

Fifth Edition

Public and Private Families

An Introduction



Andrew J. Cherlin

Public & Private Families

AN INTRODUCTION

ANDREW J. CHERLIN
Johns Hopkins University

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PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES: AN INTRODUCTION

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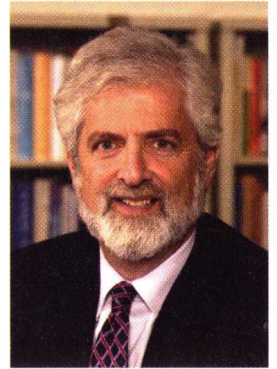
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About the Author

Andrew J. Cherlin is Benjamin H. Griswold III Professor of Public Policy and Sociology at Johns Hopkins University. He received a B.S. from Yale University in 1970 and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1976. His books include *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage* (revised and enlarged edition, 1992), *Divided Families: What Happens to Children When Parents Part* (with Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., 1991), *The Changing American Family and Public Policy* (1988), and *The New American Grandparent: A Place in the Family, A Life Apart* (with Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., 1986). In 1989–1990 he was chair of the Family Section of the American Sociological Association. In 1999 he was president of the Population Association of America, the scholarly organization for demographic research.

In 2005 Professor Cherlin was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. He received the Distinguished Career Award in 2003 from the Family Section of the American Sociological Association. In 2001 he received the Olivia S. Nordberg Award for Excellence in Writing in the Population Sciences. He has also received a Merit Award from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for his research on the effects of family structure on children. His recent articles include “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage,” in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*; “The Influence of Physical and Sexual Abuse on Marriage and Cohabitation,” in the *American Sociological Review*; and “American Marriage in the Early Twenty-First Century,” in *The Future of Children*. He also has written many articles for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *Newsweek*, and other periodicals. He has been interviewed on *ABC News Nightline*, the *Today Show*, network evening news programs, National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered*, and other news programs and documentaries.



Courtesy of Will Kirk, Johns Hopkins University.

Preface

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

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

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

■ Organization

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

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

■ Special Features

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

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

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

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

reau of the Census Web pages. But the Internet is also a powerful instructional tool. Consequently, at the end of each chapter is a section titled “Families on the Internet,” in which I list Web sites that students may find useful.

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

Pedagogy

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

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

What’s New in Each Chapter?

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

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES

- Updated information on same-sex marriage.

CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

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

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

CHAPTER 3. GENDER AND FAMILIES

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

CHAPTER 4. SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILIES

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

CHAPTER 5. RACE, ETHNICITY, AND FAMILIES

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

CHAPTER 6. SEXUALITIES

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

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

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

CHAPTER 7. COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE

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

CHAPTER 8. WORK AND FAMILIES

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

CHAPTER 9. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

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

CHAPTER 10. THE ELDERLY AND THEIR FAMILIES

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

CHAPTER 11. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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

CHAPTER 12. DIVORCE

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

CHAPTER 13. REMARRIAGE AND STEPFAMILIES

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

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

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

CHAPTER 15. SOCIAL CHANGE AND FAMILIES

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

Supplements Package

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

FOR THE STUDENT

- *Public and Private Families: A Reader, 5th Edition*—Edited by the text’s author and keyed to text chapters, this Reader includes articles and book excerpts by family sociologists and other writers on a variety of issues facing families today. A special discount is available when the textbook and Reader are ordered as a package.
- *Reel Families CD-ROM*—This unique interactive movie enables students to take on the role of one of the story’s characters and influence key plot turns by making choices for that character. The movie allows students to explore course concepts and terminology in a relevant and meaningful context. Movie segments are augmented by an array of review and assessment features. With

this learning tool, students can explore a wide variety of family issues firsthand and master course concepts more completely than they could by just reading any text.

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

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

- The *Online Instructor's Resource* manual—provides access to a wide array of important ancillaries:
 - *Instructor's Manual/Testbank*—includes detailed chapter outlines, key terms, overviews, lecture notes, and a complete testbank
 - *Reel Families Instructor's Guide*—teaching tips and notes that make it easy to integrate the *Reel Families CD* into your course
 - *Computerized Testbank*—easy-to-use computerized testing program for both Windows and Macintosh computers
 - *PowerPoint Slides*—complete, chapter-by-chapter slideshows featuring text, art, and tables
- *Reel Families Lecture Launcher Videotape*—so even if you can't require students to use the CD, you can use the movie footage to jumpstart lectures in a unique and exciting fashion
- *Full-Length Videotapes*—a wide variety of videotapes from the *Films for the Humanities and Social Sciences* series is available to adopters of the text.
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- *Primis Online*—a unique database publishing system that allows instructors to create their own custom text from material in this text or elsewhere and deliver that text to students electronically as an e-book or in print format via the bookstore.

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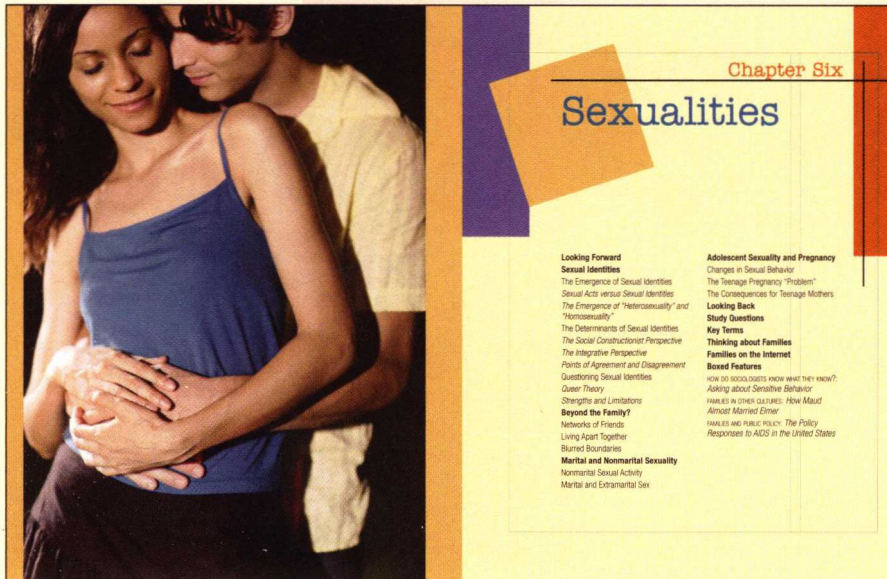
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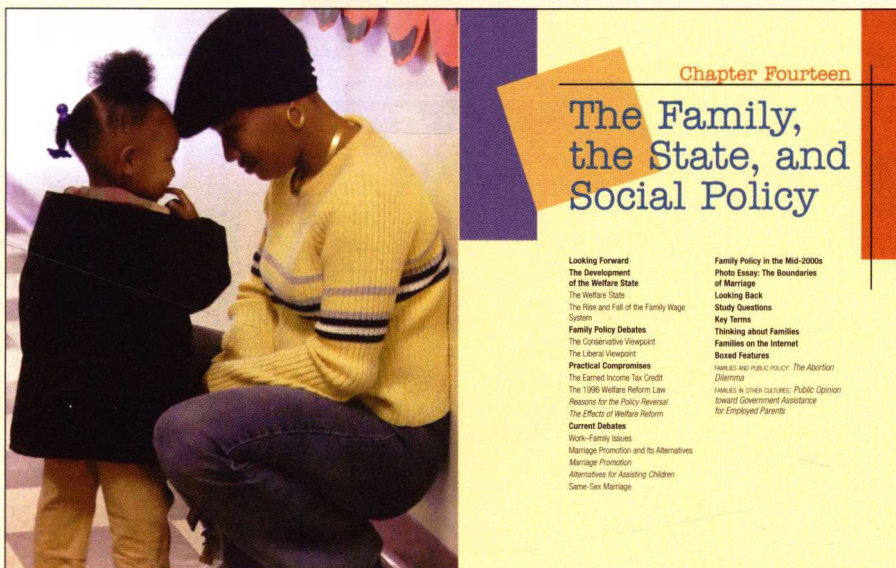
Andrew J. Cherlin

Visual Preview



Explores the Public and Private Family

Thorough coverage of both the private, personal aspects of families—sexuality, companionship, choosing a spouse or partner—and the public, societal aspects of families—policies to support employed parents, concern about adolescent childbearing, debates over poverty and welfare programs.



China's Missing Girls

Many other cultures show a sharp increase in life expectancy after 1967, or indeed, but when the continuing presence of risk in China coalesced with the rapid increase in the country's population growth, the consequences for men and for women in general were dramatic. China's "one-child policy" was implemented in 1979, it resulted in a "one-policy crisis" which limited children to one child per family. The result was a sharp rise. Because the state controlled parents' choices of sex, housing, land, and consumer goods, 1.4-billion and 400-million families in 1980 and 1990 were forced to have one child. As a result, the population growth rate was reduced by 100 million people. Because males have higher death rates, these numbers are even more dramatic. The population growth rate was likely to be 1.4 billion in 1990 and 1.5 billion in 2000 in the 1990s and 1970s, before the "one-child policy" (Zeng et al., 1993). But China's 2000 census showed a sharp drop at birth of 120 million (Bianster, 2003). For second births, the ratio is even higher: 152 million.

being reported than would ordinarily have been born. They have become known as "ghost babies."

No one knows for sure what is responsible for this discrepancy. One factor is the self-reporting of girl babies who are hidden, sent to live with friends or relatives elsewhere, or given up for adoption (Zeng *et al.*, 1993). In some cases, families actually abandon girls, leaving them to fend for themselves, or placing them in overcrowded orphanages, trimming with girls but boys of funds. But recent reports suggest that self-selective abortions may be an important cause. The number of sophisticated ultrasound scanners, which can detect the sex of a fetus, has increased greatly in China in the 1980s and 1990s. Some parents are learning the sex of fetuses through ultrasound tests and then selectively aborting females (Ries, 2004). And, given a small number of parents may be allowing their infant daughters to die of neglect—no breastfeeding, even as young as 10 days, for example—or even killing them.

Moral questions aside, the one-child policy has reduced China's economic development by halving population growth. But it is beginning to cause problems. As the first one-child generation matures, education, employment, and retirement will be a

both suggest that girls and boys may have deep-seated predispositions toward certain types of behaviors. The biosocial approach emphasizes genetic and hormonal influences, while the psychoanalytic approach emphasizes the children's experiences with women caregivers. Finally, the interactionists argue that gender is too problematic to be created merely through childhood socialization; rather, it must be created and re-created in the everyday lives of adults. Throughout life, they argue, people construct and maintain gender differences through their everyday interactions with others.

Despite their different perspectives—or perhaps because of them—sociologists who have studied gender (along with their colleagues in anthropology, history, and psychology) have made important contributions to our understanding of the family. First, they have demonstrated that the roles men and women play in

Although the emphasis in the book is on the contemporary United States and other Western nations, every chapter features a boxed essay entitled “Families in Other Cultures” that highlights cross-cultural similarities and differences.

Many chapters include a boxed section entitled “How Do Sociologists Know What They Know?” that explains the ways that family sociologists go about their research.

Asking about Sensitive Behavior

His sociologists collect information on people's behavior and attitudes for the most part, they ask them. The most common way of doing so is through the random sample survey. \rightarrow 118. Typically, a survey research organization will first try to recruit a sample of people who are representative of a particular population. Then they ask a list of questions. In 1992, the National Opinion Research Center, one of the leading academic survey research organizations, asked a random sample of 1,435 people about their attitudes toward various activities and preferences. Researchers from the University of Chicago, who had written the questions, tabulated the results and published *The Social Organization of Sexual Activity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). The findings are presented in this chapter.

But how can findings be trusted? After all, the interviewers were inquiring about some of the most intimate and sensitive aspects of people's lives. In a book written in, *writing in the New York Review of Books* (Lewontin, 1995a), indicated the skepticism for believing the responses of their subjects. His scathing critique, and the subsequent work of other sociologists and other scientists and men, addressed the limits of survey-based sociological research.

Lewontin's main reason for this social skepticism can be seen if the reader considers that the survey is a *post hoc* method. In other words, the subjects are asked to report on their behavior after the fact.

When the topic is as sensitive as sexuality, the researchers found, while others may not even admit the truth to themselves, Leachin also pointed to a discrepancy in the data. Men reported 75 percent more sexual partners in the previous five years than did women. Leachin also noted that the average number of sexual partners of men and women should be almost the same. The authors examine this discrepancy and conclude that the most likely cause is that men are more likely to report sexual partners than are women. Leachin and his colleagues write, "It now seems likely that authors of their work... should have taken to task some of the other results of the study" (1996a, p. 20).

Leachin and his colleagues also note that they "readily admit that we were not always successful in securing full disclosure," they "spent a great deal of time worrying about how we could check the reliability and validity of the data" (1996a, p. 20). Leachin and his colleagues also note that they "used techniques such as asking similar questions of different persons in the interview to test if a person's responses were consistent" (1996a, p. 20). The researchers note that the respondents were given a form to fill out that they could return in a sealed envelope.

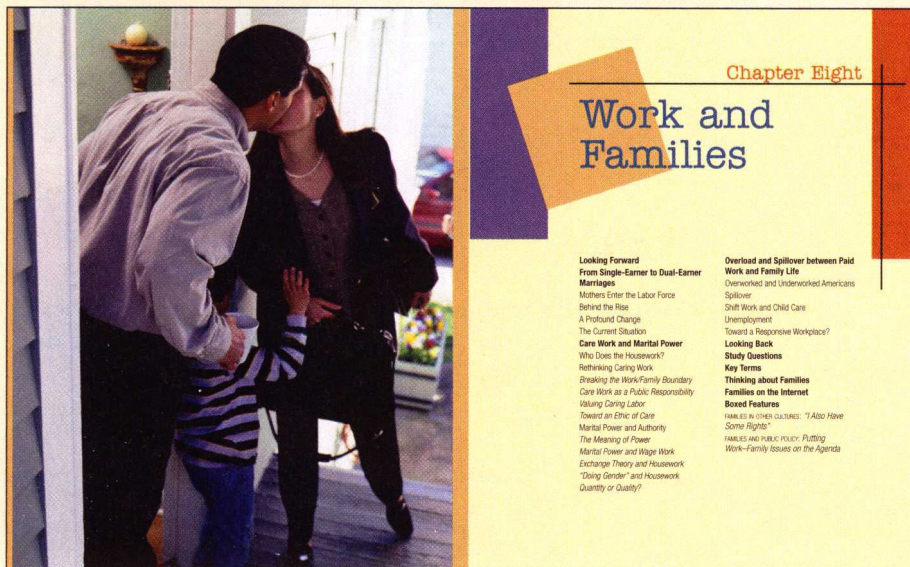
Leachin was not appalled for future researchers to use a sample of adolescents who were not representative of the general population. He wrote, "The

groups. When they accept self-reports of emotional feelings and automatic actions, they, in turn, argue, sociologists are trying too hard to impute the nature sciences. Without adequate ways to measure information such as sexual behavior, and allow self-reports to be taken seriously, sociologists, he maintains, sociology is limited.

Dickens is asking about the most complex and difficult phenomena in the mind complex and noncalculus organisms, without the ability to manipulate the objects of study which is essential to the scientific method. The period, the fact of the incredible body of work in this... Like it or not, there are a lot of questions that cannot be answered, and even more that cannot be asked. There are a lot of things that are shameful in the past. (Lewontin, *Evolution* 1980b, p. 44)

Lewontin's argument must be taken seriously by sociologists. There are indeed limits to how much sociologists can know about human behavior, and randomness, and the nature of the social world, cannot surmount these limits. For some problems, sociologists must be better off abandoning surveys and turning to the kind of work that the young men and women that anthropologists and biologists do.

reported at least some attraction to the same sex (in other words, they did not choose "only attracted to males"), compared to 7.8 percent of men. The last set of bars shows responses to a question on sexual identity: "Do you think of yourself as . . . Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bisexual, or Something else?" Among both men and women, 1 percent chose both homosexual or bisexual. Among that 1 percent of the sample, however, women were more likely to choose bisexual (2.8 percent) than homosexual, while men were more likely to choose homosexual (2.3 percent) than bisexual.



Chapter Eight

Work and Families

Looking Forward

From Single-Earner to Dual-Earner

Mothers Enter the Labor Force
Behind the Rise
A Profound Change
The Current Situation

Care Work and Marital Power

Who Does the Housework?
Rethinking Caring Work
Breaking the Work/Family Boundary
Care Work as a Public Responsibility
Valuing Caring Labor
Toward an Ethic of Care
Marital Power and Authority
The Meaning of Power
Marital Power and Wage Work
Exchange Theory and Housework
"Doing Gender" and Housework
Quantity or Quality?

Overload and Spillover between Paid Work and Family Life

Overworked and Underworked Americans
Spillover
Shift Work and Child Care
Unemployment
Toward a Responsive Workplace?

Looking Back

Study Questions

Key Terms

Thinking about Families

Families on the Internet

Boxed Features

FAMILIES IN OTHER CULTURES: "I Also Have Some Rights"
FAMILIES AND PUBLIC POLICY: Putting Work-Family Issues on the Agenda

Chapter-Opening Previews

Detailed chapter-opening outlines and "Looking Forward" questions draw students in and help them focus on the chapter's most critical concepts.



Poverty and Altitude

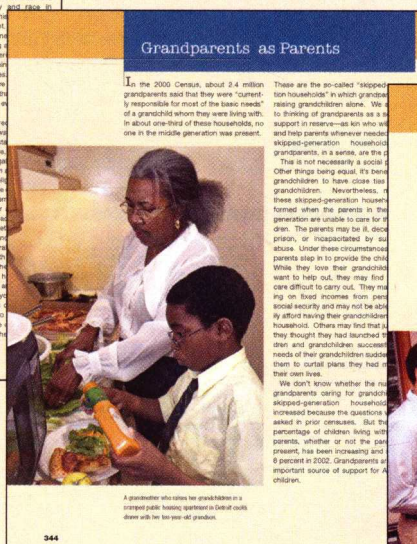
Rarely are social class differences in America as visible as they were in the first few days after Katrina made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane in Louisiana and Mississippi on August 29, 2005. After levees in New Orleans were breached and neighborhoods flooded, television networks showed images after images of low-income families, nearly all of them African American, trapped in "high water" or marooned at the Louisiana Superdome. It turns out that the geography of New Orleans starkly illustrated the American social divide. Many wealthy families lived in neighborhoods that were above sea level and therefore spared the worst of the flooding. But poorer families tended to live in neighborhoods such as the Lower Ninth Ward that were below sea level and were devastated when the levees failed.

The images were so disturbing that they caught a flurry of attention in the media to the problems of poverty and race in America. In the midst of the crisis, a major Katrina moment reporter asked me to comment on Katrina for Thinking & Here is what I said: "After think of poor people as being far their own economic woes a case where the poor were flat. It was a reminder the moral obligation to provide in with a decent life."

During the next week, I received e-mail messages from people who disagreed with my analysis. One person wrote that not have a moral or legal provide every American with a decent life for their opportunity has existed for this country for several decades. Newsweek published a letter for that said, "Bloomberg mentioned that we have a moral provide every American with a decent life. Nobody has the ability to provide for myself a life I guess I would ask what you think the lesson. Do we have an obligation to America with a decent life one an e-mail message (see 17) response."

New Orleans city council president Oliver Thomas helps his wife Angelle and daughter Leah. (2) When he is reunited with them he thanks for the first time in his life since they were taken from him. (3) When he is reunited with them he thanks for the first time in his life since they were taken from him. (4) When he is reunited with them he thanks for the first time in his life since they were taken from him.

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Grandparents as Parents

In the 2000 Census, about 2.4 million grandparents said that they were "currently responsible for most of the basic needs" of a grandchild whom they were living with. In about one-third of these households, no one in the middle generation was present.

These are the so-called "skipped-generation households" in which grandparents raise grandchildren alone. Yes, it is not necessarily a social problem. Grandchildren being raised by grandparents are not necessarily in a worse situation than those raised by parents. The parents may be ill, dead, in prison, or incapacitated by drug abuse. Under these circumstances, parents step in to provide the child. While they love their grandchildren, they may find it difficult to carry out. They may be on their own, with no social security and may not be able to afford having their grandchildren in their household. Others may find that they thought they had launched their children into the world, but their grandchildren suddenly needed them to provide the child with their own lives.

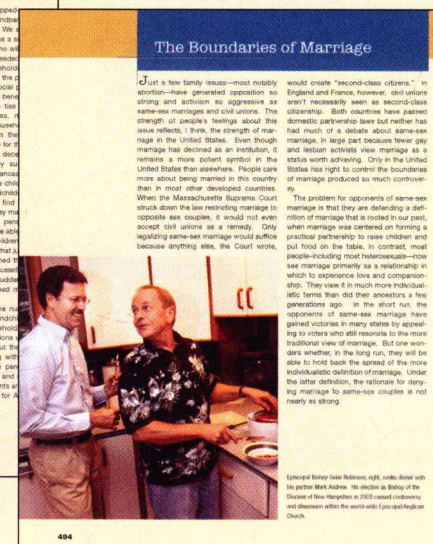
We don't know whether the grandparents caring for grandchildren are in a worse situation than those raised by parents. But the percentage of children living with grandparents, whether or not the parent is present, has been increasing and is 8 percent in 2002. Grandparents are an important source of support for children.

A grandparent who raises his grandchildren in a cramped public housing apartment in Detroit could share with his two-year-old grandson.

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NEW Photo Essays

Three photo essays invite students to visually examine topics such as poverty, skipped-generation households, and same-sex marriages.



The Boundaries of Marriage

Just a few family issues—most notably abortion—have generated opposition so strong and activism so aggressive as to strain same-sex marriages and civil unions. The strength of people's feelings about the issue reflects, I think, the strength of marriage in the United States. Even though marriage has declined as an institution, it remains a more potent symbol in the United States than elsewhere. People care more about being married in this country than in most other developed countries. When the Massachusetts Supreme Court struck down the law restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples, it would not even accept civil unions as a remedy. Only legalizing same-sex marriage would suffice because anything else, the Court wrote,

would create "second-class citizens" in England and France, however, civil unions aren't necessarily seen as second-class citizenship. Both countries have passed domestic partnership laws but neither has had much of a debate about same-sex marriage. In large part because fewer gay and lesbian activists view marriage as a status worth achieving. Only in the United States has right to control the boundaries of marriage produced so much controversy. The problem for opponents of same-sex marriage is that they are defending a definition of marriage that is rooted in our past, when marriage was centered on forming a practical partnership to raise children and put food on the table. In contrast, most people—including most heterosexuals—now see marriage primarily as a relationship in which to experience love and companionship. They view it in much more individualistic terms than did their ancestors a few generations ago. In the long run, they will be able to hold back the spread of the more individualistic definition of marriage. Under the latter definition, the rationale for denying marriage to same-sex couples is not nearly as strong.

Editorial: Today's New Orleans, right, looks almost like its partner West Africa. Its election as Bishop of the Diocese of New Orleans in 1983 raised controversy and drew attention after the world-wide (see opposite) Church.

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middle-class structures
and growing such as the
church, the neighborhood,
the school, the government,
and the family.

Moreover many members of the new black middle class were able to move upward in part through the assistance of kin, such as siblings who helped pay for college or an uncle who provided a first job. These extended kinship ties tend to remain after a person has attained middle-class status, but the flow of assistance often reverses. The sister who has attained a job as a computer programmer may have an unemployed brother who needs a short-term loan to start off his family's education from their apartment or a bright cousin from a poor family who needs financial help so he can go to college. Having benefited from the assistance of her kin on her way up the economic ladder the computer programmer has a difficult time refusing their requests. Yet her salary may be insufficient to maintain her middle-class status as well as help all the relatives who are in need. The resultant financial pressure can create what Andrew Billingsley called "the mixed blessings of upward mobility" (Billingsley, 1992). Moreover, because of residential segregation, middle-class black neighborhoods tend to be closer to poor black neighborhoods, and in fact they usually contain some poor families. Panto (2005) writes of the "subservience" of the black middle-class residential experience. Middle-class blacks tend to live in neighborhoods that have less crime and poverty than the neighborhoods of low-income blacks, but much more crime and poverty than the neighborhoods of middle-class whites. As a result, middle-class African American parents may struggle to shield their children from the lure of street life, with its criminal behavior and drug usage. And middle-class African Americans must coexist with neighbors and relatives in the underground economy in ways most whites need not (Panto-McCoy, 1999). Still, the growth of the African American middle class is a success story that is far often lost in the understandable focus on the African American poor.

Black churches have been a great source of social support to African Americans who have newly gained middle-class status. Throughout African American history the church and the family have been the enduring institutions through which black families could gain the strength to resist the oppression of slavery, reconstruction, segregation, and discrimination (Berry & Blount, 1982). The church has served as a stabilizing institution, a medieval social institution (other examples are civic groups, neighborhoods, and families themselves) through which individuals can negotiate with government and resist governmental abuses of power (Berger & Berger, 1983). It has been the greatest source of continuity outside of the family in the African American experience. Today the church also

Quick Review

- Marriage has declined among African Americans even more than among European Americans.
- The trend of economic restructuring—and the employment problems it has caused for African Americans—has an important factor in the decline of marriage.
- But cultural differences between African Americans and European Americans are probably important too.
- In general, African American families rely less on ties to extended kin more than European American families do.
- Over the past several decades, a substantial African American middle class has emerged for the first time.
- African American women's family lives are affected not only by their race and class but also by their gender.

“Quick Review” Summaries

Each chapter features several internal section summaries in addition to the one at the end of the chapter, ensuring that students stay on track as they read.

Complete End-of-Chapter Reviews

Clear, concise chapter summaries, key terms lists, review questions, critical thinking exercises, and Internet activities provide students with essential study materials.

Looking Back

1. What functions have families traditionally performed?

Family and kinship emerged as ways of ensuring the survival of human groups, which were organized as bands of hunter-gatherers and about 10,000 years ago. Until the past 200 years or so, most families performed three basic activities: production, reproduction, and consumption. Most American Indian tribes were organized into lineages and clans that provided the basis for social organization and governance. Colonial American families performed functions such as education that are now performed by schools and other institutions. These kinds of families can be said to follow the familial mode of production. The colonial American family performed many activities that are now done mostly outside the family: educating children, providing vocational training, treating the seriously ill, and so forth.

2. How did American families change after the United States was founded?

Between 1776 and about 1850, a new kind of family emerged among the white middle class in the United States, one in which marriage was based on affection rather than authority and custom. Over time, the primary role of women in these families became the care of children and the maintenance of the home. Children came to be seen as needing continual affection and guidance, which mothers were thought to be better at providing than fathers. As families became more centered on children, the number of children they raised declined. At the same time, a movement toward greater individualism weakened parents' influence over their children's marriage decisions and family lives. Working-class families, because of difficult economic circumstances, did not change as much.

3. How have the family histories of major ethnic and racial groups differed?

Before the Civil War, African slaves married and lived together for life, whenever possible, and knew and kept track of their kin. After the Civil War, discrimination shaped their family lives. For example, out of economic necessity, most black slaves worked in the fields, and urban blacks were forced for wages outside the home, more than white slaves did. As for Mexican Americans, after U.S. troops and immigrants seized their land, they became more of a working-class community, increasingly confined to barrios. Over time, more and more women headed households, in part because their husbands often worked as migratory farm workers. Chinese and Japanese families also faced discrimination.

Traditionally patrilineal, their authority over their children had declined over the generations. However, the second largest Asian immigrant group in the United States today are descended mostly from people who immigrated in the twentieth century. Filipinos have a bilateral kinship structure more similar to the kinship system of Europeans.

4. How did the emotional character of the American family change during the early twentieth century?

During the early decades of the twentieth century, rising standards of living allowed for greater attention to an emotionally satisfying private life. As the search for emotional satisfaction through family life became an important goal, the private family emerged. Eventually, the success of marriage came to be defined more in emotional terms than in terms of economic survival. People experienced more privacy in their personal lives through the increasing common empty nest phase of marriage and the rise in the number of individuals living alone.

5. What important changes occurred in marriage and childbearing in the last half of twentieth century?

In the 1950s, young adults married at earlier ages and the birthrate rose to a twentieth-century high. The baby boom was caused in part by the small cohort size and good economic future of the cohort that reached adulthood in the 1930s. In addition, a greater cultural emphasis on marriage and childbearing seems to have been present. The 1950s was the high point of the breadwinner-homemaker family, which was dominant only during the first half of the twentieth century. During the 1960s and 1970s, the trends in marriage, divorce, and births all reversed. Age at marriage increased sharply, the divorce rate declined, and the birthrate reached its lowest level. Moreover, married women were increasingly likely to work outside the home even when their children were young.

6. How does the life-course perspective help us to understand social change?

Sociologists examine how the course of individual lives is affected by historical events such as the Great Depression of the 1930s or the large rise in divorce rates in the 1960s and 1970s. Because young adults today have better job opportunities if they obtain a college degree, many are postponing marriage and childbearing until they finish their studies. Life-course scholars now use the term “early adulthood” for the emerging life stage.



Go to the Online Learning Center at www.mhhe.com/cherlin5 to test your knowledge of the chapter concepts and key terms.

Study Questions

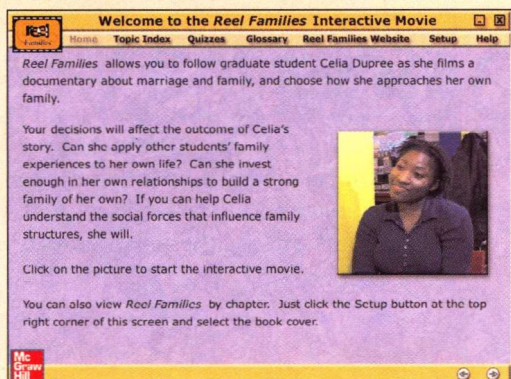
1. How did belonging to a lineage help a family in a tribal, agricultural society?
2. What is the key difference between the familial and labor market modes of production?
3. What did the colonial family do that modern families do not? What do modern families do that the colonial family did not?
4. How did marriage change during the late 1700s and early 1800s?
5. What were the costs and benefits to women of their restriction to “women’s sphere”?
6. How did the lives of working-class and minority-group wives differ from those of middle-class white wives?
7. In what ways did the scope of the “private family” increase after 1800?
8. In what ways was family life in the 1950s distinctive compared to that earlier or later in the century?
9. What does it mean to take a “life-course perspective” on the study of social change?
10. Why is the concept of “early adulthood” emerging now rather than 50 or 100 years ago?

Key Terms

1965 Immigration Act	58	early adulthood	70	lineage	38
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Thinking about Families

The Public Family	The Private Family
Why were the American family's public responsibilities much broader in the colonial period than in the case today?	Why are emotional satisfaction, intimacy, and romance less more important in American family life today than they were 100 years ago?



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