Chapter 8
Institutions

Title Page Image 8.1
https://www.pexels.com/photo/mother-carrying-her-baby-while-working-from-home-6393356/

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand that the family is one of several social institutions that shape the way individuals live their lives.

2. Think through the symbiotic nature in which the family is influenced by other institutions and the family also influences these institutions.

3. Identify the ways in which work, education, religion, and government institutions influence the day-to-day activities of families.

4. Understand the way in which institutions affect families differently at different stages of the life course.

5. Learn about the direct and indirect ways in which institutions affect and are affected by the family.

<vignette>

It is Monday morning and Cam and Wanda Phillips are gearing up for a new week. The week ahead is pretty much set for them, with school trips and work deadlines as well as the events their religious community has planned. It looks particularly busy and they wonder if there is any way to slow it all down. They have thought about home-schooling their two older children, but that would mean that Cam or Wanda would have to put his or her career as a lawyer on hold; after spending all that money and time in law school, it doesn't seem as if that is going to happen. If only they lived closer to Cam or Wanda's family and hadn't moved across the country for new jobs, they wouldn't have to deal with the daycare issue of their youngest each morning. Wanda was legally entitled to an extended maternity leave package at her firm, but she returned to work just two months after the baby was born. She hopes to make partner one day and the thought of being put on the "mommy track" scared her. She wanted her company to know that she could work just as hard as the men there. With BlackBerry in hand, school planners signed, and breakfast in a glass, Cam heads off to take the older children to school while Wanda buckles in the baby to take him to daycare. It will be another day of wondering whether this craziness will ever end.

<end of vignette>

The Phillips may have a little more money in their retirement account, drive nicer cars, and have a bigger house than most couples, but their day-to-day life is not that different from most North Americans as they try to juggle multiple demands on their time. This chapter looks at the impact that other common social institutions have on the family, and how that impact changes over the life course. See Box 8.1 for more detail on what we mean by social institutions. The family is one of several social institutions that influence one another. In the Phillips family, we see the influence of the educational system throughout the day in the form of rides to school and tightly packed schedules, but it also affects people across the life course according to the type and location of the school selected as well as the length of time spent in formal education. The education one chooses earlier in life is usually tied to career choices made later in life, which may in turn require the need to relocate to obtain work. The labour institution has influenced where the Phillips have chosen to live. Religion will also affect the family's schedule in terms of when and where they gather with their faith community. Although government as an institution isn't mentioned directly, it has also affected the family by establishing laws regarding universal

child education, parental leave policies, retirement payouts, and the way in which child care is provided and funded. At the end of the day, the Phillips family must navigate the difficult terrain set in front of them by these often competing institutions.

Box 8.1
Social Institutions
The term "social institution" is somewhat unclear both in ordinary language and in the philosophical literature (see below). However, contemporary sociology is somewhat more consistent in its use of the term. Typically, contemporary sociologists use the term to refer to complex social forms that reproduce themselves such as governments, the family, human languages, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems. A typical definition is that proffered by Jonathan Turner (Turner 1997: 6): "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment." Again, Anthony Giddens says (Giddens 1984: 24): "Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life." He (Giddens 1984: 31) goes on to list as institutional orders, modes of discourse, political institutions, economic institutions and legal institutions.
Source: Miller (2011)

Institutional influence does not remain constant across the life course of individuals or the family. As people move through the educational system, they are steered toward career choices as well as toward potential mates who reflect their own values. These early life choices have a lasting impact across the rest of the life course. How much education we receive, what careers we choose, and the people with whom we develop early, committed, intimate relationships will give the rest of our lives structure that becomes more difficult to change later in life. Newly married couples are not concerned about daycare issues or school day activities, nor are couples later in life after their children have left home. While younger couples may be more concerned about child-care policies, older couples may focus on the government's approach to Old Age Security payments and health care funding priorities. As we move through the life course, the institutions around us continue to affect us in ever-changing ways.

We begin this chapter with a brief discussion of the theoretical perspectives applied to examining the institution of the family, to give us a framework in which to discuss the dominant social institutions that influence and are influenced by the family. We will look at the impact of labour, education, religion, and government on the family over the life course.

The ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle had strong but conflicting views of the family and its place among institutions such as the government. Plato had little regard for the family while Aristotle saw it as a key component to a healthy, stable society. More recently, sociological theorists Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber addressed this issue of family among other institutions. Marx and Weber shared similar ideas regarding the economic importance of

the family. Weber felt that close family ties hindered the growth of capitalism. Consistent with his work on the **Protestant Reformation**, Weber concluded that the transfer of affinity from kin to one's religious community freed individuals to produce goods and services more rapidly, which helped to fuel the expansion of capitalism. Durkheim wrote more extensively on institutions and saw the institutions of family and religion as the foundation of societal development. His traditional views on gender interdependence and divorce would not make him popular today yet his emphasis on the structural importance of working together rather than pure patriarchal leanings motivated his logic. Durkheim viewed the developmental progression of mechanical solidarity into organic solidarity as support for the theory that family size will continue to shrink as development increases, passing through the stages of extended family to a focus on **conjugal families** and ultimately to single-parent families. Mid Twentieth-century scholars continued to study these ideas and express their concern for the family amid the competing influence of other institutions.

American sociologists Carle Zimmerman (1947) and William Ogburn (1937) both documented the family's interaction with other social institutions. Ogburn and Zimmerman would have agreed on the trend that saw the family`s steady loss of functions to increasingly powerful corporations and government, although they would have disagreed on the importance of this trend. Ogburn viewed the American home as becoming "merely parking places" for parents and children, who spend most of their time elsewhere, and argued that the state should assist people with this inevitable path. It could do this by ensuring full-time employment for mothers and universal daycare for children. The goal would be the individualization of society. In stark contrast, Zimmerman did not view the course of society as linear but as cyclical. With a focus on the amount of power a family has over its members, he observed three types of families over history: (1) the **trustee family**, which has the locus of power in kinship connections; (2) the **atomistic family**, characterized by strong individualism and weak influence of family on its members; and (3) the **domestic family**, in which a balance of power exists between the family and other social institutions. The trustee family is followed by the domestic family and then the atomistic family, which is similar to Ogburn's description except that Zimmerman viewed this progression as eventually leading to societal collapse, only to see the cycle repeat itself. Zimmerman documents two previous historical cycles, with the Roman Empire being the last to collapse, and suggests that the North American family is close to becoming the third.

Current scholars continue to examine the family and its interaction with surrounding institutions. The latter half of the twentieth century has seen a significant contribution to the study of the family in its institutional context by feminist scholars such as Lynne Casper, Suzanne Bianchi, Phyllis Moen, Marty Blair-Loy, Anne-Marie Ambert, and Stephanie Coontz. These women and many others like them have provided a more complete picture of the challenges and obstacles that men and women must navigate within both the family and competing social structures.

The family, as an institution, is bigger than the individual members within it and is subject to the influences of other social institutions, such as religion and education, on the behaviours of its individual members. Durkheim (1888) argued that the family had an important effect on reducing the prevalence of suicide. The family provided social cohesion, thus reducing the potential

levels of anomie. As a social institution, the family has a direct impact on many life course outcomes that affect individuals. Uhlenberg and Mueller (2004) list four outcomes of well-being that family context influences: survival and physical health, mental health, socio-economic status, and relational success.

Before moving on to discuss specific institutions, it is important to note that social influence is never unidirectional. Not only is the family influenced by other institutions, but the family as an institution also influences these other institutions. The family is just one of many institutions at work shaping the lives of individuals and other institutions. Riley (1998, p. 45) illustrates this point when she discusses the reciprocal nature of women's career aspirations and the social norms regarding women in the paid workforce over the last century:

> We uncovered historical data on the work lives of successive cohorts of U.S. women spanning an entire century that reveal a consistent and striking transformation: In each more recent cohort, larger and larger proportions of women have spent their adult lives in the labor force. From generation to generation, this wave has mounted until, with the changes in lives, structures began to change. As women in those early cohorts demonstrated what they could do, more and more work roles opened up for them at every age up to retirement. Gradually, the norms changed as well. First it became acceptable for women to work. Now it is expected, even required, that women (at all income levels), even young mothers, should work. Clearly, changes in the individual lives of millions of women in successive cohorts (and their employers) have revolutionized both work and family structures.

Work and Family Across the Life Course

Research in the area of work and family has been stimulated by social, economic, and demographic transformations affecting both institutions. These changes have affected the way in which Canadians experience family life (Duxbury, Higgins, & Coghill, 2003) and the way in which they see the family interacting with work. The dual-earner family is now the norm as women participate in the workforce at almost the same level as men and more and more families become dependent on two paycheques to maintain their standard of living (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; McQuillan & Ravanera, 2006). As women now outnumber men in institutions of higher learning, the trend of women in the paid workforce can be expected to continue at historically high levels. Recent Statistics Canada data show that women have increased their labour force participation from 42 percent in 1976 to 63 percent in 2008 (Girard, 2010). Women are not only entering the workforce in greater numbers, but also remaining there even after having children. Married women who had children had a rate of departure from the workforce of 26.7 percent in the 1970s; that number decreased to 10.4 percent only 20 years later (Even & Macpherson, 2001). With people living longer and the population aging, the care of dependent parents is also becoming a significant family concern for working Canadians.

As the profile of the Canadian worker shifts to reflect more of a gender balance, the work environment is changing. Although it appears that the average length of the workweek has remained relatively stable for most North American workers, some people are working fewer hours than they would like and others are working more hours than they would like, creating a

cancelling-out effect (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Accompanying a divergence in non-preferred work hours is the trend for Canadian workers to have non-standard work schedules (Beaujot & Andersen, 2008). This trend toward **non-standard employment** continues, with no change in that pattern in sight (Vosko, Zukewich, & Cranford, 2003). With many workplace cultures still operating under assumptions representative of only a minority of Canadians, such as those of the male breadwinner and the female homemaker, conflict is inevitable. Confusion and lack of institutional clarity confront workers and family members alike. While the lack of clarity may be universal, the way in which it is experienced is divergent. Social norms regarding ideal workers benefit men more than they do women (Williams, 2000).

Early research on work–family interaction focused on the dysfunctional aspects of the interaction. Coser (1974) referred to work–family interaction as the tension between two "greedy institutions." Hogan (1978) looked at the importance of the temporal order of significant life events. He demonstrated that negative consequences were associated with non-normative patterns of life events. For example, marital instability was higher in those cases that did not follow the normative pattern of completing one's education followed by gaining employment and then beginning a family. More recent work has framed the interaction as being more normative and having the potential for positive outcomes and enhancing one's life (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006). The dynamic nature of work–family interaction has been addressed through longitudinal research. These studies have looked at the transition from school to work (Schoon, McCulloch, Joshi, Wiggins, & Bynner, 2001); career pathways (Blair-Loy, 1999; Huang, El-Khouri, Johansson, Lindroth, & Sverke, 2007); job stability and interruptions (Fuller, 2008); employment, housing, and marital status (Pollock, 2007); and the importance of time in the work–family interaction in general (Han & Moen, 1999). Voydanoff (1987) and White (1999), in their research on the staging of work and family careers, recognized the importance of studying work–family interaction from a systemic perspective. Finally, when work–family research acknowledges that the interaction influences not just individuals but also work environments and families, the institutional dimension is incorporated into the research design. Grzywacz, Almeida, and McDonald (2002) look at the bidirectional effect of positive and negative spillover in both families and the workplace. Drobnic, Blossfeld, and Rohwer (1999) examine the cross-cultural differences in women's employment patterns across the family life course.

Work–family interaction, with its ebb and flow of conflict and resolution, has always existed in various forms (Voydanoff, 2007). Family and work are universal institutions, existing across time and in all societies. Economic theory reminds us that markets are always changing as well, adapting to forces of supply and demand, economic cycles, and innovation and bureaucracy. Early sociologists of the family saw the family as "an organization that is in the constant process of adaptation to changing conditions" (Angell, 1965/ 1936, p. 14). The latter part of the twentieth century saw rapid change in work environments as the technical information age replaced the labour-intensive industrial age. In addition to changes in work environment, families have been forced to adapt rapidly to a changing world with different family forms and evolving social norms. However, neither of these large social changes are new phenomena.

Historical Context

As family composition changes over time and workplace cultures continue to be transformed, the intersection of these two institutions will affect each other in ways that will challenge both. Benoit (2000) describes the pre-modern historical epochs of work and family in the context of gender inequity at different times through history. She begins with a brief description of hunting and gathering societies and continues through to large scale farming societies. Her premise is that in simpler societies, women experienced status on par with men. With few possessions and no surplus wealth, there was little to differentiate women from men economically. As societies moved to small-scale farming, equality remained relatively intact, although gender roles began to diverge. As societies entered large-scale farming, inequity was at its greatest. Men controlled the rudimentary means of production and the income and wealth that accompanied it. In terms of work–family interaction, pre-industrial societies are best described as involving equally hard work for both men and women, with men being the greater benefactors of that hard work.

From the onset of the Industrial Revolution, work and family continued to transform and intersect. Benoit develops another continuum of change for women, outlining the gender inequity from early mercantilism to the current post-industrial society. She concludes that mercantilism picked up where large-scale farming left off—that is, with women at the lowest level of social status. As societies move through the manufacturing stages, first small-scale and then large-scale, women begin to gain in social status as the distribution of wealth extends to females through economic opportunity and less patrilineal inheritance customs. In the post-industrial society, Benoit sees women making large gains in social status because of men's income stagnating while women's income grows. The dominance of the service sector and alternative, non-standard working arrangements provides opportunities to women not previously available. Despite these large gains in social status, Benoit notes that inequity continues between men and women, with women overrepresented in the more precarious working environments.

From a functionalist perspective, Rothman (1978) paints a historical work–family picture similar to Benoit's. She describes the previous 100 years of work–family interaction and notes that in the nineteenth century men were vacating the home as a place of work to go to the cities and work in factories. There seemed to be little concern about this at the time, and men being removed from the household is generally taken for granted today. Initially, wives and sometimes children worked alongside the men, but eventually middle-class values were projected on a larger portion of society and women were relegated back to the home, where they often looked after boarders or did laundry to earn extra income.

With the technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution, time-saving devices began to reduce the energy required to look after the home and children. During the middle of the twentieth century, following World War II, the functionalist work of Parsons and Bales (1955) applied Durkheim's (1933) concept of the division of labour to describe how the family could be organized as efficiently as industry; with men as the breadwinners, fulfilling the **instrumental role**, and women as the homemakers, fulfilling the **expressive role**, the family was seen to be

functioning optimally. When organized labour's power peaked in the mid twentieth century and with the postwar economy expanding rapidly, large numbers of men were able to earn a family wage, eliminating the economic need for women to earn an income as well.

Coontz's (1992) denunciation of this ideal functionalist image of the middle-class nuclear family helps to convey just how prevalent this ideal type was as the standard in North American culture. Coontz argues that the family was never like the Cleaver family depicted in the 1950s television show *Leave It to Beaver.* Despite Coontz's attempt to clarify the heterogeneity of family forms, this almost monolithic functionalist image continues to influence many people's definition of how the family used to be and ought to be today.

Early feminist scholars focused on the simplistic nature of seeing all men and all women as homogenous groups with identical environments and roles. Damaske and Gerson (2008, p. 235), citing several authors, state: "More recent theoretical approaches, along with a host of empirical studies, have extended this early work by focusing on variations among women (and men) as well as by examining the institutional and cultural paradoxes and contradictions that leave modern mothers facing deep conflicts and dilemmas." They highlight the importance of understanding the differences that emerge among women when ethnicity, race, and socio-economic stratification are considered. They cite Collins (1991) to make two important points. First, as Coontz noted, the traditional breadwinner family was an anomaly among white middle-class women and could never accurately be applied to black women. For black women, motherhood has always taken a different form. This inaccurate ideal also does not apply to working-class and working-poor families that have always depended on women's workforce participation.

Image 8.2

Work and Family Today

As the first decade of the twenty-first century ended, demographic and geopolitical changes continued to alter the landscape of both workers and families and challenge the institutions of the family and work. The competing institutional demands of work and family are reinforced in a national report by Duxbury et al. (2003), which shows that Canadians are experiencing higher levels of **role overload** as a direct result of spending more time both at work and with their family. The tension caused by the limited resources of time and energy trying to meet the expanding demands of work and family means that something will need to change, just as it always has.

Rapid changes to both the family and the workplace over the past century highlight the need to view work–family interaction in its changing context. The institution of the family has seen a rise in the prevalence of cohabitation and divorce, as well as a move toward increased education, delayed child-bearing, and smaller families. These trends both affect and are affected by the institution of work. The transition from an industrial based economy to an information-based economy has necessitated more education for the average worker. Greater female representation in the paid workforce, especially of young mothers, has led to a reduction in the size of families. Workplace changes in the form of flextime, non-standard work, the baby boom bubble, and an increase in precarious employment have also influenced and been influenced by the family. Dual-income families may seek non-standard work schedules that do not overlap to

alleviate child-care needs and costs. As the baby boom generation begins to enter traditional retirement years, there will be an increased demand for workers in sectors of the economy such as financial services, health care, and technology.

Work–family interaction must be understood as a dynamic process requiring concepts and theories that understand it as such. More than 10 years ago, Han and Moen (1999, p. 100) stated: "Scholars are only beginning to consider the work– family interface as it unfolds over time and across multiple domains." Since then, the dynamic nature of the work–family interface has garnered more attention in journals and books. Kalliath (Kalliath & Brough, 2008), in an interview regarding the state of work–family balance theory, said, "I believe work–family conflict is an intermediate state in a continuous process of creating harmony between work, family and personal life." Books such as It's About Time (Moen, 2003), *The Time Divide* (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), and *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life* (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006) look at the interaction of work and family as a dynamic process that changes across the lifespan. Each book uses the family as the unit of analysis but also outlines the gendered nature in which these dynamics unfold. All three volumes present a variety of studies that involve the measurement of time spent at work and with family, each specifically separating the findings for each gender to provide a more detailed summary of work–family interaction.

As constantly intersecting, constantly changing institutions, work and family are also subject to age, historical period, and cohort effects. In looking at work–family interaction, age effects are going to be the result of an individual's maturation over time. An individual who is young and just out of school may possess little human and social capital in comparison to their situation later in life. Different chronological ages can be more highly correlated to life events such as the birth of a child or the last child leaving the home. These events affect a person's family and work dynamics. Different periods in history are influenced by different socio-historical and political events such as war, economic crisis, or important legislative changes. These periods need to be understood as having different influences on work–family interaction. For example, during World War II, millions of families were left for years without a father physically present when men went to war. At the same time, historically high numbers of women were in full-time employment as part of the war effort. Within a few years after the war, the social context of both work and family environments were quite different. Women left the workforce to make room for returning male soldiers, fertility rates began to climb, and a growing number of women entered institutions of higher learning. These sudden changes also help to explain cohort effects. Women born prior to these changes and women born after them experienced the labour market in different ways. Blair-Loy (1999) looks at the role that cohort and period effects have on female financial executives' success in their field. After outlining the social and legislative changes of the 1960s that helped to integrate women into maledominated fields, Blair-Loy demonstrates that earlier cohorts' efforts and sacrifices paved the way for later cohorts' success. Earlier cohorts had to deal with a male-dominated field and the challenges that presented, such as lack of female role models, job mobility inequity, discriminatory practices, and sex typing of jobs in the field. Blair-Loy finds that subsequent generations of female financial executives were relatively unaware of the path paved for them by their female predecessors.

As the twenty-first century entered its second decade, the institutions of work and family continued to morph and change as they interacted with one another (see Career Box 8.1). This reciprocal impact is well noted in the areas of child and family care, non-paid domestic work, and division of labour. The study of work and family continues to look at these areas as families adjust to new roles and social expectations. Some of the most recent research has highlighted the importance of social support to the well-being of mothers returning to the labour force (Seiger & Wiese, 2011), as well as for new mothers and marital satisfaction levels (Dew & Wilcox, 2011). At the other end of the life course, Kahn, McGill, and Bianchi (2011) found that as men retire from the workforce, they become more involved in the care of grandchildren, to the point where there is no gender difference between grandparents in providing care by the time they are in their sixties.

Career Box 8.1
Intersecting Institutional Influences
As Mindy sat in the orientation meeting, she could not believe that she was finally able to fulfill her lifelong goal of completing a seminary degree. Her father was a pastor, his father's father was a pastor, and now she was going to be the first female pastor in her family. After years of theological debate, her denomination concluded that the ordination of female clergy would now be recognized. Mindy knew that challenges lay ahead of her. Her decision to have four children and develop a home-based business had been a direct result of her not thinking this day would ever come. She had consigned herself to the role of mother, homemaker, and entrepreneur early in her marriage. Now that the doors had opened to her lifelong calling, her family was going to have to make some significant adjustments. Her business was very profitable yet provided no extended health coverage. Would her husband quit his lower-paying job to take over her business and help with the children? Mindy had homeschooled all of them and now they would have to be integrated into the public school system. When Mindy graduated and received her first parish assignment, where would it be and would her family be willing to relocate? All of these issues will be a challenge, but her biggest concern is whether she will be able to get back into an academic environment alongside all of the younger students. After all, she was becoming a student all over again with others half her age. Mindy is optimistic, but a little scared as well.

One major concern often brought up in regard to the increased labour force participation of women, especially young mothers, has been the issue of child outcomes. The logic is that as women work more hours, their children receive less care and suffer as a result. It is therefore interesting to note that women spend more time with their children today than they did just decades ago (Bianchi et al., 2006). Bianchi et al. (2006) show that employed mothers have found a way to balance home and work by reducing time spent on housework, even though they have an average combined workload of five hours more per week than working fathers. When aggregating the workloads of all fathers and mothers, the results indicate gender equality. This time equality is something that the authors indicate reflects the continuing pattern from the mid

1960s. They conclude, based on detailed data gathered from time diaries, that families have adapted to the changing institutional norms.

Education and Family Across the Life Course

Education repeatedly has been connected to a variety of advantages in life. It is by far the single most important factor in determining future economic well-being. It has been shown to be associated with improved health and longer life. It also affects a variety of life course transitions associated with the family, such as marriage, fertility, and divorce.

Box 8.2
Residential Schools
Education was seen as a primary tool in effecting the transformation. In a vein similar to the government's notion of "getting them while they are young," the Oblates saw tremendous possibilities in the establishment of residential schools. Here the students could be isolated from the cultural influences of their parents and a daily, systematic inculcation of Christian theory and practice became possible. Attempts to control became close to absolute in that students were expected to attend from August to June and visits from home were strictly limited. Source: Haig-Brown (1988, pp. 35-36)

What makes education so important to the study of the life course is that it is something one normally does early in life rather than later. This is important because life course theory has at its foundation the concept that earlier life events have implications for later life events (Mayer, 2004, 2009). Life course trajectories and pathways always contain some form of education early in life, whether it occurs in a formal school environment or is a result of parents and elders who invest time and energy in preparing young members of society for adulthood. It should be noted that this early influence has also been used to subjugate disadvantaged populations, as the case of residential schools in Canada has shown. Residential schools were established to educate and re-socialize young Indigenous children into the dominant Western culture of the new nation of Canada. Box 8.2 contains a paragraph from Celia Haig-Brown's 1988 work titled *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. This book is an ethnographic account of those who attended the residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Recent tradition has made completing one's education a key event in the transition from childhood to adulthood (Arnett, 2001). This life event marking the transition to adulthood becomes even more culturally relevant when we consider the fact that young adults are extending their time spent in formal education for periods unlike those seen in the past. This extension of formal education has created ripple effects in the life course, such as delayed union

formation and delayed and reduced fertility. The rest of this section summarizes the impact of education on events across the life course also associated with the family.

Early Childhood Care and Education

The importance of early childhood education has been well documented (Mustard, 2006). Families benefit from education and from the implementation of early child care and child education. Canada, like many other **OECD countries**, has been working toward an integrated program of early childhood education and child care. However, like its OECD counterparts, Canada has some demographic challenges. These include a high and increasing rate of young mothers in the paid labour force, an ethnically diverse population, a fertility rate below replacement level, and a relatively high rate of child poverty (Friendly, 2008). For the Indigenous population especially, the demand for culturally sensitive childcare is high as more parents enter the workforce (Colbert, 1999).

Economic Well-Being

Education is an investment of time and money early in life that has an expected increased economic return later in life. Education usually leads to greater economic returns across the life course in the form of higher and more stable income. The time spent in formal education is often time lost to earning income, so education is usually viewed from a long-term or lifelong perspective. From a relational perspective, time in formal education usually is associated with delays in entering committed relationships and having children.

Family Transitions

Cohabitation and Marriage Higher education is consistent with improved communication and problem-solving skills, both of which equip individuals for entering and maintaining relationships. Higher educational levels may benefit one gender more than the other in the preparation for family formation. Men become more attractive marriage partners due to increased education and the earning power that comes along with it. Women, on the other hand, do not experience the same benefits. Better educated women have prepared for careers that are usually less flexible and more demanding, which makes these careers less compatible with finding a partner and having children (see Figure 8.1). In addition, women who have more rewarding careers may not feel the same desire for a family in order to feel fulfilled in life.

Figure 8.1 Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to Men and Women in the United States, 1959 to 2004

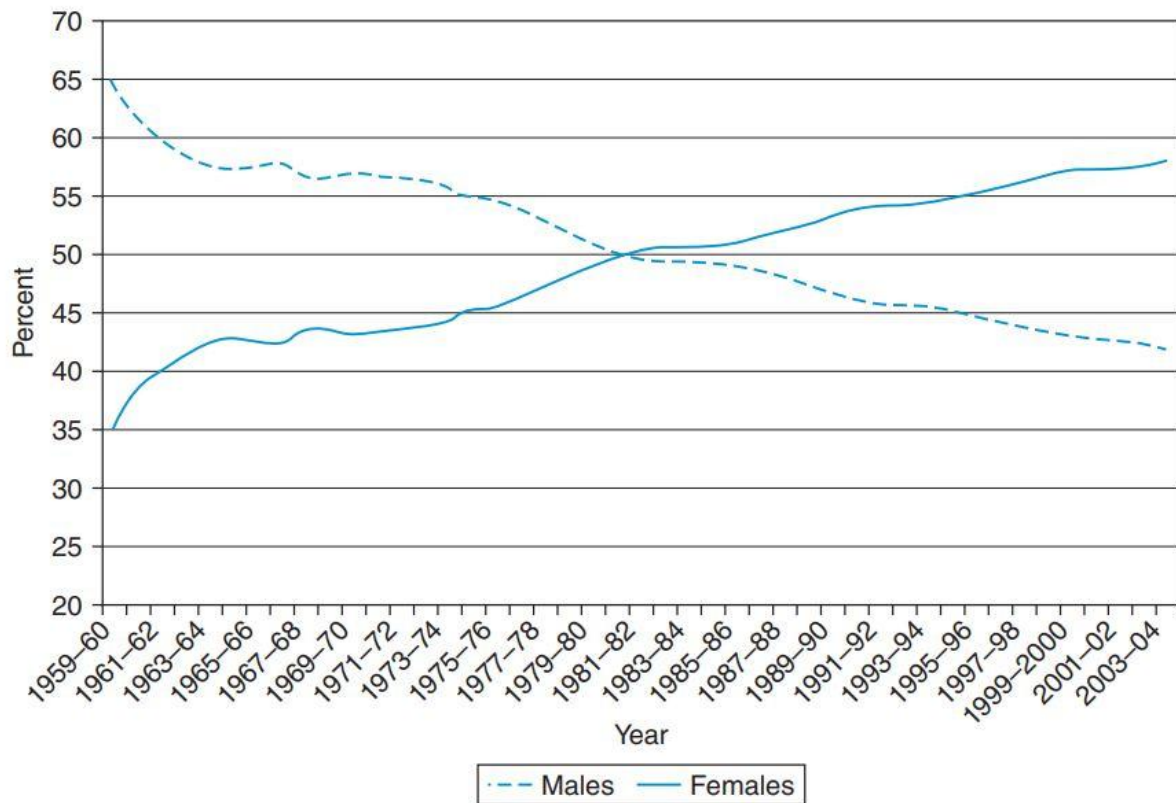Source: Buchman and DiPrete (2006, p. 516).

Figure 8.1 Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to Men and Women in the United States, 1959 to 2004

Source: Buchmann and DiPrete (2006, p. 516).

The type of relationship that people enter into is also affected by education attainment. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to marry rather than to cohabit. Higher levels of educational attainment are associated with delayed entry into committed unions. Much of this delay can be accounted for by the extended period spent in formal education, but outside of this effect, the acquisition of education is positively related to union formation and, in particular, marriage rather than cohabitation. This relationship has been explained as being consistent with an economic dual-earner model of union formation (Oppenheimer, 1994).

Divorce and Separation Research overwhelmingly supports the relationship of increased education and decreased levels of divorce and separation, although this relationship may not be so direct or linear. Recent research indicates that those with some college education may be more likely to divorce than those with little education or those with a college degree, conveying a curvilinear relationship. Social economic theorist Gary Becker (1981) suggests that this is a result of increased education among women decreasing the economic benefits of marriage for them. It has also been shown that more highly educated women are better equipped financially and psychologically to deal with divorce (Blossfeld, De Rose, Hoem, & Rohwer, 1995). Härkönen and Dronkers (2006) summarize the existing theories connecting education with

divorce outcomes and state that the common element in each prevailing explanation is that as long as the benefits of the union outweigh the costs of divorce for the partners, the relationship will remain intact. They suggest that the main difference between prevailing theories involves the mechanism, like those suggested above, as being responsible for tipping the balance toward divorce.

Religion and Family Across the Life Course

Many scholars believe that the family is the most influential socializing agent in children's development of religiosity. Although exceptions (e.g., Hoge, Johnson, & Luidens, 1994) and inconsistencies can be found, numerous studies have demonstrated a link between parental and offspring religiosity (see, for example, Clark, Worthington, & Danser, 1986). Religion and family come together in the socialization process as family members pass on their beliefs and behaviours from one generation to the next. The major world religions exist today because of this very process. Hundreds and even thousands of years separate the founding of each major faith and its current adherents. A powerful dimension of religious socialization is the **rite of passage** ceremonies practised by most faiths in unique ways.

Rites of Passage and Religious Ceremonies

Religion and family not only have developed hand in hand over time, but also interact with one another across the life course. Religion and family come together in diverse ways across religious traditions. Some Christian families have their newborn infants baptized or christened, while others wait for their children to be confirmed in later childhood as a sign of acceptance into the religious community. Jewish families have their male children circumcised on the eighth day of life as part of an ancient covenant God made with their ancestor Abraham. The bar mitzvah occurs when a Jewish male turns 13 years old. This ceremony marks the age of accountability and responsibility for his actions. Rites of passage ceremonies are common in many other religious and cultural traditions as well. Young Buddhist males are carried around on the shoulders of older men during the three-day ceremony of Poy Sang Long before being ordained as novice monks. The corporate nature of Poy Sang Long contrasts with the Australian Aboriginal walkabout, which sees preadolescent boys sent out into the wilderness for six months on their own to mark their transition to adulthood. In many Latin American countries, families celebrate a girl's fifteenth birthday with the Fiesta de Quinceañera, which marks her transition to womanhood. In addition to these religious ceremonies, there are the universal traditions of marriage and burial that link religion and family across the life course.

Box 8.3
More about the Australian Aboriginal Walkabout
▶ The impact of divorce on children: Tamara D. Afifi at TEDxUCSB

Image 8.3

Religious and Family Socialization

Religious convictions and customs are strongly held beliefs carried forward by groups through religious socialization. This process is facilitated by two primary institutions: the formal religious authorities and the families that embrace the religious teaching. The first of these takes a literal cradle-to-grave life course perspective of the individual, as can be seen in ceremonies involving infants and those remembering the deceased. The family takes an active role in religious socialization by exposing children to religious custom, reinforcing the teaching of the religious institution, and modelling behaviour consistent with the religious community, as shown in Box 8.4. The sacred texts of the three **Abrahamic-based religions**—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism—speak to this point:

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. [7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. [8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)

Box 8.4
A Study of Religious Socialization
Overview In this study we look at the influence parents, peers and faith communities have on adolescent faith transfer. We examine the transmission of religiosity among Protestant youth using "faith maturity" as operationalized by Benson, Donahue, and Erickson (1993) and Roehlkepartain and Benson (1993). Both of these authors define faith maturity as: ". . . the degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of vibrant and life transforming faith, as these have been understood in 'mainline' Protestant traditions" (p. 3). **Contradictions in the Literature** Research on religious socialization shows that there are inconsistent results when studying the influence of parental religiosity on the religiosity of their offspring. First, there is the question of whether there is any significant influence. Although most researchers (Clark, Worthington, & Danser, 1986) believe parental religiosity to be central in determining adolescent religiosity, Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens (1994) concluded that parents' involvement in a local church had no determining influence on the patterns of their children. Their study showed a negative relationship between the religiosity of the mother and the church involvement of the youth. Another example of the inconsistencies is the significance of family types and styles of parenting. Nelsen (1980) found that warmth between the parent and adolescent was not a

factor in religious transmission. On the other hand, Myers (1996) reported that family type and style of parenting were significant in aiding or hindering parental influence in religious socialization. Myers found families that were described as warm and caring were more fertile to parental intergenerational transmission of religiosity. Myers also noted that traditional single-income family structures aid in the process of religious inheritance. In contradiction, yet another report indicated that parental education, income, and class had no significant effects on the religiosity of offspring (Francis & Brown, 1991). Results became even more confusing when Wilson and Sherkat (1994) noted that parents of higher income may produce offspring that are less likely to resemble themselves.

Clark et al. (1986) provide a final example of contradictory findings in their review of twelve different studies analyzing the influences of gender of parent on the child's socialization. In seven of the studies, the mother was more influential in determining the offspring's religiosity, two found the fathers more influential, and three found no difference. Some researchers have suggested that the pattern of religious participation has little to do with family transmission at all, but is more the result of macro influences that shape the life course. Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, and Waite (1995) showed that by separating the effects of marriage and childbearing from the effects of age alone, the data demonstrated that current age and family formation change religious participation. Firebaugh and Harley (1991) supported this perspective and concluded that church attendance is simply a result of aging.

Findings

The importance of this study is that it helps to clarify the importance of all three socializing institutions. It demonstrates that congregational influences are significant in adolescent development of faith maturity. It provides strong evidence for the strength of the peer influence in the process and finally it shows the lasting impact that parents have in influencing the faith maturity of their offspring. Furthermore, there is support for peers as a mediating variable in the channeling model.

Many studies examining religious socialization have focused on religious socialization as measured by the similarity between the parents and the offspring. However, religious socialization is not necessarily the replication of a list of belief or behavioral items. These intergenerational comparisons do not convey what is sought by religious socialization. In a study of a similar grouping of denominations as used in this study, Hoge et al. (1982) found that parents rated the goal of moral maturity as number one for their children. Since cohorts and period have changed, the meaning and behaviors indicating such maturity may also change. Indeed, parent–child similarities may indicate a lack of moral maturity. What this study has shown is that parents play an important role in the development of their offspring's faith maturity.

Source: Martin, White, and Perlman (2001).

Religion and Family Influence on Couple Formation, Fertility, and Marital Control

Frans Van Poppel and Renzo Derosas (2006), in their book *Religion and the Decline of Fertility in the Western World*, examine some interesting questions. In the late nineteenth century, early researchers were confronted with the almost simultaneous decline in fertility across Europe.

This led to resources being directed toward the study of fertility. Greater attention to demographic records confirmed the trends in fertility. Because of the increase in data collection, more opportunities for studying fertility differentials occurred at various levels. Provinces, states, countries, towns, and regions could now be compared.

Countries with religious diversity showed religious differentials almost immediately. This was very apparent in Protestant–Catholic comparisons (Knodel, 1974). Although other religious groups such as Jewish populations were studied, the early debates and discussions revolved around explaining why the fertility rate was higher among Catholics than among Protestants. Each group developed rationales supportive of their cause and political parties were established around each religious group. Van Poppel and Derosas (2006) state that the early twentieth century research of religion and fertility was primarily motivated by fear of losing political power to those producing more offspring. They cite Julius Wolf, a German economist in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who showed that the regions with the highest percentage of Socialist votes had the largest decline in fertility, while the areas that voted for the Confessional Party had the smallest decline. Based on this kind of information, projections were made by demographers about which regions would grow fast enough to secure power or which groups would decline to the point of losing power.

As the level of sophistication of information gathering and data analysis increased, so did the objectivity of the study of religion and fertility. Researchers emphasized that they focused on scientific study and were not motivated by religious, political, or any other motives. Van Poppel and Derosas (2006) cite an Indianapolis study carried out in 1941 as a seminal work in religious differences regarding fertility. The study looked at the details of social networks and personal factors that may influence the decision to limit family size. Freedman and Whelpton (1950) continued a series of articles testing various hypotheses regarding the influence of religion on fertility. They tested the hypothesis that the more importance religion had to a person, the less likely he or she would take steps to limit fertility, an assumption based on the pro-natalist nature of religion. They concluded their study by saying that their data did not support this hypothesis, even though earlier studies had shown support for it.

During the second demographic transition of the 1960s and beyond, the rapid decline in European fertility led to very low reproduction levels (Lesthaeghe, 1995). During this time, most Western countries lost interest in the role that religion played in fertility (Van Poppel & Derosas, 2006). With very low fertility levels and decreased religious influence in society, only small differentials were found between groups based on religion.

Presently, as a result of the theoretical contributions of authors such as Goldscheider (1971), Kertzer (1995, 1997), and Greenhalgh (1995), new theories are being explored concerning how fertility and religion correlate. McQuillan (2004) and Chatters and Taylor (2005) have begun to look not just at religion but also at the aspects of religion that may be working to influence fertility. McQuillan (2004) looked at qualities of religion that must be present for it to influence fertility. First, the religion in question must have statements of belief concerning behaviour that specifically relates to fertility outcomes. Norms concerning abortion and contraceptive use have

some connection to most religious groups, although those norms may change over time. Second, the religious group must have the means not only to communicate these teachings, but also to enforce compliance to these norms. This enforcement need not occur at the institutional level but often comes through informal social pressure from the community itself. Goldscheider (2006) makes the same argument in response to those who have studied families exposed to the stricter Islamic schools. Goldscheider believes that the coercive nature of the communities these families come from reinforces the strict gender role segregation that encourages higher fertility. The same coercive nature at work in these strict Islamic sects would also explain higher levels of fertility in strict religious sects of Judaism and Protestantism. Finally, McQuillan (2004) argues that religious groups influence the fertility of their members only when those members feel a strong sense of attachment to the group.

Chatters and Taylor (2005, p. 518) list the following general links between religion and family behaviour:

- Religion condemns certain forms of behavior and promotes specific beliefs and practices that are conducive to family solidarity and assistance;
- It provides a framework for beliefs, norms and practices that reinforce the fulfillment of certain family roles;
- It gives guidelines for the handling of life difficulties and conflicts between family roles;
- It fosters positive feelings that promote certain family characteristics;
- Religious settings provide benefits and support for families.

Both McQuillan (2004) and Chatters and Taylor (2005) encourage further study of the religion–fertility link in context to gain a better understanding of what religion means. The connection between religion and fertility has regained some stature in the eyes of researchers. With fertility data and religious scholars from non-Western countries contributing to the literature (King & Beattie, 2004), broader approaches and a greater understanding of the process at work will emerge.

Religion and Gender Roles

Ursula King and Tina Beattie (2004) produced an entire volume on the topic of gender and religion from a cross-cultural perspective. They gathered a diverse group of scholars from various religious traditions to write on the topic of gender and religion. This builds on earlier work by King (1995) on gender and religion. These works highlight the increased interest in the interaction of gender and religion, especially from a feminist perspective.

Many social scientists have attempted to understand and explain the high participation rate of women in religious communities (Finke & Stark, 1992; Stark & Bainbridge, 1985). Women of all ages have higher scores on measures of religiosity. Female membership continues to outnumber men even in newer faith movements (Howell, 1998). This pattern of higher female participation seems to continue across the life course and across religious organizations (Ozorak, 1996). It is not limited to North America, as the same phenomenon occurs in Europe and among Latin American women (Martin, 1990). Because of the high female participation

rates and gender differences in religious adherence, some feminists have criticized women's participation as having a "false consciousness" (Furseth & Repstad, 2006). Feminist scholars continue to contribute to the understanding of the gender issue in the context of religion. The Abrahamic-based religions of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are presented as a dichotomized version of gender equality. Each supports spiritual equality but each also sustains a version of social inequality. This dualistic approach filters into gender role attributes. King (1993) suggests that many world religions are based on the idea that women are associated with the body, nature, and earth, whereas men are associated with the mind, spirit, and heaven. Each of these traditions is also marked by complementary marriage scripts, although there have been significant moves toward a more egalitarian model in some religious communities representing each of these faiths.

Sexuality is an area in which religion has a voice. Once again, across the faith traditions, women have been seen through the lens of their reproductive function. Ancient religions focused on fertility gods. Contemporary religions have vacillated between the evils of sexuality, tolerated procreative value, and a separation of procreation and the sex act. Foucault (1976) considered religion a central part of culture. In his work on sexuality, "Foucault argues that religion actually is always about sexuality and the body because discourses about religious practice and belief center around the body and are always concerned about what people do with their bodies" (Furseth & Repstad, 2006, p. 65).

The Christian texts and traditions speak extensively about the role of sexuality, often in a contradictory manner. Most traditionally seen as sanctioned in the context of marriage, sex is mentioned in both a procreative and a non-procreative way. Paul, an early disciple of Jesus and a missionary of the Christian faith, tells husbands and wives that

> The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time . . . (1 Corinthians 7:3–5).

This passage makes no reference to procreation and gives no sense of gender inequality. This seems consistent with the teachings of Jesus himself when he was asked about the role of marriage in the future kingdom to come. Jesus stated frankly that after the resurrection of the dead, people will not marry but be like the angels (Luke 20:24–36), a reference, presumably, to their sexless nature. The early church fathers moved away from this mutual view of sexuality and began to see it as a necessary evil. Soble (2002) discusses Augustine's theology of sexuality in which sexual activity between married spouses, if done for pleasure only and not for procreation, is a sin but forgivable. Thomas Aquinas continues this sinful view of sexuality by referring to women as inferior and mandating a need to separate sexual pleasure from procreation (Furseth & Repstad, 2006). Over the next 500 years, sexual abstinence was viewed as a superior form of earthly living. After the Reformation, Protestant sects slowly began to adopt a more love-centred view of sexuality and marriage. Today, the Catholic Church maintains strict teachings on marriage, divorce, contraception, and abortion. However, a brief study of the

very low fertility levels in predominantly Catholic countries would reveal a form of cognitive dissonance in this area.

With the resurgence of religion (Christianity and Islam) in the late twentieth century, scholars began to look more closely at the role religion has in family life. Recent immigrants to Canada come from a variety of religious traditions and ethnic backgrounds. Caron Malenfant and Belanger (2006) note that 80 percent of new immigrants adhere to the Christian faith. That rate is slightly higher than in the general population, in which 72 percent identified with Christianity. Morgan (1987) argues that religion has an increased impact on family and gender-related issues. Using Scanzoni's (1975) research, Morgan focuses on the symbiotic relationship between religious devotion and sex role traditionalism. She highlights the role that religion has played in the creation and maintenance of traditional family roles, which also contributed to assigning privileged patriarchal rights in the realm of politics, business, and the judicial systems (Burlage, 1974).

In the Islamic sacred text, the Quran, women are spoken of as having equal spiritual status as men, but that equality is not extended socially. Swenson (2008) builds a case for Islamic patriarchy by citing several passages from the Quran. Women and men were both created by Allah (Sûrah 4:1 and 49:13) and they both have the opportunity to enter paradise in the afterlife if their deeds are considered righteous (Sûrah 4:124 and 33:35). Physically, both women and men are considered protectors of one another (Sûrah 9:71) and they should treat each other with kindness. Despite these spiritual and physical statements of equality, men have been placed in charge of women because Allah made one to excel compared to the other and because men economically support women (Sûrah 4:34).

Islamic traditions do not see sexuality and spirituality as being at odds. Sexuality is described as a sign of God's mercy (Furseth & Repstad, 2006). The control of women's sexuality using the hijab or the veil has its roots in pre-Islamic notions of honour and shame. Hassan (1995) describes the role of men's honour and shame being connected to women's chastity. As a result, it is extremely important for men to control women's bodies and their sexuality. Furseth and Repstad (2006) cite Natayanan (1990) in describing the Hindu scriptural sources as being primarily male centred. This focus has significant implications in Indian culture. Women suffer from labels of being unclean and impure during menstruation and childbirth, but fertility is celebrated and mother images are worshipped.

Morgan (1987) references several authors (Burlage, 1974; Daly, 1974; Richmond & Abbott, 1983) to support the statement that traditional religious belief systems have also viewed women's primary function as that of bearing and raising children. Historically, Hindu marriages were for having children, with a greater appreciation for sons who would be able to carry on the family line in the patriarchal society (Jain, 2003). Morgan's (1987) study revealed that as religious devoutness increases, gender role attitudes become more traditional. In support of this finding, Pearce (2002) concluded that the greater a woman's involvement in and valuation of religion, the larger the size of family she desired. Pearce (2002, p. 337) states: "These findings

suggest that gender-oriented studies of family issues such as child-bearing dispositions cannot ignore the influence of religion."

Religion and gender roles—whether through direct instruction, sexuality, or cultural mandates—are intricately connected. Religion's influence in establishing gender roles and maintaining those gender roles connects well to McQuillan's (2004) tripartite requirements for religion influencing fertility. After establishing the link between religion and its history of influencing gender roles, particularly gender roles consistent with fertility decisions and outcomes, the link between gender roles and fertility can be examined.

Box 8.5
Microaggressions and LGBTQ families
A recent study (Haines et al., 2018) found that family legitimacy is a consistent theme in reports of microaggressions. It is sometimes expressed through invalidation of LGBTQ couples as couples or not seeing their marriages as valid if they were married. At other times it's expressed in terms of views of illegitimacy of LGBTQ families as true families. The assumption of sexual pathology in LGBTQ relationships is a common theme in rejection of LGBTQ families as being incompatible with family values. Additionally, the idea of traditional gender roles is often imposed on LGBTQ families (i.e., who's the "mom" and who's the "dad"). Finally, the concept of chosen families in the LGBTQ community, which are usually friends and partners that LGBTQ people feel accepted by, are often not recognized by others as valid form of family. Source: Haines, K. M., Boyer, C. R., Giovanazzi, C., & Galupo, M. P. (2018). "Not a real family": Microaggressions directed toward LGBTQ families. *Journal of homosexuality*, *65*(9), 1138-1151.

Gender Roles and Fertility Goldscheider (2006) suggests that as the roles of women become less family based, fertility levels are likely to decline. He sees this as a central research emphasis. Illustrated by the complex social structure of Muslim Israelis, Goldscheider illustrates that large family size is consistent with traditional family roles. These Muslim women represent powerlessness on two fronts: their gender and their religious orientation. Because of their powerlessness, they are unable to move out of a gender role that values and reinforces large families. Consequently, large family size ties women to households and families in a way that reinforces and maintains their gender segregated roles. This illustration provides a good summary of the literature on the effects of gender roles on fertility outcomes.

Government and Family Across the Life Course

Governments are keenly interested in the citizens of their country. They are concerned that their constituents are relatively satisfied and have their basic needs met. Different types of governments have different approaches to how this may look. For example, the welfare capitalist state may encourage an environment of maximum productivity, whereas a socialist state may be more concerned about the equal distribution of resources among the population.

The point is that each type of government will be active to some extent in influencing the life course of individuals and families through policies and laws. For example, the state legally defines marriage (see Box 8.4); decides who is financially responsible for children; and determines whether procedures affecting fertility, such as abortion, are considered legal. The state may also define who is family (see Box 8.5).

Box 8.6
Bill C-38: The Civil Marriage Act
Bill C-38, An Act respecting certain aspects of legal capacity for marriage for civil purposes, or the Civil Marriage Act, received first reading in the House of Commons on 1 February 2005. The bill codifies a definition of marriage for the first time in Canadian law, expanding on the traditional common-law understanding of civil marriage as an exclusively heterosexual institution. Bill C-38 defines civil marriage as "the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others," thus extending civil marriage to conjugal couples of the same sex. Source: http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/LegislativeSummaries/bills_ls.asp?ls=c38&Parl=38&Ses=1

Box 8.7
Bill C-31: Defining Who is Family and Who is Not
In June 1985, the Canadian government amended the Indian Act through Bill C-31. The impact on Indigenous women and their children was particularly important. Prior to this legislative change, an Indigenous woman who married outside her band automatically became a member of her husband's band. A transfer between bands is still possible but occurs only through the woman's choice and the receiving band's consent. In addition, prior to the legislation, Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men lost both their status and their band membership. These patterns robbed thousands of women of their traditional kinship and lineage and removed their children from those same family ties. During the first five-year period (1985 to 1990) following the amendment to the legislation, the population of Status Indians rose by 19 percent, with women representing the majority of that number (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1990).

Box 8.8
Brave New World
In the year of our Ford 632, children are created, sex is purely recreational, and the world's economic goals are being achieved with the help of carefully crafted castes of humans who could boast of up to 95 identical siblings thanks to the Bokanovsky process. Aldous Huxley's

futuristic depiction of society was written in 1932 but is set in the Gregorian equivalent of AD 2450. Huxley's utopian world is at peace and its 2 billion inhabitants have everything they could possibly want. The world economy is running smoothly and is populated by the five controlled castes. Fertility is no longer an option or a concern. The state-run hatcheries allow the fetuses of the highest (or Alpha) caste to develop naturally in "decanting bottles," while fetuses predestined to become members of the lower castes (Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon) are exposed to chemical treatments that retard their physical and intellectual abilities and make them uniquely suited to obedience and functionality. When one young boy is foolish enough to inquire about the value of this Taylorized incubation process, the Director of the Hatcheries and Conditioning Centres promptly replies,

"My good boy! Can't you see? Can't you see? Bokanovosky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability. Stability," said the Controller, "stability. No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability. Stability," insisted the Controller, "stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this."

The mass production of human beings with predetermined IQs allows for the easy division of society members into castes with minimal questioning or potential social unrest. With limited cognitive and physical abilities, these beings represent ideal citizens in the Brave New World. All of the children are socialized with subconscious messages appropriate to their caste. This approach ensures conformity to designated social roles as well as the adoption of morals, behaviours, and a class consciousness consistent with the needs of society.

Any connection between sexuality and procreation was long forgotten. Sexuality was for recreational purposes only. Parental identification had become so removed from society's consciousness that the use of a familial term such as father was considered pornographic. Women relied on a "Malthusian belt" and a regular supply of contraceptive cartridges to avoid pregnancy.

Aldous Huxley's brave new world (see Box 8.6) really isn't all that new after all, just an old idea told in a new way. As discussed, Greek philosophers debated the role of the state in the family. Plato, in *The Republic*, abolishes the family and replaces it with guardians instead. This was his solution to nepotism and the amassing of private wealth (*Republic*, book 5, 416–417, and 462–464). "Wives and children are to be held in common by all, and no parent is to know neither his own child nor any child his parents— provided it can be done" (*Republic*, book 5, 457). In his other works, Plato took a less drastic position on the family but still felt that the state should control the number of children to avoid having too many for the state to care for or too few to meet the needs of the state (*Laws*, book 5, 740). Plato's student Aristotle did not embrace his mentor's opinion about the state and the family. He felt that when things are held in common, they receive less care than when individuals are responsible. "For besides other considerations, everybody is more inclined to neglect something which he expects another to fulfill; as in families many attendants are often less useful than a few. Each citizen will have a thousand sons who will not be his sons individually, but anybody will be equally the son of anybody, and will therefore be neglected by all alike" (*The Politics of Aristotle*, 1261 b34–1262 a2).

With the increased prevalence of towns and cities coming together during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to form nations, the state began to gain more importance and became more concerned about their populations. These more clearly defined nation-states focused on their increased need to protect their borders and their trading markets. The increased interest in the individuals making up the nation led to a strategic division of the life course. The state divided those who were dependent on care (children and the elderly) from those who were productive workers able to provide that care. Leisering (2004) describes this period as the time when the tripartite division of childhood and youth, working age, and old age gradually evolved. The welfare state's concern for the care of its population developed and, as a result, legislation was implemented to ensure that these groups worked together and their needs were met. The primary function of the government in a **welfare state** is to ensure that the basic needs and expectations of the individuals in the nation are achieved. The more the state is involved, the more the state feels it can do a better job of making the choices associated with the redistribution of the nation's resources.

Leisering and Walker (1998) provide a succinct overview of the welfare state's interaction with the family over the life course in their model shown in Figure 8.2. They present the state's role in minimizing certain economic and security risks associated with various stages of the life course. Leisering (2003) points out that social scientists have examined the key examples of the state's influence in the areas of education, old age pensions, and risk management. The concern is that these contributions have been looked at in isolation and instead need to be studied holistically.

Childhood

State policies that directly relate to the first stage of the life course, childhood, need to start with birth and fertility. State policies affecting fertility may be as direct as the Chinese government's strict one-child policy or cash incentives for having more than two children, as was tried in Quebec during the 1990s. More indirect policies—such as parental leave allowances and universal child-care programs—often encourage women to approach their desired fertility level without fear of it negatively affecting their career goals.

Child-care policies and universal education legislation play an important role in the structure and functioning of the family across the life course. With children in the care of alternative caregivers, women are able to engage in the paid workforce at a similar level to men who are the fathers of young children. One of the most significant trends in the twentieth century was the rise of women in the paid workforce. Nowhere has that effect been more pronounced than among women with preschool-aged children.

Labour Force Participation

Government policies benefit some segments of society more than others (e.g., two-parent families versus single-parent families, wealthier families versus poorer families). Gornick and Meyers (2003) point out that policies in the United States favour intact families and that poorer

families spend a disproportionate amount of their income on child care compared to wealthier families. In Canada, economic fluctuations and state intervention strategies are not experienced in the same way by poorer or non-traditional families. Legal immigrants do not experience the same benefits as the native population (Papademtriou & Terrazas, 2009). Although many companies have increased their focus on family-friendly policies, workplace norms still segregate serious employees from those on the **"mommy or daddy track"** who consider family care an integral part of their identity (Cummins, 2005; Duxbury et al., 2003) and something they are not willing to sacrifice to get ahead in the workplace.

Another form of indirect state intervention that affects families in the working stage is the way in which governments choose to tax earnings of single individuals compared to family units. A country may tax individuals who are part of a family differently than individuals who are unattached from a family, or it may present family-based tax credits that benefit only one individual within the family (e.g., a child tax credit paid to the mother).

Marriage and Divorce

Marriage and divorce are important family life-course markers. They also are regulated by the state. Who can legally marry is at the discretion of the government and may change. Multiple-partner marriage, or polygamy, was made illegal in North America in the late nineteenth century. Most recently, Canada changed the definition of who could marry from one man and one woman to include same-sex marriages (see Box 8.5). The state is interested in marriage because it legally establishes the mutual responsibility of each partner as well as the physical and emotional care of any children who come from the union. No-fault divorce or divorce without cause (irreconcilable differences) is a relatively new phenomenon that involves the division of assets between the parties without attributing blame to either partner. This is in contrast to the experience of previous generations, when the state would often mandate spousal support payments, usually paid by the husband to the wife. The state continues to decide the amount of child support that must be paid when joint custody of working spouses is not awarded in a divorce.

Retirement

The third stage of the tripartite division of the life course by the state is retirement. Mandatory retirement of older workers was first instituted in Germany in the 1880s. People are now living longer and healthier lives, so it is not a surprise to see countries such as Canada repeal mandatory retirement laws. A person born in 1960 can expect to live 20 years longer than someone born in 1900. Yet even though an individual is not required to retire at age 65, government pension rules help to create a typical retirement age around this period. The state also influences housing and health care decisions in old age. Government housing is common in welfare and socialist states as a means of providing housing for low-income and elderly citizens. These housing units are built where the state chooses, which leaves those who need this type of housing with few options regarding where they will live. Other housing concerns

affect those seniors no longer able to live on their own. Institutionalized care homes are in increasing demand as the populations of Western countries age.

Figure 8.2 Observed and Projected Youth, Senior, and Total Demographic Dependency Ratios, Canada, 1971 to 2056
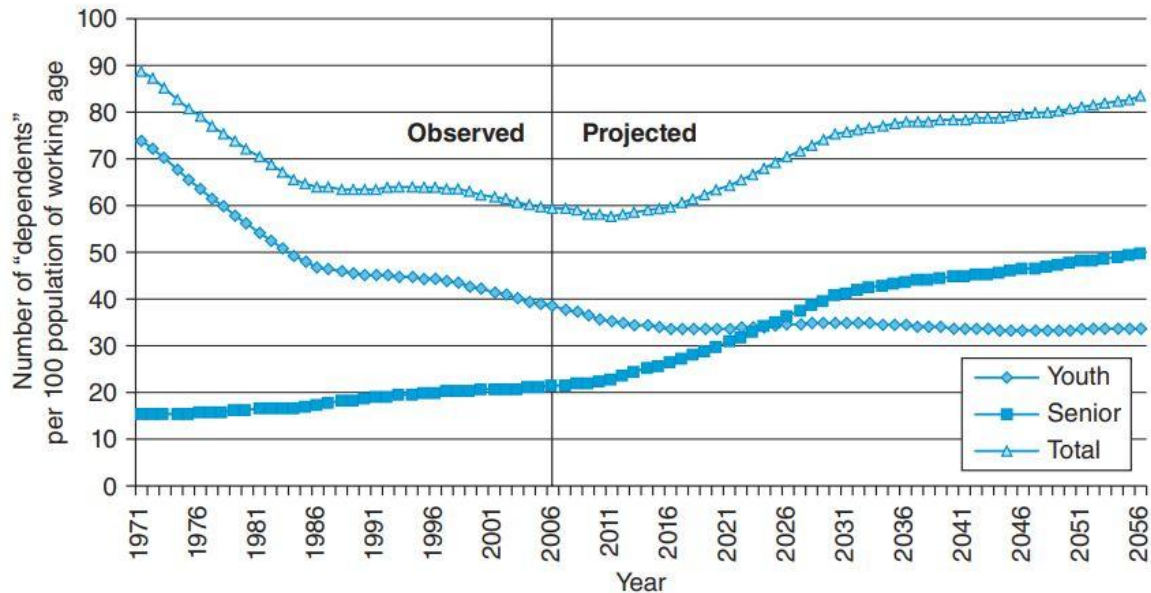
Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM Tables 051-001 (1971 to 2008) and 052-0004 (2009-2056).

Income during retirement is usually made up of a variety of sources, the primary ones being personal savings, work-related pensions, and government pensions. Each of these sources is affected by the state. Government pensions are distributed to elderly citizens in amounts that vary by marital status and, to a certain degree, financial need. These funds are dispersed from tax dollars and from contributions made by the retired individuals earlier in the life course. The government's ability to continue to pay these amounts to an aging population has caused some concern, particularly among younger Canadians. The **dependency ratio** in Canada is projected to increase (see Figure 8.3). The total demographic dependency ratio is the ratio of the combined youth population (0 to 19 years) and senior population (65 years or older) to the working-age population (20 to 64 years). It is expressed as the number of "dependents" for every 100 "workers." In other words, it is the number of youth (ages 0 to 19) plus the number of seniors (ages 65 and older) per 100 workers (ages 20 to 64).

The state affects not only the amount that elderly people can expect to receive from the government, but also the way in which work pensions and individual savings are collected and distributed. Through legislation, the government can create tax incentives for companies to pay pensions as well as laws that benefit individual savers. Registered retirement savings plans and tax-free savings accounts are examples of the ways in which the state can influence savings and ultimately retirement income.

Box 8.9
Get in Line … and Wait
Date: Jun. 3, 2009 MRI wait lists in British Columbia are approaching one year—and expensive private clinics may be the only alternative. Victoria resident Vicki Clark is reeling from an old sports injury. Doctors say she needs an MRI scan to diagnose the problem, but Clark was shocked when she learned how long she would have to wait. "I have an appointment for 7 a.m. in Victoria, March 20, 2010," Clark said. Mike Conroy, of the Vancouver Island Health Authority, had a similar reaction. "I was a little surprised by that," Conroy said. In 2008, the province gave the health authorities $120 million in one-time funding to clear up MRI wait lists—and it worked. But now the money is drained up, and wait lists have shot up dramatically. Clark also called a private clinic. She was told she could receive the same scan within a week— but for a cost of more than $1,200. "I'm not adverse to private treatment, but at the same time I think our health system should be revamped," Clark said. Source: http://www.ctvbc.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20090603/bc_mri_waits_090603

An aging population is concerned with health care availability and affordability. State health care policies govern who receives treatment and when that treatment can take place. Even in countries with universal health care, barriers exist that restrict the availability of care. Universal health care is not synonymous with unlimited resources. For example, limited magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines means that queuing is used to limit the number of people who have access to this type of imaging (see Box 8.7).

The state also influences the cost and availability of drugs through pharmaceutical regulations and drug approval processes. The elderly as a group are most affected by this because of their greater use of medication and medical processes.

In summary, the influence of the government on families across the life course is much more prevalent than the casual observer might expect. It is present when we consider formalizing our

relationships, influences how many children we choose to have, and decides at what age our children go to school. It gives us incentives to save for the future and controls the medical process on which we ultimately become dependent. The government, like religion, can be described as affecting our lives from cradle to grave.

Conclusion

The family represents one of the foundational social institutions of any society. Researchers and scholars may not agree on the future or value of the family, but they do agree that the family continues to have important social implications. Alongside other important social institutions such as religion, government, education, and labour, the family continues to shape and influence the behaviours of individuals across the life course.

Summary of Key Points

- The family is one of several social institutions that influence one another. Some other important social institutions are:
  - Work
  - Education
  - Religion
  - Government

- The family is influenced by other social institutions and also influences those social institutions.

- Classic and modern scholars have debated and continue to debate the importance of the family as a social institution.

- The dual-earner family has now become the norm in Canada.

- Early research on work–family interaction focused on the dysfunctional aspects of the interaction, but current work continues to examine the benefits of multiple roles.

- The idyllic depiction of the North American family in *Leave It to Beaver* in the 1950s continues to influence people's definition of how the family was and ought to be today, despite it being an anomaly in recent family history.

- Despite the increasing rate of young working mothers, women spend more time with their children today than they did just decades ago (Bianchi et al., 2006).

- Concerning family care and paid work, the differences between men and women are decreasing, but men continue to do more paid work and less family care than women.

- Education is an excellent example of an early life course event that has an impact on later life course events. Individuals and families benefit from early education.

- Completing one's education is recognized as a marker in the transition to adulthood.

- Economic theory suggests that as income goes up, divorce rates go down because of the costs associated with divorce. Highly educated and highly paid women are less likely to be financially dependent on a male provider and therefore are more likely to divorce.

- Religious influences on family socialization revolve around important life course events such as marriage, birth, death, and coming of age ceremonies.

- Religion influences family life in both direct and indirect ways. Direct influences include doctrinal propositions regarding marriage and divorce scripts as well as the socially acceptable use of sexuality. Indirect influences include reinforcing patriarchal approaches to family life that affect decisions on the roles of family members and fertility.

- The government is or has been involved in virtually every aspect of the family:
  - Who can legally marry and divorce (see Bill C-38)
  - Who is related to whom (see Bill C-31)
  - Accepted forms of sexual expression
  - When you can start working and when you must stop
  - Issues of child custody and obligations among former partners

Glossary

Abrahamic-based religions The religions of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, which all trace their historical roots to the patriarch Abraham.

atomistic family A family that has the individual as its focus. This is the third stage in Zimmerman's cyclical theory of family development and is depicted as the state having a dominant role in the life of the family.

conjugal family A family that has the partner dyad as its focus. Goode predicted that this family type would be a natural result of modernization.

dependency ratio The ratio of the population considered to be below and above working age to the population in the labour force.

domestic family The second stage of Zimmerman's cyclical theory of family development in which the state has increasing influence in the life of the family.

expressive role A gendered term that refers to family roles that are most often associated with females, such as caring and nurturing.

instrumental role A gendered term that refers to family roles that are most often associated with males, such as economic provision and physical protection.

mommy and daddy track A symbolic pathway that parents who value family more than career are often placed on by company supervisors.

non-standard employment Employment that falls outside of the more traditional working hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

OECD countries The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development represents a group of countries committed to democracy and the market economy. Founded in 1961, the original group of 20 states has now expanded to 34 countries.

Protestant Reformation A general religious movement of the European Christian faith in which dissenters separated from the Roman Catholic Church in protest of perceived religious abuses.

rite of passage A significant life course event in which individuals pass from one life stage to another. This typically involves a ceremony that marks the transition to adulthood.

role overload A concept that was developed by family researchers from a functionalist perspective who felt that additional roles in a person's life would reduce the effectiveness of the existing roles. This concept was applied to the roles of women as they began to enter the paid labour force in large numbers.

trustee family The first stage in Zimmerman's cyclical theory of family development. He considered this stage as a time in which families relied on each other for survival and the state was either undeveloped or not yet interfering with family functions.

welfare state A term used to designate government systems that seek to enhance the economic and social well-being of their citizenry. Welfare states exist in most current nation-states and lie on a continuum of involvement and intervention.

Connections

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parental_leave
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-229-x/2009001/demo/dep-eng.htm#hg
https://bc.ctvnews.ca/mri-wait-lists-reaching-one-year-in-b-c-1.404505

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-flames-skip-flu-vaccine-lineups-1.809497