FOURTH EDITION

FAMILIES

AND THEIR SOCIAL WORLDS

KAREN SECCOMBE

Families and Their Social Worlds

Fourth Edition

Karen Seccombe

Pearson

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Preface

Family courses are popular on college campuses because families themselves are entities of profound interest. We are intensely curious about families, and they are the center of many of our conversations, movies, television shows, songs, news stories, and cartoons. Families can offer some of the most exciting times of our lives: falling in love, getting married, or the birth or adoption of a baby. Families also can offer some of the worst times: disagreements, betrayal, violence, and divorce. What students tend to forget, however, is that families are far more than just personal relationships. Families are a powerful social institution with a set of rules, regulations, and norms (sometimes written, sometimes not) that are situated in a particular culture in a particular historical time.

I hope that you find this an upbeat and high-quality text written for students in sociology, family science, and social work programs. I envision that many students may have likely taken at least an Introduction to Sociology course, and would therefore be familiar with general sociological concepts, for example, culture, stratification, social structure, socialization, and race and ethnicity. I review and build upon these concepts—highlighting the "sociological imagination"—and show how they can be applied to a specific substantive area—the field of families. I want to teach students to think about families beyond their own personal experiences, and even beyond family structure in the United States. I hope to impart a passion for critical thinking as students see that families exist within social worlds.

My overarching goal is to show that our conceptions and organizations of families are embedded within our social structure, and to make the discovery of this fact interesting to students as I showcase how and why family scholars do their work. Moreover, a sociological imagination reveals that many family concerns are really social issues rather than merely private ones; therefore, solutions to these concerns must be social in nature as well. Embedded in each chapter are important policy considerations to illustrate what is currently being done, and perhaps even more importantly, what *can be* done to strengthen families and intimate relationships. "Social Policy and Family Resilience" identifies social policies that have made a real difference in the lives of millions, in the United States and elsewhere.

We will cover several key themes: (1) families are both a public social institution and a private personal relationship; (2) social inequality has a powerful influence on family life; (3) an expanded strengths-based perspective can improve family resiliency; (4) family policies reflect historical, cultural, political, and social factors; and (5) understanding families in the United States requires a comparative perspective.

Families Are Both a Public Social Institution and a Private Personal Relationship

Families fulfill many of our personal needs for love, warmth, and intimacy. Nonetheless, I remind students that families are also a public social institution, with a set of beliefs and rules that are organized to meet basic human needs. Families are a social institution in much the same way our political, economic, religious, health care, and educational systems are social institutions. Families can best be understood by examining how they interact with, influence, and are influenced by other social institutions. Families can't merely be separated out as "havens" from the rest of society. Patterns of education, religious customs, economic systems, and political systems all shape family patterns, attitudes, behaviors, and the constraints and opportunities experienced by individual members.

Most people don't reflect very often on families as social institutions. Instead, they focus on the day-to-day experience of being in their own family. People tend to think about their families in individualized terms, often without seeing their interconnection to these larger social structures. Yet, many aspects of family life are affected by broader social structures in which we're embedded, including our sex, race, and social class. For instance, how does one's level of education affect the chances of getting married, having children, or divorcing? Is the relationship between level of education and the likelihood of these events identical for men and women, and for Black and White people? And how may they be related to capitalism, urbanization, or the distribution of money and other resources? Although humans technically do have free choice, it's important to identify the ways that we are influenced by the structure of the society in which we live.

Social Inequality Has a Powerful Influence on Family Life

Most Americans believe that the United States provides nearly equal opportunities for everyone. However, I show that American society is highly stratified on the basis of

economics, power, and social status. Inequality is woven into many of our basic social structures and institutions. These patterns of social inequality filter down and shape all dimensions of family life, for example, the neighborhood in which you live, your gendered expectations, whether you are legally allowed to marry your partner, the values you are likely to hold for your children, the type of job you are likely to get, your consumption patterns, daily stressors, and your coping mechanisms. Social class, sex, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation affect the way family members interact with one another and the way that they are responded to.

Conversely, patterns of social inequality are also shaped *by* families. Americans fantasize that they can be anything they want to be, but in reality there is little substantial upward (or downward) social mobility. People usually live out their lives in generally the same social class in which they were born. Families pass on their wealth and social capital (or their lack of it) to their newest members, and this perpetuates social inequality. For example, because of U.S. inheritance laws, affluent parents are able to distribute their wealth to their children upon their death. Consequently, some of the richest people have only marginal employment histories. Yet others work relentlessly, often in the unglamorous but growing service sector, and find no real route to a better life. Their wages are low, they may not receive health insurance or other benefits, and they live on the margin only one paycheck away from impoverishment. My goal is to reveal to students the complexities of social inequality, and its deleterious effects on families.

An Expanded Strengths-Based Perspective Can Demonstrate Paths to Family Resiliency

The family strengths perspective is a world-view, or perspective, that is based in optimism. I do not ignore family problems; in fact, I describe many problems in considerable depth—poverty, rape, racism, divorce, female genital cutting, and stalking, to name just a few. However, a strengths perspective focuses on identifying, creating, mobilizing, advocating, and respecting the resources, assets, wisdom, and knowledge that every person and every family has to ameliorate problems. Rather than working from a deficit model, I want to highlight how members of our society can work together to make families more resilient. Resiliency is the capacity to rebound from adversity, misfortune, trauma, or other transitional crises and become strengthened and more resourceful. Most of the literature offering a strengths-based perspective focuses on micro-level factors such as individual personality or family traits. However, I suggest that these are often not enough to help families through a myriad of challenges. Social problems require social solutions. Sometimes we only have to look within our own communities for ideas to increase resiliency. In other contexts, we may need to look further, perhaps to other countries, to see the models that they provide. My goal within each chapter is to offer an example of how families truly can become more resilient, with the aid of a macro-level helping hand.

Family Policies Reflect a Complex Set of Historical, Cultural, Political, and Social Factors

If families are public social institutions in addition to private personal relationships, then we must recognize the importance of federal, state, and local involvement. The fourth theme of this text is that government regulates many conditions of families, and these policies reflect historical patterns, cultural values, social conditions, and political viewpoints. This may occur by enacting specific policies targeting certain groups or certain aspects of family life, such as welfare reform, requiring partners to get a blood test before marrying, or passing legislation to prohibit gays and lesbians from marrying.

Conversely, historical, cultural, political, and social factors may also exercise a strong influence backhandedly by the absence of specific policies. For example, the U.S. government offers no systematic paid leave to women who have just given birth. This is in sharp contrast to other industrialized nations (and many nonindustrialized ones). Commonly in other countries, women will receive 6 to 12 months off of work, with full or nearly full pay. Why does the United States offer so little to new parents? The United States is far more likely than other countries to believe that family matters are personal issues, reflecting our long-standing belief in rugged individualism. Family policies reflect values about personal responsibility versus collective good, the role of work in our lives, the expectations placed on mothers and fathers to manage the inherent conflicts between their work and family lives, and the level of concern over social inequality.

We will explore the origins of many critical family policies (e.g., social security, welfare, employer-sponsored health insurance) and reveal how they operate today and with what consequences. Drawing upon United States and cross-cultural examples, policy discussions are integrated into each chapter to illustrate how specific policies can be used to strengthen families and make them more resilient. Examples include maternity leave, child care, family allowance, child support, affirmative action, and universal health care.

Understanding Families in the United States Requires a Comparative Perspective

The fifth theme shows that one of the best ways to understand what is happening in the United States today is to examine what has happened in other times and in other places around the world. Learning how other societies structure families, how they collectively think about families, how they encourage members to interact, and how they deal with the challenges families face can provide insight into our own concerns. We cannot ignore what is happening in other places because societies are becoming increasingly interconnected. New technologies, immigration, commerce across borders, and greater ease in world communication and travel have increased visibility, and the United States can no longer remain isolated. Although many problems, such as poverty or HIV/AIDS, are considerably worse in other countries, other problems loom larger in the United States than elsewhere. For example, the U.S. infant mortality rate is among the highest for developing countries, and life expectancy is among the lowest. How can a society as richly endowed as the United States have such poor health statistics? U.S. poverty is rising and is among the highest of developed countries as are teenage pregnancy rates and the likelihood of divorce. What can we learn from other countries to better understand our own?

Likewise, it is easy to ignore history and only focus on the here and now. But many of our current family issues are rooted in the traditions of the past. For example, to truly understand the high rate of divorce in the United States we should be aware of the ways in which the notion of love, which evolved in the eighteenth century, changed the entire basis on which mates were chosen, and thereby increased the likelihood of couples ending an unhappy marriage.

These themes are designed to get students thinking, analyzing, comparing, and contrasting modern-day families with models found throughout the world and throughout history. I hope to show students the insights that come from growing their sociological imagination. Let's get started!

New to this Edition

This fourth edition of *Families and their Social Worlds* keeps the same basic structure as the last edition, which makes it easy for instructors to move from the third edition to the fourth without having to recreate their entire course materials. I know instructors will appreciate that. However, this new fourth edition has been updated with specific examples and ideas to which today's students will relate. It's easy to forget that four years ago, when the third edition was published, many of our students were still in middle school! To them, four years is a significant portion of their lives, and examples from their middle school years do not make the course look fresh and relevant. So, in addition to the standard updating of statistics and research findings, I have made a concerted effort to update ideas and examples that will resonate with today's undergraduate students. For example:

- Current social issues are addressed, such as the #MeToo movement, online dating, discrimination against gays and lesbians, hookups, revenge porn, sexual assault in the college environment, continued racism, and economic issues in a post-recession era.
- Greater attention is given to the political debates that affect families and intimate relationships, such as increasing the minimum wage to $15 an hour, immigration policy, the DACA program, the Affordable Care Act (AKA Obamacare), climate change, same-sex marriage, parental leaves after childbirth, and Social Security and Medicaid.
- There is additional focus on global issues, including Saudi women's new legal opportunity to drive cars, changes to the one-child policy in China, world family planning efforts, genocide among the Rohingya in Myanmar, and girls' access to education.
- Photos and graphics are enhanced and designed to grab students' attention and help them better retain the ideas and concepts presented. World maps show differences and similarities across countries on different family-related topics.
- Thought-provoking critical thinking questions are placed throughout each chapter, encouraging students to integrate course content, and to think theoretically and empirically.
- This version of Revel contains more sophisticated interactives, videos, prompts, and assessments that are designed to make students active rather than passive learners. Students engage more fully with the material, increasing their understanding, retention, and respect for a sociological analysis of families.

Acknowledgments

A textbook is never a solo venture. I would like to thank all of those who had a helping hand in the process of turning my ideas for a family text into reality. The encouragement you gave, the challenging questions you posed, and the personal and professional backing you offered have made this book one of which I am very proud. Thank you. The Friday Harbor community serves as my "village," and we all know it takes a village. And I would like to offer a huge thank you to Gary Lee, Kathy Kaiser, Bill Martin, and Manley Johnson, who sparked this intellectual interest in families in the first place. They have each been wonderful mentors to me at various stages of my career, and without their attention and care, who honestly knows where I would be right now?

Most naturally, I would like to acknowledge my husband Richard, and daughters Natalie—who is now 18 years old (and off to college—wow!)—and Olivia, who is a bright-eyed 16 year-old in 11th grade. While many authors thank their family members for their sacrifices, I believe that writing this textbook actually enhanced our lives. What a unique and crazy opportunity to combine theory, methods, and application!

Now, to the readers, if you have questions or comments, please send them my way. I want to hear from you: karen.s.meenan@icloud.com.

Just FYI: Meenan is my family name, while Seccombe is actually my middle name, which I use professionally.

About the Author

Karen Seccombe (Meenan) considers herself a freelance academic these days. Over the course of her career she has been a professor at the University of Alaska, University of Florida, and Portland State University. Most recently she enjoyed teaching in the Semester at Sea program, where she traveled to Japan, China, Vietnam, Myanmar, India, South Africa, Ghana, and Morocco with nearly 600 students. While the ship was at sea, Karen taught Marriage and Family Relationships, Gender and Society, and Social Problems, enriching her courses with the in-port opportunities she and her students experienced.

Karen is a proud community college graduate, which she credits as giving her "a great start in life." She received her BA in sociology from California State University, Chico; her MSW in health and social welfare policy from the University of Washington; and her PhD in sociology from Washington State University.

She is the author of *Exploring Marriages and Families*, 3rd edition; *Social Problems*, 16th edition with William Kornblum; *"So You Think I Drive a Cadillac?": Welfare Recipients' Perspectives on the System and its Reform*, 4th edition; *Families in Poverty* (all with Pearson); and *Just Don't Get Sick: Access to Health Care in the Aftermath of Welfare Reform* with Kim Hoffman (Rutgers University Press). She is a National Council on Family Relations fellow, and a member of the American Sociological Association and the Pacific Sociological Association, where she has held elective offices.

Karen lives on an island off the coast of Washington State with her husband Richard, a health economist; her 18-year-old daughter, Natalie Rose, who is off to college in the fall; and her 16-year-old daughter, Olivia Lin, whose photos are sprinkled through this book. In her spare time she enjoys hiking with her pack, which includes her dogs, Bart and Stella; cycling the coastal back roads of the San Juan Islands, and looking for whales and other sea life that call the Salish Sea their home.

Chapter 1

Families and the Sociological Imagination

Learning Objectives

1.1 Determine the multiple definitions of family

1.2 Compare scientific approaches to sociology

1.3 Analyze major political perspectives on family in the U.S.

1.4 Evaluate the U.S. approach to family policy

1.5 Summarize themes in the study of family

What could be more mundane than families—getting up, having breakfast, carpooling the kids, going to work, making dinner, doing homework, watching TV, and putting everyone to bed? Yet, at the same time, we're intensely curious about families; they are the center of many of our movies, television shows, songs, news stories, and cartoons.

Families offer some of the most exciting times of our lives: falling in love, getting married, or the birth or adoption of a baby. However, families can also offer some of the worst times: disagreements, betrayal, violence, and divorce.

Virtually all of us grew up within some type of family, and most of us hope to recreate a new family through marriage or a partnership, and possibly with children. Although

Families in Comics

Family life is serious business, even in comic strips. The popularity and long lives of comic strip families make them trusted observers and reporters of the public discourse. More than 100 million people read the daily comics, and they come away with a variety of interpretations, including perceptions of ideal families, gender stereotypes, and proper roles for mothers and fathers. A research team headed by Ralph LaRossa, a sociologist at Georgia State University, systematically examined the content of 490 Father's Day and Mother's Day comic strips published from 1940 to 1999. The oldest comic in the study was *Gasoline Alley*, first published in 1919. Others such as *Blondie, Bloom County, Cathy, Dennis the Menace, the Family Circus, Garfield, Hi and Lois, Little Orphan Annie, Peanuts, Pogo,* and *Ziggy* were also included.

Focusing in particular on the roles of fathers, the researchers found that the depiction of fatherhood fluctuated significantly. In the past, fathers were often viewed as incompetent or were mocked as they performed (or tried to perform) parenting duties. Likewise, during the 40-year period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1990s, fathers were rarely shown to be supportive or nurturing. Comic strips today have a greater emphasis on fathers spending quality time with their children. "The fluctuation reflects societal shifts," says LaRossa. "When you look at the figures across six decades, they go up and down in a way understandable with what was happening in larger society."

The researchers also noted that the comics generally portrayed a homogeneous and stereotypical picture of family life. For example, virtually all characters were White. In this sample, only 5 percent of the comics featured a Black parental figure as a main character. Families also tended to be middle-class, nuclear in structure, and with two parents in the home. Other family types were largely excluded (LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil, & Wynn, 2000).

we talk about "the family" as though there is only one type of experience, we also know that there are tremendous differences. Some families have no children, whereas others have many; some have two parents, whereas others have only one; some have biological children, whereas others include adopted children or stepchildren; some have grandparents living with them, whereas others don't. Some families celebrate Christmas, whereas others focus on different traditions during the season, such as Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. Some families are happy, whereas others are riddled with conflict or grief.

Given the differences among families, along with racial, ethnic, class, and cultural diversity, how is it possible to understand families in any systematic way? This course will use a sociological perspective to examine and interpret families and show that all human behavior, including family life, occurs in a social context. Together we'll explore how our personal relationships are shaped by this social context.

1.1: What Are Families?

OBJECTIVE: Determine the multiple definitions of family

Watch WHAT IS A FAMILY?

We are all familiar with the word "family," but do we agree upon its definition? In this video you will meet Becca, Melanie, Meghan, Jono, Tracey, Juan, Karen, and Betsy, who represent some of today's families. The proportion of "traditional" two-parent, heterosexual families has declined, while diverse forms of family are on the rise. Together we will examine these trends, look at their causes, and discuss their implications.

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as two or more people living together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. This definition remains the basis for many social programs and policies, including employee fringe benefits, such as health and dental insurance or family and medical leaves.

Nonetheless, this official definition doesn't really reflect the rich diversity of family life today (Amato, 2014). Some suggest that if people *feel* that they are a family and *behave* as though they are a family, then they should be recognized as such. The focus should be on greater inclusion of family

relationships. In 2001, the scholarly journal published by the National Council on Family Relations changed its name from *The Journal of Marriage and the Family* to *The Journal of Marriage and Family* (deleting the word "the") to reflect the growing recognition of multiple family forms. This seemingly small change corresponds to the public's evolving attitudes toward families.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1.1.1 Describe different kinds of families

1.1.2 Explain how legal definitions impact families

1.1.1: Defining Family

OBJECTIVE: Describe different kinds of families

Many Americans, especially younger Americans, accept divorce, cohabitation, remaining single, same-sex marriage, and being childfree as legitimate lifestyles, while at the same time also espousing that marriage, children, and a strong family life are important goals toward which they strive (Wang & Parker, 2014). For example, only about a third of adults under age 30 say that it is "very important" to them that a couple legally marries if they plan to spend the rest of their lives together. Contrast this to nearly two-thirds of those 65 and over who report to feel this way. This is shown in Figure 01-01.

Even teenagers espouse these views. Among high school seniors, the vast majority see cohabitation as a good testing ground for marriage (Anderson, 2016). Over half of high school seniors agree that having a child without being married is experimenting with a worthwhile lifestyle, and that cohabiting before marriage is a good idea (National Marriage Project, 2012).

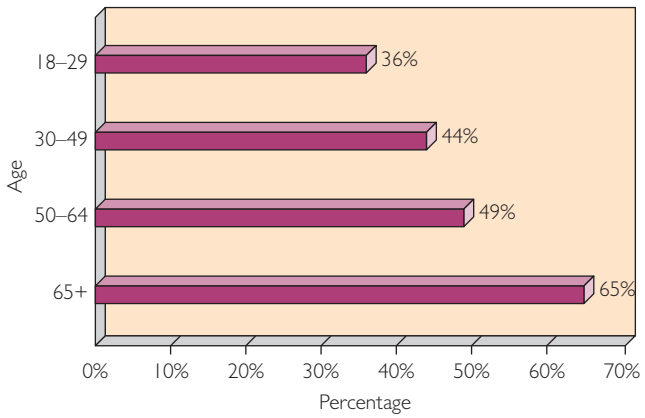
We use a broader and more inclusive definition than that taken from the Census Bureau. *Families* are defined here as *relationships by blood, marriage, or affection, in which members may cooperate economically, may care for any children, and may consider their identity to be intimately connected to the larger group*.

This definition could also include *fictive kin*, who are nonrelatives whose bonds are strong and intimate, such as the relationships shared among unmarried homosexual or heterosexual partners, or very close friends. In fact, these bonds could be stronger than those between biological relatives. For example, my favorite "Nana Marge" isn't really a relative at all. Fictive kin can provide important services and care for individuals, including assistance around the holiday season, or through critical life transitions, such as the birth of a child or a divorce (Heslin et al., 2011). Our use of the term **families** draws upon these relationships as well as more traditional ones. The box "Role of Family" shows how different families can be.

Families play a primary role in all cultures around the world. Family roles, responsibilities, and even membership may vary from one region to another. For example, the United States and most developed countries recognize grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins on both your mother and father's side of the family. We call this a bilateral approach to family. However, in many parts of the world, only one side is recognized as kin: either those on the father's side (patrilineal) or those on the mother's side (matrilineal).

Figure 01-01 Percent Who Say It is "Very Important" to Them That a Couple Legally Marries If They Plan to Spend the Rest of Their Lives Together

Do you believe it is important that a couple who plans to spend their lives together legally marry?



SOURCE: Wang & Parker, 2014

1.1.2: Why Definitions Are Important

OBJECTIVE: Explain how legal definitions impact families

Does it really matter how we define the term *family*? Yes, it matters a great deal. The definition used has important consequences with respect to informal and formal rights (Human Rights Campaign, 2014). For example, neighbors, schools, and other community groups interact with family members differently than with other nonrelated groups who live together. Families even get special membership discounts to a wide variety of organizations that roommates or friends don't get. You may find that an individual membership to a particular organization you want to join is $25, but a family rate is $30, regardless of family size!

However, far more is at stake than a few dollars. The agreed-upon definition has important consequences that are legally recognized. For example, under most employer insurance plans only a worker's spouse and legal children can be covered by a health or dental insurance policy. *Domestic partners*, defined as adults in long-term committed relationships and responsible for each other's financial and emotional well-being, are usually excluded from coverage (Human Rights Campaign, 2017). Domestic partners, either heterosexual or homosexual, have faced many obstacles simply because they lack the legal basis of marriage.

Role of Family

Despite some differences, there are many similar functions of families across many cultures. These include the regulation of sexual behavior, reproduction and socializing children, providing a path for inheritance, economic cooperation among members, social status placement, and a mechanism for providing warmth, intimacy, and protection.

Families are universal. Although they may vary in size or social roles, they remain a cornerstone of life in all cultures. In developing countries families often take the place of social institutions such as schools or health care.

Family size has been shrinking in the United States. Most American families have only two children. However, unlike some countries such as China and India that put significant pressure on families to remain small to control population growth, American families can be as large or small as desired.

Although the teenage pregnancy rate has been steadily declining, the number of older single parents is on the rise. Adoption is a popular mechanism for having a child, although the number of international adoptions has been declining since 2005.

About one in five people today say that they do not want to have children. This couple is very happy with one another and their dog, "Scooby." They think of Scooby as part of the family.

Same-sex couples worked diligently to secure the right to marry and be recognized as legitimate families in the eyes of the law. Most people now agree with the position that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry.

Some employers recognize that denying benefits to domestic partners may not only be unjust, but bad for business as well. In 1982, the New York City weekly newspaper *The Village Voice* became the first employer to offer domestic partner benefits to its lesbian and gay employees. Since that time, tens of thousands of employers have chosen to offer domestic partner benefits to an employee's unmarried partner, whether of the same or opposite sex. These employers include the majority of Fortune 500 companies, along with city, county, and state agencies. Documentation of proof of domestic partnership, such as financial statements or written statements by each partner, is left up to the discretion of the employer. Most employers who cover domestic partners do so regardless of sexual orientation. Despite the continued growth in the number of employers who offer domestic partner benefits, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has ruled that domestic partners cannot be considered spouses for federal tax purposes.

WRITING PROMPT

Your Definition of Family

How do you define family? Are fictive kin included? Does your definition of family differ from those within your family? What role does the legal definition of family play in your definition?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

1.2: The Sociological Imagination

OBJECTIVE: Compare scientific approaches to sociology

Many of our personal experiences are not simply random events. Instead, they are shaped by *social structure*, which is the organized pattern of relationships and institutions that together form the basis of society. For example, how has your sex influenced your life experience? Has being male or being female influenced your choice of a college major, your hobbies, interests, and relationships? How has your family structure affected you? You may have grown up with one parent, two parents, or with no parents at all. How did this affect your financial well-being, your social capital, and overall opportunities?

Broader social issues also affect families and personal relationships. One critical example is climate change, which encompasses global warming, but refers to the broader range of changes that are happening to our planet, including rising sea levels; shrinking mountain glaciers; heat waves and droughts in much of the world; and changes in plant blooming and growing seasons. According to the vast majority of scientists, the effects of climate change on families will continue to intensify as storms destroy homes and livelihoods, and interrupt farming and food distribution (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2017).

There is widespread consensus among scientists that climate change is a real and present danger. It has the potential to seriously disrupt families unless immediate changes are made in our lifestyles and use of fossil fuels.

Using a **sociological imagination** reveals general patterns in what otherwise might be thought of as simple random events (Mills, 1959). C. Wright Mills stressed the importance of understanding the relationship between individuals and their society. Family problems, such as lack of affordable housing, unemployment, child abuse, limited access to health care, work-family stress, and finding adequate child care, are more than just personal troubles experienced by a few people. They are issues that affect large numbers of people and originate in a society's institutional arrangements. In other words, individual experiences are linked to the social structure and broader social factors.

Peter Berger elaborated on these ideas in his 1963 book *Invitation to Sociology*. Although we think of ourselves as individuals, much of our behavior is actually patterned on the basis of what social categories we fall into, such as age, income, race, ethnicity, sex, and physical appearance. For example, men and women behave differently for reasons that often have nothing to do with biology. Many of these patterns are socially produced. In other words, boys and girls, men and women, are each taught and encouraged to think of themselves differently and to behave in different ways. For example, why are over 90 percent of students in bachelor of science nursing programs female? This is not the result of some biological imperative, some quirk of the occupation itself, or some random event. Rather, society even has a hand in shaping something as seemingly personal and individual as the choice of a college major (Beutel, Burge, & Borden, 2017).

Emile Durkheim (1897) conducted an early study on the subject of suicide, documenting how social structures affect human behavior. At first glance, what could be more private and individualized than the reasons that surround

a person's decision to take his or her own life? The loss of a loving relationship, job troubles, financial worries, and low self-esteem are just a few of the many reasons that a person may have for taking his or her own life. Yet looking through official records and death certificates, Durkheim noted that suicide was not a completely random event, and that there were several important patterns worthy of attention. He found that men were more likely to take their own lives than were women; Protestants were more likely than Catholics and Jews; wealthy people were more likely than the poor; and it appeared that unmarried people were more likely to take their own lives than were married people. Although his study was conducted over 100 years ago, recent research indicates that these patterns persist. Suicide today is a major social problem, with 800,000 people worldwide, and 41,000 Americans, taking their lives each year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015; World Health Organization (WHO), August 2017). It's the tenth leading cause of death for all Americans, and the second for persons aged 15–34 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The sociological imagination draws attention to the fact that seemingly private issues are often public ones (Mills, 1959).

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1.2.1 **Explain how the comparative perspective functions in sociology**

1.2.2 **Characterize the empirical approach to sociology**

1.2.3 **Identify major sociological theories**

1.2.1: Comparative Perspective

OBJECTIVE: **Explain how the comparative perspective functions in sociology**

The sociological imagination uses a **comparative perspective** to study families. If we want to know what is happening in the United States, it's especially meaningful to compare the country to something else, such as other cultures or other points in history. For example, an examination of the nature of dating practices or weddings in the United States becomes far more insightful when compared to the practices in other cultures, such as that of India, or at other points in time, such as in colonial America.

It's easy to sit back and assume that our society's way of doing things is always the best way. However, this **ethnocentrism** can have considerable costs. A comparative perspective allows Americans to learn how other countries and cultures organize their social life and respond to its challenges (Ember & Ember, 2011). This, in turn, allows us to learn about ourselves.

Perhaps nowhere is a comparative approach more important than in the realm of family life. The structure and dynamics of families affect all of us in substantial ways. Learning how other societies structure families, how they collectively think about families, and how they deal with the challenges families face can provide insight into our own concerns. Many problems that we face in the United States are more serious elsewhere, such as the tremendous poverty among developing nations. Other problems loom larger here.

For example, the infant mortality rate in the United States is among the worst of industrialized nations, as shown in Figure 01-02. The U.S. rate, at 6.0 deaths per 1,000 live births, is higher than most of western Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Iceland, and Hong Kong (Population Reference Bureau, 2017). Given the vast wealth of the United States, it's alarming that the infant death rates are comparable to countries that are so much poorer, including Cuba, Croatia, and Taiwan. Why is the U.S. infant mortality rate so much higher than that of peer nations? A comparative perspective examines the organization, values, and policies of those nations and evaluates their relevance for the United States. Obviously, with respect to lowering infant mortality, they are doing something right and the United States could take note.

1.2.2: An Empirical Approach

OBJECTIVE: **Characterize the empirical approach to sociology**

The sociological imagination also values an *empirical approach*, a method that answers questions through a systematic collection and analysis of data. Uncovering patterns of family dynamics can be extremely important for building stronger families.

Most of us have commonsense ideas about intimacy, domestic violence, and child rearing (or any other type of family interaction for that matter) based upon personal experience or habits, religious teachings, cultural customs, or societal laws. Because virtually all of us were raised in families, we may think we're experts on the topic.

Historically, the common-sense view of violence among intimates was that it was okay for men to beat their wives—within reason. However, common sense changes over time. Today, it's against the law in the United States for husbands to hit their wives (and vice versa). However, violence against an intimate partner is still not illegal in many parts of the world. There, cultural norms suggest that violence can be justified and it's the husband's prerogative to hit his wife, although again, usually within "reasonable" limits (e.g., a husband can beat, but not kill his spouse).

A recent analysis conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Medical Research Council, based on existing data from over 80 countries, found that worldwide, almost one-third 30 percent of all women who have

been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. The prevalence estimates range from 23.2 percent in high-income countries and 24.6 percent in the Western Pacific region to 37 percent in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region, and 37.7 percent in the South-East Asia region. The World Health Organization takes violence against women very seriously (World Health Organization, November 2018).

If common sense is subject to historical and cultural whims, then what can we depend on to help us understand family dynamics? Sociologists and other family scientists use an empirical approach in collecting and analyzing data. The goal can be to:

- ***Describe Some Phenomenon***—how many women have been physically assaulted by someone close to them; how this compares to the number of men who are assaulted by their partners each year; how abused women and men interpret the reasons for the assault.
- ***Examine the Factors That Predict or Are Associated with Some Phenomenon***—what factors are associated with violence among intimates; what factors predict whether a victim will report the assault to the police.
- ***Explain Cause-And-Effect Relationships or Provide Insight into Why Certain Events Do or Do Not Occur***—the relationship between alcohol and violence among intimates; the relationship between attitudes of male dominance and domestic violence.
- ***Understand the Meanings Attached to Behavior or Situations***—how do people interpret their roles as victims or perpetrators?

Because of empirical research, we know that violence is a serious and pervasive social problem. Nearly 1.9 million people are victims of domestic or intimate partner violence annually in the United States (Truman & Morgan, 2016). How can a sociological perspective help people who are battered by their partners? Family scholars conduct basic and applied research to understand the phenomenon, striving to reveal information about the incidence, predictors, social factors associated with violence, and the experience of violence. Psychologists, social workers, and politicians could use this information to develop programs to prevent violence, assist victims, and treat the perpetrators. Intimate partner violence is a social problem, not simply an individual one, and the goal is to uncover the social patterns that underlie it.

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS Sociologists and other family scientists use different methods to collect and analyze data. A full discussion of them is beyond the scope of this text. However, Table 01-01 summarizes six primary ways of collecting data, outlining their advantages and limitations.

Some researchers focus on *quantitative methods* in which the focus is on collecting data that can be measured numerically. Examples are found in surveys, experiments, or doing further analyses on available government statistics (such as from the U.S. Census Bureau) or another source. This research yields percentages and other statistics that can be easily interpreted.

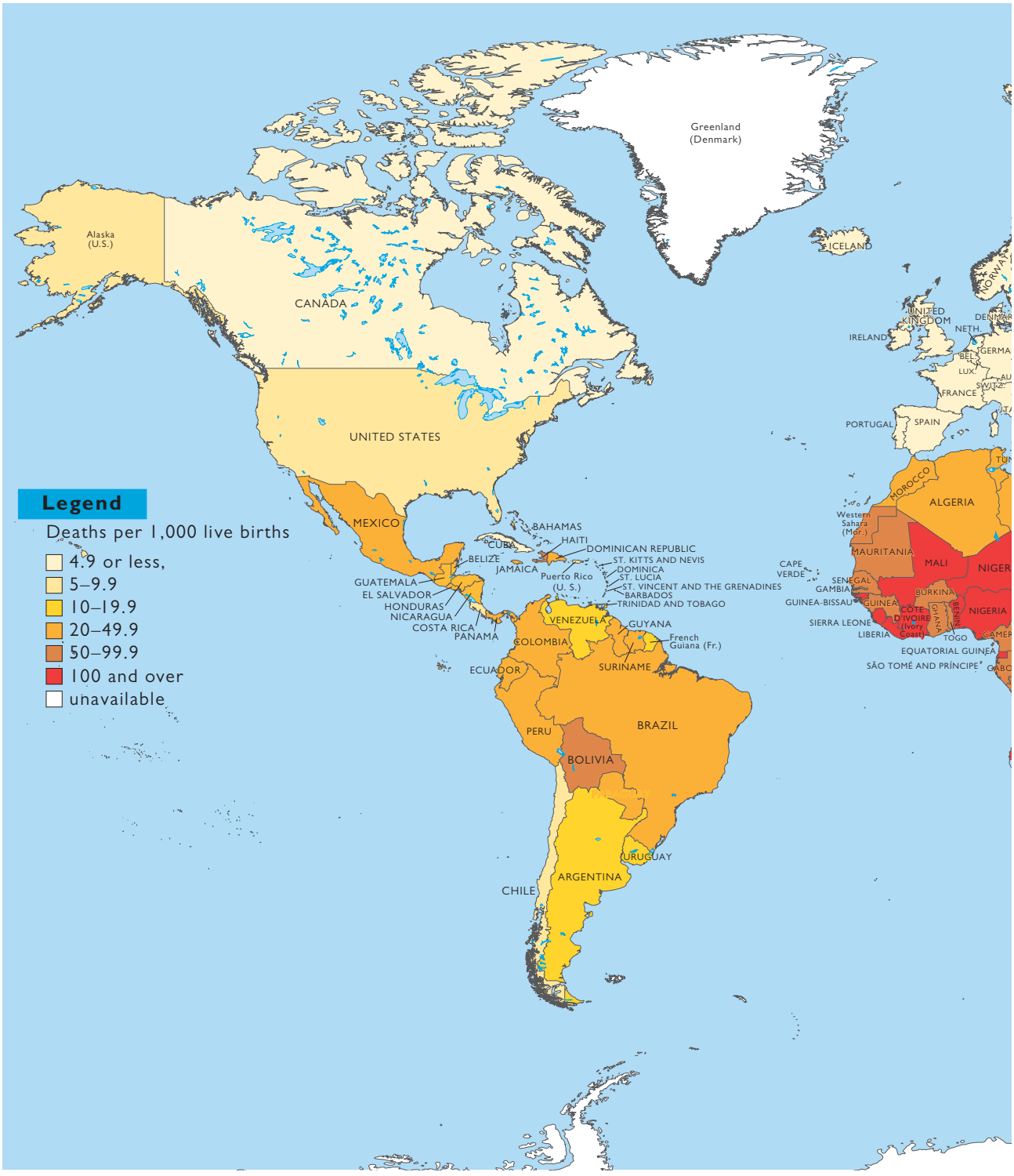
Others use *qualitative methods* that focus on narrative description with words rather than numbers to analyze patterns and their underlying meanings. Examples of qualitative research methods include in-depth interviews, focus groups, observational studies, and conducting a further analysis using narrative documents, such as letters or diaries. Qualitative research doesn't usually offer statistics but can reveal a rich description and understanding of some phenomena.

None of these methods are inherently better or worse than the others. The method used depends on the research questions that are posed. For example, if we want to better understand what family life was like in the nineteenth century, we wouldn't want to conduct a survey today. The best method would be to conduct a further analysis of documents that were written during that time period. Diaries, letters, or other lengthy correspondence between people, and other such qualitative data could help us understand the common everyday experiences within families. Likewise, we could analyze quantitative data from historical records to get an aggregate picture about, for example, immigration trends, age at first marriage, or the average length of time between marriage and first birth. Census records, birth, marriage, and death registers; immigration records; slave auctions and other transactions; church records; newspapers and magazine articles; employment ledgers; and tax

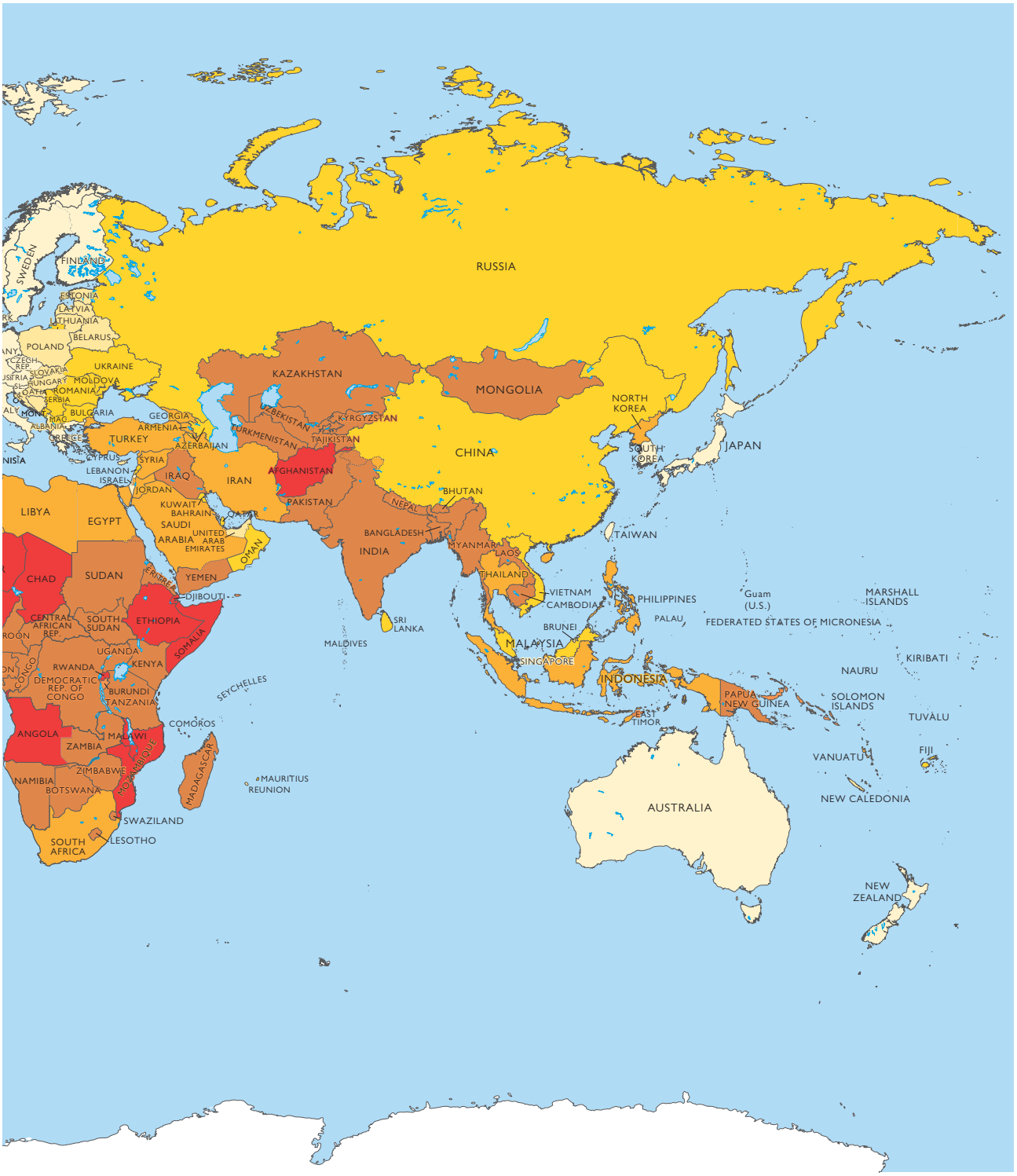
Watch QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Sociologists and other family scientists use a variety of research methods to collect and analyze data. Quantitative methods focus on data that can be measured numerically, while qualitative methods focus on narrative descriptions.

Figure 01-02 Eye on the World: Comparative Infant Mortality Rates, 2016



SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau, 2017


RUSSIA
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SWEDEN
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
BELARUS
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SLOVAKIA
BULGARIA
SERBIA
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
TURKEY
SYRIA
LEBANON
ISRAEL
IRAQ
JORDAN
IRAN
KAZAKHSTAN
UZBEKISTAN
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TAJIKISTAN
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
MONGOLIA
CHINA
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
JAPAN
TAIWAN
BHUTAN
NEPAL
BANGLADESH
INDIA
MYANMAR
LAOS
THAILAND
VIETNAM
CAMBODIA
PHILIPPINES
BRUNEI
MALAYSIA
SINGAPORE
INDONESIA
PALAU
Guam (U.S.)
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
MARSHALL ISLANDS
KIRIBATI
NAURU
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
TUVALU
FIJI
VANUATU
NEW CALEDONIA
EAST TIMOR
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
SRI LANKA
MALDIVES
KUWAIT
BAHRAIN
QATAR
SAUDI ARABIA
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
OMAN
YEMEN
LIBYA
EGYPT
SUDAN
CHAD
ERITREA
DJIBOUTI
ETHIOPIA
SOMALIA
SOUTH SUDAN
CENTRAL AFRICAN REP.
UGANDA
KENYA
RWANDA
DEMOCRATIC REP. OF CONGO
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
SEYCHELLES
COMOROS
MADAGASCAR
MAURITIUS
REUNION
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
MALAWI
MOZAMBIQUE
ZIMBABWE
NAMIBIA
BOTSWANA
SWAZILAND
LESOTHO
SOUTH AFRICA

Table 01-01 Six Research Methods: A Summary

Each research method has advantages and limitations. No single method is perfect. It all depends on the researcher's goals.

Method	Application	Advantages	Limitations
Survey	For gathering information about issues that are not directly observed, such as values, opinions, and other self-reports. Can be by mail, telephone, or administered in person. Useful for descriptive or explanatory purposes; can generate quantitative or qualitative data.	Sampling methods can allow researcher to generalize findings to a larger population. Can provide open-ended questions or a fixed response.	Surveys must be carefully prepared to avoid bias. A potential for a low return or response rate. Can be expensive and time consuming. Self-reports may be biased.
In-depth Interview	For obtaining information about issues that are not directly observed, such as values, opinions, and other self-reports. Useful for getting in-depth information about a topic. Conducted in person, conversation is usually audiotaped and then transcribed. Generates qualitative data.	Can provide detailed and high-quality data. Interviewer can probe or ask follow-up questions for clarification or to encourage the respondent to elaborate. Can establish a genuine rapport with respondent.	Expensive and time consuming to conduct and transcribe. Self-reports may be biased. Respondent may feel uncomfortable revealing personal information.
Experiment	For explanatory research that examines cause-and-effect relationships among variables. Several types: classical experimental design and quasi-experimental designs based on degree of controlling the environment. Generates quantitative data.	Provides greatest opportunity to assess cause and effect. Research design relatively easy to replicate.	The setting may have an artificial quality to it. Unless the experimental and control group are randomly assigned or matched on all relevant variables, and the environment is carefully controlled, bias may result.
Focus Groups	For obtaining information from small groups of people who are brought together to discuss a particular topic. Often exploratory in nature. Particularly useful for studying public perceptions. Facilitator may ask only a few questions; goal is to get group to interact with one another. Generates qualitative data.	Group interaction may produce more valuable insights than individual surveys or in-depth interviews. Research can obtain data quickly and inexpensively. Good at eliciting unanticipated information.	Setting is contrived. Some people may feel uncomfortable speaking in a group and others may dominate.
Observation	For exploratory and descriptive study of people in a natural setting. Researcher can be participant or nonparticipant. Generates qualitative data.	Allows study of real behavior in a natural setting. Does not rely on self-reports. Researchers can often ask questions and take notes. Usually inexpensive.	Can be time consuming. Could be ethical issues involved in certain types of observation studies (i.e., observing without consent). Researcher must balance roles of participant and observer. Replication of research is difficult.
Secondary Analysis	For exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory research with data that were collected for some other purpose. Diverse. Can be large data sources based on national samples (e.g., U.S. Census), or can be historical documents or records. Generates quantitative or qualitative data, depending on the source of data used.	Saves the expense and time of original data collection. Can be longitudinal, with data collected at more than one point in time. Good for analyzing national attitudes or trends. Makes historical research possible.	Because data were collected for another purpose, the researcher cannot control what variables were included or excluded. Researcher has no control over sampling or other biases of the data.

records can also provide insight into the family lives of large numbers of ordinary people.

However, if we want to assess today's opinions, perhaps a survey or in-depth interviews would be best. We may want to ask the same questions of everyone in our sample, and offer a standard set of answers from which they can choose, such as "How many children do you personally want to have? Would you say it is zero, one, two, three, four, or five or more?" We can easily quantify this information. Or, if we're interested in broader questions that allow each person in our study to elaborate in their own words, such as "How did you come to decide on the number of children that you would like to have?", we would likely use in-depth interviews, which then yield qualitative data.

1.2.3: Theory Helps Us Make Sense of the World

OBJECTIVE: Identify major sociological theories

Research is guided by *theory*, which is a general framework, explanation, or tool used to understand and describe the real world (Smith & Hamon, 2012). Theories are important both before and after data have been collected because they help us decide what topics to research, what questions to ask, and how to interpret the answers. Before collecting data, theories can help frame the question. When data have been collected and patterns emerge, theories can help make sense of what was found.

Family Theories

Theoretical perspectives make different assumptions about the nature of society. The following summarizes the most common theories applied in studying families (Smith & Hamon, 2012). Some theories are more *macro* in nature and focus on understanding broad societal patterns. These include structural functionalism, conflict theory, and feminist theory. Other theories are more *micro* in nature and focus on personal dynamics and face-to-face interaction, such as social exchange, symbolic interaction, developmental theory, and family systems theory.

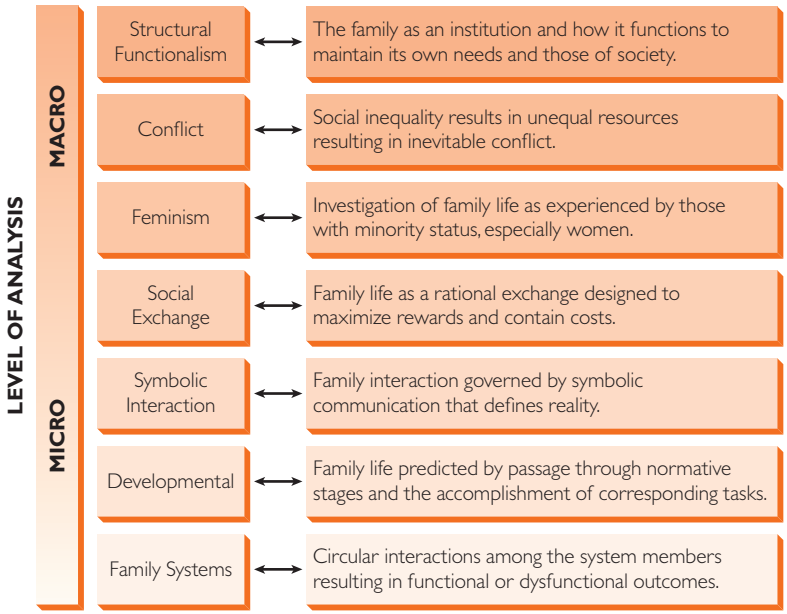
Structural Functionalism—Often abbreviated as *functionalism, structural functionalist theory* looks at the structure, systems, functions, and equilibria of social institutions, including families. A popular theory in the 1940s and 1950s, the focus is on how families are organized, how they interact with other social systems, the functions that families serve, and how they are a stabilizing force in society (Parsons, 1937; 1951). For example, Parsons & Boles (1955) focused on the division of labor in families, noting the ways in which separate spheres for men and women contributed to the stability and functionality of families. Expressive roles and tasks fell to women, whereas instrumental roles fell to men (Parsons & Boles, 1955), which they argued contributed to smooth family functioning. Functionalists rarely note the tensions, conflicts, or political ideologies behind their ideas, which may explain why this trend has fallen out of fashion in recent decades.

Conflict Theory—While emphasizing issues surrounding social inequality, power, conflict, and social change, *conflict theory* also includes how these factors influence, or are played out, in families. Those who follow the writings of Karl Marx focus on the consequences of capitalism for families—tensions and inequality generated by the gross distribution of wealth and power associated with capitalism (Marx & Engels, 1971). Other conflict theorists look at a wider set of issues surrounding conflict, inequality, or power differentials. For example, a conflict theorist might ask why virtually all elderly persons regardless of income receive government-subsidized health care (Medicare) when no similar universal program exists for children. Does this difference in treatment arise because the elderly represent a large special interest group and powerful voting bloc, whereas children are virtually powerless?

Feminist Theory—Although related to conflict theory, *feminist theory* is different in that gender is seen as the central concept for explaining family structure and family dynamics (Lloyd et al., 2009; Osmond & Thorne, 1993). It focuses on the inequality and power imbalances between men and women and analyzes "women's subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it" (Gordon, 1979). It suggests that *sex* and *gender* are powerful organizing concepts fraught with power and inequality. For example, research indicates that women do far more household labor than men even when both partners are employed full-time for pay. Feminist theorists see the gendered division of household labor as a result of power imbalances between men and women that are embedded in larger society and have virtually taken on a life of their own. It's an example of "doing gender" as West & Zimmerman (1987) say.

Social Exchange Theory—This theory draws upon a model of human behavior used by many economists. *Social exchange theory* assumes that individuals are rational beings, and their behavior reflects decisions evaluated on the basis of costs and benefits (Becker, 1981; Nye, 1979). Exchange theorists

Figure 01-03 Family Theories



would suggest that a particular type of family structure or dynamic is the result of rational decisions based on social, economic, and emotional costs and benefits, as compared to the alternatives. For example, Becker (1981) argued that a woman often rationally chooses to exchange her household labor for the benefits of a man's income because she understands that men are more "efficient" in the labor market (they usually earn higher wages than women).

Symbolic Interaction Theory—The emphasis of *symbolic interaction theory* is the symbols we use in everyday interaction—words, gestures, appearances—and how these are interpreted by others (Mead, 1935). Our interactions with others are based on how we interpret these symbols. Some symbols are obvious (an engagement ring, a kiss, a smile) and show us how to interact or what roles to play. Others are less obvious and confusing to interpret, thereby causing tension or conflict in a relationship. For example, the symbol of a mother is relatively straightforward, and we have a general agreement about what she is supposed to do for her family. But what is the role of a stepmother? What is she supposed to do? There is much confusion about step-parenting roles.

Developmental Theory—This theory suggests that families (and individual family members) go through distinct stages over time, with each stage having its own set of tasks, roles, and responsibilities. The developmental changes within *development theory* include (1) married couple; (2) childbearing; (3) preschool age; (4) school age; (5) teenage; (6) launching center; (7) middle-aged parents; and (8) aging family members (Duvall & Miller, 1985). Early development theorists claimed that the stages were inevitable and occurred in a relatively linear fashion. However, we now recognize that stages aren't always neat and tidy. Some families never have children. Other families have children later in life, so that parents may face tasks associated with middle age (e.g., planning for retirement) before children leave home. The developmental approach uses both micro and macro approaches to describe and explain family relationships over the various family stages (Rodgers & White, 1993).

A related approach, the **life course perspective**, examines how individuals' lives change as they pass through specific events, with the recognition that many events are shared among a cohort of people (Elder, 1998; Schaie and Elder, 2005). For example, sociologist Glen Elder's (1999) longitudinal study followed a cohort of children throughout the Great Depression and afterward to see how a historical event of such magnitude affected a cohort of Americans. Another example of a cohort study would be to track men and women who served in combat in the Vietnam War to see how a major traumatic event such as war influenced their lives.

Family Systems Theory—A system is more than the sum of its parts. Likewise, the *family systems theory* proposes that a family system—the family members and the roles they play—is larger than the sum of its individual members (Broderick & Smith, 1979). Collectively the family becomes a system, but it also includes subsystems within it, such as the married couple subsystem, the sibling subsystem, or the parent–child subsystem. All family systems and subsystems create boundaries between themselves and the environment with varying degrees of permeability. They also create *rules of transformation* so that families function smoothly and members know what to expect from each other. All systems tend toward equilibrium so that families work toward a balancing point in their relationship, and they maintain this equilibrium by feedback or control. Therefore, the family systems theory is particularly useful in studying how members of the family (or subsystems within the family) communicate with one another and the rippling effects of that communication.

WRITING PROMPT

Empirical Approach

Identify a research question that you want to study. What type of empirical approach would you use, and why? Identify the theories that might be helpful to you.

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

1.3: Families and Social Change

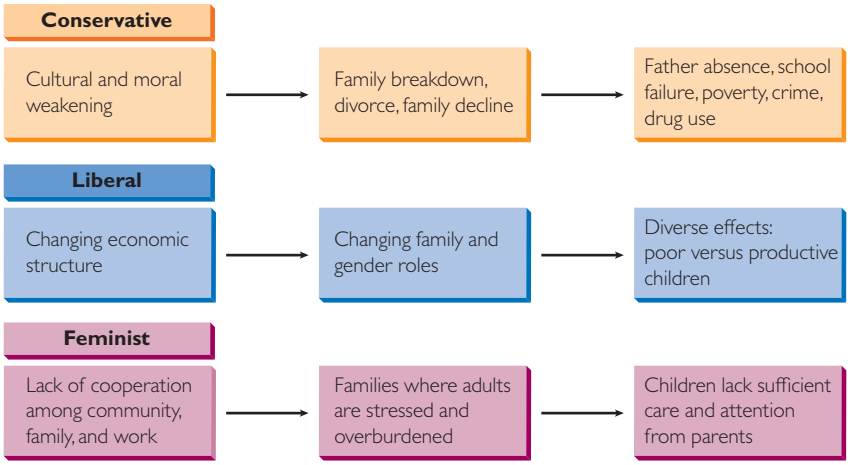
OBJECTIVE: Analyze major political perspectives on family in the U.S.

Any cursory review of family history will show that families have undergone tremendous changes over time. That fact is rarely disputed. It's the *meanings* and *implications* of these changes that generate considerable debate. Some people are concerned that the family is in trouble (National Marriage Project, 2012), citing "the neglect of marriage," "lack of commitment by men," "loss of child centeredness," "the rise in cohabitation," and "fatherless families." Others remind us that the good old days of the past never really existed as we've fantasized about them. They argue that families have always faced challenges, including desertion, poverty, and children born out of wedlock (Coontz, 1997; 2005).

Families are changing in composition, expectations, and roles. What is causing these changes? Are these changes good or bad? What are the consequences of family change? A debate is ongoing over the implications of these changes—a debate that is woven firmly into the U.S. political discourse, as you can see in any nightly news show, from Fox News to MSNBC. Janet Giele (1996) summarizes three conflicting political viewpoints about the causes and consequences of changes in families, as shown in Figure 01-04.

Figure 01-04 Causes and Consequences of Family Change

Conservative, liberal, and feminist perspectives differ as to what causes family change, and in their interpretation of the consequences of these changes.



SOURCE: Giele, 1996

Changes Within Families

Review some of the more significant changes within families over the past generation.

Changes within Families	Rationale for Change
Both men and women are postponing marriage.	Because of expanding opportunities and changing norms, people are marrying at later ages than in the past. Women now marry at an average age of almost 27, compared to 21 in 1970. Men now marry at an average age of nearly 29, compared to 23 in 1970.
The percentage of persons who have never married has declined slightly.	About 4 percent of elderly women have never married, down from 6 percent in 1980. Among men, the decline in lifelong singlehood is less dramatic, but exists nonetheless: 4 percent of elderly men aged 65 and older have never married, down from 5 percent in 1980. In other words, people now are somewhat more likely to marry, not less likely.
Family size is shrinking.	Fewer people are having three or more children today. Family size is particularly shrinking among Black and Hispanic families.
The divorce rate has declined over the past few decades.	In the 1960s, the divorce rate began to rise rapidly, peaking at approximately 23 divorces per 1,000 married women around 1980. However, since that time the divorce rate declined.
Mothers are increasingly likely to be employed for pay outside the home.	Although single mothers usually have had to work outside the home, now more than half of married women with children even younger than two years of age are in the workplace.
Single-parent households are on the rise, particularly among men.	Since 1970 there has been a 300 percent increase in single-parent households headed by mothers, although today the rate has stabilized, and a 500 percent increase in those headed by fathers. Today more than a quarter of White families, half of Black families, and a third of Hispanic families are headed by one parent.
Hispanic groups are now the largest minority in the United States, comprising 17 percent of the population.	In contrast, Blacks constitute 13 percent of the population. Nearly two-thirds of Hispanics are of Mexican origin. Because birth and immigration rates are higher among Hispanics, it's estimated that their presence in the United States will continue to grow much faster than other groups.
The teenage birthrate has declined significantly.	The birthrate among teenagers rose steadily until the early 1990s, when it began a steady and sharp decline. This decline occurred among all racial and ethnic groups, and is particularly pronounced among Blacks and Hispanics.
Unmarried couples living together are becoming increasingly common.	The number of unmarried couples who live together has increased to over 8 million. Growth has occurred in all age groups, including the elderly.
The number and proportion of elderly in society are increasing rapidly.	In 1900, only a small portion of people—1 in 25—were aged 65 or older. It's likely that many younger people spent long portions of their lives rarely even seeing an elderly person. Today, we're a rapidly aging society. The large baby-boom generation (those born after World War II) are now in their 60s and 70s.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1.3.1 **Characterize the conservative perspective on family changes in the U.S.**

1.3.2 **Explain the liberal perspective on family changes in the U.S.**

1.3.3 **Relate feminism to a sociological theory of family changes**

1.3.1: Conservative Perspective

OBJECTIVE: **Characterize the conservative perspective on family changes in the U.S.**

Conservatives express grave concern that changes in family structure put children at risk (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Murray, 1984; 2012; 2016; National Marriage Project, 2012). They suggest that many challenges families face are linked to gross cultural and moral weakening. According to this perspective, this weakening contributes to father absence and family disorganization through divorce or having children outside of marriage. This ultimately results in greater poverty, crime, drug use, and a host of other social problems that cause stress for many families. The conservative model is diagrammed in Figure 01-04 and is contrasted with the liberal and feminist perspectives that are also described here.

Conservatives argue that the weakening of the U.S. moral fabric can be traced to the modern secularization of religious practice and the decline of religious affiliation. They suggest that these trends have reshaped our cultural norms so that certain harmful practices are no longer seen as immoral, such as nonmarital sex, cohabitation, or having a child outside of marriage. When this happens, we witness the breakdown of the traditional two-parent family, which conservatives argue is the cornerstone of society. Fathers become increasingly irrelevant in the lives of women and children. Divorce rates and illegitimacy soar. Husbands divorce their wives, leaving their children "behind." They form new unions and have additional children, referred to as "multiple partner fertility," often without providing financially or emotionally for the children they already have. Conservatives suggest that welfare and other social programs actually serve to undermine families, rather than help them, because they encourage family breakups.

When families break up and fathers become increasingly marginalized, social problems flourish. Poverty becomes rampant, and children fail to thrive. They do worse in school, and possibly turn to alcohol, drugs, and crime to try to alleviate their suffering. Conservatives suggest that the solution to this downward spiral is to strengthen and support traditional marriage. To restore the ideal of the two-parent family, other types of families should be made less attractive. The government should minimize its support of single mothers and encourage couples to marry and rely upon one another for the care of their children.

1.3.2: Liberal Perspective

OBJECTIVE: **Explain the liberal perspective on family changes in the U.S.**

Liberals also note that families have changed significantly in recent decades, resulting in many negative challenges. However, liberals suggest that these family challenges result from economic and structural adjustments that place new demands on families without offering additional social supports. The liberal model is also diagrammed in

The U.S. teenage birth rate has declined steadily over the past 25 years. This decline has occurred among all racial and ethnic groups, in part due to sex education programs designed to inform teens about sexuality and pregnancy. However, conservative groups often prefer an abstinence-based program.

Forty thousand Michigan workers at AT&T Mobility, which provides wireless service to 134 million people, began a three-day strike to protest the lack of progress in contract negotiations. Job security is a key issue: the company wants to outsource jobs or send them overseas. The liberal perspective identifies economic issues as the primary driver of family change.

Figure 01-04. These changes include the loss of relatively high-paying manufacturing jobs, an erosion of the minimum wage, a decline in employer-sponsored fringe benefits such as health insurance, and a rise in the number of low-paying service sector jobs. These economic changes have several implications for families, and men and women's relationships within families. First, there is an increasing need for both husbands and wives to work and earn a two-paycheck income. Second, less time is available for prenatal child care, and there is a greater need for child care centers. Third, young women may be less inclined to marry men with few good economic prospects. According to William Julius Wilson (1996), a scholar and former president of the American Sociological Association, it's partly the lack of jobs in the inner city that drives up the rate of out-of-wedlock births, because the men aren't considered "marriageable."

The result is the creation of an underclass. Poor children face extraordinary challenges because they don't have the social supports to weather these changes. Liberals essentially believe in a market economy, but they ask for sufficient social supports to help families in the bottom tier. Such supports include welfare benefits, job training programs, educational subsidies, expansion of programs such as Head Start, and strengthening supports for working families, such as through Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs), or high-quality child care.

1.3.3: Feminist Perspective

OBJECTIVE: Relate feminism to a sociological theory of family changes

The feminist perspective (also shown in Figure 01-04) blends elements of both conservative and liberal perspectives. In common with conservatives, they share a heightened respect for the often invisible, but very important caregiving work done in families. With liberals, they share a concern that the changes in economic conditions have had many deleterious consequences for families, particularly those families that are most vulnerable. Yet, while having features in common with both perspectives, there are also sharp differences. The feminist perspective criticizes conservatives for exploiting female caregivers to allow men to be more active in the public realm. Meanwhile, liberals perpetuate the notion that the best families are those that are somehow self-sufficient.

Feminists attribute the difficulties children face to a lack of cooperation between the community, family, and employers to improve the quality of life. A sense of individualism permeates U.S. culture and has replaced a collective responsibility for each other's welfare. Comparative research in other countries reveals that where support is generous enough to help all families (not just the most vulnerable), poverty and its associated problems plummet, and health, education, and well-being soar (Minguez, 2017). Instead, in the United States, the lack of collectivism results in families in which adults feel routinely stressed and overburdened. Although poor families may feel these stresses more acutely than the middle class, all families suffer. Children may suffer because they lack sufficient care and attention from their parents, who receive so little outside help. Instead, families are expected to fend for themselves.

This child care director holds one of her babies in a classroom at the Merrill Lynch Family Center at the World Financial Center, a state-of-the-art child care center offering backup child care, infant transition care, and full-time infant and toddler care for Merrill Lynch employees. The feminist perspective suggests that mothers, too, just like fathers, have a right to be active in the public realm, and that outside assistance should be available to help all family members thrive.

Feminists critically evaluate the U.S. economic system and ask for alternative policies that place higher value on the quality of human relationships. They work for reforms that build and strengthen neighborhoods and volunteer groups, support caregiving activities, and encourage education and employment among both women and men. Family policies should be enacted to protect and nurture families, including in the areas of child care, maternity benefits, health care, work guarantees, and other economic supports. In sum, feminists judge the strength of a family not by its form (dual parent versus single parent), but by the social well-being that comes from parents knowing that they have the support necessary to be family caregivers and productive workers (Giele, 2012).

WRITING PROMPT

Perspectives on Family Issues

Identify a family issue that has changed over the past generation, such as the number of mothers who work outside the home, greater gender equality, or same-sex marriage. Compare how each perspective would analyze that issue.

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

1.4: The Government and Family Policy

OBJECTIVE: Evaluate the U.S. approach to family policy

Compared to many other developed nations, the United States conspicuously lacks a national family policy, yet the importance of policy to families can't be overstated (Bogenschneider, 2014; Giele, 2012). Americans are more distrustful of big government. Independence and self-reliance are seen as good virtues, and Americans are uncomfortable with offering "too much" assistance, because they fear that it will decrease initiative and encourage dependence. Therefore, families are generally expected to fend for themselves with only minimal assistance. Policies and programs that are in place are usually selective in nature, and available only for a few, often as tax breaks that come once a year. Other developed countries lean more toward offering universal policies and programs that are regularly available to all citizens.

The United States has some universal programs that do not require a means test. Public education is one of these. However, compared to other developed (and less developed nations), the United States offers fewer of these types of programs to its citizens.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1.4.1 **Explain the sociocultural impetus behind means-tested public programs in the U.S.**

1.4.2 **Compare the public program approaches between the U.S. and the rest of the world**

1.4.1: Selective Programs

OBJECTIVE: Explain the sociocultural impetus behind means-tested public programs in the U.S.

Social policies do not exist in a vacuum; they represent a nation's history, rich cultural traditions, and values. The United States has a long history of rugged individualism and a distrust of government and its programs (Stern & Axinn, 2017). Much of colonial America was populated by people trying to flee government controls or what were viewed as government intrusions into their lives. Therefore, it's not surprising that family policies in the United States reflect and promote the concepts of individualism and self-sufficiency. U.S. policies reflect our belief that people should be in charge of their own destinies. We acknowledge that some people may need a helping hand, but Americans have little tolerance for people who seem unwilling or unable to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." Borrowing from early English "poor laws," U.S. policies evolved over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and make clear distinctions between "worthy" needy people (people who can't support themselves through no fault of their own, such as the disabled or children) and the "unworthy" (able-bodied men and women).

Not surprisingly then, the United States has a laissez-faire approach in which families are largely left to fend for themselves (DiNitto & Johnson, 2017; Karger & Stoesz, 2018). Many programs tend to be *selective*, meaning that persons need to meet some eligibility requirement to qualify for benefits. Most often this means that persons must meet certain income thresholds; for example, people have to be below a certain income to qualify for Medicaid (a health insurance program). This is referred to as *means-tested*. Income thresholds are kept relatively low to limit the number of users of the program and thus control their costs. There is a general distrust and fear that people will take undue advantage of services and programs if they're made too accessible (Seccombe, 2015).

However, not all programs in the United States are means-tested. Police and fire protection and public education are available to all persons, regardless of income. It's not always clear to the observer why some programs are available to everyone and others aren't. For example, why is education a "right," but health insurance a "privilege," primarily available to persons with generous employers, to those who are poor enough to qualify for Medicaid (along with other criteria), or to persons over the age of 65? Is education really more important than health care? Or is it simply a result of some historical circumstance, such as early unions fighting for universal education rather than universal health insurance?

1.4.2: Universal Programs

OBJECTIVE: Compare the public program approaches between the U.S. and the rest of the world

When we compare the philosophy of the United States to the philosophies of most of Europe, Canada, and other countries, we see great differences in approaches. Most developed nations have an interrelated, coordinated set of proactive and *universal programs* available to all persons that are designed to help strengthen all families. Universal programs aren't means-tested; rather, they are social and economic programs available to everyone. However, the United States is the only one of these countries without universal health insurance coverage, paid maternal/parental leave at childbirth, or a family allowance/child dependency grant, as shown in Table 01-02 (Social Security Administration, 2013).

Although Americans think of these issues in individualistic terms and expect parents largely to figure it out themselves, other countries have specific policies to ensure that all people can receive these benefits as shown in case study: *What a Difference Location Can Make*. Unfortunately, many parents in the United States aren't able to "figure it out themselves." How does one figure out how to get health insurance when an employer doesn't offer it and the costs of purchasing it yourself far exceed your budget? How do you arrange for a paid maternal leave after the birth of your child when an employer tells you that you will be fired if you don't quickly return to work? How do you find a family allowance, when most people in the United States have never even heard of such a program and the government doesn't offer one?

In other countries, these programs are financed by *progressive taxation*—those who earn more money pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes. They have adopted these

Table 01-02 Safety Net Policies in 23 Developed Countries, Compared with the U.S.

The United States is the only developed nation without universal health insurance, paid leave at childbirth, or a family allowance grant.

COUNTRY	UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE/HEALTH CARE	PAID PATERNAL/MATERNAL LEAVE AT CHILDBIRTH	FAMILY ALLOWANCE/CHILD DEPENDENCY GRANT
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes
Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes
Denmark	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iceland	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Japan	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luxembourg	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Zealand	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poland	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	Yes
United States	**No**	**No**	**No**

SOURCE: Social Security Online, 2013

Case Study

What a Difference Location Can Make!

In this case study, one woman describes the assistance provided to her as a new mother living in France. Compare her story to any new mother living in the United States. Examining specific family policies, or the lack thereof, can tell a great deal about U.S. collective family values.

I was living in France, a country that has an astounding array of benefits for families—and for mothers in particular. When my children were born, I stayed in the hospital for five comfortable days. I found a nanny through a free, community-based referral service, then employed her legally and full-time, for a cost of about $10,500 a year, after tax breaks. My elder daughter, from the time she was 18 months, attended excellent part-time preschools, where she painted and played with modeling clay and ate cookies and napped for about $150 a month—the top end of the fee scale. She could have started public school at age three, and could have opted to stay until 5 P.M. daily. My friends, who were covered by the French social security system (which I did not pay into), had even greater benefits: at least 4 months of paid maternity leave, the right to stop working for up to 3 years and have jobs held for them, cash grants after their second children were born, starting at about $105 per month.

And that was just the beginning. There was more. A culture. An atmosphere. A set of deeply held attitudes toward motherhood—toward adult womanhood—that had the effect of allowing me to have two children, work in an office, work out in a gym, and go out to dinner at night and away for a short vacation with my husband without ever hearing, without ever thinking, the word "guilt" (pp. 9–10).

. . . I know what had worked for me in France. It wasn't just that I had access to a slew of government-run or subsidized support services; it was also that I'd had a whole unofficial network of people to help and support me—materially and emotionally—as I navigated the new world of motherhood. There was the midwife who'd appeared as if by magic on day four in the hospital to offer tissues as I succumbed to the tears of the "baby blues" and who'd said matter of factly, "Everything is coming out now. Blood, milk, tears. You have to let it flow."

There was my local pharmacist who, unasked, filled my shopping bag with breast pads. The pediatrician who answered his own phone. The network of on-call doctors who made house calls at any time of the day or night. The public elementary school principal who gave us a personal tour of her school and encouraged us to call her if we had any questions. In short, an extended community of people who'd guaranteed that I was never, from the moment I became a mother onward, left to fend for myself alone (pp. 30–31).

WRITING PROMPT

Benefits for Families

How does the experience of a new mother in France differ from that of a new mother in the United States? What factors keep the United States from moving toward the French model?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

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programs because their citizens tend to believe in structural explanations for poverty and inequality, and therefore look for structural solutions. Americans are much more likely to equate poverty and its consequences with individual failure, immorality, lack of thrift, or laziness. For example, when asked, "Why are there people in this country who live in need?" 39 percent of Americans blamed personal laziness, compared to only 16 percent of Swedes and 15 percent of the French (Larsen, 2006). The Swedes, French, and many other people around the world believe families shouldn't be left to fend for themselves, because they are the collective responsibility of all citizens. Therefore, citizens of those countries are generally more willing to pay higher taxes than are U.S. citizens to ensure that all members of the community are taken care of. How does this form of government policy work?

1.5: Themes of This Course

OBJECTIVE: Summarize themes in the study of family

This course will introduce you to the social side of family and intimate relationships. However, you'll learn more than a bunch of random facts. Five themes are woven throughout this course that will help guide our discussion on issues ranging from courtship to divorce. These themes also help us to understand signature concepts such as gender, race, and class, and how these shape family structures and dynamics. The overarching goal is to get students to think sociologically—using empirical methods and a comparative approach to illustrate that many of our personal experiences are shaped by social structure. Along this academic

journey, we hope that you can apply these connections to your own life.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- **1.5.1** **Characterize the relationship between social structure and individual experience in families**
- **1.5.2** **Relate social inequality to family life**
- **1.5.3** **Identify sources of resiliency for families**
- **1.5.4** **Explain the sociopolitical elements of public family policy**
- **1.5.5** **Describe the functions and practices of the comparative perspective**

1.5.1: Families Are Both a Public Social Institution and a Private Personal Relationship

OBJECTIVE: **Characterize the relationship between social structure and individual experience in families**

Families fulfill many of our personal needs for love, warmth, and intimacy. It's within families that we raise our children and nurture their social, emotional, and physical growth. Nonetheless, we should not forget that families are also a public *social institution*. A social institution is a major sphere of social life, with a set of beliefs and rules that are organized to meet basic human needs. In addition to talking about your specific family, we talk about *the* family. Families are a social institution in much the same way our political, economic, religious, health care, and educational systems are social institutions. In early human civilizations, families were the center of most activities. The earliest hunting and gathering societies were based almost exclusively on kinship. In families, we learned and practiced religion, we educated the young, and took care of the sick. However, with the advent of technology and the Industrial Revolution, other institutions developed and took on many of these functions that used to be done within families. Today, we worship in churches, synagogues, and mosques; children are educated in schools; and we go to hospitals when we're sick.

Yet, families continue to represent a major sphere of social life for most people—and despite their diversity, families still have a surprisingly organized set of beliefs and rules to meet certain fundamental needs. For example, in virtually every society, families are considered the best place to raise children.

Families can best be understood by examining how they interact with, influence, and are influenced by other social institutions. Families can't merely be separated out as "havens" from the rest of society. Patterns of education, religious customs, economic systems, and political systems all shape family patterns, attitudes, behaviors, and the constraints and opportunities experienced by individual members. For example, norms associated with social institutions may influence who is considered an appropriate mate, which family members work outside the home and what kind of work they do, who has the primary responsibility for housework and other domestic labor, how children are raised and disciplined, how children can be schooled, how power and decision making among family members will be allocated, and the roles that extended family members are expected to play.

However, in all likelihood, most people don't reflect very often on families as social institutions. Instead, they focus on the day-to-day experience of being in a family, either in their *family of orientation* (defined as the family they were born into) or the *family of procreation* (more broadly used to refer to the family made through partnership, marriage, and/or with children). People tend to think about their families in individualized terms, often without seeing their interconnection to larger social structures. Many aspects of family life, however, including our chances of marrying or being in a committed partnership, of bearing children, of divorcing, the kind of neighborhood we live in, the type of job we're likely to get, the sort of child care we're likely to use, our general health and well-being, and the likelihood of living to see our grandchildren, are affected by broader social structures in which we're embedded, including our sex, race, and social class.

It's important to recognize how our personal choices and behaviors are shaped by these larger social structures. For instance, how does one's level of education affect the chances of having children? Is the relationship between level of education and the likelihood of having children identical for men and women? Are children viewed as an asset, and how might views toward children be related to capitalism, urbanization, or the distribution of money and other resources?

At the same time, being mindful of these social forces doesn't imply that we're passive recipients of them. *Human agency* is the ability of human beings to create viable lives even when they are constrained or limited by social forces (Baca Zinn et al., 2016). Rich, poor, male, female, young, or old—we're all actively producing our lives, even in light of the structural factors that help shape our opportunities. We do have free choice, but it's important to be mindful of the ways that we are influenced by the structure of the society in which we live.

1.5.2: Social Inequality

OBJECTIVE: **Relate social inequality to family life**

Our second theme is that social inequality is a critical organizing feature in society and has an important influence on family life. Most Americans believe that the United States provides nearly equal opportunities for everyone. However,

Case Study

Ideology of "Family" Shapes Perceptions of Immigrant Children

All children want to feel that they live in a typical, "normal" family. But how are definitions of "normal" constructed, and what are the consequences of living in a family that does not conform to the definition? Sociologist Karen Pyke explores these sensitive issues in her own research based on adult children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants.

The cultural imagery of American families that we see on television and throughout the media suggests that "normal" families contain a mom, a dad, and siblings, all of whom are expected to behave toward each other in very specific ways. The problem is this cultural imagery is at odds with the reality of life for many families. The values of non-white, immigrant, and gay and lesbian families are largely excluded from this narrow imagery of "normal" families. This family ideology implicitly denigrates those families whose structure or cultural practices are different. This contributes to negative self-images and even self-derogation among members of such families, as I found in my research.

I conducted interviews with 73 grown children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants and found that when these young adults contrasted behavior in their immigrant families with mainstream images of normalcy, they interpreted their own family life, as well as that of Asians and Asian Americans in general, as deficient. In their descriptions, they emphasized Americanized definitions of love that stress expressiveness, such as the display of affection, sentimentality, and close communication. They downplayed their parents' instrumental style of love emphasized in Asian cultures, such as their material support of children well into adulthood and—in the case of many Korean parents—their decision to immigrate in search of a better life and education for their children. However, because their parents did not conform to Americanized notions of expressive love, these children often described them as distant, unloving, uncaring, and not "normal."

Dat, 22, who left Vietnam at age 5, referred to images of normal American families he saw on television and among friends as motivating his desire for more affection and closeness with his father. "Sometimes when I had problems in school, all I wanted was my dad to listen to me, of all people," he said. "I guess that's the American way and I was raised American. . . . That's what I see on TV and in my friends' family. And I expected him to be that way too. But it didn't happen."

Similarly, Paul, a 21-year-old born in the United States to Korean immigrant parents, had similar feelings. "As a child I was always watching television and watching other friends' fathers," he said. "All the relationships seemed so much different from me and my father's relationship. . . . I can remember watching *The Brady Bunch* reruns and thinking Mike Brady would be a wonderful dad to have. He was always so supportive. . . . Basically, I used what I saw on TV as a picture of what a typical family should be like in the United States. I only wished that my family could be like that."

The widespread family ideology promotes the white middle-class, heterosexual family as the norm and the superior standard. This ideology put immense pressure on many of the children of immigrants in this study to assimilate and encouraged some to denigrate their own ethnic family styles as deficient in comparison. They internalized a negative view of their own Asian immigrant family life, while glorifying the cultural practices associated with white families.

As Robert, 24, who emigrated from Korea at age 7, explained, "I still find myself envying white American families and wishing that my family was perfect like theirs. So basically I find myself suckered into this ideal image of the American family. And I realize, sadly, that my family is not the American family and never will be. God, you know, this really upsets me when I keep striving for this intangible thing because then I never really feel happiness or satisfaction."

Author: Karen Pyke

SOURCE: Pyke, 2000a; 2000b

WRITING PROMPT

The "Normal American Family"

How might someone define a "normal American family"? Which types of families does this definition include and exclude, and why? How might someone who doesn't live in the "normal American family" be impacted by this definition?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

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U.S. society is highly stratified on the basis of economics, power, and social status. Inequality is woven into many basic social structures and institutions. These patterns of social inequality filter down and shape all components of family life—the neighborhood in which you live, your gendered expectations, the values you're likely to hold for your children, the type of job you're likely to get, your consumption patterns, daily stressors, and your coping mechanisms. Social class, sex, race, and ethnicity affect the way family members interact with one another and the way in which they are responded to.

Conversely, patterns of social inequality are also shaped *by* families. Americans fantasize that they can be anything they want to be, but in reality, there is little substantial upward (or downward) social mobility. People usually live out their lives in generally the same social class in which they were born. Families pass on their wealth and social capital (or their lack of it) to their newest members, and this perpetuates social inequality. For example, because of the U.S. inheritance laws, affluent parents are able to distribute their wealth to their children upon their death. Relatively little of the wealth is taxed and redistributed, as is the case in other countries. Consequently, some of the richest people have only marginal employment histories. They don't need to work for a living—yet others who work relentlessly, often in the unglamorous but growing service sector, find no real route to a better life. Their wages are low; they may not receive health insurance or other benefits; they live on the margins, only one paycheck away from impoverishment. What type of wealth or social capital do these parents have to pass on to their children?

This course examines the assumptions, values, and ideologies that are used to justify or explain social inequality and its shaping of families. We'll see that the ideologies of more powerful groups are often presented as "normal" or "common sense" rather than showing their true ideological slant.

1.5.3: Family Resiliency

OBJECTIVE: Identify sources of resiliency for families

A *family-strengths perspective* is a worldview based on optimism (Saleebey, 2013). We will not ignore family problems; in fact, poverty, rape, racism, divorce, female genital cutting, and stalking, to name just a few, are described in considerable depth. However, a strengths perspective focuses on identifying, creating, mobilizing, advocating, and respecting the resources, assets, wisdom, and knowledge that every person and every family has to help ameliorate problems. Rather than working from a deficit model, this course highlights how members of our society can work together to make families stronger and more resilient. Sometimes we only have to look within our own communities, but in other contexts we may need to look further, perhaps to other societies, to see the models they use.

Resiliency is the capacity to rebound from adversity, misfortune, trauma, or other transitional crises and become strengthened and more resourceful (McCubbin et al., 1997; Walsh, 2011). Let's take the example of poverty; the well-cited Kauai Longitudinal Study will show us the power of resiliency (Werner, 1994; 1995; Werner & Smith, 1989; 1992).

Based on a sample of 698 children born in 1955 on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, researchers followed them for nearly 40 years to examine the long-term effects of growing up in high-risk environments. Approximately one-third of the children were considered high risk because of exposure to a combination of at least four individual, parental, or household risk factors, such as having a serious health problem, familial alcoholism, violence, divorce, or mental illness in the family.

The children were assessed from the perinatal period to ages 1, 2, 10, 18, and 32 years. The research team found that two-thirds of high-risk two-year-olds who experienced four or more risk factors by age two developed learning or behavior problems by age 18. One-third had no behavior problems, and instead developed into stable, competent, confident, and productive adults. In a later follow-up, at age 40, all but two of these individuals were still successful. In fact, many of them had outperformed the children from low-risk families. Moreover, among the two-thirds of the surveyed high-risk children who had learning or behavioral problems at age 18, one-half did not exhibit these problems at age 30. As adults, they had satisfying jobs, stable marriages, and in other measures, they were deemed successful by the research team. Consequently, it appears that resiliency can be developed at any point in the life course. Conversely, a few individuals identified as resilient at age 18 had developed significant problems by age 30.

The evidence shows us that many adults and children reared in poverty or with other risk factors do overcome their adversities. Why is this?

Most research on three broad factors that can promote resiliency. These include (1) Individual-Level Protective Factors; (2) Family Protective and Recovery Factors; and (3) Community Factors. Each of these are described in the feature box, Three Factors of Resilience.

Three Factors of Resilience

Most research on resilience has focused on three types of factors that promote resiliency in the face of adverse conditions.

Individual-Level Protective Factors—Individual personality traits and dispositions that enhance a person's ability to be successful are called *individual-level protective factors*. In their review of research and clinic experience, Wolin & Wolin (1993) identified seven traits of adults who survived a troubled childhood: insight (awareness of dysfunction);

independence (distancing self from troubles); supportive relationships; initiative; creativity; humor (reframing the situation in a less threatening way); and morality (justice and compassion rather than revenge). For example, the resilient high-risk adolescents in the Kauai Longitudinal Study developed a sense that obstacles were not insurmountable, and they believed that they had control over their fate. They had a high degree of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and many developed a special skill or hobby that was a source of pride.

This young man's musical talent gives him confidence. It is an individual-level protective factor.

Family Protective and Recovery Factors—These factors are central features of the resiliency literature (Black & Lobo, 2008; Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2012). **Family protective factors (FPF)** are those characteristics or dynamics that shape the family's ability to endure in the face of risk factors; **family recovery factors (FRF)** assist families in "bouncing back" from a crisis situation (McCubbin et al., 1997). Key characteristics of resilient families include warmth, affection, cohesion, commitment, clear expectations, shared goals, and emotional support for one another. Resilient families participate in family celebrations, share spiritual connections, have specific traditions, and have predictable routines (Saleebey, 2009).

This boy has the protective factor of a loving mom. Here she helps her son with his homework.

Community Factors—There are also *community factors*—resources that help develop resilient youth and foster resiliency among adults (Walsh, 2011). Blyth & Roelkepartian (1993) indicate several types of community strengths. First, opportunities for participation in community life, such as extracurricular activities in school, religious youth groups, or scouting can bond youth to their communities and teach important skills, such as teamwork, group pride, or leadership. Second, strong communities provide avenues for contributing to the welfare of others, which can foster a sense of inner strength and self-esteem. Third, involvement in the community provides opportunities to connect with role models or a confidant.

Community resources such as the Girl Scouts and other organizations can provide an important sense of belonging.

As important as individuals, families, and communities are, something is *missing*. Noticeably absent is an emphasis on *structural-level* conditions, such as national and statewide policies that can strengthen families (Seccombe, 2002). For example, poverty contributes to poorer nutrition, lower-quality home environment, parental stress, fewer resources for learning, housing problems, and poor-quality neighborhoods, which in turn lead to further negative consequences. Can we expect families to be resilient without supportive family policies? Is it enough to surround a poor child with a loving extended family, church, and community groups? Certainly, these are important components of resiliency, but they are most often insufficient by themselves. The family may also need help with affordable housing, child care subsidies, or food assistance—all requiring sound social policy.

One study examined the gap in math and science achievement of third- and fourth-graders who lived with a single parent versus those who lived with two parents in 11 different countries (Pong et al., 2003). The researchers found that countries that provided the fewest policies to equalize the resources of parents, such as the United States and New Zealand, had the largest achievement gap between children in single- versus two-parent families. In contrast, those countries with family policies specifically designed to

Case Study

Families as Lived Experience—Meet Nathan Cabrera

Nathan Cabrera won a scholarship award from the Children's Defense Fund for his success in beating the odds against him. He is celebrated for his ability to overcome extreme adversity to succeed in school and in life. Since 1990, the Children's Defense Fund has recognized the achievements of over 600 courageous young people who overcame incredible odds stacked against them—poverty, violence, abuse, illness—problems that would derail most young lives. Yet, with an effort and determination that are inspiring, these young men and women are thriving and becoming leaders in their communities.

Nathan Cabrera has never really had a childhood—he has had to be mature and responsible almost his entire life. Born to a 14-year-old mother who used drugs and subsequently had three more children by three different fathers, Nathan became the one responsible for taking care of the children while his mother worked afternoon and evening jobs. He could never spend time with friends because he was busy feeding and bathing his younger siblings and making sure their homework was done. With a father in prison and a teenage mother, Nathan said it was more like being raised by a peer than by a parent, and the only time he felt like a kid was when he was with his grandmother, who lives in North Carolina.

Along with juggling numerous responsibilities at home, Nathan worked hard at school, determined to show his siblings that education was the key to a normal life. But after years of watching his mother act like an irresponsible teenager, he himself eventually became rebellious and reckless. Concerned about Nathan's behavior and talk of suicide, his pastor intervened and began working with the family. Nathan's relationship with his mother improved and he helped her earn her GED. She even held down a regular job for a while but could not stop surrounding herself with the wrong crowd.

In September 2007, she was killed in retaliation for helping a friend escape from the control of a Latino gang. His father then tried to come back into Nathan's life, but was physical and controlling, and even attempted to kidnap Nathan one night. Fortunately, Pastor Frank again was there for Nathan and helped arrange a safe place for him to live. Nathan's siblings moved in with relatives of their respective fathers. Currently, in addition to maintaining his high academic standards, Nathan is running a t-shirt business with Pastor Frank, encouraging teens to avoid temptation with their t-shirts' unique designs and simple messages. He said he is looking forward to earning a business management degree and to bringing his siblings back together one day soon to all live as a family again.

SOURCE: Children's Defense Fund 2010. www.childrensdefense.org/newsroom/real-children-real-stories/beatthe-odds/nathan-cabrera.html

WRITING PROMPT

Resilience

What type of factors can you identify that helped Nathan become more resilient? Can you think of any formal policies or programs that would have helped him as well?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

equalize resources between single- and two-parent families were far more successful in decreasing the achievement gap.

1.5.4: Family Policies

OBJECTIVE: Explain the sociopolitical elements of public family policy

If families are public social institutions in addition to private personal relationships, then we must recognize the importance of federal, state, and local involvement (DiNitto & Johnson, 2017; Karger & Stoesz, 2018). Our fourth theme is that government regulates or fails to regulate many conditions of families, and these policies (or lack thereof) reflect historical patterns, cultural values, political viewpoints, and many social conditions, including the distribution of power and inequality in society. This may occur in the passing of specific policies targeting certain groups or certain aspects of family life, such as welfare reform, requiring partners to get a blood test before marrying, or passing legislation to prohibit gays and lesbians from marrying.

Conversely, historical, cultural, political, and social factors may also have great influence backhandedly by the *absence* of specific policies. For example, the U.S. government offers no systematic paid leave to women who have just given birth. This is in sharp contrast to other developed nations (and many developing ones), as you'll learn in upcoming chapters. Commonly in other countries, women

receive 6–12 months off from work, with full or nearly full pay. A study comparing attitudes in 31 countries toward family policies reveals that the United States is far more likely to believe that family matters are personal issues than are other countries, reflecting a long-standing belief in rugged individualism. For example, an international survey asking whether women should receive paid maternity leave when they have a baby received a nearly unanimous "yes" in other countries, but in the United States, nearly a quarter of Americans said "no." Why would so many people object to women receiving paid maternity benefits?

Family policies reflect historical, cultural, political, and social factors in every society. These include values about personal responsibility versus collective good, the role of work in our lives, the expectations placed on mothers and fathers to manage the inherent conflicts between their work and family lives, and the level of concern over social inequality.

Parasuraman & Greenhaus (1997) identify three solutions that can be used when family and work conflict with one another. First, establishing policies that *create more family-friendly work environments*, such as paid maternity and family leaves, could alter the situation. A second approach is that employees themselves should *learn specific techniques for managing their conflicts*, such as choosing a one-job family pattern. A third approach would *modify the meanings of the situation*. It would suggest that people have family and work conflicts simply because they want to work more hours or want more money. Policies would focus on increasing personal responsibility and commitments (Bogenschneider, 2014).

Of these three solutions, the United States most often adopts the second and third approaches. Family issues, whether they are poverty or income insecurity, work-family conflicts, or caring for dependents, are often seen as personal issues or problems. This is in contrast to many other countries that take a more structural view.

These different policy approaches between the United States and other countries will become apparent as we explore the many aspects of family. Social policies, either by their commission or omission, critically influence virtually all aspects of family life, including how families are structured or organized, and the values, attitudes, and behaviors of its members.

1.5.5: The Comparative Perspective

OBJECTIVE: Describe the functions and practices of the comparative perspective

The final theme of this course focuses on the importance of learning about other cultures and other historical periods to better inform us of American families (Kelleher & Klein, 2011). In the past, it was easier to ignore what was happening in the world beyond our borders, but now this is no longer the case because societies are becoming increasingly interconnected. New technologies, immigration, commerce across borders, and greater ease in world travel have increased visibility. Societies see other ways of doing things and sometimes adopt pieces of another's culture, including food, clothing, and even language.

Just as with culture, it's easy to ignore history and focus only on the here and now—yet many of our current family issues are rooted in the traditions of the past. For example, to truly understand the high rate of divorce in the United States, we should be aware of the ways in which the current notion of love, which evolved in the eighteenth century, changed the entire basis on which mates were chosen, and thereby increased the likelihood of couples ending an unhappy marriage (Coontz, 2005).

A comparative perspective helps us understand our current situation because it informs us of alternative social arrangements and presents new ways to frame an issue or policy solution. Can a comparative perspective help us understand the nature and role of adolescence in U.S. culture? This is an important concern because it's well known that adolescents commit a disproportionate number of crimes, experience higher-than-average unemployment, and face a host of other social problems, such as teen pregnancy or drug use.

A comparative perspective shows us that adolescence, as known in the United States today, is largely a new social construction, originating in the West in the late nineteenth century as a result of newly created child labor laws and the changing nature of the labor market (Leeder, 2004; Mintz, 2004). Until then, children's labor was needed on farms and even young teenagers were considered mini-adults. However, with urbanization and industrialization in the late nineteenth century, a movement arose to increase the protection of young people. Social reformers known as *child savers* were particularly interested in developing social programs that were age-based and targeted toward children. Compulsory education increased the length of time children spent in school until well into their teenage years.

Adolescence became a new period of transition between childhood and adulthood, but without clear-cut norms about what to expect during this period. By the twentieth century, the concept of adolescence as a separate stage of life had taken hold, and now represents a substantial component of popular culture segregated from adult-oriented culture, with unique clothing, music, and food marketed toward this relatively new consumer group.

Nonetheless, it's not clear what the developmental tasks of this age group are and how they can contribute to society. Separating adolescents from adults, but giving them an unclear or unknown set of tasks, has not necessarily served adolescents well.

How do other cultures construct this age period? How are these social constructions related to the level of technology or wealth in society? The case study: *Adolescence Among the Maasai* offers some clues. Can we learn from other cultures, even those that are radically different from our own?

Case Study

Adolescence Among the Maasai

Think about your time as an adolescent. What were the norms, the expectations, and the rituals that you experienced? As you probably realize by now, adolescence is conceived differently at different points of time and across different cultures today. An interesting contrast to adolescence in the West is found among the Maasai, an ethnic group living on the savannas of Kenya and Tanzania. As you learn about the Maasai, compare and contrast their experience with adolescence to that of your own.

The Maasai are a small tribe in the mosaic of African peoples; they are tall, thin pastoralists who can be spotted miles away by their signature red clothing. Their lives are simple; they depend on their cattle and their families, living closely with the earth. Wealth is measured by the number of cattle and children a man has, and the economy is a family-based one in which all contribute to the family's well-being. The men are in charge, primarily protecting the village and caring for the animals.

For the men, the passage to adulthood is a long and rigorous process. Early on, a boy is assigned to a *moran*: the group of warriors with whom he will be associated, his age mates. However, the actual age during this rite of passage may vary somewhat because boys without younger brothers may need to stay behind to care for the animals. The moran is divided into junior and senior groups as well as the specific group with whom the boy will be circumcised. Male circumcision takes place between the ages of 13 and 17. During the circumcision, the young man is not allowed to cry or yell; to do so leads to disrespect for his entire family. His parents could be beaten by members of the entire village for raising such a coward.

Once boys are circumcised, they become junior warriors and live with their age mates in a special dwelling set aside for them. The mother accompanies her son, adorning herself with elaborate beaded ear ornaments that show everyone she is the mother of a warrior. She, along with her daughters, builds a house for him while he roams about freely with his moran, having sex with women, hunting, growing his hair long, and decorating elaborate headdresses. The moran becomes so close that they even urinate together; these men are now brothers and share everything in life, even their wives when they later take them.

When the junior morans age, they become senior warriors and the life of the community is centered on them. They direct the stock, are in charge of defense and security, and occasionally deal with the local government. They are hunters and are allowed to do so by the Kenyan government, although only to a limited extent. Theirs is a most important position in that society, and the young men are now fully adults.

What about women? They do not experience a similarly celebrated rite of passage. Instead, adolescent girls build the houses, collect wood, cook, clean, milk the cows, and raise the children. However, females are required to undergo female genital mutilation (AKA female circumcision, or female genital cutting) before age 13, marking their availability for marriage. In this procedure, which vastly differs from male circumcision, a woman's clitoris is removed, and sometimes the adjacent labia are removed as well. This eliminates the opportunity for orgasm; female sexual pleasure is considered dangerous in Maasai culture. A major international movement has developed over the past 30 years to eradicate this cultural practice but has met with only limited success. Despite Kenya abolishing female genital mutilation, the practice continues in the rural countryside.

From this example of Maasai culture, one can see that adolescence as we know it at home in the United States does not exist in all cultures. Instead, being in a moran and being circumcised prepares a young man in the Maasai for his coming role in society. There is no delineation as a teen; the young man is a warrior in training and thus is fully respected and important to his society. He is responsible and his job is crucial to the survival of his society. The young woman may be married by age 13, also deemed an adult.

SOURCE: Adapted from Moore, 2018, and Leeder, 2004

WRITING PROMPT

Coming of Age

What rituals—religious, cultural, academic—mark adolescence in the United States? How do these rituals differ within the United States and how have they changed over time? How do Maasai rituals in adolescence reflect their culture?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

Summary: Families and the Sociological Imagination

1.1: What Are Families?

The text defines families more broadly than does the federal government. Families are defined as relationships by blood, marriage, or affection, in which members may cooperate economically, may care for any children, and may consider their identity to be intimately connected to the larger group. How a society defines families has important consequences for many different rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

1.2: The Sociological Imagination

The sociological imagination reveals that many of our personal experiences are not simply random events. Instead, they are shaped by social structure, which is the organized pattern of relationships and institutions that together form the basis of society. The sociological imagination uses a comparative perspective and an empirical approach to describe and explain patterns of family structure, family change, and personal relationships. Empirical research is guided by theory, which is a general framework or explanation used to understand social phenomena.

1.3: Families and Social Change

Even a cursory review of family history will show that families have undergone tremendous changes over time. What is causing these changes? Are these changes good or bad? These questions indicate that family change is, in part, a political issue. Three different political viewpoints identify the causes and consequences of family change: conservative, liberal, and feminist.

1.4: The Government and Family Policy

Compared to many other developed countries, the Unites States lacks a coherent, national family policy. Programs in the United States tend to be selective, and often means-tested, rather than universal and funded by progressive taxation. One example is the comparison of the services available to new mothers in France, as compared to those in the United States.

1.5: Themes of This Course

Five themes are woven throughout this course that will help guide our discussion on issues ranging from courtship to divorce. These themes also help us to understand signature concepts such as gender, race, and class, and how these shape family structures and dynamics. These themes include: (1) Characterize the relationship between social structure and individual experience in families; (2) Relate social inequality to family life; (3) Identify sources of resiliency for families; (4) Explain the sociopolitical elements of public family policy; and (5) Describe the functions and practices of the comparative perspective.

SHARED WRITING: THEMES

As we begin our academic journey together, what are your initial thoughts on these five themes? Do you have any personal experiences relevant to the themes?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

Chapter 2

Families Throughout the World

Learning Objectives

2.1 Compare family relationships

2.2 Analyze how family patterns affect daily life

2.3 Evaluate the impact of modernization on social life

2.4 Contrast family experiences in India, Japan, and Sweden

Throughout history and throughout the world, people have lived in families. As a social institution, families are at the center of all societies because they fulfill needs that few other institutions can (Bonvillain, 2018; Ember, Ember, & Peregrine, 2015; Karraker, 2013). Yes, societies develop their own style in how marriage, families, and kinship groups should function and what they're supposed to do, but what is surprising is the amazing similarity from one region of the world to another.

Traditional Vietnamese Families

One of the long-time organizing features of the Vietnamese family has been the preference of married couples to co-reside with the husband's parents when possible. This custom, based on Confucianism, is referred to as a **patrilocal living arrangement**. When a first son marries, he is obliged to move in with his parents, at least until another brother marries and joins the family.

However, as Vietnam becomes an increasingly modernized nation, has the custom of patrilocality declined? A common theory of family change suggests that as educational and occupational opportunities expand, as adult children become more geographically mobile, and as a country becomes more urbanized, greater independence between family members is likely to emerge. The nuclear family will gradually replace extended families, and support for traditional family obligations, such as patrilocality, will decline.

Sociologists Charles Hirschman and Nguyen Huu Minh analyzed data from the Vietnam Longitudinal Study, which is based on 1,855 households in the largest province in the Red River Delta of northern Vietnam. The survey included a wide range of questions on family relationships, structure, educational and occupational history, siblings, and marriage and children.

The researchers found, somewhat unexpectedly, that the proportion of newly married couples that followed the patrilocal custom actually increased in recent decades rather than declined. Between 1956 and 1965, 72 percent of sons lived with their parents after their marriage. However, between 1986 and 1995, the proportion had increased to 83 percent. The researchers did find that the length of time sons and their wives co-resided had declined somewhat. After 5 years, fewer than 30 percent of the more recent cohorts still lived with their parents, compared to over 40 percent between 1956 and 1965.

The researchers also found that relatively few aspects of modernization contributed to a lower incidence of living with parents. Adult children who worked in nonagricultural occupations and who married later in life were somewhat less likely to co-reside with the groom's parents. Yet, overall it appears that the underlying cultural preference to live with the groom's parents immediately after marriage remains strong and grows stronger in Vietnam. Hirschman and Minh conclude that not all aspects of the traditional family structure may undergo the same tensions associated with modernization. Joint living arrangements, at least in the son's early part of marriage, may be mutually beneficial and show no sign of declining (Hirschman & Minh, 2002).

This chapter explores some of the similarities and differences among families throughout the world. Here, we'll look at key concepts and theoretical issues in comparative family studies that we can draw upon as we study families throughout this chapter.

2.1: Functions of the Family

OBJECTIVE: Compare family relationships

Why do we even have families? Drawing upon structural functionalism, the theoretical perspective, sociologists and family scientists often discuss families in terms of the important functions they serve for individuals and for society at large. These functions include the regulation of sexual behavior, reproduction and the socialization of children, property and inheritance, economic cooperation, assignment of roles and status, and shared intimacy.

Marriage is the cornerstone of these functions (Bonvillain, 2018; Ember, Ember, & Peregrine, 2015). It is an arrangement that is strictly human and publicly recognizes social and intimate bonds. Cultural norms specify who is eligible to be married, to whom and to how many people an individual can marry, what the marriage ceremony will consist of, and the norms surrounding how married persons should behave. In his cross-cultural study, anthropologist William Stephens provided a broad definition of marriage. It is (1) a socially legitimate sexual union, begun with (2) a public announcement or ceremony, (3) undertaken with some idea of permanence, and (4) assumed with a more or less explicit marriage contract that spells out reciprocal obligations between spouses, and between spouses and their children (Stephens, 1963). The public announcement is often in the form of a wedding, which is a cultural ritual that represents a rite of passage. Weddings are powerful rituals because they denote movement from one phase of life to another—the transition between being single and being married.

Wedding rituals can be quite different in terms of what the bride and groom wear, what they do, and who witnesses the event, as shown in this example of an Indian wedding. Red is the common wedding color, rather than white.

Historian Lewis Henry Morgan ([1851] 1962) describes the marriage and wedding arrangements of the Iroquois tribe in early North America:

> Marriage was not founded upon the affections. . . . When the mother considered her son of a suitable age for a marriage, she looked about her for a maiden, whom she judged would accord with him in disposition and temperament. A negotiation between the mothers ensued, and a conclusion was reached. . . . Not the least singular of the transaction was the entire ignorance in which the parties remained of the pending negotiation. Objection on their part was never attempted; they received each other as the gift of their parents. When the fact of marriage had been communicated to the parties, a simple ceremonial completed the transaction. On the day following the announcement, the maiden was conducted by her mother, accompanied by a few friends, to the home of her intended husband. She carried in her hand a few cakes of unleavened corn bread, which she presented on entering the house, to her mother-in-law, as an earnest of her usefulness and of her skill in the domestic arts. After receiving it, the mother of the young warrior returned a present of venison, or other fruit of the chase, to the mother of the bride, as an earnest of his ability to provide for his household. This exchange of presents ratified and concluded the contract, which bound the new pair together in the marriage relations.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- **2.1.1** **Explain how society regulates reproduction**
- **2.1.2** **Relate property to social hierarchy**
- **2.1.3** **Analyze the history of family economy**
- **2.1.4** **Differentiate statuses and roles**
- **2.1.5** **Describe the ways in which families provide care for their members**

2.1.1: Sex and Reproduction

OBJECTIVE: **Explain how society regulates reproduction**

Every culture, including ours, regulates sexual behavior. Cultural norms make it clear who can have a sexual relationship with whom and under what circumstances. One virtually universal regulation around the world is the *incest taboo*, which forbids sexual activity (and marriage) among close family members. The definition of "close family members" differs, although it usually involves at least parents and their children, and siblings. However, sometimes the taboo is extended to one side of the family but not to the other. For example, a person may be forbidden from having a sexual relationship with cousins on the mother's side, but a partner from the father's side of the family would be permitted.

The incest taboo persists because sexual relations among close relatives increase the chance of inherited genetic abnormalities. However, it's likely that the incest taboo originated not because of biology, but because of social considerations. It is a mechanism to minimize jealousies, competition, and conflict that could undermine smooth family functioning and lead to chaos (Ellis, 1963). The incest taboo also forges broader alliances by requiring marriage outside of the inner family circle.

For a society to continue, it must produce new members to replace those who die or move away. Families have the primary responsibility for producing the newest members and for teaching them the culture in which they live. Children learn primarily from their families the language, values, beliefs, interpersonal skills, and general knowledge necessary to adequately function in society (Parsons & Boles, 1955). Societies generally encourage reproduction to occur inside established families rather than randomly among unrelated partners so that parents (or some designated family member) will be responsible for socializing children.

WRITING PROMPT

Your Family Culture

Describe your family culture. Who raises the children? From whom did you learn the most about life? What issues are taboo in your family and culture?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

2.1.2: Property and Inheritance

OBJECTIVE: **Relate property to social hierarchy**

In very early history, families lived in small groups as hunters and gatherers. They were nomadic, with frequent moves as they looked for prey and other foods to sustain

them. The group lived communally, all sharing the products from the labor of the group, and people did not have much in the way of personal possessions. Even group possessions were kept to a minimum; otherwise it would be difficult to move quickly in search of food.

As families moved from a nomadic lifestyle as hunters and gatherers to one based on agriculture, people stayed put to tend to the land. It became possible for the first time for people to accumulate surplus property beyond what was needed for sheer survival. Instead of sharing the surplus with the entire group, individual families or small factions could keep what they cultivated or barter it for other services and goods. Social inequality was more apparent, with some families having considerably more surplus than others, and families wanted to pass on their good fortune to their heirs.

Friedrich Engels ([1884] 1902) tied the origin of the family to males' desire to identify heirs so that they could pass down their property to their sons. Monogamy worked in men's favor. Without it, paternity was uncertain. Therefore, men sought to strictly control women sexually, economically, and socially through marriage.

2.1.3: Economic Cooperation

OBJECTIVE: Analyze the history of family economy

Adults and children have physical needs for food, shelter, and clothing. Families are the first line of defense for providing these to its members. Husbands, wives, children, and, during much of history, extended kin all cooperate to ensure the well-being of members of the family.

Historical records indicate that there is usually a gendered division of labor within families, with certain tasks primarily performed by men and others by women. However, exactly which tasks are considered masculine or feminine differs from one society to the next, and from one historical period of time to another. Is basket weaving a feminine or masculine task? Do men do all the hunting, or is it a task that is shared with women? The answers to these questions all depend on the society. However, whatever the gendered expectations may be, there are usually sanctions for violating them.

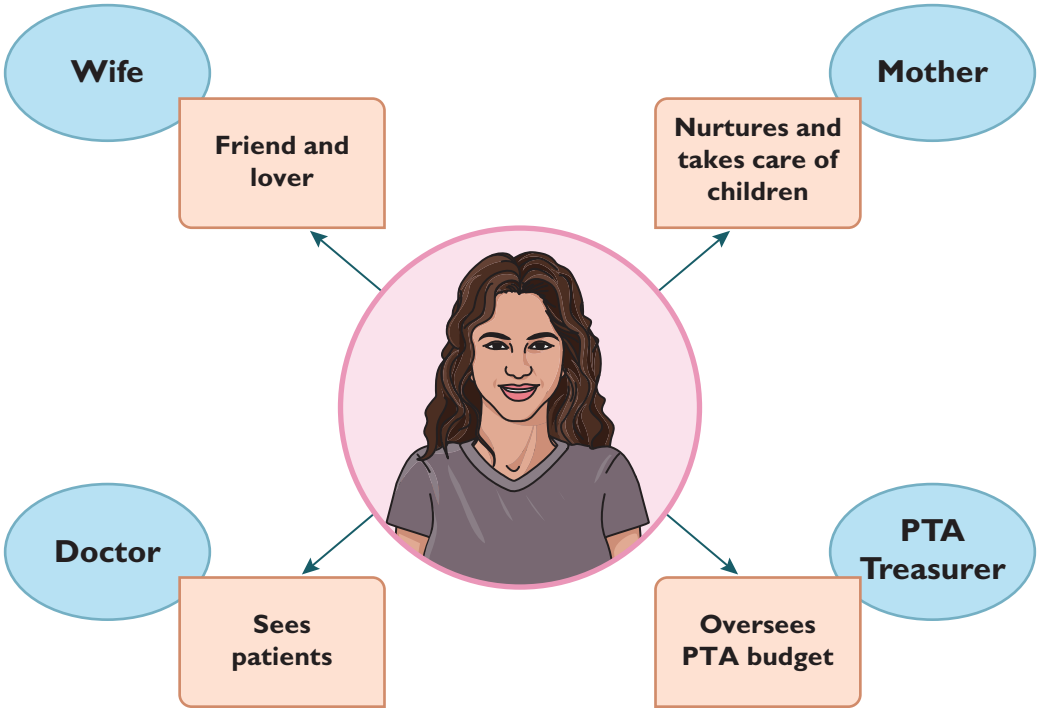
It's important to recognize that families are both productive and consumptive units. In the past, families produced most of their goods and services such as making soap, spinning cloth, and growing food. However, in industrialized societies today, family members tend to work outside the home for wages and they purchase many of the items they previously produced. These families are largely considered consumptive units. They produce little, but consume a lot.

2.1.4: Social Placement, Status, and Roles

OBJECTIVE: Differentiate statuses and roles

All members of society relate in some way to the basic structure of that society, usually in a way that preserves order and minimizes confusion and conflict. We fit in by way of a complex web of *statuses* (positions in a group or society) and *roles* (behaviors that are associated with

Figure 02-01 Web of Statuses and Roles of a Hispanic Woman



those positions). Through our families, we are given an identity and position in society. For example, we are born into a certain social class, ethnic or racial group, religious affiliation, culture, or geographic region. The statuses that we are born into are called *ascribed statuses*. Our ascribed statuses, individually and collectively, give us an identity and a way of seeing the world. Likewise, they shape how others respond to us. An Indian girl born into poverty has a decidedly different social placement from that of the son of a wealthy and prominent family in New York City. These two individuals will have countless divergent opportunities and constraints because social statuses influence nearly all aspects of our lives. In fact, much of what we think of as our unique "personality" or our unique choices really arise from our initial social placement with our family. Other statuses that we obtain on our own are called *achieved statuses*, and include things such as our level of education or the type of job we hold (see Figure 02-01).

2.1.5: Care, Warmth, Protection, and Intimacy

OBJECTIVE: Describe the ways in which families provide care for their members

In addition to food, shelter, and clothing, humans need warmth and affection to survive and thrive. Families are intended to provide the care, warmth, protection, and intimacy that individuals need. However, not all families give equal weight to these features. For example, in many cultures, love and intimacy aren't the primary reasons for marriage and, in fact, may be completely absent. It's common in some cultures for persons to marry without having met prior to their wedding day. Their parents arranged their marriages based on factors other than love, such as economics or the wish to cultivate certain kinship ties. Nonetheless, even in these unions, the protection and care of spouses, extended family members, and children are primary functions.

The Functions of Families

People throughout the world live in families. Whereas some functions of marriages and families might differ from one society to another, what is more remarkable is how *similar* these are across time and place. In particular, there are at least six universal functions of families:

Regulation of Sexual Behavior—No society allows for unrestricted sexual behavior. Instead, each society has specific norms about sexuality, including who, what, where, when, and how. The social institutions of marriage and families further channel these social norms.

Reproduction and Socializing Children—Families have the primary responsibility for bearing and raising children, teaching them the cultural norms by which to abide. Other social institutions have a hand in socializing children,

(*Continued*)

including schools and churches, but families are considered most important.

Property and Inheritance—Throughout history, as societies became more complex and moved beyond a nomadic lifestyle, people began to accumulate wealth and possessions. According to Engels, males wanted to pass their surplus to their sons, but how could they ensure that the sons born by their wives or partners were truly theirs? One primary way was to strictly control women sexually, economically, and socially through marriage. Women were expected to always remain chaste outside the confines of their marriages.

Economic—Husbands, wives, and their children must work together to varying degrees to provide for their physical needs for food, shelter, and clothing. The division of labor, however, is often gendered, with men and women doing different types of tasks. Domestic tasks, including cooking, cleaning, and making clothing fall to women in most cultures.

Social Placement, Status, and Roles—These boys and their fathers are working in the slate industry, circa 1905. What guesses would you make about their social class positions? Given that the boys are picking slate instead of going to school, what predictions can you make about their futures? While the boys' ascribed status comes from their family backgrounds, sometimes their achieved status relates to their family backgrounds as well. Because of growing up in poverty, these boys are less likely to achieve an education.

Care, Warmth, Protection, and Intimacy—Families are designed to be both practical and nurturing. This family, together, provides one another with care, warmth, protection, and intimacy. However, these factors can take on different meanings and associated behaviors across cultures. For example, not all cultures consider love as a basis for marriage. In fact, many would say it is among the worst reasons to marry.

These are some of the functions of families. Nonetheless, how these functions are performed can look quite different. So can the structure of marriage and family relationships. Is the expectation that one man will marry one woman found in all societies? Not really. Let's now look at some of these differences.

2.2: Differences in Marriage and Family Patterns

OBJECTIVE: Analyze how family patterns affect daily life

How do you intend to choose your mate (or how did you choose your mate)? Would it surprise you to learn that no one really has complete "free rein" in picking a marriage partner? In some countries, the external control is obvious and deeply rooted in cultural traditions. Fathers choose their son's or daughter's marriage partner with little or no input from those who will be directly affected. Marriage is viewed as an economic union between two families rather than a relationship between two individuals based on love. The prospective bride and groom are often all too happy to give such a big responsibility over to their parents (Allendorf, 2013, 2017).

In other countries, such as the United States, young people shudder at the thought of a parent choosing their future spouse. We prefer to base marriage on romantic love and mutual attraction (Acevedo & Aron, 2009; Sprecher & Hatfield, 2017). Parental involvement seems minimal. Yet, external control over mate selection still occurs, but is more subtle. Imagine the possible reactions from family when a person marries someone outside his or her race or ethnicity, wants to marry someone of the same sex, or when the woman is much older than her partner. The sanctions can be as minor as a sigh, or as severe as parental rejection.

External control over mate selection, whether in the United States or a country as rigid as Pakistan, operates through norms of endogamy and exogamy. *Endogamy* refers to norms that encourage marriage between people of the same social category, such as their own racial, ethnic, religious, age, or social class background. Although marrying outside our own social category may or may not be prohibited by law, it is sanctioned to varying degrees.

In contrast, *exogamy* refers to norms that encourage marriage between people of different social categories. For example, can a person marry someone of the same sex, or must they marry outside of that social category? The answer varies and depends on the culture. In another example, in some cultures it is illegal for a person to marry a first cousin, whereas in other cultures, a first cousin would be seen as an ideal mate.

If marriage is not strictly a private choice, then what is it based on? Ethnographic studies by anthropologists and sociologists reveal that most marriage and family patterns reflect social, economic, and political issues in a given culture (Bonvillain, 2018; Miller, 2013). Some cultures allow men to have more than one wife, whereas others practice strict monogamy. In some cultures, the newly married couple virtually always resides with the husband's family and would never consider moving to their own household miles away. There are cultures that expect brothers to live together and share one wife.

How and why do these different patterns emerge? From her anthropological work, Jean Stockard (2002) suggests that these patterns aren't random, but reflect the following cultural practices and conditions:

- ***The physical environment, material goods, level of technology, and subsistence, as well as how these have shaped the social organization***—As agriculture developed, family members were needed to contribute to the labor of agriculture. In particular, nonmechanized farming economies create and sustain extended families.
- ***The significance of descent ideology and structure—the clan, lineage, and descent line***—A matrilineal structure (organized around female lines of descent) will organize marriage and households in such a way that acknowledges females, although it may not necessarily give these females any power.
- ***Social processes, especially residence practices that reproduce and sometimes modify kinship structures across the generations***—The pattern of elderly Chinese co-residing with a living son, as the Chinese practice it, creates families that prioritize male descendants over females.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

2.2.1 **Differentiate forms of marriage**

2.2.2 **Determine how patriarchy impacts life for women across the world**

2.2.3 **Identify the patterns of power in different forms of kinship**

2.2.4 **Compare patterns of residence for newly married couples**

2.2.1: Marriage

OBJECTIVE: Differentiate forms of marriage

Marriage has real consequences for the way we experience family life. There are expectations about whom and how we marry, where we should live, who should have power,

Case Study

Marriage Among the !Kung San

It is easy to fall prey to the belief that everyone in the world practices marriage patterns similar to ours: In early adulthood you meet someone, fall in love with them, and marry them. A closer look around the world reveals patterns that are in striking contrast to ours.

The !Kung San are people inhabiting territories bordering on the Kalahari Desert, primarily in Botswana, Namibia, and Angola. They are a branch of the San peoples, an indigenous people of Africa, numbering approximately 50,000 that once occupied a vast territory in southern Africa. Given the name "Bushmen" by European colonists, they call themselves the *Ju/'hoansi*, which means "the real people." Until the 1970s, when political and economic change forced an end to their traditional way of life, they were one of the several remaining contemporary populations in the world practicing hunting and gathering. This way of life, or subsistence adaptation, is believed to resemble the one characterizing all human populations prior to the development of agriculture about 10,000 years ago.

Marriage among the !Kung San resembles marriage as practiced by people for most of human history. Ethnographers report that girls were typically married very young, anywhere from age 8–12 on average. A new bride protested marriage in general and often her parents' choice of husband in particular. The marriage ceremony itself was, from the outsider's perspective, understated and hardly noticeable. The arrangement of marriage entailed the demonstration of hunting skills by the husband, who was expected to hunt after marriage not just for his wife, but more important, for her father.

New husbands were usually at least 18–25 years old, and sometimes as old as 30, creating a disparity in the ages of bride and groom of 10 years or more. Many, if not most girls, married before reaching their first menstrual period, but !Kung San feel strongly that marital sexual relations must not be consummated until the young wife is sexually mature. Indeed, they do not permit a husband, older and perhaps more anxious to begin sexual relations, to force himself on his young wife, believing it would make her crazy.

Ethnographic descriptions reveal an apparent connection between a *subsistence adaptation*, in this case hunting, and the practice of marriage. In marrying, a husband assumes an obligation called bride service: He must hunt for his father-in-law for many years, not only to establish but also to maintain his marriage to the man's daughter. In this way, marriage is a relationship involving more than just the couple. With a large stake in the outcome, the parents arrange and negotiate the marriage, a matter far too important to be left to the passions and whims of the young people.

With the establishment of a !Kung San marriage, a newly married couple assumes residence in a small house built adjacent to the house of the young bride's parents. Through the distributions of meat from a son-in-law during bride service, the boundaries of nuclear families are regularly crossed, linking the families of the bride and groom and her parents in an important economic relationship. In addition, gifts of meat that are received by the father-in-law are shared again by him to include his daughter's family.

These patterns identify that !Kung San society has no isolated nuclear families living apart unto themselves. Each is linked in important ways to other families, as the long process of bride service dramatically emphasizes. Meat is so greatly valued that its distribution is not based on generalized reciprocity, but is shared according to an established protocol. The husband is expected to take the best cut, and gives this to his wife's parents. Following this first-order distribution, waves of further sharing follow, ending in many gifts of meat to people in the band.

The giving of meat in this society in some sense creates a kind of politics: Giving of meat creates personal prestige in receiving a good cut of meat, and redistributing shares to others also creates obligations in them. Such giving is an important part of being male.

SOURCE: Adapted from Stockard 2002

WRITING PROMPT

!Kung San Politics

If you were to take a guess, how do you think !Kung San culture has changed since the economic and political changes of the 1970s? Do you think these changes are for the better? Why or why not?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

and how we inherit and trace our lineage. Let's look at several specific customs and practices surrounding marriage throughout the world.

MONOGAMY Most of us probably see marriage as a relationship between two partners (if not for a lifetime, at least for a period of time). We call this marriage pattern *monogamy*, from Greek meaning "one union." Monogamy doesn't allow individuals to have multiple spouses. Monogamy is practiced in most parts of the world, especially in developed nations. In fact, any other type of marriage would be illegal. However, we can see in Eye on the World in Figure 02-02 that in many parts of the world, monogamy is not the expected or preferred form of marriage. If monogamy is not universal, then what are the alternatives?

POLYGAMY Other societies practice *polygamy*, which allows for more than one spouse at a time. Although it may be the preferred practice in many cultures, not everyone can be polygamous because of sex ratios; there aren't enough women to go around for every man to have two or three wives. It's often reserved for those who are the wealthiest or most senior members of society. Having multiple spouses may be a status symbol, a mark of prestige (Stephens, 1963).

Most Americans disapprove of polygamy. However, and perhaps related to the TV show, Sister Wives, the percentage of Americans who approve of polygamy has more than doubled since 2001, from 7 to 16 percent (Allen, 2015). There are two types of polygamy.

POLYGYNY The most common type, *polygyny*, is the practice in which husbands can have more than one wife, and is sometimes used interchangeably with polygamy (Luscombe, 2012). Polygyny is allowed in many developing societies in the world today, although we don't know its exact prevalence. Israeli anthropologist Joseph Ginat suggests that as many as a third of the world's population lives in a region that allows it, although the percentage of men who actually practice it is much smaller (Stack, 1998). Polygyny is more likely to be found in developing countries, including parts of Africa and South America. Where practiced, it's often supported by religious custom. These societies are also associated with high degrees of male dominance and authority.

Researchers Charles Welch & Paul Glick (1981) examined 15 selected African countries and found that, depending on the country, between one in five and one in three married men had more than one wife. Those who practiced polygyny tended to have two, or occasionally three, wives and only rarely more than that. Having numerous wives is a sign of family wealth, education, and other dimensions of high status. It's used as a way to increase fertility within a family, because multiple wives increase the number of children born. Although Westerners assume that multiple wives would be jealous or competitive with one another, a study based in polygynous Nigeria indicated that the wives tend to get along. When asked how they would feel if their husbands took another wife, about 60 percent said they would be pleased to share the housework, care of their husband, and childrearing, and to have someone to share things with (Ware, 1979).

It is possible that more than 100,000 American families currently practice polygyny, although it is illegal (Hagerty, 2008; Tapestry against Polygamy, 2006). Meet one such family in the case study: *A Personal Ad from Simon, Angela, and Marion*. It's primarily found in Utah, Nevada, and other western states. In a study of these polygynous families, Altman and Ginat found that, on average, they contained four wives and 27 children (Altman & Ginat, 1996). Why would women in the United States submit to the practice of polygyny? What is in it for them? The answers to this are intriguing. One female supporter claims that it provides support and empowerment:

> I think Polygyny is the one lifestyle that offers women a chance to really have it all. It's an empowering lifestyle for women, not an oppressive one. It allows me to maximize my female potential without having all the tradeoffs and compromises that attend monogamy. For example, there are a group of us who share the cooking, cleaning, and childcare. These women are my friends. We have been together for a decade, and have shared a man. Yes, these women are very special to me.

Others feel differently (Decker, 2012; Jessop & Palmer, 2008, 2010; Wall & Pulitzer, 2009), suggesting that polygyny is abusive to women and girls. Women who escaped from polygynous marriages write of being manipulated and abused. They describe forced child marriages, rape, and threats to their well-being to ensure conformity.

Some people mistakenly associate today's polygyny with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon), but the church has not tolerated polygynous marriages since it was outlawed in 1890 and will excommunicate members who are found to practice polygyny. Instead, some polygynous families are Muslims or evangelical Christians who find support for polygyny in the Quran and Bible.

POLYANDRY The second type of polygamy, *polyandry*, is a marriage pattern in which several men share one wife. This type of marriage pattern is quite rare and contains several unique features (Cassidy & Lee, 1989; Stephens, 1963). First, polyandry may occur in societies with difficult environmental conditions, where poverty is widespread. It is practiced only in agricultural societies where land is severely limited and weather or other conditions are harsh. Second, the multiple husbands are usually brothers or otherwise related.

Figure 02-02 Comparative Marital Patterns: Eye on the World

SOURCE: Peters World Atlas, 2001


RUSSIA
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
BELARUS
POLAND
DENMARK
NETH.
GERMANY
BEL.
LUX.
FRANCE
SWITZ.
AUSTRIA
CZECH REP.
SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
MOLDOVA
ROMANIA
UKRAINE
SLO.
CROATIA
B.H.
SERBIA
ITALY
MONT.
MAC.
ALBANIA
BULGARIA
GREECE
SPAIN
KAZAKHSTAN
MONGOLIA
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
TURKEY
CYPRUS
SYRIA
LEBANON
ISRAEL
JORDAN
IRAQ
IRAN
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
TAJIKISTAN
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
JAPAN
CHINA
TUNISIA
ALGERIA
LIBYA
EGYPT
KUWAIT
BAHRAIN
QATAR
SAUDI ARABIA
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
OMAN
YEMEN
BHUTAN
NEPAL
BANGLADESH
INDIA
MYANMAR
LAOS
THAILAND
VIETNAM
CAMBODIA
TAIWAN
PHILIPPINES
BRUNEI
MALAYSIA
SINGAPORE
INDONESIA
EAST TIMOR
PALAU
Guam (U.S.)
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
MARSHALL ISLANDS
KIRIBATI
NAURU
SOLOMON ISLANDS
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
TUVALU
FIJI
VANUATU
NEW CALEDONIA
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
SRI LANKA
MALDIVES
MALI
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN
ERITREA
DJIBOUTI
ETHIOPIA
SOMALIA
BURKINA
GHANA
BENIN
TOGO
NIGERIA
CAMEROON
CENTRAL AFRICAN REP.
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
AND PRÍNCIPE
GABON
CONGO
DEMOCRATIC REP. OF CONGO
UGANDA
KENYA
RWANDA
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
SEYCHELLES
COMOROS
MADAGASCAR
MAURITIUS
REUNION
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
MALAWI
MOZAMBIQUE
ZIMBABWE
NAMIBIA
BOTSWANA
SWAZILAND
LESOTHO
SOUTH AFRICA

Case Study

A Personal Ad from Simon, Angela, and Marion

In truth, one does not have to look around the world to find different marriage patterns. The following is an advertisement from an evangelical Christian living in Nevada looking for a third wife to join his family. I chatted with Angela over e-mail, and once she was convinced that my goal was simply to inform my students about polygyny rather than to pass judgment, she enthusiastically agreed to have the ad included in this chapter.

CLASSIFIEDS

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS! We provide complete Property Management, Leasing and Real Estate Services for Residential and Commercial Properties.

3BR- Single Family /$32,900 Single Family - 3 Bedroom / 1 1/2 Bath. Property has been COMPLETELY RENOVATED!!!

RENT to OWN If you cannot qualify for a traditional mortgage through the banks, NO PROBLEM!

BUSINESS

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS! We provide complete Property Management, Leasing and Real Estate Services for Residential and Commercial Properties.

ATTENTION: HOME OWNER 2 bedrooms Property has been completely renovated and is currently occupied!! Both tenants are currently on leases and each unit is rented at $400

EXCELLENT INVESTMENT 2 Family (DUPLEX)- Both units have 2 bedrooms and 1 bath. Property has been completely renovated and is currently occupied!!! Both tenants are currently on leases and each unit is rented at $400 and $450.

COMMERCIAL LOANS We will consider applications on the following property types: • Multi-family construction • Retail Centres • Office • Mixed Use

NO MONEY DOWN We help home buyers to purchase their home with ZERO money down, call us today to put together a proposal for an offer on your property.

OFFICE AVILABLE 3 individual enclosed office space cubicles (with desks) at a great location, use of Boardrooms and general facilities. General Parking nearby. 275$/each Location: Downtown

LOOKING FOR INVESTORS Looking for additional investors.Investments are primarily focused in Real Estate Market.

GENERAL HELP WANTED Seeking someone for general help, eg. filing, organizing, errands, answering emails. Must know how to type. $10 per hour to start

GARDEN MAINTENANCE Experienced in maintenance work such as, lawn mowing/blow it clean, trimming, garden, pruning of plants, hedges, planting, and other maintenance and installation. Location: West River RD

Are you looking for a realtor? Maybe you just have some questions Maybe you don't know what you want yet...

STUDENT LOANS Do you need a Student Loan? We provide all kinds of options to assist you financially. CALL US TODAY

★ MORTGAGE EXPERT ★ Residential & Commercial. Specialize in Residential Real Estate Finance & All Commercial Mortgages

NEED A SMALL LOAN Do you need a loan? Do you need some cash fast? CALL US QUICKLY

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES -Accounts Payable -Accounts Receivable -Bank Credit Card Reconciliations Flexible rates starting at $18 per hour.

CAREERS

GENERAL HELP WANTED Seeking someone for general help, eg. filing, organizing, errands, answering emails. Must know how to type. $10 per hour to start

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEEKEND RECEPTION We are seeking a general office assistant for Sunday afternoons between the hours of 11:30am to 5:00pm. $12/H

NEW AD

GENERAL MANAGER a non-profit social enterprise is seeking a full-time General Manager with business experience to lead and manage, the focus of the work will be on sales, marketing, $60,000 per annum

Medical Assistant Training Online Classes We want you to be successful. Just click the link and learn today.

★ ★ ★

ENGLISH CLASSES English as a Second Language Lesson fees are: $25/hr per person; $20/hr per person

WEEKEND RECEPTION We are seeking a general office assistant for Sunday afternoons between the hours of 11:30am to 5:00pm. $12/H

GENERAL MANAGER a non-profit social enterprise is seeking a full-time General Manager with business experience to lead and manage, the focus of the work will be on sales, marketing, $60,000 per annum

P/T Sales assistant We are looking for high energy , career oriented sales assistant who thrives in a fast paced environment. You must be able to multi tak constantly. $12/H

SENIOR ADVISOR ASSISTANT A well-established independent wealth management organization is seeking a qualified Senior Advisor Assistant to join their team. $40,000 to $60,000 per annum based on relevant experience.

RECEPTIONIST WANTED Our Clinic is looking for a Receptionist that is looking to grow with our centre.This position is open for a driven, passionate and self motivated person.

★ CALL NOW ★

Sales Assistant

We currently have an excellent opportunity in our sales office. For more information about this company. See our website or Send resume.

Word Processing Specialist Our client is seeking a talented and experienced Word Processing Specialist to join our team for a short-term project. a strong background in computer programs in general. $15/H

EDUCATION

TUTORS NEEDED We are looking for: highly skilled, motivated and dynamic individuals who have strong communication skills. Candidate must possess a love for teaching. $12/h B.A. is a must.

DANCE CLASSES We offers an opportunity for private dance lessons. Students can register for classes and learn based on their specific needs and

TUTORS NEEDED We are looking for: highly skilled, motivated and dynamic individuals who have strong communication skills. Candidate must possess a love for teaching. $12/h B.A. is a must.

DANCE CLASSES We offers an opportunity for private dance lessons. Students can register for classes and learn based on their specific needs and

Medical Assistant Training Online Classes We want you to be successful. Just click the link and learn today.

★ ★ ★

ENGLISH CLASSES English as a Second Language Lesson fees are: $25/hr per person; $20/hr per person for two students.

SERVICES

GARDEN MAINTENANCE Experienced in maintenance work such as, lawn mowing/blow it clean, trimming, gardon, pruning of plants, hedges, planting, and other maintenance and installation. Location: West River RD.

Are you looking for a realtor? Maybe you just have some questions Maybe you don't know what you want yet...

STUDENT LOANS Do you need a Student Loan? We provide all kinds of options to assist you financially. CALL US TODAY

★ MORTGAGE EXPERT ★ Residential & Commercial. Specialize in Residential Real Estate Finance & All Commercial Mortgages

NEED A SMALL LOAN Do you need a loan? Do you need some cash fast? CALL US QUICKLY

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES -Accounts Payable -Accounts Receivable -Bank Credit Card Reconciliations Flexible rates starting at $18 per hour.

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS! We provide complete Property Management, Leasing and Real Estate Services for Residential and Commercial Properties.

LOOKING FOR INVESTORS Looking for additional investors.Investments are primarily focused in Real Estate Market.

We BUY HOUSES HOUSES WANTED!!!!... Need to sell your house??...Have you been thinking of selling your house soon??

Free Property Seminar Topic covered Buying procedures, tax issues, and property values, Seating is limited, so please REGISTER NOW!!!

REAL ESTATE

Home Inspection Service 5% off if you are a first time home buyer. Certified and Licensed home inspector. Call Now for 280$

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS! We provide complete Property Management, Leasing and Real Estate Services for Residential and Commercial Properties

3BR - Single Family /$32,900 Single Family - 3 Bedroom / 1 1/2 Bath. Property has been COMPLETELY RENOVATED!!!

RENT to OWN If you cannot qualify for a traditional mortgage through the banks, NO PROBLEM!

TWO BEDROOM for 850$ Beautiful 2 bed/2 bath open floor concept condo comes with a lovely kitchen, charming living room w/ fireplace and balcony.

HOUSE FOR SALE 2 bed/2 bath open floor concept condo comes with a lovely kitchen, charming living room w/ fireplace. Now only Sale for 280000$

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

RENOVATED 1 BEDROOM This great corner unit has just finished being renovated including new paint, flooring and appliance. Only for 595$

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GARDEN MAINTENANCE Experienced in maintenance work such as, lawn mowing/blow it clean, trimming, garden, pruning of plants, hedges, planting, and other maintenance and installation. Location: West River RD.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS! We provide complete Property Management, Leasing and Real Estate Services for Residential and Commercial Properties.

Hello, our family consists of my two wives and myself. We are all interested in our family becoming larger—if God blesses me with another wife. We are seeking a Christian lady with a kind spirit, who is levelheaded and has a positive attitude toward the Lord, their own life and toward others.

Let me tell you a little bit about us. . . .

I am 50 years old, blond hair, blue eyes, 6 feet tall, and weigh 200 pounds. I work as a business consultant. My wives are 33 and 22 years old and they both help me in our business. We don't drink, smoke, or take drugs. We don't object to social drinking now and then. However, we do object to smoking.

We are all real home bodies. We enjoy quiet times at home alone and with friends and family. We only have a few friends and we have had them for a long time. We don't need to have a lot of neighbors or non-family around us to be happy. We value our privacy and those close to us. We find our home very enjoyable.

Angela likes to cook which is great because I like gourmet meals, especially when it is all natural and prepared at home. She also has an interest in gardening and really wants to learn to sew. Marion likes to read and discuss ideas. We all have a good sense of humor, sometimes odd, but always fun! We want a large family and plan to have children in the near future.

We are evangelical Christians. We are not legalistic nor do we believe in taboos. We study the Bible from taped classes for about an hour every night. God has given all of us instructions for life in written form, the Bible. An owner's manual for the soul. It only makes sense to learn what our Lord has to tell us. Then, of course, comes the challenging part; practicing what you know you should do. We find that taking in God's word daily and applying what we learn gives us a good basis for a strong spiritual life.

I became interested in plural marriage many years ago. My wives have learned about it since we got together. The Bible is very clear that God ordained marriage, sanctioning polygamy just as He did monogamy. There are many instances in the Bible where men practicing plural marriage were greatly blessed. God blesses people living according to His principles. I consider companionship, talking to one another, sharing thoughts and interests the most important factors in a relationship. I am affectionate, both physically and verbally. I believe mutual respect and relating honestly to others is vital to a permanent relationship.

My priorities in a relationship in order of importance are: Being loved, Companionship, Honesty, Respect, and lastly Sex. The best foundation for a good relationship is friendship. Deep friendships grow in intensity and last forever. Too much emphasis is put on sex today. You can't build a lasting relationship based only on sex. A friendship built on soul rapport is far more important and will last a lifetime. Then, sharing sexual intimacy, as an expression of genuine love, is very meaningful. We believe that marriage is a lifetime commitment. I don't believe in premarital sex and my wives are not interested in a bi-sexual relationship. We believe marriage must have a foundation built on Christian principles.

Communication is of primary importance to us. We like to discuss ideas and share personal feelings. Talking and relating to one another is so very important. We want to know how you feel, what makes you happy and what makes you sad. We don't want you to ever feel alone. We want you to know that you are supported by a family who cares, who will listen to you, who can meet your needs and a husband who cherishes you and our relationship. A good relationship is a long conversation that always seems too short. A lasting relationship depends on what each person can bring to the relationship instead of what they can take out of it. A good relationship is more than finding the right person, it is being the right person.

I am affectionate. I like to give hugs in the kitchen or cuddle during a movie. I like a woman to wrap her arms around me for no reason even when I'm busy working. I'm not a macho moron hung up on impressing dimwitted friends by neglecting you. I don't have to treat you like a slave in order to feel like a man. I am very

secure in my masculinity. A woman is beautiful and designed to be feminine, responsive and loving. I enjoy a woman's companionship and affection very much.

We are looking for a woman who is positive toward the Bible and has Christian values. A woman who is a lady, gentle, loyal, faithful, and feminine. A woman who wants to wear dresses instead of Levis. A woman who wants to make a career of her husband, children, family, and home. A woman who is proud to be a wife and mother.

If you have children, they will find a home filled with lots of love, acceptance and most of all guidance. Your age is not a major issue. Friendship, honesty and respect are of utmost importance. Where you live, your past, or your economic circumstances are not at issue either. What is important is that we all get along and have the same values and principles to guide our lives and futures.

If you're interested in becoming friends, let's talk. Tell us what is important to you in life. What you like to do. What you're looking for in a relationship. What you want for your life in the future.

SOURCE: Polygamy.com 2003. Reprinted by permission

WRITING PROMPT

Polygamy in the USA

How do Simon, Angela, and Marion compare to the stereotype of a polygamous family? Why do you think the United States outlaws polygamy? Do you think it should be illegal in the U.S.?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

They may, for example, belong to the same clan and be of the same generation. This minimizes jealousy or possessiveness. Third, the marriage often takes place because it is seen to provide economic advantages to the men involved. For example, one husband may recruit his brothers or clan to work on his land with him. Fourth, women's status is often low, with a limited role in the productive economy. Girls may be seen as burdensome to families and an economic liability. Female infanticide may be practiced as a way of eliminating the need to care for girls, and therefore a shortage of women and girls for marriage may arise.

Watch BROTHER HUSBANDS

The opposite of polygamy is polyandry, when a woman has multiple husbands. Polyandry does exist and some cultures in Tibet take it a step further with fraternal polyandry. As you watch the video, ask yourself why is one husband and multiple wives more acceptable than the reverse.

Anthropologist Jean Stockard (2002) describes the practice of polyandry among the members of the Tibetan Nyinba settlement in Nepal. The villages are established at elevations between 9,000 and 11,000 feet, and the mountainous terrain makes it difficult to support their agrarian lifestyle. Nyinba brothers are raised to cooperate both in marriage and in their labor, so that the household can be sustained. Only a household with many sons will thrive in this environment, with at least one needed for agricultural work, others needed for small-scale cattle herding, and others involved in the long-distance salt trade, traveling with pack animals between Tibet and India, trading salt for grain. Marriage cannot break up the family, or else they would all be impoverished. Nyinba males put cooperation above competition and jealousy. Therefore, all brothers share one wife. She marries into the family and moves into their household. As the sole woman, she doesn't have an elevated status; rather, she does the work that wealthier families give to slaves. She plows and weeds the fields, and performs all of the work of grain processing. She is also responsible for all domestic tasks and childcare.

All brothers in the household will share their wife sexually, rotating her among the men, and she is to show no favoritism. When she becomes pregnant, it is expected that she will have kept track of paternity. The Nyinba do admit that sometimes a wife will apportion paternity to a specific spouse just to make sure that all husbands have at least one offspring. As expected, sons are more highly valued than daughters, who might be denied food if it is in short supply (Stockard, 2002).

Polyandry is not sanctioned by any religious groups in the United States, and in fact some that support polygyny denounce the practice of polyandry outright.

2.2.2: Patterns of Power and Authority

OBJECTIVE: Determine how patriarchy impacts life for women across the world

Most of us say we value social equality, but, interestingly, no society exists in which people are truly equal. What are some ways in which power and authority are distributed in society?

PATRIARCHY In every society in the world, women and men are treated differently (Brettell & Sargent, 2013). The term *patriarchy*, which means "rule of the father," refers to a form of social organization in which the norm is that men have a natural right to be in positions of authority over women. It is far more than an individual man controlling an individual woman. Instead, men's dominance is woven into the fabric of society. Patriarchy is manifested and upheld in a wide variety of social institutions, including legal, educational, religious, family, and economic institutions. For example, the legal system may rule that women must cover their faces or hair in public; the educational system may enforce unequal or no formal education for girls; family norms may prescribe that women only eat the leftover food after all males have finished their meal; and religious institutions may attribute male dominance to "God's will." Social differences between men and women are seen as natural and normal; those who question them are viewed as deviant or sinners.

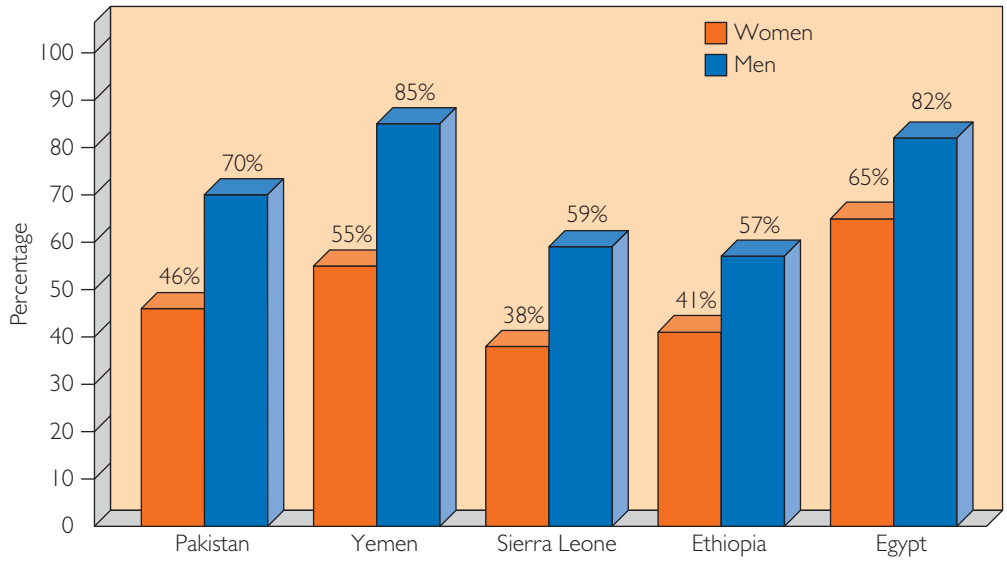
Patriarchy is the most dominant form of authority pattern and is particularly notable in politics where men predominate. For example, in most of Africa, women hold less than 15 percent of parliamentary seats in government. Even in developed nations, women are grossly underrepresented. In the United States, women hold only 23 percent of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, slightly below the world average of 23 percent women in parliamentary seats. In no country do women hold 50 percent of seats, although many developed and less developed nations come close, with Iceland at 48, and Finland, Mexico, and South Africa at 42 percent, respectively (The World Bank, 2017).

Patriarchy is also reflected in the different literacy rates between men and women in many countries, especially in parts of the Middle East and Africa, as shown in Figure 02-03. The ability to read and write is crucial to accessing information and thereby increasing personal and political power. However, literacy rates among women aged 15 and over vary significantly, from a low of only about 38 percent in Sierra Leone, to a high of virtually 100 percent in most developed nations (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).

HEALTHCARE IN A PATRIARCHY One final example presented here is that of healthcare. Because women are so disvalued in many parts of the world, scant attention is paid to their healthcare needs. Yet, at the same time, their need for healthcare is exacerbated by patriarchy. Women and girls are more likely to suffer from malnutrition, sexual violence, and HIV/AIDS. Moreover, because many girls are married young, they also bear children when they are barely teenagers themselves, often without any prenatal care or trained personnel in attendance. This contributes to a host of reproductive health difficulties, including the epidemic of fistulas—tearing of the tissue between the vagina and bladder or rectum (or both), resulting in the

Figure 02-03 Percentage of Persons Age 15 and Over who are Literate, By Sex, in Selected Countries in Africa and the Middle East, 2015

Women have lower literacy rates than do men across the developing world.



SOURCE: Central Intelligence Agency, 2017