Lecture Notes

# Chapter 10: Family and Education: Institutionalizing Socialization

## Learning Objectives

1. Discuss how definitions of families are socially constructed and change over time.
2. Give examples of how each major theory approaches family.
3. Explain how new families start in most Global North societies.
4. Diagram and explain how the institution of family interacts with other institutions.
5. Discuss why different societies react differently to same-sex marriage.
6. Describe global patterns and policies that affect families, and give examples.
7. Describe why an educated citizenry is important for a nation’s economy.
8. Compare rational choice and symbolic interaction explanations for why students succeed—or do not—in school.
9. Illustrate the bureaucratization of education.
10. Describe how schools contribute to the reproduction of social class.
11. Provide examples of how society’s culture influences educational policy.

## Chapter Overview

Chapter 10 describes the importance of the institution of the family. Theoretical perspectives on the family, including rational choice, symbolic interactionist, structural functionalist, conflict, and feminist theories are detailed. Then, mate selection and power relations within a family are explained extensively in order to illustrate micro-processes within the family that are embedded in meso- and macro-level contexts. Then, meso-level and macro-level analyses of the family are provided using family changes as examples. These changes include teenage pregnancy, dual career marriages, cohabitation, and divorce.

Next, the authors discuss various roles in the formal education system and problems associated with the roles. This section focuses on student and peer culture, but the authors also discuss the role of teachers and administrators. The authors then distinguish between the formal education systems, focusing on schools as a bureaucracy, and the informal structures of school, which highlights the hidden curriculum and the educational climate of schools. Next the authors detail how the educational institution interacts with other social institutions, paying specific attention to the relationships between schools and families, schools and communities, and schools and the federal government. The chapter turns to an examination of education as a road to opportunity. In their discussion of these findings, the authors illustrate the role of testing, tracking, and school funding in perpetuating inequalities.

## Lecture Outline

I. What is a Family?

A. U.S. Census Bureau – “a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of the family.”

B. Some sociologists – “two or more individuals who maintain an intimate relationship that they expect will last indefinitely—or in the case of parent and child, until the child reaches adulthood—and who usually live under the same roof and pool their incomes and household labor”

C. The most basic institution of society

i. *Institution* – a system of norms

ii. Affects us for most of our lives

iii. Major life events take place within the family

iv. Capable of fulfilling a number of functions of other institutions

1. Other institutions often cannot fulfill the functions of the family

v. Important for human survival

D. Two types

i. *Family of orientation* – the family we are born into; our parent(s) and possibly sibling(s); we are socialized into this family

ii. *Family of procreation* – our lifemates and/or own children

1. The transmission of values from the family of orientation to the family of procreation stabilizes the family system

II. Theoretical Perspectives on Family

A. Micro-Level Theories of Family and the Meso-Level Connection

i. *Symbolic interaction theory* – culture dictates the language we learn and how we interpret various situations; our families help socialize us into behavioral patterns

B. Meso- and Macro-Level Theories of the Family

i. *Structural-functional theory* – the family serves a number of common purposes in every society

ii. *Conflict theory* – conflict within families is inevitable and natural; this conflict results from struggles for power both from within the family and between the family and society at large

iii. *Feminist theory* – women are placed at the center to spotlight them as active agents and uncover the biases in male assumptions

III. Family Dynamics: Micro-Level Processes

A. Global trend toward the western model is changing families

B. Family is interdependent as a micro-level social unit, meso-level social institution, and macro-level social structure

C. Many individual family issues that seem very intimate and personal are actually affected by norms and forces at other levels

D. Mate Selection: How do new Families Start?

i. Highly limited by social characteristics like ethnicity, age, geographical proximity, etc.

ii. Norms Governing Choice of Marriage Partners: Societal Rules and Intimate Choices

1. *Exogamy* – a norm that requires individuals to marry *outside* of their own immediate group

a. Village exogamy – marrying outside the village to bond villages and reduce the likelihood of armed conflict between them

b. Incest taboo – may recognize negative biological consequences of inbreeding or lead to family destruction through sexual jealousy

c. Each group defines “exogamy” in a way that is most beneficial for them

d. Some norms are weakening

2. *Endogamy* – require individuals to marry *inside* certain boundaries, whatever the societal members see as protecting the homogeneity of the group

a. Interracial marriages challenge the norms, but are becoming more common.

3. *Homogamy* – most people choose a mate with similar social characteristics such as age, place of residence, educational background, political philosophy, moral values, and psychological traits

iii. *Finding a Mate*

1. *Arranged marriages* – someone other than the couple selects marital partners

a. Often happens in traditional, patriarchal societies

b. Love may develop eventually, but it is secondary

2. *Free-choice marriage* – the partners select one another primarily based on romance and love

a. Becoming more prevalent around the world

b. Industrialized societies tend to value love and individualism and tend to have high marriage rates, low fertility rates, and high divorce rates

c. Men are more likely than women to desire marriage

d. “E-romance” is helping to facilitate free choice mate selection

3. *Three-stage courtship process* – the process of selecting (or screening out) a mate. Stages include stimulus, value comparison, and the roles and needs stage

a. *Stimulus* – we meet someone to whom we are attracted

b. *Value comparison* – we find a person compatible if they affirm our own beliefs and values

c. *Roles and needs stage* – the couple explores the roles of companion, parent, housekeeper, and lover and find common needs, interests, and favored activities

4. E-dating services – several popular sites include Match.com, ZOOSK, and eHarmony.com

a. Many would-be mates are finding their partners

b. Many specialized niche services have sprung up based on race, religion, sexual orientation, occupations, and other interests

E. Who Holds the Power? Authority in Marriage-most societies practice patriarchy; some believe it is because men are larger, free from child-bearing, and not tied to one place

i. *Patriarchy* – male authority

ii. *Matriarchy* – female authority (very rare)

iii. *Egalitarian family patterns* – power, authority, and decision-making are shared between the spouses and perhaps with the children

1. Emerging, but men generally still have a disproportionate say over major decisions

iv. *Resource theory* – the spouse with the greater resources (education, income, occupational prestige) has greater power

v. Who does the housework?

1. In most families, housework is sex-segregated. Women do the majority of housework and childcare

2. *The second shift* – employed women do the housework and childcare after finishing their first shift at work

3. Husbands who are at home when their wives are working do more housework

4. Education, employment, and earnings give women more respect, independence, and power

5. Men who do an equitable share of the household chores report higher levels of satisfaction with the marriage and the couple is less likely to divorce

6. The success or failure of a marriage often depends on patterns that develop early in the marriage for dealing with everyday situations

vi. Women are more economically dependent upon men, but men are more emotionally dependent upon women

IV. The Family as an Institution: Meso-Level Analysis

A. Marriage and family structure: The components of family as an institution

B. Types of marriages

i. *Monogamy* – marriage of two individuals

1. *Strict monogamy* – to one other person is life-long and deviation from that standard is prohibited

2. *Serial monogamy* – marrying several spouses, but one at a time

a. Common in western societies

3. *Polygamy* – a man or woman has more than one spouse

a. Most common in agricultural societies

4. *Polygyny* – a husband having more than one wife

a. Many societies allow it, but few men practice it because few men earn enough money to support several wives, and there are not enough women to go around

5. *Polyandry* – a wife having more than one husband

a. Very rare and usually only happens when men are very poor

6. *Extended families* – two or more adult generations that share tasks and living quarters

7. *Nuclear families* – mother, father, and children—or any two of the three

a. Occurs when individuals live in urban areas where smaller families are more practical, mate selection is based on love, and couples establish independent households after marriage; marriage is less of an economic arrangement between families; fewer marriages take place between relatives such as cousins; and equality between the sexes increases

C. The Economic Institution and Family

i. The economy has a major impact on family

ii. Poverty and families in the United States

1. Poverty threshold for family of four: $23,850

2. Poverty threshold for an individual: $11,670

3. 15% of all persons live below the poverty level

4. Single mothers are more likely to be in poverty (31.6%) because they are both workers and mother, earn less than men, receive irregular child support, and are underrepresented among policy makers

5. 6.2% of married couples had incomes below the poverty line

6. The average family has gotten poorer in the past 10 years with median incomes falling over 7%Culture of poverty – a set of attitudes and values including a sense of hopelessness and passivity, low aspirations, feelings of powerlessness and inferiority, and “present-time orientation” (concern only for the present), is passed from one generation to the next

a. Many sociologists argue that poverty is actually the cause of the values and attitudes that develop in poor communities as survival mechanisms

iii. Dual-worker families

1. *Dual-career marriages* – couples who both earn an income; economic stresses are lessened but family life may be complicated

2. The United States has been slower than many other countries to institute family friendly policies that assist dual career families (such as readily available child care, parental leave, flexible hours, or working from home)

a. *Flex-time* – individuals can schedule their own work hours within certain time frames

b. *Job-sharing* – individuals can split a job with one family member working in the morning and the other in the afternoon

V.

A. Divorce – Contract Breaking

i. Nearly half of all U.S. children will live in a single parent family for at least part of their lives

ii. Some point to divorce rates as a sign of the “breakdown of the family unit”

iii. Others view divorce as an adaptation to a different kind of social system

1. More people today express satisfaction with marriage than at any previous time

iv. Divorce rates have been dropping since 1996 and are often influenced by the economy.

1. 15.9 per 1000 citizens 1980; 5.2 in 2008 and 3.4 in 2009

v. The United States still has one of the highest rates of divorce in global north countries

vi. No-fault divorce is one reason for the rise in divorce rates in the 1970s

1. *Bi-lateral no-fault divorce* – required both parties to agree that they wanted out of the marriage

2. *Unilateral no-fault divorce* – allows one person to insist that the marriage has “irreconcilable differences.”The two do not have to agree

3. *Divorce culture* – a society in which people assume that marriages are fragile

4. *Marriage culture* – a culture that assumes marriage is for life

vii. Divorces often have a high emotional cost; Most societies have no way of reabsorbing divorced persons back into society

viii. Men have a harder time dealing emotionally with singlehood, but women have a harder time financially

ix. Support from the non-custodial parent can help relieve the poverty that single mothers may face

x. Children can benefit from divorce if the marriage was highly conflictual, but in general they are negatively impacted by reduced resources and new living arrangements

1. Many studies show the effects of divorce on children are short term with school achievement, peer relationships, and behavior affected.

2. Some argue the effects may be life-long and are related to higher levels of depression, higher probability of divorce, teen pregnancy, delinquency, poorer physical health, lower income and occupational prestige, etc.

3. Children who are well-adjusted to begin with have an easier time with divorce, especially if they can remain in their home and school

B. Same-Sex Marriage

i. The U.S. Supreme Court declared same-sex marriages legal in all 50 states on Jun 26, 2015

ii. In the United States, support for same sex marriage has rapidly increased

iii. Opponents of same-sex marriage argue that marriage has been a function of the church, temple, and mosque for centuries,

VI. What Have We Learned?

A. Societies depend on families as the unit through which to funnel services

B. It is the political, economic, health, education, religious, and sexual base for most people

VII.

A. *Formal education* is schooling that takes place in a formal setting with the goal of teaching a predetermined curriculum

B. Standards of education worldwide are based largely on a country’s level of development, political ideology, and guidelines from international standards

C. There are various ways of measuring educational quality worldwide:

i. *Student-teacher ratio*, or the number of pupils to instructors in a classroom, is one measure of educational quality

ii. *Literacy,* or the ability to read and write the language of an individual’s culture, is another measure of educational quality

D. *Mass education,* the standardization of national educational curricula is a trend spreading around the world

II. The Ins and Outs of Local Schools

1. *Teachers: The Front Line*

a. Teachers serve as gatekeepers, controlling the classroom flow of students, activities, resources, and privileges; act as timekeepers and traffic managers; and spend a lot of time in non-teaching clerical work

b. Teachers are in the middle of the educational hierarchy, and are often expected to serve as role models, graders, and disciplinarians at the same time they are students’ supporters and encouragers

c. The status and rewards associated with teaching varies around the globe

i. In the United States, teachers often have low salaries and low status which leads to dissatisfaction in their career

d. The “accountability movement” is another issue teachers are facing, and it encourages the use of two types of tests: standardized tests to measure students’ achievement and competency tests to determine teachers’ own knowledge and skills

e. This creates an emphasis on curricula that “teaches to the tests” that teachers must follow

f. Regarding teacher accountability, teacher tests lower teacher’s status and question their professionalism and ability to self-regulate

i. If governments regulate standards for teachers, the result is *deprofessionalization*

2. *Administrators: The Managers of the School System*

a. Administrators are responsible for many tasks: issuing budget reports; engaging in staff negotiations; hiring, firing, and training staff members; meeting with parents; carrying out routine approval of projects; managing public relations; preparing reports for boards of directors, local education councils, legislative bodies and national agencies; keeping up with new regulations; making recommendations regarding the staff; and many other tasks.

b. Administrations may also oversee discipline and act as buffers between parents and teachers when conflicts arise

c. School organizations and administrative structures around the world are becoming more similar

d. The Informal System: What Really Happens Inside Schools?

ii. The *informal system* of schooling includes the unspoken, unwritten, implicit demands that we must learn in order to master the system

1. The *hidden curriculum* refers to the implicit demands found in every learning institution that students have to learn and respond to in order to succeed within the educational system

a. For functionalists, the hidden curriculum teaches students expectations, behaviors, and values necessary to succeed in school and society

2. For conflict theorists, the hidden curriculum is a social and economic agenda that is responsible for differentiating social classes

3. Elite classes are given greater responsibility and opportunities for problem solving that result in higher achievement

4. Non-elite students are taught to obey rules and to accept their lot as punctual, obedient workers

iii. Educational Climate of Schools

1. The *school climate* is “a general social condition that characterizes a group, organization, or community” such as a school

2. The school’s architecture, teachers’ expectations, open versus closed classroom structure, ability grouping, age grading, and team teaching all affect the climate of the school

3. Classrooms also have climates

a. Teachers use discipline and encouragement, the way teachers organize tasks and plan student interactions, the seating arrangements and décor all influence student achievement

b. Boys get more attention, are called on more often, and are given instructions about how to accomplish tasks

c. Diverse classrooms and cultures may also create inequalities as “different” students tend to end up in lower ability groups, guaranteeing their poorer achievement

d. Friendships and peer groups are influenced by school and classroom organizations and teachers’ policies

e. Students who are tracked form friendships within the tracks

f. Students in poor and minority neighborhoods are less likely to have access to advanced classes

iv. Value Climates of Schools

1. The *value climate* of schools refers to students’ motivation, aspirations, and achievements

a. Neighborhood racial, ethnic, and class composition affect the value climate within the school

b. Students perform better when they are involved and perceive themselves as part of their school community compared to students not attached to school

c. Teachers and parents also have expectations for students

i. Expectations and rankings can become *self-fulfilling prophecies* which affect how children feel about their own abilities, which, in turn, influence their motivation to achieve

v. Effective Academic Learning Climate

1. Schools need to be

a. safe and orderly

b. organized

c. clear on what students will learn at each level

vi. Power Dynamics and Coping Strategies in the Classroom

1. How rules are enforced and who has control are part of the power dynamics in classrooms

a. Students who are most successful in meeting achievement and behavioral expectations do the best in schools

b. Teachers and students develop coping strategies to deal with pressures and difficult situations

III. After the School Bell Rings: Meso-Level Analysis

A. Formal Education Systems

i. Since the 16th century, compulsory schooling has transformed from a way to spread religious beliefs to a way to teach better agricultural methods and prepare pupils for factory jobs to military preparation to an institution of stratification that works to reproduce the class system

ii. Schools have emerged as major formal organizations and have spread worldwide from 1950s to the 1990s

B. The Bureaucratic School Structure

i. Schools because a formal bureaucratic atmosphere is cost-effective, efficient, and impersonal

ii. Weber’s Bureaucratic Model applies to schools:

1. Schools are characterized by a division of labor

2. The administrative hierarchy incorporates a chain of command and channels of communications

3. Specific rules and procedures in a school cover everything from course content to discipline in the classroom

4. Personal relationships are downplayed in favor of formalized relations among members of the system

5. Rationality governs the operations of the organization

iii. Impersonal rules can lock students and teachers into rigid behavior patterns, leading to apathy and alienation

C. Education and the Social Institution of Family

i. Family background, according to many sociologists, is the most important single influence on children’s school achievement

1. Parent’s encouragement and concern about schoolwork are key factors in achievement

2. Middle-class parents tend to “manage” their children’s education, visiting schools and teachers, having educational materials in the home, and holding high expectations for their children’s achievement

3. Parents from a lower socioeconomic status and first-generations immigrant families look to schools as the authority and are less involved in their children’s schooling

4. Family and work structures also put parents under more stress, as busy parents have less time to help children with school work or participate in the school community

D. Educational Decision Making at the Meso-Level

i. Local-Level Influences

1. Communities conflict most over selection of reading material and sex education courses

ii. National-Level Influences

1. In the United States, the constitution mandates that education be primarily the concern of each state, leaving state governments mainly responsible for educational decisions

a. However, the federal government sometimes offers funding for special programs, which gives them the power to influence curricula and policies in the school

IV. Education, Society, and the Road to Opportunity? The Macro-Level

V. Why Societies Have Education Systems: Macro-Level Theories

A. The Purposes of Education: Functionalist Perspective

i. Functional theorists argue that formal and informal education serves certain crucial purposes in society

ii. *Latent Functions of Education*: In addition to these planned, formal functions, education also has *latent functions*—unintended, unorganized, informal results of the educational process

1. Schools keep children off the streets until they can be absorbed into productive roles in society

2. They provided young people with a place to congregate

3. Schools foster the creation of a “youth culture”

4. Schools are the central meeting place for the young as a kind of mate selection market

5. Schools also weakens parental control over youths, helps them begin the move toward independence, and provides experience in large, impersonal secondary groups

iii. Functional theorists argue that formal and informal education serves crucial purposes in society, especially as societies modernize

1. *Socialization*: Societies use education to pass on essential information in a culture—the values, skills, and knowledge necessary for survival

a. Especially important in industrialized societies where elders and family members cannot teach all the skills necessary for survival

b. Children are culturally socialized where they come together to form diverse groups

c. Children are also socialized by teachers, formal curricula, and the routine practices and rules of everyday classroom life

2. *Selecting and Training Individual Positions in Society*: We accumulate *credentials*, or grades, test scores, and degrees—that determine the college or job opportunities available to us, the fields of study we pursue, and ultimately our positions in society

3. *Promoting Change and Innovation*: Institutions of higher education are expected to generate new knowledge, technology, and ideas, and to produce students with up-to-date skills and knowledge to lead industry and other key institutions in society

a. Familiarity with technological equipment becomes critical survival skills taught by some schools

4. *Enhancing Personal and Social Development*: In school, children learn that they are no longer accepted regardless of their behaviors as they were in their families

a. They learn to meet certain expectations and compete for attention and rewards

b. They also must prepare to participate in their society’s political and economic systems

B. Conflict Perspective on Stratification and Education

i. Conflict theorists argue that schools participate in the stratification process

1. Some individuals receive an elite education and others do not

ii. Conflict theorists see institutions, including education, as tools of powerful and affluent groups to ensure that their own self-interests are met

1. Conflict theorists believe that schools are manipulated in ways that keep the sons and daughters of the “haves” in positions of privilege, while lower class children are prepared for less prestigious and rewarding positions in society

iii. If schools do not provide equal educational opportunities for all children in a society, then students cannot compete equally in the job market. This creates the *reproduction of class* or the socioeconomic positions of one generation pass on the next generation

1. The reproduction of class takes place through socialization of young people into adult work roles

2. Schools also teach students from lower socioeconomic positions to obey authority and accept the dominant ideology that justifies social inequality

C. Can Schools Bring about Equality in Society?

i. Equal opportunity exists when all people have an equal chance of achieving high socioeconomic status in society regardless of their class, ethnicity or race, and gender

ii. The goals of equal educational opportunity in the following way, according to James Coleman:

1. To provide a common curriculum for all children regardless of background

2. To provide that children from diverse backgrounds attend the same school

3. To provide equality within a given loyalty

iii. In the United States, equal opportunity means that children are provided with equal facilities, financing, and access to school programs

iv. Many children face what seem to be insurmountable barriers to educational success: increasing numbers of children living in poverty, lack of health care and immunizations, missing school due to illness or homelessness, or dropping out to help the family

D. Who Gets Ahead and Why? The Role of Education in Stratification

i. Education is a *meritocracy*, or a social group or organization where people are allocated to positions according to their ability and credentials

ii. Middle-class and elite children, and boys in developing countries, receive more and better education than equally intelligent poor and minority children. The fact that many children do not attend school on an equal footing, questions whether or not a meritocracy exists

1. Conflict theorists feel education creates and perpetuates inequality

2. The children of the “haves” get *social and cultural capital*, or language skills, knowledge of how the social system works, and networks, from their parents

E. Sources of Inequality

i. Three sources of inequality in schools illustrate how schools reproduce and perpetuate social stratification:

1. *Assessing Student Achievement: Testing*

a. Testing is one means of placing students in schools according to their achievement and merit, and determining progress is being made

b. Critics of testing argue that the test questions, language differences, and the testing situation itself are biased against lower class, minority, and immigrant students, resulting in lower scores and relegating these students to lower tracks in the educational student

i. IQ tests often only test selected types of intelligence and their bias if often questioned

ii. Achievements are intended to measure how much students have learned, but higher class students tend to do better on the tests

2. *Tracking*

a. *Tracking* or *streaming* refers to placing students in groups based on their ability levels, and is another way in which schools contribute to the stratification process

b. Tracking begins in primary school, and intelligence and achievement tests are typically used to track students into groups

c. Research finds that tracking correlates directly with the child’s background and ethnic group, language skills, appearance, and other socioeconomic variables

d. Differences in children’s achievement become reinforced though the selection process and differences in track programs

e. This results in students from lower social classes and minority groups are clustered in the lower tracks and complete fewer years and lower level of schools

f. The negative effects of tracking can be reduced if the system of placement is flexible, allowing students to be placed in different tracks by subject matter and ensuring reevaluation of students frequently so that they are not locked into placements

3. *School Funding*

a. The amount and sources of money available to fund schools affect the types of programs offered

b. Money for education comes from central governments in some societies, and from a combination of federal, state, and local government and private sources in others

c. In the United States, unequal school spending results from reliance on local property taxes as well as state and federal funds

i. This perpetuates existing inequalities

VI. What Have We Learned?

A. Educational systems are typically viewed as the channel for reduction of inequality, the source of upward mobility, the way to improve the economy, and the path for reduction of prejudice in societies

B. However, institutions such as education also have a vested interest in lack of change, or stability