Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens 2e

CONTEMPORARY FAMILIES: AN EQUITY LENS 2E

ELIZABETH B. PEARCE

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AUTHOR INFO

Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Welcome to our Work in Progress!

This course is exciting because the textbook is still being written. This means that you have an opportunity to help make it better. You can give valuable feedback to the textbook authors by completing the feedback survey at the end of each chapter. Please note: You may see errors or inconsistencies in the current version.

We are working to ensure that all textbook content is accessible. If you encounter an accessibility issue, please let your instructor know right away.

Accessibility Statement

This book was created with a good faith effort to ensure that it will meet accessibility standards wherever possible, and to highlight areas where we know there is work to do. It is our hope that by being transparent in this way, we can begin the process of making sure accessibility is top of mind for all authors, adopters, students and contributors of all kinds on open textbook projects.

There are many known issues and potential barriers to accessibility in this version of **Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens 2e**. When we revise and publish this Pressbook in the next phase of this project, these issues will be addressed. If you encounter an accessibility issue that you need fixed, please let your instructor know right away.

Equity Lens

The Open Oregon Educational Resources Targeted Pathways Project seeks to dismantle structures of power and oppression entrenched in barriers to course material access. We provide tools and resources to make diversity, **equity**, and inclusion (DEI) primary considerations when faculty choose, adapt, and create course materials. In promoting DEI, our project is committed to:

1. Ensuring diversity of representation within our team and the materials we distribute
2. Publishing materials that use accessible, clear language for our target audience
3. Sharing course materials that directly address and interrogate systems of oppression, equipping students and educators with the knowledge to do the same

Designing and piloting openly licensed, intersectional, and antiracist course materials is one starting point among many when addressing inequities in higher education. Our project invites students and educators to engage with us in this work, and we value spaces where learning communities can grow and engage together.

We welcome being held accountable to this statement and will respond to feedback submitted via our contact page.

Course Learning Outcomes

Educators, students, and future employers all benefit when course-level learning outcomes guide our shared work. When course-level learning outcomes are public, institutions demonstrate a commitment to equitable student success through the potential for increased collaboration and inclusive course design. This project analyzed learning outcomes across the state of Oregon to identify themes and commonalities. Authors used this analysis as a basis for developing course outcomes that could match the curriculum of multiple institutions in Oregon while still considering their local needs and context.

See Supporting Cross-Institutional OER Teams in Open Practices and Learning Outcomes Alignment for additional information.

Pedagogical Foundations

The authors of this book embraced an **equity**-minded design for structure, scope, and sequence of chapters and chapter content. They sought to honor the needs and experiences of students who are often underserved in higher education in Oregon. Authors considered Transparency in Teaching and Learning (TILT), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Culturally Responsive Teaching to design meaningful learning pathways for you. You will find rich images and multimedia in addition to written content. You will also find provocative discussion questions that align with learning outcomes and objectives.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS BOOK

Table of Contents

Every page of this book has a button labeled "**Contents**" in the upper left corner. You can click anywhere on that button to show the book's table of contents. Clicking the button again hides the table of contents.

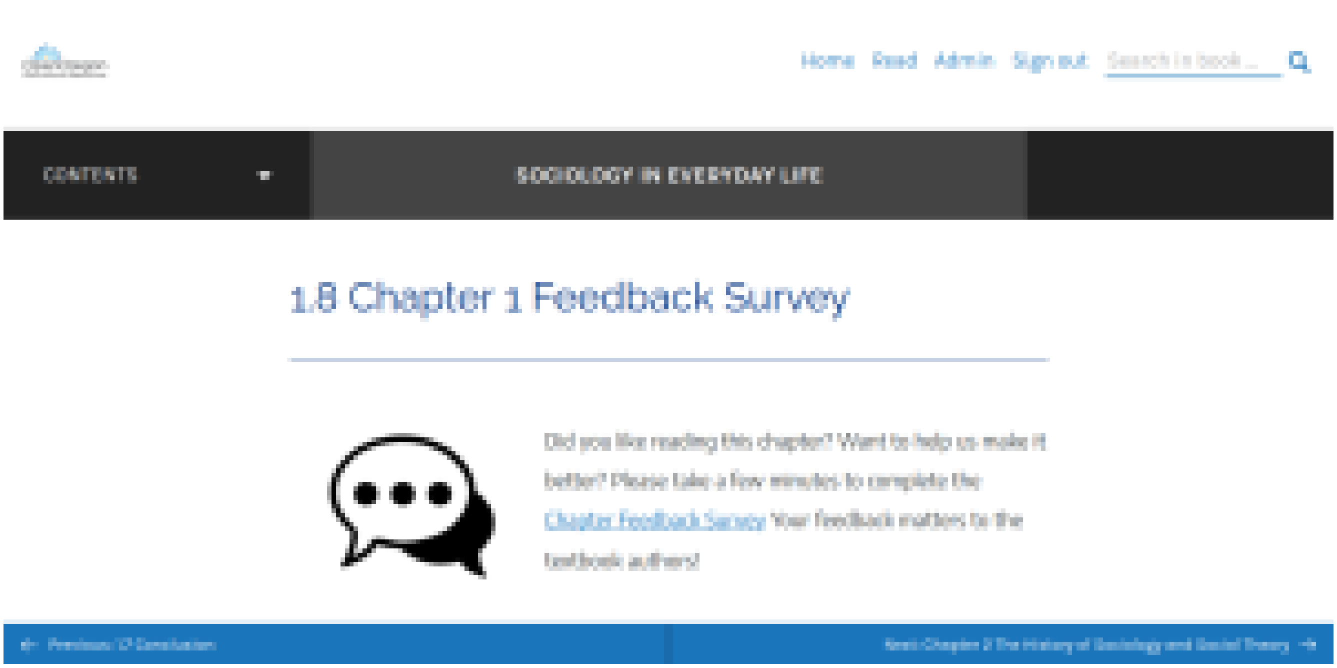
In the table of contents, you can click on a title of a chapter to navigate to the beginning of that chapter.

You can also click on the "+" in the table of contents to see the chapter's sections and navigate directly to that place in the book.

Turning a Page

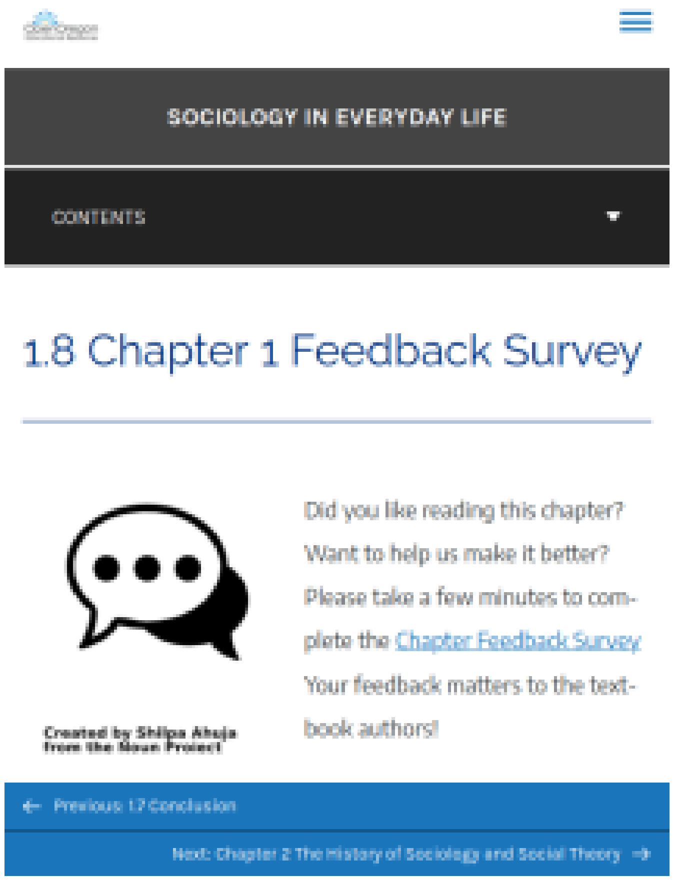
Every page of this book has a button in the lower right corner labeled "**Next** →" that you can click to move forward, and another button in the lower left corner labeled "← **Previous**" that you can click to move backward.

For example:



Reading on Smaller Screens

On smaller screens, like phones and tablets, the **Contents** button is at the top of the page. The **Previous** and **Next** buttons are stacked at the bottom of the page, like this:



IN GRATITUDE

One of my greatest hopes is to help students understand the complexities of how oppression and privilege affect families in this country. I want students to embrace the goal of working toward **equity**. Working toward understanding and creating a more equitable world is a team project. Although I've spent a significant chunk of my career teaching these concepts, I am still learning.

The worldwide pandemic has dramatically changed the world of teaching. I am thankful to have the opportunity to write this book and to reach out and touch students in ways other than in the classroom. Writing this book is a step toward living under the roof of hope; during its creation, I have had many mentors, co-thinkers, collaborators and supporters. Thank you all for being a part of this creation.

Michaela Willi-Hooper fosters my creativity in a way that makes this text impactful and innovative. She has provided the students and me with unwavering support, enthusiasm, and resources. Her knowledge of systemic privilege and **discrimination** is invaluable and her administrative and research skills sustained us. She is central to the success of this project.

Steve Smith and **Katie Winder** have guided me in a way that allows me to see beyond what exists and into what I can do and be. I am forever grateful to have worked with both of them.

Angie Klampe, Rica Amity, and **Jason Kovac** interweave the **roles** of friend, mentor, and colleague in ways that keep me joyful, challenged, inspired, and focused.

Karelia Stetz-Waters and **Scott McAleer** keep me sane. Our years of friendship on and off-campus have changed my life for the better.

Nana Osei-Kofi's wisdom, scholarship, warmth, collegiality, and guidance influence my continued growth as a social justice educator and author. One memorable appetizer and laughter infused evening with Nana was enough to get me over my writer's block.

Chessie Alberti's enthusiasm, encouragement, knowledge and technical skill have made significant contributions in both the development and the finishing touches of this book.

Open Oregon Educational Resources and **Linn-Benton Community College Library** have provided structural support, funding, and leadership in the fields of Open Educational Resources and Open **Pedagogy**. **Amy Hofer** is leading us toward more equitable education where more students have the chance to flourish. **Dionna Camp** of **The Center for Accessibility Resources** was instrumental in this project. **The Learning and Innovation Center, and especially the faculty who participated in the January 2020 open pedagogy crowdsourcing** session, contributed to this project.

Three people who have served as Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities Division Dean: **Katie Winder,**

Oriana Mulatero Ferraro, and **Meg Roland** helped to plan the project, balance my workload and provide support to carry out a vision of equitable open **pedagogy** that involved student authors.

My colleagues at Linn-Benton Community College have helped me grow and have influenced the project through our conversations during lunchtime, learning community gatherings, faculty meetings, and walks on the Wellness Trail.

Isabelle Havet, Deron Carter, and **Jane Sandberg** have inspired me to think more deeply, to question more thoroughly, and to be my best self in the classroom and as an author.

Terese Jones, Jeff Flesch, and **Verna Ourada** have provided HDFS discipline specific knowledge and valuable insights into the early drafts of the first chapters and the foundation of this text.

My work during my sabbatical brought me in contact with faculty **Alexis J. Walker, Richard Settersten,** and **Becky Warner** at Oregon State University. Their scholarship and teaching has influenced my thinking, teaching, and writing.

Reviewers of individual chapters helped me to see other perspectives and include important sources. Their contributions provided immediate insight but also concepts that influenced other chapters and will be included in future editions. **Andrew Douglas Campbell, Shelly Dermody, Bobbi Hall, Isabelle Havet, Terese Jones, Nana Osei-Kofi, Jane Sandberg, Karelia Stetz-Waters, Lauren Visconti, Mark Weiss,** and **Michaela Willi-Hooper** all reviewed chapters and contributed feedback. **Deron Carter** and his **Winter 2020 Geology 209 Environmental Justice students** read chapters, provided resources, and met with the authors to discuss chapter drafts.

Oregon State University's Difference, Power, and Discrimination (DPD) Academy, led by Nana Osei-Kofi and **Bradley Boovy** provide leadership to the DPD Faculty at LBCC. This ongoing partnership feeds all of our LBCC DPD courses and contributes to the scholarship of this text. LBCC DPD Faculty Learning Community discussions are critical to my ongoing learning in this field and I appreciate my colleagues who continue to learn together.

Jane Waite, Bruce E. Thomson, Christopher Byers, Marcia Walsh, Zakir Khan, Amy Hofer, Margarita Casas, and **Fay Stetz-Waters** all provided stimulating conversation and resources that have impacted this project.

Lauren Antrosiglio, Michaela Willi-Hooper, and **Liz Baker** volunteered time and skills to make edits to the Pressbook that turned it into an eye-pleasing and accurate product both in digital and in downloadable formats.

Learning doesn't just happen when you are at work. **Rica Amity, Angie Klampe, Nadine Wood, Kellie Neet, Deb Savageau,** and **Sarah Davis Farrell** have all spent time in the forest with me, talking, and co-thinking about the topics in this text.

Alexis, Amy, Carla, Cassie, Christopher, Hannah, Jessica, Kate, Katie, Nyssa, Ruta, Shonna, and **Wesley** are my co-authors. They leapt into the unknown with me, entering the liminal space between consumership and authorship of a college textbook. They trusted me to guide an experience in which I was also a neophyte. They dug deep into their own family experiences, even painful, to develop the themes of this text. They took risks. They grew in their scholarship and built the foundation of this book. They played their **roles** in differing ways: as brainstormers, as organizers, as researchers and as writers. They all will make a difference in the experience of future learners.

Margaret Pearce, Frances Pearce, Beth and **John Volz** provide unwavering support and love from the other side of the United States. The voice of **James Pearce** helps me to write and to edit. I know he would be proud. My daughters **Rachel** and **Sarabeth Pearce-Smith** are some of my favorite conversationalists in general but especially when it comes to talking about privilege and oppression. My Oregon framily is vast and loving; their friendship keeps me whole.

Liz Baker provides a foundation at home that contributes to my thinking, teaching, and writing. She makes me laugh. She volunteered to move the text from Google Drive into the Pressbook format so that students could access it there in the Fall of 2020. She is my partner in life, companionship, and growth.

I move toward the house that shelters students in their learning about **equity** and social justice, together with you. The support of colleagues, friends, and family is crucial. Families matter and I am grateful to have mine.

–Elizabeth B. Pearce

EPIGRAPH

"The very least you can do in your life is figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof."
-Barbara Kingsolver

FOREWORD: NANA OSEI-KOFI

What would a nation of greater equitable social, economic, and political conditions mean for families in the United States? How might families be able to live if those who study families, those who create policies that shape the lives of families, and those who work with families, had the opportunity to engage with the content of the book you are currently reading? How can an **equity** lens contribute to critical thinking about families and the conditions they face? What can a justice-informed perspective reveal about what it means for all families to experience belonging, connection, and love? These are some of the many questions Liz Pearce and her students grapple with through this open educational resource (OER), freely available online.

As a result of an open **pedagogy** project, the community college students who co-authored this text offer readers content that is well-researched, deeply engaging, and thought-provoking. What they have accomplished through this project would not have been possible without bravery, dedication, and commitment to addressing the complexity of the many issues at hand. They have every reason to be very proud of what they have achieved.

As part of the Preface to this book, Liz Pearce discusses how coming to a deeper understanding of the ways in which power, privilege, and oppression overlap and shape life-conditions was life-altering for her. Hopefully, this book contributes to similar outcomes for students in classrooms across the United States and plays a part in creating a more equitable world for all families.

Nana Osei-Kofi, PhD
Director, Difference, Power, & **Discrimination** Program
Associate Professor, Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
Oregon State University

FOREWORD: AMY HOFER AND MICHAELA WILLI-HOOPER

The book you are reading is an open educational resource (OER). That means it's free to read online, or you can purchase a print copy at cost. Other faculty anywhere in the world can make use of the open license on this book to customize it and use it in their own classes, so that their students can also use no-cost or low-cost materials.

It is also the result of an open **pedagogy** project, meaning that Liz coathored this book with her community college students. Student perspectives and voices make this book valuable and also make the case for why it is important. The student authors' writing on issues that have directly impacted their lives, and their reflections on how they have changed their minds on these issues, are informed by personal experience and grounded in deep learning.

You know what is a really good read? The chapter of this book titled "The Authors." I'm excited for every one of these authors to graduate and bring the care and talent they put into this project to the next stage of their careers.

Amy Hofer

Coordinator, Statewide Open Education Library Services

openoregon.org

To create this book, Liz facilitated a yearlong community conversation around the question of "what do families need?" This question engaged many people with many perspectives, and a lot of learning happened. Helping students interweave existing knowledge with their own experiences was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The team created a work that is multivoiced yet coherent, easy-to-understand while still reflecting the complexities of our world. It reflects families in our communities, meets the learning goals of this course, and saves students money.

I hope the larger OER community will improve this, customize it locally, and share it back. Most of the original content the Linn-Benton Community College team created is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license. Re-users should refer to the attributions and licenses in each section for more detailed information, and note that some chapters have more restrictive licenses. Because important parts of people's lived experiences are not Creative Commons-licensed[1] some components are included with permission or under fair use.

Michaela Willi Hooper, M.S.I.
OER & Textbook Affordability Librarian
Linn-Benton Community College

1. Myers, C., Cross, W. & Pai, S. (2020, June 18). Fair use and OER: Strange bedfellows or BFFs? Open Textbook Network Summit 2020. https://youtu.be/b_LNgeQCOV0

THE AUTHORS

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Lead Author

Liz is a faculty member who teaches Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) classes at Lin-Benton Community College (LBCC.) She has served as Department Chair, the Faculty Fellow in Technology and Teaching, and as the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Faculty Lead. This textbook, mostly original work, was written in collaboration with LBCC community college students.

She is proud to be a member of an institution that supports the work of open educational resources and open **pedagogy**, which strive to increase **equity** for students. Her passion is creating opportunities and resources for transformative learning. She is a long-time faculty member at Linn-Benton Community College, teaching Human Development and Family Sciences courses and advising future Human Services and Social Work professionals. In addition she leads and mentors faculty in several areas: **equity**-based teaching, active learning, technology use, and open **pedagogy**.

Liz earned a Bachelor of Arts in Child Study with a Performing Arts minor at Tufts University. After teaching young children for four years, she returned to earn a Master of Education degree in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has also completed post-graduate coursework in child development, life course development theory, educational policy, and sociology at Wheelock College (now Boston University) and Oregon State University.

Christopher Byers

Christopher earned an Associate of Science degree in Human Development and Family Sciences, Human Services option in June 2020 from Linn-Benton Community College. HE is now headed to Portland State University for the social work program. Christopher helped start the Human Services Club at LBCC, has been active in Student Government and is currently working on acquiring his Drug and Alcohol Counseling Certificate at Emergence Addiction & Mental Health Services. He expects to graduate with his Bachelors of Social Work degree in 2022 and his Masters of Social Work in 2023.

Alexis Castaneda-Perez

Alexis Castaneda-Perez is a Psychology major at Oregon State University and LBCC. He researched and wrote for the Justice chapter as well as the Food and Water chapter. In addition he assisted with ensuring accessibility, accessing open resources, and creating chapter glossaries. He hopes to eventually become a therapist and help college students. When not at school he enjoys writing music and playing guitar.

Nyssa Cronin

Nyssa Cronin is a proud Linn-Benton Community College and Oregon State University alumni with a Bachelors of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences, emphasizing in Human Services and minoring in Public Health. Her academic and personal interests have led her to study trauma and how that impacts individual, interpersonal, familial, and community health. No doubt, this led her to understand how systemic structures impact individuals based on their race, class, and gender. As an ally, she believes that education should be free to all; this book marks a step forward in that pursuit.

Cassie Cruze

Cassie is a working single parent in the process of attaining her undergraduate degree in Human Development Family Sciences at Linn-Benton Community College with the hope to see social and personal goals met. She worked on the Justice Chapter of this book. She is employed by the Lebanon Downtown Association; her favorite aspect is creating experiences for individuals and families to have lasting memories. She enjoys working alongside her child as they volunteer for community organizations that serve Linn and Benton counties. She expects to graduate from Linn Benton in 2021.

Shonna Dempsey

Shonna is a 40 year old, first generation college student. She is a full-time mother, part-time employee, and full-time college student. She is currently enrolled at LBCC. She will be graduating with an AS in HDFS in 2021. Shonna worked on the Housing and Routines, Traditions, and **Culture** chapters, as well as the glossaries. After graduating she plans on transferring to obtain a bachelor's degree in social work or in HDFS. Shonna's dream job is to work with women coming out of addiction and domestic violence or at risk youth.

Ruta Faifaise

Ruta is a dual-enrolled LBCC and OSU student who is majoring in Human Development and Family Sciences. She was awarded the Oscar Humberto Montemayor Award at the 2020 Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration as a student who “embodies Oscar’s ethos of selfless service; steady, strong, considerate leadership; and trailblazing spirit and heart.”

Jessica N. Hampton

Jessica is finishing up her associate degree in the Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) field at Linn-Benton CC, and is heading forward to continue HDFS at OSU to obtain her Bachelor of Science degree. She contributed to the Visual **Culture**: Art and Beauty chapter, as well as the Health chapter of this text. She is a feminist, a mother of two, and believes that the beginning of every individuals journey to success starts with receiving the necessary services and support needed to help them flourish.

Katherine Hemlock

Katherine Hemlock is a Human Development Family Sciences student, dual-enrolled at Linn-Benton Community College and Oregon State University. She helped start the Human Services Club at LBCC and also uses her Applied Science Degree in Horti**culture** to teach a gardening class for Justice Involved Youth. Katherine enjoys writing and art, and contributed to the Housing chapter as well as creating several illustrations. She is a parent of two school-aged sons and two little dogs she trained to chase birds out of her blueberry patch and fruit trees.

Amy Huskey

Amy is a mom who is a volunteer leader at her children’s schools and in her community. She is studying Public Health at LBCC.

Carla Medel

Carla Medel is a current Oregon State University student who is dual enrolled at Linn Benton Community College. She is majoring in Psychology and holding minors in Human Development and Family Sciences and

Spanish. As a young Latina who is also part of an immigrant family she found it extremely important to include the stories of people and families like hers to this book. Throughout this project she showed continuous motivation and drive to have future students see themselves reflected in academic learning materials as she did not get to experience that in her previous education. She will be graduating with a Bachelor's degree in the spring of 2021 and is looking to further her education with a Masters degree.

Hannah Morelos

Hannah is currently an Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) major at LBCC with an emphasis in Human Services and soon plans to transfer to OSU for a Bachelor of Science in HDFS. She contributed to the Art and Beauty chapter along with the Health chapter. Hannah's dream career is to work with troubled adolescents along with making an impact in the systems that affect young individuals.

Katie Niemeyer

Katie Niemeyer is an aspiring artist who wants to see the world change for the better. When she took on this project, she had no idea what was in store for her but this project helped her learn and grow into the person she is today.

Wesley Sharp

Wesley Sharp is currently a Human Services major at Linn-Benton Community College. Wesley's main passion is avocation for socially disadvantaged groups mainly focusing on the LGBT+ community. He contributed to the Love and Nurturance Chapter as well as the Housing chapter. He hopes to eventually run a non profit organization on empowering and elevating queer youth as well as finding them safe and affirming living situations where there are none.

DEDICATION

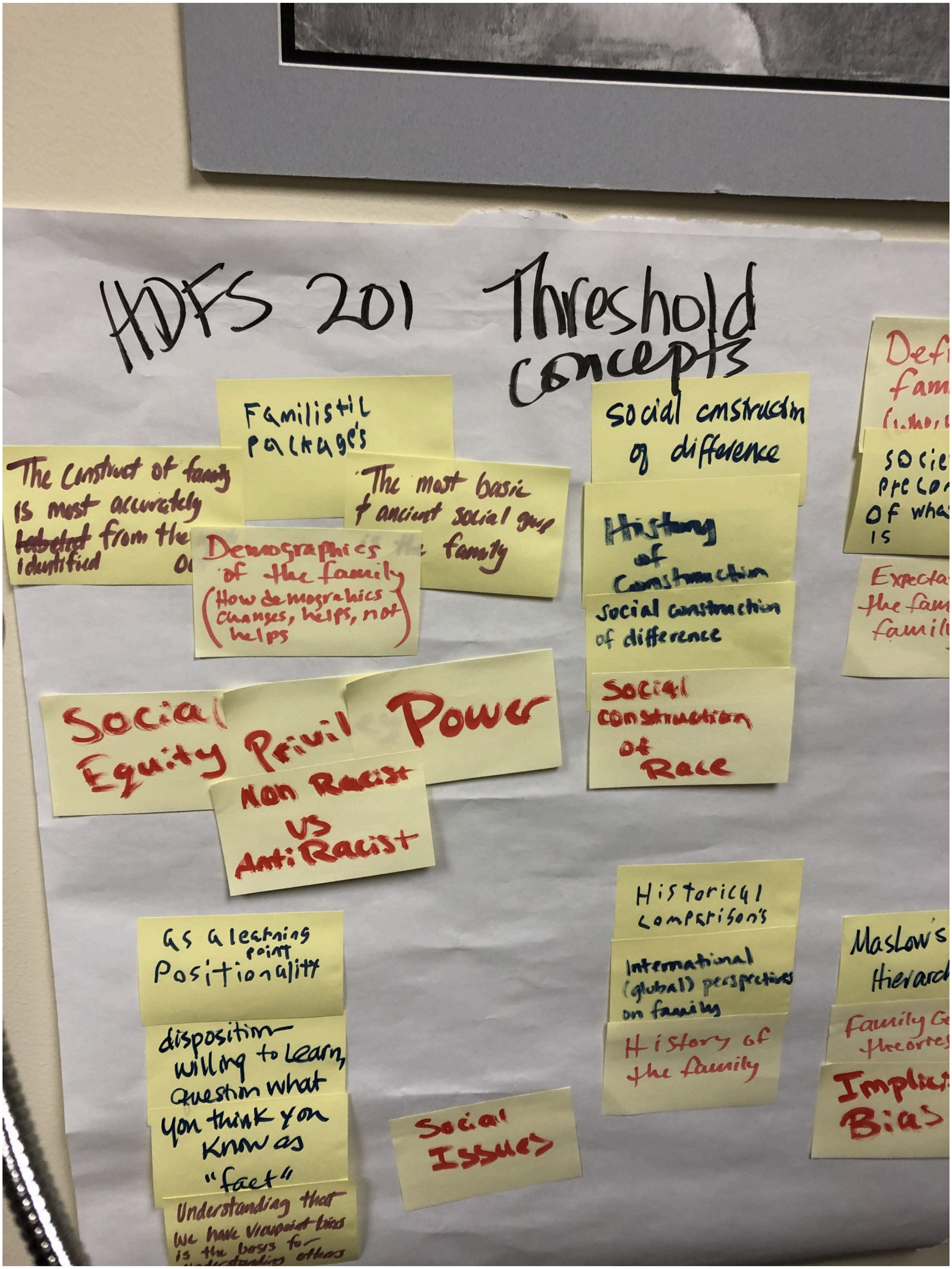
To all learners who strive to understand their own relationship with privilege and **discrimination** while doing their best to listen and see the experience of others.

In memory of:
Sandra Angel Nelson
and
Dr. Alexis J. Walker
who worked to make the world more just.

PREFACE

I've changed. Understanding how privilege, power, oppression, and **discrimination** overlap is life-altering. It humbles me to consider how much privilege I have and to wonder what families in the United States would look like if greater **equity** existed. Teaching a social justice class has been transformational.

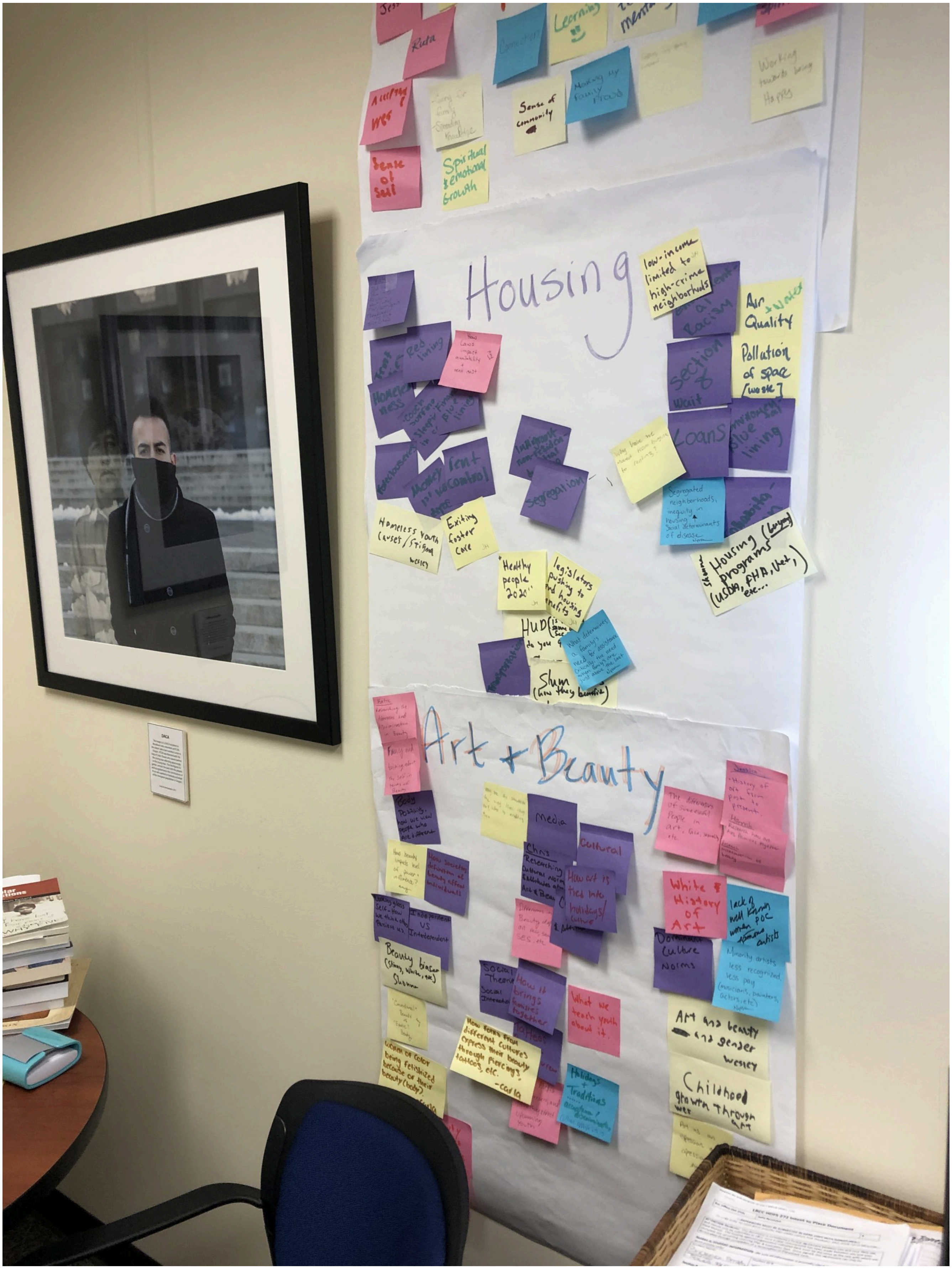
In 2007-2008 I took a sabbatical and was exposed to sociology, family, and social justice course work at Oregon State University. During that time I studied with Dr. Alexis J. Walker, Dr. Richard Settersten, and Dr. Becky Warner. I began to teach Contemporary Families in the United States (HDFS 201), at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC), which is a Difference, Power, and **Discrimination** course at both institutions.


HDFS 201 Threshold concepts
Familistic packages
The construct of family is most accurately identified from the
The most basic & ancient social group is the family
Demographics of the family (How demographics changes, helps, not helps)
social construction of difference
History of Construction
Social construction of difference
Social construction of Race
Social Equity
Privil
Power
Non Racist vs Anti Racist
Historical comparison's
International (global) perspectives on family
History of the family
as a learning point Positionality
disposition willing to learn, question what you think you know as "fact"
Understanding that we have viewpoint bias is the basis for
Social Issues
Maslow's Hierarch
Family Ge theories
Implic Bias

My understanding continued to develop when I participated in the Difference, Power, and **Discrimination** Academy led by Dr. Nana Osei-Kofi at OSU. With the leadership of Dr. Katie Winder, DPD became institutionalized at LBCC. Colleague Matt Usner and I co-led the first DPD Faculty Learning Community in 2015. Continued learning is a core aspect of social justice learning. Just because I've taught about it for twelve years does not mean that I fully comprehend all of the complexities and depth of these concepts. I count myself among the learners among the community that I lead. Talking DPD teaching and learning alongside Isabelle Havet, Jane Sandberg, Lauren Visconti, Stephen Rust, Deron Carter, Christy Stevens, Verna Ourada, Matt Usner, Paul Hibbard, Joseph Jess, and Arfa Aflatooni is one of the privileges of teaching at LBCC.

Learning about privilege and oppression extends beyond the workplace. I am thankful to have family and friends who are willing to grapple with these concepts. Many dinner conversations with my daughters Rachel and Sarabeth and my partner Liz Baker have been devoted to dissecting the ways that we experience and observe institutionalized power and **discrimination**. So many hikes and walks have been absorbed by my own thinking or conversations about social justice with friends. Whatever I am reading, including my favorite thrillers, are seen through the lens of **equity**. Once you've seen it, it can't be unseen.

My greatest pleasures, challenges, and growth come from my work with LBCC students. I hear your questions; I read your articulation of concepts; I listen to your experiences being discriminated against; I support your work to comprehend your own privilege; I strive to understand the oppression you have experienced but perhaps did not have the language to describe. The greater my interactions with you, the better teacher I become.

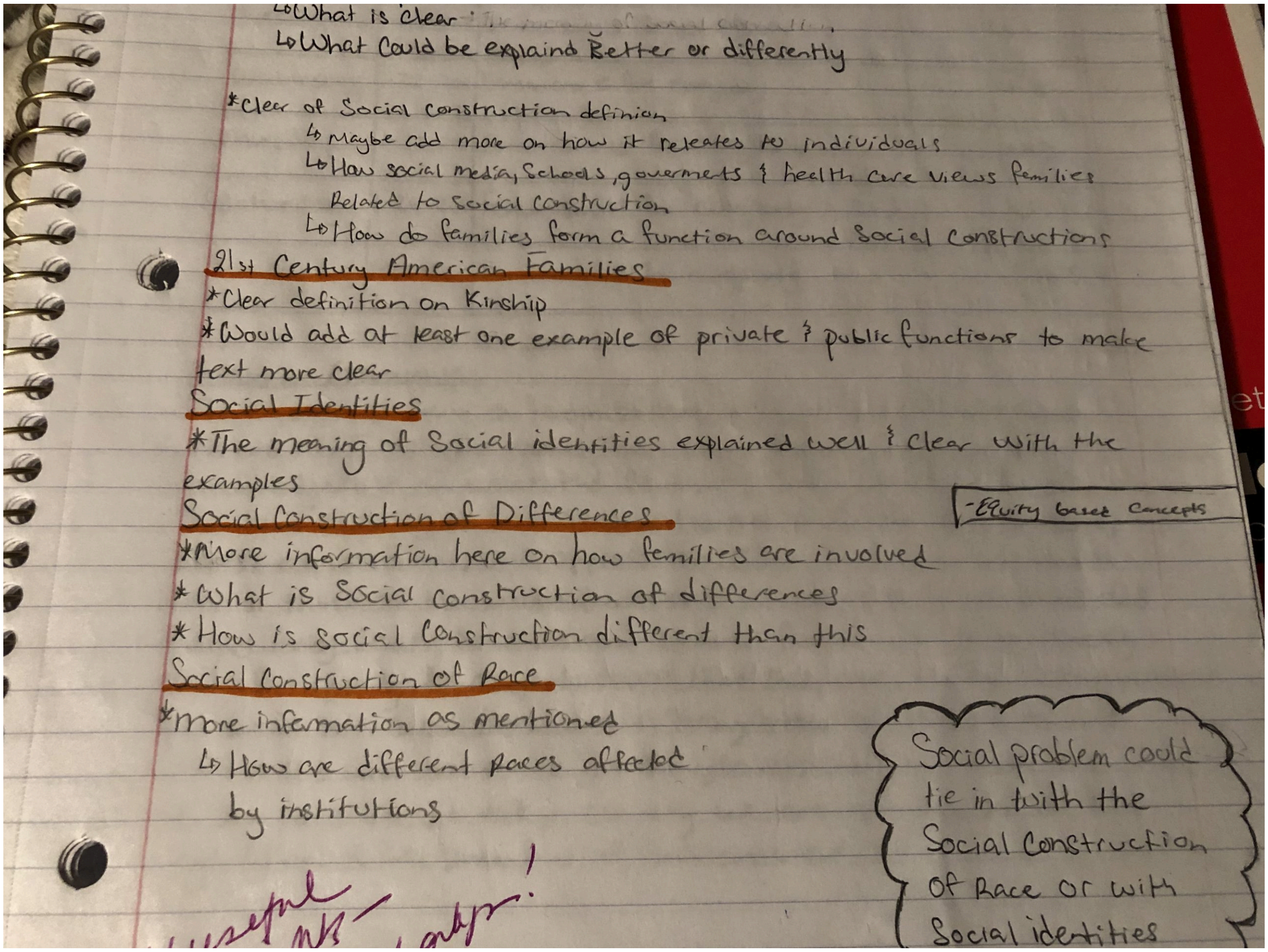

Learning
Working towards being Happy
Sense of community
Making my family proud
Sense of self
Spiritual & emotional Growth
Housing
low-income limited to high-crime neighborhoods
Air Quality
Pollution of space [waste]
section 8 wait
Loans
Segregation
Homeless Youth (causes/stigma)
Exiting foster care
"Healthy people 2020"
Housing programs (USDA, PHA, Vet, etc...)
Slum (how they benefit)
Art + Beauty
Media
Cultural
White History of Art
Dominant Culture Norms
Art and beauty and gender
Childhood growth through art
What we teach youth about it.
Holidays + Traditions
How it brings families together
Independent vs Interdependent
Beauty biases (Skinny, White, etc)

Through my interactions with students and colleagues, it became evident that the commercial text we were using did not fully support students in meeting the course outcomes. Searches over the past five years did not reveal an existing openly licensed (free to users to read, remix, or reuse) text. With funding and support from LBCC, I undertook to facilitate an open **pedagogy** project and write a new text. This new text takes an interdisciplinary approach that more fully supports understanding the interaction of society, institutions, privilege, and oppression.

There is strong instructional and budgetary support for creating open educational resources (OERs) that are free to students at LBCC. Certainly making knowledge more accessible makes college more equitable. Going beyond by involving student authors embeds **equity** within the actual text by facilitating the expression of diverse voices. Michaela Willi-Hooper, the OER Librarian, was instrumental in supporting this outcome. All three Deans who oversaw my work during this 18-month long project, Katie Winder, Oriana Mulatero Ferrando, and Meg Roland, provided additional support specifically so that students could be involved.

This openly licensed text approaches contemporary families from an **equity** lens and asks a question that more fully meets the Difference, Power, and **Discrimination** outcomes. “What do families need?” and “ How do society and institutions support or get in the way of families getting what they need?” In order to answer these questions, I included the voices of the consumers of this class. I asked, “What matters most to LBCC and OSU students when it comes to family needs?” This has shaped the content of the book; it is a far different book than I would have written alone. I wanted to emphasize diversity of viewpoint, experience, **social identity**, and voice. It was the best way I could think of to live the concepts of Difference, Power, and **Discrimination**.

It takes a lot of guts to help write a textbook when you are an undergraduate, even more if you are the first person in your family to attend college. The thirteen students who participated in this project have my utmost regard for their courage and their scholarship. Deep examination of institutionalized privilege, oppression and justice is challenging and painful. They brainstormed, questioned, researched, debated, outlined, drew, and wrote. Each one has their own personal connection to the needs of families and the inequities that families experience. They introduced and advocated for the inclusion of topics that have an immediate relevance to current students’ lives.



The book content was created from brainstorming and discussion sessions with the students, followed by research conducted by the student authors, librarian and contributor, Michaela Willi-Hooper, and myself. The brainstorming sessions conducted in person during the winter and via ZOOM in spring term were integral to expressing a diversity of voice. Without those sessions, my own perspective, that comes from experiencing more privilege than most students, would override topics and viewpoints that student families experience and care about. The three images here in the preface come from student brainstorming and journaling sessions. Much of the book is written either by me or via collaborative efforts with students; you will see groups of names listed on those chapters where we collaborated. In the Justice chapter, I wanted you to read the students' words unfiltered; you will see the individual authors credited. I hope that future students will add to this chapter.

One of the best parts of an openly licensed digital text is that it is a living document. While this has been one of the most invigorating experiences of my life, it is not over. I invite you to be a part of the future of this text. When the time comes to revise this text, I will be incorporating the suggestions of colleagues, students, and friends. When there is more funding available, additional chapters with topics like education and employment will be added. I look forward to the future of this book, to its contribution to understanding inequities that families face, and the knowledge that it inspires us to advocate for and improve structures and society.

–Elizabeth B. Pearce

CHAPTER 1: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

1.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1.1 Learning Objectives

1. Define **social construction**.
2. Define social identities and social groups.
3. Contrast the **social construction of difference** with a **social construction**.
4. Explain how **equity** is different from **equality** and fairness.
5. Explore the relationship between **intersectionality** and **equity**.
6. Analyze how the government affects the structure of **kinship** and family.
7. Describe family demographic trends in the United States.
8. Relate the historical context of families in the United States to the **social construction** of "the family."

1.1.2 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

1.1.2.1 Open Content, Original

1.2 THE FAMILY: A SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED IDEA

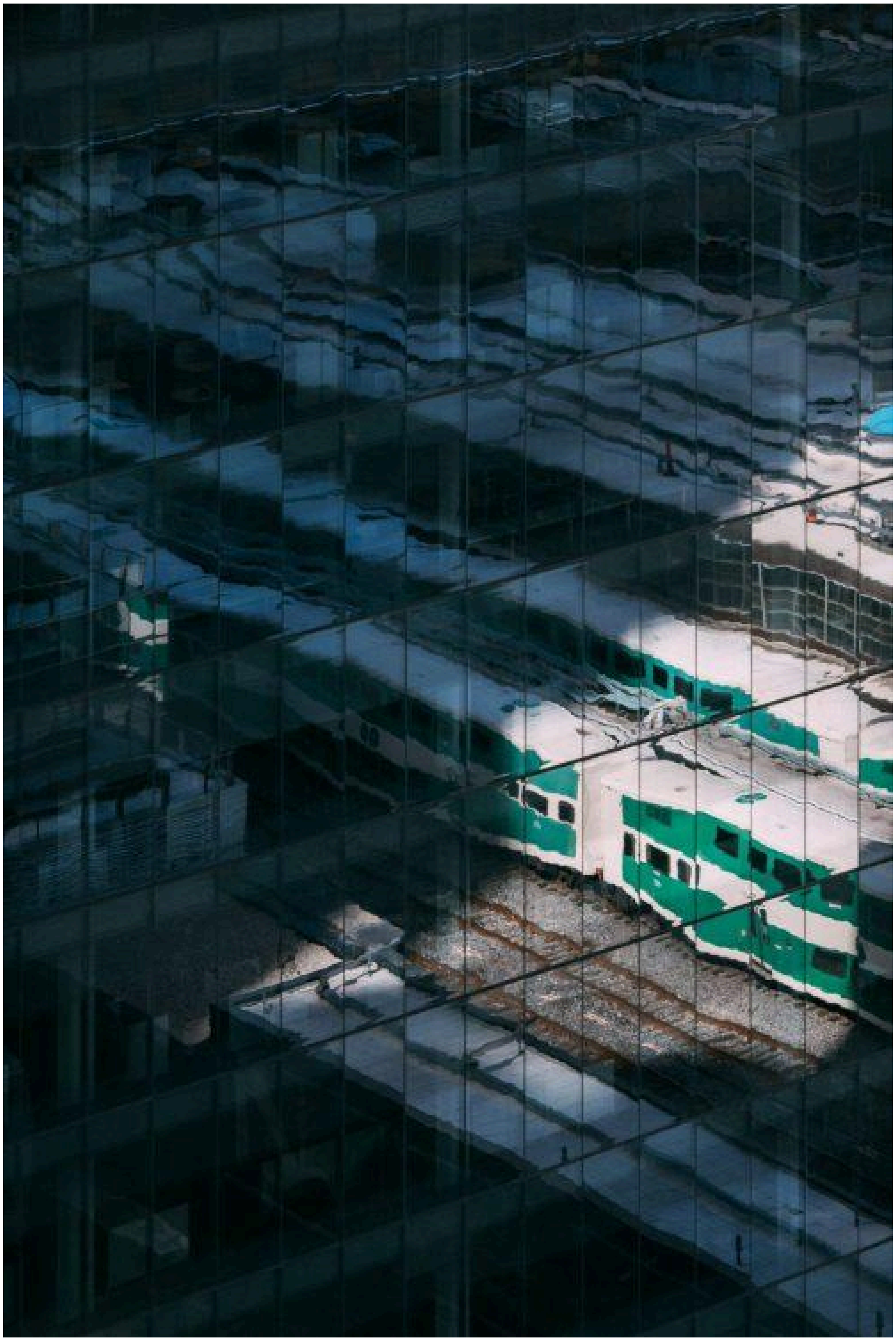


Figure 1.1. **Social construction**s are ideas that reflect the world in which we live.

To begin our study of contemporary families in the United States, we will first define an important concept that is used for a large portion of this book: **social construction**s. A **social construction** is a mutual understanding and accepted reality created by members of a society: something that is not determined by biology or the natural world. In the same way that the reflection of a train in Figure 1.1 represents a real object, our socially constructed ideas are reflections of the real world.

Is there anything that humans have created that holds no real value in the natural world, yet we have assigned a great deal of value to it? If you are thinking of cash, you're right on the money. Humans have determined that certain pieces of paper and metal objects are worth an agreed-upon value. For example, in the United States, a one dollar bill is worth 100 times the value of a penny. One of the ways that we can tell money is a **social construction** is that it varies from **culture** to **culture** and over time. When you visit another country, the United States dollar bill has to be "exchanged" for money that has a different appearance and value.

Compare money with another thing of value to human beings: air. Air is needed by all human beings to survive. The need for air and its value do not change over time or from **culture** to **culture**.

Social constructions also relate to behavior and activities. For example, what food would you expect to see on the menu when you go out for breakfast in the United States? What if the eating place were described as a "Mexican" restaurant? And what if you traveled to another country, say, Korea? What is eaten for breakfast varies from **culture** to **culture** and even person to person. And yet, in general, we have a socially constructed idea of what is typically breakfast food in the United States: eggs, bacon, cereal, toast, and fruit, but not vegetables, noodles, pinto beans, or hot dogs.

One of the ways that you can recognize that something is a socially constructed idea is that it differs from place to place and changes over time. In addition, whatever is part of the socially constructed idea (in this case what typical breakfast foods are) becomes "the norm" or what is expected. While we might welcome trying some different foods for breakfast, they are not what is seen as the typical, or expected, American breakfast foods (Figure 1.2).

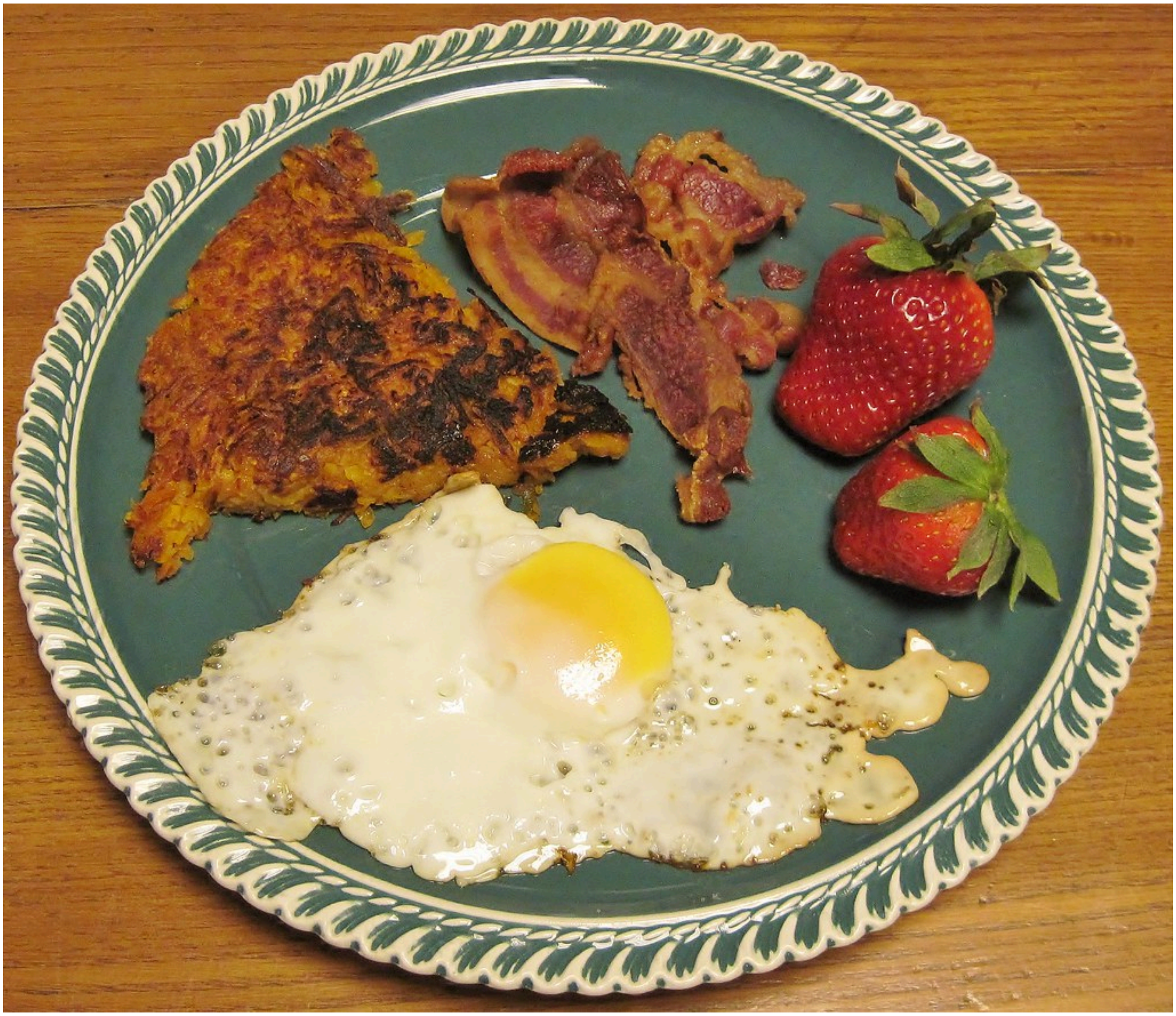


Figure 1.2. Breakfast burrito; eggs, bacon, strawberries, and sweet potato roll, and steamed buns represent a variety of breakfasts that are common around the world.

What does this have to do with families? While studying families, we must continually remind ourselves that the idea of the family, and in particular the internalized belief that there is a "normal family," is a **social construction**. What is a normal family? I suspect that we can each paint a picture in our heads, based on the years each of us has been exposed to portrayals of families in institutions such as the media, schools, government, and health care.

Generally, the traditional American family has been identified as the **nuclear family**, most often represented as a male and female heterosexual married couple who is middle class, White, and with several children. When society or the individuals within a society designate one kind of family to be traditional, this may imply a value, or a preference, for this kind of family structure with these particular **social characteristics**. This is sometimes called the *Leave it to Beaver* family after the popular sitcom television show that ran from 1957 until 1963 (Figure 1.3, on left).

A current popular sitcom, *Modern Family*, which concluded its 11th and final season in 2020, also features this traditional family, but includes two other families which feature people of other ethnic groups, and a same-sex couple (Figure 1.3, on right). Together they form an extended family who all live in the same town. It is important to note, however, that the primacy of the upper middle-class, White family image continues to be emphasized.

Figure 1.3. TV families in the 1950s and today.

1.2.1 Societal Contributions to the Social Construction of Difference

As we study families we must keep in mind that this idea of the typical family is not representative of all families, yet it is continually reinforced by the **social process**es and institutions in our society. Media in particular continually reminds us of what families are "supposed to" look like. Whether you consume big-budget films, social media platforms, video games, and/or books and magazines, take a look. What kind of people and families do you see represented? While representation of women, people of color, and people of differing sexualities and gender expressions has increased in media, they still predominantly play less consequential characters within the plot lines.

Although the majority of families in the United States no longer fit the traditional model (Pew Research Center, 2015), **social institutions** perpetuate the idea of a certain family structure. Government, schools, medical institutions, businesses, and places of worship all reinforce a typical view of family through the forms, activities, requirements, and processes that are shared with the public. How many times have you tried to fill out a form with checkboxes only to find that you did not "fit" into one of the boxes? Typical examples include giving parental choices of "mother" and "father," couple status choices such as "married" or "single," and gender choices such as "male" or "female," all of which reinforce a binary view of individuals and families.

The preference for an idealized traditional family type contributes to the experience of having less social support for families who don't fit this ideal: for example, single-parent families, LGBTQ+ families, rural families, or families with a member who is disabled, unemployed, or who has a criminal record. Accepted structures and practices such as "Daddy-Daughter Dances," churches that exclude or condemn LGBTQ+ ministers or members, the lack of safe and healthy housing for low income families, and educational materials that cannot be read with low vision are all examples of ways that some individuals and families are less recognized and less privileged. You can probably think of other examples from your own family's perspective. Socially constructed ideals contribute to other family forms being differentiated as less recognized and valued.

The **social construction of difference** describes value being assigned to a perceived difference (in this case, the form and function of families; Johnson, 2006). Allan Johnson is an author who wrote about differences in privilege related to social identities such as race, **ethnicity**, gender, and ability. We will extend this concept he described to include the **social construction of difference** among families. Via the socially constructed idea of family, American systems and structures regularly create and reinforce inequities among American families.

1.2.2 **Equity**, **Equality**, and Fairness

You will notice that this text often refers to **equity** rather than **equality** or fairness. We define **equity** as everyone having what they need, acknowledging that systemic inequities have affected people differently, and working to ensure that all members of society have access to the same opportunities and outcomes. The drawing in Figure 1.4 illustrates the difference between **equity** and **equality**. You may have seen different variations of this concept as memes on social media.

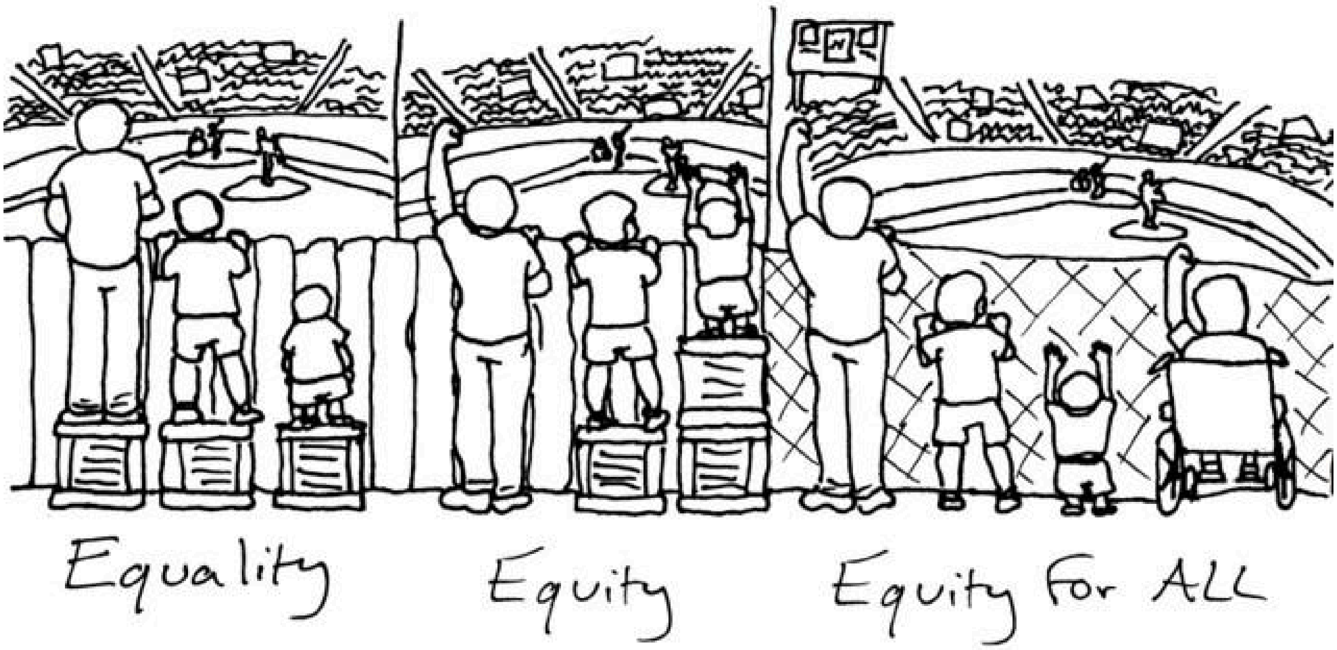


Figure 1.4. **Equity** means giving some people more (an additional box) so that they can have the same experience. To create **equity** for all, barriers are removed.

All families need equitable resources, but sometimes experiences and structures get in the way. In the first panel of the drawing, all of the participants have equal-sized boxes, but they do not all get to have an equal experience. In the second drawing, the participants can have the viewing experience because the boxes have been equitably distributed. And in the third panel, the structure that limited equitable access, the fence, has been removed so that all participants can view the game without additional resources.

In this text, we study American families with an emphasis on the current inequities in the United States. To help us understand the socially constructed nature of our view of the family and the systems that affect families, we take a **comparative approach** (American Sociological Association, 2020). This means that, while our focus is current American families, we will also look at how families have evolved in America, what the practices are of immigrant **culture**s in America, and how other countries develop systems that affect families. We also utilize empirical research, data that are collected in a variety of ways, analyzed, and presented to further our understanding.

1.2.3 Twenty-First Century American Families

While we are studying families, it is important to note the concept of **kinship**. While definitions vary, it is widely agreed that the term **kinship** is broader than the term family. **Kinship** refers to the social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships. **Kinship** acknowledges that individuals have a role in defining who is a member of their own family and how familial relationships extend across society.

What are families in the United States like today? Because we are constrained by both our personal experiences, as well as the societal representations of "typical families," it is important to talk about what kinds of **kinship** structures and changes are actually occurring. At times, the study of families has been referred to as the study of "the family." This text avoids that terminology because we are studying many types of families.

In order to describe current American families and **kinship** structures, it is probably easiest to compare them with families of the past and families in other countries. Here is a snapshot of some **kinship** patterns:

1.2.3.1 Increasingly Varied Family Arrangements

In Figure 1.5, based on data from the Pew Research Center, increases are noted in children living with a single parent and cohabiting parents.

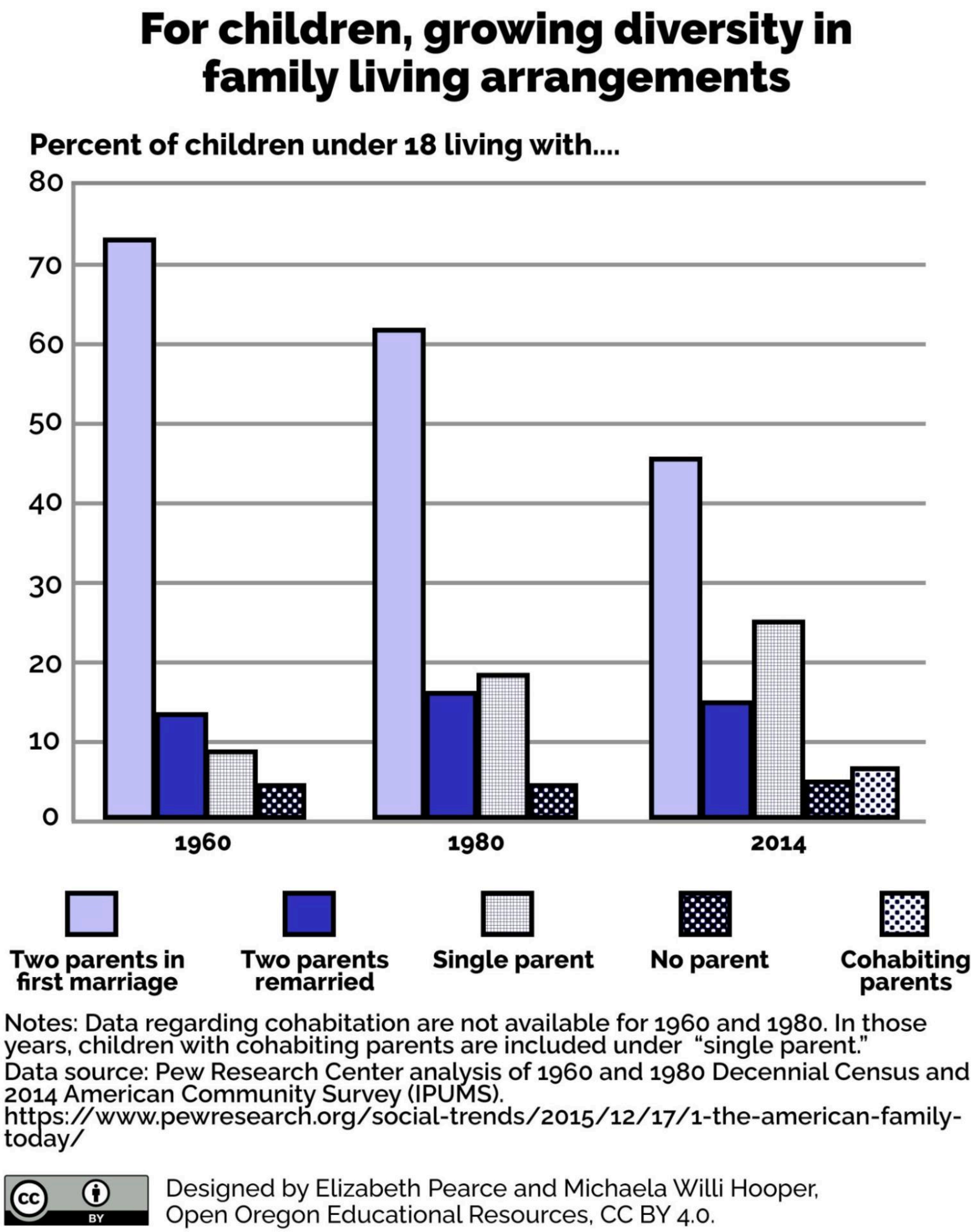


Figure 1.5. Growing diversity in family living arrangements. Data from Pew Research Center. Data for cohabitation was not available in 1960 and 1980; those children were included in the group "single parents." Figure 1.5 Image Description

1.2.3.2 Marriages Later in Life

Figure 1.6 shows the increase, for both men (blue, top line) and women (red, bottom line) in the median age of first marriage.

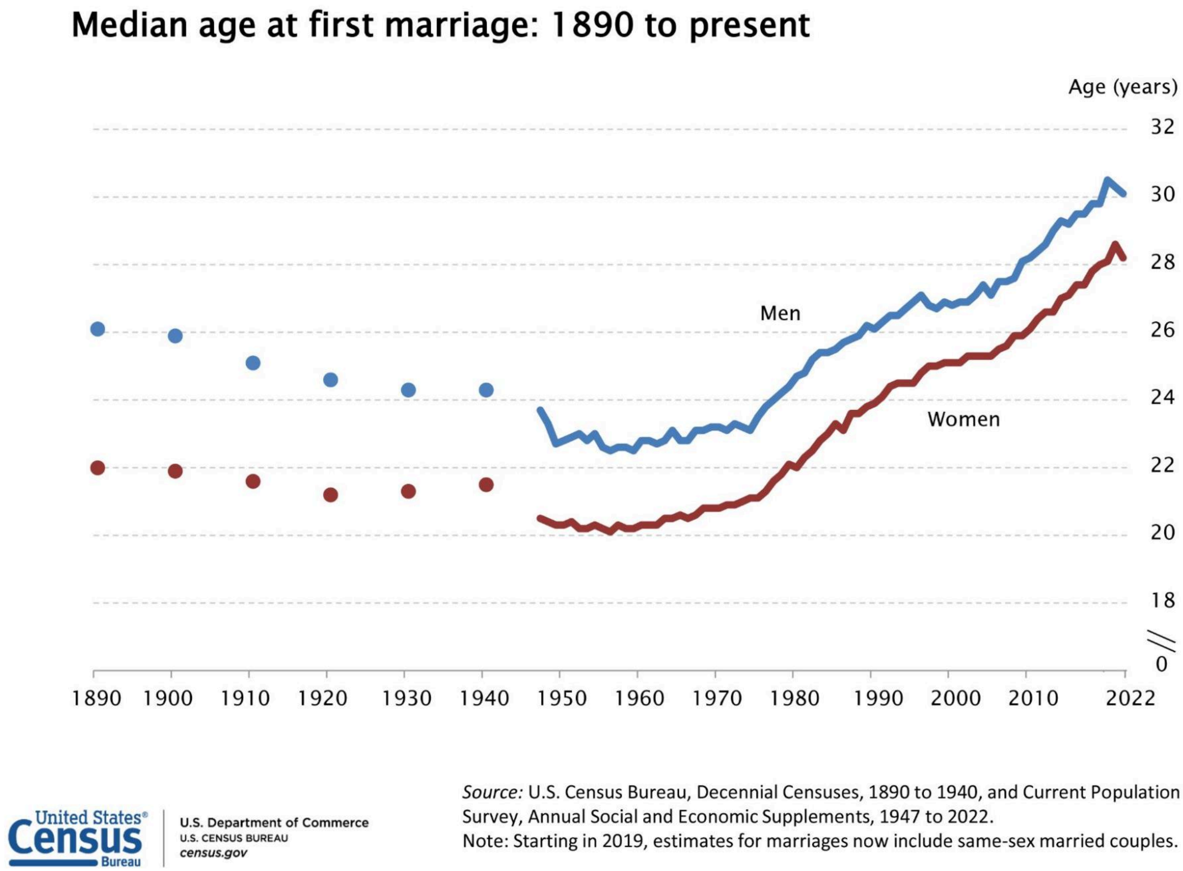


Figure 1.6. A Census graph showing the age of first marriages going up since the 1950s. Figure 1.6 Image Description

1.2.3.3 Declining Marriage and divorce Rates

In the chart in Figure 1.7, you can see that the marriage rate (blue, bottom) is declining a bit faster than the divorce rate (red, top), which is one of the factors that makes it appear as if divorce is increasing. It's actually declining, just at a slower rate than marriage is declining:

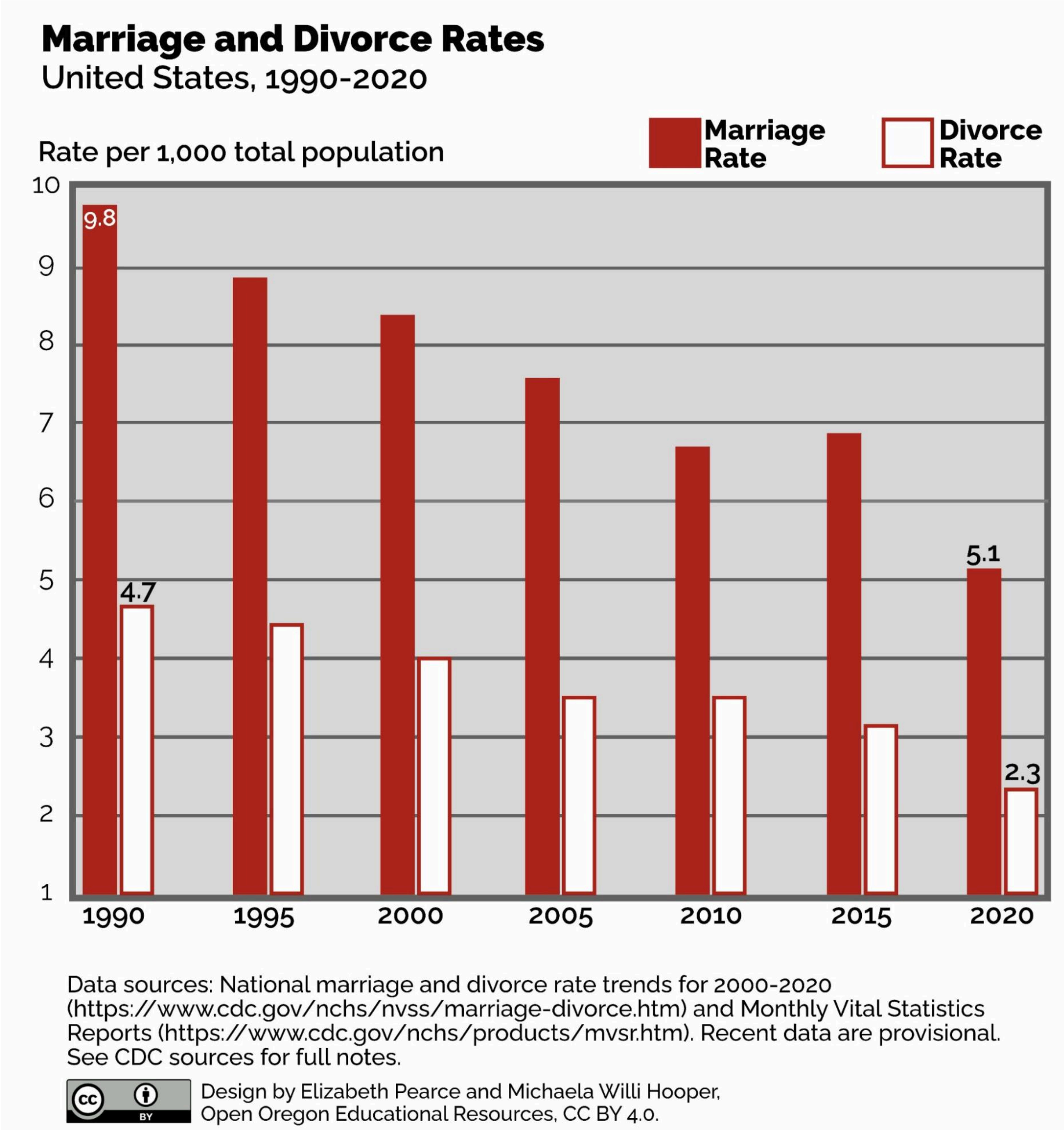


Figure 1.7. Marriage and divorce rates have gone down since the 1990s. This data comes from Statistical Abstract, 2009 based on the U.S. Census. Figure 1.7 Image Description

1.2.3.4 Declining Fertility Rates and Birth Rates

Women are having fewer children, following the "Baby Boom" years between approximately 1946 and 1964 as shown in Figure 1.8.

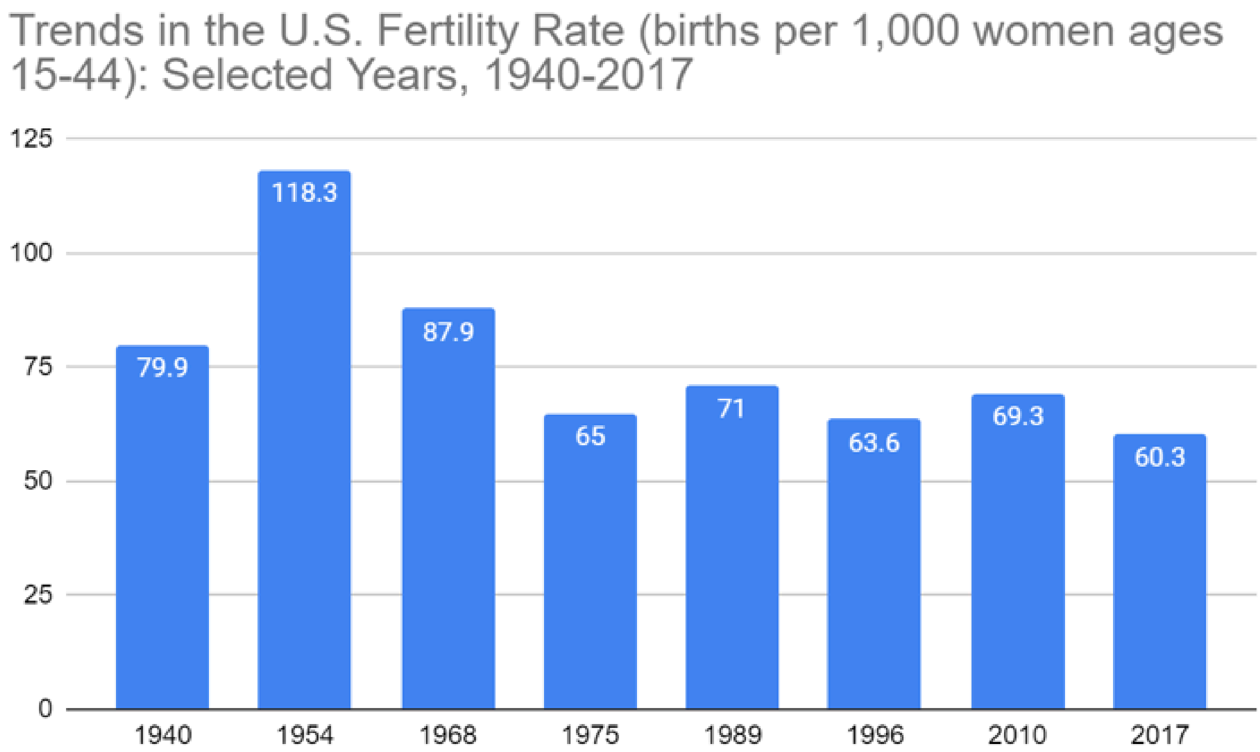


Figure 1.8. Fertility rates in the United States have declined since peaking in 1954; related social, economic and biological factors will be explored in Chapter 4.

1.2.3.5 Multigenerational households.

Multigenerational living includes families with two or more adult generations and families that have grandchildren under age 25 and grandparents living together. This style of living hit a low of 12% of all families in the United States in 1980. Since then, multigenerational living has increased in most racial and ethnic groups, age groups, and genders. Figure 1.9 illustrates the trend of multi generational living in the United States (Pew Research, 2018).

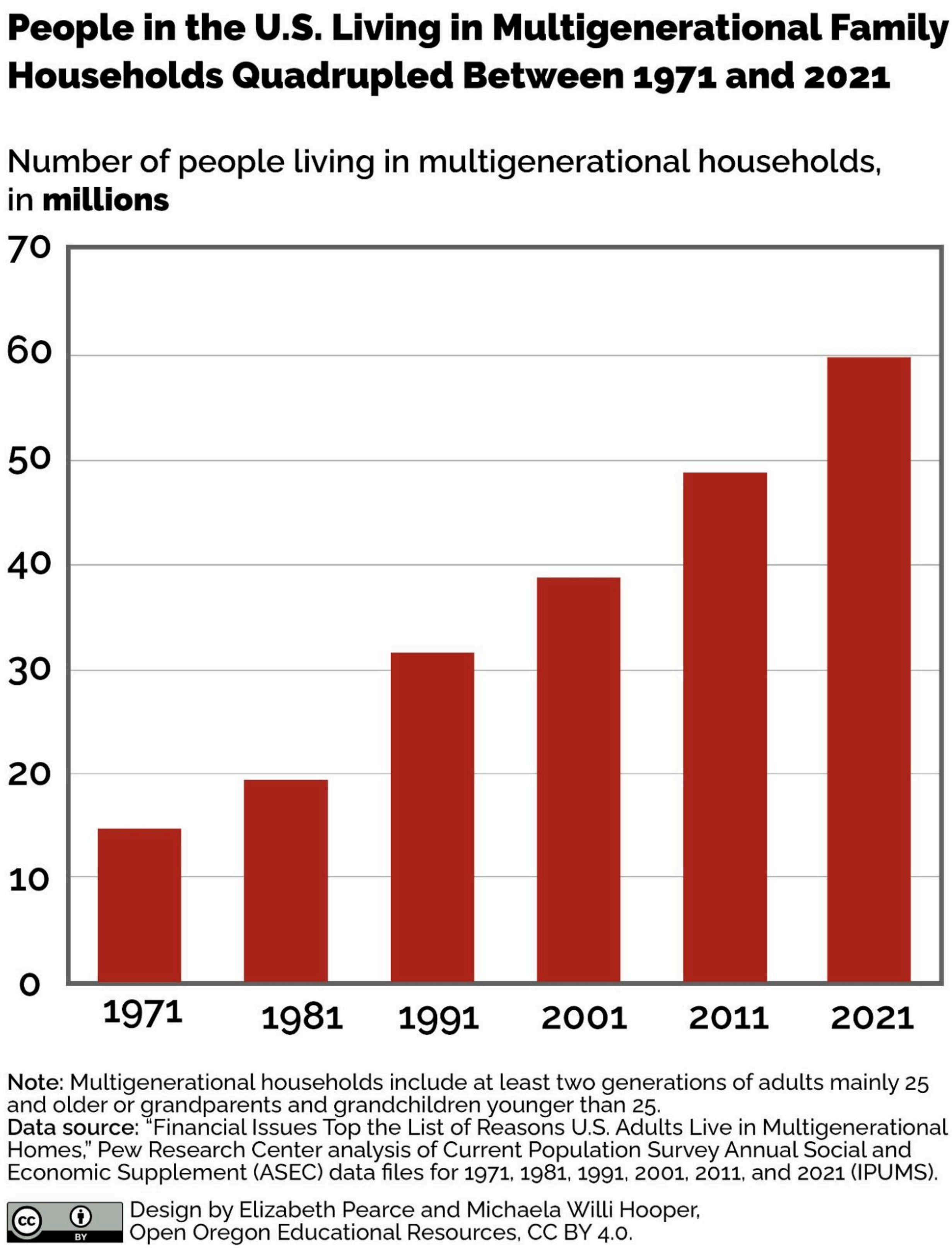


Figure 1.9. The number of Americans who live in multigenerational households has increased since the low

in the 1970s. This graph is based on an analysis by the Pew Research Center based on data from the U.S. Census and 2000-2016 American Community Survey. Figure 1.9 Image Description

1.2.3.6 Longer Working Lives

Beneficial trends such as longer life expectancy and being healthier longer affect people's decisions to work longer. Less beneficial trends such as concern about having adequate health care coverage, fewer jobs that have pensions associated with them, and the increasing number of workers who have multiple part-time jobs also affect this trend. These factors, along with the increases in cost of living, have contributed to the middle class shrinking.

The graph in Figure 1.10 shows differentiation by gender and by education level, but there is also differentiation related to wealth, income, and kind of employment. Look at the difference between 1992 (light blue, left hand column) and 2004 (red, right hand column). Notice that for both genders, and with all education levels, people are expecting to work longer.

Figure 1.10. People are expecting to work longer.

But expectations do not always match experience, and there is sufficient evidence that older workers are consistently forced out of stable, well-paying jobs at a significant percentage, as you can see in Figure 1.11.

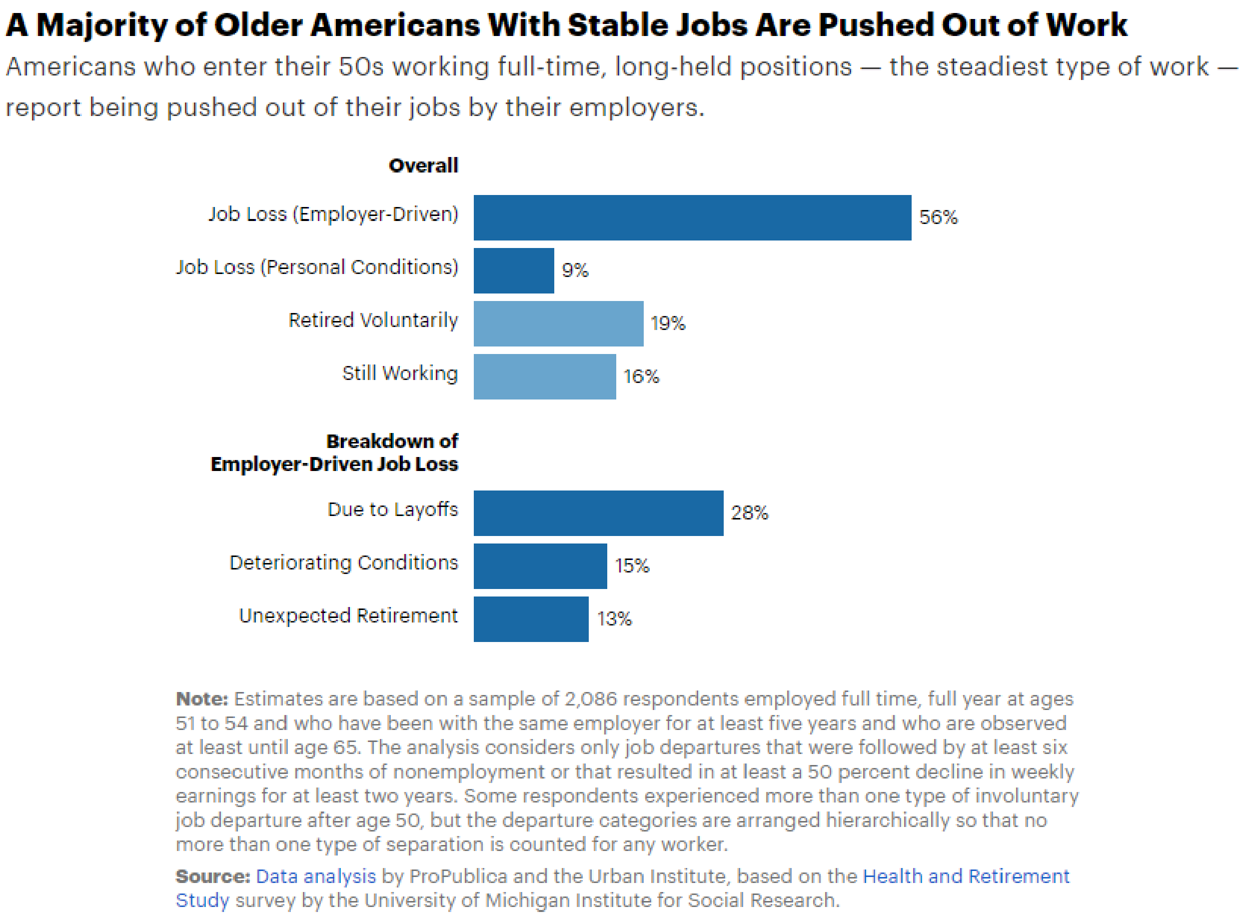


Figure 1.11. Most Americans don't retire because they want to.

1.2.4 Families and Society

Scholars, as well as the general public, have multiple viewpoints about the meaning of families within society. While families have evolved, so have the ways each of us think about our own family, as well as how we think about how families should and could interact within themselves and with social structures.

In this text the authors describe multiple accepted theories and perspectives, with an eye to including diversity of thinking. These theories don't necessarily conflict with one another. Rather, they offer different views of how families interact within themselves and within society.

1.2.4.1 Family as Haven, Fulfillment, and Encumbrance

Sociologist Maxine Baca Zinn examines the ways that ideas and images of families influence family expectations and interactions. Specifically, she describes family as haven, family as fulfillment, and family as encumbrance (Zinn et. al., 2011).

The family as haven describes the contrast that has historically been made between home spaces and work spaces in the United States. The idea that we live in a "heartless world" where individuals cannot expect to be treated with compassion isolates those caring characteristics to the home and family. The family became the place of warmth, tenderness, and morality in contrast to a world of commerce and competition, especially as society became more industrialized. It became a place where protection was offered.

The idea of family as fulfillment emerged in the later part of the 20th century as expectations increased for individual family **roles** as well as the home and family environment. For example, more intensive parenting to raise well-developed children, became more idealized and seen as fulfilling for parents. In addition, the family as a whole was not seen just as an escape from the harsh world, but also a place for enjoyment, creating meaning, and rejuvenation.

The family as encumbrance recognizes the ways in which the family ideals encompass responsibilities, effort, and stagnation. Monogamous marriage and parenting can be monotonous. This can get in the way of self-actualization and freedom to have the fullest experience of self. While both the family as fulfillment and as encumbrance incorporate the societal ideals of reaching one's full potential, they represent two differing ways that the family can be viewed and experienced.

1.2.4.2 The Private and Public Functions of Families

Sociologist Andrew Cherlin uses the lens of private and public functions to view families. Notably, American society today is more concerned with the private function of families, which focuses on the intimate relationships of family members. Being a part of a loving relationship that will last forever, or an indefinite amount of time, is seen as a core part of being a family member (Cherlin, 2016).

In the past, and today in other **culture**s and countries, families focused more on the public function, such as the production of children, who could contribute both to family well-being, but also to society. This perspective is similar to what would be called **public goods** (or the products produced and used by the public) in an economic model. The most common public good in American families are children, but caring for elderly or differently-abled adults with disabilities could also be considered as producing a public good. Volunteering and contributing to places of worship, charitable organizations, and other not-for-profit agencies is another way to perform the public function.

As public institutions, families support, contribute to, and benefit from the overall **social structure**, which describes the organization of institutions within a society and affects the ways individuals and families interact. Although our society currently focuses on the private function, families implicitly perform both; these functions are complementary to one another. In this text we will raise awareness of the public function.

The focus on the private function of families and on self-actualization as an important part of life may relate to the United States' identity as an **individualistic society** (Morin, 2019). In America, there is a focus on what individuals can achieve, with value placed on accomplishments that are gained without the support of society.

Many other countries have **collectivist societies** (Psychology Wiki, 2019) which emphasize social support for all, so that all members of the group are able to meet their goals and needs.

1.2.4.3 Want to Learn More?

- Delve into additional data and read more about how this affects families, read "If You're Over 50, Chances Are the Decision to Leave a Job Won't be Yours," a data analysis by ProPublica and the Urban Institute.

1.2.5 Licenses and Attributions for The Family: A Socially Constructed Idea

1.2.5.1 Open Content, Original

1.2.5.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

1.2.5.3 All Rights Reserved Content

1.2.6 References

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Collectivist and individualist cultures | Psychology Wiki | Fandom. Retrieved December 29, 2019, from https://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Collectivist_and_individualist_cultures –

Image Description for Figure 1.5:

For children, growing diversity in family living arrangements (1960, 1980, and 2014)

Bar chart visualizing the data in the following table:

Family Structure	**1960**	**1980**	**2014**
Two parents, first marriage	73%	61%	46%
Two parents remarried	14%	16%	15%
Single parent	9%	19%	26%
No parent	4%	4%	5%
Cohabiting parent	N/A	N/A	7%

Notes: Data regarding cohabitation are not available for 1960 and 1980. In those years, children with cohabiting parents are included under "single parent."

Data source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census and 2014 American Community Survey (IPUMS). https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/12/17/1-the-american-family-today/

Designed by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

[Return to Figure 1.5]

Image Description for Figure 1.6:

Median Age at First Marriage: 1890 – 2022

Line chart from the US Census Bureau shows age at first marriage.This dipped down from 26 for men and 22 for women in 1890 to about 20 for women and 22 for men in the 1950s and '60s. The lines then rise quickly to 2020, when there is again a slight dip downwards. In 2022, the median age of first marriage was about 30 for men and 28 for women.

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1890-1940, and Current Population Survey, Annual Economics Supplements, 1947-2022. Note: Starting in 2019, estimates for marriage now include same-sex married couples.

[Return to Figure 1.6]

Image Description for Figure 1.7:

Marriage and Divorce Rates, United States, 1990-2020

Rate per 1,000 total population. Bar chart of marriage and divorce rates.

Data table:

Year	Marriage Rate	Divorce Rate
1990	9.8	4.7
1995	8.9	4.4
2000	8.2	4.0
2005	7.6	3.6
2010	6.8	3.6
2015	6.9	3.1
2020	5.1	2.3

Data sources:

National marriage and divorce rate trends for 2000-2020 (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage-divorce.htm) and Monthly Vital Statistics Reports (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/mvsr.htm). Recent data are provisional. See CDC sources for full notes.

Design by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. Open Oregon Educational Resources.

[Return to Figure 1.7]

Image Description for Figure 1.9:

People in the U.S. Living in Multigenerational Family Households Quadrupled Between 1971 and 2021

A bar chart shows that the number of people living in multigenerational households (represented in millions) increased steadily from around 15 million in 1971 to 60 million in 2021.

Notes:

Data are represented in ten year intervals. Multigenerational households include at least two generations of adults mainly 25 and older or grandparents and grandchildren younger than 25.

Data source:

"Financial Issues Top the List of Reasons U.S. Adults Live in Multigenerational Homes," Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) data files for 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021(IPUMS).

Design by Michaela Willi Hooper and Elizabeth Pearce, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

[Return to Figure 1.9]

1.3 A HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR TODAY'S FAMILIES

"Stabbing Conviction Upheld," the headline said. In January 2010, the North Carolina Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of a man who had attempted to kill his wife in December 2007 by stabbing her repeatedly in the face and back with a butcher knife. The victim was on her way to deliver Christmas presents to her parents, but her husband attacked her because he thought she was having an affair. With a sentence of almost 21 years, the husband is due to be released from prison 3 days before Christmas in 2027 (Schulman, 2010).

Once upon a time, domestic violence did not exist, or so the popular television shows and movies of past decades would have us believe. Neither did single-parent households, **gay** couples, interracial couples, mothers working outside the home, couples deciding not to have children, or other family forms and situations that are increasingly common today. Domestic violence existed, of course, but it was not something that television shows and other popular media depicted back then. Other family forms and situations also existed and have become more visible, more accepted, and perhaps more common today.

1.3.1 The "Nostalgia Trap"

In contrast to idealized images of the past, we now hear that parents are too busy working at their jobs to raise their kids properly. We hear of domestic violence like the sad story from North Carolina described at the start of this page. We hear of kids living without fathers because their parents either are divorced or never were married in the first place. We hear of young people having babies, using drugs, and/or committing violence.

We hear that the breakdown of the **nuclear family**, the entrance of women into the labor force, and the growth of single-parent households are responsible for these problems. Some observers urge women to work only part time or not at all so they can spend more time with their children. Some yearn wistfully for a return to the 1950s, when everything seemed so much easier and better. Children had what they needed back then: one parent to earn the money, and another parent to take care of them full time until they started kindergarten, when this parent would be there for them when they came home from school.

Families have indeed changed, but this yearning for the 1950s falls into the "nostalgia trap" (Coontz, 2000.) The 1950s television shows did depict what *some* families were like back then, but they failed to show what many other families were like. Moreover, the changes in families since that time have probably not had the harmful effects that many observers allege. It is more likely that the challenges that many families face today have more to do with economic change, increasing levels of poverty, and systemic racism, sexism, and other "isms."

Much of this text focuses on uncovering those systemic forces that interact with family life. In fact, historical and cross-cultural evidence suggests that the *Leave It to Beaver*–style family of the 1950s was a relatively recent and atypical phenomenon and that, given equitable access to resources, many other types of families can thrive just as well as the 1950s television families did.

1.3.2 Defining Family

Many family forms exist in the United States and throughout the world. When we try to define the word "family," we realize just how slippery of a concept it is.

Does family mean those who are blood related? This excludes stepparents and adopted children. It also denies the existence of chosen family, or non-blood related people that one considers to be part of one's family.

Does family mean a **nuclear family** (composed of legally-married parents and their children), as is often thought of in the contemporary United States? This excludes extended kin—or family members such as uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, nephews, and nieces. It also excludes single parents, the unmarried, and those couples who do not have children. Or does family denote a common household characterized by economic cooperation?

1.3.2.1 Living Apart

Traditional definitions of families exclude those who consider each other family but cannot or do not live in the same household, oftentimes for economic reasons. This includes **transnational families**—for example, South or Central American parents leaving their country of origin to make wages in the United States and send them back to their families. **Transnational families** are common in the United States, partly because immigration laws have historically limited immigration to people who can obtain employment, and families are divided temporarily or permanently. The Great Recession (2009-2014) also separated families, sometimes across the nation and sometimes between nations.

Other families who live apart also include families with a member who is incarcerated. People who are imprisoned represent a significant portion of the population in the United States. Although the rate of prison incarceration has slowly been falling since 2008, the United States incarcerates a larger share of its own population than any other country (Gramlich, J. 2021).

The population of incarcerated people includes parents of children: "An estimated 809,800 prisoners of the 1,518,535 held in the nation's prisons at midyear 2007 were parents of children under age 18. Parents held in the nation's prisons — 52 percent of state inmates and 63 percent of federal inmates — reported having an estimated 1,706,600 minor children, accounting for 2.3 percent of the U.S. resident population under age 18"

(Sabol and West, 2010). That means that more than two percent of children in the United States have a parent incarcerated.

1.3.2.2 Constrictive Definitions

While it can be desirable to develop criteria for a definition, these criteria deny the importance and existence of what Kath Weston (1991) has labeled "chosen families," or how queers, **gay** men, and **lesbian**s who are ostracized from their families of origin form **kinship** ties with close friends. The diversity of family formations across time and place tells us that the definition of a "universal 'family' tends to favor specific family traits and to devalue others. It reproduces an ideology of 'the family' that obscures the diversity and reality of family experiences(Gerstel, 2003).

What is the dominant ideology of the family in the United States? How did the family formation that this dominant ideology rests upon come to be the normative family model?

The dominant ideology of what constitutes a family in the United States recognizes a very class- and race-specific type of gendered family formation (Figure 1.12). This family formation has been labeled the Standard North American Family (SNAF) and is defined as:

> a conception of the family as a legally married couple sharing a household. The adult male is in paid employment; his earnings provide the economic basis of the family-household. The adult female may also earn an income, but her primary responsibility is to the care of the husband, household, and children. Adult male and female may be parents (in whatever legal sense) of children also resident in the household (Smith 1993).

Figure 1.12. Defining families with a "family ideal" is harmful to other families and to the social structure that supports families.

When we put the SNAF into a historical perspective, we are able to see how this dominant family formation is neither natural nor outside of politics and processes of race, class, and gender in**equality**. The SNAF originated in the 19th century with the separation between work and family,and was occasioned by the rise of industrial capitalism (Cott, 2000 and Coontz, 2005).

1.3.3 Pre-Industrial Period

The industrial **economy** evolved in the United States between 1750 and 1850. Prior to an **economy** based on the creation of commodities in urban factories, the family was primarily an agricultural work unit—there was no separation between work and home. People in foraging societies, sometimes called hunter-gatherer groups, probably lived in small groups composed of several nuclear families. These groupings helped ensure that enough food would be found for everyone to eat.

While men tended to hunt and women tended to gather food and take care of the children, both sexes' activities were considered equally important for a family's survival. Many Native American societies were matriarchal in nature.

Plant food and livestock were abundant, and families' wealth and well-being depended on fertile land and the size of herds. Because men were more involved than women in herding, they acquired more authority in families, and families became more patriarchal than previously (Quale, 1992). Still, families continued to be the primary economic unit of society until industrialization.Colonization of Native people altered family structure via the emphasis on patriarchy. The **nuclear family** that was so popular on television shows during the 1950s remains common today, but it was certainly less common during the pre-industrial period (Figure 1.13).

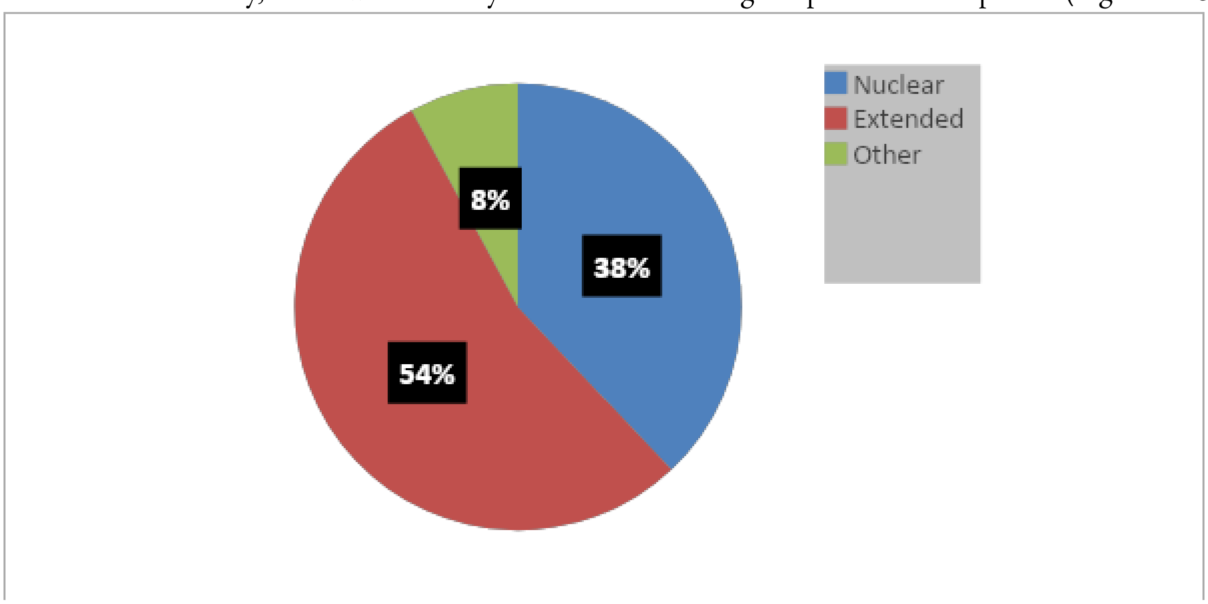

Figure 1.13. Kinds of Families in Preindustrial Societies. Source: Data from Standard Cross-Cultural Sample.

1.3.3.1 Colonization

Colonization refers to two structural activities in the United States. The first was the colonization of North America by European countries attempting to increase their power and wealth. This period ended with the incorporation of the thirteen existing colonies into the United States of America, following the **American Revolution**ary War, sometimes called the War for Independence, which ended in 1783.

Colonization also refers to the actions that the colonies, and then the newly incorporated states, took to increase their power, influence, and wealth. This included moving Native Americans off of their home lands to less fertile areas, creating boarding schools for their children that broke up families and destroyed Native languages and **culture**. In addition, colonists enslaved African people who were brought to this country against their will, treating them as objects, and separating families. While these activities occurred prior to the incorporation of the United States, the new legal status facilitated the institutionalization of these supremacist actions.

During this time, nomadic Native American groups had relatively small nuclear families, while groups that were more stationary had larger extended families; in either type of society, though, "a much larger network of marital alliances and kin obligations [meant that]… no single family was forced to go it alone" (Coontz, 1995). The U.S. institution of legalized slavery, which lasted from the country's founding until 1865, made it difficult for enslaved African Americans to maintain nuclear families. Slave owners frequently sold children and broke apart families to increase their profits. People who were enslaved adapted by developing extended families, adopting orphans, and taking in other people not related by blood or marriage.

1.3.4 Industrialization

With the rise of industrial capitalism between 1750 and 1850, working class families and families of color (who had been denied access to union jobs or were still enslaved, maintaining their poverty or working-class status) needed to have all the adults, and children as well, go to work. The majority of family members—including children and women—worked in factories, or sometimes in domestic labor serving middle-class and wealthy families.

Middle-class families who had inherited property and wealth—the vast majority of whom were white—did not need all the members of their families to work. They were able to pay for their homes, hire house servants, maids (who were primarily African American, or immigrant women of color) and tutors, and send their children to private educational institutions with the salary of the breadwinning father, who provided the financial means for himself and his family. Also sometimes referred to as "family wage jobs", breadwinning jobs that could support an entire family were more common during this time period than they are now.

Thus, the gendered division of labor—wherein women perform unpaid care-work within the home and men are salaried or wage-earning breadwinners—that is often assumed to be a natural, given way of family life originated due to relatively recent economic changes that privileged middle-class, white families.

During industrialization, people began to move into cities to be near factories. A new division of labor emerged in many families: largely, men worked in factories and elsewhere outside the home, while women stayed at home to take care of children and do housework, including the production of clothing, bread, and other necessities, for which they were paid nothing (Gottlieb, 1993). For this reason, men's incomes increased their patriarchal hold over their families.

In some families, however, women continued to work outside the home. Economic necessity dictated this: because families now had to buy much of their food and other products instead of producing them themselves, the standard of living actually declined for many families.

This false split between the publicly-oriented, working father and the privately-oriented domestic mother produced the ideologies of separate spheres and the cult of domesticity, which celebrated women's **roles** as mother and homemaker. The ideology of separate spheres held that women and men were distinctly different creatures, with different natures and therefore suited for different activities. Masculinity was equated with breadwinning, and femininity was equated with homemaking (Figure 1.14).

Figure 1.14. The idealized White middle class woman equated domesticity with femininity, but failed to account for the often immigrant, Black, or other marginalized people who were most often servants or helpers in middle-class homes.

Likewise, the cult of domesticity was an ideology about white womanhood that held that white women were **asexual**, pure, moral beings properly located in the private sphere of the household. Importantly, this ideology was applied to all women as a measure of womanhood. The effects of this ideology were to systematically deny working-class white women and women of color access to the category of "women," because these women had to work and earn wages to support their families. White working-class women and women of color had access to the public sphere in ways white middle-class women did not, but they also had to work in poorly paid jobs and were thought to be less than true women.

Furthermore, during this period, coverture laws defined white women who were married to be legally defined as the property of their husband. Upon marriage, women's legal personhood was dissolved into that of the husband. They could not own property, sign or make legal documents, and any wages they made had to be turned over to their husbands. Thus, even though they did not have to work in factories or the fields of plantations, white middle-class women were systematically denied rights and personhood under coverture. In this way, white middle-class women had a degree of material wealth and symbolic status as pure, moral beings, but at the cost of submission to their husbands and lack of legal personhood.

1.3.5 Early and Mid-Twentieth Century

Medical, automotive and technical advances led to many women entering the workforce in the 1920s primarily in office jobs, and the Great Depression of the 1930s led even more women to work outside the home. During the 1940s, a shortage of men in shipyards, factories, and other workplaces because of World War II led to a national call for women to join the labor force to support the war effort and the national **economy**. They did so in large numbers, and many continued to work after the war ended.

One of the most iconic images from WWII was Rosie the Riveter, which came from an ad campaign to recruit women into jobs in the defense industry during the war (Figure 1.15). During World War II, many women served in the military, and many other women joined the labor force to support the war effort and the national **economy**.

Figure 1.15. This popular poster exemplifies the power that women experienced and demonstrated during World War II.

But as men came home from Europe and Japan, books, magazines, and newspapers exhorted women to have babies, and babies they did have: people got married at younger ages and the birth rate soared, resulting in the now famous baby boom generation. Meanwhile, divorce rates dropped. The national **economy** thrived as auto and other factory jobs multiplied, and many families for the first time could dream of owning their own homes. Suburbs sprang up, and many families –especially white middle-class families — moved to them. Many white, middle-class families during the 1950s did indeed fit the*Leave It to Beaver* model of the breadwinner-homemaker suburban **nuclear family** (Skolnick, 1991.).

Even so, less than 60% of American children during the 1950s lived in breadwinner-homemaker nuclear families (Coontz, 2000). Moreover, many lived in poverty, as the poverty rate then was almost twice as high as it is today. Teenage pregnancy rates were about twice as high as today, even if most pregnant teens were already married or decided to get married because of the pregnancy. Although not as publicly known back then, alcoholism and violence in families were common. Historians have found that many women in this era were unhappy with their homemaker **roles**, suffering from what was called the "feminine mystique", that women could and should be satisfied in the **roles** of wife, homemaker, and mother (Friedan, 1963.)

In the 1970s, the **economy** finally worsened. Home prices and college tuition soared much faster than family incomes, and women began to enter the labor force as much out of economic necessity as out of simple desire for fulfillment. More than 60% of married women with children under 6 years of age were in the labor force, compared to less than 19% in 1960 (Coontz, 1997). Working mothers were no longer a rarity.

Postmodernism emerged as a theory that explains changing behavior in the late twentieth century. The **postmodern theory** emphasizes individuality and choice. When this is applied to family life we can see that the majority of families in the United States do not fit on particular structure. The multiple and numerous differences in the ways in which people structure their families today can be called postmodern families (Stacey, 1998.)

In sum, the cross-cultural and historical record shows that many types of families and family arrangements have existed. Two themes relevant to contemporary life emerge from our review of this record. First, although nuclear families and extended families with a nuclear core have dominated social life, many children throughout history have not lived in nuclear families because of the death of a parent, divorce or birth to unwed parents. The few societies that have not featured nuclear families have succeeded in socializing their children and in accomplishing the other functions that nuclear families serve. In the United States, the **nuclear family** has historically been the norm, but, again, many children have been raised in stepfamilies or by one parent.

Second, the **nuclear family** model popularized in the 1950s, in which the male was the breadwinner and the female the homemaker, must be considered a blip in U.S. history rather than a long-term model. At least up to the beginning of industrialization and, for many families, after industrialization, women as well as men worked to sustain the family.

Breadwinner-homemaker families did increase during the 1950s and have decreased since, but their appearance during that decade was more of a historical aberration than a historical norm. "American families always have been diverse, and the male breadwinner-female homemaker, nuclear ideal that most people associate with 'the' traditional family has predominated for only a small portion of our history."(Coontz, 1995.) It can be said that rather than thinking of the 1950's as the last era of family normality, it is actually the 1950's that deviate from the norm of diverse families over time (Skolnick, 1991.)

1.3.6 How Policies Define Family

The historical, dominant ideology of the SNAF is reinforced by present day law and social policy. For example, when **gay** men and **lesbian**s have children they often rely on adoption or assisted reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilization or surrogacy (where a woman is contracted to carry a child to term for someone else), among other methods. Since laws in most states assume that blood-ties between mother and child supersede non-biological family relations, **gay** men and **lesbian**s who seek to have children and families face barriers. The law embodies the assumptions of the conventional **nuclear family**, which does not match the reality of many families in the United States today.

Social policies often assume that the nuclear heterosexual family is not only a superior family structure, but that its promotion is a substitute for policies that would seek to reduce poverty. For instance, both the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama have promoted marriage and the **nuclear family** as a poverty reduction policy. These programs have targeted poor families of color, in particular. In The Healthy Marriages Initiative of 2004, President Bush pledged $1.5 billion to programs aimed at "Marriage education, marriage skills training, public advertising campaigns, high school education on the value of marriage and marriage mentoring programs...activities promoting fatherhood, such as counseling, mentoring, marriage education, enhancing relationship skills, parenting, and activities to foster economic stability" (US Department of Health and Human Services 2009).

Such policies ignore the historical, structural sources of racialized poverty and blame the victims of systemic classism and racism for problems that they did not create. As the history of the SNAF shows, the normative family model is based on a white middle-class model—one that a majority of families in the United States do not fit or necessarily want to fit.

1.3.7 Licenses and Attributions for A Historical Context for Today's Families

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1.4 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENCE

In this section we will start by exploring the complexities of social identities. Then we will analyze the ways the socially constructed differences contribute to the ways that individuals and families experience power, privilege, **discrimination** and oppression.

1.4.1 Social Identities

Families are made up of individuals and each individual possesses a unique **social identity** (Figure 1.16). An **identity** consists of the combination of individual characteristics, **social characteristics** or identities, **roles**, and relationships with which a person identifies. Let's break down each of those aspects of **social identity**.

1. **Individual characteristics** are integral to a person's values, beliefs, and motivations.
2. **Social characteristics or social identities** can be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Sex, gender, race, **ethnicity**, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion are all **social characteristics**.
3. **Roles and relationships** indicate the behaviors and patterns utilized, such as parent, partner, sibling, employee, employer, etc.

Figure 1.16. Families are made up of individuals who share some aspects of identity, but also have separate identities.

The **Social Identity** Wheel in Figure 1.17 includes some common categories for **social characteristics** in the middle oval. When it comes to **social identity**, each of us gets to determine our own. That means we determine which of our **social characteristics**, **roles**, and group memberships are most important to our own identities. While each of us gets to determine our own **social identity**, it is important to note that others may identify us differently than we identify ourselves. Our most notable physical aspects may signal something different than our personal lived experience.

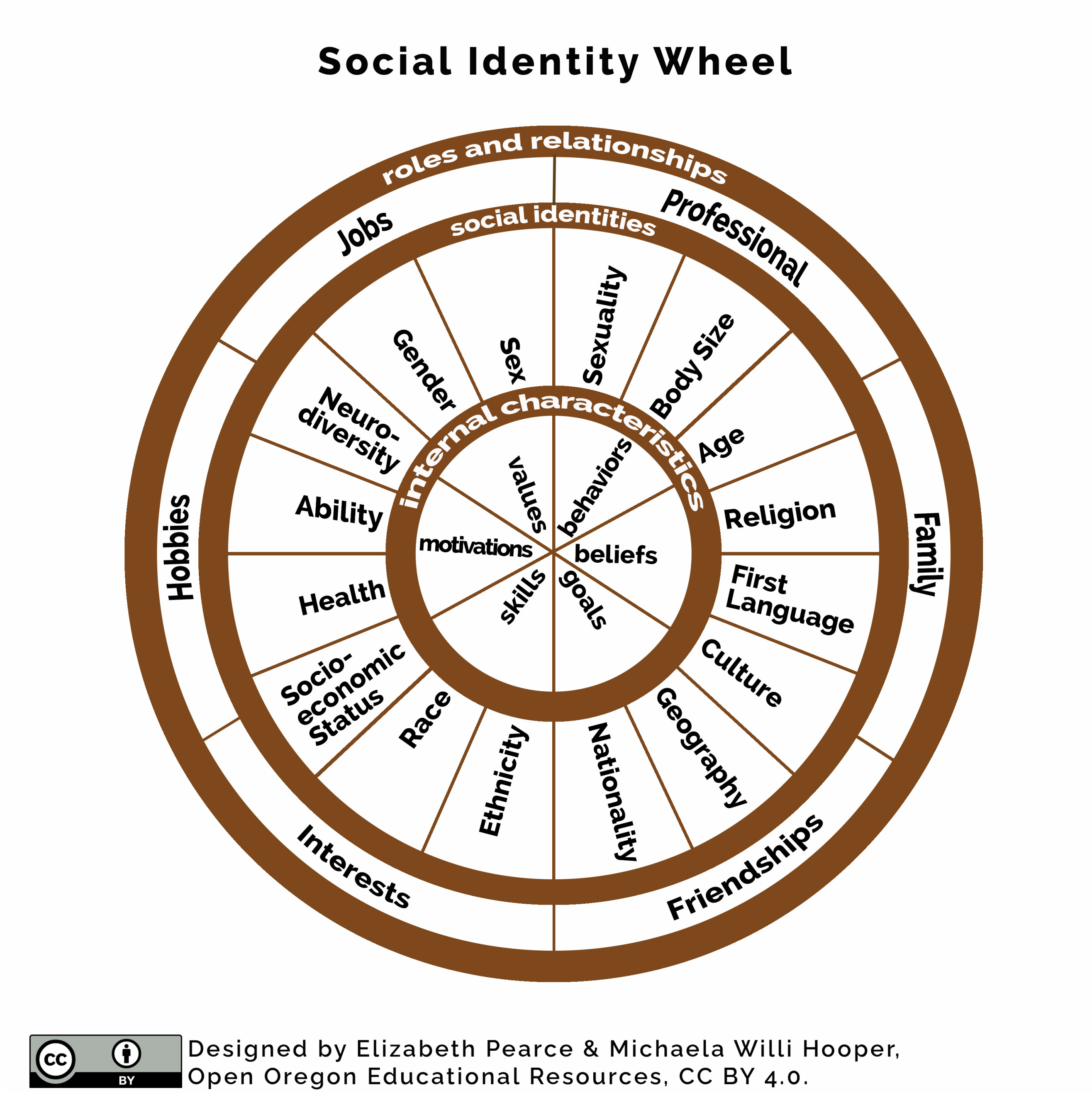

Figure 1.17. **Social identity** wheel that emphasizes the **social characteristics** aspects of one's **social identity**. Figure 1.17 Image Description

For example, in this video about **cultural humility** (which will be defined and discussed in the next section) Dr. Melanie Tervalon describes her identity as an African American woman, the difference between how she sees herself and how others see her, and the right that each of us has to our own **social identity** (Figure 1.18).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=303#oembed-1

Figure 1.18. **Cultural Humility** Edited [YouTube Video]. **Cultural humility** involves listening to others about how they define themselves and what their experiences have been.

The founders of Mixed in America (MIA), whose mission is to empower the Mixed community and heal Mixed identity, are two multiracial activists, Jazmine Jarvis and Meagan Kimberly Smith. This is what they had to say about the expression of **social identity** on Taylor Nolan's podcast, Let's Talk About It: "We wanna put the power back in the person's hands, so that they can express in a way that makes them feel authentic.(Nolan, 2020)"

1.4.2 The Social Construction of Difference

Social identities can help us understand the **social construction of difference,** which is when hierarchical value is assigned to perceived differences between socially constructed ideas. In the process of forming our own social identities, we connect most easily to people who share the same group membership(s) that we do. According to the **Social Identity** Theory formulated by Henri Tajfel, we see people who are members of different groups as "others" (McLeod, 2019). In general, we tend to be drawn to others who are more similar to ourselves, whether by appearance or related to other **social characteristics**, such as age, ability, or sex. This, in combination with the likelihood of overestimating the similarities within groups and the differences between groups, contributes to the **social construction of difference**.

1.4.3 The Social Construction of Race

The **social construction** of race deserves a special mention, since there is a broadly held public assumption that there are significant biological and genetic differences between human beings based on "race" (meaning observable physical differences such as skin color). In actuality, race is a social construct rather than a biological reality (Figure 1.19).

Figure 1.19. Observable physical differences such as skin color are not equivalent to race.

Scientists state that while genetic diversity exists, it does not divide along the racial lines that many humans notice (Gannon, 2016). In fact, members of the human "race" (all humans) share 99.9 % of their genes (National Human Genome Research Institute, 2011). Ancestry and geography likely influence which genes get "turned on" and expressed. What makes our understanding of race complicated is that we have behaved for centuries as if there is a biological difference. Because there has been a longstanding discriminatory practice against people of color, there are multiple impacts today (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

The reasons for doubting the biological basis for racial categories suggest that race is more of a social category than a biological one. Another way to say this is that race is a **social construction**, a concept that has no objective reality but rather is what people decide it is. In this view, race has no real existence other than what and how people think of it.

This understanding of race is reflected in the problems of placing people with multiracial backgrounds into any one racial category. Would you consider former President Obama, White, Black, or multiracial (Figure 1.20)? He had one Black parent and one White parent. As another example, the well-known golfer Tiger Woods was typically called an African American by the news media when he burst onto the golfing scene in the late 1990s, but in fact his ancestry is one-half Asian (divided evenly between Chinese and Thai), one-quarter White, one-eighth Native American, and only one-eighth African American (Williams-León & Nakashima, 2001).

Figure 1.20. Former President Barack Obama had an African father and a White mother. Although his ancestry is equally Black and White, Obama considers himself an African American, as do most Americans. In several Latin American nations, however, Obama would be considered White because of his White ancestry.

Historical examples of attempts to place people in racial categories further underscore the **social construction**ism of race. In the South during the time of slavery, the skin tone of the enslaved lightened over the years as babies were born from the union, often in the form of rape, of slave owners and other Whites with enslaved people. As it became difficult to tell who was "Black" and who was not, many court battles over people's racial identity occurred. People who were accused of having Black ancestry would go to court to prove they were White in order to avoid enslavement or other problems (Staples, 1988).

Litigation over race continued long past the days of slavery. In a relatively recent example, Susie Guillory Phipps sued the Louisiana Bureau of Vital Records in the early 1980s to change her official race to White. Phipps was descended from a slave owner and an enslaved person and thereafter had only White ancestors. Despite this fact, she was called "Black" on her birth certificate because of a state law, echoing the "one-drop rule," that designated people as Black if their ancestry was at least 1/32 Black (meaning one of their great-great-great grandparents was Black). Phipps had always thought of herself as White and was surprised after seeing a copy of her birth certificate to discover she was officially Black because she had one Black ancestor about 150 years earlier. She lost her case, and the U.S. Supreme Court later refused to review it (Omi & Winant, 2015).

1.4.4 **Social Construction** of Other Social Identities, including Gender

It is important to note that the **social construction** of gender is another widely accepted concept. In other words, the differences that we attribute to the biological designation of female, male, or intersex are actually predominantly constructed by our societal beliefs, and not by biology. The recent broadening of gender identity and expression clearly demonstrates this concept.

Other identities are also constructed via societal agreement. Sexuality, ability, religion, **ethnicity**, age, and other identities may contain some physical parameters, and certainly contain meaning to the individuals that possess them. Critical to our study of families, however, is the understanding that society creates and reinforces **social construction** of these characteristics and those constructions favor some groups, discriminate against others, and generally impact the lives of families.

1.4.5 Intersectionality

Articulated by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), the concept of **intersectionality** identifies a mode of analysis integral to women, gender, and sexuality studies (Figure 1.21). Within intersectional frameworks, race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other aspects of identity are experienced simultaneously and the meanings of different aspects of identity are shaped by one another. In other words, notions of gender and the way a person's gender is interpreted by others are always impacted by notions of race and the way that person's race is interpreted.

For example, a person is never received as just a woman, but how that person is racialized impacts how the person is received as a woman. So, notions of blackness, brownness, and whiteness always influence gendered experience, and there is no experience of gender that is outside of an experience of race. In addition to race, gendered experience is also shaped by age, sexuality, class, and ability; likewise, the experience of race is impacted by gender, age, class, sexuality, and ability.

Figure 1.21. An idea expressed by many women of color, **intersectionality** was defined and articulated by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Understanding **intersectionality** requires a particular way of thinking (Figure 1.22). It is different from the ways in which many people imagine identities operate. An intersectional analysis of identity is distinct from **single-determinant identity models** which presume that one aspect of identity (say, gender) dictates one's access to or disenfranchisement from power.

Figure 1.22. An intersectional perspective examines how identities are related to each other in our own experiences and how the social structures of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability intersect for everyone.

An example of this idea is the concept of "global sisterhood," or the idea that all women across the globe share some basic common political interests, concerns, and needs (Morgan, 2016). If women in different locations did share common interests, it would make sense for them to unite on the basis of gender to fight for social changes on a global scale. Unfortunately, if the analysis of **social problem**s stops at gender, what is missed is an attention to how various cultural contexts shaped by race, religion, and access to resources may actually place some women's needs at cross-purposes to other women's needs. Therefore, this approach obscures the fact that women in different social and geographic locations face different problems.

Many White, middle-class women activists of the mid-20th century United States fought for freedom to work and legal parity with men. But this was not the major problem for women of color or working-class White women who had already been actively participating in the U.S. labor market as domestic workers, factory workers, and enslaved laborers since early colonial settlement. Campaigns for women's equal legal rights and access to the labor market at the international level are shaped by the experience and concerns of White American women. But women of the Global South, in particular, may have more pressing concerns: access to clean water, access to adequate health care, and safety from the physical and psychological harms of living in tyrannical, war-torn, or economically impoverished nations.

"Gender" is too often used simply and erroneously to mean "White women," while "race" too often connotes "Black men." An intersectional perspective examines how identities are related to each other in our own experiences and how the social structures of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability intersect for everyone. As opposed to single-determinant and additive models of identity, an intersectional approach develops a more sophisticated understanding of the world and how individuals in differently situated social groups experience differential access to both material and symbolic resources such as privilege.

1.4.6 Want to know more?

- Explore mixed racial and ethnic identities with Megan Kimberly Smith and Jazmine Jarvis on the website Mixed in America.
- Hear their full podcast interview with Taylor Nolan here.

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Image Description for Figure 1.17:

Visualization of ***Social Identity*** *Wheel*

A wheel with three rings divided into sections of attributes.

Inner ring: Internal Characteristics

- Values
- Beliefs
- Motivations
- Skills
- Behaviors
- Goals

Middle ring: Social Identities

- Nationality
- First Language
- Religion
- Ability
- Neurodiversity
- Health
- Body size
- Age
- Sex
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race
- **Culture**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Socioeconomic Status** (SES)
- Geography

Outer ring: **Roles** and Relationships

- Job
- Hobbies
- Family
- Friendships

- Professional
- Interests

[Return to Figure 1.9]

1.5 THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND FAMILIES

One of the most, if not the most, powerful **social institutions** in the United States is the government. It is important to note that in the United States, the federal government has three branches: the Congress, the Executive (President), and the Judicial or Court System. In addition, the Constitution recognizes the rights and responsibilities of state governments; counties and cities have governing structures as well. All of these structures legislate in ways that affect families, some directly and some indirectly. The United States is considered to be a Common Law country, meaning that laws are derived in three ways: legislation created by governing bodies; administrative rules and regulations; and decisions via judicial courts.

1.5.1 Family Formation and the Law

Most **family law** (including marriage, divorce, and adoption) is governed by the states. When there is a great deal of advocacy, unrest, **inequity**, and/or controversy, family-related matters rise to the federal level. Here are two relatively recent examples:

1. In 1958, Mildred Loving, a woman of color, and her White husband, Richard Loving, were sentenced to a year of prison for marrying each other, breaking Virginia's "Racial Integrity Act of 1924.", which supported the now outdated idea that separate races exist, and that interbreeding was problematic. The Lovings appealed their conviction in Virginia and eventually to the U.S. Supreme Court, who ruled in 1967 (***Loving v. Virginia***) that all laws banning interracial marriage were violations of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which made it illegal for individual states to restrict interracial marriage (Figure 1.23).

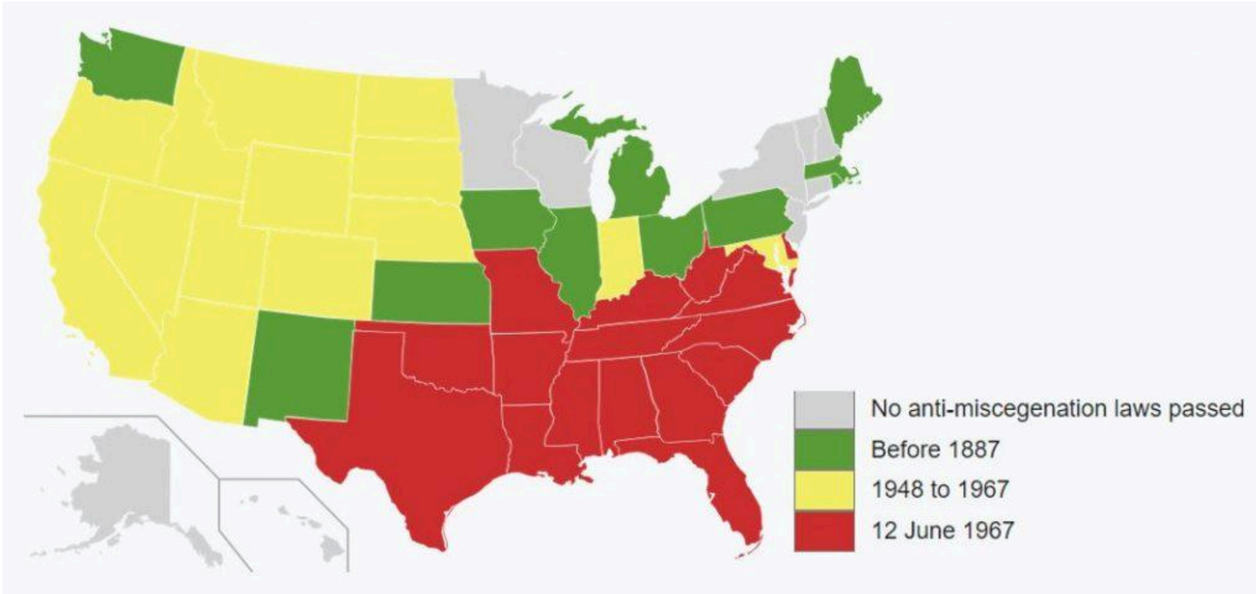

Figure 1.23. Dates of repeal of U.S. anti-miscegenation laws by state.

2. More recently, the ruling on ***Loving v. Virginia*** has been utilized to argue that laws banning same-sex marriages were also unconstitutional. Between 2012 and 2014, plaintiffs from multiple states filed in state courts to overturn state laws that criminalized same-sex marriages (Figure 1.24). While several district courts found these laws to be unconstitutional, one district court ruled in favor of the constitutionality of these laws. With the split between courts, the case rose to the level of the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 2015 that all states must perform and recognize marriages between same-sex couples (***Obergefell v. Hodges***).

Figure 1.24. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court decided, by a narrow margin, to legalize same-sex marriage.

Of note is that while the 1967 decision to legalize interracial marriage was a unanimous decision, the 2015 decision to legalize same-sex marriage was closely contested among the Court members and passed by a narrow 5-4 margin. How would you interpret the differentiated results of these decisions? It appears that there is still disagreement among the most powerful in this country about whether the language in the Fourteenth Amendment applies to marriage, **gay** and **lesbian** people, or neither. The Amendment states in part: "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

From ***Loving v. Virginia*** (1967) and ***Obergefell v. Hodges*** (2015), we can derive some understanding that governments influence whom we marry, how we divorce, and the legal relationships, rights, benefits, and taxes related to parenting, **kinship** structures, and children as noted in Figure 1.25. Critically we must note that the government places value on socially constructed differences such as race, **ethnicity**, and sexuality in ways that impact individual and family choice.

Figure 1.25 We may take for granted the rights of interracial couples to marry, such as John Legend who identifies as Black, and Chrissy Tiegen, who has a Thai mother and a White father, this right is only guaranteed through the 1967 Supreme Court ruling.

Laws are only one of the ways that government impacts family composition. Consider the federal government's role in taxing individuals and families and then providing redistribution of that money via benefits. Benefits such as food stamps, Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), K-12 school lunches, and financial aid for college are all distributed and regulated by the government. Tax credits, such as the **Child and Dependent Care Credit**, are driven by the government's definition related to that specific tax. Specifically, the government's definitions of eligibility and family structure impact who receives benefits and how much they receive.

If the government defines "family" or "dependent" in a specific way, does that impact how families form? For example, college financial aid does not count the income of a roommate or domestic partner in an applicant's income, but it does count the income of a spouse. Might this influence a college student's decision to marry? While this union is not criminalized as the previous two examples were, it is still impacted by the government's criteria related to distributing benefits. Some of us might decide to marry or not to marry based on the federal government's criteria for benefits or taxes.

1.5.2 Family Residence and **Kinship** Structure

While co-residence is considered by many family theorists to be a pillar of the definition of family, it is important to note that not all families live together. In fact, the U.S. government has played a role in separating family members from one another (immigrant and enslaved families in particular).

Sometimes the United States has been idealized as a "melting pot" or even a "salad bowl" of **culture**s and ethnicities. Many immigrate to this country to make a better life for themselves and their families. The borders of the United States were open until the late 1800s, when the first restrictive immigration law was enacted: the Page Act of 1875, which excluded Chinese women. This act specifically targeted Chinese workers who were providing needed labor in gold mines, agri**culture**, and most notably, building the transcontinental railroad (Figure 1.26). The Page Act was intended to discourage Chinese laborers from staying in the United States by separating them from their wives and families.

Figure 1.26. Since 1882, numerous U.S. immigration laws have targeted people from Asian and Latin American countries.

By 1882, Chinese men were excluded as well. Since that time, there have been numerous restrictive versions of immigration laws in the United States, most of them targeting people from Asian and Latin American countries.In combination with these laws, the United States has continued to rely on immigrant labor to perform less desirable and lower-paying jobs, specifically in agri**culture**, sanitation, service, and cleaning. There will be more discussion of the effects on these families in the food, employment, and housing chapters. Restrictive immigration laws and policies have contributed to the formation of involuntary **transnational families**, families whose members live on different continents and/or in different countries.

Another related idealization of the United States originates in the **Declaration of Independence**, which states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson et al., 1776). It is difficult to defend **equality** as a fundamental right, both when the document was written and today as well. The most obvious example is the enslavement of people from Africa, who were intentionally imprisoned and brought to this country for that purpose. The **Declaration of Independence** goes on to describe the institution of governments to secure these rights. But the government specifically secured the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for one group of people (Euro-Americans), enslaved another group (African Americans), and used legal means to oppress Native Americans and immigrants.

Slavery dramatically affected family formations and **kinship** structures. Because human beings were considered property, their family ties were not respected, which meant that children were habitually separated from parents, adults were not able to marry at will, and **common-law spouses** were removed from one another at the will of the "owner." Violence against women in the form of rape resulted in parenting relationships that were structured and controlled by the owners.

There is continued discussion about the effects on families who have descended from enslaved people. While families were forcibly separated, there was resistance to the severance of family ties. For example, children taken from their birth parents and sold were often assigned to adults in caregiving relationships. People forced together created families and used kin names such as "aunt", "uncle" and "cousin" to delineate familial relationships. Because enslaved people were often thrown in together with others who came from all over Africa with differing customs and traditions, it is difficult to know which family practices that survived came from original traditions and which came from active resistance to the disruption of their biological and chosen families (Taylor, 2000).

During the writing of the **Declaration of Independence** and the **American Revolution**, both free and enslaved African Americans played active **roles**. About 20% of enslaved people escaped and sought sanctuary among Native Americans or the British during the war. Many fought in the war, including Private Lemuel Haynes, who believed that the revolution should also be a war against slavery. He rebutted The **Declaration of Independence**, saying the document's principle of freedom should put an end to slavery. Thousands of Black fighters for freedom participated in the emancipation of the United States from Britain (Ortiz, 2018).

Dean Spade is a lawyer, writer, trans activist and Associate Professor of Law and the SEattle University School of Law. He is known for his work with **transgender**, intersex and gender non-conforming people who are low income and/or people of color, specially the founding of a non-profit law collective that provides free legal services to members of these groups. He thinks and writes critically about **intersectionality**, historical records, and the limits of law in *Normal Life*:

> Social movements engaged in resistance have given us a very different portrayal of the United States than what is taught in most elementary school classrooms and textbooks. The patriotic narrative delivered at school tells us a few key lies about U.S. law and politics: that the United States is a democracy in which law and policy derive from what majority of people think is best, that the United States used to be racist and sexist but is now fair and neutral thanks to changes in the law, and that if particular groups experience harm, they can appeal to the law for protection. Social movements have challenged this narrative, identifying the United States as a settler colony and a racial project, founded and built through genocide and enslavement. They have shown that the United States has always had laws that arrange people through categories of indigeneity, race, gender, ability, and national origin to produce populations with different levels of vulnerability to economic exploitation, violence, and poverty. (Spade, 2015)

1.5.3 Licenses and Attributions for The U.S. Government and Families

1.5.3.1 Open Content, Original

1.5.3.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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1.6 LOOKING AHEAD

Figure 1.27. Understanding how structures like institutions and societal views limit families can help us to strive for **equity**.

In this text we will discuss the ways in which **social institutions** and processes continue to reinforce the inequities created within the original formation of the United States. We will focus on the federal government and the tension that exists between federal powers and state's rights, which often leads to inequities among American families. We will examine other **social institutions** such as school systems, health care/insurance structures, the **economy**, businesses, and places of worship. We will look at the bi-directional nature of people and institutions: the ways that individuals and families organize to create social movements that influence existing practices and structures, and the ways those practices and structures influence people.

By examining the existing structures that limit families, as shown in Figure 1.27, we strive to be a part of the change that will transform our institutions, societal views, and processes in a way that increases and supports **equity** for all families.

1.6.1 Want to Learn More?

- To delve into additional data and read more about how this affects families, read "If You're Over 50, Chances Are the Decision to Leave a Job Won't be Yours," a data analysis by ProPublica and the Urban Institute.
- To understand more about the treatment of people who were enslaved, and strategies for maintaining White dominance, read Boundless U.S. History's chapter about treatment of enslaved people including sexual abuse.
- If you'd like to read more about the development of the Constitution, click here.
- To read a summary of the Supreme Court case that affected interractial marriage , click here.
- To learn more about how immigration laws affected families of people who immigrate to the United States

- Wikipedia provides a list of major immigration laws from 1790 through 2012 here.
- In this article in The Atlantic magazine, more recent laws and practices are discussed.

1.6.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

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1.7 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

1.7.1 Reflective Questions

1. How does the **social construction of difference** contrast with a **social construction**?
2. If you could add a third image in Figure 1.3, what television family would you choose and why?
3. How is **equity** different from **equality** and fairness?
4. What are the big demographic family trends in the United States, and how is your own family similar or different?
5. What is a **social identity**? Can you describe your own **social identity** via your **roles**, characteristics and groups?
6. How does **intersectionality** relate to **equity**?
7. How has the government affected the structure of **kinship** and family? Families with which social identities have been most affected by this social structure?

1.7.2 Key Terms

- **collectivist societies**: a society viewpoint that focuses on meeting the needs and goals of all members of a group, rather than focusing on individual successes.
- **comparative approach**: within the fields of anthropology and sociology, the act of

examining and contrasting **social process**es and institutions with a view to draw inferences and understand patterns.

- **demographics**: statistical data about particular groups and changes in trends within the overall population.
- **equity**: ensuring that people have what they need in order to have a healthy, successful life equal to others. Different from **equality** in that some may receive more help than others in order to be at the same level of success.
- **individualist societies**: emphasizes the needs and success of the individual over the needs of the whole community.
- **intersectionality**: an approach originally advanced by women of color that finds it critical to look at how identities and characteristics (such as **ethnicity**, race, gender, etc.) overlap and influence each other to create complex hierarchies of power and oppression.
- **kinship**: the social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships.
- **nuclear family**: a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.
- **social characteristics**: describes traits that may be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Examples include sex, gender, race, **ethnicity**, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion.
- **social construction**: meaning assigned to an object or event by mutual agreement (explicit or implicit) of the members of a society; can change over time and/or location.
- **social construction of difference**: hierarchical value is assigned to perceived differences between one socially constructed idea and another. Class, race, and other hierarchies based on **social identity** are **social constructions of difference**.
- **social identity**: a person's sense of self as defined by and in relation to the combination of **social characteristics**, **roles**, and groups to which they belong.
- **social structure**: the organization of institutions within society; this affects the ways individuals and families interact together.

1.7.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and

Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

1.7.3.1 Open Content, Original

1.8 CHAPTER 1 FEEDBACK SURVEY

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CHAPTER 2: STUDYING FAMILIES

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

2.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the value of studying families.
2. Describe the main methods of researching families.
3. Describe the dimensions of diversity and learning dispositions needed in order to understand the complexities of family life and **equity**.
4. Identify major theoretical perspectives including ecological systems theory, feminism, postmodernism, life course theory, **social exchange theory**, structural diversity framework, and symbolic interactionism,
5. Explain the levels of social stratification and its relationship to **equity**.
6. Define a **social problem** using an **equity** perspective.
7. Predict how studying families will impact your family and work life in the future.

2.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

2.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

2.2 HOW AND WHY WE STUDY FAMILIES

Families and **kinship** are of great interest to most, if not all, people. We all have a family, whether or not that family meets the socially constructed definition of family that is common in the United States, or our own definition of family.

2.2.1 Objective and Subjective Views

Sociologist Paul Amato separates family into objective and subjective definitions (Amato, 2019). The objective definitions are often provided by governmental structures. Employers, schools and agencies also rely on these definitions. Subjective definitions are both richer in context and more complicated to explain. This includes your own definition of family. When we are discussing **equity** and families we must attend to the subjective definitions. Because it is only by measuring the experiences of all families in the United States that we can really perceive how privilege, power, and **discrimination** affect families.

2.2.2 Using Your **Sociological Imagination**

We study families in order to better understand ourselves. When we can see our own family within the greater context of the experiences of other families and societal influences and trends, we understand ourselves better. Being able to relate your own experiences to these greater forces and interactions with the world is called the **sociological imagination**.

Sociologist Charles (C.) Wright Mills created this term in 1959 in order to help explain the ways that the field of sociology contributes to both everyday life and academia (Wright Mills, 1959). Throughout this course and this text you will be given opportunities to develop your **sociological imagination**. Ask yourself how your own family's experiences relate to the broad trends and events in this country. Where do you fit? Or find yourself as an outlier, differing from other members of your family, social group, or society?

2.2.3 Learning about Others

We also study families in order to better understand other families and society. In this way we recognize both the uniqueness of each family and the ways in which groups share identities and experiences. Let's say that you feel familiar with the experience of a rural student family, because you are a student and you live in a rural community. You may be able to speak very eloquently to the challenges students are facing today, and what living in a rural setting means about your access to education, medical care, healthy food, and transportation. At the same time, you cannot speak for all rural student families, because every family has a unique history and set of circumstances that affects their lives. So part of your job in studying families is to listen and understand how those other rural student families experience life.

Simultaneously we study families to understand the circumstances and experiences of families that we have never met. It's even more important to "listen" to and understand families whom we might see as different from us. You might easily see the differences between a family that has emigrated to the United States in the past ten years as compared to a family made up of people who have lived in the United States for several generations. Could you imagine living in a country that uses a different language than you grew up speaking? Or vice versa? While we might quickly identify those kinds of differences, we need to study more deeply to understand at least two other themes:

- how our families share similar love, goals, and needs; and
- how our families may be treated differently by the institutions and the society of the United States.

The greater our ability to comprehend each other's experiences, the more likely we will be able to better understand how families are similar in what they need and what they do, and what the differences are among what families experience in the United States.

2.2.4 Families and Social Structure

We study families in order to understand how they interact with other social structures within the United States. There are a variety of definitions for social structure, but they all include the idea of "structure," an ordered arrangement or pattern and the idea of "social" which denotes individual persons or groups, such as tribes, families, or religious organizations. In this text we will focus on the living, changing aspect of social structure, especially large social organizations that affect families such as the media, the government, and the health-care system.

We study families to make a difference in our everyday lives: to better understand our own families, our neighbors, and our friends. Studying families also helps us in our work lives. All of us will work with a diverse group of individuals, all of whom have families. Whether you are a teacher who influences the next generation, a business owner who coordinates benefits for your employees, a marketing director who designs advertising campaigns, a computer programmer who creates code, or a social worker who helps people solve life problems, you will both work alongside a group of diverse individuals who have families, and you will have clients, consumers, or customers who are members of this diverse country, the United States.

2.2.5 Licenses and Attributions for How and Why We Study Families

2.2.5.1 Open Content, Original

2.3 RESEARCH METHODS AND APPLICATIONS TO STUDYING FAMILIES

Much of what we know about families and **kinship** comes from research conducted in the United States and in other countries. In order to be a critical consumer of research, it is helpful to understand what methodologies are used, and what their strengths and limitations are. In addition, it is useful to be aware that there are myths and beliefs that we hold because society has created and reinforced them. When learning new information we must be prepared to question our own long-held beliefs in order to incorporate greater understanding.

Sound research is an essential tool for understanding families. Families are complex because there are multiple ways that families form and function. Every family is composed of unique individuals. Studies about families seek to learn about how families interact internally as well as with the greater social world. What are the effects of actions and environments on families? How do families treat each other within their structures? For example, the coronavirus pandemic impacted individuals and families in multiple ways, changing most people's health, social, work, school, and home environments. But how do we understand and quantify those changes? What impacts, dynamics, consequences, and solutions have families experienced? The table in Figure 2.1 briefly describes the major ways scholars gather information, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and a narrative of each method follows.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Survey	Many people can be included. If given to a random sample of the population, a survey's results can be generalized to the population.	Large surveys are expensive and time consuming. Although much information is gathered, this information is relatively superficial.
Experiments	If random assignment is used, experiments provide fairly convincing data on cause and effect.	Because experiments do not involve random samples of the population and most often involve college students, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Observation (field research)	Observational studies may provide rich, detailed information about the people who are observed.	Because observation studies do not involve random samples of the population, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Existing Data	Because existing data have already been gathered, the researcher does not have to spend time and money to gather data.	The data set that is being analyzed may not contain data on all the variables in which a sociologist is interested or may contain data on variables that are not measured in ways the sociologist prefers.

Figure 2.1. Advantages and disadvantages of sociological data collection methods.

2.3.1 Surveys

The **survey** is the most common method by which sociologists gather their data. The Gallup poll is perhaps the most well-known example of a survey and, like all surveys, gathers its data with the help of a questionnaire that is given to a group of respondents. The Gallup poll is an example of a survey conducted by a private organization, but sociologists do their own surveys, as does the government and many organizations in addition to Gallup. Many surveys are administered to respondents who are randomly chosen and thus constitute a random sample. In a random sample, everyone in the population (whether it be the whole U.S. population or just the population of a state or city, all the college students in a state or city or all the students at just one college, etc.) has the same chance of being included in the survey. The beauty of a random sample is that it allows us to generalize the results of the sample to the population from which the sample comes. This means that we can be fairly sure of the behavior and attitudes of the whole U.S. population by knowing the behavior and attitudes of just four hundred people randomly chosen from that population. Common survey formats include face-to-face, telephone surveys, and internet tools such as google forms and email.

Surveys are used in the study of families to gather information about the behavior and attitudes of people regarding their behaviors. For example, many surveys ask people about their use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs or about their experiences of being unemployed or in poor health. Many of the chapters in this book will present evidence gathered by surveys carried out by sociologists and other social scientists, various governmental agencies, and private research and public interest firms.

2.3.2 Experiments

Experiments are the primary form of research in the natural and physical sciences, but in the social sciences they are for the most part found only in psychology. Some sociologists still use experiments, however, and they remain a powerful tool of social research.

The major advantage of experiments, whether they are done in the natural and physical sciences or in the social sciences, is that the researcher can be fairly sure of a cause-and-effect relationship because of the way the experiment is set up. Although many different experimental designs exist, the typical experiment consists of an experimental group and a control group, with subjects randomly assigned to either group. The researcher does something to the experimental group that is not done to the control group. If the two groups differ later in some variable, then it is safe to say that the condition to which the experimental group was subjected was responsible for the difference that resulted. As you might imagine, ethical issues emerge rapidly when we think of human beings and family life as the subject of this type of experiment. What if an experiment denied or forbade prenatal care to pregnant women in the control group but provided and encouraged it to another group of pregnant women? So experiments, while useful, are not commonly used to study families.

2.3.3 Observational Studies

Observational research is a staple of sociology. Sociologists have a long history of observing people and social settings, and the result has been many rich descriptions and analyses of behavior in juvenile gangs, bars, urban street corners, and even whole communities.

Observational studies, also called field research, consist of both participant observation and nonparticipant observation. Their names describe how they differ. In participant observation, the researcher is part of the group that they are studying, spends time with the group, and might even live with people in the group.] In nonparticipant observation, the researcher observes a group of people but does not otherwise interact with them. If you went to your local shopping mall to observe, say, whether people walking with children looked happier than people without children, you would be engaging in nonparticipant observation.

Similar to experiments, observational studies cannot automatically be generalized to other settings or members of the population. But in many ways, they provide a richer account of people's lives than surveys do, and they remain an important method of research on **social problem**s.

2.3.4 Analysis and Synthesis of Existing Data

Sometimes sociologists do not gather their own data but instead analyze existing data that someone else has gathered. The U.S. Census Bureau, for example, gathers data on all kinds of areas relevant to the lives of Americans, and many sociologists analyze census data on such **social problem**s as poverty, unemployment, and illness. Sociologists and psychologists interested in crime and the criminal justice system may analyze data from court records, while medical researchers often analyze data from patient records at hospitals.

Analysis of existing data such as these is called **secondary data analysis**. Its advantage to sociologists is that someone else has already spent the time and money to gather the data. If one study does not contain all the data that the researcher needs, they may synthesize data from multiple studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to reach broader conclusions.

2.3.5 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Research can be qualitative, quantitative, or sometimes combine both kinds of analysis. **Qualitative research** deals with words and with meanings, whereas quantitative research deals with numbers and statistics. Both of these kinds of analyses are important for understanding families. For example, quantitative research can tell us how many, or what percentage of families studied, have participated in a **social process** such as marriage, divorce, or remarriage. Qualitative research can tell us how members of that family experienced the process: what emotional reactions did they have, what did it mean to them, and what other actions or behaviors they attribute to being involved in the specific **social process** (marriage, divorce, or remarriage.) Qualitative research is descriptive; quantitative research is measurable.

2.3.6 The Scientific Process and Objectivity

This section began by stressing the need for sound research in the study of **social problem**s. But what are the elements of sound research? At a minimum, such research should follow the rules of the **scientific process**:formulating hypotheses, making observations, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and modifying hypotheses. These steps help guarantee that research yields the most accurate, descriptive, and reliable conclusions possible.

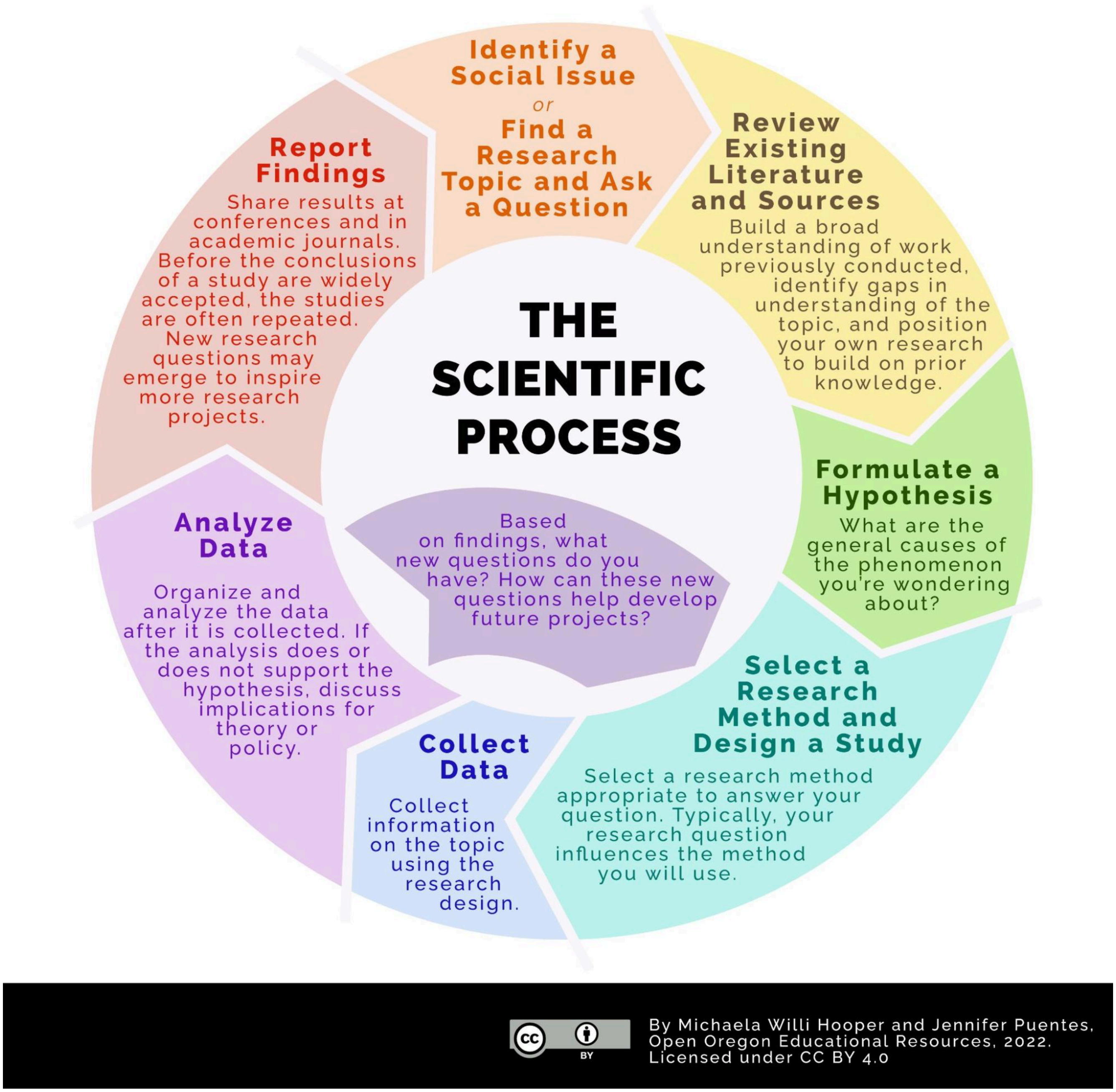

Figure 2.2 The scientific process is a way of thinking about and acting on ideas and theories.

An overriding principle of the scientific process is that research should be conducted as objectively as possible. Researchers are often passionate about their work, but they must take care not to let the findings they expect and even hope to uncover affect how they do their research. This in turn means that they must not conduct their research in a manner that helps achieve the results they expect or desire to find. Such bias can happen unconsciously, and the scientific process helps reduce the potential for this bias as much as possible.

2.3.7 Licenses and Attributions for Research Methods and Applications to Studying Families

2.3.7.1 Open Content, Original

2.3.7.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

2.3.8 References

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2.4 LEARNING ABOUT FAMILIES

One of the most important aspects of learning about families and **equity** is you, the learner. In order for your brain to change, to adapt, to assimilate new information you will need to work at it. Reading, writing, and discussing the material is not enough. It's a start, but the disposition that you bring to this experience will make a large impact on what you learn.

- Are you willing to set aside existing assumptions and ideas when you read something that doesn't make sense to you at first?
- Are you willing to question beliefs that may be ingrained in multiple generations of your own family or **kinship** group?
- Are you willing to be uncomfortable during this learning process?
- Will you work to "listen" to others that have different social identities than your own?

Dispositions that are open to trying out new ideas and ways of thinking will help you learn and your brain grow new understandings and neural pathways. We will talk about three learning dispositions here: **cognitive and emotional perspective-taking**, objectivity, and **cultural humility**.

2.4.1 Cognitive and Emotional Perspective-Taking

To understand the diversity of family experiences in the United States, students will need to practice "putting yourself in another person's shoes." Seeing that people have beliefs, values, emotions, and responses that can overlap with and differ from our own will expose the richness and depth of family life. It is important to note that we cannot always predict how we (or someone else!) will respond given a particular circumstance. Instead, it is our work as students to "listen," understand, and learn more about what families experience and how they function in the United States. In particular, it is critical to listen to those we perceive as belonging to different social groups than ourselves. By adopting an attitude of listening, rather than an attitude of judging, we will increase our knowledge base.

2.4.2 Objectivity and Humanity

Every human being has a unique set of characteristics, experiences, and beliefs. Part of what makes us human is the ability to think, reflect, and form conclusions based on our particular set of circumstances. This is likewise true of social scientists, the human beings who study other humans, our social groups, and interactions. We rely on empirical research, data collected and analyzed by social scientists, to learn about individuals and families. These scientists emerge from a variety of disciplines including anthropology, education, human development and family sciences, psychology, and sociology.

Sociologists embrace the research principle of **objectivity**, the act of setting aside their own beliefs and experiences in order to conduct unbiased study or analysis of their subjects. Creating objectivity is considered crucial to the scientific process which includes formulating a hypothesis that is then tested via the collection and analysis of information. At the same time, we must acknowledge that this method was created and validated almost exclusively by people of one gender and one race (male and European, or White) and there is room for refinement of this thinking.

The feminist perspective (described later in this chapter in "Theoretical Perspectives and Key Concepts" and the table in Figure 2.X) introduces some complexity to the idea of objectivity by emphasizing that in order to truly understand our social structure, researchers must acknowledge that every human being (themselves included) brings their own viewpoint based on their unique set of **social characteristics** to their work. The intersection of our gender, **ethnicity**, race, age, sexuality, ability, and other identities along with our own life experiences makes each of us unique. Scientists must understand their own perspective, or bias, in order to do their best to both recognize the impact of their own viewpoint and to attempt to set it aside while collecting and analyzing information.

2.4.3 Cultural Humility

Figure 2.3.Listening to other people is key to understanding them.

Cultural humility is the ability to remain open to learning about other **culture**s while acknowledging one's own lack of competence and recognizing power dynamics that impact the relationship (Figure 2.3). Within **cultural humility** it is important to engage in continuous self-reflection, recognize the impact of power dynamics on individuals and communities, embrace "not knowing," and commit to lifelong learning. This approach to diversity encourages a curious spirit and the ability to openly engage with others in the process of learning about a different **culture**. As a result, it is important to address power imbalances and develop meaningful relationships with community members in order to create positive change.

As our world becomes increasingly diverse and interconnected, understanding different **culture**s becomes crucial. Without a basic understanding of the beliefs and experiences of individuals, people can unintentionally contribute to prejudice and **discrimination** or negatively impact relationships and interactions. To understand cultural experiences, it is important to consider the context of **social identity**, history, and individual and community experiences with prejudice and **discrimination**. It is also important to acknowledge that our understanding of cultural differences evolves through an ongoing learning process (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

The next section includes dimensions of diversity that are related to **culture**. You will notice that many of these dimensions correspond with the **Social Identity** Wheel that was introduced in Chapter 1 of this text.

2.4.4 Dimensions of Diversity

Although it is impossible to discuss all of the dimensions of human diversity in this section, we present some common dimensions that will be discussed in this text. The authors also acknowledge the importance of **intersectionality**, which was described in Chapter 1 and the process of **cultural humility** in understanding diversity.

2.4.4.1 Culture

"**Culture** is something that unites people." –Anastasiya O., Russia

Culture is an important dimension of diversity for students to examine. In general, **culture** has been challenging to define, with modern definitions viewing **culture** as a dynamic concept that changes individuals and societies together over time. Further, **culture** in today's society refers to more than just cultural and ethnic groups but also includes racial groups, religious groups, sexual minority groups, socioeconomic groups, nation-states, and corporations.

While numerous definitions exist, the key components of **culture** include shared meanings and shared experiences by individuals in a group that are passed down over time with each generation. That is, **culture**s have shared beliefs, values, practices, definitions, and other elements that are expressed through family socialization, formal schooling, shared language, social **roles**, and norms for feeling, thinking, and acting (Cohen, 2009).

Culture can be examined at multiple ecological levels to understand its impact. This means that **culture** can influence the norms and practices of individuals, families, organizations, local communities, and the broader society. For example, cultural influences can have an impact on how members function and interact with one another. Further, **culture** should be understood within a broader context of power relationships, and how power is used and distributed (Trickett, 2011).

2.4.4.2 Race

Figure 2.4. Most genetic variation exists within racial groups rather than between groups.

While physical differences often are used to define race, in general, there is no consensus for this term. Typically, **race** has been defined using observable physical or biological criteria, such as skin color, hair color or texture, facial features, and so forth (Figure 2.4). However, these biological assumptions of race have been determined to be inaccurate and harmful by biologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and other scientists.

Research has proven no biological foundations to race and that human racial groups are more alike than different; in fact, most genetic variation exists within racial groups rather than between groups. Therefore, racial differences in areas such as academics or intelligence are not based on biological differences but are instead related to economic, historical, and social factors (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993).

Instead, race has been socially constructed and has different social and psychological meanings in many societies (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). In the US, people of color experience more racial prejudice and **discrimination** than White people. The meanings and definitions of race have also changed over time and are often driven by policies and laws (e.g., one-drop rule or laws). It can be concluded that although race is not based on biological differences, it has still fundamentally influenced our social structures and has harmed dark-skinned people in many ways.

2.4.4.3 In Focus: Is Race a Selected Identity?

Rachel Dolezal, also known as Nkechi Amare Diallo, was born to White parents with no known African ancestry. As a young adult, she became involved in civil rights, became a college instructor of Africana Studies, and began self-identifying as a Black woman. She even became president of the Spokane, Washington chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Figure 2.5. Definitions of race have also changed over time and are often driven by policies and laws.

She resigned from her position with the NAACP and was dismissed from her role as an instructor after information surfaced casting doubt upon her racial heritage. She later acknowledged that she was born to White parents but continued to insist that she strongly identifies as a Black woman.

2.4.4.4 **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity refers to one's **social identity** based on the **culture** of origin, ancestry, or affiliation with a cultural group (Pinderhughes, 1989). **Ethnicity** is not the same as nationality, which is a person's status of belonging to a specific nation by birth or citizenship. For example, an individual can be of Japanese **ethnicity** but British nationality because they were born in the United Kingdom. **Ethnicity** is defined by aspects of **subjective culture** such as customs, language, and social ties (Figure 2.6; Resnicow et al., 1999).

Figure 2.6. Asian Americans have roots in over 20 countries in Asia and India.

While ethnic groups are combined into broad categories for research or demographic purposes in the US, there are many ethnicities among the ones you may be familiar with. Latina/o/x or Hispanic may refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish, Dominican, or many other ancestries. Asian Americans have roots in over 20 countries in Asia and India, with the six largest Asian ethnic subgroups in the United States being the Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Japanese.

2.4.4.5 Origin and First Language

Origin refers to the geographical location where a person was born and spent (at least) their early years in. This includes regions of the United States, as well as other countries. A person's origin will impact the cultural norms that influence them during their early childhood development, or perhaps longer. In addition, it may mean that their first language is not English. **First language** refers to the language learned in early childhood.

This language may be learned in the home, in a childcare setting, and in greater society. Even within the United States, there are regional differences in language.

Origin and first language are closely tied to **culture** and **ethnicity**, but there are differentiations as well. For example, a Filipino person may have grown up in the Philippines, the mainland United States, or in Hawaii. In the Philippines, while the official languages are English and Filipino, there are 183 living languages, many of which are Indigenous. A person growing up there might speak one or more of these languages. A Filipino person growing up on the mainland of the United States would likely learn English, but may also use the Filipino language at home. A Filipino person growing up in Hawaii might be exposed to English, the Hawaiian language (although banned in 1898, there are still remnants), and the Filipino language. Because the Hawaiian language and Filipino language are from the same language family, there may be an additional crossover. As this simplified example illustrates, there is the possibility of great diversity both among and within people who share a similar origin or first language.

2.4.4.6 Gender and Sex

Gender refers to the socially constructed perceptions of what it means to be male or female in our society and how those genders may be reflected and interpreted by society. Gender is different from **sex**, which is a biological descriptor involving chromosomes and internal/external reproductive organs (Figure 2.7) that is typically assigned at birth. As a socially constructed concept, gender has magnified the perceived differences between females and males leading to limitations in attitudes, **roles**, and how **social institutions** are organized. For example, how do gender norms influence types of jobs viewed as appropriate or not appropriate for women or men? How are household or parenting responsibilities divided between men and women?

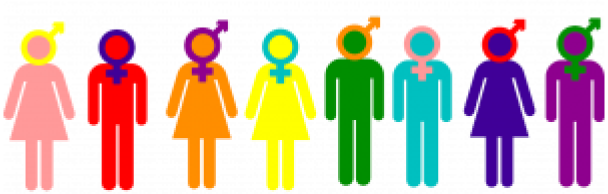

Figure 2.7. Gender identity is determined by the individual and may be different from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender is not just a demographic category but also influences gender norms, the distribution of power and resources, access to opportunities, and other important processes (Bond, 1999). For those who live outside of these traditional expectations for gender, the experience can be challenging. In general, the binary categories for sex, gender, gender identity, and so forth have received the most attention from both society and the research community, with only more attention to other gender identities (e.g., gender-neutral, **transgender**, **nonbinary**, and gender queer) in recent years (Kosciw et al., 2015).

But the attention to other gender identities is increasing, both academically and publicly. One example is the case of Nicole Maines challenging her elementary school's restroom policy, which resulted in a victory when the Maine Supreme Judicial Court ruled that she had been excluded from the restroom because of her **transgender** identity. While community psychologists are making efforts to conduct more research on the various gender identities on the gender spectrum, more research needs to continue in this area.

2.4.4.7 Age

Figure 2.8. Age describes the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult.

Age describes the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult (Figure 2.8). Power dynamics, relationships, physical and psychological health concerns, community participation, life satisfaction, and so forth can all vary for these different age groups (Cheng & Heller, 2009). Although the field has started to include aging issues in research, Cheng and Heller searched for publications on older adults in major Community Psychology journals and found that this segment of the population has been neglected (Cheng & Heller, 2009). Although the skills, values, and training of community psychologists would likely make a difference in the lives of older adults, the attitudes within our profession and society are current barriers.

2.4.4.8 Social Class

Figure 2.9. Social class can include a person's income or material wealth, educational status, occupational status, and/or housing status.

Like the other components of diversity, social class is socially constructed and can affect our choices and opportunities (Figure 2.9). **Social class** can include a person's income or material wealth, educational status, and/or occupational status. It can include assumptions about where a person belongs in society and indicate differences in power, privilege, economic opportunities and resources, and social capital. Social class and **culture** can also shape a person's worldview or understanding of the world; influencing how they feel, act, and fit in; and impacting the types of schools they attend, access to health care, or jobs they work at throughout life. The differences in norms, values, and practices between lower and upper social classes can also have impacts on well-being and health outcomes (Cohen, 2009).

2.4.4.9 Sexual Orientation

Figure 2.10. **Sexual orientation** is different from gender identity or gender expression.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's emotional, romantic, erotic, and spiritual attraction toward another in relation to their own sex or gender (Figure 2.10). The definition focuses on feelings rather than behaviors since individuals who identify with a minority **sexual orientation** experience significant stigma and oppression in our society (Flanders et al., 2016). **Sexual orientation** exists on a continuum or multiple continuums and crosses all dimensions of diversity (e.g., race, **ethnicity**, social class, ability, religion, etc.).

Sexual orientation is different from gender identity or gender expression. Over time, **gay**, **lesbian**, **asexual**, and **bisexual** identities have extended to other **sexual orientation**s such as **pansexual**, polysexual, and fluid, and increasingly more research is being conducted on these populations within the field of Community Psychology (Kosciw et al., 2015). As a historically marginalized and oppressed group with inadequate representation in the literature, sexual minority groups face a variety of problems and issues that necessitate further research. The empowering and participatory approaches and methods used in Community Psychology can be beneficial for research with sexual minority groups.

2.4.4.10 Ability/Disability

Disabilities refer to visible or hidden and temporary or permanent conditions that provide barriers or challenges, and impact individuals of every age and social group. Traditional views of disability follow a **medical model**, primarily explaining diagnoses and treatment models from a pathological perspective (Goodley & Lawthom, 2010). In this traditional approach, individuals diagnosed with a disability are often discussed as objects of study instead of complex individuals impacted by their environment. A **social model of ability**, which is the perspective of these authors, views diagnoses from a social and environmental perspective and considers multiple ecological levels. The experiences of individuals are strongly valued, and community-based participatory research is a valuable way to explore experiences while empowering members of a community with varying levels of ability/disability. Learn more by watching the Employment Choice for People with Severe Physical Disabilities video.

Figure 2.11. **Culture** may impact the diagnosis of a disability.

Culture must be considered when viewing ability from a social perspective (Goodley & Lawthom, 2010), and may impact whether or not certain behaviors are considered sufficient for inclusion in a diagnosis (Figure 2.11). For example, cultural differences in the assessment of "typical" development have impacted the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders in different countries. Further, diagnoses or symptoms can be culturally-specific, and **culture** may influence how symptoms are communicated. The experience of **culture** can significantly impact lived experience for individuals diagnosed with a disability.

It is important to consider how **intersectionality** impacts the experience of disability. For example, students of color and other underserved groups have a higher rate of diagnosis of learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, and intellectual disabilities (Artiles et ak,m 2010), which may be due to economic, historical, and social factors. Diagnosis must be considered as disabled youth are at a disadvantage, leading to more substantial disparities later in life.

2.4.5 Licenses and Attributions for Learning about Families

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2.5 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Elizabeth B. Pearce

In order to understand family life in the United States, it is important to identify the various levels of social stratification or **socioeconomic status**, which include a person, or family's, education level, income, career and overall social status. The first chapter of this text identified some of the differences that individuals and families experience based on gender, sex, sexuality, race, immigration status, and **ethnicity**. Here we will focus on what the definitions and meanings are of social classes.

Geologists also use the word "stratification" to describe the distinct vertical layers found in rock. Typically, society's layers, made of people, represent the uneven distribution of society's resources. Society views the people with more resources as the top layer of the social structure of stratification. Other groups of people, with fewer and fewer resources, represent the lower layers. An individual's place within this stratification is called **socioeconomic status** (SES).

Figure 2.12 Strata in rock illustrate social stratification. People are sorted, or layered, into levels of **socioeconomic status**.

Most people and institutions in the United States indicate that they value **equality**, a belief that everyone has an equal chance at success. In other words, hard work and talent—not inherited wealth, prejudicial treatment, institutional racism, or societal values—determine social mobility. This emphasis on choice, motivation, and self-effort perpetuates the American belief that people control their own social standing.

However, it is easy to see inequalities in social class. While inequalities exist between individuals, it's also important to be aware of larger social patterns. Sociologists look to see if individuals with similar backgrounds, group memberships, identities, and location in the country share the same social stratification. No individual, rich or poor, can be blamed for social inequalities, but all of us participate in a system where some rise and others fall. Most Americans believe the rising and falling is based on individual choices. But we will see how the structure of society affects a person's social standing and therefore is created and supported by society.

One key determinant of social standing is our parents. Parents tend to pass their social position on to their children. People inherit not only social standing but also the cultural norms, values, and beliefs that accompany a certain lifestyle. They share these with a network of friends and family members that provide resources and support. This is one of the reasons first-generation college students may not fare as well as other students, and that colleges and universities currently focus on supporting these students. They lack access to the resources and support commonly provided to those whose parents have gone to college.

Other determinants are found in a society's occupational structure. Teachers, for example, often have high levels of education but receive lower pay than other professions with high levels of education. Many believe that teaching is a noble profession, so teachers should do their jobs for love of their profession and the good of their students—not for money. Yet, the same attitude is not applied to professional athletes, executives, or those working in corporate world. Cultural attitudes and beliefs like these support and perpetuate social and economic inequalities.

2.5.1 Social Classes in the United States

Categorizing social class is a fluid science. Sociologists generally identify three levels of class in the United States: upper, middle, and lower class. Within each class, there are many subcategories. Wealth is the most significant way of distinguishing classes, because wealth can be transferred to one's children and perpetuate the class structure. One economist, J.D. Foster, defines the 20 percent of U.S. citizens' highest earners as "upper income," and the lower 20 percent as "lower income." The remaining 60 percent of the population make up the middle class (Mason 2010). With that distinction, economists can describe the range in annual household incomes for the middle-class, but they cannot show how the range of all incomes vary and how they change over time. For this reason, the Pew Center defines classes based on the median household income. The lower class includes those whose income is two-thirds of the national median, the middle class includes those whose income falls between two-thirds and twice the median, and the upper class includes those whose income is above twice the national median (Kochhar 2015).

One sociological perspective distinguishes the classes, in part, according to their relative power and control over their lives. Members of the upper class not only have power and control over their own lives, but their social status gives them power and control over others' lives. The middle class doesn't generally control other strata of society, but its members do exert control over their own lives. In contrast, the lower class has little control over their work or lives.Next we will explore the major divisions of U.S. social class and their key subcategories.

2.5.1.1 Upper Class

The upper class is considered the top, and only the powerful elite get to see the view from there. In the United States, people with extreme wealth make up one percent of the population, and they own roughly one-third of the country's wealth (Beeghley 2008).

Money provides not just access to material goods, but also access to a lot of power. As corporate leaders, members of the upper class make decisions that affect the job status of millions of people. As media owners, they influence the collective identity of the nation. They run the major network television stations, radio broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, and sports franchises. As board members of the most influential colleges and universities, they influence cultural attitudes and values. As philanthropists, they establish foundations to support social causes they believe in. As campaign contributors and legislation drivers, they fund political campaigns to sway policymakers, sometimes to protect their own economic interests and at other times to support or promote a cause.

2.5.1.2 The Middle Class

Many people consider themselves middle class, but there are differing ideas about what that means. People with annual incomes of $150,000 call themselves middle class, as do people who annually earn $30,000. That helps explain why, in the United States, the middle class is broken into upper and lower subcategories.

Lower-middle class members tend to complete a two-year associate's degrees from community or technical colleges or a four-year bachelor's degree. Upper-middle class people tend to continue on to postgraduate degrees. They've studied subjects such as business, management, law, or medicine.

Middle-class people work hard and live fairly comfortable lives. Upper-middle-class people tend to pursue careers, own their homes, and travel on vacation. Their children receive high-quality education and healthcare (Gilbert 2010). Families within the middle class may have access to some wealth, but also must work for an income to maintain this lifestyle.

In the lower middle class, people hold jobs supervised by members of the upper middle class. They fill technical, lower- level management or administrative support positions. Compared to lower-class work, lower-middle-class jobs carry more prestige and come with slightly higher paychecks. With these incomes, people can afford a decent, mainstream lifestyle, but they struggle to maintain it. They generally don't have enough income to build significant savings. In addition, their grip on class status is more precarious than those in the upper tiers of the class system.

2.5.1.3 The Lower Class

The lower class is also referred to as the working class. Just like the middle and upper classes, the lower class can be divided into subsets: the working class, the working poor, and the underclass. Compared to the lower middle class, people from the lower economic class have less formal education and earn smaller incomes. They work jobs that require less training or experience than middle-class occupations and often do routine tasks under close supervision.

Working-class people, the highest subcategory of the lower class, often land steady jobs. The work is hands-on and often physically demanding, such as landscaping, cooking, cleaning, or building.

Beneath the working class is the working poor. They have unskilled, low-paying employment. However, their jobs rarely offer benefits such as healthcare or retirement planning, and their positions are often seasonal or temporary. They work as migrant farm workers, housecleaners, and day laborers. Education is limited. Some lack a high school diploma.

How can people work full-time and still be poor? Even working full-time, millions of the working poor earn incomes too meager to support a family. The government requires employers pay a minimum wage that varies from state to state, and often leave individuals and families below the poverty line. In addition to low wages, the value of the wage has not kept pace with inflation. "The real value of the federal minimum wage has dropped 17% since 2009 and 31% since 1968 (Cooper, Gould, & Zipperer, 2019).

The underclass is the United States' lowest tier. The term itself and its classification of people have been questioned, and some prominent sociologists (including a former president of the American Sociological Association), believe its use is either overgeneralizing or incorrect (Gans 1991). But many economists, sociologists government agencies, and advocacy groups recognize the growth of the underclass. Members of the underclass live mainly in inner cities. Many are unemployed or underemployed. Those who do hold jobs typically perform menial tasks for little pay. Some of the underclass are **houseless**. Many rely on welfare systems to provide food, medical care, and housing assistance, which often does not cover all their basic needs. The underclass have more stress, poorer health, and suffer crises fairly regularly.

2.5.2 Social Mobility

People are often inspired and amazed at people's ability to overcome extremely difficult upbringings. Alice

Coachman grew up with few resources and was denied access to training facilities because of her race; she ran barefoot and built her own high jump equipment before becoming the first Black athlete (and one of the first American track and field athletes) to win an Olympic Gold. Pelé, perhaps the most transformative figure in soccer, learned the game while using a rag-stuffed sock for a ball. These are some of the stories told in documentaries or biographies meant to inspire and share the challenges of unequal upbringings. Relative to the overall population, the number of people who rise from poverty to become very successful is small, and the number that become wealthy is even smaller. Systemic barriers like unequal education, **discrimination**, and lack of opportunity can slow or diminish one's ability to move up.

Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals to change positions within a social stratification system. When people improve or diminish their economic status in a way that affects social class, they experience social mobility. Individuals can experience upward or downward social mobility for a variety of reasons. Upward mobility refers to an increase—or upward shift—when they move from a lower to a higher socioeconomical class. In contrast, individuals experience downward mobility when they move from higher socioeconomic class to a lower one. Some people move downward because of business setbacks, unemployment, or illness. Dropping out of school, losing a job, or getting a divorce may result in a loss of income or status and, therefore, downward social mobility.

Structural mobility happens when societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder. In the first half of the twentieth century, industrialization expanded the U.S. **economy**, raising the standard of living and leading to upward structural mobility for almost everyone. In the decade and a half of the twenty-first century, recessions and the outsourcing of jobs overseas have contributed to the withdrawal of Americans from the workforce (BLS 2021). Many people experienced economic setbacks, creating a wave of downward structural mobility.

2.5.3 The Layers of Socioeconomic Classes

In the last century, the United States has seen a steady rise in its standard of living, the level of wealth available to acquire the material necessities and comforts to maintain a specific lifestyle. The country's standard of living is based on factors such as income, employment, class, literacy rates, mortality rates, poverty rates, and housing affordability. A country with a high standard of living will often reflect a high quality of life, which in the United States means residents can afford a home, own a car, and take vacations. Ultimately, standard of living is shaped by the wealth and distribution of wealth in a country and the expectations its citizens have for their lifestyle.

Wealth is not evenly distributed in most countries. In the United States, a small portion of the population has the means to the highest standard of living. The wealthiest one percent of the population holds one-third of our nation's wealth while the bottom 50 percent of Americans hold only 2 percent. Those in-between, the top 50 to 90 percent hold almost two-thirds of the nation's wealth (The Federal Reserve, 2021).

Although the middle class is still significantly larger than the lower and upper classes, it shrank from 69 percent in 1971 to 51 percent in 2020. Arguably the most significant threat to the U.S.'s relatively high standard of living is the decline of the middle class. The wealth of the middle class has also been declining in recent decades. Its share of the wealth fell from 32 percent in 1983 to 16 percent in 2016 (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Kochhar 2020).

People with wealth often receive the most and best schooling, access better health care, and consume the most goods and services. In addition, wealthy people also wield decision-making power over their daily life because money gives them access to better resources. Many lower-income individuals receive less education and inadequate health care and have less influence over the circumstances of their everyday lives.

Additionally, tens of millions of women and men struggle to pay rent, buy food, find work, and afford basic medical care. Women who are single heads of household tend to have a lower income and lower standard of living than their married or single male counterparts. This is a worldwide phenomenon known as the "feminization of poverty"—which acknowledges that women disproportionately make up the majority of individuals in poverty across the globe and have a lower standard of living. In the United States, women make up approximately 56 percent of Americans living in poverty. One reason for this difference is the struggle of single mothers to provide for their children. One in four unmarried mother lives in poverty (Bleiweis, 2020). The wage gap, discussed extensively in the Work and the **Economy** chapter, also contributes to the gender-disparity in poverty.

In the United States, poverty is most often referred to as a relative rather than absolute measurement. Absolute poverty is an economic condition in which a family or individual cannot afford basic necessities, such as food and shelter, so that day-to-day survival is in jeopardy. Relative poverty is an economic condition in which a family or individuals have 50% income less than the average median income. This income is sometimes called the poverty level or the poverty line. In 2021, for example, the poverty for a single individual was set at $12,880 for one individual, $17,420 for a couple, and $26,500 for a family of four (ASPE 2021).

As a wealthy developed country, the United States invests in resources to provide the basic necessities to those in need through a series of federal and state social welfare programs. These programs provide food, medical, and cash assistance. One of the best-known programs is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), administered by the United States Department of Agri**culture** and formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. This program began in the Great Depression, when unmarketable or surplus food was distributed to the hungry. It was not formalized until 1961, when President John F. Kennedy initiated a food stamp pilot program. His successor Lyndon B. Johnson was instrumental in the passage of the Food Stamp Act in 1964. In 1965, more than 500,000 individuals received food assistance. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, participation reached 43 million people.

These resources are important for survival, but do not provide enough assistance to help people achieve social mobility.

2.5.4 Licenses and Attributions for Social Stratification

2.5.4.1 Open Content, Original

Figure 12.2 "Candy Cliffs Rock Strata" by Elizabeth B. Pearce is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

2.5.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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2.6 THEORIES, PERSPECTIVES, AND KEY CONCEPTS

We will examine families from a variety of theories and perspectives. A **theory** is not just an idea that someone has but rather a structural framework, explanation, or tool that has been tested and evaluated over time. Theories are developed and put into practice through scholarship, research, discussion, and debate. Theories help us to understand the world in general and, in this instance, the ways in which families form, function, interact with, and experience the world.

Perspectives are similar to theories in that they are also important ways of understanding families and the world. They differ in that they may be more focused on understanding the relationships among ideas or on presenting a framework, rather than a single scientific hypothesis accompanied by research.

Because the study of families overlaps multiple disciplines, this text introduces several sociological, human development, psychological, and anthropological theories and concepts. Play the video and review the table to learn about some foundational theories related to the study of families and used in this text:

- Ecological systems theory
- Exchange (aka social exchange) theory
- Feminist (aka feminism) theory
- Life course perspective
- Postmodernism (aka modernity) perspective
- Structural Diversity framework
- Symbolic Interactionist theory

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=325#oembed-1

Figure 2.13 Theories and Concepts [YouTube Video]. This video introduces **social exchange theory**, symbolic interactionism, feminist, life course and **postmodern theory**. (It is recommended that you play it at 1.25x speed and disregard the references to chapter numbers).

2.6.1 Core Theories Used in Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens

Figure 2.14 is a summary table of the seven core theories used to study families in this textbook. For a more complete table of theories and perspectives that are used to study families in the fields of psychology, sociology, and human development and family sciences, see Appendix A.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.	Children are influenced by the people and environments in which they spend the most time,, as well as the greater social events, trends and values.	Micro, Meso, Exo, Macro, and Chronosystems.	Urie Bronfenbrenner developed this theory in the second half of the 20th century; he influenced the creation of HeadStart in the United States.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.	Emphasizes the motivation for familial relationships: that each person is giving and gaining within the family.	The "breadwinner-homemaker family" is the classic example.	
Feminism (aka Feminist)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; the theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.	This theory emphasizes the way that gender **roles** are constructed within the family including the socialization of children.	Gender differences are mostly socially constructed. This theory draws on the Conflict, Exchange, and Symbolic Interaction perspectives.	Different from the Feminist Activist movement! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.
Life Course	Pays attention to time including significant social and historical events and life transitions in their **roles** of shaping the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.	Family life is impacted by large national and international events: wars, natural disasters, pandemics, economic depressions. In particular, children and adolescents in a given cohort will be impacted by these events over time.	Emerging Early Adulthood: the period of life when people shift into adulthood as they end their education, start a career and begin families. This period of life has become more varied and complex because of societal change.	Do not confuse this with the Lifespan theory which has a different emphasis! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.

Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose with society and within institutions.	Individuals have a much greater choice than they did in the past about how they form their families, the **roles** they play and who is in their family. History, family, and tradition have decreasing **roles** in family life.	Reflexivity: the way in which people take in new information, reflect upon it, and adjust and act with new knowledge	This theory is a very broad one and applies to many aspects of work, societal, and family life. Social Theorist Anthony Giddens has written about this theory.
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.	Family diversity is constructed through interactions with social structures as well as the individual actions of family members	Social location: families are affected by the intersections of class, race, and gender which place them in differing social locations. Human Agency: the active shaping of family life by individual action.	This approach posited by Maxine Baca Zinn combines prior work in **intersectionality** with individual agency, family, and social structural factors.
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others and this affects the **roles** they play.	Changing **roles** and symbols affect the ways family members interact with each other and with society. Societal expectations and **social construction**s of fathering and mothering **roles** have changed over time and this interacts with the way fathers and mothers actually behave.	Interpretation of shared understandings influences how humans respond and interact.	Has a basis in philosophy (George Herbert Mead) and in Sociology (Herbert Blumer.)

Figure 2.14. Foundational theories related to the study of families that are most emphasized in this text.

2.6.2 Licenses and Attributions for Theories, Perspectives, and Key Concepts

2.6.2.1 Open Content, Original

2.7 WHAT IS A SOCIAL PROBLEM?

A **social problem** is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed systemically. It cannot be solved by an individual; institutional or societal responses are needed. This definition has both an objective component and a subjective component.

The objective component is this: for any condition or behavior to be considered a **social problem**, it must have negative consequences for large numbers of people. How do we know if a **social problem** has negative consequences? Reasonable people can disagree on whether such consequences exist and on the seriousness of consequences, but a body of data accumulates—from academic researchers, government agencies, and other sources—that strongly points to extensive consequences.

Consider, for example, the case of climate change, defined as changes in the earth's climate due to the buildup of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Although the majority of climate scientists say that climate change is real and serious, the percentage of Americans who agree with scientists is lower. In a 2011 poll, 64 percent said they "think that global warming is happening" (Leiserowitz et al., 2011). While the majority of Americans believe in 2020 that climate change is a **social problem** (Tyson & Kennedy, 2020), there is still a discrepancy between the scientific community and the public's view. **Social identity** and location influence viewpoints, according to Gallup polls that have found that people in the West and Northeast (Inc, 2019), as well as younger adults (Ing, 2018), are more likely to believe that climate change is at least partially caused by human behavior and needs to be addressed.

This type of dispute points to the subjective component: there must be a perception that the condition or behavior needs to be addressed for it to be considered a **social problem** and that viewpoint can change over time and location. This component lies at the heart of the **social construction**ist view of **social problem**s (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010). In this view, many types of negative conditions and behaviors exist. Many of these are considered sufficiently negative to acquire the status of a **social problem**; some do not receive this consideration and thus do not become a **social problem**; and some become considered a **social problem** only if citizens, policymakers, or other parties call attention to the condition or behavior.

The history of attention given to rape and sexual assault in the United States before and after the 1970s provides an example of this latter situation. Acts of sexual violence against women are not a new occurrence and certainly were common in the United States before the 1970s. Although men were sometimes arrested and prosecuted for rape and sexual assault, sexual violence was otherwise ignored by legal policymakers and received little attention in college textbooks and the news media, and many people thought that rape and sexual assault were just something that happened (Allison & Wrightsman, 1993). Thus, although sexual violence existed, it was not considered a **social problem**. When the contemporary women's movement began in the late 1970s, it soon focused on rape and sexual assault as serious crimes and as manifestations of women's in**equality**. Thanks to this focus, rape and sexual assault eventually entered the public consciousness, views of these crimes began to change, and legal policymakers began to give them more attention. In short, sexual violence against women became a **social problem**.

Figure 2.15. Before the 1970s, rape and sexual assault certainly existed and were very common, but they were generally ignored and not considered a **social problem**. When the contemporary women's movement arose during the 1970s, it focused on sexual violence against women and turned this behavior into a **social problem**.

The changing view of rape reflects the **social construction**ist nature of **social problem**s. It also reflects the dynamic in which men have held more power to shape societal views. This raises an interesting question: when is a **social problem** a **social problem**? According to some sociologists who adopt this view, negative conditions and behaviors are not a **social problem** unless they are recognized as such by policymakers, large numbers of lay citizens, or other segments of our society; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were not **social problem**s because our society as a whole paid them little attention. Other sociologists say that negative conditions and behaviors should be considered a **social problem** even if they receive little or no attention; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were **social problem**s.

This type of debate is probably akin to the age-old question: If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, is a sound made? As such, it is not easy to answer, but it does reinforce one of the key beliefs of the **social construction**ist view: Perception matters at least as much as reality, and sometimes more so. In line with this belief, **social construction**ism emphasizes that citizens, interest groups, policymakers, and other parties often compete to influence popular perceptions of many types of conditions and behaviors. They try to influence news media coverage and popular views of the nature and extent of any negative consequences that may be occurring, the reasons underlying the condition or behavior in question, and possible solutions to the problem.

Social constructionism's emphasis on perception has a provocative implication: Just as a condition or behavior may not be considered a **social problem** even if there is a strong basis for this perception, so may a condition or behavior be considered a **social problem** even if there is little or no basis for this perception. The "issue" of women in college provides a historical example of this latter possibility. In the late 1800s, leading physicians and medical researchers in the United States wrote journal articles, textbooks, and newspaper columns in which they warned women not to go to college. The reason? They feared that the stress of college would disrupt women's menstrual cycles, and they also feared that women would not do well in exams during "that time of the month" (Ehrenreich & English, 2005). We now know better, of course, but the sexist beliefs of these writers turned the idea of women going to college into a **social problem** and helped to reinforce restrictions by colleges and universities on the admission of women.

In a related dynamic, various parties can distort certain aspects of a **social problem** that does exist: politicians can give speeches, the news media can use scary headlines and heavy coverage to capture readers' or viewers' interest, and businesses can use advertising and influence news coverage. News media coverage of violent crime provides many examples of this dynamic (Robinson, 2011; Surette, 2011). The news media overdramatize violent crime, which is far less common than property crime like burglary and larceny, by featuring so many stories about it, and this coverage contributes to public fear of crime. Media stories about violent crime also tend to be more common when the accused offender is Black and the victim is White and when the offender is a juvenile. This type of coverage is thought to heighten the public's prejudice toward African Americans and to contribute to negative views about teenagers.

Figure 2.16. A **social problem** emerges when a social change group successfully calls attention to a condition or behavior that it considers serious. Protests like the one depicted here have raised the environmental consciousness of Americans and helped put pressure on businesses to be environmentally responsible.

2.7.1 The **Sociological Imagination** and **Social Problem**s

Many individuals experience one or more **social problem**s personally. For example, many people are poor and unemployed, many are in poor health, and many have family problems, drink too much alcohol, or commit crimes. When we hear about these individuals, it is easy to think that their problems are theirs alone, and that they and other individuals with the same problems are entirely to blame for their difficulties.

Sociology takes a different approach, as it stresses that individual problems are often rooted in problems stemming from aspects of society itself. Personal troubles refer to a problem affecting individuals that the affected individual, as well as other members of society, typically blame on the individual's own personal and moral failings. Examples include such different problems as eating disorders, divorce, and unemployment. Public issues, whose source lies in the social structure and **culture** of a society, refer to **social problem**s affecting many individuals. Problems in society thus help account for problems that individuals experience. Mills felt that many problems ordinarily considered private troubles are best understood as public issues, and he coined the term **sociological imagination** to refer to the ability to appreciate the structural basis for individual problems.

Let's use our **sociological imagination**s to understand some contemporary **social problem**s. We will start with unemployment, which Mills himself discussed. If only a few people were unemployed, Mills wrote, we could reasonably explain their unemployment by saying they were lazy, lacked good work habits, and so forth. If so, their unemployment would be their own personal trouble. But when millions of people are out of work, unemployment is best understood as a public issue because, as Mills put it (Wright Mills, 1959), "the very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals."

The high U.S. unemployment rate stemming from the severe economic downturn that began in 2008 provides a telling example of the point Mills was making. Millions of people lost their jobs through no fault of their own. While some individuals are undoubtedly unemployed because they are lazy or lack good work habits, a more structural explanation focusing on the lack of opportunity is needed to explain why so many people were out of work. If so, unemployment is best understood as a public issue rather than as a personal trouble.

Another **social problem** is eating disorders. Society often views eating disorders as a lifestyle choice rather than a **social problem**. Looking at it this way does not help us understand why so many people have eating disorders. Perhaps more important, this belief also neglects the larger social and cultural forces that help explain such disorders. For example, most Americans with eating disorders are women, not men. This gender difference forces us to ask what it is about being a woman in American society that makes eating disorders more common. To begin to answer this question, we need to look at the standard of beauty for women that emphasizes a slender body (Boyd et al., 2011). If this cultural standard did not exist, would fewer American women suffer from eating disorders than do now? Studies have shown that young women are at higher risk of developing eating disorders if they've internalized cultural expectations of thinness and perfection (Izydorczyk B, Sitnik-Warchulska K., 2018). Viewed in this way, eating disorders are best understood as a public issue, not as a personal trouble.

Picking up on Mills's insights, psychologist William Ryan pointed out that Americans typically think that **social problem**s such as poverty and unemployment stem from the personal failings of the people experiencing these problems, not from structural problems in the larger society (Ryan, 1976). Ryan's work was widely considered to be a major structuralist response to an influential report published in 1965, The Moynihan Report, which posited that the prevalence of Black single-parent families was a result of "ghetto **culture**". The report deemphasized the role of discriminatory laws and practices (US Department of Labor, 1965). Using Mills's terms, Americans tend to think of **social problem**s as personal troubles rather than public issues.As Ryan put it, they tend to believe in blaming the victim rather than blaming the system.

To help us understand a blaming-the-victim ideology, let's consider why children from low-income, under-resourced urban areas often learn very little in their schools. According to Ryan, a blaming-the-victim approach would say the children's parents do not care about their learning, fail to teach them good study habits, and do not encourage them to take school seriously. This type of explanation, he wrote, may apply to some parents, but it ignores a much more important reason: the sad shape of America's urban schools, which, he said, are overcrowded, decrepit structures housing old textbooks and out-of-date equipment. To improve the schooling of children in urban areas, he wrote, we must improve the schools themselves and not just try to "improve" the parents.

As this example suggests, a blaming-the-victim approach points to solutions to **social problem**s such as poverty and illiteracy that are very different from those suggested by a more structural approach that blames the system. If we blame the victim, we would spend our limited dollars to address the personal failings of individuals who suffer from poverty, illiteracy, poor health, eating disorders, and other difficulties. If instead we blame the system, we would focus our attention on the various social conditions (decrepit schools, cultural standards of female beauty, and the like) that account for these difficulties. A sociological understanding suggests that the latter approach is ultimately needed to help us deal successfully with the **social problem**s facing us today.

2.7.2 An Equity Lens

The title of this text, *Contemporary Families: An **Equity** Lens,* may lead you to ask, what is an **equity** lens? In Chapter 1, we described the difference between **equality** and **equity**, focusing on **equity** ensuring that each person or family has what they need. An **equity** lens helps us to consider how actions can translate into **equity** for all. Lane County Oregon defines it this way on their website:

> A racial **equity** lens is a set of questions we ask ourselves when we plan, develop or evaluate a policy, program or decision. Using an **equity** lens will help us identify potential impacts on institutionally under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.
>
> The purpose of an **equity** lens is to be deliberately inclusive as we make decisions and to support us as we strive towards more equitable outcomes…
>
> …An **equity** lens will not tell us what action to take. Rather, the lens helps us discuss and reflect on **equity** considerations as we act and make decisions (Lane County, 2016.)

How does this relate to you, a college student? You are already an actor in your own family and community. You may coach your child's volleyball team, or serve on the student council. Perhaps you volunteer for a local agency that serves the **houseless**, or children who have been abused. You make decisions every day about whom you say "hello" to, whom you smile at, and whom you sit next to in class. All of these decisions have the power to effect change when you think about them from an **equity** lens.

To understand families using an **equity** lens, we develop awareness of the disproportionate ways that families experience **social problem**s. In addition, we talk about social justice, which has many definitions but commonly includes equal access or opportunity, equal treatment, and equal rights. Awareness is an important next step, but it is our individual and collective actions that will contribute to creating **equity** for families in the U.S.

In this text, we will provide historical and cross-cultural context related to families' varied experiences, but focus on the current status of families in the United States. An **equity** lens is applied throughout the text as we aim to understand what families need, how and whether those needs are met, the role that **social institutions** play in family outcomes, and the ways that individuals and families can make a difference.

You will also see thinking related to Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory (CRT). Both of these theories examine institutions and power structures. In this short video, Megan Paulson defines both theories in the first minute. She then goes on to talk about the positive effect on students of all races and ethnicities when they have usable terms and language to talk about what they experience in terms of difference in their daily lives.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=329#oembed-1

Figure 2.17. A Minute And Over: Critical Race Theory [YouTube Video]. An **Equity** Lens benefits all people, not only members of underserved groups.

It is the intent of the authors of this text that students use what they learn in this class to understand their own experiences, and the experiences of others, better. Discussion in the face-to-face and online environments is encouraged. This text examines what families need, and how institutions and society can support those needs, or get in the way of meeting needs. This will lead to a better understanding and analysis of how existing **social process**es and institutions contribute to family **inequity**.

2.7.3 Want to Learn More?

Here are two websites if you would like to know more about how social justice is defined and how to contribute to greater social justice in the United States:

- Center for Economic and Social Justice
- The San Diego Foundation: What is Social Justice?

2.7.4 Licenses and Attributions for What Is a Social Problem?

2.7.4.1 Opent Content, Original

2.7.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

2.7.4.3 All Rights Reserved Content

2.7.5 References

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2.8 LOOKING AHEAD

Because human development and family sciences is an interdisciplinary field, it uses theories and perspectives from a variety of disciplines. As a student in an introductory course using this book, it is unlikely that you will be asked to master multiple theories. It is, however, important that you attempt to understand and apply what you are learning about contemporary families to several theoretical frameworks. Look to see which theories or perspectives you find most relevant.

It is also the case that depending on societal events and changes, theories may seem more applicable at one time than another. For example, the most developed research related to the life course theory is based on World War II, one of the most impactful worldwide events in our history. While this might not feel as relatable to current students, it can be argued that the current COVID-19 pandemic may have as much and as many effects on the Millennial and Gen Z birth cohorts as World War II had on the Greatest Generation birth cohort.

In fact, a leading team of life course perspective scholars have already proposed a framework for studying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. While acknowledging that there is much that is unknown, they discuss two distinct aspects: having COVID-19 or being close to someone who has it and being affected by the overall cultural, economic, social and psychological effects of the disease and the pandemic. They also note that positionality in terms of age, location, and life transition may differentiate the effects of the pandemic on an individual's life course. The authors of "Understanding the effects of Covid-19 through a life course lens" wrote in 2020:

> Looking forward, a life course perspective also asks us to identify which pandemic experiences will turn into permanent scars or reorientations for individuals and their families, and which will be open to resilience and be compensated for or even forgotten with time. Even more, it encourages researchers to…account for environment and policy considerations by specifying the conditions under which there will be scarring or resilience.
>
> … [I]t is important to not only probe these dynamics at an individual level of analyses, but also to examine them for groups, especially birth cohorts or social generations. In historical moments like this, people of different ages are branded differently…
>
> The pandemic is reshaping transitions and trajectories in every domain of life, and instigating turning points that redirect life. Many of these are negative, or at least challenging. The transition to adulthood, for example, has become longer, more variable, and risk-laden in many countries in recent decades. The pandemic is likely to heighten these trends through its effects on educational transitions, youth labor markets, chances for regional mobility, family formation, and general trust in the future. Likewise, at the other end of working life, the transition to retirement may become more difficult due to insecure pensions or insufficient savings or assets, just as leisure and volunteering activities or the grandparent role may become more difficult due to limited mobility or concerns about exposure to Covid-19. Indeed, throughout the life course, the age-based rhythm of many transitions may loosen in the face of uncertainty and de-standardize life trajectories (Settersten et al., 2020).

Can you see the ways that these authors are applying an **equity** lens to the pandemic? While we don't have the data and ability to look at generational effects from the future, we can study the theory, the research, and speculate about what future researchers may find. In addition, governments and other social structures have the opportunity to prepare policies and practices that will ameliorate potential negative consequences for large cohorts of people.

2.8.1 Want to Learn More?

- A guide to **cultural humility** is offered by Culturally Connected.
- Read more about Rachel Dolezal, the woman born to white parents who identifies as Black, in this article from Time magazine.
- To read about the growing and diverse groups of Asian Americans read this Pew Research Center summary.
- Unnatural Causes: Is In**equality** Making Us Sick? (a seven part documentary) that can help us understand **intersectionality** by focusing on the connection between social class, racism, and health.

2.8.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

2.8.2.1 Open Content, Original

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2.9 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions, or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

2.9.1 Reflective Questions

1. What can you expect to learn from studying families?
2. How will studying families impact your family and your work life in the future?
3. What are the main methods for researching families?
4. What are the nuances of objectivity coupled with humanity?
5. How will **cultural humility** help you understand other people?
6. What are the major theoretical perspectives? Which ones make the most sense to you?
7. What is a **social problem**? What **social problem**s have you experienced or observed?
8. How will having a **sociological imagination** and understanding **equity** equip you to learn about families in the United States?

2.9.2 Key Terms

- **age:** the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult.
- **cultural humility**: the focus on staying other-centered in order to learn about and understand the experiences and viewpoints of people with social identities different from

your own.

- **culture**: the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group.
- **disabilities:** the visible or hidden and temporary or permanent conditions that provide barriers or challenges.
- **ethnicity**: one's **social identity** based on the **culture** of origin, ancestry, or affiliation with a cultural group.
- **experiments**: a primary form of research in natural and physical sciences that involves comparing and contrasting at least two different interventions.
- **first language:** the language learned in early childhood.
- **gender:** the socially constructed perceptions of what it means to be male or female in our society.
- **objectivity:** the act of staying free from the influence of personal experiences and opinions.
- **observational studies**: a type of field research that includes both participant observation and nonparticipant observation.
- **origin:** the geographical location where a person was born and spent (at least) their early years in.
- **qualitative research**: the descriptive, in-depth study of a topic.
- **quantitative research**: the numbers-based, measurable study of a topic.
- **race**: the categorization of humans using observable physical or biological criteria, such as skin color, hair color or texture, facial features, etc.
- **research**: a systematic investigation into a particular topic, examining materials, sources, and/or behaviors.
- **scientific process**: the process of formulating hypotheses, making observations, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and modifying hypotheses.
- **secondary data analysis**: the study of existing research.
- **sex:** a biological descriptor involving chromosomes and internal/external reproductive organs
- **sexual orientation:** a person's emotional, romantic, erotic, and spiritual attractions toward another in relation to their own sex or gender.
- **social class:** a person's income or material wealth, educational status, and/or occupational status.
- **sociological perspective**: viewpoints that emphasize causes, effects and actions of groups of individuals, looking for patterns.
- **social model of ability:** a view of diagnoses from a social and environmental perspective and considers multiple ecological levels.

- **social problem:** a large issue that affects many people, can threaten the health and well being of society, is recognized as a problem by many, includes multiple causes and effects, and needs a systemic solution.
- **subjectivity**: influenced by personal experiences and opinions
- **survey**: a method by which sociologists gather their data by asking questions.
- **theory**: a structural framework, explanation, or tool that has been tested and evaluated over time.

2.9.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

2.9.3.1 Open Content, Original

2.10 CHAPTER 2 FEEDBACK SURVEY

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CHAPTER 3: CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, LOVE, AND PARTNERING

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

3.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the value of community and connection to individuals using a theory.
2. Explain the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality.
3. Describe the need for and various ways individuals connect through community and intimate relationships.
4. Describe the multidirectional relationship between social structures and the ways that individuals create community and intimate relationships.
5. Analyze how the government influences partnership, marriage, and break ups.
6. Analyze partnerships and marriage from an **equity** perspective.
7. Apply theoretical concepts related to choosing a partner(s) to own observations and experiences.

3.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

3.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO CONNECTION, LOVE, AND COMMUNITY

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Wesley Sharp, and Nyssa Cronin

> "A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."
>
> – Albert Einstein, in a letter he wrote to a rabbi whose family was grieving over the loss of his child (Sullivan, 1972).

The need for, and benefits of, being connected in an emotional and social way to other human beings is one of the central foundations of family life. The quote speaks to the tension among Western, Eastern, and Indigenous views about individuality and collectivism. Einstein refers to the "optical delusion" (what we might call a **social construction**) of seeing ourselves as separate beings from others and the natural world. Increasing layers of research, however, speak to the importance of close social relationships (belongingness and connectedness) as well as the wider circle of social networks (Seppala et al., 2013).

Theorists who discuss families, parenting, and mate selection rely on an underlying principle: the mutual social and emotional interdependence of human beings that fosters family development and growth. In addition, our ability to connect to the greater society and planet, including those who are less similar or unrelated to us, enhances our care for family and community. An emphasis of this text is the disposition of being willing to listen and to learn about the greater community in which we live.

As we discuss social connection, we are referring to qualities and experiences such as:

- Positive relationships with others in the social world;
- Attachment, an affectionate emotional connection with at least one other;
- A feeling of belonging and lack of feeling of exclusion;
- Social support, which includes connection but may also include informational support, appraisal support (such as personal feedback and/or affirmation), and/or practical support (such as money or labor);
- The act of nurturing and being nurtured;
- An individual's perception of all of the above.

It matters most to the individual what they perceive as connection and support, and less how others would view it.

3.2.1 Theoretical Perspectives that Emphasize Connection

In this section, we'll discuss the ecological systems theory and the hierarchy of needs theory, two theories that emphasize the importance of our connections with others. It is believed that systems of support are critical to individual and family well-being.

3.2.1.1 Ecological Systems Theory

The **ecological systems theory** was developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner to explain how environments affect a child's or individual's growth and development. The model is typically illustrated with six concentric circles that represent the individual, environments and interactions (see Chapter 4, Figure 4.14). Bronfenbrenner's model shows the individual at the center of concentric circles that represent all the people and places in that person's life. The outer circles include the community values and norms, as well as the person's location in time and geography. Although Bronfenbrenner identified systems which will be explored in depth in Chapter 4, it can be argued that all systems consist of people. It is the people within these circles that will interact with and impact each of us.

3.2.1.2 Hierarchy of Needs Theories

There are **hierarchy of needs theories** created by multiple Indigenous groups, and best documented by the Blackfoot Nation in North America, that emphasize the self-actualization of not just the individual, but of the community as the most primary of needs (Figure 3.1 right.) Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, described in Chapter 2, includes the emotional need for affection and loving connections to others once basic physiological and biological needs are met (Figure 3.1, left.)

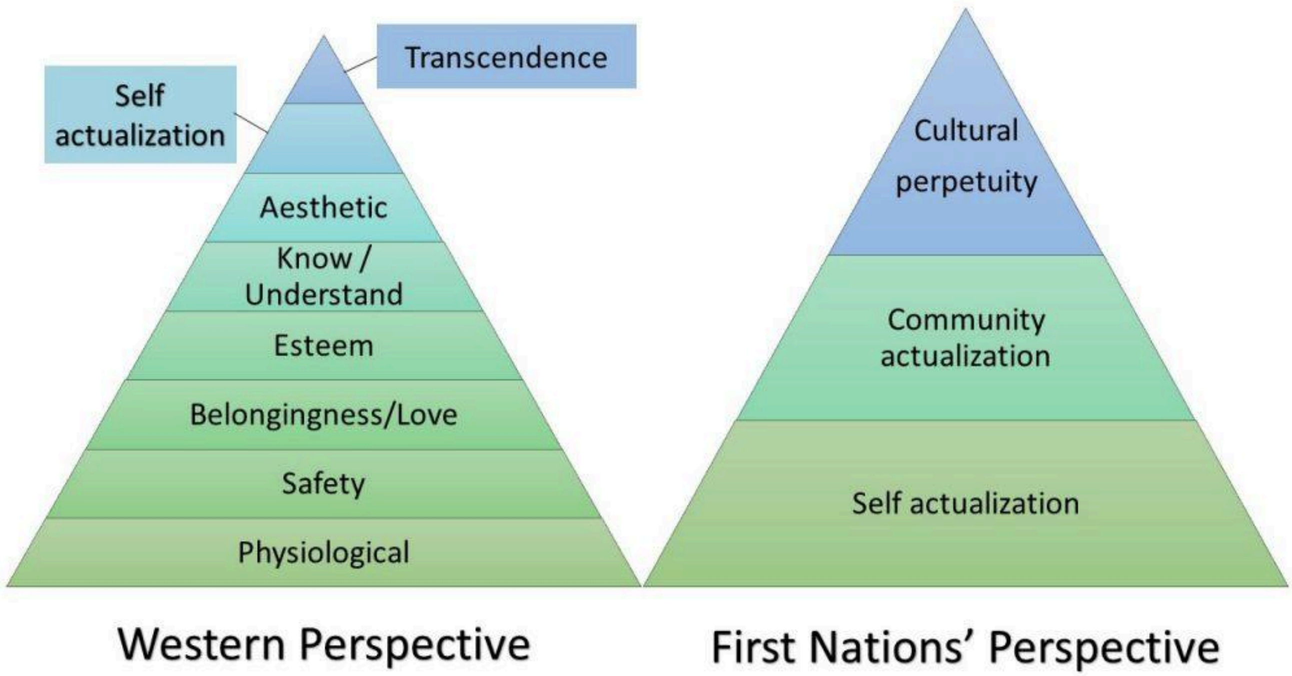

Figure 3.1. Comparison between Maslow's Hierarchy and First Nations Perspective.

In 1938 Maslow spent time with the Blackfoot Nation (link to archival photo) in Canada prior to releasing his hierarchy of needs theory. It is believed that he based the teepee-like structure on the Blackfoot ideas but westernized the focus to be on the individual rather than on the community (Bray, 2019).

If we look more closely at the representation of Blackfoot ideas, it can be seen that the well-being of the individual, the family, and the community are based on connectedness, the closeness that we experience with family and friends, and the prosocial extension that we provide to others in our communities and in the world. In addition, this model focuses on time; the top of the teepee is cultural perpetuity and it symbolizes a community's **culture** lasting forever.

Maslow's theory is of value, but the mislabeling of it as a theory of human development rather than as a Western cultural theory of human development mistakenly applies what Maslow observed to all human beings. Bringing theories from other **culture**s and geographical regions forward helps us to understand the variety of ways that human beings develop and to recognize the value of the diversity of family experiences and beliefs.

3.2.2 Social Support Networks

Human connectedness and prosocial relationships are increasingly associated with better health outcomes and longevity. The World Health Organization now lists "Social Support Networks" as a determinant of health. Their webpage notes that a person's social environment, including **culture** and community beliefs, is a key determinant in overall health (World Health Organization, 2020).

This country has a history of immigration law that has often separated families, including spouses. As introduced in Chapter 2, this practice contributes to the number of **transnational families**, many of whom are involuntarily so. In 2018, the United States developed a “zero tolerance” policy toward illegal immigration from the South and imprisoned families seeking legal status, separating children from parents. Although the policy officially ended in June 2018, it continued, with at least 1,100 additional children being separated from their parents since that time.

Public health officials are working to move forward the prioritization of social connections as a part of public health efforts in the United States. They propose examining current evidence and research, conducting additional research, and creating a consensus process amongst experts related to social connectedness (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017).

It seems that once we feel connected to others that a more familial sense of belongingness can develop, which then benefits individuals and the greater community. This research supports the belief systems of indigenous peoples, such as the Blackfoot Nation discussed earlier, and Eastern philosophies which see a reciprocal relationship between the good of the community, the planet, and the good of individuals.

In this chapter, we will explore **kinship** connections, including chosen families and partner or mate selection. In addition, we will look more closely at the factors that affect our partner choices and family formations, including psychological, societal, and institutional factors.

3.2.2.1 **Kinship** and Extended **Kinship**

Kinship, as discussed in Chapter 1, refers to the broader social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships. **Kinship** acknowledges that individuals have a role in defining who is a member of their own family and how familial relationships extend across both vertical and horizontal lines. For example, in families with multiple living generations, there is the possibility of close relationships between young children, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Families who have large sibling groups can have family reunions that include dozens or even hundreds of people. These relationships are called extended **kinship** or extended families and can also include non-blood or legal relatives as designated by the **kinship** group.

We will use the terms “**kinship**s” or “**kinship** groups” interchangeably with “families” to remind ourselves of this broader definition (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Connection to other people is a foundational need that can be met through extended **kinship** groups.

3.2.2.2 Chosen Families

According to *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Marriage, Family, and Couples Counseling*, "**chosen families** are nonbiological **kinship** bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love" (Carlson & Dermer, 2019). Chosen family is an option for every individual, although it has historically been associated with the LGBTQ+ **culture**. People who identify as **lesbian**, **gay**, or other stigmatized identities have sometimes been disowned by families who do not accept these identities and therefore do not accept their children (or other family members).

Chosen families can be for anyone of any background who desires to connect through **kinship** bonds with others who are not blood- or legally-related individuals. The chosen family can meet or supplement needs not sufficiently met by the biological or otherwise traditionally structured family. In some cases, people are ostracized from their family of origin and are denied a sense of belonging. Others may be living away from their biological families due to schooling, immigration, employment, legal restrictions, migration, or other reasons.

In addition, both chosen families and extended **kinship** relationships may be created through hardship. As described in Chapter 1, Black people who were enslaved found ways to create **kinship** ties among the hostile living conditions that separated them from biological and legal family members. Native Americans and immigrant groups facing oppressive laws and policies continued to foster familial and **kinship** connections within communities. Chosen families are created for a variety of reasons, and it is important to see them through the lenses of love, connection, nurturance, and **equity**.

In this chapter, we will focus on the romantic, sexual, and partnership unions that people make by starting with an overview of sex, gender, and sexuality. The following chapter, Nurturance, will focus more on parenting and other caregiving aspects of family life.

3.2.3 Licenses and Attributions for Introduction to Connection, Love, and Community

3.2.3.1 Open Content, Original

3.2.3.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

3.2.4 References

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3.3 SEX, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

Sex, gender, and sexuality are all central to family life. Not only are they all involved in the partner(s) that we choose, but the construction of behaviors and **roles** related to gender are impactful to the operation of family life. Before we discuss their meanings, we will first acknowledge the socially constructed binary systems that influence society's thinking about these topics.

3.3.1 Socially Constructed Binary Systems

Black and white. Masculine and feminine. Rich and poor. Straight and **gay**. Able-bodied and disabled. These are binaries.

A **binary** is a social construct composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites. Binary systems reflect how this idea has become embedded in our **culture** creating an exaggeration of differences between social groups until they seem to have nothing in common. An example of this is the phrase "men are from Mars, women are from Venus." Ideas of men and women being complete opposites invite simplistic comparisons that rely on stereotypes: men are practical, women are emotional; men are strong, women are weak; men lead, women support. Binary notions mask the complicated realities and variety of unique human beings. They also erase the existence of individuals, such as multiracial or mixed-race people and people with non-binary gender identities, who may identify with neither of the assumed categories or with multiple categories.

We know very well that men have emotions and that women have physical strength, but a binary perspective of gender prefigures men and women to have nothing in common. They are defined against each other; men are defined, in part, as "not women" and women as "not men." Thus, our understanding of men is influenced by our understanding of women. Rather than seeing aspects of identity like race, gender, class, ability, and sexuality as containing only two dichotomous, opposing categories, conceptualizing multiple various identities allows us to examine how men and women, Black and White, and the like may not be so completely different after all, and how varied and complex identities and lives can be.

3.3.2 Understanding Sex and Gender

Although the words "sex" and "gender" are at times used interchangeably in social settings, scientists and sociologists make a clear distinction between these two terms. As we discussed in Chapter 1, a person's sex refers to the biological category, based on anatomy and physiology. This category is assigned at birth, most typically as male or female. A small percentage of the population (less than 1 percent) is born as intersex, meaning that there is a combination of primary and secondary sex characteristics that indicate both male and female features. In these situations, parents and medical professionals work together to make a decision about which sex to assign, and whether any surgery is warranted. Sexual identity, as you will recall, is the person's internalization or recognition of their sex category.

Gender, on the other hand, is the social expression of a person's sexual identity. While sex is biological, gender has a biological component but is influenced by society. Each person develops their own gender identity. In the past a binary gender system was accepted, meaning that people typically identified as male or female. Now many of us are aware of people who identify as **nonbinary**, or androgynous, basically meaning that a person sees the binary system as too rigid, and feels that their gender cannot be defined within a binary system. Gender expression is the pattern of behaviors that a person exhibits in the social world, especially as it relates to behaviors typically associated with boys/men, girls/women, or **nonbinary** people.

Ideas about gender evolve over time, which reminds us that it is a **social construction** as discussed in Chapter 1. A popular phenomenon which began in 2008 "gender-reveal parties" are really more about biological sex. At these events, parents-to-be gather with friends and family to reveal whether their in-utero fetus is a girl or a boy. Typically the socially constructed ideas of color (pink for a girl and blue for a boy) are used to symbolize which sex the baby will be. A cake, smoke bombs, balloons, or other festive objects are used to reveal the sex, by cutting into the cake, releasing the smoke bombs or balloons, and so forth (Figure 3.3). Often the parents are surprised as well, having delivered the concealed medical information to a baker or event planner in advance.

Figure 3.3. This cake will be cut open at a key point in the gender reveal party to inform all of the guests of the baby's sex. Would it be more accurate to call it a "sex reveal party"?

As you can see, sex and gender are relevant to each other, but they have differing meanings. Because these terms often get confused, a text box of basic definitions is provided to highlight the basic differences.

Sex: one's biological identity, based on anatomy and physiology: female, male or intersex.

Gender: the social expression of one's biological sex. This includes gender identity, which gender one identifies with: women, men, **nonbinary**, and other developing terms, as well as gender expression, which is one's outward expression of behaviors related to a gender category.

3.3.3 Gender Identity and Gender Expression

A binary gender perspective assumes that only men and women exist, obscuring gender diversity and erasing the existence of people who do not identify as men or women. A gendered assumption in our **culture** is that someone assigned female at birth will identify as a woman and that all women were assigned female at birth. While this is true for **cisgender** (or "cis") individuals—people who identify in accordance with their gender assignment—it is not the case for everyone. Some people assigned male at birth identify as women, some people assigned female identify as men, and some people identify as neither women nor men. This illustrates the difference between the assignment of biological sex, which doctors place on infants (and fetuses) based on the appearance of genitalia, and gender identity, which one discerns about oneself. The existence of **transgender people**, or individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, challenges the very idea of a single-sex/gender identity.

The existence of people who are trans contests the biological determinist argument that biological sex predicts gender identity. **Transgender** people may or may not have surgeries or hormone therapies to change their physical bodies, but in many cases, they experience a change in their social gender identities. Some people who do not identify as men or women may identify as **nonbinary**, gender fluid, or genderqueer, for example. Some may use gender-neutral pronouns, such as they/them, rather than the gendered pronouns she/her or he/his. As pronouns and gender identities are not visible on the body, trans communities created procedures for communicating gender pronouns, which consists of verbally asking and stating one's pronouns (Nordmarken, 2013). These practices have gradually been adopted by the general public.

The existence of sex variations fundamentally challenges the notion of a binary biological sex. **Intersex** describes variation in sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals. The bodies of individuals with sex characteristics variations do not fit typical definitions of what is culturally considered "male" or "female." "Intersex," like "female" and "male," is a socially constructed category that humans have created to label bodies that they view as different from those they would classify as distinctly "female" or "male." The term basically marks existing biological variation among bodies; bodies are not essentially intersex—we just call them intersex. The term is slightly misleading because it may suggest that people have complete sets of what would be called "male" and "female" reproductive systems, but those kinds of human bodies do not actually exist; "intersex" really just refers to biological variation. The term "hermaphrodite" is therefore inappropriate for referring to intersex, and it also is derogatory.

The concepts of "**transgender**" and "intersex" are easy to confuse, but these terms refer to very different identities. To review, **transgender** people experience a **social process** of gender change, while intersex people have biological characteristics that do not fit with the dominant sex/gender system. One term refers to social gender (**transgender**) and one term refers to biological sex (intersex). While **transgender** people challenge our binary (man/woman) ideas of gender, intersex people challenge our binary (male/female) ideas of biological sex.

3.3.4 Understanding Sexuality

Sexuality, sometimes called **sexual orientation**, is the pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction, feelings and behaviors to others in relation to one's own gender identity. First, let's look at how **social construction**s affect our ideas about sexuality.

3.3.4.1 The **Social Construction** of Heterosexuality

What does it mean to be "heterosexual" in contemporary U.S. society? Has it always meant this, or has the definition changed over time and location? As historian of human sexuality Jonathon Ned Katz shows in his book *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (1999), the word "heterosexual" was originally coined by Dr. James Kiernan in 1892, but its meaning and usage differed drastically from contemporary understandings of the term.

Kiernan thought of "hetero-sexuals" as not defined by their attraction to the opposite sex, but by their "inclinations to both sexes." Furthermore, Kiernan thought of the heterosexual as someone who "betrayed inclinations to 'abnormal methods of gratification'" (Katz, 1999). In other words, heterosexuals were those who were attracted to both sexes and engaged in sex for pleasure, not for reproduction. Katz further points out that this definition of the heterosexual lasted within middle-class **culture**s in the United States until the 1920s, and then went through various radical reformulations up to the current usage (Katz, 1999).

Looking at this historical example makes visible the process of the **social construction** of heterosexuality. First of all, the example shows how **social construction** occurs within institutions—in this case, a medical doctor created a new category to describe a particular type of sexuality, based on existing medical knowledge at the time. "Hetero-sexuality" was initially a medical term that defined a deviant type of sexuality. Second, by seeing how Kiernan—and middle-class **culture**, more broadly—defined "hetero-sexuality" in the 19th century, it is possible to see how drastically the meanings of the concept have changed over time.Typically, in the United States in contemporary usage, "heterosexuality" is thought to mean "normal" or "good"—it is usually the invisible term defined by what is thought to be its opposite, homosexuality. However, in its initial usage, "hetero-sexuality" was thought to counter the norm of reproductive sexuality and be, therefore, deviant. The third aspect of **social construction**ism is that cultural and historical contexts shape our definition and understanding of concepts. The norm of reproductive sexuality—having sex not for pleasure, but to have children—in the 19th century defined what types of sexuality were regarded as "normal" or "deviant." Fourth, this case illustrates how categorization shapes human experience, behavior, and interpretation of reality.

To be a "heterosexual" in middle-class **culture** in the United States in the early 1900s was not something desirable to be—it was not an identity that most people would have wanted to inhabit. The very definition of "hetero-sexual" as deviant, because it violated reproductive sexuality, defined "proper" sexual behavior as that which was reproductive and not pleasure-centered. Like all **social construction**s, the meaning of "hetero-sexuality" has changed and will continue to change.

3.3.4.2 A Range of Sexualities

Heterosexuality is no more and no less natural than **gay** sexuality or **bisexual**ity. People—particularly sexologists and medical doctors—define heterosexuality and its boundaries. This definition of the parameters of heterosexuality is an expression of power that decides what types of sexuality are considered "normal" and which types of sexuality are considered “deviant.” Situated, cultural norms define what is considered “natural.” Defining sexual desire and relations between women and men as acceptable and normal means defining all sexual desire and expression outside that parameter as deviant. However, even within sexual relations between men and women, gendered cultural norms associated with heterosexuality dictate what is “normal” or “deviant.” As a quick thought exercise, think of some words for women who have many sexual partners and then, do the same for men who have many sexual partners; the results will be quite different. So, within the field of sexuality, we can see power in relations along lines of gender and **sexual orientation** (and race, class, age, and ability as well).

Adrienne Rich (1980) called heterosexuality “compulsory,” meaning that 1) in our **culture** all people are assumed to be heterosexual, and 2) society is full of both formal and informal enforcements that encourage heterosexuality and penalize sexual variation. While we now know that there is not one binary contrast to heterosexuality, what range of sexualities exist? Just like gender, sexuality is neither binary nor fixed. There are straight people and **gay** people, but people are also **bisexual**, **pansexual**, omnisexual, queer, and heteroflexible, to name a few additional sexual identities. In general, the idea of sexuality being seen on a continuum or other graduated model is now favored, rather than the existence of a binary system.

The concept of being attracted, with affection and romance, rather than sex as an emphasis, has also emerged. Identities such as biromantic, heteroromantic, panromantic, and related terms are used by people to describe themselves. Sexual and romantic attraction, relations, relationships, and identity can shift over a person’s lifetime. As there are more than two genders, there are more than two kinds of people to be attracted to and individuals can be attracted to and can relate sexually to multiple people of different genders at the same time, or over a span of time.

3.3.4.3 Sexuality as Privilege and Oppression in Family Life

Compulsory heterosexuality plays an important role in reproducing in**equality** in the lives of sexual minorities in many aspects of their own and their families’ lives. For example, up until a Supreme Court ruling in 2017, same-sex spouses were not allowed to be listed on their child’s birth certificate in many states (Paven v. Smith, 2017). As of 2022, each state is still able to make its own laws about LGBTQ+ **discrimination** in foster care, second-parent adoption, and parental presumption in same-sex relationships. Many states continue to explicitly allow **discrimination** within the foster care system and adoption placement or have no laws to prevent **discrimination**. Examples include:

- not requiring training for foster parents regarding LGBTQ+ youth;
- not permitting second-parent adoptions for same-sex couples regardless of whether their relationship is legally recognized;
- laws permitting **discrimination** based on sexuality in adoption or foster placement.

In addition, **gay** men and **lesbian**s have lost custody battles over children due to **homophobia**—the fear, hatred, or prejudice against **gay** people (Pershing, 1994). Media depictions of **gay** men and **lesbian**s are few and often negatively stereotyped.

Figure 3.4. Same-sex couples may demonstrate gender and sexuality expressions that break out of the traditional binary expressions.

Heteronormativity structures the everyday, taken-for-granted ways in which heterosexuality is privileged and normalized. For instance, sociologist Karen Martin studied what parents say to their children about sexuality and reproduction, and found that with children as young as three and five years old, parents routinely assumed their children were heterosexual, told them they would get (heterosexually) married, and interpreted cross-gender interactions between children as "signs" of heterosexuality (Martin, 2009). This kind of socialization is an additional element of normative sexuality—the idea of compulsory monogamy, where exclusive romantic and sexual relationships and marriage are expected and valued over other kinds of relationships (Willey, 2016). Therefore, heteronormativity surrounds us at a very young age, teaching us that there are only two genders and that we are or should desire and partner with one person of the opposite gender, who we will marry.

3.3.4.4 Relationship Structures Continue to be Created

The symbolic interaction theory, described in Chapter 2, reminds us that society can change more quickly than our language does. We use words to symbolize actions and relationships, but we are constantly in the state of catching up. At the same time, the words that we choose as symbols for relationships contribute to the socially constructed world that we inhabit.

For example, there are people who are very close life-long partners who may not have a romantic, sexual relationship, or familial relationship determined by blood or legal ties. Queerplatonic relationships, which originated from the **asexual** and aromantic parts of the LGBTQ+ community are described as "non-romantic significant-other relationships of 'partner status''" (Chasin, 2015.) It is a non-romantic or sexual relationship, but more intimate than friendship. The term "Platonic Life Partnership"(PLP) is credited to April Lee, who created a Tik Tok video and blog posts that went viral in 2021 and 2022. With roots as far back as the 18th century, when women developed live-in friendships called "Boston marriages," the PLP does not limit women from pursuing romantic or sexual relationships with other people. It merely makes the platonic partner the central relationship (Klein, 2022). This is what Lee has to say in her April 2022 blog post:

> When we were discussing making this commitment to each other, we found ourselves coming back to the idea of conditional versus unconditional love. Because the foundation of our partnership is our ability to help one another work on ourselves, we consider our love conditional. The rule is: "I'll keep loving you as long as you keep loving yourself." And we've given each other permission to leave if either of us has given up on ourselves or is no longer serving a purpose in the other's life, apart from providing comfortable company.
>
> Renee moved in a few months ago, so I guess you could say that we are currently in our honeymoon phase. That said, I've been waiting for 12 years for that to end. So far, I just keep finding more things to love about her — and to love about myself when I'm with her.
>
> This experience has made me believe that the majority of people, myself included, have been navigating interpersonal relationships using the same outdated roadmap. We've romanticized the notion that one person could be our everything: our roommate, our financial and emotional support, our co-parenting partner, our best friend — and on top of all of this, they have to also be our lifelong lover. It just doesn't seem realistic.
>
> I'll never glamorize a platonic life partnership — they take just as much commitment and communication as any other partnership. We work hard to keep each other accountable and believe that boundaries are a huge part of keeping any relationship healthy. We over-communicate, negotiate, and compromise. We acknowledge that we want what is best for the other person, even if that isn't each other.
>
> But it's a relief to not have to worry about keeping a romantic connection alive while discussing the logistics of our shared life…It's based on one very common and flawed assumption: that romantic love is the best kind of love that exists. While I'm a romantic myself, I can't honestly say that this has been my experience. (Lee, 2022)

Queer is a term that has been used in a derogatory way to describe people who did not fit on the "normal" side of the gender or sexuality binary. Increasingly though, being "queer" has been embraced by many members of the LGBTQ+ to describe themselves. The meaning varies based on the person who is using it, and as with all labels, it is important to pay attention to how any individual describes themselves. Being "queer" can be used to signal the rejection of binary systems. Other times it is used as an umbrella term by people who in any number of ways do not see themselves as fitting into some kind of normative gender or sexuality group. This multiplicity suggests that the culturally dominant binary model fails to accurately describe the wide variety of lived experiences.

As society becomes increasingly accepting and knowledgeable about the variety of ways that healthy relationships can be formed, it is likely that new language will continue to be created to reflect the range of relationship structure

3.3.5 Licenses and Attributions for Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

3.3.5.1 Open Content, Original

3.3.5.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

3.3.6 References

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3.4 LOVE AND UNION FORMATION

> "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."

–Lao Tzu, philosopher

Relationships represent the excitement, passion, security, and connection we experience; they also represent the sadness, heartbreak, insecurities, violence, and loneliness we find at times.

Close relationships, such as those with a confidant or spouse, are highly associated with health and recovery from disease. In studies of various forms of cancer, including breast cancer, having one or more confidants decreased the likelihood and frequency of relapse (Maunsell et al., 1995). As a social species, intimate relationships are a fundamental aspect of our lives (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5. People show love and affection through a variety of activities and experiences.

3.4.1 Theories of Love

Love is a multidimensional concept and psychologists and sociologists have defined it in a variety of ways over the years. Here we look at two frameworks that describe varying kinds of love within intimate relationships.

3.4.1.1 Lee's Theory of Love

John Lee was a well-known Canadian psychologist who has a theory on love that includes six love types. Lee assumed that we all shared six core components of love and that our current loving relationship can be assessed and measured. Lee also claimed that there are qualities of love types—some more long-lasting and supportive of relationships and some pathological and defective which inhibit relationships. Lee's love types are widely used to help people understand their love styles.

- Eros: the love of sensuality (taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell).

- Storgé: the love of your best friend.
- Pragma: the love of details and qualities in the other person.
- Agapé: the love that is selfless, other-focused, and seeks to serve others rather than receive from others. In Christian theology, it's the love of God for mankind.
- Ludis: an immature love that is more of a tease than a legitimate loving relationship.
- Mania: an insecure love that is a mixture of conflict and artificially romantic Eros expressions.

Figure 3.6. Intense feelings of love are expressed outwardly and internally.

3.4.1.2 Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

Robert Sternberg became known as the "Geometry of Love" psychologist who triangulated love using intimacy, passion, and commitment by measuring the intensity of each and how intense the triangulation was for the couple. To Sternberg, it was important to consider how each partner's triangle matched the other partner's. He said that a couple with all three types of love balanced, and in sufficient magnitude, would have a rare yet rewarding type of love that encompassed much of what couples seek in a loving relationship.

Sternberg's consummate love is a love type that had equal measures of passion, intimacy, and commitment that is satisfactory to both lovers.

In modern-day applications of love, various components have been found as the ingredients of love: commitment, passion, friendship, trust, loyalty, affection, intimacy, acceptance, caring, concern, care, selflessness, infatuation, and romance. There is a love type identified that many people are aware of called unconditional love. Unconditional love is sincere love that does not vary regardless of the actions of the person who is loved. You often hear it expressed in greater measure among parents of children whose misbehaviors embarrass or disappoint them. The love types and patterns discussed below are taken from many sources but fit neatly into the Lee, Maslow, or Sternberg, paradigms.

- Romance: a love that is based on continual courtship and physical intimacy.
- Infatuation: a temporary state of love where the other person is overly idolized and seen in narrow and extremely positive terms.
- Commitment: a love that is loyal and devoted.
- Altruism: a selfless type of love that serves others while not serving the one who is altruistic.
- Passion: Sexual or passionate love focused on the intense pleasures of the senses (taste, smell, touch, feel, hear, and sight).
- Friendship: a love that includes intimacy and trust among close friends.
- Realistic Love: feelings you have when your list of a potential mate's personal traits is met in the other person.
- Obsession: an unhealthy love type where conflict and dramatic extremes in the relationship are both the goal and the theme of the couple's love.

3.4.2 Influences on Union Formations

The factors related to the selection of the people that we are emotionally and/or physically intimate with are complex and nuanced. The spirit of this textbook is to aspire to discuss this topic in a way that recognizes the diversity of family formations in the United States. Here we will do our best to identify some of the shared factors that affect human beings who choose a mate for a long-term relationship.

In order to organize our own thinking, we name and label things to better understand the world around us. As our society changes and expands, descriptions and labels come more slowly, creating **cultural lag** and causing disconnection. For example, marriage was once defined between only a man and a woman. It is now recognized legally that this is a limiting description that is not representative of our nation's unions. In addition, couples have formed via common-law marriage and/or cohabitation throughout our country's history. We will use the terms **union formations** to include all couple relationships, including marriage. When specific research has focused only on married relationships rather than the broader spectrum, we will use the term "marriage." Within our text, we acknowledge and celebrate all marriages/unions/partnerships/relationships that may have mixed legal, religious, or community acceptance.

Here we will explore the ways that **kinship** groups and society influence our selection of a primary mate or mates. In addition, we will review the **social exchange theory**.

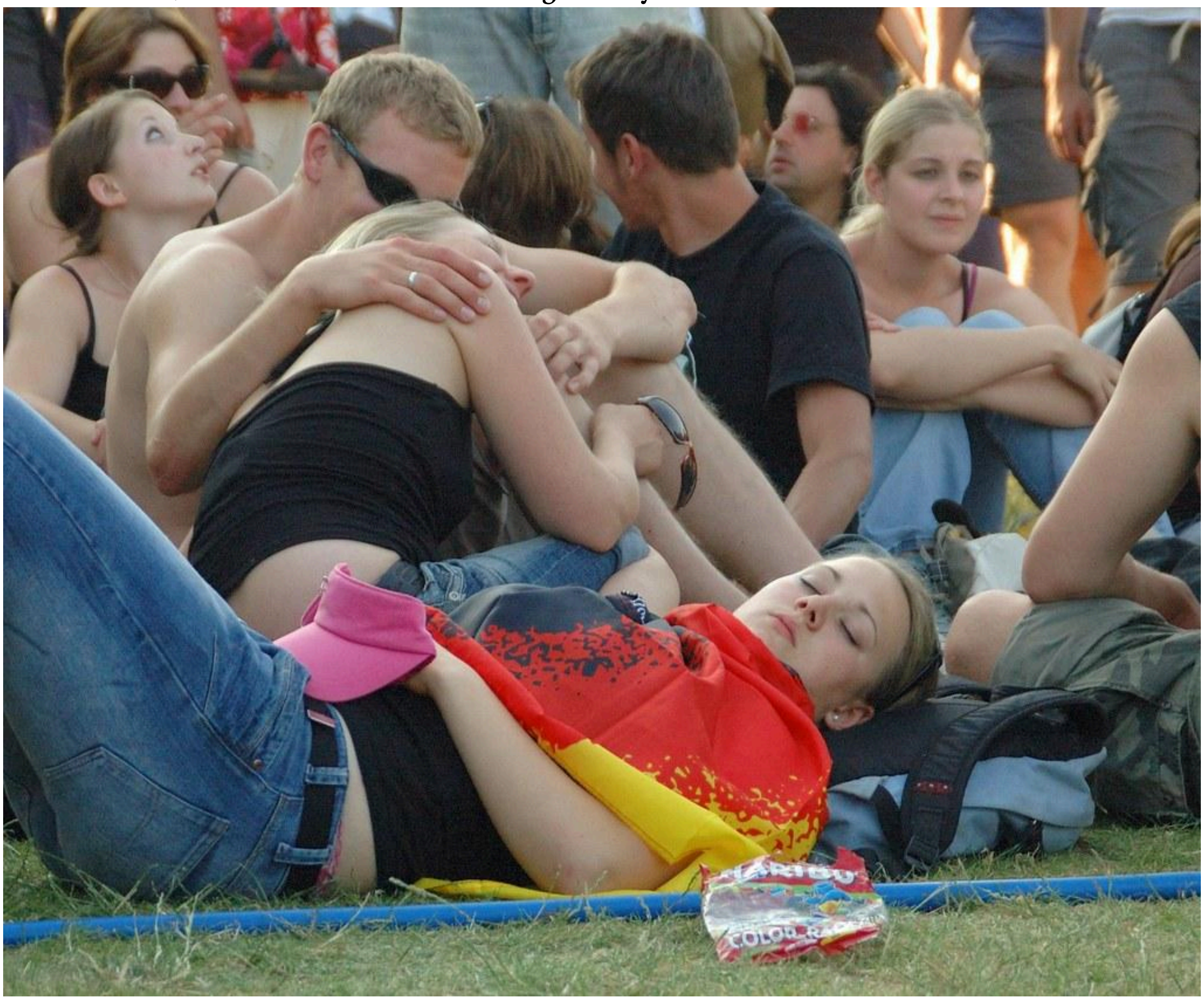

Figure 3.7. Love, comfort, and affection can be shared among two or more people.

3.4.2.1 Family Experiences, Values, and Expectations

How we choose the people we connect with is influenced by our family experiences, values, and expectations. It is common for adults to communicate and model these with their young children. For example, a parent makes a light-hearted comment about their three-year-old having a boyfriend or girlfriend. And in another comment about marriage, the parent assumes that that child will marry and that it will be to a person of the opposite gender in a binary system. Within the rules and structure of our family of origin, children navigate crucial social experiences that will affect mate selection and relationship dynamics. Young children are most influenced by the world that is both tangible and current. **Socialization theory** suggests that many of our ideas about gender-based behaviors are formed for life during our early childhood years. Our family of origin impacts how we orient to particular family themes, identity images, and myths that further delineate and define who is an appropriate intimate partner for us (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011).

3.4.2.2 **Assortative Mating**

When you consider your current mate, or any intimate partners that you seek, are they more like you or quite different from you? The idea of **assortative mating**, simply put, is that human beings tend to choose intimate mates who are more like themselves than if mates were assigned randomly. (As it turns out, non-human animals do as well, but that's another story).

The ways in which we might choose partners assortatively are quite wide and varied but can be divided very loosely into two categories: the physical and the social. Height and appearance both fit into the physical category; in this text, we will focus more on the social categories which include **culture**, **ethnicity**, religion, education, and **socioeconomic status** (Wikipedia, 2020). In particular, education level has become an increasingly assortative factor within union formations in the United States. Between the 1940s and the 1980s, education increased as an assortative factor until it leveled off for those with higher education degrees. It continues to increase for those without a high school degree, however (Eika et al., 2017). While the patterns in assortative and disassortative relationships have been studied, it is challenging to determine the underlying reasons for this behavior.

Because income level is increasingly associated with higher education, this pattern interacts with the trends in **socioeconomic status** in this country and may contribute to the cycle of poverty. It is important to note that this change affects the current generations in ways that we don't yet completely understand. Millennials (or Gen Y) and Gen Z (or iGen) are coping with the increased importance of education to income and status at the same time that college costs and student debt have increased dramatically. How this affects union formation and other family patterns remains to be seen. Based on what is known about couples wanting to be financially stable before marrying, it is likely that the trend of marrying less and marrying later will continue.

3.4.2.3 The Evolving **Economy** and Social Movements

Economics and social change affect personal choices about unions, but they also influence the way the role of mate, partner, or spouse is defined. In the early days of this country, and indeed before the formation of the United States, both Native families and Euro-American settlers relied on their **kinship** and family groupings for survival. Native families lived in tribes that shared spiritual beliefs and resources. Extended kin networks were, and still are, critical to the stability of the community (Deer et al., 2008). Euro-American families were large, with an emphasis on mate selection that would ensure as much financial stability and the likelihood of survival. Fertility was valued because children were seen as assets in the shared family work. Love as a rationale for marriage was disdained; feelings might change and a marriage built on instability could threaten survival (Coontz, 2000).

Figure 3.9. Industrialization and other economic changes influence union formations and patterns.

As the country industrialized, **roles** became more gender specific: men tended to work in the factories, and women more likely managed the home and children. As you saw in Chapter 1, this is known as the development of separate spheres, an idea that has persisted, though weakened, into the 21st century (Lewis, 2019). A growing **economy** and more routinized family patterns contributed to stability and a decreased focus on survival. It was still important to consider economics in a partnership, but romance, sexual companionship, and love also became expectations of intimate and marriage relationships. Family size decreased dramatically as both child mortality decreased and the White middle class evolved.

However, this progress was enabled by the less privileged.Children and women in minoritized groups continued to contribute to the family income. Labor laws protected most children who were White. Important social programs such as the Social Security Act of 1935 excluded domestic and agricultural workers, who were primarily immigrants and people of color. It is important to note that the idealized version of a sparkling house, home-cooked meals, and wife and mother who volunteered at her child's school was maintained via the assistance of other low-paid workers in the home, usually members of minoritized groups. In families that were not protected and privileged by government programs, survival was and is still paramount.

Figure 3.10 Economic changes along with social movements have a surprising effect on relationships, union formations, and break-ups.

The **economy** in the United States had steadily improved over centuries, but between the 1970s and the present, the country has experienced increased periods of stability and periods of recession. Social movements and technological changes in the same time frame have contributed to a structural and social broadening of the definition of the role of a partner. The feminist movements, civil rights movements, and LGBTQ+ movements have all influenced the ways in which individuals define themselves and therefore how we select mates. Interracial and same-sex couplings had existed long before they were openly discussed and eventually legalized. But it is clear that legal and social acceptance has increased the visibility and likely the number as well. The public changes in acceptance of relationships that are interracial and/or same-sex are important to note when it comes to the earlier discussion of **assortative mating**s.

Technological advances such as the automobile, household appliances, and the computer all influence relationships. The car makes it more possible for couples to meet up and have privacy, and household appliances increase time availability for other parts of life including partner, friend, and family relationships. Computers, the internet, and phones all facilitate communication and connection in a variety of ways.

3.4.2.4 **Social Constructions** and Theories that Impact Relationships

The United States is an individualistic country and in the same time period that has seen increased social movements, we have also seen an increase in individualism that must affect our most intimate relationships. While we continue to see marriage as an economic partnership, as well as a source of romance, sex, and companionship, there is now an additional expectation on these relationships. The marriage relationship has absorbed the value of Americans finding self-fulfillment and personal happiness. This adds even more pressure to the mating partnership and may contribute to the decrease in stability and length of marriages (Finkel et al., 2014).

The **social exchange theory**, as described in Chapter 2, is also applicable here. A person might be attracted to someone based on their first impressions, such as, “They’re cute and have a sense of humor that matches mine.” After observing them longer, someone might say, “But they also avoid doing their work in class group projects.” The **social exchange theory** says that we evaluate relationships based on looking at the person’s advantages and disadvantages to decide if we would want to enter a relationship with them. And what do we have to offer in exchange (our own goods and costs)? This theory emphasizes the implicit agreements that couples exchange when they enter a relationship.

We have been socialized to think of the White middle-class **nuclear family** living the “American Dream” as the ideal representation of family within the United States. This socially constructed ideal has been based on heterosexual norms. This is something that should not be quickly disregarded as it has shaped and influenced people’s thinking, even if they do not feel a part of these ideals.

Figure 3.11. Today’s couples use both traditional symbols and postmodern choices in their weddings.

Social change and advances in technology make us more aware of diversity in families. But this diversity has always existed among Native families and the immigrant groups that have brought a variety of family structures and norms to the United States. American families are as diverse as the people who live here. It is important to understand that as a nation, we have many similarities in regards to our experiences, values, and expectations. We also have differences. We have described here some of the institutional forces and theoretical ideas about how individuals enter into amorous relationships, but also acknowledged that each relationship is unique, complex, and nuanced in ways that are indescribable in writing.

3.4.3 Licenses and Attributions for Love and Union Formation

3.4.3.1 Open Content, Original

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3.5 A WORD ABOUT MARRIAGE

In the United States, marriage is often viewed as a symbolic representation of love and a significant step into adulthood. A single, lifelong marriage is considered a success. But these are **social construction**s. Here, we will discuss the socially constructed ideals of marriage, as well as acknowledge that marriage is just one possibility within all romantic and love relationships. Admittedly, marriage holds a high status in the United States. And we will ask you, the reader, to think about the role of marriage in society.

3.5.1 Marriage as a **Social Construction**

What image comes to mind when you think about marriage? Perhaps you immediately see a couple–a young man with a young woman–in wedding garb, with the man in formal black clothing and the woman in a white dress. Weddings are symbolic of the joining of a couple and the families involved. Perhaps you visualized something else–another stage of marriage or another kind of couple or family. The meaning of and ideals about marriage have changed over time and differ among **kinship** groups and **culture**s.

Figure 3.12. Weddings signal the start of a marriage and have symbolic importance in the United States, although both weddings and marriages have changed in meaning over time and location.

The most powerful **social construction**s of marriage in the United States have been driven by the **economy** and social change. Briefly summarized, these are the ways that marriage has been viewed by society over time:

- Marriage as an institution, which was the most common among Euro-American settlers from the time of arrival in what became this country until the mid-20th century. In **institutionalized marriage**, **roles** were clearly defined between the man and the woman in the pursuit of economic and familial stability. Producing children was highly valued as they contributed to the family's economic stability.
- **Companionate marriage** emerged as the **economy** in the United States improved and one spouse (usually the man) worked away from the home. "Separate spheres," the idea that men and women worked in different worlds (home and the workplace), emerged. While **roles** were still well defined, the importance of companionship, love, affection, and sex were all added to the expectations of marriage.
- **Individualistic marriage** evolved with the continued economic growth and the increase in women's **equality** and the expansion of gender **roles** for men, women, and the **nonbinary** role. This led to more flexible and fluid **roles** in marriages and in parenting. In addition, in **individualistic marriage**s, it is expected that each spouse works toward their own self-actualization, as well as supporting their spouse's self-actualization. Parenting and work within marriage were more likely to be shared. Both partners are expected to be more expressive and communicative. The role of support and encouragement in helping your spouse to become their best self is added to the growing list of expectations for marriage (Cherlin, 2004.)

Socially constructed ideals have taken on additional representation with the increasing usage of social media and the emergence of influencers, entrepreneurs who support themselves via their images, text, and videos on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Rather than acknowledging the challenges and imperfections within relationships, social media images by influencers are designed to reinforce idealized concepts and sell products. This contributes to the unrealistic constructions of married life (Perel, 2019.)

3.5.2 Activity: How do our ideas about marriage reflect theories?

Here are a set of statements about the role of marriage in the United States:

1. Marriage is a **social construction**; something that people have agreed is a unit of importance that has changed in meaning and function over time and location.
2. Marriage is a status symbol; even though people are marrying less it is still important.
3. Although individuals may not realize it, the way that world events have shaped their birth cohort impacts the timing and likelihood of marriage.
4. Marriage is a partnership that individuals form considering the costs and benefits of pairing up with another person.
5. Marriage is another function in which the power of men over women is emphasized in a binary structure.
6. Marriage is impacted by the social structure in our country–the institutions and processes that privilege some and oppress others.
7. When examining an individual's circles of support, marriage can be an important part of the innermost circle.
8. People marry for so many reasons and in so many different ways that it is difficult to say what it means or why people marry.

3.5.2.1 Responding to these Statements

Do you agree with some of these statements? Which ones and why? If you wrote your own statement about marriage and society and what would it say?

3.5.2.2 Matching these Statements to Core Theories

Each of these statements resonates with one of the perspectives that have been presented in this text. The first one represents the central idea of this text; that many familial operations and structures are **social construction**s that we have defined as a society and that have changed over time and could change some more. For statements 2 through 8, see if you can match them up with one of the theories in Figure 3.13 which is an excerpt of the table found in Chapter 2.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.
Feminism (aka Feminist)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; the theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.
Life Course	Pays attention to time including significant social and historical events and life transitions in their **roles** of shaping the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose with society and within institutions.
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others and this affects the **roles** they play.

Figure 3.13. This table shows foundational theories related to the study of families.

3.5.3 Who Is Left Out?

Who is left out of this socially constructed idea? Let's talk about other forms of union formation that may not fit the idealized marriage construction. As discussed earlier, our social identities, especially those that are related to gender and sexuality, are integral to the partnerships we form.

3.5.3.1 Same-Sex Marriages

In the United States, as well as other countries, two individuals of the same sex may be legally married, but in these countries as well as other places, same-sex couples have been creating households and families for centuries, long before legal recognition. Same-sex marriages are documented, for instance, in the history of Native American groups from the Great Plains. On the Plains, men who preferred to dress and take on the **roles** of women were allowed to marry other men. It was assumed that if one partner gathered plant food and prepared food, the other partner should have a complementary role like hunting. Androgynous individuals, males who preferred female **roles** or dress, and females who took on male **roles**, were not condemned but regarded as "two-spirits," a label that had positive connotations.

Two-spirits were considered to embody a third gender combining elements of both male and female. The key to the two-spirit gender identity was behavior: what individuals did in their communities (Roscoe, 2005). If a person who was born biologically male felt his identity and chosen lifestyle best matched the social role recognized as female, he could move into a third gender two-spirit category. Today, Native American groups set their own laws regarding same-sex marriage. Many recognize two-spirit individuals and accept the marriage of a two-spirit person to a person of the same biological sex. Although some nations still do not permit same-sex marriage between tribal members, one of the largest tribal nations, the Cherokee Nation, legalized same-sex marriages in 2016.

Although same-sex marriage was legalized in the United States in 2015, there is still stigma and controversy attached to same-sex couples who wish to marry (***Obergefell v. Hodges***, 2015). Among same-sex couples, there is variance in how much of the socially constructed ideals of weddings and marriage they choose to embrace. Some choose to have weddings, symbols, and/or marriages that fit these ideals and others reject these symbols while using the benefits of marriage.

3.5.3.2 Polygamy

Polygamy refers to any marriage in which there are multiple partners. It is related to polyamory, relationships in which a person has intimate relationships with more than one person at a time (and is transparent with partners about this). There are two kinds of polygamy: polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny refers to marriages in which there is one husband and multiple wives. In some societies that practice polygyny, the preference is for sororal polygyny, or the marriage of one man to several sisters. In such cases, it is sometimes believed that sisters will get along better as co-wives. Polyandry describes marriages with one wife and multiple husbands. As with polygyny, fraternal polyandry is common and involves the marriage of a woman to a group of brothers.

Polygamy has not been legalized in the United States, nor is there significant discussion about this right. Polygamous families face stigma and **discrimination** and do not fit into the socially constructed ideal.

Remember that marriage is one way of building a family or **kinship** group. As you continue to read this text, we encourage you to think critically about what marriage means to your own family and to society and what role it should play.

3.5.4 Licenses and Attributions for A Word about Marriage

3.5.4.1 Open Content, Original

3.5.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

3.5.5 References

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3.6 GOVERNMENTAL INFLUENCES ON UNION FORMATIONS

As discussed in Chapter 1, these authors believe that each person is in control of their own social and family identities. **Social institutions**, however, also define “family” via rights, responsibilities, benefits, and taxes. While the federal government leaps to mind as the arbiter of family definitions for taxation and benefits purposes, state and local governments are the primary legislators of **family law** and mediators of familial relationships. This was an intentional decision made during the formation of the United States of America: that states and local municipalities be the governors of matters related to the family. It is only when there is enough disruption among the states that matters of the family rise to the national decision-making level. An example is that many different laws related to same-sex marriage created inequities for families within states and disruption for families who moved from state to state. The 2015 Supreme Court decision that the right to marry is fundamental and must be available to all couples created consistency in marriage law (**Obergefell v. Hodges**, 2015).

In addition to government entities, institutions such as employers, schools, and insurance companies all have the authority to define family within certain parameters and to limit benefits such as sick leave, insurance coverage, and pension benefits. We know that these institutions impact the resources and benefits that families receive based on their structure and legal ties to one another. One question is, how do these varied definitions, policies, and practices affect partner and family formation and dissolutions? Whom we connect with, love, parent, marry, and divorce affects our access to resources in ways that are inequitable. The complexity of factors in choosing a partner(s) or in forming a family is difficult to analyze and study. Here, we will talk about how institutional policies and practices may play a role in those decisions. Federal Student Aid and student loans, Medicaid and Medicare, social security and income taxes, immigration law, military housing policies, and health care insurance all rely on definitions of partner and family structures in order to assign taxes, rights, privileges, and benefits.

3.6.1 Federal Student Aid and Loans

Let’s start with what might be most familiar to the reader: federal student aid and loans. Whether or not you have qualified for federal grants and loans, the system affects you and the authors expect that you know this quite well.

The federal aid system makes some assumptions about families: first, that parents will always pay for the education of their children if the children are younger than 24 years. Conversely, they consider a child who is 24 years or older to be “independent” and that their parents will not be contributing to their education. Making this distinction leads to the government considering the parents’ income and **accumulated wealth** when it comes to awarding financial aid, but only when students are younger than 24 years. Right away, we can see some flaws and inequities in this regulation. Some parents will pay for education regardless of the child’s age; others will not. Some families have **accumulated wealth** over generations of privilege; others may have gone without necessities to set aside savings for a healthcare crisis or retirement. (All wealth is not created equally). This rule does not recognize the nuances of the parent-child relationship or the privilege and oppression that contributes to the attainment of wealth and savings.

The federal aid system also differentiates between married couples and cohabiting or common law relationships. It presumes that a married couple combines their resources and that a cohabiting couple does not; so marrying a partner who has a higher income will likely lessen a financial aid award, while cohabiting with them will not.

Student debt is becoming an increasingly common issue for graduates and for people who do not complete a degree. College costs have increased dramatically in the past forty years, and student debt rates have followed. Does student debt influence the likelihood of marriage? Since many wish to be financially stable before marrying, it is possible. Anecdotal reports and news stories indicate that people are delaying marriage based on student debt loads. Studying this is complicated, but one demographic review found that women were more likely to put off marriage when they had student loans to repay (Bozick & Estacion, 2014).

3.6.2 Social Security and Income Taxes

Income taxes and social security are heavily dependent on the institutional marriage of the mid-20th century, specifically the breadwinner-homemaker model. Couples were more homogeneous at that time; likely to marry early and stay married longer, with men typically earning more or much of the income. Both the federal income tax system and the social security systems evolved over the 20th century to correct what was considered to be the most common gender injustice: that many women made less money than their spouses (Figure 3.14).

These systems failed to take into account the racial injustice of the times; when social security was implemented in 1935 it excluded all domestic and farm workers who were primarily Black people and immigrants. Both groups were added in the 1950s.

Figure 3.14. Although union formations are more diverse today, many government benefits and tax systems are based on a specific model of marriage.

Much has been discussed about the "marriage bonus" and the "marriage penalty," meaning that some couples benefit from marrying and some couples pay more taxes when they marry. The federal and state systems have changed over the years but face what is called a "trilemma" by tax experts: systems cannot simultaneously impose progressive marginal tax rates, assess equal taxes on married couples with equal earnings, and maintain marriage neutrality (meaning that married and unmarried couples pay the same amount of taxes). The net result from the trilemma is that married couples whose individual incomes are comparable pay more in taxes than a couple whose incomes are dramatically different (Alstott, 2013).

Both social security, with its survivor benefit emphasis, and income taxes focus on the marriage ideal from the last century: one spouse (usually male) who earns most of the family's income, and a lower-earning spouse (usually female). But this has not been the norm for over 50 years, and many argue that these systems need to catch up. As explained by the **postmodern theory**, choice and individuality are emphasized in today's society. Diverse relationships are accepted more readily and marriages are less assortative in most ways. Marriage is declining; people wait longer to marry, are less likely to marry, and stay married for fewer years. Couples are more likely to have equal rather than disparate individual incomes. All of these factors point to the inadequacy of the current systems and raise the question of whether these policies influence people's choice to marry or otherwise partner up.

3.6.3 Medicaid and Medicare

Let's review the general definitions of each of Medicaid and Medicare, which are frequently confused. Medicare is federally funded health insurance for people who are aged 65 or older, some younger people with disabilities, and people with end-stage renal disease. Medicaid also provides health care coverage, in this case for eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults, and people with disabilities.

Like income taxes and social security, these government programs are built on a marriage model. This model presumes shared incomes and budgets for married households, and separate budgets for people who live together and are related in other ways, such as friendship, cohabitation, or blood ties.

Chronic disease and acute injuries can lead to staggering bills, even for families who have private or public health insurance, and this is a major contributor to bankruptcy, loss of home, remaining in poverty, and other financial crises. Eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid can not only save physical life, but economic and family stability. But eligibility is complicated.

3.6.4 Activity: What if Your Spouse was in a Devastating Car Accident?

To learn about a classic dilemma that a family with a health crisis faces, listen to this 19-minute interview with Carol Levine, a public health professional who faced a personal and health crisis when her husband was in a devastating car accident.

As you listen, ask yourself, what would you do in a similar situation? And how does this relate to

- love,
- health **equity**,
- unions that are not a marriage, and
- and the institution of marriage?

3.6.5 Military Policies

The branches of the military which include the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard are funded by the federal government. As the employer, the federal government has particular policies that apply to families. Two of the most well-known apply to relationships, sexuality, and marriage.

Figure 3.15 Military recruitment poster, 2019.

For the majority of this nation's military history, members of the LGBTQ+ community have been disqualified from employment and service. This doesn't mean that they didn't serve, but they were stigmatized and hidden. The policy changed between 1994 and 2011, when the infamous rule "**Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue**" (Don't Ask, Don't Tell or **DADT**) was in effect. During this time, **gay** men, **lesbian** women, and **bisexual** people were permitted to be employed as long as they did not exhibit or talk about conduct that could be identified in these ways; in addition, others were prohibited from discriminating against or harassing them. The "Don't Pursue" aspect of the regulation limited the investigations by superiors of members presumed to belong to the LGBTQ+ community.

The law, which appeared to signify progress, still resulted in many members of the military experiencing stigma, stalled careers, **discrimination**, harassment, and violence. Multiple legal challenges were filed and it was eventually repealed. While the regulation has changed, stigma and harassment remain.

Necko L. Fanning, wrote this in the New York Times about his experience serving in the Army between 2011 and 2014.

> The second week after I arrived at Fort Drum, N.Y. — my first and only duty station with the Army — I found death threats slipped under the door of my barracks room. I noticed the colors first. Pink, blue and yellow; strangely happy colors at odds with the words written on them. Some were simple: slurs and epithets written in thick black Sharpie, pressed so hard into the paper that it bled through. "Faggot" and "queer fag," the notes read. A couple were more elaborate: detailed descriptions of what might happen to me if I was caught alone, and proclamations about the wrongness of **gay**s in the military…
>
> …The military is built on a foundation of earning trust and proving yourself to your peers and superiors as capable. Being new to a unit isn't unlike being a new employee at any other job. People are cautious, even wary, until you've shown you can handle the work. Perhaps it didn't help that I was an intelligence analyst in an infantryman's world — a support soldier in a combat soldier's unit. But none of that had been mentioned in the notes. My capability wasn't in question, nor was my duty position. It wasn't my effectiveness or value to the unit that elicited these noxious notes but something far removed from my control. Something that after September 2011 was supposed to be meaningless (Fanning, 2019.)

The military has also been known for policies that incentivize marriage. In general, single members of the armed forces live in barracks with a large group of colleagues. Married members, in contrast, live in military housing that more closely mimic suburban neighborhoods. In addition, there is a housing allowance that goes along with this privilege, resulting in married military members earning more salary and benefits. This incentive is provided by the military in order to support and stabilize families who are frequently moving and have less predictable work schedules than other government positions. Could this contribute to marriages made for financial reasons? Anecdotally, yes, there are many stories that support this theory. When taken in combination with the prohibition of LGBTQ+ people's service, it could also serve as a double incentive: a way to avert suspicion of unsanctioned sexuality as well as a financial gain. But getting married is a complex decision and it is difficult to attribute just one aspect of life to being the primary factor in getting married.

3.6.6 Immigration Law

The history of immigration law is varied and complex and has favored different groups of families over time. In the most recent few years, law has changed rapidly. Here the authors will provide a few examples of the ways in which family status affects legal status and how recent and current laws affect families.

For special attention to how family ties affect immigration, green card, and citizenship status, here are two good sources to read:

- The CATO Institute's definitions, summaries, and overview of the line for green cards in 2019: Immigration Wait Times from Quotas Have Doubled: Green Card Backlogs Are Long, Growing, and Inequitable
- This case study about two immigrants who are scientific researchers and their children who have legal status, but who face deportation due to the delays in processing their applications.

Unpredictability about laws and status may affect partners' decisions about union formation. Consider for yourself: if your partner's legal status changed, would it change your feelings about them? Would it change your plans to marry or to cohabitate? Families who have been waiting for years or decades, as described in the cases above, for their status to be resolved face ongoing uncertainty and stress related to work and family.

Consider the family that has some members who are citizens, and some who have green cards. Others may be waiting for resolution, perhaps approved for **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals** (**DACA**), described in detail in Chapter 11.

3.6.7 In Focus: Transnational Families

My mom came to the United States accompanied by her aunt and uncle at the age of 14. She and her parents (my grandparents) decided that it would be best for her to leave Mexico because she was no longer attending school, as they could not afford it, and she was more than likely going to be stuck working at my grandpa’s small farm for the rest of her life.

Once in the United States she was able to return to school and soon became the first in the family to graduate from high school but she found it impossible to further her education as there were no scholarships or loans available to undocumented folks at the time, so she went to work. She worked at a potato factory, met my dad, and had kids, including me. Right around this time **DACA** came around which was huge. She applied to **DACA**, was approved, and soon after was able to quit her factory job for a much better paying job.

Now that myself and my siblings are a little older she is considering going back to school and even buying a house but she finds herself constantly second guessing that decision as her future here in the United States is uncertain.

3.6.8 Official Definitions and Societal Stigma

Definitions and categories are used to assign rights, privileges, and benefits to individuals and families. Government policies grounded in these definitions are intertwined with status and stigma. For example, although same-sex and interracial marriages are now legal across the country, they still have levels of stigma associated with them, dependent on location. Cohabitation, even among White heterosexual couples, has less status than does marriage. Status and stigma can affect people socially and emotionally as well as economically.

Other areas that families see the effects of government definitions about partnerships and **kinship** groups include access to health care and health insurance, which is discussed in Chapter 7.

As we wrap up this section about the impact of institutions on personal partnerships and relationships, what other examples have you experienced or observed?

3.6.9 Relationship Health and Relationship Challenge

While this course and text are primarily focused on how society, institutions, and **kinship** groups interact, we will focus here discussing the health of intimate relationships and what factors, both internal and external, predict the longevity of the relationship.

3.6.10 Activity: What Makes Relationships Hard?

First, watch this Ted Talk (10:14) "Relationships are Hard, but Why?" by Therapist Stan Tatkin (Figure 3.16)

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=347#oembed-1

Figure 3.16 Relationships Are Hard, But Why? | Stan Tatkin | TEDxKC [YouTube Video]. Therapist Stan Tatkin talks about how our brains contribute to falling in love, and then how our communication styles can contribute to feelings of being safe or being threatened within relationships.

Then discuss the video.

- What was new to you in this video?
- What are the "mistakes" that the primitive brain contributes to ?
- What does he mean by, "human communication, even on a good day, is terrible"?
- What is the "fun part" described by Stan Tatkin?
- In what ways can you apply these ideas to your own life, or to what you have observed?

The first half of 2020 saw a confluence of worldwide events: the coronavirus and related pandemic; massive job loss, school closures, and an economic downturn; and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement.

These have affected families in many ways; let's look at two examples of how these trends and movements have uncovered challenges within intimate relationships.

An August 2020 letter to advice columnist Carolyn Hax, started out this way:

> My husband and I disagree about covid precautions and have reached the point where we're constantly fighting about it. I am more conservative and trying to have contact with only a few families I know are taking similar precautions. He's exposing himself and his 8-year-old son, my stepson, to a lot more people, including one family that I believe does not take covid seriously. One child in this family had cold symptoms, and they refused to have him tested and continued to expose him to other kids.
>
> At first my husband lied to me about seeing this family. After I found out, he said he won't lie anymore but is going to do what he wants… (Hax, 2020)

As the writer continues and Carolyn Hax responds, they both acknowledge that the extreme pandemic experience has exposed the husband's willingness to lie and to disregard her feelings and needs. Hax emphasizes that this is not situation specific but actually uncovers a challenge in the relationship that must be addressed separately from the specific circumstance. She advises the letter writer that she has several options: couples counseling to see if the husband is willing to change this behavior, leaving the marriage, or to choose to stay knowing that she is not able to fully trust him.

Figure 3.17. Rachel Lindsay and Becca Kufrin have had lively dialogue about relationships and racism.

A very public example of a relationship challenge comes to us from the popular television franchise: *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Two former Bachelorette leads, Rachel Lindsay Abasolo (Figure 3.18, left, *The Bachelorette*, Season 13) and Becca Kufrin (Figure 3.18, right, *The Bachelorette*, Season 14) hosted a podcast together, *Bachelor Happy Hour*. Lindsay met her husband on her season of the show and Kufrin met her fiancé. Both women make some portion of their livelihood as "influencers," as do each of their male partners.

As the Black Lives Matter movement gained more notice, and additional White allies emerged, Kufrin identified herself publicly as someone who wanted to become a more knowledgeable and active person in the racial justice movement. Simultaneously, her fiancé, Garrett Yrigoyen, posted Instagram images that presented his support of the competing Blue Lives Matter movement. Kufrin discussed both her own personal development as well as the challenges she faced in her relationship on the podcast. Kufrin and Yrigoyen have ended their engagement and relationship. And in 2021, Lindsey left the podcast, for reasons related to the ways in which the franchise treated contestants of color and issues of race on the show.

Families are under great pressure from the pandemic and economic stress. People of color (**POC**) experience additional stress related to the public exposure of the disproportionate violence against Black people. In many cases, **kinship** groups are spending more time together, including those in intimate relationships. Values and belief system differences that may have been purposely hidden, or that were just implicitly undiscussable may be uncovered and effect relationships for the long term.

If you'd like to know more about healthy relationships and which relationships are more likely to last, The Gottman Institute is a psychological research institute that studies couple interactions and nuances.

In The Science of Love video (2.50), host Julian Hueguet describes the Gottmans' work and predictors of success in the relationships that they have studied, primarily heterosexual married couples (Figure 3.18).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=347#oembed-2

Figure 3.18 The Secret To A Successful Relationship [YouTube Video]. This short video describes the Gottman Institute's work.

While the Gottman Institute is known for its scientific research, as with many studies the majority of participating couples are White and heterosexual. The Gottmans did participate with Dr. Robert Levenson in a 12-year study of 21 **gay** and 21 **lesbian** couples. In an effort to study underrepresented populations as well as partnerships outside of marriage, they have acknowledged this weakness and are reaching out to underrepresented people to tell their own relationship stories via a submission form on their website. You can participate here.

3.6.11 Licenses and Attributions for Governmental Influences on Union Formations

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Figure 3.20 Kobol, Heather, and Yang Jiang. "Basic Facts about Low-Income Children under 18 Years, 2016." NCCP | Child Poverty, 28 Feb. 2018. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_1194.html Used under fair use.

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3.7 UNION DISSOLUTION AND DIVORCE

The U.S. divorce rate has risen since the early 1900s, with several peaks and valleys, and is now one of the highest in the industrial world. It rose sharply during the Great Depression and World War II, probably because of the economic distress of the former and the family disruption caused by the latter, and fell sharply after the war as the **economy** thrived and as marriage and family were proclaimed as patriotic ideals. It dropped a bit more during the 1950s before rising sharply in the 1970s (Cherlin, 2009). The divorce rate has declined steadily since 1980 as shown in Figure 3.19.

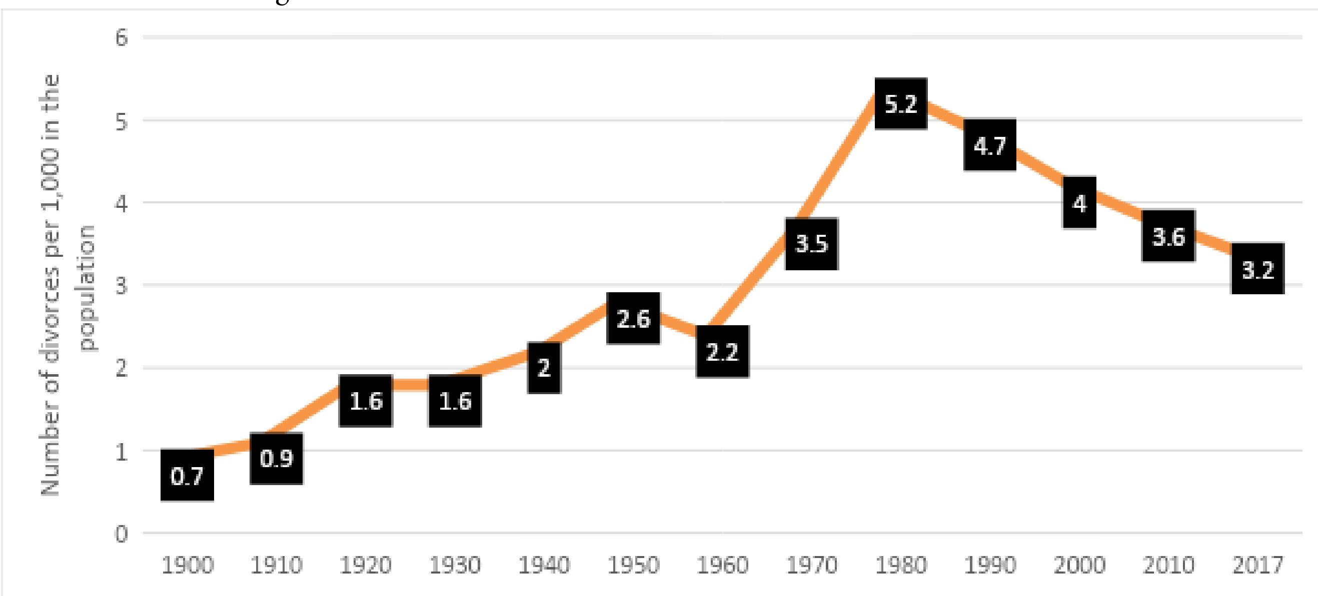

Figure 3.19 Number of Divorces per 1,000 in the population, 1900-2017

3.7.1 Reasons for Divorce

We cannot be certain about why the divorce rate rose so much during the 1960s and 1970s, but we can rule out two oft-cited causes. First, there is little reason to believe that marriages became any less happy during this period. We do not have good data to compare marriages then and now, but the best guess is that marital satisfaction did not decline after the 1950s ended. What did change was that people after the 1950s became more willing to seek divorces in marriages that were already unhappy.

Recall our discussion earlier in Chapter 3, about the changing nature of marriage expectations. As individuals expect more and more from marriage, it is more likely that some partnerships would not meet the increased expectations of companionship, romance, sex, and monogamy required for the **social construction** of the **companionate marriage**. Shifting forward to the 21st century, and the expectations of role flexibility and personal fulfillment of the **individualistic marriage**, you can see that it may be more difficult for any one person or partnership to meet these ideals. The greater societal emphasis on personal fulfillment has likely contributed to people ending unhappy marriages.

Sometimes the contemporary women's movement is blamed for the increase in the divorce rate by making women think marriage is an oppressive institution. The women's movement emerged in the late 1960s and was capturing headlines by the early 1970s. Although the divorce rate obviously rose after that time, it also started rising several years before the women's movement emerged. If the divorce rate began rising before the women's movement started, it is illogical to blame the women's movement. Instead, other structural and cultural forces must have been at work, just as they were at other times in the last century, as just noted, when the divorce rate rose and fell.

Why, then, did divorce increase during the 1960s and 1970s? One reason is the increasing economic independence of women. As women entered the labor force in the 1960s and 1970s, they became more economically independent of their spouses. When women in unhappy marriages do become more economically independent, they are more able to afford to get divorced than when they have to rely entirely on their spouses earnings (Hiedemann, Suhomlinova, & O'Rand, 1998). At the same time men's employment opportunities decreased.

When both spouses work outside the home, moreover, it is more difficult to juggle the many demands of family life, especially child care, and family life can be more stressful. Such stress can reduce marital happiness and make divorce more likely. Spouses have less time for each other when both are working outside the home, making it more difficult to deal with problems they may be having.

It is also true that disapproval of divorce has declined since the 1950s, even if negative views of it still remain (Cherlin, 2009). Not too long ago, divorce was considered a deviant act; now it is considered a normal if unfortunate part of life. We no longer say a bad marriage should continue for the sake of the children. But is the growing acceptability of divorce a cause of the rising divorce rate, or is it the result of the rising divorce rate? Or is it both a cause and result? There are bi-directional forces at play with society's views and individual's actions.

Another reason divorce rose during the 1960s and 1970s may be that divorces became easier to obtain legally. In the past, most states required couples to prove that one or both had committed actions such as mental cruelty, adultery, or other such behaviors in order to get divorced. Today almost all states have no-fault divorce laws that allow a couple to divorce if they say their marriage has failed from irreconcilable differences (Kneip & Bauer, 2009).

We have just looked at possible reasons for divorce rate trends, but we can also examine the reasons why certain marriages are more or less likely to end in divorce within a given time period. Although, as noted earlier, 40%–50% of all new marriages will probably end in divorce, it is also true that some marriages are more likely to end than others. Family scholars identify several correlates of divorce (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006; Wilcox, 2009). They include:

- age at marriage: teenagers who get married are much more likely to get divorced than people who marry well into their 20s or beyond

- social class: people who are poor at the time of their marriage are more likely to get divorced than people who begin their marriages in economic comfort, as the stress of poverty causes stress in marriage.

3.7.2 Effects of Divorce and Single-Parent Households

Much research exists on the effects of divorce on spouses and their children, and scholars do not always agree on what these effects are. One thing is clear: divorce plunges many women into poverty or near-poverty (Gadalla, 2008). Many have been working only part time or not at all outside the home, and divorce takes away their spouse's economic support. Even women working full time often have trouble making ends meet, because, as we saw in earlier chapters, so many are in low-paying jobs.

It is very difficult to separate the effects of divorce from the effects of poverty, but research indicates that poverty may have worse effects on women and children than does divorce. One-parent families headed by a woman for any reason are much poorer ($35,400 median annual income in 2016) than those headed by a man ($55,580 median annual income in 2016). Meanwhile, that same year, the median income of married-couple families was much higher ($85,300). Almost 35.6% of all single-parent families headed by women are poor.

Although the economic consequences of divorce seem clear, what are the psychological consequences for families? Are they better off if a divorce occurs, worse off, or about the same? The research evidence is very conflicting. Many studies find that divorced spouses are, on average, less happy and have poorer mental health after their divorce, but some studies find that happiness and mental health often improve after divorce (Williams, 2003; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009). The post-divorce time period that is studied may affect what results are found: for some people psychological well-being may decline in the immediate aftermath of a divorce, but rise over the next few years.

Parents used to stay together "for the sake of the children," thinking that divorce would cause their children more harm than good. Studies of this issue generally find that children in divorced families are indeed more likely, on average, to do worse in school, to use drugs and alcohol and suffer other behavioral problems, and to experience emotional distress and other psychological problems (Sun & Li, 2009; Amato & Cheadle, 2008). Children, in general, tend to rebound after the first year following the divorce. However, it is sometimes difficult in these studies to determine whether the effects on children stem from the divorce itself, poverty, or, instead, from the parental conflict that led to the divorce.

The statistics on children and poverty are discouraging (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2009). Nineteen percent of children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold, and 41% of children live in households experiencing twice the poverty (double the poverty line) (Koball and Jiang, 2018). Family structure plays a significant role in child poverty, with 41% of children in poverty residing with a single parent compared to the 13% of children in poverty who live with 2 parents.

As with many things, race and **ethnicity** play an important role: African American, Latino and Native American children are more than two times as likely as non-Latino white children to live in poverty as shown in Figure 3.20.

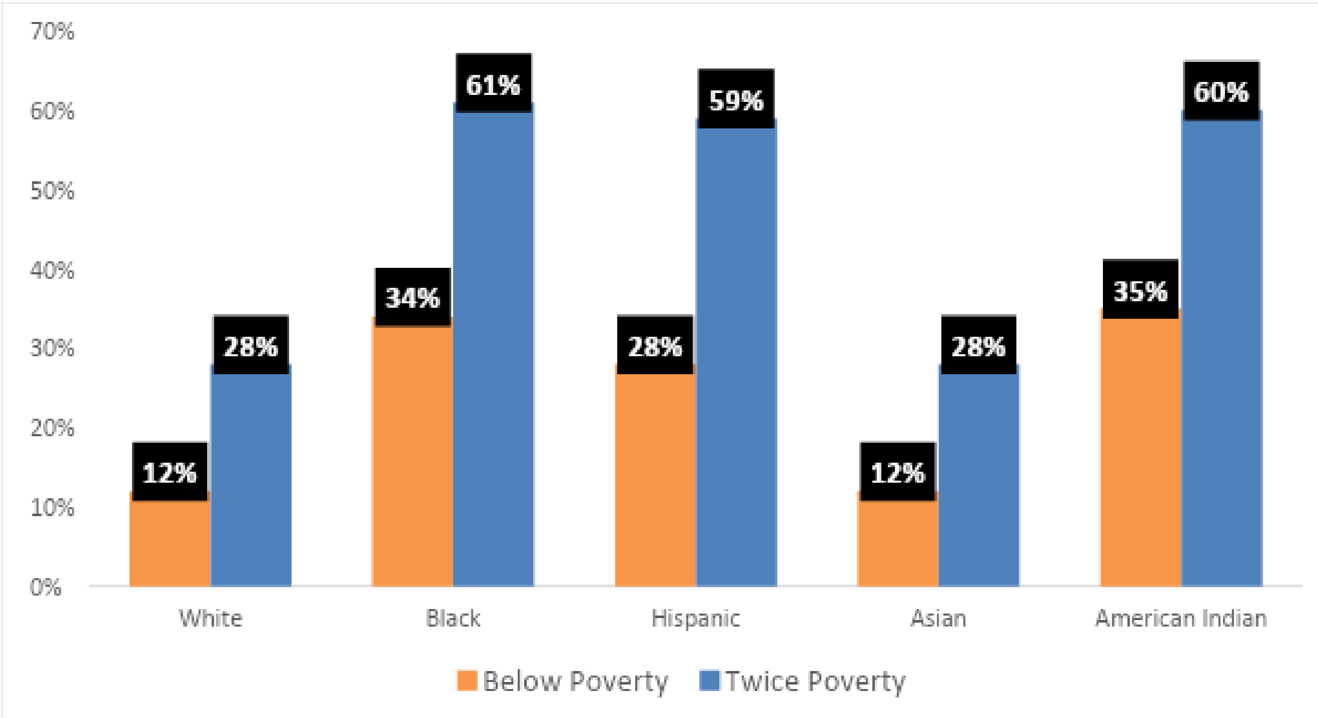

Figure 3.20 Percentage of Children Below Poverty Level by Race-**Ethnicity**, 2016

Childhood poverty is higher in the United States than in any other post industrial democracy, and poor children in the United States fare worse than their counterparts in other postindustrial democracies (Jäntti, 2009). A major reason for this is that the United States lacks the large, national programs other postindustrial democracies have both for preventing poverty and for helping children and adults already living in poverty. These programs include housing allowances, free or subsidized day care and preschool programs and adequate healthcare. The experience of other postindustrial democracies indicates that the number of U.S. poor children and the problems they face are much higher than they need to be (Waldfogel, 2009).

3.7.3 Licenses and Attributions for Union Dissolution and Divorce

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3.8 LOOKING AHEAD

Nyssa Cronin and Elizabeth B. Pearce

We are a social species. Familial **roles** can be expanded beyond the perimeters of legal definitions and regarded in a much broader sense that can include friendships, sexual relationships, caregiving, social support, partnering and more. The people we interact with on a daily basis have been influenced by many factors, including where we live, our **socioeconomic status**, and the attachments that we formed in early childhood. This complicated network of influencing factors within our relationships contributes to societal disparities and inequities, a factor that we have strived to make more visible through this text.

Kinship, partnerships, and familial relationships contribute to health benefits as described in the first section of this chapter. As shown in Figure 3.21, these interactions and connections also contribute to the joy and empathy of shared experience.

Figure 3.21 Families, partnerships, and **kinship** groups come together to laugh, to reminisce, to learn, to compete, to build, and to play. Facing adversity together can strengthen ties and build purpose.

We aspire to understand the ways that labels, definitions, and policies weaken **kinship** formations. Simultaneously, we celebrate and support the love and joy that families can produce, maintain, and grow.

3.8.1 Want to Learn More?

- If you would like to read more about the separation of immigrant families from the global south, there is a deep dive on this Human Rights Watch webpage, and there are links to detailed fact sheets and descriptions of visits to the facilities where parents, babies, toddlers, and children are being held (Wikipedia, 2020).
- To learn more about platonic life partnerships (PLP) from April Lee, visit her TikTok page.
- To read more about digital media and relationships, this article can be accessed via an LBCC library account and the same article is available on Researchgate: From Online Dating to Online Divorce: An Overview of Couple and Family Relationships Shaped through Digital Media (2017).
- To read about who and how to qualify for Medicare or Medicaid, review these government websites:
    - Medicare.gov
    - Medicaid.gov
- If you'd like to listen to Rachel Lindsey and Becca Kufrin, listen to "Race, Diversity, and Bachelor Nation," the June 9, 2020 episode.

3.8.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

3.8.2.1 Open Content, Original

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3.9 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

3.9.1 Reflective Questions

1. How are community and connection important to individuals? What theory best helps you understand this idea?
2. How are **kinship** and family similar? Different?
3. What are the factors contribute to Union Formation? Which ones have influenced you the most personally?
4. In what ways does the government influence partnership, marriage, and break ups?
5. How does societal stigma influence union formations?
6. What are the issues related to **equity** when it comes to partnerships including marriage?
7. If you were writing the laws and regulations around taxes and benefits related to union formations and **kinship** groups, what would they look like?

3.9.2 Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **assortative mating:** the tendency to choose intimate mates who are more like oneself.

- **binary:** a social construct composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites.
- **chosen families:** non biological **kinship** bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love.
- **cisgender:** a person who identifies in accordance with their gender assignment.
- **companionate marriage:** a relationship in which one spouse (usually the man) works away from the home.
- **hierarchy of needs theories:** a framework, articulated by multiple Indigenous groups, that emphasizes self-actualization not just of the individual, but of the community as the most primary of needs.
- **homophobia:** the fear, hatred, or prejudice against **gay** people.
- **individualistic marriage:** a relationship in which parenting and work are more likely to be shared.
- **intersex**: a variation in sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals.
- **intimate relationships:** characterized by mutual trust, caring and acceptance and often implies a romantic or sexual relationship.
- **institutionalized marriage:** a relationship in which **roles** are clearly defined between the man and the woman in the pursuit of economic and familial stability.
- **polyamory:** having intimate relationships with more than one person at at at a time
- **private function of families:** the aspect of family life related to loving another person forever, or indefinitely
- **sexuality:** the pattern or romantic and/or sexual attraction feelings and behaviors to others in relation to one's own gender identity.
- **stigma:**negative or discriminatory attitude based on a social characteristic or behavior
- **transgender people:** individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- **union formation:** any couple relationships, including marriage.

3.9.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and

Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

3.9.3.1 Open Content, Original

3.10 CHAPTER 3 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 4: NURTURANCE, PARENTING, AND CAREGIVING

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

Elizabeth B. Pearce with Nyssa Cronin, Shyanti Franco, Wesley Sharp and Genna Watkins

4.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the importance of caregiving relationships using a child development or parenting theory or perspective.
2. Describe the demographic changes that affect parenting, grandparenting, and other caregiving relationships.
3. Apply theoretical concepts related to parenting to one's own observations and experiences.
4. Describe the multidirectional relationship between social structures and caregiving relationships.
5. Analyze how the government influences caregiving, parenting and attachment.
6. Describe the stigmas associated with parenting and caregiving.
7. Analyze parenting and caregiving from an **equity** perspective.

4.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

4.2 NURTURANCE: CARING FOR OTHERS

Caregiving and being cared for is one of the critical aspects of **kinship** and family life. All of us have been parented in one form or another. In addition, many provide caregiving and nurturance to children, younger adults, and other adults who need or desire assistance (figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).

Perhaps the most emphasized caregiving role in the United States is that of "parent," but it is important to realize that this too is a **social construction**. Some are parents via biological creation, but others become parents via other familial relationships such as grandparenting. There are legally assigned adoptive and foster parents. And there are those who fully meet the caregiving and provider definition of parent, but have neither legal nor biological ties.

In this section we will discuss parenting, grandparenting and other nurturing relationships. We will examine the horizontal and the vertical relationships related to **kinship** and caregiving.

Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. Nurturing relationships occur in many family forms.

A **caregiver** provides nurturance or support of another person in some way, shape or form. Other than parenting, caregiving also covers areas regarding the care of adults, elders, individuals who are disabled or ill, and people who fall anywhere in the spectrum of not being able to have their full needs met without the assistance of others.

Now that the baseline meaning of a caregiver is defined, let's explore the different, deeper aspects of nurturance and how people may or may not get the proper care that they need. We will examine the ways in which institutional power, influence, and **discrimination** impact these critical relationships. We will discuss important theories related to parenting and other nurturing relationships. And we will continue to note the ways that societal perceptions impact families—the ways that some **kinship** groups are harmed or limited and others are privileged—in their experience with nurturance, caregiving, and receiving care.

As introduced in Chapter 1, one way to view families is through their private and public functions. In this chapter, the focus is on the **public function of families**: the caregiving and nurturing of family members, with a focus on children. Other public functions include caring for disabled adults and older family members (Cherlin, n.d.).

Another example of this function are older family members caring for grandchildren, or helping run households for and with their adult children. The relationships can also be bi-directional when **multigenerational** households share caregiving, financial, and household responsibilities, as pictured in Figure 4.X. These kinds of households have consistently been more common in other countries and within some **culture**s in the United States, such as the Latinx communities. They are now becoming more common among the White middle-class demographic that previously embraced the **nuclear family**. Demographic and societal forces that have contributed to these changes in needs and preferences.

Figure 4.4. Multigenerational family living situations are more common in the early 2000's than they were in the late 20th century.

4.2.1 Licenses and Attributions for Nurturance: Caring for Others

4.2.1.1 Open Content, Original

4.2.1.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

4.2.2 References

Cherlin, Andrew.Public and Private Families: An Introduction – McGraw Hill., 2017.https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/public-private-families-introduction-cherlin/M9781260813272.html

4.3 CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Population trends which demonstrate changes in lifespan, fertility, and family formation within the United States are connected to the ways that families form and function in their nurturing relationships. These demographic changes are captured via large studies and surveys; most of the data is collected, analyzed, and publicized by the U.S. federal government (or collected separately by the states and then combined.) These big trends help us to understand how families change over time.

4.3.1 Birth, Fertility, and Fecundity Rates

In addition to the interpersonal aspects of caregiving and parenting, it is important to look at the changes that are occurring as the population ages: to birth, fertility and fecundity rates. Many of these changes are similar in other developed countries, but we will focus on the United States.

In general, the population is aging in the United States: people are living longer and fewer children are being born. The birth rate is declining across all education, income, and age levels with just one exception. While older women (ages 45-49) are having more children, this is a very small number in comparison to all the other groups that are having fewer children (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

To read the provisional data for 2020, refer to the Vital Statistics Rapid Release Report (May 2021) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The graph in Figure 4.5 demonstrates the number of live births in the United States between 1990 and 2020 (30 years.) The blue line represents the number of actual births in the millions (e.g., there were over 4 million births in 1990 and about 3,600,000 births in 2020.) The green line represents the birth rate per 1,000 women (e.g., there were just over 70 births per 1,000 women in 1990 and 55.8 births per 1,000 women in 2020.)

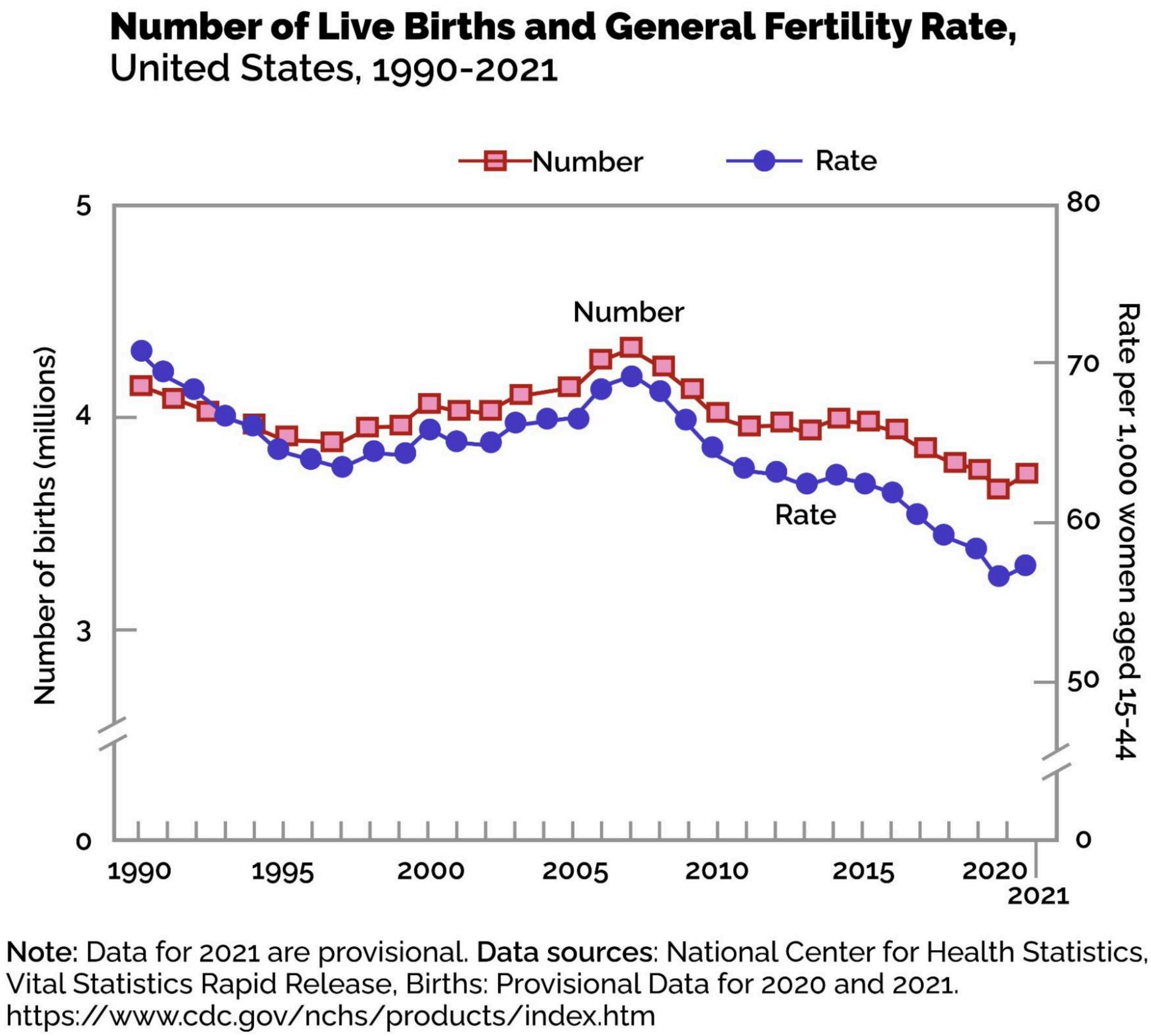

Figure 4.5. Any way that you measure it, there are fewer babies being born in the United States.

It may be helpful to understand the three different rates that are declining. The **birth rate** is the number of live births per 1,000 women in the total population. The **fertility rate** looks more closely at age, and tells us proportionally how many women in a specific age group gave birth compared to the total number of women in that age group. Both of these rates are declining in the United States. In addition, the **fecundity rate**, which is the rate of women who wish to give birth, who are able to give birth, is declining as well.

Because these rates are declining across all social identities in the United States, it is difficult for researchers to isolate what is contributing to this decline.

4.3.2 Activity: How do cultural and environmental changes contribute to childbearing rates?

In this podcast (47:09), scientists Melissa Kearney and Shanna Swan explain how a combination of economic, medical, social, and environmental factors contribute (Figure 4.6).

▶ LISTEN

Gerber baby food products are seen on a supermarket shelf in New York City.

Mario Tama/Getty Images

Figure 4.6. Listen here if you would like to understand more about the relationship between childbearing, economics, **culture**, and the environment.

- What did you hear that was surprising to you?
- What did you hear that resonates with your own lived or observed experiences?
- What is the difference between the birth, fertility, and fecundity rates?

- Do economics and the environment have significant effects on the birth rate? Are some women affected more than others?
- What is your biggest takeaway from this podcast?

While the **fertility** rate has been on the decline in the United States since 1960, the health and economic crises related to the COVID-19 pandemic appear to have negatively affected the desire to have children in the United States ("Key facts about fertility in the U.S. before the pandemic," 2021). Not only has the birth rate dropped lower, but adults are increasingly saying that they don't expect to have children, or dont expect to have more children. Again, there does not seem to be one deciding factor that influences the decision with the majority of childless adults saying that "they just don't want to have children" ("Growing share of childless adults in U.S. don't expect to ever have children," 2021).

4.3.3 Child Care

Child care is generally presumed to mean "non-maternal" or "non-parental care of young children." A big question for many is whether regular non-parental care benefits, harms or is neutral to children's development.

The most comprehensive attempt to answer this question was undertaken by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) between 1991 and 2006. In this study over 1,000 children and families participated in research conducted between the birth of the child and approximately ninth grade.Sadly this

study has not been continued or replicated since 2006, but it is by far the most complete look at quantity, quality, and types of child care.

Figure 4.7 Both home and child care environments can contain high quality materials for children to use.

The NICHD Study of Early Childhood and Youth Development (linked here) provides a great deal of basic information about child care, along with detailed findings. The most significant findings were a correlation between a child's cognitive, language, and social development, their parents' characteristics, and the quality of the child care that they experienced. Quality related to positive caregiving, as described below.

> The more standards a child care setting meets, the more positive the caregiving. The more positive the caregiving, the higher the quality of care and the better the children's outcomes.
>
> For instance, for young children in care with smaller groups of children cared for by trained caregivers with higher levels of education in a setting with a low adult-to-child ratio, the care provided tends to be warm, attentive, and intellectually stimulating. Children who receive such care are better off developmentally.
>
> In contrast, when groups are large, when there are many children to care for but few caregivers, and the training/education of caregivers is limited, the care provided tends to be of lower quality, and children's development is less advanced…

Overall, the study found that children in **child care** did not develop differently than children who were cared for by their parents. While there were some small advantages to being in child care, parent and family characteristics were more strongly correlated. Quality child care was correlated with these advantages as well.

Quality costs money. As noted above, quality indicators include more adults, smaller groups of children, and teachers who are educated and have access to training. This contributes to what Early Education leader Gwen Morgan pictured in Figure 4.7, called "the **child care trilemma**". She advocated for higher quality of care, better wages for teachers, and affordability for parents. She stated that a systemic solution was needed so that child care programs could have all three in order for children to develop well in child care settings ("The Child Care Trilemma," n.d.).

Figure 4.8 Gwen Morgan coined the term "child care trilemma" which identified the tension in parents being able to afford quality child care and workers being paid a living wage.

A weakness of the NICHD study was its limited involvement of children from families with lower **socioeconomic status**es. There has been, however, extensive research about the Head Start program, which serves lower income families. Unfortunately not all families who are eligible for Head Start are enrolled, primarily due to lack of funding. It is estimated that about 40 percent of all eligible children are actually served ("Only 42 Percent of Eligible Children Participate in Head Start," 2013).

It can be said that quality child care can have the potential to improve or maintain a child's development and outcomes. The NICHD estimated that fewer than 10 percent of children are in such high quality settings and that fewer than 10 percent of children are in the lowest quality settings, with very little positive caregiving. The majority of the children in the United States are in child care that might be described as "fair—between 'poor' and 'good'."

The lack of quality child care in the United States presents issues of **equity**. As it has become more necessary for all adults in a household to work, the demand for child care has increased. While there are some programs that help parents to pay for child care, this varies widely across states and even within communities. The quality and quantity of child care is also highly variable. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these problems. While some families are able to access quality child care that they can afford, many families are left out. This is unlikely to change without a systemic look at the trilemma: workforce needs, attention to quality child care, and livable wages for child care teachers.

4.3.4 Single Parenting, Co-Parenting, and Step-Parenting

Children are growing up in a variety of parenting arrangements that include having one "single" parent, being parented by co-parents who live in different homes, and having additional parents who are not biologically or legally related to them, "step"-parents. And there are variations on these variations! For example, a step-parent may live in the same home, actively parent the child, and may not be legally married to the child's parent. Or a step-parent may legally adopt the child, effectively becoming the "parent."

To put it simply, our language and terminology has not caught up with the complexity of family structures that involve children.

In six states, however, laws have been passed that recognize that children may have more than two parental attachment figures. These laws expressly allow courts to recognize more than two parents. With parentage come both rights and responsibilities. These laws give children who have multiple adults in their lives access to all of those adults when disputes or tragedies arise.

For example, a child who might have otherwise been assigned to the foster care system when a parent dies, could have access to another recognized parental figure such as a step-parent, aunt, surrogate mother, or an egg or sperm donor who has been active in the child's life. In one West Virginia case, this doctrine assigned parental care to both the aunt and uncle who had parented the child, as well as to his legal mother who had rehabilitated herself over a period of 10 years ("The next normal: States will recognize multi parent families," 2022). This trend points in the direction of the legal system catching up with the complexity of children's and parents' lives.

Pew Research conducted a randomized nationally representative study of 1,807 parents in the United States in 2014. While not every family form is captured, this study provides us with an overview of the changing structures of families with children.

The number of children who are living with parents in a first marriage has decreased from 73 percent in 1960 to 46 percent in 2014. That means 26 percent more of 2014's children have diverse arrangements. Dramatically more children are living with single parents; 9 percent lived with single parents in 1960 and 26 percent lived with single parents in 2014. Seven percent of children lived with cohabiting parents in 2014; this number was zero or unrecorded in 1960 ("Parenting in America," 2015).

4.3.5 Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families

To fully understand the increase in **multigenerational families** (where more than two generations live together) and **grandfamilies** (where grandparents or great-grandparents provide the primary care for their grandchildren) it is important to note a significant trend in the United States.For centuries, the **mortality rate**, or the rate of death for a particular group in a particular area, had decreased. While rates vary by gender, race, and **ethnicity**, overall life expectancy rates increased in the United States between 1860 and 2015.

Since 2015, however, life expectancy has dropped for all genders, races, and ethnicities in the United States, with the most dramatic changes occurring in 2021. These most recent changes have been attributed to negative social trends such as diet, sedentary lifestyles increased medical costs, increased rates of drug use and suicide, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

In spite of this recent change, people in the United States, in general, are living longer. They are also living healthier and more active lives. This, combined with the decrease in fertility, means that older adults have fewer children and grandchildren who are more widely spaced apart by age. This creates a capacity for both more active grandparenting than in previous generations, as well as the possibility of actual parenting of grandchildren and other caregiving relationships.It is believed that the combination of families having fewer children and living longer has led to more involvement by grandparents with their grandchildren. Simply put, people are living long enough to see their grandchildren be born, and to be an active part of their lives.

Interestingly enough, while life expectancy in the United States has been increasing for decades, there has been a big decline in recent years, as shown in Figure 4.9, for both men and for women (CDC, 2021). It is important to note that life expectancy in the United States trails other developed wealthy countries.

Life expectancy is also correlated with race and **ethnicity** as shown in Figure 4.10. When we consider family life, we can think about both quality of life and length of life. Both of these figures illustrate important trends in life expectancy.

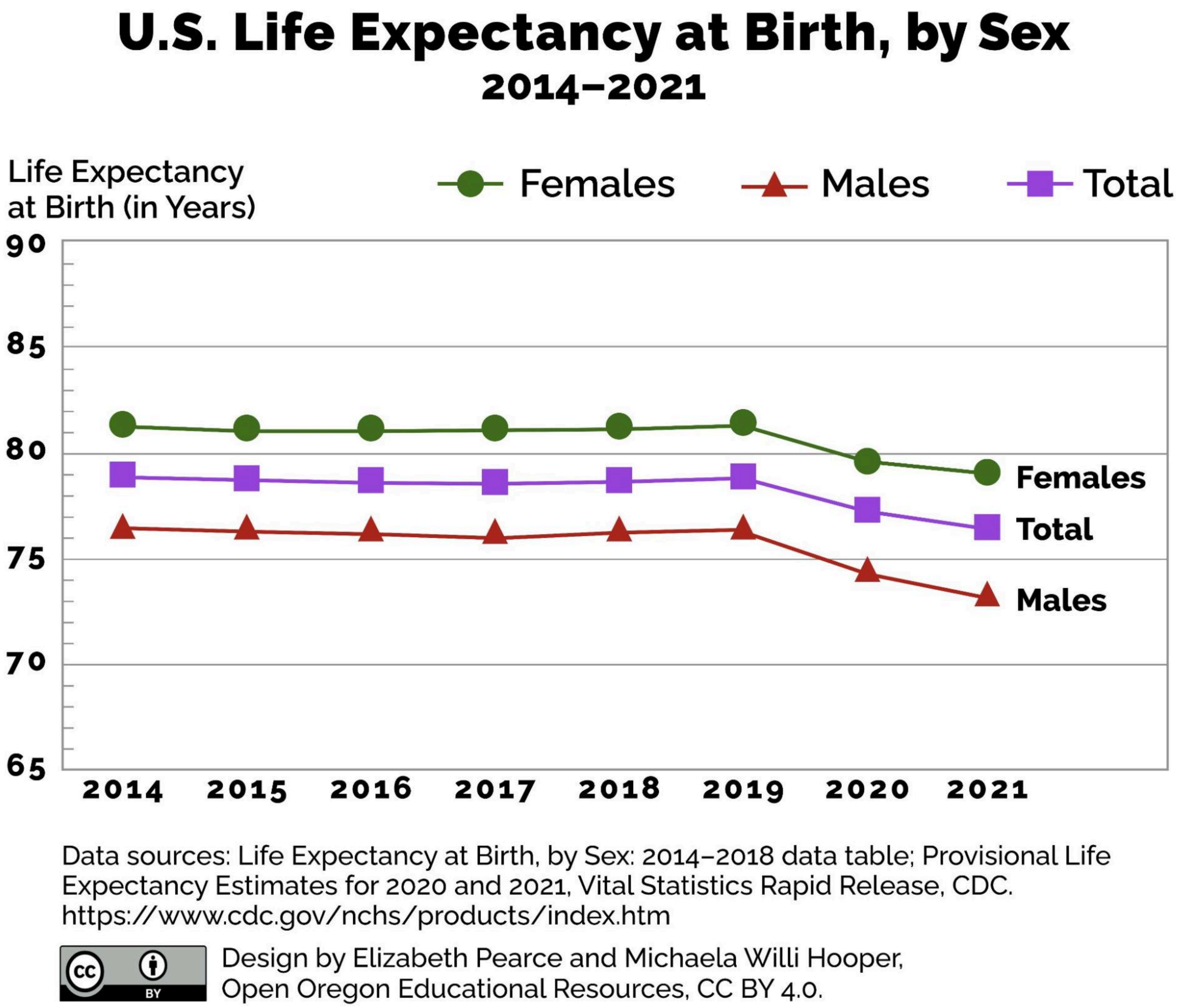

Figure 4.9. While women have had longer life expectancy than men for a long time, both groups face a significant decline between 2019 and 2021 in the United States. Figure 4.9 Image Description

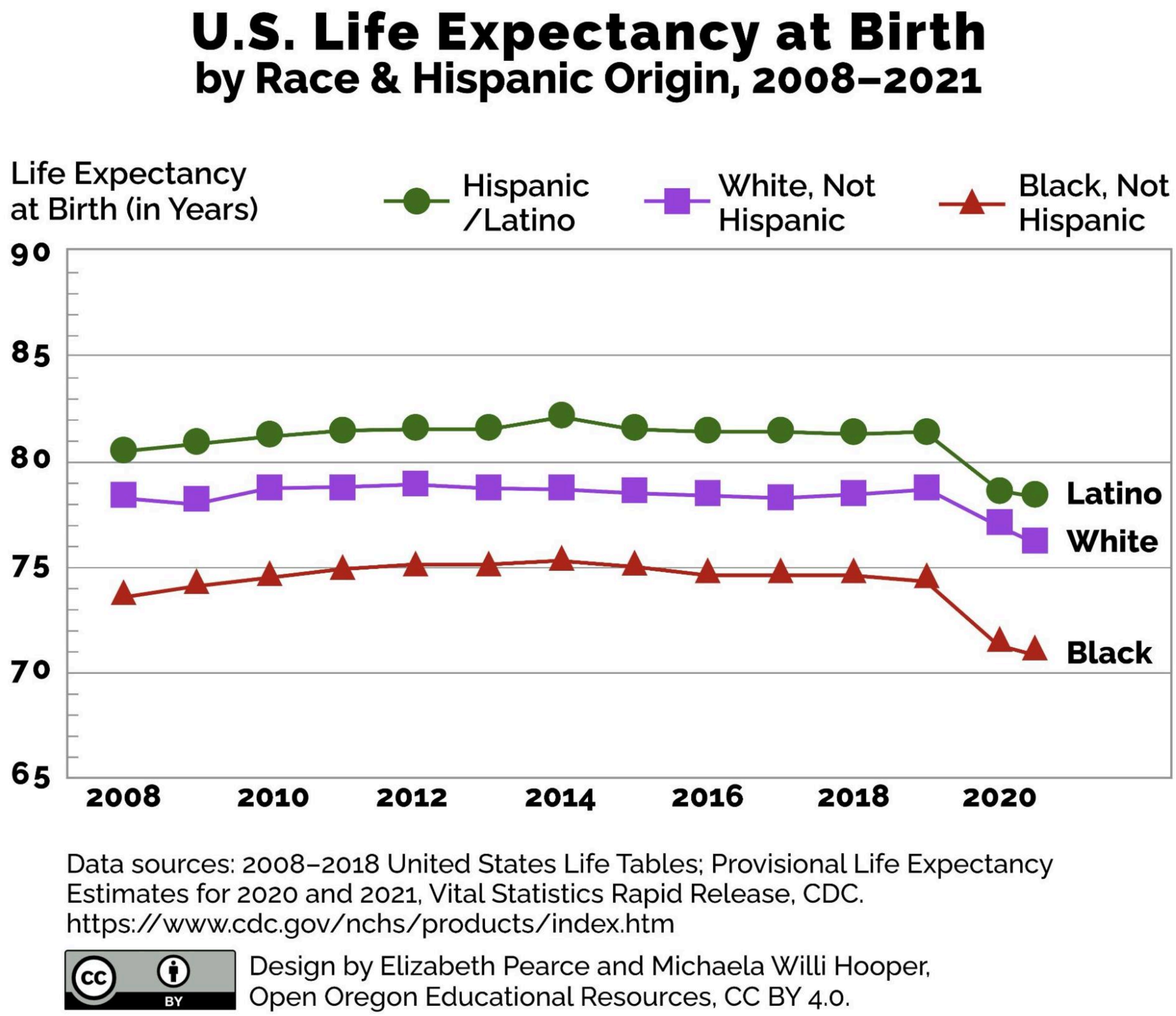

Figure 4.10 While people of all races and ethnicities have seen declines in life expectancy, Latinos and Blacks have seen a more dramatic decline between 2018 and 2020.

Image Description

While life expectancy is declining, parents may increasingly need help from older relatives. Rates of single parents and divorced parents have increased. These parents may call on their own parents for financial support, child care, shared housing, or other needs. In addition, **social problem**s such as addiction and mass incarceration also contribute to the need for more adults to be involved in parenting. Older adults, including grandparents, are more frequently involved in caregiving and supporting children and grandchildren than ever before. It is important to note that it is not only middle class or wealthy grandparents that are helping out; poor and working class grandparents are struggling to help out their children and grandchildren.

Figure 4.11. Multigenerational families usually include three generations: children, parents, and grandparents. Grandfamilies usually include grandchildren and grandparents, with the skipped generation of parents playing a range of **roles** from non-involvement to a lot of involvement, but not living in the same household.

Multigenerational households are on the rise after reaching a low of 12 percent in 1980. In 2016 roughly one in five adults (20 percent) lived in a multigenerational household, with an increase being attributed to the economic recession that started in 2009 ("Record 64 million Americans live in multigenerational households," 2018). The National Association of Realtors reports that multigenerational home purchases increased during the pandemic by four percentage points ("How the Pandemic Accelerated the Rise in Multigenerational Living," 2020). These trends point out the connection between economic change and living arrangements that affect family relationships and structure.

4.3.6 Licenses and Attributions for Changing Demographics

4.3.6.1 Open Content, Original

"Changing Demographics" including all subsections on this page by Elizabeth B. Pearce is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Figure 4.5 "Number of Live Births and General Fertility Rate, United States, 1990-2021" by Elizabeth Be. Pearce and Michaela Willi-Hooper is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Figure 4.9 "U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth, by Sex, 2014–2021" by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper is licensed under CC BY 4.0. Data from 2008–2018 United States Life Tables; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, CDC.

"Activity: How do cultural and environmental changes contribute to childbearing rates?" by Elizabeth B. Pearce is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Figure 4.10 "U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth by Race & Hispanic Origin, 2008–2021" by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper is licensed under CC BY 4.0. Data from 2008–2018 United States Life Tables; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, CDC.

4.3.6.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

Figure 4.7 Photo by Gautam Arora on Unsplash

Figure 4.11 Boy (13-15) with parents and grandparents by moodboard on flickr.com licensed CC BY 2.0

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Figure 4.6 https://the1a.org/segments/birth-rate-low-america/

Figure 4.8 Willer, Barbara *Remembering Gwen Morgan*. (2015). NAEYC. from https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/remembering-gwen-morgan used under fair use.

4.3.7 References

Image Description for Figure 4.9:

U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth, by Sex, 2014–2021

Line chart visualizing life expectancy at birth, in years.

Data table:

Year	Females	Males	Total
2014	81.3	76.5	78.9
2015	81.1	76.3	78.7
2016	81.1	76.2	78.7
2017	81.1	76.1	78.6
2018	81.2	76.2	78.7
2019	81.4	76.3	78.8
2020	79.9	74.2	77.0
2021	79.1	73.2	76.1

Data sources:

Life Expectancy at Birth, by Sex: 2014–2018 data table; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, CDC.

Licensing information:

[Return to Figure 4.9]

4.4 CHILD AND FAMILY THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES

There are several important and well-accepted theories about how children develop. While we cannot describe all of those theories in this text, the authors will point you toward D1/D2 texts to examine multiple theories. In this text we will focus on Psychosocial Theory (Erik and Joan Erikson) below and on the ecological systems theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner) later in this chapter.

4.4.1 Psychosocial Theory

The **psychosocial model** gives us a guideline for the entire life span and suggests certain primary psychological and social concerns throughout life. The theory emphasizes our relationships and that society's expectations motivate much of our behavior and the importance of conscious thought.

This model focuses on the importance of **culture** in parenting practices and personal motivations. Humans are motivated, for instance, by the need to feel that the world is a trustworthy place, that we are capable individuals, that we can make a contribution to society, and that we have lived a meaningful life. These are all psycho**social problem**s.

The theory divides the lifespan into eight stages. In each stage, we have a major psychosocial task to accomplish or crisis to overcome. Erik Erikson, the psychologist who developed this model, included three stages of adult development as well; his wife Joan Erikson added an additional stage following his death. Both theorists believed that our personality continues to take shape throughout our lifespan as we face these challenges in living. Figure 4.12 shows a brief overview of the theory including the ninth stage of development.

Name of Stage	Description of Stage
Trust vs. mistrust (0-1)	The infant must have basic needs met in a consistent way in order to feel that the world is a trustworthy place.
Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (1-2)	Mobile toddlers have newfound freedom they like to exercise and by being allowed to do so, they learn some basic independence.
Initiative vs. Guilt (3-5)	Preschoolers like to initiate activities and emphasize doing things "all by myself."
Industry vs. inferiority (6-11)	School aged children focus on accomplishments and begin making comparisons between themselves and their classmates
Identity vs. role confusion (adolescence)	Teenagers are trying to gain a sense of identity as they experiment with various **roles**, beliefs, and ideas.
Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood)	In our 20s and 30s we are making some of our first long-term commitments in intimate relationships.
Generativity vs. stagnation (middle adulthood)	The 40s through the early 60s we focus on being productive at work and home and are motivated by wanting to feel that we've made a contribution to society.
Integrity vs. Despair (late adulthood)	We look back on our lives and hope to like what we see-that we have lived well and have a sense of integrity because we lived according to our beliefs.
Revistation of Stages (elderly adulthood)	In this stage elderly adults revisit the earlier stages and may resolve the stages differently, perhaps less positively, than before. Adults who can come to term with these changes are more likely to have an overall positive perspective on life.

Figure 4.12. These nine stages of development encompass infancy through elderly adulthood.

These stages form a foundation for discussions on emotional and social development during the life span. Keep in mind, however, that these stages or crises can occur more than once. For instance, a person may struggle with a lack of trust beyond infancy under certain circumstances.

Erikson's theory has been criticized for focusing so heavily on stages and assuming that the completion of one stage is prerequisite for the next crisis of development.The theory also focuses on the social expectations that are found in certain **culture**s, but not in all. For instance, the idea that adolescence is a time of searching for identity might translate well in the middle-class **culture** of the United States, but not as well in **culture**s where the transition into adulthood coincides with puberty through rites of passage and where adult **roles** offer fewer choices. But the overall emphasis on the importance of primary relationships, as shown in Figure 4.13, is universal.

Figure 4.13 The psychosocial theory emphasizes the importance of caregiving, attachment, and parenting as an important part of development.

4.4.2 The Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was introduced in Chapter 3. Here we will explore it more deeply and use it to illustrate the way various systems interact to influence nurturing by parents and other caregivers. This theory helps us look more deeply at the direct and indirect influences on children's lives without favoring one family form or family circumstance over another.

The **ecological systems theory** was created in the late 1970's by Urie Bronfenbrenner. He developed this theory to explain how environments affect a child's or individual's growth and development. The model in Figure 4.14 shows six concentric circles that represent the individual, environments and interactions:

- **Individual**: the main concept behind ecological approach, "person in environment" (P.I.E) means that every person lives in an environment that can affect their outcome or circumstance. In helping professions individuals work to improve a person's environment by helping them identify what is working well and what is negatively impacting them within their environments.
- **Microsystem:** the smallest system that focuses on the relationship between a person and their direct

environment, typically the places and people that the person sees every day often including parents and school for a child or partner, work/school for an adult.

- **Exosystem:** the people and places that an individual interacts with on a regular basis but not daily, perhaps a place of worship, club, lesson, or social group.
- **Mesosystem: the space** between the micro and exo systems that represents how those people and places interact and cooperate.
- **Macrosystem:** the larger values and attitudes of the **culture**.
- **Chronosystem:** time as a system that affects individuals.

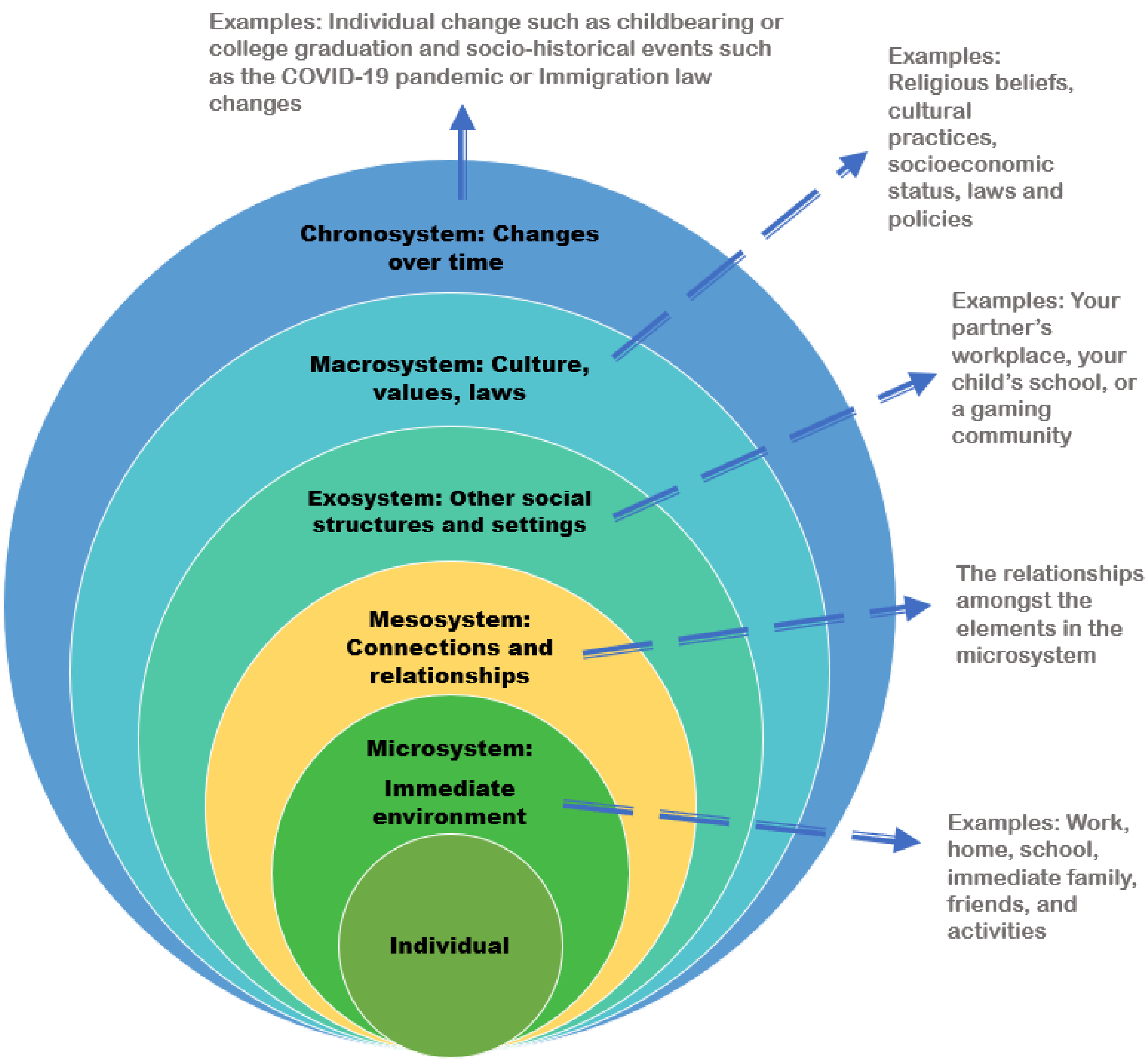

Figure 4.14. This view of individuals emphasizes the ways that environments, time, and location impact a person's development.

4.4.3 Nature and Nurture

A well-known debate is nature versus nurture, first coined by psychologist Sir Francis Galton in 1869. With this theory, Galton established the two deciding factors of child development: the biological aspect, known as nature, and the environmental aspect, known as nurture.Because both are important, many experts now refer to nature *and* nurture rather than as one against the other.

The concept of **nature and nurture** attempts to explain a child's development as well as their outcomes through inherited traits and social influences. Nature attributes developed characteristics that are biologically determined, including being inherited from genes. An example of this might include a baby who is born with poor vision, or a chronic condition such as epilepsy. Another example of this might be the biological child of two athletes who is also an exceptional athlete. Or is that an example of nurture? If those two parents provide many opportunities to be active, be coached in sports, and observe athletics, it may be more difficult to separate the effects of nature and nurture. Nurture attributes developed characteristics to socialization. The concept of nurture not only includes academic, artistic, athletic, and social activities, but it also emphasizes the specific type of parenting style implemented.

When discussing the concept of nurture it is important to consider **equity**. The ability to create varied, stimulating, and rich environments varies from family to family. **Socioeconomic status** is an important factor that affects all aspects of a child's environment including what kind of home they live in, the neighborhood structure, which school they attend, and what activities they may participate in. It may also impact the amount of time a parent spends with their child; a parent who works several part-time jobs or relies on public transportation for example, may have less time at home.

The nature and nurture discussion is of great interest to families that include foster and adoptive children. Studies seeking to understand nature and nurture have included biological children who have been raised in different home environments (e.g. adopted into different homes, or one living in a home with the biological parents and others living with adoptive parents.) Other studies compare identical twins (who share the same set of genes) and fraternal twins who may grow up together but are more similar to other siblings in their genetic makeup. The video in Figure 4.15 from FuseSchool-Global Education describes the nature and nurture debate, with a focus on the study of twins, who are often the focus of understanding the effects of nature and nurture.

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Figure 4.15. Nature vs Nurture | Genetics | Biology | FuseSchool [YouTube Video]. This video will help you understand the effects of genetics and environment by looking at identical twins.

4.4.4 Baumrind's Four Styles of Parenting

The categorization of different **parenting styles** is a perspective on child development credited to Diana Baumrind and expanded by E.E. Maccoby and J.A. Martin. The four parenting styles include: authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved, and authoritative (Figure 4.16).

Parenting Style	Description	Effects on Development
Authoritative "Democratic"	Parents pay attention to children's needs and strengths. Parents set limits and enforce rules.	Children often become independent, self-reliant, well-liked, and successful in school.
Authoritarian "Disciplinarian"	Parents value obedience and punish misconduct. Parents are less likely to pay attention to children's pain or difficulties. Parents make decisions unilaterally for children.	Children may grow up to be aggressive, rebellious and/or with indecisive behavior. Can contribute to low-self esteem.
Permissive "Indulgent"	Parents act as a resource without guidance. Parents allow children to make decisions beyond their developmental level.	Children may lack self-discipline, have poor social skills, and lack persistence.
Uninvolved "Negligent"	Parents put little to no effort into caring or raising the child.	Children may experience deficits in many aspects of life, including cognition, attachment, emotional skills, and social skills.

Figure 4.16. Four Styles of Parenting

Baumrind measured parenting on two dimensions: supportiveness and demandingness. Supportiveness describes characteristics such as paying attention to the unique needs and strengths of each child in order to guide and problem-solve with the child. Demandingness includes having expectations and rules for each child.

Authoritative parenting emphasizes high levels of both supportiveness and demandingness and is considered to produce the most positive outcomes most frequently in the United States.Authoritative parents exhibit interest in their children, pay attention to their unique qualities and experiences, and moderate their demands with this understanding in place.

Authoritarian parenting includes low support combined with a high level of demandingness for their child(ren.) Parents who utilize this type of parenting are known to be strict and controlling and use physical punishment. There have been specific studies that support some authoritarian parenting practices among

African American families (Jackson-Newsom et al., 2008). Physical punishment may not be seen as negatively in Asian American or African American **culture** (Chao, 1994; Nievar & Luster, 2000).

In contrast, permissive parents are high in support yet low in demand. Permissive parents are oftentimes too lenient, or "indulgent," with their child, which may cause that child to later struggle with authority, self-discipline, persistence, and problem-solving.

The parenting styles theory was modified by Maccoby and Martin with the significant contribution of a fourth parenting style. Uninvolved, or "negligent," parenting does not provide a child with support or control. The parent, in this case, is inattentive emotionally and/or physically. This may occur in families where parents experience severe health issues or other stressors (Li, 2021).

Parents vary in their style over time and location and will likely fall into one of these styles along a continuum. A parent may be primarily authoritative but exhibit more support than demandingness; or the opposite. In addition, many children have two, three, or more parents in their lifetimes. Each parent will fall on different places of the continuum or perhaps in different styles. It is not simple to correlate parenting styles on child outcomes, but it does help scholars and individuals to understand how parenting plays a role in individual and family outcomes.

4.4.5 Concerted Cultivation and Natural Growth

Sociologist Annette Lareau studied parenting styles of White and Black families that were middle class, working class, and poor during the 1990's (Lareau, 2002). She identified styles that were based more on class than on race known as concerted cultivation and natural growth.

In Lareau's findings, middle class families, both white and Black were more likely to identify and foster their child(ren)'s talents, opinions and skills. **Concerted cultivation** is an approach in which a parent encourages the development of their child's talents through the controlled and routine engagement in extracurricular activities, like piano lessons, soccer practice, or scouting activities. Families living within the middle-class economic status observe their parents' involvement questioning and intervening with others. They are also encouraged to think independently, negotiate and to speak up for their own needs. Lareau believes that not only does this prepare children for the dominant **culture** which privileges active informed citizens, but that it fosters an "emerging sense of entitlement" (Lareau, 2003).

Lower-income families who are poor and/or in the working class prioritize caring for the child and allowing the child to grow naturally in the home or neighborhood. **Natural growth** is a parenting method that allows for that child's talents to develop spontaneously, or naturally. Children interact more with siblings as well as multi-aged neighbors. They may develop more skills in leadership, problem-solving, and caretaking because they are organizing their own activities and games, rather than following rules typically designed by adults. They may occasionally engage in structured activities, but these are usually for a limited amount of time. Children observe their parents being helpful and deferential to other adults. At the same time, these parents are often more distrustful of professionals and institutions. Lareau observed that children in the lower class families developed "an emerging sense of constraint." This sense of constraint may disadvantage children who do not assert themselves in the way the dominant **culture** and many institutions value.

The neighborhood and home environment , climate change, and increasing reliance on technology both have a significant impact on natural growth. Climate change affects the poor disproportionately; extreme heat, unhealthy air quality, and natural disasters make it more difficult to move easily outdoors. If children live in unsafe or unhealthy areas and cannot get outdoors to play and socialize, they may be more likely to spend time indoors, limited to using electronic devices, and less likely to reap the positive benefits of natural growth.

4.4.6 Attachment Theory

Research demonstrates the importance of connected caregiving on our mate relationships and selection. Largely, this is explained through attachment theory. **Attachment theory** implies that the capacity to form emotional attachments to others is primarily developed during infancy and early childhood. It is believed that children need to form a healthy attachment with at least one primary caregiver. The psychologists Harry Harlow, John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth each developed aspects of our understanding of attachment and the associated behaviors.

4.4.6.1 Harlow, Bowlby and Ainsworth: Attachment

Psychosocial development occurs as children form relationships, interact with others, and understand and manage their feelings. In social and emotional development, forming healthy attachments is very important and is the major social milestone of infancy (Figure 4.16).Developmental psychologists are interested in how infants reach this milestone. They ask questions such as: How do parent and infant attachment bonds form? How does neglect affect these bonds? What accounts for children's attachment differences?

Figure 4.17. A child comfortably rests in their parent's arms.

Researchers Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, and Mary Ainsworth conducted studies designed to answer these questions. In the 1950s, Harlow conducted a series of experiments on monkeys (Figure 4.17). He separated newborn monkeys from their mothers. Each monkey was presented with two surrogate mothers. One surrogate monkey was made out of wire mesh, and she could dispense milk. The other monkey was softer and made from cloth, but did not dispense milk.

The study's findings showed that the monkeys preferred the soft, cuddly cloth monkey, even though she did not provide any nourishment (Figure 4.18). The baby monkeys spent their time clinging to the cloth monkey and only went to the wire monkey when they needed to be fed. Prior to this study, the medical and scientific communities generally thought that babies become attached to the people who provide their nourishment. However, Harlow (1958) concluded that there was more to the mother-child bond than nourishment. Feelings of comfort and security are the critical components of maternal-infant bonding, which leads to healthy psychosocial development.

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Figure 4.18 Harlow's studies of monkeys were performed before modern ethics guidelines were in place, and today his experiments are widely considered to be unethical and even cruel.

Building on the work of Harlow and others, John Bowlby developed the concept of attachment theory. He defined attachment as the affectional bond or tie that infants form with their mother (Bowlby, 1969). An infant must form this bond with a primary caregiver in order to have normal social and emotional development. In addition, Bowlby proposed that this attachment bond is very powerful and continues throughout life. He used the concept of a secure base to define a healthy attachment between parent and child (Bowlby, 1988). A secure base is a parental presence that gives the child a sense of safety as he explores his surroundings. Bowlby (1969) said that two things are needed for a healthy attachment: the caregiver must be responsive to the child's physical, social, and emotional needs, and the caregiver and child must engage in mutually enjoyable interactions.

4.4.6.2 Mary Ainsworth's Research

While Bowlby believed that attachment was an all-or-nothing process, Mary Ainsworth's research showed otherwise (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Ainsworth identified the existence of what she calls "attachment behaviors," which are examples of behaviors demonstrated by insecure children in hopes of establishing or re-establishing an attachment to a presently absent caregiver. As Ainsworth explains, "Since this behavior occurs uniformly in children, it is a compelling argument for the existence of 'innate' or instinctive behaviors in human beings" (Psychologist World, 2019).

Ainsworth wanted to know if children differ in the ways they bond, and if so, why. To find the answers to these questions, she used the Strange Situation procedure to study attachment between mothers and their infants in 1970. In the Strange Situation, the mother (or primary caregiver) and the infant (age 12–18 months) are placed in a room together. There are toys in the room, and the caregiver and child spend some time alone in the room. After the child has had time to explore one's surroundings, a stranger enters the room. The primary caregiver then leaves the baby with the stranger. After a few minutes, the caregiver returns to comfort the child.

Based on how the infants/toddlers responded to the separation and reunion, Ainsworth identified three types of parent-child attachments: secure, avoidant, and resistant (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). A fourth style, known as disorganized attachment, was later described (Main & Solomon, 1990). The most common type of attachment—also considered the healthiest—is called secure attachment (Figure 4.19.).

Figure 4.19. Physical contact contributes to parent-child attachment.

In secure attachment, the toddler prefers their primary caregiver over a stranger. The attachment figure is used by the child as a secure base to explore their environment and is sought out in times of stress. Securely attached children were distressed when their caregivers left the room in the Strange Situation experiment, but when their caregivers returned, the securely attached children were happy to see them. Securely attached children have caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to their needs.

With avoidant attachment (sometimes called insecure or anxious-avoidant), the child is unresponsive to the parent, does not use the parent as a secure base, and does not care if the parent leaves. The toddler reacts to the parent the same way she reacts to a stranger. When the parent does return, the child is slow to show a positive reaction. Ainsworth et al. (1978) theorized that these children were most likely to have a caregiver who was insensitive and inattentive to their needs.

In cases of resistant attachment (also called ambivalent or anxious-ambivalent/resistant), children tend to show clingy behavior, but then reject the attachment figure's attempts to interact with them (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). These children do not explore the toys in the room, as they are too fearful. During separation in the Strange Situation, they became extremely disturbed and angry with the parent. When the parent returns, the children are upset and difficult to comfort. Resistant attachment is the result of the caregivers' inconsistent level of response to their child.

Finally, children with disorganized attachment behave oddly in the Strange Situation. They freeze, run around the room in an erratic manner, or try to run away when the caregiver returns (Main & Solomon, 1990). This type of attachment is seen most often in children who have been abused. Research has shown that abuse disrupts a child's ability to regulate their emotions.

4.4.6.3 Activity: Strange Situation

Watch this video to view a clip of the Strange Situation.

- Discuss which type(s) of attachment baby Lisa exhibits.

While both Harlow's and Ainsworth's research has found support in subsequent studies, they have also met criticism. Some researchers have pointed out that a child's temperament may have a strong influence on attachment, and others have noted that attachment varies from **culture** to **culture**, a factor not accounted for in Ainsworth's research (Gervai, 2009; Harris, 2009; Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008). Most notably, research in countries where multiple caregivers are more common has shown that babies can develop secure attachment to more than one caregiver. This finding predicts secure attachments for children who, for example, live in multigenerational homes or have other loving consistent caregivers in home or child care settings.

Importantly, these theories suggest that the attachments we made in early childhood are transferred and displayed in our close relationships throughout life. It is reflected in our belief in ourselves, others, and our social world. While there is evidence to support the correlation of positive attributes such as good self-esteem with secure attachment, it is important to note that poor attachment is not a certain predictor of poor outcomes. Through the understanding of attachment styles and self-reflection exists the power to move beyond damaging dynamics to build healthy and secure relationships.

4.4.6.4 Attachment: Cultural Considerations

Without diminishing the significance of Ainsworth, Bowlby, and Harlow's findings, it is important to consider cultural differences when examining attachment. Both of these studies were completed in Western societies where individualism is the dominant **culture**; thus many participants shared common cultural ideals relating to child-raising. Individualist **culture**s typically place greater emphasis on the independence, individualism, and self-sufficiency of the child, and typically children will be largely raised by a few trusted adults.

Collectivist **culture**s, however, tend to place more emphasis on mutual effort and interdependence, and tend to include a more community-based method of raising children, including **roles** for extended family and community networks. Additionally, many young children are taught to help care for infants as primary caregivers, which is not commonplace in many Western **culture**s. Parenting styles can also have varying effects in different **culture**s, and while one style of parenting may work well in one **culture**, it may not be as effective in another.

Levels of emotional expression also vary across different **culture**s. For example, in sub-Saharan farming communities, emotional expression is seen as disturbing, therefore children are socialized early in life to maintain neutral expressions. Additionally, while stranger anxiety was treated as a universal norm in The Strange Situation Experiment, it has been found that children in these farming communities do not show a predisposition to stranger anxiety. In fact a study conducted by Hiltrud Otto in 2004 found that the majority of infants in Cameroonian Nso farming communities were not afraid of strangers picking them up or moving them away from their mothers. Instead they were found to display neutral facial expressions and experienced decreased levels of the stress hormone cortisol as the stranger approached (Keller, 2018).

These examples are not representative of all **culture**s, nor do they encompass all variations regarding how children are raised or form attachments. The range of variance in cultural norms can differ based upon many factors including but not limited to environmental interactions and sociocultural history. It is also important to note that these differences do not only occur in other countries. In addition to the dominant **culture** within the United States, there are also many sub**culture**s, or groups within our society whose beliefs and interests differ from the dominant **culture**. These sub**culture**s originate in part from our multicultural history, and may look either very similar to the dominant **culture**, or they may look largely dissimilar (Keller, 2018). Regardless of perceivable differences it is important to be able to view **culture**s as valid in their own right by practicing the evaluation of a **culture** by its own standards, and not through the standards of another **culture**; as such, the avoidance of ethnocentrism fosters an environment of understanding, as it does not attempt to force either **culture** to adapt or change for the other, but instead allows for understanding of validity for both.

As we move forward, it will be important to consider how we conduct studies, including the inclusion of an emphasis on family structures in addition to **culture**s. Currently much of the research being conducted on families focuses mainly on maternal figures, and does not focus as heavily on paternal figures or caregivers.

4.4.7 Licenses and Attributions for Child and Family Theories and Perspectives

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4.4.8 References

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4.5 THE OVERLAP OF PUBLIC POLICY WITH PARENTING

Public policy can affect the ability of families and caregivers to foster attachment as well, either by supporting or disrupting attachments. These policies may affect attachment intentionally or consequentially, and in some cases policies can cause family attachments and security to become collateral damage. Let's look at some ways that policy affects parent-child attachment.

4.5.1 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

On November 20th, 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, becoming officially effective on September 2nd, 1990. This document is a human rights treaty which outlines a child's right to areas such as protection, identity, health care, shelter, nutrition, non-**discrimination**, and education (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). A total of 196 countries have adopted this convention, making it one of the most widely adopted human rights treaties in history. However, while the United States participated in the creation of the convention and signed the treaty to acknowledge approval for its content, it is the only member of the United Nations which has not ratified and adopted it into practice.

In order for a treaty to be ratified in the United States, the president must submit the treaty to the Senate, where it requires a two-thirds vote. If the treaty is approved by the Senate, it is then passed back to the president who can then ratify it. To date, no American president has submitted this treaty to the Senate.

4.5.2 Activity: Ester's Story

"Ester", a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was forcibly separated from five of her children during civil conflict in the early 2000s. She spent years in a refugee camp and was eventually resettled to North Carolina without her children. Upon arrival in the United States, she petitioned the USCIS to bring her children here. USCIS required that Esther provide birth certificates to prove her relationship to her children, all minors, but these documents did not exist. Incurring months of extra delay, Esther contacted relatives in the Congo who procured retroactive documentation of the relationship. USCIS then approved the petition and transferred the file to the United States Embassy in Kinshasa, Congo's capital. In order to continue processing, the children had to travel to Kinshasa for visa interviews. But the children lived on the other side of the country, hundreds of miles away, and the journey to Kinshasa was extremely dangerous. Esther had no choice, however, and raised money from her church to fly them to the capital in a small plane…. On the day of their interview, they were turned away from the embassy because they lacked the requisite paperwork, which was in the United States with Esther. Rescheduling the interview took months. During this time, the youngest child, Florence, went missing. She is presumed kidnapped or dead, and did not accompany her siblings to the United States to be reunited with their mother. When the remaining four children received a new interview…. Their visas were approved—nearly two years after Esther filed the petition (Haile, 2015).

Discussion Questions

1. Imagine you and your family were suddenly unsafe in the United States and feared for your life. What would you do? If you would leave the country, where would you go? How would you get there? How would you provide for your family in the meantime? How do you think you would be received there?
2. Why should a country receive refugee families?
3. What helps refugee families' well-being during relocation? Consider especially what would provide stability and nurturance for children.
4. Where did Ester run into problems with the resettlement process?
5. Are there policy recommendations you could make?

4.5.3 Disrupted Attachment at the U.S. – Mexico Border

On May 7, 2018, a "zero tolerance policy" was announced by the U.S. Attorney General which only addressed unauthorized entry to the United States without acknowledging that many people who cross the border have legal and legitimate asylum claims (Sessions, 2018).This order that separated adults and children from one another was applied both to families attempting to immigrate to the United States who have not yet achieved an authorized status as well as those who came to the border with valid asylum claims.

The section of the policy targeted towards separating families was modified by executive order on June 20, 2018 to promote keeping families together throughout criminal and immigration proceedings, however this order did not attempt to reunify families who had already been separated. Over the course of that 44 days, over 5,000 families had already been separated, and many adult caregivers were deported without their dependents.

It was not until 958 days later, on February 2nd, 2021, that the Zero Tolerance Policy was officially rescinded and replaced by the "Executive Order on the Establishment of Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families" (Biden, 2021). In essence, this new order intends to protect family unity and establish a task force to assist families who are still separated. At the time this new order was signed, approximately 20 percent of families who had been affected by the previous orders were still separated (Biden, 2021).

Evidence presented in the court case Ms. L. vs. U.S Immigration & Customs Enforcement details how forced separation of families is traumatic for adults and children alike; it includes evidence regarding the consequences of separation which, especially for younger children, can be dire (*Ms. L. v. U.S Immigration & Customs Enforcement,* 2018). According to the research conducted by Harlow, Ainsworth, and Bowlby bonds must be formed with a primary caregiver and will last throughout all stages of life, and also states that attachment at an early age is considered foundational to future bonds with friends, families and partners/spouses. Additionally, if we look at Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, stages for both the caregiver and the child would be disrupted. For the child this disruption would be due to the inability of the primary caregiver to provide adequate support due to separation, and for the caregiver this could contribute to feelings of failure, regret, and despair that could persist and present long after the situation is resolved.

In children, disruption of attachment can lead to developmental delays, decreased psychological development, and mental health disorders such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and anxiety disorders. Additionally, extreme levels of stress and trauma, such as which is present during forceful separation of families, has been shown to have the capacity to cause physical changes to the body in areas such as brain development and formation of organ systems. Therefore, this trauma can potentially lead to altered brain development and cognitive impairment. Children who experience traumatic events also tend to experience poverty and food insecurity at higher rates.

Apart from the physical, mental, and developmental health risks, non-citizen children who have been removed from their families can experience unstable care settings due to families not having available support systems to provide care for the children, or the support systems which are in place may be difficult to contact. However it has been shown that any separation of a child from their family increases their susceptibility for exploitation or abuse.

The following *New York Times* video provides a firsthand look into the impacts of separation on a family who came to the U.S./Mexico border seeking asylum, but were separated at the border under the "Zero Tolerance Policy" in 2018 (Figure 4.20). It also explores similar experiences from two other families in the same village.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=365#oembed-1

Figure 4.20. Inside a Young Migrant's Family Separation Nightmare | NYT News [YouTube Video]. Watch this video to understand the separation nightmare that families experience.

4.5.4 Disrupted Attachment during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, borders between many countries as well as some states were closed or heavily regulated in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus. One unintentional consequence of these border closures is the separation of families who commute across state lines or who were traveling otherwise prior to these closures. The borders between both the United States and Mexico, as well as the United States and Canada were closed to all nonessential travel starting in March 2020, and are expected to continue through at least the end of May 2021 for Canada, and June 2021 for Mexico.

Closures such as these were not unique to the United States as many countries around the world also closed their borders to combat the spread of the virus. In fact, as of May 2021, there are still at least 173 unaccompanied minors in India who have been separated from their primary caregivers due to travel restrictions put in place by their home country of Australia; many of these were staying with relatives prior to the border closures and were too young to be considered for government-sponsored repatriation flights (Wertheimer, 2021). You can read more about this story here.

In the following sections we will discuss families with particular challenges and characteristics using the ecological model.

4.5.5 Immigrant and Refugee Families

Now we will look at how the ecological systems theory proposed by Uri Bronfenbrenner can be applied to current families. The ecological framework assumes that families interact within multiple environments that mutually influence each other. These environments include the microsystem (the systems in immediate surroundings, such as family, neighborhood, work, or school), the mesosystem (the ways in which these immediate systems connect, such as the relationships between neighborhood and school), the exosystem (the larger social system, such as the stress of another family member's job), the macrosystem (cultural values of the local and larger community), and the chronosystem (such as immigration policy that influences access, and changes over time) (Ballard et al., 2019).

In the context of a refugee family, the family might be influenced by their microsystem (e.g., whether or not members were injured as they fled the persecution and parental conflict while fleeing), their mesosystem (e.g., teachers and school personnel who are struggling with their own trauma from fleeing conflict or personal troubles and thus their ability to provide robust services being impaired), their exosystem (e.g., local leaders who do not consult with women living in shelters regarding their resources needs and don't provide feminine hygiene products or children's toys), and countless other environments (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011). The family may have access to and be able to directly influence their mesosystem and at the same time feel powerless to make changes in the exosystem. Each of these environments will contribute to their coping.

Figure 4.21. Protesting is one way that people can influence their macrosystems and chronosystems.

With its focus on interaction within multiple environments, the ecological systems framework is an incredibly useful lens to employ cross-cultural contexts such as when considering immigrant families. For example, a researcher could ask, "How do Hmong immigrant families manage financial resources in their new environment in the United States?" and "How did Hmong families manage their financial resources while still living in Laos?" The theory helps us to understand that immigrant families are operating within more complex systems, because they have lived in more than one dominant **culture**. The needs, values, and environment within each **culture** are important to the family (Solheim & Yang, 2010).

The family system has certain needs, including physical needs for resources and interpersonal needs for relationships. Parenting children is one of those primary needs. If their current situation is not meeting these needs, the family system will engage in management to meet these needs within their value systems.

4.5.6 Justice-Involved Families

Having a family member who is "justice-involved" (any interaction with the justice system as a defendant) creates family stress; this is discussed in Chapter 11. Here we will focus specifically on how incarceration affects the nurturing relationships between parents and children.

There is a growing recognition that incarceration has significant negative effects on the family structure, a notable point given that over half of the 2.5 million individuals incarcerated in the United States are parents (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Maruschak et al., 2021). Over the last several decades, researchers have started to parse apart how periods of incarceration influence the children and family members left behind. This work has demonstrated the long-term consequences that incarceration can have on the family unit. Scholars have also offered potential remedies to lessen the consequences to children, such as parenting courses during periods of incarceration.

Separation from children, due to incarceration or other factors, represents a significant acute and long-term stressor (Beckmeyer & Arditti, 2014). There is evidence that such separation is linked to institutional misconduct (e.g., violating institutional rules) and psychiatric distress among incarcerated parents (Loper et al., 2009; Houck & Loper, 2002). The extent to which separation distress contributes to such risk may be dependent on a number of other factors, such as availability of an alternative caregiver, support within the institution, and the nature of parent–child relationships prior to incarceration (Arditti, 2016).

It is also important to explore gender role differences within the context of incarceration. Women tend to take on a larger role in terms of childcare duties prior to involvement with the criminal justice system and are more often primary caretakers of children than men. Therefore, mothers who are incarcerated may experience great stress associated with child separation (McBride et al., 2002; Pedersen, 2012).

Within the parent-child dyad, both individuals experience significant changes to their microsystem when a parent is incarcerated. The parent is replaced by an alternative caregiver(s) in the child's life. The parent themself does not likely have such a replacement (someone to care for on a daily basis.) In addition, the home environment changes dramatically for the parent, and possibly for the child as well. There is an additional institution—a very powerful one—in the parent's life, which becomes part of the child's exosystem. How well does this new institution interact with the other important aspects of the child's life—their school, their caregiver's workplace, their place of worship, and other structures? Jails and prisons are known for the rigidity of policies, including those that involve family visits. It is highly likely that the child's mesosystem, or the ways that the various institutions within their lives interact well with one another, has become more difficult and complicated. Systems-level barriers (e.g., the institution itself) and interpersonal barriers (e.g., the relationship with the caregiver) affect the extent to which parents can have contact with their children.

The after-effects of incarceration including multiple transitions and increased unemployment continue to impact parenting and other nurturing relationships within **kinship** groups.

4.5.7 Licenses and Attributions for The Overlap of

Public Policy with Parenting

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4.6 SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED IDEAS: FORM AND FUNCTION

This text began with a chapter about ideas that are socially constructed, including the picture of the traditional, or ideal family. That **nuclear family** model, often represented as two white married heterosexual middle-class parents with 2.2 children, is only one form of families involving caregiving and sometimes children. In this section we will distinguish between family form and family functionality.

Figure 4.22. Family structure, or form, is separate from the health of the family, or the family function.

Families come in many forms, including those described above, many variations of adults with children, and those without children. Family forms include parents who are married, living together, divorced, stepparents, adoptive parents, single parents, grandparents in parenting **roles** and foster parents. Forms may include blended and step families, half-siblings, and step-siblings. The form of any household may include more than two generations or people who are not related legally or by blood. All of these are differing forms, or structures of family life. The **family form** is merely the physical makeup of the family members in relationship to one another. These differing forms are sometimes called the "complexities" of family life in academic literature. The form does not indicate how healthy the family is, or how well the family members behave toward one another, known as the **family function**.

Families function in a range of ways and differently over time. How well does any given family function? That answer is complicated to measure in one moment and also over time. It includes the functionality of each individual family member, the functionality of any two members' relationship, and the overall functionality of the entire family. What indicates healthy functionality? Here are a couple of indicators; you may have your own standards of what indicates healthy functioning.

- Respect for the individuality of each family member
- Communication that is direct, but not purposefully harmful or painful
- Commitment to each other
- Parent(s) who prioritize their children's needs

Figure 4.23. Family forms have developed and changed over time, and there is no one typical family structure.

It is important to understand and to separate form and functionality. Because many of our **social institutions** identify one kind of family as "the norm" it is easy to assume that somehow other kinds of families are "less than." That is not the case. As discussed throughout this text family forms have developed and changed over time. It is critical to note that there are many well functioning families that include single or **gay** parents, or who are poor, who have been incarcerated, who have lots of children, or have no children. All families face challenges, and families that look "perfect" on the outside may have dysfunctions. As you navigate the world, do your best to remind yourself of this, because the societal message is often the opposite.Throughout this chapter we discuss families who may not fit that idealized family form, but who are just as likely to have loving functional relationships within their family.

4.6.1 Families without Children

Increasing number of partnered adults are completing their families without having children. As discussed earlier all three rates (birth, fertility, and fecundity) are declining. In this section, the authors wish to acknowledge the societal stigma that can be associated with not having children.

4.6.1.1 Childless or Childfree?

For many decades in the United States, there was a predictive life course for heterosexual, white, middle-class families. This was considered the ideal, and a part of the "American Dream." Steps included going to school, starting a career, getting married, and then "starting a family," which really meant having children. Couples were expected to produce babies soon after marriage.

But this norm, never attainable for all families, has become increasingly diversified. Now it is known that a family can be a "family" without including children. There is greater awareness of the difficulties that a heterosexual couple may have with conceiving a child. There is greater acceptance of same-sex couples who may have difficulty adopting or using medical and biological means to procreate. And there is increased understanding of couples who do not wish to have children and consider their families complete without children. These families express their desire to remain childfree by choice.

Increased awareness and acceptance does not equate with a disappearance of social stigma. Harmful viewpoints that equate pregnancy with "becoming a woman" or that describe men being more masculine if they get someone pregnant quickly continue to resonate in our society, along with the idea that one's life is not "complete" until they have children.

4.6.2 Same-Sex Parenting

Pearce/Franco

LGBTQ+ parenting refers to the care and guidance of children with **lesbian**, **gay**, **bisexual**, **transgender**, and queer couples along with other members of this broad community. People who identify within this community can become parents through various means, including – but not limited to – adoption, foster care, insemination and other pregnancy methods, and surrogacy.

LGBTQ+ identifying parents have been proven to be as effective as heterosexual parents (although this comparison in and of itself reflects the binary hetero-normative standard, itself a **social construction**.) The primary research in this area has been conducted on same-sex parents. This research was originally driven by the desire for data when parents divorced and one parent identified as **gay**. Both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ parents sought rationales that would justify the child custody arrangement that they preferred.

Judith Stacey and Timothy Biblarz are known for their 2001 literature survey and analysis of research related to LGBTQ+ (then called "lesbi**gay**") parenting. There are no notable differences in the major markers of parent-child relationships or of child health when children raised by same-sex parents are compared to children raised by heterosexual parents; both psychological and physical development of children are comparably healthy (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001). Children raised in LGBTQ+ households tend to hold more open views about gender and sexuality identities than do children raised in heterosexual families. Stacey and Biblarz go on to argue that such comparative studies only serve to reinforce the framework that **sexual orientation** is a significant aspect of parenting, and that research focused on other parenting differences such as gender, parent-child involvement, and processes such as divorce or adoption would better serve the social science research.

An argument against LGBTQ+ parenting has been made that children will face bullying and harassment in either the public arena, or in court cases involving child custody. It is true that these families face marginalization and **discrimination**. Is this a reason to deny these families their rights, essentially marginalizing them further? These authors argue that like other families from marginalized groups, it is the work of **social institutions** and society to diminish and eliminate the causes of **discrimination**.

4.6.3 Student Parents

Parents who are also students live at the intersection of two **social construction**s that don't quite fit them. First, they often do not fit the demographic of the "traditional college student" which the Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis describes as "someone who begins college immediately after high school, enrolls full-time, lives on campus, and is ready to begin college level classes" (Deil-Amen, 2011). While community colleges have long served the "nontraditional" student population, universities are more recently adapting to this student group and the ways that their needs differ.

Secondarily student parents may not fit the socially constructed family ideal either, at least in terms of how a paying job or career fits into their family life. They are likely to have a family where "all adults are working" meaning that whether single or coupled, someone(s) has paid employment in addition to a college career. This creates immediate conflicts in prioritization, because they are not only "balancing work and family" but likely "school, work, and family."

The COVID-19 pandemic hit this group of families particularly hard as their multiple work, schooling, and children's environments collided. Students often work in lower-paying industries while going to school to better their situations for themselves and their children. Those settings and jobs were often eliminated when locations such as restaurants, bars, and other service industries were shut down. In other cases work at places such as food production and canning, grocery stores, or medical settings were still open but brought higher risk of infection. Schools from child care settings to college settings were unpredictable in their hours and services. Student parents have been in a constant state of planning, responding, and trying to survive in environments compounded by uncertainty.

4.6.4 Foster and Adoptive Families

One way to protect children from abuse or neglect is to remove them from their primary caregivers and place them into foster care or with family members. (Child safety, neglect, and abuse will be discussed more thoroughly in the Safety chapter.) Foster care is regulated state by state, but generally consists of a system in which a minor is placed into a private home of a state-certified caregiver, referred to as a "foster parent," with a family member, or occasionally in a group setting approved by the state. The placement of the child is arranged through the government or a social service agency. The state, via its Child Services department maintains responsibility for the child.

In the United States the number of children in foster care has steadily grown between 2010 and 2019 from about 405,000 to roughly 424,000 according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2019 AFCARS Report. The number of children waiting to be adopted is 122,000 as of September 2019. This means that these children's parents have lost the legal rights and custody, leaving them without any permanently legal caregivers (the government assumes this responsibility until someone adopts the children). The average age of youth waiting to be adopted from foster care is eight years old.

4.6.5 Families with Disabled Members

Disabled people have always faced problems which are created because society is structured without disability in mind. For instance, the rail transport system assumes that all passengers can step over a gap between a train and the platform, that they can walk to their seat, and indeed that sitting in a "standardized" seat is an option. There are countless practices in our study which exclude or marginalize disabled people. The way things routinely get done in everyday life can be problematic, and that can include the material infrastructure of a building as well as the ways in which people interact. For instance, people with dementia might rely on familiar, clear signage to find their way in and out of a building, or the facilities in it, but they also need people who will give them time to communicate, or understand how to wait for a response in a respectful way.

How can we start to understand the ways that social structure interacts with families who have members with disabilities? It is important to understand the dichotomy between the social and **medical model** of disability. The **medical model**, which has dominated thinking in the United States, focuses on the individual who has a difference in ability as having a personal problem. The social model focuses on society and **culture** making adjustments that allow all people to access activities and services.

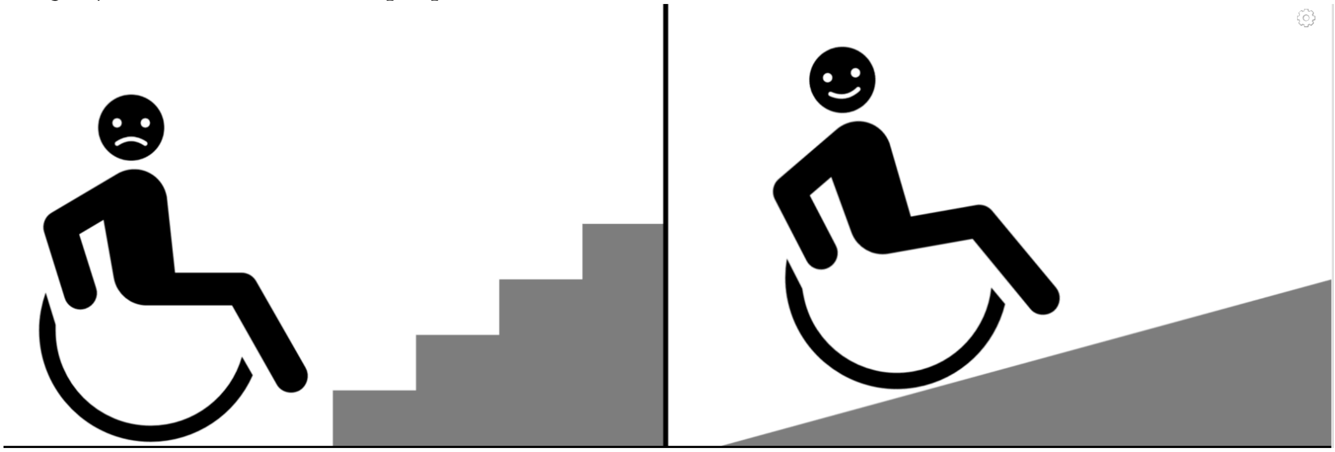

Figure 4.24. The first image focuses on the individual having a problem. The second image shows how an adapted environment can contribute to **equity** in access.

The social model directs our attention towards the external barriers facing disabled people, and now we need to find better ways of analyzing and understanding those barriers. It also emphasizes that people who have a disability can be active participants in what kinds of societal supports and policies will be effective.

An individual disabled family member affects all other members of the family as well as the overall family dynamic. Parents and caregivers must respond to the child who faces more systemic challenges to participating in daily life. While there are services and funding available for families, there is not a centralized system, forcing families to spend valuable time and financial resources to apply for these assets. Many parents believe that the available resources are not sufficient. Admittedly, if parents need to focus on one child accessing basic activities such as school, health care, or transportation, they may have less time or financial resources for their other children or partners.

Caring for adults, such as siblings, close friends, or parents also affect family dynamics. When those adults are able to find support that removes society's barriers it can positively affect the rest of the family. As people are living longer, the number of adults who face Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia are increasing.

Here are some words from the Forget-me-Not dementia group in the United Kingdom:

> Everyone will tell you the same thing. You're diagnosed, and then it's "You've got dementia. Go home and we'll see you next month." What we need is for someone, like a counselor or someone else with dementia, to tell us at that point "Life isn't over." You can go on for ten or fifteen years. And you're not told, you're just left. And I thought, tomorrow my day had come. The fear and the anxiety sets in, and then the depression sets in, doesn't it? I think when you're diagnosed, you should be given a book. And on the front of the book, in big letters, it should say: "Don't panic." (*Forget-me-not club—Dementia support*, n.d.)

These are people who do not want to be seen through a medical lens as individual tragedies, but are turning around the whole meaning of dementia into something where they are in control, can support each other and where they have a voice. However, social practice theory also reminds us about the importance of material resources. For instance, in order to meet each other and to have a collective sense of peer support, people need to have spaces which are not institutionalized, which they feel they can 'own'. All too often, we have seen very well-intentioned group activities taking place in old, large halls, or where people are routinely sitting in configurations which make communication difficult. But we have also seen the Forget-me-Not group, in an ordinary, homely environment, where staff members interact on a basis of **equality** with the members who have dementia.

This is just one of many examples where we are finding that people CAN do things differently, and where society can change towards inclusion and empowerment.

4.6.5.1 Dreaming of Juniper

Hailey Adkisson, M.A., Communication,North Dakota State University; B.S.Media Art and Design, James Madison University; Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) Communications Faculty.

When you have children, you have certain dreams for them. There are big ones like going to college, getting married, having their own children. There are smaller ones, like first steps, teaching them to ride a bike, or shopping for a prom dress. But what happens when those dreams can't become a reality? How do we celebrate our children for who they are while still allowing ourselves the ability to mourn our dreams?

Figure 4.25. Juniper in a sun hat, playful and silly.

When Juniper was six months old, we noticed she was exhibiting some strange movements; her arms would jerk up, her body would crunch, and her head would dip. At first, it would happen every few days in a cluster of 5-10. Just later, these movements began happening at every sleep/wake cycle and lasted 20-40 at a time.

Maybe it's reflux?

Maybe it's a weird baby movement?

We contacted her pediatrician just in case and were told if she was breathing regularly, it wasn't an emergency. Something told me this wasn't quite right and we drove to the nearest emergency room for another opinion. The ER doctors saw Juniper having the movements, but like her pediatrician, told us not to worry.

I tried to reassure myself of this as we drove an hour to the nearest children's hospital the next day, but I knew in my gut, something was seriously wrong. Juniper was hooked up to an electroencephalogram (EEG) to test for abnormalities in her brain waves. When the attending physician came into the room, the look on his face told me it wasn't good news.

Juniper was diagnosed with a rare and catastrophic form of pediatric epilepsy called Infantile Spasms (IS). Each movement we were seeing was actually a tiny seizure, and she was having hundreds a day. In addition to seizures, her background brain activity presented in a pattern called hypsarrhythmia. Think of this as static on a radio. It's hard to comprehend the story because the static keeps interrupting the message. Additionally, each seizure was as if her brain was "rebooting" like a computer. Shutting down, then starting back up. If we didn't stop the hypsarrhythmia and the spasms, Juniper would not be able to develop because she wouldn't be able to encode anything she was experiencing or learning. Her brain would be too cluttered.

The outcome of IS on children largely depends on how they respond to treatment and what the underlying cause of the seizures are. Epilepsy is a symptom of something else; genetic variations, metabolic syndromes, a traumatic brain injury, or brain malformations. A child could respond quickly to treatment, but they could have a genetic variation that causes intellectual and physical disabilities in the future.

First, stop the spasms. Then, figure out the cause.

Juniper was prescribed an extremely high dose steroid treatment we injected into her chubby baby thighs twice a day. My beautiful and happy baby gained five pounds in a month and was miserable. Unfortunately, it didn't stop the spasms. Another medication with horrible side effects, another relapse. At this point, we decided to get a second opinion and it was discovered that Juniper's cause was a malformation called focal cortical dysplasia (FCD).

Juniper celebrated her first birthday hooked up to an EEG. Four days later, she underwent a hemispherectomy. This aggressive surgery involves removing half her brain. The hope being that removing the dysplasia while young would allow her brain to rewire. While we may be able to achieve seizure freedom, it didn't come without a cost. Juniper would lose vision on the left side of both her eyes. She would have paralysis in her left arm and left leg and would never have fine motor skills in her left hand. She would likely have trouble with numbers, memory, self-control, and emotion regulation. Her chance of autism increased. She may be nonverbal.

Figure 4.26. In the hospital bed, Hailey and Juni snuggle.

As a parent, you make decisions on behalf of your child every day in hopes of providing them with the best quality of life. While our decision was one I wish no other parent ever has to make, our goal was still the same; we needed to give Juniper a chance at the best quality of life, and that meant surgery.

But what is a “good” quality of life? For Juniper, it can’t be based on our “norms”—a house, a good job, financial security, a marriage, 2.5 kids and a Labrador.

So is it mobility? Independent feeding? Verbal communication?

What if that isn’t her reality? Does that mean she has a bad life? How do I know if my daughter has a good life?

To know, I have to ask myself:

Is she happy?

Is she comfortable?

Is she safe?

Constant seizures would not allow her to have any of these things.

While I don’t know what Juniper will be able to do in the future, there are some obvious limitations. When my son asked if Juniper would be able to have babies, I cried. These are not Juniper’s dreams, they are mine. My children are an extension of my own dreams. While I hope she never feels a loss of anything, that she thinks her life is beautiful and amazing, I will feel that loss. Like any loss, it will take time to grieve.

It’s hard to explain what it is like to have a child with a disability. You love them fiercely and are amazed by them every day, but you also mourn what could have been. You get to celebrate every tiny thing, moments I missed with my son because they happened so quickly. At the same time you wish life wasn’t so challenging for them and that things like “pushing to sit” came naturally.

The uncertainty about Juniper can be incapacitating at times because there is so much we don’t know. What I do know is that she has changed me.

I am stronger than I thought I was. I am more resilient. I learned how to advocate for my child; look a doctor in the eyes and demand a plan. I learned the importance of trusting my gut when it comes to parenting. I often think back to what would have happened if I had brushed off my intuition in those early days of her diagnosis. Juniper looked and acted like a “normal” baby. Even after her spasms became more intense and I documented an episode on video, her pediatrician at the time and an entire team of ER doctors told us not to worry— it was no big deal. The truth is, IS is an emergency. It is an extremely rare and catastrophic form of epilepsy that often goes misdiagnosed for months (even by medical professionals). If left untreated, IS can have devastating impacts on development.

Most importantly, I have learned to appreciate tiny moments of joy that I never slowed down to see before. While I still experience deep grief about the trauma my daughter and my family has had to go through, I try to stay focused on the present as much as possible. Yes, my dreams for my daughter have had to shift. Instead of mourning what she won’t be able to do, I try to focus on who she is now.

Figure 4.27. Juniper has wonderful happy times with her family, as well as big challenges.
Juniper has a smile that seems too big for her face, and a belly laugh that fills an entire room with joy. She loves being

outside, especially when she is in her swing. She will grab at any necklace, watch, or shiny thing within reach. There isn't a food she dislikes. She's addicted to her pacifier. Her brother is her favorite person.

Juniper is more than her disability. She is more than her seizures. She is more than her brain surgery. Her journey hasn't fit with the dreams I had for my children, but dreams change. They have to. Otherwise, you'll miss out on the beautiful reality that's right in front of you.

Figure 4.28 Hailey and Juniper

Hailey Adkisson, M.A is a full-time community college professor, a wife, a mother of 3, and in her "free time," an unofficial therapist, nurse, and pharmacist to her daughter, Juniper, who has med-resistant epilepsy. Since her daughter's diagnosis, Hailey has immersed herself in the disability community, connecting with families across the country who have young children with medical complexities. She believes building community is key to providing support for parent caregivers like herself. You can reach out to Hailey on @growing_juniper on Instagram.

4.6.6 Poverty

Throughout this textbook, you will read about how families who experience poverty are impacted in terms of their daily needs: housing, food, water, education and more. Each chapter will delve into one of these specific needs and highlight how **socioeconomic status** combined with other **social characteristics** such as sex, gender, race, and **ethnicity** contribute to **intersectionality** and the likelihood of **discrimination**.

But how does poverty affect the public function of caregiving in families?

As highlighted in earlier sections of this chapter, it has been found that **socioeconomic status**, more than race or **ethnicity**, has been identified as a key indicator in the ways that parents raise their children. Why this is so, is a difficult question to answer. It can be deduced that parents with a higher **socioeconomic status** have more resources and therefore more choices about where they live and what activities their children are involved in.

Does this make their parenting or their love for their children superior? Of course not. But it does tell us that they may be able to afford options for their families that others cannot. The effects of poverty affect family dynamics in at least two ways. First, because in reality "time is money" parents who are poor often have less time as well as less money. So they have less time to spend with their children. Secondly, because they are at the lower end of "classism", they are more likely to be discriminated against based on **socioeconomic status** than other families.

Families in lower socioeconomic groups face more judgment and **discrimination**. Parents in these groups may have to make more difficult choices with both time and money such as "Should I make a home-cooked meal, or should I sit on the floor and play with my child—which means I have to serve a frozen meal?" Even that choice may create more choices, as a prepared frozen meal will likely cost more than something that takes time to assemble. "Should I pay for this needed car repair or for a new pair of shoes for my child?" presents related dilemmas. Enter the societal **culture** that judges parents on what can be seen: worn out shoes or new shoes?

In this text, we will continually look for systemic solutions to **social problem**s such as the numbers of families in the United States who experience poverty. Enlightening research tells us that it is possible to impact families positively via social programs. A recent study led by Columbia University in New York, demonstrates the effect of cash gifts to poor families:

> "This study demonstrates the causal impact of a poverty reduction intervention on early childhood brain activity. Data from the Baby's First Years study, a randomized control trial, show that a predictable, monthly unconditional cash transfer given to low-income families may have a causal impact on infant brain activity. In the context of greater economic resources, children's experiences changed, and their brain activity adapted to those experiences…
>
> Early childhood poverty is a risk factor for lower school achievement, reduced earnings, and poorer health, and has been associated with differences in brain structure and function. Whether poverty causes differences in neurodevelopment, or is merely associated with factors that cause such differences, remains unclear. Here, we report estimates of the causal impact of a poverty reduction intervention on brain activity in the first year of life…
>
> In sum, using a rigorous randomized design, we provide evidence that giving monthly unconditional cash transfers to mothers experiencing poverty in the first year of their children's lives may change infant brain activity. Such changes reflect neuroplasticity and environmental adaptation and display a pattern that has been associated with the development of subsequent cognitive skills." (Troller-Renfree et al., 2022)

This study lends hope that the cycle of poverty can be interrupted. Policies and programs that contribute to **equity** can make a positive difference in the outcomes for families experiencing poverty.

A recent federal policy demonstrates a practical application of cash benefits. In the American Rescue Plan of 2021, the Child Tax Credit was not only expanded, but also distributed differently. Prior to 2021, parents received the child tax credit in a lump sum, after submitting their taxes. Many expenses related to having children, such as child care, rent/mortgage, transportation, and extracurricular activities are payable by month or by week—not in one lump sum. But in 2021, families received a monthly distribution of about $250-300/month ("The Child Tax Credit," n.d.). Not only was monthly income predictable, it was also expanded to the poorest families, those who do not pay income taxes, who were previously excluded from this benefit. Unfortunately, the extension of this program is included in the now stalled Build Back Better agenda that has not been passed by the U.S. Senate as of February 2022.

4.6.7 Pandemic Parenting

It is difficult to imagine a more life-altering period of time than that of the COVID-19 pandemic that spans late 2019 to the present day. If we look back at the Ecological Systems Theory, this pandemic qualifies as a chronosystem large socio-historical event that ripples inward through the concentric circles of families' lives. It has affected the cultural practices of our macrosystem (such as wearing masks and social distancing); it has changed exosystem elements such restaurants, stores, and places of worship; it has dramatically altered our microsystem settings such as workplaces, schools, and perhaps even our homes. And what of the mesosystem, the connections and relationships between all of these systems? Well, by inference, those have been changed as well.

Large catastrophic events are known to be linked with mental health burdens. Caregivers are not exempt from these mental health changes; in fact they may be greater than for those who are not caring for others. While the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are unknown, it is likely that individual and family outcomes will be changed. Already it is known that K-12 and college students are experiencing much higher levels of depression ("The Impact of COVID-19 on Student Mental Health," 2020). With people of all ages experiencing mental health challenges, it is likely that it will affect the parent-child relationship, or any caregiving connection.

4.6.7.1 Women, Work and Parenting

In addition, the pandemic has affected parents, especially mothers, in their work life. The transition to online schooling and stay-at-home orders during the coronavirus pandemic required at least one adult in the home to focus on the children—helping them with schoolwork and supervising them all day.

While there was no immediate impact on detachment or unemployment, working mothers in states with early stay-at-home orders and school closures were 68.8 percent more likely to take leave from their jobs than working mothers in states where closures happened later, according to new research by the U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve (Heggeness, 2020). While one study found that dads increased their childcare role during the pandemic, it also showed moms spent the most time caring for children (Sevilla & Smith, 2020).

In the United States, around one in five (19.6 percent) of working-age adults said the reason they were not working was because COVID-19 disrupted their childcare arrangements as shown in Figure 4.28.

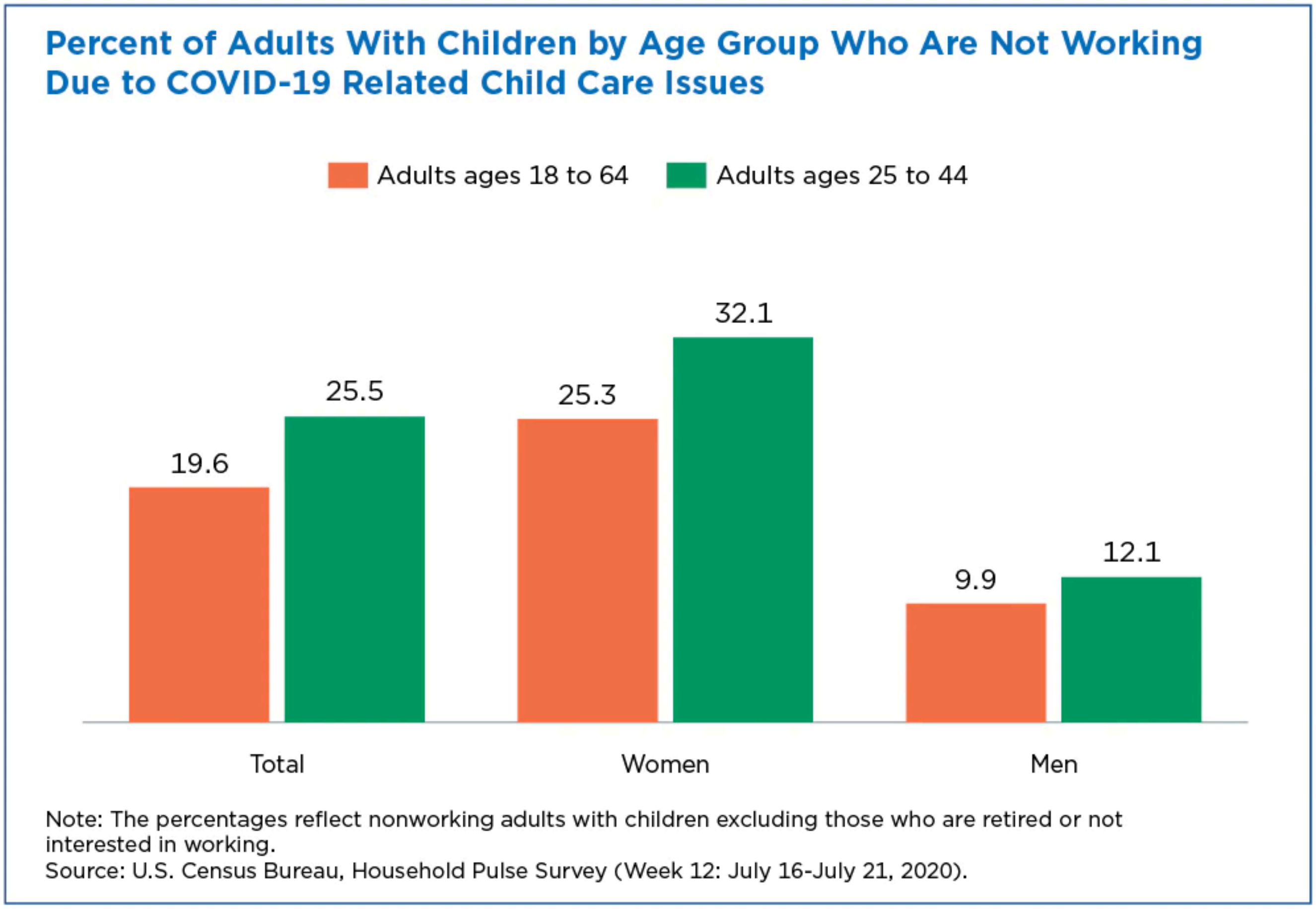

Figure 4.29. This graph clearly illustrates the effects of the pandemic on working mothers.

4.6.7.2 Caregivers at Home; Caregivers at Work

Working parents in all fields face the challenge and stress of balancing their work lives with caring for their children, as well as other personal and household responsibilities. In this section we will focus on a subset of working parents who have elected to work in jobs or careers that are focused on serving others. These fields include education, health, human services, and hospitality.

In all of these fields there is an emphasis on serving others and to some degree a focus on a cause greater than oneself. For example, teachers are focused on creating a curriculum and an environment in which students achieve specific learning outcomes. At the same time, they are concerned with their students' overall well being. They work with 25 to 150 students each year, depending on their teaching assignments, with a societal expectation that all of these students will succeed.

How does being service oriented in one's work life overlap with nurturing when also a parent?

It is undeniable that the collapse of many public systems during the pandemic affected this group of caregivers powerfully, putting many of them in a public bind. Teachers who are caregivers at home faced both the immediate need to completely adapt their curriculum into online and video conferencing content at the same time, arranging for their own children or dependents to adjust to lack of in-person services. Many times they were teaching their own children at home while responsible for the learning of a group of other students. Health workers faced the onslaught of more people needing medical care and the psychological component of being exposed to a deadly disease on a daily basis. They faced the lack of schooling, child care, and adult day services for their own dependents, while facing an increased demand on their work time.

Even in non pandemic times caregivers face the challenge of providing self-care while caring for others. While the pandemic exacerbated this dual challenge, it is one that is always present for this group of parents and other caregivers.

4.6.8 Licenses and Attributions for Socially Constructed Ideas: Form and Function

4.6.8.1 Open Content, Original

4.6.8.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

4.6.9 References

Forget-me-not club—Dementia support. (n.d.). Retrieved February 14, 2023, from https://www.forgetmenotclub.co.uk/help.html

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Sevilla, A. and Smith, S. (2020). Baby steps: The gender division of childcare during the COVID19 pandemic. University of Bristol.chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.bristol.ac.uk/efm/media/workingpapers/working_papers/pdffiles/dp20723.pdf

4.7 LOOKING AHEAD

Real-world current events demonstrate the importance of attachment for child development, as well as the impact that disrupted attachments can cause. Separation does not only impact an individual, it can have far-reaching consequences, changing how children learn to view the world and develop, interact with their communities, and react to stressful situations. They are at a higher risk for psychological disorders and physical health problems, and they are at greater risk of substance abuse as adults.

There are known strategies for supporting children who are experiencing trauma, such as the ones included in this resource from The Child Traumatic Stress Network. This document groups children into three age groups: preschool or younger, school-aged, and adolescents, and provides a general overview on how trauma might present within those three age groups, as well as suggestions for how support systems can best assist in helping children cope with trauma. These strategies will be useful as the world works to support the isolation and trauma that is evident both for intact families experiencing the pandemic, and for families that have endured separation as well during this time.

4.7.1 Want to Learn More?

- Read the Pew Research *Parenting in America* summary, for nuanced distinctions regarding family formation, where children are living, and current parenting concerns.
- Watch this seven-minute video " Raising children for a second time, 'grandfamilies' struggle during the pandemic" to learn more about grandfamilies.
- An idea related to nature and nurture that has recently gained attention is the one of "orchid children and dandelion children." Dr. Thomas Boyce has theorized that most children are "dandelions": resilient and hardy, able to withstand some difficulties and continue to thrive. In contrast, some children are "orchids"; more delicate and sensitive. These children may also develop well, as long as their sensitive nature is acknowledged and a stable, responsive environment is provided. This kind of framing may help parents and caregivers see the importance of environmental and parenting choices.

- To read or listen to more about this emerging theory, click here for an article and recording by National Public Radio.

- This clip from a Crash Course video looks at both Harlow's and Ainsworth's work, as well as giving a quick summary of Diana Baumrind's parenting styles. Review this if you would like more information about this research and theories.
- There are many resources which are aimed at educating parents and caregivers on how to build secure attachments, such as through the Child Welfare Information Gateway which compiles information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration for Children & Families, and the Children's Bureau.
- For statistics about adoption and foster care visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Adoption and Foster Care Statistics website.
- To learn more about the social model of disability from the perspective of a person diagnosed with autism, listen to this TED Talk with Jac den Houting.
- Curious about pandemic parenting? Look at these two studies:
    - Why is Mommy so Stressed Out? Estimating the Immediate Impact of the COVID-19 Shock on Parental Attachment to the Labor Market and the Double Bind of Mothers
    - Baby steps: The gender division of childcare during the COVID19 pandemic

4.7.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

4.7.2.1 Open Content, Original

4.8 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

4.8.1 Reflective Questions

1. Explain the importance of caregiving relationships using a child development or parenting theory or perspective.
2. What are the benefits to self and to society of nurturing relationships?
3. In what ways do social structures such as the **economy** and the environment relate to changes in family size and structure?
4. How does the "child care trilemma" affect **equity** for families? Consider both families who work in childcare, as well as families who use child care.
5. This chapter focuses on disruptive attachment for a wide range of families and children. Discuss why attachment is so important not just to individual families, but to society.
6. How does the government influence caregiving, parenting and attachment?
7. What are some social stigmas associated with parenting and caregiving?
8. Analyze parenting and caregiving from an **equity** perspective.

4.8.2 Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **attachment theory**: a lasting bond or connection between people.
- **birth rate**: the number of live births per 1,000 women in the total population.
- **caregiving**: the act of providing support or watching over a person.
- **child care**: usually used to refer to non-parental care of a young child, often in a paid provider's home or in a child care center.
- **child care trilemma:** the acknowledgement that it is difficult to provide affordable, accessible, and high quality care without some kind of subsidy or support.
- **concerted cultivation**: a parenting style that emphasizes adult led enrichment programs for children.
- **dysfunction**: behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or society.
- **ecological systems theory**: a framework that looks at individuals within their environments.
- **family form**: the structure of a family including the members and their relationships to one another.
- **family function**: the way the family members behave towards each other and within society.
- **fecundity rate**: the number of people who want to have biological children who are able to get pregnant and give birth.
- **fertility rate**: the number of people in a specific age range who are able to give birth.
- **grandfamily**: a family in which grandparents are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren; usually the parents are not present.
- **mortality rate**: death, and the rate of death for a particular group or in a particular area.
- **multigenerational families**: more than two generations of a family living together.
- **natural growth**: a parenting style that emphasizes child led games and activities, often in multi-age groups from the same family or neighborhood.
- **nature and nurture**: a discussion about the relationship between biological and environmental factors in a child's development .

- **parenting styles**: usually refers to the four styles model including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved.
- **psychosocial model**: a framework that emphasizes our relationships and that society's expectations motivate much of our behavior and the importance of conscious thought.
- **public function of families**: the aspect of family life related to caring for others in a way that benefits society, especially children.
- **socioeconomic status**: the status of an individual and family via the combination of education, income, and occupation or career.

4.8.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

4.8.3.1 Open Content, Original

4.9 CHAPTER 4 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 5: ROUTINES, TRADITIONS, AND CULTURE

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

5.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the benefits that children and adults derive from creating and maintaining routines and traditions.
2. Distinguish between routine, traditions, and customs.
3. Identify four aspects of life where rituals are commonplace and can serve as support in adapting to change and transition.
4. Recognize how routines, traditions, and rituals in familial practices contribute to the production and maintenance of **culture**.
5. Identify ways in which **culture** and religion overlap.
6. Examine **culture** from a theoretical perspective.
7. Describe how anchoring practices can contribute to creating a sense of community and belonging.
8. Recognize how communities can practice cultural persistence as resistance to assimilationist policies.

5.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

5.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

5.2 HOW ROUTINES AND PREDICTABILITY AFFECT CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Routines, broadly defined, are repeated goal-focused behaviors (Segal, 2004). Your routines may include a mixture of scheduled activities, such as shared mealtimes or a game of pickup basketball on the weekends. The purpose of these routines, other than to get something to eat or enjoy some exercise, is to bring together people with different schedules so they can interact and accomplish a task (DeVault, 1994).

Routines and predictability can have positive effects for children, adolescents, and adults. **Family routines** are the predictable, repeated consistent patterns that characterize everyday home life. As one of the fundamental structures of family life, these routines help to promote the health of the family members (Boyce et al., 1983). Family routines bring us closer together, help us get work done, bring stability to our lives, and manage the day-to-day challenges (Harrist et al., 2019).

5.2.1 In Focus: Reading as a Family

[From virtual guest book include “Reading as a Family” about the practice of reading together as a family.]

Figure 5.1

This is Wolfie, a hand puppet that was gifted to my now 2-year old son when he was a small baby (Figure 5.1). It's become part of my family's daily life. Each night, Wolfie (attached to Dad) reads to Oscar. It's a fun way to teach Oscar to read (while keeping him interested enough not to run away). But it's also become an object around which we gather, learn, and play. Oscar thinks it's so fun when Wolfie reads with him, and likes Mom and Dad to join in the fun too!

5.2.2 In Focus: Family Meals

[From virtual guestbook, "Family Meals" about the practices of family meal time.]

Figure 5.2. "Family Meals." Credit: Liz Pearce

Cooking food and sharing meals has been important to me all my life. My love of sharing food has not changed, but the people I share my everyday life with has. I grew up in a family where a typical dinner meal included meat, potatoes, and two vegetables. My mom was the main cook and she used family recipes and cookbooks. *The Joy of Cooking* (Figure 5.2) is one I remember from childhood.

The Moosewood Cookbook and The Silver Palate represent cookbooks I've used for over 30 years at home. Now I share food with my partner and with my daughters who range from vegan to mostly vegetarian eating. We still love cooking and eating together, but there is a lot more dialogue, debate, and compromise as we share food and celebrations together.

5.2.3 Outcomes for Children

It may seem obvious to you that routines bring people together and create stability. You may have felt this first hand growing up with routines that brought comfort and security, like reading bedtime stories with a favorite stuffed animal, or the absence of routines.

One way to understand the nature of contemporary families, beyond your personal experience, is to analyze patterns of social behavior. Recent research shows how routines affect outcomes for children:

- Routines in the home, such as bedtime routines and homework sessions, can have positive effects on children's mental health, physical health, academic achievement, and delinquent behavior.
- Family routines can give children a sense of stability and security, in turn potentially decreasing anxiety.
- Positive child adjustment across the transition to kindergarten can be facilitated by family routines.
- Home routines can be especially helpful for children from low SES households in countering some of the elevated risk for experiencing chaotic and unpredictable family environments.

5.2.4 Outcomes for Adolescents

The benefits and positive developmental effects of routines for children are similar to those experienced during adolescence. Studies show how routines affect outcomes for adolescents:

- Adolescents who regularly share mealtimes with their parents are less susceptible to experiencing depression, get better grades, are less likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana, are less likely to have problematic drinking problems,and have fewer mental health problems (Compan, Moreno, Ruiz, & Pascual, 2002; Eisenberg, Olson, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Bearinger, 2004).

- African-American adolescents who experience more family routines have reduced risk of alcohol and epinephrine use, higher emotional self-regulation, and increased likelihood of enrolling in a 4-year university (Barton et al., 2018).
- Youth who struggled with mental health, family routines served as a way for the families to feel in control, routines helped the family members cope and have a sense of purpose, routines enforced

familial cohesion, and that the maintenance of routines reinforced individual and family identity (Koom, Hocking, & Sutton, 2012).

For adolescents, family routines can increase social competence, improve educational outcomes, and contribute to mental health and resilience (Barnes et al., 2007; Evans & Rodger, 2008; Fiese et al., 2002; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Lanza & Taylor, 2010; Schultz-Krohn, 2004). These family routines might look like a regular movie night or volunteering to pick up trash at a neighborhood park every other month. An adolescent's sense of connectedness with family life can also serve as a protective factor against suicide ideation (Carter et al., 2005). Children and adolescents who participate in shared family activities, such as game nights or attending religious services together, can form a stronger sense of identity and self-confidence (Denham, 1995, 2002, 2003; Evans & Rodger, 2008).

5.2.5 Outcomes for Adults

Life as an adult can sometimes feel chaotic and overwhelming. With work, caretaking, social, and academic demands, it can be challenging to create and maintain routines that fit within a busy schedule. Even so, having routines as an adult can be beneficial. Researchers have also shown how routines can be helpful for adults, particularly in the areas of physical, emotional, relational, and financial wellbeing.

Routines in adulthood can be ones that a person establishes for themselves, or ones that are shared with housemates, family members, and/or friends. Routines in a family environment can be helpful for a person's health. For example, a couple might make a habit of going for a daily stroll around the block or cooking a healthy meal together. People trying to implement health behaviors, such as discontinuing the use of tobacco products, can find benefits in routines (Wagner, Burg, & Sirois, 2004). A family might have a routine of getting dental and medical checkups on birthdays or at the beginning of each year, which could help prevent medical and dental issues (Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990).

Routines can also be beneficial for an adult's emotional and relational wellbeing. For individuals, day-to-day routines, such as a 10-minute meditation each morning, can enhance a person's sense of contentment and life satisfaction (Heintzelman & King, 2019). Adults who share routines with friends and family are likely to feel supported, and can strengthen relationships. For example families that have regular check-ins can support and encourage each other, which can help increase a sense of closeness (Franko et al., 2008). Romantic couples can enhance their sense of connectedness and emotional intimacy by setting aside "date nights," or time to regularly enjoy each other's company (Wilcox & Dew, 2012).

Routines can also be helpful for one's financial wellbeing while at the same time be helpful for relationships. Adults who live with roommates, and who have weekly or monthly budget check-ins, have been found to have better success meeting financial goals. The roommates can encourage and support each other in their goals, as well as discuss financial issues to prevent conflict that could come from economic stress (Dew, 2008).

5.2.6 Licenses and Attributions for How Routines and Predictability Affect Children and Adults

5.2.6.1 Open Content, Original

5.2.6.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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5.3 TRADITIONS AND RITUALS

In the previous section we examined the implications of family routines for family wellbeing. In this section, we will discuss the differences between routines and rituals, the importance of rituals and traditions for families, and case studies that describe important life events and transitions.

What are the differences between routines and rituals? When families attribute significance and meaning to routines, especially those that promote family cohesion and family identity, routines can become rituals. As previously discussed, family routines are the predictable, repeated consistent patterns that characterize daily home life. In contrast, **family rituals** are "compelling and bounded behaviors with symbolic meanings that can be clearly described and serve to organize and affirm central family ideas" (Steinglass et al., 1987, as cited in Denham, 2003).

Figure 5.3 provides a comparison of family rituals and family routines. Family routines and rituals overlap in many ways with respect to their meanings, associations, ways they are initiated, and meaning. Routines tend to be tied to everyday life, whereas rituals tend to be carried out in association with extraordinary events, those that surpass quotidian life. Additionally, family routines may not hold special meaning or symbolic significance.

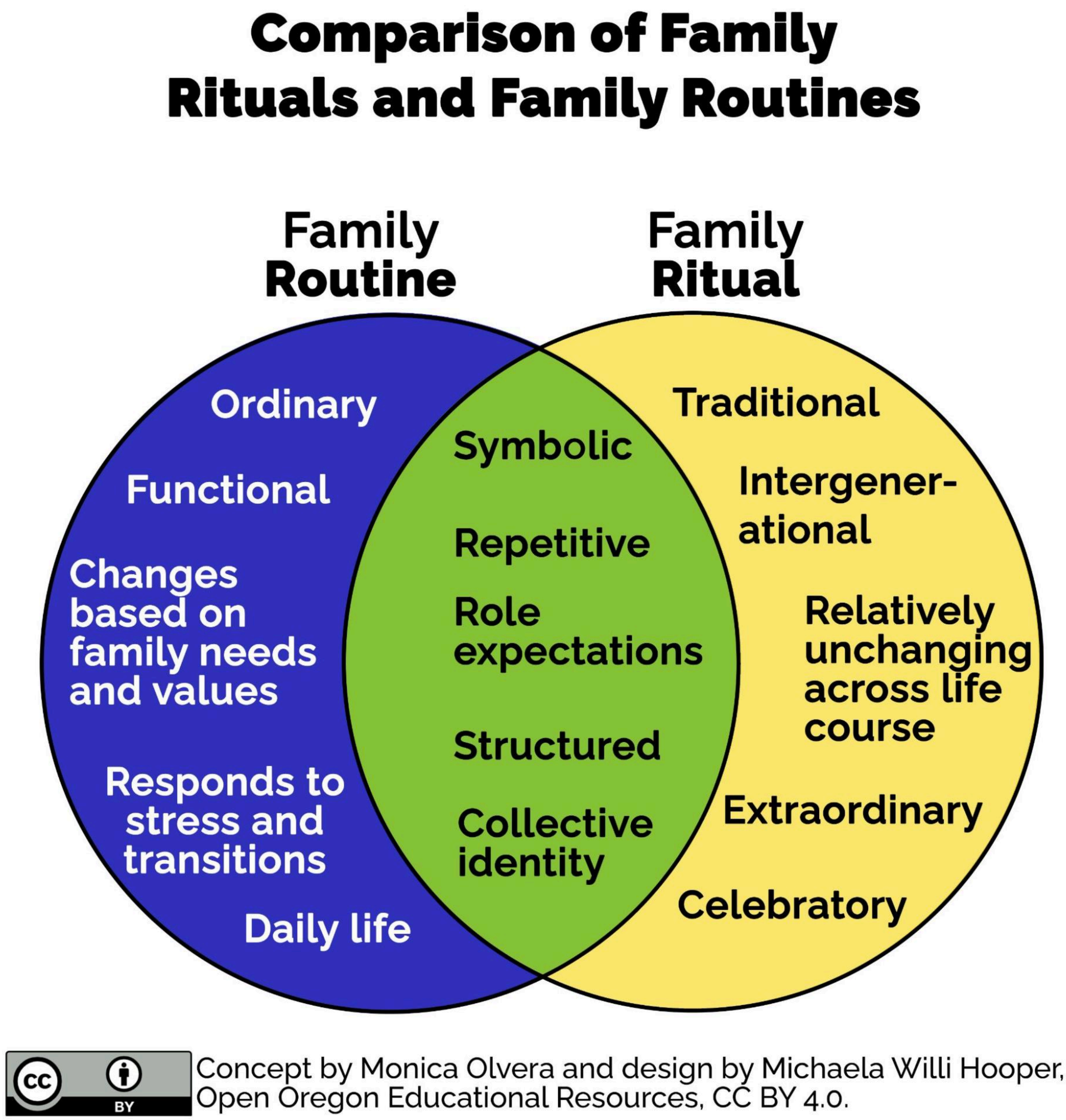

Figure 5.3. Comparison of Family Rituals and Family Routines. For more detail about the elements in family routines and family rituals, consult Appendix B. Figure 5.3 Image Description

Routines and rituals build a sense of belonging, family cohesion, and family identity. While family routines can be supportive for families, they can be disruptive if they are too rigid or chaotic, require too much time or energy, lead to conflicts among family members, or contribute to family members resenting each other (Fiese, 2007). Figure 5.4 provides a summary of the supportive or disruptive elements of family routines and rituals.

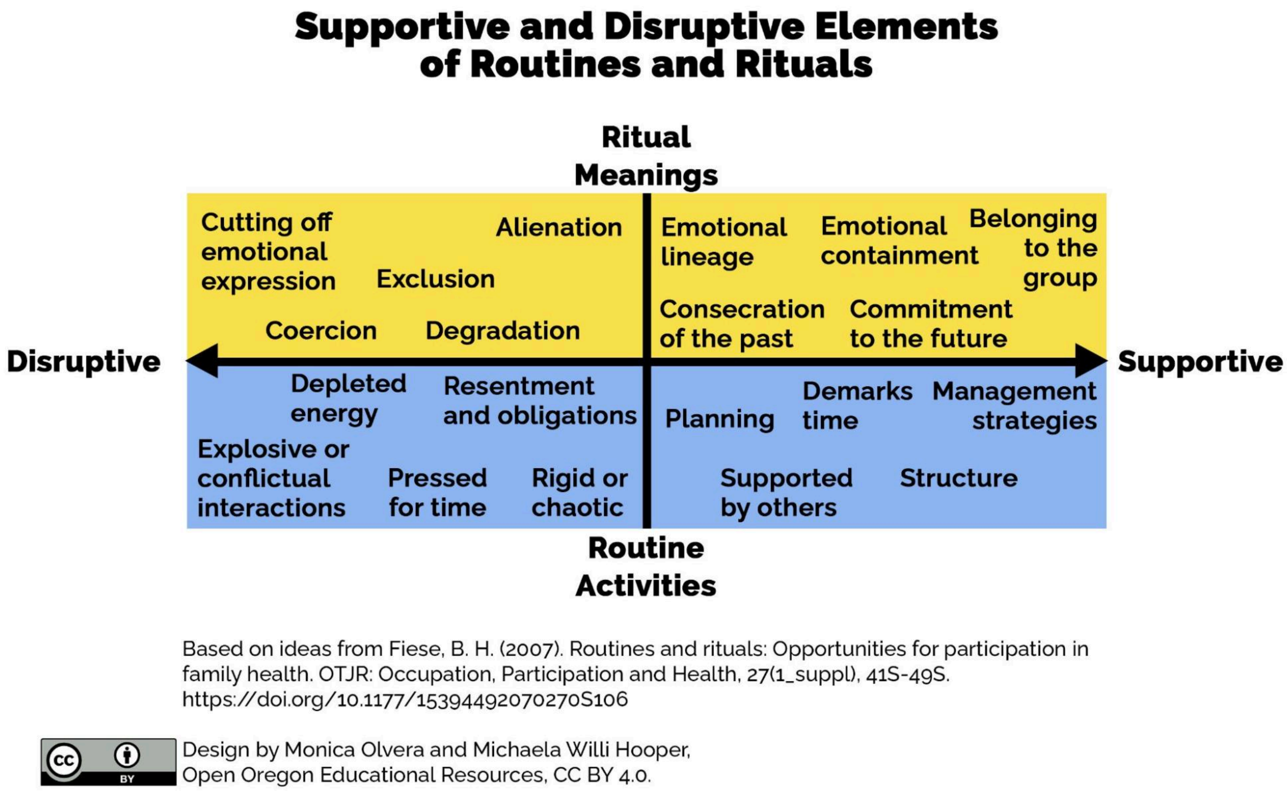

Figure 5.4. Supportive and Disruptive Elements of Routines and Rituals. (Adapted from Fiese, 2007). Figure 5.4 Image Description

Family routines can become rituals when symbolic meaning is attached to the activity. Ritual meanings can become disruptive to families, however, if family members feel alienated or excluded, if they are cut off from emotional expression during the ritual, or if they feel coerced at any point during the ritual (Fiese, 2007). The disruption of family rituals can be more impactful than the disruption of family routines. This is because the disruption of family rituals can erode group cohesion for the family. In contrast, a disruption of family routine may be easily corrected. A regular disruption of routines, however, can be harmful because it contributes to an accumulation of stress beyond what the family can handle (Harrist et al., 2019).

5.3.1 In Focus: Learning to Catch Each Other

Twenty-five years ago, I met my husband at Smith Rock State Park. Since then, we have rock climbed with our kids all over the world. One of our safety devices is a Gri-gri, which a belayer uses to catch a climber if they fall (Figure 5.5). Being tied to your loved ones with a rope and protecting their physical safety with this hand-sized piece of metal is a powerful responsibility. Some of our best conversations with our kids are on these trips, but we usually aren't talking about the climbing routes; we talk about everything else in our lives. The connection we feel as a family is a big part of what makes the Gri-gri work.

Figure 5.5. "Learning to Catch Each Other." Credit: Dio Morales

5.3.2 Rituals Related to Life Transitions

Many **culture**s and societies practice rites of passage. A **rite of passage** can be a ritual or celebration that marks the passage when a person leaves one status, role, conditions, or group to enter another. Rituals and celebrations that mark a rite of passage are typically performed within a community setting are community-created and community-directed. The rite can be a public affirmation of shared values and beliefs, such as a marriage ceremony, or can promote community identity and cohesion, such as a powwow. Rites of passage can guide a person's transition into a new role, status, or phase, as seen in a commencement ceremony to mark a person's completion of high school. Anthropological records show that humans have practiced rites of passage for thousands of years, in many different forms, and across all **culture**s.

Rites of passage have three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation. These three stages were first described by French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep who considered rites of passage a series of phases, rather than a single event.

The first phase is separation, in which people withdraw from their current status and prepare to move from one place or status to another. During separation, people detach from their former selves through symbolic actions and rituals. For example, when a civilian joins the army, they cut their hair to signal they are "cutting away" the former self.

The second phase is transition, also known as the liminal phase. It is the period between stages during which one has left one place or state but has not yet entered or joined the next. For example, high school seniors eagerly waiting to be handed their high school diploma are in between being a student and having graduated.

The third phase is incorporation, or reaggregation. Once the ritual is completed, the individual assumes their new identity and re-enters society. Often this phase is characterized by rituals and ceremonies, such debutante balls and college graduations. Often, people use outward symbols to represent this change. For example, a person who has just gotten married might wear a wedding ring on their left hand as a tangible sign of being married.

In the following section, we highlight a few case studies of how families in the United States celebrate rites of passage that are common for human experiences. The examples described below represent a minuscule fraction of the ways in which individuals, families, and communities practice rites of passage.

5.3.2.1 Birth/Family Formation

Birth is the beginning of a new life and therefore a unique life event, and rituals can be a key part of marking and celebrating such an event (Wojtkowiak, 2020). Similar to other life passages (such as adulthood, marriage or death), considering birth as a social transition means that the pre-status or social order is temporally in a state of liminality, or a space of transition and a status of being in-between two spaces or statuses. Parents-to-be are preparing mentally, materially or even spiritually for the coming of their child and the transition into becoming parents. Family members and friends are searching for their new **roles** in the life of this new human being. Experiencing the birth of a baby can be related to feelings of happiness and joy, as well as ambiguity and uncertainty. The coming of a new member of society has been traditionally marked by rituals. Birth is therefore understood as the first rite of passage in a human life (Van Gennep, 1960).

Rituals and ceremonies performed around the time of birth serve as celebrations to mark the occasion. Rituals can also help parents transition into new **roles**, as well as establish relationships of care, support, and responsibility within a community of friends and family. In this section, we will look at examples of "blessingway" ceremonies, and secular naming ceremonies.

"Blessingway" ceremonies, or "mother's blessing" is inspired by the traditional Native American Navajo blessingway ceremony (Biddle, 1996). Traditional blessingway ceremonies consist of singing, chanting and sharing stories to wish beauty, good and harmony to the mother-to-be. The songs and stories are shared during pregnancy and childbirth. The singer, who is a traditional medicine man, performs the songs. The songs and stories are important for the mother-to-be and shape her view of childbirth and family life. Through the chants the woman is spiritually connected to her ancestors and the past and future (Biddle, 1996). A modern mother's blessing is described as a "celebration of a woman's transition into motherhood that's rooted in Navajo **culture**. It is a spiritual gathering of the woman's closest friends and family who come to nurture the mama-to-be with wise words, positivity, art and pampering." During a mother's blessing the mother is blessed by other significant women before the baby is born. Most of the time, the other participants are her mother (in law), sister(s), aunts and friends. However, variations are possible and sometimes men are also present.

Naming or welcoming ceremonies for babies, inspired by traditional baptism, is a re-invented way of welcoming the baby into one's community. It is practiced as an alternative to a traditional, religious baptism. The motivation for a baby naming ceremony is for parents/caregivers to have a ceremony that brings together friends and family, to celebrate one of life's key milestones. Naming ceremonies are ideal for families who want to mark the occasion in a way that isn't religious. A naming ceremony is personalized and uniquely created for each family, and can last between 20 to 60 minutes. Parents and other significant others can, for instance, state their hopes and wishes for the baby. "Wishes for a Child" by Joanna Miller is an example of a poem for a naming ceremony, and it appears here with other poems. Music and readings can also be part of the ceremony. Some physical symbols might be given to the baby, such as for guidance or something that the child can open or read later in her life. "Guideparents" might be presented to the community and they can also express their wishes to the baby. As this ritual is individually crafted for each family, the location, length, content and other ritual elements are chosen for the occasion.

5.3.2.2 Entry into Adulthood

Coming of age rituals are the rituals, ceremonies, or traditions that mark the leaving behind of childhood or adolescence, and the entry into adulthood, maturity, or increased level of responsibility and duties. Many times a coming of age ritual is rooted in religious tradition, such as a Bar and Bat Mitzvah in Judaism, or the Sacrament of Confirmation in Catholicism. Secular coming of age practices can include getting one's driver's license, Débutante balls, high school senior prom, and graduation.

We will do an extended exploration of quinceañeras, an important coming of age celebration among girls in some Latinx families.

If you would like to explore coming of age rituals in more depth, this TED Talk explores historic and modern important rites of passage, and how they can help young teens understand what it means to become an adult, by teaching life skills and reinforcing character traits and values. From a parent's point of view, watching a youth grow into maturity and take on the **roles**, responsibilities, and risks of adulthood can be both exciting and frightening, as the parent struggles with letting their child have more autonomy, while also fearing for their child's wellbeing and safety. In this TED Talk, Marc Bamuthi Joseph shares a Black father's tender and wrenching internal reflection on the pride and terror of seeing his son enter adulthood.

5.3.3 In Focus: La Quinceañera: A rite of passage among Latina adolescents

"Hurry, mamá!," Laura begged her mom. "*¡Ayúdame a quitar la falda! ¡Ya va a empezar el baile sorpresa* and I'm not even wearing my folklórico dress yet!" Help me take off this skirt, the surprise dance is about to start. Laura was hurriedly trying to unlace the glittery, sequin-bedazzled gown to put on her Jalisco dress, to dance El Son de la Negra with her corte de chambelanes y damas, her court of young men and women who wouldPon música accompany her. Amy, Laura's mom, clumsily helped Laura unlace the bodice of the dress, then helped Laura step into her Jalisco dress and was careful to zip the dress up without getting any of Laura's curls stuck in the zipper. The scene felt like a fiasco, because the guests were waiting to see the *baile sorpresa*. It was her quinceañera, the elaborate party and celebration of Laura turning 15 a few months ago, a ritual that many other Latina girls her age had gone through, or were already planning more than a year away from their birthday. Laura had practiced the dance for months with her court members, and it was almost the moment to debut the choreographed and stylized dance for the party guests, a mixture of Laura's extended family members, friends, Amy's coworkers, and even guests that had flown to Chicago for the big event.

Finally, Amy finished helping Laura secure her skirt and clasp her shoes, and with a woosh, the pair of them rushed out to the reception hall. Laura took her place on the dance floor by the chambelan de honor, the male escort of honor, and turned her head to catch the DJ's eye.. The hired DJ saw Laura in position to begin the dance with the court, queued up the music, and belted out a command to the guests, *"Damas y caballeros, un fuerte el aplauso para Laura y los chambelanes. DJ, !pon la música!*" Ladies and gentlemen, give a big round of applause for Laura and her court! DJ, play the music! As the music started and Laura's court of friends and cousins began to dance, Amy released a huge sigh of relief. This momentous occasion, which the family had saved for over the years, and which had taken almost a year of planning, was finally coming to fruition. Laura, her parents, her family, friends, and community were celebrating this important coming of age ritual, cementing the family's sense of cohesion and identity, and Laura's symbolic rite of passage into a performance of womanhood.

The quinceañera, a rite of passage that marks the 15th birthday of Latina girls, is practiced by Latinos of various backgrounds and nationalities throughout the United States and LAtin America. (The term "quinceañera" refers both to the ritual and to the girl celebrating her 15th birthday.) While it has many variations, quinceañeras were typically practiced by elite families in Mexico. The tradition has been transported to, and transformed within, the United States. The previous vignette describes the quinceañera, Laura, preparing for the surprise dance portion of the quinceañera, a ritual within a ritual. In this section we will describe the origins, structure, and meanings of components of a quinceañera. We will also provide a brief discussion of how the tradition has taken on new meaning among contemporary families in the US.

5.3.3.1 Components of a Quinceañera Celebration

The exact origins of the quinceañera are somewhat unclear, though the tradition is thought to have its roots in the Spanish court dances of Europe, and coming-of-age rituals among pre-Columbian communities (Cantú, 1999). quinceañeras are a blending or hybridization of the pageantry European court rituals and Indigenous cultural mixture (Erevia, 1992). Although there are many variations in quinceañeras, there are three key elements that are generally present in most quinceañeras in the United States and Latin America–a dress, Catholic mass (or Protestant church service), and a party or reception following the religious ceremony. The quinceañera's dress, such as the one shown in Figure 5.6, is typically a focal point of the entire event, and is traditionally reminiscent of a floor-length, puffy ball gown or fairy tale princess dress. But, some girls may choose more modern formal dresses. The color may vary, from white or pastel colors, to bright, vibrant colors and patterns. (The pictures included in this section provide a small sampling of variations in the dresses).

Figure 5.6. “quinceañera. Santa Fe.”

The religious ceremony typically includes a procession to the church, consisting of the girl, her parents, and her corte, or court, of young women (*damas* or female attendants) and young men (*chambelanes* or escorts). Traditionally, the court would also include a dama de honor (female attendant of honor) a chambelán. de honor (male escort of honor). The damas usually wear formal dresses in similar hue as the quinceañera’s dress, while the *chambelanes* would wear tuxedos. The *dama* and a *chambelán de honor* typically wear a somewhat distinct outfit from the rest of the court, to indicate their distinguished status. During the mass, such as the one shown in Figure 5.7, the teenager prays to “renew her baptismal commitment, strengthen her faith, to ask for a blessing as she enters a new stage in life, to give thanks for arriving at the age of fifteen, and to honor her parents” (Davalos 1996, p. 109). In Mexican or Mexican American families, the girl might also pray a special devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. Many girls receive a rosary and/or a prayer book that was blessed by the priest during the mass.

Figure 5.7. Two quinceañeras at Catholic mass.

After the religious ceremony, a reception usually follows in a rented banquet hall, church hall, or the family's home. Among more affluent families, the girl and her court might be transported in a limousine from the church to the reception. The reception can consist of several phases, and typically has many more attendees than the religious ceremony. Sometimes a full supper is provided. Once the guests have been seated, the girl and her court perform a choreographed waltz, followed by *baile sorpresa*,, a surprise dance, such as a choreographed dance to modern music that is popular among youth. The group dance can be followed by the girl's first dance with her father, or the *chambelan* de honor, signifying her newly acquired permission to dance with young men. Another common component is the changing of the girl's flat shoes to high heels, to represent her transition into adulthood. Also, she may be presented with the "last doll," to signify leaving behind the toys of childhood.

[This video provides an example of the quinceañera (wearing a tiara) and her full court performing the choreographed surprise dance at a party in Dallas, Texas. The dance consists of multiple genres of music, transitions and different configurations, as well as the *chambelanes* showing off their footwork towards the end of the video. About midway through the dance, the quinceañera is lifted up and carried by some of the *chambelanes*.]

After the choreographed dances are completed, an elaborate cake, such as the one shown in Figure 5.8, comparable to a wedding cake, is served to the guests. There might be live music played by a hired band, or a DJ with a sound system and lights, similar to a dance club. The band or DJ would play dance music for all the guests to dance, including songs the guests and the court members request. Aside from playing traditional musical genres such as banda, norteña, ranchera, cumbia, quebradita, salsa, and merengue, it is very common for the youth to request hip-hop, pop, and reggaeton. At the end of the quinceañera, the guests can take home *recuerdos*, or souvenirs, from the event, such as table decorations or cloth napkins embroidered with the girl's name, the date of the party, and the words *Mi quinceañera*, or "my quinceañera."

Figure 5.8. "quinceañera Cake."

Put together, all these components can create a grand expense. Traditionally families would utilize a system of *compadrazgo*, a system of financial sponsorship, with its origins in Mexico (Gonzalez-Martin, 2020). For example, the girl's parents might ask an uncle to be the *padrino* (literally, the god-father/sponsor) of the cake, or ask an aunt to be the *madrina* (literally, the god-mother/sponsor) of the last doll. The use of *compadrazgo* affirms relationships of responsibility, duty, and moral obligation among the family.

5.3.3.2 Meanings and Interpretations

There are many critiques and interpretations of the quinceañera as a ritual, and the smaller rituals that make up the practice. That is, "meaning is made through the process of donning a gown, striding down the church aisles, and enacting a series of smaller, internal rituals that create a recognizable quinceañera event" (Gonzalez-Martin, 2020, p 145). The quinceañera can affirm or establish social status by demonstrating the family's capacity to pay for a large, lavish, and expensive event (Horowitz, 1993). Some criticize the practice, questioning why families would spend such a large quantity of money on the party. Others have noted that girls who are heavily involved with planning the quinceañera tend to be more connected to their family, cultural beliefs and practices, which can protect against depression and risky behaviors (Alvarez, 2007). Quinceañeras can serve as cultural markers and events that support family and community cohesion. The quinceañera ceremony in the United States can be a way for a family to assert its "Mexicanness" against a backdrop of Anglo influence (Horowitz, 1993). While quinceañeras draw from traditions rooted in the past, participants in the event can incorporate new practices, or variations of traditions, as an adaptation and affirmation of cultural identity.

Figure 5.9. “Mis Quince.”

Other criticisms of quinceañeras is that the coming of age ritual can be interpreted as a public display that “the young woman is no longer a child and that she is available for courtship” (Horowitz, 1993, p. 275). quinceañeras have been compared to a rehearsal wedding, “[sending] a clear message to the Latina girl: We expect you to get married, have children, devote yourself to your family” (Alvarez, 2007, p. 56). Moreover, the quinceañera is very clearly a heteronormative Christian tradition, with aspects of exaggerated femininity with the dress, dances, and other components. For some girls, such as girls in the LGBTQ+ community, the quinceañera can be the epitome of everything young women want to escape from within their families. The clothing style and the girl’s performance can represent obedience, adherence to heterosexuality, and chastity (Gonzalez-Martin, 2020). Regardless of how the quinceañera ritual is perceived and interpreted, it is a vibrant expression of “*Latinidad*,” or sense of one’s Latino cultural identity, and a way to stay connected with one’s cultural roots (Davalos, 1996).

A unique perspective is that quinceañeras provide an opportunity for Latina girls to express themselves, have decision-making power and agency, and that the process of planning and executing the components of the quinceañera can be empowering. The girl may be able to choose the color and style of her dress, which is a central piece and sets the tone for the entire event, as her court of honor will be dressed in a similar style and color as her quinceañera dress (Gonzalez-Martin, 2020). The gown serves as a focal point of the whole event, "drawing in the gaze of audience members as the young woman embodies womanhood by donning the ornate and often expensive dress in the context of dance and public performance" (Gonzalez-Martin, 2020, p. 149). A family can attend expos where hundreds of dresses are on display, and where vendors sell everything from pre-choreographed dance routines and digital photography packages, to digitally-printed, deluxe invitations. Girls can turn to hundreds of websites, YouTube videos, social media accounts, and even quinceañera Magazine to find ideas and inspiration about themes, color schemes, ideas for *recuerdos* and entertainment, makeup and hairstyles, types of tiaras, and tips about the best undergarments to wear for a strapless ball gown. Thus in choosing the dress, the quinceañera influences all other aspects of the event. The girl also can decide what songs she wants to include in the performance and who she wants on her court. Latina girls planning modern quinceañeras can find themselves overwhelmed with the array of choices and opportunities to assert their own creativity within the traditional rituals, and express their personality through their choices.

5.3.3.3 Union Formation/Marriage

The chapter about love and union formation of this book, describes different types of unions, marriages, partnerships, and relationships that may have mixed legal, religious, or community acceptance. In this section we present a few examples of marriage and union formation rituals practiced by families in the United States. Union formations have been practiced by **culture**s and societies around the world for millennia. The video "The history of marriage" provides a succinct introduction to marriage practices around the world, such as polygamy, a marriage form permitting more than one spouse at the same time.

"Jumping the broom" is a marriage tradition that some African American couples practice. The tradition was mainly practiced by enslaved couples, who did not have access to the legal right of marriage due to the rampant racial **discrimination** that existed in the institution of chattel slavery. A couple would publicly proclaim their commitment and devotion to each other, sometimes with a priest/minister or the enslaver officiating the ceremony.

Variations of the practice could involve the couple jumping over a broom placed sideways, jumping over two brooms. The broom could be held up, or placed on the ground, and the couple could jump or step over the broom at the same time, or one person at a time (Dundes, 1996).

The ritual typically was regarded as a binding agreement for the couple, potentially to the extent that it was legally recognized.

While the origin of the practice is unclear, some scholars suggest brooms were symbolic in wedding rituals in Africa, and thus were incorporated into wedding traditions of enslaved people in the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Dundes, 1996). Other researchers suggest the practice originated in the British Isles (Parry, 2020).

In contemporary weddings, couples may choose to incorporate jumping the broom into their wedding ceremony. This practice could typically occur towards the end of a wedding ceremony, when the couple have exchanged their vows in front of a room filled with friends, family, and loved ones, as the last step in culminating the wedding ceremony. A broom would be placed on the ground in front of the couple, facing the guests, and a speaker would describe the origins of the practice and what the practice symbolizes for the new couple.

For example, in a video excerpt of a couple's ceremony, we can see a couple standing in front of the broom, while the officiate speaks to the guests:

"We now end this ceremony with the African tradition of jumping the broom. Slaves in this country were not permitted to marry, so they jumped the broom as a way to [demonstrate] unity. Today it represents great joy, and at the same time serves as a reminder of the past and the pain of slavery. As our bride and groom jump the broom, they physically and spiritually cross the threshold of the path of matrimony…in making their home together. It represents the sweeping away of the old, and welcoming the new. The sweeping away of negative energy, making the way for all things good to come into their lives. It is also a call of support for the marriage from the entire community of family and friends. The bride and groom will now begin their new lives together with a clean sweep."

Then, the speaker asks the guests to stand and count to 3, upon which the couple hop over the broom together, while the guests erupt into cheers and applause.

5.3.3.4 Death and Bereavement

Death and bereavement, or mourning the passing of a loved one, can be very difficult topics to discuss. The passing of a loved one can be a time of great sadness, but also joy in celebrating a person's life and legacy. Rituals can provide opportunities to mourn the passing of a loved one, and for friends and family to gather and comfort one another. In this section we will look at the example of bereavement practices among Asian Indian American Hindus, residing in the southern region of the US.

Beliefs about the end of life, and the meaning of death as a transition to another ife, can help people feel less anxiety about death (Chopra, 2006). **Ethnicity** can provide a cultural system to make sense of the world, including suffering and loss (Gupta, 2011). Asian Indian American Hindus (AIAH) interviewed by Gupta (2011) accessed their cultural and religious beliefs to help them make sense of death and loss, as well as provide comfort in mourning practices. In focus groups Gupta conducted with AIAH, individuals discussed their traditional beliefs and practices, and described how death and bereavement is approached in India as opposed to the US. The AIAH strives to adhere to their religious and cultural practices as much as possible, within the resources available to them in the US. Gupta (2011) noted that the death rituals and customs followed include "delivering a eulogy, embalming at Hindu funerals, a 1- to 2-day mourning period instead of 13 days, donation of the body to science instead of cremation, and allowing the funeral home to perform the cleansing of the deceased instead of the son" (p. 257).

Despite the majority of Hindus in India believing that life-prolonging means interfere with the cycle of life and death, in the United States some Hindus have utilized artificial means to prolong life, such as a respirator. Some Hindus in the United States follow pre- and post-death rituals, whereas others do not. In India widows are expected to wear white saris, and refrain from wearing makeup or jewelry for the remainder of their lives, as a sign of mourning. But, in India as well as the US, this custom is changing, with widows in the United States wearing colors that do not disrupt them blending into the workforce (Gupta, 2011).

The variation in adherence to practices may vary according to the degree of one's acculturation, place of birth, religious orientation, and availability of priests and temples. The AIAH seniors Gupta interviewed stated that they were not afraid of death, but were concerned about getting very sick and becoming a burden for their adult children. They were not too concerned, however, about their adult children's ability to carry out rituals and customs that the seniors had performed for their own parents in India, as the adult children would follow the guidance and recommendations of the priest at their respective places or religious gatherings (Gupta, 2011).

5.3.4 Legal and Structural Overlap with Traditions and Rituals

Sometimes family rituals and traditions clash with legal and/or structural aspects of the larger **culture**. One such clash in the United States has been same-sex marriage. The reasons people marry vary widely, but usually include the desire to publicly and formally declare their love, to form a single household unit, to legitimize sexual relations and procreation, for social and economic stability, and for the education and nurturing of children. A marriage can be declared by a wedding ceremony, which may be performed either by a religious officiant or through a similar government-sanctioned secular process. The act of marriage creates obligations between the individuals involved, and, in some societies, between the parties' extended families.

Same-sex marriage was not fully recognized as a legal bond and was limited in many U.S. stages until 2015 when the Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act.(DOMA). Many same-sex couples followed common cultural practices to publicly proclaim their love for and commitment to a partner. These enactments of commitment often followed the dominant cultural scripts of weddings and marriage quite closely, despite that many same-sex couples would face exclusion from the legal institution of marriage (Hull, 2006).

Another example of how traditions and rituals can clash with structural processes in the United States is that of the observance of religious holidays. For example, many schools, places of business, and government offices close for Christmas, a Christian holiday, celebrated annually on December 25th. In contrast, the same is not necessarily true for non-Christian holidays. Individuals who observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the High Holy Days of the Jewish year, may have to request time off from work or school. Similarly, people who observe Ramadan, a sacred period of spiritual reflection for Muslim communities, may have difficulty adapting their work or academic responsibilities that can conflict with celebrations associated with Ramadan, such fasting during the day.

5.3.5 Licenses and Attributions for Traditions and Rituals

5.3.5.1 Open Content, Original

5.3.5.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

5.3.6 References

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Image Description for Figure 5.3:

Comparison of Family Rituals and Family Routines

Two circles intersect in a Venn diagram. One of the circles is labeled “Family Routine.” The words and phrases inside this circle are:

- Ordinary
- Functional
- Changes based on family needs and values
- Responds to stress and transitions
- Daily life

The other circle is labeled “Family Ritual,” The words and phrases inside this circle are:

- Traditional
- Intergenerational
- Relatively unchanging across life course
- Extraordinary
- Celebratory

The intersection of the two circles includes the words and phrases:

- Symbolic
- Repetitive
- Role expectations
- Structured
- Collective identity

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[Return to Figure 5.3]

Image Description for Figure 5.4:

Supportive and Disruptive Elements of Routines and Rituals

A box has four quadrants, providing a summary of the supportive or disruptive elements of family routines and rituals. Arrows point both directions on the horizontal axis, which is labeled Disruptive in one direction and Supportive in another. The vertical axis does not have arrows but is labeled Ritual Meanings and Routine Activities. Below is a table representing the categories in the image

	Routine Activities	**Ritual Meanings**
	Management strategies	Belonging to the group
	Structure	Emotional containment
Supportive	Demarks time	Commitment to the future
	supported by others	Emotional lineage
	Planning	Consecration of the past
	Rigid or chaotic	Alienation
	Resentment and obligations	Degradation
Disruptive	Pressed for time	Exclusion
	Depleted energy	Coercion
	Explosive or conflictual interactions	Cutting off emotional expression

Based on ideas from Fiese, B. H. (2007). Routines and rituals: Opportunities for participation in family health. OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health, 27(1_suppl), 41S-49S. https://doi.org/10.1177/15394492070270S106. Design by Monica Olvera and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

[Return to Figure 5.3]

5.4 CULTURE

As discussed in Chapter 2, **culture**, broadly defined, is the set of beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, logics, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society. **Culture** elements are learned behaviors; children learn them while growing up in a particular **culture** as older members teach them how to live. As such, **culture** is passed down from one generation to the next.

Culture and **ethnicity** are deeply intertwined. **Ethnicity** refers to the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another. Similarly, an **ethnic group** is a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; with relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and with some sense of identity or belonging to the subgroup. **Pan-ethnicity** is the grouping together of multiple ethnicities and nationalities under a single label. For example, people in the United States with Vietnamese, Cambodian, Japanese, and Korean backgrounds could be grouped together under the pan-ethnic label Asian American. The United States has five pan-ethnic groups, including Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and Latinos. The grouping together of multiple ethnicities or nationalities under one umbrella term can be very problematic.

Sometimes **ethnicity** and race are used to categorize groups of people, which can be a source of confusion. The ways that people think of themselves could vary from how the U.S. government defines race and **ethnicity**. For example, an individual could identify as Latinx, but when completing administrative forms, such as a the U.S. census, the person would not have "Latinx" as an option, and instead need to select one of the categories "Mexican, Mexican American, **Chicano**;" "Puerto Rican," "Cuban," or "Another Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin." To add yet another layer of potential confusion, sometimes nationalities and ethnicities are used interchangeably. The U.S. census has been used to categorize people by race and **ethnicity**, and the category names can change as a reflection of shifts in public attitudes and politics, and demographic changes. The first U.S. census was conducted in 1790, and is completed every ten years. The 2020 census categories for race & **ethnicity** included the following :

- White+*
- Black or African American+*
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian

- Chinese
- Japanese

- Filipino
- Korean
- Asian Indian
- Vietnamese
- Other Asian

- Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

- Native Hawaiian
- Samoan
- Chamorro
- Other Pacific Islander

- Some other race
- Hispanic

- Mexican, Mexican American, **Chicano**+*
- Puerto Rican
- Cuban
- Another Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin

[footnote: The "+" symbol indicates in the 2020 census, if a person checked that option, they could for the first time write more about their origins, such as "Irish" or "Lebanese" if they selected "White," or "Jamaican" or "Somali" if they selected "Black or African American."]

In addition to **culture** and **ethnicity**, other terms are used to refer to this aspect of **culture**s, such as majority and minoritized or marginalized **culture**s, or dominant and nondominant **culture**s or macro- and micro-**culture**s. Some groups within a larger **culture** relate to the social identities of those involved. These may be based on regions (the old South, the East Coast, urban, rural), religion or beliefs: (Catholics, Southern Baptists, Lutherans, Buddhists, Muslims, atheists), or affiliation (street gangs, NASCAR fans, college students). Such groups are not necessarily distinct **culture**s, but groups of people who share concerns and who might perceive similarities due to common interests or characteristics (Lustig & Koester, 2010).

The way **culture** operates in families is that, as previously discussed, families maintain traditions, rituals, and routines, which are heavily influenced by the cultural space(s) that families occupy. The section X will discuss ways in which **culture** operates in family functioning, and the complexities for families that occupy more than one cultural space.

5.4.1 Cultural Erasure versus Persistence

Cultural erasure is the practice of a dominant **culture** contributing to the erasure of a non-dominant or minoritized **culture**. An example of active cultural erasure would be that of Native American children being forced to attend residential boarding schools, where they might be punished for speaking their heritage language, would wear uniforms that were stripped of makers of their their community and identity, and harshly mistreated, even to the point of starvation or being beaten (Figure 5.10). The strategy of not allowing the children to speak their communities' languages, or learn and practice their communities' traditions and rituals, was active cultural erasure. Passive cultural erasure could include the histories of communities not being included in historical textbooks, or the passing of laws that prohibit people from wearing jewelry, hair styles, clothing, or other items that are indicators of one's cultural identity.

Figure 5.10. The photographs here show "before" and "after" portraits of a student at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a residential boarding school built on the idea that education should "kill the Indian in him, and save the man."

Cultural persistence, then, is the very opposite of cultural erasure. Cultural persistence is when elements of **culture**, such as language, rituals, foodways, traditions,persist despite efforts to blot out those cultural practices and identities. An example of cultural persistence is that of language revitalization programs among Native communities, such as the Chinuk Wawa language program, supported by Lane Community College (LCC) in Eugene, Oregon. This program consists of a collaboration between Lane Community College, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Northwest Indian Language Institute of the University of Oregon (UO). Through this program that has operated for nearly a decade, provides language classes for tribal members, LCC and UO students, as well as community members on the Grand Ronde Reservation.

5.4.2 The Overlap of Culture and Religion

As previously discussed, **culture** is composed of beliefs, values, symbols, rituals, and various other elements, particularly that of religion. Religion is a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values. Many religions have narratives, symbols, traditions, and sacred histories that are intended to give meaning to life or to explain the origin of life or the universe.

If you would like to explore the topic of how **culture** and religion overlap in human lives, we recommend the TED Talk by the anthropologist Wade Davis, "The worldwide web of belief and ritual." Davis provides many examples of the deep familiarity and knowledge indigenous communities develop and pass on to the next generations. Using the example of the Elder Brothers, a group of Sierra Nevada Native Americans, Davis discusses how rituals practiced by groups are deeply intertwined with their cosmologies.

5.4.3 Licenses and Attributions for Culture

5.4.3.1 Open Content, Original

5.4.3.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

5.4.4 References

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5.5 CULTURAL IDENTITIES

There are many aspects to our identities, such as our family histories, religious affiliation, and nationality. A major component of our identities can be our **ethnicity** and cultural heritage. In this section, we will consider various aspects of ethnic identity, and how it can change over time.

5.5.1 Jean Phinney's Model of Positive Ethnic Identity

The researcher Jean S. Phinney defines **ethnic identity** as a sense of self that is derived from a sense of belonging to a group, a **culture**, and a particular setting. Aspects of ethnic identity can also include a person's knowledge of an ethnic group they identify with, and how valuable or significant it is to be a member of an ethnic group (Tajfel, 1981). Ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct that can change over time and context (Phinney, 2003). Ethnic identity can be developed and reinforced by engaging in activities associated with one's **culture** or ethnic group, such as associating with members of one's group or speaking a shared language. But, ethnic identity can also exist as an internal structure, independent of such behaviors (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Components of ethnic identity also include in-group attitudes, towards one's own ethnic group, as well towards other groups:

- **Positive ethnic identity:**a positive self-attitude derived from a sense of belonging to groups that are meaningful to a person (Phinney, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
- **Intra-group affinity:** a positive, or affirming sense of one's own ethnic identity can create a sense of pride in one's ethnic identity. Possessing intra-group affinity has been linked to reduced depressive symptoms among youth from minoritized communities (Smith & Silva, 2011), and is associated with positive
- **Inter-group affinity**: positive attitudes towards ethnic groups other than a group where an individual has ascribed membership. Inter-group affinity has been linked to reduction of inter-group conflict among youth from minoritized ethnic groups (Phinney & Ferguson, 1997).

5.5.2 John W. Berry's Model of Acculturation

Our lives are increasingly defined by technology and globalization that allow us to interact with people on the other side of the world, as well as learn about and internalize components of many **culture**s. When individuals and families are exposed to new **culture**s, they go through a process of **acculturation**, or adapting to a new **culture** (Berry, 2003). Figure 5.11 shows a model of acculturation proposed by John Berry (1980) anticipates that acculturating individuals face two issues: (1) the **dominant culture orientation**, of the extent to which acculturating individuals are involved with the receiving or host **culture**, and (2) the **heritage cultural orientation**, or the extent to which individuals are involved with their heritage, ethnic, or nondominant **culture** (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

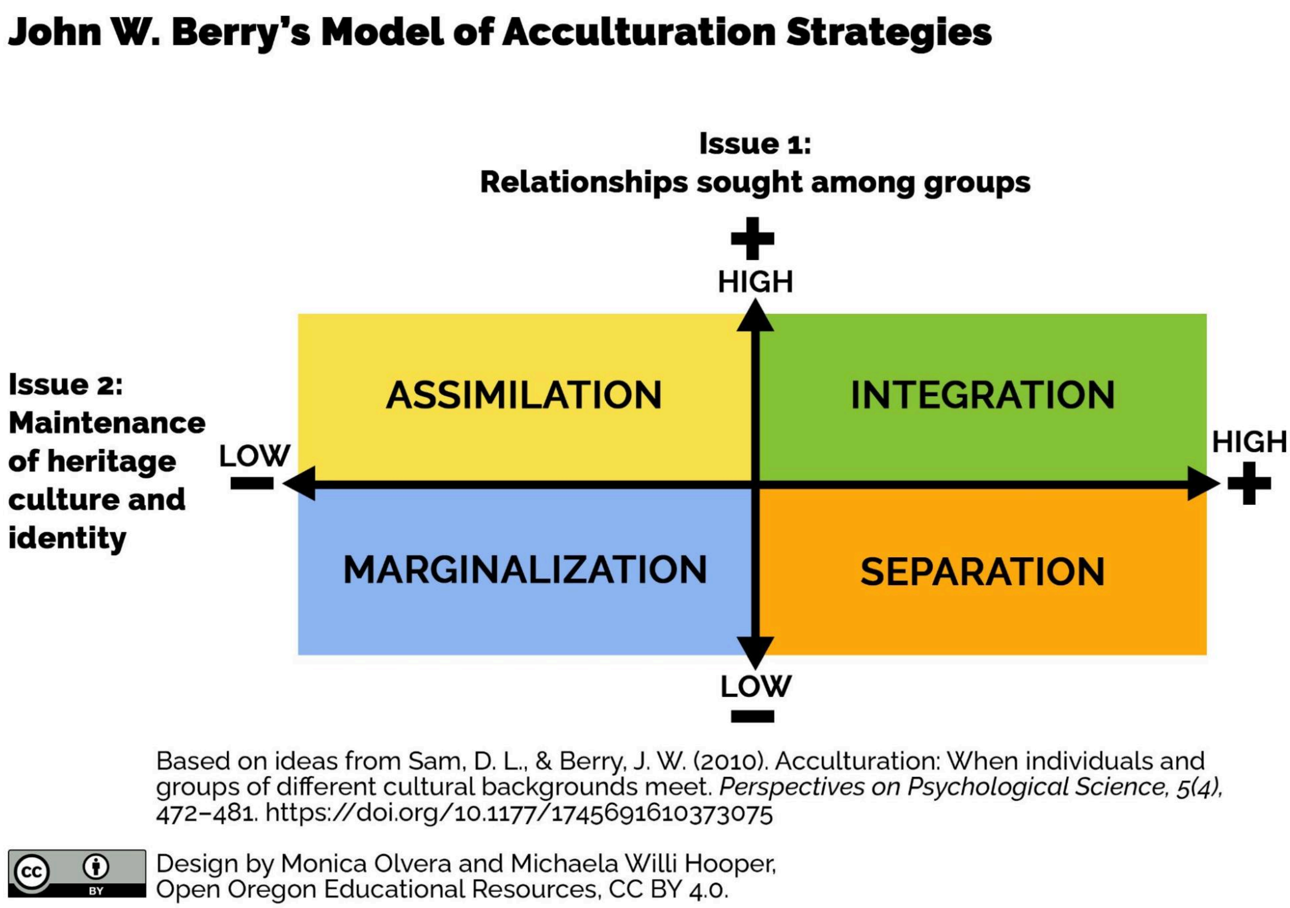

Figure 5.11. John W. Berry's Model of Acculturation Strategies. Figure 5.11 Image Description

One helpful framework to understand acculturation is a model developed by psychologist John W. Berry. His model examines four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 2003).

Assimilation strategy is utilized when an individual does not seek to maintain their cultural identity, and instead pursues close interaction with other **culture**s. The person may adopt the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society.

Integration strategy is utilized by those who wish to maintain one's original **culture**, as a member of an ethnocultural group. At the same time, they may also participate as a member of the dominant society. In this way, the person both maintains aspects of their original **culture**, while also incorporating aspects of a newer

culture into their cultural knowledge and practices. This strategy has been found to be the most adaptive, and is linked to better psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Liebkind, 2001; Sam et al., 2008).

The **separation strategy** is chosen by those who place a high value on maintaining the integrity of their original cultural identity, and avoid interaction with those of the new society. The **marginalization strategy** consists of placing a low value on cultural maintenance, and also avoiding interactions with those of the new society, sometimes due to experiences of exclusion or **discrimination**. This strategy has been found to be the least adaptive.

A person may utilize different strategies, depending on context and circumstances, as the strategies are not static. The attitudes of the larger society towards the immigrants, and/or the types of settlement policies the larger society prefers towards acculturating groups can influence which strategy gets adopted. Generally, integration is the preferred strategy for optimal outcomes, whereas marginalization is the least preferred strategy (Berry, 2003).

Of all the strategies described, integration, or biculturalism, has the strongest association with socio-cultural and psychological adaptation (Nguyen &, Benet-Martınez, 2013). Immigrants who experience higher perceived instances of **discrimination** may prefer separation, whereas those who experience less perceived instances of **discrimination** might prefer assimilation. Interestingly, research suggests that integration is more common in settler societies (i.e., a society that encourages and welcomes immigration, such as Canada and Australia), than in non-settler societies (i.e., where immigration is regarded a necessity aimed at assisting less-privileged people, such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) (Berry et al. 2006).

5.5.3 Belonging

While there are many definitions and conceptualizations of belonging, one definition is when a person experiences a subjective feeling that they are an integral part of their surrounding systems, including one's friends, family, school work environments, communities, cultural groups, and physical places (Hagerty et al., 1992). According to Allen et al. (2021), the need for belonging, "to connect deeply with other people and secure places, to align with one's cultural and subcultural identities, and to feel like one is a part of the systems around them or connect deeply with other people," is a very basic human need (p. 2). Connection with others, physical safety, and wellbeing are inextricably linked, and are crucial for survival (Boyd & Richardson, 2009). Belonging is created "because of and in connection with the systems in which we reside" (Kern et al., 2020, p. 709). A greater sense of belonging is associated with positive psychosocial outcomes.

The benefits and potential protective factors derived from a sense of belonging are especially potent for individuals who identify with marginalized and/or minoritized groups, including people who identify as sexually or gender diverse, people with disabilities, or those who experience mental health issues (Gardner et al., 2019; Harrist & Bradley, 2002; Rainey et al., 2018; Spencer et al., 2016; Steger & Kashdan, 2009). Among college students from minoritized communities, social belonging interventions are associated with positive impacts on academic and health outcomes (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Other positive effects include having a healthy sense of belonging, including more positive social relationships, academic achievement, occupational success, and better physical and mental health (e.g., Allen et al., 2018; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Hagerty et al., 1992).

In contrast to the benefits of feeling a sense of belonging, a lack of belonging has been linked to an increased risk for mental and physical health problems (Cacioppo et al., 2015). The health risks associated with social isolation can be the equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and are twice as harmful as obesity (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). Social isolation across the lifespan is associated with poor sleep quality, depression, cardiovascular difficulties, rapid cognitive decline, reduced immunity increased risk for mental illness, lowered immune functioning, antisocial behavior, physical illness, and early mortality (e.g., Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2003; Cacioppo et al., 2011; Choenarom et al., 2005; Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Hawkley & Capitanio, 2015; Holt-Lunstad, 2018; Leary, 1990; Slavich, O'Donovan et al., 2010).

Belonging can be fostered at the individual and social level. Figure 5.12 provides a framework for understanding and fostering belonging. A sense of belonging can be impacted by one's competencies, opportunities, perceptions, and motivations, as well as social, cultural, and temporal contexts and experiences (Allen et al., 2021).

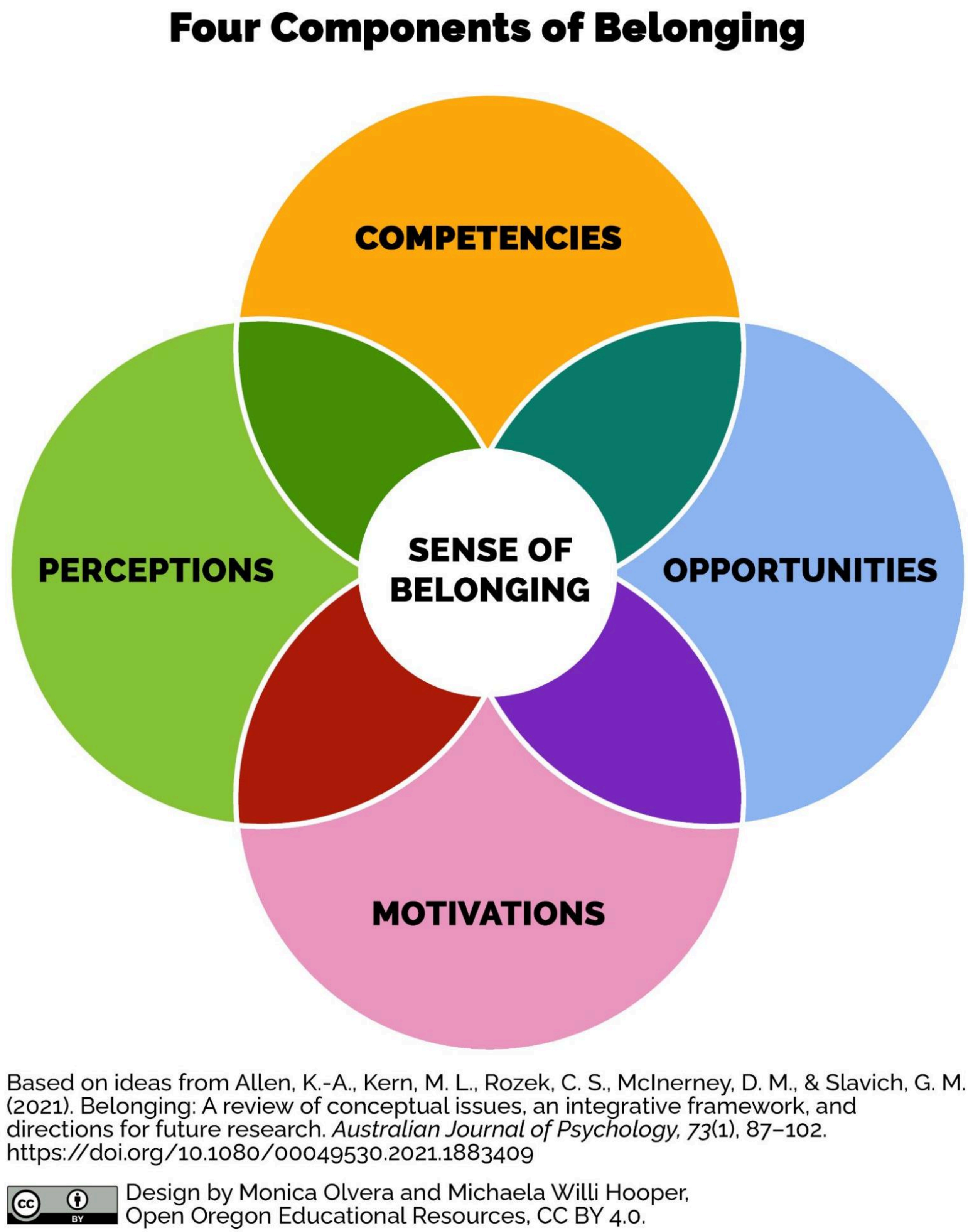

Figure 5.12. An integrative framework for understanding, assessing, and fostering belonging. (Adapted from Allen, Kern, Rozek, McInerney, & Slavich, 2021)

Image description

Competencies refers to having a set of skills and abilities that are needed to connect and relate to others, develop a sense of identity, ensure one's behavior aligns with social norms and cultural values. Competencies can be fostered by learning multiple cultural repertoires for different contexts, acquiring verbal and nonverbal communication skills, practicing active listening, and possessing emotion and behavioral regulation.

Opportunities to belong come from the availability of groups, people, places, times, and spaces to connect with others in ways that allow belonging to occur. Individuals from isolated or rural areas, first and second-generation immigrants, and refugees may experience circumstances that limit opportunities to foster belonging. The lack of Opportunities for belonging was sharply felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, when shelter-in-place orders and social distancing measures limited human interactions. But, despite opportunities to connect in-person, technologies such as gaming and social media quickly became opportunities for connection, especially for youth, those who are shy, or people who experience social anxiety (Allen et al., 2014; Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2002; Davis, 2012; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Seabrook et al., 2016; Seidman, 2013).

Motivations to belong consist of the need or desire to connect with others, or the real, fundamental need to feel accepted, belong, and seek social interactions and connections (Leary & Kelly, 2009). Individuals can experience varying levels of motivations, as they can vary by personality type, mental health, and one's previous experiences that may include repeated rejection.

A person's perceptions of belonging are related to one's subjective feelings and cognitions regarding their experiences, such as a sense of satisfaction. Perceptions about one's experiences are informed by past experiences , such as repeated rejection and or feeling left-out. A person's negative perceptions of self or others and stereotypes can affect the desire to connect with others.

5.5.4 Overlapping Cultures and/or Religions Within a Family

Religiosity, or the attachment to and practice of religious practices, can be beneficial for families. For example, for immigrant and refugee families in the US, religiosity can be a protective factor against the potentially deleterious effects of acculturation. Religiosity and spirituality, often integrated with one's ethnic identity, rituals, and traditions, appear to play a significant role as a protective factor in the immigrant paradox among Latino/a and Somali youth (Areba, 2015; Ruiz & Steffen, 2011). Also, participation in a religious community was a key means of connecting children of Vietnam refugees with their ethnic heritage and building cultural capital (Tingvold et al., 2012).

What happens when there are overlapping, or even conflicting religions or **culture**s within a family? People who grew up in families where parents had different religions, and who had dissimilar participation in their respective religious communities,overall report less overall religiosity (McPhail, 2019). Petts and Knoester (2007) found that couples that have different religions may experience more marital conflict, and that children whose parents have different religions are more likely to engage in marijuana use and underage drinking than children with religiously homogamous parents. But, these associations occur only in families where one parent is not religious (does not affiliate with a religion), or where both parents identify with different religions).

5.5.5 Assimilation versus acculturation

As previously discussed, assimilation is a strategy utilized when an individual does not seek to maintain their cultural identity, and instead pursues close interaction with other **culture**s, including adopting the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society. With respect to policies applied to immigrant communities in the US, however, assimilation takes on a different meaning. Alba and Nee (2009) describe assimilation as a multidimensional process of boundary brokering and reduction, in which ethnic distinctions, and the social and cultural differences and identities associated with them, are blurred or dissolved.

At the group level, "assimilation may involve the absorption of one or more minority groups into the mainstream," whereas at the individual level, "assimilation denotes the cumulative changes that make individuals of one ethnic group more acculturated, integrated, and identified with the members of another (Rumbaut, 2015, p. 2). This approach has been used to justify selective, state-imposed policies and practices with the goal of eradicating minoritized **culture**s and the "benevolent" conquest of other peoples. One striking example is the effort to "Americanize," Christianize, and "civilize" Native-American children by forcibly removing them from their families and sending them to residential schools, such as the Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon. Around 270 children died while in custody at the Chemawa Indian School between 1880-1945 (Pember, 2021).

Another startling example is the 1898 "Benevolent Assimilation" policy of the United States to pursue imperial interests in the Philippines, under the guise of idealized purpose and benevolence, meant to colonize and pacify a people who were seeking independence from imperialism and colonization (Miller, 1982). It should be noted that both examples were supported by the Dawes Act of 1887. As described by Rumbaut (2015), "the ideal of assimilation, more often tied to the metaphor of the 'melting pot,' has sought to dramatize, legitimize and celebrate the consensual integration of immigrants and their descendants into a common national life—while ignoring the realities, inequalities, and potentialities of conflictual intergroup relations marked by enduring segregation, **discrimination**, marginalization and exclusion" (p. 2; emphasis added).

Race, **ethnicity**, and socio-economic status are critical determinants of the measure of assimilation, in that they can delimit forms of social contact and augment social contrasts and conflict. Assimilation and upward social mobility can be achieved through intermarriage, and being identified as belonging to a race, **ethnicity**, and **socioeconomic status** that allow individuals and groups to have intimate contact with the dominant social group, so as to acquire "the language and social ritual of the native community…[and] participate, without encountering prejudice, in the common life, economic and political" (Park, 1930, p. 281). If a person or group of people are regarded as perpetual foreigners, however, that group can be subject to exclusionary policies and systematic state persecution, such as the aforementioned examples. “A fraught concept like ‘assimilation,’ weighted by the normative baggage of its past and by its insistent if inclusive expectation of progress and homogenized national cohesion, seems ill-suited to grasp these complex dynamics and to focus critical attention on enduring structural inequalities and persistent ethnic and pan-ethnic formations in a ‘permanently unfinished’ society” (Rumbaut, 2015, p. 12). Perceptions of strong assimilationist pressures in schools create tensions and can lead to separation (Niens et al., 2013). In environments that tend towards assimilation, cultural maintenance in ethnic minorities can lead to lower levels of life satisfaction (Kus-Harbord & Ward, 2015). In contrast, policies and practices that allow individuals, families, and groups to create communities of belonging and practice their heritage **culture**s, can promote **equity**.

5.5.6 Creating Communities of Belonging

Whether a person is a college student who moved to a new area to attend college in a community they are unfamiliar with, or a person who immigrated to a host country and has yet to get to know the new receiving community, people tend to seek or create community by utilizing anchoring practices. Like an anchor of a boat, meant to keep a boat in a specific place, and not be moved by tides, currents, or winds, **anchoring practices** are the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness.

When a person, a family, or a group of people move to a new community, there is a human need to create a sense of belonging. Immigrant and refugee families recently arriving to a receiving community can experience challenges like isolation and loneliness (Campbell, 2008; Narchal, 2012). Families can make use of existing social networks within a community to tap into community groups, or they may have to create entirely new spaces. For example, Somali refugee families in Boston utilized existing religious organizations, family support, and community organizations to tap into existing communities, thus benefiting from peer and family support, religious faith, and social support networks to make new lives for themselves (Betancourt et al., 2014). Connections with family members help immigrants and refugees retain a sense of identity within their **culture** and family (Lim, 2009). People who move to a new community may have access anchoring practices that have already be established through family members or friends who are already settled in a community, religious organizations (e.g., mosques or churches), schools, cultural or community centers, and non-profit organizations aimed at helping immigrant and refugee families (e.g., Centre of African Immigration and Refugees (CAIRO)).

Other anchoring practices could include forming spaces of community when those spaces do not exist, or if there are gaps. For example, in Corvallis, Oregon, a small group of Mexican immigrant families got together to form a group folkloric Mexican dance, so that the children’s positive cultural identity could be supported, and parents could mutually support each other (Figure 5.13).

The ways immigrant and refugee individuals, families, and communities seek, create, and maintain support vary widely. They may draw on family and community resilience to find ways to continue to survive and, in many cases, thrive.

Figure 5.13. Three dancers perform the folkloric Mexican dance "Los Machetes de Jalisco."

5.5.7 Community, Culture, and Belonging as Resistance

In this section, we highlight examples of family and community practices that reinforce cultural identities, despite direct or indirect pressure to discontinue the practices as a part of the assimilation process.

Individuals, families, and communities strive to promote and maintain positive cultural identity, often through activities and practices associated with creating a sense of belonging and community. In some ways, the practices of maintaining a sense of community and shared cultural identity can resist assimilation ideologies and/or policies that promote a sense of societal/cultural uniformity. Assimilationist policies and/or ideologies can fail to address, or even worsen, complex societal and structural inequalities that persist among pan-ethnic groups, in a society as diverse as the United States (Rumbaut, 2015).

An extended example of community building and cultural maintenance as resistance to cultural erasure is highlighted in the section about the revival of native Hawai'ian language and **culture**. Among Black Caribbean immigrants, gatherings of family and friends called "liming" sessions reinforce family and cultural identities through storytelling (Brooks, 2013).

Throughout U.S. history, among the many horrific ways Native Americans were treated, one strategy to de-ligitimize their **culture**s is paper genocide, or state and federal recognition titles used to determine Native Americans' significance, presence, and legacy in U.S. history and society, or to refute their identity. There are strict criteria for a tribe to be federally recognized, and it can be difficult for some Native communities to "obtain enough tangible historic resources to prove their ancestry or community" (Nguyễn & Tribal Nation, E. P., 2020, p. 5). An example of paper genocide, or use of law and policy to remove Native American's presence in US history and society, is the 1887 Dawes Act. Because of this law, Native communities experienced cultural erasure through children being removed from their communities and sent to residential or boarding schools, where they were punished for speaking languages other than English, and stripped of their cultural heritage. In 1975, the U.S. government passed the Indian Self-Determination Act, providing Native communities the option to create their own schools and curriculum, which has been instrumental in language and cultural revival programs, and shaping their own future (Manuelito, 2005).

The Eastern Pequot Tribal National Archeology Field School in Pennsylvania is a clear example of a community outright resisting cultural erasure while building community in a culturally affirming way. As a part of this revival effort, and to combat cultural erasure, the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation Archaeology Field School provides tangible items from the past which grounds the Tribal members to their reservation that has been established for hundreds of years. Items such as arrowheads, musket bullets, and scissors show that the Eastern Pequots' ancestors lived with their European colonizers from the 17th to the 19th centuries a s their Native presence was enough to resist colonization. Over 99,000 artifacts found throughout the 15 Field School seasons dismantle the common misconception of how Native Americans lived during the beginning of the United States' history and redefines modern beliefs about how Natives survived European colonization. The Field School transforms the brief binary description of Native history into a more complicated and dynamic story that elaborates on Native struggle, survival and resistance (Nguyễn & Tribal Nation, E. P. 2020).

5.5.8 Licenses and Attributions for Cultural Identities

5.5.8.1 Open Content, Original

5.5.8.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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Image Description for Figure 5.11:

John W. Berry's Model of Acculturation Strategies

A rectangle is divided into four quadrants. The axes have arrows pointing both directions. A plus sign and the word high are on one end of the axes, while a minus sign and the word low are on the other end. The Y axis is labeled Issue 1: relationships sought among groups. The X axis is labeled Issue 2: maintenance of heritage and cultural identity.

The low seeking of relationships and low maintenance of heritage and cultural identity quadrant is labeled marginalization.

The high seeking of relationships and low maintenance of heritage and cultural identity quadrant is labeled assimilation.

The high maintenance of heritage and cultural identity and low seeking of relationships quadrant is labeled separation.

The high maintenance of heritage and cultural identity and high seeking of relationships quadrant is labeled integration.

Based on ideas from Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. W. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(4), 472–481. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075

[Return to Figure 5.11]

5.6 REVIVAL OF THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE

Before the arrival of Captain Cook in Hawai'i in 1778, Hawaiians had lived and thrived for centuries in the islands, creating a distinct and rich **culture**, including a plentiful oral tradition. The Hawaiian language, or ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi embodied a cultural history that linked Hawaiians to their history, cosmology, and worldview. *Kāhuna* (priests) could recite from memory the origin chant, or *Kumulipo*, which contains over 2,000 lines of text (Beckwith, 1972; Mitchell, 1992) Countless *moʻolelo* (stories), *kaʻao* (epic legends), *mele* (songs) and *pule* (prayers) were vehicles for conveying values, teachings, and histories to the people.

In the nineteenth century, the arrival of American missionaries prompted profound changes on ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi. Missionaries built schools with the intention of using education to convert Hawaiians to christianity. Hawaiians learned Latin and French, in addition to English with per capita literacy rates at 91 percent in the late 1800s (Nogelmeier, 2003).

One primary tool the missionaries utilized in their efforts was the printing press. With this technology, books and newspapers written in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, printed, and circulated in the community. One of the first printed books was the Bible. Despite the increased circulation of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi in printed text, however, ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi was considered a lower-status language than English, and instruction in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi was not prioritized.

In the late 1800s, political unrest, Foreign influence in the islands by American investors and businessmen, as well as the involvement of the U.S. military, culminated in the illegal overthrow of Queen Liliʻuokalani in 1893. This was followed by the establishment of a provisional government, which supported the American annexation of Hawai'i. The Republic of Hawai'i was established, made up of foreign businessmen and missionary descendents, who viewed ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi as a political threat. In June 1896, Act 57 was passed, which declared that only English could be used as the language of instruction in schools. Thus, children would no longer receive instruction in schools in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi. Children were shamed and punished for speaking Hawaiian at school, and the language was stigmatized. This stigma expanded to other areas of Hawaiian society (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007).

During the years of 1898-1959, ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi was mostly limited to the entertainment sector, while English permeated all other aspects of people's daily lives, in addition to dealings in business, schools, and government. Thus, the only remaining group of people who spoke ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi as their native language was a group of küpuna (elders) in their 70s in a small, isolated community on the island of Ni'ihau (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007). What is more, in 1922, ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi was being taught as a foreign language at the University of Hawai'i.. By the late 1970s, fewer than 50 children were reported to speak Hawaiian. The felt sense of fear was that once the küpuna were gone, the language would also disappear (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007). A once thriving language was at a precarious point.

Elders in some communities were concerned at the dwindling use of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi., and began strident efforts to revitalize its usage. In 1977, Ka Leo O Hawaiÿi, a Hawaiian language radio show 1977 on KCCN, aired its first broadcast in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi. Then, in 1977, the non-profit organization ʻAhahui ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, established standardized Hawaiian orthography. Progress continued as ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi was recognized as a state language in 1978, and the 1896 law banning ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi-**medium** instruction in schools was lifted.

A small group of parents and educators wanted their children to learn ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, but it had not been taught in schools for many decades, and the law that banned the language as a **medium** of instruction had only recently been lifted.The parents wanted their children to not only speak Hawaiian at home, but also wanted their children to be educated through instruction delivered in the Hawaiian language. The parents know that, if ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi were to flourish again, it needed to be spoken in various settings (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007). Thus, in 1984, the ʻAha Pünana Leo Hawaiian language immersion preschool was launched.

The establishment of the family-based, language immersion preschool program provided multiple challenges for the teachers and parents for the first years it operated. There were many questions, such as where would the curriculum and books come from? Which school principles would be willing to allow a HAwaiian language immersion program in their school? Who had a teaching certificate and could speak Hawaiian? How would the program be funded?

The solutions to these questions came from the dedication from the first group of parents and educators, who created a program patterned after the successful efforts of the language and cultural revitalization of the Mäori of Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the early 1980s (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007). School staff would translate materials and develop curriculum on a year basis, essentially laying the path for the children as the first cohort of students made their way through the program (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007). The preschool program expanded into a preschool through kindergarten, and then added first grade, then second grade, and successively added a year to their repertoire of curriculum. Finally, the program had been expanded to cover pre-school, all the way to 12th grade for graduating high school seniors. By 1992, the program was K-12. In 1999, a cohort of students graduated that, for the first time in over 100 years, had been educated entirely in Hawaiian from kindergarten to grade 12. The program was not without its critics. Some doubted the validity and rigor of the academics. Others expected the program to fizzle out. Teachers were pressured to adopt the bilingual education model, used with immigrant emergent bilingual children, which focuses on transitioning the student to instruction in English by second or third grade. But, the parents and teachers remained steadfastly dedicated to the immersion model (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007). One parent shared, "As we are frequently met with unsupportive policies, institutional resistance, and supporters of the status quo, we continue to relay our aloha for the language, sharing the potential of and need for Hawaiian language immersion education" (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007, p. 202).

Some critics considered Hawaiian to be a "dead language," and expressed concern for the children's future, believing the children would not be able to attend college because they did not know English. The opposite was true, however, as the immersion program has a 100% high school graduation rate, and 80% of the graduates pursue higher education at the university level (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007).

For the educators, parents, and now grandparents of the children who attend ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi programs, the revitalization of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi is deeply important. It is the reconnection to their rich cultural heritage, the passing on of cultural wisdom from one generation to another, as well as a source of traditional knowledge. One parent marveled, "It was amazing to witness the keiki [children] fluently speaking, singing, praying, learning, playing, creating, fighting, and, I would surmise, dreaming, all in Hawaiian" (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007, p. 200).

Children who learned in the language immersion program developed proficiency in multiple languages, formed strong cultural and self-identity, and grounded the children's cultural Hawaiian identity (Kawaiʻaeʻa et al., 2007).

Parents, grandparents, and educators, and involved in the language immersion program, as well as the graduates themselves, believe that their legacy is the Hawaiian language that lives on and continues to flourish in their children and grandchildren. Thus, the language, and rich traditions, are on the pathway to thrive once again. What is more, the model employed in the development of the language immersion program has provided a model for other language revitalization efforts. In 2008, the ʻAha Pünana Leo Hawaiian language immersion preschool celebrated its 25th anniversary.

5.6.1 Licenses and Attributions for Revival of the Hawaiian Language

5.6.1.1 Open Content, Original

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5.7 LOOKING AHEAD

In this chapter we have looked at how routines and rituals contribute to a sense of identity, whether individual, family, or cultural identity. We have also discussed ways in which families adapt to cultural transitions. In this section, we will examine an adaptive strategy that may be especially beneficial for youth who experience changes in their cultural settings.

Biculturalism, sometimes also referred to as multiculturalism, can be conceptualized as someone who has been exposed to and internalized elements from two or more **culture**s (Nguyen & Benet- Martínez, 2007). This can include people who are immigrants or descendents of immigrants, being a member of a minoritized community, having parents from two different **culture**s, having mixed ethnic or racial backgrounds, having lived in more than one country, growing up with one **culture** in addition to the dominant mainstream **culture**, and those in multicultural relationships. Bicultural identity refers to an individual who has been socialized in more than one **culture**, and who expresses a sense of belongingness with these **culture**s (Cheng et al., 2021). Having a bicultural identity does not require, however, that a person has even degrees of identification with all internalized **culture**s, such that a person could experience significantly more identification with one **culture**, and this identification can fluctuate.

Adolescents and young adults who combine aspects of both their family of origin **culture** and the new **culture** and speak both languages tend to adjust better than those who either stay steeped in their root **culture** only or assimilate completely to their new **culture** (Kasinitz et al., 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Biculturalism can promote feelings of pride, uniqueness, and a heightened awareness of community and history. Children in families who promote learning in two languages benefit in academic achievements, cognitive gains, self-esteem, and family cohesion (Espinosa, 2008; Han, 2012). Although it can be a stressful obligation, children of immigrants often express pride in their bi-lingual abilities and in being able to translate for their parents (Kasinitz et al., 2008). In addition, speaking one's native language allows children in immigrant and refugee families to connect with extended family members and ties them to their ethnic heritage (Costigan & Koryzma, 2011; Nesteruk & Marks, 2009). Biculturalism has the strongest association with socio-cultural and psychological adaptation (Nguyen & Benet-Martınez, 2013).

Biculturalism can be seen as the availability of double resources and competencies that come from one's own ethnic/cultural group, and also those from the new and larger society. These resources and competencies can double a person's capacity to cope with cultural transitions (Sam & Berry, 2010). Having social support networks in more than one **culture** can buffer the psych-socio-cultural challenges that might result from acculturation experiences, such as anxiety, loneliness, intercultural miscommunication, and inter-personal conflict (Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018). Those with bicultural identities can show higher levels of integrative complexity, professional success, and creativity, as well as have lower levels of stereotype use, discriminatory choices, and symbolic racism (Leung et al., 2008; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009; Maddux et al., 2013; Tadmor, Galinsky, Maddux, 2012; Tadmor, Hong, et al., 2012). Given the positive outcomes associated with biculturalism, it is our hope that people can be encouraged to be involved with the **culture**s they have internalized, and that individuals' and family's cultural identities can be celebrated.

5.7.1 Want to Learn More?

- For more in-depth discussion about the complexities and drawbacks of pan-ethnic labels, please refer to this resource.
- To further explore the different race, **ethnicity** and origin categories used in the U.S. census, we recommend visiting the interactive resource by the Pew Research Center, "What Census Calls Us."
- For further information aboutquinceañeras, we recommend visiting the following resources:
    - History and Traditions of quinceañeras from Mestizo.
    - quinceañeras Are More Than a Birthday Party | ¡FIESTA! quinceañera Ep. 1 from Indie Lens Storycast.
    - Sick with Leukemia, her grandfather wouldn't make her quinceañera, so she brought the event to him.
- For additional information on the topic of the revitalization, of *ʻōlelo* Hawaiʻi and the ripple effects of the movement, please explore the following resources:
    - *He pūko ʻa kani ʻāina*: Creating Pathways for Indigenous Language Vitality | Candace Galla – an 11-minute TED Talk by Candace Galla about how the movement to revitalize *ʻōlelo* Hawaiʻi inspired many other Indigenous language communities around the world.
    - The Hawaiian Language | Insights on PBS Hawai'i – discussion of the Hawaiian language with scholars and musicians who are fluent in the language (56 minutes duration).
    - *Ho ʻokipa*: Hawaiian Language Movement Visitation Program – information about a program in Hilo, Hawai ʻi that hosts hundreds of language advocates annually at various events and gatherings (5 minutes duration).

- Queen Liliʻuokalani – The First and Last Queen of Hawaiʻi | Unladylike2020 | American Masters | PBS – information about Queen Liliʻuokalani, the first sovereign queen, and the last monarch of Hawaiʻi, who assumed the throne in the midst of a government takeover by American business owners supported by the U.S. military (12 minutes duration).
- The Hawaiian Language Nearly Died. A Radio Show Sparked Its Revival – article and associated podcast episode about the radio show that was integral in efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language (35 minutes duration).

5.7.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

5.7.2.1 Open Content, Original

5.7.2.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

5.7.3 References

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5.8 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

5.8.1 Reflective Questions

1. Think about a ritual or tradition that you have practiced with your family or loved one. Describe the ritual or tradition. What is the ritual? Who participates and what are their **roles**? What is the context of the ritual or tradition, such as a religious holiday or annual event? When or how did the ritual or tradition become part of the family's practices, if known? How do you feel during the ritual or tradition?
2. This chapter discusses common rites of passage, and gives some examples of four life stages that are commonly marked by rites of passage: birth/family formation, coming-of-age, union formation/marriage, and dying/bereavement. Identify and describe a rite of passage in your own life, or that of a family member or friend. The example you come up with does not have to be limited to birth/family formation, coming-of-age, union formation/marriage, and dying/bereavement.
3. Anchoring practices are the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness. What are things you have done to create a sense of belonging, community, or rootedness?
4. Routines can be tricky to establish and maintain while attending college. What are some routines or habits you have tried to start or maintain? What has been helpful in keeping a routine going? What are some things that get in the way of maintaining a routine or habit?
5. The chapter has some examples of ways that people have created communities of belonging and practice their heritage **culture**s. What are some examples in your community, such as your college campus, city, or state, of groups that have found creative ways to continue practicing their heritage **culture**?
6. What happens when there are overlapping, or even conflicting religions or **culture**s within a family? What are some ways in which families can negotiate overlapping or conflicting religions or **culture**s within a family? Can you name any content creators on social media who talk about their experiences growing up in a home where the parents had different religious or cultural backgrounds?

5.8.2 Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **acculturation**: the process of adapting to a new **culture**.
- **anchoring practices**: the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness.
- **assimilation strategy**: an acculturation strategy consisting of pursuing and adopting the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society or dominant **culture**.
- **biculturalism**: when a person has been exposed to and has internalized elements from two or more **culture**s
- **Culture**: the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group, such as beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, logics, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society
- **cultural erasure**: the practice of a dominant or hegemonic **culture** actively or passively contributing to the erasure, or disappearing, of a non-dominant or minoritized **culture**.
- **dominant cultural orientation**: the extent to which acculturating individuals are involved with the receiving or host **culture**.
- **ethnic group**: a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; with relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and with some sense of identity of belonging to the subgroup.
- **ethnic identity**: a sense of self that is derived from a sense of belonging to a group, a **culture**, and a particular setting.
- **ethnicity**: the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another.
- **family ritual**: behaviors with symbolic meanings that can be clearly described and serve to organize and affirm central family ideas.
- **family routine**: the predictable, repeated consistent patterns that characterize everyday home life.
- **heritage cultural orientation**: the extent to which individuals are involved with their

heritage, ethnic, or nondominant **culture**.

- **integration strategy**: an acculturation strategy utilized by those who wish to maintain one's original **culture**, as a member of an ethnocultural group, while also participating as an integral member of the larger social network.
- **marginalization strategy**: an acculturation strategy where a person seeks little. relationships with aspects of the host **culture**, nor maintains their heritage **culture** and identity.
- **pan-ethnicity**: the grouping together of multiple ethnicities and nationalities under a single label.
- **rite of passage**: a ritual or celebration that marks the passage when a person leaves one status, role, conditions, or group to enter another.
- **Separation strategy**: an acculturation strategy where a person places a high value on maintaining the integrity of their original cultural identity, and avoids interaction with those of the new society.

5.8.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

5.8.3.1 Open Content, Original

5.9 CHAPTER 5 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 6: REPRESENTATION AND BELONGING IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

6.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the formal processes for representation of all U.S. families.
2. Analyze why some families are represented less frequently in **social process**es such as voting, being elected, and participating in the census.
3. Discuss barriers to participation in **social process**es.
4. Name the U.S. demographic groups that are most and least represented. .
5. Explain the connection between social identities and representation.
6. Describe the multidirectional relationship between social structures and the ways that individuals are represented.
7. Analyze representation and belonging from an **equity** perspective, with a focus on Black feminist critiques and queer politics.
8. Apply theoretical concepts related to representation and belonging to one's own observations and experiences.

6.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

6.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

6.2 REPRESENTATION AND BELONGING

Social institutions serve a critical function for society and contain a structure of rules and **roles**. Those **roles** almost always include some form of **representation**: a way in which decision-making is streamlined and the participants are somehow "seen" and acknowledged even if they do not directly participate in leadership. Representation means that families know that they belong, that they are important, that their needs are known, and that the institution is functional. If the representation does not serve these purposes, it is unlikely that outcomes will be equitable for families.

In this chapter, we will focus on the institutions of local and national governments. As you read, consider applying these same concepts to other institutions that are important to you, your friends, or your family–including K-12 schools, the college and university systems, health care and health insurance, businesses and corporations, prisons and courts, media, and others.

We will study a couple of the formal ways that families can expect to be represented in the United States and how that representation plays out when we look at **equity**. This is important because governing bodies make decisions that affect all families; the definitions, laws, and regulations made by governments influence employers, business practices, schools, and other public facilities such as libraries and parks.

6.2.1 **Social Identity**, Institutions, and **Equity**

Your social identities affect your experience with representation. In other words, it is likely that you, the reader, see representation through the lens of how well you have typically been represented in this country's institutions. Any individual's social identities are multifaceted (refer to the **Social Identity** Wheel in Chapter 1 and each family member adds additional complexities. This is one of the more beautiful and challenging aspects of family life. It is aspirational to think that we live in a country where every family has equitable access to opportunity and representation. An aspect of this belief is that our representatives "see," "listen to," and understand the needs of families that they do not know personally.

For example, this author is a member of the LGBTQ+ community, is White, and is a cisgender female (Figure 6.1). In many organizations, I observe that the majority of the leadership is White. I see many women decision-makers, although the percentage decreases as the level of power increases. And I see relatively few members of the LGBTQ+ community in positions of leadership. Since this part of the population is small (about 10 percent or less), I do not expect a majority of leaders in any organization to be members of this group.

What I hope for is that, regardless of demographic, these leaders still work to understand me and my family. This is especially true of any aspect of my identity that has been marginalized; in my case, that is being a woman and being part of the LGBTQ+ community. I hope that they listen to my stories. I hope that they "see" me. I hope that they work to educate themselves about families like mine, so that even if I don't see people like myself making the decisions that affect my family, I can trust that they still represent me.

Figure 6.1. Social identities are complex, and every family member adds additional complexities to identity.

When I think about representation from this perspective, I am not only considering the federal government. I am thinking about employers, city councils, my health care insurance and health care providers, the school board, and the local court system. All of these institutions affect families based on their identities and formations. It is important to note that all families are affected by all institutions even if they are not "included" by the institution. In fact, those left out may be most affected. In my case, I was "left out" of the **social process** of legal marriage, which was historically controlled by state governments and now by federal law.

For example, health care and retirement benefits are typically tied to employers, whether they are public organizations, for-profit corporations, or not-for-profit entities. Those employers will determine which members of my family qualify for benefits and may be listed as beneficiaries of pension or life insurance policies. The school board is making decisions about forms, processes, rights, and responsibilities affecting my children. The local courts and judges interpret laws and make decisions about fostering and adoption, divorce, and custody agreements. In all of these cases, I want to know that the people in the decision-making **roles** have some understanding of who my family is and who I am, whether or not they share the same social identities. They are representing me, not just as an individual, but as a member of the community that designated them with this power.

Our social identities (including how others define us) affect what kind of representation we have experienced. At the same time, representation continues to contribute to the **social construction** of identity: color, **ethnicity**, gender, sex, **socioeconomic status**, ability, age, and so on. Understanding this relationship can help us increase **equity** in two ways:

- Reducing the effects of racialization and other forms of stereotyping that contribute to the marginalization of families, and
- Acknowledging the ways that families who are part of the dominant **culture** benefit from the stereotyping and bias of marginalized groups.

When we talk about families, we are moving far beyond the **social construction** of the typical family and the ways that government and other institutions define "family" for taxes, health care, and other legal rights and responsibilities. We are including all the ways that people define their own families. It is our aspirational goal to inspire readers to understand injustice more deeply via the ways that we are represented in institutions and to advocate and contribute to changes toward greater **equity** for families in the United States.

Each one of you who reads this has your own social identities that overlap with the identities within your family. As you read this chapter, consider what representation means to you and how you would like to be represented, included, or not included within the various institutions in which you participate.

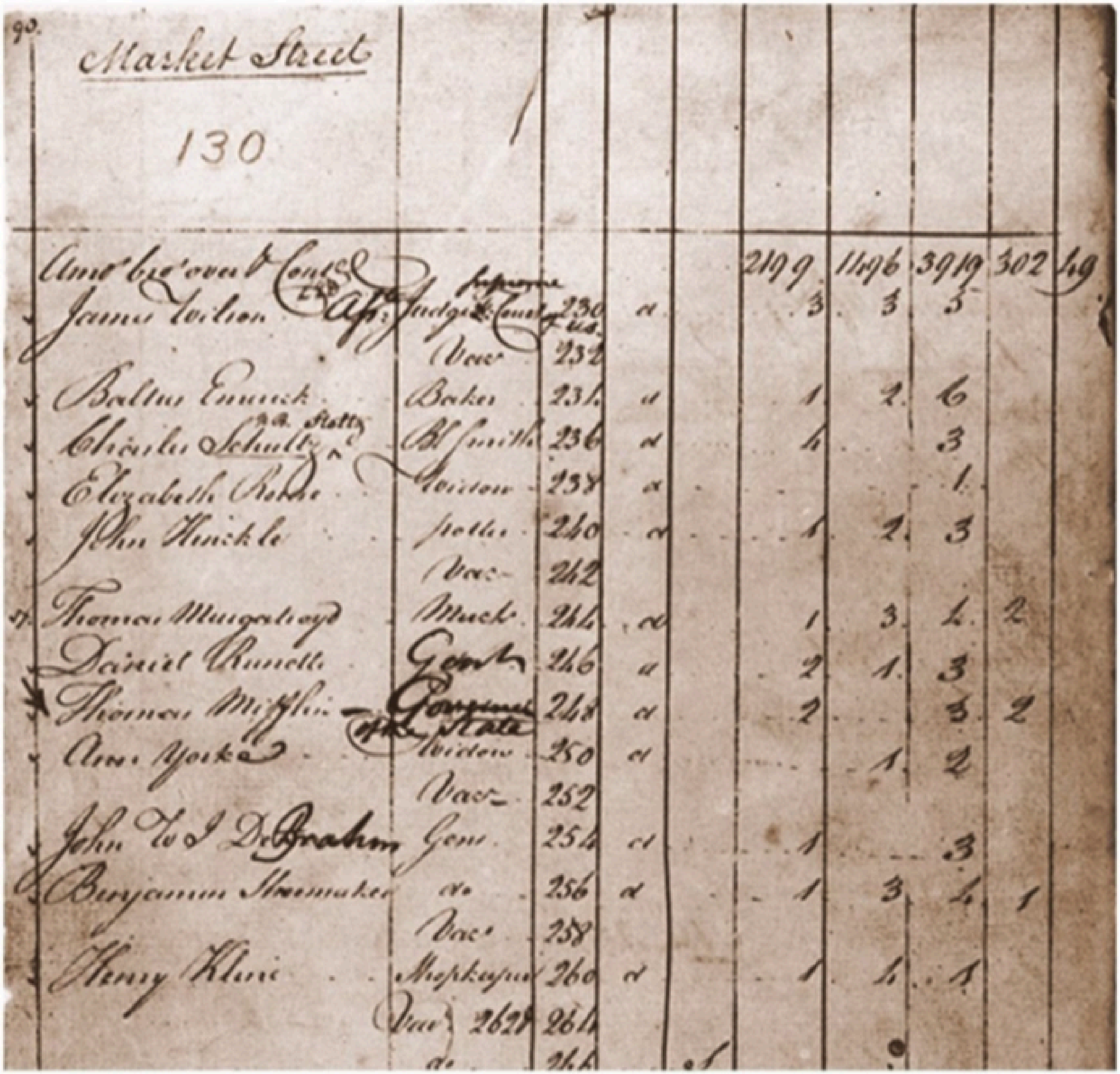
6.2.2 The Significance of the U.S. Census

Next, we will look at the **U.S. census,** a survey that attempts to count all the people—not all citizens, but all people—living in the United States. This survey directly impacts the number of seats that a state has assigned in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as how federal funds are distributed. Then we will look more closely at voting and the resulting elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels. Those officials are directly responsible for the laws and justice systems that govern us. Finally, we will look at an aspect of representation outside of the formal processes: activism and social movements.

6.2.2.1 The Evolution of the U.S. Census

The **U.S. census** is conducted every 10 years with the goal of counting every person in the country, although, as described below, it is almost impossible to reach this goal. The census collects information about the race, age, and housing situation of the population. The primary purpose of the census, as established in the Constitution, is to determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, the legislative branch of government. Voting district boundaries must then be redrawn in states that have gained or lost seats between census years. Censuses also determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are distributed for many important purposes, including education, health care, environmental protection, transportation, and other forms of federal aid to states and cities.

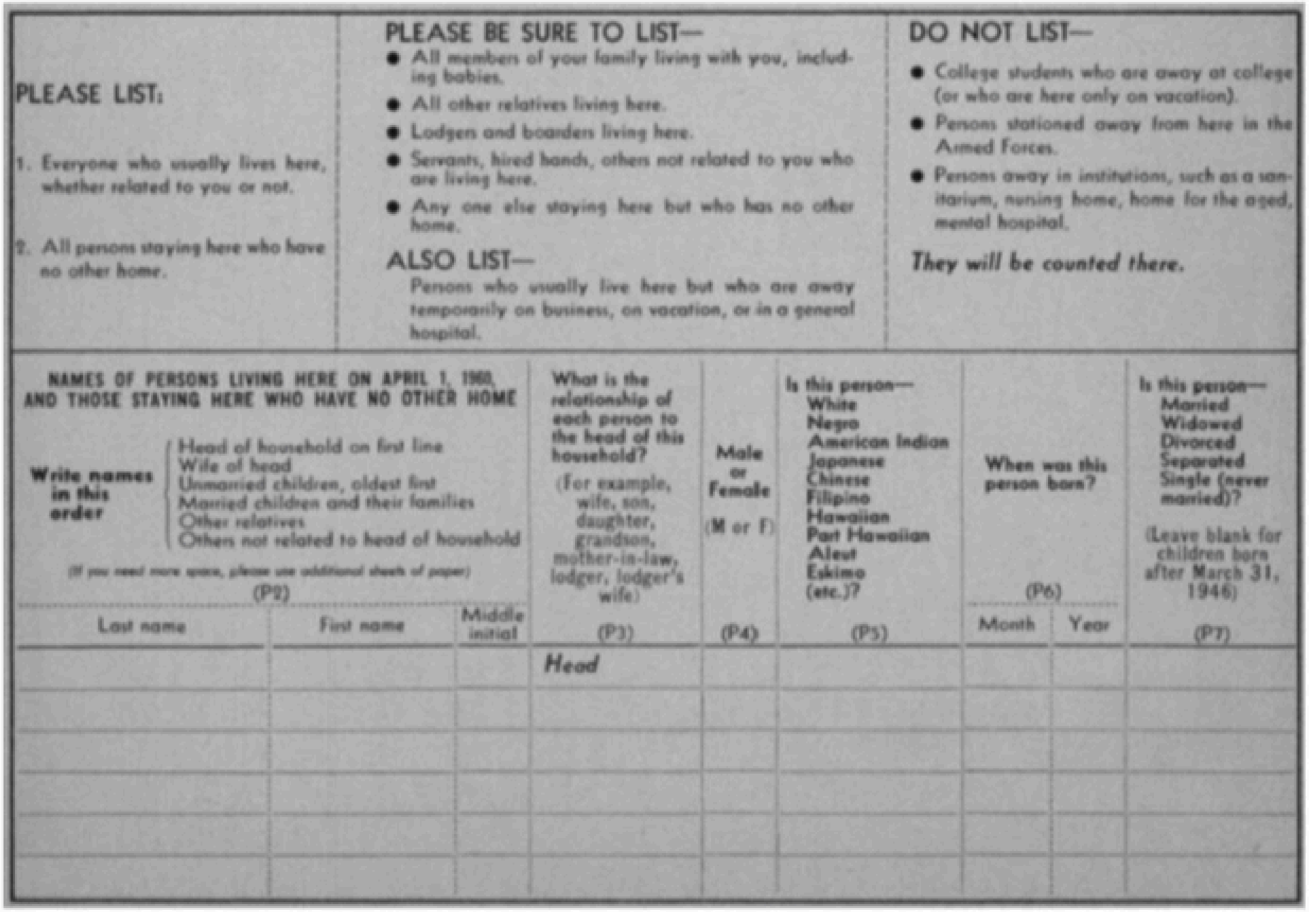
The first U.S. census, carried out in 1791 by sixteen U.S. marshals and 650 assistants, counted around 3.9 million people. They asked only a few questions: the number of free persons, the number of enslaved people, and the sex and race of each individual (Figure 6.2).


Market Street

130

Figure 6.2. Census form 1791. This form for the first census in the United States was filled out by a census taker who asked a few questions.

By 1960, with the population approaching 180 million, it was no longer feasible to have a census taker visit each household. Instead, questionnaires were mailed to every household, and temporary employees followed up in person with the households that did not respond (Figure 6.3).



PLEASE LIST:

1. Everyone who usually lives here, whether related to you or not.
2. All persons staying here who have no other home.

PLEASE BE SURE TO LIST—

- All members of your family living with you, including babies.
- All other relatives living here.
- Lodgers and boarders living here.
- Servants, hired hands, others not related to you who are living here.
- Any one else staying here but who has no other home.

ALSO LIST—

Persons who usually live here but who are away temporarily on business, on vacation, or in a general hospital.

DO NOT LIST—

- College students who are away at college (or who are here only on vacation).
- Persons stationed away from here in the Armed Forces.
- Persons away in institutions, such as a sanitarium, nursing home, home for the aged, mental hospital.

They will be counted there.

NAMES OF PERSONS LIVING HERE ON APRIL 1, 1960, AND THOSE STAYING HERE WHO HAVE NO OTHER HOME. Write names in this order: Head of household on first line; Wife of head; Unmarried children, oldest first; Married children and their families; Other relatives; Others not related to head of household (If you need more space, please use additional sheets of paper) (P2)			What is the relationship of each person to the head of this household? (For example, wife, son, daughter, grandson, mother-in-law, lodger, lodger's wife)	Male or Female (M or F)	Is this person— White, Negro, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Part Hawaiian, Aleut, Eskimo (etc.)?	When was this person born? (P6)		Is this person— Married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Single (never married)? (Leave blank for children born after March 31, 1946)
Last name	First name	Middle initial	(P3)	(P4)	(P5)	Month	Year	(P7)
			Head					

Figure 6.3. Census form 1960. This is a blank copy of the 1960 census form that was mailed to each household to be filled out.

Questions asked of all households now include the number of persons by age, gender, **ethnicity**, homeownership, and household composition. Between 1940 and 2000, one in six households also received a more detailed "long form" survey which asked questions about a much wider range of topics including income, occupation, commute length, and military service. The Census Bureau then used this sample to estimate the characteristics of the rest of the population.

Demand for more timely social data led to the development of the **American Community Survey (ACS)**, which replaced the long-form census survey in 2010. The ACS is conducted every year in order to provide more frequent "snapshots" of the demographic, economic, and housing characteristics of the population. However, only 2–3 million households receive the survey per year (less than 2 percent of the population), which introduces substantial statistical errors in estimates for the whole population. Data for the census and ACS are collected from each household, but in order to preserve privacy and to make the data easier to use, the Census Bureau aggregates the data into larger geographic areas.

6.2.2.2 Limitations of Census Data

The census is the most comprehensive source of demographic information available for the United States, but it still has important limitations.

The primary challenge is accuracy and undercounting. The census attempts to take a snapshot of how many people there are and where they are living on April 1st of the census year. The method for collecting data assumes that every person lives in a housing unit with a postal address and that they will respond accurately to surveys. The Census Bureau estimated that approximately 10 million people were missed in its 2010 count (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4. Census 2010. The first enumeration of the 2010 census took place in Noorvik, Alaska. An early start allows census takers to reach remote villages before residents leave to hunt and fish or travel for warm-weather jobs following the spring thaw.

Undercounting is not random because it is more prevalent in certain areas and subpopulations. Those who are **houseless** or have unstable housing at the time of the census are often missed. Those residing in remote rural areas can be hard to contact by mail or in person. The census is also less likely to receive responses from those who distrust the government, such as people fearful that their answers will be used by immigration enforcement to deport undocumented family members.

The census is only taken every ten years, and the counts have long-term consequences for states and cities.

The accuracy of counts can be very contentious in cash-strapped cities. For example, Detroit challenged the findings of the 2010 census, having come up 40,000 people short of a population cutoff point for many major sources of federal funding. Since under-resourced and marginalized populations are among the hardest to count, districts with the most need are also the most at risk of underfunding and underrepresentation.

Beyond issues of accuracy, census data may be limited due to the topics it does not cover. For example, there are no questions about religion, consumer spending, or political party affiliation. The quantity and wording of questions asked in the census have changed over time, and data are not always available for all places or for all geographic areas.

6.2.2.3 Why the U.S. Census Focuses on Race

Race was emphasized in the first census and the video in Figure 6.5 helps us understand why. It was important related to the number of voters (mostly free White men over the age of 21 years) and the number of elected representatives. The video also describes the changes in how race and **ethnicity** have been quantified.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=395#oembed-1

Figure 6.5. Why Does the Government Care about Race? [YouTube Video]. This video (10:12) will help you understand why the government cares about race.

Remember the discussion of the **social construction** of race in the first chapter? The changing definitions of race within the census data are a perfect example of the socially constructed aspect of race. But **social construction**s have real effects on families and **kinship** groups. One of the reasons that we continue to quantify race is to track access to resources and the **equity** of experience for individuals and families.

6.2.2.4 Challenges to Census Participation

The 2020 Census count was ended early by the Trump Administration. Originally scheduled to end on December 30, 2020, all counting ceased on October 31, 2020. The Census Bureau has identified populations that are less likely to participate in the process as “Hard to Count (HTC)” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Have you or your family members participated in the Census? Perhaps your family falls into a group that the Census Bureau identifies as hard to locate, contact, persuade, and/or interview. It is likely that fewer people, primarily in the “hard to count” groups, participated in the 2020 census due to its shortened timeline.

Current events affect participation; increased efforts to limit immigration and other quickly changing laws and policies related to immigrants in recent years may reduce the number of immigrants willing to participate. For example, the Trump administration fought in several legal forums to have a question about citizenship added to the 2020 census, but this question was not added.

Another current event, the COVID-19 pandemic, may affect the number of college students who respond to the census. The main dates for the mailing of census forms were between April 1 and May 13, 2020, at a time when many college students abandoned their regular place of residence (such as dormitory or apartment building in a college town) and went to live with parents or other family members. Towns with large universities may be affected by lower census counts because of this pattern.

Because Census results have a big impact on representation and therefore access to political influence and government resources, people have created organizations designed to encourage Census participation. We Count Oregon is an organization and website that has been developed to persuade everyone to participate in the census. Why? The more people who participate will lead to more federal funding for hospitals, Medicaid, Head Start, parks, roads, and other programs. Oregon is one of five states (Arizona, Colorado, Florida, and North Carolina are the others) predicted to earn an additional seat in the House of Representatives. We Count Oregon identifies HTC communities as including "people of color, children under five, renters, immigrants, people with limited English proficiency, multiple-family homes, Native tribal and urban communities, disabled people, and LGBTQ individuals" (We Count Oregon, n.d.).

If you and your family are wondering if you can make a difference by filling out the census, check out We Count Oregon's website. It is an opportunity to be more fully represented. Even if you missed the 2020 census, the American Community Survey (which samples a much smaller part of the population) is an opportunity to be counted each year. If you are selected, it is an opportunity to have your family represented by the many scholars, groups, and decision-makers in the United States.

https://vimeo.com/388180134?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=104046171

Figure 6.6. The 2020 Census is about Money and Power [Vimeo Video]. This video explains how participating in the Census could help you and your family,

6.2.3 Licenses and Attributions for Representation and Belonging

6.2.3.1 Open Content, Original

6.2.4 References

Jefferson, T. (1776, July 4). Declaration of independence: A transcription. https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript

US Census Bureau. (2019, July). Counting the hard to count in a census. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2019/demo/Hard-to-Count-Populations-Brief.pdf

We Count Oregon. (n.d.). About #WeCountOregon. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://wecountoregon.com/

6.3 DECISION-MAKING AND POWER

Much of the decision-making in the United States is executed by elected officials via legislation that passes through several branches of government. While most are elected by popular vote, the President is elected through the electoral college and some leaders, including the President, have the authority to appoint other decision-making officials such as judges and cabinet secretaries. People who have the right to vote, and who choose to vote, have some influence on who gets elected. Voting is important and is one aspect of representation, a potential equalizer in a country in which some decisions are made via direct democracy (each individual has a vote) and others are made by representative democracy (elected representatives).

As we will explore in this section, however, there are complicating factors that affect elections and **equity**.

6.3.1 Who Votes?

There are a variety of reasons that people don't vote in local, state, and national elections. Thomas Jefferson is known for saying, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." Ironically, Jefferson was a part of the legislature that limited which people in the United States actually had the right to vote. In fact, what he could have said was, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority of people whom we have allowed to vote and who participate." This text aims to examine how institutions still limit voting rights both explicitly and implicitly.

6.3.1.1 Older, More Educated and Non-Hispanic Younger, Less Educated, and Latinx

Figure 6.7. People who are older, non-Hispanic, and more educated are more likely to vote.

In general, voter turnout in the United States is higher during presidential elections, which occur every four years. In measurements between 1984 through 2016, people who are older, non-Hispanic, and more educated are most likely to vote. Those who are 60+ years old vote the most, followed by those aged 45–59 years, then by those aged 30–44 years, and with 18- to 29-year-olds having the lowest likelihood of voting with more than double 60+ year-old voting (65%) compared with 31 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds voting in the 2018 election (Figure 6.9).

It could be argued that the youngest citizens have the most at stake and could have the greatest impact on the future of the United States and yet they are voting less. Younger, less educated, Latinx people are less likely to vote? In your viewpoint, what is behind the numbers that people in these demographics are voting less?

6.3.2 Voter Registration Across the United States

Elections are state-by-state contests. They include general elections for president and statewide offices (e.g., governor and U.S. senator), and they are often organized and paid for by the states. Because political **culture**s vary from state to state, the process of voter registration also varies. For example, suppose an 85-year-old retiree with an expired driver's license wants to register to vote. The retiree might be able to register quickly in California or Florida, but a current government ID might be required prior to registration in Texas or Indiana.

The varied registration and voting laws across the United States have long caused controversy. In the aftermath of the Civil War, southern states enacted literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and other requirements intended to disenfranchise Black voters in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. Literacy tests were long and detailed exams on local and national politics, history, and more. They were often administered arbitrarily with more Black voters required to take them than White voters (Medvic, 2014). Consider these literacy tests along with the practice of refusing schooling to Black children and you will understand how these requirements became part of a racist system that prevented Black people from voting. Poll taxes required voters to pay a fee to vote. Grandfather clauses exempted individuals from taking literacy tests or paying poll taxes if they or their fathers or grandfathers had been permitted to vote prior to a certain point in time. While the Supreme Court determined that grandfather clauses were unconstitutional in 1915, states continued to use poll taxes and literacy tests to deter potential voters from registering (*Guinn v. United States*, 1915). States also ignored instances of violence and intimidation against African Americans wanting to register or vote (Medvic, 2014).

The ratification of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment in 1964 ended poll taxes, but the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965 (Figure 6.5) had a more profound effect. The act protected the rights of minority voters by prohibiting state laws that denied voting rights based on race. The VRA gave the U.S. attorney general authority to order federal examiners to areas with a history of **discrimination**. These examiners had the power to oversee and monitor voter registration and elections. States found to violate provisions of the VRA were required to get any changes in their election laws approved by the U.S. attorney general or by going through the court system.

However, in *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013), the Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision, threw out the standards and process of the VRA, effectively gutting the landmark legislation. This decision effectively pushed decision-making and discretion for election policy in VRA states to the state and local levels. Several such states subsequently made changes to their voter ID laws and North Carolina changed its plans for how many polling places were available in certain areas. Texas also restricted voting based on photo identification; these changes often do not have a neutral effect. In fact, when the U.S. Court of Appeals struck down one North Carolina law in 2016, they found that it targeted "African Americans with almost surgical precision."

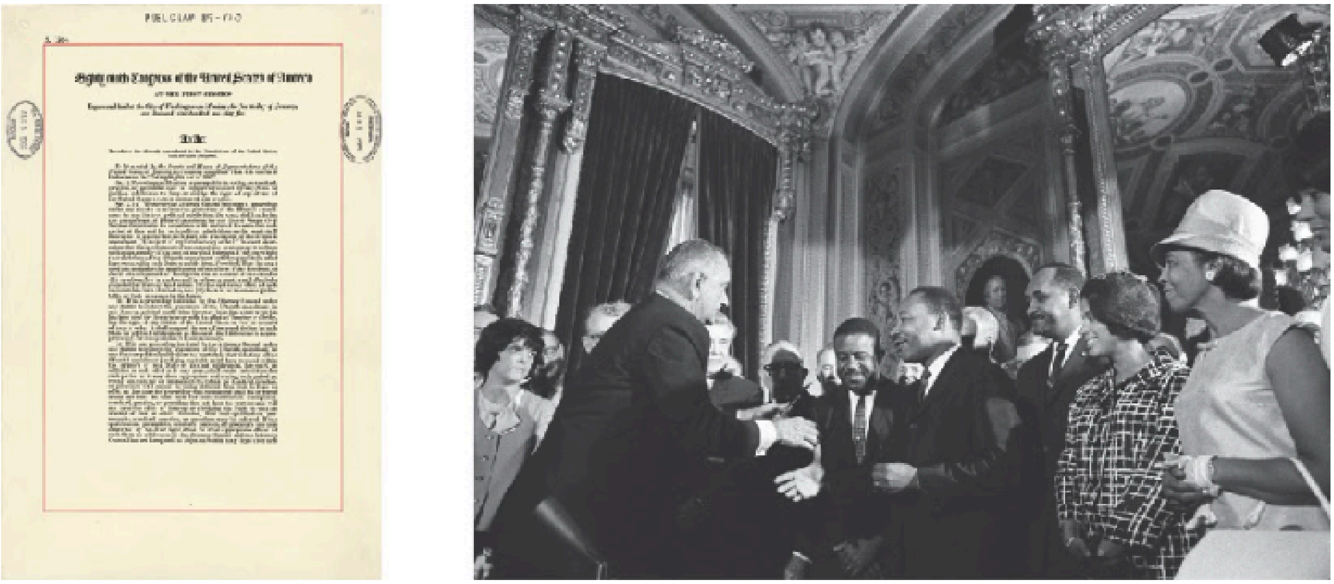


Figure 6.8. The Voting Rights Act (a) was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson (b, left) on August 6, 1965, in the presence of major figures of the civil rights movement, including Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. (b, center).

The effects of the VRA were visible almost immediately. In Mississippi, only 6.7 percent of Black people were registered to vote in 1965; however, by the fall of 1967, nearly 60 percent were registered. Alabama experienced similar effects, with African American registration increasing from 19.3 percent to 51.6 percent. Voter turnout across these two states similarly increased. Mississippi went from 33.9 percent turnout to 53.2 percent, while Alabama increased from 35.9 percent to 52.7 percent between the 1964 and 1968 presidential elections (Grofman et al., 1992).

Following the implementation of the VRA, many states have sought other methods of increasing voter registration. Several states make registering to vote relatively easy for citizens who have government documentation. Oregon has few requirements for registering and registers many of its voters automatically. North Dakota has no registration at all. In 2002, Arizona was the first state to offer online voter registration, which allowed citizens with a driver's license to register to vote without any paper application or signature. The system matches the information on the application to information stored at the Department of Motor Vehicles, to ensure each citizen is registering to vote in the right precinct. Citizens without a driver's license still need to file a paper application. More than eighteen states have moved to online registration or passed laws to begin doing so. The National Conference of State Legislatures estimates, however, that adopting an online voter registration system can initially cost a state between $250,000 and $750,000 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014).

Other states have decided against online registration due to concerns about voter fraud and security. Legislators also argue that online registration makes it difficult to ensure that only citizens are registering and that they are registering in the correct precincts. As technology continues to update other areas of state recordkeeping, online registration may become easier and safer. In some areas, citizens have pressured the states and pushed the process along. A bill to move registration online in Florida stalled for over a year in the legislature, based on security concerns. With strong citizen support, however, it was passed and signed in 2015, despite the governor's lingering concerns. In other states, such as Texas, some are concerned about identity fraud, so traditional paper registration has been preferred until the COVID-19 pandemic, which has renewed interest in voting methods other than in-person.

6.3.3 Voting by Mail

Oregon was the first state to enact postal voting, or "vote-by-mail" in the United States, in 1998. Voter turnout dramatically increased with this adaptation, and Oregon continues to have one of the highest participation rates in the country. Of course, absentee and early voting have long been available for military families and for individuals by request. As of 2020, Colorado, Hawaii, Washington, and Utah have all converted to vote-by-mail elections. The coronavirus pandemic has raised concerns about people visiting crowded polling places, and 46 states are loosening restrictions on vote-by-mail. To view the voting status of individual states, check out ballotpedia; to investigate overall voting information, consult this usa.gov website.

Research repeatedly shows that allowing people to vote by mail increases participation. A draft working paper of a Stanford University study found that postal voting in Colorado increased voter participation by 10 percent. Notably, turnout among groups less likely to vote increased even more: 16 percentage points among young people, 13 percent among African Americans, 11 percent among Asian Americans, and 10 percentage points among Latinx Americans, blue-collar workers, those without a high school diploma, and those with less than $10,000 of wealth (Bonica et al., 2020).

Republican lawmakers are divided on the issue of voting by mail, while Democratic lawmakers generally support this effort. Experts, including researchers and political science professors, do not believe that voting by mail is likely to increase fraud. Voting continues to be a state responsibility, which means it varies a great deal. In the November 2020 election, that variance became a point of legal and social debate. Not only did states already have differing processes, but the legislators' efforts to ensure that as many people as possible could vote given the social distancing required by the pandemic, created greater discrepancies and differences in voting rules. While then-President Trump and many other individuals questioned the validity of these processes in four states that had close presidential vote counts, the courts and the officials of those states consistently verified the results.

6.3.4 Barriers to Voting

Although the right to vote is more equitably distributed than in the past, institutional and societal factors still influence who actually votes. If there were times that you didn't vote, what got in the way? A busy life might keep you from voting. In the following sections, we'll explore some of the most common barriers to voting.

6.3.4.1 **Socioeconomic Status**

When voting is limited to one day (e.g., 12 hours in November), people who have more restrictive work, school, parenting, childcare, or other schedules will have more challenges in getting to the polling location during the limited time. Workers in jobs with less autonomy (e.g., retail, clerical, and blue-collar workers) have less flexibility on voting day than those in managerial or professional positions. Transportation can be a factor; personal vehicles provide the most efficiency in a busy life. Using shared vehicles, public transportation, bicycles, and walking (while more cost and energy effective) all take longer.

If you are a working parent faced with choosing between getting food on the table for your two young children or transporting them and waiting in line to vote in the election, which do you choose? If you need to race home from work so that your partner can use your shared vehicle to get to their evening shift, do you then go take a bus to vote?

Families with a lower **socioeconomic status** are more likely to have a combination of these factors that contribute to having less flexibility and less time (Figure 6.8). Families who have more resources in general have more resources related to political activity and are more likely to participate in voting in person. Those who are unemployed are the least likely to vote.

Figure 6.9. Families with a lower **socioeconomic status** face more barriers getting to polling stations.

6.3.4.2 Disabilities

People with disabilities vote at a 6 percent lower rate than people who do not have disabilities and share other demographic characteristics, as measured by Rutgers University in the 2016 election (Schur & Kruse, 2017). Why might that be? One factor may be the polling places themselves. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) observed 178 polling places during that same election. They found that 60 percent of the polling places had some kind of physical impediment between the parking lot and the entry to the buildings (Figure 6.7). Of the 137 that could be observed inside, 65 percent had polling stations that could impede someone from casting their votes independently as shown in Figure 6.10 (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2017).

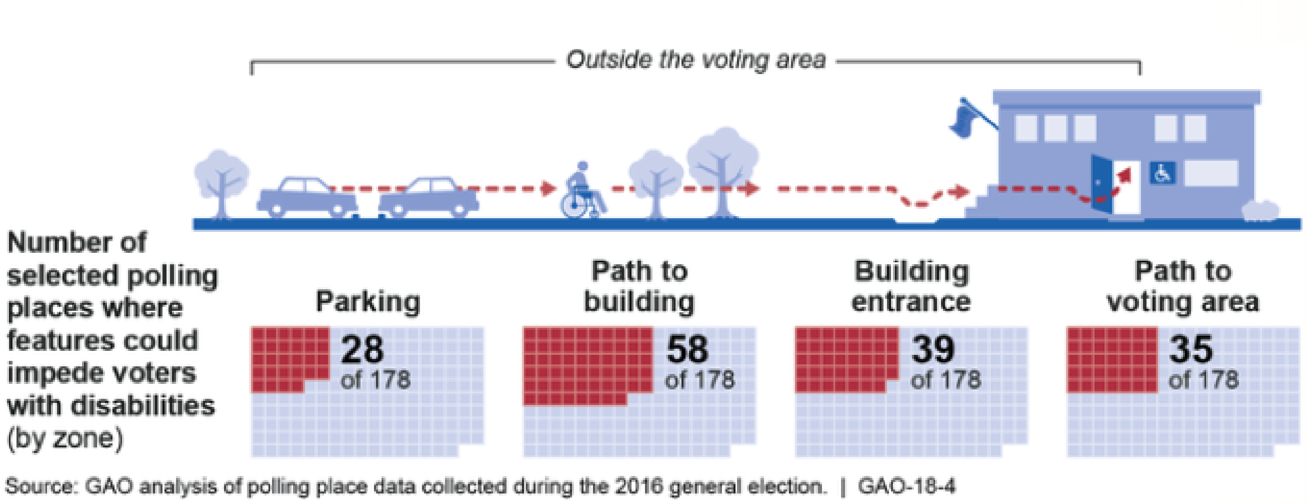


Figure 6.10. Voters with disabilities often face physical barriers to voting, including inaccessible parking, paths, and entrances.

There are efforts underway to improve access to and participation in voting among people with disabilities. The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is working in selected states to increase voter registration and turnout. REVUP (Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power) has shown a 1 percent increase in the voting participation of people with disabilities in REVUP states compared with non-REVUP states between 2014 and 2018 (Schur & Kruse, 2019). This is a small increase in a very large sample, and it is difficult to say if REVUP is the main factor.

6.3.4.3 Felony Convictions

The majority of states in the United States limit people who have been convicted of felonies from voting, at least during the time that they are incarcerated. (The exceptions are Maine and Vermont.) Variances among states include whether rights are lost just while incarcerated, while still serving parole and/or probation or whether rights are restored automatically after release (Figure 6.8). Oregon is one of 16 states plus the District of Columbia that automatically restore rights (National Council of State Legislatures, 2019).

There are 11 states that have additional restrictions including the payment of fees, fines, and restitution before voting rights are restored. These kinds of restrictions treat families unevenly; individuals who have lower income and no **accumulated wealth** will be less likely to be able to access their voting rights than will people with wealth and means.

Generally, the trend over the last few decades by states is to restore voting rights to felons once they are released. There are variations state by state as these movements go forward. What is your viewpoint about the right to vote and how it overlaps with people who have committed crimes? Do you think that people serving time should be able to vote? What about those who have rehabilitated and/or paid a debt to society? What about those same people whether they are poor or rich? Should **socioeconomic status** affect the right to vote?

6.3.4.4 Residency and Citizenship Status

Citizenship status also can pose a barrier to voting. According to USA.gov, non-citizens, including permanent legal residents, cannot vote in federal, state, and most local elections (*usagov*. n.d.).

There are 14 U.S. territories, all of which are in the Pacific or Caribbean Oceans. Thirteen of these territories, including Puerto Rico, are unincorporated which means that only select parts of the Constitution apply to them. For example, they do not have representation in the U.S. Congress or Senate, do not pay federal income tax, and cannot vote for the President of the United States. Residents of Puerto Rico voted in favor of full statehood in the 2020 elections via a non-binding referendum (WorldAtlas, 2020.) Many people believe that the citizens of Puerto Rico and other territories would benefit from statehood and representation at the federal level.

6.3.4.5 Feeling Disenfranchised

There are times when people feel so disconnected from the process of democracy and representation that voting seems hopeless. If elected officials repeatedly fail to discuss issues of importance to a person or their family, or if the decision outcomes are consistently inadequate, people may develop apathy toward the voting process. Growing up in a family where the parent(s) don't vote or who express cynicism or distrust toward representatives and the voting process also impacts children's views of the system and participation. As discussed at length in this chapter, there has been a great deal of effort made to limit people of color, the poor, and immigrants from voting in at least some states. It's hard to think that you belong and that your vote matters when institutions work against your voting rights, as expressed in the following quote.

"Voting is not an act of political freedom. It is an act of political conformity. Those who refuse to vote are not expressing silence. They are screaming in the politician's ear: 'You do not represent me. This is not a process in which my voice matters. I do not believe you'." – Wendy McElroy, a Canadian individualist feminist and anarcho-capitalist writer

In some states, one political party (Democratic or Republican) has such a majority position that if you are a member of the other dominant party or of an alternative party, it may not seem "worth it" to vote. They may feel that their vote doesn't make a difference or that the election is not a competitive one.

6.3.5 Barriers to Participation

Does your city have an elected council? How about your school board? Are judges elected or appointed in your area? Is there a County Board of Commissioners? Take a minute to think about what you know about how someone gets one of these positions. Are they paid at all? If so, do they pay enough to support an individual or family? Many of them are elected positions, although they are not paid. For example, in Corvallis, Oregon neither the school board nor the City Council are paid positions. The Benton County Commissioner positions (of which Corvallis is a part) are paid; three Commissioners each make between $84,000 and $94,100 in 2019 (Hall, 2019). Typically, salaries of public employees are public information and you can find it via an internet search on the entity's website or in a newspaper report on salary negotiations.

We ask these questions for several reasons. First, those decision-makers affect all of our lives. If you question whether or not a school board member affects your daily life, consider those board members who decided how and if school will be held during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consider the recent national and local debates about what kinds of bathrooms and locker rooms students can access, and who determines which students will use which bathrooms.

Many of these local positions are unpaid. If they are not paid, but require many hours of work each week, consider who is most likely to have the time available for such a position. Corvallis School Board Members are expected to devote time to reading policies, citizen input, budget documents, and related research as well as participating in trainings, committee discussions, and formal meetings. The time commitment varies from five to twenty hours per week and is unpredictable. This time commitment is similar for City Council members; remember that both positions are unpaid.

Given this context, it is likely that people who have a high enough income or **accumulated wealth**, a career that allows flexibility in work hours, or who are retired will be more likely to be able to afford the time and to dominate these boards. It is important to appreciate these public servants, their volunteer commitment, and their efforts to listen to all of their constituents. It is also important to acknowledge that these decision-makers are more likely to be older, have greater income and wealth, and have more education. How do you think this might influence the discussions the groups have and the decisions that they make? How would families benefit from a system that is more representative of the communities served? What systemic changes could be made to include voices that more fully represent the population?

6.3.6 Do Demographics Matter?

Ask yourself, how do **social characteristics** that make up **social identity** matter when it comes to who represents all families in the decision-making spaces of this country? This is a good time to remind yourself of the **Social Identity** Wheel introduced in Chapter 1 (Figure 6.11). When we talk about demographics, we are looking at the statistical data related to social identities.

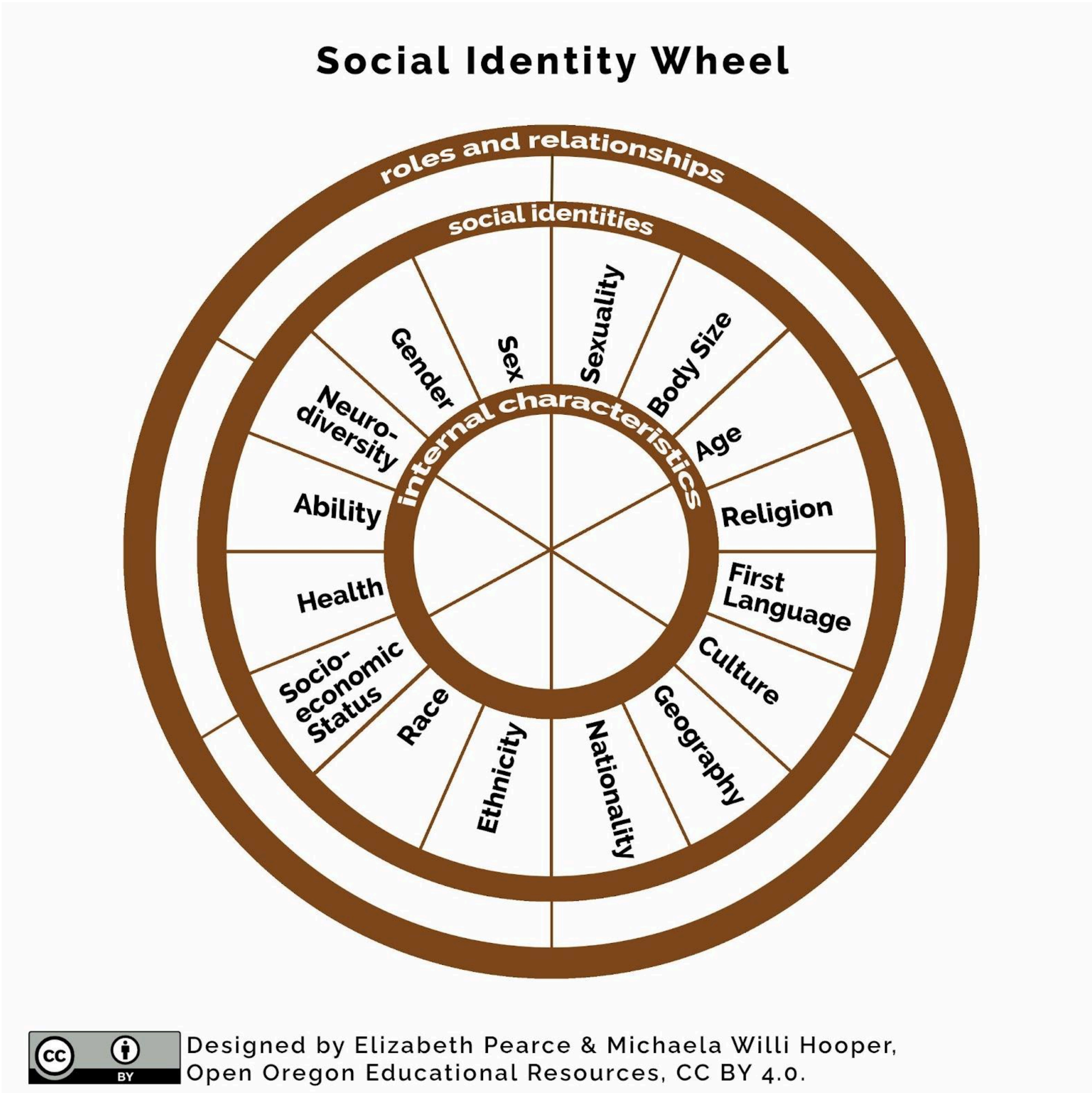


Figure 6.11. When we talk about demographics, we are looking at the statistical data related to social identities. Figure 6.11 Image Description

Let's look at some of the demographics that are reported most frequently: race and gender. This very short (under two minutes) video from wholeads.us compares the demographics of the population in the United States with those of elected officials (Figure 6.12).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=397#oembed-1

Figure 6.12. Who Leads Us? [YouTube Video]. The visuals in this video help us see whether our democracy is reflective of our demographics.

When the demographics are so skewed, we must ask ourselves whether those who are less represented via **social identity** are being treated equitably. Not just in the past, but right now.

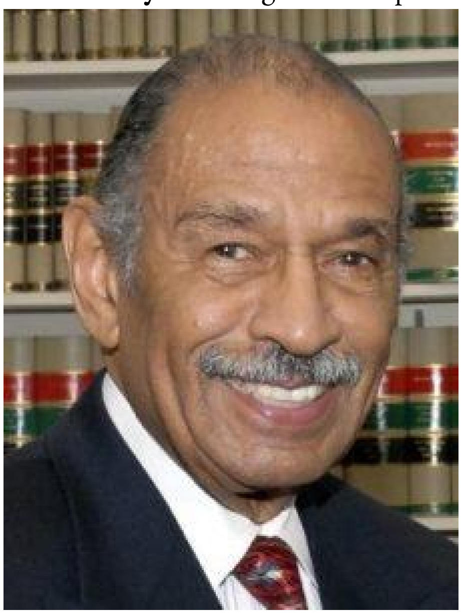


Figure 6.13. Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-Michigan) introduced House Resolution 40, to study the effects of slavery, 28 times. It has still not been passed.

For example, in 1989, Representative John Conyers,Jr. (D-Michigan), pictured in Figure 6.13, introduced House Resolution (H.R.) 40 to the U.S. Congress for the first time (Figure 6.16). (The number "40" refers to the unfulfilled promise made that when slavery ended, every freed family would be allotted plots of land no larger than 40 acres, plus a mule. This proclamation was reversed by President Andrew Johnson after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.) Representative Conyers, who died in 2019, proposed H.R. 40 a total of 28 times, once per year from 1989 until 2017.

Which laws and policies would be moved forward, voted on, and passed if Black people had greater representation among elected officials? What if the system supported the employment of people of lower **socioeconomic status** in decision-making **roles**? How would this affect the in**equality** that families experience in the United States? Could you imagine how housing, health care, and employment might be different? These authors believe that more equitable representation, while not the only needed change, will lead to equitable access to education, health care, housing, food, and water. This will benefit all families, regardless of race, **ethnicity**, or gender. More equitable representation among decision-makers could lead to different systems and structures so that all families could meet their basic needs.

There is some progress toward more diverse representation in our elected officials. Pew Research reports that the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. Congress has grown gradually between 2001 and 2019. Currently, 116 members of the House of Representatives are people of color, which is an 84 percent increase over the 107th Congress of 2001 (Bialik, 2019). When it comes to gender parity, while the number of women who are participating in elected positions is increasing in the United States, it is increasing at a slower pace than in the rest of the world. While we ranked 48th in the world for elected gender parity in 2000 (out of 192 countries), 20 years later we have sunk to 82nd in the world as measured by Represent Women's research (Figure 6.14). To use the interactive map below, learn more about their methodology, and see how individual states within the United States compare with one another, click here.

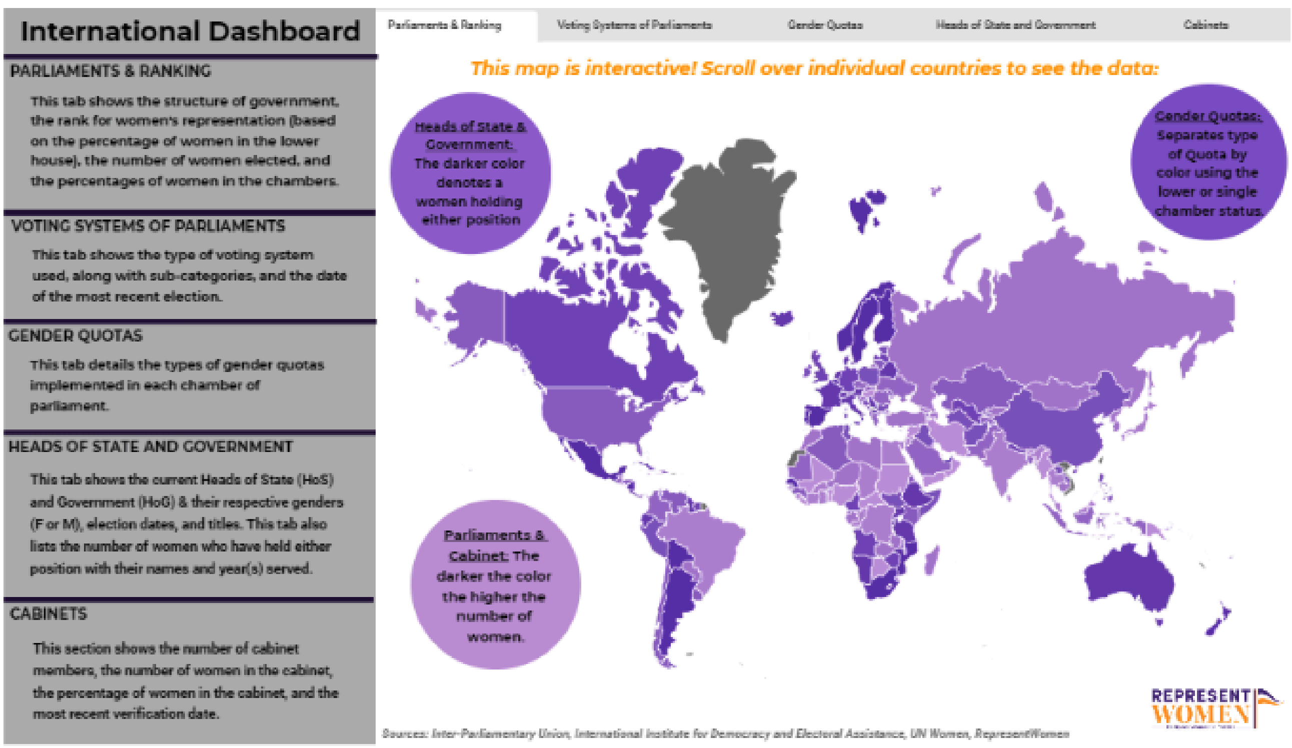


Figure 6.14. While the number of women who are participating in elected positions is increasing in the United States, the number is increasing at a slower rate than the rest of the world.

6.3.7 Licenses and Attributions for Decision-Making and Power

6.3.7.1 Open Content, Original

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Figure 6.11. "Social identity wheel" by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

6.3.7.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

"Voter Registration Across the United States" is from "Voter Registration" in American Government 2e by Glen Krutz et al. License: CC BY 4.0. Adaptations: content moved around; updated for accuracy.

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Figure 6.10. "Number of selected polling places where features could impede voters with disabilities (by zone)" by Government Accountability Office. Public domain.

Figure 6.13. "United States Representative John Conyers (D-MI) official photo" by US Congress. Public domain.

Figure 6.14. "International Women's Representation Dashboard" by Represent Women. License: Permission to share with credit at bottom of homepage.

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Figure 6.12. "Who Leads Us?" (c) Women's Donor Network. License Terms: Standard YouTube license.

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Image Description for Figure 6.11:

Visualization of ***Social Identity*** *Wheel*

A wheel with three rings divided into sections of attributes. The inner and outer are blank segments.

Middle ring

These are social identities. Attributes include:

- Nationality
- First Language
- Religion
- Ability
- Neurodiversity
- Health
- Body size
- Age
- Sex
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race
- **Culture**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Socioeconomic Status** (SES)
- Geography

[Return to Figure 6.11]

6.4 WORKING OUTSIDE OF THE SYSTEM: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ACTIVISM

We've spent a large portion of this chapter focused on historical and current aspects of the way **social process**es work in this country: the census, voting, representation, the courts and elected officials. We have attempted to uncover some of the flaws, gaps, and structures that lead to unequal representation and treatment of families. Change within these processes is possible, but sometimes challenging because the existing structures favor some groups and reinforce negative bias and in**equality** toward others. Working outside of the systems to push for change is an alternative for people whom the systems have marginalized.

6.4.1 Social Movements

A **social movement** may be defined as an organized effort by a large number of people to bring about or impede social, political, economic, or cultural change. Defined in this way, social movements might sound similar to special-interest groups, and they do have some things in common. But a major difference between social movements and special-interest groups lies in the nature of their actions. Special-interest groups normally work within the system via conventional political activities such as lobbying and election campaigning. In contrast, social movements often work outside the system by engaging in various kinds of protest, including demonstrations, picket lines, sit-ins, and sometimes outright violence (Figure 6.15).

Figure 6.15. Social movements are organized efforts by large numbers of people to bring about or impede social change. Often they try to do so by engaging in various kinds of protest, such as the march depicted here.

6.4.2 Focusing on Feminism and Intersectionality

While many social movements deserve attention, we would like to focus here on one social movement that emphasizes a key theme of this text: our multiple social identities and **intersectionality**. Women are 51 percent of the population in the United States and have advocated for over 100 years for **equality** (U.S. Census, 2020). The in-depth essay that follows is an excerpt from the text *Introduction to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies* authored by Miliann Kang, Donovan Lessard, and Laura Heston at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. It illustrates the complexity working toward **equity** while focused on one social characteristic (in this case, being female). How does this social movement navigate the intersections of race, **ethnicity**, parenthood, employee status, and sexuality? By studying the feminist movement over time, we can see the multiple dimensions, weaknesses, and strengths of communities advocating for change.

6.4.2.1 Introduction: Feminist Movements

> "History is also everybody talking at once, multiple rhythms being played simultaneously. The events and people we write about did not occur in isolation but in dialogue with a myriad of other people and events. In fact, at any given moment millions of people are all talking at once. As historians we try to isolate one conversation and to explore it, but the trick is then how to put that conversation in a context which makes evident its dialogue with so many others—how to make this one lyric stand alone and at the same time be in connection with all the other lyrics being sung."
>
> — Elsa Barkley Brown, "'What has happened here,'" pp. 297-298.

With this quote, feminist historian Barkley Brown reminds us that social movements and identities are not separate from each other, as we often imagine they are in contemporary society. She argues that we must have a relational understanding of social movements and identities within and between social movements—an understanding of the ways in which privilege and oppression are linked and how the stories of people of color and feminists fighting for justice have been historically linked through overlapping and sometimes conflicting social movements. Here, we use a relational lens to discuss and make sense of feminist movements, beginning in the 19th century up to the present time.

Feminist movements have generated, made possible, and nurtured feminist theories and feminist academic knowledge. In this way, feminist movements are fantastic examples of praxis—that is, they use critical reflection about the world to change it. It is because of various social movements—feminist activism, workers' activism, and civil rights activism throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries—that "feminist history" is a viable field of study today. Feminist history is part of a larger historical project that draws on the experiences of traditionally ignored and disempowered groups (e.g., factory workers, immigrants, people of color, **lesbian**s) to re-think and challenge the histories that have been traditionally written from the experiences and points of view of the powerful (e.g., colonizers, representatives of the state, the wealthy)—the histories we typically learn in high school textbooks.

6.4.2.2 19th Century Feminist Movements

What has come to be called the first wave of the feminist movement began in the mid-19th century and lasted until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which gave women the right to vote. White middle-class first-wave feminists in the 19th century to early 20th century, such as suffragist leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, primarily focused on women's suffrage (the right to vote), striking down laws in which her property passed to her new husband upon marriage, and gaining access to education and employment (Figure 6.16). These goals are famously enshrined in the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, which is the resulting document of the first women's rights convention in the United States in 1848.

Figure 6.16. White, middle-class, first-wave feminists fought for the right to vote, own property, and access education and employment.

Demanding women's enfranchisement, the abolition of coverture, and access to employment and education were quite radical demands at the time. These demands confronted the ideology of the cult of true womanhood, summarized in four key tenets—piety, purity, submission and domesticity—which held that White women were rightfully and naturally located in the private sphere of the household and not fit for public, political participation, or labor in the waged **economy**. However, this emphasis on confronting the ideology of the cult of true womanhood was shaped by the White middle-class standpoint of the leaders of the movement. The cult of true womanhood was an ideology of White womanhood that systematically denied Black and working-class women access to the category of "women," because working-class and Black women, by necessity, had to labor outside of the home. This relates to the idealized **nuclear family** described in Chapter 2.

The White middle-class leadership of the first wave movement shaped the priorities of the movement, often excluding the concerns and participation of working-class women and women of color. For example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) in order to break from other suffragists who supported the passage of the 15th Amendment, which would give African

American men the right to vote before women. Stanton and Anthony privileged White women's rights instead of creating solidarities across race and class groups. Accordingly, they saw women's suffrage as the central goal of the women's rights movement. For example, in the first issue of her newspaper, *The Revolution*, Susan B. Anthony wrote:

> We shall show that the ballot will secure for woman equal place and equal wages in the world of work; that it will open to her the schools, colleges, professions, and all the opportunities and advantages of life; that in her hand it will be a moral power to stay the tide of crime and misery on every side. (Anthony, 1868, as cited in Davis, 1981, p. 73)

Meanwhile, working-class women and women of color knew that mere access to voting did not overturn class and race inequalities. As feminist activist and scholar Angela Davis (1981) writes, working-class women "…were seldom moved by the suffragists' promise that the vote would permit them to become equal to their men—their exploited, suffering men." Furthermore, the largest suffrage organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)—a descendent of the National Women Suffrage Association—barred the participation of Black women suffragists in its organization.

Although the first wave movement was largely defined and led by middle class White women, there was significant overlap between it and the abolitionist movement—which sought to end slavery—and the racial justice movement following the end of the Civil War. Historian Nancy Cott (2000) argues that, in some ways, both movements were largely about having self-ownership and control over one's body. For enslaved people, that meant the freedom from lifelong, unpaid, forced labor, as well as freedom from the sexual assault that many enslaved Black women suffered from their enslavers.For married White women, it meant recognition as people in the face of the law and the ability to refuse their husbands' sexual advances. White middle-class abolitionists often made analogies between slavery and marriage, as abolitionist Antoinette Brown (1853) wrote in 1853 that, "The wife owes service and labor to her husband as much and as absolutely as the slave does to his master" (Brown, 1853, as cited in Cott, 2000). This analogy between marriage and slavery had historical resonance at the time, but it problematically conflated the unique experience of the racialized oppression of slavery that African American women faced with a very different type of oppression that White women faced under coverture. This illustrates quite well Angela Davis' (1983) argument that while White women abolitionists and feminists of the time made important contributions to anti-slavery campaigns, they often failed to understand the uniqueness and severity of enslaved women's lives and the complex system of chattel slavery.

Black activists, writers, newspaper publishers, and academics moved between the racial justice and feminist movements, arguing for inclusion in the first wave feminist movement and condemning slavery and Jim Crow laws that maintained racial segregation. Sojourner Truth's famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech, which has been attributed to the Akron Women's Convention in 1851, captured this contentious linkage between the first wave women's movement and the abolitionist movement well. In her speech, she critiqued the exclusion of Black women from the women's movement while simultaneously condemning the injustices of slavery:

> That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me!....I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Feminist historian Nell Painter (1996) has questioned the validity of this representation of the speech, arguing that White suffragists dramatically changed its content and title. This illustrates that certain social actors with power can construct the story and possibly misrepresent actors with less power and social movements.

Despite their marginalization, Black women emerged as passionate and powerful leaders. Ida B. Wells, a particularly influential activist who participated in the movement for women's suffrage, was a founding member of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Figure 6.17). As a journalist, she authored numerous pamphlets and articles exposing the violent lynching of thousands of African Americans in the Reconstruction period (the period following the Civil War). Wells (1893) argued that lynching in the Reconstruction Period was a systematic attempt to maintain racial in**equality**, despite the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868 (which held that African Americans were citizens and could not be discriminated against based on their race). Additionally, thousands of African American women were members of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which was pro-suffrage, but did not receive recognition from the predominantly middle-class, White National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

Figure 6.17. Ida B. Wells was a founding member of the NAACP and a journalist who exposed the lynchings of thousands of African Americans.

The passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 provided a test for the argument that the granting of women's right to vote would give them unfettered access to the institutions they had been denied from, as well as **equality** with men. Quite plainly, this argument was proven wrong, as had been the case with the passage of the 18th Amendment followed by a period of backlash. The formal legal endorsement of the doctrine of "separate but equal" with *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, the complex of Jim Crow laws in states across the country, and the unchecked violence of the Ku Klux Klan, prevented Black women and men from access to voting, education, employment, and public facilities. While equal rights existed in the abstract realm of the law under the 18th and 19th amendments, the on-the-ground reality of continued racial and gender in**equality** was quite different.

6.4.2.3 Early to Late 20th Century Feminist Movements

Social movements are not static entities; they change according to movement gains or losses, and these gains or losses are often quite dependent on the political and social contexts they take place within. Following women's suffrage in 1920, feminist activists channeled their energy into institutionalized legal and political channels for effecting changes in labor laws and attacking **discrimination** against women in the workplace. The Women's Bureau—a federal agency created to craft policy according to women workers' needs—was established in 1920, and the YWCA, the American Association of University Women (AAUW), and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) lobbied government officials to pass legislation that would legally prohibit **discrimination** against women in the workplace.

These organizations, however, did not necessarily agree on what **equality** looked like and how that would be achieved. For example, the BPW supported the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which they argued would effectively end employment **discrimination** against women. Meanwhile, the Women's Bureau and the YWCA opposed the ERA, arguing that it would damage the gains that organized labor had made already. The disagreement clearly brought into relief the competing agendas of defining working women first and foremost as women (who are also workers), versus defining working women first and foremost as workers (who are also women). Nearly a century after suffrage, the ERA has yet to be passed, and debate about its desirability even within the feminist movement continues.

While millions of women were already working in the United States at the beginning of World War II, labor shortages during World War II allowed millions of women to move into higher-paying factory jobs that had previously been occupied by men. Simultaneously, nearly 125,000 African American men fought in segregated units in World War II, often being sent on the front guard of the most dangerous missions (Zinn, 2003). Japanese Americans whose families were interned also fought in the segregated units that had the war's highest casualty rates (Odo, 2017; Takaki, 2001).

Following the end of the war, both the women who had worked in high-paying jobs in factories and the African American men who had fought in the war returned to a society that was still deeply segregated, and they were expected to return to their previous subordinate positions. Despite the conservative political climate of the 1950s, civil rights organizers began to challenge both the de jure segregation of Jim Crow laws and the de facto segregation experienced by African Americans on a daily basis. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954, which made "separate but equal" educational facilities illegal, provided an essential legal basis for activism against the institutionalized racism of Jim Crow laws. Eventually, the Black Freedom Movement, also known now as the civil rights movement, would fundamentally change U.S. society and inspire the second wave feminist movement and the radical political movements of the New Left (e.g., **gay** liberationism, Black nationalism, socialist and anarchist activism, the environmentalist movement) in the late 1960s.

Although the stories and lives of the leaders of the civil rights movement are centered in popular representations, this grassroots mass movement was composed of working class African American men and women, White and African American students, and clergy that utilized the tactics of nonviolent direct action (e.g., sit-ins, marches, and vigils) to demand full legal **equality** for African Americans in US society. For example, Rosa Parks—famous for refusing to give up her seat at the front of a Montgomery bus to a White passenger in December, 1955 and beginning the Montgomery Bus Boycott—was not acting as an isolated, frustrated woman when she refused to give up her seat at the front of the bus (as the typical narrative goes) (Figure 6.18).

Figure 6.18. Rosa Parks's decision to stand up to segregation was part of a lifelong commitment to racial justice.

According to feminist historians Ellen Debois and Lynn Dumenil (2005), Parks "had been active in the local NAACP for fifteen years, and her decision to make this stand against segregation was part of a lifelong commitment to racial justice. For some time NAACP leaders had wanted to find a good test case to challenge Montgomery's bus segregation in courts." Furthermore, the bus boycott that ensued after Parks' arrest and lasted for 381 days, until its success, was an organized political action involving both working-class African American and White women activists. The working-class Black women who relied on public transportation to go to their jobs as domestic servants in White households refused to use the bus system, and either walked to work or relied on rides to work from a carpool organized by women activists. Furthermore, the Women's

Political Caucus of Montgomery distributed fliers promoting the boycott and had provided the groundwork and planning to execute the boycott before it began.

Additionally, the sit-in movement was sparked by the Greensboro sit-ins, when four African American students in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat at a segregated lunch counter at a Woolworth's store in February of 1960 and refused to leave. The number of students participating in the sit-ins increased as the days and weeks went on, and the sit-ins began to receive national media attention. Networks of student activists began sharing the successes of the tactic of the nonviolent sit-in, and began doing sit-ins in their own cities and towns around the country throughout the early 1960s.

Importantly, the sit-in movement led to the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), initiated by Ella Baker shortly after the first sit-in strikes in Greensboro (Figure 6.19). The student activists of SNCC took part in the Freedom Rides of 1961, with African American and White men and women participants, and sought to challenge the Jim Crow laws of the south, which the Interstate Commerce Commission had ruled to be unconstitutional. The freedom riders experienced brutal mob violence in Birmingham and were jailed, but the Congress of Racial **Equality** (CORE) and SNCC kept sending riders to fill the jails of Birmingham. SNCC also participated in Freedom Summer in 1964, which was a campaign that brought mostly White students from the north down to the south to support the work of Black southern civil rights activists for voting rights for African Americans. Once again, Freedom Summer activists faced mob violence, but succeeded in bringing national attention to southern states' foot-dragging in terms of allowing African Americans the legal rights they had won through activism and grassroots organizing.

Figure 6.19. Ella Baker initiated the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

SNCC's non-hierarchical structure gave women chances to participate in the civil rights movement in ways previously blocked to them. However, the deeply embedded sexism of the surrounding **culture** still seeped into civil rights organizations, including SNCC. Although women played pivotal **roles** as organizers and activists throughout the civil rights movement, men occupied the majority of formal leadership **roles** in the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), the NAACP, and CORE. Working with SNCC, Black women activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash became noted activists and leaders within the civil rights movement in the early 1960s. Despite this, women within SNCC were often expected to do "women's work" (i.e., housework and secretarial work). White women SNCC activists Casey Hayden and Mary King critiqued this reproduction of gendered **roles** within the movement and called for dialogue about sexism within the civil rights movement in a memo that circulated through SNCC in 1965, titled "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo."

The memo became an influential document for the birth of the second wave feminist movement, a movement focused generally on fighting patriarchal structures of power, and specifically on combating occupational sex segregation in employment and fighting for reproductive rights for women. However, this was not the only source of second wave feminism, and White women were not the only women spearheading feminist movements. As historian Becky Thompson (2002) argues, in the mid and late 1960s, Latina women, African American women, and Asian American women were developing multiracial feminist organizations that would become important players within the U.S. second wave feminist movement.

In many ways, the second wave feminist movement was influenced and facilitated by the activist tools provided by the civil rights movement. Drawing on the stories of women who participated in the civil rights movement, Debois and Dumenil (2005) argue that women's participation in the civil rights movement allowed them to challenge gender norms that held that women belonged in the private sphere, and not in politics or activism. Not only did many women who were involved in the civil rights movement become activists in the second wave feminist movement, they also employed tactics that the civil rights movement had used, including marches and non-violent direct action. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964—a major legal victory for the civil rights movement—not only prohibited employment **discrimination** based on race, but Title VII of the Act also prohibited sex **discrimination**.

When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—the federal agency created to enforce Title VII—largely ignored women's complaints of employment **discrimination**, 15 women and one man organized to form the National Organization of Women (NOW), which was modeled after the NAACP. NOW focused its attention and organizing on passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), fighting sex **discrimination** in education, and defending *Roe v. Wade*—the Supreme Court decision of 1973 that struck down state laws that prohibited abortion within the first three months of pregnancy.

Although the second wave feminist movement challenged gendered inequalities and brought women's issues to the forefront of national politics in the late 1960s and 1970s, the movement also reproduced race and sex inequalities. Black women writers and activists such as Alice Walker, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins developed **Black feminist critiques** of the ways in which second wave feminists often ignored racism and class oppression and how they uniquely impact women and men of color and working-class people (Figure 6.20). One of the first formal Black feminist organizations was the Combahee River Collective, formed in 1974.

Figure 6.20. Black feminist bell hooks argues that you can't fight sexism without fighting racism, classism, and homophobia.

Black feminist bell hooks (1984) argued that feminism cannot just be a fight to make women equal with men, because such a fight does not acknowledge that all men are not equal in a capitalist, racist, and homophobic society. Thus, hooks and other Black feminists argued that sexism cannot be separated from racism, classism and homophobia, and that these systems of domination overlap and reinforce each other. Therefore, she argued, you cannot fight sexism without fighting racism, classism, and homophobia. Importantly, Black feminism argues that an intersectional perspective that makes visible and critiques multiple sources of oppression and in**equality** also inspires coalitional activism that brings people together across race, class, gender, and sexual identity lines.

6.4.2.4 Third Wave and Queer Feminist Movements

> "We are living in a world for which old forms of activism are not enough and today's activism is about creating coalitions between communities."
>
> — Angela Davis, cited by Hernandez and Rehman in *Colonize This!*

Third wave feminism is, in many ways, a hybrid creature. It is influenced by second wave feminism, Black feminisms, transnational feminisms, Global South feminisms, and queer feminism. This hybrid activism comes directly out of the experiences of feminists in the late 20th and early 21st centuries who have grown up in a world that supposedly does not need social movements. This is because "equal rights" for racial minorities, sexual minorities, and women have been guaranteed by law in most countries. The gap between law and reality—between the abstract proclamations of states and concrete lived experience—however, reveals the necessity of both old and new forms of activism.

In a country where women are paid only 81 percent of what men are paid for the same labor, where police violence in Black communities occurs at much higher rates than in other communities, where 58 percent of **transgender** people surveyed experienced mistreatment from police officers in the past year, where 40 percent of homeless youth organizations' clientele are **gay**, **lesbian**, **bisexual**, or **transgender**, where people of color—on average—make less income and have considerably lower amounts of wealth than White people, and where the military is the most funded institution by the government, feminists have increasingly realized that a coalitional politics that organizes with other groups based on their shared (but differing) experiences of oppression, rather than their specific identity, is absolutely necessary (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019; James, 2016; Durso & Gates, 2012; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Duggan, 2002).

In the 1980s and 1990s, third wave feminists took up activism in a number of forms. Beginning in the mid 1980s, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) began organizing to press an unwilling U.S. government and medical establishment to develop affordable drugs for people with HIV/AIDS (Figure 6.21). In the latter part of the 1980s, a more radical subset of individuals began to articulate a **queer politics**, explicitly reclaiming a derogatory term often used against **gay** men and **lesbian**s, and distancing themselves from the **gay** and **lesbian** rights movement, which they felt mainly reflected the interests of White, middle-class **gay** men and **lesbian**s.The queer turn sought to develop more radical political perspectives and more inclusive sexual **culture**s and communities, which aimed to welcome and support **transgender** and gender non-conforming people and people of color. This was motivated by an intersectional critique of the existing hierarchies within sexual liberation movements, which marginalized individuals within already sexually marginalized groups.

Figure 6.21. The ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) began organizing to press an unwilling US government and medical establishment to develop affordable drugs for people with HIV/AID.

Another defining characteristic of the third wave is the development of new tactics to politicize feminist issues and demands. For instance, ACT UP began to use powerful street theater that brought the death and suffering of people with HIV/AIDS to the streets and to the politicians and pharmaceutical companies that did not seem to care that thousands and thousands of people were dying. They staged die-ins, inflated massive condoms, and occupied politicians' and pharmaceutical executives' offices (Figure 6.22). Their confrontational tactics would be emulated and picked up by anti-globalization activists and the radical Left throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Queer Nation was formed in 1990 by ACT UP activists, and used the tactics developed by ACT UP in order to challenge homophobic violence and heterosexism in mainstream US society.

Figure 6.22. A mass "die-in" on the lawn of Bldg. 1 closed the demonstration as ranks of uniformed officers, some on horseback, protected NIH headquarters during the "Storm the NIH" demonstration on May 21, 1990.

Around the same time as ACT UP was beginning to organize in the mid-1980s, sex-positive feminism came into currency among feminist activists and theorists. Amidst what is known now as the "Feminist Sex Wars" of the 1980s, sex-positive feminists argued that sexual liberation, within a sex-positive **culture** that values consent between partners, would liberate not only women, but also men. Drawing from a **social construction**ist perspective, sex-positive feminists such as cultural anthropologist **Gay**le Rubin (1984) argued that no sexual act has an inherent meaning, and that not all sex, or all representations of sex, were inherently degrading to women. In fact, they argued, sexual politics and sexual liberation are key sites of struggle for White women, women of color, **gay** men, **lesbian**s, queers, and **transgender** people—groups of people who have historically been stigmatized for their sexual identities or sexual practices. Therefore, a key aspect of queer and feminist sub**culture**s is to create sex-positive spaces and communities that not only validatesexualities that are often stigmatized in the broader **culture**, but also place sexual consent at the center of sex-positive spaces and communities. Part of this project of creating sex-positive, feminist and queer spaces is creating media messaging that attempts to both consolidate feminist communities and create knowledge from and for oppressed groups.

In a media-savvy generation, it is not surprising that cultural production is a main avenue of activism taken by contemporary activists. Although some commentators have deemed the third wave to be "post-feminist" or "not feminist" because it often does not utilize the activist forms (e.g., marches, vigils, and policy change) of the second wave movement, the creation of alternative forms of **culture** in the face of a massive corporate media industry can be understood as quite political (Sommers, 1994). For example, the Riot Grrrl movement, based in the Pacific Northwest of the United States in the early 1990s, consisted of do-it-yourself bands predominantly composed of women, the creation of independent record labels, feminist 'zines, and art. Their lyrics often addressed gendered sexual violence, sexual liberationism, heteronormativity, gender normativity, police brutality, and war. Feminist news websites and magazines have also become important sources of feminist analysis on current events and issues. Magazines such as *Bitch* and *Ms*., as well as online blog collectives such as Feministing and the Feminist Wire function as alternative sources of feminist knowledge production. If we consider the creation of lives on our own terms and the struggle for autonomy as fundamental feminist acts of resistance, then creating alternative **culture** on our own terms should be considered a feminist act of resistance as well.

In conclusion, third wave feminism is a vibrant mix of differing activist and theoretical traditions. Third wave feminism's insistence on grappling with multiple points-of-view, as well as its persistent refusal to be pinned down as representing just one group of people or one perspective, may be its greatest strong point. Similar to how queer activists and theorists have insisted that "queer" is and should be open-ended and never set to mean one thing, third wave feminism's complexity, nuance, and adaptability become assets in a world marked by rapidly shifting political situations. The third wave's insistence on coalitional politics as an alternative to identity-based politics is a crucial project in a world that is marked by fluid, multiple, overlapping inequalities.

6.4.3 Licenses and Attributions for Working Outside of the System: Social Movements and Activism

6.4.3.1 Open Content, Shared Previously

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6.5 LOOKING AHEAD

People who have experienced marginalization in this country continue to work,to raise their families, ensure their children have better lives, and strive toward **equity**. While there are a multitude of individual, organized, and grassroots efforts that work both outside and inside the representative system, we have looked most closely at the analysis of the feminist movement and the ways it intersects with other needs and activism.

The United States has been focused on the Black Lives Matter social movement more fully since 2020 than ever before. Black people have been actively seeking change for hundreds of years. The year 2020 saw increased activism both among Black people and allies. Nationally, there is increased understanding of the **discrimination** and bias that Black people continue to experience. This is a time of enlightenment, understanding, and rapid change. The authors encourage readers to continue to examine how past and current policies affect the experiences of Black and multiracial families.

One aspect of the current Black Lives Matter movement is the increased involvement of people from other races and ethnicities as **allies**, people who form relationships and advocate with or for others who are marginalized. These can be White people who do not experience racism but work to support and advocate for **equity**. Often, an ally will come to this position through a variety of experiences and observations, such as interactions with a close friend or family member who experiences racism. But others may not have close experience with people of color. "Listening" to stories, whether through music, the news, novels, or podcasts, is critical to understanding someone else's lived experience. In this podcast, you can hear about one ally, a young Korean American, who surprised himself by speaking up.

https://www.npr.org/2020/07/20/892974604/one-korean-americans-reckoning

Allyship is critical to changing systems of bias, dissemination, and the corresponding privilege that other groups experience. The focus of the story should continue to be on Black individuals who have experienced ongoing systemic harm to their families. They have continued to advocate for understanding of their experience, representation, belonging, and an equal opportunity to participate safely in society and institutions.

You have likely heard of Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's "I Have Dream" speech delivered in Washington, D.C. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. Maybe you have heard these famous lines,

> I say to you today, my friends [applause], so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow (Uh-huh), I still have a dream. (Yes) It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. (Yes)
>
> I have a dream (Mhm) that one day (Yes) this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed (Hah): "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." (Yeah, Uh-huh, Hear hear) [applause]

> I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia (Yes, Talk), the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
>
> I have a dream (Yes) [applause] that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice (Yeah), sweltering with the heat of oppression (Mhm), will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
>
> I have a dream (Yeah) [applause] that my four little children (Well) will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. (My Lord) I have a dream today. [enthusiastic applause]"

You can read the full text here, at the King Institute's website.

You can watch the whole speech in Figure 6.23, with subtitles (although there are occasional places where the audio has been lost).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=401#oembed-1

Figure 6.23. It's worthwhile to read and listen while reflecting on your viewpoint about whether and how the country has progressed and changed since this speech in 1963.

As we reflect, we must keep in mind our own social identities. This author, a White person, has not experienced the negative effects of racialization; in fact, I have benefitted from it even when I didn't realize it. So, reflect. And a part of that reflection must be the willingness to hear the experiences and viewpoints of those whose social identities put them most at risk for structural and individualized **discrimination**.

There are many Black leaders who are changing the way that representation is expressed and experienced. Bubba (Darrell) Wallace, a successful National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) driver made significant headlines by calling on the organization to ban the display of Confederate flags (Figure 6.24). Within 48 hours, the flags were banned, and he had his race car painted with a Black Lives Matter theme. This famous athlete used his personal influence combined with the ongoing social movement and the current national focus to address a longtime problematic symbol of oppression.

Figure 6.24. Bubba (Darrell) Wallace, Jr. called on NASCAR to ban displays of the Confederate flag.

Senator Kamala Harris, a woman of Black and South Asian (Indian) ancestry was elected Vice President in the national 2020 election (Figure 6.25). Her nomination and election highlights her education and work accomplishments as well as the importance of representation at the national level. The election of one Black leader does not solve the inequities that many people of color experience, but it is one step along the way.

Figure 6.25. Former Senator Kamala Harris was elected Vice President in the 2020 election.

We have looked closely at several ways that representation affects families in the United States. As you continue your education in this class, and in the future, pay attention to the ways in which you see representation making a difference, and the potential for changes in representation.

6.5.1 Want to Learn More?

- The official government census website is continually updated as more data is processed. Check here for the most recent information.
- REVUP (Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power) works to increase the voting participation of people with disabilities. If you are interested in REVUP's work, click here.

6.5.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

6.5.2.1 Open Content, Shared Previously

Figure 6.24. "darrell wallace jr." by Zach Catanzareti Photo. License: CC BY 2.0.

Figure 6.25. "At the 2019 Iowa Democrats Hall of Fame Celebration in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on Sunday. June 9" by Lorie Shaull. License: CC BY-NC SA 2.0.

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Figure 6.23. "Dr Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream Full SPEECH with English Subtitles" (c) English Subtitles. License Terms: Standard YouTube license.

6.6 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

6.6.1 Reflective Questions

1. What formal processes exist in the United States for the representation of all families?
2. What contributes to some families being represented less frequently in **social process**es such as voting, being elected, and participating in the census?
3. How would more parity among our elected representatives make a difference?
4. What are the barriers to participation? What institutional changes could be made to increase participation? What new processes and institutions could you imagine that might lead to more **equity** in representation?
5. Which demographic groups are best represented? Least represented?
6. How is representation linked with **equity**?
7. How has the feminist movement evolved and changed over time?
8. How do social movements interact with laws, policy, and elected officials?
9. How are representation and belonging linked?
10. What institutional changes to increase participation and **equity** in **social process**es would you recommend?

6.6.2 Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

6.7 KEY TERMS

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **ally**: a person who forms relationships with and advocates with or for others who are marginalized, but do not have that marginalized identity themselves.
- **American Community Survey (ACS)**: a program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that gathers demographic information annually in the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- **Black feminist critiques**: a body of critical and creative work written by black women in the United States regarding feminism and how it often ignored racism and class oppression.
- **disenfranchisemen**t: the state of being rejecting or being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.
- **feminist movement**: a series of social movements and political campaigns for radical and liberal reforms regarding sex and gender **equity**, women's issues, and sexism.
- **representation**: the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way.
- **social movement**: A loosely organized effort by a large group of people to achieve a social goal, such as carrying out change, or to resist or undo the status quo.
- **U.S. Census**: A population census that takes place every 10 years and is legally mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- **voter registration**: The process whereby citizens register with election officials in order to become eligible to vote.

6.7.1 Licenses and Attributions for Key Terms

6.7.1.1 Open Content, Original

6.8 CHAPTER 6 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 7: HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

7.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain how socially constructed ideas affect health.
2. Describe the advantage of understanding health disparities related to **social characteristics** (race, gender, etc.).
3. Explain why people with mental illness or substance abuse disorders are less likely to get medical care and support.
4. Relate the challenges of meeting basic needs like sleep, exercise, and good diet to family health.
5. Describe the difference between a health care system and health insurance.
6. Examine how family structure, geography, and income level overlap affect health care access.
7. Analyze the role of capitalism in the opioid crisis.
8. Apply theoretical concepts related to health care to one's own observations and experiences.

7.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

7.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

7.2 HEALTH, WELLNESS, SICKNESS, AND DISEASE

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Amy Huskey

> "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."
>
> — Mahatma Gandhi

Health is the "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity," as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2005) in its Constitution. The organization goes on to state that families and communities are able to thrive when individuals are able to maintain health. Our employment, finances, mental and emotional functioning, and spiritual lives all interact with our overall health.

While the status of health is very real, it is also important to examine the aspects of health and illness that are socially constructed. As members of society, we share assumptions about reality that define both health and illness. Illness has a biological component, yet it also embodies an independent element that is experienced by the person and observed by those outside of the illness. Societies construct the idea of "health" differently from place to place, and over time. For example, many societies consider health and health care to be a human right that all human beings are entitled to, but this is not universally true (Figure 7.1). What is your viewpoint?

The **social construction** of the idea of family, as discussed in Chapter 1, plays a special role in the health of families in the United States. In all other industrialized countries, health care is considered a human right, and all individuals can access comparable care regardless of family status. But in the U.S., health care insurance is accessed through a variety of systems, all of which have age, income, employment status, and family relationships as criteria. How do definitions of "family" impact the access of any individual to health care?

Figure 7.1. Activists around the world continue to strive for universal access to health care.

Society informs the definitions for when an illness can be considered a disability, how eligibility for insurance and medical coverage are determined, what illnesses are perceived as legitimate, when the reality of an illness is questioned, and what illnesses are stigmatized (Griffiths & Keirns, 2015). These social constructs can, in themselves, contribute to differentiation in individual health as well as stereotypes, prejudice, and **discrimination**. **Stigma,** the **social process** whereby individuals that are taken to be different in some way are rejected by the greater society in which they live based on that difference, operates in the world of health, ability, and illness. Sociologist Erving Goffman said, "Stigma is a process by which the reaction of others spoils normal identity." A disease or illness that is stigmatized is one in which there is some societal disapproval or questioning of the integrity of people who have the disease, which can also include medical professionals and the person with the disease stigmatizing themselves (Figure 7.2).

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=411#oembed-1*

Figure 7. 2. Stigma – Social and self | Individuals and Society | MCAT | Khan Academy [YouTube Video].

The Khan Academy Medicine channel describes the interrelationship among stigma, self, and society in this 7-minute video.

There are many socially stigmatized diseases which can include mental disorders, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse disorders, skin conditions, and diseases that are less understood by the medical community, such as auto-immune disorders and chronic fatigue syndrome. Individuals may be less likely to seek treatment when experiencing symptoms of a stigmatized condition. In the United States, where health insurance creates another layer of bureaucracy, less understood illnesses and treatments may not be covered by some insurance.

Even if a person with a stigmatized disease accesses health care, they may have fewer social supports and greater chances of isolation and **discrimination** in the health care setting and beyond. Management of a disability because of the deterioration of health due to a stigmatized illness can prove to be a tremendous hardship (Sartorius, 2007). It is important to consider how marginalized groups experience health inequities, including those experienced due to the stigma and prejudices linked with the societal perception of specific illnesses.

One's status in society, or structural power, can complicate the experience of social stigma related to medical conditions. For example, cisgender men hold more power in the United States than women or people outside the **gender binary**. What role does that play in the diagnosis of real health concerns and the **social construction** of those concerns?

We know that overwhelmingly men are the subjects of the majority of medical studies and research. That affects what is thought of as "typical" or "normal." Women have more often been told that their symptoms are "all in your head" or related to "female troubles." While this is less common than in the past, it likely continues to play a part in the misdiagnosis of serious illness in women and people with **nonbinary** gender identities. We also know that women experience diseases such as myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia in much higher numbers than do men. The medical community describes these syndromes in overly broad terms that make diagnosis difficult. We must ask ourselves, how do these multiple complex factors serve to continue to reinforce the existing power dynamic in the United States? What systemic changes in healthcare would reduce this **inequity**?

In this chapter, we will examine the overall health of families in the United States, with attention to comparisons among families' experiences with health, illness, injury, and diseases as well as comparisons with other countries. We will describe the daily life factors and resources that affect health, including the effects of stigma, prejudice and **discrimination**. We will look closely at how families access health care services, including the health care insurance system. We will discuss the question of health care as a human right.

7.2.1 Activity: Lung Cancer, Stigma, and Intersectionality

In a 2014 report, “Addressing the Stigma of Lung Cancer,” the American Lung Association (ALA) described how stigma can contribute to patients avoiding or delaying care when symptoms are experienced and how they may resist disclosing health information to providers. Patients could also experience fewer social supports, feel more distress related to the disease, experience additional conflicts in relationships, and receive lower quality of health care. The report then explained how the stigmas around lung cancer related to lung cancer being hard to detect early, being seen as a death sentence with little hope for survival, and being labeled “a smoker’s disease.” This could contribute to society’s feeling that people with lung cancer are to blame for their disease and ought to feel ashamed.

According to the ALA survey, the public lacked knowledge regarding the prevalence and mortality of lung cancer, as well as knowledge about the funding levels for research. Responders also lacked knowledge of factors, other than smoking, that contributed to the development of lung cancer, such as genetics and occupational or environmental exposures. Lack of knowledge could play an important role in perpetuating some of the negative associations with and assumptions related to lung cancer (Figure 7.3).

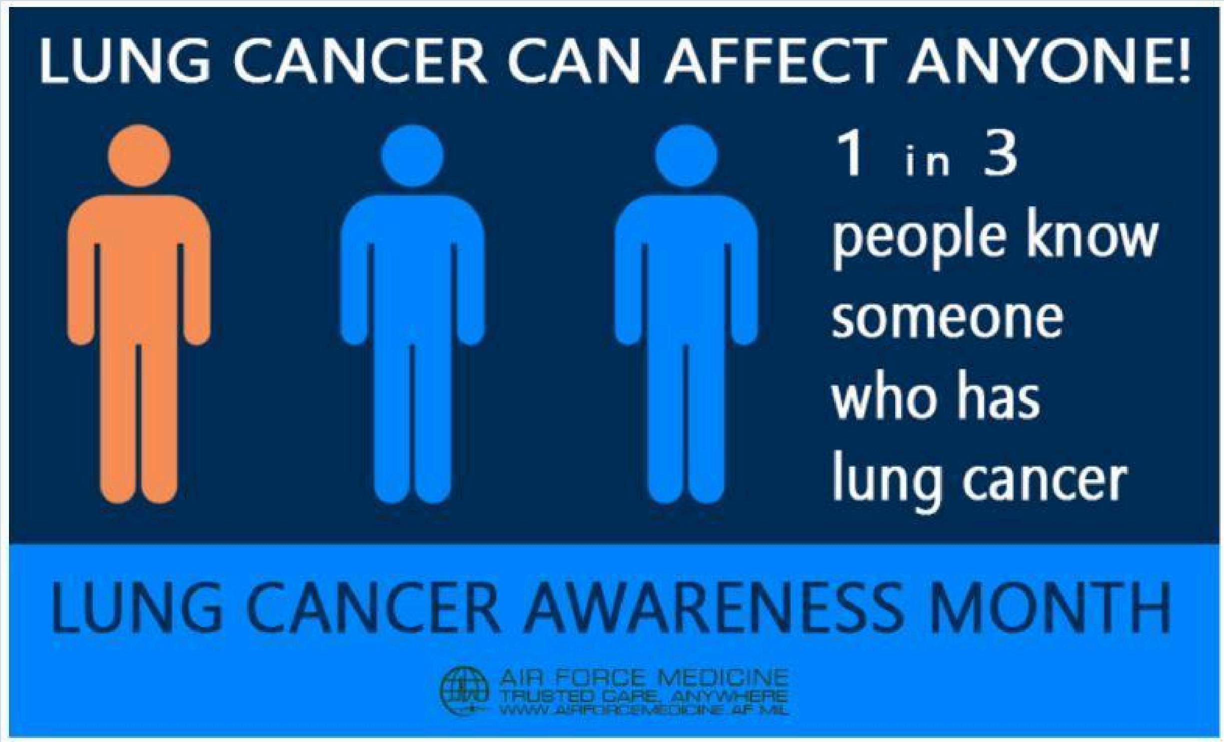

Figure 7.3. This graphic, created by the Air Force Medicine Facebook group, raises awareness about the commonality of lung cancer, which can help reduce stigma related to the disease.

Lung cancer stigma has real consequences. People with lung cancer may hide their condition and experience anxiety and depression. They may believe that healthcare providers are judgmental and biased towards them. Research, advocacy, and public policy are also dimensions in which stigma can have negative consequences for advancing progress toward the treatment of this disease. For instance, lung cancer kills far more people than any other cancer type and contributes to over 25 percent of all cancer deaths per year (American Cancer Society, 2020). Yet, a study of nonprofit research funding by cancer type determined that lung cancer ranked fourth in its level of funding and is underfunded in relation to its burden on society (Kamath et al., 2019). Not only are funding levels influenced by stigma, but celebrities, community leaders, and volunteers may be less likely to lend their name or volunteer their time due to negative associations with this disease (American Lung Association, 2014).

Discussion

- As you finish reading this section, notice if you blame or hold people more responsible knowing that they have lung cancer, than if they have another cancer such as breast or prostate cancer.
- What did you learn that was new or surprised you?

- What effect could the stigma itself have on people who are sick, and the healthcare that they receive?
- Is the stigmatization of lung cancer a **social problem**? Rather than perceiving lung cancer as a personal problem does the prevalence of the illness combined with the stigmatization affect the well-being of our society?

Understanding **intersectionality** and stigma provides a way of analyzing how **intersectionality** can be illustrated through the lens of the **social construction** of illness. The LGBTQ+ community, for instance, already faces challenges in finding health care providers who are culturally competent and have adequate knowledge in LGBTQ+ health (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, n.d.). If you couple this with the stigma related to a lung cancer diagnosis, then you are compounding the obstacles that stand in the way of receiving quality health care. One could also examine how **socioeconomic status** may further complicate this scenario by realizing that people living in poverty are more likely to have no health insurance, therefore restricting access even more (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Even geographical location, like living in a rural area, or in the Southern portion of the United States, will reduce accessibility to healthcare (Warshaw, 2017). Every time an individual is grouped into a marginalized group, including illness status, it intensifies the effects of **discrimination** and resulting health disparities.

7.2.2 Licenses and Attributions for Health, Wellness, Sickness, and Disease

7.2.2.1 Open Content, Original

7.2.2.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

7.2.3 References

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7.3 HEALTH EQUITY

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Amy Huskey; Jessica N. Hampton; and Hannah Morelos

Health in the United States is a complex topic. As one of the wealthiest nations, the United States fares well in some health comparisons with the rest of the world. For example, most postoperative complications are less common in the U.S. than in comparable countries. And, as Figure 7.4 shows, mortality rates for several cancers are lower.

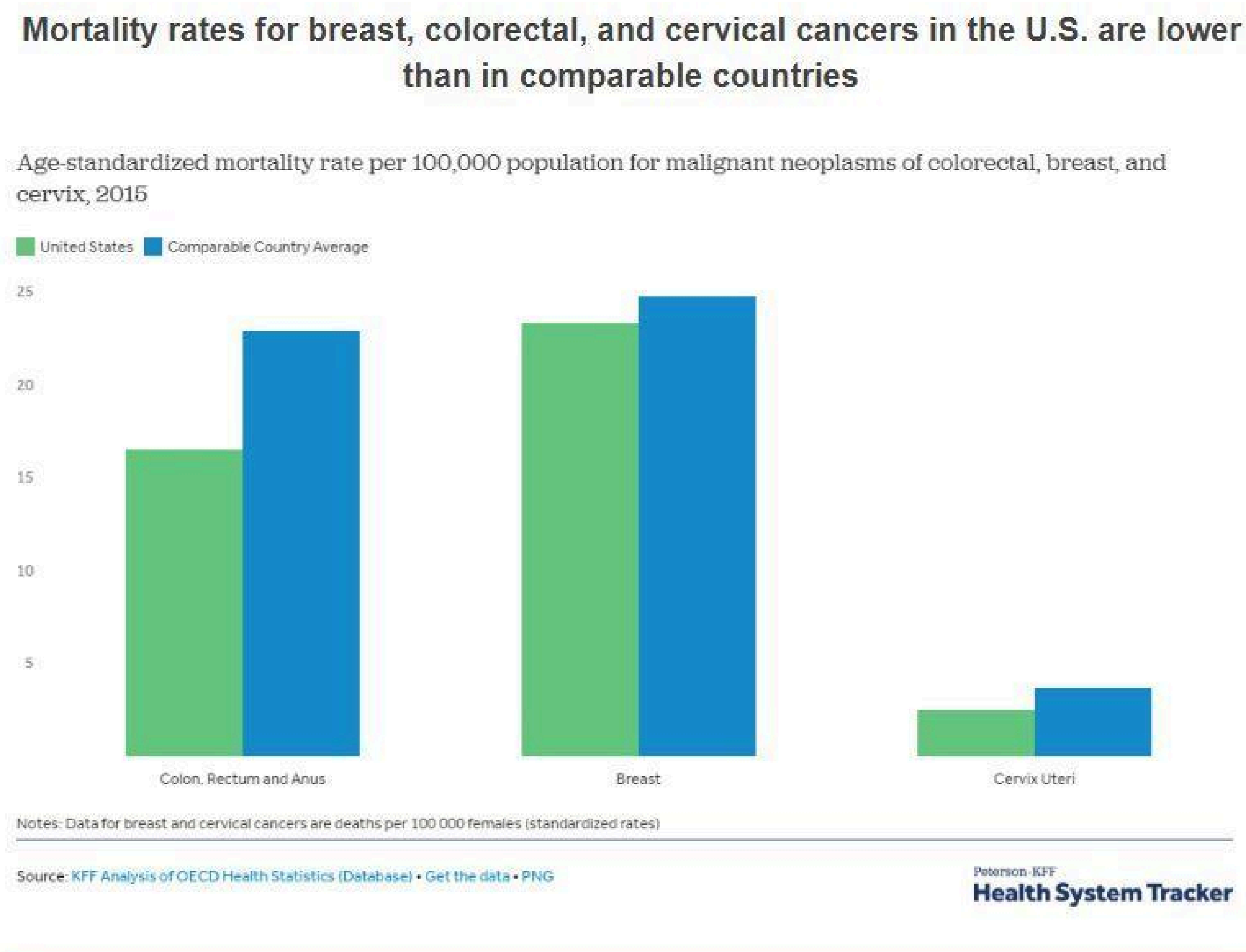

Figure 7.4. While there is debate over the best way to measure outcomes for cancer, the U.S. typically performs better in both mortality rates and five-year survival rates for breast cancer. In 2015, the mortality rate for breast and cervical cancers in the U.S. was slightly lower than the comparable country average. For colorectal cancers, the U.S. has a mortality rate of 16.5 deaths per 100,000 population, compared to the average rate of 22.9 per 100,000 in similar countries.

The overall comparative picture is more grim. The United States spends a great deal more public, private, and out-of-pocket funds per capita on health care but also lags behind almost every industrialized country in terms of providing basic health and health care to all of its citizens (figures 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7) (Tikkanen & Abrams, 2020).

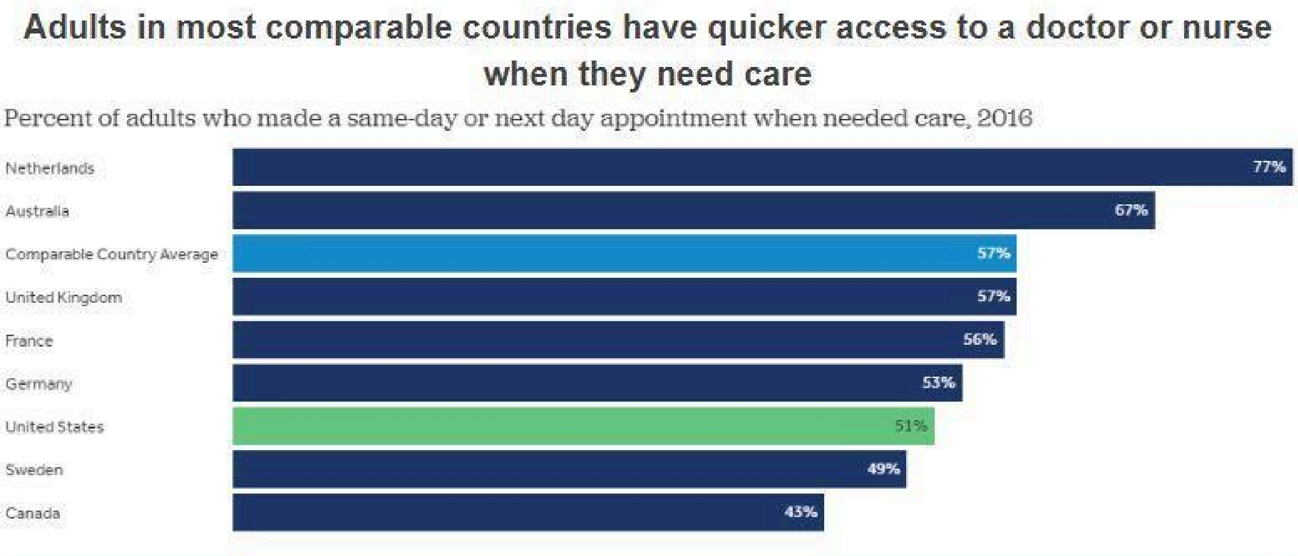

Figure 7.5 With the exception of Canada and Sweden, patients in the United States have a harder time making a same-day appointment when in need of care. In 2016, 51% of patients in the United States were able to make a same-day appointment with a provider, compared to 57% of patients in similar countries.

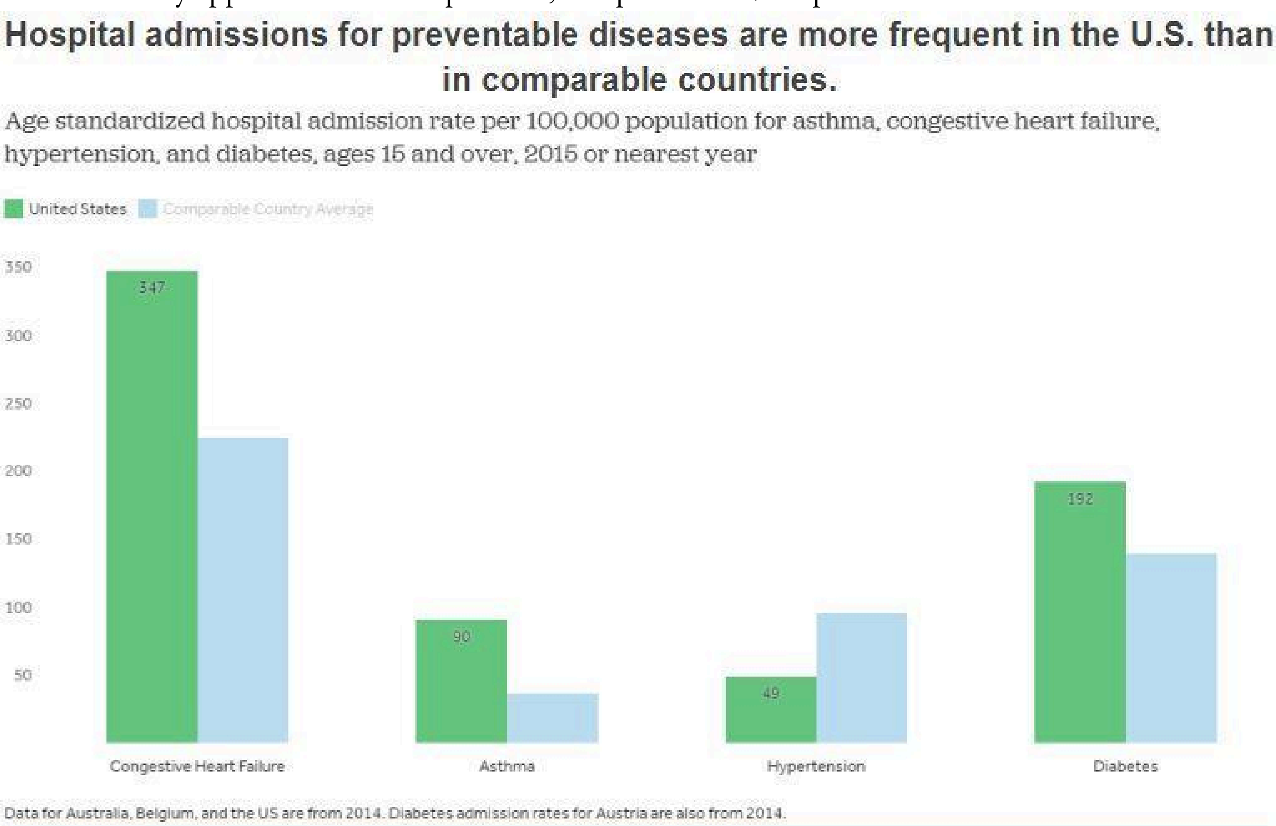

Figure 7.6. Hospital admissions for certain chronic diseases like circulatory conditions, asthma, and

diabetes, can arise when prevention services are either not being adhered to or delivered. Hospital admission rates in the U.S. are higher than in comparable countries for congestive heart failure, asthma, and complications due to diabetes. However, the U.S. has lower rates of hospitalization for hypertension than comparably wealthy countries do on average. In total across these four disease categories, the United States has a 37 percent higher rate of hospital admissions than the average of other countries.

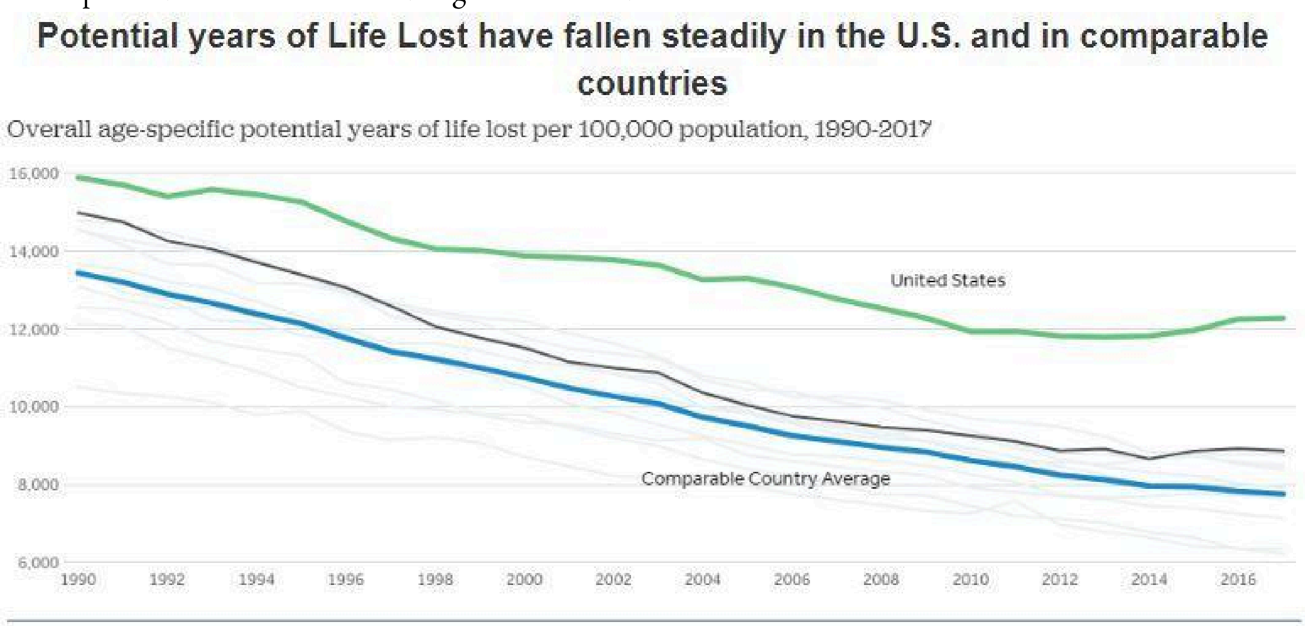

Figure 7.7. Premature deaths are measured in Years of Life Lost (YLL), which is an alternative to overall mortality rate. It is measured by adding together the total number of years that people who died before a specified age (e.g. 70) would have lived if they had lived to that age. For example, a person who dies at age 45 would have a YLL of 25. As a measure, it provides more weight to deaths at younger ages. The U.S. and comparable OECD countries have made progress in reducing YLL's over the last 25 years (down 23 percent and 42 percent respectively), although the U.S. continues to trail comparable countries by a significant margin (12,282 v. 7,764 YLLs in 2017).

But these charts do not tell the entire story. The overall averages of health only compare the rates in the U.S. to the rates in other countries. Within the United States, groups are affected disproportionately in terms of access to health and health outcomes. These disparities are described next.

7.3.1 Social Determinants of Health and Disparities

Family and individual health is affected by the environments in which people live, work, learn, and play. While the focus here is health, these **social determinants of health** also affect a wide range of quality of life factors. Social engagement and access to resources, safety, and security are all impacted by the settings where families spend their time. Simply put, place matters when it comes to health.

Health disparities are linked to the **social determinants of health**. They are preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations (CDC, 2008). Populations can be defined by factors such as race or **ethnicity**, gender, education or income, disability, geographic location (e.g., rural or urban), or **sexual orientation**. Health disparities are inequitable and are directly related to the historical and current unequal distribution of social, political, economic, and environmental resources.

Health disparities result from multiple factors, including:

- Poverty
- Environmental threats
- Inadequate access to health care
- Individual and behavioral factors
- Educational inequalities

Health disparities are also related to inequities in education. Dropping out of school is associated with multiple social and health problems (McCarty et al., 2008; Ellickson et al., 1997). Overall, individuals with less education are more likely to experience a number of health risks, such as obesity, substance abuse, and intentional and unintentional injury, compared with individuals with more education (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). Higher levels of education are associated with a longer life and an increased likelihood of obtaining or understanding basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (Liao et al., 1999; Jemal et al., 2008; Breese et al., 2007).

At the same time, good health is associated with academic success. Higher levels of protective health behaviors and lower levels of health risk behaviors have been associated with higher academic grades among high school students (Rasberry et al., 2017). Health risks such as teenage pregnancy, poor dietary choices, inadequate physical activity, physical and emotional abuse, substance abuse, and gang involvement have a significant impact on how well students perform in school (Choi, 2007; Shore et al., 2008; Valois et al., 2002; Chomitz et al., 2009; Field et al., 2001).

7.3.1.1 Health by Race and **Ethnicity**

When looking at the social epidemiology of the United States, it is hard to miss the disparities among races. The discrepancy between Black and White Americans shows the gap clearly; in 2008, the average life expectancy for White males was approximately five years longer than for Black males: 75.9 compared to 70.9. An even stronger disparity was found in 2007: the infant mortality rate for Black Americans was nearly twice that of White Americans at 13.2 compared to 5.6 per 1,000 live births (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). According to a report from the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, Black Americans also have a higher incidence of several other diseases and causes of mortality, from cancer to heart disease to diabetes (James et al., 2007). In a similar vein, it is important to note that ethnic minority groups, including Mexican Americans and Native Americans, also have higher rates of these diseases and causes of mortality than White Americans.

Lisa Berkman (2009) notes that this gap started to narrow during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, but it began widening again in the early 1980s. What accounts for these perpetual disparities in health among different ethnic groups? Much of the answer lies in the level of healthcare that these groups receive. Even after adjusting for insurance differences, marginalized racial and ethnic groups racial and ethnic minority groups receive poorer quality of care and less access to care than dominant groups (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2010). Racial inequalities in care include:

1. Black Americans, Native Americans, and Alaskan Natives received inferior care than White Americans for about 40 percent of measures.
2. Asian ethnicities received inferior care for about 20 percent of measures.
3. Among Whites, Hispanic Whites received 60 percent inferior care of measures compared to non-Hispanic Whites.

7.3.1.2 Health by **Socioeconomic Status** (SES)

Discussions of health by race and **ethnicity** often overlap with discussions of health by **socioeconomic status**, since the two concepts are intertwined in the United States. As the Agency for Health Research and Quality (2010) notes, "racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be poor or near poor," so many of the data pertaining to marginalized groups is also likely to be pertinent to low socioeconomic groups. Marilyn Winkleby et al. (1992) state that "one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of a person's morbidity [incidence of disease] and mortality experience is that person's **socioeconomic status** (SES). This finding persists across all diseases with few exceptions, continues throughout the entire lifespan, and extends across numerous risk factors for disease."

It is important to remember that economics are only part of the SES picture; research suggests that education also plays an important role. Phelan and Link (2003) note that many diseases with a behavioral component, like lung cancer from smoking, coronary artery disease from poor eating and exercise habits, and AIDS initially were widespread across SES groups.

However, once information linking habits to disease was disseminated, these diseases decreased in high SES groups and increased in low SES groups. This illustrates the important role of education initiatives regarding a given disease, as well as possible inequalities in how those initiatives effectively reach different SES groups.

7.3.1.3 Health by Gender

Women are affected adversely both by unequal access to health care and institutionalized sexism in the healthcare industry. According to a recent report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, women experienced a decline in their ability to see needed specialists between 2001 and 2008. In 2008, one quarter of females questioned the quality of her healthcare (Ranji & Salganico, 2011). In this report, we also see the explanatory value of understanding **intersectionality** and intersection theory. Feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins developed the intersection theory, which suggests we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, **sexual orientation**, and other attributes. Further examination of the lack of confidence in the healthcare system by women, as identified in the Kaiser study, found, for example, women categorized as low income were more likely (32 percent compared to 23 percent) to express concerns about healthcare quality, illustrating the multiple layers of disadvantage caused by **socioeconomic status** and sex.

We can see an example of institutionalized sexism in the way that women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with certain kinds of mental disorders. Psychologist Dana Becker (n.d.) notes that 75 percent of all diagnoses of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) are for women, according to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). This diagnosis is characterized by instability of identity, mood, and behavior, and Becker argues that it has been used as a catch-all diagnosis for too many women. She further criticizes the pejorative connotation of the diagnosis, saying that these pejorative connotations cause people in and outside of the profession of psychotherapy to be biased against women who have been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder.

Many critics also point to the medicalization of women's issues as an example of institutionalized sexism. Medicalization refers to the process by which previously normal aspects of life are redefined as deviant and needing medical attention to remedy. Historically and contemporarily, many aspects of women's lives have been medicalized, including menstruation, premenstrual syndrome, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause.

The medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth has been particularly contentious in recent decades, with many women opting against the medical process and choosing a more natural childbirth. Fox and Worts (1999) find that all women experience pain and anxiety during the birth process, but that social support relieves both as effectively as medical support. In other words, medical interventions are no more effective than social ones at helping with the difficulties of pain and childbirth. Fox and Worts further found that women with supportive partners ended up with less medical intervention and fewer cases of postpartum depression. Of course, access to quality birth care outside the standard **medical model**s may not be readily available to women of all social classes.

7.3.2 Interrelationship of Mental and Physical Health

Mental and physical health have been viewed in the Western world as separate, with mental disorders being stigmatized. Often mental illnesses such as depression or anxiety have been seen as a personal problem that a person should and could "get over" as opposed to a physical ailment such as a sprained ankle or strep throat that merits medical attention and assistance. Even physical illnesses such as fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome, which are experienced by many more women than men, can be seen as "in the patient's head," leading medical professionals to the potential of missing physical illnesses that need medical intervention. This leaves the patient with not only the physical symptoms, but also a potential lack of understanding among peers, family members, medical professionals, and co-workers.

Eastern and Native **culture**s have long seen the connection between the mind and body and indeed, this connection is better understood than in the United States and among other Western countries where dualism (the separating of the mind/spirit from the body) prevails. Cancer, heart, and respiratory disease death rates are all higher in people with mental illness. In addition, it is better understood how physical lifestyle choices such as exercise, diet, and drug use affect mental health and vice versa (Mental Health Foundation, 2020).

7.3.2.1 Mental Health Stigma

Someone struggling with depression that causes weight gain or weight loss due to a lack of appetite or excessive hunger is an example of the relationship between mental health and stigma. Obesity and emaciation are both stigmatized in our **culture**, while the underlying mental or physical health condition may be ignored. Although we have seen a shift in media about mental illness from known celebrities coming forward, such as Demi Lovato, Chrissy Teigan, Steve Young, and Dan Reynolds, there is still a social stigma against mental health. Oftentimes, when someone is diagnosed with a physical illness such as cancer or heart disease, we see communities and families coming together. Unfortunately, we rarely see mental illness struggles come to the surface without holding a place of shame or guilt; individuals, families, and communities are often more reluctant to talk and come together in the same way.

Figure 7.8. There continues to be a need to advocate for mental health awareness.

When we speak about stigma, we speak of two different types: the first stigma is social stigma, meaning the prejudiced attitudes others have around mental illness and the treatment of mental illness. The second one is self-perceived stigma, which is an internalized stigma that the individual who suffers from the mental illness has. Not only may the stigma around mental illness create painful emotions and a sense of invalidation for the individual, it can result in a reluctance to seek treatment, social rejection, avoidance, isolation, and direct harm to psychological well-being. The social and self-perceived stigma attached to mental illness can be reinforced by common cultural misconceptions, social stereotypes, popular media representations, political leaders, and even some medical professionals and health care institutions.

7.3.2.2 Health Insurance Coverage and Legislation

Like all other health care in the United States, access to mental health care is highly dependent on access to medical insurance. But because the need for mental health support is not validated as fully as is the need for physical health support, insurance companies and government programs have frequently excluded or limited mental health coverage. This is an example of institutionalized or structural stigma.

This practice has been changed through two major acts of legislation: the Mental Health Parity and Addiction **Equity** Act (MHPAEA) passed in 2008 and The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or simply Obamacare, passed by the 111th Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2010.

In 2008, federal lawmakers passed MHPAEA, which created an **equity** requirement for insurance providers who covered mental health services; those services must be equivalent to the physical health coverage provided. It did not, however, require providers to provide mental health care coverage. So benefits, expenses, and limits requirements were allowed to vary from state to state along with whatever insurance plan individuals could access. It was still the case that insurance holders did not have access to mental health treatment. In 2013, 61 percent of insured people had access to mental health services and 54 percent of the insured had access to addiction treatment (Health **Poc**ket, 2013).

The passage of the ACA reduced the inequities in access to mental health and addiction treatment in two fundamental ways. First, it eliminated health insurance companies' ability to deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions. That gave consumers diagnosed with any mental or physical illness greater choice and more financial leverage when selecting an insurance company. In addition, it required insurance providers to include 10 essential benefits including "services for those suffering from mental health disorders and problems with substance abuse."

While these improvements in the equitability of mental health and addiction access are notable, they apply only to families who have access to certain kinds of health insurance and not universally to all families in the United States. Structural stigma intersects with systemic racism, sexism, and classism.

7.3.2.3 Focus On: Sleep, **Discrimination**, and **Intersectionality**

Let's focus on how these various disparities overlap with everyday behavior. A biological need that is fundamental to human health is sleep, yet the medical community still has much to understand and learn about its exact mechanisms. Sleep is a vital part of our daily routine, and we spend about one-third of our time doing it. Quality sleep, and getting enough of it at the right times, is as essential to survival as food and water. In rats, death results from no sleep at 32 days (Palmer, 2009). Research has not observed human death as a result of prolonged sleep deprivation, but paranoia and hallucinations can begin happening in as little as 24 hours without sleep (Walters et al., 2008).

Without sleep, you can't form or maintain the pathways in your brain that let you learn and create new memories, and it's harder to concentrate and respond quickly. Sleep is important to a number of brain functions, including how nerve cells communicate with each other. In fact, our brains and bodies stay remarkably active while we sleep. Recent findings suggest that sleep plays a housekeeping role that removes toxins in our brains that build up when we are awake.

Figure 7.9. Being sleep deprived affects you more than just being tired!

Sleep affects almost every type of tissue and system in the body, from the brain, heart, and lungs to metabolism, immune function, mood, and disease resistance. Research shows that a chronic lack of sleep, or getting poor quality sleep, increases the risk of disorders including high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity. All of these conditions, shown in Figure 7.9, would likely have a noticeable effect on multiple dimensions of family life and how it impacts the well being of a family as a whole.

7.3.2.4 Activity: Sleep is a Superpower

For some surprising and specific health effects of sleep view, this TED Talk that discusses reproductive systems, memory, and cardiovascular systems. , … (Figure 7.10):

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=413#oembed-1

Figure 7.10. Sleep is your superpower | Matt Walker [YouTube Video]Matt Walker talks about sleep as a superpower.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you hear in this talk that was new or surprising to you?
2. What are some of the correlated health effects of losing an hour of sleep (daylight savings time) or gaining an hour of sleep?
3. How does sleep affect your immune system, heart, reproductive system, or brain?
4. If you are not getting enough sleep, what could you do to increase the sleep you get? What about this video might influence you to prioritize more sleep?

In 2010, a study was published that examined whether there were disparities in sleep quality based on poverty and race/**ethnicity** (Figure 7.9). They found that a "sleep disparity" did exist in the study population, and poor sleep quality was strongly associated with poverty and race. Factors such as employment, education, and health status, among others, significantly mediated this effect in participants experiencing poverty. The literature linking sleep and health continues to grow. This study illustrated how poor health is associated with an almost 4-fold increased likelihood of poor sleep. It is important to note that the relationship between health and sleep quality is likely bidirectional and/or parallel: sleep can influence health and vice versa (Patel et al., 2010).

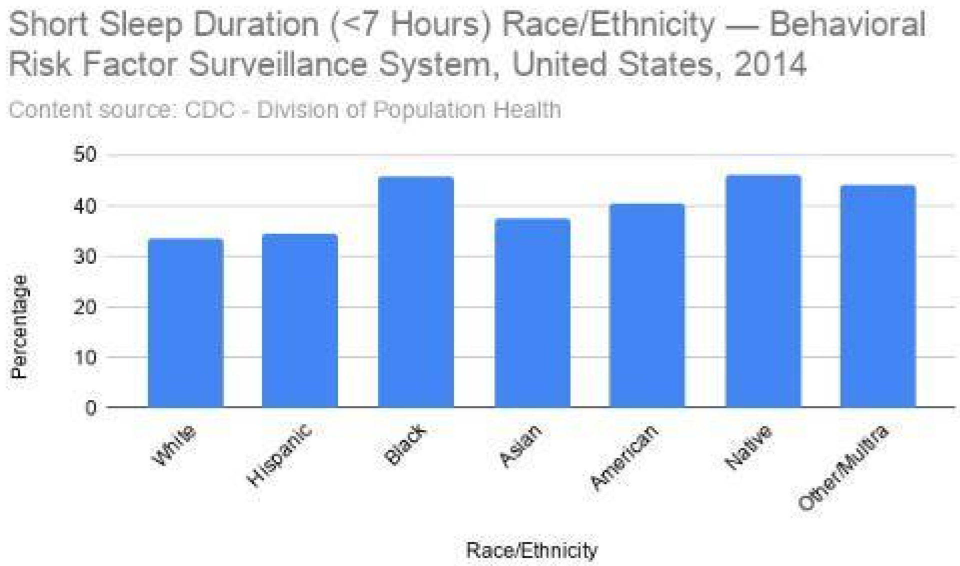

Figure 7.11. In 2010, a study found that poor sleep quality was strongly associated with poverty and race.

Discrimination, and especially intersectional **discrimination**, appear to influence sleep, mental, and physical health. The relationship between **discrimination** and poorer mental and physical health has been established among populations such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and members of LGBTQ+ groups. For instance, **discrimination** can harm wellbeing, increase distress and mental illness symptoms, elevate risk for a wide variety of physical illnesses and conditions, and undermine general indicators of health (Brown et al., 2018; Schmitt et al., 2014). Consider also the ways that low-income and marginalized groups inhabit less desirable neighborhoods. The overlap of all **social determinants of health** and feeling safe and secure in particular are likely to impact sleep. Recently, lack of sleep and less functionality during the daytime have been identified as integral aspects of the cycle of **discrimination**, stress, and overall mental and physical health (Hisler & Brenner, 2019).

7.3.3 Licenses and Attributions for Health Equity

7.3.3.1 Open Content, Original

"Mental Health Stigma" by Hannah Morelos is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

"Health Insurance Coverage" by Elizabeth B. Pearce is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

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Figure 7.4. "Mortality rates for breast and colorectal cancer in the U.S. are lower than in comparable countries" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Figure 7.5. "Percent of adults who made a same-day or next day appointment when needed care, 2016" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Figure 7.6. "Age-sex standardized hospital admission rate per 100,000 population for asthma, congestive heart failure, hypertension, and diabetes, ages 15 and over, 2016 or nearest year" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Figure 7.7. "Potential Years of Life Lost have fallen steadily in the U.S. and in comparable OECD countries" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

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Figure 7.8. "Main health effects of sleep deprivation" by Mikael Häggström. CC0.

Figure 7.9. "Short sleep duration (<7 hours) race/ethnicity" by CDC. Public domain.

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Figure 7.10. "Sleep is your superpower" (c) TED Talks. License Terms: Standard YouTube license.

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7.4 HEALTH AND HEALTH INSURANCE

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Jessica N. Hampton, and Christopher Byers

Industrialized nations throughout the world, with the notable exception of the United States, provide their citizens with some form of national health care and national health insurance (Russell, 2018). Although their healthcare systems differ in several respects, their governments pay all or most of the costs for health care, drugs, and other health needs. In Denmark, for example, the government provides free medical care and hospitalization for the entire population and pays for some medications and some dental care. In France, the government pays for some of the medical, hospitalization, and medication costs for most people and all these expenses for people who are low-income, unemployed, or have children under the age of ten. In Great Britain, the National Health Service pays most medical costs for the population, including medical care, hospitalization, prescriptions, dental care, and eyeglasses. In Canada, the National Health Insurance system also pays for most medical costs. Patients do not even receive bills from their physicians, who instead are paid by the government. Medical debt and bankruptcy due to accidents or disease is a uniquely American problem.

These national health insurance programs are commonly credited with reducing infant mortality, extending life expectancy, and, more generally, for enabling their citizens to have relatively good health. Notably, the United States ranks 33 out of 36 countries who belong to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for infant mortality. The infant mortality rate in the United States is 5.9 deaths per 1,000 live infant births, as compared to the average rate of 3.9 deaths per 1000 births. Five countries have death rates lower than 2 per 1,000 births. Their populations are generally healthier than Americans, even though healthcare spending is much higher per capita in the United States than in these other nations. In all these respects, these national health insurance systems offer several advantages over the healthcare model found in the United States (Reid, 2010).

7.4.1 The Role of Health Insurance in the United States

Medicine in the United States is big business. Expenditures for health care, health research, and other health items and services have risen sharply in recent decades, having increased tenfold since 1980 as shown in Figure 7.11, and now cost the nation more than $2.6 trillion annually. This translates to the largest figure per capita in the industrial world. Despite this expenditure, the United States lags behind many other industrialized nations in several important health indicators.

US Health-Care Expenditure, 1980–2010 (in Billions of Dollars)

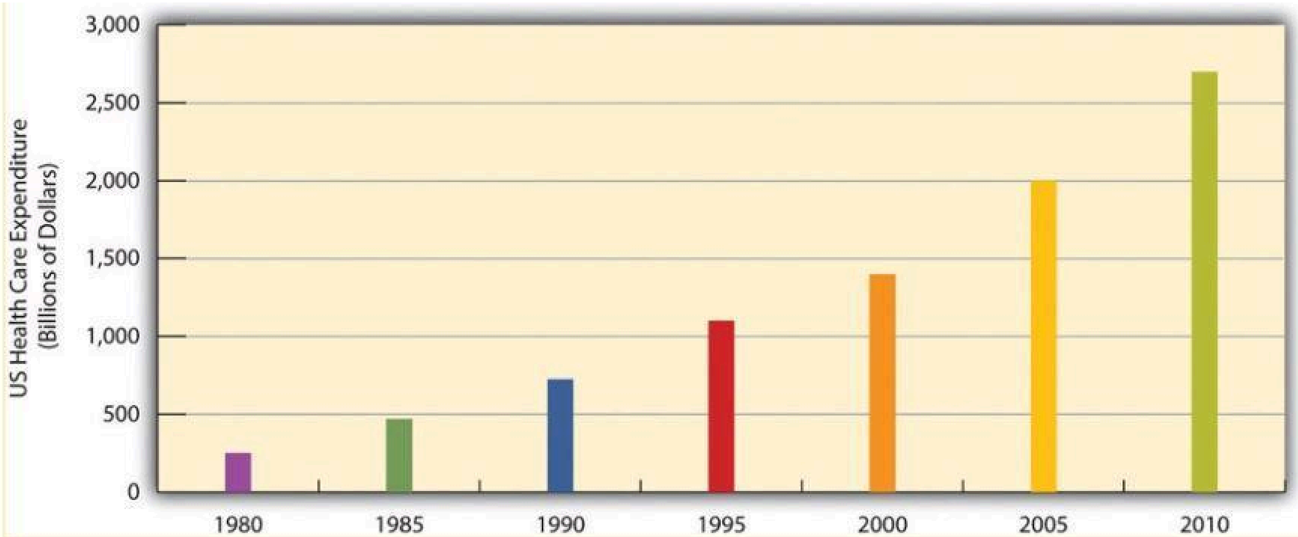

Figure 7.11. Expenditures for health care have increased tenfold since 1980.

7.4.2 Access to Health Care Coverage and Insurance

There are many insurance options in America, and we will see that they disproportionately benefit some and disadvantage others based on factors like sex, income, geographical location, and **ethnicity**. In 2017, some of the most common ways people accessed insurance included the following:

- Private plans
- Employer-based (56 percent)
- Direct purchase (16 percent)

Other methods of accessing insurance included government plans such as the following:

- Medicaid (19.3 percent)
- Medicare (17.2 percent)
- Military healthcare (4.8 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

To learn more about how people accessed health insurance coverage, and who remained uncovered, watch this seven-minute video provided by the United States Census Bureau (Figure 7.12).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=415#oembed-1

Figure 7.12. 2017 Income, Poverty and Health Insurance – Health Insurance Presentation [YouTube Video]. This video presents a visual representation and map of health insurance coverage in the U.S.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was created to make healthcare more affordable and to be less discriminatory in 2010. In 2016, section 1557 provided new regulations to the Affordable Care Act, including a way to enforce civil rights protections in healthcare by making it unlawful for health care entities to discriminate against protected populations if they receive any type of federal financial assistance. This included health insurance companies participating in the Health Insurance Marketplaces, providers who accept Medicare, Medicaid, and Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) payments, and any state or local healthcare agencies, among others. This marked the first time that discriminatory practices on the basis of race, skin color, national origin, age, sex, disability status–and in some cases, sexuality and gender identity–were broadly prohibited in the arena of public and private healthcare (Rosenbaum, 2016).

Some of the common ways that lower income families and individuals access insurance in Oregon are through programs like Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP), which is referred to as Oregon Health plan (OHP) in Oregon, Figure 7.13.

Family Size	OHP for Adults	OHP for Children
1	$1,396/month	$3,086/month
2	$1,893/month	$4,184/month
3	$2,390/month	$5,282/month
4	$2,887/month	$6,380/month
5	$3,383/month	$7,478/month
6	$3,880/month	$8,576/month

Figure 7.13.Oregon Health Plan Income Limits for Application to Medicaid or OHP 2020 (Health Plans in Oregon, 2020).

Medicaid is a federal and state funded program that is managed by individual states. It provides government insurance to those who need it. Each state has the power to decide who is eligible for it, and most states focus on low-income individuals, and those with disabilities. With the expansion of the ACA in 2014, states had the choice to expand their Medicaid to serve more citizens; Oregon is one of 37 states that elected to do so. For up to date information on each state, consult this Kaiser Family Foundation interactive map and narrative.

https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/status-of-state-medicaid-expansion-decisions-interactive-map/

The U.S. government's website about Medicaid (https://www.medicaid.gov) provides state by state report cards on a wide variety of health access and health quality measures. This variance in Medicaid eligibility creates great **inequity** for low-income families based on location. Those in states that have not expanded Medicaid face a much larger "coverage gap," meaning that many more families do not have access to health care insurance as shown in Figure 7.14 (Garfield et al., 2020).

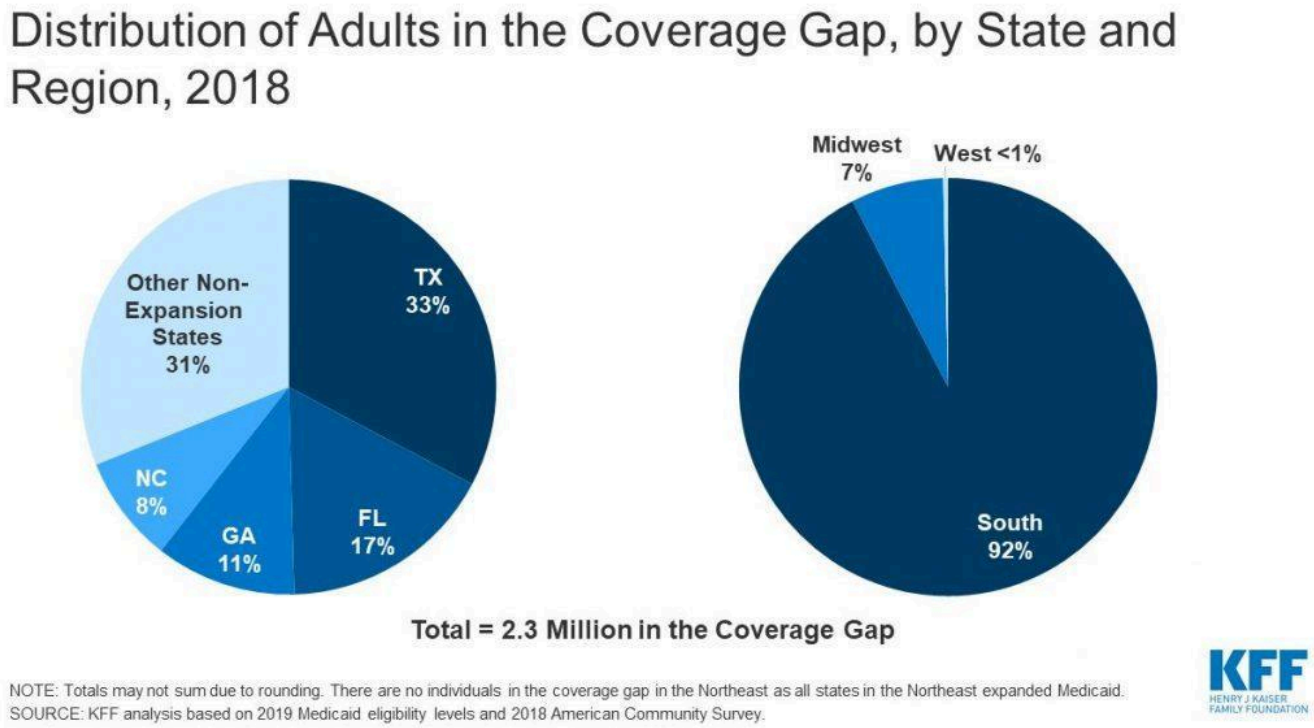

Figure 7.14. These graphs demonstrate that where you live affects your access to health care. Families who live in states that did not adopt the Medicaid expansion are more likely to have less access to health care.

Those who are age 65 or older can access healthcare insurance through Medicare, which is federally funded. Medicare covers about half of health care expenses for those enrolled, and many retirees who can afford to do so purchase private insurance or purchase additional coverage from Medicare itself to cover the gap (MedPac, 2020).

7.4.2.1 Focus On: Getting Tested for Coronavirus

Carmen Quinero, a 35-year-old essential worker who works at a distribution center that ships N95 masks in California, developed a severe cough in late March 2020. Her workplace's human resources department told her to stay home until she was tested for the virus. Quinero has health insurance coverage through her employer; she has a $3,500 deductible.

Tests were not widely available in March 2020, so she was directed by her doctor to go to an emergency room. She went to the closest one, a for-profit hospital owned by Universal Health Services, one of the largest healthcare management companies in the United States. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security

Act (aka CARES Act) had passed the week before, and it had been widely publicized that coronavirus testing and treatment would be free to individuals and covered by the federal government.

Unfortunately, the legislation is full of loopholes, including for people like Quinero who need a test but were unable to get one due to the low supplies. Although she was given a chest x-ray and prescribed an inhaler, she was not tested. That means that not only was she responsible for the $1,840 in hospital and doctor fees, but she had to miss a week of work (mostly unpaid), putting a considerable financial strain on Quinero and her family.

Quinero's case is not isolated and is not specific to the coronavirus. Access to, and coverage for, the test for COVID-19 illustrates how the patchwork of insurance, government programs and laws, and private payments inequitably affect lower-income people, whether or not they have health insurance coverage.

To hear more about Carmen's story, listen to this 4-minute recording from the NPR-KFF series Bill of the Month.

7.4.3 Who Is Left Out?

"He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything." Arabian Proverb

Most of the uninsured (84.6 percent) in the United States are working age adults aged 19 to 64 years old. Men are overrepresented in these numbers; over half of all people without health insurance coverage were male (54.6 percent), even though the U.S. population has more women than men. The uninsured are disproportionately concentrated in the South (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The number of people without health insurance has been increasing steadily since 2016; 8.5 percent of all Americans (27.5 million people) did not have health insurance at any point in the year of 2018, according to the American Community Survey (Berchick et al., 2020).

Socioeconomic status plays a large part in access to healthcare. Occupation, education level, and chronic poverty all play contributing **roles**. The unique structure of tying health care insurance to full-time employment in the United States perpetuates income **equality**. Income ties into important **social determinants of health** including location of home, transportation, and quality of life, as illustrated in Figure 7.15. Medicaid, which is tied to income level, has limited medical coverage, and often does not cover dental or vision care for adults. Plans vary from state to state. Children, older adults, and people of color are disproportionately affected by health inequities (Keenan & Vistnes, 2019).

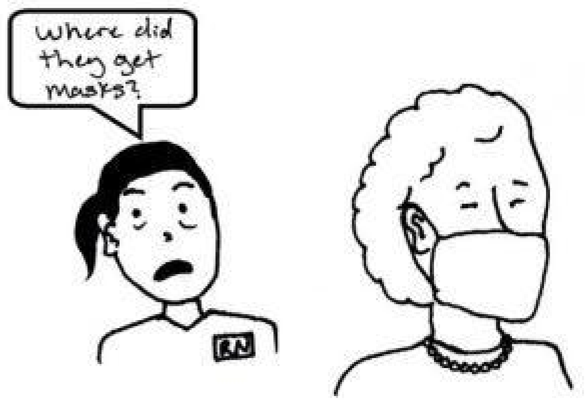

Figure 7.15. During the coronavirus outbreak, many essential workers like nurses lacked personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks.

A separate study showed that before the expansion of the ACA in 2014, about 41 percent of Hispanic people, 26 percent of Black people, and 15 percent of White people were uninsured, while after expansion the rate of uninsured individuals decreased by 7 percent for Hispanic people, 5 percent for Black people, and 3 percent for White people (Buchmueller et al., 2016). Although the difference in rates for those uninsured have decreased, there is still a sizable gap that needs to be addressed in order to effectively address **equity** in access to health care (Inserro, 2018).

Even with these improvements, vast inequities exist state to state. A family may be eligible to receive Medicaid in one state but not in another state, especially those states that have not expanded Medicaid. Geography matters. Although our country has a rhetoric of **equality**, family and health laws vary significantly state to state, which reinforces inequalities. Eligibility ranges from having an income that is 40% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) to having an income that is 138% of the FPL: quite a difference!

Lack of health insurance has significant consequences because people are less likely to receive preventive health care and care for various conditions and illnesses. For example, because uninsured Americans are less likely than those with private insurance to receive cancer screenings, they are more likely to be diagnosed with more advanced cancer rather than an earlier stage of cancer (Halpern et al., 2008). In an analysis published in 2009, researchers found that there was a 25 percent higher risk of death for adults (aged 17–64) who were uninsured than those who had private insurance (Wilper et al., 2009).

7.4.3.1 Research and Drug Access

Pharmaceutical research and sales are a gargantuan business in the United States. The cost of developing any single new drug is estimated to be about one billion dollars as symbolized by Figure 7.16. Financing comes from the federal government and philanthropic organizations at the discovery research level; large sums of money are pumped into the initial stage of medication research (Institute of Medicine (U.S.) Forum on Drug Discovery, Development, and Translation, 2009).

Figure 7.16. Drug development is typically funded by the government and philanthropic organizations, but profits are funneled to corporations.

Later-stage development is typically funded by pharmaceutical companies, which can be for for-profit companies or nonprofit companies. For-profit companies may be funded by venture capitalists or as a part of larger corporations. Funding for nonprofit companies is a bit trickier; gaining access to federal and foundation funding takes staff time and expertise. The unequal and inequitable funding opportunities put nonprofits at a disadvantage, because they have to invest more time in writing requests for grants and funding from government corporations.

The cost of drugs in the United States increased dramatically starting in the 1990s. It is important to note that American families are not accessing more medications than people in comparative countries. In fact, Americans use fewer prescription drugs and are more likely to use less expensive generic prescriptions. It really comes down to price per pill; they simply cost more in the United States than in other countries as shown in Figure 7.17 (Haeder, 2019).

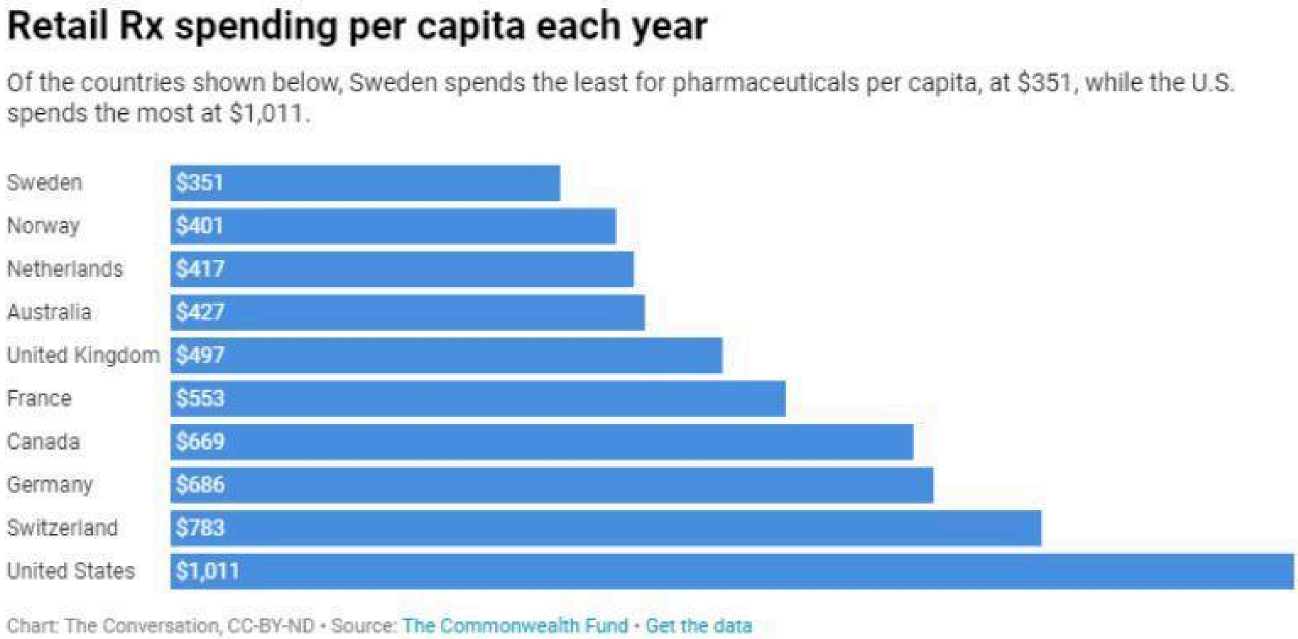

Figure 7.17. Pharmaceuticals cost more in the United States than in other countries.

For-profit pharmacological companies have the upper hand in terms of distribution and overall influence on the decisions for research and funding for new medications in the United States. Ethical dilemmas arise when a company has a mission of profit for its employees and public shareholders and is selling a product that has an impact on the consumers' health. Making a profit may frequently be at odds with making medication or medical products accessible to those with limited resources. The drive for profit can also lead to overselling and overprescribing. It is for this reason that most countries (excluding the United States) do not allow drug research companies to profit and create state contracts with those companies in order to keep costs low (Gross, 1994).

7.4.3.2 Case Study: The Opioid Epidemic

An example of the power of for-profit drug companies can be found in the opioid epidemic. The opioid epidemic began in the United States in the 1940s. While medications like heroin and morphine have been used for pain management for thousands of years, they became more popular during World War II, when heroin and morphine were used to treat war veterans and people who have experienced trauma and wounds from battle.

Families in the United States with members who have difficulty navigating proper pain management have found opioids to be one solution. Prescriptions for these medications were given out and dispensed very generously, even for temporary pain, starting in the mid-20th century. As usage increased dramatically in the 1990s, pharmaceutical companies assured the medical community and patients that these drugs were not addictive (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). It is now known that addiction to these opioids and other substances often starts with prescription medications and progresses to a more dangerous level of use if left unchecked (Figure 7.18).

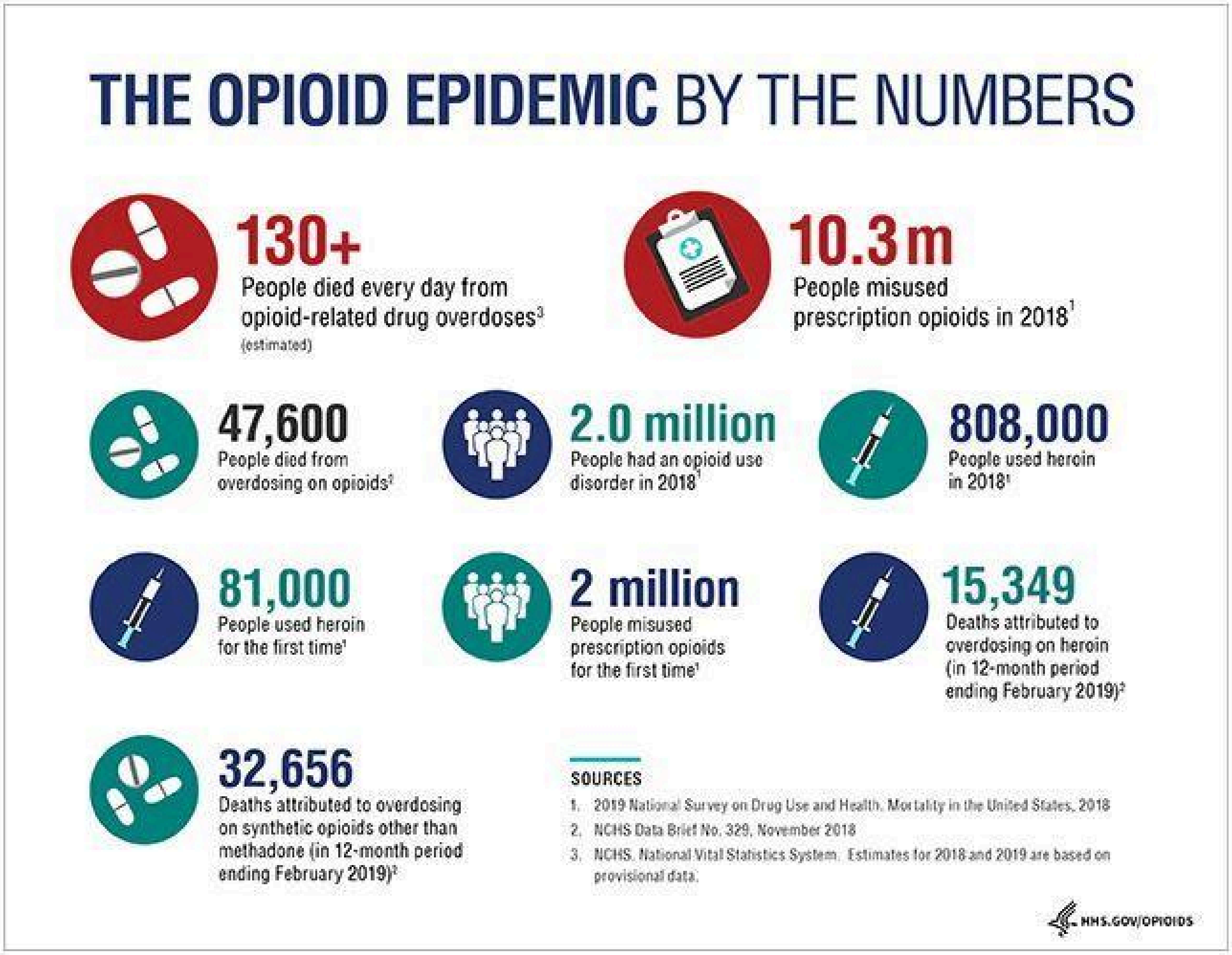

Figure 7.18. This 2019 chart illustrates the current opioid epidemic, which is estimated to kill over 130 people a day.

Private lawsuits and governmental action against pharmaceutical companies began to emerge in the early 2000s in the United States. It has been found that companies failed to follow government regulations related to drug production and regulation such as tracking and investigating suspicious orders of these medications. Both name-brand (e.g., Oxycodone) and generic drug manufacturers were guilty of these actions, although generic manufacturers remained unchecked for longer. Companies made billions of dollars of profits during this same period of time (Yerby, 2020).

Lawsuits against drug companies and distributors by the federal government, multiple states, Native American tribes, and local municipalities show promise for compensation. Examples include allegations of deceptive business practices, fraud, lax monitoring, and oversaturation of the market (Haffajee & Mello, 2017). These actions resulted in not only individual negative consequences but have also contributed to systemic breakdown in communities.

The ripple effects of opioid abuse on families and communities are difficult to quantify. While overdoses and deaths can be counted, loss and grief is immeasurable. Diminished parenting, loss of employment, loss of housing, and broken relationships all affect families, schools, workplaces, and communities. The effects of drug addiction and trauma are generational; we will not know how many families have been affected by this multi-century epidemic until well into the future.

7.4.4 Licenses and Attributions for Health and Health Insurance

7.4.4.1 Open Content, Original

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Figure 7.15."Where did THEY get masks?" by Katie Niemeyer is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

7.4.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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Figure 7.12 "2017 Income, Poverty and Health Insurance – Health Insurance Presentation" by the U.S.Census Bureau is in the public domain.

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Figure 7.17. "Retail RX spending per capita each year" by The Conversation. License: CC BY-ND 4.0. Based on data from The Commonwealth Fund.

Figure 7.18. "The Opioid Epidemic by the Numbers" by the US Department of Health and Human Services. Public domain.

7.4.5 References

7.5 LOOKING AHEAD

If you were to spend a few minutes brainstorming a list, what would you include as the most important requirements to keeping your family healthy? While this chapter has focused on health care and health insurance as important aspects of health management, the authors of this text would like to emphasize that health care starts with access and decision-making related to exercise, diet, relationships, work, sleep, intellectual stimulation, addictive substances, education, and social life. This is our list; perhaps you have other aspects to add!

Importantly, those individual and family decisions are directly impacted by the **social institutions** and processes at the core of the United States. Past and present laws, policies, practices, and biases that create and reinforce inequities mean that families live with vastly different access to resources, including food, safe and stimulating outdoor environments, time, work environments, social life, and health care.

For example, many families live without easy access to recreational trails and playgrounds. Chapter 8 details the ways in which laws, regulations, and lending corporations have actively participated in pushing minoritized racial-ethnic groups into these areas. We must pay attention to these past practices and the ways that they impact present families' health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear that the virus is transmitted more easily in crowded spaces indoors than in the outdoors (Figure 7.19).

Figure 7.19. Tips for physical distancing outside during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Which families might have a more difficult time with being outdoors or social distancing?

There is a disproportionate number of coronavirus cases and deaths among marginalized populations in the United States, and it is possible that lack of access to outdoor spaces plays a role (Godoy & Wood, 2020). So at the same time that this lack of resources makes it more difficult to maintain everyday physical and mental health, it may also contribute to illness, hospitalization, loss of employment, and even death during the pandemic.

Institutionalized inequities have been amplified during the coronavirus pandemic as illustrated in Figure 7.20. Some of the factors that contribute to greater numbers of Black, Native, and Latinx families being affected by the COVID-10 virus include the following:

- Crowded work environments such as meat-packing facilities
- Food deserts
- Less health insurance
- Less access to health care and virus testing as measured by geography and transportation options
- Greater likelihood to experience **discrimination**, stress, and lack of sleep (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=417#oembed-1

Figure 7.20. Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH, discusses COVID-19 and health **equity** | COVID-19 Update for April 21, 2020 [YouTube Video]. This video from the American Medical Association features an interview with Doctor Aletha Maybank and explains how funding, data collection, and the overlap with structural **discrimination** affect the rates of the virus

Activism can help alleviate **social problem**s, including the problem of poor health experienced by so many in the United States. With adequate health care, there . is hope; many countries have successful models of health care that give all citizens access. In this country, groups, many led by physicians or other medical professionals, are working to create and/or modify systems to increase access to basic health care. Two prominent organizations are Health Care for ALL Oregon and Physicians for a National Health Program.

The **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights** Article 25 identifies health as a human right:

> (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

> (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection (United Nations, 1948).

Some non-industrialized nations and all industrialized nations, with the United States as the notable exception, have adopted some form of universal healthcare system since the 1948 adoption of this Declaration. The irony is that the framework for the human rights declaration came from the United States and the work of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife and Statesperson Eleanor Roosevelt (Gerisch, n.d.). The United States does not have an actual health care system, but rather multiple systems of health insurance. These systems are accessed through a variety of providers: employers,state-funded block programs, and federal programs for specific groups such as people who are indigent, disabled, or older. In other words, not all people have access.

While families in the United States strive to make the best choices for themselves, they are limited by the existing access to resources needed to be as healthy as possible. Some of these inequities were created by past laws and practices. But those, and others, can be adjusted and changed. The societal and governmental commitment to the standards of health and well-being as identified in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights is one way to begin.

7.5.1 Want to Learn More?

- To read more about the **Social Determinants of Health** model, consult https://health.gov/healthypeople.
- To read more about the relationship between physical and mental health, check out this brief article from PsychCentral here.
- In 2017, *The Lancet* published a comprehensive series about in**equality** and health care in the United States. The Table of Contents for the series is linked here; although it is free, you will need to log in to read the series of articles.
- What are the 10 Essential Health Benefits mandated by the ACA? Anyone who buys health care via the health care exchange is entitled to these benefits.
- For greater detail on adults aged 18-64 who are uninsured, review this 2019 report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

7.5.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

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7.5.3 References

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7.6 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

7.6.1 Reflective Questions

1. How do socially constructed ideas affect health?
2. What is the advantage of understanding disparities related to **social characteristics** (race, gender, etc.)?
3. Why are people with mental illness or abuse substance disorders less likely to get medical care and support?
4. What are the challenges to all families being able to keep themselves healthy by meeting basic needs such as sleep, exercise and a good diet?
5. What is the difference between a health care system and health insurance?
6. How does family structure affect access to health insurance and health care?
7. How do geography and income level overlap when it comes to health care access?
8. What role does capitalism play in the opioid epidemic?
9. Based on what you've read in this chapter, provide reasoning and support for whether health care should be considered a human right.

7.6.2 Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **health:** The state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- **health disparity:** preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations.
- **health care system:** An organization of people, institutions, and resources that delivers health care services to meet the health needs of target populations.
- **health equity:** Even access to health benefits regardless of all people, regardless of identity.
- **health insurance:** A type of insurance that covers the whole or a part of the risk of a person incurring medical expenses
- **mental health:** a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.
- **mental illness:** a wide range of mental health disorders that affect your mood, thinking, and behavior.
- **opioid:** substances that affect the neurons in our brain by blocking pain and providing a feeling of calm and euphoria.
- **stigma**: a negative or discriminatory attitude toward others related to a specific characteristic or difference, often of a marginalized identity.
- **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights:** An international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that enshrines the rights and freedoms of all human beings.
- **Wellness:** the act of practicing healthy habits on a daily basis to attain better physical and mental health outcomes

7.6.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

7.6.3.1 Open Content, Original

7.7 CHAPTER 7 FEEDBACK SURVEY

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CHAPTER 8: HOUSING

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

8.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define **houseless**ness and housing insecurity.
2. Explain some institutional barriers to home ownership and whom those barriers are most likely to affect.
3. Define redlining and bluelining.
4. Discuss the purpose of **the Fair Housing Act** and evaluate its success to date.
5. Relate economics and power to home ownership.
6. Analyze how where someone lives relates to other aspects of family life, such as health.
7. Recommend some solutions to the housing challenges that families face in the U.S.
8. Analyze chapter concepts related to housing to one's own observations and experiences.
9. Describe the multidirectional relationship between **social process**es and institutions and access to housing.
10. Analyze housing from an **equity** perspective.

8.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

8.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

8.2 HOUSING AND HOMES

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Katherine Hemlock, and Carla Medel

> "I just feel like I influence people because I'm like—I was practically homeless." — Cardi B

Housing is another word for the place that families go each night to find shelter not only from the physical elements, but also to find enough emotional safety that they can become centered, rejuvenated, and sleep securely. In the best scenarios it provides not only security, but a place for families to love and nurture the self and one another.

Figure 8.1. Cardi B rose from poverty to fame.

Cardi B, a famous rapper (born as Belcalis Almanzar), describes being able to move out of her abusive boyfriend's home with money earned from her work stripping in a club. "There were two pit bulls in that house, and I had asthma. There were bed bugs, too," she told Vibe. "On top of that, I felt like my ex-boyfriend was cheating on me, but it was like even if he was cheating on me, I still can't leave because—where was I gonna go?" (Akhtar, 2017).

In Cardi B's (Figure 8.1) case, she had safety from the outside physical world. But she was not safe inside her home. This is just one example of the complexities of housing, and specifically the ways that inequities play out in the United States.

Income is the primary determining factor in housing access. Price, availability, location, and macroeconomics all play a role, but a family's annual income is the main determinant in housing affordability (Tilly, 2006). Therefore, inequities in income distribution directly affect housing access, and the capability of families to be safe, secure, and able to function to their maximum potential.

Cardi B grew up living between two different Bronx neighborhoods in New York City. When she describes her parents, she says, "I have real good parents, they poor. They have regular, poor jobs and what not," she said in an interview with Global Grind. "They real good people and what not, I was just raised in a bad society" (Shamsian & Singh, 2019). It is common for U.S. families to have multiple wage-earners, with multiple jobs, and still be unable to afford adequate housing.

Figure 8.2. It is common in the U.S. for families to have multiple wage-earners, with multiple jobs, and still be unable to afford adequate housing.

Part-time and temporary jobs frequently come with lower pay and fewer benefits such as health care, sick leave, and other paid and unpaid leaves. This makes it harder to budget for regular expenses such as food and housing. Sex, sexuality, immigration status, and **ethnicity** matters when it comes to full-time permanent work, meaning that it is also likely women, immigrants, and people from marginalized ethnic and sexuality groups are more likely to have fewer of these jobs and more difficulty saving for housing.

Affordable housing is defined as housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care. Diverse income levels, reinforced by governmental and lending practices that discriminate based on racial-ethnic groups, immigration status, and **socioeconomic status**, widen the gap between those who are housing secure, **housing insecure**, and homeless.

8.2.1 Houselessness

In 2019, over a half million Americans were considered **houseless which means they do not have a permanent place to live**. Commonly referred to as "the homeless" or "homeless people" in the past, the terms "unhoused" and "**houseless** people" are now considered to be more respectful and accurate. This encompasses the movement toward "person-first language" as well as the distinctions between a house, which refers to a physical shelter, and a home, that includes both shelter as well as family, loved ones, or other comforts.

Many of the people lacking housing are children and youth. In early 2018, just over 180,000 people in 56,000 families with children experienced **houseless**ness. More than 36,000 young people (under the age of 25) were unaccompanied youth who were **houseless** on their own; most of those (89 percent) were between the ages of 18–24 years (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018). In 2020 580, 466 people were experiencing **houseless**ness (Figure 8.3).

8.2.1.1 On a single night in 2020, 580,466 people in the U.S. were experiencing **houseless**ness.

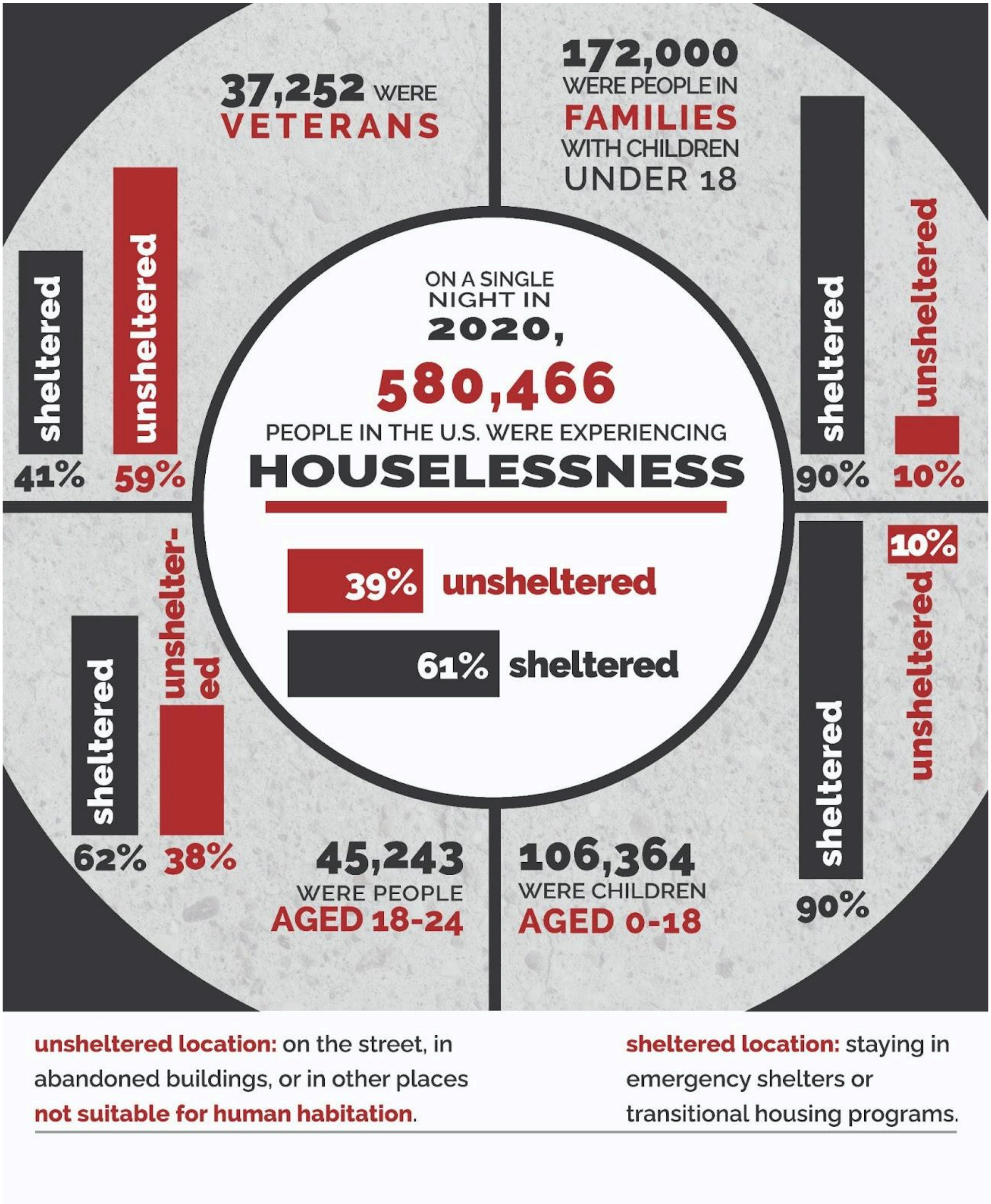

Figure 8.3. In the 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S. Congress reported about persons who experience homelessness during a 12-month period, point-in-time counts of people experiencing homelessness on one day in January, and data about shelter and housing available in a community.

The AFAR reports on demographics such as age, veteran status, families with children, and whether people are in sheltered or unsheltered locations while **houseless**.

As shown in Figure 8.4, a recent national survey that included Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) in Albany, Oregon found that students at the two-year institution had higher levels of **houseless**ness than do their counterparts nationally. With a response rate of 9.7 percent, 558 of 5,700 surveyed LBCC students participated in the 2019 #RealCollege Survey Report instituted by Temple University in 2019. Nineteen percent of LBCC students reported experiencing **houseless**ness in the past year, compared with 17 percent nationally. In addition, 53 percent of LBCC students reported experiencing housing insecurity (described below) in the past year, compared with 50 percent nationally.

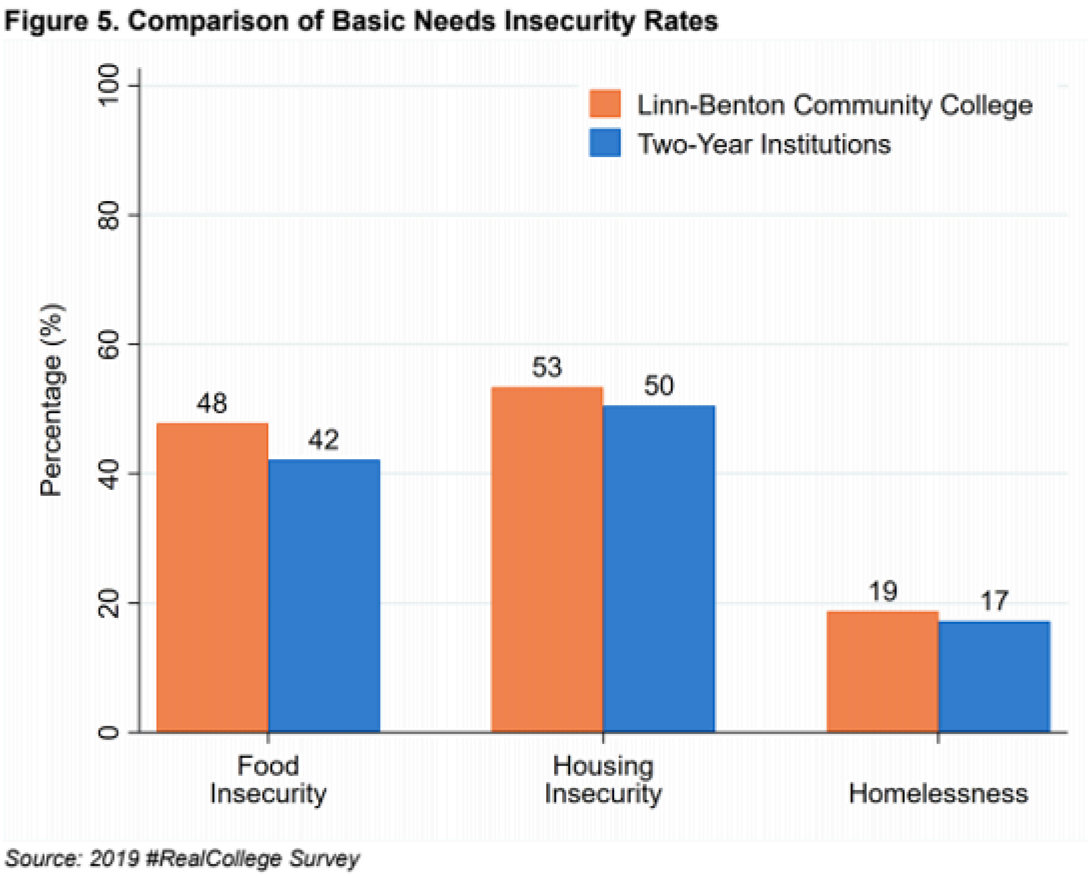

Figure 8.4. A recent national survey that included Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) in Albany, Oregon found that students at the two-year institution had higher levels of **houseless**ness than do their counterparts nationally.

This report indicates that more than half of community college students are struggling with some kind of stress related to having a safe, stable place to care for themselves and their families. Demographic factors that indicate a higher rate of **houseless**ness and housing insecurity include being a woman, being **transgender**, being Native American, Black, Latinx,or 21 or older. Although White people, men of color, younger students

(18-20), and athletes were less likely to experience **houseless**ness or housing insecurity, they still did so in double-digit percentages (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019).

Living in tents, couch surfing and car sleeping all are forms of **houseless**ness. In an effort to provide stability and safety to the **houseless** population, formal encampments called tent cities have popped up across America in response to the cost of living and other societal problems (Figure 8.5). Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon, provides a community that is self-organized and offers a bit of security. Because the majority of tent cities are not legal, people living in them lack stability and live under the threat of being swept or evicted. In 2017, there were 255 tent cities reported across the United States, ranging in size from 10 to over 100 people living in them. "Of those [tent cities] where legality was reported, 75 percent were illegal, 20 percent silently sanctioned, and 4 percent legal." Tent cities are a response to the fact that most city-run shelter beds are maxed out and **affordable housing** has not become available in response to the growing need (Invisible People, n.d.).

Figure 8.5. The Wayne Morse Federal Courthouse is within sight of a temporary location of the Whoville Homeless Camp in Eugene, Oregon.

8.2.2 Shelters for People Experiencing Houselessness (aka Homeless Shelters)

Shelters for people who are **houseless** provide needed temporary immediate service to over 1.5 million Americans each year (Popov, 2017). Primarily federally funded, many nonprofit organizations also provide support and temporary shelter for families and individuals. Some are so full that they sleep people in shifts, especially in the cold of winter. Many **houseless** people have nowhere to go during the day; however, day shelters such as Rose Haven in Portland, Oregon, offer services to those in need. The shelter serves about 3,500 individuals, including women, children, and gender non-conforming people who experience trauma, poverty, and health challenges.

Tensions exist among tent dwellers, staff, and users of shelters, and the business and home-owning communities. This is exemplified in Corvallis, Oregon, where the community has struggled for years to find a permanent location for the men's overnight cold-weather shelter. Advocates for people who are **houseless** argue for a location close to needed city services; accessibility is important when walking, bicycling, and public transportation are the primary modes of getting around. These needs bump up against business owners' desires for welcoming environments. Most recently, churches outside of the downtown area have allowed people to erect tents on the church property (Hall, 2019). With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, more people who are **houseless** are moving into tents, and the city has intentionally stopped removing illegal campsites. In addition, Corvallis is providing hygiene centers that include showers, hand-washing, laundry, and food services (Day, 2020).

The socially constructed ideas of "normal" or "acceptable" identities are barriers to many people in accessing shelter, housing, and other services. In **houseless** shelters, **transgender** women may be refused admittance by the women's shelter and at risk of violence at the men's shelter. More progress must be made to provide security for all, regardless of identity (National Center for **Transgender Equality**, 2019).

Another barrier some women with children face in seeking shelter from domestic violence is the shelter rules themselves. Early curfews and overly strict rules can compromise the empowerment of residents. Many women fleeing domestic violence find themselves facing punitive and inflexible environments that mimic the patterns of control they are trying to escape. The Washington State coalition against domestic violence, called Building Dignity, "explores design strategies for domestic violence emergency housing. Thoughtful design dignifies survivors by meeting their needs for self-determination, security and connection. The idea here is to reflect a commitment to creating welcoming accessible environments that help to empower survivors and their children" (Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.).

8.2.3 Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity is less obvious than **houseless**ness. People who are **houseless** are somewhat visible, but we may be less likely to know whether or not someone is **housing insecure**. That's because it is an umbrella term that encompasses many characteristics and conditions. Signs of **housing insecurity** include missing a rent or utility payment, having a place to live but not having certainty about meeting basic needs, experiencing formal or informal evictions, foreclosures, couch surfing, and frequent moves (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.). It can also include being exposed to health and safety risks such as mold, vermin, lead, overcrowding, and personal safety fears such as abuse (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.). Cardi B's living situation, which she describes as "practically homeless," illustrates housing insecurity.

Housing insecurity can be defined as a **social problem**; the current estimates are that 10–15 percent of all Americans are **housing insecure**. The increase in the number of **cost-burdened households**, households that pay 30 percent or more of monthly income toward housing, is dramatic among families who rent homes. Since 2008, these households increased by 3.6 billion to include 21.3 billion by 2014. And households with the most severe cost burden (paying 50 percent or more for housing) increased to a record 11.4 million (Harvard University, 2016). By definition, a **cost-burdened household i**s one that also faces housing instability and insecurity.

8.2.4 Somewhere In-Between

A well-established housing system that is often overlooked is immigrant housing. There are many immigrants who come to the United States as part of a guestworker program, which dates back to 1942 with the **Bracero Program** and continues through the hiring today of **H2-A** workers. Although these folks are called "guest workers," they are not treated as guests when it comes to living spaces.

The **Bracero Program** was an agreement between the United States and Mexico to bring in a few hundred Mexican laborers to harvest sugar beets in California. What was thought to be a small program eventually drew at its peak more than 400,000 workers a year. When it was abolished in 1964, a total of about 4.5 million jobs had been filled by Mexican citizens. After the **Bracero Program**, foreign workers could still be imported for agricultural work under the H-2 program, which was created in 1943 when the Florida sugar cane industry obtained permission to hire Caribbean workers to cut sugar cane on temporary visas. The H-2 program was revised in 1986 and was divided into the H-2A agricultural program and the H-2B non-agricultural program which are still up and running today. These programs provide temporary jobs and income for workers but do not offer any advantage in terms of establishing residency or citizenship in the United States.

The protections provided to these guest workers vary depending on the program they are under, so the quality of living varies widely but is often low quality. The housing vicinities lack basic necessities and are often in areas considered to be dangerous. Many guest workers find themselves living in one-room containers that later may be split up between many workers. Other guest workers find themselves living in tent cities, placed right next to the field where they are picking crops. One tent is provided to fit multiple guest workers or an entire family.

These living spaces are often in very rural locations, which isolate these workers and make them totally reliant on their employers. Many employers forbid them from bringing visitors, which reinforces the guest workers' dependence on the employer and limits the likelihood of reports about the poor living conditions or other violations (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

8.2.5 Licenses and Attributions for Housing and Homes

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8.2.6 References

8.3 THE INFLUENCE OF INSTITUTIONS: GOVERNMENTS AND LENDING INSTITUTIONS

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Katherine Hemlock, and Carla Medel

Federal, state, and local governments all influence housing access via laws, zoning rules, permitting processes, and regulations. In addition, the government has the power to regulate the way that most Americans access home ownership, which is a loan agreement between an individual or couple and a lending institution such as a bank or credit union. In fact, it is the lending institution who owns any home, until the individual or couple completely pays the mortgage, which is a combination of the home's original price and the interest that is charged, typically over a 15-, 20-, or 30-year loan.

Together, government and lending institutions control who can borrow money, where they can access housing, the down payment required, and the interest rate that each family pays. These regulations do not treat all families equally: **socioeconomic status**, racial-ethnic identity, marriage and sexuality, and immigrant and documentation status have all played a role in lending policies over time in the United States. Immigrants and individuals with **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals** (**DACA**) status have difficulty securing loans due to ambiguous federal legislation affecting their status. People who do not have a social security number are eligible for loans, but these typically require a higher down payment and higher interest rates.

Home foreclosures added to the economic disparity following the housing market crash of 2008. Over half of U.S. states were affected by prior predatory lending practices and lack of oversight of the banking system. Uninsured, private market subprime loans were made available with looser requirements, quickly driving up the price of homes so that some people owed more on their house than it was worth. Many were considered "underwater in their loans" or "upside-down" in their home value and defaulted on payments. Banks took back homes and many families were forced into shelters, living in their cars, or the homes of family members increasing the numbers of cost-burdened, **housing insecure**, and **houseless** families.

8.3.1 Where Families Live

Considering the location of families in the United States, we will briefly look at three factors: geography, types of locations, which commonly include urban, suburban, and rural communities, and household size. **Exurbs**, a relatively new term, describes areas just outside of suburban communities which typically feature low density housing and large homes. These may overlap into farm or forested areas, but are not considered rural.

8.3.1.1 Geography

Population distribution is divided into four main regions by the U.S. Census Bureau in order to register the population: the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West; see the map below (Figure 8.6) for divisions within regions.

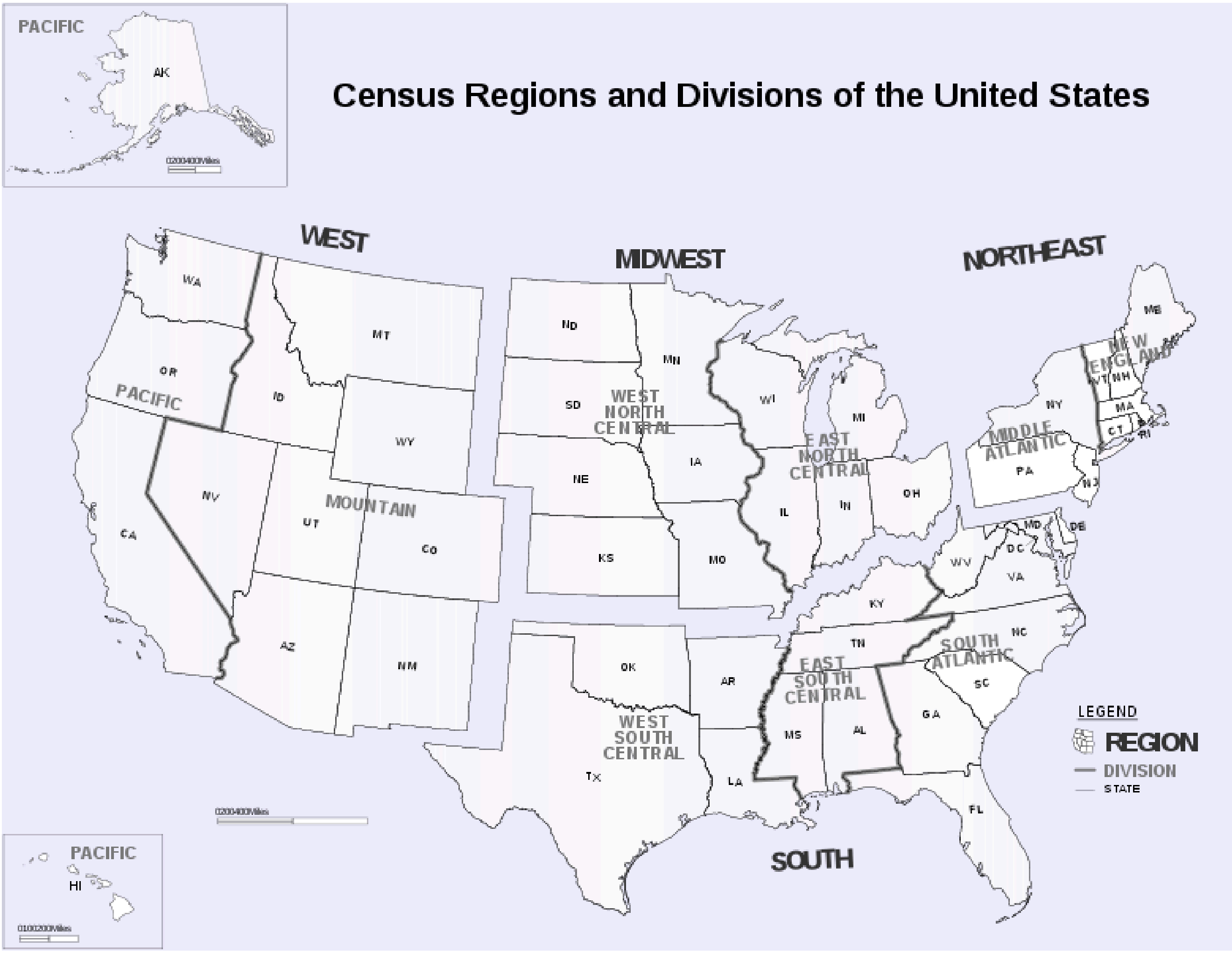

Figure 8.6. The Census Bureau divides the United States into four regions: the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.

Population is spread unevenly across the United States with density focused in the Northeast and Southern regions, and two smaller divisions: the East North Central in the Midwest, and the Pacific division of the West, which includes Oregon (Figure 8.7).

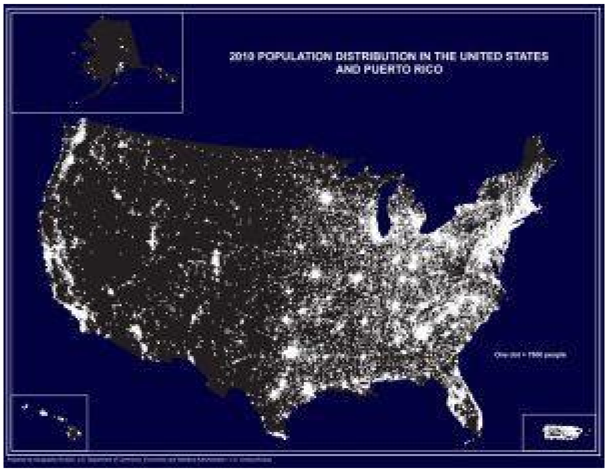

Figure 8.7. Although the population of the United States is growing, the rate of growth is slowing. The four states that have the largest numeric growth in the past ten years are Texas, Florida, Arizona and North Carolina. The states with the most growth, percentage-wise, are Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah, experiencing between 1.7 percent and 2.1 percent growth in the past year (2018–2019) (United States Census Bureau, 2019).

Communities: Urban, Rural, Suburbs and **Exurbs**

Where families live can also be examined related to living in urban, suburban, rural, and exurban (prosperous districts outside of the suburbs) areas. Over the second half of the 20th century and the first part of the 21st century, families generally moved away from urban centers and into the suburbs. But the recession of 2008–2015 reversed that trend and urban areas made some growth, while suburbs and **exurbs** declined. Since 2016, the overall trend has again shifted, increasing family growth in suburbs and metropolitan areas (as opposed to urban cores), with Midwestern metro areas seeing the most growth (Frey, 2018). Values, racial-ethnic groups, and education are all factors in family location.

Environments and locations have differing health advantages and risks. Air quality, access to green spaces, clean water, and places to recreate are often described as "quality of life" factors. But a greater emphasis is critical as these are considered to be as important to overall health as are genetics and lifestyle (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). Air and water will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 10. With the advent of shelter-at-home restrictions related to the pandemic of COVID-19, home environments have become an even greater factor in our overall health.

8.3.1.2 Household Size

Household size had been declining from 1790 through 2010, going from an average size of 5.79 people to 2.58 people. Since then it has increased to 2.63 people in 2018. This increase is likely due to several factors. The recession affected families across the United States and many families "doubled up" in their housing. In addition, the trend of young adults living with their parents for longer periods of time decreases the number of independent households (Fry, 2019). And there is an increase in multigenerational households. This reflects the growing racial-ethnic diversity in the United States; Asian, Hispanic, and Black families are more likely to live in multigenerational households than are non-Hispanic White families (Menasce et al., 2019). The trend of increasing household size is important to note because it will likely impact the **economy** in the United States if it continues, as it will influence that amount of new housing construction.

8.3.2 Licenses and Attributions for The Influence of Institutions: Governments and Lending Institutions

8.3.2.1 Open Content, Original

8.3.3 References

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8.4 FINDING A HOME: INEQUITIES

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Carla Medel, Katherine Hemlock, and Shonna Dempsey

Finding a place to call "home" is important. Living in a place that supports access to outdoor spaces, a feeling of security, effective schools, transportation, food and other resources and the potential for community are quality factors that affect a family's abilities to function effectively and efficiently. We might call these "livable environments."

Home ownership has been and is still the most basic and viable way to accrue wealth in the United States. Access to home ownership is important to families for both livability and financial investment purposes. Uncovering the inequities in access to home ownership is critical to understanding the well-being of families in the United States.

8.4.1 Power and the American Dream: Home Ownership Versus Renting

The government and financial organizations both hold substantial power in the United States. Together, they affect how homes are purchased and who can purchase them. Although we know that race is a **social construction**, it is still used as an identifying feature for families, and has been used by these systems to control home purchases and to segregate living areas. We will discuss housing from the perspective of racial-ethnic groups affected by these regulations and practices.

Families that rent homes rather than buy are on the increase; more people are renting now than at any time in the last fifty years. This is not due to lack of desire to own a home; in a 2016 Pew Research Center Survey, 72 percent of renters said that they desire to own a home (Cilluffo et al., 2017). Denial rates for mortgages continue to be higher for Black and Hispanic applicants. When they are approved, they tend to have higher monthly payments, which increases the cost burden on families. This is typically due to having fewer financial resources with which to make a down payment (Desilver & Bialik, 2017).

8.4.2 Historic Discrimination and Today's Effects on Families

While it may be obvious that home ownership increases stability and enables individuals and families to accrue wealth, it is also true that home ownership has a significant effect on the life satisfaction of low-income people. Home buyers have been found to have higher levels of life satisfaction and may also have increased self-esteem and a sense of control compared to renters (Rohe & Stegman, 1994). It is impossible to talk about lower rates of home ownership among minoritized groups without discussing the practices of intentional segregation and gouging enacted by the federal government, lending institutions, local governments, and housing covenants following the legal end of slavery in the United States. Figure 8.8 is an example of signage from this time period.'

Figure 8.8. Segregated neighborhoods did not come about organically, but through deliberate planning of policies and practices.

8.4.2.1 Redlining

Redlining is the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied. Although homeownership became an emblem of American citizenship and the American dream during the 20th century, Black families and other marginalized populations were specifically limited in their abilities to purchase homes. Both the federal government, which created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation in 1933 and the Federal Housing Association (FHA) in 1934, along with the real estate industry, worked to segregate White neighborhoods from other groups in order to preserve property values.

Lending institutions and the federal government did this by creating maps in which the places where people of color and/or foreign-born individuals lived were colored red (Figure 8.9). Then those areas were designated to be "dangerous" or "risky" in terms of loaning practices. Because families in these same groups were often denied access to the neighborhoods designated to be "good" or "the best" they were forced to take loans that required higher down payments and/or higher interest rates.

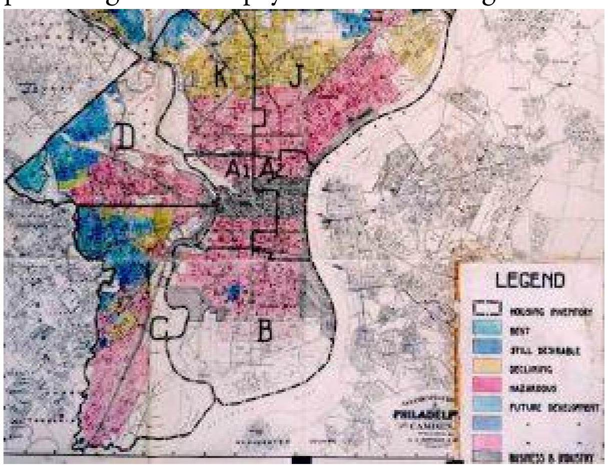

Figure 8.9. Lending institutions and the federal government created maps in which the places where people of color and/or foreign-born lived were colored red.

The Home Owners' Loan Corporation, which regulated home loans, created residential security maps divided into four different categories:

- Green: "The best" for businessmen
- Blue: "Good" for white-collar families
- Yellow: "Declining" for working-class families
- Red: "Detrimental" or "Dangerous" for "foreign-born people, low-class whites, and negroes"

These ratings indicated to lending institutions how "risky" it was to provide loans by area. It was then less likely that loans could be secured in the red and yellow neighborhoods; interest and payments would be higher. Unscrupulous private lenders used this opportunity to create unfair practices such as unreasonably high payments with devastating consequences if one payment or partial payment was missed, such as the Black homeowner losing their home and all **equity** that had been earned (Coates, 2014).

In 1968, these practices were outlawed by **the Fair Housing Act**, which was part of the Civil Rights Act. **The Fair Housing Act** is an attempt at providing equitable housing to all. It makes discriminating against someone based on skin color, sex, religion, and disability illegal. Also banned is the practice of real estate lowballing, where banks underestimate the value of a home, in effect forcing a borrower to come up with a larger down payment to compensate for the lower loan value. The offering of higher interest rates, insurance, and terms and conditions to minority loan applicants is illegal. Denying loans and services on the basis of an applicant's protected class is also illegal.

Still, much damage was done prior to its passage. For decades, the federal government poured tax monies into home loans that almost exclusively favored White families. Home ownership is the most accessible way to build **equity** and wealth and it was denied to many minority families for decades. Once **the Fair Housing Act** passed, local governments, residential covenants, and deed modifications continued to discriminate well into the 2000s, and families in marginalized groups still had less success in achieving home loans.

The result of these institutionalized efforts resulted in **residential segregation**, the physical separation of two or more groups into different neighborhoods. Many times this form of segregation is associated with race, but it can also be associated with income. Segregated neighborhoods did not come about organically, but through deliberate planning of policies and practices that have systematically denied equal opportunity to minority populations. Segregation has been present in the United States for many years, and while now it is illegal to do so, it has been institutionalized in neighborhood patterns (Figure 8.10). From information collected in the 2010 census, we see that a typical White person lives in a neighborhood that is 75 percent White and 8 percent African American, while a typical African American person lives in a neighborhood that is 35 percent White and 45 percent African American (Frey, 2020).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=429#oembed-1

Figure 8.10. Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History | Code Switch | NPR [YouTube Video]. This video provides a summary of housing segregation in the U.S.

8.4.2.2 In Focus: Residential Segregation in Oregon

As a recipient of federal funding, the city of Portland, Oregon, is required to abide by the rules of **the Fair Housing Act**, but like many cities in the United States, Portland has a history of redlining and other discriminatory practices. In order to better understand Portland's practices, learning about Oregon's history is useful. Black exclusion laws were put in place when the state was founded in order to discourage people of color from settling in Oregon.

Between 1900 and 1930, Portland began zoning practices, the act of separating land based on what it will be used for, such as residential, industrial, and commercial. In 1924, Portland approved its first zoning code with the following zones:

- Zone 1–Single-Family
- Zone 2–Multifamily
- Zone 3–Business-Manufacturing
- Zone 4–Unrestricted

Most residential areas were designated Zone 2, except for 15 neighborhoods considered the "highest quality" that were designated Zone 1 (Hughes et al., 2019).

Between the 1930s and '40s, Portland City Council rezoned large areas of multifamily zoning to single-family zoning (Figure 8.10). This was done to protect real estate values of single-family homes and make it easier for homeowners to obtain Federal Housing Administration loans in those areas. During this time, roughly 14.25 square miles was rezoned from multifamily to single-family housing. This was used as a tool to further reinforce racial segregation by restricting federal and private lending. It made it difficult, sometimes even impossible, for residents living in "redlined" neighborhoods to receive residential and commercial loans.

Neighborhood planning from 1960 to 1970 included the ideas of residents instead of only the real estate industry.Although many strong neighborhood associations formed, power continued to reside with the more affluent, mostly White neighborhoods, and the 1980 Comprehensive Plan favored expanding and protecting single-family zones.

Figure 8.10. Portland has failed to create more mixed neighborhoods.

In 1994, the Community and Neighborhood Planning Program was adopted to address issues that sprouted after the Comprehensive Plan. With this they did the opposite of what had been done for many years in the past by expanding the multifamily zones. The program sought to expand and intermix multifamily housing, but it was met with resistance and controversy that led to uneven results.

VisionPDX came forward in 2005 as an effort to engage community members, especially those from underrepresented communities, in developing a shared vision of Portland. They wanted to focus on providing an opportunity for input to those who previously had no say in the future of Portland. This new way of thinking about **equity** led to the development of new goals and policies in the most updated version of the Comprehensive Plan in 2016.

Today, single-family zoning accounts for approximately 74 percent of the total land area for housing in Portland. Since the 1920s, very little change has occurred with the original 15 single-family zones. These neighborhoods have remained stable and demographically homogeneous with low levels of vulnerability to displacement and tend to be the zones for White households. Similarly, the zones originally designated as less desirable are homes for many families from marginalized groups, and contain fewer resources and amenities desired by families.

So what can we learn from this? Portland's land use planning history, intentional or not, has resulted in **discrimination** and segregation. These planning practices and the decisions made have predominantly benefited and privileged White homeowners while communities of color have been burdened, excluded, and displaced. Decision-making for collective improvement is often complicated when it affects individual outcomes. The same people who may believe in **equity** may also resist change when they perceive that it affects them individually. This is called the "Not in my Backyard" (NIMBY) phenomenon and likely affected Portland's failure to move toward creating more mixed neighborhoods. Portland and all cities can do better. Fair housing regulations can be achieved by understanding the history and then creating policy change which will lead to more equitable outcomes.

8.4.2.3 Bluelining

Bluelining is a current banking and lending issue related to rising water levels that are a product of climate change. Real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation and/or proximity to a floodplain may not qualify for loans. With the current rate of ocean warming, sea levels are expected to rise and warm water will generate storms that displace millions of people in the United States and worldwide (Figure 8.12). **Climigration**, a newly coined word that combines "climate" and migration, describes the act of people relocating to areas less devastated by flooding, storms, drought, lack of clean water or economic disaster due to the forces of climate change.

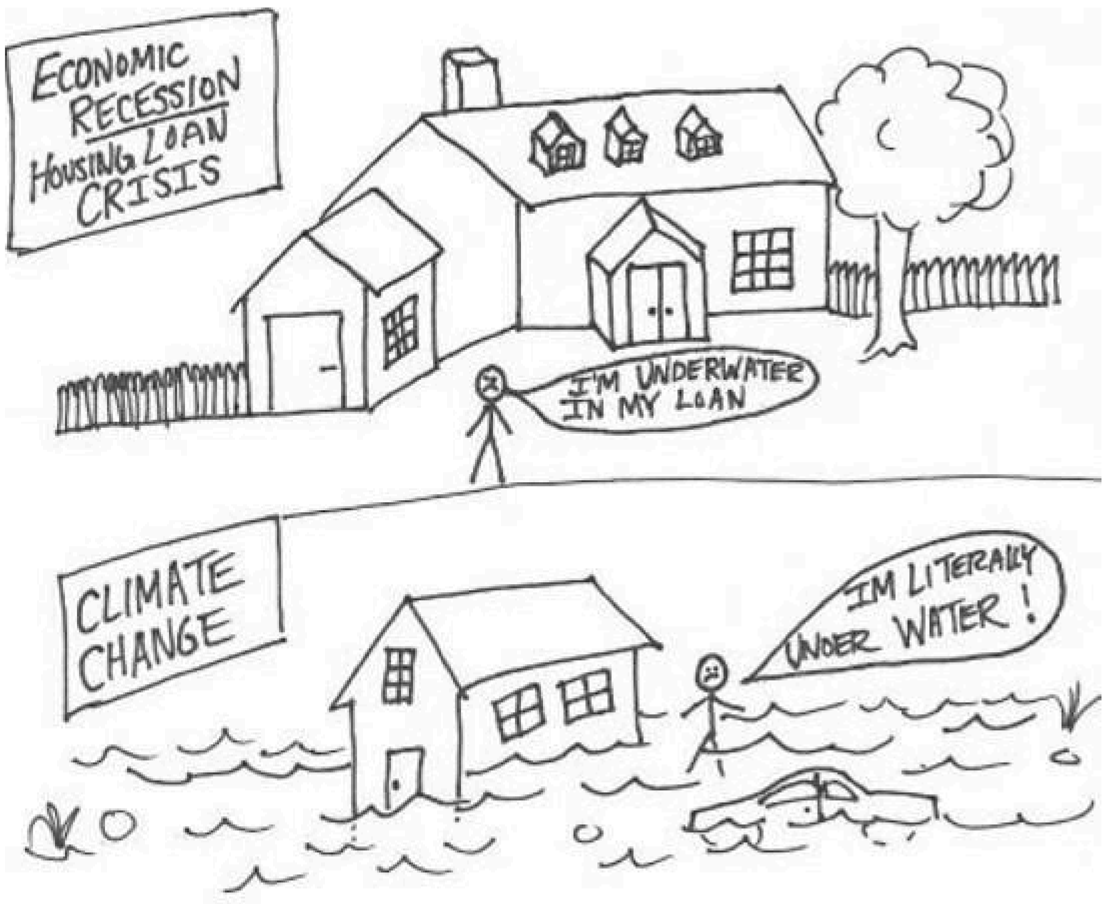

Figure 8.12. Homes at risk of being destroyed due to river, ocean, or storm flooding could lose value in the housing market.

Many American families relocate as jobs disappear or land becomes flooded or arid. In response to immediate disaster, many families move to live with relatives or friends. Some families have nowhere to turn. The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment (AHAR) to Congress reported that 3,900 people were staying in sheltered locations specifically for people displaced by presidentially declared national disasters. They were displaced from areas struck by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and Nate; western wildfires; and other storms and events (Henry, Mahathey, Morrill, Robinson, Shivji, & Watt,2018)" (Henry et al., 2018).

Climate change has also changed the economic desirability of entire regions, creating a new divide between the poor and the privileged. In the Southern California region of Los Angeles, shade has become an increasingly precious commodity, giving respite from the searing heat that bakes the community during longer, hotter warm seasons.

In the 1950s, the lure of the California sunshine attracted settlers from across the U.S. to propel LA into a major metropolis. Now, shade provided by large tree-lined neighborhoods and areas of upscale urban design are enjoyed by the affluent but absent for those who need it the most. There is a public health benefit from trees, with studies showing benefits like lower asthma and improved mental health for those exposed to greenspaces. The accessibility of greenspaces is proving to have a direct impact on health (Figure 8.13).

Figure 8.13. The accessibility of greenspaces is proving to have a direct impact on health.

People who live in less desirable neighborhoods and use public transportation also wait at the more than 750 bus stops where police ordered the removal or minimization of trees in an earlier era as shown in Figure 8.14. To learn about an inventive solution to this problem, read about Urban Farming: The "Gangsta Gardener" in Chapter 10. They spend more time outdoors traveling to jobs and needed resources and suffer the highest heat index (Arango, 2019).

Figure 8.14. People who live in less desirable neighborhoods and use public transportation suffer the highest heat index.

8.4.2.4 Environmental Factors

Environmental factors, such as proximity to industry and landfills also affect quality of life. In the U.S the recycling rate of plastics is only 5 to 6 percent as of 2021, while at the same time generation of plastic waste per capita has increased by 263 percent since 1980. While paper, cardboard, and metal are recycled at higher rates, Plastic recycling has never reached 10 percent. Most of the plastics end up in harmful areas like landfills, incinerators, and areas that were not planned like waterways (Fox, 2022).

Landfills continue to fill up as we produce more and more plastic waste. Those who make enough money to live in areas with funding for infrastructure can avoid living near landfills and plastic waste. Those who don't have enough can't afford to make these choices and end up disproportionately affected by plastics. This includes having to purchase bottled water, when tap water is unsafe to buy as well as living near waste disposal sites (Jones, 2022). Forty percent of the United State's total landfill capacity and sixty percent of the largest commercial hazardous waste landfills are in communities that are predominantly families with marginalized identities. (Bullard,n.d.)

Change is challenging; those who are faced with the negative consequences of this waste are not the same who are benefiting financially. Change is unlikely without economic incentives for corporations to use more easily recyclable and less mixed materials, as it is cheaper to dispose rather than recycle.(STINA, 2021). A federal bill has been proposed: The Environmental Justice for All Act. "This bill establishes several environmental justice requirements, advisory bodies, and programs to address the disproportionate adverse human health or environmental effects of federal laws or programs on communities of color, low-income communities, or tribal and indigenous communities."(Congress, 2022). While promising, this bill has not yet been passed by the US Congress.

8.4.2.5 Reservation Land and Home Ownership

There is another group of families for whom it is more complicated and limited to build capital via home ownership: Native Americans who reside on reservations. When the United States government sequestered Native Americans to reservation lands, it also retained ownership of that land, creating a "ward: guardian relationship" between the government and the Indian Nations, as characterized by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall in 1831 (Cherokee Nations v. Georgia, 1831). The government holds reservation lands "in trust" for the tribe nations.

While there is much public debate about other aspects of tribal rights such as casinos,

and the effects of using Native images and names for sport teams, there is little discussion at the legislative level about the ways the U.S. government has limited the abilities of Native Americans to own property within the communities where they live (Schaefer Riley, 2016). This most basic way of building **equity** in a country that values individualism and capitalism has been restricted for the people who have inhabited it the longest. Native Americans have the highest poverty rate of any racial-ethnic group (28 percent in 2015) and it is likely that the control the government has exerted over their living conditions contributes to this circumstance (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

8.4.2.6 Fair Housing Act

What legally constitutes a family has influenced a multitude of the availability of resources and within that bubble of needs, housing is one of them. Housing distribution appears to have always been a necessity that was historically discriminatory towards marginalized groups regarding social identities such as race, **sexual**

orientation, gender and sex, country of origin, and disability. **The Fair Housing Act** passed in 1968 originally banned the sale and rental of housing (and other housing practices) indicating preference or **discrimination** based on race, color, religion or national origin. In 1974, it was amended to include sex, and in 1988, people with disabilities and people with children. To date, it does not include gender identity or **sexual orientation**. Only a handful of states have made it illegal to discriminate based on **sexual orientation** and gender identity, and that creates a challenge for LGBTQ+ couples.

8.4.2.7 The Role of Stigma in Obtaining Housing

It is important to note the critical nature of stigma. When a characteristic or behavior is devalued in society, and negative labels are applied to people, the consequences that the labels create can have lasting effects. The labeling theory is a "sociological hypothesis that claims that by describing an individual in terms of particular behavioral characteristics may have a significant effect on his or her behavior, as a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. "Being called "homeless," "drug-addict," "unemployable," can cause the persons being called these things to self-fulfill the negative labels. Because people of color, LGBTQ+ **kinship** groups, immigrant families, and others have been stigmatized, they are more likely to then be given other negative behavior-based labels (American Psychological Association, n.d.). This is an example of how society can perpetuate things such as **houseless**ness and criminality without awareness of doing so.

8.4.2.8 Families Who Rent

Decision-making about rental rates, whom to rent to, and upkeep of the home resides with the owner. People who rent, while receiving variable rights and responsibilities dependent on the municipality in which they reside, have less control over their living space than do owners. While many owner-renter relationships are mutually beneficial, renters who live at or below the poverty line have fewer choices and are more likely to encounter landlords who are inattentive or worse.

8.4.2.9 Slumlords

A **slumlord,** a property owner who does not properly or ethically manage their rental properties, especially one who makes an excess or unfair profit, benefits from renting substandard property to people who have few options. Properties found in low-income areas are more susceptible to having owners who may take advantage of the renters (Figure 8.15). Families who cannot rent anywhere else utilize this type of housing, because the rent is less expensive, and there may be fewer requirements such as background checks. These may include those with criminal records, previous evictions, or issues with paying rent on time.

Figure 8.15. Homes owned by "slum lords" are typically in low-income areas.

8.4.2.10 Section 8 Housing

The housing choice voucher program, more commonly known as **Section 8 housing**, is the federal government's program for assisting low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford housing. An important thing to notice is how since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants themselves are able to find their own housing.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Sometimes, a family could even use its voucher to purchase a home with a PHA's authorization (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.).

Qualifying for Section 8 housing is not a guarantee of moving into **affordable housing**. In 2020, the median wait time for people who have applied for a housing voucher in the United States is 1.5 years, with some waits as long as seven years. Currently in Oregon there are thirteen open waiting lists and at least seven counties where families cannot even get on a waiting list (**Affordable Housing** Online, n.d.).

8.4.3 Licenses and Attributions for Finding a Home: Inequities

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8.5 LOOKING AHEAD

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Katherine Hemlock, and Wesley Sharp

Understanding and acknowledging past injustices is the first step toward making homes equitably available to all families. Efforts to make changes come from multiple directions. There are legislative changes (some which have passed and some that are proposed), and nonprofit agencies and advocacy groups that work both legislatively and with direct action. In addition, there are grassroots efforts to change neighborhood dynamics and to add resources.

8.5.1 Updating the Fair Housing Act with the Equality Act

To date, **the Fair Housing Act** does not protect gender identity or **sexual orientation**. Only a handful of states have made it illegal to discriminate based on **sexual orientation** and gender identity and that creates a challenge for LGBTQ+ families and couples (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.).

In 2016, a rule by the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) insured equal access to Community Planning and Development programs regardless of **sexual orientation**, gender identity or marriage status, non-conforming gender individuals may find it difficult to access services as this rule applies to one specific program (and not to other public or private programs; 24 CFR § 5.106).

Figure 8.16 Many years of social activism, including protests, contributed to the creation and passage of **the Fair Housing Act**.

The **2019 Equality Act** is an attempt to make all Americans equal in work, housing, and other public environments. The **Equality** Act has been proposed multiple times since the 1970's, the most recent a 2021 bill passed by the US House of Representatives that would amend the Civil Rights Act to "prohibit **discrimination** on the basis of the sex, **sexual orientation**, gender identity, or pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition of an individual, as well as because of sex-based stereotypes." This Act was sent to the Senate most recently in March 2021, but has not been taken up for consideration as of February 2023 (**Equality** Act, 2021).

8.5.2 Addressing Houselessness: Housing First

People who are **houseless** can experience an overlap of **social problem**s, such as poverty, untreated mental illness, unemployment, and/or addictions. Traditionally, programs attempt to help people become "ready for housing" via support and criteria that may require multiple moves. For example, the person must become sober or employed first. A relatively new and innovative approach called Housing First sprung from grassroots efforts as early as 1988 in California and 1992 in New York. Simply put, **Housing First** prioritizes providing people with stable housing, which makes solving other problems more likely. Having a secure home, consistent access to schooling, transportation and support services means that people can be more successful in addressing overlapping issues such as mental health, addiction, and seeking employment.

Housing First: National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonprofit organization that exemplifies the approach to end **houseless**ness. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has endorsed the Housing First approach. HUD estimates that **houseless**ness costs the government between $30,000 and $60,000 per person annually, due to emergency room visits and jail time. A less expensive solution is to actually provide people with housing.

Various communities have adopted the Housing First approach and it looks different depending on the resources and principles of each location. Utah's Housing First approach is a model for how these services can be made available. Through the collaboration of many local organizations and donations from local churches, real permanent semi-communal housing is provided, along with services such as counseling. A true success story, Utah was able to reduce its **houseless** rate by 91% and the rate remains low, eight years later. For example, Grace Mary Manor in Salt Lake City is a permanent **affordable housing** facility for 84 chronically homeless individuals with a disabling condition. One resident, Joe Ortega, talks about the 1,000 piece puzzle he has laid out in his room, describing it as his "new addiction". He was able to move into Grace Mary Manor, and then address the drinking and drugs he had used to deal with life. Through programs like this, Utah was able to decrease their **houseless** population by 91 percent (Mcevers, 2015).

The state of Oregon hosts a web page dedicated to Permanent Supportive/Supported Housing Resources, which contains some of the federal government's resources about Housing First. In addition, JOIN was founded in Portland in 1992 and reports that they supported 1,377 people leaving the street for permanent and stable housing in 2018. One year later, 83 percent of those families remain stable (Join, n.d.).

8.5.3 Creating Standards to End Houselessness

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has determined criteria and benchmarks for communities to achieve the goal of ending chronic **houseless**ness. Standards are important because they help us identify what we are working toward.

These criteria are summarized as follows:

1. The community has identified and provided outreach to all individuals experiencing or at risk for chronic **houseless**ness and prevents chronic **houseless**ness whenever possible.

2. The community provides access to shelter or other temporary accommodations immediately to any person experiencing unsheltered chronic **houseless**ness who wants it.
3. The community has implemented a community-wide Housing First orientation and response that also considers the preferences of the individuals being served.
4. The community assists individuals experiencing chronic **houseless**ness to move swiftly into permanent housing with the appropriate level of supportive services and effectively prioritizes people for permanent supportive housing.
5. The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place to prevent chronic **houseless**ness from occurring and to ensure that individuals who experienced chronic **houseless**ness do not fall into **houseless**ness again or, if they do, are quickly reconnected to permanent housing.

These goals are considered met when the benchmark of maintaining these criteria has been met for 90 days. Though likely not achievable, the goal of zero **houseless** individuals in a community is aspirational (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016).

8.5.4 Changing Opportunities

We've discussed at length redlining and the continuing effects on people of color. How can the effects of so many years of institutionalized **discrimination** be undone? Analysis and action can contribute to change. Communities across the United States have been analyzed by The Opportunity Atlas, which identifies neighborhoods from which children are most likely to rise out of poverty. (Click on the link to assess your own community from a variety of **social characteristics**, including race, sex, and income; U.S. Census and Opportunity Insights, n.d.).

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management partnered with the Seattle Public Housing Authority and King County (WA) Public Housing Authority and used The Opportunity Atlas to create a pilot program that offered families using housing vouchers to move into "high opportunity neighborhoods" as defined by the Atlas. Research shows that each year spent in a high opportunity neighborhood increases the likelihood of children going to college and total lifetime earnings by at least $200,000 (Chetty et al., 2016).

In this study, the Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO) project, families received additional basic services, such as education on the location of opportunity neighborhoods, personalized rental application coaching, housing search assistance, and financial assistance. Fifty-four percent of the families receiving this assistance chose to move to opportunity neighborhoods compared to approximately 14 percent of families who received standard services. This demonstrates that families using housing vouchers are not choosing lower opportunity neighborhoods because of preference; when given education, means, and the choice to move to higher opportunity neighborhoods, they are more likely to do so. This still in progress project offers hope that there are ways that federal housing voucher programs can change the course of intergenerational poverty via investments in families who use vouchers (Delvin-Foltz, 2019). In 2019 the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) funded a larger version of this project (Bell, 2019).

8.5.5 Community Efforts

Individuals and communities are taking initiative to improve their neighborhoods aesthetically and with increasing resources that benefit families, such as informal libraries, greenspaces, and art houses.

For example, Theaster Gates, a University of Chicago professor who is also a potter and social activist, started by drawing attention to one run-down home that he refurbished, and gradually organized multiple grassroots efforts that have used **culture** to transform the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood in Chicago (Figure 8.17; TED Talks, 2015).

Figure 8.17. Theaster Gates organized multiple grassroots efforts that have used **culture** to transform the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood in Chicago.

In the video in Figure 8.18, Gates discusses how imagination, beauty, and art can revive a neighborhood.

https://www.ted.com/talks/theaster_gates_how_to_revive_a_neighborhood_with_imagination_beauty_and_art?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_**medium**=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare

Figure 8.18. How to revive a neighborhood: with imagination, beauty and art [TED Video]. Theaster Gates discusses how he has transformed abandoned buildings to create community hubs that connect and inspire those who live there (and draw in those who don't)..

Another organization, the international organization Firmeza Foundation based in the Netherlands, works with local neighborhoods to create community artwork. Artists Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn (aka Haas and and Hahn) work on the designs with community members, then hire and train local residents to complete the painting. Dre Urhahn describes the impact of the attention and love that community members pour into their neighborhoods, as well as the resulting beauty, as transformational aspects of the projects (Urhahn, 2017). Two well known projects are the favela paintings in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Northern Philadelphia in the United States.

8.5.6 An Existence Worthy of Human Dignity

In prior chapters, we have discussed models related to what human beings need. We are sharing this graphic that shows different versions of how families meet needs again (Figure 8.18) in relation to the need for housing.

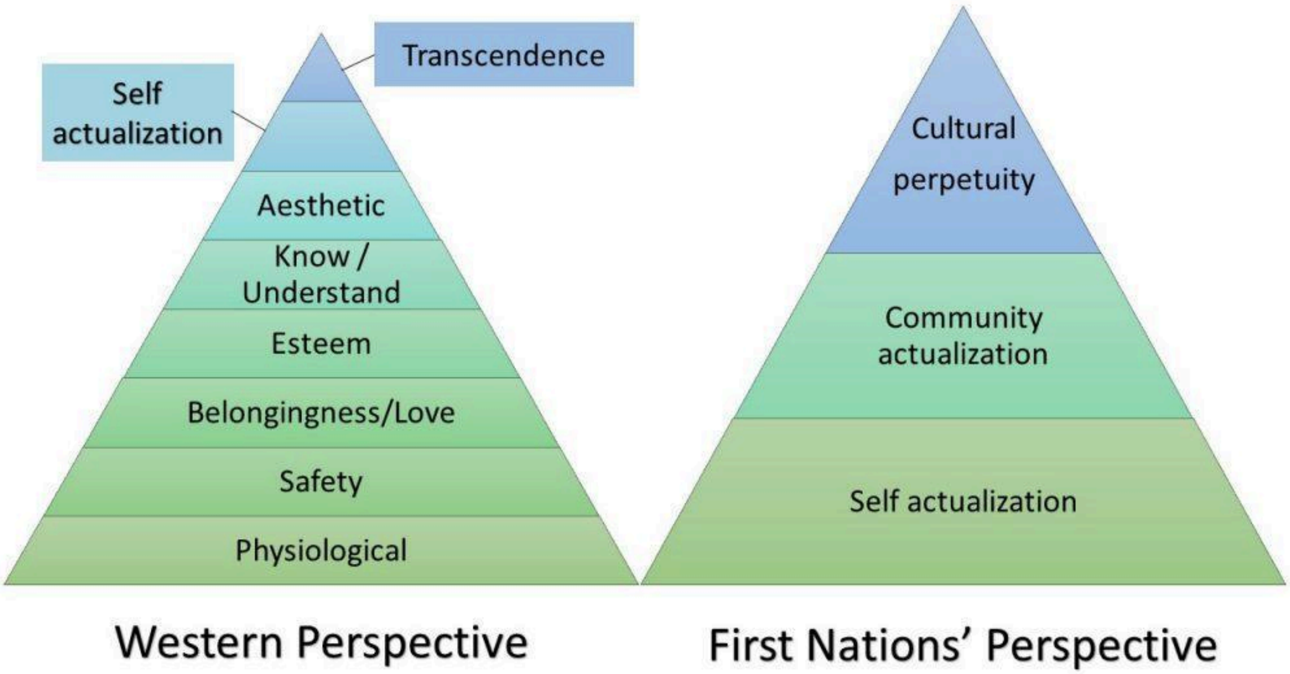

Figure 8.18. Maslow's hierarchy of needs compared to the First Nations' perspective. Maslow's scope of analysis is individual rights/privilege in one lifetime. The First Nations have an expansive concept of time and multiple dimensions of reality.

The models differ in perspective, but they both emphasize the importance of basic needs, of which shelter is one. Maslow's model on the left places shelter as the foundation of the hierarchy of needs, meaning that it must be met first in order for other needs to be achieved. In the First Nations' Perspective on the right, the well-being of the self and of community is prioritized; well-being includes basic needs for all being met.

The United Nations, a 193 nation member group founded in 1945, summarizes its mission as: Peace, Dignity and **Equality** on a Healthy Planet created a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which includes

> "Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection." (Rosenbaum, n.d.)

–Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations. 1948. Article 23

There is broad agreement that secure housing is a critical need for families to survive and thrive. While institutional biases that contribute to **inequity** and lack of secure housing for many families in the U.S.

have decreased, they have not been completely eradicated. Nor have the effects of the prior centuries of **discrimination** been undone. We must continue to work to understand the past and the present in order to impact the future.

8.5.7 Want to Learn More?

- To understand the demographics of who lives in which kind of community, read this article from the Pew Research Center: What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities.
- For more on how to assess your environment and its importance to health, watch this TEDMED TALK with Bill Davenhall.
- The Oregon Encyclopedia contains a summary of Black exclusion laws in Oregon
- To hear the full story about Utah's successful Housing First efforts, listen (or read) here.
- Theaster Gates founded the Rebuild Foundation in 2010, which is a non-profit organization that encompasses multiple neighborhood improvement projects. To read more about his community work, visit the "Projects" section of his website
- To learn more about how the work of Artists Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn (aka Haas and and Hahn) is funded and organized, watch their TED Talk here.

8.5.8 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

8.5.8.1 Open Content, Original

8.5.8.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

8.5.9 References

24 CFR § 5.106

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8.6 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

8.6.1 Reflective Questions

1. What are **houseless**ness and housing insecurity?
2. Where do most families in the U.S. live?
3. What are some institutional barriers to home ownership and who are those barriers most likely to affect?
4. What are redlining and bluelining?
5. What is the purpose of **the Fair Housing Act** and how successful has it been?
6. How do economics and power relate to home ownership?
7. How does where you live relate to other aspects of family life, such as health?
8. What are some solutions to the housing challenges that families in the U.S. face?

8.6.2 Key Terms

- **affordable housing:** housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care.
- **bluelining:** real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation, and flooding due to climate change, may not qualify for loans.

- **Bracero program**: a series of laws and diplomatic agreements, initiated in1942, when the United States signed an agreement with Mexico.
- **cost-burdened households:** households that pay 30 percent or more of monthly income toward housing
- **discrimination:** the unequal treatment of an individual or group on the basis of their statuses (e.g., age, beliefs, **ethnicity**, sex)
- **Fair Housing Act:** An act that protects people from **discrimination** when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities.
- **household size:** all the people occupying a housing unit
- **houseless/houselessness**: lacking a permanent place to live.
- **Housing First:** An approach with the belief that people need basic necessities like food and shelter before focusing on other needs such as substance use, employment, or budget.
- **housing insecurity**: Having a place to live but having uncertainty about meeting basic needs, or needing to move frequently
- **redlining:** the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied
- **residential segregation**: the physical separation of two or more groups into different neighborhoods.
- **renters:** A person who does not own their place of living, but pays another party to live in their place of living.
- **Section 8 housing:** a program that authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords on behalf of low-income households.
- **shelters**: Places and organizations that provide temporary living space for **houseless** families and individuals.
- **slumlord**: a property owner who does not properly or ethically manage their rental properties, especially one who makes an excess or unfair profit,
- **socioeconomic status:** A combination of one's wealth, education and occupational level.

8.6.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and

Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

8.6.3.1 Open Content, Original

8.7 CHAPTER 8 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 9: SAFETY AND STABILITY

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

9.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify macro- and micro-level resources that families need to be safe.
2. Explain what protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs) are and how these relate to the safety of families.
3. Describe what adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are and how they impact families.
4. Outline how social supports outside families contribute to the safety of families.
5. Identify practices that create safety within families.
6. Discuss a wide range of family issues, such as violence and abuse, and how common they are.
7. Explain why some families have greater access to the resources they need to be safe.

9.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

9.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

9.2 WHAT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEED TO BE SAFE

Safety and stability are fundamental aspects of both Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and First Nations perspectives on needs, which we discussed in Chapter 3. In Maslow's hierarchy, individuals need physical safety to achieve self-actualization. Similarly, the idea of safety is inherent to First Nations ideas about meeting the community's needs, where the safety of a community is essential to cultural perpetuity.

Maslow's theory and First Nations perspectives show us that safety can be co-created in communities and experienced individually. Safety can be a public policy goal, such as the passage of a law increasing funding for afterschool programs. Organizations, such as services provided to people leaving abusive relationships, also create safety. In relationships, safety grows from the intense love, trust, and connection between child and parent. Finally, individuals can create safety and develop through positive childhood experiences and by learning social and emotional skills.

There are different kinds of safety: physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal. Individuals, families, and communities experience safety. Physical safety includes access to resources like food and water. It also includes freedom from violence and freedom from anyone touching your body without consent.

Psychological safety is freedom from excessive worry of physical or emotional harm. This does not mean that bad things never happen. Instead, when people have psychological safety, they feel they can openly communicate with others and find solutions to problems.

A person, family, and/or community has spiritual safety when they feel comfortable being themselves because others acknowledge, understand, and engage respectfully with them. Spiritual safety emerges in contexts where there is mutual understanding and support.

Communal safety is when a person has a sense of belonging and attachment to their family, broader social groups, and families. It also means that people within these social groups are free to express their **culture**, supported, and able to thrive in perpetuity. All of these aspects of safety are relevant to understanding what children and families need to be safe.

This chapter will explore the various aspects of safety, both macro-level and micro-level aspects. We'll also discuss how freedom from abuse and violence is integral to creating safety but one that many families struggle to obtain. Finally, we'll examine families' barriers to achieving a sense of safety and how policies and communities have progressed on these issues.

9.2.1 Macro-Level and Micro-Level Aspects of Safety

Many factors contribute to families' and individuals' ability to be safe. These include macro-level factors: policies, institutions, communities, and **culture**s that promote safety and security. Other factors work at the micro-level to create safety and security: safety created through relationships, social service interventions, and individuals' social and emotional skills.

Before we look more in-depth at the macro- and micro-factors contributing to safety, we will briefly discuss why safety is so important, especially during childhood and adolescence. The safer and more stable families and communities are, the better they will be able to provide their children with protective childhood experiences. These experiences improve children's resilience during adversity and, in some cases, avoid adverse childhood experiences.

9.2.2 Protective and Compensatory Childhood Experiences

Individuals need safety throughout their life course, particularly during childhood because of its role in cognitive and emotional development (Morris et al., 2021). Families play a significant role in providing children with experiences that will help them grow into happy, stable, and successful adults. When families and communities have a sense of safety and stability, they can provide children with the security they need to develop into productive adults.

Public health scholars have identified 10 **protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs)** that help children develop resilience. These experiences can promote resilience even if children have some adverse or traumatic childhood experiences (Morris et al., 2021). PACEs are fulfilled by:

1. A caregiver who loves them unconditionally.
2. A best friend who they can trust and have fun with.
3. An adult who is not their parent that they can trust and turn to for advice.
4. Regular opportunities to help others, through volunteering or participation in other community projects.
5. Physical activities and/or sports.
6. Social groups, such as church, scout groups, community groups.
7. Hobbies, such as arts and crafts, reading, debate team, playing a musical instrument.
8. A school with the resources and academic experiences that they need to learn.
9. A home that is clean, safe, and where there is enough to eat.
10. A home with routines and fair, clear, and consistently enforced rules.

The ability to provide children with these experiences is directly related to macro- and micro-level factors associated with safety. These experiences can only exist at the macro-level if families have access to resources—such as food, money, access to quality schools, and time to engage in the community. At the micro-level, these experiences are born out of healthy relationships and a sense of community—children knowing they have people who care about them. If we want children to grow into resilient adults, then we need families and communities to have the support they need. Families with support can provide children with needed resources and build strong relationships.

9.2.3 Adverse Childhood Experiences

When families don't have the things they need to be safe, children are more likely to be exposed to adverse childhood experiences. **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** are traumas that occur in an individual's life before they turn 18, which include neglect, abuse, and household difficulties. The greater the number of ACEs that an individual has experienced, the greater the likelihood of poor social, emotional, and health outcomes in the short and long term. Specifically, researchers have identified 10 adverse childhood experiences:

1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Witnessing violence against mother/stepmother
5. Substance abuse in household
6. Mental illness in household
7. Parental separation or divorce
8. Incarcerated household member
9. Emotional neglect
10. Physical neglect (CDC, 2021)

Hudson Center for Health **Equity** and Quality has developed an online calculator for adverse childhood experiences where you can calculate your ACE score. This online tool is based on the CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study but is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Adverse childhood experiences impact children in the short and long term. In the short term, children may internalize or externalize their emotions related to the trauma that they have experienced. Children may respond to these experiences by externalizing their emotions, a psychological defense mechanism in which they direct uncomfortable feelings at others or "act out." They may engage in inappropriate or disruptive behavior or become diagnosed with ADHD or conduct disorders. In contrast, children may respond to these issues by internalizing their emotions, a similar defense mechanism that involves holding in or hiding their feelings. Children who internalize may experience anxiety and/or depression. In both cases, children's neurodevelopment is disrupted, which leads to a greater likelihood of long-term impacts from these experiences (McLaughlin et al. 2015).

9.2.4 Activity: Childhood Trauma Over the Lifetime

Watch this video featuring the former Surgeon General of California Nadine Burke Harris who explains how ACEs can impact health in the long term, but also ways that communities can address these issues before they get to that level (Figure 9.1).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=439#oembed-1

Figure 9.1. How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime | Nadine Burke Harris [YouTube Video]. Childhood trauma is a common occurrence that impacts individuals' physical and psychological health throughout the life course if it is not addressed

Questions to Consider:

1. How do ACEs impact children's health outcomes?
2. What is the benefit of screening children for ACEs?
3. What can local and state public health agencies do to reduce the health impact that ACEs have on children?

As the video shows, in the long term, ACEs can impact health across the lifetime. Figure 9.2 shows the pathway from adverse childhood experiences to poor health outcomes and wellbeing over the life course.

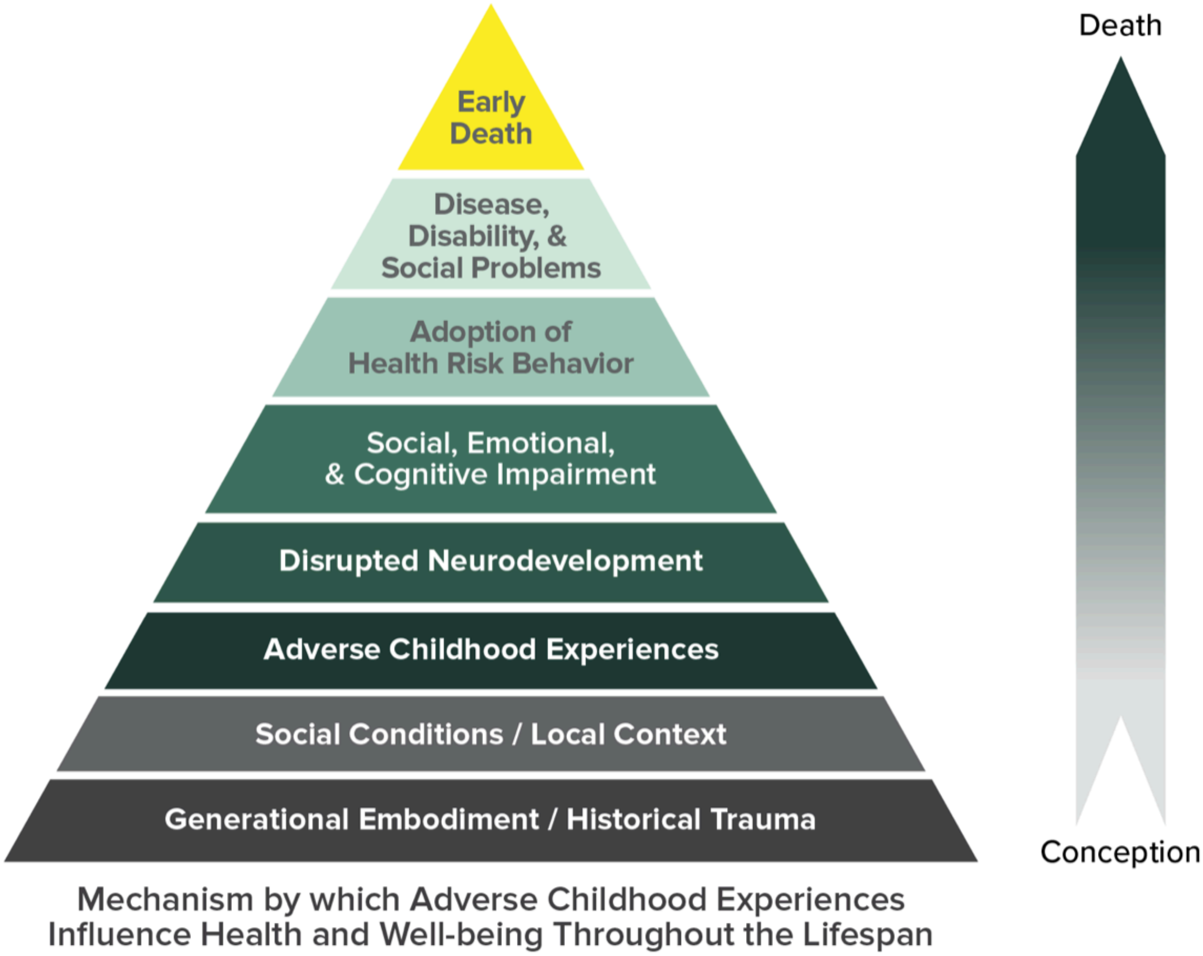

Figure 9.2. The ACE Pyramid shows how adverse childhood experiences end up influencing long term health outcomes.

Macro- and micro-level factors that promote safety directly connect to adverse childhood experiences. Adverse childhood experiences arise from a combination of social conditions and individual interactions. For instance, when we look at the bottom of the ACE pyramid in Figure 9.2, we can see how issues such as historical trauma or other social/community conditions can lead to adverse childhood experiences. These are macro-factors that indicate a lack of safety for families.

At the same time, the extent to which adverse childhood experiences impact a child depends on their exposure to protective and compensatory childhood experiences. Many of these protective factors function at the micro-level—quality relationships and a sense of support—and connect back to the broader needs for families to access resources. Not every child exposed to trauma will have significant and severe long-term negative consequences. However, the greater the number of protective factors children have, the lower the likelihood that adverse childhood experiences will have severe long-term outcomes.

Public health initiatives to address the impact of ACEs and trauma in children are crucial. Addressing this impact requires the government and organizations to put resources towards helping families and educating families on the effects of ACEs. Additionally, families must be open to learning skills to heal from trauma and improve their relationships. An example of what this can look like in practice can be found in the box below, highlighting the group Creating Community Resilience in Douglas County, Oregon. Moving forward, we'll look at how access to resources and families' community and individual relationships influence their sense of safety.

9.2.5 In Focus: Creating Community Resilience

In Douglas County, Oregon, there is an organization named Creating Community Resilience. This group aims to inform the community about the impact of adverse childhood experiences and integrate trauma-informed practices into local schools, county agencies, and nonprofits.

One of the strengths of this group is that they bring together a wide range of community groups to accomplish these goals. The involved organizations include local school districts, the juvenile department, health care providers, social service agencies, the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and Umpqua Community College. All these agencies play a role in educating the public, implementing trauma-informed practices, and working with other community groups to spread the impact of this work. Regularly, members of this group will give ACE Interface trainings to local groups. These trainings explain the Kaiser ACE study, discuss protective factors against ACEs, and provide information about how community members can address these issues.

They also hold "Lunch and Learn" monthly events for community members. At these lunches, community members can learn more about trauma-related issues and the work being done in Douglas County to address trauma. Through all of this work, Creating Community Resilience is taking active steps to mitigate the impact of trauma in Douglas County by both strengthening the skills of local professionals to address these issues in a wide range of contexts and educating the general public.

9.2.6 Licenses and Attributions for What Children

and Families Need to be Safe

9.2.6.1 Open Content, Original

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9.2.7 References

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9.3 MACRO-LEVEL AND MICRO-LEVEL FACTORS RELATED TO SAFETY

As we've already noted, the level of safety that an individual or family experiences is directly related to macro-level factors: policies, institutions, community, and **culture**s. These factors are crucial in creating social support so families can access the resources they need: food, water, healthcare, money, and others.

In this section, we explore two critical ideas related to macro-level factors. First, we will discuss how social support can increase families' physical and mental safety. Finally, we will examine the interconnection between macro-factors that promote safety.

Similar to our discussion of macro-factors that promote safety, the micro-factors that create safety are also important for families to truly feel secure. This section explores the role of quality relationships in creating safety for families. Together, these factors help families have physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal safety.

9.3.1 Social Supports Increasing Safety

How do society and institutions support or get in the way of families getting what they need? Public policies that expand social support are essential to increasing families' physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal safety.

For example, let's look at how the passage of paid parental leave policies promotes and creates safety within families. Paid parental leave policies provide parents time off of work while still receiving their salary after giving birth or following an adoption or foster care placement. The period of parental leave varies from four to 85 weeks, depending on the state or country.

Parental leave policies support families in their physical, psychological, and spiritual safety. Paid parental leave increases the physical safety of members of the family. If a parent gives birth, they have time off to physically recover. The child gains valuable time to bond and be physically close to their parents, which is crucial to developing healthy attachment and psychological safety. The ability to stay home and bond with their child without worrying about whether they'll be able to pay their bills also provides parents with a sense of psychological safety. Parents have a sense of spiritual safety because of paid parental leave. They feel like society at large acknowledges and understands the demands of a new family member by providing this benefit.

Together, all of these forms of safety increase communal safety. Public policies that create safety help children develop a sense of belonging and attachment to their families. Safety also provides building blocks so that families can continue to thrive. Parental leave is one of many examples of how good public policy can give families a deeper and more comprehensive sense of safety in the short and long term.

Unfortunately, the relative lack of social support for families and individuals in the United States is a major barrier to families getting what they need and creating a true sense of safety. From the earliest stages of life, comprehensive policies are absent to support families.

While we looked at the example of how families can have a greater sense of safety from paid parental leave, these policies are not universally accessible in the United States. In fact, as of 2021, only nine states and Washington D.C. have paid parental leave laws, which range from 4 to 12 weeks off and provide anywhere between 50–100 percent of a parent's pay (KFF, 2021). Similarly, only 35 percent of all U.S. employees have employers who offer paid parental leave. Most of these employees are in the top 25 percent of all income earners. These statistics show that the private sector is not compensating for the lack of federal or state laws guaranteeing these benefits (KFF, 2021). Lack of social support has consequences for families, particularly low-income families in states without these protections.

This lack of a robust social safety net continues to impact families over time, which we can see, for example, when looking at the state of anti-poverty programs in the United States. The U.S. minimum wage remains well below what is required to adequately provide for a family as the cost of living continues to increase. Social safety nets have consistently been cut or are under threat.

Welfare reform in the 1990s is an example of cuts to social programs. Congress changed laws to limit the length of time families could receive this kind of assistance. Another example is the more recent (unsuccessful) attacks on food assistance programs (Hsu, 2020). Many families remain in poverty despite the efforts of remaining social programs—especially when looking at families headed by single mothers or members of oppressed groups.

Poverty impacts every aspect of family life, affecting the family's physical, psychological, spiritual, and community safety. These issues highlight one of the main reasons representation is important. (See Chapter 6 for more about representation.) If the issues faced by a diverse range of families are not being represented or heard by lawmakers, then families and groups won't have their needs met. And, if families and groups don't have their needs met, then safety remains elusive.

Unlike in the United States, robust social support for families is the norm globally, especially in other high-income nations. For instance, the United States and Papua New Guinea are the only two countries without paid parental leave laws. If we look at other issues, such as child poverty, the United States has much higher rates than other high-income nations. Researchers have consistently found that the U.S. under invests in its children and families compared to other wealthy countries. This underinvestment leads to negative economic and educational outcomes (Smeeding & Thévenot, 2016).

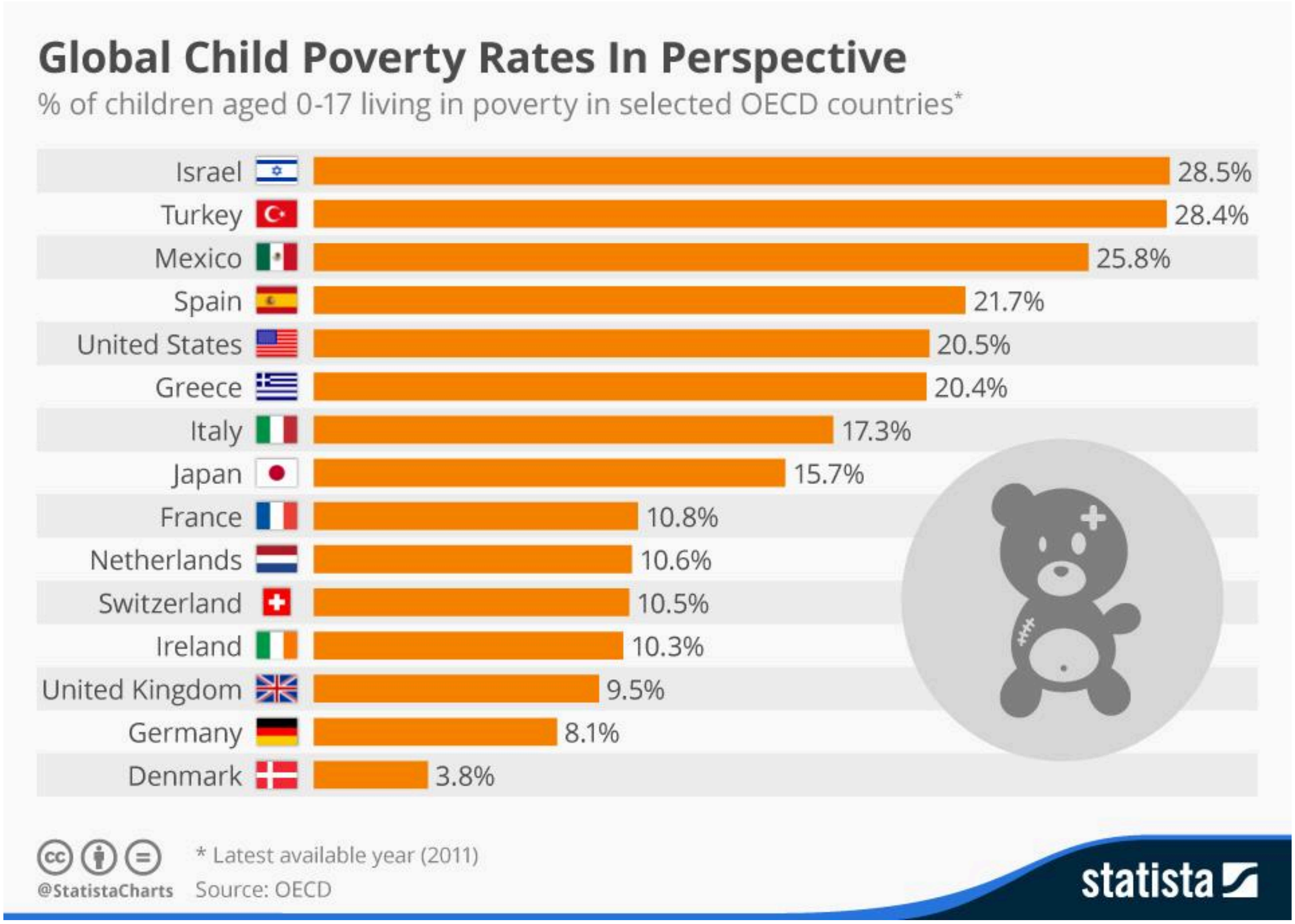

Figure 9.3 Child poverty is significantly higher in the US than it is in many other high income nations

In these other wealthy countries, we can see how policies such as cash support and employment assistance help groups disproportionately likely to be in poverty in the U.S., such as single mothers. If America wants to increase safety within families and communities, it is worth considering what we can learn from the examples of other nations that have increased social support for families.

9.3.2 Interconnection of Macro-Level Safety Factors

The other central question addressed in this textbook is, "what do families need?" In answering that question, we examine various aspects of society that contribute to safety. In earlier chapters, we covered several macro-factors that promote safety in families: a sense of community (Chapter 3), **culture** (Chapter 5), representation in government (Chapter 6), access to quality physical and mental health care (Chapter 7), and affordable and safe housing (Chapter 8). In the following chapters, we'll expand upon this by looking at how access to food and water (Chapter 10), and equal justice (Chapter 11). These factors increase physical safety and improve the health and wellness of families. At the same time, they give families a deeper sense of agency, belonging, and respect that positively impacts psychological, spiritual, and communal safety.

In many ways, true safety is created when families have all of their needs met. Yet, this can be difficult because many of these needs are related. For instance, it is unlikely that a family in the United States will have access to quality healthcare, quality education, or affordable and safe housing if they are struggling economically. In many ways, the most privileged members of society have the greatest access to safety. This is because they can get the majority (if not all) of their needs met. Still, many of these factors are interrelated. Consequently, even a modest increase in meeting one of these needs can increase the safety of a family. For instance, increasing access to healthy food and clean water for young children can improve physical and mental health outcomes and educational outcomes.

There are plenty of examples of how families and communities mobilized available resources to create safety, even when they lacked other necessary resources or equal protection. Chosen families, often created in LGBTQ+ communities, are a great example. In chosen families, members create a **culture** that centers around sharing resources. This cooperation compensates for the lack of access to representation in government, equal justice, quality healthcare, and equal opportunities in the labor market. These practices, in turn, create an improved sense of physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal safety amongst participants—even though society may not be broadly safe or welcoming.

9.3.3 Quality Relationships

Micro-factors are equally important in establishing a sense of safety in families. Quality relationships with family and community members (friends, mentors, coaches, colleagues) are important for children and adults. Families need a sense of safety with one another. They also need a broader sense of security that develops through positive connections with people in their social sphere.

Childhood and adolescence are periods where youth can benefit from positive social relationships. In Chapter 4, we look at the concept of nurturance, highlighting how parenting and caregiving can be important responsibilities taken on within families. Baumrind's parenting styles strongly argue that the authoritative parenting style can help create safety for children.

Children need supportive, emotionally responsive parents who clearly explain and consistently enforce fair rules. When parents do this, it creates a sense of safety by providing children with psychological safety. Children know what to expect if they break the rules. They also generally feel connected to and supported by their parents, trusting their parents will openly communicate with them. Fair rules also create a sense of spiritual safety where children know their parents will treat them with respect. These aspects work together to provide children with communal security—a sense of belonging within their families.

The research on attachment theory, also discussed in Chapter 4, similarly connects back to the idea of safety. For children to have a secure attachment, an indicator that they feel safe, parents need to be able to help children regulate their emotions. Regulation of emotions also helps children to feel deep or unconditional love from their caregivers. Children know they will be supported and safe within their relationship with their caregiver.

Finally, children and adolescents need relationships outside of the family. Many of the protective and compensatory experiences for youth are related to being involved in groups where they can develop friendships and engage with mentors. This is one of the reasons that mentoring programs, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, have been so effective. These programs have been successful in helping youth stay in school, avoid contact with the juvenile justice system, and build friendships within the communities. Relationships outside the family allow youth to broaden their sense of safety by helping them find new places where they can experience physical, psychological, and spiritual safety. These experiences can give youth a broader sense of communal safety. These experiences also give children a sense of connection to a much wider **culture** than they could get in their immediate social networks.

Adults within families also need quality relationships with family to have a sense of safety—whether these families are biological or chosen. Relationships outside the family provide adults with a broader sense of connection to their communities, creating a deeper sense of communal safety. At the same time, issues can arise in families—such as intimate partner violence or economic struggles—where external support is even more crucial. When families experience problems like this, connections to those outside of the family can help provide members with physical, psychological, and spiritual safety. This kind of safety can be crucial to families getting through tough times or helping them adjust after traumatic events.

Still, the broader social context influences many of these micro-level factors. For instance, it may be harder for a parent to develop a secure attachment to their child if they immediately have to return to work due to lack of paid parental leave. Similarly, while being involved in extracurricular activities and mentoring programs can significantly benefit youth, these activities and programs are not universally accessible. In both examples, it is clear that social supports have a tremendous impact on the level of safety experienced by families.

9.3.4 Licenses and Attributions for Macro-Level and Micro-Level Factors Related to Safety

9.3.4.1 Open Content, Original

9.3.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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9.4 FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Freedom from violence and abuse is an essential aspect of families' ability to create safety. Violence and abuse are common issues for families. They are significant barriers that keep families from creating a true sense of safety. Similarly, many types of families experience violence and abuse—both those who have resources and are served well by **social institutions** and those who are not. Even if a family has many of their macro-level needs met, families are prevented from creating positive and compensatory experiences for children if there is violence and abuse. Violence and abuse also can prevent the development of quality relationships within and outside of the family.

This section looks at common violence and abuse: intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and intergenerational trauma. First, we'll define these terms and discuss how common these types of violence and abuse are. Next, we'll outline the problems that must be addressed if we want all families and individuals to experience safety and stability. One of the major takeaways from this discussion is that institutions are critical to addressing the impact of violence and abuse on families, as their role is to promote safety. If institutions can effectively promote safety, families and individuals will be better positioned.

It is important to note that these are serious and difficult topics to discuss, mainly because these **social problem**s impact many people. Still, by better understanding the dynamics of violence and abuse, we can find ways to make our society safer for all individuals.

9.4.1 Intimate Partner Violence

The United States recognizes intimate partner violence as a significant public health issue. This type of violence is universally condemned due to its heinous nature. **Intimate partner violence (IPV)** is defined as any incident or pattern of behaviors (physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal) used by one partner to maintain power and control over the relationship.

Historically, in the United States, IPV has been considered an act of violence committed by men toward women. While heterosexual women commonly experience IPV, it can occur to people of any gender and sexuality. Young women are particularly at risk as IPV declines with age. Perpetrators of IPV are most often heterosexual men. Engaging in IPV has been linked with being unemployed, low income, involved with aggressive peers, and having conduct problems or anti-social behavior (Capaldi et al., 2012).

Figure 9.4 Intimate partner violence is extremely common, especially for women.

There are three kinds of IPV:

1. Physical violence consists of touching or painful physical contact, including intimidation of the victim through pushing, slapping, hair pulling, arm twisting, disfiguration, bruising, burning, beating, punching, and use of weapons.
2. Sexual violence consists of making degrading comments, touching in unpleasant means of harm, addressing a partner in a degrading way during sexual intercourse, and marital rape.
3. Psychological and emotional violence consists of threatening, intimidating, killing of pets, deprivation of fundamental needs (food, clothing, shelter, sleep), and distorting reality through control and manipulation.

Many abusers may use a combination of these tactics to establish power and control over the person they are abusing, frequently using physical and sexual violence to reinforce the subtle methods of physical and emotional abuse.

Community organizations have worked to provide services to help people experiencing intimate partner violence. These organizations offer a wide range of services to individuals and families experiencing this kind of violence: safety planning, counseling, legal assistance, shelter, and other social services. These organizations provide services that are integral to helping individuals safely leave abusive relationships. These resources are essential because the threat of violence is highest when a victim of intimate partner violence leaves their abuser.

9.4.2 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence includes harassment, assault, and rape. It is a common misperception that women are at greater risk of sexual violence from strangers. In reality, women are most likely to experience sexual violence from men they are intimate with or know. More than one in three women and one in four men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes. Nearly one in five women and one in 38 men have reported experiencing completed or attempted rape, and one in 14 men was made to penetrate someone (completed or attempted) during their lifetime. Men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of sexual violence. Still, similar to intimate partner violence, sexual violence can affect individuals of any gender or sexuality. Men are significantly less likely to report sexual assault, so these numbers may be higher.

College students are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence compared to non-students. Male college-aged students (18–24) are 78 percent more likely than non-students of the same age to be victims of rape or sexual assault (*Fast Facts: Preventing Sexual Violence*, 2022). Female college-aged students (18–24) are 20 percent less likely than non-students of the same age to be victims of rape or sexual assault (*Fast Facts: Preventing Sexual Violence*, 2022).

There are several reasons that sexual violence is rampant, especially on residential four-year campuses. On many campuses, students lack knowledge of reporting sexual violence when it occurs. When it does get reported, colleges and universities rarely punish perpetrators of sexual violence and remove them from campus. College students engage in unsupervised heavy alcohol consumption, especially in greek life and high-powered athletic programs. This party **culture** creates an environment where predators have more opportunities to assault people sexually. Finally, there is a lack of education about consent.

One of the significant issues in the United States is that our society has failed to adequately address sexual violence and support victims. In fact, out of every 1000 instances of rape, only 13 cases get referred to a prosecutor, and only seven cases will lead to a felony conviction (Rape Abuse and Incest National Network [RAINN], n.d.). Instead of a **culture** where institutions hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable, American society is one where rape **culture** is common. **Rape culture** refers to a society or environment where there is a **culture** of disbelief and lack of support for sexual violence survivors through normalizing and trivializing sexual violence despite its prevalent occurrence.

There are many examples of rape **culture** in institutions. Rape **culture** is when administrators ask, 'what were you wearing?' or 'how much did you have to drink?' as a student is trying to report a rape that occurred at a fraternity party to a campus administrator.

Rape **culture** is also present in the criminal justice system. The 2015 case against rapist Brock Turner highlighted how rape **culture** can manifest. Turner brutally raped an unconscious college student behind a dumpster and was caught in the act by two men. During the trial, Turner's father declared that he should not have his life ruined over "20 minutes of action." Ultimately, the California judge gave Turneronly three years of probation (Stack 2016). This example captures how rape **culture** exists in individual attitudes and how institutions function. Despite the egregious and substantiated nature, Turner faced few consequences for his actions, and the court system did not treat this as a serious offense. More broadly, this case reflects the dismal statistics on prosecution and convictions of rape in the U.S.

Finally, rape **culture** can be found in pop**culture**, such as lyrics in popular music. A particularly blatant example of this is found in Rick Ross's 2013 song "U.O.E.N.O". In this song, he raps, "Put molly all in her champagne, she ain't even know it/I took her home and I enjoyed that, she ain't even know it." These lyrics trivialize sexual assault and glorify rape. These examples show how rape **culture** is deeply embedded in societal institutions and must be challenged if we want all individuals and families to feel safe.

9.4.3 Child Abuse

Child abuse is the intentional emotional, negligent, physical, or sexual mistreatment of a child by an adult (Bell, 2013). Child abuse is common. At least one in seven children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the past year (*Fast Facts: Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2022). One of the many reasons these statistics are so concerning is that child abuse is trauma. According to SAMHSA (2014), trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Abuse comes in many forms, including physical, emotional/verbal, and sexual abuse. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN, 2021), **physical abuse** is defined as any act, completed or attempted, that physically hurts or injures a child. NCTSN also describes that acts of physical abuse include hitting, kicking, scratching, pulling hair, and more. Child Protection Services typically get reports of bruises and other noticeable marks when investigating a report of physical abuse.

Emotional abuse is nonphysical maltreatment of a child through verbal language. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) states that emotional abuse includes humiliation, threatening, ignoring, manipulating, and more. (https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/emotional-abuse/what-is-emotional-abuse/) Abusers can combine emotional abuse with other forms, like physical and sexual abuse. Most reports of emotional abuse are harder to prove; thus, physical or sexual abuse tends to be the main cause of removal from a home.

Sexual abuse is maltreatment, violation, and exploitation where a perpetrator forces, coerces, or threatens a child into sexual contact for sexual gratification and/or financial benefit. Sexual abuse includes molestation, statutory rape, prostitution, pornography, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitative activities. (American Society for the Positive Care of Children, 2017). Sexual abuse is also a common adverse childhood experience. About one in four girls and one in 13 boys experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood (*Fast Facts: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*, 2022). Like other forms of child abuse, sexual abuse is overwhelmingly perpetrated by someone close to the child. Data show that 91 percent of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child or their family knows (*Fast Facts: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*, 2022).

Abuse does not always have to be physical, sexual, or verbal assault. It can also be neglect. According to the NSPCC, **neglect** is the failure to meet a child's basic needs.

9.4.4 Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse is when older people are deprived of care or intentionally harmed by their caretakers. Abuse, including neglect and exploitation, is experienced by about 1 in 10 people aged 60 and older who live at home. Elder abuse and neglect are under-reported in the United States for many reasons, including fear and embarrassment by the elderly (O'Connor & Rowe, 2005). Elder victims of abuse risks include: functional disability, lack of social supports, poor physical health, cognitive impairment, mental health issues, lower socio-economic status, gender, age, and financial dependence (Pillemar, Burnes, Riffin, & Lachs, 2016). There is not one specific cause for elderly abuse and neglect. These reasons include various dynamics, cultural norms, negligence, and lack of education and support (Muehlbauer & Crane, 2006). Potential causes of abuse could be due to mental illness, substance abuse, and the need to abuse the perpetrator (Pillemar, Burnes, Riffin, & Lachs, 2016).

Forms of elder abuse can take the following shapes:

- Physical abuse—Use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment
- Sexual abuse—Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person
- Emotional abuse—Infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts
- Financial/material exploitation—Illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets
- Neglect—Refusal, or failure, to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elderly person
- Abandonment—Desertion of an elderly person by an individual who has physical custody of the elder or by a person who has assumed responsibility for providing care to the elder
- Self-neglect—Behaviors of an elderly person that threaten the elder's health or safety (National Center on Elder Abuse, 2005)

There are several strategies that can help prevent elder abuse. These strategies include learning about and educating others on the signs of elder abuse, providing help for overburdened caregivers, listening to older adults and their caregivers about their struggles, and reporting abuse or suspected abuse to adult protective services.

9.4.5 Intergenerational Trauma

The American Psychological Association defines **intergenerational trauma** as "a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person himself or herself" (APA 2022). They note that these reactions can vary but often include:

- Shame.
- Increased anxiety and guilt.
- A heightened sense of vulnerability and helplessness.
- Low self-esteem.
- Depression and suicidality.
- Substance abuse.
- Dissociation.
- Hypervigilance.
- Intrusive thoughts.
- Difficulty with relationships and attachment to others.
- Difficulty in regulating aggression.
- Extreme reactivity to stress (APA, 2022)

Many groups have experienced intergenerational trauma, including descendants of Holocaust survivors, Rwandan genocide survivors, Native American boarding school survivors, and enslaved persons. Scientists think that trauma responses are passed down by parents and grandparents who model and teach relationship skills, behaviors, values, and beliefs. There is also some evidence that the transmission of these reactions may be biological (Yehuda et al., 2015).

Epigenetics is the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible. They do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence (CDC, 2022). A 2016 study found evidence of epigenetic changes transmitted across generations to descendants of Holocaust survivors. This was the first human evidence that intergenerational trauma may also have a biological mechanism (Yehuda et al., 2015).

Regardless of the means of transmission—social, biological, or both—intergenerational trauma can threaten a family's sense of safety and create problems within families. This kind of trauma may impact the bonds grandparents, parents, and children can form with one another, frequently making these relationships difficult and emotionally stunted. At the same time, more significant issues can emerge. These include suicidality, substance use disorders, and difficulty regulating aggression. These problems can lead to negative outcomes like adverse childhood experiences and family instability. The research on intergenerational trauma is still being done. We still have much to learn about how it functions. Consequently, strategies to address intergenerational trauma are also in the early stages of development. Even without specific evidence-based treatments, therapy can address intergenerational trauma.

9.4.6 Licenses and Attributions for Freedom from Violence and Abuse

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9.5 ACCESS TO SAFETY AND STABILITY

Why do some families have more access to what they need to be safe and stable? And what can be done to address these resource gaps between families? This final section of the chapter explores why some families don't have access to what they need.

At the macro-level, systemic perspectives on in**equality** highlight how classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and other forms of **discrimination** are built into our social structure. These systemic inequalities make it so that marginalized groups don't have equal access to safety and stability. These macro-factors directly impact micro-level factors, such as the ability to have quality family relationships.

There are also significant barriers to addressing violence and abuse at the micro-level that are also integral to ensuring that families are safe and stable. Finally, we'll look at a few examples of how policies, organizations, and individuals have tried to address these issues.

9.5.1 Limiting Factors for Safety and Stability

In the previous section, we looked at how interconnected factors promote safety. When families lack an essential resource—food, shelter, or healthcare—they experience increased vulnerability. But why do some families have a deeper sense of safety and stability than others? Much of the reason that some families are more able to access safety and stability than others directly relates to systemic inequalities in society, including classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism.

At the macro-level, quality family relationships and access to resources are intertwined. If a parent has to work 60–70 hours a week to support their family, they may have strained relationships with their partner and children.

Systemic inequalities also directly impact the quality of family relationships. For instance, more Black children grow up without a father in the home today than during slavery, primarily due to mass incarceration and the racially motivated War on Drugs (Alexander 2010). Another example can be seen in the 2014 murder of Eric Garner. A combination of racist institutional policies allowing chokeholds and racial biases led to Garner's five children losing their father to police violence. These are examples of macro-level policies and systemic in**equality** impacting families on the most intimate, personal levels.

At the micro-level, families' lack of safety and stability also stems from intimate partner violence and child abuse. Despite increased services to address intimate partner violence, many places in the country don't have access to services to help victims leave an abusive relationship.This is particularly an issue in rural areas.

This lack of resources connects back to the macro-level factors we discussed above, where some groups have significantly greater access to resources than other communities.

Additionally, funding for social services is generally tenuous. Many organizations that address intimate partner violence do not have enough resources to meet service demands. Numerous factors contribute to these shortages, including cuts in grant funding, unstable fundraising, or overworked staff.

Even when victims have access to services, it can be tough to leave an abusive relationship because of the power and control an abuser has over their victim. While it can be hard for the victim to psychologically and emotionally break away from their abuser, they also face physical risk when leaving a relationship where there is intimate partner violence. Remember, the risk of homicide by an abusive partner is highest when someone is leaving the relationship.

Just as there are barriers to addressing intimate partner violence, there are also barriers to addressing child abuse. More child abuse occurs than is reported to official agencies responsible for addressing this issue. Scholars commonly refer to this gap as the 'dark figure' of child abuse. Even if child protective services identify children experiencing abuse, these experiences can also be traumatic and expose them more to trauma. This is especially true if they're placed into foster care.

9.5.2 Addressing Barriers to Safety and Stability

So how can we address barriers to promoting and creating safety and stability? Families need robust social support. Families directly benefit and become safer when we increase access to financial resources, food, shelter, and other basic needs. These improvements can also not be completely effective unless we work to address the legacies and current manifestations of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression within our society and institutions. Otherwise, we will only see a reimagining of old systems of oppression in new forms.

For example, we can see how Black families have been continually impacted by institutional racism across U.S. history despite reforms: slavery, sharecropping, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and mass incarceration. If we truly want all groups to experience safety, we need to dismantle the systems that lead to some groups having significantly better outcomes and experiences with institutions

At the micro-level, education is integral to preventing, identifying, and effectively addressing issues such as violence and abuse. Efforts to educate childcare providers, teachers, and medical providers about the signs of child abuse can help the people who are most likely to interact with children notice the signs of abuse and intervene.

At the same time, broader education about intimate partner violence can help people identify early warning signs of abuse. Education can also help people know how to appropriately respond if they or one of their loved ones is in an abusive relationship. Education is also crucial for helping families create healthy relationships within and outside of their families. This is especially vital for groups who have experienced historical traumas that may be passed down across generations.

9.5.3 Activity: Why Domestic Violence Victims Stay

Watch the following TEDTalk "Why Domestic Violence Victims Don't Leave" by Leslie Morgan Steiner to learn more about barriers to exiting abusive relationships (Figure 9.5).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=445#oembed-1

Figure 9.5. Even when physical violence escalates, it can be extremely difficult for someone to leave a relationship where intimate partner violence is occurring

Questions to Consider:

1. How can education about intimate partner violence help prevent it?
2. What obstacles exist when a victim wants to leave an abusive relationship?
3. What did you learn from listening to Leslie Morgan Steiner's experience with abuse?

9.5.4 Licenses and Attributions for Access to Safety and Stability

9.5.4.1 Open Content, Original

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9.6 LOOKING AHEAD

One of the big critiques of our response to intimate partner violence and sexual violence is the lack of accountability and consequences for those who commit these acts. The mechanisms within the criminal justice system to hold perpetrators accountable are relatively weak and incomplete.

Police may lack the training to respond appropriately to intimate partner violence and sexual assault calls. Even when police have training on these issues, they often fail to properly handle calls that are suspected of intimate partner violence or sexual assault. The 2021 Gaby Petito and Brian Laundrie case was a well-known example of this. In this case, officers came under fire for not adhering to department protocols for domestic violence situations. At the same time, many police do not see addressing social issues as a central part of their job. They see themselves as enforcers of the law rather than a professional who intervenes in the relationships of others.

In addition, while the courts may grant you a restraining order against someone who has abused or assaulted you, they cannot effectively enforce these orders. Many abuse survivors tell stories of continuing to be harassed or stalked by their abuser even after they got this protection order. In other cases, the restraining orders are only temporary because there is not enough evidence of misconduct for permanent restraining orders. If the situation escalates to the point of pressing criminal charges against the perpetrator, there is no guarantee that prosecutors will pursue the case or hold the perpetrator accountable in a way that a survivor finds meaningful.

If a case gets in front of a judge, the trial process is not easy. Many survivors of sexual violence feel uncomfortable testifying and facing their attacker. Survivors of intimate partner violence may not want to be involved or have conflicting feelings about being involved in the court process, especially if they still love or want to be with their abusive partner. Even if convicted, punishment is punitive and frequently not focused on repairing damage or helping survivors heal. This is not to say that all survivors are unhappy with how domestic abuse or sexual assault trials resolve. It is the case, though, that many survivors feel that the criminal justice system does not sufficiently repair harm or bring justice to their experiences.

The barriers to effectively addressing these kinds of violence are complex and not easily fixed within our current system. Consequently, what role could alternative systems play in addressing these problems? For instance, restorative justice has become a central part of discussions about reforming the criminal justice system. Restorative justice centers the survivor, considering what they need to experience healing. It also involves the perpetrator's participation, requiring them to recognize the harm they did in holding them accountable. More recently, the Center for Court Innovation published a report on the state of nationwide restorative justice approaches to intimate partner violence. Examples of restorative programs noted in this report include peacemaking circles, family group conferences, and support circles.

These programs are very different from a criminal justice approach. One of the reasons that groups have begun these practices is due to the inadequacies of the traditional criminal justice system in resolving these issues (Center for Court Innovation, 2019). Unlike the court system, restorative justice centers the survivor rather than the state. It recognizes the agency of survivors and their need to feel safe in the wake of these forms of violence.It also recognizes that healing can look different to different people. At the same time, restorative justice requires the perpetrator to participate actively and engage in an accountability process. More broadly, restorative justice engages communities in their efforts to address intimate partner violence by shifting the **culture** around intimate partner violence.

Participation in restorative justice interventions is voluntary and may not be appropriate in all situations, especially if this is not the survivor's wish. Even so, restorative justice provides an alternate framework, which is worth considering as a means to address some common complaints with the criminal justice approach to intimate partner violence.

9.6.1 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

9.6.1.1 Open Content, Original

9.6.2 References

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9.7 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

9.7.1 Reflective Questions

1. What do you think is the most important lesson for parents and other caregivers to know about adverse childhood experiences and protective childhood experiences? How do you think that knowledge of these two concepts could positively impact the behavior of individuals, the work of community organizations, or the development of public policy?
2. How do healthy interpersonal relationships impact our lives? What role do your loved ones play in creating a sense of stability and safety in your life?
3. Why do some families have more access to the resources they need to be safe? What kinds of changes do you think should be made to increase access to safety and stability for all families?
4. How can we better address sexual violence and rape **culture** as a society?
5. Can you think of any social supports (government assistance, community resources, relationships) that did or would have positively impacted the life of your family as you grew up? Are there any current social supports that you're not currently receiving that could make a difference in your life? Why?
6. Out of all of the factors that can help promote and create safety and stability within families, which of the factors do you think is most important? Why?

9.8 KEY TERMS

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):** traumas that occur in an individual's life before they turn 18, which include neglect, abuse, and household difficulties.
- **child abuse:** the intentional emotional, negligent, physical, or sexual mistreatment of a child by an adult.
- **elder abuse:** when older people are deprived of care or intentionally harmed by their caretakers.
- **emotional abuse:** nonphysical maltreatment through verbal language.
- **epigenetics:** the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work.
- **intergenerational trauma:** a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person who experienced the event.
- **intimate partner violence (IPV):** any incident or pattern of behaviors (physical, psychological, sexual or verbal) used by one partner to maintain power and control over the relationship.
- **neglect:** failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- **physical abuse:** any act, completed or attempted, that physically hurts or injures someone.
- **protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs):** experiences that help children develop and promote resilience, even if they also have some adverse or traumatic childhood experiences.
- **rape culture:** a society or environment where there is a **culture** of disbelief and lack of support for sexual violence survivors through normalizing and trivializing sexual violence despite its prevalent occurrence.
- **sexual abuse:** maltreatment, violation, and exploitation where a perpetrator forces, coerces, or threatens someone into sexual contact for sexual gratification and/or financial benefit.
- **sexual violence:** making degrading comments, touching in unpleasant means of harm, or addressing a partner in a degrading way during sexual intercourse, which includes marital rape.

9.8.1 Licenses and Attributions for Key Terms

9.8.1.1 Open Content, Original

9.9 CHAPTER 9 FEEDBACK SURVEY

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CHAPTER 10: FOOD AND WATER

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

10.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the connection between the production of food and **equity**.
2. Explain the role that government crop subsidies play in nutrition.
3. Discuss the role that tax breaks and food banks play in food insecurity.
4. Identify the forces that influence a family's food purchases.
5. Explain the critical factors related to children and access to nutritious food and clean water.
6. Name the factors that affect a family's access to safe water and sanitation.
7. Describe the government's role in the water and sanitation system.
8. Determine whether access to safe water and sanitation is a human right or not.
9. Describe the multidirectional relationship between social structures and the ways that individuals and families access food and water.
10. Apply theoretical concepts to one's own observations and experiences with food and water.

10.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

10.1.1.1 Open Content, Original

10.2 FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Amy Huskey

> "I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and **culture** for their minds, and dignity, **equality** and freedom for their spirits."
>
> — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Figure 10.1 Some of the healthiest foods are the most difficult for families to access.

Survivalists have a rule of three: you can survive without food for three weeks, without water for three days, without shelter from a harsh environment for three hours, and without air for three minutes (Wikipedia, n.d.). If a human goes without any of these resources for a long enough time, death will eventually be the result. It stands to reason that when we talk about American families' needs, we would talk about all of these; in this chapter we will look at both food and water.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) describes these physiological needs as being a key motivator in human behavior (Wikipedia, n.d.). Obtaining food, water, shelter, sleep, and oxygen to survive consumes a large amount of our time and resources both directly and indirectly. Think about how much time your family spends working to pay for food. In general, families pay a smaller percentage of their income for food than they did 50 years ago. That's not because food expenses have decreased, but because other costs, primarily shelter and health care, have increased. We discuss shelter (housing and living environments) in the Housing chapter. Now consider your family's access to water. While we may not think about paying for it as a percentage of our incomes, access to plentiful, clean, safe water is influenced by where we live. The financial resources that are invested into our community infrastructure, which includes water and sanitation, impact our safety and overall health. Where we live matters when it comes to having available and safe water.

Personal finances are only one part of the cost, benefits, and societal dynamics that play into meeting these basic needs. We must pay attention to where food comes from, business and government investment in food production, and the business of food charity. Time is another cost of food; families decide how much time is spent purchasing, preparing, eating, and cleaning up meals (Figure 10.1). Turning on a faucet to access clean, toxin free drinking water requires building, maintaining, and monitoring water and sanitation systems, and this comes at a cost that not all municipalities can afford. While the federal government has invested in water infrastructure, there is not an ongoing commitment, so these needs must be balanced with competing needs such as schools, parks, police, and libraries. There are variations and influences on how food and water needs are met, but ultimately they must be met in some way.

10.2.1 Food Production and Systems of Oppression

Prior to the formation of the United States, families found food in a variety of ways, including foraging, hunting, fishing, and growing food. As the country progressed toward a formal organizational structure managed by the Euro-American settlers, Native Americans were restricted to designated reservations, often on land that was not as fertile for farming. Food production via farms became a major economic factor. Industrialization created more efficiencies and more wealth for landowners.

It is important to note that these new ways of sourcing food would not have been possible without three institutional structures:

1. Oppression of the way of life that Native Americans had established here for thousands of years;
2. Enslavement of African immigrants brought to this country for the explicit purpose of free labor without attention to their rights and needs;
3. Laws that controlled immigrants from other countries by limiting who could immigrate by gender, familial, and employment status; laws that discriminate based on nationality and immigration status related to wage, housing options, and typeof employment.

These structures affected the functionality of all families in the United States, favoring White families, especially those who owned land. Which of these structures affect families today? If you answered all three, you are correct. Native Americans are still fighting for rights related to their family needs that have been disrupted and restricted; the aftereffects of slavery, including the restrictions of wealth attainment on Black people, affects both the families who were able to accumulate wealth and the ones who were not; and current immigration laws still place the needs of the employers first.

10.2.2 Black Farmers During Reconstruction

Black farmers in America have had a long and arduous struggle to own land and to operate independently. For more than a century after the Civil War, deficient civil rights and various economic and social barriers maintained a system of in**equality**. Many Black farmers worked as farm operators with a limited and often total lack of opportunity to achieve ownership and independence. Although some formerly enslaved people were deeded land in the "Forty Acres and a Mule" division of lands in 1868, the same land was later deeded back to the original Confederate owners and the Black families became sharecroppers rather than owners. Other Black farm owners saw their properties diminished throughout the 20th century as described in the 15-minute video in Figure 10.2.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=457#oembed-1

Figure 10.2. How Black Americans Were Robbed of Their Land [YouTube Video]. These personal stories help us understand how families that worked hard still were treated unjustly.

Black farmers often ended up working for landowners once again. Even as employees, they received less protection than factory and office workers. When social security and unemployment laws meant to protect workers were passed, they excluded people who worked on farms or as domestic help, of which the majority were immigrants and marginalized groups, including African Americans. Diminished civil rights also limited collective action strategies, such as cooperatives and unions.

It is tempting to think that these past laws and practices do not affect us today. Many of the structures survive, however, in both subtle and obvious ways. In addition, because these structures limited access and land ownership in proximity to the vital resources of food and water, White families were able to build wealth more quickly and easily than any other group of families. We discuss the institutional factors related to housing, location, and wealth in Chapter 8.

10.2.3 Farm and Field Workers

Farm workers are and have been an essential part of the U.S. **economy** and food system. They come in varying immigration statuses: U.S. citizens or residents, people on guest worker visas, or undocumented workers. The following U.S. Department of Agri**culture** (USDA) table describes the demographic characteristics of farm workers in the United States in 2018, collected from data on the American Community Survey (part of the

Census project) (Figure 10.3). The data shows that about 55 percent of farm laborers are born in countries other than the United States.

10.2.3.1 Social Identities of Workers	10.2.3.2 Farm laborers, graders, and sorters	10.2.3.3 Farm managers, inspectors, and supervisors	10.2.3.4 All other occupations in agri**culture**	10.2.3.5 Agri**culture**: all occupations	10.2.3.6 All U.S. private wage and salary workers
Percent female	26	13	36	27	45
Average age in years	39	44	42	41	40
Percent under age 25	20	10	17	18	18
Percent over age 44	37	50	47	41	41
Percent married	48	62	54	51	48
10.2.3.7 Race/**Ethnicity**/Ancestry					
Percent White, not Hispanic	31	67	61	44	59
Percent Black, not Hispanic	3	2	3	3	12
Percent other, not Hispanic	2	3	4	3	9
Percent Hispanic: Mexican origin	57	24	26	44	12

Percent Hispanic: Other	7	4	6	6	8
Percent born in U.S. (includes Puerto Rico)	44	75	76	57	80
Percent U.S. citizens	53	84	84	66	90

10.2.3.8 Education

Percent lacking high school diploma	48	19	20	36	9
Percent with high school diploma (includes equivalency)	32	31	31	31	29
Percent with at least some college	21	50	49	32	62

Figure 10.3. Demographic Characteristics of Farm Workers in the United States in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Note: Counts all private sector wage and salary workers employed in the crop, livestock, and agricultural support industries. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service analysis of data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2019.

Since this data is gathered from a written survey related to the Census, it is important to note that there is likely some underreporting from groups that are the hardest to reach, including people of color, children under five, renters, immigrants, people with limited English proficiency, multiple-family homes, Native tribal and urban communities, disabled people, people who distrust the government, and LGBTQ+ individuals. The challenges of representation are discussed at length in Chapter 6.

The survey also tells us that the average age for farmworkers is on the rise, and they are more likely to be female. Younger immigrants are less likely to go into farm work than into other professions, so the population is aging. It is hypothesized that as men move toward agricultural employment (rather than working with crops) and there is increased machine usage, women are moving into these jobs.

Immigrants, especially those who are not yet documented or who live in mixed-status families, are more likely to experience poor treatment and be less likely to complain about bad work conditions.

10.2.3.9 In Focus: Field Workers

By Carla Medel, Bachelor's Degree candidate: Psychology with Spanish and HDFS minors, Oregon State University, 2021.

103 degrees Fahrenheit, picking zucchini, I turn to the sound of "water, water, we need water!" and to the woman with the purple bandana and a hurt shoulder on the ground; she had fainted of dehydration. She sits underneath a tree for 15 minutes with a bottle of water that one of our coworkers was able to give her and before I even know it, she is back on the field picking zucchini along my side.

That afternoon as I made my way home, I could not help but to begin crying out of frustration. I was only 16 but I knew that what I had just witnessed was not correct. Feeling hopeless, the next day I no longer wanted to go back to work. What I did instead was go grocery shopping with my mom. When we headed to produce and I saw people grabbing zucchini, the tears came again. They did not know what those .76¢ zucchini really cost. This is my story, but this is definitely not a unique one. Immigrant farm workers in the United States are treated terribly, and with little to no protection, others are ready to take advantage.

10.2.4 Food Factory Workers as Essential Workers

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought necessary attention to the important function of meat production and the preservation of fruits and vegetables in factories. The federal government has determined employees at food factories to be essential workers. Many of these workers are immigrants and people of color.

The authors of this text plan to elaborate on this group of families in future editions of the text. For now, this podcast highlighting the experience of a mother supporting a family of five who works in the Smithfield pork plant in South Dakota illustrates the dilemmas an essential worker faces.

10.2.5 Licenses and Attributions for Food and Food Production

10.2.5.1 Open Content, Original

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10.2.6 References

10.3 EQUITABLE ACCESS TO FOOD

What causes some families to be hungry, or the more technical term, food insecure? We acknowledge that food insecurity is a symptom of another **social problem**: poverty. First, let's look at some of the systems that affect food availability in the United States.

Equitable access to food is hampered by governmental systems that focus on subsidizing specific farm crops. Federal government subsidies help farmers reduce their risk due to weather, commodities brokers, economic downturns, and changes in demand. There are only five crops that receive these major government subsidies: corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, and rice. Producers of fruit, vegetables and meat only benefit from crop insurance and disaster relief (Amadeo, 2020). Farm subsidies have increased dramatically in the last four years, totaling $28 billion dollars for a two year period (2018–2020, not including the additional Coronavirus payments authorized in the spring of 2020) (Charles, 2019). This incentivizes the production of certain crops in the United States and provides stability for the families involved in producing those crops.

It is more complicated to measure the effects of these subsidies on consumers. We know that these subsidized food crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, and rice) are more easily stored and utilized in processed foods, which nutritionists advise should be eaten in the smallest amounts. Crops in their raw forms, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, meat, and dairy products, provide more health benefits but are not subsidized consistently by the government (Figure 10.4). Here we may deduce that governmental subsidies of less healthy crops contribute to food availability and cost, affecting food purchases. Lower income families and those living in food deserts are most affected.

Figure 10.4. Fresh produce is more difficult to store and less likely to be available at food banks.

Another challenge to food accessibility is the societal approach which focuses on governmental programs (such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—SNAP) and charity, which in itself has become a business. Grocery stores and other businesses are provided with tax benefits when they overproduce food and donate it to food banks. Andy Fisher, the author of *Big Hunger,* describes hearing from grocery store owners who acknowledge the overproduction of sheet cakes, birthday cakes, pastries, and other baked goods. Consumers do not wish to purchase the last cake on the shelf, and so stores overproduce these items. When they are no longer considered fresh, they are donated to food banks. This is one of the reasons that about 25 percent of the donations that Food Banks give away consist of food that is categorized as unhealthy (Hemmelgarn, 2013). Listen to Fisher describe the complexities of this cycle in this podcast where he discusses charitable giving, hunger, and poverty.

Not only is overproduction of food supported by tax deductions, but food banks themselves have become multimillion dollar businesses. Food banks serve a charitable purpose that meets an immediate and important need. At the same time, if the real problem—poverty—were addressed, people could have the dignity of providing and choosing the food that is best for their own family.

Poverty affects Americans of every racial-ethnic group, including those descended from European immigrants, but continues to affect the previously mentioned groups (Native Americans, Black or African Americans, and people descended from Latin America and some Asian countries) in disproportionately larger numbers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The United States is an individualistic country and people are sometimes blamed for being poor. This makes the problem of hunger more approachable than the problem of poverty. It is encouraging to note, however, that Americans increasingly understand that poverty stems not from personal shortcomings, but from differentiation in circumstance and opportunity. Pew Center survey results released in March, 2020, note that almost ⅔ of American adults say that people who are rich have experienced more advantages than those who are poor; only ⅓ say that it is because rich people have worked harder. These viewpoints are unevenly related to political affiliation and age, with Democrats and younger people more likely to hold the majority view (Pew Research Center, 2020). If more people view poverty as a **social problem** than a personal problem, it is more likely to be solved with a systemic solution.

10.3.1 Food Deserts

Food deserts are geographic locations where there is not a variety of healthy food readily available (within a mile in urban environments or within 10–20 miles in a rural area). Food deserts occur nationally, with a greater concentration of food deserts in the Midwest and southern states.

Think about the community that you live in. Where are the grocery stores? Convenience stores don't count, because they do not typically have fresh fruits and vegetables (Figure 10.5), although they do sell other items that are food stamp eligible. Are the stores evenly spaced out amongst the neighborhoods? Probably not, and typically the scarcity of stores is in lower income neighborhoods. The same parts of Portland, Oregon that are identified as redlined neighborhoods in the Housing chapter are also food deserts. The Oregon State University (OSU) student newspaper, *The Daily Barometer*, wrote about food deserts in Corvallis, Oregon, in 2019, pointing out that the majority of grocery stores in Corvallis are clustered around 9th Street and Walnut Boulevard (Shelby, 2019). Two of the four stores that are more distantly spaced are among the healthiest, emphasizing organic produce and natural foods, but also the most expensive.

Figure 10.5. Convenience Stores such as this one don't count as grocery stores because they do not sell the healthy fresh foods that nutritionists recommend.

What if there were federal funding to support equitable distribution of grocery stores that had a full selection of healthy foods? In the same way that federal subsidies protect farmers of selected crops from economic problems, they could protect grocery businesses and create greater **equity** for many consumers.

10.3.1.1 In Focus: The "Gangsta Gardener"

How can individuals and families impact the trends toward large commercial farms and likelihood that foods are transported thousands of miles rather than being available fresh, locally? One example of someone who is making a difference is Ron Finley, a proponent of urban farming. Formerly best known as a fashion designer for high-end stores and celebrities, he now calls himself the "Gangsta Gardener" after digging up a strip of earth between his house and the street to plant fruits and vegetables. It turned out that this was illegal in the city of Los Angeles so Finley worked to change the law (Figure 10.6).

Figure 10.6. Ron Finley has inspired people locally and globally to use urban spaces to grow healthy food.

Since that time he has helped hundreds of families start their own gardens and given a TED Talk watched by 4.2 million people as of 2022. An article in *The Guardian* described Finley this way:

> He has traveled widely talking about his work, including a TED Talk watched by 3.5 million people (that's where his nickname comes from, when he says: "Let's all become gangsta gardeners … If you ain't a gardener, you ain't gangsta"). He likens his work to graffiti, describing Mother Nature as the greatest artist out there. "We did it in LA and we can do it all over the world … A garden can change people's lives, it can change the destruction of a community," he says in Can You Dig This?, a 2015

documentary about community gardens in South Central, which has music star John Legend among its executive producers (Weston, 2020.)

Finley emphasizes the importance of opportunity as opposed to hope, “It’s the opportunity to make shit happen…A lot of the governments and municipalities need to put money into this, which they haven’t,” he says.

10.3.2 The Poverty Line and Food Costs

How is poverty defined? While there are multiple measures, a common and shared one is the poverty threshold, also known as the **poverty line**. While poverty will affect all of the families related to all of the topics in this text, we will discuss it here because it was originally tied to the cost of food, specifically an “**economy** food plan.” In 1963, the poverty line was designated at three times the **economy** food plan, and it was assumed “that the housewife will be a careful shopper, a skillful cook, and a good manager who will prepare all the family’s meals at home” (Fremstad, 2019).

When U.S. officials became concerned about poverty during the 1960s, they quickly realized they needed to find out how much poverty we had. To do so, a measure of official poverty, or a poverty line, was needed. A government economist, Mollie Orshanky, first calculated this line in 1963 by multiplying the cost of a very minimal diet by three, as a 1955 government study had determined that the typical American family spent one third of its income on food. Thus a family whose cash income is lower than three times the cost of a very minimal diet is considered officially poor.

This way of calculating the official poverty line has not changed since 1963, although the amount is adjusted by inflation. It is thus out of date for many reasons. For example, many expenses, such as heat and electricity, child care, transportation, and health care, now occupy a greater percentage of the typical family’s budget than was true in 1963. In addition, this official measure ignores a family’s non-cash income from benefits such as food stamps and tax credits. As a national measure, the poverty line also fails to take into account regional differences in the cost of living. All these problems make the official measurement of poverty highly suspect. As one poverty expert observes, “The official measure no longer corresponds to reality. It doesn’t get either side of the equation right—how much the poor have or how much they need. No one really trusts the data” (DeParle et al., 2011).

This is a good time to ask yourself, if you looked at food as a percentage of your budget, would it be the equivalent of 33 percent? That’s how the poverty line is still calculated.

The poverty line is adjusted annually for inflation and takes into account the number of people in a family: the larger the family size, the higher the poverty line. In 2010, the poverty line for a nonfarm family of four (two adults, two children) was $22,213. A four-person family earning even one more dollar than $22,213 in 2010 was not officially poor, even though its "extra" income hardly lifted it out of dire economic straits. Poverty experts have calculated a no-frills budget that enables a family to meet its basic needs in food, clothing, shelter, and so forth; this budget is about twice the poverty line. Families with incomes between the poverty line and twice the poverty line (or twice poverty) are barely making ends meet, but they are not considered officially poor (Figure 10.7).

Figure 10.7. Ironically enough, although poverty is measured by an income that is lower than three times the cost of a minimal diet, many families above the poverty line still struggle with having enough food.

When we talk here about the poverty level, then, keep in mind that we are talking only about official poverty and that there are many families and individuals living in near poverty who have trouble meeting their basic needs, especially when they face unusually high medical expenses, motor vehicle expenses, college debt, or the like. For this reason, many analysts think families need incomes twice as high as the federal poverty level just to get by (Wright et al., 2011). They thus use twice-poverty data (i.e., family incomes below twice the poverty line) to provide a more accurate understanding of how many Americans face serious financial difficulties, even if they are not living in official poverty (Anonymous, 2016).

10.3.3 Food Security and Food Insecurity

Identified in 1995 as a measurable problem, the USDA introduced new language to describe ranges of severity of food insecurity in 2006. The methods used to assess households' food security remained unchanged. Here are the current definitions of food security and food insecurity:

10.3.3.1 Food Security

- High food security: no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
- Marginal food security: one or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.

10.3.3.2 Food Insecurity

- Low food security (Food insecurity without hunger): reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
- Very low food security (Food insecurity with hunger): Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. (Economic Research Service, 2019)

According to the USDA, hunger "… refer(s) to a potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation." Nationally, food insecurity has been a problem as long as it has been measured and the rate has changed very little; the number of food insecure families was 12 percent in 1995 and was still 11.1 percent in 2018. Let's look more closely at Oregon, where food insecurity has been one of the toughest challenges to overcome. According to the Oregon Public Health Division, Oregon ranks 13th in the nation for food insecurity among children, and 21st for adults. While efforts have been made to combat hunger in Oregon, it is still a big problem for the state. According to USDA data, more than one in seven of Oregon households were food insecure between 2014 and 2016 (Bauer, 2018). Renters in Oregon had food insecurity rates as high as one in four between 2015–2017 (Edwards, 2018).

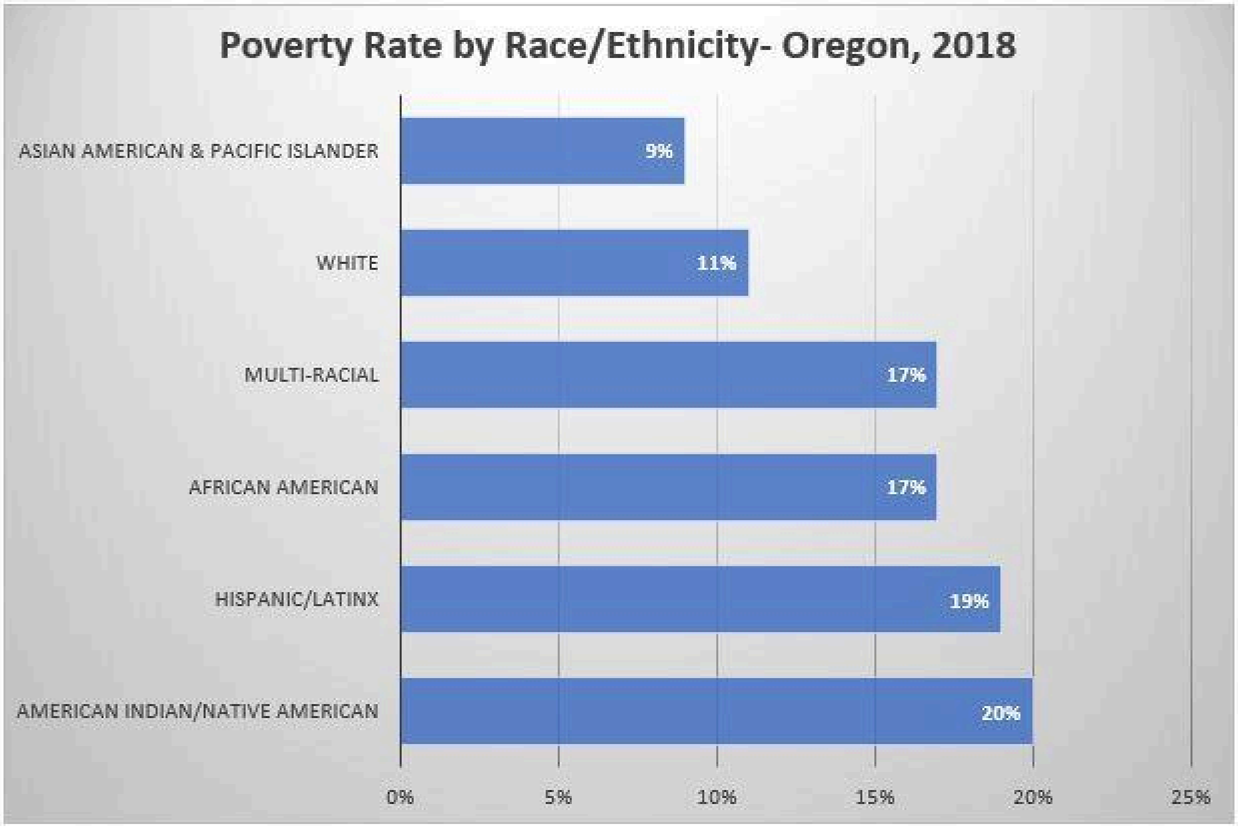

Figure 10.8. Poverty rate by race/**ethnicity**, Oregon, 2018.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy says that over 527,000 people in Oregon suffer from food insecurity (Bauer, 2018).

Figure 10.9. Share of food insecure Oregonians with too much income to qualify for SNAP assistance, 2016.

To put that into perspective, the population of Portland, our largest city, is around 647,800 people. Overall, minorities and single mothers are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity; food insecurity is strongly linked to **socioeconomic status**.

While there are programs to help families who are food insecure, there are still families who are food insecure who do not qualify for any food assistance (Figure 10.8).

10.3.3.3 Case Study: Food Insecurity at Linn-Benton Community College

In a recent survey conducted by the HOPE Center at Temple University, Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) in Albany, Oregon was one of 400 community colleges queried about food and housing insecurity over the past five years. Linn-Benton Community College students participated in 2019, the fifth year of the study. The survey was sent to 5,700 students and 558 students responded.

Forty-eight percent of students reported experiencing food insecurity within the last 30 days, slightly higher than the nation-wide average of community college students (Figure 10.10).

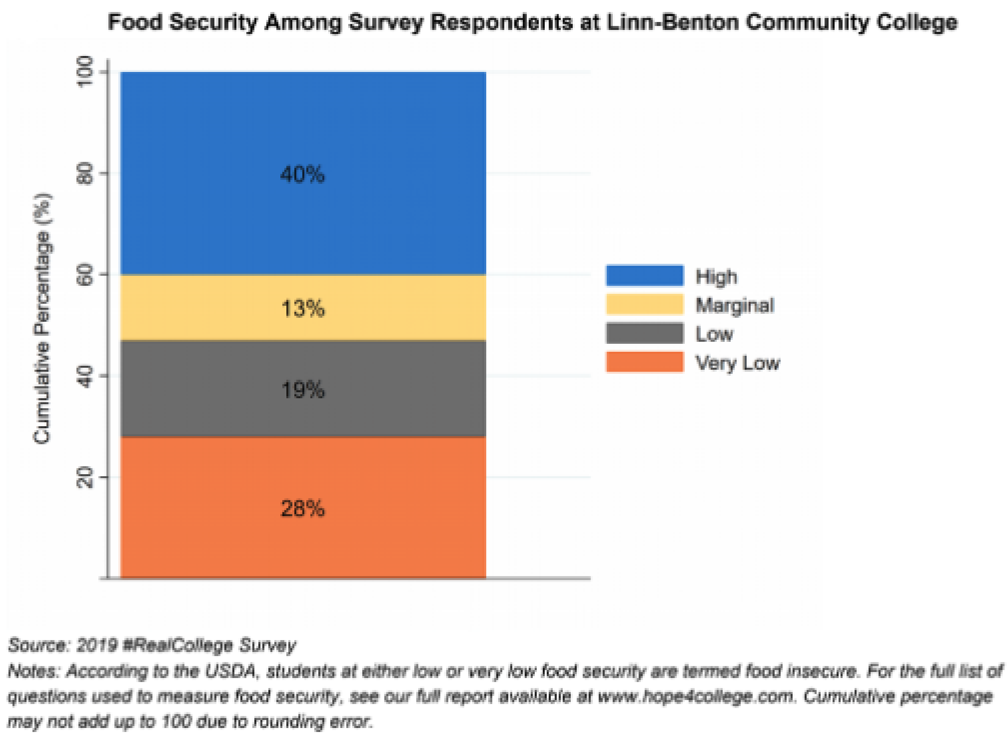

Figure 10.10. Forty-seven percent of student respondents at LBCC are food insecure.

Sixty-six percent of the students that participated in the survey reported experiencing either food insecurity, housing insecurity, or **houseless**ness within the past year (Baker-Smith et al., 2020). Various measures of food insecurity ranged in response from five to 49 percent of LBCC students (Figure 10.11).

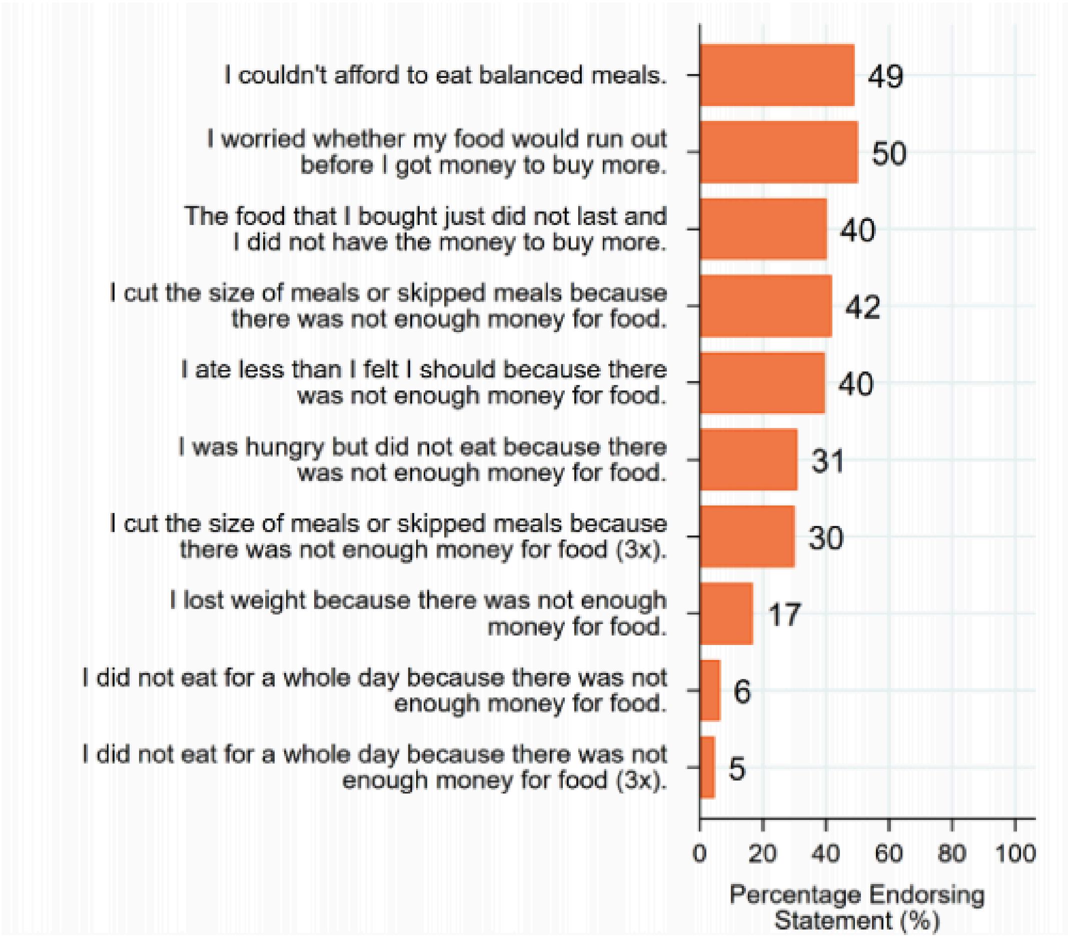

Figure 10.11. Food insecurity as measured in a variety of ways appears among survey respondents at LBCC.

10.3.4 Food Stamps

Many people in the United States rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to provide food for their families. **SNAP**, also known as **food stamps**, is a federal program that in some states is supplemented with local funds whose goal is to supplement nutrition and the food budget of families who are moving toward self-sufficiency. According to the 2018 American Community Survey, 12.4 percent of people in the United States use food stamps and the majority of those families have at least one person working, with ⅓ of recipients having two family members working (US Census Bureau, 2020). Oregon has one of the highest usage rates in the country at a rate of fourteen percent. Here you can see a map of SNAP usage across the country.

Many people on SNAP still have trouble making ends meet. Many people find themselves stuck in a seemingly endless cycle of poverty, despite striving for self-sufficiency. Listen here to a 3-minute summary of an interview with a woman in 2000 when she used food stamps and then re-interviewed in 2012.

Fraud is often mentioned as a concern when it comes to food stamps, but when recipient and vendor fraud is totaled it is estimated at less than one percent of all funds disbursed. That means that more than 99 percent of the funds are used correctly (Constable, 2018). The USDA maintains a webpage that reports on their efforts to stop fraud and to recoup delinquent funds. These authors advocate for the focus to shift toward solving the **social problem**s of poverty and hunger, rather than letting the small amount of fraud distract the country from these efforts.

People struggling to feed themselves and their families face other challenges as well. Accepting governmental assistance and charity is stigmatized. Some families feel too embarrassed to seek or accept needed resources. Constant stress related to food insecurity and choosing which bills to pay contributes to mental health challenges. Do you or someone you know have experience with using SNAP? Click here to read Voices From 'Hunger In Oregon' for short descriptions from Oregonians who have used this program.

10.3.5 Licenses and Attributions for Equitable Access to Food

10.3.5.1 Open Content, Original

10.3.5.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

10.3.6 References

Weston, P. (2020, April 28). "This is no damn hobby": The "gangsta gardener" transforming Los Angeles. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/28/ron-finley-gangsta-gardener-transforming-los-angeles

10.4 FOOD EQUITY AND FAMILIES

Hearing the phrase "you are what you eat" might conjure a distinct image in a person's mind. This phrase is often associated with encouraging a healthy diet to promote an individual's overall well-being. Yet, food is not only a form of sustenance, but it is also used to communicate **culture** as well as a way of forming social ties and communicating love.

It is important to recognize the multidimensional influence food has on family life, and therefore how it can impact families in various ways. In this chapter, we have focused on the ways that institutional forces and family social class shape access to food. Let's spend a little time here on other factors that affect food choices; this text will explore more aspects of food and family in the Routines, Traditions, and **Culture** chapter.

10.4.1 Children and Nutrition

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 focus more closely on children. But children deserve a special mention when it comes to food, and especially to hunger. Children are heavily impacted by poverty and hunger in the United States. In 2017, 17.5 percent of all children in the United States lived in poverty; Latinx and Black children were more often in poverty than were White children. This contributes to diet deficiency. A high quality diet is a major contributing factor to children's health and well-being and to their health outcomes as adults. Poor eating patterns in childhood are associated with obesity during childhood and adolescence; obese children are more likely to become obese adults. Obesity in children has been increasing dramatically since 1980 and is likely related to diet, physical activity, family environment and other factors. Obesity leads to increased risks for a wide variety of chronic diseases, including diabetes, stroke, heart disease, arthritis, and some cancers (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2019).

Hunger and a poor diet can have other effects on children. Hungry children cannot learn as efficiently as well-nourished children. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), they are more likely to develop anxiety and depression along with other health problems. Brain development, learning, and information processing can all be affected by lack of an adequate diet. Children experience stigma around being food insecure and accessing free and reduced meals, part of the federal response to poverty. For more information on this program, access the USDA website here. Many children receive USDA subsidized meals and snacks in child care and at school (Figure 10.12). Children may feel isolated and ashamed about being poor or about being food insecure, although many children share this experience in the United States (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Figure 10.12. Children eating fresh fruit in a child care setting.

10.4.2 Early Food Experiences

The way our family approaches food when we are children affects us the rest of our lives. What we eat matters, as do the social aspects of meals. Some families eat meals together; others eat their meals individually in front of devices. People who were not exposed to a variety of foods as children, or who were forced to swallow every last bite of overcooked vegetables, may make limited food choices as adults. Children who do not have practice socializing during meals may not develop social skills or understand dining table social norms. A variety of factors—social, cultural, personal health, environmental, and experiential—affect how we eat, what we eat, and where we eat.

10.4.2.1 Social Factors

Any school lunchroom observer can testify to the impact of peer pressure on eating habits, and this influence lasts through adulthood. People make food choices based on how they see others and want others to see them. For example, individuals who are surrounded by others who consume fast food are more likely to do the same.

Advertising and media greatly influence food choice by persuading consumers to eat certain foods. Have you ever found yourself suddenly hungry after watching an advertisement for the local pizza place? The media affects both when we eat and what we eat.

10.4.2.2 Cultural Factors

The **culture** in which one grows up affects how one sees food in daily life and on special occasions. Food and family recipes are important ways to transmit **culture** across families and from generation to generation. Traditions and celebrations often include food.

People design their diets for various reasons, including religious doctrines. For example, Jewish people may observe kosher eating practices and Muslim people fast during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (Constable, 2018).

10.4.2.3 Personal Health Factors

It can be easy to establish a habit around things we do each day. For example, having a dessert can become a habit. Having a snack after school or a drink with dinner can develop into a habit. Healthy habits such as "an apple a day" can be developed as well and may require intention on the part of the individual.

Some people have significant food allergies, to peanuts for example, and need to avoid those foods. Others may have developed health issues which require them to follow a low salt or gluten-free diet. In addition, people who have never worried about their weight have a very different approach to eating than those who have long struggled with excess weight.

In addition to one's physical health, emotional issues can also affect eating habits. When faced with a great deal of stress, some people tend to overeat, while others find it hard to eat at all.

10.4.2.4 Environmental Factors

Where a person lives influences food choices. For instance, people who live in Midwestern U.S. states have less access to fresh seafood than those living along the coasts.

Based on a growing understanding of diet as a public and personal issue, more and more people are starting to make food choices based on their environmental impact. Realizing that their food choices help shape the world, many individuals are opting for a vegetarian diet, or, if they do eat animal products, striving to find the most "cruelty-free" or sustainable options possible. Purchasing local and organic food products and items grown through sustainable means also helps shrink the size of one's dietary footprint.

10.4.2.5 Experiential Factors

Knowledge about healthful foods and calorie amounts affect food choices. This can be gained through family, peer, or media influence. Cooking knowledge is impactful. For example, knowing how to hydrate dried beans or prepare fresh vegetables could increase consumption of healthier foods. There has been a dramatic increase in television cooking shows in the 21st century, as well as nutrition, recipe, and cooking websites, blogs, and videos. The amount of information can make it hard to choose, but there are many options to learn about nutrition and cooking.

One thing that contemporary families in the United States have less now than they did fifty years ago is time. This is primarily due to the decreasing number of jobs with enough pay and benefits to support a family and the need for more adults in the house to be working. With less time, efficiencies such as fast food, processed food, and prepared food become more appealing. Having more time means that families have the flexibility to cook and prepare their own food if they choose.

10.4.3 Obesity

A **social problem** is characterized by affecting many people, threatening the health and welfare of society, recognized as a problem by many people, with multiple causes and effects, and also requiring a systemic solution. Among many **social problem**s faced by this country is obesity, which affects many Americans directly and indirectly. Obesity affects children and adults but is most prevalent in Non-Hispanic Black adults as shown in Figure 10.13 (CDC, 2022).

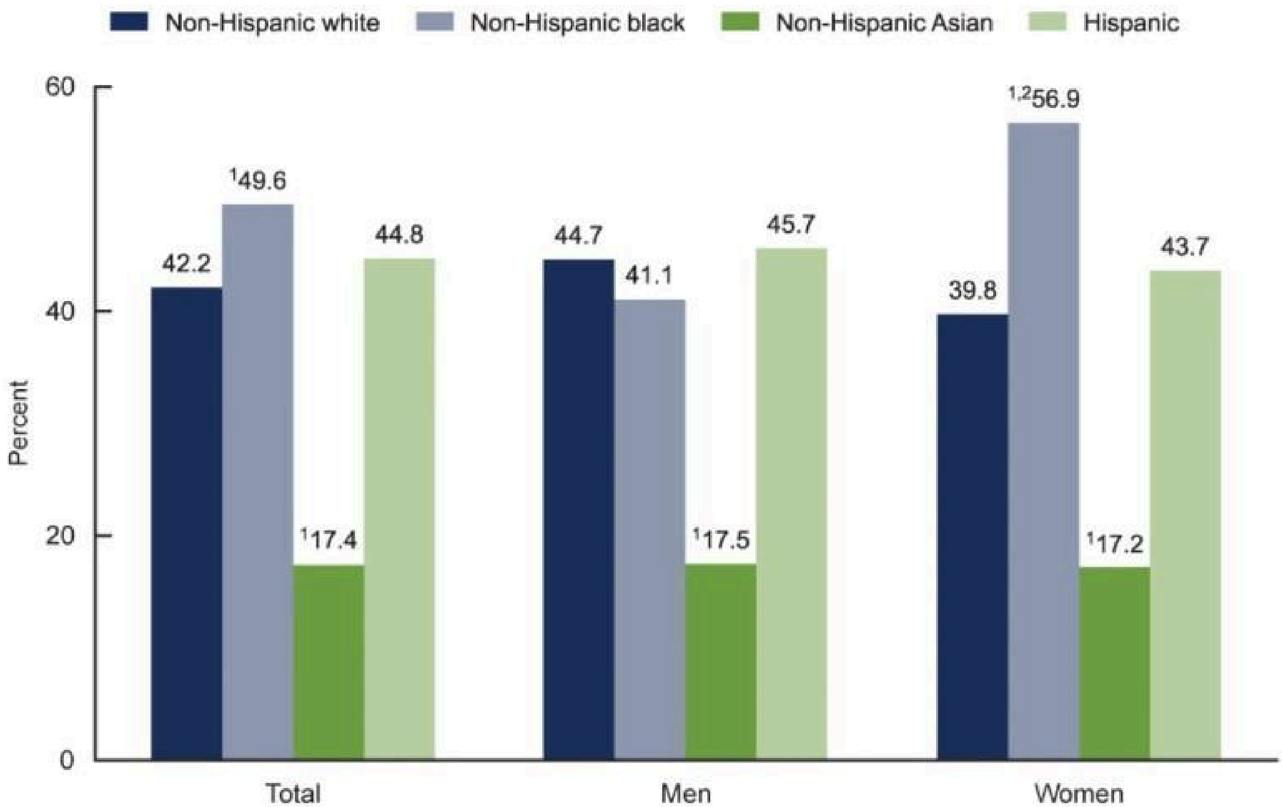

Figure 10.13. The chart shows the prevalence of obesity among adults ages 20 and over, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, 2017–2018. Adapted from the NIH National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases "Overweight & Obesity Statistics."

It is clear from Figure 10.X that obesity is most prevalent in non-Hispanic black identifying people, with the highest level of 49.6%. It translates to one in every two non-Hispanic Black adults suffering from obesity, women more than men. But it is difficult to separate this data from the intersection of "isms" that Black women have faced and continue to face: racism, sexism, and classism (Awad et. al. 2015).

The National Institute of Health states that when an individual's weight is higher than the average weight at a given height, that individual is said to be overweight or suffering from obesity (Ogden, 2018). Being overweight or obese makes it more likely to be prone to a wide range of other illnesses, such as type-2 diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, which are life-threatening. It is tricky to pinpoint what causes obesity as many factors contribute to including several personal conditions and behaviors:

- genetics that predispose a person toward obesity,
- medication, and
- medical conditions, and
- diet.

How do these personal conditions and behaviors relate to societal conditions? In order to solve a **social problem** we must understand the ways that social structures create conditions for the problem.

Some of the social conditions that contribute to the obesity epidemic include:

- food deserts,
- subsidized crops (predominantly those discussed earlier),
- lack of access to outdoors,
- lack of places to exercise,
- **socioeconomic status**,
- stigma related to being overweight.

In February 2023, the American Academy of Pediatrics released updated guidelines for evaluating and treating children and adolescents with obesity, the first update in over 15 years. They advocate for more intensive treatment options, including therapy, medication, and surgery, earlier in life. They advise pediatricians to "offer treatment options early and at the highest available intensity" (Hampl et. al. 2023). If obesity is untreated, it is associated with a wide-range of health problems including heart disease and diabetes. The AAP guidelines call for a "whole child" approach, acknowledging that obesity has complex causes including genetics and **socioeconomic status** rather than personal behaviors and choices. They emphasize communication that is non stigmatizing and supportive.

10.4.4 Licenses and Attributions for Food Equity and Families

10.4.4.1 Open Content, Original

10.4.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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10.5 ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Alexis Castaneda-Perez

For about 100 years, water in the United States has been supported by a federally funded infrastructure that ensures families safe drinking water and sanitation. Water-borne diseases, such as cholera, were virtually eliminated by the provision of this system. Although the effort to create safe water and sanitation was well funded up until the end of the 20th century, there are some geographic areas and groups that are underserved; systems were not funded equitably before funding dried up.

Safe water and **sanitation** can be defined by these three things:

- access to safe and reliable drinking water
- a shower, toilet, and tap in the home
- a reliable system for treating and disposing of wastewater

Socioeconomic status is a barrier to safe water access. Challenges in poor communities include contaminated water supplies, housing with lead pipes, other substandard plumbing issues, and unequal distribution of public drinking water such as water fountains in schools and other public places.

As individuals more regularly carry their water with them, access to a bottle filling station can mean the difference between a one-time purchase or the ongoing expense of hundreds of plastic water bottles (Figure 10.14). Look around your own daily environments; where can you find these stations? Could there be more bottle fillers added and more equitably distributed?

Figure 10.14. Water bottle filling stations cut down on costs related to disposable bottles.

10.5.1 Diverse Water Challenges

Almost one-third of adults in America are inadequately hydrated. Race is the biggest predictor to lack of water access; African American and Latinx people are more likely to experience lack of adequate hydration as are lower income people (Brooks et al., 2017). This graphic from the University of North Carolina describes six access challenges (Figure 10.15).

Figure 10.15. It is eye-opening to realize the number of water access challenges families face in the United States.

There is no centralized government or research entity that collects national data about water and sanitation in the United States, which creates challenges to assessing and meeting needs. In November 2019, the U.S. Water Alliance and Dig Deep, two organizations dedicated to improving water access for families in the United States, released a comprehensive report analyzing all available data from local, regional, and national sources.

More than 2 million Americans lack access to safe water. Closing the Water Access Gap in the United States: A National Action Plan has five key findings:

1. Federal data doesn't accurately measure the water access gap.
2. Race is the strongest predictor of water and sanitation access.
3. Poverty is a key obstacle to water access.
4. Water access challenges affect entire communities.
5. Progress is uneven, and some communities are backsliding.

Along with race and poverty as indicators, the report identifies residents of Puerto Rico, **houseless** people, and members of Native American communities as having a greater likelihood of lack of access to water and sanitation (US Water Alliance, 2019).

10.5.2 In Focus: Flint, Michigan

Let's look more closely at a community that has experienced a safe water crisis between 2014 and 2020. For some context, Flint, Michigan, was a booming city with an **economy** centered around the automotive industry through the late 20th century. In fact, this is where vehicle manufacturer General Motors was founded.

Figure 10.16. General Motors was a highly profitable automaker in the late 20th century.

However, like many United States cities, Flint suffered from the decline of the manufacturing industry, often referred to as deindustrialization. The decline was reinforced in the 1980s as the manufacturing industry hit a recession. The decline in the automotive industry hurt many people who relied on the industry, however the hurt was not uniformly felt across race and **socioeconomic status**. Many people who could afford to move relocated in search of better opportunities. People who could not afford to move were more or less forced to stay. Flint's population shrunk from around 200,000 to just 100,000 residents (State of Michigan, 2016).

As the overall population of Flint declined, the African American population percentage of Michigan has steadily increased. According to Census data, in 1960 the total percentage of African Americans in Michigan was roughly 9 percent. By 2000, the total percentage of African Americans in Michigan was 14 percent (Metzger & Booza, 2002). The percentage of low income White Americans also increased. According to the U.S. census population estimates, 53.7 percent of Flint residents are African American and 40.4 percent of its population lives in poverty (Figure 10.17; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The median household income in Flint is about $24,000–$27,000 a year.

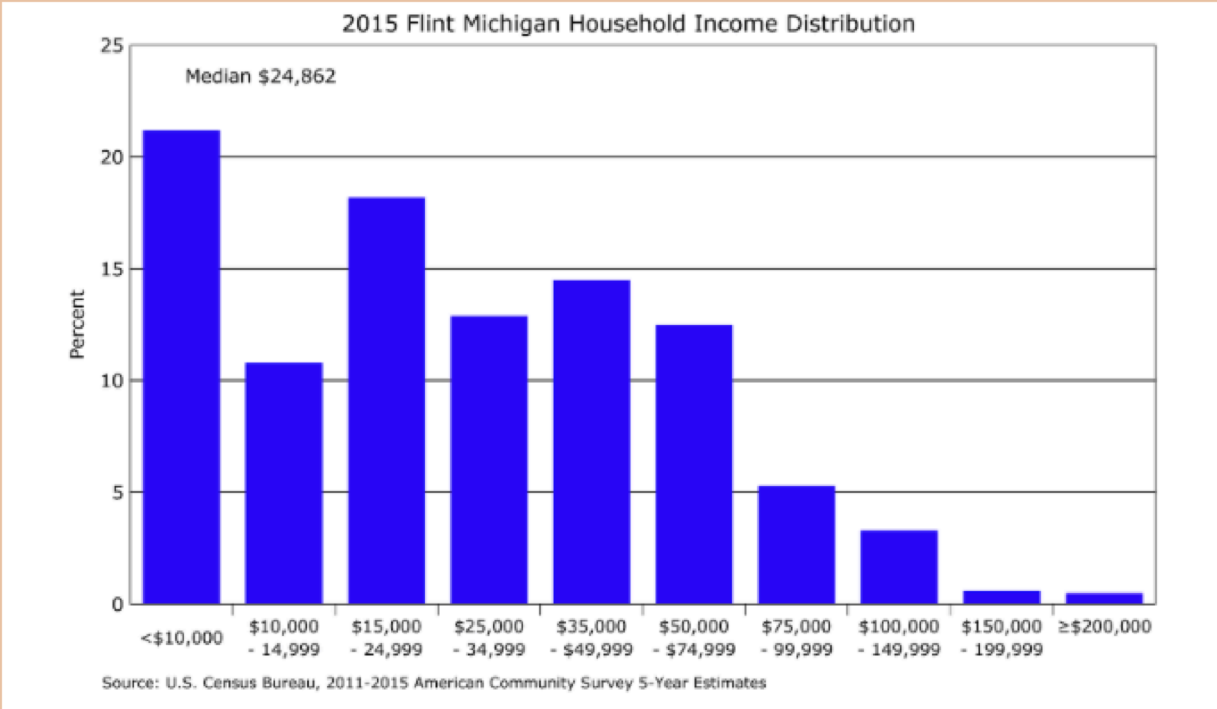

Figure 10.17. Flint, Michigan has many low-income families.

10.5.2.1 Saving Money

In 2014, Flint city officials decided to change its water source. The city used to get its water from the Detroit Water and Sewage Department. This water was treated and sourced from Lake Huron and the Detroit River. While this worked fine, the city was strapped for cash and, in 2011, Flint had a $25,000,000 deficit (City of Flint, 2012). The city declared a state of emergency and was looking for ways to save money. City leaders decided to source water from the Flint River as a cheap and temporary alternative while a pipeline from the Huron River was built. But the water was not treated properly for human consumption, which caused spikes of lead in the water. Immediately after the water source was switched, people noticed that the tap water in Flint was different. The color ranged from yellow to brown, smelled weird, and tasted terrible.

10.5.2.2 Effects on Families

In one home, Virginia Tech researchers found that the lead levels in the water were between 200 parts per billion (ppb) to 13,200 ppb (Mantha & Roy, 2015). Lead amounts above 5,000 pbb are classified by the EPA to be hazardous waste. Children are the most susceptible to the effects of lead. It can lead to many health issues such as anemia, slowed growth, and learning problems. Lead can put pregnant women at risk for miscarriage, as well as cause organ issues in adults. High levels of lead can cause death (Environmental Protection Agency, 2019). An outbreak of Legionnaires' disease, a serious type of pneumonia (lung infection) caused by bacteria, is also thought to be caused by the water crisis (AlHajal, 2016). At least twelve people have died as a result, and numerous criminal and civil lawsuits have been filed against officials.

After 18 months of negotiations, the state of Michigan agreed to a $626 million settlement. More than 80 percent of that money would go to people who were minors and most affected by the toxins in the water.

10.5.2.3 Environmental Justice

According to the EPA, **environmental justice** is "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020). People of color and low-income families are disproportionately being affected by the water crisis in Flint, a classic case of environmental injustice. These families can't easily move or fund a new source of water.

The EPA also emphasizes "the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards" along with its definition of environmental justice. It is clear that the people of Flint are not receiving the same degree of protection. Watch this 3-minute video in Figure 10.18 to further understand the definition and history of environmental justice.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=463#oembed-1

Figure 10.18. A Brief History of Environmental Justice [YouTube Video]. Environmental justice has been actively sought at least since the 1970's.

10.5.2.4 Deindustrialization in Rural America

The decline of deindustrialization can be felt in rural communities as well. For example, Oregon's timber industry faced a massive decline after the 1980s recession (Mapes, 2019). Environmental regulations have affected job availability. We can see many parallels between this situation and other communities who have faced job and company losses. Many towns that were dependent on the income from the timber industry are now left struggling.

Douglas county recently voted to shut down their entire library system (Figure 10.19; Friedman, 2019). Jackson County and Josephine County have also had to shut down their libraries, although eventually they managed to bring back partial services (Swinder, 2017). Many timber towns depended on a federal program that gave $100,000,000 every year to Oregon counties. Since the program has been discontinued, many counties are having to make sacrifices to keep from going under (Mapes, 2014). Another parallel we can see between the deindustrialization of Michigan and Oregon is people leaving small towns for urban centers, with those remaining mostly being of low income.

Figure 10.19. When cities and counties are underfunded, they must choose between programs that serve all families such as water, parks, schools, and libraries.

Lawmakers in these communities face similar choices as the leaders in Flint, Michigan. When there are fewer taxpayers to fund local services and less federal funding for services that all families can use, programs such as libraries, schools, parks, and even water must be examined as places to save money. As in Flint, the lack of services disproportionately hurts people with low income who are unable to or reluctant to move to other communities.

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10.6 SYSTEMIC USES OF WATER

No one argues with the understanding that agri**culture**, and increasingly aqua**culture** (farming that occurs in water), are essential to supplying our food to sustain the world's population. Farming is the world's largest industry, employing over one billion people and generating over one trillion dollars' worth of food annually. Moreover, it is the most significant driver of habitat and biodiversity loss around the world.

Agricultural ecosystems provide essential habitats for many wild plant and animal species. This is especially the case for traditional farming areas that cultivate diverse species. However, rising demand for food and other agricultural products has seen the large-scale clearing of natural habitats to make room for intensive mono**culture**s. Recent examples include the conversion of lowland rainforests in Indonesia to oil palm plantations, and of large areas of the Amazon rainforest and Brazilian savanna to soybean and cattle farms. This ongoing habitat loss threatens entire ecosystems as well as many species. Expanding palm oil plantations in Indonesia and Malaysia, for example, pose the most significant threats to endangered megafauna, including the Asian elephant, Sumatran rhinoceros, and tigers.

Aqua**culture** is also in direct competition with natural marine and freshwater habitats for space. For example, marine fish farms often need the shelter of bays and estuaries to avoid damage from storms and currents. Also, farmed fish need good water quality, frequent water exchange, and other optimal environmental conditions. However, these locations are also very often ideal for wild fish and other marine life. Some European fish farms have been placed in the migratory routes of wild salmon, while in Asia and Latin America, mangrove forests have been cleared to make space for shrimp farms.

Water resources are impacted by modern agri**culture**. Globally, the agricultural sector consumes about 70 percent of the planet's accessible freshwater and many big food producing countries like the U.S., China, India, Pakistan, Australia, and Spain have reached, or are close to reaching, their renewable water resource limits.

10.6.1 Wasted Water

The leading causes of wasteful and unsustainable water use are:

- leaky irrigation systems
- wasteful field application methods
- cultivation of thirsty crops not suited to the environment

Unsustainable water use can harm the environment by changing the water table and depleting groundwater supplies. Studies have also found that excessive irrigation can increase soil salinity and wash pollutants and sediment into rivers—causing damage to freshwater ecosystems and species as well as those further downstream, including coral reefs and coastal fish breeding grounds.

Soil carried off in rain or irrigation water can lead to sedimentation of rivers, lakes and coastal areas. The problem is exacerbated if there is no vegetation left along the banks of rivers and other watercourses to hold the soil. Sedimentation causes severe damage to freshwater and marine habitats, as well as the local communities that depend on these habitats. For example, people living in Xingu Indigenous Park in Brazil report declines in fish numbers. This trend is attributed to changes in the courses of waterways resulting from farming-related erosion and the silt deposition this causes. In Central America, plantation soil run-off ends up in the sea, where it affects the Meso-American Reef.

It is not just the eroded soil that is damaging: pesticides and fertilizers carried in rainwater and irrigation runoff can pollute waterways and harm wildlife. The use of pesticides, fertilizers, and other agrochemicals has increased 26-fold over the past 50 years.

These chemicals do not just stay in the fields they are applied to. Some application methods, such as pesticide spraying by airplane, lead to pollution of adjacent land, rivers, or wetlands. Pesticides often do not just kill the target pest. Beneficial insects in and around the fields can be poisoned or killed, as can other animals eating poisoned insects. Pesticides can also kill soil microorganisms and are suspected of disrupting the hormone messaging systems of wildlife and people. Many remain in the environment for generations.

Unlike pesticides, fertilizers are not directly toxic. However, their presence in freshwater and marine areas alters the nutrient system, and in consequence the species composition of specific ecosystems. Their most dramatic effect is an explosive growth of algae due to excess nutrients as described in Figure 10.20. This depletes the water of dissolved oxygen, which in turn can kill fish and other aquatic life.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=465#oembed-1

Figure 10.20. Nancy Rabalais explains how farming practices around the Mississippi River, one of the largest rivers in the world, affects water resources for fish, aquatic life, and the land surrounding the river. This in turn affects access to water and food for many families in the United States.

Food production is one of the primary causes of biodiversity loss through habitat degradation, exploitation, overfishing, pollution, and soil loss. Even though its environmental impacts are immense, the current food system is expected to expand rapidly to keep up with projected increases in population, wealth, and animal-protein consumption.

10.6.2 Sustainable Agriculture Movement

A growing movement has emerged during the past two decades to address agricultural practices that contribute to these problems. Advocates argue that sustainable agri**culture** can address many environmental and social concerns and can benefit growers, laborers, and consumers.

The **food system** is more than just the farm. It involves the interaction of individuals and institutions with contrasting and often competing goals. The system includes farmers, researchers, input suppliers, farmworkers, unions, farm advisors, processors, retailers, consumers, and policymakers. Relationships among these groups shift over time as new technologies create economic, social, and political changes.

New federal, state, and local government policies are needed to simultaneously promote environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic **equity**.

For example, currently government subsidies support large corporations growing corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, and rice. This makes it difficult for farmers to diversify. Policy changes could encourage a diverse and decentralized system of family farms rather than large corporations that plant single crops. Government and land-grant universities could create research policies that encouraged research into sustainable alternatives. Rules that require fruits and vegetables to look perfect could be amended to encourage reduced pesticide use. Subsidies could also increase consumer power, especially of low-income families. If fresh, green foods were of lower cost and more available, all families would have greater access to healthy diets.

Conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is another important issue. Rapid growth and rising land values threaten farming on prime soils. At the same time, people in newly developed residential communities often want environmentally safe farming practices. Sustainable agri**culture** research and education can help farmers reduce chemical use and conserve scarce resources. These practices can help build public support for agricultural land preservation. Educating land use planners and decision- makers about sustainable agri**culture** is an urgent priority (University of California at Davis, 2022). This video in Figure 10.21 provides an example of a dairy farm that is both sustainable and profitable.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=465#oembed-2

Figure 10.21. Consumers can play a role in creating a sustainable food system. Through their purchases, they send messages to producers, retailers, and others in the system about what they think is essential

Rural communities are often among the poorest locations in the nation. The reasons for the decline are complex, but changes in farm structure have played a significant role. Sustainable agri**culture** presents an opportunity to rethink the importance of family farms and rural communities. Economic development policies are needed that encourage more diversified agricultural production on family farms as a foundation for healthy economies in rural communities. In combination with other strategies, sustainable agri**culture** practices and policies can help foster community institutions that meet employment, educational, health, cultural and spiritual needs.

Food cost and nutritional quality have always influenced consumer choices. The challenge now is to find strategies that broaden consumer perspectives, so that environmental quality, resource use, and social **equity** issues are also considered in shopping decisions.

10.6.3 Licenses and Attributions for Systemic Uses of Water

10.6.3.1 Open Content, Shared Previously

10.6.3.2 All Rights Reserved Content

10.6.4 References

Welcome | Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program, University of California, Davis, CA (2022).

10.7 LOOKING AHEAD

There are interesting developments in sustainable and socially equitable agri**culture** today such as the vertical and urban gardening movement. Vertical and urban gardens bring hope that fresh, green, and healthy foods can be made more available to families in cities via smaller local gardens. In Figure 10.22, several vertical gardens are explored, including one that is feeding an entire group of children in their preschool in California.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=467#oembed-1

Figure 10.22. Vertical Farming – TechKnow [YouTube Video]. In this six-minute video, solutions to finding usable farmland are described.

The U.S. Water Alliance provides the most comprehensive view of water access in the United States and is dedicated to valuing and managing this resource. Via listening sessions and collaborations with businesses, governments, non-profit organizations and individuals all over the country, they have developed a platform of seven big ideas to sustain water resources:

1. Advance regional collaboration on water management
2. Accelerate agri**culture**-utility partnerships to improve water quality
3. Sustain adequate funding for water infrastructure
4. Blend public and private expertise and investment to address water infrastructure needs
5. Redefine affordability for the 21st century
6. Reduce lead risks, and embrace the mission of protecting public health
7. Accelerate technology adoption to build efficiency and improve water service.

Ideas and organizations such as this one provide leadership so that all families in the United States will have access to safe water and sanitation.

10.7.1 Want to Learn More?

- To learn more about food deserts, or to access an interactive map that displays different ways of viewing food deserts, read NPR's article "How to find a food desert near you" and follow the link to the USDA's Food Atlas.
- To learn more about the AAP's recommendations for treating child obesity:

- Listen to An Aggressive New Approach to Child Obesity from The Daily
- Read NPR's Childhood obesity requires early, aggressive treatment, new guidelines say

- To read more about how to find lead in your home environment and the effects of lead on children, click here for the CDC's infographic.
- To see additional perspective and proposed solutions to these **social problem**s, watch LaToya Ruby Frazier detail the experiences of the low-income residents as well as a creative solution . She was hired to document the unfolding crisis in Flint and relates her history growing up with environmental racism in Philadelphia to the crisis.

10.7.2 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

10.7.2.1 Open Content, Original

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Figure 10.23. A creative solution for the water crisis in Flint, Michigan| Latoya Ruby Frazier (c) Ted. License Terms: Standard YouTube license.

10.8 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

10.8.1 Reflective Questions

1. How is the production of food tied to **equity**?
2. What role do government crop subsidies play in nutrition?
3. What role do tax breaks and food banks play in food insecurity?
4. How do food costs and the poverty line interact?
5. What influences a family's food purchases? How does what you've read relate to your own family's experience with food?
6. What are the factors that affect a family's access to safe water and sanitation?
7. What role does the government play in the water and sanitation system?
8. Based on what you've read in this chapter, provide reasoning and support for whether safe water and sanitation should be considered a human right?

10.9 KEY TERMS

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **environmental justice**: an intersectional social movement pioneered by African Americans, Indigenous peoples, Latinx, women, lower-income, and other historically oppressed populations fighting against environmental **discrimination** within their communities and across the world
- **food desert**: geographic locations where there is very limited or no access to affordable and nutritious foods
- **food insecurity**: Low or very low access to food of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. May or may not show patterns of disrupted eating.
- **food security**: No or little reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
- **food stamps**: The previous name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.
- **food system:** The interconnected systems and processes that influence nutrition, food, health, community development, and agri**culture**.
- **poverty line**: the estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life, adjusted annually for inflation.
- **sanitation**: Conditions relating to public health, especially the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal.
- **sharecropper**: A type of farming in which families rent small plots of land from a landowner in return for a portion of their crop, to be given to the landowner at the end of each year.
- **socioeconomic status**: A combination of one's wealth, education and occupational level.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**: a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**: The department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food in the united states of america.
- **wastewater**: water generated after the use of freshwater, raw water, drinking water or saline water in a variety of deliberate applications or processes, such as sewage water.

10.9.1 Licenses and Attributions for Key Terms

10.9.1.1 Open Content, Original

10.10 CHAPTER 10 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 11: JUSTICE

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

11.1 AUTHOR'S NOTE

This chapter was created with selected essays by three student authors: Alexis Castenada-Perez, Christopher Byers, and Carla Medel. The balance of the book consists of either collaborative writing among student authors and myself or my individual writing based on substantive brainstorming and research conducted by the research librarian Michaela Willi-Hooper, the student authors, and myself. When it comes to justice, I want you to read directly the words of students and see what matters to them. Going forward, I will add to this chapter with additions by other students. Following my introduction, each of the individual students will speak to a meaningful aspect of justice, their experience writing the text, and their developing understanding of social justice.

–Elizabeth B. Pearce

11.2 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define justice.
2. Discuss how justice applies to families in the U.S.
3. Describe how intersections of race, **ethnicity**, gender, immigration, and **socioeconomic status** create different experiences of justice.
4. Describe how the founding documents of our country define justice.
5. Analyze experiences of justice and injustice in your own family.
6. Identify the diverse ways that families' needs are related to justice.

11.2.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

11.2.1.1 Open Content, Original

11.3 JUSTICE: AN INTRODUCTION

> "It's up to all of us—Black, white, everyone—no matter how well-meaning we think we might be, to do the honest, uncomfortable work of rooting it out. It starts with self-examination and listening to those whose lives are different from our own. It ends with justice, compassion, and empathy that manifests in our lives and on our streets."
>
> — Michelle Obama, J.D.

Your **social identity** affects your experience with justice, how you understand what justice is, and how you will respond to this chapter, and this textbook, which is written with an **equity** lens. It is easy to think we live in a country where every family has equitable access to opportunity, representation, and justice, but we must recognize the ways in which justice is distributed unevenly. **Justice** is typically defined as equal access or opportunity, equal treatment, and equal rights.

It is the intent of this chapter, and of this text, to uncover the ways in which representation and justice contribute to **inequity** in family experiences in the United States. When we talk about families, we are moving far beyond the **social construction** of the typical **nuclear family** (as discussed in Chapter 1), and the ways that government and other institutions define "family" for taxes, health care, and other legal rights and responsibilities (as discussed in Chapter 3). We are including all the ways that people define their own families. It is our aspirational goal to inspire readers to understand injustice more deeply and to advocate and contribute to changes toward greater **equity** for families in the United States.

11.3.1 The Social Construction of Justice and Criminality

Flowing from the representation via elected officials is the common law system of justice generally in use in the United States. Common law, or case law, is law that is derived primarily from the court system. When a case is tried and decided in a court, it can affect civil law, those laws that are created by governing bodies such as state legislatures and the federal congress.

The level a particular court holds will affect whether counties, states, or the whole country will see a change in law based on the decision. Who makes those court decisions? While juries are involved in some cases, judges ultimately make many decisions before a case even appears before a jury. Judges also make decisions along the way about what evidence, witnesses, and motions will be allowed. Many cases are decided by a single judge or a panel of judges, without a jury. This is true to the United States Supreme Court, pictured in 11.1, the Regional

Appeals Courts, and many lower-level courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States; decisions made by this court affect civil laws and all existing related case law in the country.

Who judges are, their experiences, their beliefs, and their backgrounds have a big impact on all citizens of the United States. Judges in the United States must meet requirements such as having a Juris Doctorate (law degree), passing the bar exam, and practicing law. Judges may be elected or appointed depending on the governing regulations of the county, state, circuit, or federal system. Appointments are made by elected officials (e.g., the President of the United States appoints federal justices and then the Senate must confirm that appointment in order for it to be official). As you can see, the system of common law comes back to elected officials, and participation of residents in the United States.

Figure 11.1.The Supreme Court as composed June 30, 2022 to present.

Front row, left to right: Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr., and Associate Justice Elena Kagan. Back row, left to right: Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh, and Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

We will discuss the **social construction** of justice and criminality in the United States, and we will include aspects of the court system, government, and criminal justice system for our examples. If you would like to more clearly understand the structure and interrelationships of these systems, these openly licensed and free texts are useful:

- American Government – 2e from the University of Oklahoma
- Introduction to the American Criminal Justice System from Southern Oregon University

Like every system created by human beings, the justice system, and what is considered to be criminal, is a **social construction**. We have created and defined structures, **roles**, and institutions that we tacitly agree to abide by. Ideas such as justice, rehabilitation, "paying a debt to society," and criminality all have definitions that have changed over time and location.

For example, let's look briefly at the plant marijuana, which is frequently dried to be smoked, has oil extracted, or is otherwise ingested or applied. Is it a valuable medicine? Is it an illegal drug? Is it bad for you? Is it a comparable form of recreation to alcohol? Is it an essential service in the time of COVID-19? Are you a criminal if you use it? The answers to these questions vary based on location (federal, state, and county laws) and over time.

The answers can also vary based on your profession and employer. Currently, it is legal in 33 states to use marijuana for medical purposes, and it is also legal for recreational purposes in 11 states, including Oregon (National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, 2019). But its use is also considered to be criminal; cannabis over 0.3% THC continues to be completely illegal under the federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970. The increased legislative activity around marijuana between 2009 and the present day illustrates the very complicated relationship between federal and state governments and that the **social construction** of marijuana is in contention. For recent history and up-to-date changes, consult the Cannabis in the United States Wikipedia page here.

Cannabis flowers contain many different psychoactive compounds that are used for recreational or medicinal purposes. The plant goes by many different names: marijuana, pot, weed, dope, Mary Jane, etc. The bud is usually either crumbled up and smoked or mixed with food into an edible.

From this example, you can see how a **social construction** can determine whether something (in this case, a plant) is perceived to be criminal, medicinal, or recreational. The most common use of marijuana for medical reasons is for chronic pain control which has been found to be effective for millions of Americans (Grinspoon, 2020). Based on location, someone who uses this plant medicinally may be branded a criminal rather than a patient treating a medical problem. We will extend this idea to people: how **social construction**s such as gender, race, poverty, and sexuality translate into justice being interpreted and applied unevenly to different people based on **implicit bias** and the socially constructed difference of identities.

11.3.2 Race, Legal, and Extralegal Justice

We know that the original construction of **equality** in the United States actually referred to **equality** amongst White male landowners (as described at the start of this chapter). The purpose of this textbook is to examine the needs and experiences of current American families, and some exploration of history is helpful for context.

There exists a disparity in the United States currently related to criminality and justice. This can be traced back to the poverty, bias, and institutional **discrimination** that Black people have faced not just during slavery, but through post-emancipation Jim Crow laws, the racial caste system that limited income, wealth accumulation, and rights of African Americans. For example, Black people were limited from using bathrooms, drinking from water fountains, sitting in certain seats in restaurants and transportation, and generally segregated to separate locations in public spaces including libraries and schools (Figure 11.2). These laws lasted for about 100 years until the Civil Rights Act was signed in 1968.

Figure 11.2. Many spaces and services were explicitly or implicitly segregated.

A result of these laws was the criminalization of everyday actions by Black people, performed in spaces that were either explicitly or implicitly for White people. This resulted in both formal punishment, such as imprisonment, but also the beating and lynching of Black people. Families continued to be broken up, not through slavery, but now through violence, imprisonment, and death for the socially constructed criminality of being in the wrong place or talking with the wrong person. Multiracial interactions were stigmatized, and Black men were consistently punished for any interaction with a White woman. Class, gender, and race intersected in a way that often led to Black men being killed or imprisoned by legal or extralegal means.

In February 2020, Ahmaud Arbery was killed while out jogging. Three men believed that he looked "suspicious" and similar to someone who committed a burglary weeks earlier, armed themselves with a shotgun and a handgun, chased him, and shot him dead. In *The New York Times*, many Black people who jog to stay fit and relieve stress wrote about the dangers of "running while Black." They describe staying in parks rather than running on neighborhood streets, wearing brightly colored shirts and shoes to signify that they are joggers, avoiding new areas, and taking care to call out "hello" or "excuse me" in order to signal to people that they are friendly (Figure 11.3). These actions are intended to keep people from harassing or harming them (Futterman & Minsberg, 2020).

Figure 11.3. Silhouettes of three runners on a city street.

11.3.3 Socioeconomic Status and Incarceration

Organizations such as the American Bar Association and media outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have all written extensively about the criminalization of poverty. Many crimes are punished by fees and fines in addition to some kind of **incarceration** (jail, prison, probation and/or parole sentences).

Incarceration affects individuals and families by the loss of autonomy, parenting and family connections, as well as loss of income (Figure 11.4). Many people will lose their jobs, so that even when they finish a sentence, they are unemployed. Finding employment and housing is more difficult with a criminal record. Add on top of this, there is the payment of fines and fees.

Figure 11.4. About half of the adults in the U.S. have had a family member incarcerated for one or more nights in prison.

Families with **accumulated wealth** and higher incomes will be able to pay these fees and fines more quickly than a family that has not **accumulated wealth** or has a low-paying job. In some states, if interest and additional fees accrue, it can lead to additional incarceration, loss of a driving license, or loss of an occupational license, making it more difficult to earn money with which to pay the fines. This affects the financial, physical, and mental health of families. Examples such as a 12-month sentence for stealing a can of beer, three days in jail for catching a fish offseason, and 22 days in jail for not having enough money to pay fees when appearing in court are cited by the National Public Radio investigation into court fees and the incarceration of poor people who cannot pay them. You can listen to the 12-minute report here: As Court Fees Rise, The Poor are Paying the Price.

Approximately half of all adults in the United States have had an immediate family member incarcerated for one or more nights in prison, raising incarceration in the United States to the level of a **social problem**. Incarceration disproportionately impacts low-income families and people of color. Compared to White adults, Black adults are three times more likely to have had a family member incarcerated and Latinx adults are 1.7 times more likely to have had a family member incarcerated for more than one year. Adults with lower household incomes (less than $25,000) are three times more likely than adults with a household income of $100,000 or more to have a family member incarcerated for a year or more.

In the following essay, Human Services major Heather Denherder describes her experience with working through her addiction-associated criminal background and toward her career passion of working with families. Along the way, she uncovered realizations about the role that race plays in her journey.

11.3.4 In Focus: Career, Criminality, and Race

By Heather Denherder, A.S. in HDFS Human Services Option, LBCC, 2020, is licenced under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

During my Human Services practicum class, I worked with Justice-involved students (people who have experience with jail, prison, parole, or probation) and I have seen a trend of **discrimination**. This comes not from anyone working at my site, but from their experience when they tell their stories about not being able to find work, housing, and some not being able to go into the field they are interested in because they have a criminal record. Even though they have changed the law and employers can no longer ask if you have a criminal record on work applications, it can still come up in the interview.

I myself have a criminal record and when I was deciding what I wanted to do for a career I received a lot of flak not only from people just looking in from the outside, but also from people working within the system. My drug counselor once informed me I would never be certified by the state or allowed to work with children, even if I had a degree. I struggled with the thought of getting my Human Services degree and then not being able to work in the field I wanted, not because I wasn't equipped to, but because of a bad decision when I was young.

I not only have been able to complete a degree in the field I want to work, but I also am approved by the state of Oregon to work with children. Currently, I am working with an educator that has been involved with the justice system. I believe this has been possible for both of us not just through our own hard work and determination, but also because we benefit from White privilege. In the society we live in today, we are still the "power" race. I am lucky enough to be working at a site that treats everyone equally, and they just want to help everyone no matter what your race is or what your background looks like. They want to teach/guide you in being successful as not only a college student, but also as a functioning member of society once they have a certificate.

My mentor believes that everyone is capable of change as long as they have the correct tools, support, and know-how to use the tools they have been given. I was listening to one of the students talking about how hard it is for her to even decide what field of study to go into because of her criminal history and that she was told she would never be able to get a job in that field because of her history; she couldn't decide what or if she even wanted to continue with school, she was crying and felt defeated.

I could definitely relate with her because that was me when I first came back to school. I often felt defeated because I felt the "felon" label was going to follow me the rest of my life. What I know now is even if we are labeled, we can overcome the stigma through hard work and determination.

When I was trying to find a placement for the Human Services practicum, I could not find one. It wasn't because I wasn't qualified or even because of my felonies, but because it hadn't been long enough since I was released from parole. Once again, I felt completely defeated. Being open and honest about my past put me right where I needed to be. If you are a minority with a label, it can be more difficult to overcome such stigmas.

It is all too often that being White has become the most powerful race not only in the workplace but also in the eyes of the law. It is prevalent in the legal system. How many times have you seen or heard about a person of privilege, a White person, committing a crime? I have very rarely heard it was a "White person that attacked me," instead I hear the perpetrator described as a "person" whereas people of color are usually called out by race or **ethnicity**, such as saying a "Black person attacked me."

In 2009, the statistics for individuals incarcerated as Black males were six times higher than White males. I know that even though I have been to prison, there is a higher chance of me being able to find a job in any field than a minority with the same criminal history as me. I think that social media and the news often highlight the crimes of minorities while brushing the crimes of Whites under the rug. How many serial killers have you seen that are anything but White? I personally cannot think of one that isn't White, yet when we think of a murderer we think of people of color. Why is that? Social media and the news are huge indicators of what society is going to see and know about. It is sometimes hard for White people to acknowledge that they are in the position of power when it comes to race. Being in college, talking with others, and doing research helped me see that White people hold the power in most situations.

The intersections of our social identities will overlap with the identities of those who make the policies and laws, those who enforce them, and those who make the judgments that impact incarceration, parole, probation, and future experiences. Paying attention to these overlaps and attempting to overhaul our systems to correct **discrimination** that is built into our psyches and our institutions will create more equitable opportunity, treatment, and rights for all families.

11.3.5 Licenses and Attributions for Justice: An Introduction

11.3.5.1 Open Content, Original

11.3.5.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

11.3.6 References

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11.4 THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF JUSTICE

By Alexis Castenada-Perez

11.4.1 Preface

As a psychology major, I was surprised to find myself contributing and writing for a Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) open textbook. "What does any of this have to do with the human psyche?" was something I was asking myself before I started researching and writing. While we learned of **intersectionality** in HDFS 201, I didn't really start to fully grasp the concept until I started writing for this project. It's not just sociology and psychology that come into play when we talk about social justice, but instead, a strong cooperation of multiple disciplines is involved in understanding how in**equality** and injustice occur. Everything is connected whether we realize it or not.

After that happened during the spring and summer of 2020, it feels very gratifying to try and help educate others on topics and ideas that I myself didn't fully understand when I began writing. Challenging myself to do this project has only made me a better student. If there's anything that I would like for someone to take away from this reading, it's this: for some, it is easy to deny that many of the ideas discussed (such as **intersectionality** and institutional racism) exist. Human civilization and society stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Many modern institutions and values in the United States were founded on the antiquated idea that those pertaining to a certain class and race were superior to others. Context matters and it shouldn't be ignored.

With that being said, I want to thank everyone who collaborated on this project for being some of the most open-minded and friendly people I've met!

Following is a series of short essays that explore various groups who experience injustice and the ways that social identities overlap with the justice system.

11.4.2 What Does Justice Look Like?

The last few words of the United States Pledge of Allegiance are: "with liberty and justice for all." This ideal is part of our nation's identity, but the unfortunate reality is that our justice system wasn't ever made to be fair. The first form of police in the southern part of the United States were slave patrols (Potter, n.d.). Their purpose was to capture escaped enslaved people, prevent further escape, and discipline those enslaved. For hundreds of years in the United States, the justice system's job was to enforce the idea of White supremacy, and to limit the rights of women and people of color. This can be seen in Supreme Court cases such as Dred Scott V. Sandford, where the Supreme Court ruled that anyone with African ancestry could never become a citizen of the United States, and therefore not be able to sue in federal court. The Supreme Court also seized this opportunity to rule that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. This meant that the federal government couldn't prevent slavery in certain territories. This decision was unsurprising to many Americans, because seven of the nine Supreme Court justices at the time of the Dred Scott decision had been appointed by pro-slavery presidents (PBS, n.d.). Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, who authored the majority opinion for the Dred Scott case, wrote in reference to the legal status of African Americans, "They are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word 'citizens' in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States" (Brewer & Heitzeg, 2008).

While there may not be laws, rules, and regulations that explicitly target people of color (**POC**) today, there do exist many that their entire origins are based on racism and prejudice (see Chapter 8). In many cases, those whose duty is to exercise the law simply choose to ignore crimes that are being committed against people of color. For example, 37 percent of cases involving missing/disappeared Native American women are dismissed by the U.S. Attorney's Office (National Indian Council on Aging, 2019).

11.4.3 Activity: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

To learn about the search for missing and murdered Indigenous women, listen to this 1A podcast (40:17):

https://the1a.org/segments/search-missing-murdered-indigenous-women/

Figure 11.5 In this podcast, you will hear interviews with the parents of murdered women, learn about the data related to missing and murdered Native American women (timestamp 12.07), as well as what legal and police action is being taken.

Discussion

- What did you hear or learn that was new to you?
- How does this lack of police and legal action related to missing and murdered Native American women relate to **implicit bias**, the **social construction of difference**, or other

concepts you have studied in this text?
- This website tracks federal legislation related to missing and murdered Indigenous women. What is new since this podcast aired in 2020?
- What are some strategies (named in the podcast or via your own brainstorming) that would help bring more **equity** for Indigenous women?

This is a pattern that goes back to at least the 1920s when local law enforcement neglected to properly investigate murdered Native Americans during the infamous Osage Indian Murders. The Osage Indian Murders show one of the more blatant attempts of a government trying to circumvent justice in order to oppress and marginalize a group of minorities. The Osage people of Kansas were relocated to a reservation in Oklahoma around 1870. It later became known that the Osage reservation is located on top of one of the largest oil deposits in the country. As a result of this, the Osage people saw an extraordinary increase in wealth. The United States Congress eventually passed a law requiring a guardian to assume control of every Osage's finances until they were deemed 'competent'. The guardians were of course always White males, who usually didn't have the best interests of the Osage in mind, often defrauding them.

11.4.4 "Justice" Depends on Race

There currently exists a disparity in the United States that has been rapidly increasing particularly within the last two decades. African Americans face harsher punishments than a White person would for committing the exact same crime. If you compare the sentence of a Black person and a White person for a similar crime, Black people serve sentences around 19 percent longer than White people do on average. Not only do Black people serve longer sentences, but the more Afrocentric features someone has, the more likely they are to be sentenced to death (United States Sentencing Commission, 2017). This recent disparity, while having many causes, can largely be attributed to the Supreme Court ruling on the case of United States V. Booker. The Supreme Court ruled that judges didn't have to strictly adhere to mandatory sentencing regulations that were created in 1984 under the Sentencing Reform Act, a bipartisan bill that aimed to increase fairness and consistency of sentences (whether this reform actually worked could be debated as well, because the Reagan administration doubled down on Nixon's War on Drugs during his presidency; the policies introduced during this time disproportionately targeted **POC**). Instead, the federal government found that the United States V. Booker ruling actually has been counterproductive to the Sentencing Reform Act, and actually created more sentences inconsistent with regulations, and a greater racial disparity as well (Department of Justice, 2006). Since judges can use the regulations as just advisory, their biases and preconceived notions of people of color have a much larger role in the sentencing of minorities than they did before 1984.

11.4.5 The War on Drugs

Originally coined by former president Richard Nixon, the War on Drugs was first started as a campaign by the Nixon administration. Although it wasn't known as "the War on Drugs" until 1971, drug reform in the United states dates back many years all the way to the beginning of the 20th century when the first drug prohibition policies were being passed. The Harrison Narcotics Tax of 1914 was one of the first federal laws to regulate drugs (PBS, n.d.). On paper the aims of the Nixon campaign were to try and shrink the drug trade in the United States and prevent new addicts through various policies (Nixon, 1971), which includes the creation of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and giving increased funding to law enforcement agencies (LEA) to actively seek out drug charges. Drug crime was so low on the priority list for most LEAs when the "war" started, that many agencies did not try to enforce the new policy.

To try and get all LEA to participate in the war, the federal government provided them with a few incentives. Firstly, they could compete to receive federal cash grants. This allowed many agencies to expand their number of officers and to start a new narcotics task force in order to increase the number of arrests. Simply put, more arrests and convictions equals more money for the agency. In addition to giving money to LEA, the federal government also provided cooperating agencies with intelligence, special training, and equipment in order to carry out the war. To top it all off, the government let agencies keep almost all of the money that they seized in drug raids (Alexander, 2020). Overall this system has led to issues such as the militarization of the police and an increase of **POC** in prison for nonviolent crimes. Even one of Richard Nixon's own aides has admitted that the War on Drugs was used as a means to incarcerate Black people.

11.4.6 The Militarization of Police

As a direct result of the War on Drugs, the police in the United States are given more freedom and weaponry than ever before. Concerns have been raised recently regarding what is called "Warrior **Culture**" that is present in many police departments, where officers are encouraged to take a "warrior's mindset." This sometimes is in contrast to academy training and is instead encouraged by fellow officers, but not always. The warrior mindset can also be understood as an "Us vs Them" form of thinking. Police are being taught that they live in a hostile environment that is out to get them (Stoughton, 2015). Rookie officers are told constantly that their lives are in danger and that they should be scared or else they could die. Many departments say that their first and immediate goal is to make sure officers are unharmed and get home safely; this tends to foster fear in officers and causes overestimation of danger. As a result, officers are more likely to treat ordinary citizens as a threat and to escalate the situation entirely. This counter-intuitively raises the risk of death for both police officers and citizens. In order to benefit our communities to the best of their ability, police must work closely with the communities that they are serving. A heavily armed and paranoid police force does not mesh well with people who are growing ever more distrustful of police. For many decades, national confidence and trust in the police have remained at around 60 percent (Tyler, 2011). Unsurprisingly, trust and confidence for the police are much lower in minority communities. African Americans' trust of the police sits at just 31 percent (Tyler, 2005). While minority communities could greatly benefit from a well-trained police presence, they are often disproportionately arrested, harassed, disrespected, and made victims of police brutality.

11.4.7 Police Brutality

> "… the senseless acts of killings of these young boys out there … This is reality, this is my world, this is what I talk about in my music. You can't delude that. Me being on a cop car, that's a performance piece after these senseless acts … Hip-hop is not the problem. Our reality is the problem of the situation. This is our music. This is us expressing ourselves."
>
> – Kendrick Lamar to TMZ

Figure 11.6. Kendrick Lamar sees hip hop as an expression of the problem of racism, not part of the problem itself.

During the 2015 BET awards Kendrick Lamar performed his hit song "Alright" off of his album *To Pimp a Butterfly*, whose lyrics have been praised by critics for being politically-charged and a socially relevant commentary on the struggles of the modern African American (Figure 11.5). At some point in the performance, Lamar stood on top of a police car that had been vandalized, a symbolic statement for many viewers showcasing his support for those protesting the killing of unarmed Black men and condemning the police for their actions. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was founded in 2013 by three women in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, shown in Figure 11.7 (https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/, n.d.). In 2014 and 2015, many high profile cases of police brutality emerged. To name a few: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray. There were over 1,059 known police killings in the United States in 2014 (Mapping Police Violence, n.d.), many of whom were unarmed. It was during this year that the Black Lives Matter movement gained more traction.

Figure 11.7 Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi — created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter.

Lamar faced backlash from those critical of the Black Lives Matter movement. Lyrics such as "… and we hate po-po, wanna kill us dead in the streets fo-sho," got the attention of *Fox News* pundit Geraldo Rivera, who said, "This is why I say that hip-hop has done more damage to young African-Americans than racism in recent years. This is exactly the wrong message." Lamar responded by saying, "Hip-hop is not the problem. Our reality is the problem of the situation. This is us expressing ourselves."

People of color are more likely than White people to be victims of police brutality, African American men, American Indian/Alaskan Native women, and Latino men to be more specific. African American men are the most likely out of all races to be victims. Black men face a one in 1000 chance of being killed by police throughout their lifetime (Edwards et al., 2019). The blame for all of this is all too often placed on people of color. Kendrick Lamar's words are affirming for many young people and still ring true today. With the 2020 deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the United States has seen a surge in protests across all 50 states (Burch et al., 2020).

There are many parallels that can be drawn from the civil rights movement of the 1960s as well as the 1992 Los Angeles riots, but there is unique history happening right in front of our eyes. With the relatively recent rise of smartphone cameras, people can now capture police brutality with relative ease, as well as being able to upload it straight to the internet as it happens. While some would hurry to dismiss the problem of police abusing their power as just "a few bad apples," we can now see that police brutality isn't a rare or isolated incident. There is a clear pattern of abuse, one that has been occurring in this country for centuries. It is clear that police brutality is a systemic problem in the United States.

11.4.8 Gender, Underrepresentation, and Intersectionality

With many of the high profile cases of police brutality being about men, women of color are often forgotten in the discussion. Due to this, there unfortunately are not many studies particularly focusing on the experiences of women of color. The most oppressed voices are usually the least heard. Women of color are at the intersection of gender and race and are victims of police violence just as much as men of color. Physical violence isn't the only way women suffer at hands of the police; they are also more likely to face sexual assault.

Sexual assault is the second most reported form of police misconduct in the United States (Bennett, 2018; National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project, 2010). **Transgender** women are most vulnerable to sexual violence by the police. Fifteen percent of **transgender** women report being sexually assaulted while in police custody, while African American **transgender** women report an astounding 32 percent assault rate (Office of Justice Programs, 2014). Some of these instances of sexual violence occur during 'searches' where officers look for narcotics or other paraphernalia. Black men are also often victims of police sexual violence (Chan, 2007). During an investigation by *Associated Press News* on police sexual misconduct, it was discovered that over 1,000 police officers lost their jobs over a six-year period for sex-related crimes (Sedensky, 2015). The Say Her Name movement was started to bring light to the issues women of color face. We can quickly see a pattern forming. The more instances of **intersectionality** in your life, the more likely you are to be a victim of violence and systematic oppression.

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11.5 TREATMENT, JAIL, OR JUSTICE?

By Christopher Byers

11.5.1 Preface

I always thought of myself as someone who has been the underdog in life. From my sister's death, to homelessness, to drug addiction, I thought I had it worse than anyone in the world. My negative experiences played a role in shaping my belief systems about myself and the world around me and, in a way, encapsulated my thinking by keeping me "unique." But then, that all began to change for me.

It all started with a class. In an HDFS class at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC), I was introduced to a concept that altered my perception of the world and how I fit into it in a significant way. I began to learn how maybe after all these years of believing I had a hard life and everyone had it easy, this was not the case. I learned about concepts such as privilege, **sociological imagination**, **equity**, social constructivism, and many other concepts like those that helped me to slowly and, sometimes painfully, open my eyes to the reality of life. When I learned about privilege, I had the hardest time wrapping my head around that one. How could I, someone whose sister died, experienced homelessness, and drug addiction, be privileged? I thought at first that it didn't apply to me. But through much internal reflection and writing and processing with people in my life and with my professor, I began to slowly understand what privilege means. That concept alone was a catalyst for me to dive further into researching injustice in the United States, and really inspired me to do a lot of deep reflective work on my own **social identity** and what it means to be who I am in the United States. This work has become some of the most important work I have ever done in my life. I see it as a path of healing not only for myself, but for many of us who choose to seek it.

11.5.2 Mental Health and Substance Abuse

> "Humans have been ingesting drugs for thousands of years. And throughout recorded time, significant numbers of nearly every society on earth have used one or more drugs to achieve certain desired physical or mental states. Drug use comes close to being universal, both worldwide and throughout history."
>
> – Sociologist Erich Goode

To the extent that social in**equality**, social interaction, and drug **culture** contribute to substance use, it is a mistake to attribute substance use only to biological and psychological factors. While these factors do play a role, it would be a mistake to ignore the social environments in which people participate in substance use. The role that the family plays in substance abuse potential is vastly underestimated. Weak family bonds and school connections are often seen as a major role in the development of substance use in adolescents. Weak bonds to family members prompt adolescents to be less likely to conform to conventional norms and more likely to engage in using drugs and other deviant behavior. Healthy family bonds, coping with trauma, learning how to identify feelings, and open communication all play a positive role in the reduction and prevention of potential substance use of family members in the future.

11.5.2.1 Mental Health

So what exactly is mental health? And how is it defined today? Well, first, let's shine a brief but illuminating light on the history of mental disorders in the United States. The mentally ill have been treated very poorly for hundreds of years. In the 1800s, it was believed that mental illness was caused by demonic possession, witchcraft, or an angry god. For example, in medieval times, abnormal behaviors were viewed as a sign that a person was possessed by demons. This was not an uncommon societal belief in the 1700s. The idea that mental illness was the result of demonic possession by either an evil spirit or an evil god incorrectly attributed all inexplicable phenomena to deities deemed either good or evil (Lumen Learning, n.d.). The prevailing theories of psychopathology, derived from folklore and inadequate scientific beliefs, t are still perpetuated today. Although science has a better understanding of mental health, it is still common for stigma, **discrimination**, and ignorance to be the deciding factors in how people with mental health are cared for and treated.

Psychological disorders are very common in the United States, yet there is still a great deal of **inequity** that encompasses mental health issues. Stigma, labeling, ignorance, **discrimination**, and judgment are all still very prevalent and harsh realities in our society today. The biological, sociological, physiological, and cultural determinants of mental health disorders vary from case to case, and most mental health issues are still often difficult to understand, since the roots of mental illness are often misunderstood (Figure 11.6).

Figure 11.8. Mental health is a part of our overall health.

Our society has made a lot of progress in understanding how some mental health disorders operate, but we still have a ways to go until we as a society can see mental health through a collective, compassionate lens. It is important to remember that those who struggle with psychological disorders are not their disorder. It is something they have, through no fault of their own. As with cancer and diabetes, these people who have psychological disorders often suffer from debilitating, often painful, conditions through no choice of their own. These individuals deserve to be treated and viewed with compassion, dignity, and understanding.

11.5.2.2 Substance Abuse

So what exactly is the relationship between substance abuse and mental health? Substance abuse and mental health are interconnecting and overlapping systems. There have been many years of stigma, **discrimination**, and misunderstanding toward people who have both mental health issues and substance abuse issues. Many people who suffer from substance abuse often have unaddressed trauma, depression, anxiety, and environmental and genetic factors that contribute to the use of substances as a way to self-medicate and cope with how they feel, regardless of the negative consequences that might happen as a result of using. For example, conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder are strongly associated with the development of both substance use and serious mental illness such as major depression and bipolar disorder. Some substance abuse can even mimic mental health issues, making a diagnosis difficult without dealing with the substance abuse issues first. Psychopharmacological reactions to withdrawal can also induce psychiatric symptoms and exacerbate underlying mental health issues for people as well.

Mental health issues are interconnected with substance abuse. Most people who practice counseling often deal with the substance abuse issues with a client and then proceed to determine if that individual is suffering from mental health issues after the substance abuse is addressed.

11.5.2.3 The Criminalization of Drugs

Although slavery has been abolished and Jim Crow laws are no longer legal, the systems that have oppressed people of color and marginalized communities for over 300 years continue. It can be argued that the criminal justice system and the legislation and policies that were created to punish drug users and drug crimes were designed to perpetuate **discrimination** and oppression of people of color at disproportionate rates.

A significant aspect of the War on Drugs, a piece of legislation that disproportionately affected people of color in the United States, was that it imposed mandatory minimum sentencing laws that sent non-violent drug offenders to prison, rather than enrolling them in treatment programs. Seventy percent of inmates in the United States are people of color—a figure that surpasses the percentage of this demographic group in U.S. society, which is approximately 23 percent, according to the 2015 U.S. census. That means that people of color are greatly over-represented in the U.S. criminal justice system. The United States has the highest incarceration rates for drug-related crimes. Figure 11.7, based on the article "The Black/White marijuana arrest gap, in nine charts," demonstrates the **implicit bias** our justice system still has for people of color in the United States.

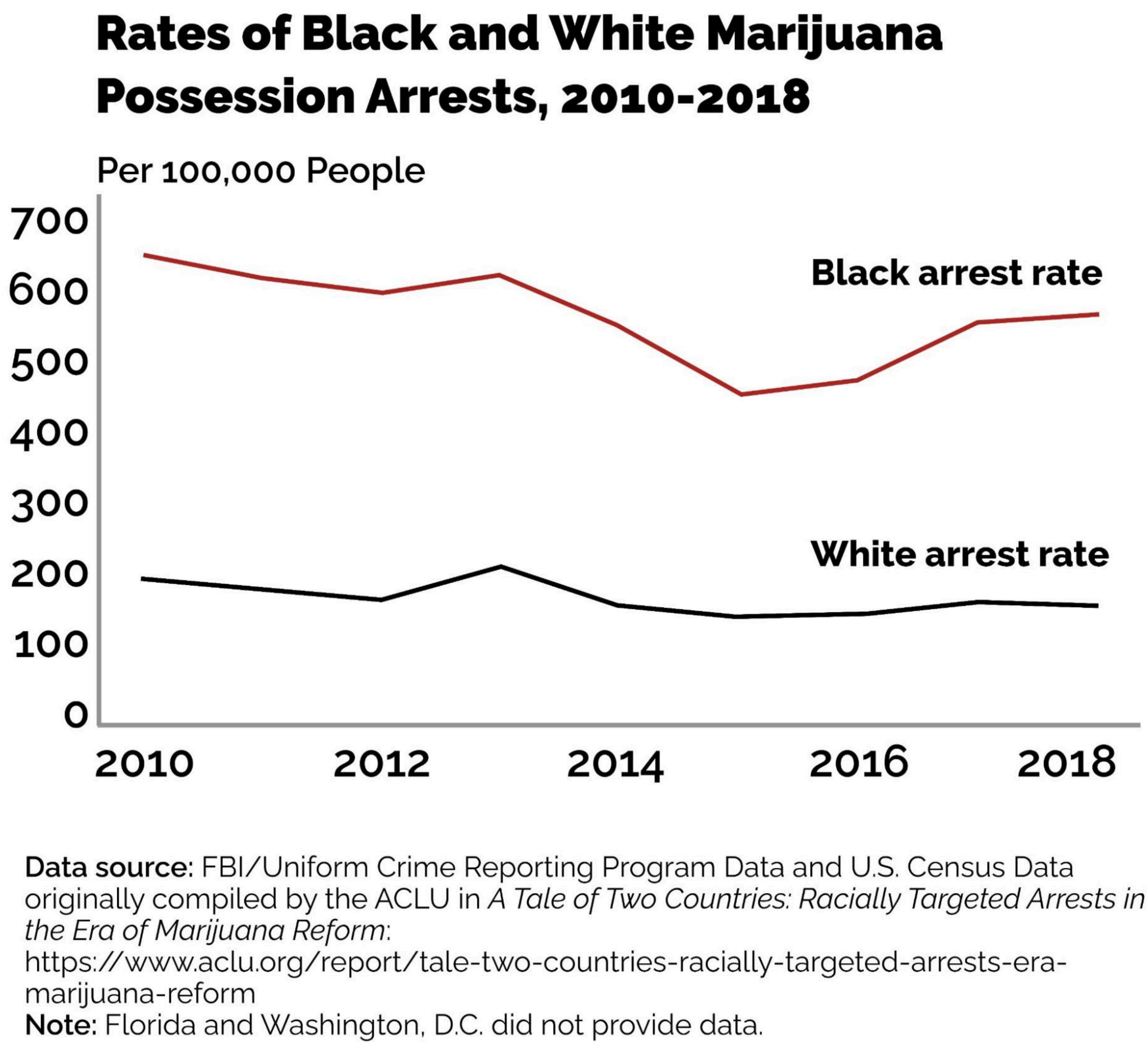

Figure 11.9. Black people are disproportionately arrested for marijuana compared to White people.

It is a sad and common societal view that addicts and substance abuse users are lesser human beings, a lower standard of individual than the rest of society. This is an example of stigma. This overarching and negative view of people who struggle with substance abuse plays a role in the passing of policies and criminalization of millions of people every year in the United States, which disproportionately affects families of color. When people of color are targeted for nonviolent drug-related crimes, they are more likely to receive harsher punishments than White people. This has damaging consequences for people of color and their families, with the head of households usually being the ones who receive these harsher punishments.

Women of color have been arrested at rates far higher than White women, even though they use drugs at a rate equal to or lower than White women. Furthermore, according to Bureau of Justice statistics from 2007, nearly two-thirds of U.S. women prisoners had children under 18 years of age. Before incarceration, disproportionately, these women were the primary caregivers to their children and other family members, so the impact on children, families, and communities is substantial when women are imprisoned.

Inmates often engage in prison labor for less than minimum wage. When these individuals are incarcerated, corporations contract prison labor that produces millions of dollars in profit. Therefore, the incarceration of millions of people artificially deflates the unemployment rate (something politicians benefit from) and creates a cheap labor force that generates millions of dollars in profit for private corporations. How do we make sense of this? What does this say about the state of democracy in the United States?

When seen through an **equity** lens, we can establish some interesting points. One is that the rates that people of color and White people use drugs are about the same, but one important factor plays a role in the disproportionate rates of incarceration for people of color: **implicit bias**. People have subconscious ideas about who uses drugs in the United States. These ideas are based on false narratives derived from **implicit bias**es that perpetuate the inequitable incarceration of people of color. Secondly, the War on Drugs focused and funneled money into the punishment of and incarceration for drug-related offenses.

A question to ponder is this: what would society look like if instead of punishment and criminalizing drug use and drug users, we used that money to focus on treatment, recovery centers, and social services?

11.5.3 Licenses and Attributions for Treatment, Jail, or Justice?

11.5.3.1 Open Content, Original

11.5.3.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

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11.6 REAL LAWS, REAL FAMILIES

By Carla Medel

11.6.1 Preface

Now going into my last year in undergrad and looking into graduate school for programs in counseling, specifically designed for children and families, I would like to thank Liz for allowing me to be a part of this project. It has been one of the best experiences so far in my academic career. I think that at first it doesn't really make sense as to why I would be so passionate about something like this project, but I'll explain. All I have ever wanted is to see myself reflected in the things that I partake in, part of that being academic materials. As a Latinx woman and daughter of immigrants, I have never really gotten that, and it can truly take a toll on the way you view yourself and your people.

Because of the privilege I have of being able to make it into higher ed and be a part of this project, I wanted to use that to write about people like me, my parents, and my family so that more children don't see themselves as an "other," a little section of the text that no one really goes over. Things haven't been and aren't fair for those who identify as immigrants, but people like me have been a part of the United States before this land was even named, and we are here to stay. It's time for our stories to be told, too. Here, I'd like to explain several of the laws that affect not just families like mine, but, tangentially, all families in the United States.

11.6.2 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a policy created under the Obama administration on June 15, 2012. Individuals who meet the following criteria are eligible for **DACA**:

- are under 31 years of age as of June 15, 2012
- came to the U.S. while under the age of 16
- have continuously resided in the U.S. from June 15, 2007, to the present
- entered the U.S. without inspection or fell out of lawful visa status before June 15, 2012
- were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making the request for consideration of **DACA** with USCIS
- are currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or armed forces

- have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor, or more than three misdemeanors of any kind
- do not pose a threat to national security or public safety

Applicants have to provide evidence of the above criteria. In addition, every applicant must complete and pass a biographic and biometric background check. An applicant who is granted **DACA** is not considered to have legal status but will not be deemed to be accruing unlawful presence in the U.S. during the time period when their **DACA** is in effect. **DACA** allows for individuals to live in the U.S. without fear of deportation and with work authorization. **DACA** is temporary as it only lasts 2 years; every 2 years the individual will need to reapply which means submitting an application, getting biometrics done, and paying a fee of $495.

At its peak, there were up to about 800,000 people who were **DACA** recipients but those numbers dramatically declined during the Trump Administration, due to fear of what would happen to the **DACA** program. The number of people on **DACA** now is closer to 600,000 total.

DACA has been on the line since Donald Trump took presidency, having **DACA** recipients live in limbo unsure of what their future would look like. Even after waiting years for the Supreme Court to make a decision on **DACA** during this presidency, that decision is not being respected. The Supreme Court decided in July of 2020 that Donald Trump's decision to rescind **DACA** was made without the proper steps. Because of this decision, **DACA** should have been restored to its original form, open to new applicants and advance parole, with a special permit for international travel available to current recipients—but the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has declared that they will reject all initial **DACA** requests who have not previously been granted **DACA**. It also eliminates the possibility for **DACA** recipients to be granted advance parole. Requests for renewal were changed from a two-year period to a one-year period (National Immigration Law Center, 2020). Not even the highest courts have been able to protect these young dreamers.

Here is one of many stories from the website of the National Immigration Law Center (National Immigration Law Center, n.d.). This website offers many resources for immigrants. In addition, it contains valuable resources for educators and others who are working with immigrant families.

11.6.2.1 In Focus: **DACA**, A Personal Account

The following story by Esmeralda (pseudonym), a **DACA** recipient from Santa Clara, California, was posted on the National Immigration Law Center's website:

I am a current **DACA** recipient. Given that I am a member of a multi–[immigration] status family, **DACA** has allowed me to do more for my family, financially and emotionally.

In regards to education, **DACA** gave me access to the resources I could never afford prior. Having to experience these hardships, I dedicated my life to support the diverse population of students in California, from pre-K to higher education.

DACA allowed me to complete my A.A. and transfer to a four-year institution. I was finally able to complete my bachelor's degree. After ten long years, this past May, I graduated with a master's and would love to continue on to a Ph.D.

DACA gave me access to a humane job with a living wage. **DACA** allowed me to have a driver's license. Having an actual identity in this country gave me life. I could live without my everyday fear of being deported or having to drive without a license.

DACA gave me access to open a bank account with a credit line, and I would love to one day do something with that credit, like invest in the country I consider my home: the U.S.

DACA changed my life for the best: being able to legally drive, travel to other states in the country, finish my degrees, have a fulfilling job, and give back to my community.

Most importantly, **DACA** gave me life (National Immigration Law Center (n.d.)

11.6.3 DREAM Act

The DREAM Act was a bill brought forward in 2017 and, unfortunately, died that same year. This is what most DREAMers (young undocumented immigrants) are fighting for (National Immigration Forum, 2017). This bill would provide DREAMers protection from deportation and an opportunity to obtain legal status if they meet certain requirements.

The DREAM Act would create a conditional permanent resident status valid for up to eight years for young undocumented immigrants that would protect them from deportation, allow them to work legally in the United States, and permit them to travel outside the country. To qualify for conditional permanent resident status, young undocumented immigrants would need to meet the following requirements:

- through documentation described in the bill, establish that they were brought to the United States at age 17 or younger and have lived continuously in the United States for at least four years prior to the bill's enactment;
- pass a government background check, demonstrate "good moral character" with no felony or multiple misdemeanor convictions, submit biometric and biographic data and undergo a biometric and medical

exam;
- demonstrate they have been admitted to a college or university, have earned a high school diploma, or are in the process of earning a high school diploma or an equivalent; and
- pay a fee. (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020)

The bill would automatically grant conditional permanent resident status to **DACA** recipients who still meet the requirements needed to obtain **DACA**. Conditional permanent resident status can be changed to lawful permanent resident status by:

- maintaining continuous residence in the United States;
- meeting one of the following three requirements:

- completion of at least two years of military service,
- graduation from a college or university or completion of at least two years of a bachelor's or higher degree program in the United States, or
- employment for a period totaling at least three years;

- demonstrating an ability to read, write, and speak English and an understanding of American history, principles, and form of government;
- passing a government background check, continuing to demonstrate "good moral character" without felony or multiple misdemeanor convictions, submitting biometric and biographic data and undergoing a biometric and medical exam; and
- paying a fee.

11.6.4 The Legal Process

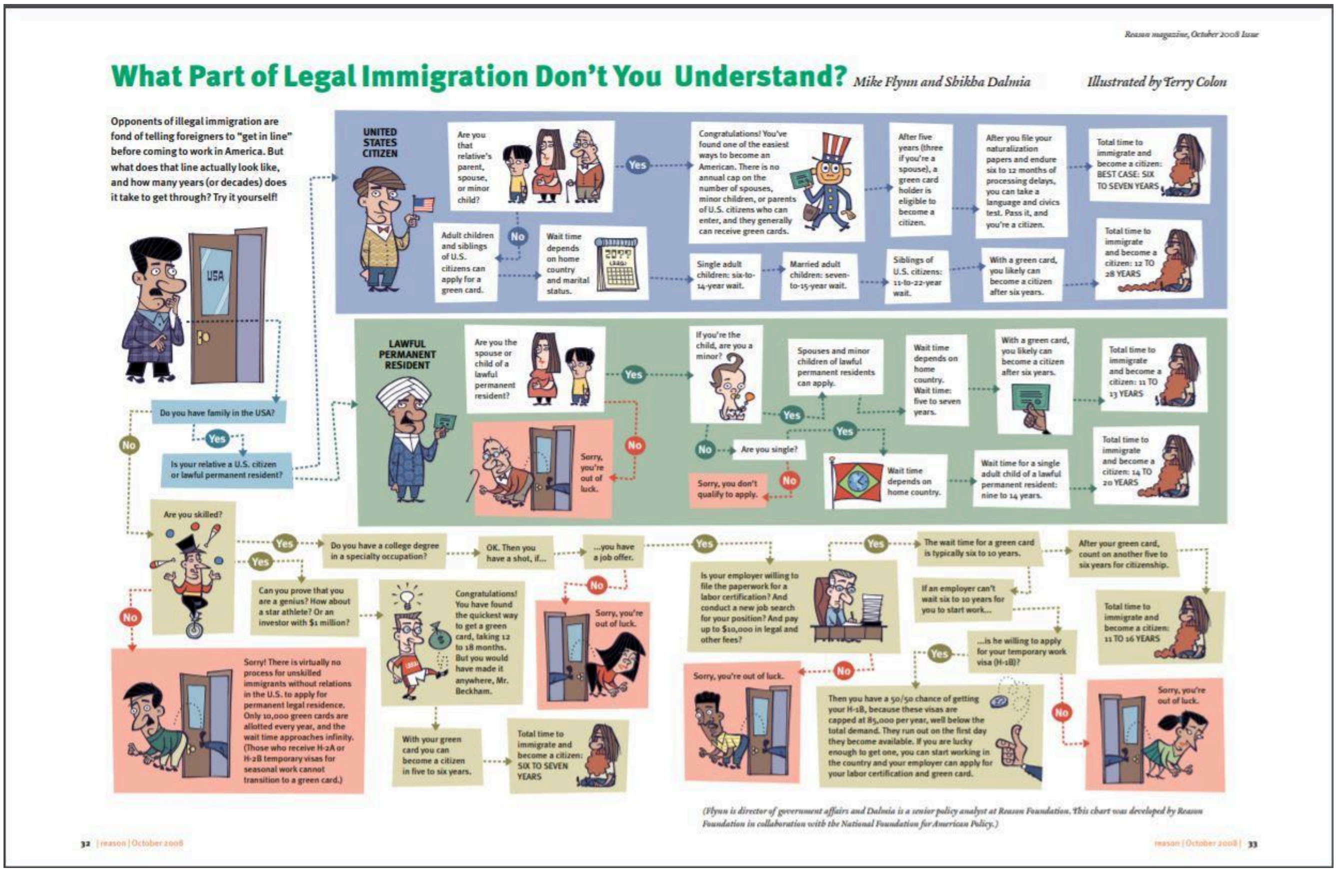

Figure 11.10. The line that immigrants can get into legally is actually very complicated and long. Larger version.

"Just come here legally," is one of my most disliked phrases for immigrants because the process to do so is not as easy as the general public thinks. Immigrants, just like everyone else, seek out to move because where they currently are isn't providing them what is needed to succeed. Unlike here in the United States, they cannot just move from one state to another to seek out those opportunities, as they do not exist there either. Instead, they need to leave the country. Some people have the time and money needed to try and apply for a visa or have a family member who is a United States citizen or legal permanent resident (LPR) sponsor them to become an LPR and are able to come to the United States that way. This could take anywhere from six to 28 years and will cost anywhere from $750 to $1,225 per person (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020), so it's obvious that there could be a lack of money needed to take this route and it is even worse for others if their current situation might be more urgent, and they don't have the time to wait. If legal immigration was easy, accessible, and fast, it's very unlikely that people wouldn't risk their lives entering and living in the United States without documentation.

Figure 11.11. Many people have died while waiting for hearings while in ICE custody.

11.6.5 Licenses and Attributions for Real Laws, Real Families

11.6.5.1 Open Content, Original

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11.7 LOOKING AHEAD

There is a great deal of discussion in this country about the politics, legality, and ethics of our immigration practices. In this text, we discuss some of the aspects that directly affect immigrant families and their descendants who are living in the United States right now. As discussed in Chapter 1, laws have primarily been designed to foster inexpensive labor (the immigrants) to benefit the existing landowners, business owners, and consumers already residing in the country. Regardless of employment status, wage, and purpose for coming to this country, these families have the same needs as other residents. In addition, they are navigating new structures such as the health care and insurance system, differing government practices, and perhaps a new language at the same time as they are caring for their children, accessing schooling, finding a place to live, and fostering healthy family routines. It is difficult to also advocate for needed services, as pictured in Figure 11.12.

Figure 11.12. Vietnamese members speak to a state representative at the Washington state capitol.

The authors view all families, regardless of documentation status, as "contemporary families in the United States," the subjects of this course and this textbook. We believe that the well-being of each family in the United States is of value in and of itself. In addition, every family affects all the other families within the spheres of the neighborhood, the places of worship, the retail establishments, schools, parks, and employment. As we discuss the laws that affect immigrant families, and the ways in which employment and citizenship practices reflect a lack of justice, think about these families' needs and rights just as you would for any other family.

It is not only laws that work institutionally to foster immigration, but also businesses and corporations. In this excerpt of an article from The Conversation, applied research demonstrates how undocumented labor practices are encouraged.

11.7.1 A Preference for the Undocumented

By Lise Nelson, Associate Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Associate Professor of Geography, Pennsylvania State University

My colleagues and I have conducted research in U.S. communities where undocumented Latinx immigrants live and work, including interviews with their employers. We focused on small businesses in rural Colorado and Georgia. We investigated how and why entrepreneurs in construction, landscaping, and low-wage service industries began actively seeking to hire undocumented Latino immigrants starting in the mid-1990s even though immigrant workers were largely absent from these places prior to that time.

What started for many as a short-term solution to fill a labor gap turned into a preference for hiring undocumented workers. Recruitment efforts thus intensified, causing a significant growth in the Latino immigrant population in both places. In a rural Georgia county, the Latino population increased 1,760 percent between 1990 and 2010, due to the increase in these recruitment efforts by businesses involved in construction, landscaping, cleaning, and food provision.

Why did businesses that rely on low-wage workers develop a preference for immigrants and particularly undocumented ones?

In interviews, employers describe the undocumented Latino immigrants they hire as among the most reliable, honest, and hardworking employees they have ever had. As one Georgia employer described it:

> I think about, if I had to get rid of the nine Hispanics that I've got tomorrow and replace them with locals, to get the same amount of output, I would have to hire fifteen instead of nine and I'd probably have to pay them $1 an hour more each, and that figures up quick. And there's sometimes that you just can't find people to do the work.

Most employers we interviewed began by the late 1990s to organize their businesses around the productivity and discipline offered by an undocumented immigrant workforce.

11.7.2 Interwoven families

When we think about immigrant families, we cannot separate them from all of us. As the quilt pictured in Figure 11.13, we are all not only connected, but we support each other in complex and in ways that are sometimes difficult to decipher.

Figure 11.13. Interwoven patterns are fascinating to study and complicated to understand.

When we talk about how immigrant families affect other families in the United States, we must understand that immigrant families are deeply interwoven into communities, schools, for-profit businesses, services, and all aspects of society. **Kinship** groups themselves can be mixed, made up of recent immigrants, second-generation citizens, indigenous, and citizens whose families have lived in the United States for hundreds of years. It's difficult to unwind the complexity of these relationships, but it is critical to understand that we are intertwined and to continue to educate ourselves about these economic, familial, and societal relationships.

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11.8 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

11.8.1 Reflective Questions

1. How is justice typically defined? How does it apply to families in the United States?
2. How do race, **ethnicity**, gender, immigration, and **socioeconomic status** intersect to create differing experiences with justice?
3. What do the founding documents of our country tell us about justice?
4. Which chapters by the student authors (Heather Denherder, Alexis Castenada-Perez, Christopher Byers, and Carla Medel) can you relate to your own life or observations?
5. In what ways has your family experienced justice and injustice? What topics would you add to this chapter?

11.9 KEY TERMS

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **Criminalization:** the act of making an activity or person illegal by making their activity a criminal offense.
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** a U.S. immigration policy that allows individuals who arrived in the United States as children to remain and work in the country for a renewable period of two years. This policy has been legalized and implemented inconsistently in the 2000s.
- **implicit bias:** an unconscious tendency to favor one person, group, or point of view over another usually based on **social characteristics** such as gender, sexuality, race or **socioeconomic status**.
- **incarceration:** being confined within a prison or jail.
- **militarization:** the process of preparing for war or another conflict; can refer to the transformation of a civilian agency becoming more like a military operation.
- **substance use disorder (SUD):** a disease that affects the brain and includes the uncontrolled use of something despite harmful consequences (sometimes called substance abuse).

11.9.1 Licenses and Attributions for Key Terms

11.9.1.1 Open Content, Original

11.10 CHAPTER 11 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

CHAPTER 12: VISUAL CULTURE

Click on the + in the **Contents** menu to see all the parts of this chapter, or go through them in order by clicking **Next** → below.

12.1 CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the value of creativity, art, and beauty to families in the United States.
2. Explain how art as representation shapes the history of the United States and current experiences.
3. Analyze the unique challenges and gifts of protest and **public art**.
4. Examine the role of dominant **culture** in defining "art."
5. Explain how socially constructed ideas about beauty affect American families.
6. Describe how visual **culture** affects family outcomes.
7. Analyze the effects of **intersectionality** on potential creators, artists, and art lovers.
8. Describe the multidirectional relationship between social structures and the ways that individuals experience and access creativity, art, and beauty.
9. Analyze visual **culture** from an **equity** perspective.
10. Apply theoretical concepts related to creativity, art, and beauty to one's own observations and experiences.

12.1.1 Licenses and Attributions for Chapter Learning Objectives

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12.2 EXPERIENCE, EXPRESSION, AND EQUITY

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Christopher Byers, and Carla Medel

> "If you have only two pennies, spend the first on bread and the other on hyacinths for your soul."
>
> – Arab Proverb

In this chapter, we will study the effects of visual **culture** on how families function in the United States.

Figure 12.1. This community mural of two boys in nature can be found in Comuna 13, a neighborhood in Medellín, Columbia.

You may wonder about the inclusion of art and beauty in a text that discusses the needs of families. But it can be argued that American individuals and families need art both as individuals and as a civilization. In addition, how society defines art and what is considered to be "beautiful" is relevant to **equity** and family outcomes.

Visual culture is described as the combination of visual events in which "information, meaning, or pleasure" are communicated to the consumer (Mirzoeff, 1998). The information that we take in through our eyes is both immense and psychologically powerful, affecting us in ways that take time and cognition to understand (Figure 12.1). It is the intent of this chapter to highlight the ways in which visual **culture** affects families, both in the way we view ourselves, and in the ways we can access resources such as education, employment, and wealth.

Art is one way people share ideas, express themselves, and communicate. Consider the print of Claude Monet's *The Water Lily Pond* hanging in your doctor's office (Figure 12.2). What about the graffiti you passed on the way to the bus stop? Artistic expression exemplifies the richness of a **culture** and energizes our thought processes. We are exposed to art, design, and creativity all day long, whether we realize it or not.

Figure 12.2. *The Water Lily Pond* [oil on canvas], ca. 1917-19 by Claude Monet hangs in the Albertina, a museum in Vienna, Austria, but reproductions of Monet's art can be found everywhere.

Art is one way in which people share ideas, express themselves, and communicate. How and where an individual is able to access art is largely related to the values and beliefs a **culture** holds as a standard for determining what is desirable in a society, both by artistic and by beauty standards.

Individuals have specific, individualized beliefs, but can still share collective values. Values shape how a society views what is considered beautiful and what kinds of art are valued. Beauty is a concept that is flexible and that changes depending on where and when you are living. A family's access to art that speaks to their **culture**, interests, and imagination depends on what is available in the popular media and accessible in their geographic region. In Western **culture**, art was historically housed in museums. In Indigenous **culture**s, art often takes the form of useful objects, such as baskets, an example shown in Figure 12.3, and clothing.

Figure 12. 3. In the Western Apache **culture**, women traditionally produced storage baskets for family use. Thisbasket, likely made in Arizona circa 1890, is now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Today art and other imagery are easily accessible in digitized forms of technology, which are accessed through the internet. These readily available ways that people can use and access visual **culture** can breed unrealistic expectations for many people.

For example, with the rise of "selfies," social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat can provide individuals outlets to shape and shift self images so that they can conform more easily to the dominant social standard of beauty.

It can be posited then that the dominant **culture**'s expectation of physical beauty can and has been what has most heavily influenced Western **culture**. The media and films portray a particular standard of beauty, setting up a tension between conforming to this standard, individualistic preferences, and cultural practices that may conflict with the idealized concept of beauty.

Beauty perceptions affect family members of all ages; the multidirectional relationship of families and society affects the parents and guardians of children, which in turn affects the kids, and the grandkids, and so on. The patterns are shown in the way we rear our children, which is the emotional connection within the **private family**.

12.2.1 Art: A Historical Context

Expression is a fundamental need for human beings. Some human developmental theories, like Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, demonstrate that once humans have their basic needs met, such as food, water, shelter, love, nurturance, and housing, they can begin to move into more creative avenues of self-expression and self-actualization.

Throughout history, humans have produced artworks. One would be surprised at how far back in time humans were attempting to engage in expression. Scientists have recently found shells dating back 500,000 years ago that were engraved with small geometric incisions on the surface (Callaway, 2014). While these shells can be debated to be considered art by historians, it's important to note that long before the concept of "art" was created, homo sapiens were trying to do it (Figure 12.4).

The question "What is art?" is one that continues to be debated. Some art historians believe that the oldest piece of art to date has been discovered and originated from the Late Stone Age and the Upper Paleolithic Period, from between 70,000 and 40,000 BCE.

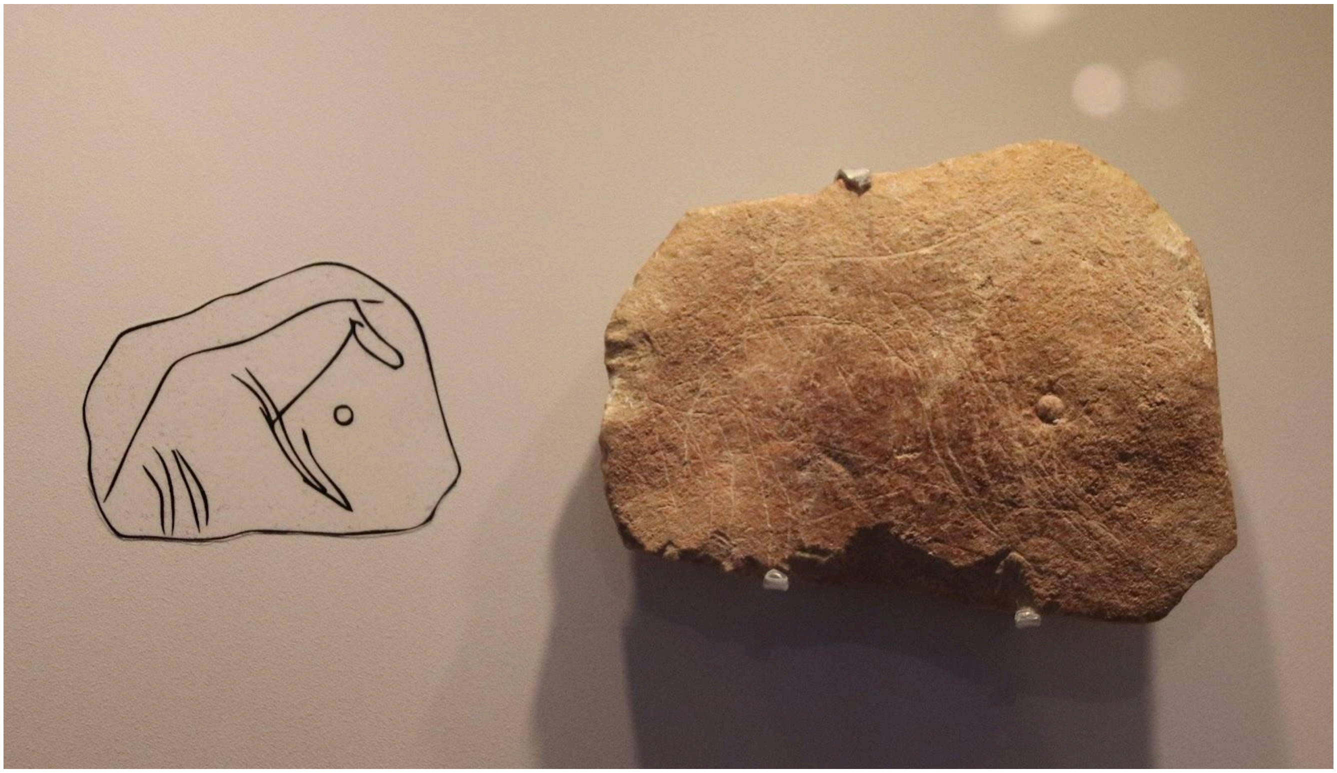

Figure 12.4. Prehistoric art carving, ca. 26,000 BCE.

Throughout history, art has been passed down from our families, rituals, and ceremonies that are given to us by our communities and interactions with the dominant **culture** (Breen, 2008). Do human beings have equitable access to create art now? Are there barriers that are present in the lives of individuals today that make it difficult or impossible to be able to engage in self expression? Systemic barriers that limit families in the United States from meeting basic needs also inhibit equitable access to self expression.

12.2.2 Using Art to Teach

Visual representations are strong; the popular saying, "a picture is worth 1,000 words," speaks to this power. When it comes to teaching history in the high school setting, it has been found that art is a powerful **pedagogy** that moves students beyond the understanding that they gain from text alone. Students develop more interest in history, and the potential for examining multiple viewpoints via **artistic representation** can help students to develop critical thinking skills related to understanding history.

Younghee Suh summarizes much of the literature related to how students absorb history via **artistic representations** (visual, photographic, and musical among others) in the study, "Past Looking: Using Arts as Historical Evidence in Teaching History" (Suh, 2013). Suh focuses on **pedagogy** and notes that the way in which teachers expose students to art highly influences students' abilities to sort fiction from fact. Exposure to art from the past is not enough, however. Teachers must also provide scaffolding to students that helps them to consider the perspective of the artist, the time in history, and the choice about which art is included in textbooks and other historical summaries. Without this guidance and contextualization, learners are left to see representations as "fact" instead of a particular viewpoint of the past.

Many history books (and the accompanying **artistic representation**s) are presented from the viewpoint of the Euro-American settlers. It is important that we understand the experience of all families, not just the families who belong to the **culture** that now dominates. In the process of establishing dominance, Indigenous families were harmed. For example, children were frequently separated from the rest of the family and sent to schools where they were harshly punished for speaking their Native languages and practicing their religions (Little, 2018). Violence against Native women was and is still perpetuated at higher rates than against women of other races, and is underreported and under prosecuted (Amnesty International, n.d.).

Another example of the cultural context of art comes from Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon. A student made this observation in an art history class: "I took an art class and when my teacher was showing a painting of the Virgin Mary it seemed very normal to everyone in my class except for me, until she showed a picture of the Virgin Mary the way that Latinos are used to seeing her (the one on the left [a] in Figure 12.5 is a Mexican depiction of Virgin Mary and the one on the right is Italian [b]). If my teacher would have never said that it was Virgin Mary who was depicted in the art, I would've never known because that's not how I have seen Virgin Mary growing up."

Figure 12.5. **Artistic representation**s of the Virgin Mary. A (on left) is part of a 16th century shrine located at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City, Mexico. B (on right) is the *Madonna del Granduca* [oil on canvas] by Raphael, 1505, which hangs in the Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy.

The Virgin Mary is associated with qualities considered positively in Western **culture**, which include purity and beauty. Look closely at these images in Figure 12.4 to see how the expression of those characteristics are represented.

A discussion of art needs greater exploration and explanation, but the point of this section is to illustrate the ways in which art always has a viewpoint. While the dominant cultural viewpoint is the one most often seen, art can also be used to express other viewpoints and to initiate critical discussion about the past as we will explore in the next section.

12.2.3 Protest Art

Visual art as **protest art** is used both to promote and to express dissatisfaction with ideologies, policies, and social movements. Creative expression is used to express individual and group views, thoughts, and emotions. Because making art isn't always an expensive venture, many can participate in it. Displays of art are not limited to inside the doors of a museum with admission fees. Anyone can access it while out and about in their daily lives; it is everywhere.

This brings us to the notion of power. When people express their thoughts and feelings via paper, canvas, media, or other outlets, it can have a powerful effect on an audience. Art that is expressed publicly is more equitably available to people in minoritized groups and with fewer socioeconomic resources.

Figure 12.6. Street art in Berlin, Germany of a portrait of George Floyd.

Figure 12.6 is a visual reminder of the number of Black men and women who have been killed by police when in helpless circumstances. The protest is not only about George Floyd's murder, but also about the overall dominant **culture** of the police force in the United States.

Privileged groups who have a higher distribution of resources, such as wealth, may present their views via protest but also have the means to use art to catch people's attention and promote their agendas via advertising, media, and political campaigns.

Art has a special place among activists and social movements because it can be used as a message to pay attention to a particular issue or injustice (Figure 12.7). It exists in part to freely express oneself and emotions, gain attention, plant a seed of thought, and inspire passion in some way, shape, or form to actively do something about the issue.

Figure 12.7. **Gay** Pride parade marchers holding signs.

Both protest and artistic expression are fundamental rights protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. The melding of the two creates messages that can influence and empower individuals and families. Artistic expression that protests and argues for power of the underserved is expansive, subjective, and cannot fit into any one box (Wikipedia, n.d.).

12.2.4 Public Art

Much of this chapter discusses art that has some kind of paywall: museums with entrance fees, or films and other media that require a ticket or subscription price. In this section, we will pay attention to art that may be considered "public" in one form or another. **Public art** is often defined as art that is "visually and physically accessible to the public" (Wikipedia, n.d.). While it is also often described as representing universal concepts rather than those that are partisan, political, commercial or personal, these authors challenge that notion from two perspectives. The first is that the funding for and decision-making about **public art** is still often controlled by dominant or political groups. While efforts have been made to equalize art-making decisions, the tension between money and ideals is real. Secondly, it can be said that all art is personal. What is more personal than an artist's vision and creation? Some **public art** is commissioned by a public group, and this can come with restrictions or guidance for the artists. For now, we will stick with the definition that **public art** is art that is easily accessed by any member of society.

By its nature, **public art** may be viewed by anyone who can get themselves to the location it is presented. While it is more equitably accessible than art housed in museums, galleries, and media conglomerates, it is important to note that transportation, location, and resources (both time and money) prevent many families from accessing **public art**.

Creating and maintaining **public art** presents unique challenges to **equity**. Some citizens may hold art that is viewed and/or funded by the public to a different standard—one that emphasizes societal norms. Others may argue that some subjects are inappropriate to display publicly, in particular if children or young adults could view the display.

12.2.4.1 In Focus: Linn-Benton Community College and "Drawing the Line"

The tensions that can exist around **public art** displays were demonstrated during the 2017 exhibit "Drawing the Line" in the hallways of North Santiam Hall at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC). Curated by LBCC Art faculty and students, the fiber art of Andrew Douglas Campbell lined the halls through which the LBCC community traversed to class, the lunch commons, and offices (figures 12.7 and 12.8). Generally, Campbell explores themes of difference, connection, and identity in his work. He is an artist who merges the **medium**s of photography and fiber to focus on the response and interaction of social and narrative tensions. To read more from Campbell, view his website here.

Figure 12.7. Rend and Mend by Andrew Douglas Campbell. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

The **public art** display at LBCC explored multiple subjects, but attention rapidly became focused on one series that examined the relationship of the porn industry and its marketing strategies to the queer community, titled *"… And Then What Could Happen Bent to What Will Happen…"* seen in Figure 12.9. The series is pictured here, on Campbell's website.

Figure 12.8. Thresh(strand)hold by Andrew Douglas Campbell.

Campbell describes his process: “[I was] thinking about the porn industry as a market that I personally had not yet held with the same skeptical eye as I do a lot of other economies, and so I started to look at that and part of it is true, they have tapped into a certain desire of mine. Part of it is I’m very skeptical of it,” said Campbell. “It made sense to me that I should render their material sort of inconsequential; it’s so fragile it can be blown away. It’s important but unimportant at the same time, it’s present and not present, it’s solid and transparent. That’s where I came up with these very loose airy images that are barely there but still very impactful” (Guy, 2017).

Figure 12.9. "...and then what will happen bent to what could happen..." by Andrew Douglas Campbell.

The focus became negative; a local company that pays their employees' tuition at LBCC and a member of the Board of Directors of the College were most outspoken in their belief that this work should not be displayed in a setting that was publicly accessible. There were discussions about this display at every level of the college: in offices, classrooms, and boardrooms. Ultimately, there were some alterations and adaptations to the exhibit, and it remained in place.

When considering the diverse structure and viewpoints of families in the United States, it is important to think about whether all families have access to viewing art that speaks to them, represents them, and inspires them. Limiting art to the viewpoint of any dominant group limits the expression and growth of families. "Drawing the Line" is the catalyst for related questions: would similar artwork that expressed heteronormative experiences have invited the same controversy? And why is sexuality considered an offensive or inappropriate subject for **public art**istic display, and yet scenes of conquerors, violence, and dominance are prominently exhibited? Examples of and responses to the latter will be discussed in the next sections.

12.2.4.2 In Focus: Bellevue Community College Mural

In an example of the clash between the dominant **culture** and the portrayal of a discriminatory act at Bellevue Community College in Seattle, Washington, several administrative leaders lost their jobs when they bowed to pressure to alter the artist's statement on a public mural (Figure 12.10). This is a literal example of whitewashing history, as white-out was used to eliminate the names and racially-ethnically based actions of a prominent citizen in March 2020.

Figure 12.10. These images show us a concrete example of "whitewashing" (A) and then the pasted over corrections of the original artist's statement (B).

More will be written about this event in future editions of this text, but here are links to the articles describing what happened and what consequences occurred:

- Bellevue College apologizes after administrator alters display on Japanese American incarceration.
- Bellevue College president, vice president out after mural on Japanese American incarceration was altered.

12.2.5 Access to Art and Culture

Families have unequal access to viewing and experiencing visual **culture**. Geographical location,

socioeconomic status, and **social characteristics** all influence access to art. In particular, families in rural areas, with lower **socioeconomic status**, and in minoritized groups have less opportunity to accrue wealth in the United States and have fewer opportunities. In addition, they are less likely to have influence in terms of what is considered worthy to appear in curated exhibits behind museum doors.

One way to measure **equity** in art is to examine the ability to view curated art. Access to art in childhood is especially important because activating the developing child and adolescent brain impacts eventual life outcomes. In 2011, a unique opportunity presented itself to study how child access to art affected adult outcomes. Alice Walton, a Walmart heir, founded the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, a 50,000 square-foot space with an 800 million dollar endowment, in Bentonville, Arkansas (Figure 12.11). Most children in this area had little or no exposure to art or other cultural experiences.

Class visits were provided for free via the gift of a donor. Demand was high, and not all groups who desired the visits could be accommodated. Scholars from the University of Arkansas set up a lottery system to determine which school groups would visit the museum. During the following months, all students (those who visited and those who did not) were offered free tickets to visit the museum with their families, and were also administered a multi-dimensional survey. Nearly 11,000 students and 500 teachers participated in this study (Green et al., 2013).

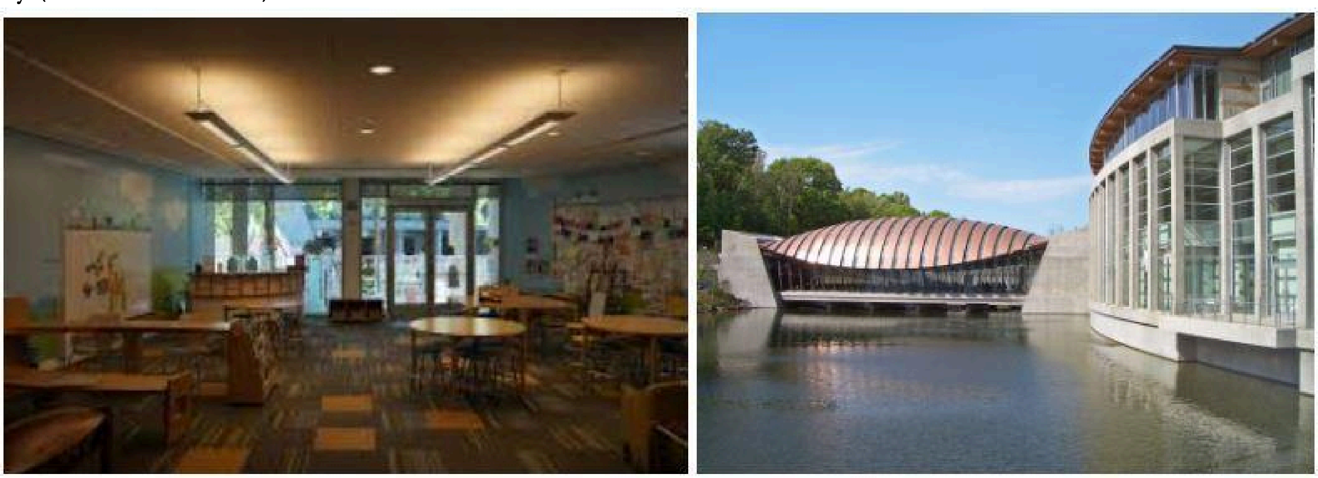

Figure 12.11. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; both images from Wikimedia Commons.

Students who visited the museum with their classmates demonstrated stronger critical thinking skills, displayed higher levels of social tolerance, exhibited greater historical empathy and developed a taste for art museums and cultural institutions (Kisida et al., 2013). In addition, students who had visited the Museum with their class groups were 18 percent more likely to use the coupon to visit the Museum with their families! Importantly, this effect was stronger for minority students, rural students, and low-income students than it was for White, middle-class, suburban students. While there are additional questions to be answered, this study demonstrates the importance of exposure and access to art and cultural experiences for all children. The study indicates that arts education inclusion in school curricula will help students develop critical thinking, an understanding of diverse ideas and experiences, and empathy with those who are different from themselves.

12.2.6 Licenses and Attributions for Experience, Expression, and Equity

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12.3 ART, MEDIA AND DOMINANCE

Elizabeth B. Pearce, Jessica N. Hampton, Hannah Morelos, and Katie Niemeyer

Art has been a part of history and daily lives for centuries, but what is considered "artistic" and valuable as defined by financial worth has been shaped by the same preferences and oppression that shape other aspects of our daily life. Many individuals face **discrimination** and underrepresentation based on their gender, race, sexuality, or other **social characteristics**. Even in the 20th century, we see the perceived differences between men and women's art in the way that artists are often described in the media. Why is a woman referred to as a "female artist"? A person of color as a "Black photographer"? Or a "Latinx sculptor"? In contrast, when created by a White man, race and gender are not usually mentioned.

The topic of whiteness as the dominant **culture** can be an uncomfortable topic for many, while seeming quite obvious to others. Dominant **culture** expresses itself in the United States as the "typical" or "regular" way of being. Sometimes, White people express that they don't actually have a **culture**. This is part of the whiteness experience. When we describe this experience, it includes the power given to a particular group of people, and oppression to another group of people, otherwise known as White privilege. "White-washed art" can be described as giving privilege to a group of people based on their **social characteristics** and perpetuating a system that favors Euro-Americans (mostly White people).

When we talk about whiteness in art, it allows us the opportunity to peel back a layer of denial. Western expansion and dominance of Indigenous communities is one reason that there is a preference for White and westernized art and institutions. It is interesting to note that **implicit bias**, "the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our actions that we aren't aware of, can affect how and what we feel and think about the word art when we hear it" (The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and **Ethnicity**, 2015).

What do you think of when you think of art? An example of **implicit bias** would be when an **Implicit bias** and cultural norms shape how we respond to art. Individuals from any **culture** are more likely to view a work of art as pleasing if it fits with their **culture**'s dominant **social characteristics**. For example, one of the most famous sculptures in the world, The David by Michelangelo Buonarroti, shows a young, White male, which are dominant characteristics of Western **culture**. Traditionally, art that represents Western **culture** has been made, exhibited, and celebrated by White men. This bias affects who is considered an artist and what is considered art. A recent study found that 85 percent of artists featured in permanent collections are White, while 87 percent are men (Magazine & Solly, 2019). Our exposure to these institutionalized biases as children can affect how we view art.

Social institutions are complex systems that both influence their members and which can be influenced by individuals as well. For example, schools and museums are both examples of institutions in which children and families participate. They are exposed to art that is, for the most part, White and male-dominated through the selection process that has occurred throughout history. Increasing awareness of these biases has led to exhibitions and mentorship of individuals in underrepresented groups related to gender, **ethnicity**, race, sexuality, ability, and other **social characteristics**. Individuals and allies contribute to institutions by advocating for change. Examples within this chapter show both the built-in biases and the ways in which artistic expression helps us move beyond socially constructed bias, preference, and ideas; this expands our definitions of art and beauty.

12.3.1 Art, Race, **Ethnicity**, and **Culture**

Ken Monkman is a North American artist well known for his paintings that reexamine the past. He frames his work by noting that these past experiences significantly influence the present. Monkman describes his use of visual art to examine the experience of Indigenous people in North America, both during the period of colonization and the effects on the present day families. His paintings depict the violence that European settlers acted upon Indigenous people, and the cultural beliefs that have been silenced. He creates works of art that tell the story from the perspective of those who were harmed and emphasizes the heroism of Indigenous families, the **nonbinary** aspect of gender they expressed, and other cultural aspects.

In the 3 minute video (Figure 12.12) Monkman describes his use of visual art to examine the experience of Indigenous people in North America, both during the period of colonization and the continued effects on the present day families.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=499#oembed-1

Figure 12.12. Shame and Prejudice: Artist Kent Monkman's story of resilience [YouTube Video]. Ken Monkman describes his critical perspective on art and its role in taking us to dark places.

Kehinde Wiley is another artist known for using his work to expose hy**poc**risies in the framing of European history, such as the Age of Reason, or Enlightenment period, which is known for its progress in liberty, universalism, separation of church and state, and freedom. This same time period is known for the colonialism of many Indigenous people and people of color, including Napoleon Bonaparte himself who reinstituted slavery in the French colonies a year after the famous Jacques-Louis David painting *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* was painted.

Figure 12.13. Comparing *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps* by artist Kehinde Wiley (A, left) and *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* by artist Jacques-Louis David (B, right).

Wiley's re-interpretation of this painting, *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps*, pictures a young Black man in the same pose (Figure 12.13), but in a way that questions the heroism and softens the military masculinity portrayed in the original. He confronts and critiques the portrayal of Black people in art.

The paintings hung side-by-side in the Brooklyn Museum through March 2020.

12.3.2 Art, Sex, and Gender

Art, reflective of society, has been work dominated by men. Men's work was more likely to be sponsored, commissioned, featured, publicized, and preserved. Women artists have often been seen as secondary. The well-known artist Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter who was inspired by artifacts of her **culture** and used a folk art style (Figure 12.14). She explored themes of identity, postcolonialism, class, race, and gender. A prime example of marginalization taking place in Frida Kahlo's lifetime happened when she lived in Detroit, married to a male artist named Diego Rivera. In Detroit, Frida Kahlo never showed her portraits in any exhibitions; however, she did get the opportunity to be interviewed. Although she was praised for her work through this opportunity, when the article came out, it was titled "Wife of the Master Mural Painter Gleefully Dabbles in Works of Art."

Figure 12.14. *Los cocos* by Frida Kahlo (A, left) and *Poster – Frida Kahlo* by Vagner Borges (B, right).

Through this lens, Frida Kahlo was publicly known to her peers and the world as "Diego Rivera's wife" and not as an artist. But Kahlo's work surpassed Rivera's in terms of artistic and social recognition. Kahlo died in 1954 at age 47, and her work became best known between the 1970s and 1990s. She is regarded as an icon of the **Chicano** civil rights movement, feminism, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Many paintings considered classic representations of ancient myths and events were painted by men. Carmen McCormack, a 2019 graduate of Oregon State University's Bachelor of Fine Arts program, has recreated some works from a female, feminist, and **lesbian** perspective. For example, she has reinterpreted Francois Boucher's 1741 painting, *Leda and the Swan*, which tells the story of the seduction or rape of Leda by Zeus in the form of a swan (Figure 12.15).

Figure 12.15. Painting *Leda and the Swan* by Francois Boucher (A, left) and Carmen McCormack (B, right).

"I wanted to reinterpret that as a feminist, as a woman and as a contemporary painter," McCormack said in an interview with the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*. "In the original (the women) were smiling, which is interesting for a male painter because it reinterprets the story of sexual violence — it's not a happy thing." McCormack's version shows a dark, stormy background, and the women's facial expressions and body language suggest more fear and resistance than does the original.

Centuries ago, genders were oppressed and underrepresented in their creative aspects. We can acknowledge that although there has been an improvement, there are still groups, genders, and individuals who face underrepresentation, **discrimination**, and oppression. New York is known as the hub of art and yet it is estimated that 76–96 percent of the art showcased in art galleries is by male artists. We can see that to this day there is a gender gap in the art industry that continues in the 21st century.

12.3.3 Television

Take a minute to think about how much media you are exposed to in one day—from watching television and movies, to cruising the internet, reading newspapers, books, and magazines, listening to music and watching music videos, or playing video games. The majority of this media is produced by corporations and infused with advertisements.

According to The Nielsen Company—a marketing corporation that collects statistics on media usage—report, the average American ages "18–34 spent two hours and 45 minutes daily watching live TV in the 4th Quarter of 2015, and one hour and 23 minutes using TV-connected devices—a total of four hours and 8 minutes using a TV set for any purpose" (Nielson Company, 2016). The pervasiveness of media in **culture** begs a number of questions: what are the effects of such an overwhelming amount of exposure to media that is often saturated with advertisements? How do media construct or perpetuate gendered, sexualized, classed, ableized, and racialized differences and inequalities? What is the relationship between media and consumers, and how do consumers interact with media?

Media expert and sociologist Michael Kimmel argues that the media are a primary institution of socialization that not only reflects, but creates, **culture**. Media representation is a key domain for identity formation and the creation of gendered and sexualized difference (Kimmel, 2003). For example, think back to Disney movies you were probably shown as a child. The plots of these movies typically feature a dominant young man—a prince, a colonial ship captain, a soldier—who is romantically interested in a young woman—both are always assumed to be heterosexual—who at first resists the advances of the young man, but eventually falls in love with him and marries him.

Disney movies teach children a great deal about gender and sexuality; specifically, they teach children to value hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. **Hegemonic masculinity** refers to a specific type of culturally-valued masculinity tied to marriage and heterosexuality and patriarchal authority in the family and workplace, and maintains its privileged position through subordinating other less dominant forms of masculinity (i.e., dominance over men of lower socioeconomic classes or **gay** men). **Emphasized femininity**, meanwhile, refers to a compliance with the normative ideal of femininity, as it is oriented to serving the interests of men (Connell, 1987).

What do Disney movies have to do with how people actually live their lives? It is *because* they are fictional, so pervasive in our **culture**, and shown to us at such a young age that they may shape our gendered and sexualized selves in ways that we do not even realize. How many times have you heard people say that they want a "fairy tale wedding," or heard the media refer to a celebrity wedding as a "fairy tale wedding?" This is one example of how the media reproduces dominant ideologies—the ideas, attitudes, and values of the dominant **culture**—about gender and sexuality.

Media also reproduce racialized and gendered normative standards in the form of **beauty ideals** for both women and men. As Jean Kilbourne's video series *Killing Us Softly* illustrates, representations of women in advertising, film, and magazines often rely on the **objectification** of women—cutting apart their bodies with the camera frame and re-crafting their bodies through digital manipulation in order to create feminized bodies with characteristics that are largely unattainable by the majority of the population. Kilbourne shows how advertising often values the body types and features of White women—having petite figures and European facial features—while exoticizing women of color by putting them in nature scenes and animal-print clothing that are intended to recall a pre-civilizational past. The effect of this is to cast women of color as animalistic, savage creatures—a practice that has historically been used in political cartoons and depictions of people of color to legitimize their subjugation as less than human.

In addition, the media depict the world from a masculine point of view, representing women as sex objects. This kind of framing, what Laura Mulvey called the **male gaze**, encourages men viewers to see women as objects and encourages women to see themselves as objects of men's desire; the male gaze is thus a heterosexual male gaze. These are just a couple of examples of how media simultaneously reflect and construct differences in power between social groups in society through representing those groups.

Another way in which media reflect and simultaneously produce power differences between social groups is through symbolic annihilation. **Symbolic annihilation** refers to how social groups that lack power in society are rendered absent, condemned, or trivialized through mass media representations that simultaneously reinforce dominant ideologies and the privilege of dominant groups. For example, as we argued earlier, **gay**, **lesbian**, **transgender**, and disabled characters in mass media are often few and far between, and when they are present they are typically stereotyped and misrepresented.

12.3.4 Activity: Representation and Humanization

Trans women characters portrayed through the cisgender heterosexual male gaze are often used as plot twists or objects of ridicule for comedic effect, and are often represented as "actually men" who deceive men in order to "trap" them into having sex with them; these representations function to justify and normalize portrayals of disgust in response to them and violence against them as shown in the video in Figure 12.16. These kinds of depictions of trans women as "evil deceivers" and "pretenders" have been used in court cases to pardon perpetrators who have murdered trans women (Bettcher, 2007).

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=499#oembed-2

Figure 12.16. Depictions of **Transgender** "Deception" in Media [YouTube Video]. This video illustrates these concepts and emphasizes that merely "representing" people who are **transgender** on screen is not enough; in fact it is harmful. Media portrayals that include people who are **transgender** as those who have agency over their own lives, are attractive, and are leading players rather than "objects" are more responsible.

Discussion Questions

1. What was new or surprising to you in this video?
2. How will this video affect the way you view the inclusion of people who are **transgender** in the media?
3. This video was made in 2008. Can you identify more recent examples of people who are **transgender** in television or film? In what way(s) does your newer example seem more humane? In what way(s) does your example reinforce negative stereotypes?
4. How does the concept of "male gaze" relate to the ways that women who are **transgender** are portrayed?

While Kilbourne's insights illustrate how beauty ideals produce damaging effects on women and girls, her model of how consumers relate to media suggests that the consumers are passively accepting everything they see in advertising and electronic and print media. As Kimmel argues, "The question is…*how* the media and its consumers interact to create the varying meanings that derive from our interactions with those media" (Kimmel 2003: 238). No advertisement, movie, or any form of media has an inherent, intended meaning that passes directly from the producer of that media to the consumer of it, but consumers interact with, critique, and sometimes reject the intended messages of media. In this way, the meanings of media develop through the interaction between the media product and the consumers who are interacting with it. Furthermore, media consumers can blur the distinction between producer and consumer through creating their own media in the form of videos, music, pamphlets, ‘zines, and other forms of **cultural production**. Therefore, while media certainly often reproduce dominant ideologies and normative standards, media consumers from different standpoints can and do modify and reject the intended meanings of media.

12.3.5 Film

Another visual **medium**, film, is a part of many families’ daily lives. Mainstream movies are accessible to Americans via many formats. Although women and people of color are represented in audiences in greater percentages than their population base, they are vastly underrepresented in lead **roles** both on and off screen. In 2018, only one female, Greta Gerwig, and one person of color, Jordan Peele, were nominated for Best Director in the Oscars award show. In an analysis of speaking **roles** for women in the 900 most popular films from 2007 to 2016, fewer than one third of the **roles** went to women. Representation is worse for **nonbinary** people and when **intersectionality** of color and gender are examined (Tan, 2018).

When a child watches a movie, they are exposed to a variety of people. What most of these actors and actresses have in common is that they are White. As of 2017, only 20 percent of all lead actors and actresses on screen were people of color (Statista, 2020). To the children watching these movies, White people are the majority demographic being represented.

In one study, researchers found that when preschoolers were asked to draw a main character from a fairy tale, most of the students drew a figure with blonde hair and light skin. The findings imply that children, even those of color, saw that White skin meant a happy ending (Hurley, 2005). In their minds, only blond people with white skin were allowed to save the day and be stars.

When movies such as *Home*, *Black Panther*, or *Crazy Rich Asians* came out, people of color flocked to see them. These movies lack obvious stereotypes, and people of color play leading **roles**. Movies with successful people of color are important because these movies challenge the idea that White **culture** is the norm. When movies feature people of color, parents have the chance to show their children a main character with the same skin color or hair type as their own.

Representation in movies also pertains to how the characters are portrayed. Do they follow common, sometimes derogatory, stereotypes? Are they seen as the villain? Are they the first to be killed? When people of color are being represented through stereotypes or **typecasting** (when a person is repeatedly cast for the same type of character, usually based on looks), it sheds a negative light on those people even if the film has a more diverse cast.

In March, 2020, the Washington Post magazine featured a project in which actors of minoritized groups were asked what kind of **roles** they typically were cast in and what kind of **roles** they would like to play (Sakaguchi & San Martin, 2020). This powerful series emphasizes how easily stereotypes can be embedded in our minds. You can see Haruka Sakaguchi & Griselda San Martin's full photography series at the Typecast Project.

Typecasting people contributes to the reinforcement of stereotypes of people of color and other minoritized groups; it emphasizes the centrality of White people both as the norm and as the keepers of interesting plot lines and life stories.

12.3.6 Representation of People of Color

How are people of color represented in visual **medium**s? And which people of color are prominent? Notice that when leading **roles** are cast in visual **medium**s, they are often people of lighter-colored skin. This is called **colorism** and is distinct from racism in that it shows a preference for the visual look, as opposed to implying that there is inferiority based on race (Farrow, 2019). A recent example is the prominence of Jennifer Lopez (J-Lo) and Shakira in the 2020 Super-Bowl half-time show. While both women are Latina, many people of color do not feel represented by lighter-skinned people who have dyed their hair blonde.

12.3.6.1 Understanding "Isms"

Another way that film can help us to understand the world is to view how an "ism" affects a group that we are not a part of, such as understanding how women experience sexism, or Black people experience racism. But how do we identify which movies can help us understand what the actual experience is for the individual, and what "isms" feel like?

One of the best ways is to listen to a member of the group that experiences it. Podcasts such as the *1A Movie Club's* program "'The Help' Doesn't Help" in June, 2020, can help to explain how White-centered stories about racism fail to expose the actual experience of **discrimination** and to teach realistically and deeply. "White-centered" refers to stories which are told primarily from the White person's point-of-view, with a lead or leads who are White, and sometimes feature what is called the "White savior" meaning that it takes someone who is White to solve the problem, save the day, or otherwise fix some aspect of racism. Instead, the podcast hosts and guests recommend the following movies, among others:

- *13th* (2016)
- *Blackkklansman* (2018)
- *Get Out* (2017)
- *I Am Not Your Negro* (2016)
- *Just Mercy* (2019)
- *When They See Us* (2019)

Figure 12.17. Black directors and actors, such as in "The *BlacKkKlansman"* are less likely to present a "White Saviour" story.

Listen here to the *1A Movie Club's* lively discussion and debate about movies, Rotten Tomatoes and other movie rating systems, racism, health care, the racial empathy gap, history and current events.

12.3.6.2 Employment

While our discussion has focused on representation and on the effects that lack of representation has on families, it is important to mention employment. An obvious outcome of fewer people of color or other minoritized groups in media means people in these groups have fewer employment opportunities. A person who has multiple intersectional characteristics has even fewer options. In this one-minute video in Figure 12.18, actor Rosie Perez talks about how the **intersectionality** of being a woman of color, weight, hotness, **ethnicity**, and age affects her employment. Because movies influence so many consumers, the effects on Perez also indirectly affect the individuals and families who view media.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=499#oembed-3

Figure 12.18. Rosie Perez on **Roles** for Women of Color [YouTube Video]. Perez takes a blunt approach in her description of **social characteristics**, especially related to age and to body size.

She is conveying the message that while what is deemed "less desirable" by society may be acceptable for White males, it is less acceptable to have these traits as a woman of color. Her language may be triggering to some readers. The second video in Figure 12.19, from the group and YouTube channel "Film Courage" contains similar descriptions from actors and actresses of color.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/families2nd2e/?p=499#oembed-4

Figure 12.19. These actors describe not just lack of quantity of **roles**, but also limitations in the kinds of characters available to play.

These descriptions by Rosie Perez and other actors are supported by research. Family films made between 2006 and 2009 in the United States and Canada were studied specifically for gender bias, but also included appearance and age in the assessment. Twelve-Fourteen percent of women, with unrealistic body types, exposed skin, and waists so tiny that they would leave "little room for a womb or any other internal organs" are featured in these films. In addition, it is most common for women to be under the age of 39 years (about 74 percent) with a higher percentage of men over the age of 40 years (Smith & Choueiti, n.d.).

12.3.7 Licenses and Attributions for Art, Media and Dominance

12.3.7.1 Open Content, Original

12.3.7.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

Figure 12.13. "Napoleon Crossing the Alps" by Jacques-Louis David. Public domain.

Figure 12.14. "Poster – Frida Kahlo" by Vagner Borges. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Figure 12.15. "Leda and the Swan" by François Boucher. Public domain.

"Television" is adapted from "Media" in Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies by Miliann Kang, Donovan Lessard, and Laura Heston, UMass Amherst Libraries. License: CC BY 4.0.Adaptation: light editing for clarity and topic focus; addition of activity and media.

Figure 12.20. "Adam Driver, John David Washington, and Director Spike Lee at the 2019 Critics' Choice Awards" by Chris Miksanek. License: CC BY-SA 4.0.

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Figure 12.12. "Shame and Prejudice: Artist Kent Monkman's story of resilience" (c) University of Toronto. License Terms: Standard Youtube license.

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Figure 12.14. "Coconuts" by Frida Kahlo (c) Banco de México Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust. Image used under fair use.

Figure 12.15. "Leda and the Swan" (c) Carmen McCormack. Image used under fair use.

Figure 12.16 "It's a Trap!": Depictions of Trans Deception." © License Terms: Standard Youtube license.

Figure 12.18. "Rosie Perez on Roles for Women of Color" (c) PBS. License Terms: Standard YouTube license.

Figure 12.19. Does Ethnicity Prevent Actors from Booking Work? Actors of Color © by Film Courage. License Terms: Standard YouTube license.

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12.4 LOOKING AHEAD

Although the famous saying “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” originated in the third century BCE and was revived in its current form by Margaret Wolfe Hungerford in 1878, it can also be said that society, and the media in particular, create and reinforce stereotypical ideas of beauty.

Beauty is a social construct. It is based on societally agreed upon ideas that have been ingrained into our systems and our psyches over time and have been accepted as the norm. These ideas of beauty slowly become embedded into our minds on a micro level, and affect the way we operate. There is a multidirectional relationship with societal forces including media, marketing, businesses, government, and other institutions. These forces influence youth, affecting appearance, cosmetics, behavior, and clothing. The media, of which 90 percent is controlled by four media conglomerates who are owned by predominantly White and wealthy males (Wikipedia, n.d.), are responsible for creating and reinforcing preferences and biases which reinforce the dominant **culture**’s idea of beauty.

Western society has identified particular aspects of physical appearance as being beautiful or desirable. People with these characteristics are favored and featured. This is known as the halo effect , in which additional favorable characteristics are associated with “attractiveness.” One example of this effect applies to academia. Using just the faces of university students, researchers learned that subjects inaccurately attributed competence and intelligence to more attractive faces (Talamas et al., 2016). This can have long term implications for success in education, as other research has found that teachers’ expectations of learners can have a positive or negative effect on their learning (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Another example from academia describes how gender, perceived attractiveness, and age intersect to affect how students’ perception of physical appearance moderate their experience of the actual behavior of faculty. When students rated the perceived qualities of instructors based on appearance in a 2014 study, women’s age and attractiveness were linked (older women were judged to be less attractive). Less attractiveness correlated with judgments students made about prospective faculty. Students judged less attractive (and older) faculty as less likely to be organized and/or have rapport with their students, illustrating the halo effect (Wilson & Monteiro, 2014).

There have been some insightful analyses of attractiveness and facial symmetry related to pay and job attainment in sports. The most well-known analysis relates to “quarterback-face.” Using computer measurements, economists found that while taking into account career statistics, experience, Pro Bowl appearances, and draft position, one standard deviation of symmetry of facial structure led to an eight percent increase in pay (Berri, 2008). This holds true for starting quarterbacks in the National Football League (NFL), and even more strongly for back-up quarterbacks.

Beauty can and does change from place to place, from **culture** to **culture**, and from person to person.

It is demonstrated via society's products, patterns, trends, wants and desires. It is influenced biologically, by pheromones and natural physical attractions. This shows us that it is a **social construction**. The threat to family well-being is when that socially constructed idea is assigned different value or worth, based on physical appearance. Bullying, fewer academic opportunities, and loss of employment can all be linked to the idealized conception of beauty. The halo effect can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, where those who fit the **social construction** of attractiveness, are perceived as being more valuable members of society, which then may lead to preferential treatment and more **life chances**, thereby increasing the person's likelihood of succeeding (Wikipedia, n.d.).

So what does this mean for us, the readers and writers of this text? It means that we need to be aware and pay attention to what we might call our "intuition" or "gut" feelings about who is deserving of the benefit of the doubt or of an extra opportunity. Sometimes those instinctual feelings are masking some preference for attractiveness or an **implicit bias**. We can teach our children, students, peers, and colleagues the same. By making this topic discussable, we can work toward achieving **equity** in education, employment, and experience.

12.4.1 Beauty, Art, and Identity

The dominant **culture** is powerful. Finding ways to fit in is important and sometimes people go to extremes to fit into what is deemed desirable. For example, in the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, the movie rewards Rachel Chu for mimicking European beauty standards. She is preparing for a big wedding, and has a friend who comments how they need to get her eyelids taped, which is a popular method for East Asian and Asian Americans to remove their monolids and appear more White. In this movie, whiteness is provided as the aesthetic for beauty standards, particularly Euro-American standards. The continual reinforcement of one kind of beauty creates tension and conflict for families between this ideal, their own **culture**, and individuality.

Art and beauty matter. Make-up and facepaint reflect both **culture** and idealized beauty standards (Figure 12.21). In some Indigenous tribes, men use face paint to identify themselves, align with hopes and dreams, demonstrate their honor, and prepare for battle. Paints come from a variety of natural materials and hold significance related to color and pattern (Gowder, 2017). Drag families, form with various familiar family **roles** including a head parental figure, use costumes and make-up to express identity, role, and representation (National Center for **Transgender Equality**, 2017). Tattoos and piercings have a long history of affiliation with beauty and expression and have only grown in recent decades in importance related to identity. And yet there are questions and concerns related to employment when one has tattoos; bias against those with tattoos is a worry. The complexity of how each person and family member sees oneself, influenced by the societal norms that favor certain appearances, continues to affect functionality of both families and society.

Figure 12.21. Examples of body art.

Diversity in **culture** can inspire people to express and reinforce their own identities whether or not they are in the dominant group. Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the wildly popular Broadway musical and film, *Hamilton: An American Musical*, talks about his love of theater as an adolescent, but the limited view he had of his own expressive abilities until he saw *Rent*, the 1996 rock musical with music, lyrics and book by Jonathan Larson. *Hamilton* premiered in 2015 and has won both critical and popular acclaim, including multiple Drama Desk and Tony awards, selling out performances on Broadway, and after three national tours, was ended only by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an interview with Terry Gross on NPR's *Fresh Air* in June 2020, Miranda said,

> Really, the only thing I saw that really gave me permission to write musicals was *Rent*, which was an incredibly diverse cast. And I went from being a fan of musicals to writing musicals when I saw that show because it was the thing that gave me permission…it was contemporary, and it had Latino actors and Black actors. And it told me you're allowed to write what you know into a show. No other musical had told me that…
>
> …So it was truly the first contemporary musical I'd seen and, I think, got me from being a kid who was in school musicals and loved them but just thought they were written by other people, like, by, like, old White people on the Upper East Side, to giving me permission. And it's been gratifying to see how these shows, *Heights* and *Hamilton* in particular, like, not only provide employment but also provide, like, permission and amplification of a lot of other voices. (Miranda, 2020)

Miranda's statement demonstrates explicitly the importance of diverse voices being created, produced, and publicized. Identity and art are intertwined and influence individuals and families in their development, structure, and daily lives.

12.4.2 Conclusion

Visual **culture** influences family, in both the public function of caregiving and the private function of emotional bonds we share with one another (Figure 12.22). **Equity** in access to and representation of visual **culture** will foster the ability of every individual and family to meet their potential. Art brings families together and simultaneously displays how we view the family at any point in time. It helps us notice the socially constructed nature of the family and of our ideas of beauty. It can be a tool that is used for expression and to foster change. Visual representations depict ideas that we may not be able to put into words. After all, we as humans are wired to understand, categorize, express, and make sense of our lives through visual media. Visual **culture** creates the avenue for both our own creativity and for us to better understand the world as pictured in Figure 12.22.

Figure 12.22. *The Learning Child* by Gilbert Ibañez

12.4.3 Want to Learn More?

- To read more about Andrew Douglas Campbell's art ,the outcomes of the college-wide discussions, and to view additional photographs, read this article from *The Commuter*, LBCC's student newspaper.
- To explore representation in video games, click on Leveling up Representation: Depictions of People of Color in Video from Independent Lens

12.4.4 Licenses and Attributions for Looking Ahead

12.4.4.1 Open Content, Original

12.4.4.2 Open Content, Shared Previously

12.4.5 References

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12.5 APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS AND KEY TERMS

Application and Discussion questions are intended to be used for student reflection and response; in class discussions or online forum discussions.

Key terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

12.5.1 Reflective Questions

1. What is the value of creativity, art, and beauty to American families?
2. How does art as representation affect our understanding of American history and current experiences?
3. What are the unique challenges and gifts that accompany protest and **public art**?
4. What is the role of the dominant **culture** in what is defined as "art"?
5. How do socially constructed ideas about beauty affect American families?
6. How does visual **culture** affect family outcomes?
7. What is the effect(s) of **intersectionality** on potential creators, artists, and art-lovers?

12.5.2 Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **artistic representation**: the use of a **medium**, such as clay or paint, to construct a representation of the real thing. **Artistic representation**s are constructions of reality.
- **beauty ideals:** a specific set of beauty standards regarding traits that are ingrained in women throughout their lives

- **colorism**: prejudice or **discrimination** that favors people with lighter skin over those with darker skin, especially within a racial or ethnic group.
- **Chicano/a**: may also appear as Xicano or Xicana. **Chicano**/a is an identity that people of Mexican descent who are born in the United States may choose for themselves. This term became popular in the United States during the **Chicano** Movement (El Movimiento) of the 1960s, when it was reclaimed as an act of resistance to assimilationist narratives. It has a unique meaning from "Mexican-American," although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.
- **cultural production:** The **social process**es involved in the generation and circulation of cultural forms, practices, values, and shared understandings.
- **emphasized femininity:** A concept rooted in the patriarchy that women must conform to the needs and desires of men by a compliance with the normative ideas of femininty
- **hegemonic masculinity:** a specific type of culturally-valued masculinity tied to marriage, heterosexuality, and patriarchal authority which legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, non-binary people, **gay**, and other marginalized groups of men
- "Ism": an oppressive and especially discriminatory attitude or belief
- **life chances**: a social science theory created by German sociologist Max Weber in 1920. The theory of **life chances** postulates that an individual's opportunity to lead a successful and fulfilling life are correlated to a variety of factors, including social stratification, social class, social mobility, and social **equality**, all of which can give a person low or high **life chances**.
- **male gaze:** the idealized notion of a heterosexual man as the intended audience,in a way that facilitates men objectifying or sexualizing women and women seeing themselves as objects of mens desire.
- **medium**: the materials and supplies used to create a piece of art, such as paint or clay. May also describe categories of art, such as a painting or sculpture.
- **Objectification:** A social meaning imposed on ones being that defines them as a object or thing, typically within a sexual context.
- **protest art**: a way of using creative work to communicate used by activists and social movements.
- **public art:** art in any **medium** whose form, function and meaning are created for the general public through a public process.
- **symbolic annihilation:** A concept that refers to how marginalized groups of people are left absent, condemned and trivialized through mass media representations, instead portraying oppressive ideologies created and enforced by dominant groups.

- **typecasting:** The act of casting a person in a media role often based on physical appearance or stereotypes.
- **visual culture:** refers to combonations of visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure are expressed tangiblly or visibly.
- **whiteness:** the quality of being light or white skinned in color, and the normalization of white racial identity throughout history in the United States.

12.5.3 Licenses and Attributions for Application and Discussion: Questions and Key Terms

12.5.3.1 Open Content, Original

12.6 CHAPTER 12 FEEDBACK SURVEY

Did you like reading this chapter? Want to help us make it better? Please take a few minutes to complete the Chapter Feedback Survey Your feedback matters to the textbook authors!

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

This book is published by Open Oregon Educational Resources. It is part of our Targeted Pathways project, which uses statewide data to target disciplines and courses in which to develop high-quality, openly-licensed materials with an **equity** lens.

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APPENDIX A: FOUNDATIONAL THEORY TABLE

A.1: Inclusive (eleven) foundational theories related to the study of families for the "Contemporary Families: An **Equity** Lens" textbook.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Conflict	Opposition, power, and conflict within the family and society are needed for society to develop and change.	Emphasizes the competing interests of familial **roles** including the male dominating the family and providing stability to society.		This theory was first perpetuated by Karl Marx and posits that social order is maintained through dominance and power.
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.	Children are influenced by the people and environments in which they spend the most time,, as well as the greater social events, trends and values.	Micro, Meso, Exo, Macro, and Chronosystems.	Urie Bronfenbrenner developed this theory in the second half of the 20th century; he influenced the creation of HeadStart in the United States.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.	Emphasizes the motivation for familial relationships: that each person is giving and gaining within the family.	The “breadwinner-homemaker family” is the classic example.	
Feminism (aka Feminist)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; the theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.	This theory emphasizes the way that gender **roles** are constructed within the family including the socialization of children.	Gender differences are mostly socially constructed. This theory draws on the Conflict, Exchange, and Symbolic Interaction perspectives.	Different from the Feminist Activist movement! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.
Functionalism	**Social institutions** function together in order to meet individual and group needs.	The family can be seen as an institution (e.g. breadwinner-homemaker family) that contributes to a harmonious society		Formulated originally in 19th century France, it was the dominant sociological theory in mid-20th century United States

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Hierarchy of Needs	Individuals meet one set of needs first in order to be motivated and able to achieve other needs.	This theory influences family life in its arrangement of what needs are most important.		There is evidence that indigenous **culture**s in North America developed a hierarchy of needs earlier than the more well-known model created by Abraham Maslow.
Life Course	Pays attention to time including significant social and historical events and life transitions in their **roles** of shaping the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.	Family life is impacted by large national and international events: wars, natural disasters, pandemics, economic depressions. In particular, children and adolescents in a given cohort will be impacted by these events over time.	Emerging Early Adulthood: the period of life when people shift into adulthood as they end their education, start a career and begin families. This period of life has become more varied and complex because of societal change.	Do not confuse this with the Lifespan theory which has a different emphasis! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose with society and within institutions.	Individuals have a much greater choice than they did in the past about how they form their families, the **roles** they play and who is in their family. History, family, and tradition have decreasing **roles** in family life.	Reflexivity: the way in which people take in new information, reflect upon it, and adjust and act with new knowledge	This theory is a very broad one and applies to many aspects of work, societal, and family life. Social Theorist Anthony Giddens has written about this theory.
Psychosocial	Psychosocial theory explains changes in self-understanding, social relationships, and one's relationship to society from infancy through later life.	Interactions with family members are considered key to this theory, especially in infancy and early childhood.	Developmental crisis	

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.	Family diversity is constructed through interactions with social structures as well as the individual actions of family members	Social location: families are affected by the intersections of class, race, and gender which place them in differing social locations. Human Agency: the active shaping of family life by individual action.	This approach posited by Maxine Baca Zinn combines prior work in **intersectionality** with individual agency, family, and social structural factors.
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others and this affects the **roles** they play.	Changing **roles** and symbols affect the ways family members interact with each other and with society. Societal expectations and **social construction**s of fathering and mothering **roles** have changed over time and this interacts with the way fathers and mothers actually behave.	Interpretation of shared understandings influences how humans respond and interact.	Has a basis in philosophy (George Herbert Mead) and in Sociology (Herbert Blumer.)

A.2: Core theories (seven) in Contemporary Families: An **Equity** Lens

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.	Children are influenced by the people and environments in which they spend the most time,, as well as the greater social events, trends and values.	Micro, Meso, Exo, Macro, and Chronosystems.	Urie Bronfenbrenner developed this theory in the second half of the 20th century; he influenced the creation of HeadStart in the United States.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.	Emphasizes the motivation for familial relationships: that each person is giving and gaining within the family.	The “breadwinner-homemaker family” is the classic example.	
Feminism (aka Feminist)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; the theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.	This theory emphasizes the way that gender **roles** are constructed within the family including the socialization of children.	Gender differences are mostly socially constructed. This theory draws on the Conflict, Exchange, and Symbolic Interaction perspectives.	Different from the Feminist Activist movement! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.
Life Course	Pays attention to time including significant social and historical events and life transitions in their **roles** of shaping the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.	Family life is impacted by large national and international events: wars, natural disasters, pandemics, economic depressions. In particular, children and adolescents in a given cohort will be impacted by these events over time.	Emerging Early Adulthood: the period of life when people shift into adulthood as they end their education, start a career and begin families. This period of life has become more varied and complex because of societal change.	Do not confuse this with the Lifespan theory which has a different emphasis! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose with society and within institutions.	Individuals have a much greater choice than they did in the past about how they form their families, the **roles** they play and who is in their family. History, family, and tradition have decreasing **roles** in family life.	Reflexivity: the way in which people take in new information, reflect upon it, and adjust and act with new knowledge	This theory is a very broad one and applies to many aspects of work, societal, and family life. Social Theorist Anthony Giddens has written about this theory.
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.	Family diversity is constructed through interactions with social structures as well as the individual actions of family members	Social location: families are affected by the intersections of class, race, and gender which place them in differing social locations. Human Agency: the active shaping of family life by individual action.	This approach posited by Maxine Baca Zinn combines prior work in **intersectionality** with individual agency, family, and social structural factors.
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others and this affects the **roles** they play.	Changing **roles** and symbols affect the ways family members interact with each other and with society. Societal expectations and **social construction**s of fathering and mothering **roles** have changed over time and this interacts with the way fathers and mothers actually behave.	Interpretation of shared understandings influences how humans respond and interact.	Has a basis in philosophy (George Herbert Mead) and in Sociology (Herbert Blumer.)

A.3: Licenses and Attributions for Appendix A: Foundational Theory Table

A.3.1: Open Content, Original

APPENDIX B: COMPARISON OF FAMILY RITUALS AND FAMILY ROUTINES

Characteristic	Family Ritual	Family Routine
Meanings	Have special meaning and symbolic significance	Often have special meaning or symbolic significance
Associations	Closely tied to extraordinary events	Closely tied to ordinary family life
	Usually tied to **culture**, religion or faith, **ethnicity**, and social customs	Meaningful behaviors tied to family identity, member needs, and valued family events
Initiation	Often intergenerational; becomes more tightly enacted as the family is more committed over time and interests in retaining and transferring meaning to the future increase	Initiated when members identify themselves as family and desire a collective identity; tend to become more patterned and organized over time
Traits	Repetitive and highly structured actions related to celebrations, traditions, and cultural customs that include the entire family and have accompanying role expectations	Repetitive, with both highly and somewhat structured actions related to daily life and family function that may include the entire family, dyads, or triads and have accompanying role expectations
	Continue relatively unchanged across the life course	Changes based on members' and family household needs
	Systematically planned according to revered practices and customs	Response to valued behaviors, stress, change, transitions, development, and predictable life events
	Mostly based on esteemed family traditions	May be intentional, deliberate, and directed by shared values of multiple family members, but may also be unplanned
	Intergenerationally transmitted with few changes	Some may be transmitted across generations, but patterns may change

B.1: Licenses and Attributions for Appendix B:

Comparison of Family Rituals and Family Routines

B.1.1: Open Content, Original

GLOSSARY

“listen”

Here, "listening" implies the willingness to learn about the experience of others with more curiosity and less judgement.

2019 Equality Act

A bill that would amend the Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination related to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This bill would cover discrimination in areas such as public accommodations (including retail stores, rentals, and recreational facilities), education, federal funding, employment, housing, credit, and the jury system. The Equality Act was passed by the United States House of Representatives on May 17th, 2019 and now resides with the United States Senate awaiting consideration.

accumulated wealth

The net worth of an individual that has been built up over time, sometimes influenced by generational wealth, privilege, or inheritance.

Affordable housing

Housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care

American Revolution

A political and ideological revolution that happened in North America from 1765-1783, causing the American Revolutionary War and resulting in the formation of the United States of America.

artistic representation

The use of a medium, such as clay or paint, to construct a representation of the real thing. Artistic representations are constructions of reality.

asexual

An identity that describes someone who experiences limited or no sexual attraction or desires.

assortative mating

The process of choosing an intimate partner or partners based on similarity to oneself, particularly related to physical and social categories.

bisexual

An identity that describes someone who experiences attraction to one or more genders, or to their own gender and others.

Blue Lining

A current banking and lending issue as a result of climate change. Real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation may not qualify for loans.

Bracero Program

A 1942 agreement between the United States and Mexico that guaranteed adequate living conditions, a 30-cent per hour minimum wage, and other benefits for migrant farmworkers.

Chicano/Chicana

May also appear as Xicano or Xicana. Chicano/a is an identity that people of Mexican descent who are born in the United States may choose for themselves. This term became popular in the United States during the Chicano Movement (El Movimiento) of the 1960s, when it was reclaimed as an act of resistance to assimilationist narratives. It has a unique meaning from "Mexican-American," although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

Child and Dependent Care Credit

A tax credit available to United States taxpayers based on whether they pay for care for a qualifying individual, such as a child or other dependent.

Climigration

When people and communities are forced to relocate to areas less devastated by flooding, storms, drought, lack of clean water or economic disaster due to climate change.

cognitive and emotional perspective-taking

The attempt or the ability to infer the thinking and the emotional responses of another person.

collectivist society

A society viewpoint that focuses on meeting the needs and goals of all members of a group, rather than focusing on individual successes.

colorism

Prejudice or discrimination that favors people with lighter skin over those with darker skin, especially within a racial or ethnic group.

common-law spouses

Spouses whose union has been formed through the process of common-law marriage. Depending on local laws, a common-law marriage is a legally recognized marriage formed without formal recognition, but which meets certain requirements, such as having cohabited for a length of time and presenting as married.

Companionate marriage

A marriage defined by economic stability that also values companionship, love, affection, and sex.

comparative approach

Within the fields of anthropology and sociology, the act of examining and contrasting social processes and institutions with a view to draw inferences and understand patterns.

cost-burdened households

When 30% or more of a household's monthly gross income is dedicated to housing, making it difficult to pay for necessities (food, clothing, medical care).

cultural competence

A combination of skills that creates the ability to interact with other cultures respectfully and appropriately.

Cultural Humility

Focuses on staying other-centered in order to learn about and understand the experience and viewpoint of people with social identities different from your own.

cultural lag

The tendency of language and labels to change more slowly than social norms, which can result in a disconnection between ideas and practice.

culture

A socially transmitted worldview created, learned and shared by a group which includes values, beliefs, customs and behaviors and which is reflected in language, objects, food, and social institutions.

Declaration of Independence

Drafted in 1776, the Declaration of Independence announced the separation of the original Thirteen Colonies from British rule and made a statement about the principles that guide United States' values. Unlike other founding documents, it is not legally binding, although it still has a powerful influence on the American identity.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

A United States immigration policy that allows individuals who arrived in the United States as children to remain and work in the country for a renewable period of two years. This policy has been legalized and implemented inconsistently in the 2000s.

discrimination

The personal or institutional action of treating people unjustly based on notable characteristics, often related to traits such as race, sex, age, or sexual orientation.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue (DADT)

The policy in effect between 1994-2011 that prevented LGBTQ+ individuals who served in the United States military from disclosing their LGBTQ+ identity in any way, at risk of losing their employment. This rule also prevented military superiors from harassing or investigating the identity of anyone in active service.

Economy

How people share goods and services.

Equality

Everyone having access to what they need.

equity

Ensuring that people have what they need in order to have a healthy, successful life equal to others. Different from equality in that some may receive more help than others in order to be at the same level of success.

ethnicity

A social category and shared identity based on a common culture or national sense of belonging.

explicit bias (prejudice)

A conscious tendency and behavior to favor one person, group, or point of view over another usually based on social characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race or socioeconomic status.

Exurbs

Areas just outside of suburban communities which typically feature low density housing and large homes. These may overlap into farm or forested areas, but are not considered rural.

family law

Legislation and court rulings related to domestic relations such as adoption, union formation and union dissolution.

gay

An identity that describes someone who is homosexual, i.e. attracted to others of their same gender. Used to refer to men who are attracted to other men, but also used as an umbrella term that includes anyone who is attracted to their own gender.

gender binary

A socially constructed system that separates human identity into one of two categories, in this case "male" and "female," without allowance for roles outside of the binary.

H2-A

A temporary agricultural visa which allows foreign nationals to enter into the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature.

houseless (housing bereaved)

Being in the state of not having access to stable housing. Couch surfing, tent cities, shelters, and living in a car are all examples of houselessness.

housing insecure

Describes a lack of access to stable housing, which may include individuals who must move frequently, cannot afford rent, live with relatives, are overcrowded, or who do not have adequate housing quality.

implicit bias

An unconscious tendency to favor one person, group, or point of view over another usually based on social characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race or socioeconomic status.

Individualistic marriage

A marriage that emphasizes flexible roles among the partners and the self-fulfillment of each individual in the marriage.

individualistic society

Emphasizes the needs and success of the individual over the needs of the whole community.

inequity(ies)

Lack of fair treatment, opportunity, or conditions.

institutionalized marriage

Marriage that is socially and legally recognized by clearly defined gender roles and patterns of behavior.

Intersectionality

An approach originally advanced by women of color that finds it critical to look at how identities and characteristics (such as ethnicity, race, gender, etc.) overlap and influence each other to create complex hierarchies of power and oppression.

kinship

The social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships.

lesbian

An identity that typically describes a woman who is attracted to other women.

life chances

A social science theory created by German sociologist Max Weber in 1920. The theory of life chances postulates that an individual's opportunity to lead a successful and fulfilling life are correlated to a variety of factors, including social stratification, social class, social mobility, and social equality, all of which can give a person low or high life chances.

Loving v. Virginia (1967)

The Supreme Court decision that legalized interracial marriage in 1967 in the United States.

medical model

A viewpoint that defines disability and disease as something that is diagnosed, studied, and treated by the medical professional.

medium

The materials and supplies used to create a piece of art, such as paint or clay. May also describe categories of art, such as a painting or sculpture.

nonbinary

An identity that describes the state of holding an identity outside of the gender binary of "male" or "female."

nuclear family

A family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.

Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)

The Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage in 2015 in the United States.

pansexual

An identity that describes someone who experiences attraction to people of all genders.

pedagogy

The philosophy behind teaching methods and practices.

POC

An acronym for "person of color" or "people of color." Can refer to individuals with a skin tone other than white.

Postmodern Theory

A theory that emphasizes the increasing individuality and diverse choices that are available and acceptable in work and family life.

private family

Two or more individuals who maintain an intimate relationship that they expect will last indefinitely—or in the case of a parent and child, until the child reaches adulthood—and who typically share household functions.

Public art

Describes art in any medium whose form, function and meaning are created for the general public through a public process.

public family (public function of the family)

One or two adults who are related by partnership who is/are taking care of dependents, and the dependents themselves.

public goods

Products and services that may be enjoyed by people who do not themselves produce them. Examples include drinking water, law enforcement, infrastructure, and national defense.

Roles

Describes social behavior patterns that exist in relationships between humans, such as parent, partner, sibling, employee, employer, etc.

sexual orientation

Describes a person's sexual identity based on the gender identity to which they are attracted.

single-determinant identity models

Focuses on how one aspect of social identity dictates whether one accesses power or experiences oppression.

Social characteristics

Describes traits that may be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Examples include sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion.

social construction

Meaning assigned to an object or event by mutual agreement (explicit or implicit) of the members of a society; can change over time and/or location.

social construction of difference

Hierarchical value is assigned to perceived differences between one socially constructed idea and another. Class, race, and other hierarchies based on social identity are social constructions of difference.

social determinants of health

The settings and conditions in which individuals and families spend most of their time, which affect their health and quality of life.

Social Exchange Theory

This theory emphasizes that individuals are rational beings who enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits they will receive and what costs they will incur.

social identity

A person's sense of self as defined by and in relation to the combination of social characteristics, roles, and groups to which they belong.

social institutions

Unit of importance that meets the needs of society structured with defined rules and roles.

social model of ability

A viewpoint that sees an individual with disability or disease as having personal agency but also impacted by multiple ecological factors.

social problem (social/public issue)

A large issue that affects many people, can threaten the health and well being of society, is recognized as a problem by many, includes multiple causes and effects, and needs a systemic solution.

social process

Patterns of behavior, interactions or change among people in an organization or broader society.

Socialization theory

A theory that describes the ways that individuals learn to function within a particular society's rules and expectations, used especially when studying young children.

socioeconomic status

The combination of one's social and economic status, specifically related to income, education, and career or job status.

sociological imagination

The ability to relate personal experience and observations to the greater trends and events in society, understanding the relationship between social problems and personal troubles.

subjective culture

The intangible aspects of culture such as ideas or language (and as contrasted to material aspects like clothing or tools).

The Fair Housing Act

A law enacted as part of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination in home sales, rentals, and financing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability.

transgender

An identity that describes a person who holds a gender identity that is different from the one they were assigned at birth.

transnational families

Families whose members live on different continents and/or in different countries.