



The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today

By Andrew J. Cherlin

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Andrew J. Cherlin's three decades of study have shown him that marriage in America is a social and political battlefield in a way that it isn't in other developed countries. Americans marry and divorce more often and have more live-in partners than Europeans, and gay Americans have more interest in legalizing same-sex marriage. The difference comes from Americans' embrace of two contradictory cultural ideals: marriage, a formal commitment to share one's life with another; and individualism, which emphasizes personal choice and self-development. Religion and law in America reinforce both of these behavioral poles, fueling turmoil in our family life and heated debate in our public life. Cherlin's incisive diagnosis is an important contribution to the debate and points the way to slowing down the partnership merry-go-round.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Johns Hopkins University sociologist Cherlin (*Public and Private Families*) analyzes "the profound changes" that have occurred in American family life, especially during the past half century. Although heterosexual marriage as the bedrock institution for raising children remains a strong cultural value, it is challenged by the increasing stress placed on individualism and self-fulfillment. The book presents a comprehensive historical overview of marriage and family in the U.S. and compares American behavior with that of people in other Western countries (Americans have the highest levels of moving from partner to partner). In light of relationship instability, the author suggests that children are likely to fare better in a single parent family than in a step-family, a structure that tends to be unstable. While Cherlin delineates the stress points created by the conflicting values of marriage and individualism, he offers few suggestions for dealing with the problems identified. To suggest that the "marriage merry-go-round" can be "slowed down" by not starting or ending relationships so quickly is to restate the problem, not offer insight for its resolution.

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From [Booklist](#)

The fact that the U.S. has the highest rate of marriage and divorce of any Western nation illustrates the tension between the American cultural ideal of commitment to marriage and the appeal of individual freedom. Cherlin, an authority on American family life, explores that tension and the differences in perceptions and value of marriage in the U.S. versus other Western nations, particularly Britain and France. Citing research on marriage and child-rearing trends, Cherlin observes that American family life is a merry-go-round characterized by the "great turbulence" of frequent marriage, frequent divorce, and more short-term cohabiting relationships than families in other Western nations. Analyzing changes in social, economic, and technological realms that account for differences in marriage trends among Western nations, Cherlin focuses on U.S. politics that uses such issues as gay marriage and covenant marriage to influence voters. He concludes that the U.S. could benefit from a culture and policies that spend less time and resources promoting marriage (pointedly between men and women) and more on promoting stable family life for children, however those families are constructed. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"A landmark new book." —*Time*

"Intriguing. . . . Provocative. . . . Cherlin has come up with an original thesis [to explain] this peculiar paradox—we idealize marriage and yet we're so bad at it." —*The New York Times*

"A masterful comparative analysis. . . . Cherlin argues that Americans have a distinctive pattern . . . which stems from our simultaneous commitments to marriage and to self-expression and personal growth." —*The American Prospect*

"Cherlin is one of America's leading experts on the family. . . . His book delivers a stern warning to this fast-paced conjugal culture: 'Slow down—watch out for the children.'" —*Commonweal*

Users Review

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As people who live in typically the modest era should be change about what going on or details even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era which is always change and move forward. Some of you maybe can update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what kind you should start with. This The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Donald McLaughlin:

The feeling that you get from The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today is a more deep you rooting the information that hide in the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to recognise but The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today giving you buzz feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in selected way that can be understood by simply anyone who read the item because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this specific The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today instantly.

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David McKenney:

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because while you are reading a book specially book entitled The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely might be your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a book then become one application form conclusion and explanation in which maybe you never get previous to. The The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today giving you one more experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful facts for your better life in this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary paying spare time activity?

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