

# CH. 13 FAMILY AND RELIGION

## THE POWER OF SOCIETY

-Can a person's religious affiliation (or lack of it) give us any clues about that person's attitudes of family life?

### Families: What is...

- Family: Social institution of cooperative groups to oversee the bearing and raising of children
- Kinship: Social bond based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption
- Marriage: Legal relationship, involving economic cooperation, sexual activity, and childbearing
- Extended family: Family consisting of parents, children and other kin
- Nuclear family: Family form composed of one or two parents and their children

### Marriage Patterns

- Monogamy: Marriage that unites two partners
- Polygamy: Marriage that unites a person with two or more spouses
- Polygyny: Marriage that unites one man and two or more women
- Polyandry: Marriage that unites one woman and two or more men

### Theories of the Family:

#### -Structural-Functional Analysis

- The family performs many vital tasks
  - Socialization
  - Regulation of sexual activity
  - Social placement
  - Material and emotional security

#### -Social-Conflict and Feminist Analysis

- How the family perpetuates social inequality
  - Property and inheritance
  - Patriarchy
  - Racial and ethnic categories persist over generations because most people marry others like themselves

#### -Micro-Level Analysis

- Symbolic-interaction theory
  - Opportunities for sharing activities help build emotional bonds
  - As children approach adulthood, kinship ties typically open up to include sharing confidences with greater intimacy
- Social-exchange theory
  - Courtship and marriage as a negotiation to make the "best deal" on a partner

### Stages of Family Life

#### -Courtship

- Arranged marriages are alliances between two extended families of similar social standing usually involve an exchange of children and wealth
- Change with industrialization involves choosing own mate, different courtship skills, sexual experimentation, and delayed marriage

#### -Romantic love

- Culture celebrates romantic love
- Couples encouraged to leave the home and form new families of their own
- Romantic love is a less stable foundation for marriage than social and economic considerations

#### -Settling in: ideal and real marriage

- Ideal
  - Unrealistic optimism about perfect marriage
  - Honeymoon stage
- Real
  - Infidelity

#### -Child rearing

- Industrialization transformed children from assets to liabilities
- Trend toward smaller families

- About half of U.S. families would like more time to parent
- Economic reality requires parents to work outside the home

### **Stages of Family Life: Families in Later Life**

- Empty nest: adjustment period when children no longer have daily contact with parents
- Sandwich generation: Taking care of both parents and children
- Loneliness: Social isolation from others

### **U.S. Families:**

#### **-Class and Race**

- Social class: Determines a family's financial security and opportunities
- Ethnicity and race
  - American Indian
  - Latino families
  - African American family

#### **-Ethnically and Racially Mixed Marriages**

- Race has been powerful mate selection barrier
- In 1967, interracial marriage is legalized in U.S.
- Racially mixed marriage is increasing
- More interracial couples live in Western U.S.

#### **-Gender**

- Every marriage is actually two different relationships: woman's marriage and man's marriage (Bernard 1982)
- Marriage benefits men more than women

### **Transitions and Problems in Family Life:**

#### **-Divorce**

-9/10 people marry, 5/10 divorce... Why?

- Rising individualism
- Subsiding romantic love
- Less female dependence on men
- More stressful marriages
- Higher socially acceptable of divorce
- More easily acquired divorce

#### **-Divorce and Children**

- Divorce may be a solution for a couple in an unhappy marriage, but it can be a problem for children who experience the withdrawal of a parent from their social world

#### **-Remarriage and Blended Families**

##### **-Alternative family forms**

- More than half of people who divorce remarry
- Remarriage often creates blended families
- Challenge of defining new roles and relationships
- One-Parent families
  - Increase a woman's risk of poverty
  - Limit work and education
  - Put children at disadvantage
- Cohabitation
  - Involves sharing of a household by unmarried couple
  - Tends to appeal to more independent-minded individuals as well as those who favor gender equality
- Gay and Lesbian couples
  - Public opinion trend is toward greater support for homosexual relationships
- Singlehood
  - Increasing numbers of people are choosing to live alone

### **Religion: Concepts and Theories**

#### **-Emile Durkheim**

- Things that surpass the limits of our knowledge

- Social institution involving beliefs based on recognition of the sacred
- Profane: Ordinary elements of everyday life
- Sacred:
  - Set apart as extraordinary, inspiring awe and reverence
  - Embodied in ritual or formal, ceremonial behavior
- Faith: Belief-based conviction rather than scientific evidence
- Structural-Functional Theory
  - Religion has 3 major functions (Durkheim)
    - Establishing social cohesion
    - Promoting social control
    - Providing meaning and purpose
- Symbolic-Interaction Theory
  - Religion is social constructed
    - Symbols
    - Rituals
    - “Cosmic frame of reference” gives appearance of ultimate security and permanence (Berger 1967)
- Social-Conflict Theory
  - Religion
    - Serves elites by legitimizing status quo and diverting attention from social inequality
    - Attempts to “convert heathens” and is the “Opiate of the masses” (Marx)

### **Gender and Religion: Feminist Theory**

- Feminist theory
  - Patriarchal structure of major religions links gender and social inequality to religion
  - Patriarchy is a characteristic of all the world’s major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

### **Religion and Social Change**

- Weber: Protestantism and capitalism: Rise of industrial capitalism encouraged by Calvinism
- Liberation theology
  - Combined Christian principles with political activism, often Marxist in character
  - Social oppression counter Christian morality

### **Types of Religious Organizations**

- Church
  - Religious organization that is well integrated into the larger society
  - Usually persist for centuries
  - Include generations of the same families
  - Established rules and formally trained and ordained leaders
- Sect
  - Religious organization that stands apart from the larger society
  - Many sects actively recruit or proselytize new members and value conversion
- Cult
  - Religious organization that is largely outside a society’s cultural traditions

### **Religion on History**

- Pre-industrial societies
  - Animism: Elements of the natural world are conscious life forms that affect humanity
- Pastoral and horticultural societies
  - Monotheistic-Belief in a single divine power: Responsible for creating the world

### **Religion in the United States**

- In industrial societies
  - Industrial Revolution introduced in a growing emphasis on science
  - Science: How does the world work?
  - Religion: Why are we here?
- United States