

Preface

The sociology of the family is deceptively hard to study. Unlike, say, physics, the topic is familiar (a word whose very root is Latin for “family”) because virtually everyone grows up in families. Therefore, it can seem “easy” to study the family because students can bring to bear their personal knowledge of the subject. Some textbooks play to this familiarity by mainly providing students with an opportunity to better understand their private lives. The authors never stray too far from the individual experiences of their readers, focusing on personal choices such as whether to marry and whether to have children. To be sure, giving students insight into the social forces that shape their personal decisions about family life is a worthwhile objective. Nevertheless, the challenge of writing about the sociology of the family is also to help students understand that the significance of families extends beyond personal experience. Today, as in the past, the family is the site of not only private decisions but also activities that matter to our society as a whole.

These activities center on taking care of people who are unable to fully care for themselves, most notably children and the elderly. Anyone who follows social issues knows of the often-expressed concern about whether, given developments such as the increases in divorce and childbearing outside of marriage, we are raising the next generation adequately. Anyone anxious about the well-being of the rapidly growing elderly population (as well as the escalating cost of providing financial and medical assistance to the elderly) knows the concern about whether family members will continue to provide adequate assistance to them. Indeed, rarely does a month pass without these issues appearing on the covers of magazines and the front pages of newspapers.

In this textbook, consequently, I have written about the family in two senses: the *private family*, in which we live most of our personal lives, and the *public family*, in which adults perform tasks that are important to society. My goal is to give students a thorough grounding in both aspects. It is true that the two are related—taking care of children adequately, for instance, requires the love and affection that family members express privately toward each other. But the public side of the family deserves equal time with the private side.

Organization

This book is divided into 6 parts and 15 chapters. Part One (“Introduction”) introduces the concepts of the public and private families and examines how sociologists and other social scientists study them. It also provides an overview of the history of the family. Part Two (“Gender, Class, and Race-Ethnicity”) deals with the three key dimensions of social stratification in family life: gender, social class, and race-ethnicity. In Part Three (“Sexuality, Love, Partnership, and Marriage”), the focus shifts to the private family. The section examines the emergence of the modern concept of sexuality, the changing meaning of love, the formation of partnerships, and the degree of persistence and change in the institution of marriage. Finally, it covers the complex connections between work and family.

Part Four (“Links across the Generations”) explores how well the public family is meeting its responsibilities for children and the elderly. Part Five (“Conflict, Disruption, and Reconstitution”) deals with the consequences of conflict and disruption in family life. It first studies violence against wives and children. Then divorce, remarriage, and stepfamilies are discussed. Finally, in Part Six (“Family and Society”) social and political issues involving the family and the state are discussed, and then the text concludes with a chapter on the meaning of the great social changes in family life over the past century.

Special Features

Public and Private Families is distinguishable from other textbooks in several important ways.

First and foremost, it explores the public and the private family. The public/private distinction that underlies the book’s structure is intended to provide a more balanced portrait of contemporary life. Furthermore, the focus on the public family leads to a much greater emphasis on government policy toward the family than in most other textbooks. In fact, every chapter except the first includes a short, boxed essay under the general title, “Families and Public Policy,” to stimulate student interest and make the book relevant to current political debates.

In addition to this unique emphasis on both the *Public and Private Families*, the text:

- **Highlights family life in other cultures.** Although the emphasis in the book is on the contemporary United States and other Western nations, no text should ignore the important historical and cross-cultural diversity of families. Consequently, in addition to relevant material in the body of the text, I have also included in every chapter except the first a boxed essay under the title, “Families in Other Cultures.”
- **Includes distinctive chapters.** The attention to the public family led me to write several chapters that are not included in some sociology of the family textbooks. These include Chapter 14, “The Family, the State, and Social Policy”, Chapter 9, “Children and Parents”; and Chapter 10, “The Elderly and Their Families.” These chapters examine issues of great current interest, such as income assistance to poor families, the effects of out-of-home childcare, and the costs of the Social Security and Medicare programs. Throughout these and other chapters, variations by race, ethnicity, and gender are explored.
- **Gives special attention to the research methods used by family sociologists.** To give students an understanding of how sociologists study the family, I include a section in Chapter 1 titled, “How Do Family Sociologists Know What They Know?” This material explains the ways that family sociologists go about their research. Then in seven chapters, I include boxed essays under a similar title on subjects ranging from national surveys to feminist research methods to archival research.
- **Features “Families on the Internet” sections.** Since I wrote the first edition of this textbook, the World Wide Web has changed from a pleasant diversion to an essential information-gathering tool. Almost every chapter contains information that I gathered from the Web, including the most up-to-date demographic statistics from government statistical sites such as the Bureau of the Census web pages. But the Internet is also a powerful instructional tool. Consequently, at the end of each chapter is a section titled “Families on the Internet,” in which I list web sites that students may find useful.

Pedagogy

Each chapter begins in a way that engages the reader: the neither-men-nor-women berdaches of many Native American tribes; the nineteenth-century diary in which Maud Rittenhouse described her suitors; the story of American men who fly to Russia in search of brides; the case of Danny Henrikson, taken from a stepfather who raised him and awarded by a judge to a father he did not know; and so forth. And each of the six parts of the book is preceded by a brief introduction that sets the stage.

- For the fourth edition, I have added several *Quick Review* boxes in each chapter that include bulleted, one-sentence summaries of the key points of the preceding sections.
- Each chapter includes the following types of questions:
 - *Looking Forward*—Questions that preview the chapter themes and topics.
 - *Ask Yourself*—Two questions, which appear at the end of each of the three types of boxes.
 - *Looking Back*—Looking Forward questions reiterated at the end of each chapter, around which the chapter summaries are organized.
 - *Thinking about Families*—Two questions, which appear at the end of each chapter and are designed to encourage critical thinking about the “public” and the “private” family.
- *Cross-Reference icons*: These icons, embedded in the text, point readers to the exact page where an important concept was introduced in an earlier chapter.

What’s New in Each Chapter?

Several instructors suggested that the chapter on “The Family, the State, and Social Policy” would work better in the last section of the text. Consequently, I have moved it from Chapter 6 in the previous edition to Chapter 14 in the current edition. Otherwise, the chapter order remains the same. I have made minor changes in how I divide the 15 chapters into the six “parts” of the text to accommodate the revised chapter order.

This edition contains important new sections on modernity theory (sometimes called “postmodern” theory—see Chapters 1 and 15), on the burgeoning sub-field of care work studies (see Chapter 8), on the topical issue of same-sex marriage (see Chapters 6 and 14), and on the interesting concept of “intergenerational ambivalence” (see Chapter 10). In addition, every chapter has new material.

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES

- New opening section on changes in the portrayal of families on television
- New section on individualism and family life
- New coverage of theories of modernity and postmodernity

CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

- Census 2000 data on the increase in Asian immigration
- New scholarship on the history of American marriage
- New scholarship on the 1950s
- Updated statistics on immigration
- Updated statistics on ethnicity
- Updated statistics on age at marriage

CHAPTER 3. GENDER AND FAMILIES

- Discussion of why sociologists of gender have become dissatisfied with the concept of “gender role”
- Updated information on male and female characters in children’s picture books
- Expanded discussion of the symbolic interactionist perspective on gender differences
- Updated information on feminist research methods
- Updated information on the imbalanced ratio of male to female births in China
- Updated information on the earnings gap between women and men
- Discussion of the interrelatedness of inequalities due to gender, class, and race/ethnicity

CHAPTER 4. SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILIES

- New opening vignette on the wealthiest 400 taxpayers
- Expanded discussion of Marxist and Weberian conceptions of class
- New discussion of the difficulty of deciding what class a family belongs to
- New discussion of the difficulty of drawing the line between the working class and the middle class
- Updated statistics on women in the labor force
- Updated statistics on family income inequality
- Updated statistics on trends in poverty by racial and ethnic group
- Updated statistics on median family income by family type and number of earners
- New discussion of social class and gender roles
- New discussion of social class and childrearing

CHAPTER 5. RACE, ETHNICITIES, AND FAMILIES

- Expanded coverage of the transnational nature of immigration, including new opening vignette on “transnational motherhood”
- Discussion of the growing number of studies of “whiteness” as an ethnicity
- Expanded discussion of the African American middle class

CHAPTER 6. SEXUALITY AND LOVE

- Expanded discussion of the social constructionist and biosocial perspectives on sexuality
- Expanded discussion of mythic/passionate versus prosaic/companionate cultures of love
- Updated statistics on teenage sexual activity and childbearing
- Expanded discussion of gay and lesbian sexuality
- Discussion of same-sex marriage

CHAPTER 7. COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE

- Revised discussion of the “individualized marriage” (previously called the “independent marriage”)
- New discussion of trends from 1939 to 1996 in characteristics young adults most desire in a marriage partner
- New discussion of Anthony Giddens’s concept of the “pure relationship”
- Expanded discussion of gay and lesbian partnerships and “families of choice”

CHAPTER 8. WORK AND FAMILIES

- Extensive new section on recent scholarship on “care work”
- Expanded discussion of the “motherhood penalty” in lower wages
- New information on the long work weeks of dual-earner couples

CHAPTER 9. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

- New section on adoptive families
- New section on recent research about how working parents compensate for the time they spend away from their children
- Report on NICHD Early Child Care Resource Network 2003 article on the association between nonmaternal care and behavioral difficulties in kindergarten
- Statistics on how the American public thinks children’s well-being is worse than it actually is
- New chart on the percentage of children living with two parents from 1880 to 1996

CHAPTER 10. THE ELDERLY AND THEIR FAMILIES

- New section on grandchildren living with grandparents in “skipped-generation” households and three-generation households
- New section on “intergenerational ambivalence”
- New discussion of aging and social support among low-income, urban adults
- New discussion of grandparents as “the family national guard”
- Updated discussion of the elderly in Japan

CHAPTER 11. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- New opening vignette on New Jersey malnourishment case
- New discussion of higher risk of domestic violence in cohabiting couples than married couples
- New discussion of how the risk of domestic violence varies by social class and race
- Expanded discussion of the consequences of childhood sexual and physical abuse
- Expanded discussion of elder abuse
- Expanded discussion of wife beating in the developing world

CHAPTER 12. DIVORCE

- Updated statistics on divorce and on child support
- Addition of findings from E. Mavis Hetherington’s 2002 book, *For Better or For Worse*
- Addition of findings from British study on children as active participants in the family’s adjustment to divorce

CHAPTER 13. REMARRIAGE AND STEPFAMILIES

- Updated discussion of the legal rights and responsibilities of stepparents, including recent court cases
- Updated probabilities of remarriage and divorce from the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics' 1995 National Survey of Family Growth
- Discussion of overlooked aspects of stepfathering from William Marsiglio's 2004 book, *Stepdads: Stories of Love, Hope, and Repair*

CHAPTER 14. THE FAMILY, THE STATE, AND SOCIAL POLICY

- New discussion of the effects of welfare reform
- New discussion of policy debates on work-family issues
- New discussion of marriage promotion policy
- New discussion of the policy issues on same-sex marriage

CHAPTER 15. SOCIAL CHANGE AND FAMILIES

- New discussion of reflexive change and the family
- New discussion of changes in the nature of personal life in late modern societies
- Expanded discussion of “fragile families”

Supplements Package

As a full-service publisher of quality educational products, McGraw-Hill does much more than just sell textbooks. The company creates and publishes an extensive array of print, video, and digital supplements for students and instructors. This edition of *Public and Private Families* is accompanied by an extensive, comprehensive supplements package:

FOR THE STUDENT

- *Public and Private Families: A Reader, 4th Edition*—Edited by the text's author and keyed to text chapters, this reader includes articles and book excerpts by family sociologists and other writers on a variety of issues facing families today. A special discount is available when the text and reader are ordered as a package.
- *Reel Families CD-ROM*—This unique interactive movie takes the concept of active learning to a whole new level, enabling students to take on the role of one of the story's characters and influence key plot turns by making choices for that character. The movie allows students to explore course concepts and terminology in a relevant and meaningful context. Movie segments are augmented by a robust array of review and assessment features. With this breakthrough learning tool, students can explore a wide variety of family issues firsthand and master course concepts more completely than they could by just reading any text.
- *Online Learning Center Website*—This provides innovative, text-specific website featuring PowerWeb—online access to articles from the popular and scholarly press, weekly updates, daily newsfeeds, and a search engine—as well as flashcards that can be used to master vocabulary, quizzes with feedback that students can use to study for exams, and more.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

- *Instructor's Resource CD*—a single CD with an easy-to-use interface providing access to a wide array of important ancillaries:
 - *Instructor's Manual/Testbank*—includes detailed chapter outlines, key terms, overviews, lecture notes, and a complete testbank
 - *Reel Families Instructor's Guide*—teaching tips and notes that make it easy to integrate the *Reel Families CD* into your course
 - *Computerized Testbank*—easy-to-use computerized testing program for both Windows and Macintosh computers
 - *PowerPoint Slides*—complete, chapter-by-chapter slideshows featuring text, art, and tables
- *Online Learning Center Website*—password-protected access to downloadable supplements and other important instructor support materials and additional resources
- *Reel Families Lecture Launcher Videotape*—so even if you can't require students to use the CD, you can use the movie footage to jumpstart lectures in a unique and exciting fashion
- *Full-Length Videotapes*—a wide variety of videotapes from the [Films for the Humanities and Social Sciences](#) series is available to adopters of the text.
- *Course Management Systems*—whether you use WebCT, Blackboard, e-College, or another course management system, McGraw-Hill will provide you with a cartridge that enables you to either conduct your course entirely online or supplement your lectures with online material. And if your school does not yet have one of these course management systems, we can provide you with PageOut, an easy-to-use tool that allows you to create your own course web page and access all material on the Online Learning Center.
- *Primis Online*—a unique database publishing system that allows instructors to create their own custom text from material in this text or elsewhere and deliver that text to students electronically as an e-book or in print format via the bookstore.

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