The Availability of Family Ties in Later Life

Of all the ways we communicate with one another, the story has established itself as the most comfortable, the most versatile—and perhaps also the most dangerous. Stories touch all of us, reaching across cultures and generations, accompanying humanity down the centuries. Assembling facts or incidents into stories is the only form of expression and entertainment that most of us enjoy equally at age three and age seventy-three.

—Fulford (1999:x)

- How do demographic and social trends affect the availability of family ties in later life?

- In what ways does marital status vary by gender, age, and race/ethnicity across the life course?

- How do fertility rates affect the availability of intergenerational and intragenerational relationships in later life?

- How does the availability of family ties affect living arrangements among older adults?

Demographic Trends and Family Structure

The opening quote by Fulford (1999) is especially relevant at a time when respect for facts is flagging and such disregard flaunted in the stories told by some political leaders. At the same time that we have a responsibility to know the facts, there is also the challenge to present them in a compelling way so that others will pay attention (Connidis, 2015b). The value of telling good stories rests in their appeal; the danger lies in misrepresenting available information. As you study the data that we provide in this chapter, consider the stories that they tell. In subsequent chapters, we will consider how the information presented in this chapter relates to particular family ties later in life.

Population aging is the most significant demographic trend affecting individuals, families, and societies worldwide. The age group of those who are 60 years old or more is growing faster than any other age group. The 901 million people who are currently aged 60 and older is expected to double in size by 2050, and the 125 million people who are currently aged 80 and older is expected to triple in that time (United Nations, 2015). Countries that currently have the largest proportions of adults aged 60 and older are Japan (33%),

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Italy (29%), Germany (28%), and Finland (27%). Compare this with 22% in Canada and 21% in the United States. Population aging is, first, a function of decreased fertility rates and then of increased longevity followed by the short-term baby boom bulge (Colby & Ortman, 2014; United Nations, 2015). The average global life expectancy at birth in 2015 was 71 years, with a range from 50.1 in Sierra Leone to 83.7 in Japan (World Health Organization, 2017). As one might expect, life expectancy and birth rates vary by region and are highly influenced by times of war and peace, prosperity and famine. Population aging is projected to grow most quickly in Latin America, followed by Asia, Africa, Oceania, North America, and Europe. The speed at which the global population is aging brings into question how such changes will affect family ties across the life course.

Structured social relations at the macro level—that is, our position in society given our gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and ability—shape our personal experience (see Chapter 1). The structural features of families at the meso level of social institutions also create variable circumstances for individuals to negotiate in their relationships with one another. This chapter focuses primarily on the demographic trends that shape family structure in the United States and Canada. Family structure includes the following:

- Family size of each generation—the horizontal dimension

- The composition of a family, a generation, or a family subgroup, such as siblings (based on the combined attributes of its members, e.g., gender, age, and marital status)

- The number of surviving generations—the vertical dimension (Antonucci et al., 2011; Dilworth-Anderson et al., 2005; Hagestad, 2003; Herlofson & Hagestad, 2011)

The horizontal dimension reflects the fertility levels of each generation. The vertical dimension reflects the pattern of age differences between succeeding generations. In an age-condensed structure, one generation after the next has children at a young age, making the family more vertical (more generations alive at the same time). In an age-gapped structure, one generation after the next has children at a relatively old age, resulting in fewer surviving generations.

Family structure can be the basis for variations among families at one point in time or across time. Much has been made of the vertical family structure of today, often referred to as the *beanpole family* to describe the higher number of surviving generations but smaller numbers in each generation. Fertility timing is crucial to the number of generations; when succeeding cohorts delay the birth of their first child, coexisting survival of more than three or four generations decreases, as does the number of shared years between generations (Herlofson & Hagestad, 2011; Matthews & Sun, 2006; see Chapter 1). Trends in partner formation (staying single, marrying, cohabiting, divorcing, remarrying, widowhood, and living apart together), fertility (timing and number of children), and mortality (life expectancy) all shape family structure.

Consider your own family network. What is your marital status? What about your parents? Do you have stepparents? How many sisters and brothers do you have? Do you have a partner or expect to? What about

children? Now think about old members of your family. Are they married, living with a partner, or on their own? Is this a long-term or recent situation? How many children do they have? Grandchildren? Siblings? This chapter considers continuity and change in availability of various family relationships across age groups and across time. Although having a particular family tie does not guarantee an active relationship with that relative, not having one certainly precludes it. Therefore, as a starting point, it is useful to consider the availability of various kin as one parameter of family life in old age.

Demographic and social trends set some boundaries to family life, but they do not portend a particular destiny for any age cohort (Connidis, 2002; Moor & Komter, 2012; Silverstein & Giarrusso, 2010). Both types of trends reflect how individuals have negotiated relationships with others in the context of current social arrangements and demands, including public policy. Demographic and social trends are at once a critical component of the social context in which family members negotiate their relationships and a product of their time. That is why we cannot simply apply trend data to our current way of doing things and assume that we have seen a complete picture of what lies ahead. For example, the social context of being married or cohabiting today is different from what it was in the 1950s. Changes in the availability of one type of kin tie are likely to be met by adaptations in the way that other ones are negotiated. For example, if people have fewer or no children, they may negotiate more supportive ties with a spouse or partner, brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces. In later chapters, the nature of specific family ties in terms of their intensity (type and amount of contact), quality, and supportiveness (the degree and direction of support exchange between older persons and particular family members) is examined. Combining knowledge of trends with that of the nature of different kin relationships and the social context in which they are negotiated helps us to anticipate continuity and change in future family forms and functions.

Over the past four to five decades, rates of marriage went down, cohabiting rates went up, divorce rates went up and then stabilized, and birth rates went down (Bianchi & Casper, 2005; Copen et al., 2012). Very recently, birth rates have increased slightly in the United States, and rates of staying single (neither marrying nor cohabiting) also went up among younger age cohorts in many countries. Throughout this time, life expectancy at birth has increased for both men and women, with an average life expectancy of 81.8 years in Canada in 2014 and 78.8 years in the United States in 2014 (CDC National Center for Health Statistics, 2015a; Statistics Canada, 2017a). Life expectancy at the age of 65 has also gone up. Over a 90-year period in Canada, life expectancy went up by about 6 years for men and 8 years for women (Bourbeau & Oullette, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2016a). Women continue to live longer than men, but the margin of difference between them has decreased. The 81.2 expected years of life for women is 4.8 years greater than that of men in the United States. In Canada, women can expect approximately 83.7 years of life, 4.2 more years than men can expect. Differences by race continue also: Life expectancy for Blacks is 75.6 compared with 79.0 for Whites in the United States. Similar gender differences apply to both groups (CDC National Center for Health Statistics, 2017).

In both the United States and Canada, the substantial foreign-born population is a significant source of diversity. In 2010, 12.4% of those aged

65 and over in the United States were foreign born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a). In 2016, over one-fifth (21.9%) of Canadians were foreign born, the highest percentage in 80 years (Statistics Canada, 2017b). The foreign-born population is generally younger than the native-born and, in the United States, has less education and lower income but with very substantial differences based on region of birth and occupational distribution (Kandel, 2011; Larsen, 2004). For example, in 2013, those emigrating from Europe had median family incomes that were $20,000 to $30,000 higher than the incomes of those emigrating from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Central America (Lopez, Passel, & Rohal, 2015). These variations have consequences for the flow of support between generations.

Changes in intimate relationships mean that more families contain couples, both straight and gay, who cohabit; more cohabiting couples and more unattached women have children; more families include step ties; more children live in other-than-nuclear families than in nuclear families; and more grandparents raise grandchildren (Demo et al., 2005; Silverstein et al., 2010). Changes in fertility patterns mean smaller families among younger generations, changes in the gender composition of families, later age of becoming grandparents, and a greater age gap between one generation and the next. Although we emphasize change, we must be cautious not to misrepresent it. For example, the rise in one-parent (usually one-mother) families receives considerable attention. Yet one-parent families are not new. What has changed is their source; they are now typically the result of divorce rather than widowhood (Ambert, 2006) and, in growing numbers, births to unattached women. These shifting family structures have an important influence on family ties in later life, as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

How do general trends affect the availability of family ties across age groups and across time? We begin by looking at trends in marital status, number of children, and the availability of siblings and of grandchildren and then examine the living arrangements of several age cohorts. Reliance on census data limits our discussion to particular racial and ethnic groups and to employing the occasionally puzzling definitions of ethnic versus racial group membership that are the focus of the U.S. Census (McAdoo et al., 2005). For example, the 2005 U.S. Census includes Asians as a separate race, considers Hispanics an ethnic and a racial group, allows Filipinos to identify as Asian and Spanish in origin, and provides no way of identifying oneself as Arab or Middle Eastern. A related issue is the impossibility of presenting national data based on sexual orientation despite estimates of there being about 2.8 million gay men and lesbians aged 65 years and over in the United States (Allen, 2005a).

We typically exercise choice in having partners and having children; we do not have direct control over the number of siblings or grandchildren that we have. Our focus here is on partners, children, siblings, and grandchildren, but many older persons also have nieces, nephews, and cousins, and substantial numbers of those in their 60s have parents, aunts, and uncles as well (Dew et al., 2016). Although a vulnerable group, we focus less on the small percentage (1% in the United States) of persons aged 55 and older who have no immediate family, that is, a spouse/partner, children, siblings, or parents (Margolis & Verdery, 2017). When considering the data that follow, step back now and again to consider how detailed information relates

to the bigger picture; in essence, go back and forth between the forest and the trees, appreciating important variations (the trees) that occur within the general pattern (the forest).

The Availability of a Marital or Intimate Partner

As discussed further in the next chapter, a complete treatment of intimate relationships at any stage of the life course, including old age, must extend beyond marriage. Yet available data limit the extent to which alternative-couple arrangements can be documented accurately. Because we rely on census data, we focus here on marital status, but, as subsequent chapters illustrate, ties other than traditional marital ones are significant intimate bonds for older adults, whatever their sexual orientation. This said, the dominance of marriage as the primary socially and legally sanctioned intimate relationship of adulthood confers particular privileges and responsibilities that have consequences for family life in old age (see Chapter 3).

Marital status establishes a parameter of family life with both short- and long-term consequences for social networks, living arrangements, and social support. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present the distribution of the population by marital status at one point in time (2010/2016). Remember that these cross-sectional data reflect current circumstances only. Regarding divorce, for example, they do not reflect the total number of individuals who have ever divorced but rather only those who are currently divorced.

In Table 2.1, we can see a similar distribution of marital status for 10-year age groups in the United States (2010) and Canada (2016) among those aged 45 and over, particularly in the likelihood of being married. The majority of all individuals aged 35 to 74 years are married. This continues to be true for men for all age groups but for women only up to the age of 75 years. Among those aged 65 to 74, about three-quarters of the men are married but only just over half of the women are. By the ages of 75 to 84 years, over 70% of men are still married, but only approximately one-third of women have a spouse. Among the oldest age group (85 and over), 56% of American and Canadian men have a spouse, compared with only 16% of American and Canadian women. Given increases in cohabiting, it is worth noting that by 2016 in Canada, 7% of those aged 65–69, 5% of those aged 70–74, 3% of 75- to 79-year-olds, and under 2% of those 80-plus were in a common-law relationship (Statistics Canada, 2016b). The rise in common-law relationships among younger age groups elevates the percentage married for 2016. For those aged 25–34 and 35–44, 22% and 17%, respectively, were in common-law relationships.

These gender differences in the likelihood of being married are due primarily to different widowhood rates. At the ages of 65 to 74, only 5–6% of the men are widowed, compared with one-quarter of American women and 17% of Canadian women. This gender difference grows with age; for those aged 75 to 84, not quite 1 in 5 men is widowed, compared with half of the women. By the ages of 85 years and over, 1 in 3 men are widowed, compared with 3 of every 4 women. As can be seen in Table 2.2, these gender

Table 2.1 Percentage Distribution of Current Marital Status by Gender and Age: United States, 2010; Canada, 2016

| | United States | | | | | | | | | | Canada | | | | | | | | | |
| | Single | | Married[a] | | Separated[b] | | Divorced | | Widowed | | Single | | Married[a] | | Separated[b] | | Divorced | | Widowed | |
Age	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
25–34	50	38	41	50	2	4	4	6	0	0	48	37	50	60	1	2	1	2	0	0
35–44	22	16	63	64	3	4	10	13	0	1	21	17	73	73	3	4	4	5	0	1
45–54	15	11	66	64	3	3	14	17	1	4	16	12	72	71	3	5	7	10	1	2
55–64	9	7	70	63	2	2	15	18	3	8	11	9	74	69	3	4	10	13	2	6
65–74	5	5	75	54	2	1	11	15	6	24	6	6	77	62	3	3	10	13	5	17
75–84	4	4	70	36	1	1	6	8	17	50	4	5	74	43	2	2	6	9	13	42
85+	3	5	56	16	1	0	4	5	35	73	4	5	56	16	2	1	3	4	33	74

Sources: Data from U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2010. America's Families and Living Arrangements, Table A1: Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2010.html

Statistics Canada, Census of Canada. 2016b. Marital Status (13), Age (16), and Sex (3) for the Population 15 Years and Over of Canada, Provinces, and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas, 1996 to 2016 Censuses. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE =0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=109650&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2016&THEME=117&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=

Note: Row percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

a. The "married" category for the United States was derived from two separate categories: "married, spouse present" and "married, spouse not present." "Married, spouse present" includes individuals whose husband or wife was reported as a member of the household, even if temporarily absent on business trips, hospital visits, etc., whereas "married, spouse not present" included "people living apart because either the husband or wife was employed and living at a considerable distance from home, was serving away from home in the Armed Forces, had moved to another area, or had a different place of residence for any other reason except separation." U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS)—Definitions and explanations (see http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html)

The "married" category includes common-law relationships. A new feature of the 2016 Canadian Census allowed us to combine these two categories for direct comparison with the U.S. data. Previously, common-law relationships were dispersed in categories other than married, e.g., single. Comparisons of marital status distributions from earlier years must take this difference in categorizing common-law relationships into account. In Canada, since 2006, the married category also includes spouses in same-sex marriages.

b. The "separated" category includes married people with legal separations, those living apart with intentions of obtaining a divorce, and other people permanently or temporarily separated because of marital discord.

Table 2.2 Percentage Distribution of Current Marital Status by Gender, Age and Race: United States, 2010

Race and Age	Single Men	Single Women	Married[a] Men	Married[a] Women	Separated[b] Men	Separated[b] Women	Divorced Men	Divorced Women	Widowed Men	Widowed Women
White Only										
25–34	48	34	43	54	2	4	5	7	0	0
35–44	20	12	65	70	3	3	10	13	0	1
45–54	13	9	68	67	2	3	14	17	1	3
55–64	8	6	72	67	2	2	15	17	2	7
65–74	4	5	77	57	1	1	11	15	6	23
75–84	3	3	71	38	1	1	6	8	17	50
85+	2	4	57	17	1	0	4	5	34	72
Black Only										
25–34	64	62	27	26	3	4	4	5	1	1
35–44	36	37	47	37	4	7	11	15	1	2
45–54	28	26	47	38	5	8	16	21	2	6
55–64	16	17	55	38	5	6	18	24	4	14
65–74	7	10	58	30	6	4	18	20	10	34
75–84	6	10	53	20	6	3	9	10	24	56
85+	12	10	38	4	0	1	6	4	38	81
Hispanic Only										
25–34	52	36	36	50	3	6	3	5	0	1
35–44	27	16	55	62	5	6	8	12	1	1
45–54	16	13	61	60	4	6	12	15	1	4
55–64	13	10	63	54	5	6	12	19	3	9
65–74	6	6	65	45	4	4	12	16	9	28
75–84	8	5	60	32	2	4	5	10	23	48
85+	9	6	45	16	2	2	8	8	29	66
Asian Only										
25–34	50	30	45	65	1	1	2	3	1	0
35–44	18	12	75	76	1	2	4	7	0	1
45–54	9	8	80	74	1	2	6	9	0	3
55–64	5	7	85	71	2	2	5	8	1	10
65–74	3	5	78	55	4	2	6	5	4	30
75–84	3	7	86	36	—	3	2	4	8	49
85+	6	5	57	22	—	—	—	5	37	65

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. America's Families and Living Arrangements, Table A1: Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2010.html

Note: Row percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

a. The "married" category was derived from two separate categories: "married, spouse present" and "married, spouse not present."

b. The "separated" category includes married people with legal separations, those living apart with intentions of obtaining a divorce, and other people permanently or temporarily separated because of marital discord.

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differences in the proportions that are married and widowed apply to all races in the United States and reflect the longer life expectancy of women than men and the cultural tradition of men marrying women younger than themselves. Although men are more likely than women to remarry once widowed, rates of remarriage for both widowed men and women are fairly low (see Chapter 5).

There are substantial differences by race in marital status distribution in the United States (see Table 2.2). Overall, Asian and White persons are the most likely to be married, followed by Hispanics and then by Blacks. Thus, for example, among men aged 75 to 84 years, the percentage married is 86 for Asians, 77 for Whites, 60 for Hispanics, and 53 for Blacks. Corresponding figures for women in this age group are 38% of Whites, 36% of Asians, 32% of Hispanics, and 20% of Blacks. The distribution of widowed men aged 75 to 84 is 8% of Asians, 17% of Whites, 23% of Hispanics, and 24% of Blacks; for widowed women, it is 48% of Hispanics, 49% of Asians, 50% of Whites, and 56% of Blacks. Over the past 10 years, the odds of being married and widowed have become much more similar between Whites and Hispanics (see Connidis, 2001). Differences in marital status set the stage for racial variations in living arrangements and support networks in old age.

For both men and women in the United States, the percentage of currently divorced individuals is in the double digits for those aged 35 to 74 years old, with slightly lower figures in Canada (Table 2.1). Only among 25- to 34-year-olds, who are less likely to have been married in the first place, and those who are 75 years or over is the percentage divorced in the single digits. As of 2016, 11% (men) to 15% (women) of Americans and 10% (men) to 13% (women) of Canadians aged 65 to 74 years were currently divorced. For men in this age group, being divorced is more common than widowhood; the opposite is true of women. When compared with those over the age of 65, a higher percentage of those aged 35 to 64 is divorced, indicating that more old individuals are likely to be divorced in the future (see Chapter 5).

With the exception of Blacks and Hispanics aged 85 years or more, for all races and ages, women in the United States are consistently more likely than men to be currently divorced, due largely to men's higher rates of remarriage (Table 2.2). Asians of all age groups have the smallest proportion of divorced individuals, with especially low numbers among Asian men. For the age groups from 35 to 84 years, Blacks have the highest proportion who are divorced, followed by Whites and Hispanics. African American women aged 55 to 64 are most likely to be currently divorced; approximately 1 in 4 are in this situation, followed by 1 in 5 aged 65–74.

The single constitute a relatively small proportion of older persons. Of those aged 65 to 74, 5% of Americans and 6% of Canadians never married (Table 2.1). The high percentage of single persons under the age of 35 represents, in part, later age at first marriage but may also indicate an increase in the proportion of single adults in the future. Although not married, some of these single individuals may be in committed relationships that do not constitute legal marriage, including straight, gay, and lesbian adults. Greater acceptance of alternative lifestyles has improved awareness and recognition of cohabiting and same-sex partnerships (see Chapters 4 and 7).

Being single is most common among Black men and women (7% and 10% of 65- to 74-year-olds) and least common among Asian men and women

(3% and 5% of 65- to 74-year-olds; see Table 2.2). Whites and Hispanics fall between the two groups with somewhat higher percentages of single persons among Hispanics. Generally, men are more likely than women to be single, but this pattern is reversed among Whites aged 65 to 74 and 85 or more, Blacks aged 35 to 44 and 55 to 84, and Hispanics aged 55 to 84.

What about trends in marital status over time among those aged 65 years and older (Table 2.3)? In the United States today, 4% of older women and 5% of older men are single, 72% of men and 42% of women are married, 9% of men and 11% of women are divorced, and 13% of men and 40% of women are widowed. Comparable data on marital status by gender for Canada show that the distribution has remained quite stable since 1971–1972 for this age group in both countries. In Canada, the apparent increase in older persons who are married in 2016 is an artifact of including common-law relationships in the married category for direct comparison with U.S. data. Despite the long-term stability in marital status, there is some change over this 34-year period.

From the early 1980s in the United States and Canada, the percentage of old married women rises steadily, with a corresponding decline in the percentage that is widowed, more so in the U.S. Among men, there is a slight decline in both the percentage married and widowed. This shift reflects longer life expectancy for both men and women as well as the more recent catch-up in male life expectancy (Milan, 2013). Although women still live longer than men, the shrinking difference in life expectancy increases shared survivorship. In the U.S., a growing proportion of marriages include partners who have been married before; by 2014, 40% of all new marriages included at least one divorced or widowed partner (Livingston, 2014). Twenty-three percent of those who are currently married have been married before.

The numbers remain small, but the most dramatic rate of change is the percentage of currently divorced individuals aged 65 and over, which has more than doubled since 1970 (Table 2.3). Since the 1990s, the proportions of Canadian and American men and women who are divorced consistently equals or surpasses the proportions who are single. These trends indicate the growing acceptance of divorce as an option to a poor marriage among all age groups. The age of those who are divorced has been moving up over recent years so that by 2011, Canadians aged 50 and over had the highest percentage who were divorced—22% of women and 19% of men—of all age groups (Milan, 2013). The greater economic security of women, due to employment and to changes in social policy that ensure receipt of a share of a former spouse's social insurance benefits, may also facilitate being divorced and divorcing in older age (see Chapter 5). Such benefits are particularly significant in the lives of older women who have less financial security than men, but receiving them depends on staying married for long enough (10 years) to qualify (Angel & Settersten, 2015; Harrington et al., 2006).

There are variations in these trends over time among White, Black, and Hispanic Americans aged 65 years and over (see Table 2.4). Because data regarding old Asian Americans are only available for 2000, 2006, and 2010, discussion of trends in their case is premature. Focusing first on the data for 2010, we see dramatic differences in marital status distribution among those aged 65 or more. For White and Asian men and women, 3% to 5% are

Table 2.3   Percentage Distribution of Marital Status for Population Aged 65+, by Gender: United States, 1960–2010; Canada, 1971–2016

Gender and Marital Status	United States						Canada							
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1971	1981	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
MEN														
Never Married	7	8	5	4	4	4	11	9	7	7	6	6	6	5
Married[a]	70	68	76	74	73	72	72	76	74	73	72	71	70	75
Separated[b]	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	2	2	3	2
Divorced	2	3	4	5	6	9	1	2	5	7	6	7	9	8
Widowed	19	18	14	14	14	13	17	14	13	14	13	13	12	10
WOMEN														
Never Married	9	7	6	5	4	5	11	10	8	7	6	6	6	5
Married[a]	35	34	38	40	41	42	39	40	40	41	41	42	41	49
Separated[b]	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	2	2	2	2
Divorced	2	2	3	5	7	11	1	2	5	6	6	7	9	10
Widowed	53	55	51	49	45	40	49	49	47	47	45	43	43	34

Source: Data from Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada,* Canada Yearbook, 1975, Table 4.15, p. 167, Statistics Canada Catalogue 92-901, *Census of Canada,* 1981, Vol. 1, Table 4, Statistics Canada Catalogue 93-312, Census Canada, The Nation, *Census of Canada,* 2001, Catalogue 95F0407XCB2001004.

Statistics Canada. 2016. Marital Status (13), Age (16), and Sex (3) for the Population 15 Years and Over of Canada, Provinces, and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas, 1996 to 2016 Censuses. Retrieved from *http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=109650&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&temporal=2016&THEME=117&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=*

U.S. Census Bureau. 2014. *Current Population Reports.* Table 5-1 Marital Status of the Population Aged 65 and Over by Age and Sex: 1960-2010. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p23-212.pdf

Note: Row percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding.

a. The "married" category for the U.S. was derived from two separate categories: "married, spouse present" and "married, spouse not present." The "married" category includes common-law relationships for the United States but not for Canada with the exception of 2016 Canada data. In 1971–2011 Canada data, common-law relationships are not counted in the legally married category but are dispersed throughout the other categories. In Canada, starting in 2006, the married category includes spouses in same-sex marriages.

b. The "separated" category includes married people with legal separations, those living apart with intentions of obtaining a divorce, and other people permanently or temporarily separated because of marital discord.

Marital Status, Gender, and Race	1972	1981	1991	1995	2000	2006	2010
Never Married							
Men							
White	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Black	4	5	5	7	9	7	9
Hispanic	6	5	3	3	4	5	6
Asian	–	–	–	–	4	4	3
Women							
White	7	6	5	4	4	3	4
Black	3	5	5	6	6	7	9
Hispanic	3	8	5	8	6	4	8
Asian	–	–	–	–	2	3	5
Married[a]							
Men							
White	77	79	78	78	75	75	72
Black	65	68	63	64	56	56	54
Hispanic	63	71	78	70	70	72	68
Asian	–	–	–	–	83	84	80
Women							
White	36	37	42	44	44	46	44
Black	30	29	31	29	27	25	23
Hispanic	30	38	42	39	41	42	37
Asian	–	–	–	–	50	49	47
Divorced/Separated[b]							
Men							
White	2	4	5	6	7	9	11
Black	7	11	16	12	13	18	20
Hispanic	7	10	8	13	11	12	14
Asian	–	–	–	–	4	5	7
Women							
White	3	4	6	6	8	10	13
Black	8	10	13	13	13	16	21
Hispanic	8	6	11	14	14	14	17
Asian	–	–	–	–	3	10	9
Widowed							
Men							
White	17	15	14	13	14	13	13
Black	29	23	23	22	21	19	17

Table 2.4   Percentage Distribution of Marital Status for Population Aged 65+, by Gender and Race: United States, 1972–2010

(*Continued*)

Table 2.4   (Continued)

Marital Status, Gender, and Race	1972	1981	1991	1995	2000	2006	2010
Hispanic	29	19	14	18	15	12	12
Asian	–	–	–	–	9	9	10
Women							
White	55	54	48	47	44	42	40
Black	65	60	55	56	55	52	46
Hispanic	65	50	45	44	39	39	38
Asian	–	–	–	–	45	36	40

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000, 2006, 2010.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2014. *Current Population Reports*. Table 5-2 Marital Status of the Population Aged 65 and Over by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010 Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p23-212.pdf

a. The "married" category was derived from two separate categories: "married, spouse present" and "married, spouse not present," and includes common-law relationships.

b. The "separated" category includes married people with legal separations, those living apart with intentions of obtaining a divorce, and other people permanently or temporarily separated because of marital discord. The separated were combined with the divorced because numbers for separated were low and had only been counted since 2000. Black men and women were more likely to be separated than other race and gender groups.

single, but among Black and Hispanic men and women, 6% to 9% are so. The percentage married varies greatly, ranging from 25% of Black women to 84% of Asian men. We would expect gender differences, but even within gender categories, we see significant variations: Among old women, there is a range from 23% of Black women to 47% of Asian women married and a range from 54% of African men to 80% of Asian men married. White and Hispanic men and women fall between these extremes. White men and women follow their Asian counterparts, with 44% of women and 72% of men married. The Hispanic population has slightly lower proportions who are married (37% of women and 68% of men). The lower percentage of married persons among old African Americans is reflected in higher percentages who are divorced or widowed and, among men, separated.

The percentage of single persons over 65 has been relatively stable among White men since 1981 but has decreased slightly among White women for most years since 1972. The opposite is true for African American men and women for whom the percentage single has increased over time, with a slight drop among Black men and increase among Black women between 2000 and 2011 so that they now share the percentage single (9%) with each other. Hispanic men and especially women have more variable trends over time in the percentage single, possibly reflecting variations in migration patterns over time.

Despite declines in the percentage that are widowed among all groups, only old White women have experienced a consistent increase in the percentage that are married over time. Since 1981, Black and White men have

experienced a decline in the percentage aged 65 and over who are married, as have Black women since 1991. Combining the percentages of divorced and separated old persons (these two groups were combined in the U.S. Census prior to 2000), we see steady increases among White and Black women and men over time and stabilizing percentages among old Hispanic men and women. Over time, Blacks have higher percentages of currently divorced or separated old people, followed by Hispanics and then Whites. The data discussed here concern current marital status; figures of those who have ever been divorced are higher (see Chapter 5).

In Canada, same-sex couples were about 1% of all couples (married and common-law combined) in 2011 (Milan, 2013). The impact of legalizing same-sex marriage in 2005 is evident in the shifting proportion of same-sex couples who are married versus in common-law relationships, from 16.5% in 2006 to 32.5% in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). In the United States, less than 1% of all households comprised same-sex couples in 2010.

The Availability of Children

Although one can generally equate being single (never married) with child-lessness in the older population, this is not true of the younger population and is becoming less true among the young old. By 2014, 40.2% of all births in the United States were to unmarried mothers (CDC National Center for Health Statistics, 2016a). Thus, being single can no longer stand as a proxy for having no children. Total fertility (the total number of births per woman) has declined over several decades in the United States and Canada until a recent increase in both countries, especially the United States. In comparison with other Western countries, the United States has a higher birth rate, attributed largely to higher fertility rates among African Americans and Mexican Hispanics (Kim & Raley, 2015; Swicegood & Morgan, 2002; Torrey & Haub, 2003) but also to earlier age of marriage and birth of first child (Statistics Canada, 2002a). As a consequence of ethnic or racial variations in birth rates in the United States, the makeup of the country is shifting, with a decrease in the percentage of all births to non-Hispanic White women (54% in 2015; National Vital Statistics Reports, 2016). An increase in what some have termed multipartnered fertility (Carlson & Furstenberg, 2006; Guzzo, 2014a)—referring to having children with more than one partner—is also reshaping family forms, creating new situations for older persons to negotiate in their relationships with children and grandchildren.

As of 2014, Canada's total fertility rate was 1.6, compared with 1.9 in the United States (Population Reference Bureau [PBR], 2015), a difference that slows down the aging of the U.S. population in comparison with Canada's. Increases in fertility in Canada and the United States during the 1990s also had different origins: In the United States, increased fertility reflected higher fertility rates among young women, whereas in Canada increased fertility was a result of delayed childbearing, a shift that does not result in an increase in total number of births to one woman (Swicegood & Morgan, 2002). In the United States, a decrease in teen births from the late 1990s to early 2000s was met with an increase in 2006 and then by a decrease in 2014, when teen

Table 2.5   Percentage Distribution of Number of Children Ever Born to Women Aged 40+ by Age Group: United States, 2014, and Canada, 2011[a]

Number of Children	United States								Canada								
	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70–74	75–79	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70–74	75–79	80+
0	15	17	19	18	16	13	10	10	17	17	20	19	16	13	13	13	14
1	18	19	17	17	17	14	11	10	18	16	15	15	16	13	11	9	10
2	35	34	35	36	36	34	28	23	42	43	41	42	38	35	29	24	23
3	20	19	19	18	19	21	24	22	16	16	18	18	23	25	25	24	20
4	8	8	7	7	7	10	14	15	5	5	5	4	5	10	12	15	7
5+	4	4	3	4	4	7	14	20	2	2	1	2	3	4	10	14	18

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014b. Fertility data tables: Selected Years, 1970 to 2014. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/topics/health/fertility/data/tables.html. Statistics Canada. (May, 2013a). Fertility overview, 2009–2011. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-209-x/2013001/article/11784-eng.pdf

a. Canadian data are based on asking women of different ages about how many children they had (cross-sectional). The U.S. data asked women of the same age group (40–44) in different years how many children they had. U.S. data combine information from different sources to create the equivalent of cross-sectional data. Both Canadian and U.S. data are for all marital statuses.

births dropped to another historic low (CDC National Center for Health Statistics, 2016b). In Canada, the fertility rate of women younger than 30 years has declined steadily, and women in their 30s continue to be the primary source of a slight increase in birth rates (Statistics Canada, 2013a). In the United States, higher fertility rates among women aged 35 and over were exceeded by women of the same age in earlier cohorts, especially those who bore the baby boom (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2016). The novelty of today's increased birth rates among older mothers is that they are more often the arrival of the first or second child rather than the fourth, fifth, or sixth. Looking ahead, we will have a different picture of family size and fertility history between current and future cohorts of old people and between the United States and Canada.

Focusing on birth rates can provide a distorted picture because they do not portray family life as it is experienced. How does a total fertility rate of 1.6 or 1.9 translate into actual family size across the population? Data on number of children ever born to women who have completed their fertility give a better sense of what family life looks like over time because they reflect more closely family size from the perspective of mothers (number of children) and children (number of siblings). Table 2.5 presents estimates of the number of children ever born to women of different age groups regardless of marital status in the United States (2014) and Canada (2011). U.S. data are based on the number of children born by the time women were aged 40 to 44 years, an age by which most but not all women have completed childbearing.

Similar trends occur in the United States and Canada. Looking across cohorts, although the majority of women aged 40 and over have at least one child, the percentage who are childless or who have had one or two children decreases over time, as we move from younger to older cohorts. Among American women aged 70 to 79 years in 2014, 90% had at least one child, and most had two or three; among Canadian women aged 65 and over in 2011, 87% had at least one child, and most had two or three. In both countries, those aged 70 and over—many of them the mothers of the baby boom—are most likely of all age groups to have had four or more children. Declining birth rates are a current concern, but the older cohorts have the lowest percentages of childless women. A shrinking percentage of women in both countries has had three or more children. Data (not shown here) for American women aged 40 to 44 years from 1988 to 2014 show significant differences by race; Hispanic women (20%) are most likely to have four or more children, followed by Black (18%), White (11%), and Asian women (10%; Pew Research Center, 2015a). All races, however, show a growing trend to have 1 to 3 children and a decline in having four or more children. While mothers with less education tend to have more children, more highly educated mothers in 2014 are opting to have larger families than highly educated mothers in 1994 (Pew Research Center, 2010, 2015a).

Overall, the trends shown in Table 2.5 illustrate that declining birth rates among the younger cohorts, when compared with mothers of the baby boom born from 1946 to 1964, are largely a function of higher rates of childlessness and an increasing proportion who have had one or two rather three or more children. Historically, there are interesting parallels in family size, rates of childlessness, and delayed childbearing between the

women in their 20s and 30s during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the younger cohorts of today (Connidis, 2010a). The current cohort of old people, many the parents of the baby boom, stand out as having an unusually high supply of children when compared with cohorts who preceded and followed them. The data reported here refer to children ever born and thus mask those cases where having no children or a small family is due to the death of children. The longer life expectancy of women makes them more likely than men to outlive at least one of their children, particularly among women who had their children at relatively young ages and among those who have sons. Speaking of her deceased daughter, a London, Ontario, widow of 92 notes the unexpected nature of such loss: "It never occurred to me that I would end my days without her. We were very, very close, and we had so much to do with the family." However, even taking into account this possibility, the vast majority of older Americans and Canadians have at least one living child.

The Availability of Grandchildren

Demographic changes are altering the availability of grandchildren for middle-aged and older adults. In 2010, there were an estimated 65 million grandparents aged 45 and over in the United States, and this number is projected to increase to 80 million by 2020 (Metlife, 2011a). This translates into approximately 83% of American parents aged 65 and older having grandchildren (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Among those 50 and over, there are racial, ethnic, and gender differences in the likelihood of having grandchildren. Hispanic and Black men and women are more likely than their White counterparts to have grandchildren (Margolis & Wright, 2017a; Stykes, Manning, & Brown, 2014) until approximately age 75, when White adults are more likely than Black adults to be grandparents. Grandparents will become more racially and ethnically diverse given that approximately 40% of young adults in the United States are African American, Hispanic, or Asian, compared with 20% of older adults (Metlife, 2011a). Gender differences in Canada and the United States also apply; more women than men report that they have grandchildren, a result of women's longer life expectancy (Margolis, 2016; Metlife, 2011a).

There is a clear pattern over time of a declining percentage of middle-aged and young-old who are grandparents and a delay in becoming grandparents (Margolis, 2016). A lower likelihood of becoming a grandparent is a function of increased childlessness, especially in the middle generation of adult children, which affects younger cohorts of potential grandparents. Table 2.6 summarizes the availability of grandchildren in the United States and Canada. In both countries, a general pattern over time is increased proportions of older age groups and decreased proportions of younger age groups who are grandparents. Delays in becoming grandparents reflect delays in having children by the next generation. Despite these delays, more old adults are active grandparents in their later years because of improved health and reduced mortality among older generations (Margolis & Iciaszczyk, 2015; Margolis & Wright, 2017a).

| | United States | | | | Canada | | | |
| | Women | | Men | | Women | | Men | |
Ages	1992/94	2010	1992/94	2010	1985	2011	1985	2011
45–49	—	—	—	—	37	15	17	10
50–54	62	55	52	55	58	29	44	22
55–59	76	58	69	53	71	47	55	37
60–64	81	78	77	69	81	66	65	55
65–69	80	85	79	81	77	79	75	72
70–74	79	90	78	85	72	82	76	77
75–79	77	88	83	88	79	84	74	84
80+	68	85	81	86	73	82	73	84

Table 2.6 Percentage With Grandchildren by Sex and Age: United States 1992/94, 2010: Canada 1985, 2011

Source: Margolis (2016); Margolis and Wright (2017a).

By 2011, being a grandparent in the oldest age categories was more likely for both men and women, and similar percentages of those 75 years or older were grandfathers or grandmothers. For example, among those aged 75 to 79, 84% of Canadian and 88% of American men and women were grandparents. Canadian grandmothers now spend slightly less time as grandparents (24.3 years in 2011, down from 24.7 years in 1985); by contrast, men are grandfathers for a longer time (18.9 years up from 17 years) because they have enjoyed greater increases in life expectancy (Margolis & Wright, 2017a). On average, however, grandmothers in both the United States and Canada spend more healthy years with their grandchildren (18–19 years) compared with grandfathers (14–16 years).

Following a life course perspective, international data from the United States and 24 European countries show how the timing of grandparenthood varies across countries and over time (Leopold & Skopek, 2015a). Ukraine (98%) and Poland (91%) have the highest percentage of adults who are grandparents, whereas Spain (77%) and West Germany (74%) have the lowest percentage who are grandparents. In the United States, 85% of adults are grandparents. Grandparents in the United States, East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Ukraine, Hungary, and Russia are the youngest when they become grandparents (age 47 to 48 for women and 50 to 51 for men), creating more years with their grandchildren when compared with grandparents in other countries. This is due primarily to the timing of a grandchild's birth to a young parent than to the timing of a grandparent's death (Leopold & Skopek, 2015a). In contrast, grandparents in Spain and Switzerland are the oldest when they become grandparents (age 53 for women and 56 for men).

In Canada, the average number of grandchildren has been declining over time so that by 2011, the average number of grandchildren was 4.2 (Battams, 2016), down from a 2001 average of five grandchildren (Kemp, 2003). Among grandparents, 17% currently have one grandchild, 22% have

two, 27% have three or four, and 34% have five or more (Milan, Laflamme, & Wong, 2015). The decline in available grandchildren, coupled with increased longevity among grandparents, has potential consequences for social support in old age (see Chapter 11). Looked at from the vantage point of 25- to 34-year-old men and women, 36% (Black) to 52% (White) have at least one living grandparent compared with 22% (Black) to 24% (White) of adults aged 35 and older (Dew et al., 2016). The probability of having a living grandparent drops significantly after 44 years of age. Thus, for a majority, ties to a grandparent extend into adulthood, and old age includes grandchildren.

Approximately one-third of U.S. households are headed by persons who are grandparents, and 1 in 10 of these households has grandchildren present (Metlife, 2011a). Recent U.S. data (Ellis & Simmons, 2014) show that grandparents and grandchildren live together in 3% of all households; 60% of these households are run by grandparents who, as a group, are generally younger and better off than grandparents who live in multigenerational parent-maintained households. Although the majority of grandparents who live with or raise their grandchildren are White (U.S. Census, 2015), White grandparents do not have the highest odds of doing so. There is a disproportionate likelihood of grandparents living with their grandchildren by race, with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander grandparents most likely to live with grandchildren (11%), followed by American Indians and Alaska Natives (8%), Hispanics (7%), Blacks and Asians (6%), and Whites (3%; Ellis & Simmons, 2014). From the grandchild's perspective, 10% of children in the U.S. live with a grandparent; a third of this group also lives with both parents. Race affects both the likelihood of living with grandparents and of having parents present if living with grandparents. Seven percent of White, 12% of Hispanic, and 14% of both Black and Asian children live with a grandparent. Yet 3% of Asian versus 12% of Hispanic, 24% of White, and 28% of Black children living with their grandparents has no parent present. Those who live with a grandmother and no parent are most likely to be poor.

Canadian data (Milan et al., 2015) indicate parallels with the United States. Four percent of all Canadians aged 45 or more live with their grandchildren, equivalent to 8% of all grandparents and favoring grandmothers (5%) over grandfathers (3%). The vast majority of this group—88%—lives with at least one middle-generation person; the other 12% are in skip-generation households. Almost two-thirds of grandparents living with grandchildren are married or had a common-law partner, one-quarter are widowed, and 14% are divorced, separated, or single. Grandparents residing in Nunavut, who identified as First Nations or Inuit and who were recent immigrants are especially likely to be living with their grandchildren.

The current interest in grandparents who are heavily involved in raising their grandchildren may explain the greater availability of current data on this phenomenon than on the general patterns of grandparent and grandchild availability. Raising a grandchild is often a long-term commitment, with approximately 60% of grandparents who raise grandchildren doing so for 10 or more years (Luo et al., 2012). Other grandparents transition in and out of this parenting role, leading to significant heterogeneity in grandparents' experiences with their grandchildren (see Chapter 11).

The Availability of Siblings

Patterns of fertility also affect the availability of siblings. Families of orientation are the ones we come from and determine the number of siblings that we have. Families of procreation are the ones that we produce and determine the number of children that we have. A particular cohort will experience a simultaneous shortage of siblings and children only when the fertility rates of families of orientation and of procreation are low. For a number of cohorts, a small number of siblings (a small family of orientation) was offset somewhat by a larger number of children (larger family of procreation). Thus, for example, the parents of the baby boom (born mostly between 1922 and 1938) came from small families but produced large ones, and the baby boom (born between 1946 and 1964 in the United States and 1965 in Canada) came from large families but produced small ones.

The baby busters, born between 1966 and 1974, are the children of parents born during World War II (1939–1945; Statistics Canada, 2006; Swicegood & Morgan, 2002). They are a relatively small cohort, partly because they were born to a small cohort and partly because family size was smaller for this age group, resulting in a smaller network of siblings among baby busters. The cohort of the baby boomers' children—those born between 1975 and 1995—is larger than the baby bust cohort because their parents are a large cohort and because birth rates and resulting family size began to increase somewhat in the 1990s (primarily among the younger end of the baby boom). For these younger cohorts, both families of orientation and procreation are comparatively small.

A variety of earlier surveys in the United States indicates the availability of siblings across the life course (Cicirelli, 1995). Among adolescents, 79% have at least one sibling (Bobbitt-Zeher & Downey, 2012). Over 90% of Americans and Canadians aged 35 years or older have had siblings. Most continue to have surviving siblings into old age (Connidis, 2001). Canadian data show that among those aged 55 to 64 years, only 3% have no living siblings, and 80% report having two or more (author calculations; Statistics Canada, 2001 General Social Survey, Cycle 15). Among those 65 to 74 years old, 7% have no living siblings, and 75% have two or more brothers and sisters. Over 80% of persons aged 75 and over have at least one living sibling, and over half have more. A seven-country study that includes the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy reports that across all countries, over 85% of 50-year-olds, 80% of 60-year-olds, and 75% of 70-year-olds have at least one living sibling (Murphy, 2004). Reflecting gender differences in longevity, at the age of 70, over 60% have a sister, compared with less than half who have a brother.

Recent U.S. data, summarized in Table 2.7, show the availability of both siblings and half-siblings by race and age (Dew et al., 2016). White adults aged 45 to 54 have more full siblings, followed by Black and then White adults aged 55 and older. For all age groups, half-siblings are more numerous among Black than among White adults, and White and Black adults aged 45 to 54 have more half-siblings than their respective counterparts in other age groups. Younger White and Black adults are generally less likely to have full siblings and half-siblings compared with older adults, reflecting

Table 2.7 Estimated Number of Full Siblings and Half-Siblings by Race and Age		
Race and Age	Full siblings	Half-siblings
White		
25–34	1.25	0.19
35–44	1.21	0.25
45–54	1.77	0.28
55+	1.58	0.26
Black		
25–34	0.72	1.08
35–44	1.15	1.03
45–54	1.41	1.25
55+	1.66	0.81

Source: Dew, Verdery, and Margolis (2016).

lower fertility rates, smaller family sizes, and the cumulative result of having children with more than one partner among the parents of the younger generations. Class also affects the availability of siblings; adults younger than 45 years of age with more education are more likely to have full siblings, and those aged 45 and older with less education are more likely to have full siblings (Dew et al., 2016). The probability of having a half-sibling decreases with education, regardless of age group. These variations reflect, in part, the differential impact of class on fertility and marital stability (see Chapter 4) over time.

Sibling ties are becoming more complex as more people grow up with brothers and sisters who do not share both biological parents. Thus, for example, although 11% of Canadians aged 25 to 34 years old in 2001 report having no full siblings, only 5% report not growing up with a sibling (author calculations, Statistics Canada, 2001). An even smaller number reports not having a living sibling, suggesting that siblings were acquired after leaving home. For all age groups, a disparity between the proportions who report having no full siblings and who report growing up with no siblings indicates that growing up with other than full siblings is not a recent phenomenon. However, the likelihood of having step and half-siblings has increased over time. Most adolescents in the United States have full siblings, with a growing number of step-, half-, and adopted or foster siblings (Bobbitt-Zeher & Downey, 2012). Among Canadians in 2001, 9% of people aged 75 and over had step-, half-, or adopted siblings compared with 22% of those aged 25 to 34 (author calculations, Statistics Canada, 2001). Data from a 2010 U.S. survey of adults aged 18 and over (Parker, 2011) show that 30% have a step- or half- sibling. Age variations apply with a range from 16% among those 65 and over, 23% among 50- to 64-year-olds, 35% for those aged 30–49, and 44% among 16- to 29-year-olds. Race differences also apply; 25% of Whites, 38% of Hispanics, and 45% of Blacks have step- or half-siblings. Changing patterns of family formation herald more complex sibling networks for older people in the future.

Living Arrangements in Later Life

The living arrangements of older persons reflect the availability of family ties, their continued involvement in family settings, and a trend toward living alone in the absence of a spouse. Longitudinal trends in the living arrangements of older Americans and Canadians show that living with family was more common in the United States than in Canada until the mid-1990s and is the norm among older persons in both countries

(Connidis, 2010a). Table 2.8 summarizes the living arrangements of adults aged 65 and over in the United States and Canada. Living with a spouse is most common, followed by living alone, and then by another living arrangement. There are substantial gender differences, however, with men much more likely than women to be in couple households: 67% of American and 76% of Canadian men lived with a partner in 2011, but only 30% of American and 49% of Canadian women did so. These gender differences reflect primarily the higher widowhood rates among women. In Canada, a slight decline in the percentage of women who live alone, from 38% in 2001 to 33% by 2016, is a result of extended joint survivorship. Growing older increases the likelihood of living alone, especially among women. Based on data from a sample of 2,444 lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults aged 50 and over (Hyun-Jun & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016), 55% live with a partner, 37% live alone, and 8% live with someone other than a partner (mostly nonfamily members).

Only a small proportion of all those aged 65 and over currently live in institutional care settings; in the United States, this population declined from 4.6% in 2000 to 3.1% in 2010 (Current Population Reports, 2014). In Canada, 1.2% of older Canadians lived in residences for senior citizens in 2016, down from 2.6% in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011b, 2017c). Almost three-fourths of them were women and over one-quarter men. They were part of the 7.1% of seniors who lived in a collective unit designed for seniors, including long-term care hospitals and nursing homes. Less than 1% of those aged 65–69 lived in such dwellings, compared with 32% of those aged 85 or more.

Earlier studies have found that institutionalization is more likely among women than among men, those with fewer children, the nonmarried, Whites, and older seniors (Angel et al., 1992; Belgrave & Bradsher, 1994; Belgrave et al., 1993; Carrière & Pelletier, 1995). A systematic literature review of 36 studies found that being older and White, coresiding with others, and having poorer physical and mental health were strong predictors of institutionalization; marital and employment status, education and income level, and gender were moderate or weak predictors of institutionalization in this meta-analysis (Luppa et al., 2009). Men are twice as likely as women to transition to institutionalized care following the death of their spouse, but that decreases with the presence of children (Noël-Miller, 2010). Regarding race, White women are most likely to live in an institution, followed by Black women, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander women, Black men, and White men (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a). Asian, Native American, and Hispanic elders are least likely to live in an institution. The lower institutionalization rates of racial and ethnic minorities, when compared with Whites, are offset somewhat by their greater reliance on paid home care and informal care but are also due to simply going without care (Wallace et al., 1998; see Chapter 15). The presence of at least one daughter or sibling minimizes the chances of being placed in a nursing home (Freedman, 1996; McCann, Donnelly, & O'Reilly, 2011), providing a link between the availability of ties and their impact on social life in older age.

The trend toward solitary living among older persons (see Chapter 1) has stabilized, and since the early 1990s, nearly one-fifth of old men and over one-third of old women in Canada, and almost one-quarter of men and

		Living in a Couple[a]		Living Alone		Other Living Arrangement[b]	
	Year	United States	Canada	United States	Canada	United States	Canada
Men	2001	68	79	23	17	9	5
	2006	68	79	21	17	11	5
	2011	67	76	23	16	10	8
	2016	—	76	—	18	—	6
Women	2001	28	52	50	38	22	9
	2006	30	54	50	37	20	9
	2011	30	49	48	35	22	16
	2016	—	52	—	33	—	16

Table 2.8 Percentage Distribution of the Population Aged 65+, by Type of Living Arrangement and Gender: United States 2001–2011; Canada, 2001–2016

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2016. Living Arrangements of Adults 18 and Over, 1967 to Present. Table AD3 Living Arrangements of Adults 65 to 74 Years Old, 1976 to Present. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/adults.html

Statistics Canada. 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001. Census Topic-Based Tabulations. Household Living Arrangements, Age Groups, and Sex for the Population in Private Households of Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Divisions, Census Subdivisions, and Dissemination Areas. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?TABID=2&LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=109647&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2016&THEME=117&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=

a. United States includes married spouses; Canada includes married spouses and common-law partners.

b. United States and Canada includes living with adult children, with relatives, and/or non-relatives.

half of women in the United States have lived alone (Connidis, 2010a; see Table 2.8). The fact that widowed women are more likely to live on their own if they did so for at least 3 months prior to the age of 60 (Bess, 1999) suggests that solo living will continue to increase among women because living alone at earlier stages of the life course is increasingly common.

Similar gender differences occur across racial and ethnic groups, but the living arrangements of older Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian Americans vary (see Table 2.9). We report on 2006 U.S. Census data because more recent census data do not break down the type of living arrangement by gender and race. Among men, there are differences by race and ethnicity in the proportion who live with family members; in 2006, 69% of older Black men did so, compared with 78% of White, 80% of Hispanic, and 90% of Asian men. Among women, Asian (77%) and Hispanic (73%) Americans have similar and markedly higher levels of living with family members than do Whites (59%) and African Americans (57%).

The aggregate data presented here mask additional differences. For example, White persons aged 60 and over are far more likely to be living with a spouse only, and Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American persons are far more likely to be living with other kin only (Himes et al., 1996; Pew

Research Center, 2016a, 2016b). Being foreign versus native born also increases the likelihood of living with families rather than alone in later life (Current Population Reports, 2002). As well, there are differences in three-generation coresidence. In Canada, although a small proportion (4%) of all households fits this pattern, more than half (53%) of immigrants aged 65 and older lived in three-generation households (Statistics Canada, 2015). In the United States, approximately two-thirds of multigenerational households involve a child and a grandchild living with a grandparent, which is most common among White families. This is followed by 34% of multigenerational households composed of a middle generation living with their child and parent, which is most common among Asian families. Clearly, ethnicity and race are important short-term and long-term factors in the living arrangements of older persons (see Chapter 15).
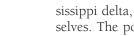
2006	Families	Nonfamily
All Men	78	22
White	78	22
Black	69	31
Hispanic	80	20
Asian	90	10
All Women	59	41
White	59	41
Black	57	43
Hispanic	73	27
Asian	77	23

Table 2.9 Percentage Distribution of the Population Aged 65+, by Type of Living Arrangement, Gender and Race: United States, 2006

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2006).

Geographic location is another element of living arrangements that also reflects ethnic and racial differences and changing immigration patterns. Currently, ethnic and racial minorities compose 22% of the population aged 65 and over and over one-third of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a); by 2050, half of the American population will be of African, Asian, or Latin origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). In addition to the age grading of ethnic and racial diversity, concentrated settlement patterns in the United States and Canada already mean regional variation in the extent of such diversity for both countries. For example, although about half of the states in the United States are predominantly White, about half of all Latinos live in California and Texas, 60% of all African Americans live in only 10 states, and just over half of all Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders live in 10 western states (Cauce, 2005). The impact of membership in a particular race or ethnic group is also variable, based on immigration history and generational status.

Older persons concentrate in particular localities for three major reasons: accumulation (older residents remain in communities that younger residents leave in order to find a more prosperous location), recomposition (older persons migrate to an area that younger persons are leaving), and congregation (older migrants outnumber younger migrants, but persons of all ages are moving in) (Morrison, 1990). Typically, congregation involves relatively well-off older persons seeking to improve their situation by moving to a desirable location, such as Arizona. In contrast, accumulation usually occurs in economically disadvantaged communities, for example, the Mississippi delta, leaving older persons with fewer resources to fend for themselves. The poorer economy of these regions also limits the ability to offer locally funded community support to older residents. The accumulation that

results from aging in place while younger persons migrate, a trend evident in both the United States and Canada, requires mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth by higher levels of government (Moore & Rosenberg, 1997; Treas & Gubernskaya, 2015). Overall, patterns of migration among the elderly and their family members have significant implications for their welfare and for public policy (see Chapter 15).

Summary

Although partners and children typically become part of one's family by choice, relationships with parents, siblings, and grandchildren do not. The timing of fertility, partner formation, and mortality all influence family structure in later life. We have seen significant variations by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation in how older persons navigate a variety of family relationships across their lives. What stories do our data tell so far?

The majority of men in old age have a spouse, and the majority of women do not, creating a very different perspective on later-life intimate relationships for men and women. In turn, the issue of life alone following widowhood affects a majority of older women but only a minority of older men. When combined with the single and the divorced, the percentages and numbers of unattached old men and women are substantial, and the unique nature of their family ties requires particular attention. The steady increase in divorce rates over the past 40 years affects all ages, both directly, in terms of the elevated frequency of divorce at all stages of the life course, and indirectly, in terms of the repercussions of divorce in one generation for other generations (see Chapter 12). Significant variations in marital status by race also shape the relative significance of particular situations. For example, Asian Americans are most likely to be married, and African Americans are most likely to be divorced or single. Alternatives to marriage in later life are discussed in Chapter 7.

Despite increases in childlessness and delayed childbearing, the majority of older persons have children, grandchildren, and siblings. Nonetheless, grandparents will have fewer grandchildren because of lower fertility rates across younger cohorts. Men are more likely than women to have both a partner and children, but women without a partner are very likely to have children, siblings, or both. Although most older persons have at least one living sibling, the number of available siblings will decline for subsequent cohorts. At the same time, half- and stepsiblings will be members of an increasing number of families. In subsequent chapters, we explore the nature of these various family ties in later life and assess the extent to which the availability of particular ties translates into active family networks.

The majority of older persons live with family, particularly a spouse or partner. Yet older women are still much more likely than older men to live alone. Significant racial and ethnic differences in these patterns represent not only variations in the availability of family ties but also cultural differences in filial piety and financial interdependence, dynamics that we consider in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion to Part I

In Chapter 1, you saw that older family members of the past did not enjoy a particularly advantaged position in our society. Today, more old people are able to maintain chosen independence due to improved social security measures. However, welfare policies are under threat, and there are important variations among old people due to the structured social relations of gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Understanding family life in old age requires going beyond definitions of family as the traditional nuclear household and recognizing the family lives of single, childless, gay, and lesbian older persons as siblings, children, aunts and uncles, partners, parents, and grandparents. A multilevel theoretical framework that combines a life course perspective with critical and feminist approaches and the concept of ambivalence emphasizes that family relationships are negotiated over time in the context of a particular family constellation, of social institutions including family and work, and of the social inequality and cultural values embedded in the larger society. Family members may have quite different views of how their families work. As we examine particular family ties, consider the ways in which the challenges of family life and of aging are private troubles and public issues.

In Chapter 2, we established some broad parameters of family life by looking at trends in the availability of various family members in later life. These data show that most old people have intragenerational (spouse and siblings) and intergenerational (children and grandchildren) relationships. Nonetheless, there are significant variations in the availability of family ties, depending on gender, class, age, race, and ethnicity. For example, most old men have a spouse, whereas most old women do not. These variations also intersect with each other to create unique challenges in old age and for family relationships. Consider the situation of old Black women, who are also much more likely to be poor than their White counterparts (Olson, 2003).

The trends in family ties and living arrangements discussed in Chapter 2, along with other social trends that are discussed in subsequent chapters (e.g., cohabitation and living apart together; see Chapter 7), create a changing population and changing family structures. Our focus on the older population sometimes conceals shifts that are occurring in the younger population. But such shifts affect the old along with the young, even when they are not the direct experience of today's old. The population of the United States and Canada is dominated less and less by Whites over time, much more so among younger than older cohorts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). As well, a substantial portion of the changing behavior regarding partnering and parenting applies more to younger than to older cohorts. Higher birth rates among non-White than White younger women, increased birth rates among unmarried women, the rise in cohabitation rather than marriage, and the delay of the birth of the first child combine to reshape the racial and ethnic composition of the aging population, as well as the dynamics of family life (Demo et al., 2005; Teachman et al., 2000).

Consider these changing dynamics as we now explore the family ties that are most central to the lives of older adults. Each of the following chapters begins with a discussion of contact with the family tie in question before examining support exchanges and qualitative dimensions of the relationship.