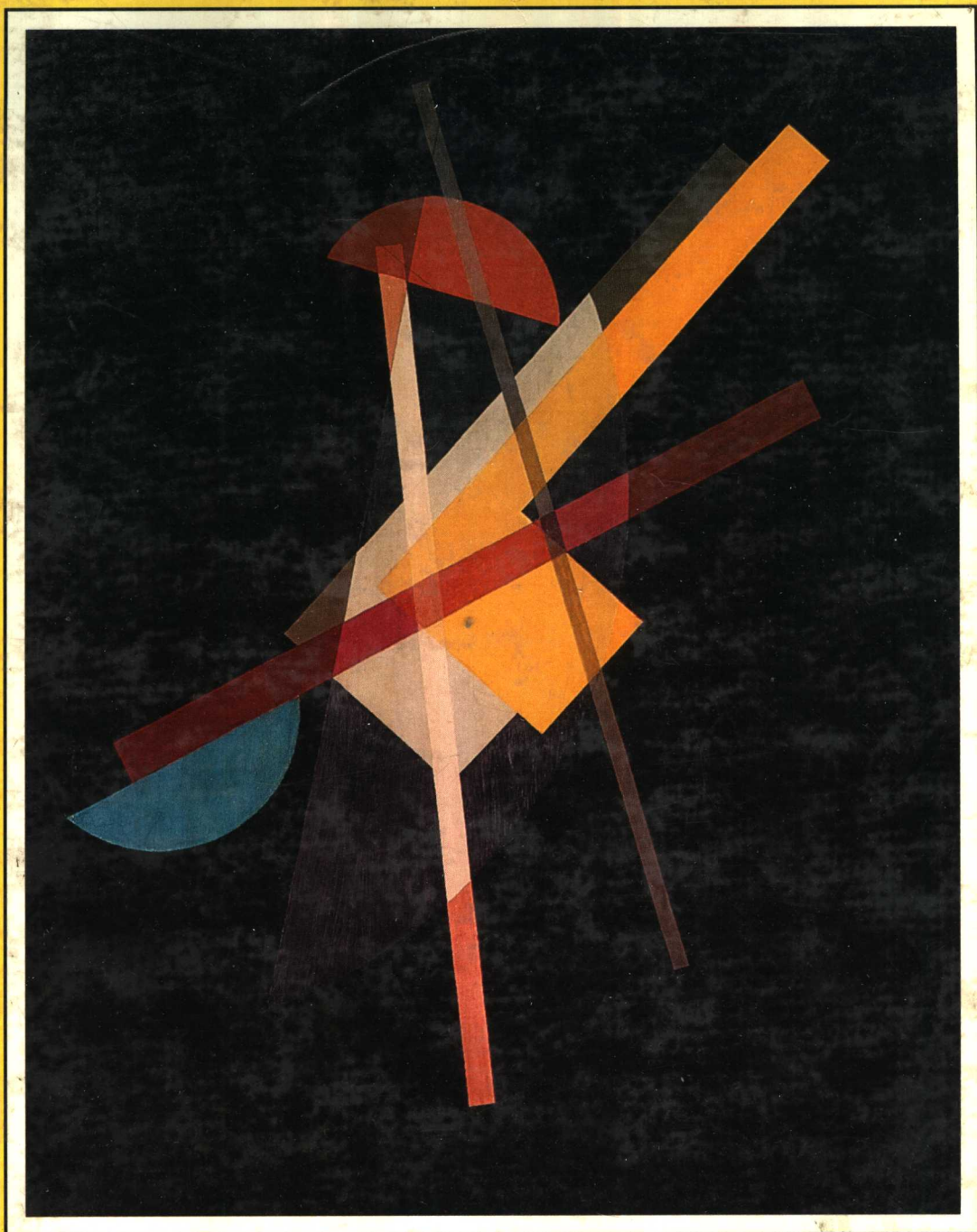


DIVERSITY *IN* FAMIL

SECOND EDITION



Maxine Baca Zinn / D. Stanley Eitzen

Diversity in Families

SECOND EDITION

Maxine Baca Zinn

The University of Michigan—Flint

D. Stanley Eitzen

Colorado State University



HarperCollinsPublishers

Sponsoring Editor: Alan McClare
Project Editor: Paula Cousin
Art Direction: Heather A. Ziegler
Cover Coordinator: Mary Archondes
Cover Design: Edward Smith Design
Cover Illustration/Photo: Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, D IV, 1922, 37 × 29½, oil on canvas,
George B. and Jenny R. Mathews Fund, 1973, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo,
New York
Photo Research: Alan Zinn
Production: Beth Maglione

Diversity in Families, Second Edition
Copyright © 1990 by HarperCollins*Publishers*, Inc.

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address HarperCollins*Publishers*, Inc., 10 East 53d Street, New York, NY 10022.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Zinn, Maxine Baca

Diversity in families / Maxine Baca Zinn. — 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Rev. ed. of: Diversity in American families. c1987.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-06-047373-8

1. Family—United States. 2. United States—Social conditions—1980-

I. Zinn, Maxine Baca, Diversity in American families. II. Title.

HQ536.Z54 1990

306.85'0973—dc20

89-38681

CIP

90 91 92 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

Diversity in Families

This book reflects the critical tradition of those family sociologists, economists, and historians whose scholarship is structuralist, feminist, and humanist. We dedicate this book to these scholars who have pushed us and others toward a fuller understanding of intimate human relationships in their social context.

Preface

SUBJECT

The subject of this book—families—is inherently interesting because each of us is part of a family and more than nine out of ten of us will form families of our own. Families interest us because familial relationships are built on the compelling and mysterious feelings of intimacy, sexuality, and love. Families fascinate us because they also may involve a dark side of domination, trauma, and conflict. Families absorb our attention, too, because they are at once private and public. They are private places of refuge yet they are often at the center of political and public controversy. And, at a very personal level, families are crucial shapers of who we are and what our opportunities have been and will be.

The purpose of *Diversity in Families* is to understand families in our society. This requires that we demythologize the family. We must substitute, for example, the reality of how families are structured from the ideal images of the family that are commonly portrayed historically. The demythologizing of the family also requires that we examine the diversity of contemporary families. Contrary to what we are often led to believe, the family is not monolithic—there is no single type of “family.” Rather than a unified whole, “the family” is experienced differently by people in different social classes, different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and even by gender. And variations in families occur within a social class or ethnic group. In fact, with such common occurrences as cohabitation, marriage, birth of children, divorce, remarriage, and widowhood, most people will experience more than one family type in the course of a lifetime.

APPROACH

Understanding families compels us to examine how they are related to the larger social world. A fundamental assumption of this book is that families are *not* the “building blocks of society” but are, rather, the products of social forces within society. The material conditions of people’s lives, for example, are critical in shaping attitudes, behaviors, and family patterns. The structure of the economy in society affects which family members work outside the

home, lifestyles of family members, how material needs are met, the opportunities for children, and even how the labor and decision making within the family will be divided. Clearly, too, the economic rewards of occupations are key determinants in family diversity.

Most crucial economic conditions in American society make family life problematic. This does not mean that families are incapable of being warm and loving places for people, but that structural conditions sometimes preclude this ideal for many. In short, some seemingly deviant responses that are disproportionately found among racial minorities and in the lower social classes are the consequences of structured social inequality and not the result of flawed people. This structural perspective does not mean, however, that we ascribe to a rigid structural determinism. Families do not simply respond passively to their changing situations. For example, although racial minorities and those in the lower social classes are victims of institutional barriers, they also find ways to adapt and lead meaningful lives.

FOCUS

The sociological perspective is the foundation for the analysis of families in this book. Our focus is on how people organize their intimate relationships as a consequence of the social forces that so keenly affect their interests, preferences, perceptions, choices, and other behaviors. The sociological approach to the family finds family forms and the behaviors of family members to be largely the result of structural influences rather than the consequences of their genes, biology, or psychology. Rather than look for explanations within people, sociologists focus on social structures outside individuals.

Our structural approach incorporates many of the assumptions and perspectives of conflict theory. In this view the family is shaped by structural demands. At the macrolevel, the family is a vital part of the economy because it produces both workers and consumers. The family is one of the primary mechanisms for perpetuating social inequality. Wealth is locked up in elite families and then passed down through inheritance. This economic domination limits the resources and opportunities of those who are lower in the socioeconomic hierarchy. Thus, families pass on their advantages and disadvantages to their offspring.

The family is not necessarily the haven assumed in cultural mythology. At the microlevel, conflict is generated by female resistance to male domination, and by the demands of occupational and economic hardships that can work against intimacy and companionship between spouses. Thus, the modern family is not always a tranquil institution, but one fraught with potential and sometimes actual conflict.

The isolated nuclear family has positive consequences for our economic system, but it can be highly negative for individuals. The economic system benefits when employers are able to move individuals (and individual families) from place to place without great disruption. The economy is served when employers do not have to worry about satisfying the emotional needs

of workers. And the system benefits when the family is isolated and therefore cannot affect society.

This isolation can have negative consequences for individuals because families have sole responsibility for maintaining a private refuge from an impersonal society and for providing personal fulfillment. The demands are often just too great. Families alone cannot provide for all the emotional needs of their members, although their members try to fulfill these needs through consumerism, physical relations, and child-centered activities.

An important aspect of our approach is the critical examination of society. We ask such questions as, How do families really work? Who benefits under the existing arrangements and who does not? This critical stance is based on the assumption that the social world is human-made and therefore not sacred. Thus, a keen sociological analysis demystifies and demythologizes social life by ferreting out the existing myths, stereotypes, and dogmas. This means, for example, that families must be examined not only from middle class, White, male viewpoints, which have dominated the scholarly study of the family, but must be viewed from other vantage points as well. Several bodies of new scholarship are infused throughout this book to inform us of the variations in family organization and experience by social class, gender, and race.

To summarize, this book examines families from the sociological perspective. This examination requires a critical analysis of society and the structural forces that impinge on families, affecting the behaviors of family members and ultimately affecting the forms that family units take. Most important, the structured inequalities in society based on wealth, race/ethnicity, and gender are viewed as key determinants in the diversity of family forms and differential experiences within families. Finally, the sociological analysis of families examines them in historical and contemporary contexts to challenge the myths and erroneous assumptions about family living that persist.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Two chapters have been added to this edition to emphasize the importance of social factors on families. The first focuses on the structural transformation of the economy (shifting toward a service economy, the movement of capital, the globalization of the economy, and new technologies) and how these radical changes have dramatic impacts on families. The other new chapter examines work and how the arrangements of work outside the home affect families and family members.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the following reviewers whose contributions to the first and second editions of this book were extremely helpful: Maxine Atkinson, North Carolina State University; Denzel Benson, Kent State University; David Demo, Virginia Polytechnic State University; Lee Frank, Community Col-

lege of Allegheny County; Shirley Harkess, University of Kansas; Sharon Houseknecht, Ohio State University; Janet Hunt, University of Maryland; Cynthia Negrey, University of Louisville; Charles Peek, Texas Tech University; Charles Petranek, University of Southern Indiana; Barbara Reisman, North Carolina State University; Constance Sheehan, University of Florida.

Maxine Baca Zinn
D. Stanley Eitzen

Contents

	Preface	xiii
1	Images, Ideals, and Myths	1
	Images and Ideals	3
	Family as Haven	3
	Family as Fulfillment	4
	Family as Encumbrance	4
	The Mythical American Family	9
	The Myth of a Stable and Harmonious Family of the Past	10
	The Myth of Separate Worlds	11
	The Myth of the Monolithic Family Form	14
	The Myth of an Undifferentiated Family Experience	16
	The Myth of Family Consensus	19
2	Families of the Past and the Emergence of the Modern Family	22
	Family and the New Social History	23
	The Traditional View and Its Flaws	25
	Family Life In Colonial America	27
	Economy, Family, and Society,	27
	Family Structure and Household Composition	32
	The Emergence of Modern Family Life	41
	Economy, Family, and Society	42
	Industrialization and Family Diversity	44
3	Industrialization and Families: Class, Gender, and Race	50
	Industrialization, Urbanization, and Family Life	52
	The Traditional View and Its Shortcomings	52
	Economy, Family, and Society	54
	Immigration and Family Life	63
	The Traditional View and Its Shortcomings	64
	Industrial Work and Family	66

	Racial Control and Family Life	69
	Traditional Views and Their Shortcomings	69
	Families of Color as Exceptions to the Rule	72
	Revised Perspectives	72
	Black Families in Slavery and Freedom	77
	Chicano Families in the Southwest	81
	Rethinking Family Diversity	86
4	Contemporary Structures of Inequality and Families	89
	Class	91
	The Cultural Approach	93
	The Structural Approach	99
	Race	109
	Race and Inequality	110
	The Cultural Approach	113
	Structural Conditions and Family Life: Blacks	116
	Structural Conditions and Family Life: Hispanics	122
	Gender	126
	The Sex-Gender System	126
	The Traditional Sex Roles Approach	128
	The Structural Approach	130
5	The Reshaping of Society and Families	140
	The Structural Transformation of the Economy and Families	141
	The Interrelated Forces Transforming the American Economy	142
	Consequences of the Economic Transformation for Families	148
	Home-Based Work	159
	Population Dynamics and Consequences for Families	160
	The New Immigration and the Changing Racial Landscape	161
	The Changing Age Structure: Divergent Paths for Children and the Elderly	165
	Public Policy and Families	169
	Welfare	170
	Abortion	174
	Child Care	175
6	The Changing Connections Between Work and Families	178
	The Changing Economic Roles of Women, Men, and Children	179
	Women's Employment	179
	Men's Employment	187
	Children's Employment	188

	Structural Linkages Between Work and Family	189
	Work Roles	191
	Family Characteristics	200
	Invisible and Unpaid Family Work	207
	Gendered Labor in the Household	208
	Other Forms of Family Work	212
	Coping with Work and Family	213
	Family Coping Strategies	213
	Family-Supportive Employer Responses	215
7	Intimacy, Sexuality, and Love	221
	Courtship and Mate Selection	225
	Variations in Courtship Practices by Gender, Social Class, and Race	226
	Factors in Mate Selection	229
	Changing Sexual Behavior	233
	The Social Construction of Sexuality	233
	The Liberalization of Sex	234
	The New Sexual Conservatism	248
	Differentiated Forms of Intimacy	249
	Gendered Love and Sex	249
	Social Class and Intimacy	256
	Race and Intimacy	260
8	Contemporary Marriages	264
	Recent Trends	267
	Nonmarried Adults	267
	Age at First Marriage	268
	Family Size	268
	Divorce	269
	Remarriage	269
	Gender: His and Her Marriages	269
	Traditional "His" and "Her" Marriages	270
	Marital Success	274
	The Correlates of Marital Quality	275
	Communication in Marriage	277
	Power and Decision Making in Marriage	280
	Sources of Power in Marriage	280
	Social Class and Marital Power	282
	Race and Ethnicity	285

9 Parents and Children 289

Demographic Patterns 290

Fertility 290

Voluntary Childlessness 295

Delayed Childbearing 298

Family Composition 298

The Impact of Children on Marriage 299

The Benefits of Parenthood 299

The Costs of Parenthood 302

Children and Structural Changes 303

The Impact of Parents on Children 305

The Omnipotent Parents Model 305

An Alternative Model: The Structure of the Family Embedded in a
Larger Network of Influences 307

Parents and Children in Dual-Earner Families 314

Social Supports for Working Parents 315

Single Parents and Their Children 316

10 Violence in Families 322

Families in a Violent Society 323

Family Organization and Violence 325

Spouse Abuse 327

Incidence of Wife Abuse 327

Why Does the Victim Tend to Remain in the Abusive Situation? 330

Child Abuse and Neglect 335

Definition 335

Incidence 336

Causes 337

Consequences 340

Incest 342

Incidence 342

Consequences 344

Battered Elders 345

Frequency and Nature of Elder Abuse 345

The Causes of Elder Abuse 346

11 Divorce and Remarriage 350**Divorce Rates 351**

Divorce Trends 351

The Correlates of Divorce 355

Predicting the Divorce Rate: Up or Down? 363

The Prediction of a Declining Divorce Rate 363

The Prediction of a Rising Divorce Rate 364

The Consequences of Divorce 366

"His" and "Her" Divorce 366

Children and Divorce 370

Remarriage After Divorce 373

Statistical Facts About Remarriage 375

The Uniqueness of Remarriage 377

12 Contemporary Lifestyle Variations 384**Single Life 392**

The Singles Population 393

Single Life and Gender 394

Race and Singles 401

Lifestyles of Singles 401

Heterosexual Cohabitation 403

Social Class, Age, and Race 404

The Rise of Cohabitation 405

Cohabitation and Traditional Courtship 407

Cohabitation Compared with Marriage 407

Gender 408

Cohabitation and the Future of Marriage 408

Homosexual Lifestyles 409

Gender 411

Discrimination 413

Commuter Marriages 419

Gender 423

13 Families in the Future 425**Diversity Among Contemporary Families 426****Social Forces Affecting Families in the Year 2000 426**

The Economy 431

The Polity 432

Demographics 434

Technological Changes 438

World Conditions 439

Three Probable Consequences of Present Trends for Families in the
Near Future 440

The Decline of Affluence 440

The Increasing Gap Between the "Haves" and the "Have-Nots" 441

The Gender Battleground 445

The Probable Shapes of Future Families 448

Glossary 451

Bibliography 460

Name Index 503

Subject Index 508

Chapter 1

Images, Ideals, and Myths

连续的发展.
Families are in flux. Far-reaching changes in society are altering family life and bringing forth contrasting interpretations of these changes. There is a growing concern that all is not well in American families. Widespread divorce, the growth of single-parent families, cohabitation, and the rise of out-of-wedlock births suggest that the family is disintegrating. On the other hand, these patterns can be interpreted to show that although some families may be troubled, the family is very much alive as it changes in response to the surrounding world.

This book presents a sociological analysis of family life in American society. In order to do this we must expose the mythical ideals that influence our perceptions and replace these myths with an understanding of historical, social, economic, and cultural forces that create families. Knowing that families

are embedded in a larger social context places us in a better position to sort out what is myth and what is reality and to make sense of family changes.

As a beginning, we need to be aware that the family is an ideal as well as a form of social organization. Strong cultural themes make it difficult to think about family life objectively. As much as we seek objectivity, our perceptions are guided by our own family experiences, our ideals, and, paradoxically, the very familiarity of family life. Because the family is familiar, we tend to take it for granted, to view it as "natural" without questioning the whys or even the hows of family dynamics. As a result, family behavior can be camouflaged in such a way that individuals may misunderstand family processes in general and even have some misconceptions about their own families. Family life can also be "hidden" by what R. D. Laing terms "mystification," which is the deliberate misdefinition of family matters or "complicated stratagems to keep everyone in the dark" (Laing, 1972:77). Family life can become mystified as one individual defines reality in order to suit his or her own purposes, and in so doing negates the needs of other family members.

Families, like governments, do not find candor a necessary ingredient for their day-to-day operations. Often, it is quite the opposite. One of the discoveries of recent family research is that families have myths, secrets, and information-processing rules which determine the kinds of communication that goes on—what can be said, and more important, what *cannot* be said. Families filter information not only about the wider culture but also about their own functioning (Skolnick, 1987:58).

Objectivity is thus obscured by two different qualities—familiarity and mystification. Other obstacles that handicap the goal of objectivity are sacredness and secrecy (Skolnick, 1987:58). The family is not merely a social institution; it is associated with what is good and proper. Moreover, it is the most private of all society's institutions. The saying that "a family's business is nobody's business but their own" is not merely a statement about the right to family privacy; it is also a statement with strong moral overtones that reflect the sacredness granted to the family. The norm of family privacy gives the family an elusive quality that exists alongside its familiarity. In contemporary Western society, the family is, to use Erving Goffman's (1959) term, a "backstage" area, where people are free to act in ways they would not in public. This accounts for the deceptive quality of family life. Privacy results in "pluralistic ignorance"—we have a backstage view of our own families, but can judge others only in terms of their public presentations. Often we have "inside" interpretations of other families' "outsides." However, the gap between public norms and private behavior can be wide; marital relationships tend to be even more private and invisible than those between parents and children (Skolnick, 1979:300).

The ideals that we hold about "the family" color not only how we experience family life but also how we speak of our experience. This is not unique to our society. Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell has found that in all societies a gap may exist between family processes and family ideals, between what people say about their family behavior and the real behavior that takes place