

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 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, Partnership, and Marriage”), the focus shifts to the private family. The section examines the emergence of the modern concept of sexuality, 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 both 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 and last 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 and last 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 child care, the costs of the Social Security and Medicare programs, and the extension of marriage to same-sex couples. 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 other 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 Bu-

reau 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.

- **Includes new photo essay features to engage the reader and enliven the text.** I have added a photo essay about Hurricane Katrina, “Poverty and Altitude,” in Chapter 5, about skipped-generation households, “Grandparents as Parents,” in Chapter 10, and about same-sex marriages/partnerships, “The Boundaries of Marriage,” in Chapter 14.

Pedagogy

Each chapter begins in a way that engages the reader: the neither-men-nor-women berdaches of many Native American tribes; 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.

- 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?

As always, this edition contains numerous new citations to recent articles and books in every chapter; and all statistics have been updated if newer data exist. In addition, the following changes have been made.

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES

- Updated information on same-sex marriage.

CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

- Expanded “Life Course” section including a new subsection on the emergence of “early adulthood” as a stage of life.
- New *Families in Other Cultures* essay on Cai Hua’s (2001) ethnography, *A Society without Fathers or Husbands: The Na of China*.

- Citations and a quotation from Stefanie Coontz's (2005) book, *Marriage, A History*.
- New subsection on diversity in colonial American families.

CHAPTER 3. GENDER AND FAMILIES

- New material on how most researchers now see parental socialization of children as a bidirectional process, with children influencing parents as well as being influenced by them.
- Description of a study showing how the division of household labor is shaped not only by couple's own preferences but by gender inequality at the national level.

CHAPTER 4. SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILIES

- New section on evidence of the diverging demographics of family life by educational attainment.
- Consistent with this new section, I introduce a three-category model of social standing (college degree, high school degree, no high school degree) based on Weber's idea of status groups, in addition to presenting the standard four-class model (upper, middle, working, lower).
- I have deleted the discussion of the Marxist theory of class because I did not subsequently use it and because of the new status-group model I am presenting.
- New chapter opener on imports from China.
- Deletion of material on "working-class kinship," which is quite dated and no longer applicable.

CHAPTER 5. RACE, ETHNICITY, AND FAMILIES

- Summary of the "natural experiment" of African American marriage rates in the military.
- Discussion of the black feminist concept of "intersectionality."
- Completely rewritten section on Mexican Americans emphasizing the role of immigration in producing distinctive family patterns (high birthrates, early marriage, more extended family households), the much lesser distinctiveness of their U.S.-born descendants, and the substantial role of the Mexican-origin population in U.S. population growth.
- New section on "Racial and Ethnic Intermarriage," reviewing recent scholarship on the rates of intermarriage for the major racial and Hispanic groups. Discussion of possible effects of high rates of intermarriage and multiracial self-identification on racial and ethnic group boundaries in the future, including the possibility of a new black/nonblack divide.
- New photo essay about Hurricane Katrina—"poverty and altitude."

CHAPTER 6. SEXUALITIES

- Reflecting the comments of several instructors who use this book, the focus is now on sexuality, and the title has been changed from "Sexuality and Love" to "Sexualities."
- Rewritten and expanded section on "Sexual Identities." It brings together material that had been in separate sections of the chapter.
- New discussion of the strengths and limitations of "queer theory," the growing and influential body of thought which claims that sexual life is artificially

organized into categories that reflect the power of heterosexual norms and which argues against the use of the concept of sexual identities.

- New data on sexual activities, attractions, and orientations from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth.
- New section, “Beyond the Family,” which discusses two kinds of living arrangements that blur the boundaries between family living and nonfamily living: families of choice and living-apart-together (LAT) relationships.

CHAPTER 7. COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE

- New section on “The Current Context of Marriage” that draws upon my 2004 article, “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage,” in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*. I have not used the word “deinstitutionalization,” however, in this section; and I have tried to clarify and simplify the language of the article in several places.
- New material based on several important recent articles on cohabitation, including growing evidence that for many cohabitators, especially childless young adults, cohabitation seems like an alternative way of being single rather than a stage in the marriage process.
- New *Families in Other Cultures* essay on “The Rise of the Love Marriage.”
- Updated information for the *Families and Public Policy* box, “Domestic Partnerships,” which focuses on legal rights for heterosexual couples. (Civil unions and marriage for same-sex couples are discussed in other chapters.)

CHAPTER 8. WORK AND FAMILIES

- Data from 1998 and 2000 American time-use studies suggesting further narrowing of the gap between women’s and men’s housework.
- Theories of why care workers are paid low wages.
- Exchange theory and gender theory perspectives on the association between the share of housework done by wives and wives’ earnings.
- New scholarship on difference in the quality, rather than quantity, of women’s and men’s leisure time.

CHAPTER 9. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

- New section on “Religion and Socialization.”
- First national statistics on adoption from the 2000 Census.
- Updated presentation of studies on children of lesbian and gay parents.
- New statistics on parents’ use of time from Bianchi et al., (2006) *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life*.

CHAPTER 10. THE ELDERLY AND THEIR FAMILIES

- New chapter opener on the increased prevalence of grandparents and step-grandparents in children’s lives.
- New discussion of active life expectancy (a new key term).
- Updated policy box on financing Social Security and Medicaid.
- Expanded subsection on multigenerational households (new key term), including information on skipped-generation households.
- Expanded and updated section on public and private provision of care for the elderly.
- New photo essay about skipped-generation households, “Grandparents as parents.”

CHAPTER 11. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- New section on the growing movement among researchers to distinguish two kinds of intimate partner violence, both of which are new key terms: “situational couple violence,” a less serious kind initiated by both men and women, and “intimate terrorism,” a more serious kind, perpetrated almost entirely by men seeking to control women’s actions. A chart summarizes the distinctions.

CHAPTER 12. DIVORCE

- New section on recent trends that covers the apparent divergence of divorce rates since 1980 on the basis of educational attainment, with the rates rising for people without high school degrees and falling for college graduates.
- New subsection on behavioral genetic studies of the effects of divorce on children.

CHAPTER 13. REMARRIAGE AND STEPFAMILIES

- New material (e.g., stepparents as “affinity-seekers”) from Lawrence H. Ganong and Marilyn Coleman’s (2004) book, *Stepfamily Relationships: Development, Dynamics, and Interactions*.

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

- Discussion of 2006 bill that established marriage promotion programs.
- Discussion of alternative policies for assisting children (previously discussed in Chapter 15).
- Expanded discussion of same-sex marriage.
- New photo essay about same-sex marriages / partnerships, “The Boundaries of marriage.”

CHAPTER 15 SOCIAL CHANGE AND FAMILIES

- At the suggestion of several instructors, I have shortened this chapter by moving some material to prior chapters.

Supplements Package

McGraw-Hill creates and publishes an extensive array of print, digital, and video supplements for students and instructors. This edition of *Public and Private Families* is accompanied by a comprehensive package:

FOR THE STUDENT

- *Public and Private Families: A Reader, 5th 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 enables 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 an array of review and assessment features. With

this 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 Web Site*—This provides innovative, text-specific resources including quizzes with feedback that students can use to study for exams, flashcards that can be used to master vocabulary, and more.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

- The online *Instructor's Resource* manual—provides 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
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- *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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