

Utilizing literature review and primary and secondary analyses of available data, Greer and Winch examine the incidence of family- kinship and voluntary organizational patterns in contemporary United States society.

This research confirms and extends some previous findings. Many primary family units, composed of Parents-Immediate Children ("nuclear families"), have ties with relatives outside the nuclear family. These ties suggest the existence of patterns of extended familism and of kinship networks. This pattern is in sharp contrast to a widely held notion that the nuclear family exists, in general, in isolation from kin. Participation in voluntary organizations is a widely pervasive feature of American society, offering a major level and focus of community organizations and action.

Participation in both kinship relations and voluntary organizations was found to vary on several dimensions. Kinship relations vary most strongly by "ethnicity"--measured by the religious, cultural, and/or racial background of the family. Jews tend to have the highest number of kinship ties. Protestants the least, with Catholics between Jews and Protestants in frequency.

Voluntary organizational participation varies according to the income and educational status of participators, with those in higher income and educational groups more likely to have a higher degree of organizational participation. Differences in ethnic background are associated with differences in the emphasis and functionality of organizational.