

# Marriage, divorce and remarriage as reproductive strategies in the USA

Biologically men and women have different reproductive strategies

- Costs of reproduction for men are less
- A woman's reproductive abilities decline with age
- Women care for children

Divorce is likely when the reproductive interests of one of the sexes is not being met in marriage

Marriage as a Reproductive Contract: Patterns of marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.  
Buckle, L, G. Gallup, and Z. Todd  
*Ethology and Sociobiology* 17; 363-377 (1996).

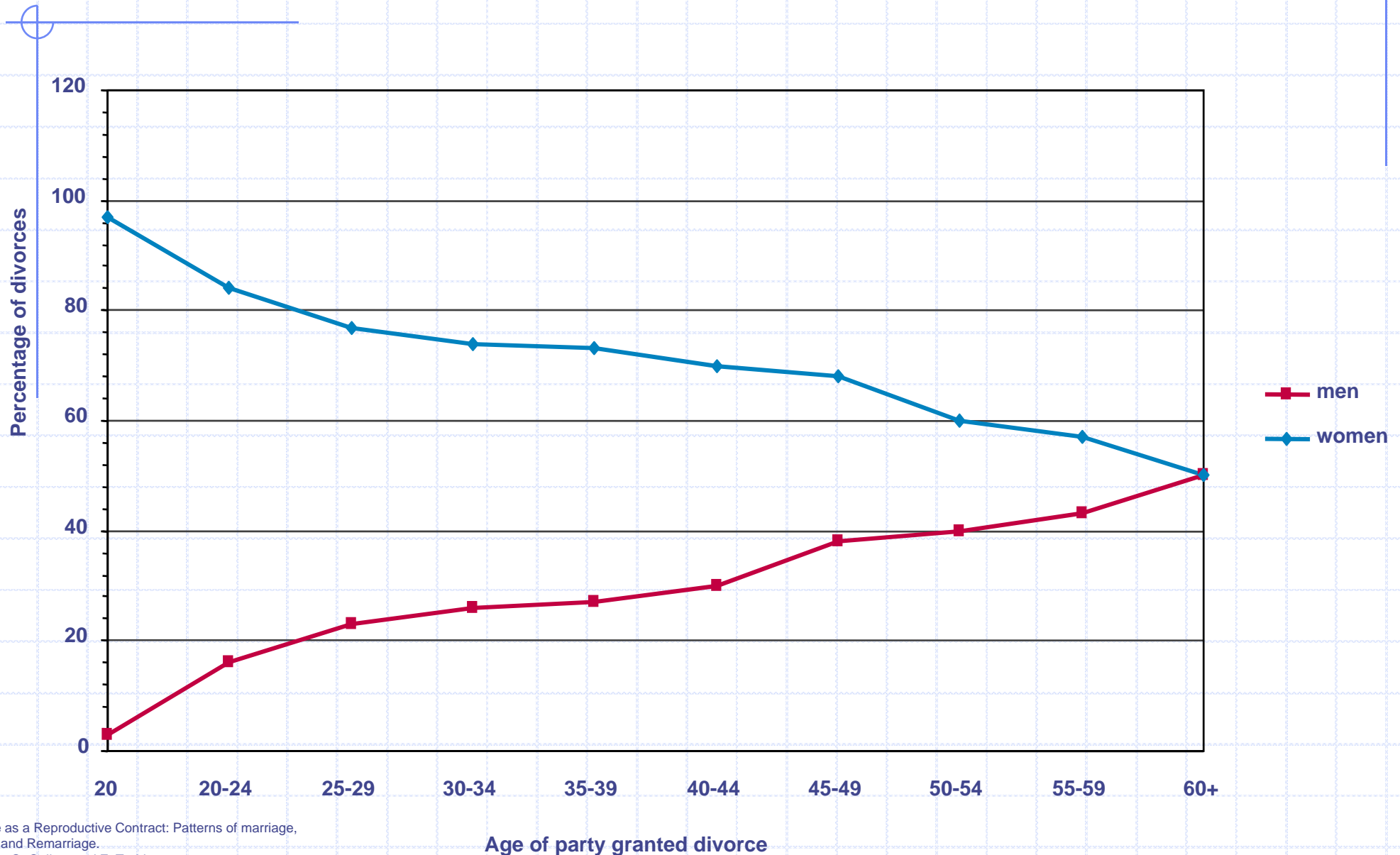
# Marriage, divorce, and remarriage

- Women divorce early because reproduction will decline while men divorce late because their wife becomes infertile
- As a consequence, females are more likely to petition for divorce than males. As proof the following slide shows a negative correlation between women petitioning for divorce and age and a positive correlation for men. [Slide 4](#)
- Remarriage: women much less likely to remarry than men. After divorce, the number of years for women prior to remarriage is greater than that of men. This is because their reproductive value declines and they cannot compete as effectively with younger women.

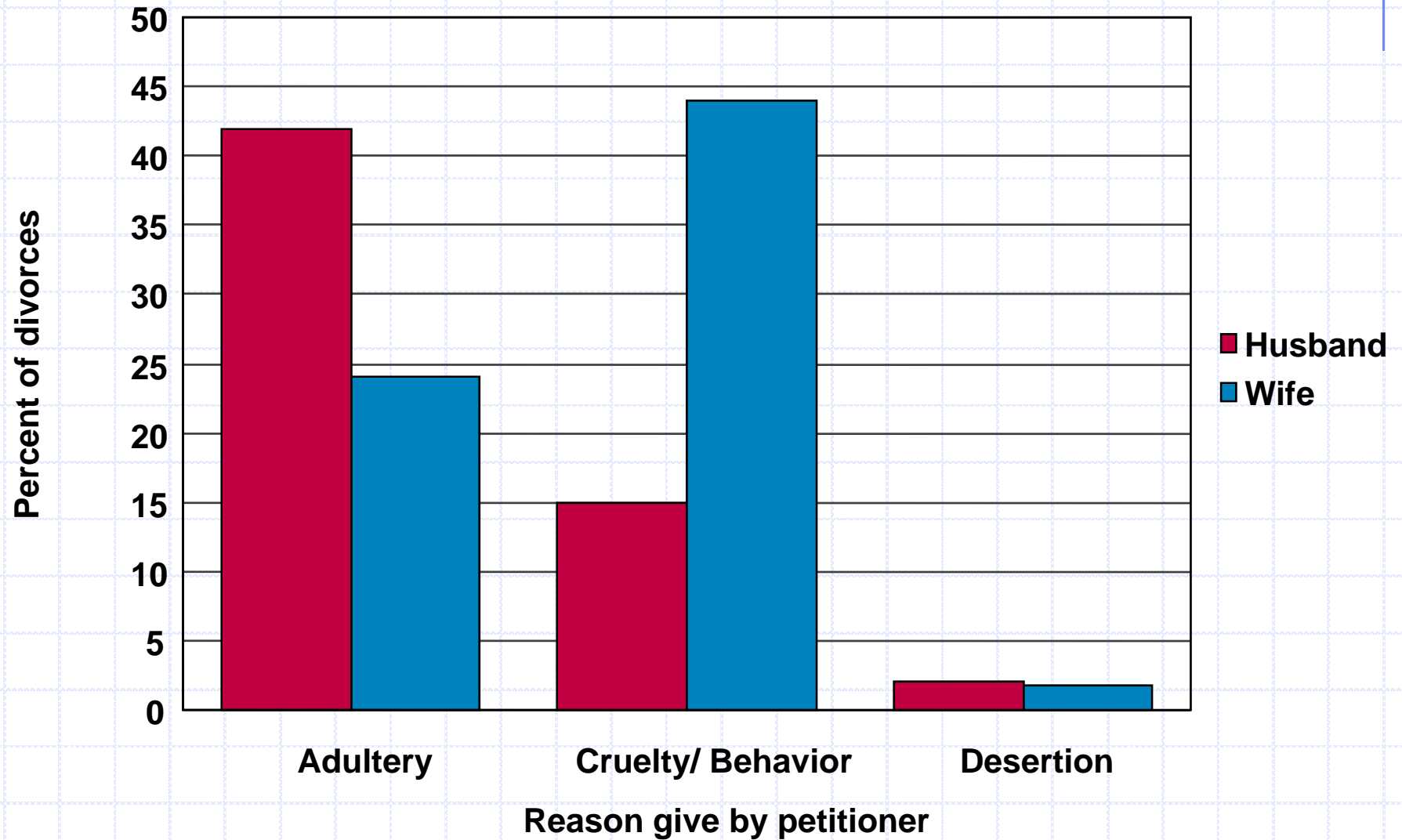
# Marriage, divorce, and remarriage

- Divorced women with children had a lower probability of remarriage than childless women and the probability of remarriage decreased with a greater number of children.
- Remarriage rates for males was independent of the number of children they had.
- But previously married males without children were four times more likely to marry a never married women than a previously married woman. ▶
- And previously married men with children were more likely to marry a previously married woman by a factor of two to one.

# Female and male divorce petitioning as a function of age



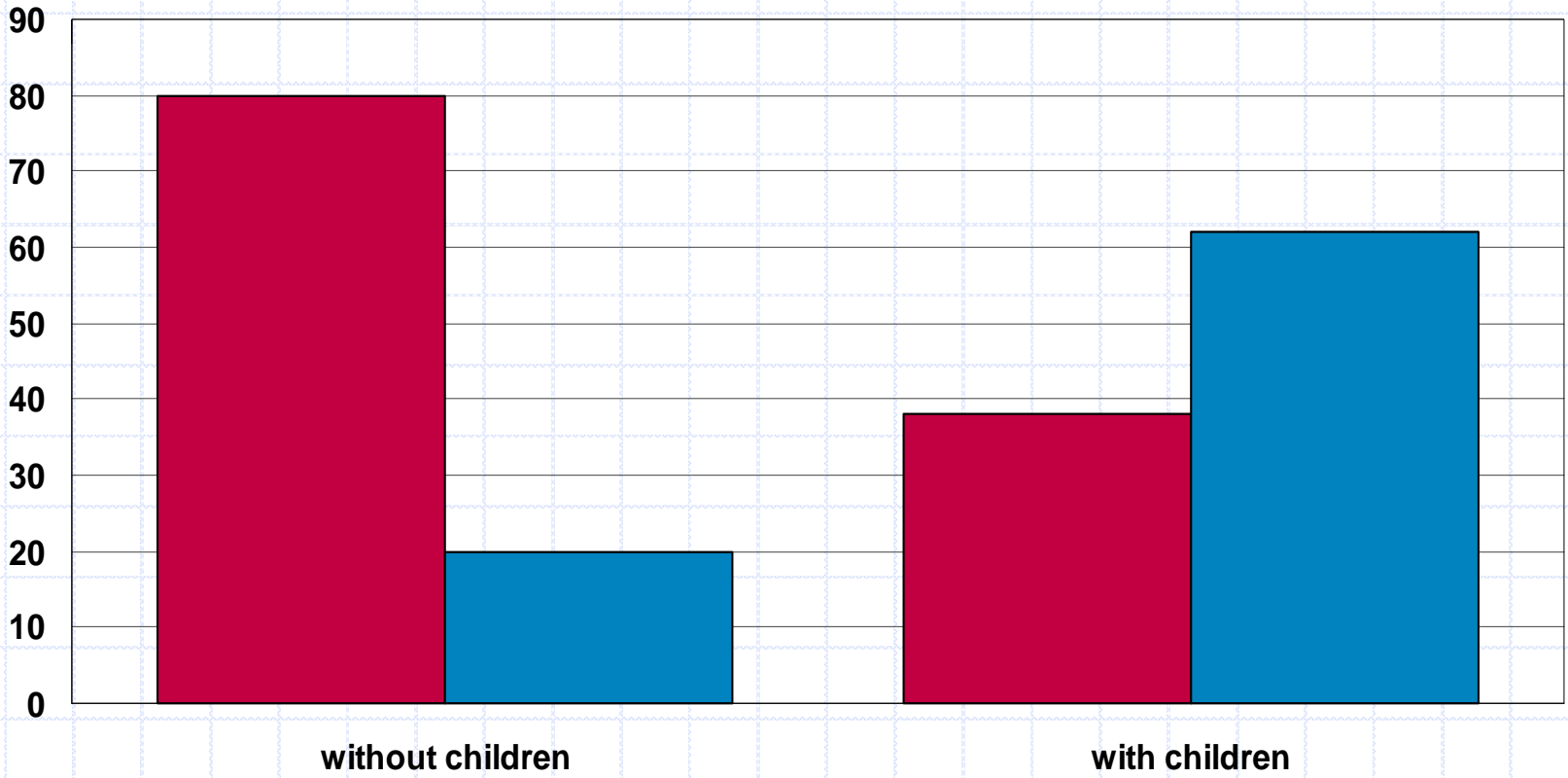
# Reasons given for divorce



# Mate choices of formerly married males as a function of their parental status



Percent remarried

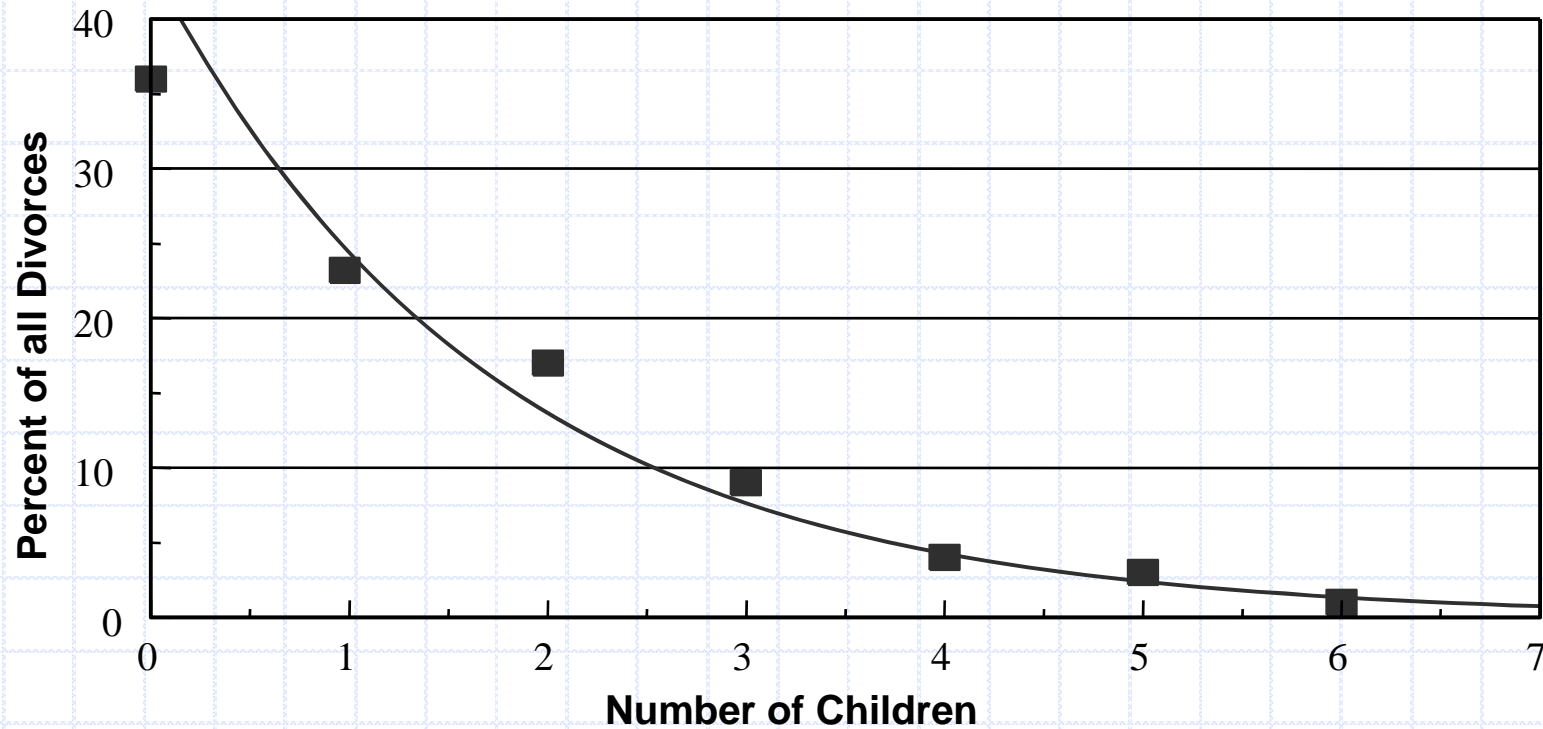


Parental status of previously divorced males

previously unmarried females divorced females

# Divorce and Children: Children Stabilize Marriage

Divorce and Number of Children in Family



does not control for duration of marriage (the longer one is married the less likely they are to divorce)

# Cause of divorce and purpose of marriage

- ◆ One way to study the purpose or function of marriage is to understand the causes of divorce
- ◆ This is reasonable because divorce occurs presumably because one or more of the purposes of marriage are not being met

# Table 9.1 Comparison of Primary Grounds for Divorce Used by Men and Women

Grounds	Men (Percent of Causes)	Women (Percent of Causes)
No divorce allowed	7.1	10.4
Reproductive problems	28.6	6.3
Illicit sex	16.1	10.4
Physical violence	0	14.6
Incompatibility	21.4	22.9
Desertion or neglect	5.4	2.1
Incompatibility with affines	1.8	4.2
Failure in economic or domestic duties	14.3	18.8
Trivial reason or no reason	5.4	10.4