

The importance of marriage

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Running head: MARRIAGE AS AN INSTITUTION The Importance of Marriage
Ana Vertz PS301 Mrs. Kathy Erickson August 30, 2009 The Importance of
Marriage From Colonial times to present marriage has been an integral part
of Americanculture. The importance is has been evident in that it is one of
the few institutions that started with the country and is still very popular.
What makes marriage an important institution?

This paper will discuss the perceptions of the importance of marriage for
men and women, children's influence in the marriage relationship, the links
between psychological distress and martial conflict, attitude towards same
sex marriages and the effects of cohabitation and marriage commitment.
The first section of this paper examines the importance of marriage from
male and female perspectives.

Research from the National Survey of Families and Households suggested
the following trends: Men and women both feel that marriage is more
important to men; women view marriage as optional for both men and
women for having a satisfying life; women are more likely to think that men
cannot have a satisfying life without marriage; youthful and more educated
individuals are less likely to put emphasis on marriage; religious individuals
and those married who have children predominantly more inclined to think
that men nor women can have fulfilling lives without the institution of
marriage.

Research from the National Survey listed above also suggests that men get a
greater benefit from marriage than do women as stated below from a study
conducted on whether or not men need a spouse and the importance of

marriage. In the article entitled “ Do Men “ Need” a Spouse more than Women? : Perceptions of The Importance of Marriage for Men and Women” the authors state: “ As Nock (1998: 3) states, “ Men reap greater gains than women for virtually every outcome affected by marriage. Research results showing the greater benefit of marriage for men than for women on many dimensions, particularly physical and mental health (Bernard 1972; Grove 1973; Waite and Gallagher 2000), together with research has shown that women provide “ kin-keeping” benefits to men by strengthening their relationships with their children and other relatives (Cooney and Uhlenberg 1990; Rossi and Rossi 1990), have led many to argue that it is men who “ need” marriage more than women.

This view is particularly prevalent among theorists of family who focus on its economic dimensions. By implication, they posit marriage to be a “ normal good” for men but an “ inferior good” for women when they argue that increased earnings lead men to “ buy into” family roles (Becker 1991; Cherlin 1992) while women use theirs to “ buy out” of marriage (Espenshade 1985; Westoff 1986). ” In many ways this research supports the fact that marriage meets the need of a man better than that of a woman.

Next we will look at research conducted from the female perspective. An excerpt from the same article states: “ The growth of female labor force participation that accelerated in the 1960’s (Goldin 1990), however, appeared to many observers to undermine what were by then conventional reasons for women to marry (Westoff 1986). As a result, women were thought to be questioning the desirability of a domestic life (Friedan 1962)

and coming to believe that “ women’s marriage” was less desirable than “ men’s marriage” (Bernard 1972).

Feminist theory has reinforced the notion that women and men face very different experiences in the family life and hence have different experiences in family life and hence have different interest’s vis-a-vis family roles, which are said to favor men (Ferree 1990). The benefits of simply “ trading” housework for men’s wages (the basis for the economic argument) have declined, given the longer-term costs in terms of career development and the higher risks imposed by the increase in divorce (Thomson and Walker 1995), and the fact that wives’ expected role has added employment to their traditional household tasks (Hochschild 1989; DeVault 1990).

Hence, modern women may have had more reason than men to reevaluate what they might gain from marriage. These speculations are at least partially reinforced by some research that does suggest men expect to benefit more from marriage than do women. The analyses of shifting attitudes make it plausible that men place more importance on marriage than women. While most people believe that the married are happier than those who are not married, this belief is more likely to be held by men than women (Axinn and Thornton 2000). Indeed, women are more likely to disagree than men that it is better to be married than single (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). These gender differences suggest that women, at least, are less sure that marriage is important, and they are likely to be thinking more about their own situation as women than about men’s. Therefore, we expect that in the

1990's, men and women will see marriage as more necessary for men than women.

These considerations, together with the paucity of research that addresses the question of who needs to be married more, men or women, motivate our research (Kaufman and Goldscheider, 2007). The above referenced article shows evidence that the more learned put off marriage, have less children and view family roles as less important. (This is based in relation to expectations to themselves and their children living in early adulthood). Spiritual or religious associations have also been connected across a vast array of family domains with greater support for the family.

These religious cultures encourage marriage, marital stability, especially non-approval of non-marital child bearing, and encouragement for traditional descriptions of marriage. In looking at the importance of marriage from the viewpoint of male and female research conducted for this paper suggest that men and women view marriage as more important to men than women. (Kaufman and Goldscheider, 2007) Children's Influence in the Marriage Relationship In the article " Children's Influence in the Marriage Relationship" the research shows that there are reciprocal effects between children and marriage.

The emotional security theory suggests that exposure to marital conflicts improves children's negative emotions, resulting in emotional insecurity. This emotional insecurity promotes children's impulses to go between, run away from or in other forms lessens the occurrence of marital discord.

(Schermerhorn, Cummings, Mark, DeCarlo, Davies, Patrick, 2007) The article

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goes on to state: “ Attempts to reduce exposure to discord indicate that the goal of preserving emotional security is activated, serving as a mechanism by which children maintain or achieve emotional security.

The first two aims of the present article are to investigate reciprocity between the child and the marital system, including examination of both the influence of marital conflict on the child and child behavioral responses that influence marital functioning. ” (Schermerhorn, Cummings, Mark, DeCarlo, Davies, Patrick, 2007) From the research we can see that children are more likely to be negatively impacted by marital discord. Many times the child resorts to mediation to help fix the problems. Overall the findings of my research showed that children engage in behaviors to by some means reduce discord between parents.

This in return reduces the child’s exposure family threats. Another behavioral response is Behavioral dysregulation (i. e. , acts of verbal or physical aggression, misbehavior, or hurting oneself). Clinic literature indicates that discord in marriages corresponds to children’s behavior problems including aggressive behavior. Some have suggested that this behavior may show a taking on of the marriage’s problem to them self in demonstrating agentic behavior. This, from the child’s perspective, would distract parents from marital difficulties giving the child’s negative behavior a purpose to reduce marital discord over time. (Schermerhorn, Cummings, Mark, DeCarlo, Davies, Patrick, 2007) The study also showed the effects on psychological adjustment. An excerpt from the article states: “ The third aim of this study is to examine relations between children’s behavioral responses to marital

discord and their adjustment. In one of the few studies examining this link, Patenaude (2000) found that for girls who believed they could control interparental conflict by engaging in parent-protecting behaviors, higher marital conflict was associated with better adjustment.

In contrast, for boys believing in a parentified role in the marital relationship, higher marital conflict was associated with more internalized symptoms, albeit non-significantly. ” (Schermerhorn, Cummings, Mark, DeCarlo, Davies, Patrick, 2007) The research I conducted on children next suggests that when children react in a proactive nature to interparental discord by attempting to mediate, conflict in fact decrease over time.

Even though negative behavior is a form of insecurity concerning the marriage relationship, the present study suggests that children’s usage of negative attitudes and behavior as a constructive coping strategy can actually provide help towards reducing marital discord. In contrast to proactive behavior, children’s negative behavior was linked with more destructive interparental relations over a period of time. It is likely that these behaviors by children don’t take their parents attention away from the marital discord but actually contribute to it by increasing conflict.

However the method of the child’s associates is unsure. The outcome of a child’s behavior may be best understood by looking at each situation. For example, parents who are able to see that the child is trying to help may be more inclined to decrease conflict. It’s not that the child solves the parent’s dilemma, but that the child’s actions allow the parent to see the child’s

suffering and discomfort. This may guide parent's ability to solve problems than the child's ability to constructively cope with the situation.

It is not suggested that children should become actively engaged in marital discord because there are findings that show children's helping behavior can contribute to children's depression. (Schermerhorn, Cummings, Mark, DeCarlo, Davies, Patrick, 2007) We will next discuss psychological distress and marital conflict in the home. References Avery, A. , Chase, J. , & Johansson, L. (2007). America's changing attitudes towards homosexuality, civil unions, and same-gender marriage: 1977-2004. *Social Work*, 52(1), 71-79. Fowers, B. , Lyons, E. , Montel, K. , & Shaked, N. (2001, March).

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