1. **The family as a social institution: the anthropological study of kinship and alliance**

   A. **Definitions**
   
   - **Family**: a group of individuals related to one another by ties of kinship and alliance, whose definition varies across societies.
   - **Kinship**: social rules which define who are parents and children, brothers and sisters.
   - **Alliance**: social rules which define who can marry whom.
   
   The definition of these rules varies from one society to the other → hence the family is a **social institution**, not a fact of nature.

   B. **Example: cross-cousin marriage**

   ![Diagram of cross-cousin marriage](image)

   C. **The social rules governing alliance**

   The **prohibition of incest**: “The universal prohibition of incest specifies, as a general rule, that people considered as parents and children, or brother and sister, even if only by name, cannot have sexual relations and even less marry each other. […] the prohibition of incest establishes a mutual dependency between families, compelling them, in order to perpetuate themselves, to give rise to new families” (Levi-Strauss, “The family”, 1960, p.276-277)

   **Elementary structures of kinship**: the rules of kinship define the group of people within which one can marry (ex. Cross-cousin marriage)

   **Complex structures of kinship**: the rules of kinship define a smaller group of people whom one cannot marry (ex. Incest prohibition in contemporary western societies)
Link w/ notions of **endogamy** (marrying within a given social group) and **exogamy** (marrying outside of a given social group)

C. Levi-Strauss, 1949, *The Elementary structures of kinship*

### D. The social rules governing kinship/descent

- Who transmits what to their offspring? Whose kinship group are children part of?
- Unilineal kinship systems: patrilineal and matrilineal descent (next slide)
- Generally more complex systems: double descent:

"[...] many societies are interested in clearly establishing the relations of the offspring with the father’s group on the one hand, and with the mother’s group on the other, but they do it by differentiating strongly the two kinds of relationships. Territorial rights may be inherited through one line, and religious privileges and obligations through the other. Or else, status from one side, magical techniques from the other". (Levi-Strauss, “The family”, 1960, p.271)

Examples of systems of patrilineal and matrilineal descent:

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### E. What functions does the family as an institution traditionally fulfil?

- Social organization: the rules of kinship and filiation as means of social organization and classification mechanisms
- Social link: the prohibition of incest (Levi-Strauss) as the basis for establishing links (via exchange in women) between social groups: “it is the groups which are important, not the temporary aggregate of the individual representatives of the group” (Levi-Strauss, “The family”, 1960, p.271).
- Economic (production and consumption)
- Demographic (reproduction)
- Care provision
- Reproduction of social inequalities (gender, class, race)

2. The family and the (re-)production of social inequalities
A. Family and gender inequality

The family as a nexus for women’s oppression
• Kinship systems and the « traffic in women » (Rubin, 1975)
• The gendered division of labor
• Domestic violence

→ Questioning the common vision of the family as a shelter and as a unit of common interests

a) Reading Levi-Strauss with a gender lense: kinship systems and the « traffic in women » (Rubin, 1975)

« It is of interest to carry this kind of deductive enterprise even further than Lévis-Strauss does, and to explicate the logical structure which underlies his entire analysis of kinship. At the most general level, the social organization of sex rests upon gender, obligatory heterosexuality, and the constraint of female sexuality » (Rubin, 1975, p.179).

Gender asymmetry and women’s objectification in the kinship systems described by Lévi-Strauss: 2 illustrations from « The family » (1960):

**Polygyny and polyandry**: “The word polygamy, it should be recalled, refers to polygyny, that is, a system where a man is entitled to several wives, as well as to polyandry, which is the complementary system where several husbands share one wife” (p.264)

**Levirate and sororate**: “When the husband dies, the levirate provides that his unmarried brothers have a preferential claim on his widow (or, as is sometimes differently put, share in their deceased brother’s duty to support his wife and children), while the sororate permits a man to marry preferentially in polygamous marriage his wife’s sisters, or – when marriage is monogamous – to get a sister to replace the wife in case the latter remains childless, has to be divorced on account of bad conduct, or dies” (p.270)

b) The gendered division of labor

   • A social (rather than natural) phenomenon

“Like the form of the family, the division of labor stems more from social and cultural considerations than from natural ones. [...] there is a great deal of difference between the Nambikwara father nursing his baby and cleaning it when it soils itself, and the European nobleman of not long ago to whom his children were formally presented from time to time, being otherwise confined to the women’s quarters until the boys were old enough to be taught riding and fencing. [...] Therefore, we should be careful to distinguish between the fact of the division of labor between the sexes which is practically universal, from the way according to which different tasks are attributed to one or the other sex, where we should recognize the same paramount influence of cultural factors, let us say the same artificiality which presides over the organization of the family itself” (C. Lévi-Strauss, “The family”, 1960, p.274-275)

   • A powerful leverage of gender inequality:
      ▪ Differential symbolic and economic value put on the tasks performed by men and women (Kergoat, 2000)
- Men’s exploitation of women’s labor within the heterosexual couple (Delphy, 1970)
- Women’s assignment to unpaid labor in the private sphere impedes their participation in paid employment
- The gendered division of labor influences the way women’s work is valued on the labor market

c) Domestic violence

Available data in France:
- First major survey of violence against women in France: ENVEFF, 2000
- 2006 INED survey « Contexte de la sexualité en France » (CSF)
- New INED survey: Violences et rapports de genre - VIRAGE (study of interpersonal violence against women and men)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of violence</th>
<th>In public space</th>
<th>At work</th>
<th>Domestic violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insult/verbal threat</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>8,5</td>
<td>4,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>0,6</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being followed</td>
<td>5,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibitionism</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological pressure</td>
<td>16,7</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional blackmail</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destroying the work/tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workplace sexual harassment</td>
<td>1,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual pressure and assault</td>
<td>1,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rape and other coerced sexual acts</td>
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<td>0,9</td>
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2000 ENVEFF data on violence against women: proportion of women reporting having been victims of violence in the past 12 months


Sexual violence within the family:
- 2006 INED survey on sexual violence:
  - 6.8% of women and 1.5% of men report having been the victims of sexual assault
  - First attempt before age 18 for 59% of these women and 67% of these men
  - Author of first sexual assault reported by female victims:
B. Family and class inequality

a) An effect increased by social homogamy (Girard, 2012 [1964])

b) Transmission of different forms of patrimony and assets

c) Transmission of cultural capital (Bourdieu): cf session on education


- different types of parenting according to social class
- effect on children’s sense of entitlement and future opportunities facing institutions
  - Middle-class: «concerted cultivation»
  - Working-class: «accomplishment of natural growth»

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Annette Lareau’s *Unequal childhoods* (2003): excerpts

« Laughing and yelling, a white fourth-grader named Garrett Tallinger splashes around in the swimming pool in the backyard of his four-bedroom home in the suburbs on a late spring afternoon. As on most evenings, after a quick dinner his father drives him to soccer practice. This is only one of Garrett’s many activities.

 […] Only twenty minutes away, in blue-collar neighborhoods, and slightly farther away, in public housing projects, childhood looks different. Mr Yanelly, a white working-class father, picks up his son Little Billy, a fourth-grader, from an after-school program. They come home and Mr Yanelli drinks a beer while Little Billy first watches television, then rides his bike and plays in the street.

[…] unlike middle-class parents, [working-class] adults do not consider the concerted development of children, particularly through organized leisure activities, an essential aspect
of good parenting. Unlike [middle-class parents], these mothers and fathers do not focus on concerted cultivation. For them, the crucial responsibilities of parenthood do not lie in eliciting their children’s feelings, opinions, and thoughts. Rather, they see a clear boundary between adults and children. Parents tend to use directives: they tell their children what to do rather than persuading them with reasoning. Unlike their middle-class counterparts, who have a steady diet of adult organized activities, the working-class and poor children have more control over the character of their leisure activities. Most children are free to go out and play with friends and relatives who typically live close by. Their parents and guardians facilitate the accomplishment of natural growth. Yet these children and their parents interact with central institutions in the society, such as schools, which firmly and decisively promote strategies of concerted cultivation in child rearing. For working-class and poor families, the cultural logic of child rearing at home is out of synch with the standards of institutions. As a result, while children whose parents adopt strategies of concerted cultivation appear to gain a sense of entitlement, [working-class children] appear to gain an emerging sense of distance, distrust, and constraint in their institutional experiences.

(A. Lareau, Unequal childhoods, 2003, p.2-3)

3. Contemporary transformations in family forms

A. A new conception of the family as a means to fulfill individual happiness...

- Love-based marriage
- Couple life as a support for one’s personal identity
- Having children as a choice and as the happy outcome of a love story

B. … in the context of broader social change:

- Individualization
- Change in women’s status
  - The cultural diffusion of feminism → increased rights consciousness, questioning of power relations in the heterosexual couple
  - Legalization of and access to birth control and abortion
  - Increased access to paid work, esp. for mothers
  - Change in children’s status

P. Ariès: how children gradually became the focal point of family life in the XVIIth century
V. Zelizer: the emergence of the « priceless child » from the late 1800s to the 1930s

- A questioning of the heterosexual norm by same-sex couples
- Increased state intervention in family issues

C. The transformation of family forms: general trends

- XIXth-XXth cent. : Shift from extended to nuclear family (cf Durkheim, Parsons)
- Non-linear change
- Recent trends (since 1970s)
  - Increase in divorces and reconstituted families
  - Increase in single-motherhood
  - Increase in unmarried couples and children born from unmarried couples
  - Postponement of the average age of marriage and for having the first child
Increase of the average age of maternity
The postponement and decline of marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male birth cohort</th>
<th>Proportion of ever married at 49^a</th>
<th>Mean age at first marriage^b (years)</th>
<th>Proportion of ever married at 24</th>
<th>Proportion of ever married at 30</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>55</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<td>1958</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31.6</td>
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<td>29</td>
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Source: INED

Changing patterns in the gendered division of labor

- Women's increased participation in the paid labor force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate of participation in the paid labor force</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women 25-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975 59,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985 72,1</td>
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<td>1995 79,6</td>
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<td>2000 81,9</td>
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<td>2010 84,2</td>
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<td>Men 25-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975 97,3</td>
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<td>1985 96,9</td>
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<td>1995 95,7</td>
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<td>2000 94,7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 94,8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: INSEE
Questioning the heterosexual norm: mobilizations and counter-mobilizations

D. A crisis in the family?

- Broader diversity of family forms ≠ crisis
- A massively endorsed value
- A key social and economic role

4. References
(see review by J.Goody : « The labyrinth of kinship » http://newleftreview.org/II/36/jack-goody-the-labyrinth-of-kinship )
Kergoat Danièle, 2000,“Division sexuelle du travail et rapports sociaux de sexe,”
*Dictionnaire critique du féminisme*, H. Hirata et al. eds., Paris, PUF, p. 35-44.
Rubin Gayle, 1975, “The traffic in women : notes on the ‘political economy’ of sex,”