

# Families

in Context



# Families in Context

Gene H. Starbuck  
*Mesa State College*

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*This book is dedicated to the memory of father, son, and mentor.*

*Paul F. Starbuck  
(1911 – 1994)*

*Scott F. Starbuck  
(1969 – 1983)*

*Howard Higman  
(1915 – 1995)*

# Preface

I started this project because I had in mind a particular kind of book about the family that I wanted to make available to college students. That book would be scholarly yet readable. It would excite students about the subject matter and about the promise of social science so that they would want to learn more.

The book I wanted to write would have a broader approach than most. The title, *Families in Context*, summarizes its main theme: families exist in a context that must be understood before families will be fully understood. This context is economic, political, religious, educational, historical, theoretical, and methodological.

The textbook I wanted to write would be inclusive. Virtually all available family textbooks promote their coverage of diversity. By that they usually mean diversity of *topics*: diverse family types, issues of race, class, and gender, and same-sex relationships. Some texts accomplish topical diversity, but remain singular in their theoretical, political, or methodological perspective. *Families in Context* goes beyond topical diversity, and explores differing perspectives. I feel strongly that it is the responsibility of authors of textbooks at this level to introduce students to the field and the subject matter as a whole. Competing theories often interpret data very differently, and even look for different sets of facts. It is important for students to see, understand, and evaluate those differences. Some sections of this book explain such differences directly; and in other sections, students, with the help of their instructors, can work out their own connections between facts and theories. This approach should help students develop critical thinking skills.

I am a sociologist, and wanted to write a book that could open the students' eyes to this fascinating discipline. But sociology is a broad tent, able to cover other fields of study, and I wanted to include those where relevant. The book thus includes topics and research findings from economics, anthropology, history, political science, and psychology. It also draws from the area of family studies, which is often rightfully considered a field in itself.

For four semesters, my students used some version of the manuscript. One semester, the publisher furnished the manuscript to students in my classes. In return, the students critiqued each chapter. They made a number of suggestions that helped shape and refine the final book. They alerted me to sections they found too

difficult or unclear, and they let me know, with a certain amount of glee, when they found a misspelled word or a grammatical error.

As a result of the feedback from class testing and many professional reviews, *Families in Context* has evolved, but I have, in essence, written the book I wanted to write.

## Plan of the Book

The first part of *Families in Context* is primarily macrosociological. Later chapters then put microsociological coverage into the “big picture” context. The book ends with a brief chapter that helps pull all the material together.

The text is organized into sixteen chapters. Chapter 1 plays with the origin and implication of various definitions of family. The introduction of family-related terms makes family diversity real. Gendered variables and the “family decline” debate are also introduced.

Every student has some experience with families, but courses for which this text will be used attract students with different levels of exposure to sociology and other social sciences. For students with little prior knowledge, Chapter 2 provides an introduction to key theories and methods. Students with a strong sociology background will benefit because the concepts discussed here are specifically applied to the field of family sociology.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide historical analysis, using modes of production as the unifying analytic tool. These chapters emphasize the theme that the family institution is part of a society, and must be understood in that larger context. The relationships between the institution of the family and the institutions of economics, politics, religion, and education are explored. Chapter 3, which incorporates material from the field of anthropology, focuses on pre-industrial families. Chapter 4 considers the impact of industrialization on the family and other institutions.

The next three chapters provide an overview of contemporary families. The post-industrial work-family context is the focus of Chapter 5. Chapter 6 explores the concepts of social class and stratification, then puts the American family into that context. Chapter 7 adds analysis of racial and ethnic family diversity.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 include micro-level analysis that draws some material from psychology. Chapter 8 explores the process of forming intimate relationships. Chapter 9 looks more closely at the mate selection process. Chapter 10 puts the scripting model to its original use in an analysis of human sexuality.

Chapters 11, 12, and 13 examine how families are constructed and maintained. Chapter 11 provides both macro- and micro-level analysis of demographic variables related to families. Chapter 12 covers marital adjustment and power, while Chapter 13 explores parent-child interactions.

Chapter 14 applies a social-movement perspective to problems in families, especially those involving violence. Macro- and micro-level analyses of divorce, remarriage, and stepfamilies are found in Chapter 15. Finally, Chapter 16 projects into the future and explores policy issues as a way of synthesizing and concluding the textbook.

## Special Features

Students are generally most interested in topics that appear directly to affect their own lives. Family experiences affect all of us, so textbook authors in this area have something of an advantage over authors in other disciplines. However, there are many topics in the academic study of families that appear to have only a remote connection to students' everyday lives. Several of the features developed for *Families in Context* help make those subtle connections more visible.

- **Finding Out.** Just as many undergraduates are less than enthusiastic about abstract theories, they generally have little initial interest in research methods. I try to demonstrate that understanding how researchers define and measure concepts is key to understanding results. Chapter 2 introduces the methods most commonly used by social scientists. Each remaining chapter includes a Finding Out box that discusses methods in some way. In most cases, a particular well-known study will be discussed. Other Finding Out features compare various ways of studying a particular topic. Still others focus on how a concept can be operationalized for research purposes. All include critical comments about methodology.
- **Prelude.** Each chapter begins with a personal vignette that brings the chapter topic to an individual level. The preludes involve issues and experiences that will likely seem familiar to students, but may also encourage them to think about those topics in a new way. The Prelude in Chapter 4 is biographically true; remaining Preludes are fictionalized accounts.
- **Thinking Ahead** sections at the chapter openings help sensitize students to the upcoming material. Considering these pre-reading questions will encourage students to begin forming some ideas that can be tested by or compared with chapter material.
- **Rethinking in Context** questions fall at the end of each chapter. These questions can help students to place their pre-reading answers in the context of the material they have just read. The two companion features work best when the “Thinking Ahead” questions are answered before the student has even scanned the chapter or heard lectures on chapter content and the Rethinking in Context questions are answered after study of the chapter content.
- **Families in the News.** These boxed items consist of recent news accounts—many with which the students will be familiar—that relate to the chapter topics. This feature highlights family-related topics found in the newspapers, magazines, and television stories every day. Students may find the news a bit more interesting when they are able to connect it to their own lives through a field of study.
- **Running Glossary.** In addition to an end-of-book glossary, important terms in this text are identified and defined at the bottom of the page on which the term is introduced.
- **Suggested Resources.** Additional print and online resources are listed at the end of each chapter for those students who wish to explore specific topics beyond the text.

## Supplements

### STUDENT RESOURCES

#### *Study Guide*

ISBN: 0-15-506250-6

By Wanda Clark, South Plains College

This text-specific study guide contains learning objectives, chapter outlines, multiple-choice, true-false,

matching, short essays, and critical thinking questions. In addition, crossword puzzles provide an entertaining way to approach the important concepts and terms for each chapter.

***Student Guide to InfoTrac® College Edition for Sociology***

<http://sociology.wadsworth.com>

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By Michele Adams, University of California, Riverside

This unique supplement features exercises that utilize InfoTrac® College Edition's huge database of articles. These exercises, based on 23 subjects vital to the study of sociology, help students narrow down the search of articles related to each subject, and ask questions that enable students to see the concepts more clearly.

***Researching Sociology on the Internet***

<http://sociology.wadsworth.com/socnet.html>

ISBN: 0-534-56894-7

By D. R. Wilson and David L. Carlson

This useful guide assists sociology students when doing research on the Internet. From general information necessary to get started to a more focused look at each main discipline in Sociology, this guide is the ideal companion to your students' Internet travels.

***Marriage and Family: An Introduction Using MicroCase® ExplorIt, Second Edition***

ISBN: 0-922914-35-4

By Kevin Demmitt, Clayton College and State University

This software-based workbook is an exciting way to get students to view marriage and family from the sociological perspective. With this workbook and accompanying *MicroCase® ExplorIt* software and data sets, students use national and cross-national surveys to examine and actively learn marriage and family topics. This inexpensive workbook will add an exciting dimension to your marriage and family course.

## INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

**Instructor's Manual and Test Bank**

ISBN: 0-15-506284-0

By Gene H. Starbuck, Mesa State College

I insisted on authoring the Instructor's Manual and Test Bank myself because I have found the quality of such productions to be somewhat uneven. I hope that my knowledge of the material, along with almost three decades of teaching experience, will help produce a

valuable instructor's tool. The test item file, printed in the Instructor's Manual, is also available as a computerized ExamView® file. For each chapter, the Instructor's Manual provides suggestions for lectures, assignments, and discussions. These suggestions have been class-tested with my students and, in many cases, by other instructors as well.

A unique feature of the Instructor's Manual is inclusion of an opinion and experience questionnaire that can be given to students early in the term. Instructors can tabulate and reveal the results when related material is covered in class. Because most of the questions are common ones asked by the likes of the GSS or Gallup Polls, I have collated and included national-level results for each of the questions on the student questionnaire. Interesting comparisons between responses from the students and those from a nationally representative sample can be discussed in class. I have found the questionnaire discussions quite useful in helping students think in terms of "social facts" and not solely in personal experiences.

***ExamView® Computerized Test Bank***

Cross-platform ISBN: 0-15-506276-X

Create, deliver, and customize tests and study guides (both print and online) in minutes with this easy-to-use assessment and tutorial system. **ExamView®** offers both a Quick Test Wizard and an Online Test Wizard that guide you step-by-step through the process of creating tests, while its unique "WYSIWYG" capability allows you to see the test you are creating on the screen exactly as it will print or display online. You can build tests of up to 250 questions using up to 12 question types. Using **ExamView®**'s complete word processing capabilities, you can enter an unlimited number of new questions or edit existing questions. *ExamView®* and *ExamView® Pro* are trademarks of FSCreations, Inc. Windows is a registered trademark of the Microsoft® Corporation and used herein under license. Macintosh and Power Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. used herein under license.

***PowerPoint® Presentation Slides***

<http://sociology.wadsworth.com>

By Paul Lamy of the University of Ottawa, Canada

These text-specific PowerPoint slides provide lecture aids such as graphs, charts, and tables corresponding to the material in each chapter. The presentation includes approximately 20 slides per chapter plus auxiliary images, allowing professors to customize their own presentation. The slides are available to download from the Web site.

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*Available to North American college and university students only. Journals subject to change.*

**SocLink 2002 CD-ROM: A Microsoft® PowerPoint® Presentation Tool**

ISBN: 0-534-55592-6

SocLink is an easy-to-use interface that instructors can use to create customized lecture presentations for their students. SocLink includes a searchable database of thousands of pieces of art and media, including a photo-gallery of all Wadsworth Introduction to Sociology, Marriage & Family, and Social Problems titles; unique CNN Video clips; and Sociology PowerPoint® slides. SocLink gives instructors the ability to post their presentations on the Web and import information from their own lecture notes. SocLink is FREE to adopters.

**Virtual Society: The Wadsworth Sociology Resource Center**

<http://sociology.wadsworth.com>

Combine Starbuck's text with Virtual Society's exciting range of Web resources and you have expanded your students' learning opportunities to the Web. Access to this powerful online resource center is FREE to text adopters and their students. The Virtual Society features a wealth of text-specific resources, forums, links to news groups, surfing lessons, a career center, and more. For instructors, a password-protected Instructor Resource Center offers the Instructor's Manual online, PowerPoint® presentations, e-mail access to Wadsworth editors, and more. For students, hyper-contents and chapter-by-chapter resources (chapter quizzes, online self-quizzes, and more) take studying to a new level.

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**Acknowledgments**

I was surprised to learn how many specialized professionals are involved in the writing and publishing processes for a book like this, and I am thankful for all of them. First, there are the roughly 8,500 students I have taught over the last 27 years. I can't say that each and every one of them contributed to my learning experience or to the book, but collectively they have been invaluable. The four classes that read and critiqued versions of the manuscript were especially helpful.

Since I wanted to include voices from disciplines outside of sociology, it was especially helpful that I am in a multidisciplinary department. My colleagues in sociology, anthropology, political science, history, economics, and psychology were all supportive. They were quite helpful when I wandered the halls late in the afternoon seeking information. In particular, anthropologists Barry Michrina and Clare Boulanger were patient in pointing me in the right direction. The former, as well as sociologist Adele Cummings and historian Doug O'Roark, read portions of the manuscript and helped to improve it. Historian Lewis Chere is a treasure chest of arcane information. To these and all the other wonderful folks in my department: party at my house at a time to be determined.

Mesa State College, in Grand Junction, Colorado where I have loved my work for 27 years, also deserves my thanks. I received a sabbatical, followed by a leave of absence, to complete most of the first draft of the book. I spent those two years at Utah State University,

reading, writing, and teaching. Gary Kiger and the rest of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, were gracious and helpful.

Because of corporate mergers in the publishing industry, my emerging manuscript passed through three different publishers before assuming its current form. Thanks to Robert Jucha (then at West Publishing) and Lin Marshall (then at Harcourt Brace) for having faith enough to acquire the book. Working with senior developmental editor Margaret McAndrew Beasley at Harcourt was a real joy. It was under her guidance that the project transformed from a rough manuscript to a finished product. Along the way, help came from Laura Webb, project editor; Diane Gray, production manager; Linda Beaupré, creative director; Charlotte Thomas, photo editor; Sarah Davis-Packard, Web editor; Lili Weiner, freelance photo researcher, and others whose names I will never know.

Several colleagues around the country read drafts of the textbook and provided valuable suggestions. The most helpful were often the ones who objected most strongly to elements of the manuscript. Frankly, their comments sometimes hurt or temporarily angered me. It was a bit like hearing a stranger criticize my children. But in a day or two, I was able to more objectively consider their comments and to make the necessary changes. My thanks to the following reviewers: Barbara Bearson, Utah Valley State College; Jon P. Block, Southern Connecticut State University; Henry Borne, Holy Cross College; Lee Frank, Community College of Allegheny County; Norval D. Glenn, University of

Texas at Austin; Theodore N. Greenstein, North Carolina State University; Joanna Grey, Pikes Peak Community College; Ron J. Hammond, Utah Valley State College; David M. Klein, University of Notre Dame; Barbara M. Lazarus, California State University, Northridge; Rudy Ray Seward, University of North Texas; Hasan Shahpari, Villanova University; Toni Terling-Watt, University of Oklahoma; and those whose names I do not know [NOTE: MORE REVIEWER NAMES PENDING PERMISSION TO ACKNOWLEDGE].

Both David Klein of Notre Dame and Norval Glenn of the University of Texas went beyond the help normally expected of reviewers. Although I didn't know them personally when I started this project, they each helped by providing encouragement and offering advice about how to navigate the ever-changing landscape of college publishing. They are true scholars and gentlemen, and it has been an honor to make their acquaintance.

It is not simply out of tradition that I want to publicly thank my mother, Ethel Starbuck. She is one of the most thoughtful, intelligent people I have ever known, and she has supported me even through all the mistakes I've made. She and her partner, Joe Sullivan, read an earlier version of the text, commented helpfully, and gave their approval.

**Gene H. Starbuck**  
*Mesa State College*

## About the Author

Gene H. Starbuck received a BA in Psychology from the University of Colorado in 1969. He earned his MA in Sociology in 1971 from a program jointly sponsored by the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Volunteers in Service to America, and the University of Colorado. Upon completing coursework for a PhD in Sociology, he accepted a teaching position at Mesa College, Colorado. Dr. Starbuck completed the doctorate in 1985, and he continues to teach at what has become Mesa State College.

Dr. Starbuck has dedicated his professional life primarily to teaching, and has won several awards in the field. His preparation to teach such classes as Sex and Gender, Social Stratification, Methods of Social Research, Crime and Delinquency, Social Problems, and others, gives him the broad background with which he approaches his favorite class—Marriage and Families.

Dr. Starbuck has published and presented papers at professional conferences in the areas of human sexuality, gender, and families. He has a particular interest in the study of domestic violence. He belongs to the American Sociological Association and the National Council on Family Relations, and currently serves as the Sociology Section Coordinator for the Western Social Science Association.



Dr. Starbuck enjoys the great outdoors by riding on one of the many great mountain bike trails a few miles from his home.

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