Shirley Zimmerman,
Family Policy: An International Perspective

FAMILY POLICY: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, FSOS 5256
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Course Description

This course takes a systems and life course perspective in examining the relationship between families and family policies in different parts of the world. In doing so, it emphasizes change, culture, the polity, and the economy as important contextual variables in shaping the relationship between families and family policies throughout the world. Some topical issues that will be discussed within the domain of family policy include: health care, income maintenance, poverty, the role of women, children, unemployment, the care of the frail elderly, and so forth. In addition to other assessment measures, the course examines the usefulness of the human development index as a tool for both explaining different countries' policy approaches to families and also for determining consequences of such differences for the well-being of different groups of families.

Teaching emphases in this class are exploration and comparative analysis.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to:

- better understand the changing context in which families and governments throughout the world function today;
- identify those environmental or contextual factors, (historical, cultural, institutional, economic, political, and demographic) that might explain differences and similarities in the ways different countries approach policy problems related to families;
- draw tentative conclusions about the implications of diverse policy approaches for families in different countries, particularly with reference to issues of race, social class, ethnicity, and gender;
- consider whether and how such approaches are the same as or different from those of their own countries, and in the process; and
- improve their analytical skills and understanding of family policy as a field of study and action.

Course Rationale

The world in which we are living has become increasingly interdependent and interactive - how one country addresses family problems often affects families in other countries, i.e., global competition, immigration, drug trafficking, adoption, and so forth. Therefore, it behooves us to better understand the nature of family-government interactions in different countries and its implications for families and their well-being. Students also may want to apply such understandings to policy development in their own country.
Student Requirements

- keep up with assigned readings;
- actively participate in class discussions;
- on a rotating basis, take the lead in presenting material related to assigned readings; and prepare and present a final paper on a topic of choice, typewritten, double-spaced, and properly referenced. For graduate students, the paper should be 15-20 pages in length; for undergraduates, 10-12 pages. Papers are due December 7. Papers should be organized around some problem and a concept or framework that will help in organizing the paper and in understanding why a country or different countries approach family problems in the ways it or they do and what the implications of this might be for different groups of families in that or those countries.

Possible topics for papers include: child care, family planning, child support, inheritance laws, marriage and divorce laws, housing arrangements and benefits, family benefit programs (i.e. family allowances, social security), health care, education, the role of women, family leave, maternal and child health, inter-generational issues, immigration laws, the care of the frail elderly, etc. This list is not exhaustive. Papers can be comparative, involving two or more countries, or an in depth analysis of one country's policy approach to a family problem. Topics should be selected on the basis of the availability of supporting materials. Course materials not used or discussed in class may be used for papers.

The outline for the paper will be discussed in class - the outline that is used will depend on the subject of the paper. Other kinds of student projects can be considered as an alternative to the above suggestions.

Grades

Grades will be based on class attendance and participation, mini and major presentations, and the final paper.

- 25% = class attendance and participation
- 35% = presentations
- 40% = final paper

Grades will be assigned according to the grading policies and practices of the University as outlined in the Class Schedule.

- A = Outstanding
- B = More than satisfactory
- C = Satisfactory
- D = Less than satisfactory, but worthy of course credit
- F = Fail, not worthy of course credit

Satisfactory work or a C in this course means being able to identify some of the contextual or environmental factors shaping the ways in which different countries approach family problems and arrive at some conclusions about differences in family well-being across countries based on available data.

More than satisfactory work or a B means in addition to C work, making comparisons across countries based on data presented in tables, and translating and making sense of the readings in systems and family policy terms.

Outstanding or A work means in addition to achieving at both C and B levels, drawing conclusions about differences in the ways in which different countries approach problems related to families and their outcomes for families in systems terms.

Required Readings:

Relations.

- Zimmerman, S. L. *Understanding Family Policy: Theoretical Approaches* Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1988. For students who have taken FSoS 5255, this book will be useful to review for the frameworks it provides for thinking about the implications of the policy approaches that different countries take in addressing family problems.

From time to time, I will be distributing news articles on a variety of family policy topics that students will find of interest on, for example, immigration policy, child support, euthanasia and so forth -- as they apply to other countries. Because the class is small and the schedule is arranged to allow for some flexibility, we will take time to discuss them within the context of the class. Students are encouraged to share their subject-related experiences with the class as well.

To give students practice in comparative analysis, we will review international census data together in class in terms of their meaning for families in different countries. Attached to each of the reading assignments listed below are questions to guide student reading.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Sept. 23--Overview of course

- A systems framework: Change, culture, the polity, and the economy as contextual variables in the family and policy relationship (Lecture)

Sept. 28--Families and Family Policies in Transition

1. *One World, Many Families*.

   - This book is intended to give students a quick overview of some of the changes that have and are occurring in families worldwide and some of the policy responses that different countries have made to them -- in a very general way

- Skolnick article:

  - What are the three worldwide structural shifts that Skolnick identifies in relation to families?
  - What differences does she cite between Canada's and the United States' policy approach to families?
  - What are the implications of such differences for U.S. and Canadian families?

- Baugher article:

  - What are the beliefs associated with each of the three political philosophies Baugher outlines in her article?
  - How might these determine a particular country's policy approach to families? Do you think Baugher's conclusions are accurate?
  - What are some of the components of the European family policy agenda?
  - How has policy responded to recent changes in the family and the economy in Latin and South America? What about in China and Africa, Asia, and the Middle East?

Sept 30

1. Kamerman article:
○ Kamerman defines family policy in terms of what governments do to and for children and their families. If you were to see the family as a system that develops over time, how would you define family policy? pp. 16-20

○ Compare the characteristics of family policy in advanced industrialized societies with those of developing countries? What are the implications of gender role changes for family policy -- worldwide?

○ Cite illustrations of family policies worldwide -p.18. How does the United States differ from other countries?

2. Moen and Firebaugh:

○ What is unique about Sweden's policy approach to families? Contrast it with the United States. pp. 21-26 (Students would benefit from reading the publication in its entirety.)

Oct. 5--World Wide Context of Family Policy


○ What are some of the world-wide changes cited in this chapter? Why has global income disparity doubled during the last three decades?

○ Compare human development in developed and developing countries, pp. 12 & 13. Pay particular attention to information about children and women.

○ Based on country rankings on the human development index, what six policy conclusions does this chapter arrive at?

○ What ten action steps does the chapter list for putting human development ideas into practice?

○ What does any of this discussion have to do with families (from a systems or any other perspective)?

Oct 7


○ What is the meaning of participation in this chapter?

○ What are the different forms that participation can take?

○ This chapter identifies new opportunities that have opened for developing countries? What are they? (pp. 23-24).

○ What role do non-government organizations play in this process?

○ What groups have been excluded from the benefits of development? What accounts for their exclusion?

○ What does any of this have to do with families (from a systems or any other perspective)?

Oct. 12


○ What are the upsides and downsides of markets? What pre-conditions are necessary for free markets?

○ What accompanying conditions must be in place for markets to operate efficiently and equitably?

○ What corrective actions should be taken when markets do not produce desirable outcomes?

○ What is the role of social safety nets in this configuration? Compare the commitment of the United States and United Kingdom with the Scandinavian countries to the protection of social safety nets.

○ How is it possible to have economic growth and no job growth at the same time?

○ What accounts for growing job insecurity throughout the world?
○ What can be learned from some of the East Asian countries?
○ How might countries promote or encourage employment?
○ Why is the relationship of credit to employment? Who finds getting credit most difficult? Why?
○ What are some of the employment safety nets available to people in developing countries?
○ What is the goal of economic reforms in countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union? How is the problem being, approached?
○ What are some of the problems that attend economic reforms in former socialistic and communist countries? Who is most vulnerable?
○ What is privatization? What are some of the consequences of privatization?
○ What are the three myths associated with market and state approaches to economic development?
○ What does any of this have to do with families (from a family or any other perspective?)

Oct 14

   ○ What has instigated and promoted the movement towards democracy in Africa and the Latin American countries?
   ○ What have outsiders done to encourage the spread of democracy? What are some of the problems that have been encountered in trying to implement democracy in developing countries?
   ○ What is one of the ways being used to promote participation and efficiency? What is the difference between horizontal and vertical decentralization?
   ○ What are some of the reasons that governance has not been decentralized?
   ○ What are some of the indicators of decentralization?
   ○ What are some of the revenue raising instruments that different countries use?
   ○ What are some of the benefits and costs of decentralization? Give some examples.
   ○ What does any of this have to do with families (from a systems or any other perspective)?

Oct 19

   ○ What is the difference between people's organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)?
   ○ How do people's organizations emerge? Give some examples.
   ○ What are some of the criteria used to assess the effectiveness of NGOs?
   ○ What preliminary conclusions can be reached about NGOs? What is the greatest strength of the NGOs?
   ○ What is their future?
   ○ What does any of this have to do with families (from a systems or any other perspective)?

Oct 21

   ○ The human development index could be used as a measure of family well-being, the goal of family policy.
   ○ Which of the developing countries has the highest HDI or level of family well-being?
Which the lowest?
- From the tables, what do you think accounts for these differences? What about the
developed countries?
- Which has the highest HDI or level of family well-being? Which the lowest?
- What do you think accounts for these differences? We will discuss these questions in
class so look the tables over ahead of time.
- Also, take note of the tables that interest you the most so that we can give them
special attention. Use these same instructions for looking at tables for October 28.

**Developing Countries**
- Table 1, Human development index, p. 135
- Table 2, Profile of human development, p. 138
- Table 3, Profile of human deprivation, p. 140
- Table 4, Trends in human development, p. 142
- Table 5, Human capital formation, p. 144
- Table 6, Trends in human capital formation, p. 146
- Table 8, Status of women, p. 150
- Table 11, Child survival and development, p. 156
- Table 12, Health profile, p. 158
- Table 17, Employment, p. 168
- Table 18, Wealth, poverty and social investment, p. 170
- Table 23, Demographic profile, p. 180

**Oct 26**

1. Human Development Index (continued) **Industrial Countries**
- Table 28, Profile of human development, p. 190
- Table 29, Profile of human distress, p. 191
- Table 30, Weakening social Fabric, p. 192
- Table 31, Trends in human development, p. 193
- Table 32, Human capital formation, p. 134
- Table 33, Status of women, p. 135
- Table 34, Female-male gaps, p. 136
- Table 35, Health profile, p. 197
- Table 36, Education profile, p. 198
- Table 37, Communication profile, p. 199
- Table 38, Employment, p. 200
- Table 39, Unemployment, p. 201
- Table 40, Wealth, poverty, and social investment, p. 202
- Table 50, Trends in economic performance, p. 212

**Oct. 28**

- Translating the above discussion into systems terms and what it means for families in
different countries. Students should prepare a brief written summary to present in class.

**Nov 2--European Context for Family Policy**

1. **New Orientations for Social Policy** Chapters 1 & 2
   - What is the goal of social policy? What are its functions? p. 9
   - What are the economic and demographic pressures that constrain its achievement?
   - What trends in social well-being does this chapter cite? Have things gotten better or
     worse? pp. 10-12
What are the new orientations of social policy? What has brought them about? pp. 12-13
What are some of the external pressures operating on health care policy in European countries? pp. 21-25
What are some of the structural reforms being made in national health care policy in the OECD countries? What implications do you think these will have for different groups of families?
What is the role of governments and families in health care policy? What shift in emphasis is taking place in health policy in OECD countries?

Nov 4

1. **New Orientations Of Social Policy, Chapters 3 & 4**
   - What are some of the factors that influence retirement?
   - What are some of the special issues facing women in their retirement?
   - What can be done to reverse trends toward early retirement?
   - Why might postponement of early retirement be desirable from the perspectives of both the individual worker and society?
   - What are some of the special needs of the frail elderly? p. 38
   - What services are necessary to sustain frail elderly people in their own homes? p. 42
   - How and to what extent should the cost of care of frail elderly persons be shared by others in society? p. 47
   - What are the main sources of public funding for care of elderly and what new alternatives are there?
   - What 6 principles does the chapter outline for the funding of services for the elderly?

2. Follow same instructions as for looking at tables as outlined on October 21.
   - Table 1 a. Public expenditure on social protection as % of GDP, 1960-1985, 19 countries, Public health and other
   - Table 1 b. Public expenditure on social protection as % of GDP, Public health, aged & non-aged
   - Table 2. Health expenditures in OECD countries as % of GDP

Nov 9--European Family Policies

   - Belgium, Sels and Dumon
   - Denmark, Soren
   - France, Commaille
   - Germany, Hohn
   - Great Britain, Wicks and Chester

These readings deal specifically with the family policies of Western European countries and their explicit and implicit family content. Students will share responsibility for summarizing and comparing the policy approaches of the above countries, focusing on broad differences and similarities and what might account of them, based on the readings and class discussion that have gone on before.

Nov 11 No class

Nov 16--European Family Policies (continued)

Companion publications:
  deals with different policy issues across countries that students might find of interest
  also: family benefits, family and labor policy, family and caretaking policy, etc. These
  publications are in my office and may be used to substitute for the 1990 volume.

Nov 18
- Matching assigned readings with international census data and data from HDI to draw
  conclusions about the relationship between families and family policies in different countries
  and outcomes for families -- in systems terms.
- Discussion of student progress on projects

Nov 23
- Working session - Students should bring drafts of papers to class - I will look them over and
  answer student questions.

Nov 25--Thanksgiving holiday

Nov 30--Student presentations

Dec 2--Student presentations

Dec 7--Papers due

Please note: The attached reference list is meant to provide direction for library work and searches.
Because it is not exhaustive, students will find a Lumina search useful in preparing for their paper
presentations. Look at the footnotes at the end of the chapters in reading assignments for additional
sources of information. Students may use country specific information that appears in the Human
Development Report too.

1. Sources of international data include:
   - Statistical Abstract of the United States.
   - International Social Security Programs
   - People, published monthly or quarterly by the International Planned Parenthood
     Federation
   - The Journal of International Social Welfare
   - International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,
   - New York Times

2. Other sources of international information include:
   - The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),
   - The United Nations,
   - The World Health Organization, and others.

3. The Journal of Marriage and the Family often has articles about families in other countries --
   check it out.

4. Visit the Government Documents Room in the Library for additional sources of material.
Shirley Zimmerman,
International Policy References

COMPARATIVE FAMILY POLICY

General Background: Economic and Political


Family Policy: General


FAMILY POLICY: TOPIC SPECIFIC

Abortion, Family Planning, and Population Issues


Family Benefits/Income Supports


Gays and Lesbians


Health Care

Rodwin, V. G. 1987. American exceptionalism in the health sector; The advantages of "backwardness" in learning from abroad. Medical Care Review, 44,1.,

Housing


Social Security


Social Services


Women: Gender-Specific


COUNTRY SPECIFIC

Africa


Australia


Canada


China

Martin's Press.


**Denmark**


**Federal Republic of Germany**


**France**


**Iceland**


**India**


**Ireland**


**Israel**


**Great Britain**


**Japan**


**New Zealand**


**Poland**


**Commonwealth of Independent States**


**Sweden**


**Switzerland**