

Ethnic Minority Aging in the U.S.: Muslim Perspectives

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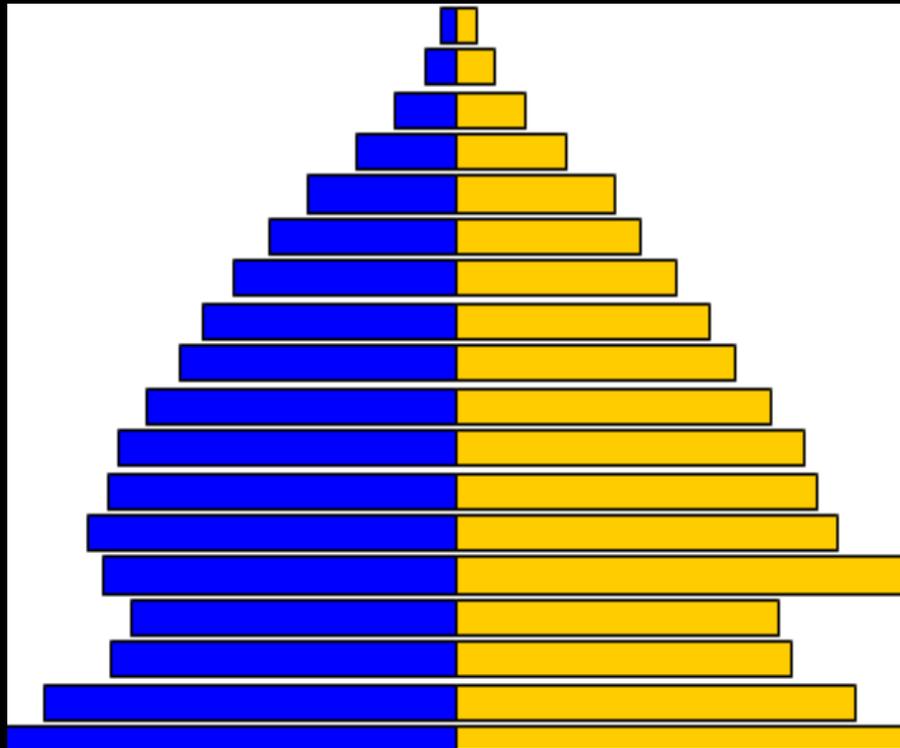
Acknowledgements

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- Study participants

Aging is the Future

Men

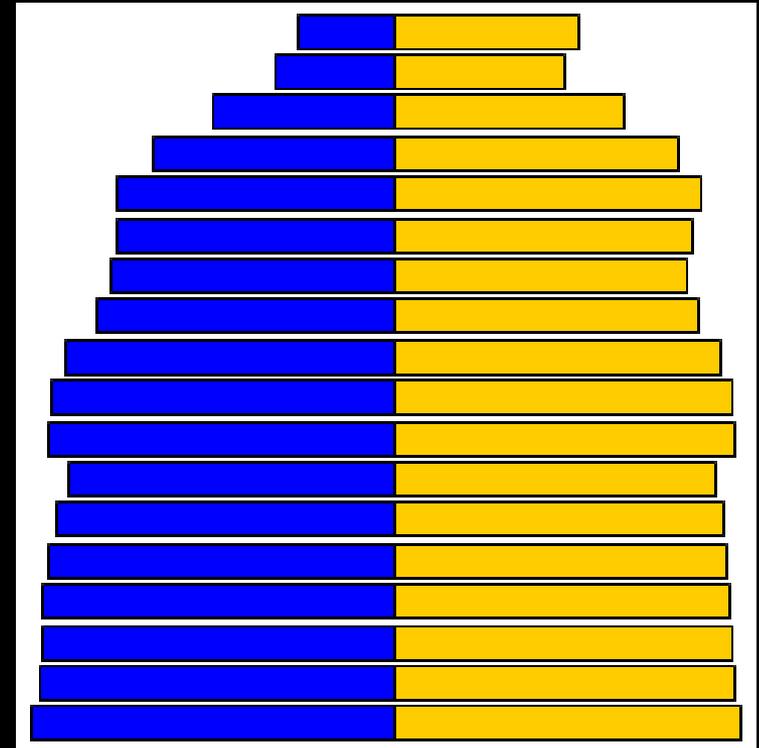
Women



1950

Men

Women



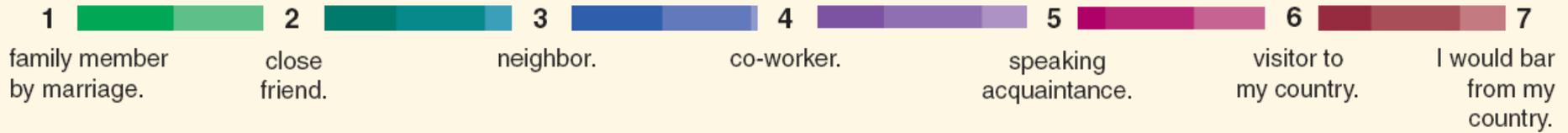
2030

100+
95-99
90-94
85-89
80-84
75-79
70-74
65-69
60-64
55-59
50-54
45-49
40-44
35-39
30-34
25-29
20-24
15-19
10-14
5-9
0-4

WHY STUDY AGING MUSLIM FAMILIES?

(a) Social Distance Scale

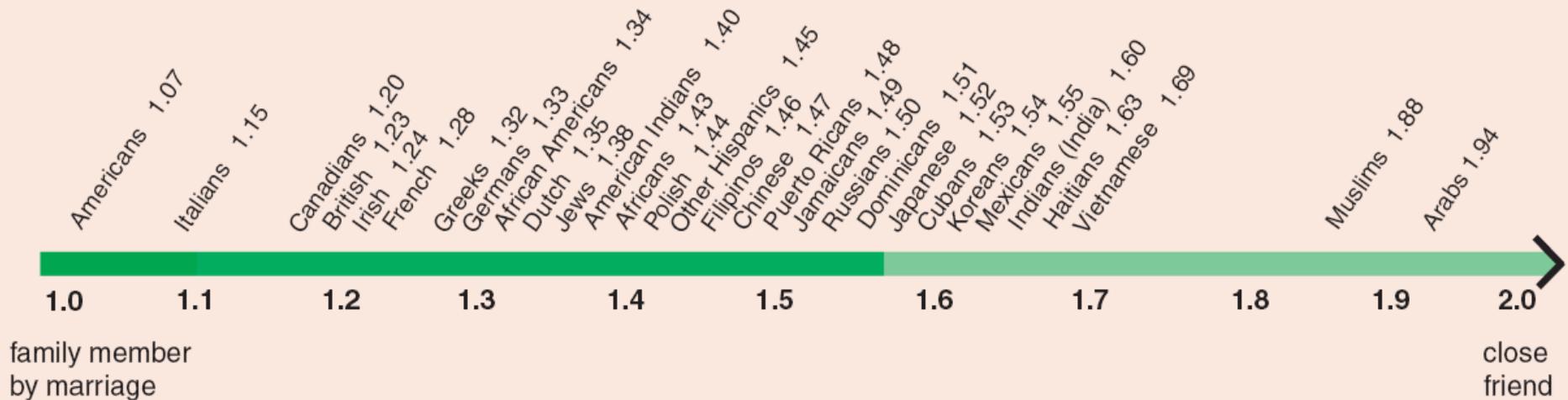
I would accept a [minority category] as a . . .



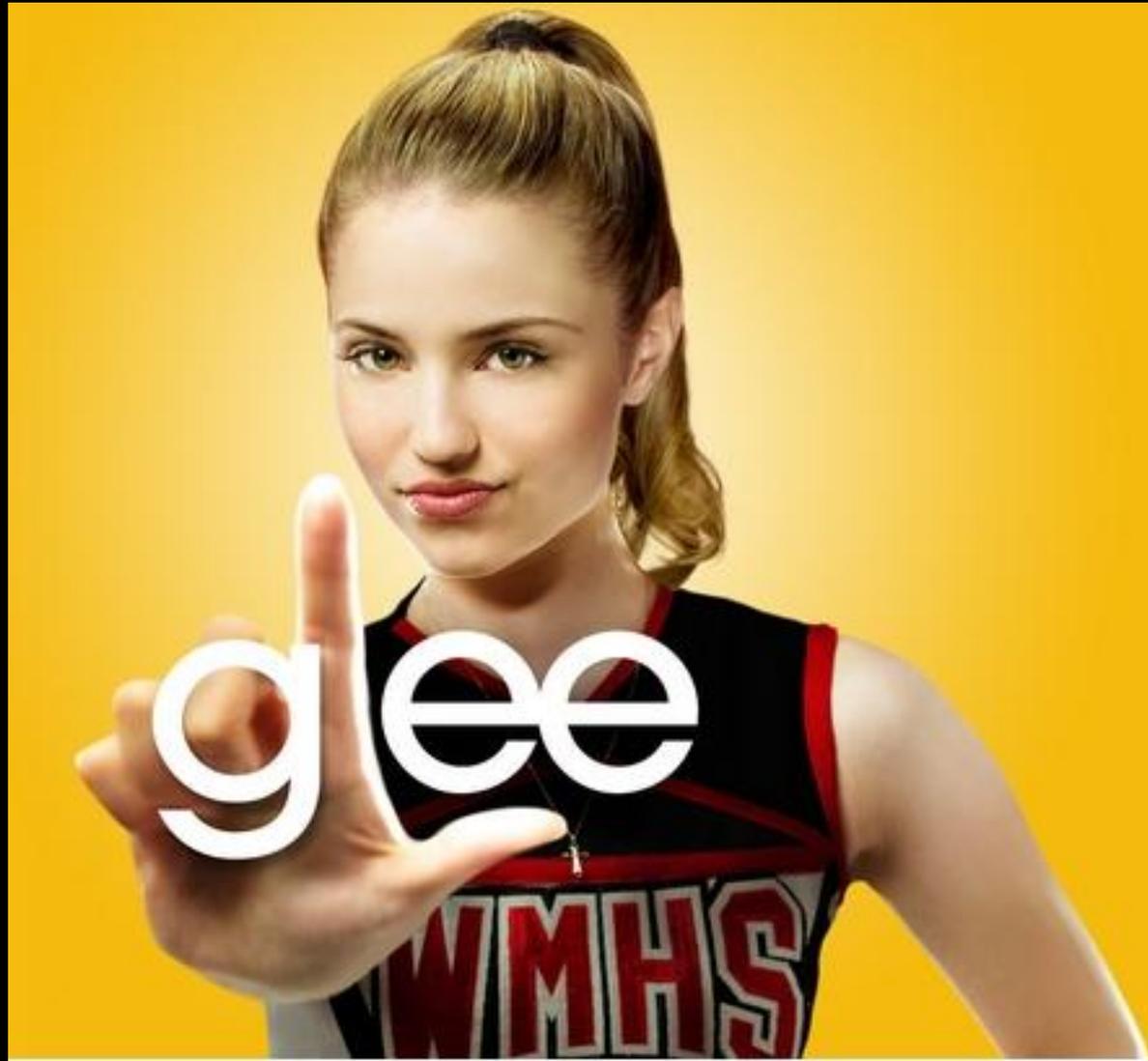
(Less social distance = greater acceptance)

(Greater social distance = less acceptance)

(b) Mean Social Distance Score by Category, 2001



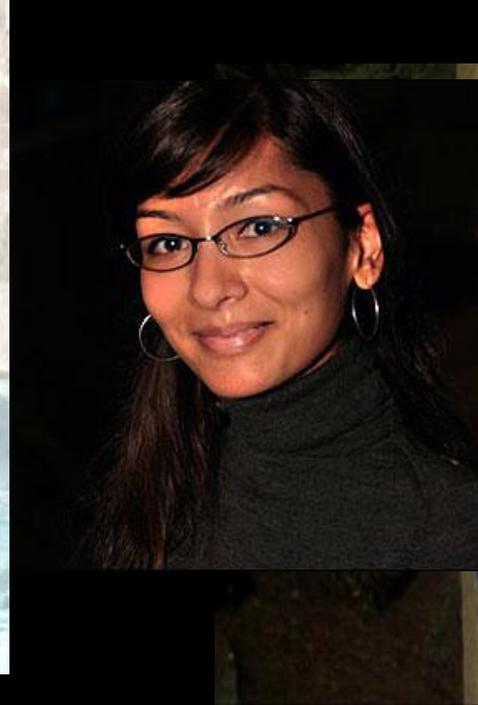
	1925	1946	1956	1966	1977	2001
(c) Mean Score for All Categories:	2.14	2.14	2.08	1.92	1.93	1.44
(d) Range of Averages:	2.85	2.57	1.75	1.55	1.38	0.87



- Within group concern
 - Underserved
 - Invisible

Minority Aging

- Culture as basis for minority status
 - Norms
 - Individualism, Autonomy
 - Belonging, Interdependence
- Diversity and Muslims
 - National origins, Immigrant status, Race
 - African American ~ 20%
 - Arab/Middle Eastern ~ 37%
 - South Asian ~ 32%
 - European and others ~ 11%
 - 2/3 foreign born



What do we know about aging Muslim families?

- Individualism is not embraced as much as is interdependence
- Community pressure for child to care for parents
- Stigma of illness/disease and/or discomfort of asking for help
- Media accounts suggest projects meant to support aging Muslims fail

What do we know about aging Muslim families?

- African Americans
 - Fictive kin, extended family, survival (life lessons)
- Albanians
 - Family reputation, honor, reject religion as resource
 - Relational coping through family trust
- Arab Americans
 - Family reputation, honor, re-discover religion
- South Asians
 - Family reputation, honor, re-discover religion

Immigration and Aging

- Strengths
 - Older adult as resource
 - Helping to reshape traditional culture
 - Caring for grandchildren
- Challenges
 - Few economic resources
 - Social isolation
 - Depressive symptoms

Present Study

- What are the needs?
- What are the strengths and challenges?
- What role can faith communities play?
- How do needs, strengths, challenges, roles vary by community?

Data Collection

- Web-based survey
 - List-serves
 - Older adult, parent, grandparent
- Key informant interviews
 - Community leaders (N=17)
- Focus group discussions
 - Adults aged 60+

Needs Assessment

- Web-based survey (N=264)
 - Camberwell Assessment of Need for the Elderly (CANE, version IV) diagnostics tool
 - Food
 - Self-care
 - Physical health
 - Memory loss
 - Accommodation/place of residence
 - Transportation
 - Social contact/activities

Needs Assessment

- Needs, strengths, challenges, potential role of mosques
- Focus Group Discussions
 - Four different mosques
 - 90 minutes

Survey Sample

Characteristic (N=264)	Mean (SD)	% (N)
Age (18-80)	48 (16.9)	
Female		46% (119)
Immigrant		51% (134)
Married		72% (188)
Education (PhD, MD, JD)		32% (84)
Ethnicity		
South Asian		53.5% (139)
African American		11.5% (30)
Arab/Middle Eastern		26.5 % (69)
Other		8.5% (22)

Need Help

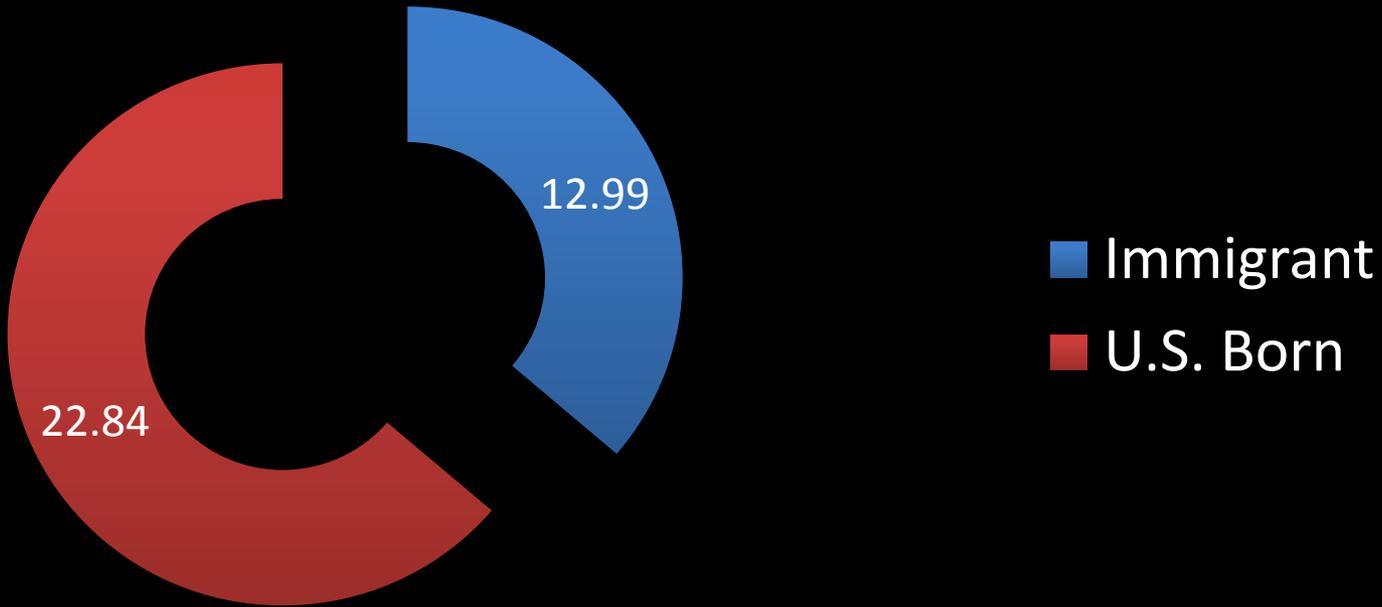
Type of Help	Total (N=264)	South Asian (N=139)	African Americans (N=30)	Arab/ Middle Eastern (N=69)	Other (N=22)
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Home	54 (114)	61 (70)	42 (11)	53 (27)	33 (6)
Transportation	42 (75)	42 (40)	35 (9)	52 (22)	31 (4)
Physical health	40 (91)	39 (47)	35 (9)	52 (30)	26 (5)
Food	36 (86)	38 (49)	21 (6)	43 (26)	25 (5)
Personal care	20 (47)	18 (22)	11 (3)	34 (20)	11 (2)
Memory loss	14.5 (32)	13 (16)	7 (2)	22 (12)	11 (2)

Social Activities

	Total (N=216)	South Asian (N=139)	African Americans (N=30)	Arab/ Middle Eastern (N=69)	Other (N=22)
	%	%	%	%	%
Talk to non-family	18	15	24	15	31
Never social activity	22	21	8	33	17
Visit	48	45	14	68	33

Who do you talk to on regular basis?

Non-family



Summary

- Top 3 needs
 - home, transportation, physical health
 - Arab/Middle Eastern Americans report higher proportions of need in most areas
- Social Activity
 - Isolation low
 - Organized activity participation varies
 - Composition varies
 - African American most diverse
 - Immigrants least diverse

Focus Group Participants

	African American	South Asian	Arab	Albanian
Participants	8	8	8	13
Average Age	70	66	75	67
Female	50 %	50%	37%	53%
Immigrant	-	100%	25%	100%
Years in U.S.	-	41	48	42
Married	38%	100%	88%	100%
Education (1-7)	3.25	6.50	3.88	1.92

Needs

- Quality of life
 - Vulnerabilities
 - Health
 - Finances
 - Safety
 - Transportation
 - Social isolation
 - Becoming a burden

Needs

Bahja: And they [older adults] can do things, for example, teach her to cook, teach her to sew, teach how to knit. I mean, I am just giving you examples. And you know--lots of other things. They are good at math, for example. People from Southeast Asia are very good at math, but they are not over here [in the U.S.]...so they could teach the kids, some of the kids who are behind. Give math classes....

Akila:we have a school next door, full-time school...so I talked to the people there and I said...can the adults come and interact with them, put two hours or one hour. Sit with the kids, play with them, talk to them. But the problem came--who is going to drop them and who is going to pick them up and bring them back?

Needs

Omar: Have a senior day.

Uthman: Yeah senior day, or senior month even, whatever, make something.

Muhammad: We also, at our at our Imam's meeting last week we talked about making a stronger effort to visit those people who are sick and who are shut in. And these people are seniors.

Uthman: That would definitely be the seniors.

Fatima: Well you can have a senior's day and have an intergenerational day, bring them together.

Everybody: Yeah, yeah.

Strengths

- Traditionalism
 - Culture and religion
 - Varied by gender
- Scripture
 - African American, Arab, South Asian

Strengths

Besjana: I'd be the first one to go (to a nursing home).

Moderator: Yeah. Well I guess the question that I had would you want your children to do for you what you did for your parents?

Ladies: *No, no, no.*

Zaynep: *No, absolutely not....no, we--and I don't want to live with my children...no, absolutely not.*

Xhelal: Yeah everybody... they think... "I don't want to live with my son or his wife." No it's not right, you know. *There is the best way. We respect our family...And I'd like my son to respect me in the future like this. If I need to, I would like (my children) to take care of me in the future....*

Challenges

- Conflict
 - Youth
 - Immigrant and host country cultures
 - Multiple religious family members
 - Discrimination

Youth

Omar: Old school, *old school, that's what they say.*
We're old school.

Muhammad: *Then they just brush you aside.* Not realizing that those schools are the one that got them there. I mean-- (laugh, laugh)

Fatima: They don't realize that they need to know the past to cope...with the present and look for the future.

(African American, p.21)

Within family

Uthman: Nobody's avoiding me because I'm Muslim. I'm not avoiding anybody because of their Christianity. But I'm not going up to my family's house or anybody else's house and involve myself with those things that are restrictive, you know, to my religion. So that's the way that is. My daughter invites me over for every event. I say, "I'm not coming over there. I am not gonna eat no pork. I won't have any of this." You know, I just don't involve myself.

Fatima: I have friends who have barbeques, and that's a national thing here in the United States during the holidays and they knew that I didn't eat any pork. They asked where I buy my chicken and meat, and I'd tell them. They would go get it and [they asked] how do you want it prepared and if someone came in and they wanted to drink, they'd tell them in a minute, "She don't drink. Leave her alone." That type of thing. So for me it wasn't about that.

Outgroup

Bob: This 'us' and 'them' mentality seems to be getting stronger and stronger everyday. I'm third generation Arab American but I can't tell you how many times I've been told to go back where I come from. I come from Dearborn, Michigan. My mother comes from Dearborn, Michigan. My grandmother...

Way Forward

- Muslims care for their own
 - Result in a higher likelihood of accepting support from formal sources
- Proceeding with small steps
 - Insufficient resources
 - Financially
 - Culturally
 - Support from religious leaders

Way Forward

Uthman: They have senior citizen buildings all over the city so why not have a Muslim *senior center*.

Fatima: Yes, yes, indeed. Exactly.

Omar: *Community center*.

Muhammad: That's a distinct possibility.

Omar: But that's frightening, you know. You see a lot of community centers are closing now. There are no funds, and for us to say that we would like to have one where Muslims can come... It would be great, but the way things are looking now it's slim to none.

Conclusions

- Universal trends
 - Desire for high quality of life
 - Mosque trusted source of support
- Unique trends
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
- Broadening locales and sample

Future directions

- Incorporate understanding Muslims as a cultural minority
- Women as key agent of social change
- Religious institutions trusted sources of support
- Focus on family unit, not individual autonomy