
NINTH EDITION

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES

AN INTRODUCTION

Andrew J. Cherlin



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Public & Private Families

AN INTRODUCTION

ANDREW J. CHERLIN
Johns Hopkins University

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PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES: AN INTRODUCTION, NINTH EDITION

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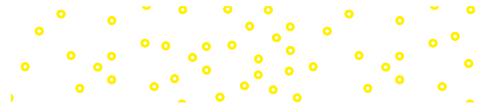
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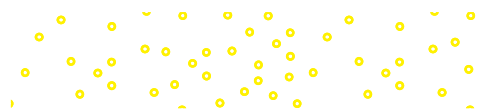
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For Claire and Reid







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 *Labor's Love Lost: The Rise and Fall of the Working-Class Family in America* (2014), *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today* (2009), *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. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and the National Academy of Sciences.



Courtesy of Will Kirk, Johns Hopkins University

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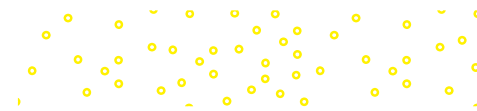
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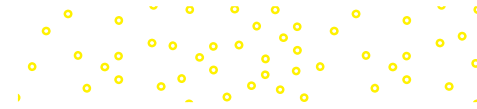
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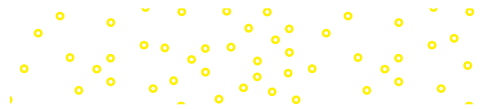
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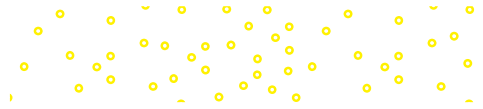
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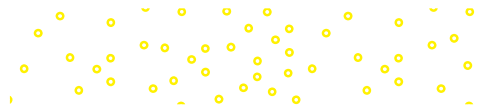
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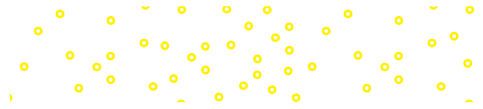


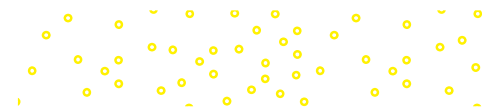
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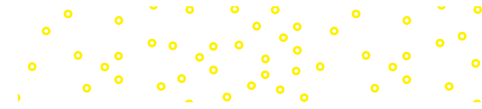
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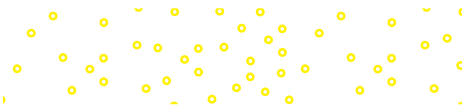
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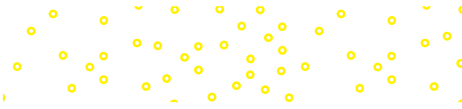
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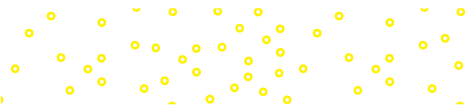
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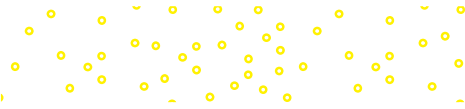
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Preface

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 the 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 expanding older population (as well as the escalating cost of providing financial and medical assistance to them) 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 14 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 intimate partner violence. Then the formation and dissolution of marriages and cohabiting unions are discussed. Finally, in Part Six (“Family, Society, and World”) family change around the world and social and political issues involving the family and the state are discussed.

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, most chapters include 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:

- **Addresses the global nature of family change.** Although the emphasis in the book is on the contemporary United States, no text should ignore the important cross-national connections among families in our globalized economy. The text includes a chapter on “International Family Change” that provides a comprehensive treatment of the major types of change that are occurring in family life around the world (Chapter 13).
- **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, in addition to the new chapter on international family change, Chapter 14, “The Family, the State, and Social Policy,” and Chapter 10, “Older People and Their Families.” These chapters examine issues of great current interest, such as income assistance to poor families, 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.

Pedagogy

Each chapter begins in a way that engages the reader: the controversy over whether the Scarborough 11 in Hartford, Connecticut, constitute a family (Chapter 1); the transgender moment (Chapter 3); the courtship of Maud Rittenhouse in the 1880s (Chapter 7); and so forth. And each of the six parts of the book is preceded by a brief introduction that sets the stage.

Several *Quick Review* boxes in each chapter include bulleted, one-sentence summaries of the key points of the preceding sections. Each chapter also contains the following types of questions:

- *Looking Forward*—Questions that preview the chapter themes and topics.
- *Ask Yourself*—Two questions that appear at the end of each of the boxed features.

- *Looking Back*—Looking Forward questions reiterated at the end of each chapter, around which the chapter summaries are organized.
- *Thinking about Families*—Two questions that appear at the end of each chapter and are designed to encourage critical thinking about the “public” and the “private” family.

What's New in Each Chapter?

As with every edition, all statistics in the text have been updated whenever possible. The structure of the chapters in the book remains the same as in the 8th edition. Changes include the following:

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FAMILIES.

- I have slightly altered the definition of the private family to accommodate alternative families such as the Scarborough 11 and the voluntary-kinship based families formed by some LGBTQ individuals. I explicitly say that family members do not all need to be related by blood or marriage.
- I now use *voluntary kinship* as the term for what I previously called *created kinship*, since the *voluntary* term is more common in the literature.
- I have deleted reference to a 1999 New York Times survey in which people were much more pessimistic about other families than about theirs. It is too dated, and I cannot find a more recent administration of the survey questions.
- I have added a fifth theoretical perspective: queer theory. In previous editions, I had discussed it briefly in other chapters, and I still do in this edition. But due to its popularity among scholars, I have now given it equal status with other important theoretical perspectives. I introduce several new key terms in this chapter: cisgender people, transgender people, heteronormativity, monogamy, polyamory, and queer theory.
- I have moved the discussion of intersectionality from Chapter 3 (gender) to this chapter. The intersectional perspective has become more prominent among social theorists.

CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

- I have moved the section on the historical emergence of sexual identities from Chapter 6 in the previous edition to Chapter 2 of this edition. This move reflects my view that the material on sexuality and the family has become more central to sociological research and should be introduced earlier.
- I have deleted the section on the origins of family and kinship, which described hunter-gatherer society and lineages; however, I have added back in material on lineages in the section on American Indians later in the chapter.
- I have deleted a discussion of African roots of African American cultural patterns, which reflects my sense that historians are no longer pursuing this topic.
- I have added to the section on emerging adulthood a subsection on gay and lesbian emerging adults in the period from 1945 to 2000.

CHAPTER 3. GENDER AND FAMILIES

- I include an update on attention to transgender issues, including an estimate of how many transgender people there are in the United States.
- In this edition, I have introduced the concept of intersectionality in Chapter 1, rather than in this chapter. Here I write briefly about the origin of the concept in gender studies and give an example of its usefulness.

CHAPTER 4. SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILY INEQUALITY

- I present new estimates of the lifetime prevalence of homelessness among the baby boom generation.
- I have deleted an out-of-date discussion about how couples decide what class they are in.
- There is a new section on the rise in “deaths of despair” due to alcohol poisoning and drug overdoses among whites without college degrees, but not among African Americans and Hispanics without college degrees. It draws upon a book and articles that I have written on the working-class family over the past several years.

CHAPTER 5. RACE, ETHNICITY, AND FAMILIES

- I include an update on racial and ethnic categories to be used in the 2020 Census, (See boxed feature, “How Should Multiracial Families Be Counted?”)
- In the section on Hispanic families, I present more information on migration from Central America. I note that Salvadorans are now a larger group in the United States than are Cubans. I have added a subsection, “Salvadorans.”

CHAPTER 6. SEXUALITIES

- Historical material on the emergence of sexual identities has been moved to Chapter 2.
- A new section on LGBTQ family life has been added, focusing on defining and forming families, becoming parents, and dividing the household labor.
- I present evidence that men’s heterosexuality may be more precarious than women’s.
- I discuss up-to-date twin studies and GWAS gene-sequencing studies on biological influences on sexuality.
- Evidence is presented that a greater increase in same-sex sexual activity has occurred among women than among men.

CHAPTER 7. COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE

- A new section on online matchmaking and commitment is included.
- I present a new estimate of the number of Americans who are in living-apart relationships.
- I also report that a majority of all same-sex couples in the United States who are living together are now married.

CHAPTER 8. WORK AND FAMILIES

- A new chapter opener contrasts the amount and kind of child care that male physicians and male emergency medical technicians tend to do (from Clawson & Gerstel, 2014).
- A new subsection presents research showing that single and cohabiting mothers tend to do less housework, have more leisure time, and sleep more than married mothers.
- I discuss the results of studies of the division of labor in same-sex couples.
- I have rewritten the section on work hours, formerly titled “Overworked and Underworked Americans.” Among other updates, the new section emphasizes the “normal unpredictability” (new key term) of work hours among less-educated workers.

CHAPTER 9. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

- I consider controversial research suggesting that the amount of time that mothers spend with their children is not associated with how well the children are faring. (See the section, “What’s Important?”)

- I include a new subsection on the difficulties that unauthorized-immigrant parents face in raising their U.S.-born children.

CHAPTER 10. OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

- I have written a new subsection on grandfamilies (called in previous editions, skipped-generation households): families in which grandparents are raising grandchildren without the parents being present. It draws upon a recent book by Rachel Dunifon (2018).
- I have deleted the subsection on the effects of divorce and remarriage. I include more on post-dissolution relationships in Chapter 12.

CHAPTER 11. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- I discuss new research showing that during the Great Recession men acted in a more coercively controlling way toward their partners in areas where the unemployment rate was increasing rapidly, even after taking into account whether the men themselves were unemployed (Schneider, Harknett, & McLanahan, 2016).
- I draw attention to the sharp rise in the number of children in foster care due, in large part, to the opioid addiction and death crisis. See the boxed feature, Families and Public Policy: The Swinging Pendulum of Foster Care Policy.

CHAPTER 12. UNION DISSOLUTION AND REPARTNERING

- I have greatly revised this chapter: It was too focused on divorce. It now notes that the rise of cohabiting unions has been the major factor driving dissolution and repartnering among young adults over the past few decades.
- A new chart (Figure 12.1) showing that while the overall percentage of children experiencing parental union disruption hasn't changed much, the source has: Children born to cohabiting parents constitute a larger share of all children experiencing dissolution than in the past.
- I present evidence from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics that families with older stepparents or adult stepchildren exchange less assistance up and down the generations than do families with only biological parents and children, which suggests a problem for future generations in societies (such as the U.S.) that rely on family members to provide assistance and care (Wiemers, Seltzer, Schoeni, Hotz, & Bianchi, 2019).

CHAPTER 13. INTERNATIONAL FAMILY CHANGE

- The great rise of cohabitation in many regions of the world necessitates an expanded, separate section on the "cohabitation boom."

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

- I discuss recent bipartisan activity on the issue of paid parental leave that raises the possibility that national legislation will be enacted in the near future.

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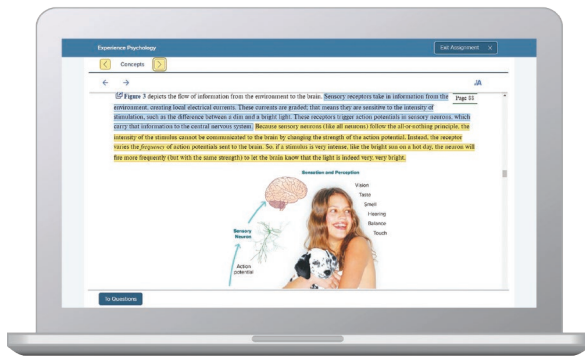




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Part One

Introduction

The family has two aspects. It is, first, the place where we experience much of our private lives. It is where we give and receive love, share our hopes and fears, work through our troubles, and relax and enjoy ourselves. Second, it is a setting in which adults perform tasks that are of importance to society, particularly raising children and assisting elderly parents. To be sure, people undertake these tasks not to perform a public service but rather to express love, affection, and gratitude. Nevertheless, family caretaking benefits us all by raising the next generation and by reducing our collective responsibility for the elderly. Indeed, people today frequently express concern over whether changes in the family have reduced parents' abilities to raise their children well. This book is about both the private and public aspects of families. It examines the contributions of family life not only to personal satisfaction but also to public welfare. The first two chapters provide an introduction to this perspective. **Chapter 1** explores the most useful ways to think about families, and it examines the approaches that sociologists and other social scientists use to study families. **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the history of the family. Over the past half-century family historians have produced many studies that provide useful insights. A knowledge of family life in the past can help us to understand families today.