 40 percent of women stated that sexual attraction was absolutely necessary for marriage, but 75 percent said that sexual fidelity was necessary for a marriage to last (Balakrishnan et al., 1993). Since extramarital sex is widespread, a double standard exists in many cultures: because children are clearly linked to their mother, a woman should be a virgin at marriage and faithful once married, but these restrictions are not placed on a man. An exclusive sexual relationship is central to the purpose of marriage; therefore, refusing to have sex with a spouse was grounds for divorce, as was **adultery**, or sex with a partner other than a spouse, until no-fault divorce was instituted in Canada in 1968. Marriage continues to define the legitimate sexual partners of individuals.

### For Better or For Worse



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## abstract | The Significance of Romantic Love for Marriage

by Jürg Willi, M.D., University Hospital, Zurich

In this study, 605 subjects were asked about romantic love and marriage. Married people differentiated themselves from single people with stable partners and divorced people with new partners by more frequently living together with their great love, more reciprocity in that love, and fewer disappointments in love relationships prior to the current relationship; but they also described themselves as less happy and satisfied than the single and divorced respondents, particularly with regard to

tenderness, sex, and conversation with their partners. Independent of marital status, those who were greatly in love with their partners describe themselves as happier. Love at first sight, relative to a gradually developing love, nevertheless, did not have a worse prognosis for happiness in marriage. Being in love seems to be of greater importance for the prognosis of the marriage than marital happiness and satisfaction. ■

**Source:** *Family Process*. (1997). (36), 171–182. © 1997 by Family Process Inc. Reproduced with permission of Family Process Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.



Couples who choose to get married are announcing their commitment to their family, friends, and community.

## Identity

When individuals marry they acquire the status of husband or wife. Marriage changes how other people see them, but it also changes how individuals see themselves. Symbolic interactionism explains that by interacting with others who see them as a husband or a wife, individuals take on the appropriate marital role (Mackie, 1995). From a developmental perspective, the choice to marry requires that individuals adjust their identity so that they can share themselves with others in intimate relationships (Erikson, 1968). Although men no longer receive a wage bonus upon marriage as they did in early twentieth-century Canada, the assumption that they will be more reliable, stable, and productive encourages them to marry before they become middle-aged (Wild, 1999). This desire suggests that men have formed a Dream that includes marriage as an essential part of their life structure (Levinson, 1978). Being married continues to be the default setting in identity for adults.

People seem to desire commitment, despite the acceptance of cohabitation and the availability of sex before marriage (White, 1992). In the National Fertility Study, an overwhelming 93 percent of married women aged 18 to 49 said that “Marriage adds something positive to a relationship” (Balakrishnan et al., 1993). Men and women are socialized to have children; however, smaller families require less emphasis on parenting and a greater emphasis on

marriage as a rewarding relationship for husband and wife (Broderick, 2002; Ward, 1994; White, 1992). The **companionate marriage** is based on shared lifestyle. Rather than marrying to acquire status, as was the case in the past, individuals who want to achieve a higher status are likely to choose a partner who has similar goals and the financial means to afford a shared status (Balakrishnan, 1993; Ward, 1994).

Some people are more willing than others to make the commitment to marriage. Individuals often make the decision following a family or societal crisis, such as the death of a parent, or a war, that emphasizes the importance of family ties (McGoldrick, 1989). On the other hand, people who have experienced their parents' divorce are less likely to marry (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Canadians whose parents divorced also appear to be delaying marriage: 40 percent of men and 54 percent of women married by their late twenties and early thirties compared to 50 percent of men and over 60 percent of women whose parents were not divorced (Statistics Canada, 2000, March 16). Finally, women who are cohabiting are more likely to separate than to marry their partners (Le Bourdais et al., 2000). Family background affects whether individuals perceive marriage as a desirable step, and if and when they are willing to take the chance.

## The Economics of Marriage

Marriage provides physical and economic survival benefits for a couple (Ward, 1994). From the functionalist perspective, the division of labour provides for the well-being of spouses and children and benefits the society in which they live. Talcott Parsons, an American sociologist who used the functionalist perspective, described clearly differentiated roles for men and women. Men had a goal-oriented **instrumental role** of providing for the family by working and earning an income. Women had an emotional **expressive role** of providing a supportive home for their husbands and their children (Jarman, 1992). Parsons was describing the distinct roles of middle-class American families in the 1950s and 1960s. Although his ideal became the model for young couples for several decades, such a distinct division of roles has never been an achievable norm for most couples.

Many men and women associate marriage with negative gender roles. Men with traditional views still feel pressured to accept full financial responsibility for supporting a wife and children. On the other hand, many women feel that they are expected to accept responsibility for housework and child care and to maintain a career, too (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Traditionally, when women married men who were older, they lost power because they were female and younger, and lost potential income because they stopped work before they could achieve the increased income gained by experience

*"Here I am, here you are, and here we are. Marriage is the commitment to that which we are."*

— Joseph Campbell



(Gee, 1995). In two-thirds of the marriages in Canada in 1998, the groom was older than the bride, but one-quarter of brides were older by an average of 3.7 years (Statistics Canada, 2001, November 15). This could indicate a willingness to break with tradition, but it is more likely that there are not enough younger women because of the declining birth rate. However, if women have a

## developing your research skills | Accessing Information From Academic Journals

Academic journals publish research articles so that research results can be reviewed by others who work in the same academic field. This process, called *peer review*, ensures that the results are reliable. Some research is also reported in the popular media. Newspaper and magazine articles can be located easily in the clipping files of libraries or on the Internet to help you locate academic articles that describe the research methods and results in greater detail.

- When you are looking for research articles, look for the names of the researchers, the title of the original publications, or the names of the organizations who sponsored the study.
- Using the library catalogue and the Internet, conduct a search to locate the original reports. You might also be able to find more current research by the same researchers. Journals are available for reference on the Internet (usually), at public libraries, and at college and university libraries.

### Example

The newspaper article “Want the good life? Get married,” written by Elaine Carey, demographics reporter, and published on January 24, 1996, in *The Toronto Star*, summarizes the results of two research articles published in the November 1995 academic journal *Demography* and reports the number of marriages for 1994.

To follow the leads to access valid secondary sources, especially academic journals:

- Locate the November 1995 issue of *Demography*, Vol. 32, No. 4, the journal of the Population Association of America, in public or university libraries or on the Internet. There you would find:
  - On page 483, “Does Marriage Matter?,” a research essay by Linda J. Waite, in which she argues the thesis that, because individuals weigh the costs and benefits of marrying to themselves, not to society, demographers have an obligation to inform people about the costs and benefits of marriage that have been determined through research. She provides a thorough review of previous studies of marriage illustrated with graphs to support her thesis (Waite, 1995).
  - On page 521, “Dissolution of Premarital Cohabitation in Canada,” a research report by Zheng Wu and T.R. Balakrishnan in which they present the results of a Canadian study to determine whether cohabiting couples are more likely to marry or to separate and the factors that affect the outcome. They conclude that although they are transient relationships, cohabitation appears to be emerging as a new form of family living (Wu & Balakrishnan, 1997).
- Search Statistics Canada’s web site to locate the most recent marriage rates in Canada and to check for publications on the topic.
- Using the Internet, locate more recent studies by the researchers Zheng Wu, T.R. Balakrishnan, and Linda Waite. ■

similar earning potential to men, men are less likely to accept full financial responsibility for their families. Likewise, women who are educated and earning comparable incomes to their husbands are less likely to accept traditional marriage roles. As the dual-income marriage becomes the norm, **egalitarian relationships**, in which men and women share the responsibilities rather than adhere to fixed gender roles, are more common (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991).

Marriages are no longer essential for economic survival now that women are employed and self-supporting (Conway, 1997). From a social exchange perspective, there must be benefits to marriage that outweigh the advantages of the alternatives—cohabitation or remaining single—for individuals to choose to marry. Men and women with traditional views of marriage roles are more likely to marry. In addition, the more education men have, the more likely they are to approve of women working and the more likely they are to marry. However, more education for women decreases their opportunity to choose marriage (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Since the persistence of traditional functional roles results in an unequal power balance within marriage, and men and women have nearly equal power outside of marriage, men are assumed to benefit from marriage more than women do (McGoldrick, 1989).

*“I have yet to hear a man ask advice on how to combine marriage and a career.”*

—Gloria Steinem

## legal matters | Marriage and Cohabitation

by Justice Marvin Zuker

### Marriage

When individuals enter into marriage, they enter into a contract and, as such, are subject to the rules that govern other contracts. The action for breach of promise to marry has been repealed in Ontario, and no action can be brought for any damages that result from a failure to marry.

The Constitution of Canada, Constitution Act, 1867 (see s. 91 (12), (13), (26)), provides that legislative jurisdiction with respect to marriage is shared between the federal and provincial governments. Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction concerning marriage and divorce, and the provincial legislatures have exclusive jurisdiction concerning solemnization of marriage, property, and civil rights in the province. The Constitution provides for overlapping legislative authority. Parliament has legislative

authority with respect to who can or cannot marry and has enacted legislation prohibiting certain persons who are related by blood or adoption from marrying in the Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act, Statutes of Canada, 1990, Chapter 46, s. 4.

### Degrees of Consanguinity Which, Under the Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act, 1990 (Canada), Bar the Lawful Solemnization of Marriage

A man may not marry his	A woman may not marry her
1. Grandmother	Grandfather
2. Mother	Father
3. Daughter	Son
4. Sister	Brother
5. Granddaughter	Grandson

The relationships set forth in this table include all such relationships, whether by whole or half-blood or by order of adoption.

In Ontario the Marriage Act sets out who may perform marriages, when a licence is required, where and from whom that licence may be obtained, and who may obtain one.

- A marriage licence cannot be issued to a minor without the written consent of both parents. Obtaining the consent of parents is regarded as a matter of the formalities requisite for marriage. It is, accordingly, a matter regulated by the law of the place where the marriage is celebrated. A marriage that has been celebrated is valid and not void or voidable if performed without the requisite parental consent.
- If a marriage has been entered into in a country where no formalities are required other than an agreement to marry followed by cohabitation, that marriage will be, with respect to formalities, regarded as valid in Ontario.
- Marriage is a relationship of heterosexual monogamy. The case law definition of marriage may be stated “...as the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others.” No person is entitled to undergo a second form of marriage while the first marriage remains valid and subsisting.
- A marriage will be void if one of the parties does not have the capacity to understand the basic nature of a marriage and its obligations. An operative lack of understanding may result from a lack of mental capacity or such non-inherent factors as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Duress of such a kind as to negate consent also invalidates a marriage.
- A decree of nullity must be distinguished from a divorce. A divorce puts an end to a valid marriage. Nullity rectifies the status of the parties as a result of some defect or disability at the time of the marriage ceremony.
- A marriage can be voided or annulled if one of the parties was unable to consummate the marriage at

the time of the ceremony. A marriage is consummated when ordinary and complete sexual intercourse takes place between the spouses after the marriage ceremony. Accordingly, the use of contraceptives, sterility, or capricious refusal to engage in sexual intercourse does not amount to an inability to consummate.

In Ontario, the Family Law Act has several definitions of “spouse.” For the purposes of Part I (family property) and Part II (matrimonial home), “spouse” refers to a man and a woman who have entered into a valid marriage, and extends to void and voidable marriages if the marriage was entered into in good faith on the part of the person asserting a right under the Act. Part III of the Family Law Act imposes mutual obligations of “spouses” to support each other. There is a duty on parents to support their children, and no distinction is drawn between children born in void, voidable, or valid marriages. In defining the rights of children, the law in Ontario no longer distinguishes between children born within or outside of marriage unless paternity is an issue.

### **Cohabitation**

The term “cohabit” is defined in the Family Law Act as “to live together in a conjugal relationship, whether within or outside marriage.” In Ontario, there are few remaining legal differences between married and cohabiting couples. Perhaps the most important distinction is that, under Part I of the Family Law Act, equal contributions are assumed, entitling a married spouse to a share of a wide range of assets acquired during the relevant period, whereas it is certainly more difficult for a cohabitant to access “non-family type” assets acquired during the relationship. In Ontario, the right of possession to the matrimonial home arises under Part II of the Family Law Act. However, that right is currently restricted to married persons, as the definition of “spouse” is the same in Part I and Part II.

In Ontario, although common-law and same-sex couples are still excluded from the property division scheme set out in Parts I and II of the Family Law Act, since the passage of the Ontario Family Law Act, 1978, cohabitants have been covered under the provincial statutory support provisions under Part III.

Section 29 of the Family Law Act defines a “spouse” for the purposes of Part III of the Act as including “either of a man and woman who are not married to each other and have cohabited,

- a) continuously for a period of no less than three years, or
- b) in a relationship of some permanence, if they are the natural or adoptive parents of a child.”

Cohabitants cannot inherit under the intestacy provisions (when a person dies without a valid will) in the Succession Law Reform Act. However, a cohabitant may apply for support under Part V of that Act if he or she was a “dependant.” Cohabitants can, of course, provide for each other by will.

Since the 1970s, cohabitation agreements have been expressly provided for in provincial legislation dealing with domestic contracts (s. 53-54). The couple may provide for the custody of children (subject always to the overriding jurisdiction of the court. Since cohabitants are not covered under Part II of the Family Law Act, they are not subject to the restrictions dealing with the family home that are imposed on married spouses in the context of marriage contracts.

The Canada Pension Plan, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, extends spousal benefits to cohabitants who have cohabited for at least one year. In Ontario the Pension Benefits Act includes cohabitants as defined in Part III of the Family Law Act. In Ontario, following the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in April 1985, a large number of statutes were amended to include heterosexual cohabitants within the definition of spouse because it was assumed that marital status would be found to be an analogous ground of discrimination. (See The Equality Rights Amendment Act, 1986, Statutes of Ontario, 1986, Chapter 64.) ■

## Cohabitation

Cohabitation has become so common in Canada that almost 60 percent of young Canadians live together in their first conjugal relationship (Turcotte & Belanger, 1997). Most people assume that cohabitation means living together *before* marriage; that is, it is a prelude to marriage, not an alternative. In the National Fertility Study, 70 percent of married women and 82 percent of women who were separated or divorced said that “cohabitation was acceptable as insurance that marriage will last,” but less acceptable if the couple “do not want to make a long term commitment” (Balakrishnan et al., 1993, p. 156). In Canada, 63 percent of cohabiting couples eventually marry after living together for an average of 2.3 years (Conway, 1997). Cohabitation is gaining greater acceptance as a trial run at marriage.

Many young couples are reluctant to marry without living together first. Both men and women might want to determine whether they are compatible when they are not on their best behaviour, as they would be during traditional

dating. The high divorce rate makes some people feel a need to test their relationship before making a firm commitment and exposing themselves to the risk of divorce (Gee, 1995). Some individuals feel that marriage would not change their relationship. This argument is used in Québec, for example, where women do not change their name at marriage. Since the roles of men and women are changing, women might want to determine whether their partners can accept their independence, and men might be looking for more egalitarian divisions of labour and responsibility (Conway, 1997).

**Views on How Being Married Would Change Their Life:  
Cohabitors Under Age 35**

Aspect of Life	Better		Same		Worse	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
a. Standard of living	19	18	74	76	7	6
b. Economic security	24	32	67	61	9	7
c. Overall happiness	30	36	57	57	13	7
d. Freedom to do what you want	11	9	59	74	30	17
e. Economic independence	11	10	75	78	14	12
f. Sex life	22	14	68	81	10	5
g. Friendships with others	14	12	73	80	13	6
h. Relations with parents	22	24	71	72	7	4
i. Emotional security	28	38	63	57	9	5

**Note:** Cohabiting respondents age 35 and younger were asked: "How do you think your life might be different if you were married now?" A 5-point scale was used for responses. The "better" category above includes "somewhat better" and "much better." "Worse" includes "somewhat worse" and "much worse."

**Source:** Adapted from Ferguson, S. J. (2001), *Shifting the center: understanding contemporary families*. (2nd ed.) Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company. p. 166. Reproduced with the permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Although cohabitation is perceived to be insurance for a lasting marriage, it is not effective. Common-law couples are more likely to separate than married couples. This would suggest that it is a good thing they did not marry. However,

### Views on Reasons For and Against Cohabitation: Cohabitors Under Age 35

Reasons why a person might WANT to live with someone of the opposite sex without being married. How important is each reason to YOU?

Response	Important		Not Important	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
a. It requires less personal commitment than marriage.	14%	18%	46%	48%
b. It is more sexually satisfying than dating.	17	18	49	59
c. It makes it possible to share living expenses.	28	26	32	29
d. It requires less sexual faithfulness than marriage.	12	10	64	69
e. Couples can be sure they are compatible before marriage.	51	56	18	16
f. It allows each partner to be more independent than marriage.	17	19	36	41

**Source:** Adapted from Ferguson, S. J. (2001), *Shifting the center: understanding contemporary families*. (2nd ed.) Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company. p. 167. Reproduced with the permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

couples that marry after cohabiting are also more likely to get divorced. The reasons for this are unclear. People who cohabit might do so because they have characteristics that do not make them good marriage partners. Perhaps living together without a commitment changes people's idea of marriage and family and reduces the importance of commitment so that they are more likely to separate when problems arise (Baker, 1993). In some cases, the problems that prevented marriage in the first place might continue to cause difficulties after the marriage (Bumpass, 2001).

Cohabitation is an alternative to marriage for some Canadians. Traditionally, men or women who were not able to divorce their first spouse would choose to cohabit in subsequent relationships. Young men and women in romantic relationships who are not fully employed, who are students, or who are not yet earning enough to afford the lifestyle they want as a married person are likely to cohabit (Clarkberg, 1999). Living together can also be more economical than living apart (Bumpass, 2001). Cohabitation might enable couples to

maintain greater personal freedom and avoid commitment. The second relationship after divorce is likely to be a common-law relationship. However, cohabiting couples will acquire some legal rights and responsibilities for each other eventually as common-law partners.

## research study

### Economic Circumstance and the Stability of Non-Marital Cohabitation

by Zheng Wu, Associate Sociology Professor, and Michael Pollard, Ph.D. Student, University of Victoria

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the role of economic circumstances in the process of non-marital union dissolution?

#### HYPOTHESES

- Cohabiting couples who experience difficult economic circumstances are less likely to marry and more likely to separate.
- Improved economic circumstances and social assistance for women may increase union instability.
- An increase in men's economic position should elevate the likelihood that cohabiting couples will marry.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

Using secondary analysis, the researchers analyzed data from the ongoing Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, Statistics Canada, to trace a cohort of individuals who were cohabiting for a period of two years. The dependent variable was married, cohabiting, or separated. The independent variable was the economic circumstance of the individuals. Other factors that affect stability, such as age, education, or motherhood, were controlled.

#### RESULTS

- Canadian cohabitations were more stable than American ones, and more stable than before,

Zheng Wu of the University of Victoria has conducted extensive research on cohabitation in Canada.



- perhaps because they are more accepted or, alternatively, because newer relationships that are more stable were in the sample group.
- The probability of separation decreased when household earnings increased.
  - When women's earnings increased, the couple was more likely to separate than marry.
  - Men's increased personal earnings contributed to the probability of separation.
  - Increased total household earnings contributed to the stability of the cohabitation.
  - Increased social status increased the probability of marriage.

#### CONCLUSION

The first two hypotheses are proven by the evidence. However, men's increased earnings improved the probability of marriage only when matched with better social status, such as a professional position (Wu & Pollard, 1998). ■

**Source:** Statistics Canada. The Income and Labour Dynamics Working Paper series. Catalogue No. 98-10. July 1998.

## case study | Sarah Gets Married

Sarah LeBlanc is a 28-year-old insurance adjuster who recently married her boyfriend, Ian. She is the only child of a French Canadian father and an Italian Canadian mother. Sarah lived with her parents in her maternal grandparents' home for the first two years of her life, until her parents could finish high school and get established in secure employment. Sarah's maternal grandmother, Toni, had just recently remarried and was living with her new partner, Ron, with his two teenage sons and three of her children from her first marriage.

In many ways, Sarah was as much a daughter as a granddaughter to grandparents Toni and her husband, Ron. Her Nana Toni babysat Sarah during the day while her parents worked until she was school-aged, and her grandparents always took her with them on their holidays. With two sets of parents, Sarah was well-loved as a child, and she grew up in a very happy and stable family.

Sarah has known her husband, Ian, since grade 7, when she changed schools and met her best friend, Annie, Ian's younger sister. She started to date Ian after she graduated from high school and started to work as a cashier at the local Canadian Tire store. Ian played softball on a mixed team, and he asked his sister to help him find another girl to play on the team. Sarah and Ian dated casually over the next three or four years but continued to see others as well. It was Sarah who kept the relationship at that level, because she felt that Ian too often treated her as his kid sister's friend. Also, when she went to Ian's home, she always felt uncomfortable in such a large family, since Ian's four brothers teased her mercilessly.

Sarah's mother and her grandmother had married as teenagers, and she had grown up hearing their stories about how difficult it was financially and emotionally

those first few years. Sarah was determined that she would not get married until she was older and became more independent, if at all. Sarah's attitude toward marriage changed when she was 25 and her beloved grandfather died suddenly of a heart attack. She and Ian were still in a comfortable relationship and continued to live in their respective parents' homes. Sarah was working for an insurance company and had been recently promoted to the position of claims adjuster. She liked her job and was taking night-school courses at a nearby community college so that she could qualify as an insurance agent. Ian was working for a carpet laying company but did not really like the work. When Sarah's best friend, Annie, got engaged, Sarah talked to Ian about living together. He was not ready to make a commitment, so they decided to break up.

During the next year, Sarah focused on her job and completed her insurance qualifications. She dated occasionally but was not really interested in a serious relationship. Her father was diagnosed with cancer, and Sarah was preoccupied with helping her mom and dad with his recovery. Often, she drove her dad to Toronto for his chemotherapy sessions. As Annie's wedding day drew nearer, Sarah and Ian found themselves together at various pre-wedding social events, since Sarah was the maid of honour and Ian was the best man. Ian was now training to be a firefighter, something that he had been talking about doing for a long time. Gradually, Ian and Sarah got back together and resumed their relationship. This pleased Sarah's mom and dad, who really liked Ian and thought he was good for Sarah.

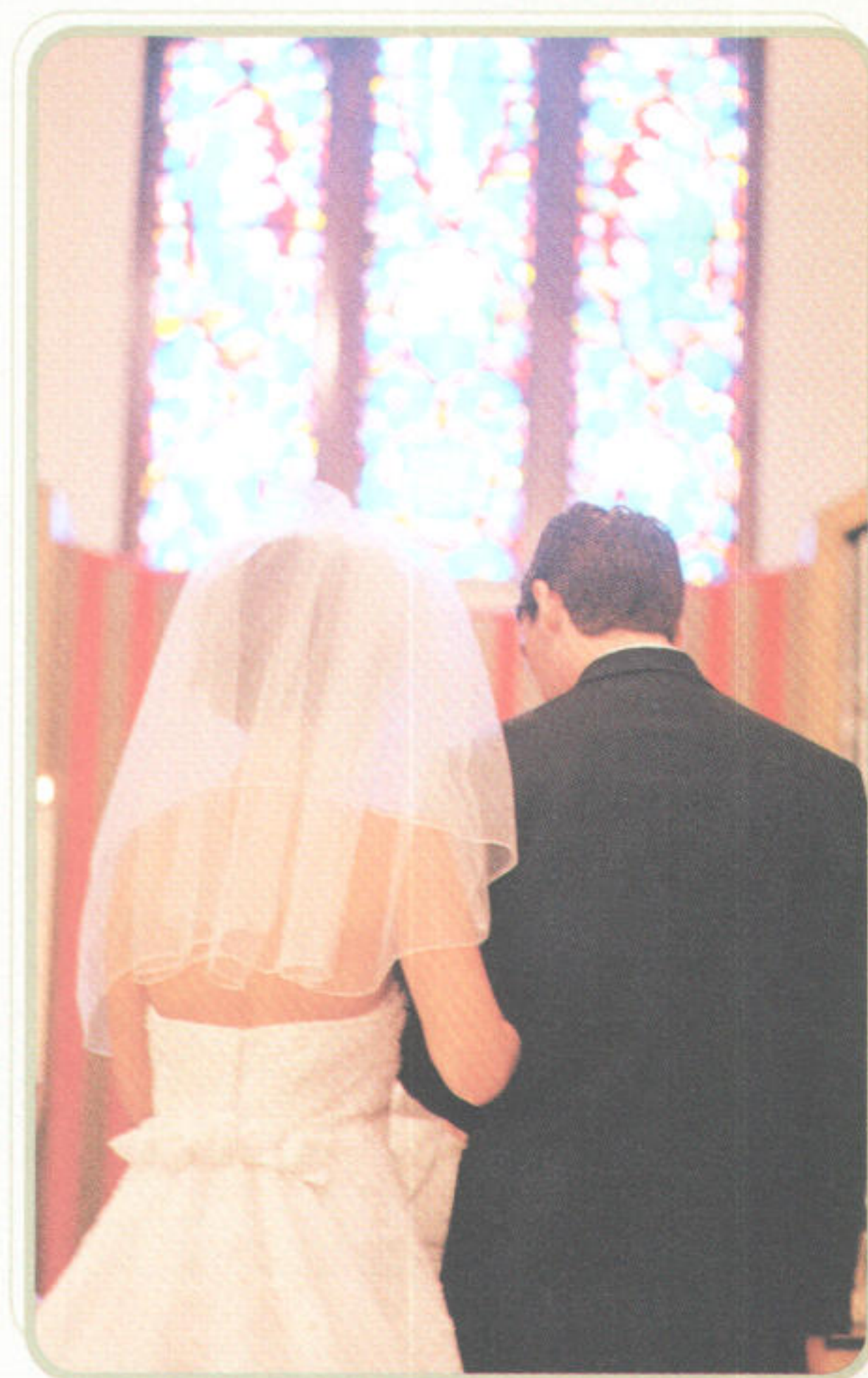
With many of their friends getting married, Sarah and Ian naturally began to talk about the possibility themselves. They knew that they loved each other, but



were very comfortable with their lives the way they were, and both were afraid to change things. They reached an understanding that they wanted to marry in the future, and they began to save money to put into a mortgage for a house when they finally decided to move in together. Then Sarah's father was diagnosed with cancer again. However, this time he did not recover and he died shortly after. Sarah was very close to her dad, and his death was difficult for her. Ian was very supportive, and the crisis in Sarah's life brought them closer together.

When Sarah's mom sold her house a few months later and moved into a small condominium in the same building as Sarah's Nana, Ian and Sarah bought a house and moved in together. Ian worked for the Barrie Fire Department, and Sarah's career at the insurance company was progressing rapidly. One year later, they were married. A few months later, they announced to their immediate families that they were expecting a baby. ■

1. What factors affected Sarah's choice not to marry earlier?
2. What reasons explain why Sarah and Ian married when they did?
3. Speculate on the likelihood that this example of the marriage process will become the norm in Canada.

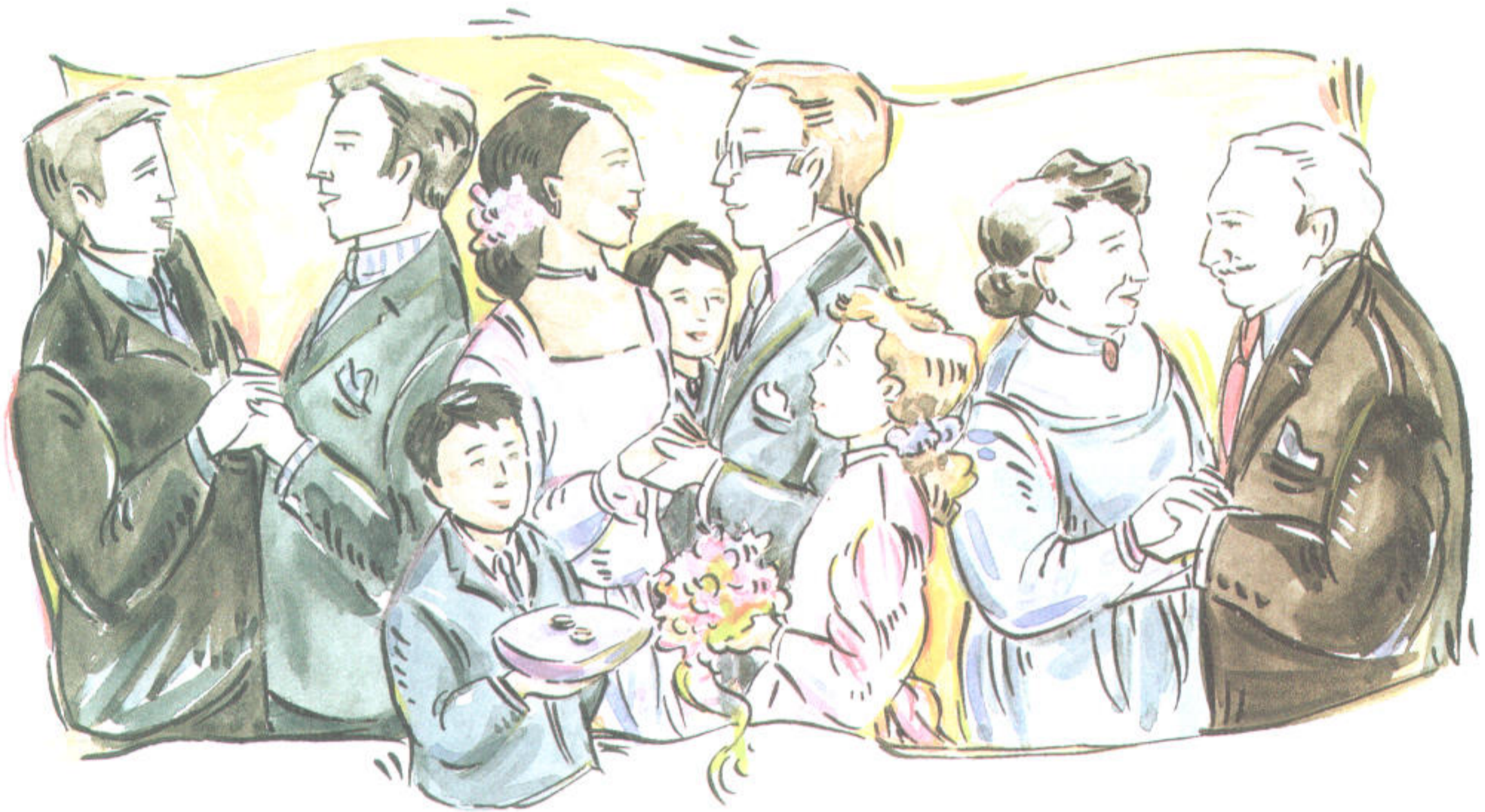


Sarah and Ian were married.

## The Future of Marriage

Marriage continues to be typical for individuals in Canada and in all parts of the world. Despite the common assumption that men and women will meet, fall in love, marry in their early twenties, and stay married to the same partner, in fact there has been constant change in the pattern of marriage. The current ideal of romantic marriage might be threatened by the increasing divorce rate, or it might be strengthened by an understanding that couples

who no longer love one another need not stay together. Cohabitation could also threaten the stability of marriage, or it might raise questions about the purpose of marriage. Current challenges to the definition of marriage as an exclusively heterosexual union raise questions about the meaning of love and the reason for marriage. Each couple makes a decision according to their own evaluation of the benefits of marriage and the alternatives. From a social exchange perspective, perhaps the various controversies concerning the choice to marry will require a redefinition and clarification of marriage and intimate relationships for future generations.



# chapter 6 Review and Apply

## Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry

1. The definition of marriage used by Benjamin Schlesinger calls marriage a “socially legitimate relationship.” What does “socially legitimate” mean? Identify the variety of intimate relationships that exist in Canada today. Classify them as socially legitimate or not socially legitimate.
2. Explain the purposes of marriage from the point of view of:
  - a) anthropologists
  - b) sociologists
3. Using a comparison chart, show the different ways marriages are formed, the obligations of spouses, the expectations concerning the marriage relationship, and how marriages can be ended, throughout the historical periods described.
4. Using data available from Statistics Canada, summarize the demographic changes that have occurred in the formation of marriages in Canada since Confederation.
5. Summarize the evidence from the chapter that supports procreation, love and companionship, identity, and economics as the purposes of marriage. Explain which purpose appears to be the most relevant today.

## Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication

6. What are the legal requirements of marriage in Ontario? Conduct an Internet search to see how these requirements may differ from other provinces in Canada.
7. Whether it is relevant to continue gathering data on marriage and divorce might depend on your theoretical point of view.
  - a) In the article “Statscan Would Sooner Count Marriages Than Complaints” on page 170, what theoretical perspective did the original decision by Statistics Canada reflect?
  - b) What theoretical perspective does the criticism reflect?
  - c) Write a response to the newspaper report about Statistics Canada’s decision in which you state an opinion based on your theoretical perspective and support your opinion on the controversy.

8. Should cohabitation have the same legal standing as marriage, or should cohabitation be an alternative relationship for those couples who want none of the legal rights or responsibilities of marriage? Choose an appropriate theoretical perspective and explain the two sides of the controversy.

**Knowledge/Understanding**   **Thinking/Inquiry**   **Communication**   **Application**

9. Develop a hypothesis regarding the purpose of marriage for young men and young women. Conduct an investigation using a survey and analyze the results. Speculate on the impact of the results on marriage for that cohort.
10. Using the Internet, conduct an investigation to determine whether the controversies concerning marriage and intimate relationships in Canada are being experienced in countries from which Canada's immigrants have come. Write a report summarizing various cultural viewpoints on the controversies.
11. Select one current trend in marriage and intimate relationships. Conduct research using the Internet to locate research articles and summarize the results. Organize and conduct a debate that presents conflicting theoretical viewpoints.