Racial and Ethnic Families: Strengths and Stresses

Chapter 5
Increasing Diversity of U.S. Families

- **Assimilation**: Conformity of ethnic group members to the culture of the dominant group, including intermarriage.

- **Cultural pluralism**: Maintaining aspects of one’s original culture, including language, while living peacefully with the host culture.

- **Acculturation**: Adopting language, values, beliefs, and roles of a host culture.
  - Newcomers merge with the host culture in most ways.
Assimilation

"We're a very tolerant society, but if you don't behave like us, you can go back to where you bloody came from."
Cultural pluralism
Acculturation

Acculturation Continuum

Retention of values and beliefs from one's own culture

BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL

Adoption of mainstream society's values and beliefs

UNACCULTURATED

ACCULTURATED

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Migration Patterns

1900
- Europe: 85%
- Latin America: 1%
- Asia: 1%
- Other: 13%

2004
- Latin America: 54%
- Europe: 14%
- Asia: 25%
- Other: 7%
Migration Patterns (US Census, 2008)

- Latin America (including Central America, South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean) - 54%
- Asia - 27%
- Europe - 13%
- Africa - 0%
- Northern America (Canada, Bermuda, Greenland, and St. Pierre and Miquelon) - 4%
- Oceania - 2%
Changes in Immigration

- Percent of U.S. population that was foreign born:
  - 1900 ~15%
  - 2008 ~11%

- Origin of Immigrants to the U.S.
  - 1900: 85% from Europe, 2% from Latin America and Asia
  - 2008: 13% from Europe, 81% from Latin America and Asia

- The US admits over one million legal immigrants annually
  - More than any other country

- In the US there are almost 10 million undocumented (illegal) immigrants
  - More than half from Mexico
Changes in Immigration
Costs of Immigration

- **Fears** about national security
- **Concerns** about diluting national identity
- **Worries** about displacing U.S. born employees
- **Use of government services** & pay less in taxes
Costs to Immigrants

- Low wages
- Poor working conditions
Benefits of Immigration

- Immigrants do work many American born workers will not do

- Provides a pool of younger workers
Consequences for (Illegal) Immigrant Families

- **Fear** that parent(s) will be arrested and/or deported

- **Breaking up the family**
  - Parent(s) arrested and/or deported
  - Financial support for the family
  - Children drop out of school to work
  - Children’s care when one or both parents deported
Race and Ethnicity

- **Minority group**: May be treated differently or unequally because of physical or cultural characteristics
  - Gender
  - Sexual orientation
  - Religion
  - Skin color

- **Minority Group Lacks Power**
  - Not the number of people
  - It’s the amount of power
Race and Ethnicity

- **Racial group**: Category who share physical characteristics, such as skin color, which members of a society consider socially important.

- **Ethnic group**: Category who identify with common national origin or cultural heritage.

- **Racial-ethnic group**: Category who have distinctive physical and cultural characteristics.
Prejudice and Discrimination

- **Prejudice**: An attitude that prejudges people, usually in a negative way

- **Discrimination**: Behavior that treats people unequally or unfairly
African American Families

- **Family Structure**
- Black family structure changed to adapt to societal pressures.
- Since 1980, black children more likely than other racial-ethnic groups to grow up with one parent, usually the mother.
African American Families

- Gender Roles
  - Egalitarian family patterns common
  - Both men and women share equal power
  - Black couples more likely than white couples to share household chores
African American Families

SC Slave Family

Contemporary Black Family
African American Families

- Parents and Children:
  - Black parents emphasize self-control and success in school
  - Through socialization, black children learn to cope with racism.
  - Problem of many families is absent fathers
African American Families

- **Health:**
  - Minorities typically receive lower quality health care than do whites
  - Strong relationship between stress, financial problems, and poor physical health
  - Infant mortality rate for African Americans nearly double that of general population

- **Economic Well-Being:**
  - The median income of African American’s is lowest of all racial-ethnic groups
Infant Mortality Rates

Figure 3. Infant mortality rates by race and ethnicity: United States, 2000 and 2005

Rate per 1,000 live births

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<tr>
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<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic black</td>
<td>13.59</td>
<td>13.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>8.21</td>
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<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>8.30</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>6.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic white</td>
<td>5.70</td>
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<td>Mexican</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central and South American</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
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</table>

*Includes persons of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin.

African American Families

Strengths include:

- Strong kinship bonds
- Ability to adapt family roles to outside pressures
- Strong work ethic
- Determination to succeed in education
- Unwavering spirituality
American Indian Families

- Heterogeneous
  - “Lumping all Indians together is a mistake.”

- Extended families common
  - Especially among those living on reservations
American Indian Families

- Studies of relationship between husbands and wives:
  - Unequal sharing of household duties
  - Both husbands and wives felt equally competent in:
    - Solving family problems
    - Coping with everyday issues
American Indian Families

- **Parents and Children**
  - Children are *important* family members
  - Children *taught respect* for authority figures by listening and not interrupting
  - Parents make children’s playthings and ceremonial items
Native American Families

- Emphasize:
  - Cooperation
  - Sharing
  - Integrity
  - Generosity
  - Harmony with nature
  - Spirituality
Parents and Children

- Parents teach children that men and women have different roles but both should be respected.

- Parents concerned about losing control of children’s behavior, especially related to friends and drinking.
American Indian Families

- Elders and grandparents

- Old age is “badge of honor.”

- Children taught to respect elders.

- Elders traditionally played central role in family decision making.

- Emphasis on family unity & cooperation.
Grandparents

- Grandparents have important roles in children’s lives.
- “Cultural conservators” take grandchildren to tribal hearings, powwows, etc.
- Provide childcare when women work outside the home.
American Indian Families

Health

- Mental health problems
  - Depression & Suicide
  - Alcoholism
  - Alcohol related violence and crime

- Physical and sexual abuse of children
Suicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender
Suicide Rates

Suicide rates by race/ethnicity* and gender, ages 10-18, 2006

- **Asian/Pacific Islander**: Females - 1.15*, Males - 3.77
- **Hispanic**: Females - 1.35, Males - 3.23
- **Black/Non-Hispanic**: Females - 0.65*, Males - 3.43
- **White/Non-Hispanic**: Females - 1.74, Males - 6.08
- **American Indian/Alaskan Native**: Females - 9.73*, Males - 19.98

© National Center for Children in Poverty (www.nccp.org) Adolescent Mental Health in the United States

* Rates based on 20 or fewer deaths may be unreliable.
American Indian Families

- **Economic Well Being**
  - 1 out of 4 American Indians lives below poverty level
  - Higher jobless rates than other groups
    - Unemployment 50-90% on many reservations.
  - Casinos created jobs and economic stability for some Indians
    - Most have not benefited
American Indian Family Strengths

- “Relational bonding”
  - Values such as respect & generosity

- Harmony and balance
  - Putting community needs above individual needs

- Spirituality

- Developing self-sufficient industries
Tribal Industries

- Company produces Kevlar helmets and panels for the U.S. Department of Defense.
Self-sufficient Tribal Industries

Art Gallery

Native American Crafts
Latino/Hispanic Families

- **Family Structure**
  - 2/3 of children live in two parent families
  - Divorce more likely now than in 1970
  - New immigrants live with family sponsors

- **Gender Roles**
  - Machismo & marianismo
  - Parenting duties--women
  - Mothers and fathers caring & affectionate with children
  - Children to be obedient, honest, and respectful
Hispanic/Latino Families
Latino/Hispanic Families

- **Familism**-family relationships over individual well being
- Large extended family networks
- To **strengthen cultural ties**, send children “home” to spend summers with relatives
- About 20% of families live below the poverty line
- Recent immigrants face low wage jobs and poverty
- Number of **middle class** families increasing
Latino/Hispanic

- Strengths of Latino families include:
  - Resilience
  - Adaptability
  - Family networks
  - Familism
Asian American Families

- **Chinese** largest Asian American group, followed by Filipino and Asian Indians

- Family structures vary:
  - Asian American households likely **extended** rather than **nuclear** families
  - Female-headed households much less common than in other groups
  - Husbands and wives follow **traditional gender role patterns**
Asian American Families

- **Filial piety** (respect and obedience toward parents) is a strong value in most Asian American families.

- Emphasis on **Familism**: Family more important than individual.

- Parents exercise more **control over children’s lives** than non-Asian parents and expect obedience.

- A strong emphasis placed on **education**.

- “**The model minority,**” a stereotype.
Strengths of Asian American Families

- Stable households
- Close knit families
- Emphasis on success and education
Middle Eastern Families

- Middle East includes about **30 countries**

- **Similar values and attitudes** about family life

- Most Middle Eastern **children live with both parents**
Middle Eastern Families

- **Divorce** is frowned upon
- Marriage patterns **endogamous**
  - Favoring marriage between cousins in some groups
- Marriage **rarely based on “romantic love”**
Middle Eastern Families

- **Men & women** have culturally prescribed gender & family roles
- **Change:** more women work outside home
- **Parents & children** strong bonds
- **Gender expectations differ** for boys and girls
  - Perceived as a double standard
- **Since 9/11/01,** Middle Eastern families experienced more discrimination and prejudice in U.S.
Strengths of Middle Eastern Families

- Strong family ties
- Strong ethnic identities
- Extended kin networks
Racial-Ethnic Intermarriage

- Number of people who identify as more than one race increasing
  - Especially in younger age groups

- Racial-ethnic intermarriage increased
- 8.4% of current U.S. marriages are interracial
  - Up from 3.2% in 1980

- 2012-- 4.8 million, 1 in 12 couples
Racial-Ethnic Intermarriage

- Sharp differences in groups that chose to marry outside their race.
- **Black men** are more than twice as likely as Black women
- Nearly 1/4 of all Black male newlyweds in 2010 married outside their race
- 9% of Black female newlyweds

(The Pew Research Center)
Racial-Ethnic Intermarriage

- African Americans who married a White spouse more likely to be college educated than those who married within their group
- 14.5% White-Black couples both attended college
- 10.2% of African-American couples were college educated
Interr牌riages

5 reasons for increase:

1. Proximity
2. Availability of potential spouses
3. Acculturation
4. Upward mobility
5. Changing attitudes