

Families' Every Fuss, Archived and Analyzed

LOS ANGELES — "Get your jacket."

Dad, shoulders slumped, face grave, is standing over his 8-year-old, trying to get the boy out the door. The youngster shifts, ducks, stalls; he wants the jacket brought to him. "Get your jacket." The boy stalls more, and Dad's mouth tightens. "Get. Your. Jacket." The boy loses it. "You're always acting like a control freak!" he cries, turning to throw himself on the couch. "I'm not calling you names or anything, but you're a control freak."

At a conference here this month, more than 70 social scientists gathered to bring to a close one of the most unusual, and oddly voyeuristic, anthropological studies ever conceived. From 2002 to 2005, before reality TV ruled the earth, researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, laboriously recruited 32 local families, videotaping nearly every waking, at-home moment during a week — including the Jacket Standoff.

Filmmakers have turned a lens on the minutiae of unscripted domestic life before, perhaps most famously in "The Osbournes" on MTV and the 1970s PBS program "An American Family."

But the U.C.L.A. project was an effort to capture a relatively new sociological species: the dual-earner, multiple-child, middle-class American household. The investigators have just finished working through the 1,540 hours of videotape, coding and categorizing every hug, every tantrum, every soul-draining search for a missing soccer cleat.

"This is the richest, most detailed, most complete database of middle-class family living in the world," said Thomas S. Weisner, a professor of anthropology at U.C.L.A. who was not involved in the research. "What it does is hold up a mirror to people. They laugh. They cringe. It shows us life as it is actually lived."

The study captured a thin slice of Los Angeles's diversity, including two black families, one Latino, one Japanese, and some ethnically mixed couples, as well as two households with gay, male parents. The families lived, most of them, well outside the city's tonier ZIP codes, in places like La Crescenta, east, and Westchester, near the airport.

After more than \$9 million and untold thousands of hours of video watching, they have found that, well, life in these trenches is exactly what it looks like: a fire shower of stress, multitasking and mutual nitpicking. And the researchers found plenty to nitpick themselves. Mothers still do most of the housework, spending 27 percent of their time on it, on average, compared with 18 percent for fathers and 3 percent for children (giving an allowance made no difference). Husbands and wives were together alone in the house only about 10 percent of their waking time, on average, and the entire family was gathered in one room about 14 percent of the time. Stress levels soared — yet families spent very little time in the most soothing, uncluttered area of the home, the yard.

"I call it the new math," said Kathleen Christensen of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which financed the project. "Two people. Three full-time jobs." Parents learned on the fly, she said — and it showed.

Dual-earner households with children have existed for years, especially in lower-income neighborhoods. But the numbers have jumped in recent decades, to 46 percent of families with children in 2008 from 36 percent in 1975.

Lyn Repath-Martos and her husband, Antonio, know all about it. With two children, ages 5 and 8, two full-time jobs outside the house and a mortgage, they qualified for the study in 2002. For \$1,000, they filled out a sheaf of questionnaires, sat for in-depth interviews and allowed a small film crew into their 943-square-foot house east of Los Angeles to record every moment.

One researcher roamed the house with a handheld computer, noting each family member's location and activities at 10-minute intervals.

"I would never volunteer for a reality series," said Ms. Repath-Martos, an administrator at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "But I was curious. And I thought that — well, this is going to sound crazy — I thought that it wouldn't be that invasive." The initial sensation was one of being studied by anthropologists.

"I was in the kitchen making kids lunches, the cameras were rolling, and I thought, 'O.K., observe how this is done.'" said another study participant, Aaron Spicker, a businessman who lives in Redondo Beach with his wife, Merrill, a corporate finance specialist, and two daughters. But after a while, they said, family members shrugged off the cameras and relaxed. The same cannot be said of the fieldworkers, most of them childless graduate students seeing combat for the first time. "The very purest form of birth control ever devised. Ever," said one, Anthony P. Graesch, a postdoctoral fellow, about the experience. (Dr. Graesch and his wife have just had their second child.)

In one house, Dr. Graesch was recording locations when an escalating argument threatened to get ugly. He bailed out for air and continued to track people inside by peeking through the windows. "Luckily it was a one-story bungalow," he said.

In weekly meetings, the researchers discussed what they were witnessing.

"Every time we met, I felt like I was on the defensive," said Tamar Kremer-Sadlik, the research director, who herself has two children and a working husband. "I mean, it's not like I approved of everything these parents were doing. But I could relate to them. I knew exactly what they were going through."

Continual negotiations, for one. Parents generally were so flexible in dividing up chores and child-care responsibilities — “catch as catch can,” one dad described it — that many boundaries were left unclear, adding to the stress.

The couples who reported the least stress tended to have rigid divisions of labor, whether equal or not. “She does the inside work, and I do all the outside, and we don’t interfere” with each other, said one husband.

The videotapes reveal parents as at-home teachers, enforcing homework deadlines. As coaches and personal trainers, sorting through piles of equipment. As camp directors, planning play dates and weekend “family time.”

“The coordination it takes, it’s more complicated than a theater production,” said Elinor Ochs, the U.C.L.A. linguistic anthropologist who led the study. “And there are no rehearsals.”

In addition to housework, mothers spent 19 percent of their time talking with family members or on the phone, and 11 percent taking occasional breathers that the study classified as “leisure.” The rates for fathers were 20 percent chatting, and 23 percent leisure — again, taken in fragments.

Still, parents also had large amounts of solo time with their children, a total of 34 percent for mothers and 25 percent for fathers, on average. Half the fathers in the study spent as much or more time as their spouse alone with at least one child when at home, and were more likely to be engaged in some activity, like playing in the backyard, the study found. Mothers were more likely to be watching TV with a child.

Occasionally, camera crews caught family members spitting into a small vial. This, too, was a part of the study: Researchers measured levels of a stress hormone called cortisol in the saliva, four times a day. These cortisol profiles provided biological backing for a familiar frustration in many marriages. The more that women engaged with their husbands in the evening, talking about the day, the faster their cortisol dropped. But the men’s levels tapered more slowly when talking with a spouse. (A previous generation’s solution: “cocktail hour”).

Inside, the homes, researchers found rooms crammed with toys, DVDs, videos, books, exercise machines; refrigerators buried in magnets; and other odds and ends. The clutter on the fridge door tended to predict the amount of clutter elsewhere. Outside the homes, the yards were open and green — but “no one was out there,” said Jeanne E. Arnold, a U.C.L.A. archaeologist who worked on the study. One family had a 17,000-square-foot yard, with a pool and a trampoline, and not even the children ventured out there during the study. That, of course, would mean leaving the house, which is not always as simple as it sounds.

At the door, having found his jacket, the 8-year-old in the video flops to the floor and is demanding that someone tie his shoes. Now Mom joins Dad, hovering over the boy, hands on hips, giving him the same hairy eyeball as her husband. Hours seem to pass as the youngster struggles with his laces, his jacket sleeves, his attitude. Finally Dad caves in, and drops to the floor to help him out. And then, just like that — through some combination of stubbornness, patience and dumb love — it is over. The clothes are on, the door swings open, and father and son go out, into the world.

Family

In human context, a family (from Latin: *familia*) is a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity, or co-residence. In most societies it is the principal institution for the socialization of children. Extended from the human "family unit" by affinity, economy, culture, tradition, honor, and friendship are concepts of family that are metaphorical, or that grow increasingly inclusive extending to nationhood and humanism. There are also concepts of family that break with tradition within particular societies, or those that are transplanted via migration to flourish or else cease within their new societies. As a unit of socialisation and a basic institution key to the structure of society, the family is the object of analysis for sociologists of the family. Genealogy is a field which aims to trace family lineages through history. In science, the term "family" has come to be used as a means to classify groups of objects as being closely and exclusively related. In the study of animals it has been found that many species form groups that have similarities to human "family"—often called "packs."

Procreation

One of the primary functions of the family is to produce and reproduce persons, biologically and socially. Thus, one's experience of one's family shifts over time. From the perspective of children, the family is a family of orientation: the family serves to locate children socially and plays a major role in their enculturation and socialization. From the point of view of the parent(s), the family is a family of procreation, the goal of which is to produce and enculturate and socialize children. However, producing children is not the only function of the family; in societies with a sexual division of labor, marriage, and the resulting relationship between two people, it is necessary for the formation of an economically productive household. A conjugal family includes only the husband, the wife, and unmarried children who are not of age. The most common form of this family is regularly referred to in sociology as a nuclear family. A consanguineal family consists of a parent and his or her children, and other people. Although the concept of consanguinity originally referred to relations by "blood", Cultural anthropologists[who?] have argued that one must understand the idea of "blood" metaphorically and that many societies understand family through other concepts rather than through genetic distance. A matrilineal family consists of a mother and her children. Generally, these children are her biological offspring, although adoption of children is a practice in nearly every society. This kind of family is common where women have the resources to rear their children by themselves, or where men are more mobile than women.

History of the family

The diverse data coming from ethnography, history, law and social statistics, establish that the human family is an institution and not a biological fact founded on the natural relationship of consanguinity. Early scholars of family history applied Darwin's biological theory of evolution in their theory of evolution of family systems. American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan published *Ancient Society* in 1877 based on his theory of the three stages of human progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization. Morgan's book was the "inspiration for Friedrich Engels' book" *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* published in 1884. Engels expanded Morgan's hypothesis that economical factors caused the transformation of primitive community into a class-divided society. Engels' theory of resource control, and later that of Karl Marx, was used to explain the cause and effect of change in family structure and function. The popularity of this theory was largely unmatched until the 1980s, when other sociological theories, most notably structural functionalism, gained acceptance.

Kinship terminology

Archaeologist Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881) performed the first survey of kinship terminologies in use around the world. Although much of his work is now considered dated, he argued that kinship terminologies reflect different sets of distinctions. For example, most kinship terminologies distinguish between sexes (the difference between a brother and a sister) and between generations (the difference between a child and a parent). Moreover, he argued, kinship terminologies distinguish between relatives by blood and marriage (although recently some anthropologists have argued that many societies define kinship in terms other than "blood"). Morgan made a distinction between kinship systems that use classificatory terminology and those that use descriptive terminology. Morgan's distinction is widely misunderstood, even by contemporary anthropologists. Classificatory systems are generally and erroneously understood to be those that "class together" with a single term relatives who actually do not have the same type of relationship to ego. (What defines "same type of relationship" under such definitions seems to be genealogical relationship. This is problematic given that any genealogical description, no matter how standardized, employs words originating in a folk understanding of kinship.) What Morgan's terminology actually differentiates are those (classificatory) kinship systems that do not distinguish lineal and collateral relationships and those (descriptive) kinship systems that do. Morgan, a lawyer, came to make this distinction in an effort to understand Seneca inheritance practices. A Seneca man's effects were inherited by his sisters' children rather than by his own children. Morgan identified six basic patterns of kinship terminologies:

Hawaiian: only distinguishes relatives based upon sex and generation.

Sudanese: no two relatives share the same term.

Eskimo: in addition to distinguishing relatives based upon sex and generation, also distinguishes between lineal relatives and collateral relatives.

Iroquois: in addition to sex and generation, also distinguishes between siblings of opposite sexes in the parental generation.

Crow: a matrilineal system with some features of an Iroquois system, but with a "skewing" feature in which generation is "frozen" for some relatives.

Omaha: like a Crow system but patrilineal.

Western kinship

Most Western societies employ Eskimo kinship terminology. This kinship terminology commonly occurs in societies based on conjugal (or nuclear) families, where nuclear families have a degree of relative mobility. Members of the nuclear use descriptive kinship terms:

Mother: a female parent

Father: a male parent

Son: a male child of the parent(s)

Daughter: a female child of the parent(s)

Brother: a male child of the same parent(s)

Sister: a female child of the same parent(s)

Grandfather: father of a father or mother

Grandmother: mother of a mother or father

Cousin: two people that share the same Grandparent(s)

Such systems generally assume that the mother's husband has also served as the biological father. In some families, a woman may have children with more than one man or a man may have children with more than one woman. The system refers to a child who shares only one parent with another child as a "half-brother" or "half-sister." For children who do not share biological or adoptive parents in common, English-speakers use the term "stepbrother" or "stepsister" to refer to their new relationship with each other when one of their biological parents marries one of the other child's biological parents. Any person (other than the biological parent of a child) who marries the parent of that child becomes the "stepparent" of the child, either the "stepmother" or "stepfather." The same terms generally apply to children adopted into a family as to children born into the family. Typically, societies with conjugal families also favor neolocal residence; thus upon marriage a person separates from the nuclear family of their childhood (family of orientation) and forms a new nuclear family (family of procreation). However, in the western society the single parent family has been growing more accepted and has begun to truly make an impact on culture. The majority of single parent families are more commonly single mother families than single father. These families face many difficult issues besides the fact that they have to rear their children on their own, but also have to deal with issues related to low income. Many single parents struggle with low incomes and must cope with other issues, including rent, child care, and other necessities required in maintaining a healthy and safe home. Members of the nuclear families of members of one's own (former) nuclear family may class as lineal or as collateral. Kin who regard them as lineal refer to them in terms that build on the terms used within the nuclear family:

An infant, his mother, his maternal grandmother, and his great-grandmother.

Grandparent

Grandfather: a parent's father

Grandmother: a parent's mother

Grandson: a child's son

Granddaughter: a child's daughter

For collateral relatives, more classificatory terms come into play, terms that do not build on the terms used within the nuclear family:

Uncle: father's brother, mother's brother, father's/mother's sister's husband

Aunt: father's sister, mother's sister, father's/mother's brother's wife

Nephew: sister's son, brother's son, wife's brother's son, wife's sister's son, husband's brother's son, husband's sister's son

Niece: sister's daughter, brother's daughter, wife's brother's daughter, wife's sister's daughter, husband's brother's daughter, husband's sister's daughter

When additional generations intervene (in other words, when one's collateral relatives belong to the same generation as one's grandparents or grandchildren), the prefixes "great-" or "grand-" modifies these terms. Also, as with grandparents and grandchildren, as more generations intervene the prefix becomes "great grand-", adding an additional "great-" for each additional generation. Most collateral relatives have never had membership of the nuclear family of the members of one's own nuclear family.

Cousin: the most classificatory term; the children of aunts or uncles. One can further distinguish cousins by

degrees of collaterality and by generation. Two persons of the same generation who share a grandparent count as "first cousins" (one degree of collaterality); if they share a great-grandparent they count as "second cousins" (two degrees of collaterality) and so on. If two persons share an ancestor, one as a grandchild and the other as a great-grandchild of that individual, then the two descendants class as "first cousins once removed" (removed by one generation); if they shared ancestor figures as the grandparent of one individual and the great-great-grandparent of the other, the individuals class as "first cousins twice removed" (removed by two generations), and so on. Similarly, if they shared ancestor figures as the great-grandparent of one person and the great-great-grandparent of the other, the individuals class as "second cousins once removed". Hence one can refer to a "third cousin once removed upwards".

Cousins of an older generation (in other words, one's parents' first cousins), although technically first cousins once removed, are often classified with "aunts" and "uncles". Similarly, a person may refer to close friends of one's parents as "aunt" or "uncle", or may refer to close friends as "brother" or "sister", using the practice of fictive kinship. English-speakers mark relationships by marriage (except for wife/husband) with the tag "-in-law". The mother and father of one's spouse become one's mother-in-law and father-in-law; the female spouse of one's child becomes one's daughter-in-law and the male spouse of one's child becomes one's son-in-law. The term "sister-in-law" refers to three essentially different relationships, either the wife of one's sibling, or the sister of one's spouse, or, in some uses, the wife of one's spouse's sibling. "Brother-in-law" expresses a similar ambiguity. No special terms exist for the rest of one's spouse's family. The terms "half-brother" and "half-sister" indicate siblings who share only one biological or adoptive parent.

Economic functions

Anthropologists have often supposed that the family in a traditional society forms the primary economic unit. This economic role has gradually diminished in modern times, and in societies like the United States it has become much smaller, except in certain sectors such as agriculture and in a few upper class families. In China the family as an economic unit still plays a strong role in the countryside. However, the relations between the economic role of the family, its socio-economic mode of production and cultural values remain highly complex.

Political functions

On the other hand family structures or its internal relationships may affect both state and religious institutions. J.F. del Giorgio in *The Oldest Europeans* points out that the high status of women among the descendants of the post-glacial Paleolithic European population was coherent with the fierce love of freedom of pre-Indo-European tribes. He believes that the extraordinary respect for women in those families meant that children reared in such atmospheres tended to distrust strong, authoritarian leaders. According to del Giorgio, European democracies have their roots in those ancient ancestors.

Family types

Family arrangements in the United States have become more diverse with no particular household arrangement representing half of the United States population.

The different types of families occur in a wide variety of settings, and their specific functions and meanings depend largely on their relationship to other social institutions. Sociologists have a special interest in the function and status of these forms in stratified (especially capitalist) societies. The term "nuclear family" is commonly used, especially in the United States and Europe, to refer to conjugal families. Sociologists distinguish between conjugal families (relatively independent of the kindred of the parents and of other families in general) and nuclear families (which maintain relatively close ties with their kindred). The term "extended family" is also common, especially in the United States and Europe. This term has two distinct meanings. First, it serves as a synonym of "consanguinal family". Second, in societies dominated by the conjugal family, it refers to kindred (an egocentric network of relatives that extends beyond the domestic group) who do not belong to the conjugal family. These types refer to ideal or normative structures found in particular societies. Any society will exhibit some variation in the actual composition and conception of families. Much sociological, historical and anthropological research dedicates itself to the understanding of this variation, and of changes in the family form over time. Thus, some speak of the bourgeois family, a family structure arising out of 16th-century and 17th-century European households, in which the family centers on a marriage between a man and woman, with strictly defined gender-roles. The man typically has responsibility for income and support, the woman for home and family matters. According to the work of scholars Max Weber, Alan Macfarlane, Steven Ozment, Jack Goody and Peter Laslett, the huge transformation that led to modern marriage in Western democracies was "fueled by the religio-cultural value system provided by elements of Judaism, early Christianity, Roman Catholic canon law and the Protestant Reformation". In contemporary Europe and the United States, people in academic, political and civil sectors have called attention to single-father-headed households, and families headed by same-sex couples,[citation needed] although academics point out that these forms exist in other societies. Also the term blended family or stepfamily describes families with mixed parents: one or both parents remarried, bringing children of the former family into the new family. Also in sociology, particularly in the works of social psychologist Michael Lamb, traditional family refers to "a

middleclass family with a bread-winning father and a stay-at-home mother, married to each other and raising their biological children", and nontraditional to exceptions from this rule. Most of the US households are now non-traditional under this definition.

Sociological views

Contemporary society generally views family as a haven from the world, supplying absolute fulfillment. The family is considered to encourage "intimacy, love and trust where individuals may escape the competition of dehumanizing forces in modern society." During industrialization, "The family as a repository of warmth and tenderness (embodied by the mother) stands in opposition to the competitive and aggressive world of commerce (embodied by the father). The family's task was to protect against the outside world." However, Zinn and Eitzen note, "The protective image of the family has waned in recent years as the ideals of family fulfillment have taken shape. Today, the family is more compensatory than protective. It supplies what is vitally needed but missing in other social arrangements". "The popular wisdom," Zinn and Eitzen say, is that the family structures of the past were superior to those today and families were more stable and happier at a time when they did not have to contend with problems such as illegitimate children and divorce. They respond to this, saying, "there is no golden age of the family gleaming at us in the far back historical past". "Desertion by spouses, illegitimate children, and other conditions that are considered characteristics of modern times existed in the past as well." Still others argue that whether or not we view the family as "declining" depends on our definition of "family." The high rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock births indicate a decline in the institution of the family. No longer are marriages arranged for political or economic gain, and children are not expected to contribute to family income. Instead, people choose mates based on love. This increased role of love indicates a societal shift toward favoring emotional fulfillment and relationships within a family, and this shift necessarily weakens the institution of the family

Oedipal family model and fascism

The model, common in the western societies, of the family triangle, husband-wife-children isolated from the outside, is also called oedipal model of the family, and it is a form of patriarchal family. Many philosophers and psychiatrists analyzed such a model. One of the most prominent of such studies is *Anti-Edipus* by Deleuze and Guattari (1972). Michel Foucault, in its renowned preface, remarked how the primary focus of this study is the fight against contemporary fascism. "And not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini [...] but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us."

In the family, they argue, the young develop in a perverse relationship, wherein they learn to love the same person who beats and oppresses them. The family therefore constitutes the first cell of the fascist society, as they will carry this attitude of love for oppressive figures in their adult life. Kindship and family forms have often been thought to impact the social relations in the society as a whole, and therefore been described as the first cell or the building social unit of the structure of a society. Fathers torment their sons. Deleuze and Guattari, in their analysis of the dynamics at work within a family, "track down all varieties of fascism, from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives". As it has been explained by Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault, as well as other philosophers and psychiatrists such as Laing and Reich, the patriarchal-family conceived in the West tradition serves the purpose of perpetuating a propertarian and authoritarian society. The child grows according to the oedipal model, which is typical of the structure of capitalist societies, and he becomes in turn owner of submissive children and protector of the woman. Some argue that the family institution conflicts with human nature and human primitive desires and that one of its core functions is performing a suppression of instincts, a repression of desire commencing with the earliest age of the child. As the young undergoes physical and psychological repression from someone for whom they develop love, they develop a loving attitude towards authority figures. They will bring such attitude in their adult life, when they will desire social repression and will form docile subjects for society. Michel Foucault, in his systematic study of sexuality, argued that rather than being merely repressed, the desires of the individual are efficiently mobilized and used, to control the individual, alter interpersonal relationships and control the masses. Foucault believed organized religion, through moral prohibitions, and economic powers, through advertising, make use of unconscious sex drives. Dominating desire, they dominate individuals. According to the analysis of Michel Foucault, in the west: the [conjugal] family organization, precisely to the extent that it was insular and heteromorphous with respect to the other power mechanisms, was used to support the great "maneuvers" employed for the Malthusian control of the birthrate, for the populationist incitements, for the medicalization of sex and the psychiatrization of its nongenital forms.

Inbreeding

A study performed by scientists from Iceland found that mating with a relative can significantly increase the number of children in a family. Many societies consider inbreeding unacceptable. Scientists warn that inbreeding may raise the chances of a child inheriting two copies of disease-causing recessive genes, leading to genetic disorders and higher infant mortality. Scientists found that couples formed of relatives had more children and

grandchildren than unrelated couples. The study revealed that when a husband and wife were third cousins, they had an average of 4.0 children and 9.2 grandchildren. If a woman was in relationship with her eighth cousin, then the number of children declined, showing an average of 3.3 children and 7.3 grandchildren.

Size

Natalism is the belief that human reproduction is the basis for individual existence, and therefore promotes having large families. Many religions, e.g., Islam, Catholicism and Judaism, encourage their followers to procreate and have many children. In recent times, however, there has been an increasing amount of family planning and a following decrease in total fertility rate in many parts of the world, in part due to concerns of overpopulation. Many countries with population decline offer incentives for people to have large families as a means of national efforts to reverse declining populations.