



iStockphoto.com/XiXinXing

1

THE CHANGING AMERICAN FAMILY

We are one big family of people, trying to make our way through the unfolding puzzle of life.

Source: —Sara Childre, President, Heartmath Research Institute

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Explain the impact of Standard North American Family ideologies on our perceptions of ourselves and others.
- 1.2 Understand the differences between family structures and family processes.
- 1.3 Analyze how early Native American and European settler families experienced both similar and different types of stressors.
- 1.4 List some historical and contemporary challenges facing African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American families in the United States.

THE STANDARD NORTH AMERICAN FAMILY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Explain the impact of Standard North American Family ideologies on our perceptions of ourselves and others.

What is a family? You might think that a formal definition is unnecessary for such a familiar concept. However, you will see throughout this book that the way we define a concept is not just a matter of semantics but can have real consequences for the people involved. How we define what a family is or is not can influence what research questions scientists choose to investigate. Our definitions can also affect social policies enacted by governments and can even shape the moral values of a given population. By reading this book you will come to realize that there are many, quite diverse ways to envision family and that the entity we call family is by nature a cultural and historical construction. In fact, it may be impossible to come up with one agreed-upon definition of what a family is, which makes studying families both difficult and endlessly fascinating.

Take a moment to think about your own definition of family. List your family members and reflect on whom you include on the list and whom you decide to leave out. Who makes up your family? I often have my students do this exercise on the first day of class, and I'm always impressed by the great variety of definitions of family they offer as well as the diverse family structures they describe. For example, last semester Miguel shared his list with our class. It included his mother, father, four siblings, seven aunts, four uncles, 32 cousins, and his grandparents on both sides.

"It seems like Miguel's definition includes only blood relatives," Jasmine, another student, commented. She continued, "My list includes my play cousins, my dad's girlfriend, my best friend who lived with us while we were growing up, and my stepbrother on my mom's side." Several members of the class nodded, and then Tiffany spoke up, saying, "I agree with Jasmine. Your family can include people who aren't blood relations. Like my uncle and his long-term partner, Joshua. They aren't married and don't have any biological kids but Joshua is a big part of our family. Not to mention that, without my dog, I wouldn't have made it through college this far. He's my baby!"

After a few giggles, the class discussed whether those we consider family must be related by blood, involved in heterosexual unions, live in the same household as us, or even be human. Several students felt their college roommates were their primary family members since they were far away from home and they had built a little family at college.

Like my students, even governments and countries define the term *family* in a variety of ways. Why does it matter that we have such different ideas about the definition of family? If you think about the laws of the United States or your home country, you might see some that apply only to people who are blood relations, legally married, or live together. For example, in many countries around the world, same-sex couples are not allowed to marry, adopt children, or visit their partners in intensive care units of hospitals because they are technically not “spouses” (visiting hours are reserved for “immediate family” only).

The definition of family doesn’t stop with a country’s laws, however. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau defines family as two or more people living together where the members are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The lead householder (the person whose name is on the mortgage or rental agreement) and all people in the household who are related to them are considered to be the family members. If we take the census definition seriously, Jasmine, Tiffany, and Miguel would not technically be “family” with anyone on their lists as they each live with college roommates, away from most of those they consider to be family members.

Compare the Census Bureau’s definition with *Webster’s Dictionary* (Merriam Webster, n.d.) definitions, which include “a group of persons of common ancestry,” or “a people or group of peoples regarded as deriving from common stock,” or “a group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation.” Would any of these definitions include Jasmine’s play cousins or stepbrother? Many people consider a “family” to be characterized solely by a husband, a wife, and a couple of kids. In fact, one of *Webster’s* other definitions of family states that family is “the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children.” To confuse you even further, a group of family researchers defines family thus: “two or more people who are in a relationship created by birth, marriage, or choice. Some families have legal protection and privileges, while others do not” (Silverstein & Auerbach, 2005, p. 33). As you can see, understanding a “simple” concept like family may not be simple after all.

In agreement with Silverstein and Auerbach’s definition, some of my students report that they have distanced themselves from their biological families because of abuse, neglect, alcoholism, or being “disowned” due to their identities or belief systems. They went on to create families of their own choosing, consisting of members such as romantic partners and their children, close friends with whom they spend the holidays, and people with whom they work or for whom they are caretakers. These students consider their “family” members to be just as important and as emotionally rewarding for them as Miguel does his biological aunties and grandparents.

We can also belong to different types of families, sometimes at the same time. There’s our **family of origin**, the family in which we grew up, and our **family of procreation**, which includes our mate and children. These two families we belong to may have similar structures, or we may form a family structure completely



PHOTO 1.1 Is Fido family?

iStock.com/SolStock

different from the one in which we grew up. In fact, with today's varied reproductive technologies, divorce rates, and open adoptions, a single child could have a biological mother who contributed an egg for conception, a surrogate mother who carried the child for nine months, an "other mother" who raises the child along with the biological mother, and future stepmothers who enter the picture when a parent divorces and remarries. The same variations in biological and environmental relatedness can occur with fathers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents as well. Today, it is not unheard of for a child whose parents divorced and remarried to have up to 16 different grandparents and great-grandparents!

In an attempt to be inclusive of all family forms, **family** will be considered in broad terms in this textbook and defined as a group of two or more people connected by blood, adoption, marriage, or choice, who may rely on each other for social, emotional, and financial support. Tiffany might not like this definition since it requires all family members to be "people" and excludes her prized pooch. Consider whether you like this definition or not and think about which parts of it ring true or don't feel right from your perspective.

Sociologist Dorothy Smith (1993) coined the term **Standard North American Family (SNAF)**, which refers to the image of a homemaker wife, a husband who works outside the home, and their two biological children. This is not just a way to describe the family. Smith argues that the image of SNAF carries with it an ideological code by which we judge all families who don't fit into this structure. We may be unconscious of how these ideologies affect our judgments of and interactions with other people. Imagine you meet people with the following family structures:

- A single mother with her three children
- A single father with his three children
- A gay or lesbian couple who have adopted children from another country
- A blended family of six children: three from the husband's previous marriage and three from the wife's

What thoughts go through your mind as you imagine each type of family? Do you feel sorry for any of them or think they may not be able to provide a stable or safe environment for their children? If you've ever thought that children would be better off in a married heterosexual household with a mother who stayed home or if you've ever been surprised when someone who was not raised with a SNAF grew up to be successful and happy, you may be walking around with SNAF ideologies influencing the way you think about your own family and the families of people you meet.

Beyond our ideas about what family structure is best for people, implicit in the SNAF image is that a "family" is both white and middle class. Smith (1993) discusses how school personnel may often view non-SNAFs (e.g., families of color, immigrant families, or same-sex families) as deficient. If a child gets into trouble at school, the first conclusion might be that the problem stems from growing up with a "dysfunctional" family form. Some consider families especially deviant if they are not headed by a married adult male. Interestingly, it was not until the 1920s that even a slight majority of children in the United States lived within a male breadwinner SNAF structure (Coontz, 1997). I urge you to continuously assess the messages about families you were taught as you grew up and try to understand how those ideas impact your perceptions of people and your interactions with them today. To start this process, check out my family in the Focus on My Family box.

FOCUS ON MY FAMILY

THE HOWE FAMILY



Photo reprinted with permission.

This picture shows me with my family of procreation. I had the privilege of being able to legally marry Mike. Our marriage was recognized by our home state, California. However, I was not allowed to marry Mike in his church, the Catholic Church. Because of the church's rules on exogamy, prohibitions about marrying someone outside of your group, we had to marry elsewhere. After five years of marriage, we had a son and then another son five years after that. What ideas pop into your mind as you look at this picture? Do you think we look happy? Like good parents? You may already know that I'm a college professor with a PhD. Would your perception change if you knew I was raised by divorced parents? That my mother married an African American man and I had a biracial half-brother? What about the fact that my biological father had a child as a teenager, giving me an older half-sister? Does it change your opinion to learn that I lived in poverty and went to 10 different schools? What if I told you my mother and brother both died of drug overdoses? Do these facts change your perceptions as you gaze at the four smiling faces looking back at you? In contrast to my background, Mike grew up in what appeared to be a SNAF. His father worked for Ford Motors in Detroit, and his mother stayed home with four children. They went to mass every Sunday, and Mike played baseball and football. He lived in the same house his entire life. Sounds idyllic, doesn't it? Does anything change if you know that his father served on the front lines in the Korean War? That he came back with posttraumatic stress symptoms that led him to drink heavily? That he has trouble connecting with people and traveling without feeling anxiety? How might these processes have affected his parenting? The structure, or observable composition, of my family of procreation consists of two legally married European American heterosexual middle-class people with two children. Our family processes, or interactional qualities, include us not fighting in front of our children, eating dinner together every night, and using consistent and predictable disciplinary methods. Does it matter that our kids have a male and female parent, or is it more important to know that Mike is naturally laid-back and I am more emotional and expressive? Think about the structures and processes in your own family and analyze which held more importance for the way you turned out. The difference between these two concepts will be explored in depth in this chapter.



PHOTO 1.2 Leave It to Beaver. Do the Cleavers seem like an ideal family? Still from *Leave It to Beaver*, c. 1957; actors Tony Dow, Barbara Billingsley, Hugh Beaumont, and Jerry Mather

CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images

Because today most families are not SNAFs, contemporary Americans often feel that the traditional institution of family is “disintegrating” or falling apart. They point to trends like the increase in cross-ethnic and cross-religious marriages, more people choosing not to marry at all, women working outside the home, science-fiction-like reproductive technologies, and the increase in openly gay, lesbian, and transgender households as destructive to the traditional family. People tend to think that “in the old days” families were happier, more moral, and more stable, and experienced fewer problems like divorce, premarital sex, and abuse. The truth is that violent crime, teen births, and divorce rates all decreased significantly between 1995 and 2020, (CDC, 2019; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2020). Outcomes for children have also improved. More kids of all racial and ethnic groups go to high school and college today than ever before, and they are also less likely to smoke than they were in the 1950s. In fact, in 2017 in the United States, 98.6% of Asian students, 94.8% of whites, 86.3% of Native Americans, 93.8% of Blacks, and 88.3% of Hispanics graduated from high school. This is a radical improvement over previous decades. Kids today are also less likely to

be involved in alcohol-related accidents and to die from drugs than they were in the 1970s (Coles, 2006). Unfortunately, there is one caveat to this good news: Since the nationwide opioid epidemic has taken root, drug overdoses for youth and adults have risen significantly since 1999.

Older generations often think back to TV shows from the 1950s, like *Father Knows Best* or *Leave It to Beaver*, which depicted white American middle-class families who fit the SNAF ideal perfectly. In *Leave It to Beaver*, for example, the mother, June Cleaver, was always dressed immaculately with hair done and makeup on. She cooked and cleaned with a smile on her face. Her husband, Ward, would come home from work, kiss her, and sit down with the newspaper while she waited on him, bringing him a drink or his slippers. She would then call their two sons, Wally and Beaver, down to enjoy a dinner of meat and potatoes, as they jovially discussed their day. The children in this show were mischievous but never got into any real trouble, and the family solved any problems that arose in about 20 minutes. Media images like these often lead people to wonder whether their own families are as good or as healthy as the Cleavers. We may wonder whether our families are even “normal.”

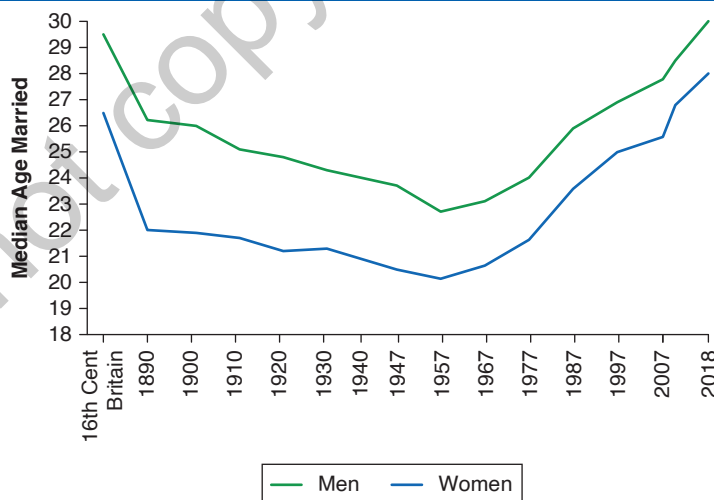
Concerns over the changing American family are usually based on misinformation. While it’s true that the ethnic composition of the United States is becoming more diverse and wider varieties of family structures are being recognized, the reality is that the United States has always been diverse

and family forms have changed and shifted continuously since the first colonies began to coalesce into a nation. Today, over 67 million people in the United States speak a language other than English at home (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). If the traditional 1950s family ever existed widely at all, it seems to have been a brief blip on the radar because that decade is certainly not representative of most Americans' experiences, either in the past or today. For example, although more people today are delaying marriage to focus on their education and career, the younger marriage ages for men and women in the 1950s were just a historical anomaly. You can see these trends in Figure 1.1.

From 16th-century British records (Wrigley & Schofield, 1989), we see that the average age of marriage then was 29.3 years for men and 26.4 years for women. In the United States, similar marriage ages occurred across all decades for the past 100 years, except for a big dip during and directly following World War II (the 1940s and 1950s). Marriage ages were older in earlier generations because men often had to wait until they had learned a trade or had secured land for a home before they married. But after World War II, the economy was booming, suburban neighborhoods and affordable uniform tract housing sprang up all over the country, and the GI Bill combined with government subsidies made education and home buying more widely available. Therefore, people had fewer incentives to delay marriage. Another reason that marriage rates increased during the 1940s is that many young couples wanted to be married quickly before the male partners were shipped off to a very uncertain fate overseas.

It is important to recognize that any historical comparisons we make are relatively arbitrary. Depending on the historical periods we choose and the variables or statistics we use, we can conclude that modern trends in marriage and family life are either worse than, better than, or pretty much the same as previous decades or centuries. Throughout this book, I hope that you will think about what effect SNAF ideologies might have on your thinking. This section has shown that there probably were no “good old days” in the 1950s; instead, that brief period evidenced trends in family life that were historically quite anomalous. Moreover, it coincided with a wider reach for media like television, which impacted people’s thinking about what families should be like, cementing the viewpoint that SNAF is preferable over other family types.

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Median Age of First Marriage in the United States



Sources: Wrigley & Schofield (1989); U.S. Census Bureau (2020d). *Current Population Survey*. Retrieved 10/06/21, from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/families-and-households/ms-2.pdf>

FAMILY STRUCTURES VERSUS FAMILY PROCESSES

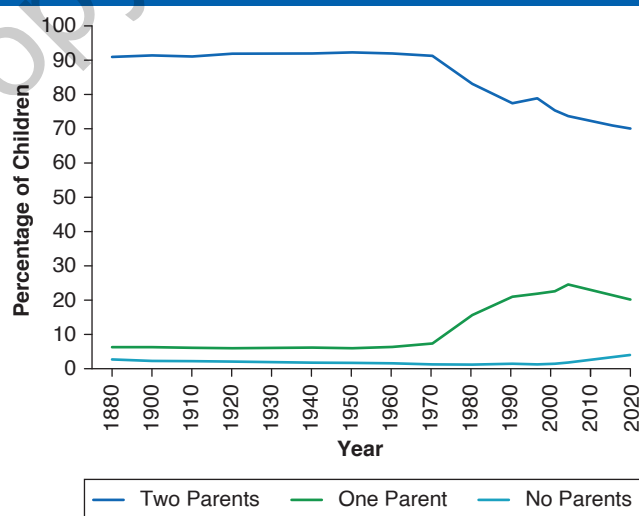
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.2 Understand the differences between family structures and family processes.

As the historical research we just explored indicates, it is not apparent that the SNAF was ever the norm in the United States, nor is there any evidence that SNAF is the best family structure. Throughout this text, I will argue that the processes families experienced are what matter most in terms of health, success, and happiness. **Processes** are interactional variables like caring, sharing, and communicating, which are not always easily visible. We cannot determine how well a child will turn out, or how successful or content a family will be, based solely on the family's external structure. A family's **structure** is its composition, how many members it has, whether people are married, their ages, and other demographic variables. Take a look at Figure 1.2 to see the changes in family structure over time. Can we conclude anything about the processes these family members experienced by looking at their structures?

Family structure itself does not reveal very much about a person's experiences. Family health, success, and happiness don't depend exclusively on family structure, such as whether a child has two moms, a large family of 11 siblings, a divorced father who is remarried to a woman with her own three children, or a single mom who struggles financially. Family structure can impact the way we grow up, the opportunities we have, the ideas we form, and the goals we set for ourselves; thus, structure is important to an individual's developmental outcomes. However, we must look deeper into a family's processes of interaction to be able to understand a person's long-term adjustment. Processes include interactional variables like problem solving, quality of emotional support, and discipline provided for children. Many

FIGURE 1.2 ■ Living Arrangements for U.S. Children, 1880–2020



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2020d). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1968 to 2020*. Retrieved 10/06/21 from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/families-and-households/ch-1.pdf>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

RATING MY FAMILY'S STRENGTHS

You've learned a bit about the different processes families experience both historically and today. You can also assess your own family processes. The table that follows lists ten healthy family processes. Rate your family, a specific dyad or triad in your family (that is, mom and older brother or husband, wife, and teenage daughter, and so on), or think about your family as a whole. You can do this regarding your *family of origin* as well as your *family of procreation*.

	Never	Sometimes	Always
1. My family members and I respect each other's individuality.	1	2	3
2. We try to solve problems without blaming each other.	1	2	3
3. We try not to raise our voices or yell.	1	2	3
4. We tell other family members we love them.	1	2	3
5. We express physical affection to each other (e.g., with hugs and kisses).	1	2	3
6. We try to discuss our problems before they fester too long.	1	2	3
7. We don't gang up on specific family members.	1	2	3
8. We don't call each other names during disagreements.	1	2	3
9. We don't get physical (e.g., slapping or pushing) during disagreements.	1	2	3
10. We enjoy just spending time together.	1	2	3
Total score			

Scores can range from 10 to 30, with higher scores being best. If you get a 25 or higher, your family has established some pretty healthy processes of interaction. Good for you!

For scores between 16 and 24, you have some key strengths but can definitely do some work to try to improve processes that are lacking.

If your score is 15 or less, you might think seriously about finding some outside help to improve your communication or problem-solving methods. You can usually find free or low-cost counseling services at your university or county mental health office; or search the Internet to find other ideas, such as faith-based pastoral counseling at a nearby house of worship. You can also consult the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists or the American Psychological Association to find a therapist in the United States or abroad (www.aamft.org; www.apa.org).

It can be useful to use this assessment as a conversation starter: Rate your family yourself first and then have another family member rate the same part of the family without knowing your assessment. Then compare the scores and have a targeted conversation about the strengths and weaknesses you think your family has. Are there weaknesses you think would be easy to improve with a heart-to-heart discussion?

Source: *Please note that all self-assessments in this text are for informational purposes only. They are not meant to diagnose, cure, or treat any family problems. They are only meant to give you food for thought.

families appear to fit the SNAF ideal on the outside if we look at the structure of the family. But this is a superficial examination because within any structure there can be successful or problematic processes. You may know a SNAF where the father has affairs or the mother struggles with mental illness. Likewise, you may know single parents, gay and lesbian parents, or families formed by choice or adoption who are loving, supportive, kind, and caring; who provide stimulation, discipline, and opportunities for their children; and who value their children for who they are. In sum, while the organizational structure may be an important first place to look when sizing up families, a true understanding of family health, success, and happiness can only come from examining the underlying interactional processes those family members experience. To check out your own family processes (strengths and weaknesses), read the Self-Assessment box “Rating My Family’s Strengths.”

Let’s think about a concrete example to be sure you understand the differences between family structures and processes. You may have heard people say that being raised in a single-parent family is not as good as being raised with two parents. It is hard to argue against this idea because the more supports and role models a child has, the better. Do these supportive family members have to be a biological mother and a biological father, though? Can the second parent be a close friend? Or what about a live-in grandmother or an uncle who lives nearby? Researchers have struggled to find ways to examine whether it’s true that a single mother is insufficient for raising a child or whether it’s just that one person alone will have a more difficult time, regardless of whether that person is a biological mother. Early research compared family structures and found that children from single-mother family structures were at risk for poor outcomes, such as lower education and more problems with the law (Milne et al., 1986). But later research that examined family processes showed that it’s not living with a single mother, per se, that is detrimental to a child (looking only at the structure of the family) but that part of the explanation for these children’s struggles could be due to the fact that single mothers are more likely to live in poverty than mothers living with partners (Brown & Moran, 1997). Moreover, children who live in poverty are more likely to struggle in school and have problems with antisocial behavior, regardless of the family structure they come from (Farrington, 1995). Why is this?

Let’s think about some of the processes that may be at work in this example. First, poor people may have to work so many hours at low-paying jobs that they can’t be home when their kids get home from school and can’t attend school events or meet with teachers. They may live in more dangerous neighborhoods where, if children can’t be supervised while the parents are at work, violent or antisocial role models in the neighborhood may play an important role in socializing the children. So does this mean that if you grew up poor, you’re doomed? No. In fact, most children who grow up poor turn out just fine. They are happy, healthy, productive members of society. These good outcomes can probably be attributed to the *processes* each individual experienced, such as a loving family, hard-working parents, caring teachers, and people who believed in them. In fact, most people who overcome adverse childhood experiences cite those very processes as explanations for how they overcame stressful circumstances (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

We will return to the ideas of SNAF and “structure versus process” throughout this book. Each chapter includes a Focus on My Family box in which real families tell their stories in their own words, and describe both the structures and the processes that affect their lives. You will see that while both family structures and processes are important for people’s outcomes, families are embedded in larger contextual and cultural systems that also greatly impact them. To give you a feel for how a person’s culture and context can affect life within the family, let’s examine some of the ways people around the world experience diverse structures and processes.

Diverse Family Structures and Processes

Before we delve into a deeper examination of the different types of “American” families, let’s first look at a few other structures and processes that exist besides the basic SNAF. The **modern family** is a dual earner household where roles and responsibilities in the home are unequal (Silverstein & Auerbach, 2005). Like SNAF, this family structure is composed of a heterosexual married couple and their children. Women in these families still bear the brunt of the childcare and housekeeping responsibilities; however, unlike SNAF wives, women in modern families often work full-time and earn as much or more than their male partners. You are probably familiar with these families. Most of us know women who work full-time but still come home and cook dinner, bathe the kids, and organize birthday parties. Even though men today do not share equally in childcare, men have tripled the amount of time they spend in childcare compared to 40 years ago (Bianchi et al., 2006; Center for American Progress, 2018; Knop & Brewster, 2015). And men’s housework participation has doubled over the past 40 years; however, they still only do 37% of childcare and 41% of housework in the United States and Canada (Brines, 2011; Fisher et al., 2006; Guppy et al., 2019). Interestingly, women have also increased the amount of time they spend with their children as compared to 40 years ago, as society now has high expectations for both men and women to participate in parenting, instead of just caretaking. In the 1950s, it would be unusual to see a mother sitting down on the floor to play board games or baby dolls with her children, a common sight today (Coltrane & Adams, 2008; Guppy, et al., 2019).

In comparison with the modern family, a **postmodern family** involves a deconstruction or transformation of at least one aspect of traditional SNAF ideas about what a family is (Silverstein & Auerbach, 2005). Postmodern families may have egalitarian gender roles or consist of a same sex couple or a father who remains single by choice. These families have abandoned the idea that a healthy family must include a European American married heterosexual pairing or traditional gender roles. The percentage of households composed of married husband-wife couples living with their own children has decreased from 23.5% in 2000 to 20.2% in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020b). You can further see the deconstruction of SNAF ideas in Figure 1.3, which shows the rising number of single-father households, by decade.

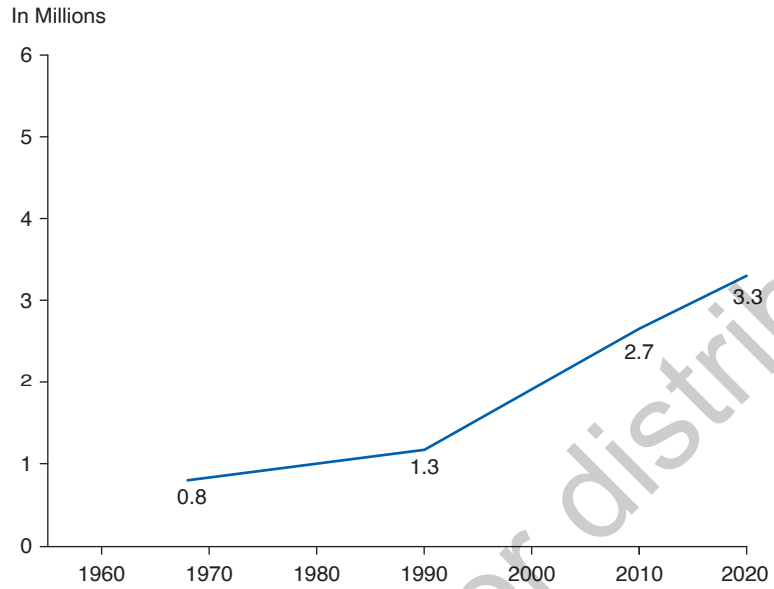
The Emmy winning television show *Modern Family* depicts many diverse family structures. Look at Photo 1.3 and see if you can figure out whether they are really a modern family or a postmodern family. Do you think this type of show could have succeeded in the 1950s? Why or why not?

Regulating Family Structures and Processes Around the World

In every culture around the world, family structures are regulated—either disallowed or endorsed by cultural, religious, or governmental leaders. Most countries, cultures, and religious groups also have rules, customs, and policies about the people whom its citizens should definitely *not* marry. This is called **exogamy**, meaning marrying *outside* (*exogenous* to) their own group. For example, many religious groups do not allow their practitioners to marry outside of their religion. Likewise, there are certain people whom groups in power wholeheartedly endorse for their citizens’ marriages. This is called **endogamy**, meaning marrying *within* a specific circle of people. For example, many immigrants prefer their children to marry within their own group and do not approve of their children marrying a person from the new country.

Another practice that is regulated—either disallowed or encouraged—by cultural groups is **polygamy**, the practice of one man marrying many women. For example, some Bedouin Arab families practice polygamy. The holy book Muslims follow, the Qu’ran, allows men to have multiple wives. For Bedouins, the first marriage is often arranged by family members, and then the

FIGURE 1.3 ■ Rising Number of Single-Father U.S. Households, 1968–2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 1968–2020, Annual Social and Economic Supplement*.



PHOTO 1.3 Modern Family. Which types of families are depicted in the TV show *Modern Family*?

David Livingston / Contributor/ Getty Images

man himself may choose his subsequent wives. These subsequent wives, chosen due to attraction, liking or loving, sometimes receive more affection, resources, or support from the husband than the first wife (Al-Krenawi et al., 2007).

Cultural groups also regulate **polyandry**, the practice of one woman marrying more than one man. The Nyinba people from Nepal allow all brothers to marry the wife of the oldest brother, resulting in polyandry. However, this structural arrangement doesn't mean the woman is guaranteed much power in these marriages. The younger brothers can choose whether to engage in sexual relations with the wife and may also choose to leave her for another wife as they become older (Haddix, 2001).

As the preceding example shows, even when family structures appear to reverse traditional gender role processes, men around the world typically retain more power in family dynamics than women do. In fact, there is no evidence that any human group has ever been **matriarchal**, with women maintaining power and control over men. Some societies have been **matrifocal**, however, meaning that a newly married couple moves in with the wife's family. And some groups have been **matrilineal**, where property, privileges, and goods are passed down through the mother's family. In general, however, most societies around the world have been and continue to be **patriarchal** in nature. Men rule and enjoy power, privilege, and control over women and children.

Men are not the only family members to wield power in family dynamics, however. Sometimes elders (including women) and esteemed community members hold even more sway than, say, a person's father. For example, in order to ensure that cultural beliefs and traditions are adhered to, some cultures practice **arranged marriage**, where the wife and husband are chosen by family members, religious leaders, or cultural elders. While many people in western societies find it very unappealing to think about marrying someone not of their own choosing, research shows the people in arranged marriages often feel happy, learn to love their partner, have lower rates of divorce, and report feeling less pressure to look sexy, attract someone based on superficial characteristics, or date many "frogs" before finding their "prince/princess" (Regan et al., 2012; Span, 2003).

In addition to people's marriage patterns being regulated or controlled, the ability to divorce, the right to adopt, and even sexual practices can be determined by cultural traditions, religion, or governmental policy. For example, in the United States, most states legislate the age at which a person can "consent" to having sexual relations. In Arkansas, Indiana, and Iowa, the age of consent is 16, but if a partner is no more than 4 years her senior, in Iowa a girl can consent at 14. Other states, such as California, Virginia, and Wisconsin, require a person to be 18 (Age of Consent, 2020). Why do you think these states chose different ages? And why different ages for boys and girls? It may have something to do with traditional beliefs about personal power or intellectual abilities in older versus younger teens or boys versus girls.

Some other exogamy rules that regulate American experiences include laws against marrying within one's own family of origin (e.g., it's illegal to marry one's father, sibling, or child). Americans are also not allowed to have sexual relationships with children. In contrast, the Etoro tribe of Papua New Guinea starts initiating boys (around the age of 12) to enter adulthood by having the boys perform fellatio rites on adult men. The thought is that by inseminating the boys with adult semen, they are helping them become men (Knauft, 2003). This example illustrates that while one culture excludes certain groups for marriage and sex, other cultures encourage relationships with those groups.

Another example of exogamy includes the fact that, in most areas, you must marry someone outside of your own gender. However, by 2019, 30 countries had legalized same-sex marriage,

including South Africa, Brazil, Uruguay, Taiwan, Argentina, Norway, Northern Ireland, and the United States (Pew Research Center, 2019). Ironically, in the same countries where gay marriage is allowed or civil unions are given the same rights as marriages, heterosexual couples are choosing *not* to marry in larger and larger numbers. More than half of couples in Sweden, for example, prefer not to get married but to raise children in cohabiting homes (Population Europe Resource Finder and Archive, 2014). There are few incentives to get married as these cultures tend to be secular instead of religious, there are few tax incentives for being married, and cohabiting couples receive the same health and insurance benefits as married couples. Is this trend away from heterosexual marriage a good thing? Many people might think trends like these endanger the very fiber of what it means to be a “family.” While this is a complex question to answer, you may be interested to know that Western European and Scandinavian countries with low rates of marriage also have some of the lowest rates of teenage pregnancy, violent crime, and child abuse (Darroch et al., 2002; Lu, 2019; Office for National Statistics, 2014; Statista, 2021).

In contrast to many western industrialized nations moving away from traditional marriage and the SNAF, other cultures around the world continue to embrace traditional ideas about marriages and families, including separate spheres of existence for males and females. For example, in some Muslim countries such as Afghanistan, women are expected to lead the family in morality and connection to God. Yet women are also expected to serve male family members. They sometimes must marry their husband’s family members if their husband dies (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003; Cherif, 2010). Before the oppressive Taliban regime took over in 1994, however, many women in Afghanistan obtained college educations and performed professional public roles, such as being attorneys and physicians. Today, Afghan women are fighting for recognition of their right to participate fully in society, including serving in the government. Once again, they face immense challenges as the Taliban re-took power in 2021.



PHOTO 1.4 Same-Sex Marriage. In what ways does society regulate family structure?

Steve Schapiro/Contributor/Corbis Historical/Getty Images

The Masai tribe in Africa also practices traditional gender roles where women must take care of the home and husbands have every right to discipline (even physically) their wives (Magoke-Mhoja, 2008). In many countries, women are encouraged, or even required to be escorted by male relatives in public and to cover their heads while outside of the home. Do you think these cultures are remiss in endorsing traditional family structures and processes? Or do you believe every society should have the right to regulate relationships and roles as they see fit?

Cultural Relativism Versus Human Rights

With all of these different cultural and legal regulations about who can or should marry whom, it is easy to wonder whether one practice is right and another wrong. Some would argue that we must consider every culture individually and accept their practices as just as valid as ours. **Cultural relativism** refers to the idea that values, practices, and beliefs differ by cultural group and that no system is better or worse than any other. From this perspective, we should judge family practices as normal relative to the family's or culture's belief system, even if such practices seem abnormal to us. Do you believe in cultural relativism? Live and let live? The United Nations (UN) has decided that we should allow cultural and religious freedom to prosper as long as cultural or religious practices do not violate a family member's *human rights*, an individual's freedom to make choices that make them happy without the threat of violence, ostracism, or psychological harm. For example, the UN has specific written documents condemning violence against women and children. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child argues that all children in every culture have the rights to be loved and valued, to receive education, and to live a life free of violence or abuse of any kind. This means that the international community has decided that individual human rights are more important in some cases than cultural traditions.

Let's turn the international lens onto the western family. What do you think about the American practice of leaving infants in cribs in their own rooms to sleep? Many cultures around the world would argue that this is child abuse or, at minimum, neglect. Parents around the world feel that infants should be with their parents all the time, especially at night. It is felt that a mother is neglecting her child if she is not there throughout the night to breastfeed on demand and soothe the infant in its sleep (Goldberg & Keller, 2007). Western research has found that when infants sleep alone, they form strong emotional attachments to transitional objects, such as blankets, stuffed animals, or dolls (Hobara, 2003). Do other cultures have a right to tell us what to do with our babies? Is constant contact in the early years better for children, or is encouraging independence through solitary sleeping more helpful for child development? For important questions such as these, researchers have to be creative in designing studies to figure out how to answer the public's demand for knowledge about the best ways to raise children. To get an idea about how we might find answers about co-sleeping versus infants sleeping alone, see the How Would You Measure That? box on infant co-sleeping. Each chapter will have such a box, which will help you practice your critical thinking skills by asking you to analyze a research study's methods and conclusions.

I hope that the research evidence reviewed so far has helped you understand that what a "good" family is becomes a complex issue when you consider cultural, religious, legal, and historical factors that impact family relations across many generations. While the picture of the European American postwar middle-class SNAF has been ingrained in many of our minds as the way American families always were and perhaps how they should still be, it's important that students of family relationships understand that diversity has always been the norm. Each ethnic group to live in the United States has had unique experiences regarding how they came here, what rules and restrictions were placed on their group, what kinds of oppression and violence

were perpetrated against them, and how successful they were in maintaining their traditional family forms while trying to adapt to life in the United States. Stephanie Coontz (2000), a leading expert on the history of the family, writes:

The “modernization” of the family was the result not of some general evolution of “the” family, as early family sociologists originally posited, but of diverging and contradictory responses that occurred in different areas and classes at various times, eventually interacting to produce the trends we now associate with industrialization. (p. 25)

If Coontz’s analysis is correct, then every ethnic group experiences life in the United States differently based on their history and adaptive strategies. Let’s start thinking about this diverging set of responses with an overview of the original Americans’ experiences. Think about some of the similar and different challenges that faced them compared to European settler families.

NATIVE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN FAMILIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.3** Analyze how early Native American and European settler families experienced both similar and different types of stressors.

As you look around your classroom, you will probably notice that the students may look different from each other. As you get to know other students, you may find that they have distinct cultural or religious backgrounds, speak other languages, or identify with different aspects of the larger culture than you do. One thing most of us have in common, though, is a history of migration or immigration in our families of origin. It’s important that we don’t just look at people’s group or family structures but that we attempt to understand the processes individuals experience and how those processes affect family health and well-being. We must look beyond static categories like race, gender, or socioeconomic status and delve deeper into the complex influences on modern family life. This section is not meant to provide a comprehensive history of each group. It is simply meant to explore the diverse experiences of many groups in the United States as well as to illustrate that even within one ethnic group, there is a great diversity of experiences. Thus, we must not generalize or stereotype people in each group because *there is usually just as much diversity within each group as there is between two given ethnic groups.*

A Look at the History of Native Americans

Centuries ago, people from Asia crossed over the land bridge that once connected what is now Russia to the current U.S. state of Alaska. They migrated all over North, Central, and South America, creating some of the great civilizations of the world, such as the Mayan Empire, which existed from 2000 BCE to 900 CE, and the Aztecs, who reigned in modern-day Mexico from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries CE. It wasn’t until the 16th century that Europeans came to these lands and encountered Native Americans. Spanish conquistadores and explorers enslaved many of the native peoples they encountered. However, the Catholic Church, which funded many of these expeditions, admonished the Europeans for any treatment that was too severe, such as the violence that enslaved Africans routinely experienced at the hands of European settlers in the “New World.” The Catholic Church also allowed Spaniards to marry Indigenous women, which led to openly “mixed-race” families. Contrast this practice of open intermarriage with the

segregation that occurred decades later in the United States when white slave owners had children with Black enslaved women, often through rape, but did not marry them (Coles, 2006).

Native American Indians are a diverse group and comprise over 570 tribes speaking over 170 languages. It is very difficult to make generalizations about their family structures or processes. To paint a clear picture of the history and current status of Native American families, we will focus only on those tribes found in what is now the United States and who have had some level of reliable data published about them.

The first U.S. Census in 1790 showed that 13% of the population was Native American Indian (Schaefer, 2004). Due to contact with Europeans and through disease, starvation, and genocide, by 1890, there were only 250,000 Indigenous people left in the United States (Stuart, 1987). The white settlers and the American Indians often engaged in armed conflict with one another, yet many families and small groups got along well, traded, and even intermarried.

Originally, the British colonial regime considered American Indian nations in the colonies to be sovereign; relations with them required public negotiations with written treaties. However, these treaties were difficult to enforce and were often broken. With U.S. independence from Britain came greed for more land. Unlike the British, the U.S. government did not respect American Indian nations as sovereign powers. While some Indigenous people stayed on ancestral lands and were not traumatized by their contact with whites, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced many Native Americans east of the Mississippi River to move west. Hundreds of thousands died on this journey, now known as the Trail of Tears. The survivors were often put on inferior reservation lands with new climates, strange soil, new plants and animals, and previously unknown diseases. All that these families had ever known was gone.

Imagine being a Native American child who grew up in a forest community, with river fishing as the primary source of sustenance. Your entire family is then relocated to a dry, desert-like climate. The only means you've ever known to survive are gone. Parents no longer know what to do to protect and feed their children. The life skills they once taught their children are irrelevant



PHOTO 1.5 Native American Family. If these Native Americans kept a journal about their family lives, how do you think it might differ from journals of white settlers in the same area at that time? Hunting Horse and daughters, 1908.

J. V. Dedrick/Buyenlarge/Getty Images

in this new setting. Government care packages of food and medicine, which were promised, arrive only sporadically. Your elders' wisdom can no longer be counted on to get you through tough times. Your warriors have new foes to face, whom they don't understand, as you have been resettled on an existing clan's hunting territory. The U.S. government promised to protect these refugees but rarely followed through (McLemore et al., 2001).

It is difficult to make generalizations about the original practices of Native American families, but we do know that they tended to be fairly permissive parents who didn't use physical punishment. Children were often raised by everyone in the clan and had much freedom to explore the natural consequences of their actions. All care-giving members of a clan could be called "mother" or "father," and people lived in extended family groups with permeable boundaries (Stanton, 1995). Some tribes were *matrilineal* or *matrifocal*, where the mother's side of the family held prominence, men would marry into their wives' clans, and female elders held much power; however, most groups were *patrilineal* and *patriarchal*, with the father's bloodline holding more sway and men keeping the power and decision-making responsibilities. In general, American Indian tribes were collectivist in nature, not having concepts for private property or individual desires.

Native Americans in Modern Times

In 1887, another blow came to American Indian peoples when the Dawes Act ensured them large parcels of land for agriculture and animal husbandry. Because many tribes had no experience with an agricultural way of life and could not afford farm implements, whites often took over these lands, too. Moreover, in order to "assimilate" American Indian children into American life, they were often removed from their families and sent to boarding schools where they were forbidden to use their own languages, practice any of their cultures' customs, or participate in traditional religious ceremonies. The schools were usually built far away from reservations and native clothing was forbidden, so the children were prevented from feeling connected to their families and old ways of life. Students were often abused and exploited and made to work long hours under harsh conditions (Lomawaima, 1994). These boarding schools existed well into the 1970s.

With the general social movements of the 1960s and 1970s involving marginalized groups like African Americans and women fighting for greater rights and freedoms, Native Americans also actively sought more power and control over their lives. This was especially true in regard to administering tribal lands on the reservations. They were eventually granted more freedom to control their own school curricula, religious and cultural events, and even child welfare issues, like adoption and fostering. Today, American Indians are considered dual citizens of their tribal nation and of the United States (John, 1998), yet only 22% still live on reservation land (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). While many tribes have managed to bring in lucrative industries, such as greeting cards, auto parts, and gaming casinos, American Indians living on reservations in general suffer from extreme poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, family violence, and high fertility rates.

Today, American Indian/Alaska Natives make up 1.8% of the American population, with the largest tribe being the Navajo, with 399,494 members (Fonseca, 2021). Many community leaders today are trying to maintain their clans' ties to the past, teaching collectivist ideals, such as viewing personal achievements as a family effort. With a history of trauma, disease, war, and resettlement, it is encouraging that the Native American population has increased to about 6.79 million people today and that families are attempting to rekindle some of their traditional ways of life while also struggling to help the 25% of their population who live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020d; *World Population Review*, 2021).

A Look at the History of European American Families

When most of us learned about American history in school, we were taught the history of *European* Americans. Other groups' experiences were either briefly described or not described at all. And most of us didn't learn many details about family life back then. In the early colonies of the New World, there was a shortage of women. For example, in the 18th century, more men than women made the journey from Europe, and later, in 1830, men crossed the country alone when offered cheap or free land out west. If they did look for a wife, they looked for a hardy, strong woman who could handle the journey as well as the intense work of setting up a homestead. They were not looking for a woman to support financially while she sat at home looking beautiful and cooking gourmet food. These men needed to form a **coprovider family**, what we call today a dual-earner structure, where both partners contribute to the family income. These coprovider families were necessary because everyone had to work equally hard to make an agriculture-based farm life successful. They had to build their own homes, grow their own food, make their own clothes, and often fight off American Indians who were struggling to protect their homelands. Pioneer women had to be skilled in many different crafts, from preserving fruit for the winter to hoeing a field for crops.

Because families were often mobile and their health was marginal, people died early, by about the age of 40 on average. Despite our popular mythology, there were actually very few multigenerational households with warm and loving grandparents welcoming each grandchild's birth. The elderly rarely came west, either across the sea to the colonies or, later, across the western frontier. People typically took in strangers to make extra money. It wasn't unusual to see "families" composed of eight or nine children, paying boarders, down-and-out community members, such as those with mental illness or alcoholism, orphans, and apprentices, all living under one roof (Coles, 2006). The term *family* didn't refer to a married couple with their biological children until well into the 19th century (Coontz, 1997).

In early colonial and pioneer families, childhood was short to nonexistent. As soon as a child could work, they were put to the task. All family members worked from sunrise to sunset, and there wasn't much time for socializing, nor was there a verb called "parenting" as we refer to it today. Parenting back then meant keeping as many children as possible alive to help with the family's work. Fathers were the heads of the households and were responsible for their children's behavior if they got into trouble. Fathers were also in charge of any education the children might receive, religious or otherwise (Coontz, 1997). To get a feel for the life of some colonial children, see the Brain Food box, which describes some real children's lives soon after they arrived on the *Mayflower*.

BRAIN FOOD CHILDHOOD IN THE COLONIES

Although many families entered the colony in servitude, another important source of servants was the practice of "putting out" one or more children. Samuel Eddy, for example, although the son of an English minister and a university graduate, did not seem to prosper in Plymouth, and he and his wife, "by reason of many wants lying on them," were forced to put out several children as servants.

So, too, Samuel Eaton and Benjamin Eaton, after the death of their father, *Mayflower* passenger Francis Eaton, were put out by their stepmother and were apprenticed respectively to Widow Bridget Fuller and John Cooke Jr.

On 13 August 1636 Mary Moorecock, by her own voluntary will, and with the consent of her stepfather, was apprenticed to Richard Sparrow for nine years.

Six-year-old Elizabeth Billington, with consent of parents, on 18 April 1642 was apprenticed for 14 years to John and Mary Barnes.

Sarah Hoskins was apprenticed on 18 January 1643/44 with the consent of her father, to Thomas and Winifred Whitney until she became twenty years old.

Thomas and Anne Savory put their 5-year-old son Thomas Jr. out on 2 August 1653 as an apprentice with Thomas Lettice, carpenter, until he reached 21. Young Thomas was to receive meat, drink, apparel, washing, lodging, and all other necessities, and was to be taught the trade of a house carpenter, and be taught to read the English language. In turn he was to give his master faithful and respectful service, not absent himself by day or night without license, not marry or contract marriage during his term, not embezzle, purloin, or steal any of his master's goods, nor give away any of his secrets, and to be obedient. On completing his term, he would be given two suits of clothes and various specified carpenter's tools.

The same Thomas and Anne Savory in November 1653 put out their 9-year-old son Benjamin to John and Alice Shaw until he reached 21, and the father was to receive thirty shillings. Benjamin was to be taught to read and write, and at the end of his term he would get £5 or a cow.

Source: From: Eugene Aubrey Stratton, FASG (1986). *Plymouth colony: Its history and people 1620-1691*. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry Publishing. Available online at www.mayflowerfamilies.com.

Because life was so difficult for most European Americans, deaths of children and parents were common. Death and desertion in hard times led to the formation of many single parent, stepparent, and remarried families. It was also common for children to grow up with several half- and stepsiblings. Children often lost one or both parents so there were many orphans. These children might be lucky enough to be apprenticed in the trades or perhaps became boarders in a family's home, but many of them roamed the streets and became petty criminals.

To address another stereotype of early American family life, the one that says contemporary generations are declining in morality, you may be surprised to learn that at least one third of marriages in the 19th century were *preceded* by a pregnancy (Demos, 1970). Because "courtship" and dating were rare and traveling long distances was difficult, people who were interested in perhaps marrying each other would often stay for extended periods with their partner's family, which often resulted in a pregnancy and a "shotgun wedding." The joke goes that a man who got a woman pregnant would be forced by her father (at gunpoint) to marry her. This lifestyle sounds like a far cry from *Leave It to Beaver!*

American Family Life After the Industrial Revolution

Between 1800 and 1850, huge waves of European immigrants came to the United States to find work and build a better life for their families. They settled in ethnic enclaves, and most major cities had Italian, Irish, Jewish, and Russian sections. Most of the European immigrants were poor and had difficulties learning English and finding work. Large factories started springing up, marking the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

By 1850 more and more farm families had moved to larger cities for a guaranteed wage and shorter work hours than farm life allowed. Women and children also worked in factories but for lower wages than men received. Children were particularly badly treated, often given the dirtiest or most dangerous jobs, like greasing moving parts in dangerous factory machines or shimmying through small airless caverns in coal mines. Children were often beaten when things went wrong.

After the United States annexed half of the country of Mexico in 1848, Latinos made up 38 million new "immigrants" who came to U.S. cities for work. This new American territory

covered modern day New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California. At that time, the United States also claimed to own most of Texas, but residents and leaders in that region felt that area belonged to the independent “Republic of Texas.”

This was a period of great social reorganization as western expansion allowed for innumerable new opportunities. For example, in the 1850s to 1920s, many Asian immigrants also sought work in the United States, particularly in mining and construction. However, those workers, along with newly freed Black Americans, were felt to pose a threat to European Americans’ livelihood. Whites were not only fearful of people they didn’t understand but were also afraid of losing their jobs to groups who would accept lower wages (Mintz & Kellogg, 1988).

As immigrants poured into the country to find work, the emerging European American business owners began to mentally separate themselves from less-educated workers from other ethnic groups. A new concept emerged as “whiteness” became a form of identity for those with European backgrounds. “White” people psychologically and physically separated themselves from non-European immigrants and people of color who experienced the lowest socioeconomic status (Coontz, 1997; Roediger, 1988). People of European backgrounds who looked “white” could change their last names to sound anglicized and could work on losing their accents, strategies that people of color could not use to blend in as “American.” Strong anti-immigrant sentiments abounded, and whites could now afford to leave city centers and move to suburbs.

Though there was still a large underpaid working class, jobs with guaranteed hours and wages did allow poor people to earn a little bit more money during the Industrial Revolution (circa 1830–1910) compared to earlier periods, so they had more leisure time than their ancestors did. With the better sanitation and medical practices that began to emerge during this period, people began to live longer, and the need for large families decreased. With more leisure time and smaller families, the role of children in the family began to change. By 1880 childhood came to be seen as a special time when skills and character should be molded. Education for white

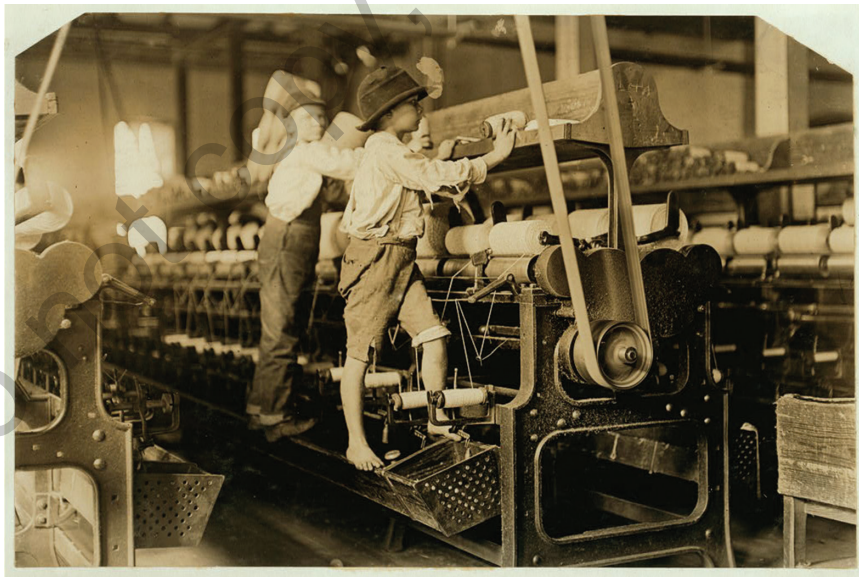


PHOTO 1.6 Child Labor. In the mid-19th century, as farm families moved to the cities, children were often given the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs, with low pay and unsafe conditions.

Photograph by Lewis W. Hine, January 19, 1909, from the records of the National Child Labor Committee (U.S.)

children became mandatory in 1890, and families sought to invest time and energy in their children so that they could become successful and benefit their families substantially over the long term.

When employee unions emerged in the second half of the 19th century, wages got even better for European American men, and their wives began to stay home, caring for the home, rearing children, and becoming responsible for the moral and religious education of children (Mintz & Kellogg, 1988). The middle class began to emerge, with children living easier lives than their parents and grandparents had. Families became increasingly private as the home and workplace became separated. Leisure activities for European American homemakers were often depicted in magazines and fashion catalogs. The early automobiles produced by Ford allowed the rising middle class of the 1920s new freedoms to travel, enjoy vacations, and meet new people outside their own towns. Other groups wanted this lifestyle, too. Unfortunately for most Americans, even most European Americans, the reality was still one of toil, financial struggles, and subsistence living.

By the 1950s, America had recovered from the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II in the 1940s, and the economy was booming. Single wage-earner SNAFs made up 60% of white American households. Men lived public lives, socializing and holding business meetings. Women occupied the private sphere, rearing children, cooking, and cleaning. With material wealth came appliances to help with housework but also larger houses and more sets of clothes to clean (Coles, 2006). Women were able to drive their own cars, but this meant they spent the majority of their time doing errands and toting children around town. Longer lives meant grandparents were more likely to be involved in family life. Single-parent families decreased in number as better health brought fewer widows (Coontz, 1992). Families became consumers in a growing economy. Subdivisions of tract homes were being built on a massive scale.

Unfortunately, during these “good old” times, women’s use of tranquilizers increased. They often felt dissatisfied with their isolated existences as well as the realization that their marriages would be longer lasting than those of any other previous generations. They had become financially dependent on men and often felt hopeless (Coltrane & Adams, 2008). An upward trend in divorce rates began in 1960 and persisted for the next 20 years, until they leveled off between 1990–2010 (Institute for Family Studies, 2020). Pronounced declines in divorce rates since 2010 have occurred and may be accounted for by fewer marriages occurring in the first place.

White children of the baby boom generation (born between 1946 and 1965) often grew up to feel isolated as well. They felt their parents were too materialistic, and they wanted to choose a different, more meaningful lifestyle for themselves. They realized their mothers had few rights and that discrimination and racism were still blights other groups faced on a daily basis. Many ethnic and cultural groups recognized that segregation, poverty, and racial hatred were ubiquitous in the United States. The widespread psychological unrest of this period gave birth to the successful fight for women’s, African Americans’, and gay rights, along with other groups who were no longer willing to be marginalized and denied “The American Dream” (Coles, 2006). While there is not yet equality in terms of income or access to education and health care, most groups today have earned unprecedented human rights guarantees.

The Immigration Law of 1965 lifted quotas and prohibited legal discrimination so that multicultural issues could rise to the forefront in education and politics. Prohibitions against sexism, racism, gender discrimination, and heterosexism have allowed people to create family forms of their own choosing, such as those many of my students described at the beginning of this chapter, including pets, friends, and domestic partners. Marriage rates have declined in most western nations. For example, as mentioned earlier, in Sweden, over half of couples cohabit but don’t

faced during our history as well as examining unique challenges and adaptive strategies for each group. Let's take a closer look at African American families.

MANY AMERICAN HISTORIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.4** List some historical and contemporary challenges facing African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American families in the United States.

People from the tribes of Africa first arrived in the New World in the 16th century, to provide indentured servitude for the colonists in Jamestown, Virginia. Slavery had not yet been established, so many poor Black and white people could eventually buy their freedom (Coles, 2006). However, by 1700, slavery became entrenched in the British colonies.

The practices of slavery had a widespread and deep impact on how African American families developed. Slave owners feared slave revolts, and so did all they could to keep enslaved people from communicating and from forming families of their own. They tried to mix enslaved people from different tribes and countries, who spoke different languages, so as to prevent slave communion and possible revolt. Plantation owners in the South often used African males as “studs” and African women as “breeders,” forcing them to reproduce to increase the available work force (Hamer, 2001). Enslaved women were forced to give birth frequently and then to quickly return to work, often without their babies (Burgess, 1995). White slave owners raped enslaved women, often fathering mixed-race children, whom they called mulattos, who could be sold at higher prices than purely Black children. “Mulatto” children were also treated better than those with darker skin. But mixed-race children could be a source of scandal for slave owners within their own families and communities, so fathers often tried to get rid of them, sometimes sending them to boarding schools but, more often than not, selling them into slavery on other plantations (Gonzales, 1998; McAdoo, 1998).

While some slave owners, especially on larger plantations that had separate slave cabins, allowed enslaved people to marry and keep their children, it was common practice for whites to prohibit marriage or to sell an enslaved person's spouse or children to another owner. Stevenson (1995), in an exploration of the lives of former enslaved people, found that out of the survivors of slavery interviewed, only 43% recalled contact with their fathers while 82% recalled being with their mothers. On the larger plantations that allowed for more freedom and the development of slave communities and churches, the families that did form tended to be **nuclear families**, meaning that a married couple lived with their biological children (Kulikoff, 1986).

As early as the Revolutionary War in the latter part of the 18th century, many enslaved people in the north were freed; an estimated 8% to 12% of Black people there were free. Once the enslaved people in the south were freed after the Civil War (around 1865), they tried to locate lost family members through the newly developed Freedman's Bureau, which was funded through the 1867 Reconstruction Act (Gutman, 1976). Many children were found living with only one parent or with no parents at all, as they had been orphaned or sold too far away to find their parents. After Reconstruction and until the 1940s, 70% of Black children lived in two-parent homes (Ruggles, 1994).

Even though the formerly enslaved people were legally freed, de facto slavery continued through segregation, racism, discrimination, and violent crimes against Black people, such as

lynching, in which African Americans would be hanged from a tree and often dismembered and set on fire. Black families continued to live in poverty and were often forced to work the land of their previous owners or other whites, under a system of sharecropping, where they would work the land and share in the profits of the crops.

African American Families in Modern Times

As former slaves heard of job opportunities in big northern cities during the Industrial Revolution, they migrated north into cities like Chicago and Detroit. However, upon arrival, formerly enslaved people found it was much easier for women to find jobs as domestic servants and nannies. Men had a more difficult time finding work, and thousands of men were left unemployed or underemployed. Divorce and desertion among Black families increased, as did family violence and conflict (Franklin, 1997). With women often bringing home the higher wages, they gained power in the family. However, once the Great Depression of the 1930s hit, African Americans of both sexes became unemployed along with millions of other Americans. Without an extended kin network to rely on, a sense of hopelessness increased in Black communities. When the government implemented monetary aid for poor households, African American families received far less than their poor white counterparts. Black families were often forced to move into large, overcrowded housing projects and take on boarders to make ends meet.

During World War II, thousands of Black men fought for a country that denied them basic civil rights, such as voting and being able to sleep in hotels on public highways. However, Black women benefited from new industrial jobs as droves of American women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds entered the workforce to be employed in factories to support the war effort. These new jobs enabled Black women to leave domestic work behind. One African American woman said, “Hitler . . . got us out of white folks’ kitchens” (as cited in Franklin, 1997, pp. 104–105). Unfortunately, African American women earned far less for factory work than European American women did.

After finally being guaranteed civil rights in 1964 and 1968 through their organized efforts, African Americans have slowly gained access to opportunities like higher education and living wages. Along with the right to vote, laws against discrimination have helped them to move ahead in careers, government, and business. In 2008, Americans elected their first president with an African background.

However, even today, African Americans have very high rates of infant mortality



PHOTO 1.7 African American Family. In what ways was African American family life both similar to and different from European American family life after slavery ended? Four generations of an African American family, born on a plantation in South Carolina.

© Bettmann/Getty Images

compared to white Americans and high rates of poverty (31% of Black children are poor compared to 10% of white children). In fact, 13.4% of African American babies are born with dangerously low birth weight, in comparison to about 7.0 to 8.5% of infants in all other racial and ethnic groups (National Center for Health Statistics, 2021). African Americans also have higher divorce rates, more nonmarital births, and a large gender gap in education, with more college-educated Black women and fewer college-educated Black men in their communities (Coles, 2006; Kids Count Data Center, 2019).

Today African Americans make up 12.4% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020d). Despite the continuing challenges of institutionalized racism, lower wages, and poorer health, African American family resilience is truly remarkable. Through centuries of trauma and turmoil, Black people have been able to maintain very strong family ties, valuing family and spending a great deal of time with family members. African Americans often live in intergenerational households where three or four generations help care for children and support the household. The church plays a key role in African American mental and spiritual resilience, and there is often a large community support system available for Black families (Haight, 2002). Large family networks have also been a great support for Hispanic/Latino families as well. Let's take a closer look.

HOW WOULD YOU MEASURE THAT? INFANT CO-SLEEPING (LERNER ET AL., 2020)

Is it better for infants to sleep with their parents, as they do in most non-western nations? Does sending infants to sleep in their own beds or their own rooms harm them? To answer a question like this requires careful research. Many people around the world think independent sleeping amounts to child neglect, yet most Americans engage in this practice. So what's the truth?

Some studies suggest that cases of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) could be prevented by co-sleeping because hormones are produced in the infants to help regulate sleep physiology, more antibodies are produced to fight disease, and parents become more in-tune with their infants' sleeping and breathing patterns. However, other research suggests that more educated and wealthier parents choose to co-sleep, so it's not the co-sleeping that matters but the conscientious parenting the children receive in general. Still other research shows that when parents are forced to co-sleep due to space limitations or child illness, sleep disturbances in both adults and children are more likely. Research also shows some risk of rolling over and harming or killing infants if parents use drugs or alcohol, are obese, or have unusually soft bedding (Mileva-Seitz et al., 2017). How can we give good advice to parents with these contradictory results?

In research, when one variable is related to another (like co-sleeping and positive child outcomes), we say the variables are correlated. Unfortunately, we can never conclude anything about causality from a simple correlation. Co-sleeping could cause better development, or people who know how to nurture development may choose to co-sleep, or it could be that a third variable, like taking parenting classes leads to both better outcomes and co-sleeping. So keep this in mind when you read that two variables are correlated with each other: We don't know what causes that relationship. Let's take a look at a correlational study that attempted to answer the co-sleeping mystery.

Lerner and fellow researchers (2020) examined 63 African American mothers and their newborn infants. They videotaped their sleeping areas and their interactions during the day. They measured the frequency of bed-sharing in the first 3 months of life and looked at self-regulatory outcomes when the infants were 6 months old, when they exposed them to a stressful event (mothers were instructed not to look at or respond to them). Infants at this

age can self-regulate their own distress by distracting themselves and looking elsewhere, sucking their thumbs, or reaching toward the mother to snuggle, breastfeed, or hold hands.

Researchers broke the families into three groups: full bed-sharers, partial bed sharers (e.g., some of each night was spent together), and non-bed-sharers. They wanted to see whether co-sleeping was related to better self-regulatory processes later on.

What they found was quite interesting. Any amount of co-sleeping in the first 3 months was related to better stress-regulation abilities in the infants 3 months later. Those infants who bed-shared for the entire 3 months exhibited less negative behavior and crying at 6 months. The authors concluded that co-sleeping can make infants feel secure and more able to develop skills to regulate their emotions and behavior better later on. This would contradict the practice common in the United States where parents make even very young infants sleep alone in their own rooms or cribs and would support international views that making infants sleep alone may be neglectful or harmful to later development.

Remember that this is only one study, which is correlational in nature, and we should not make firm conclusions from a single study. In fact, in a review of 659 articles, Meleva-Seitz, et al. (2017) found a complete lack of consistency in findings on co-sleeping around the world. They urged researchers to conduct interdisciplinary studies from medical, psychological, and anthropological perspectives to better examine the real potential costs and benefits of co-sleeping. Remember to read all research with a critical eye!

A Look at the History of Latino and Hispanic American Families' Experiences

Like Native Americans, Latinos are an extremely diverse group. They stem from many countries and have a variety of cultural backgrounds. Latino skin color ranges from the black of many Caribbean groups to white, including the blond hair and blue eyes of some Mexicans. With such a diverse group, it is difficult to make many generalizations about Latino families beyond the fact that they mostly speak Spanish or Portuguese (in Brazil) due to their colonial experiences with Spaniards and the Portuguese. Most but not all tend to practice Catholicism and to exhibit a sense of communal devotion called **familism**, where respect and reverence for one's family, especially one's elders, are paramount. Similarly, Latinos often live in multigenerational and extended family households where many "godparents" share responsibility for raising children. This spiritual parenting is often called **compadrazgo**, something similar to the idea of coparenting. Because of their conservative family values and desire to connect with others in their tight-knit communities, Hispanic/Latino peoples tend to prefer to talk about issues face-to-face and to solve problems from within their close social networks. This preference for **personalismo** allows community and family members to provide favors, help, and assistance for anything from birthing a baby to filling out insurance papers or finding a good deal on a vacation package. As you will see, these values of familism, compadrazgo, and *personalismo* have served Latinos well throughout their varied histories within the United States. They work together to create family values and communal support networks that are similar to those in the African American community.

Keep in mind that Hispanic and Latino groups vary a lot in their historical, cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Venezuelans are different from Chileans, who are quite different from Dominicans, who don't resemble Peruvians. To give you a little flavor for this diversity, we will briefly explore the histories of some of the most populous groups in the United States: Mexican Americans or Chicanos, Puerto Rican Americans, and Cuban Americans. These three groups came to the United States in quite different ways, and their histories and current states of existence vary quite a bit. These are simply brief examples

given to illustrate the vast diversity experienced in families often lumped together into single ethnic categorizations.

Mexican American Experiences

As discussed earlier, Indigenous Mexican Indians were colonized by the Spanish, starting in the 16th century. The Catholic Church allowed the groups to intermarry and Mexican Indians could sometimes buy their freedom (Gonzales, 1998). The Indigenous people and the Spaniards were both used to living in patriarchal families but because most of the families were poor and lived in rural areas, they mainly practiced **common law marriage**, a union that is recognized as legitimate even though no formal ceremony or legal documentation has taken place.

After winning the Mexican American War, the United States annexed what are now California, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada from the country of Mexico. The U.S. government affirmed that the Mexicans already living in those territories could keep their own land and maintain cultural and familial practices. However, this 19th-century land grab usurped the rights of Mexican people, and the land was eventually taken by whites (Gonzales, 1998). No longer able to survive in a traditional agrarian manner, Mexican families moved to work in gold mines, in factories, and on the railroads.

During the Great Depression, when white workers lost jobs and faced poverty, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans were deported so they could not compete for “American” jobs. As the economy recovered by 1940 and more workers were needed, Mexicans were then invited back under a *bracero* agreement, to work seasonally or for certain periods of time to help with infrastructure or war efforts during World War II (Becerra, 1998). After decades of being pushed out of and pulled back into the American workforce, the Chicano rights movement began to take shape during the 1960s, when Chicano/Latino groups fought for farm workers’ rights, better wages and working conditions, and a voice in government.

Today Mexican Americans make up the largest percentage of Hispanic families in the United States (about 61%). Their families tend to live in larger households than non-Hispanic whites (3.87 members on average; Office of Minority Health, 2021). Mexican American families have higher rates of marriage than non-Hispanic whites, as well as lower rates of divorce. A common thread among many Hispanic/Latino families is that they value family connections above other priorities, and when faced with difficulties, such as migration stress or economic problems, they draw on family values to buffer their health and their children’s academic success (Halgunseth et al., 2006).



PHOTO 1.8 Mexican American Family. How did the historical experiences of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban American families in the United States differ? Transient Mexican worker’s family from Texas in East Grand Forks, Minnesota.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress [control number: 2017780707]

Puerto Rican American Experiences

While Mexican Americans have lived on the land that is now the United States since its beginning, Puerto Ricans began arriving for war-related jobs in the 1940s. The United States won the rights to the island of Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War in 1898. Puerto Ricans were then allowed to become U.S. citizens. Today the island is considered a *commonwealth*, neither a state nor an independent nation. Citizens of Puerto Rico don’t pay U.S. taxes and cannot vote but are allowed to travel freely to the mainland at will. Puerto Ricans settled mainly on the East Coast and often worked in factories.

Today, most people of Puerto Rican descent live in Florida, New York, and New Jersey. About 23% of Puerto Ricans in the United States live in poverty, and only 38% own their homes (compared to 47% of Hispanics in general). About 18% of adults 25 and older have a bachelor's degree, and about 37% are married, compared to 46% of Hispanics overall. Over 83% of Puerto Rican adults speak English "very well" compared to 70% of Hispanics in general (Pew Research Center, 2019)

Cuban American Experiences

If Puerto Ricans have not been able to reap the rewards of a close connection to the American mainland, Cuban Americans have had quite a different experience. When the United States obtained Puerto Rico, it also gained control over Cuba (as well as the Philippines and other island nations). The U.S. government allowed self-rule for Cuba in 1902, but American capitalism and influence were entrenched there for the next 57 years (Suarez, 1998). When Fidel Castro overthrew the American-backed Cuban government in 1959, many wealthy and successful Cuban families fled to America. Because the wealthy had the most to lose in a newly communist country and because they spoke English and had close ties to the United States, elite Cubans became political refugees and were welcomed. The U.S. government helped them bring their entire families over, provided scholarships for their children, and helped them to become established, mainly in Florida. In a second wave of immigration during the 1960s and 1970s, Cuba's middle class of skilled laborers and small business owners came on flights chartered by the U.S. government (Bean & Tienda, 1987).

With this favored status and much material wealth to begin with, Cuban Americans today are the wealthiest and best educated of the Latino groups in the United States. Almost 40% of Cuban Americans have a bachelor's degree, compared to 16% of Hispanics overall. Over 55% of Cuban Americans own their homes, compared to 47% of Hispanics in general (Pew Research Center, 2019) In 2015, the United States began to normalize its relationships with the Castro government; thus, travel bans and economic embargoes began to ease, and families could more easily be reunited with long lost family members.

Latinos in Modern Times

Today, 26% of children in American households are Hispanic/Latino (Kids Count Data Center, 2019). In the 21st century, large numbers of immigrants from Central and South American countries like El Salvador, Colombia, and Guatemala began arriving in the United States and further diversifying the Latino population. Latinos continue to fight for recognition and rights in the states, as they often work at the lowest paying jobs and are marginalized due to language and cultural barriers. However, many Latinos have adjusted and fared very well. They are reaching the highest ranks of government, business, and education. College campuses are becoming more diverse as people with Hispanic/Latino heritage strive to do better than previous



PHOTO 1.9 Model Minority. Model minority stereotypes can pressure Asian American children to feel like they must overachieve.

iStock.com/mamahoooba

generations. By 2019, 16.4% of Latinos had college degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). We now turn to some Asian American experiences.

A Look at Asian American Experiences

Just as the group known as “Latinos” or “Hispanics” includes a vast array of histories and cultures, so does the group we tend to call “Asian Americans.” People from Asia come from countries as distinct as India, Afghanistan, and Korea. Chinese and Japanese immigrants were the largest Asian groups to arrive in America. But after the internment of over 100,000 Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941, fewer Japanese have come to America. Today the largest Asian American groups are Chinese, Filipino, East Indian, Vietnamese, and Korean. Two of these Asian American groups will be examined here, to provide a brief glimpse at the diverse histories, experiences, and family challenges of Asian immigrants to the United States.

Chinese American Experiences

Similar to the influx and exile of Mexican American workers at the command of U.S. industry, Chinese people came to the San Francisco Bay Area of California during the 1840s to find jobs and escape war, poverty, and disease at home. Most of these were men who had to leave their families in China. They were willing to work for lower wages than white workers in the newly discovered gold mines, but they were also required to pay higher taxes on the gold they mined than were white workers (Chan, 1991). As the United States developed its infrastructure, the government recruited Chinese immigrants to build the western half of the transcontinental railroad. However, as Chinese people made money and opened businesses, they were discriminated against and attacked, and unfair policies were implemented to thwart their attempts at success. Their long braids were cut off, and new immigration laws forbade them from sending for their families to join them in the United States (Wong, 1998). Thus, most of the Chinese people in America were men because their wives were not permitted to join them. In 1924, quotas on the immigration of certain ethnic groups were implemented. This meant that Chinese men had to go back home to have conjugal visits with their wives. Their only hope at forming a family of procreation was to leave their wives pregnant when they came back to the United States to work alone. They sacrificed family life for the hope of new financial opportunities that would eventually benefit their children.

Chinese culture was patriarchal and allowed its men to engage in polygamy, as well as take concubines or legitimized mistresses (Stockard, 2002). The U.S. census of 1870 showed that only 7% of the Chinese population was women, yet American law forbade the intermarriage of Chinese men with white women, which left Chinese men with few options. The Chinese women who were allowed into the United States were often oppressed by their husbands, kept inside, their feet tightly bound in the traditional Chinese manner, and they were sometimes attacked and raped if they went out in public. Many of these women committed suicide (Wong, 1998).

The immigration quotas were lifted in 1965, and we have since seen a continuous influx of well-educated and successful Chinese immigrants, usually coming to the United States to further their education. Today, 5.4 million people report full Chinese or half-Chinese backgrounds on the census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Chinese Americans tend to do well economically and to form traditional families with married, heterosexual parents and their children. Chinese American families have high expectations for their children’s academic achievement. They tend to have strict family rules and strong emphasis on moral behavior, which leads parents to restrict the kinds of peers children are exposed to (Yuwen & Chen, 2013). European Americans may view Chinese parents as overly strict, but Chinese children report that this parenting style reveals how much their parents care about them and their success.

Japanese American Experiences

When quotas existed from the 1920s to the 1960s to disallow Chinese people from coming to the United States, Japanese people often came in their stead and worked at the same low-paying jobs. White Americans feared that both groups would take away jobs, and in 1905, an organization called the Asiatic Exclusion League took shape to guarantee this didn't occur (Kitano & Kitano, 1998). Since intermarriage between Japanese and American people was illegal, the U.S. government finally allowed Japanese men to send home for wives, whose marriages had usually been arranged for them by family members. Japanese women subsequently faced a clash of cultures. Their husbands expected them to maintain very distinct traditional gender roles, while U.S. women had more freedom, owing to the gradually progressing feminist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries (Yanagisako, 1985). Japanese men were typically strict fathers and emotionally stoic.

The second generation of Japanese children, born in the United States between 1915 and 1945, are referred to as *Nisei*, and they tended to move away from traditional marriages, wanting to marry for love and romance like their white peers (Gonzales, 1998). Their admiration for and commitment to America was not recognized during World War II. When Japanese Americans were sent to “relocation” or internment camps in 1942, they were stripped of their homes, businesses, and dignity. Most families lost everything they had worked so hard to accomplish in the United States. The camps were closed by 1946, and the hatred for Japanese Americans that prevailed during World War II diminished. The *Nisei* generation ended up reaching high levels of educational and occupational success, as well as practicing more liberal gender roles (Kitano & Kitano, 1998). Their children, born between 1940 and 1960, have been almost completely assimilated into mainstream American culture and practice high rates of intermarriage.

Asian Americans in Modern Times

Today, Asian Americans make up 7% of the U.S. population. Chinese and Japanese Americans have higher rates of education than whites, live in more married couple homes, have fewer single-parent families, and have lower rates of divorce (Pew Research Center, 2021).

Despite racism, poverty, discrimination, and unfair immigration policies, many Asian Americans have been able to achieve much of the American dream. These positive trends can be explained by many factors. First, many Asian immigrants (especially from India and Japan) are not poor or uneducated in their home countries, and they come to the United States specifically to gain access to higher education, such as medical school or graduate programs. Also, there were not many Asian families at all in the states before World War II, so if men were not successful in America, they might have returned home, leaving the best educated or most successful Asian Americans here.

Their higher socioeconomic status can also partially be explained by the fact that they settled mainly on the east and west coasts where wages are higher (Coles, 2006). However, keep in mind that the success of Asian Americans is a broad generalization. Many Asian Americans live in poverty and are traumatized, having escaped war and genocide in their home countries, such as occurred in Vietnam. They still face prejudice and discrimination, and even **model minority** stereotypes can be harmful. Model minority refers to the positive stereotypes that paint a group as a “model” to live up to. Model minority ideas can put undue pressure on children from Asian American families to reach high levels of education and economic success. Teachers may have higher academic expectations and lower tolerance for misbehavior from children of Asian backgrounds than they do for other groups of children. We will explore the family life of Asian Americans and many other ethnic groups throughout this textbook.

This book is written from a bioecological perspective, which you will learn more about in the next chapter. In brief, it argues that every system of influence, from a person's biology, to parents, community, and culture affect how we grow up and function in families. Indeed, a comprehensive understanding requires that we look all the way out from our neurons and all the way in from our cultures (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

In order to develop educated opinions about families, it is important to understand how research is conducted and be able to analyze the quality of evidence that is gathered. Scientific research examining the very difficult and complex issues of families makes it possible to know if our ideas are true or not. We must also understand the biases of the researchers and the theoretical background behind the research being done. We turn to these topics in Chapter 2.

The rest of the book is organized to unfold the way many family relationships do, in a sequential manner. Before anyone connects with a mate or forms a family, he or she is an established individual with clear personality traits, motivations, drives, emotions, and behavioral patterns. Before diving into an analysis of how families function once all the members are together, I will take you on the journey of the individual's development. In Chapter 3, we will explore how a person's gender plays a key role in both how they approach family relationships and how others in families respond to them. Before someone engages in a sexual relationship, they are first sexual beings who develop sexualities starting in childhood and adolescence. We will also focus on individual sexuality issues in Chapter 3. Relationships tend to unfold in a sequential nature, and our explorations will follow a similar pattern, progressing from sexuality in Chapter 4, to dating and mate selection in Chapter 5, love in Chapter 6, and marriage and committed partnerships in Chapter 7. While the majority of humans pair off into committed relationships, a substantial number of people remain single. We will examine these peoples' lives and experiences as well (Chapter 8), before exploring parenting (Chapter 9), economic issues (Chapter 10), domestic violence (Chapter 11), divorce (Chapter 12), growing older (Chapter 13), and the future of families (Chapter 14).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1.1 Explain the impact of Standard North American Family ideologies on our perceptions of ourselves and others.

Our images of 1950s TV families as the norm never really existed for most Americans. The concept of the Standard North American Family (SNAF) is a lingering ideology that affects how we view ourselves and others when a family is not composed of a breadwinning father, stay-at-home mother, and their children.

Historical information about the many ethnic groups that live in the United States further supports the idea that SNAFs have never been the pervasive family structure, and various contextual factors like economic struggles and discrimination affected their families.

In addition to the SNAF definition, there are several other ways to define "family," and students are encouraged to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each.

1.2 Understand the differences between family structures and family processes.

A key message of the chapter is that family structure (e.g., whether a family is SNAF or not) has less impact on the health and happiness of its members than that family's processes, or the interactional dynamics they experience. It's true that having a large family or having a single parent (indicators of family structure) can play a role in a person's adjustment, it's far more informative to know what the interactional processes

in that family are – are the processes healthy, happy, loving, angry, or conflicted? Communication styles play a large role in the health of family processes.

1.3 Analyze how early Native American and European settler families experienced both similar and different types of stressors.

Both Native American and European American families experienced the stress of subsistence living. They had to grow all their own food, make their clothes, and keep their families safe from animals and other clans of people. They experienced family separation, albeit in different forms. European men often came westward without women and children. Native Americans were forced to relocate off their land. Moreover, Native American children were kidnapped and put into boarding schools, deprived of their families, cultures, and languages. European Americans became a dominant group in the United States, often relegating Native Americans to harsh life on reservations.

1.4 List some historical and contemporary challenges facing African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American families in the United States. Each group faces racism, discrimination, and poverty.

African people were brought to the United States involuntarily and enslaved. They were deprived of the right to make families by choice or keep families together. Hispanic/Latino people arrived in the United States in different ways. Mexicans were here from the beginning but were deprived of their rightfully owned land and forced into the bracero system. Cuban Americans were brought here and supported financially, while Puerto Ricans were given citizenship but not material support. Both Japanese and Chinese Americans faced immigration quotas. Japanese people were placed in internment camps and deprived of their belongings. Both faced the stress of a lack of work and acceptance in society.

KEY TERMS

Arranged marriage (p. 13)	Matrilineal (p. 13)
Common law marriage (p. 28)	Model minority (p. 31)
Compadrazgo (p. 27)	Modern family (p. 11)
Coprovider family (p. 19)	Nuclear families (p. 24)
Cultural relativism (p. 15)	Patriarchal (p. 13)
Endogamy (p. 11)	<i>Personalismo</i> (p. 27)
Exogamy (p. 11)	Polyandry (p. 13)
Familism (p. 27)	Polygamy (p. 13)
Family of origin (p. 3)	Postmodern family (p. 11)
Family of procreation (p. 3)	Processes (p. 8)
Family (p. 4)	Standard North American Family (SNAF) (p. 4)
Matriarchal (p. 13)	Structure (p. 8)
Matrifocal (p. 13)	

Do not copy, post, or distribute