Chapter Two

The History of the Family

Looking Forward

1. What functions have families traditionally performed?
2. How did American families change after the United States was founded?
3. How have the family histories of major ethnic and racial groups differed?
4. How did the emotional character of the American family change during the early twentieth century?
5. When did the idea of a sexual identity develop?
6. What important changes occurred in marriage and childbearing in the United States in the last half of the twentieth century?
7. How does the life course perspective help us to understand social change?

The serious study of the history of the family began in 1960, when the manager of a tropical fruit importing firm in France, a self-described "Sunday historian," published a book about the history of childhood (Ariès, 1960). Philippe Ariès, curious about family life in the Middle Ages, had examined works of art dating back 1,000 years. Any artist will tell you that children's heads are larger in proportion to the rest of their bodies than adults' heads. Yet many early medieval artists used adult proportions when painting children's heads and bodies, as if their subjects were, in fact, small adults. Moreover, the artists dressed children in the same clothes as adults. From such evidence, Ariès concluded that the concept of childhood was a modern invention.

Of course, there always had been children, but until the 1700s, wrote Ariès, the long stage of life we call childhood wasn't recognized by most people. American historian John Demos put forth a similar argument about the Puritans in Plymouth Colony in the 1600s: "Childhood as such was barely recognized in the period spanned by Plymouth Colony. There was little sense that children might somehow be a special group, with their own needs and interests and capacities" (Demos, 1970). According to historians such as Ariès and Demos, parents withheld love and affection from infants and toddlers because so many of them died. The great French essayist Montaigne wrote in the late 1500s, "I have lost two or three children in their infancy, not without regret, but without great sorrow."[1] *Two or three*—Montaigne couldn't even remember how many. If children survived, wrote Ariès and Demos, they were treated as little adults. By age seven, boys and girls performed useful work—helping fathers in the fields or mothers at the hearth—and played the same games and attended the same festivals as adults.

Ariès argued that it was only with the spread of schooling and the decline in child deaths—neither of which occurred on a large scale until the 1800s outside the noble and middle classes—that the notion of a protected, extended stage of childhood emerged.

Ariès's influential book launched a new generation of historians who studied ordinary families rather than royal families. His contribution is still respected even though many historians now believe that he underestimated parents' appreciation of childhood as a stage of life. For every Montaigne, the revisionist historians have

[1] From vol. 2, no. 8, of Montaigne's *Essais*. Quoted on p. 39 of Ariès (1960).

found a Martin Luther, who wrote in the 1500s after the death of his infant daughter, "I so lamented her death that I was exquisitely sick, my heart rendered soft and weak; never had I thought that a father's heart could be so broken for his children's sake."[2] When historian Linda Pollock located and read 68 diaries written by American and British parents in the 1600s and 1700s, she found that most of them were aware that children were different from adults and that they needed parental guidance and support. The diarists frequently referred to their children as "comforts" and showed pride in their accomplishments. "I doe not think one child of 100 of his age durst doe so much," wrote one proud father (Pollock, 1983). (See also Nicholas [1991], Ozment [2001].) Nevertheless, parents of this period did seem less saddened by the death of an infant than that of an older child.

The family history industry that Ariès spawned has produced thousands of books and articles. Related fields such as the history of women, gender, and sexuality have grown just as fast. Together, these fields provide an anchor for the study of the contemporary family. They describe the context in which the contemporary family has developed. Among other things, they tell us that the public family is as old as human civilization but that the private family blossomed only during the past few hundred years. For the sociologist studying the contemporary family, the historical literature is a wonderful source of insights. This chapter will provide a brief guided tour of that literature. Of necessity, it will be a highly selective tour, focused on the United States.

First, we will look at what the colonial and American Indian families were like prior to 1776. Afterward, we will follow the changes in the American family that took place between 1776 and the start of the twentieth century. We will then study the diversity of racial and ethnic American families in the twentieth century, the emergence of sexual identities, and the rise of what I call "the private family." Then we will consider the changing "life course" and new life stage, emerging adulthood.

The American Family before 1776

There were several kinds of American families prior to the Revolution. There were, first of all, the families of the indigenous people who would become known as American Indians. There were the families of the European colonists. And there were the families of the African slaves, who were transported involuntarily to the Americas beginning in the 1500s. I will discuss the history of African American families later in this chapter. For now, let us examine the American Indian family and the European colonists' family before 1776.

AMERICAN INDIAN FAMILIES: THE PRIMACY OF THE TRIBE

The term **American Indian** is often used for a subset of the original, indigenous people who had settled in North America thousands of years before Columbus, namely, those who had settled in the territory that later became the 48 contiguous United States (Snipp, 2007). Indeed, it was because Columbus mistakenly believed that he had reached India that he gave this aboriginal population the misnomer "Indian." Although there is little direct evidence about American Indian societies

American Indian the name used for a subset of all Native Americans, namely, those who were living in the territory that later became the 48 contiguous United States

[2] Quoted in Ozment (1983).

lineage a form of kinship group in which descent is traced through either the father's or the mother's line

patrilineal describing a lineage in which descent is traced through the father's line

matrilineal describing a lineage in which descent is traced the mother's line

before the 1800s, scholars think that most American Indians lived in tribal societies based on **lineages:** kinship groups in which people trace their descent either through the father's or through the mother's line but not both. If descent is traced through the father's line, the lineage is described as **patrilineal;** and if descent is traced through the mother's line, the lineage is described as **matrilineal.** These groups may seem odd, at first, to contemporary Western readers, who trace descent through both the father's and mother's line, but the structure served a purpose in territories where no strong government other than the tribe existed. Among other virtues, lineages limited the number of people who were related to a person and with whom that person must share land, water, animals, and other resources. If I am in a lineage that traces descent through the father's line, my sons will marry women from outside the lineage; then the couples will live near me (sometimes with me) and remain in my lineage. My grandsons will do the same. But my daughters and granddaughters will marry men from other lineages, move to their land, and leave my lineage. Consequently, I need to share my resources with, and to defend, only those persons related to me through my father, my brothers, and my sons. If a maternal uncle needs assistance, that's his lineage's problem; I am not my mother's brother's keeper.

The American Indian population was devastated by diseases brought by Europeans, such as smallpox—diseases to which the native population had developed no immunities. Moreover, we know that large numbers of American Indians were killed in wars and massacres (Snipp, 2007). How these catastrophic events modified family and kinship is unclear. In the absence of direct evidence, scholars have assumed that the numerous accounts of American Indian societies in the 1800s and early 1900s can be generalized back in time. Although the assumption that present arrangements accurately reflect the past ignores the historical changes that occurred to American Indian societies after the arrival of the Europeans, the outlines of American Indian family and kinship seem clear.

Both patrilineal and matrilineal tribes existed. Related lineages were often organized into larger clans that provided the basis for social organization and governing. In matrilineal tribes such as the Hopi, for example, a person traced his or her relatives through his or her mother's line.[3] If you were a child, your father was a guest in your mother's home. Although strong bonds existed between wives and husbands, a woman's ties to her maternal kin—her mother, her mother's brothers, her maternal cousins—were generally stronger. Consequently, your maternal uncles played an important role in your upbringing. They, not your father, had to approve your choice of spouse. Still, if you were a boy, you did learn many of the skills of an adult male—growing crops, herding animals—from your father. It was as if you had two kinds of fathers: a biological father who taught you skills and an uncle-father who held greater authority over you. If you were a girl, you spent less time with your father.

When Hopi boys reached puberty, they moved out of the household, sleeping in the men's ceremonial house and eventually marrying into another clan. Girls, on the other hand, remained in or near their mothers' homes throughout their lives, bringing husbands from other clans into their dwellings. In general, American Indian children were more independent than European American children: They were given more freedom and experienced less physical punishment (Mintz, 2004). In all tribal societies, the common requirement that individuals marry someone

[3] This account of Hopi kinship draws from Queen, Habenstein, and Quadagno (1985).

outside their clan forged alliances across clans. If clan A and clan B frequently exchanged young adults as marriage partners, the two clans would likely consider themselves as allies in any disputes with other clans in the tribe. Thus, the lineage and clan organization of American Indian societies served to strengthen the social order and to protect individuals against unfriendly outsiders.

Kinship was also matrilineal among the Apache of Arizona. Soon after a girl's first menstruation (which probably occurred several years later in her life than is the case today), her lineage held a four-day Sun Rise ceremony, after which she was eligible to marry (Joe, Sparks, & Tiger, 1999). Marriages were typically arranged by elders from the prospective bride's and groom's lineages. (Marrying someone from the same lineage was forbidden.) A series of gifts was exchanged by the bride's and groom's families, which culminated in the groom's family bringing him to the home of the bride. The bride's family then constructed a separate home for the couple. The gifts between families symbolized the importance of establishing an alliance with a family in another lineage. It's not that love between the young couple was necessarily lacking, but their marriage also served the larger purpose of tying together members of two lineages who could provide assistance in times of trouble or need.

EUROPEAN COLONISTS: THE PRIMACY OF THE PUBLIC FAMILY

Among the European colonists, there were no lineages. There were only the smaller kinship groups known as the **conjugal family** of husband, wife, and children, and the **extended family,** comprising the conjugal family plus any other relatives present in the household, such as a grandparent or uncle. These families provided services that were of great value to the community. Consider education. In Plymouth Colony, children received their basic education from their parents or, if they were working as servants, in another family's home. Parents and masters were required by law to teach reading to their children and young servants, so they could at least "be able to duely read the scriptures" (Demos, 1970). Why weren't these children learning to read in school? Because there was no school—or rather, because the family *was* school. In addition to providing schooling, all Plymouth Colony families were expected to provide vocational training. Through apprenticeship and service, working next to an adult, children and youths learned the skills they needed to farm, trade, garden, cook, and make clothes. All families were also expected to supplement church services by engaging in "family worship," praying and meditating daily.

conjugal family a kinship group comprising husband, wife, and children

extended family a kinship group comprising the conjugal family plus any other relatives present in the household, such as a grandparent or uncle.

Selected Plymouth Colony families also functioned as

- *Hospitals* Some adults who supposedly had specialized knowledge took sick persons into their homes for treatment.
- *Houses of correction* Judges ordered some idle or criminal persons to live in the homes of upstanding families to learn how to change their ways.
- *Orphanages* Children whose parents had died—and death rates were very high (Navin, 2012)—were taken in by a relative or family friend.
- *Nursing homes* Frail elderly parents were cared for in their homes by their children.
- *Poorhouses* Families sometimes took in poor relatives who needed food and shelter. (Demos, 1970)

Today, all these activities, with the exception of caring for the elderly, are carried out primarily outside the home, mostly by publicly supported institutions. In Plymouth Colony, then, the family's public role was much broader than it is now.

In contrast, the family's private role was much smaller. The kind of privacy that Westerners today take for granted hardly existed a few hundred years ago, as is apparent to anyone who visits the Puritan houses that still stand in Massachusetts. The downstairs area of a typical house contained one or two rooms. The larger of them was an all-purpose room called the "hall," in which the members of the household spent most of their indoor waking hours. It was dominated by a huge fireplace used for heating and cooking. In smaller houses, the second downstairs room would contain little except bedding. Most houses also had one or two second-story lofts with beds. Often, only the hall contained furniture for any activity other than sleeping. In this one room, fathers, mothers, children (Plymouth families had an average of seven or eight children), servants or apprentices, and perhaps a grandparent ate, cooked, talked, prayed, sewed clothing, relaxed, and received visitors. Individuals simply could not find a place to get away from other household members.

Not only did individuals have difficulty maintaining privacy but the conjugal family also had difficulty maintaining privacy from other households. The colonists did not regard the conjugal family as separate from society, but rather as an integral part of it. To a great extent, a family's affairs were considered public business. For example, Puritan laws required that married couples maintain harmonious relations and raise their children properly—and imposed fines on those who didn't. Friends and neighbors commonly called at one another's houses without advance notice. Given all the ways in which privacy was prevented, the idea of a private, conjugal family with its own separate space—and of individual privacy within the family—may not have been in the mind-set of most people. At best, privacy was probably dismissed as unattainable.

FAMILY DIVERSITY

But not all colonial families fit the ideal of two married, biological parents and their children. Particularly outside of New England, families were diverse. For one thing, death rates were so high that children commonly lost a parent and lived in a stepfamily after their remaining parent remarried (Navin, 2012; Uhlenberg, 1980). In addition, people sometimes proclaimed themselves married in front of family or friends, without the participation of clergy, and were accepted as married by their communities. Europeans, it turns out, had a long tradition of informal marriage. Until the Council of Trent in 1563, the Catholic Church accepted as a marriage any public statement by a couple that they considered themselves married to each other, as long as neither partner coerced the other and their marriage did not violate church laws about who could marry whom. Until 1753 the Church of England, which had broken with the Catholic Church during the reign of Henry VIII, recognized informal marriage (Therborn, 2004). Even as late as 1850, informal marriage was common in England among the poorer classes (Gillis, 1985). People used the phrase "living tally" to describe couples living as married but who had never wed in the church.

Informal marriage was particularly common in the Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland) and the Southern Colonies (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia), where the Anglican Church (the American wing of the Church of England) did not provide enough clergy, and in frontier areas where social control was looser. An Anglican minister

in eighteenth-century Maryland said, "if . . . no marriage should be deemed valid that had not been registered in the parish book, it would I am persuaded bastardize nine-tenths of the People in the Country."[4] In other words, most couples who considered themselves married never had a church ceremony to make it official. As in England, informal marriage persisted into the nineteenth century. In 1833, the Chief Justice of the State of Pennsylvania wrote that if the state truly enforced its marriage laws, the "vast majority" of the state's children would be considered illegitimate. A form of bigamy also sometimes occurred: A man who left his wife and migrated to a faraway state or territory was unlikely to be followed, so he could marry anew without much fear of prosecution (Hartog, 2000). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in contrast, families probably became *less* diverse over time, as churches established control of marriage and as fewer parents died while their children were young.

Quick Review

- Lineages and clans constituted the main social organization of American Indian tribal societies.
- In American colonial society, families had many public functions but a smaller private role than today.
- Parental death and informal marriage produced diverse types of families.

The Emergence of the "Modern" American Family: 1776–1900

Pinpointing the beginnings of social change is always difficult; rarely can we discern a great divide between an older way of life and an emerging one. Nevertheless, the decades surrounding the American Revolution seem to have been a watershed in the history of the American family. Between 1776 and 1830, the outlines emerged of a kind of family that would remain prominent well into the twentieth century. Clearest among the white middle class, it had four new characteristics:

- Marriage was increasingly based on affection and mutual respect rather than on male authority and custom. As a consequence, women experienced increasing autonomy in the family. (But, I would add, they were increasingly restricted to the home.)
- The primary role of the wife became the care of children and the maintenance of the home. Women came to be seen as morally superior to men, and the home came to be seen as "women's sphere."
- The attention and energy of the husband and wife were increasingly centered on their children. Children came to be seen as needing not only discipline and economic support, but also attention, affection, and loving care.
- The number of children per family declined, in part as a consequence of the greater investment of emotion and time that they were seen to need.

The role of romantic love probably increased within marriage during this period, at least among the middle and upper classes who left diaries and letters that historians can read today (Bloch, 2003). But romantic love needed to be tempered by a careful judgment of whether a potential spouse was a reliable and dependable

[4] Quoted in Cott (2000). The Anglican minister is quoted on p. 32; the Chief Justice, on p. 39.

person—someone with whom one could build a family. These practical considerations were particularly important for women, who became legally and socially bound to their husband's authority upon marrying. During courtship, women needed to assure themselves that feelings of love were leading to a safe choice of husband (Blauvelt, 2007). To be sure, young adults today still care about a partner's character, but the stakes are not as high as in the past because it is possible for women to lead independent adult lives and because ending an unhappy marriage through divorce is much more acceptable. In the early 1800s, then, both emotion and practicality played important roles in choosing a spouse.

Despite these changes, marriage retained a moral basis in custom and law through the nineteenth century. According to historian Nancy Cott (2000), political philosophers argued that lifetime marriage with the husband as the head was similar to American governance: It involved democratic rule by a leader (the husband) with the voluntary consent of the governed (the wife). Preserving marriage was seen as essential to maintaining a democratic moral order. Consequently, government support for marriage—such as laws that made obtaining a divorce difficult—was viewed as necessary and proper. Cott's thesis suggests that the family's contribution to public welfare was conceived more broadly than today. I defined the "public family" in terms of its valuable care for dependents. Prior to the twentieth century, many Americans also thought that marriage served as the foundation of national morality. This view of marriage as the moral and political backbone of society would erode during the twentieth century.

FROM COOPERATION TO SEPARATION: WOMEN'S AND MEN'S SPHERES

Another spur to family change was the transition from subsistence farming to wage labor. Instead of growing crops and tending animals, more husbands took paying jobs. It began sometime in the 1700s and early 1800s, with the growth of commercial capitalism—an economic system that emphasizes the buying, selling, and distribution of goods such as grain, tobacco, or cotton. Commercial capitalism created jobs for merchants, clerks, shippers, dockworkers, wagon builders, and others like them, who were paid money for their labor. The opportunity to earn money outside the home undermined the authority of fathers. Because sons had alternatives to farming, fathers no longer had a near monopoly on the resources needed to make a living. This greater economic independence facilitated the growth of individualism. The transition accelerated in the mid-1800s with the spread of industrial capitalism, which created factory work for the great masses of immigrants and their descendants.

The heart of this change was the movement of men's work out of the home. Instead of working together in a common household enterprise, husbands and wives now worked on separate enterprises—he exchanging his labor for wages, she maintaining the home and raising the children. Instead of working in close proximity, the two were physically separated during the workday. Moreover, wage work held no intrinsic value for most men, and in nineteenth-century factories it was frequently exhausting and dangerous.

The sharp split between a rewarding home life and an often alienating work life led to the emergence of the idea of "separate spheres": men's sphere being the world of work and, more generally, the world outside the home; and women's sphere being the home, relatives, and children. Whereas men's sphere was seen as being governed by the rough ethic of the business world, women's sphere came to be seen as morally pure, a place where wives could renew their husbands'

spirituality and character. And whereas men's sphere was seen as providing no reward other than a paycheck, women's sphere was the center of affection and nurturing, the emotional core for husbands and children.

Thus, developed a nineteenth-century ideology, a set of beliefs, which historian Barbara Welter (1966) named "the cult of True Womanhood." The True Woman was, first of all, a pious upholder of spiritual values. She was also pure: She was to have no sexual contact before marriage—although men might try to tempt her—and none afterward except with her husband. Moreover, the True Woman was submissive to men, particularly her husband. And finally, she was domestic: Her proper place was in the home, comforting her husband, lovingly raising her children.

Woman's sphere in the 1800s at once limited women's opportunities and glorified their domestic role. It was a more restricted economic role than wives in the colonial and revolutionary eras had experienced (O'Connor, 2009). To be sure, the colonial wife was also home most of the day, but she was collaborating with her husband in the family economy; and often buying and selling goods; without her contribution, her husband might not have been able to feed and clothe their children. Then the movement to wage labor separated women from paid work. Men went out every morning into the wider social world, but their wives could not follow. In a culture that had begun to celebrate individualism, women were supposed to give up much of their individualism to care for their husbands and children. Seen from this vantage point, one might argue that women's lives were worse in the 1800s than they had been before the Revolution—more restricted, less productive, more dependent and more isolated. Indeed, many historians have argued as much.

But other historians, while acknowledging the restrictions and dependency inherent in the domestic sphere, argue that it nevertheless offered some benefits. Appointing women the guardians of moral values and giving them the major role in rearing children provided them with substantial influence. However circumscribed, it may have allowed wives to counter the authority of their husbands, which had been so pervasive in the colonial period. Moreover, the ideology of women's sphere may have created a self-consciousness of, and an identification with, women as a group. Women established and maintained deep friendships with other women, reinforced by the segregation of their lives and by female rituals surrounding childbirth, weddings, illnesses, and funerals (Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). Some joined together in public associations to promote values consistent with domesticity, such as greater devotion to religion, assistance for the poor, or enlightened child-rearing. These friendships and associations may have been a prerequisite for the development of feminist organizations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historian Nancy Cott captured the dual nature of women's sphere in the title of her book, *The Bonds of Womanhood* (1977), for the bonds that tied women to the domestic sphere also bound them together in a subculture of sisterhood that prefigured their social and political movements decades later.

Quick Review

- In the late 1700s and early 1800s, American marriage seemed to change.
  - Greater importance was given to affection and mutual respect rather than male authority.
  - Increasing attention was paid to the loving care of (a declining number of) children.
- Under the emerging doctrine of "separate spheres," men's sphere was the world outside the home, women's, the home, relatives, and children.
- Women's sphere restricted their opportunities but also fostered friendships and participation in public organizations.

African American, Mexican American, and Asian Immigrant Families

Europeans, of course, were not the only immigrants to the United States in the 1700s and 1800s. Three other groups were present early in the nation's history. Africans had been forced to immigrate—captured or bought in West Africa, transported across the ocean under horrible conditions that killed many, and sold as slaves upon arrival. Mexicans, in search of grazing land, had pushed north into the area that is now the Southwest. Asian immigrants first arrived in large numbers in the mid-nineteenth century, when they were used as laborers by the railroads and other enterprises. The family lives of all three groups differed from those of the Europeans. Like white working-class women, those from racial and ethnic minority groups had to contribute economically outside, as well as inside, the home (Cherlin, 2014).

AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

Until the appearance of new scholarship in the 1970s, most historians thought that the oppression and harsh conditions of slavery had destroyed most of the culture African slaves brought with them, leaving little in its place. The writings of both white and black scholars emphasized the losses imposed by slavery: the uprooting from Africa, the disruption of families through sales of family members to new owners, the inability of fathers to protect their families from the abuses imposed by masters. In an influential 1939 book, E. Franklin Frazier, a sociologist and an African American, argued that white masters had destroyed all social organization among the slaves. As a result, he wrote, slave family life was disorganized; the only stable bond was between mothers and their children:

> *Consequently, under all conditions of slavery, the Negro mother remained the most dependable and important figure in the family. (Frazier, 1939)*

From Frazier and others, then, came the idea that both during and after slavery, most African American families were headed by women and that African American men were relatively powerless in and outside the home. But in 1976, historian Herbert Gutman published a comprehensive study of plantation, local government, and census records that suggested a much different picture (Gutman, 1976). Gutman found substantial evidence that whenever possible, slaves had married and lived together for life and that they knew and kept track of uncles, aunts, cousins, and other kin. He cited letters such as one the field hand Cash sent to relatives on a Georgia plantation after he, his wife, Phoebe, and some of their children were sold away:

> *Clairissa your affectionate Mother and Father sends a heap of love to you and your Husband and my Grand Children. Mag. & Cloe. John. Judy. My aunt sinena . . . Give our Love to Cashes brother Porter and his Wife Patience. Victoria sends her Love to her Cousin Beck and Miley. (Gutman, 1976)*

Moreover, Gutman argued, before and after slavery, in both the North and the South, most African American families included two parents. These family ties were forged despite the frequent sale of husbands, wives, and children to other masters, despite the sexual abuse of slave women by owners, and despite high rates of disease and death.

Still, there were some differences, both before and after the Civil War, between black and white families. For example, young slave women often had a first child before marrying; if so, they were usually married within a few years, although not necessarily to the father (Jones, 2010). This pattern may have occurred in part because slave owners valued women who had many children, increasing the owner's wealth. Enslaved women living on farms with a small number of slaves were more likely to be living apart from the fathers of their children than on farms with many slaves—perhaps because there were more marriages that crossed the boundaries of the smaller farms (Miller, 2018). Moreover, slave marriages had no legal standing and could be broken apart by owners at any time. Overall, slave families took a variety of forms, including marriage-based, single-parent, and multigenerational. The most lasting form, however, was the mother and child unit, which would remain after a father was sold away (Hunter, 2017).

After the Civil War, the U.S. Freedmen's Bureau, which was formed to assist former slaves, enforced marriage by arresting cohabiting individuals who had not married. In this way, government policy moved from not recognizing marriage legally before the war to punishing cohabiting couples who were not married in the years after the war (Hunter, 2017).

Another difference between black and white families after the Civil War was that wives in rural black families worked seasonally in the fields, whereas rural white women didn't. According to 1870 census figures for the Cotton Belt states, about 4 in 10 African American wives had jobs, almost all as field workers. In contrast, 98 percent of white wives said they were "keeping house" and had no other job (Jones, 2010). The differences reflect a mixture of economic pressure and culture. The plots of land African American sharecroppers farmed in the late nineteenth century provided such a marginal standard of living that men and women (and often children) were needed in the fields, at least at harvesttime. Historian Jacqueline Jones (2010) has also noted that "the outlines of African work patterns endured among enslaved laborers," in that African women often bore the major responsibility for cultivating food.

Moreover, although most black families still had two parents, black mothers were more likely to be living without a male partner than white mothers. This racial difference stemmed partly from the high mortality rates of black men; by one estimate, 42 percent of black wives were widowed by ages 45 to 50 around 1900 (Preston, Lim, & Morgan, 1992). But a difference still remains after mortality is taken into account (Morgan, McDaniel, Miller, & Preston, 1993). A much larger racial difference in household structure would emerge after about 1960 (see Chapter 5).

When black families migrated to Northern cities in the twentieth century, black women continued to work outside the home in larger numbers than white women. Thirty-one percent of married black women worked outside the home in the 1920s and 1930s, compared with 8 percent of married white women (Bouston & Collins, 2014). Because of discrimination, black men were offered only low-paying, physically challenging jobs that couldn't support a family. Staying home simply was not an option for most black wives, who also faced discrimination and found work mainly as domestic servants. As intersectionality theorists have argued (Collins, 2000), black women faced inequalities due to both gender and race. Not until the 1960s did black women break out of domestic service into occupations previously reserved for white women. Today, women of both races still lag behind men in earnings, and black men's employment situation, though improved, remains difficult (Katz, Stern, & Fader, 2005).

MEXICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

Like African Americans, Mexican Americans established a presence early in the history of what is now the United States. In the early nineteenth century, well before migrants from the eastern United States arrived, Mexicans settled the frontier of what was then northern Mexico (Martínez, 2001). These pioneers crossed deserts and fought with American Indians to reach as far west as California and as far north as Colorado. Their early settlements generally included an elite landowning family and poorer farmer-laborer settlers. The landowning elite tended to be (or claimed to be) of nearly pure Spanish descent. Some owned vast tracts of land on which they grazed cattle or sheep. They arranged their children's marriages with care and celebrated elaborate weddings and feasts, so as to preserve or merge their holdings with other wealthy families or with wealthy Anglo (non-Mexican) immigrants (Griswold del Castillo, 1979).

mestizo a person whose ancestors include both Spanish settlers and Native Americans

More numerous were the laborers who worked the great estates or farmed or grazed animals on their own smaller holdings. They tended to be **mestizos,** people whose ancestors included both Spanish settlers and Native Americans from Mexico (Caldera, Velez-Gomez, & Lindsey, 2015). There is some evidence that informal marriages were more common among this group (Griswold del Castillo, 1979). Informal marriages allowed couples to evade the control of their parents and other kin; and with fewer resources to protect than among the elite, the *mestizo* classes had less reason to control who married whom. These small landholders and laborers attempted to enlist the sponsorship and support of the well-to-do through the tradition of **compadrazgo,** a godparent relationship in which a wealthy or influential person outside the kinship group became the *compadre,* or godparent, of a newborn child, particularly at its baptism. The godfather and godchild were expected to retain a special relationship, and the godparent was supposed to assist his godchild, for example, by providing or finding a job for him (Mintz & Wolf, 1950).

compadrazgo in Mexico, a godparent relationship in which a wealthy or influential person outside the kinship group is asked to become the *compadre*, or godparent, of a newborn child, particularly at its baptism

This social structure was disrupted by a series of wars, revolts, and land grabs by U.S. troops and immigrants during the 1830s and 1840s. When it was over, the United States had acquired, by conquest, the current Southwest. Soon thereafter, most of the Spanish elite lost their land to taxes, drought, and Anglo squatters. Instead of ranchers and farmers, Mexicans became more of a working-class community, employed by the growing numbers of Anglos (Caldera, Velez-Gomez, & Lindsey, 2015). And as the number of Anglo immigrants rose, Mexican Americans were forced into **barrios,** segregated neighborhoods in the city. Residents of the *barrios* faced high unemployment or low income if they provided low-wage labor to Anglo employers.

barrio a segregated Mexican-American neighborhood in a U.S. city

A slow migration from Mexico continued until the start of World War II, consisting mostly of immigrants who stayed in the United States for a short period of time to earn money and then returned to Mexico (Rosenblum & Brick, 2011). In 1942, the U.S. and Mexican governments established the Bracero Program, under which Mexicans could enter the United States as guest workers. But it was not until the mid-1960s that legal and unauthorized Mexican immigration began to occur on a large scale due to economic difficulties in Mexico; the demand for low-wage labor by American employers in fields such as construction, farming, and maintenance; and changes to immigration law. The Mexican-origin population grew rapidly, and a new flow of immigrants began from Central American countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. In 2015, 63 percent of all Americans who identified as Hispanic said that they were of Mexican descent (Pew Research Center, 2017).

ASIAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

The Asian Heritage Before the middle of the twentieth century, most Asian American families in the United States consisted of immigrants from China and Japan and their descendants. Family systems in East Asia (where China and Japan are located) were sharply different from those in the United States and other Western countries, although these differences are currently diminishing (Cherlin, 2012; Goode, 1963). In the traditional East Asian family, parents had more authority over family members than is true in the West. For example, parents usually controlled who their children would marry and when. In addition, kinship was patrilineal, or traced through the father's line. In China, the ideal was that a man's sons (and eventually his grandsons) would bring their wives into his growing household. Daughters would be sent at marriage to live in their in-laws' households. When parents grew old, sons and their wives were expected to live with them and care for them. In Japan, the oldest son carried the main responsibility for the care of elderly parents. Thus, East Asian cultures placed a greater emphasis on children's loyalty to their parents than Western culture. For a son or daughter, happiness in marriage was less important than fulfilling obligations to parents and other kin.

Asian Immigrants Chinese immigrants first began to arrive during the California gold rush in the 1850s. After the Civil War, they were hired to build the railroads of the Southwest. Because the vast majority of these immigrant laborers were men, relatively few new families were formed. In fact, some left wives behind (Takaki, 1998). In California and most other western states, laws prohibited Chinese (and later Japanese) immigrants from marrying white Americans or becoming citizens. In fact, American sentiment against Chinese immigrants was so strong that in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which restricted Chinese immigration until after World War II. As late as 1930, 80 percent of the Chinese population was male (Takaki, 1998).

In the 1880s, significant numbers of Japanese immigrants began to arrive in Hawaii (which the United States would soon annex) and the mainland United States. The ratio of women to men was more balanced among the Japanese than among Chinese immigrants, so more families were formed. Both Chinese and Japanese families were patrilineal. The father's authority was strong, and ties to extended family members such as brothers or grandparents were important. Traditionally, parents or other relatives arranged their children's marriages (Wong, 1988). Since immigrants usually left their extended families behind, they developed other ways of building family-like ties in the United States. For example, people from the same region of China or Japan formed mutual aid societies (Bergquist, 2005).

Like the Chinese, Japanese immigrants faced discrimination. After the war with Japan began in 1941, some Americans warned that Japanese immigrants might be disloyal, even though many had lived in the United States for decades. Bowing to these fears, the government rounded up Japanese immigrants, most of whom lived in California, and sent them to internment camps. Aside from the imprisonment, humiliation, and economic losses the Japanese suffered there, the camps eroded the traditional authority of Japanese parents (Kitano & Daniels, 1988). They had little to offer children, who were exposed to American activities such as dancing to the music of the latest bands. Young Japanese American men could even volunteer to join a much-decorated U.S. Army unit that fought in Europe. After the war, the autonomy children had experienced in the camps contributed to sharp

changes in Japanese American marriage patterns. Whereas the older generation's marriages had been arranged by relatives who stressed obligations to kin and emotional restraint, the younger generation much more often chose their own spouses based on romantic love and companionship (Yanagisako, 1985).

1965 Immigration Act act passed by the U.S. Congress which ended restrictions that had blocked most Asian immigration and substituted an annual quota

Overall, Asian immigration was modest until Congress passed the **1965 Immigration Act,** which ended restrictions that had blocked most Asian immigration and substituted an annual quota. Since then, the Asian population of the United States has expanded rapidly. Moreover, Asian immigrants have become more likely to arrive as families than in the past (Takaki, 1998). According to the American Community Survey, there were 18.3 million people of Asian origin in the United States in 2016, a 54 percent increase from 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012). The three largest groups were Chinese, (Asian) Indians, and Filipinos.

Filipino immigration began as a small stream of mostly students after the United States captured the Philippines in the Spanish-American War of 1898. After 1965, many Filipino immigrants were professionals, most notably nurses. Unlike Chinese and Japanese families, Filipino families trace descent through both the father's and mother's line, a system called **bilateral kinship** (the system followed in the United States). Such a system usually provides women more independence than patrilineal kinship, so Filipino American women have been more likely to work outside the home than women in Chinese or Japanese families (Kitano & Daniels, 1988). Immigration from India was modest until after 1965, and even in 2010, 88 percent of Indian-American adults were foreign born. Indian-Americans are the most highly educated immigrant group; 70 percent of adults age 25 and over in 2010 had a college degree (DeSilver, 2014).

bilateral kinship a system in which descent is reckoned through both the mother's and father's lines

Quick Review

- The family lives of groups that emigrated from Africa (through slavery), Mexico, and Asia differed from the family lives of European immigrants.
- The women in all immigrant families were more likely to contribute economically than were middle-class women.
- African American families have maintained stronger ties to extended kin and borne a higher percentage of children outside of marriage than have European American families.
- Most African American families had two parents, even during slavery.
- Early Mexican settlers included a landed elite and a larger population of *mestizos.*
- Mexican families use the tradition of *compadrazgo* to obtain assistance for children.
- Chinese immigration was heavily male at first, and immigrants sent home remittances to family.
- Japanese families were sent to internment camps during World War II.
- Both Chinese and Japanese families were traditionally patrilineal, with arranged marriages.

The Emergence of Sexual Identities

In April 1779, Alexander Hamilton wrote to John Laurens, with whom he had served in the American Revolution:

> *Cold in my professions, warm in [my] friendships, I wish, my Dear Laurens, it m[ight] be in my power, by action rather than words, [to] convince you that I love you. I shall only tell you that 'till you bade us Adieu, I hardly knew the value you had taught my heart to set upon you.*

In September, after almost giving up hope of receiving a letter from Laurens, Hamilton wrote of his joy at finally receiving one:

> *But like a jealous lover, when I thought you slighted my caresses, my affection was alarmed and my vanity piqued. I had almost resolved to lavish no more of them upon you and to reject you as an inconstant and an ungrateful–. But you have now disarmed my resentment and by a single mark of attention made up the quarrel. (Katz, 1976)*

Upon discovering this correspondence, it is the instinct of the contemporary reader to wonder whether Alexander Hamilton was gay. Yet historians argue that such a question represents the myopia of a person steeped in contemporary culture peering back at another time. The categories of gay and straight did not yet exist, and therefore eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century people did not need to fit into them. Whether or not Hamilton's intimate friendship ever involved a sexual act was not its defining feature. As historian Jonathan Katz notes, even if many of the phrases in letters that men wrote to each other were merely rhetorical flourishes, it is striking how easy it was for men to use language that today would be seen as indicating a sexual relationship. In fact, what seems so different about relationships such as Hamilton and Laurens's is the seeming ease with which two same-sex individuals could engage in intimacies, such as declaring their love for each other, without these acts marking the relationship sexual. A broad range of public affection and intimacy was open to same-sex friendships in a way that, for most men at least, it is not today (Adam, 2004).

Alexander Hamilton was one of many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americans who wrote intimate letters to other men.

Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division [LC-DIG-ppmsca-17523]

The best-known study of same-sex intimacy in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's "The Female World of Love and Ritual" (Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). Smith-Rosenberg explored the separate sphere of middle-class women and found that they often formed strong emotional bonds with other women. Some of their correspondence seems, by today's standards at least, to have a romantic and even erotic tone. Smith-Rosenberg writes of Sarah Butler Wister and Jeannie Field Musgrove, who first met as teenagers during a summer vacation, attended boarding school together for two years, and formed a lifelong intimate friendship. At age 29, Sarah, married and a mother, wrote to Jeannie, "I shall be entirely alone [this coming week]. I can give you no idea how desperately I shall want you." Jeannie ended one letter "Goodbye my dearest, dearest lover" and another "I will go to bed . . . [though] I could write all night—A thousand kisses—I love you with my whole soul."

The point of studying exchanges such as these, as Smith-Rosenberg herself argued, "is not whether these women had genital contact and can therefore be defined as heterosexual or homosexual." Rather, the point is that these women lived in a social context that allowed them the freedom to form a friendship that was quite intimate without the friendship's being labeled as anything more than that. Middle-class women's bonds could be loving and sensual without necessarily being sexual; it is likely that even if they were, the sexual acts would not be seen as the defining characteristic of the relationship. The social context allowed women more flexibility in creating intense emotional ties than is the case today, when we tend to think that close, sensual same-sex relationships must be "gay" or "lesbian."

But in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this more fluid conception of sexuality congealed into two master categories that people saw as central to their senses of themselves—two sexual identities, then known as heterosexual and homosexual. Of course, there is nothing new about sex, or about people having sexual preferences and attractions. What's new—or at least no more than 150 years old—is the way that sexual acts and preferences are organized into sexual identities. By a **sexual identity,** I mean the formation in people's minds of an identity such as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual based on romantic and sexual attraction. Our sexual identity, in turn, becomes an important part of our sense of who we are. Furthermore, we see this as "natural"—everyone, we assume, has a sexual identity.

sexual identity the formation in people's minds of an identity such as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual based on romantic and sexual attraction

SEXUAL ACTS VERSUS SEXUAL IDENTITIES

Until the nineteenth century, not only the terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual" but also the idea of "being" homosexual or heterosexual had not yet been invented. There were only two categories of sexual activities: the socially approved (sexual intercourse within marriage, in moderation, and undertaken mainly to have children) and the socially disapproved (all other activities, including acts between persons of the same sex, masturbation, oral sex regardless of the genders of the partners, and so forth). To perform any of the latter was sinful, but such behavior did not define a person as having a particular sexual identity. Then, during the nineteenth century the concept of an orientation toward the same sex began to emerge. Men and women were recognized and sometimes punished and persecuted for their same-sex attraction, and some participated in clandestine social clubs and searched for persons of similar orientations. Yet the nature of one's sexual orientation was not as central in defining one's sense of self as it would become in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Robb, 2003). The concept of a sexual identity requires a self-consciousness and self-examination that was not prominent until the late nineteenth century.

THE EMERGENCE OF "HETEROSEXUALITY" AND "HOMOSEXUALITY"

Americans defined these categories in part by mounting a public campaign against homosexuality beginning in the late nineteenth century. At that time, an influential body of medical literature began to describe not merely homosexual acts but homosexual persons—distinctive individuals who were seen as suffering from a psychological illness that altered their sexual preferences. Their supposedly unnatural condition was labeled "homosexuality," and it was said to pervade their personalities. They were no longer just men or women who engaged in sexual acts with a same-sex partner; they were homosexuals—seriously ill people (Foucault, 1980). In contrast to them, the same writers defined a "normal" sexual preference for the opposite sex as "heterosexuality." Heterosexuals were seen as mentally healthy as opposed to sick. This was the way sexuality entered our everyday language and our consciousness: as a means of organizing people into two contrasting sexual identities, one viewed as normal and one disparaged as diseased.

The medical model remained dominant until 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders (Silverstein, 1991). The medical model stigmatized gay people and served as a basis for prejudice and discrimination. But the very force of the critique also created a group identity for individuals who had previously had none. Much as the ideology of separate spheres created conditions that allowed for social and political action by women's groups, so the discourse on homosexuality as an illness created conditions that ultimately provoked social and political actions by gays and lesbians. "Homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf," wrote Michel Foucault, "to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified" (Foucault, 1980).

There are intellectuals and researchers today who claim that these identities are becoming more fluid again and some who argue against even using the concept of a sexual identity anymore. There are sociologists who state that people who do not follow the dominant heterosexual model are creating new modes of living that challenge the usefulness of the concept of "the family" or even of diverse "families" to describe personal life in the twenty-first century. In Chapter 6, we will examine the rise, and perhaps the beginning of the fall, of sexual identities and the implications for studying family life.

Quick Review

- The idea that people have a sexual identity did not arise until the late nineteenth century.
- Homosexuality was initially defined as a psychological illness, whereas heterosexuality was seen as normal.

The Rise of the Private Family: 1900–Present

THE EARLY DECADES

An increase in premarital sex. A drop in the birthrate. A new youth culture rebelling against propriety, dressing outrageously, and indulging in indecent dance steps. And a rapidly rising divorce rate. These were the concerns of American moralists, politicians, and social scientists during the first few decades of the twentieth

century. The flourishing new youth culture was exemplified in the 1920s by the "flapper" girls. Independent, often employed outside the home, and brazen enough to bob their hair and wear lipstick and eyeliner in public, the flappers patronized dance halls and movie theaters with their male companions. Historian Stephanie Coontz (2005) notes that interest in and openness about sexuality grew during this period. A good marriage, people increasingly thought, required a good sex life, although the husband's satisfaction still seemed to matter more than the wife's. By the 1920s, birth control pioneers such as Margaret Sanger had opened clinics, and public discussion about ways to prevent births was widespread.

Perhaps the greatest source of concern, the divorce rate had risen to the point where a marriage begun in 1910 had about a 1-in-7 chance of ending in divorce. This may seem like a small risk today, but it represented a substantial increase over the 1-in-12 chance in 1880 or the 1-in-20 chance at the end of the Civil War (Cherlin, 1992). Yet the period from the 1890s through the 1920s was generally one of increasing prosperity—which raises the question of why an increase in divorce would occur. In part, it was made possible by the growing economic independence of women, who were now better educated, had fewer children, had likely worked outside the home before marrying, and therefore had greater potential to find work outside the home if their marriages ended (O'Neill, 1967). But that is not the whole story, for the marriage rate kept rising right along with the divorce rate. What had occurred, in addition, is that both women and men came to expect a greater amount of emotional satisfaction from marriage (May, 1980). More than ever before, they sought happiness, companionship, and romantic love in marriage. If they found their marriages fell short of their expectations, they were more likely to ask for a divorce. As Coontz (2005) writes, the trend had begun in the latter part of the 1800s:

> *The people who took idealization of love and intimacy to new heights during the nineteenth century did not intend to shake up marriage or unleash a new preoccupation with sexual gratification. . . . In the long run, however, they weakened it. The focus on romantic love eventually undercut the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women and the ideal of female purity, putting new strains on the institution of marriage.*

The emphasis on love and companionship, and the accompanying strain on marital bonds, spread in the early 1900s.

And so women and men came to see marriage and family as central to their quest for an emotionally satisfying private life. Before the twentieth century, emotional satisfaction had been less important to both husbands and wives, but not because they were ignorant of the concept—no Ariès-like claim is made here that people of the twentieth century discovered happiness. Rather, before the twentieth century the standard of living had been so low that most people needed to concentrate on keeping themselves clothed, housed, and fed. Before 1900, pursuing personal pleasure was a luxury few could indulge in. Most were too busy just trying to get by.

Still, Americans (and the citizens of other Western nations) were gradually enlarging the scope of the *private family.* They were defining marital success in emotional terms, not material terms, and were beginning to derive their greatest satisfaction not from the roles they played (breadwinner, homemaker, father, mother) but from the quality of the relationships they had with their spouses and children. This process had certainly begun long ago among the more prosperous classes, and it continued throughout the twentieth century. But in some eras its ascendancy was more noticeable than in others, and the first few decades of the twentieth century were such an era.

As these developments were occurring, the family was becoming less of a dominant force in people's lives. The many public goods the colonial family had provided gradually diminished: Compulsory schooling replaced education at home; hospitals replaced sickbeds; department stores replaced home crafts; and so forth. As marriage became less necessary economically and materially, it was redefined as a means of gaining emotional satisfaction. A well-known text on the family described this transformation as a shift "from institution to companionship" (Burgess & Locke, 1945). (See Chapter 7.) In this process, marriage became more fragile, for the bonds of sentiment were weaker than the ties forged by working a family farm or the unchallenged authority of the patriarch. Soon, an institution that had been designed to enhance survival and security began to creak under the weight of expectations that it provide so much emotional satisfaction. One result was a more or less continuous increase in the divorce rate, which reached a high plateau about 1980.

Privacy also increased after 1900. Two demographic trends contributed to this increase. First, the birthrate declined, which meant, among other things, fewer persons per room. Second, adult life expectancy increased due to advances in medicine and a rising standard of living. As a result of these trends, parents were younger when they finished the child-rearing stage of life, and they lived longer after their last child left home. Consequently, a new stage of family life, the "empty nest" phase of married life after all children have left home, became common. Between 1900 and 2000 the proportion of 45- to 64-year olds who were empty nesters tripled from 11 to 34 percent (Fischer & Hout, 2006).

Greater prosperity also meant that more apartments were built, and more people could afford to live on their own. And the rise in individualism probably made more unmarried people *wish* to live on their own. Consequently, boarding and lodging—in which a single person paid to rent a room and have meals cooked in a family's home—went from commonplace to rarity during the first half of the century (Laslett, 1973). In 1950, 9 percent of all households contained one person; by 1970 the figure was 17 percent; and by 2017 it was 28 percent (Kobrin, 1976; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2017). Even so, during the first few decades of the century, about two-thirds of young women and perhaps 40 percent of young men did not leave home until they married. If they did, it was often because their parents lived in rural areas, where young adults couldn't find jobs. Later, in the 1940s and 1950s, the age at which young adults left home fell sharply, both because of earlier marriage and because many young men left home to join the military during World War II and the Korean War (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994).

The first few decades of the twentieth century, then, were an important time of change in the American family. The basis for marriage moved away from an economic partnership and toward emotional satisfaction and companionship. Men and women became more economically independent of each other. As a result of these developments, the bonds of marriage became weaker, and divorce became more common. In addition, prosperity, lower birthrates, and longer life expectancy accelerated the trend toward privacy, as exemplified by child-free older couples and people living alone.

THE DEPRESSION GENERATION

The prosperity of the early decades of the century was interrupted by the Great Depression, which began in 1929 and continued until the late 1930s. In addition to its severe effects on family finances, the Depression also undermined the authority and prestige of the father. If he lost his job, his family might view him as having

failed in his role as breadwinner. If his wife or his children were forced to find jobs, as many were, their labor was a constant reminder of his inability to fulfill their expectations.

The economic hardships forced many young adults to postpone marriage and childbearing. The Depression was so long and so severe that some couples never had the opportunity to have children. As a result, lifetime childlessness was more common among women who reached their peak childbearing years in the 1930s than in any other generation of women in the twentieth century: About one in five never had a child (Rindfuss, Morgan, & Swicegood, 1988). In contrast, only about one in ten of the women who reached their peak reproductive years during the 1950s baby boom never had a child.

As fathers and mothers struggled to make a living, their children helped out. Teenage boys took whatever jobs they could find; teenage girls took over more of the household work for mothers who were forced to work outside the home. The result was what Glen Elder, Jr., called "the downward extension of adultlike experience": Girls took on the role of homemaker; boys took on the role of breadwinner. Elder (1999) examined the records of a group of children who were first observed in 1932, at age 11, and then followed through adulthood. He found that when they reached adulthood, the men and women in the group who came from economically deprived families valued marriage and family life more highly than those whose families hadn't experienced hardship. Women from deprived families married at younger ages than other women. Perhaps the difficulties their families had faced when they were adolescents made the deprived group eager for a secure marriage, or perhaps they viewed families as an important resource in hard times. In any event, when they reached adulthood, these young men and women turned inward to build their own family lives.

Quick Review

- In the twentieth century, people increasingly viewed family life through the perspective I have called the *private family.*
  - People began to derive their greatest pleasure from the quality of their personal relationships.
  - People increasingly viewed marriage primarily as a means of obtaining emotional satisfaction.
  - Divorce became more common.
  - Privacy itself increased as standards of living rose, birthrates dropped, and life expectancy rose.
- The hardship of the Great Depression forced a generation to alter their family lives by, for example, delaying or forgoing marriage and childbearing.

THE 1950s

In fact, when the young adults of the Depression generation began to marry and have children after World War II, they created the most unusual and distinctive family patterns of the century. They married younger and had more children than any other twentieth-century generation. Nearly half of women delayed having sex until after they were married, which was an easier task than it is now because of the young ages at marriage (Wu, Martin, & England, 2017). Figure 2.1, which displays the percentage of 20- to 24-year-old men and women who had never been married, from 1890 to 2017, shows how unusual the 1950s were. Note that the percentage

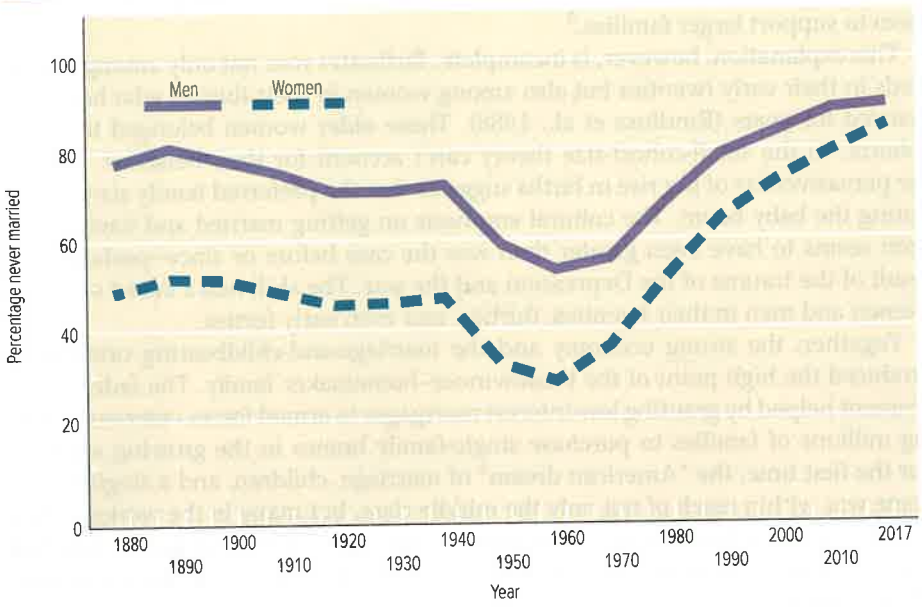

FIGURE 2.1
Percentage never married among men and women aged 20 to 24, 1890 to 2017. (*Sources:* for 1890–1990, Carter et al. (2006); for 2000–2017, U.S. Bureau of the Census (2018).)

is highest at the beginning and end of this chart, indicating that young men and women were most likely to be single (and therefore to marry at an older age) in the late 1800s and the current era. The percentage who had never been married declined slowly during the first half of the twentieth century and then plunged to its lowest point during the 1950s. After 1960, it rose so much that by the 2010s, young adults were marrying later than at any time since at least 1890.

The years after World War II were also the time of the great **baby boom.** Couples not only married at younger ages but also had children faster—and had more of them—than their parents' generation or, as statistics would later show, than even their children's generation. Indeed, the late 1940s through the 1950s was the only period in the past 150 years during which the American birthrate rose substantially. It spiked dramatically just after the war, as couples had babies they had postponed having during the war. After a few years it dropped, but then began to climb again, peaking in 1957. Women who married during the 1950s had an average of slightly more than three children, the highest fertility rate of the century (Evans, 1986; Carter et al., 2006).

baby boom the large number of people born during the late 1940s and 1950s

Although the causes of the baby boom are not fully clear, a strong post–World War II economy and a renewed cultural emphasis on marriage and children were certainly contributing factors. One explanation focuses on the unique circumstances of the young adults who married during the 1950s. Since most of them were born during the Depression, when birthrates were low, they constituted a relatively small **birth cohort,** as demographers call all the people born during a given year or period of years. After the bad luck of growing up during the Depression and the war, they had the good fortune to reach adulthood just as the economy was growing rapidly. The Allied victory in World War II had left the United States with the strongest economy in the world. Employers needed more workers, but the small size of the cohort meant there were fewer workers to hire (especially given the widespread preference during the 1950s that married women forgo work

birth cohort all people born during a given year or period of years

outside the home). In this tight labor market wages rose for young men, allowing them to support larger families.[5]

This explanation, however, is incomplete. Birthrates rose not only among newlyweds in their early twenties but also among women in their thirties who had been married for years (Rindfuss et al., 1988). These older women belonged to larger cohorts, so the small-cohort-size theory can't account for their behavior. Rather, the pervasiveness of the rise in births suggests that the preferred family size shifted during the baby boom. The cultural emphasis on getting married and having children seems to have been greater than was the case before or since—perhaps as a result of the trauma of the Depression and the war. The shift had a broad effect on women and men in their twenties, thirties, and even early forties.

Together, the strong economy and the marriage-and-childbearing orientation produced the high point of the breadwinner–homemaker family. The federal government helped by granting low-interest mortgages to armed forces veterans, allowing millions of families to purchase single-family homes in the growing suburbs. For the first time, the "American dream" of marriage, children, and a single-family home was within reach of not only the middle class, but many in the working class as well. Yet some homemakers missed the world of paid work and school they had left behind and felt constrained by their economic dependence on their husbands (Weiss, 2000).

Moreover, overlooked during the 1950s because of all the attention given to the baby boom was a countercurrent that would loom large later in the century. Increasingly, homemakers went back to work outside the home after their children were of school age. They took jobs that had been typed as women's work—jobs that were relatively low paying but still required some education, such as secretary, nurse, or salesclerk. And some urged their daughters to postpone marriage in order to pursue higher education and professional careers (Weiss, 2000). In fact, women received contradictory messages in the 1950s: Motherhood was valuable, but so was having an independent self (Plant, 2010).

THE 1960s THROUGH THE 1990s

Just as social commentators confidently announced a return to large families, the roller-coaster car reached the top of its track and hurtled downward. The birthrate plunged from the heights of the baby boom to an all-time low in the 1970. Women who were in their peak childbearing years in the 1970s had an average of 1.8 children (Carter et al., 2006). The baby boom had begotten the baby bust. The drop was aided by the introduction in 1960 of the birth control pill, the first highly effective medical method of contraception. By 1964, it was the most popular contraceptive in the nation (May, 2010). In addition, young women and men were marrying at later and later ages; between the mid-1950s and 2000, the age at which half of all first marriages occur increased by about five years for men and women (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2018). So the percentage of young adults who had never married, as Figure 2.1 shows, surpassed the levels of the early twentieth century.

What were they doing during these five additional years before marriage? In part, they were living on their own. In the first half of the twentieth century, it was rare for an unmarried person in his or her twenties to be living alone. Either you remained with your parents or you rented a room in another family's house. Young

[5] The relative-cohort-size theory was expounded by Easterlin (1980).

people couldn't afford to live on their own; there was a shortage of adequate housing; and anyway it was morally questionable, especially for an unmarried woman, to live alone. But by 2000, the proportion of unmarried twenty-somethings heading their own households had risen to 36 percent for women and 28 percent for men (Rosenfeld, 2007). Not all of these young household heads, however, were *truly* alone. After about 1970, **cohabitation**—the sharing of a household by unmarried persons in a sexual relationship—accounted for some of the postponement of marriage (Smock, 2000). In other words, some young adults substituted cohabiting relationships for early marriages. Moreover, they were increasingly having children prior to marrying. In 1950 only 4 percent of births occurred outside of marriage; but by 2000, 33 percent did (U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, 2005). Most of these births occurred among less-educated women. In 2000, 70 percent of unmarried high school dropouts aged 25 to 44 had already given birth, as had 53 percent of comparable high school graduates. But only 9 percent of unmarried college-educated women in the same age range had given birth (Fischer & Hout, 2006). Although the conventional path of marrying before having children is still prevalent among the college-educated, many of the less-educated are having children prior to marrying.

cohabitation the sharing of a household by unmarried persons who have a sexual relationship

Change occurred not only in how and when people entered marriage but also in how and when they ended marriage. The divorce rate, which had been stable during the 1950s, doubled during the 1960s and 1970s. Since then, divorce rates have diverged by educational level: the rate has declined for the college-educated, remained stable for people with high school degrees or a few years of college, and increased for people without high school degrees (Härkönen & Dronkers, 2006; Martin, 2006). At the rates prevalent near the end of the century, about one-third of the marriages of college graduates would end in separation or divorce, whereas over half of the marriages of people without college degrees would end in separation or divorce (Raley & Bumpass, 2003). Here again, a person's level of education has become an important marker of the kind of family life she or he leads.

What all of these developments have meant for the living arrangements of children during the twentieth century is shown in Figure 2.2. It is based on the answers of people of differing ages to the question "Were you living with both your own mother and father around the time you were 16?" in a series of national surveys. If they said no, they were asked whether they weren't living with both parents due to a parent dying or for other reasons—most often, divorce or separation but also, as the century progressed, being born outside of marriage. In the 1910s, according to the answers to these questions, about 25 percent of children (adding up 17 percent from the purple bar and 8 percent from the blue bar) around age 16 were not living with both parents. Note that by far the most common reason for not living with both parents was that a parent had died. A fair number of children experienced family disruption a century ago but mostly because of parental death. The percentage not living with both parents stayed relatively stable for the first two-thirds of the century (the purple and blue bars total about 25 percent at each time point through the 1960s), although the reasons changed: By mid-century parental death rates had declined but disruptions for other reasons had increased. Yet beginning in the 1970s, the percentage not living with both parents began to rise, and by the 1990s (when the purple and blue bars total 44 percent) it greatly exceeded the level of the 1910s, even though it was quite uncommon to have a parent die. Over the century,

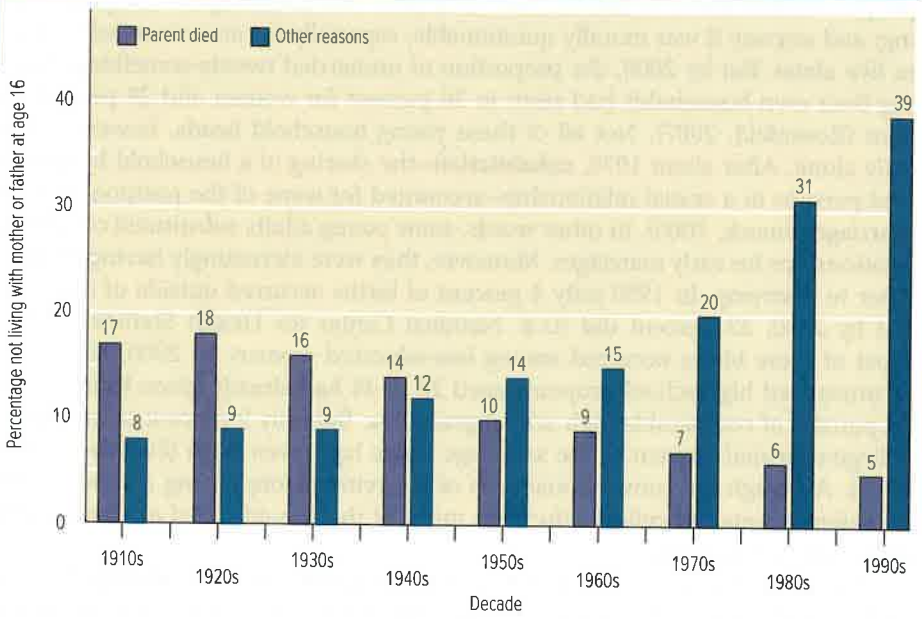

FIGURE 2.2
Percent of children not living with their own mother and father at age 16 because a parent died or for other reasons, 1910s to 1990s. *Source:* Ellwood & Jencks, 2004, Figure 1.1.

then, two changes occurred: First, the reasons why adolescents weren't living with both parents changed dramatically from the death of a parent to divorce or separation or being born to an unmarried parent. Second, beginning in the 1970s, the total number of adolescents not living with both parents rose.

After the 1950s, married women continued to work outside the home in ever larger numbers. Even women with pre-school-aged children joined the workforce in large numbers. By 2000, 77 percent of all married women with school-aged children and 63 percent of married women with pre-school-aged children were working outside the home (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2011). Whereas in the 1950s, married women tended to drop out of the paid workforce when they were raising small children, today married women are much more likely to remain at their jobs throughout the child-rearing years. This change in women's work lives has had a powerful effect on the family.

Quick Review

- The 1950s produced the most distinctive family patterns of the twentieth century, notably early marriage and larger numbers of children.
- Rising wages and a cultural shift toward home and family may have caused the 1950s baby boom.
- Family trends reversed in the 1960s: Young adults married later; birthrates fell; divorce rates rose.
- In addition, married women with young children began to enter the workforce in large numbers in the 1960s.
- The percentage of children not living with both parents rose toward the end of the century because of increases in marital separation and divorce and births to unmarried parents.

The Changing Life Course

We have seen that family and personal life changed greatly during the twentieth century. One way to understand these changes is to compare the experiences of groups of individuals who were born in different time periods. This approach is known as the **life-course perspective:** the study of changes in individuals' lives over time and how those changes are related to historical events.

life-course perspective the study of changes in individuals' lives over time, and how those changes are related to historical events

SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Consider Figure 2.3. In the middle of the figure is a time line for the twentieth century, divided into 10-year intervals. The top half shows the time lines for three different birth cohorts born 30 years apart. The first group was born in 1920; I have labeled them the "depression cohort" because they were nine years old when the Great Depression began in 1929. The second group, the "baby boom cohort," was born in 1950, just after the start of the baby boom. The third group, born between 1980 and 2000, is often referred to as the "millennials" because they began to reach adulthood after 2000, which was the turn of the new millennium. The bottom half of Figure 2.3 shows time lines for the occurrence of major historical events and trends that have changed family and personal life. For example, the Great Depression lasted from 1929 until about 1940, and the baby boom occurred from the late 1940s to the early 1960s.

One can think of the top and bottom halves of Figure 2.3 as showing two kinds of time. The top half displays what we might call "individual time": the passing of time in people's lives as they age. This is the usual way we think of time. The bottom half displays what might be called "historical time": the beginning and ending of key events and social trends that have influenced family life during the century. The figure's usefulness is that it allows a comparison of individual time and historical time; or put another way, it places the course of an individual's life in historical context.

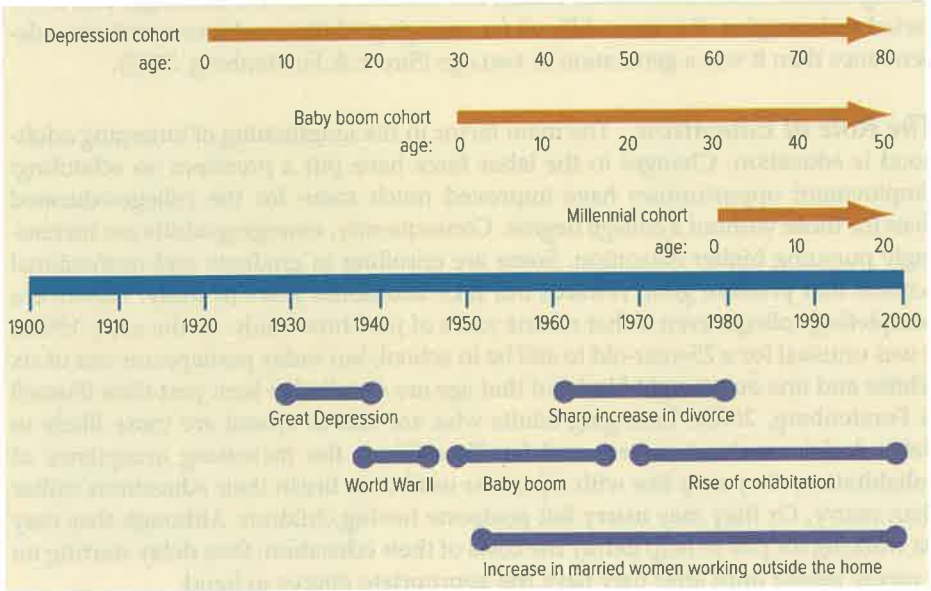

FIGURE 2.3
A life-course perspective on social change in the twentieth century.

For example, the figure shows that in 1950, as the baby boom started, members of the depression cohort were still in their childbearing years; therefore, they became the parents of the baby boomers. The figure also shows that by the time the baby boom cohort reached age 30 in 1980, a sharp rise in divorce had occurred. As a result, the baby boomers have had a much higher rate of divorce than the depression cohort. In addition, the figure shows that the millennial cohort is the first to have lived their early childhood years after the sharp rise in divorce. That is why far more millennial cohort members experienced the breakup of their parents' marriages than previous cohorts.

This way of looking at changes in family and personal life is an example of the life-course perspective. Rather than study families as an undifferentiated group, sociologists and historians who use this perspective tend to study the lives of individuals within families. They examine how historical developments affect the course of these individuals' personal and family lives. Elder's work on the depression cohort (defined in his case as people born in 1921) is probably the most influential study of this genre (Elder, 1999). The life-course perspective is particularly attractive to scholars who wish to study social change over time. And as this chapter has made clear, the twentieth century was a time of great change in the kinds of family lives individuals led.

THE NEW LIFE STAGE OF EMERGING ADULTHOOD

emerging adulthood period between mid-teens and about age 30 when individuals finish their education, enter the labor force, and begin their own families

labor force all people who are working for pay or who are looking for paid work

Recently, social scientists have used the life-course perspective to suggest the appearance of a new stage of life: **emerging adulthood** (Arnett, 2000; Settersten, Furstenberg, & Rumbaut, 2005). I will define it as the period between the mid-teens and about age 30 when individuals finish their education, enter the labor force, and begin their own families. (The **labor force** is defined as all people who are working for pay or who are looking for paid work.) It is the stage of life when one makes the transition from adolescence (itself only a century old, as we will see in Chapter 7) to adulthood. As I noted earlier in this chapter, most young people made the transition to adulthood quickly in the mid-twentieth century, marrying at historically young ages and having children soon afterwards. Today, this transition has become longer and more varied and complex. It is more difficult for emerging adults to achieve economic independence than it was a generation or two ago (Sironi & Furstenberg, 2012).

The Role of Education The main factor in the lengthening of emerging adulthood is education. Changes in the labor force have put a premium on schooling: Employment opportunities have improved much more for the college-educated than for those without a college degree. Consequently, emerging adults are increasingly pursuing higher education. Some are enrolling in graduate and professional schools that promise great rewards but take additional years of study. Others are completing college, even if that means years of part-time study. In the early 1990s, it was unusual for a 25-year-old to still be in school; but today perhaps one out of six whites and one out of eight blacks of that age are enrolled at least part-time (Fussell & Furstenberg, 2005). Emerging adults who are still in school are more likely to defer decisions about careers and families. Given the increasing acceptance of cohabitation, they may live with a partner until they finish their educations rather than marry. Or they may marry but postpone having children. Although they may be working for pay to help defray the costs of their education, they delay starting on a career ladder until after they have the appropriate degree in hand.

Constrained Opportunities Emerging adults with more limited education take other, usually shorter, paths to reach the traditional markers of adulthood. Most of those who don't graduate from high school, or who graduate but don't go on to college, enter the job market well before their college-bound peers. Some take college courses but don't achieve a bachelor's degree. Their opportunities are more constrained than were the opportunities of similarly educated individuals a half-century ago (Hill & Yeung, 1999). As I will explain in Chapter 4, the movement of manufacturing jobs overseas and the growth of automation have reduced the demand for non-college-educated workers. The kinds of decent-paying blue-collar factory jobs that sustained a generation of workers and their families a half-century ago are in short supply. Sociologists argue that non-college-educated entrants into the labor force often must take "stopgap jobs"—short-term, often part-time jobs such as working at a fast-food restaurant—that give them a modest income for a short time but don't help to develop a career (Oppenheimer, Kalmijn, & Lim, 1997).

Consequently, some non-college-educated adults are postponing marriage not because they are still studying but rather because they (or their prospective marriage partners) don't think their economic prospects are good enough to support a marriage. But forgoing marriage no longer means one must forgo having children because childbearing outside of marriage has become more acceptable. Some emerging adults father, or give birth to, children without marrying. In 2000, 5 percent of white 25-year-olds and 28 percent of black 25-year-olds were unmarried parents. They have made more progress toward traditional markers of adulthood than their childless contemporaries still in school because they have had children and are often working. But their work lives are erratic and usually consist of a series of low- and moderate-paying jobs rather than a career. And they may not marry for a long time, if ever.

Many emerging adults are living independently of their parents, a situation we will examine more closely in Chapter 7. But the probability that an independent emerging adult will move back in with his or her parents—if, for example, he or she loses a job or breaks up with a partner—has increased since the mid-twentieth century (Goldscheider, 1997). This trend toward returning to the nest is another reason why emerging adults often achieve lasting independence—and full adulthood—in fits and starts over a longer period of time. Nevertheless, by age 30 the differences between the college-educated and the less-educated in marriage, parenthood, and employment are smaller. What education does is make a difference in how they got there—how they experience emerging adulthood.

LGBTQ Emerging Adults and Their Families We know less about emerging adulthood among LGBTQ individuals, but a study of white, middle-class gay and lesbian emerging adults during the last half of the twentieth century suggests that they often had ambivalent relations with their parents and other biological kin (Murray, 2010). During the late 1950s, when homosexuality was classified by psychiatrists as a "sociopathic personality disturbance" (Bayer, 1981), gay and lesbian emerging adults were frequently hesitant to tell their parents about their sexual orientation. Fearing rejection and anger, they discreetly kept their sexual lives to themselves when talking with relatives. At a time when gay men could be arrested and imprisoned even for consensual sex (lesbians were less likely to be subject to these laws), some of them married opposite-sex partners in order to publicly lead conventional family lives. Then in the 1960s and 1970s, coming out—publicly declaring one's homosexuality—became possible as liberation movements

(gay, feminist, civil rights) swept the country. But coming out to one's parents remained fraught with potential difficulties for gay and lesbian emerging adults. In some families, parents rejected children who came out to them. In others, parents tacitly acknowledged their child's sexuality but chose not to talk about it.

Yet by the late 1970s and 1980s, a significant number of parents were accepting their children's sexuality. A new organization, Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, grew into a national movement in the 1980s to provide support to gay and lesbian emerging adults. Also in the 1980s, the deadly epidemic of AIDS arose and began to cause the deaths of thousands of gay men per year. Some parents reacted with shock and shame to the news that their child had AIDS, whereas others were sympathetic and comforting (Murray, 2010). As gay men cared for each other and lesbians cared for them (and each other) too, gays and lesbians began to include friends and caregivers as members of their family (Weston, 1991). Throughout the last half of the century, in the words of the historian who studied the topic, the biological family "might be simultaneously alienating and accepting" and it "might combine many elements of oppression and love" (Murray, 2010).

EMERGING ADULTHOOD AND THE LIFE-COURSE PERSPECTIVE

The growing literature on emerging adulthood is a good example of the life-course perspective for several reasons. It focuses on a key transition in the lives of individuals—in this case the lengthening period from adolescence to adulthood. It demonstrates the substantial social changes that have occurred in this stage of life. And importantly, it places that transition in historical perspective by showing the influences of the decline in manufacturing jobs, the growing employment opportunities for the well-educated, and the greater acceptance of cohabitation and childbearing outside of marriage. As they make the transition today, emerging adults steer a course in a different sea than was sailed in the past. Many reach their destinations later, and by different routes, than their parents and grandparents.

Quick Review

- The life-course perspective seeks to study the course of individual lives in historical context.
- Emerging adulthood is the term for an emerging life stage between adolescence and adulthood.
- The pursuit of higher education is the main factor lengthening emerging adulthood.
- Emerging adults without college degrees start the transition to full adulthood sooner.
- LGBTQ emerging adults often had ambivalent relations with their parents and other biological kin.

WHAT HISTORY TELLS US

The history of the family tells us that Americans come from regions of the world that have different family traditions. To some extent, the American mixing bowl blends those traditions together and reduces the differences. The result is that the family lives of today's ethnic and racial groups have more in common than not. Still, the historical record can help us understand some of the variation we see today.

Americans of European ancestry hail from a system that has emphasized the conjugal unit of the married couple and children more than have family systems in other

regions of the world. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European American conjugal families developed a sharp division of labor between the husband, who worked outside the home, and the wife, who by and large worked inside the home. That sharp division, however, broke down in the last half of the twentieth century as more married women entered the workforce. And during the twentieth century, Americans placed increasing weight on personal satisfaction as the standard people should use in judging the quality of their relationships. European American family traditions are important because they have been the basis for American law and custom. For example, American law gives parents nearly exclusive rights over children and gives far less authority to grandparents or other kin.

The family systems of American Indians and of Americans from other regions (such as Latin America, Asia, and Africa) have traditionally placed more emphasis on kin beyond the conjugal family. Sometimes these family systems consisted of tightly organized lineages. Think of the matrilineal tribes of the Hopi. At other times and places, they consisted of extended families in which grandparents, uncles, aunts, and others from both sides of a person's family might contribute to her or his well-being and even share a home. And as the Mexican tradition of *compadrazgo* showed, sometimes individuals without any ties of blood or marriage were recruited into a person's kin network.

Marriage was still central to most of these systems. But married couples were embedded in larger family structures that could provide assistance and support. This tradition of support is important because marriage declined among all American racial and ethnic groups during the last half of the twentieth century, although less among those with college degrees. The weakening of marriage left European American families in a particularly vulnerable position because they had less of a tradition of extended family support to fall back on. The story of recent changes in marriage and family life, and their impact on Americans with different heritages, will be told in subsequent chapters.

Looking Back

1. **What functions have families traditionally performed?** Family and kinship emerged as ways of ensuring the survival of human groups, which were organized as bands of hunter-gatherers until about 10,000 years ago. Until the past 250 years or so, most families performed three basic activities: production, reproduction, and consumption. Most American Indian tribes were organized into lineages and clans that provided the basis for social organization and governing. Colonial American families performed functions such as education that are now performed by schools and other institutions. These kinds of families can be said to follow the familial mode of production. The colonial American family performed many activities that are now done mainly outside the family: educating children, providing vocational training, treating the seriously ill, and so forth.

2. **How did American families change after the United States was founded?** Between 1776 and about 1830, a new kind of family emerged among the white middle class in the United States, one in which marriage was based on affection rather than authority and custom. Over time, the primary role of women in these families became the care of children and the maintenance of the home. Children came to be seen as needing continual affection and guidance, which mothers were thought to be better at providing than

fathers. As families became more centered on children, the number of children they raised declined. At the same time, a movement toward greater individualism weakened parents' influence over their children's marriage decisions and family lives. Working-class families, because of difficult economic circumstances, did not change as much.

3. **How have the family histories of major ethnic and racial groups differed?** Before the Civil War, African slaves married and lived together for life, wherever possible, and knew and kept track of other kin. After the Civil War, discrimination shaped their family lives. For example, out of economic necessity, rural black wives worked in the fields, and urban black wives worked for wages outside the home, more than white wives did. As for Mexican Americans, after U.S. troops and immigrants seized their land, they became more of a working-class community, increasingly confined to *barrios*. Over time, more and more women headed households, in part because their husbands often worked as migratory farm workers. Chinese and Japanese families also faced discrimination. Traditionally patrilineal, their authority over their children has declined over the generations. Filipinos, the second largest Asian immigrant group in the United States today, are descended mostly from people who immigrated in the twentieth century. Filipinos have a bilateral kinship structure more similar to the kinship system of Europeans.

4. **How did the emotional character of the American family change during the early twentieth century?** During the early decades of the twentieth century, rising standards of living allowed for greater attention to an emotionally satisfying private life. As the search for emotional satisfaction through family life became an important goal, the private family emerged. Eventually, the success of marriage came to be defined more in emotional terms than in material terms. People experienced more privacy in their personal lives through the increasingly common empty nest phase of marriage and the rise in the number of individuals living alone.

5. **When did the idea of a sexual identity develop?** The idea that individuals have a coherent sexual identity involving a preference for either opposite-sex or same-sex partners did not exist until the nineteenth century. Before then, though religious doctrine and civil law forbade numerous sexual practices, a person who broke those laws was not thought to have a different personality from people who displayed conventional sexual behavior.

6. **What important changes occurred in marriage and childbearing in the second half of the twentieth century?** In the 1950s, young adults married at earlier ages and the birthrate rose to a twentieth-century high. The baby boom was caused in part by the small cohort size and good economic fortune of the cohort that reached adulthood in the 1950s. In addition, a greater cultural emphasis on marriage and childbearing seems to have been present. The 1950s was the high point of the breadwinner–homemaker family, which was dominant only during the first half of the twentieth century. Since then the trends in marriages, divorces, and births all reversed: Age at marriage increased sharply, the divorce rate doubled, and the birthrate reached its lowest level. Cohabitation became common. Moreover, married women were increasingly likely to work outside the home even when their children were young.

7. **How does the life-course perspective help us to understand social change?** Sociologists examine how the course of individuals' lives is affected by historical events such as the Great Depression of the 1930s or the large rise in divorce rates in the 1960s and 1970s. Because young adults today have better job opportunities if they obtain a college degree, many are postponing marriage and childbearing until they finish their studies. Life-course scholars now use the term "emerging adulthood" for this life stage.

Study Questions

1. How did belonging to a lineage help a family in a tribal, agricultural society?
2. What did the colonial family do that modern families do not? What do modern families do that the colonial family did not?
3. How did marriage change during the late 1700s and early 1800s?
4. What were the costs and benefits to women of their restriction to the "women's sphere"?

5. In what ways did the scope of the "private family" increase after 1900?
6. In what ways was family life in the 1950s distinctive compared to earlier or later in the century?
7. Why didn't the decline of parental death lead to an increase in children living with both parents?
8. What does it mean to take a "life-course perspective" on the study of social change?
9. Why is the concept of "emerging adulthood" appearing now rather than 50 or 100 years ago?

Key Terms

1965 Immigration Act 48
American Indian 37
baby boom 55
barrio 46
bilateral kinship 48
birth cohort 55
cohabitation 57
compadrazgo 46
conjugal family 39
emerging adulthood 60
extended family 39
labor force 60
life-course perspective 59
lineage 38
matrilineal 38
mestizo 46
patrilineal 38
sexual identity 50

Thinking about Families

The Public Family	The Private Family
Why were the American family's public responsibilities much broader in the colonial period than is the case today?	**Why are emotional satisfaction, intimacy, and romantic love more important in American family life today than they were 100 years ago?**

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