**Course Encyclopedia “Life courses, family, & health”**

*Bachelor Sociology 2nd year*

*Season 2018-2019 (2)*

***Matthijs Kalmijn***

December 11, 2018

***[under construction]***

**Family** Either the descendants of a common ancestor (‘relatives’) or the parents and children in a household. In the past scholars often spoke of ‘the family’, currently, scholars speak of ‘family’ to recognize the different family forms that exist.

**Nuclear Family** Term often used in the past to denote a family with two parents and their biological child(ren). The term in no longer used as it has a normative component.

**Two-parent Family** Term often used to denote households with married or unmarried partners and their common biological children.

**Single-parent Family** Term often used to denote households with one parent and his or her biological child(ren). A SPF can be formed via divorce, widowhood, or the parent can have been alone when the child was born (for example, a never-married and never-cohabiting mother).

**Stepfamily Family** Family with a parent and his or her biological child and a partner who is not the biological parent of that child. This partner is called a stepparent to the child but how this is perceived by the parent and child varies.

**Blended Family** Stepfamily where the biological and the nonbiological parent of the child(ren) also have a common (biological) child in the household.

**Polygamous Family** Family where one husband or wife has two wives or husbands in the household who each have children from that husband/wife.

**Extended Family** Family where multiple generations live together in a household, usually of only one lineage (a husband and wife, their common children, and the husband’s parents, i.e., the children’s grandparents). Sometimes also used for households where other relatives live with their wives and children. Authors: William Goode.

**Household** One or more persons who live in one dwelling and who provide for their daily needs on a non-commercial or non-professional basis. Statistics Netherlands makes a distinction between people in *private* households and people in *institutional* households. In institutional households, daily needs are provided for on a professional or commercial basis (old age homes, jails, asylum center, etc.).

**Public Goods** Goods and services (in the broadest sense) that have benefits for a large number of people, including people who have not themselves contributed to the production of these goods and services (e.g., a clean environment).

**Life Course** Sequence of age-related transitions that people experience from birth to death. When applied to the family domain, this applies to the following transitions: leaving home, living together with a partner, becoming a parent, divorce/separation, repartnering/remarriage, widowhood, and death. These transitions sometimes signify changes in the roles that people have (e.g., the role of parent). In the employment life course, there are the roles of worker, student, retiree, etc.

**Path Dependency** The phenomenon that transitions that are experienced early in the life course limit the choices that can be made later in the life course.

**Fertility / Fecundity** Fertility refers to the degree to which women actually have children (how many, at what age, etc.), fecundity refers to the biological capacity to have children.

**Crude birth rate** # births in a year / # number of persons (divided by 1000)

**Fertility rate** # births in a year / # number of women of childbearing age (divided by 1000)

**Total fertility rate (TFR)** Number of children a hypothetical cohort of women expects to have given current age-specific birth rates

**Replacement fertility** TFR of 2.1. Because at the fertile ages, there are fewer women than men, society needs a little bit more that 2 children per woman to be demographically stable (i.e., no population growth, no population decline).

**Demographic Transition** Also called the First Demographic Transition, but only later, in the literature on the Second Demographic Transition. The long-term change from high fertility and mortality to low fertility and mortality (most of Europe and the U.S., 1880-1930). This transition was achieved by reducing the number of births within marriage (i.e., married women stopped having children after the 2nd or 3rd birth), hence, by deliberate control of fertility and led to smaller family sizes (2-3 per woman). Authors: Ansley Coale.

**Second Demographic Transition** As a demographic phenomenon, it refers to the continued decline in fertility between 1960 and 1990 (more or less), combined with the decline of the marriage rate and the increase in the divorce rate in that same period. The decline in fertility is not only reached by lowering the number of births within marriage but also by postponing marriage and parenthood.

**Choice Biography** Term to describe a life course where the transitions are not made on the basis of tradition but on the basis of individual considerations, relatively free of prevailing social norms.

**Norms and Values** Values are things that people find important in life and things that people strive for. Norms are rules about behavior that people believe they ‘should’ do or not do. Norms can be external (in which case they are sanctioned by the environment, by other people) and they can be internalized (in which case people themselves feel that they should do or not do something). Changes in values are often described as *ideational* change.

**Secularization** The decline in church/religious membership and church/religious attendance over time in the 20th century. This does not per se indicate a decline in religious or spiritual beliefs but rather refers to the institutional side of religion.

**Need Hierarchy** An ordering of basic human needs where people start feeling a higher order need only when a lower order need is secured. Author: Maslow, Inglehart.

**Cohabitation** Living together with a (romantic) partner without being married.

**Illegitimacy (Rate)** **/ Nonmarital Fertility** The first is an outdated term to refer to the tendency of an unmarried couple to have a child. Currently, the phenomenon is denoted with the term nonmarital fertility, which refers to either births to cohabiting couples or to births to single mothers or both.

**Meta Analysis** Analysis that summarizes a set of different analyses of the same problem (typically a series of journal articles that test the same hypothesis, each with its own data and measures). A formal meta analysis uses specific statistical tools to extract the data from the articles and to summarize the results. An informal meta analysis is a verbal summary of the results. It is not a literature review because it is focused on specific hypothesis and looks at articles that all address that same hypothesis.

**Quantum** The number of children a woman has.

**Fertility Control** The tendency of women (and men) to limit the number of children they would ‘naturally’ have (if they would not think of births as something within the realm of choice). Indirect fertility control refers to the reduction in the number of births via marriage (women who do not marry and/or women who marry late rather than early).

**Malthusian Fertility Control** Fertility can rise and fall not only because women control their own fertility but also because of changes in marriage. Higher numbers of people who remain unmarried and a later age at marriage lead to lower fertility. Authors: 19th century population scientist Malthus.

**Rationalization of Fertility** The notion that having children is something which women (and men) can personally decide about and also feel free to decide about. It implies that people are governed by personal ideas about if, when, and how many children they will have.

**Quantity Quality Tradeoff** The shift from having many children while making few time and money investments in them to having few children and investing much in each child. Author: Becker.

**Economic Uncertainty** The idea that people have little information about their personal economic circumstances in the long term. Economic situation is meant in a broad sense and includes uncertainty about future income levels, employment chances, fixed/permanent contracts, housing situation. The concept implies a combination of comfortable levels of living (compared to one’s personal standard) and the idea that these levels can be maintained over a long period.

**Exogeneous versus Endogeneous** Exogeneous forces are things that change by themselves and have an effect on the outcome without the outcome having feedback effects on the specific force. Endogeneous forces are things that change in part as a result of changes in the outcome.

**Reading History Sideways** Term used to describe the interpretation of current differences between less and more developed countries as evidence for the change that occurs as societies become developed over time. Author: Arland Thornton.

**Companionate Marriage** Marriage based on affective ties between spouses as well as their companionship (time together) and friendship. Combined with a situation where the husband works for pay and the wife is primarily responsible for domestic labor and child rearing.

**Individualized Marriage** Marriage based on affective ties between spouses but where individual emotional needs and goals of autonomy and self-actualization dominate the needs of the couple. Togetherness is not a goal in itself. Combined with a situation where the husband and wife have more or less equal economic roles and equal domestic roles. There is much debate as to how common this type of marriage actually is in contemporary society.

**Demand / Supply of Labor Force Participation** Demand = the extent to which the economy and/or employers needs/ask for workers. Supply = the extent to which people of working age want to be active in paid labor and/or apply for jobs. Authors: Claudia Goldin.

**Occupational Segregation** The situation where the incumbents of specific occupations are disproportionally male or female.

**Unpaid / Domestic Labor** Work connected to the maintainence of a household, specifically, cleaning, cooking, washing, repairs, and administration. The work is performed at home and typically not paid unless someone outside the household performs the work. The term can include child rearing but most often this is kept separately.

**The Division of Unpaid / Domestic Labor** The extent to which husbands and wives within a couple contribute to paid / domestic labor.

**Gender Equity** Not to be confused with gender equality. Equity refers to a ‘fair’ distribution of the contributions that men and women make to the shared/collective benefits of a relationship and/or household. These contributions include financial contributions, time investments, and other less tangible investments. What is fair has to be evaluated in relation to the way the shared benefits are divided.

**The Stalled Revolution** Term used to describe a situation where husbands and wives both participate in the paid labor force while wives perform most of the domestic labor. The term is not precise in that it does not specify the exact share of hours husbands and wives spent on paid and unpaid labor. Author: Hochschild, Esping-Andersen.

**Household Specialization** A situation where different members of a household (typically husband and wife) focus on those activities for which their productivity is relatively higher that it is for the other. Specialization is based on the principle of comparative advantages, which occurs when the productivities of the two partners are different (e.g., one is more efficient/more productive in one task, the other is more efficient in another). Authors: Gary Becker, Valerie Oppenheimer.

**Secondary Breadwinner** Term used to describe married women’s involvement in paid work in situations where married men have low or no earnings, often on a temporary basis to supplement the household with extra income. This situation occurs when gender roles are traditional.

**Gender Roles** With gender roles, authors typically refer to a set of behaviors that are regarded as ‘appropriate’ or ‘desirable’ for one’s gender and not for the other gender. Appropriate/desirable is meant in a normative way: it is what people in one’s context *believe* that is right and what they think people *should* do. One can also speak of gender norms.

**Gender Role Socialization** Refers to how people acquire gender norms / gender roles. This can be either by learning gender norms from one’s parents (called primary socialization) or by learning the norms from people outside the home, i.e., peers, teachers, schools, partners, colleagues (called secondary socialization). Primary socialization occurs earlier than secondary socialization.

**Gender Role Attitudes** Opinions that people have about gender roles, typically asked with a series of normative statements (either traditional or egalitarian) to which respondents respond by agreeing or disagreeing on a five-point scale.

**Doing Gender Perspective** A more recent term for gender roles with an emphasis on the actions that men and women do that are connected to their gender role. Sometimes authors refer to actions that strengthen the identity connected to one’s gender.

**Maternal Gatekeeping** Actions of mothers that limit the opportunities of fathers to get involved in activities that are normatively connected to mothers. Author: Sara Allen.

**Household Bargaining** Negotiations between husband and wife about the division of paid and domestic labor in the household. Authors: Blood & Wolfe (classic).

**Authoritative Parenting** Bringing up children with a combination of high levels of social and emotional support of children but also control of children’s behaviors. These parents set high standards and clear limits but without being authoritarian (authoritarian means strict obedience at the expense of personal freedom).

**Parental [Self-direction / Conformity] Values** Refers to the traits that parents find important in their children and traits that they want their children to develop as they grow up. A distinction between two types of traits is made, connected to two child rearing styles. Some parents emphasize obedience in their children and find it most important that their children conform to society’s norms. Other parents emphasize autonomy and self-direction in their children and find it most important that their children are curious, independent, and responsible. Author: Melvin L. Kohn.

**Child Rearing Styles** Concept from psychology to describe combinations of two dimensions of child rearing: (a) the degree to which parents are understanding and supportive of their children’s feelings and behaviors, and (b) the degree to which parents set rules for the child, monitor the child’s behavior, and sanction when rules are broken. When making dichotomies of both dimensions (low/high), this yields four combinations which are called child rearing or parenting styles. The most famous one is authoritative parenting, which is high support and high control (where control is not harsh but based on understanding the rules).

**Dimensions of Paternal Involvement** Accessibility is the degree to which parents are available when the child needs them. Engagement is the actual degree of contact and interaction between parent and child. Responsibility is the degree to which parents make decisions that are important for the child’s succesfull development.

**Parental Investments in Children** In sociology, this is conceptualized as the amount of time and energy parents use to take care of the child’s physical needs (food, comfort, watching), and the amount of time and energy parents spend on interactive activities with the child (including talking with the child, taking the child to sports, playing with the child). The ages may vary from 0-18 and include support for school work and advice to adolescents. Psychologists use more elaborate and more age-specific concepts to measure parental investments.

**Child Outcomes** Rather loose term often used to describe how well children are doing, specifically in terms of mental health (e.g., depression, self-esteem), physical health (e.g., smoking, sickness), and success in school (e.g., grades, school transitions).

**Nonmaternal Care** Care to young children that is performed by people outside of the family and that is not related to schooling. The best example is day care, which can be both public and private. The word is now outdated as it assumes no attachment role for fathers.

**Infant-Parent Attachment** Degree to which the parent has made the child feel safe, secure and protected. There is a continuum from secure attachment to insecure attachment. There are many definitions of the concept, often adding or emphasizing specific elements (e.g., availability of the parent).

**The Strange Situation** Situation where a 12-18 month old child is observed when the child is playing and adults leave and enter the room. A child plays with her/his own mother for a period of time after which an adult stranger enters the room and the mother leaves (and later returns). A securely attached child is upset when the own parent leaves but happy when the parent returns. An insecurely attached child is (a) very distressed when the parent leaves and ambivalent when the parent returns, or (b) shows no emotion when the parent leaves and returns. Authors: Bowlby, Ainsworth.

**Ideal Types** Simplified characterization of a certain kind of behavior or arrangement which contains the most common characteristics in the specified setting and the characteristics that are theoretically most plausible for the setting. Ideal is not meant in the sense of desirable.

**Human Capital** Skills and knowledge and other traits that require time and energy to obtain (investments), that make a person productive in the labor market, and that do not disappear or deplete when using it.

**Time Budget Data** Data where a large group of respondents fill out a structured diary in which they report for each specified time interval which activity from a precoded list they participate in. Usually done for one day (the past day) and sometimes for an entire week.

**Divorce and Separation** Divorce refers to the dissolution of a marriage. In some cases, divorce also means the legal ending of the marriage but this is rarely measured. Separation is a broader concept and can also include the end of a cohabiting union.

**Coparenting** Both apply to divorced parents. There are two meanings. (a) In the sense of residence, it refers to an arrangement where children live about half of the time with each parent. This is also called shared residence, but this is a confusing term. (b) In the sense of parenting, it refers to the fact that parents coordinate their parenting, support each other as parents, and manage conflict regarding child rearing. This is sometimes called shared parenting or coordinative parenting. The antonym is parallel parenting.

**Joint Custody** A legal arrangement where both parents have the same responsibilities toward the children and equal rights in decision concerning the child.

**Visitation** Legal and practical arrangement about how often and when the nonresident divorced parent can see the child.

**No Fault Divorce** A law which stipulates that a divorce can be granted without having to prove that either partner did something wrong. Usually the ground for divorce can be the simple statement that the marriage has broken down irrevocably. In a fault divorce system, partners had to prove – for example – that someone committed adultery or people had to admit this fact. Other common reasons were cruelty, gross offenses, incareration, etc, but this varies among countries. Author: Van Poppel and De Beer.

**Parental Resources** Things that parents have that can help a child to get ahead in life in the broadest sense. Typically a distinction is made between *(socio)economic* resources (income, wealth, occupational status), *social* resources (parenting skills, involvement and support in child rearing, but also parents’ friends and networks), and *cultural* resources (use and knowledge of high status symbols like arts and literature).

**Never Married Mothers** This term refers to two types of mothers: single mothers and mothers who are cohabiting with the father without being married to the father. In the U.S., these very different groups are often combined in one category.

**Parental Gatekeeping** The tendency of a parent to influence the relationship of the parent’s child with the other parent. This can be in a negative way (e.g., blocking contact of the child with the ex-partner) or in a positive way (e.g., supporting a stepparent).

**Kinkeeping** The tendency of one parent to arrange and encourage contact of the adult nonresident children with the partner (the other parent). According to Leonardo, it refers to “the conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross-household kin ties, including visits, letters, telephone calls, presents, and cards to kin; the organization of holiday gatherings; [and] the creation and maintenance of (quasi-)kin relations” (Leonardo 1987, p. 442). Kinkeeping is believed to be done mostly by women.

**Total Divorce Rate** For a hypothetical group of marriages beginning now, what is the percentage that will end in divorce if current duration-specific divorce rates will apply. The rate assumes current divorce patterns will not change over time and can thus be an overestimation or an underestimation.

**Levinger’s Attractions – Barriers – Alternatives Model** Attractions are the rewards minus the costs of the current marriage. Alternatives are the rewards minus the costs of the expected situation after divorce (e.g., when single or when with a new partner). Barriers are the costs that are associated with the transition from being married to being divorced. Rewards and costs are meant broadly and include material, symbolic, and affective aspects.

**Social Capital** Very broad term that means something different in each discipline and sometimes also in each article.

**Sexual Revolution** In family sociology, this term is used to refer to the weakening of traditional norms about sexual relationships. The most important norms that are believed to change are the norm against pre-marital sex, the norm about extra-marital sex (having an affair), the norm against homosexuality, and norms about gender differences in sexual freedom. An important correlate of these norms is the norm against unmarried cohabitation (living together).

**Loyalty Conflict** The negative feeling of being caught between two persons who one likes but who have a negative relationship with each other. Often used for what children feel toward divorced parents but is in fact a more general concept (two friends who do not like each other).

**Incomplete Institutionalization of Stepfamilies** A lack of clear roles, norms, symbols, and legal rules about stepfamilies.

**Longitudinal Research** **Design** Design where the same people are interviewed multiple times. For research on the life course, this implies that the researcher observes people before and after they make certain transitions (before and after people divorce). Can also apply to other units (e.g., countries, organizations).

**Cross-sectional Research Design** Design where the people are interviewed only once and where groups are compared. For research on the life course, this implies that the researcher compared people who made a certain transition to people who did not make this transition (divorced people to married people). Can also apply to other units (e.g., countries, organizations).

**Spurious Effect** An effect of X on Y which appears to be present but which in reality is caused by a third variable Z which causes both X and Y.

**Mortality Rate** The number of deaths in a given year divided by the population (in 1000s). Age-specific mortality rates are the same except that both the number of deaths and the population now apply to one age group (e.g., 70-80).

**Life Expectancy** The number of years one can expect to live (from birth) if current mortality rates stay as they are now in the future. This applies to a hypothetical cohort of baby’s born in that year.

**Informal Care** Giving frequent and ongoing support to others for problems caused by poor health, disability, or other limitations in daily functioning by persons who are not giving the support on a professional basis. The typical example is an adult child taking care of a sick older parent.

**Intergenerational Solidarity** The degree to which generations within the family can rely on each other for support in times of need and the related feelings of connectedness to the other generation. The concept consists of several dimensions, see below. Authors: Bengtson & Silverstein.

**Associational solidarity** The amount of face-to-face, phone, and digital contact between parents and adult children,

**Affective solidarity** The degree to which parents and adult children have positive feelings (i.e., closeness and connectedness) toward each other.

**Consensual solidarity** The degree to which parents and adult children have similar norms and values.

**Functional solidarity** The degree to which parents and adult children provide each other with practical, financial, and social-emotional support in times of need. This includes informal care by children.

**Structural solidarity** Circumstances that facilitate or hinder the exchange of other dimensions of solidarity, in particular the physical distance/proximity of parents and children and whether or not adult children co-reside with parents.

**Social Support** Concept used in the health literature that has a strong resemblance with the solidarity concept. Usually distinguished into emotional support (talking, showing care or afffection, etc.), instrumental support (help with practical matters), appraisal support (help with making decisions, closely tied to emotional support), and informational support (giving relevant information). Concept can be applied or limited to support that is relevant for mental or physical health. Authors: Berkman, Cobb.

**Social Influence** Broad concept which has it’s basis in social psychology but is also influential in sociology and in medical research. The most important type is social influence in the normative sense: people do things because others *expect* them to do those things and/or because others *sanction* them (typically: disapprove of them) if they do not do these things.

**Social Control** Similar as social influence, with the primary difference being that ‘the others’ who expect behavior or who disapprove, take a more active role. The ‘others’ can advice, encourage, or instruct you to do something. Author: Umberson.

**Healthy Ageing** The process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age. Functional ability is about having the capabilities that enable all people to be and do what they have reason to value. This includes a person’s ability to:

meet their basic needs; to learn, grow and make decisions; to be mobile; to build and maintain relationships; and to contribute to society. Literal quote from The World Health Organization http://www.who.int/ageing/healthy-ageing/en/.

**Familialism** Macro-level phenomenon. Refers to a country’s emphasis on the importance of family ties and the existence of social norms prescribing that older parents and adult children should provide each other with support when needed.

**Filial Obligations** Social norms that adult children should provide care and support to their parents regardless of what they gain from this support and regardless of what parents have done for them in the past. This means that support giving is unconditional, i.e., not conditional on other considerations, only on the parents’ need. Author: Silverstein, Gans.

**Norm of Reciprocity** Social norm that one should give something back to another person if one has received something from that person in the past; and that what one gives back is proportional to what one has received. Author: Gouldner.

**SES or Educational Gradient** Difference in an outcome variable (e.g., health) by level of SES or education.

**Altruism** Can be meant in terms of behavior or in terms of intentions. Altruistic behavior is behavior toward another person that benefits (or prevents costs for) the other person without benefiting the self. An altruistic intention is the desire to do bring benefits to another person without being better off personally.

**Prospective Exchange** Situation in which parents provide support to children as they make the transition to adulthood and where the children provide support to parents in a later stage of the life course when the parents are older and in need of support. The support provided by children is in proportion to the amount of support received from parents.

**Loneliness** Perceived absence of social relations accompanied by symptoms of psychological distress that are related to the perceived absence. Literal quote from Young, 1982, pp. 379-405.

**Item / Scale** In research, this usually refers to one question in a survey among a series of similar questions, all addressing the same general concept, for example, a series of questions about how lonely people feel. The answers that respondents give form variables and these variables are combined into a scale that measures the concept.

**Discount Rate / Value of the Future** Degree to which people value future gains and costs in their current decision making. A high discount rate means, for example, that someone disregards future damages to his or her health of current behavior (e.g., smoking). Another exampe: A high discount rate can mean that someone does not much appreciate the future benefits of making investments now in education (e.g., a good income).

**Rank / Relative Position** The position someone has in the status hierarchy relative to others, which can range from being at the bottom to being at the top. It can be based on any indicator of stratification, e.g., income, education, occupational status, and so forth.

**Fundamental Cause Hypothesis** The idea that technological innovations and other societal measures that improve health are ‘picked up’ most quickly by the higher classes or the higher educated so that health inequality can increase as society overall becomes more healthy. Authors: Link & Phelan.

**Weak Ties / Strong Ties** Used in network research to distinguish the more intimate, personal, and affectionate ties like ties with a partner, child, and friend, from the less intimate and less personal ties, like ties with a neighbor, colleague, fellow student, fellow in a sports club, and so forth. Weak ties are often a by-product of another involvement (work, residence, etc.). The classic idea is that strong ties are important for support while the weak ties are important for information. Authors: Granovetter, Wellman.

**Health Protection and Health Selection** Protection means that people with more/better relationships become healthier as a result of being in/having these relationships. Selection means that people with bad health have fewer/worse relationships than people with good health because of their bad health.

**Buffer Hypothesis** The negative effect of a stressful life event on health is reduced (moderated) if people have supportive relationships. Author: Cobb.

**Health Behaviors** Displaying behaviors that are good for one’s health and not displaying behaviors that are bad for one’s health. Relationships and socioeconomic status affect health in part *via their effects on health behavior*.

**Reactivity Hypothesis** There is variation between individuals in the degree to which people’s heart rate and blood pressure increase as a result of an outside stress. High reactivity is negatively correlated with health in the long term. Author: Uchino.

**Confederate** A person participating in an experiment who is part of the experimental setup and instructed by the experimentor to act in specific ways without the respondent knowing about this.

**Online / Offline Networks** A distinction made in communications research about friends and acquaintances that one has contact with primarily via internet facilities like Facebook etc (online) or primarily face-to-face.