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Variations, Combinations,
and Evolutions*Latino Families in the United States*

AÍDA HURTADO

Latinos of differing national origins have different histories, structural and cultural integration, and regional residence. Only recently has this heterogeneity been taken into account in the study of their family lives. For the last 20 years, research on Latino families has primarily focused on Mexican descendants (for extensive reviews see Miller, 1979; Mirandé, 1977; Staples & Mirandé, 1980; Vasquez & Gonzalez, 1981; Vega, 1990; Zapata & Jaramillo, 1981). During this time Mexican descendants made up the majority of Latinos, with Puerto Ricans constituting the second-largest group. However, although the Mexican-origin group still constitutes the majority, there has been a dramatic increase in the Latino population, primarily through new immigration from Mexico and the rest of Latin America (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991). Most Latinos reside in California (7.7 million of the total national Hispanic population of 22.4 million). A recent statewide survey of Latino heads of households found that immigrants outnumbered Latinos born in the United States (65% versus 35%, respectively) (Hurtado, Hayes-Bautista, Valdez, & Hernández, 1992).

The large number of Latino immigrants have joined neighborhoods populated by U.S.-born Latinos and older immigrants. Consequently,

family patterns, cultural practices and values, and socioeconomic integration are in a state of transition for Latinos as a whole. Latinos of different national origins are intermarrying, which creates a commingling of cultures, histories, and socioeconomic backgrounds among groups that have considerable similarities. These recent developments have only been touched on in the current research on Latino families, as most studies still focus on Mexican descendants.

In this chapter, I review the research on Latino families from 1980 to 1992 to update the most recent reviews. I make reference to research prior to 1980 only to elucidate our understanding of the current work on Latino families. I use the term *Latino* to designate all groups whose ethnicity originates in Latin America (e.g., Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans). For purposes of accuracy, throughout this review I use the ethnic label used in the source reviewed. This is also the case with non-Hispanic Whites, who are referred to as Anglos in most of the research. In my own conclusions I use the terms *Chicano* to refer to U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, *Mexican* for immigrants, and *Mexican descendants* for both Chicanos and Mexicans. Because most research has focused on the Mexican-origin population, this review is heavily slanted toward this group, although whenever the studies permit, I do generalize their findings to Latino families.

I begin by reviewing the assimilation framework, which is the most widely used perspective in studying Latino families. I then turn to the underclass model, the current version of the deficiency model that flourished in the 1960s and was used to explain Latino families' lack of assimilation. However, the structural and social changes that took place from the 1970s to the present have affected all families, resulting in expanding definitions of *family* to include the characteristics of Latino and African American families. To a certain extent the changing definitions of family legitimated the ways Latino families accomplished their functions differently from Anglo, middle-class families. The functionalist reevaluation of Chicano families proved to be an important impetus to further study of Latino families and inclusion of gender and race as central to the analysis. However, there is already a critique of the functionalist reevaluation because of the assumptions about gender that adherents to this approach take in their studies. Chicana feminists have been at the forefront of this critique and have been instrumental in pushing forward the study of Latino family life.

One of the most promising research directions is the structural deficiency model, in which Latinos' socioeconomic position and history are an integral part of how their family lives are examined. I conclude by proposing several paths for future research.

The Effects of Assimilation on Latino Families

The predominant framework for understanding ethnic families in general, and Latino families in particular, has been assimilation. Generally, assimilation is defined as acquiring the language, values, and behaviors of the dominant group. Gordon (1964) specified seven dimensions to the assimilation process (cultural, behavioral, structural, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional, and civic assimilation). This framework implies that Chicanos and other Latinos will make the same adaptations to structural changes as European immigrants at the turn of the century (O'Guinn, Imperia, & MacAdams, 1987). The assimilation framework, however, ignores the fact that Latinos and European immigrants started from a different economic base, as well as different cultural values and history (Ybarra, 1983). Although Latino families are also undergoing significant restructuring, it is not at all obvious that their adaptations are simply imitating the dominant group of Anglos. For example, Norma Williams (1990) found that Chicano families in Texas, regardless of social class, still provided for their members the regeneration of culture, values, and worldview. However, she noted that cultural values, as well as the content and frequency of cultural rituals, have changed considerably from generation to generation.

Latino families are not entirely bounded by tradition, as stated in the anthropological research of the 1950s (Heller, 1966; Madsen, 1973; Rubel, 1966). They are dynamic and must grapple with structural changes, such as the increased employment of women (Saenz, Goudy, & Lorenz, 1989; Zavella, 1984, 1987), the increased educational achievement of their children, and the consequences of migration within different Latino communities in the United States (Rogler & Cooney, 1984). However, these adaptations to change have been creative and built on their preexisting historical and cultural base. Williams (1990) found that most of her working-class respondents considered themselves religious and attended church, but they did not perceive religion to be central in the workplace or in the school, as

most of their children attended public schools. Similarly, in a recent statewide survey of California heads of household, 90% of the 1,086 respondents agreed that women have a right to birth control and 71% agreed that women have a right to an abortion (Hurtado et al., 1992). Also, Jorgensen and Adams (1988) found that among Mexican American women, their attitudes about future fertility decisions had a stronger influence over their future behavior than adherence to their ethnic group's norms. This was true even for Catholic women.

Another way to examine assimilation has been to measure what is called traditional sex-role attitudes. From this perspective, Latinos have more rigid definitions of the appropriate behaviors for women and men, which result in a variety of outcomes. The most current empirical research consistently fails to show a relationship between sex-role attitudes and a variety of behaviors. For example, Ortiz and Cooney (1984) found no relationship between Hispanic women's labor force participation and their traditional sex-role attitudes, even for first-generation Hispanic women, who, as a group, adhered more closely to traditional views of sex-role behaviors. Instead, Hispanic women who had more education were more likely to be employed than those women with less education who were married with children. Similarly, Soto and Shaver (1982) found that the sex-role traditionalism of Puerto Rican women did not directly affect their psychosomatic symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, and hostility. Rather, assertiveness, a psychological characteristic not necessarily related to a specific ethnic group, was directly related to psychosomatic symptoms. Furthermore, with the same sample of Puerto Rican women, Soto (1983) found that the more educated women were less traditional than the less educated women, regardless of the number of generations in the United States. Even the most educated women in her sample, however, reported that their parents had been more strict than non-Puerto Rican parents regarding dating, curfews, and going out with friends.

The concept of *acculturation* has been used many times as a synonym for assimilation. Several acculturation scales have been validated on Latino populations and are based largely on an individual's English dominance (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Padilla, 1980). Researchers who integrated this conceptual and empirical refinement in their studies still found that the internal functioning of families was not affected by acculturation; rather, the families' interaction with outside institutions (such as schools) changed as families

become more acculturated. These findings make sense because the English language is necessary for families to interact with the institutions outside the home (Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989). Three areas of family life that remained unaffected by acculturation were the ability of social support networks to enhance or to hamper the psychological well-being of dual-earner Mexican American families, the amount of the husband's power within a marriage, and how decisions get made in marriage (Cooney, Rogler, Hurrell, & Ortiz, 1982; Holtzman & Gilbert, 1987).

Even the intermarriage of Mexican Americans and Anglos does not seem to be an absolute index of acculturation. Mexican American spouses, some of whom are third generation in the United States, still identified as Mexican origin, spoke some Spanish, and taught Mexican culture and history to their children (Salgado de Snyder, López, & Padilla, 1982). More than two thirds of adolescents (69.8%) who came from interethnic families of Anglos and Mexican Americans still identified themselves as Mexican-origin, while the rest identified themselves as "American." A large number of the respondents spoke some Spanish (82.9%) and listened to Spanish-language radio (71.5%). Overall, adolescents from interethnic marriages were not conflicted about their "mixed" heritage, had very positive views about their Mexican background, and did not want to assimilate. Simultaneously, they did not express a preference for marrying someone of Mexican origin or for having best friends of Mexican descent.

Many researchers assumed that assimilation to Anglo values alone would determine whether Chicanas work outside the home. In her study of the impact of "Sun Belt industrialization" on 22 Chicanas and their families in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Zavella (1984) found that, contrary to an assimilation framework, women disclosed a strong commitment to their jobs and said that their employment had a significant effect on their family's finances. However, their overall values and ideology about family did not change completely to match Anglos. Rather, some aspects of their views about family changed and others did not. How and in what direction they changed was based on the women's particular work histories, job satisfaction, their monetary contributions to their families, and the demands at home. Furthermore, Saenz et al. (1989) found that unlike Anglo women, employment alone did not decrease depression for Mexican American women. Only Mexican American women with higher-prestige jobs reported lower levels of depression, whereas Mexican American women with low-

prestige jobs reported higher levels of depression than those women *not* working. This difference between Anglo and Mexican American women may be related to the fact that Mexican Americans have more positive views of housewives than Anglos, which in turn may be due to the fact that Mexican American women's access to employment is limited to low-wage, low-prestige, repetitive jobs. However, both Anglo and Mexican American women were more satisfied with their marriages and reported less depression when husbands contributed their share to the upkeep of the household.

Baca Zinn (1982c) found significant differences *entre dicho y hecho* (between what is said and what is done) in her study of Chicano families. Wives who stayed at home did most of the household tasks and had less influence over family decisions than wives who worked outside the home. However, all husbands and wives believed that authority should rest in the husband/father of the family, regardless of wives' employment status. Baca Zinn (1982c) concluded that employed wives openly challenged their husbands' dominance at the behavioral level while still adhering to the "ideology of patriarchy." However, rather than attributing behavioral changes to increased assimilation by Chicana women in the workforce, she explained them as deliberate acts by Chicanas to protect their families from a society that discriminates and subordinates all Chicanos, not just women. This is a much more sophisticated conceptual development in deciphering the complexities of cultural and economic adaptation to subordination than a simple model of assimilation from Mexican culture to Anglo culture.

Many researchers still use the assimilation framework to account for behavioral and attitudinal changes in the family lives of Latinos. Unlike previous research, however, lack of assimilation is not portrayed as a negative characteristic but merely as a fact of social existence. The current assimilation literature identifies different dimensions of family life among Latinos and compares them to those of Anglo families. When differences between Latinos and Anglos are observed in the direction predicted by the assimilation framework, the change is attributed to Latinos becoming more like Anglos, and therefore becoming more "modern" than "traditional." Furthermore, any behavior that seems to move from "pathological" to "normal" is also attributed to Latinos becoming more like Anglos; whether it is Mexican American women voting more often than in the past or husbands contributing to household chores, all are explained as a

result of acculturation to dominant Anglo culture (MacManus, Bullock, & Grothe, 1986).

The results in the research using the assimilation framework usually indicate that in some spheres there are "cultural changes" and in others there are not. The limitations of the assimilation framework become apparent when most researchers are unable to fully explain the contradictory pattern of results. For example, Triandis, Marín, and Hui (1984) found that non-Hispanics perceived less emotional support within the family and experienced less hierarchy and conflict in work roles than did Hispanics, but the authors were unable to explain this pattern of results, other than to suggest that Hispanics were more family oriented and less attached to their "work roles" than non-Hispanics.

Unfortunately, the assimilation framework often uses global ethnic categories, such as "Hispanic" versus "mainstream" population, without considering the internal heterogeneity of the Hispanic group, either by specific Latino-group membership, language, and socioeconomic status or number of generations in the United States. All of these factors have been found to be significant for many dimensions of Latino social life, such as identity, voting patterns, and ethnic socialization (Hurtado & Gurin, 1987; Hurtado, Gurin, & Peng, 1994; Hurtado, Rodríguez, Gurin, & Beals, 1993). In addition, the global category of Hispanic and the mainstream group often include African Americans and individuals with varying degrees of education and different work status (Triandis et al., 1984). Consequently, when familial "cultural" differences are found, it is difficult to know which of the many variables is causing the differences reported.

Puerto Ricans, in particular, illustrate the complexity of cultural adaptation. As citizens of the United States, they move freely between Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland, undergoing a variety of cultural transitions in the process. Rogler and Cooney (1984) indicate in their intergenerational study of Puerto Ricans involved in this type of migration that:

The new setting creates a set of life circumstances never before experienced by the immigrant Puerto Ricans, and New York City's [where the majority of Puerto Ricans migrate] immense size and structural complexity impose upon them new and unfamiliar patterns and demands, such as the need to learn a new language and relegation to the status of a minority group. (p. 5)

As an example of the cultural continuity/discontinuity between Puerto Ricans on the island and Puerto Ricans in the United States, Procidiano and Rogler (1989) found that Puerto Rican couples in Puerto Rico and New York City married similar partners based on their education, age, and culture-specific values, such as the degree of acceptance of familism and fatalism. Although Puerto Rican couples in Puerto Rico were more likely to endorse familism and fatalism, these values were still used by their New York counterparts in the selection of spouses. These researchers concluded that "the sociocultural dislocations, previously attributed to the migration experience, do not disrupt the social processes underlying marital homogamy" (p. 353).

However, cultural adaptation by Latinos is not a linear process determined by length of residence in the United States (Chapa, 1988). Instead, cultural adaptation varies by socioeconomic status, number of generations in the United States, and the ability to speak Spanish and English (Hurtado et al., 1993; Rogler, Cooney, & Ortiz, 1980).

Latino Family Life Unaffected by Assimilation

There are several areas in which Latinos indeed exhibit *intragroup* (between different Latino groups) and *intergroup* (between Latinos and Anglos) variation but not necessarily in a linear fashion, as predicted by the assimilation framework. These include ethnic identity, familism, and Spanish-language maintenance.

ETHNIC IDENTITY

Chicanos and other Latinos retain a strong sense of ethnic identity, regardless of the number of generations in the United States (Hurtado et al., 1992, 1993). Although the ethnic labels that are chosen may vary by generation and by language, overall ethnic identification remains. In fact, the pattern of ethnic identification for different Latino groups typically stems from their national origins, changing at most to a bicultural identification that includes the United States. For example, looking at Puerto Rican families who had migrated to New York, Rogler and Cooney (1991) found that although the parents and their adult children varied on how much they identified as purely

Puerto Rican, not one mother, father, or adult child identified only as North American.

Rogler et al. (1980) also found that structural integration, as measured by education, had an effect on the different components of identity for parents, but *not* for their adult children (whose educational achievement was related only to knowledge of English). For adult children of Puerto Rican parents, education was not related in a linear fashion to subjective affiliation; language spoken to family, friends, and neighbors; mass media language usage; or attitudinal cultural preferences. That is,

ethnic identity among both parents and children is related to variation in education, from no schooling through high school graduation, but additional years of schooling beyond high school graduation are not significant. . . . The ethnic identity of those who had attended college, graduated from college, or went on to postgraduate training is not significantly different from the ethnic identity of those who had only graduated from high school. (p. 211)

Age of arrival in the United States is of greater significance than education for ethnic identification. Generally, the younger the child (preschool versus early adolescence), the more likely he or she is to have a bicultural identity. However, the endpoint of immigrant children's adaptation to the United States is not total rejection of their ethnic origins and complete assimilation to the Anglo mainstream; rather the endpoint is a stable biculturalism (Rogler et al., 1980). Similar results have been found with third-generation Chicanos (Hurtado et al., 1993). Moreover, ethnic identification is manifested as a strong sense of community and allegiance to Latino issues (Williams, 1990).

FAMILISM

Latinos, regardless of their national origins (e.g., Mexican American, Central American, Cuban American, Puerto Rican), report a strong commitment to family. Certain dimensions of familism are stronger than others with each successive generation in the United States. For example, regardless of acculturation levels, Latinos perceive a high level of family support and desire geographical closeness to their families (Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Sabogal, Marín, & Otero-Sabogal, 1987). Other dimensions of familism decrease with increas-

ing levels of acculturation, for example, using family members as role models exclusively and needing to be the only source of material and emotional support to members of their extended family (Rogler & Cooney, 1991). However, even among the most acculturated individuals, Latinos' attitudes and behaviors are still more familistic than Anglos.

Several researchers have attributed the difference between the familism of Anglos and Mexican Americans to their different definitions of "sufficient interaction" between family members and to Mexican Americans' extended definition of family membership. Whereas Anglos do not consider it necessary to have frequent face-to-face interaction with kin or to live geographically close to them, Mexican Americans are more likely than Anglos to live near their families and less likely to rely on letters or long-distance phone calls to maintain family ties (Keefe, 1984). Moreover, Mexican Americans include among their kin *compadres* and *comadres* (godparents) and may also include other community members, for example, elderly persons who may hold positions of respect within their neighborhood, as part of the family (Rothman, Gant, & Hnat, 1985; Vidal, 1988).

Familistic attitudes are also manifested in the household structure of Latinos. On average, families of Mexican descendants contain 4.1 persons, 35% contain more than 5, and 1 in every 5 families has 6 or more persons (Angel & Tienda, 1982b). However, household structure also varies by the number of generations Latinos have resided in the United States. For example, Chávez (1985) found that compared to undocumented workers from Mexico, legal immigrants rarely lived in households with unmarried siblings, and they almost never lived with friends in the same household. The majority of legal immigrants lived in nuclear family households (71.4% of the sample from San Diego, California), while less than half of the undocumented immigrants (43.5%) had this type of living arrangement. Single undocumented immigrants marry and eventually have other kin join them, creating extended family networks.

Extent and type of familism is also influenced by the place where Latinos live. Researchers have consistently found that Puerto Rican families in New York, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and in Miami have intense contact with their kin (Pelto, Roman, & Liriano, 1982). But Puerto Rican families in Hartford, Connecticut, exhibited great variation in the extent they relied on kin for material and social support.

Thus, Pelto et al. (1982) advocated studying Latino families within "ecological settings" to fully capture the different adaptations Latino families make in their surroundings.

Comparison between different racial/ethnic groups is also important in defining the phenomenon of familism. For example, Mindel (1980) found that in an inner-city sample of Anglos, Mexican Americans, and African Americans from Kansas City, Missouri, Mexican Americans were the most familistic both in attitudes and behavior, African Americans were in the middle, and Anglos were the least familistic. In addition, African Americans and Mexican Americans used extended family networks in different ways. Although African Americans had less interaction with their families than Mexican Americans, African Americans were more likely to use their kin for instrumental purposes, such as material aid, whereas Mexican Americans used their kin for more social and emotional support.

Although the manifestation of familism among Latinos has changed over time and geographical setting, a substantial body of research shows that Latinos not only "ascribe to familistic norms, but practice them" (Gratton, 1987). In fact, counter to what assimilation theory would predict, recent cross-sectional studies indicate that familism, and therefore social support, increases with each generation living in the United States (Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Ramirez & Arce, 1981). However, there are gender differences in the behavioral manifestation of familism. Thus, women in the family tend to be relied on for help on health matters, whereas men are relied on for home repairs and upkeep. Same-sex family members are relied on for financial issues and personal problems, and feelings of solidarity are greater with same-sex family members as well.

In a related study, women helped when the tasks were defined as "women's work," such as caring for the sick (Markides, Boldt, & Ray, 1986). Familism may in fact reinforce the gender subordination of women by placing a disproportionate burden on them, especially as they grow older. For example, Perez (1986) found that Cuban elderly in trigenerational households provided services such as child care and contributed whatever retirement income they had to the household. Furthermore, in certain areas of the country, such as San Antonio, Texas, trigenerational families constitute 40% of the Mexican American population age 65 to 85. Latino families living in trigenerational households are not uncommon, and appreciation of

this fact will become increasingly important for understanding Latino family life.

SPANISH-LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE

Latino families experience considerable transition from Spanish to English language usage with each successive generation in the United States. Using cross-sectional data, Arce (1982) found that parents usually spoke Spanish to their own parents, Spanish and English to their siblings, and more English than Spanish to their own children. However, those children still had competence in Spanish, indicating a transition not into monolingualism in English, but to stable bilingualism in English and Spanish. The high maintenance of Spanish language within Latino families may be explained by their positive attitudes toward their language and by the desire to preserve it as one of the most important aspects of Latino culture (Hurtado & Gurin, 1987).

Research has also shown that Spanish competence, unlike other aspects of Latino culture, actually increases with structural integration. Hazuda, Stern, and Haffner (1988) found that Chicanos residing in the affluent Northside of San Antonio were more proficient in understanding, speaking, and reading Spanish than were residents of the less affluent Westside barrios.

Issues of Spanish-language maintenance within Latino families will become even more important than in the past as the number of Spanish speakers increases as a result of immigration from Mexico and Latin America.

Current Conceptualizations of Pathology: The Underclass Model

The underclass model is one of the most recent policy frameworks used to explain the position of racial/ethnic households in the United States (Schorr & Schorr, 1988). The current underclass model is a new and "improved" version of the assimilation framework: It extends the culture-of-poverty thesis that contends the poor have a different way of life than the Anglo mainstream of society and that these cultural differences explain continued poverty. There are three culprits in the

underclass model's explanation for the poverty experienced by minority populations: culture, family, and welfare (Baca Zinn, 1989). The major argument is that the culture of Latinos (and of other racial/ethnic groups) is responsible for their lack of economic advancement because these groups' values are characterized by low aspirations, excessive masculinity, and the acceptance of female-headed families as the norm.

There is substantial evidence that the cultural deficiency version of the underclass model is seriously flawed (Tienda, 1989). For example, current empirical evidence refutes the notion that poverty is caused by cultural values and passed on from one generation to another (Baca Zinn, 1989). First, there is a high turnover of individual families in poverty. That is, although the number of people in poverty remains about the same, the poor people in one year are not necessarily the poor of the following year. In simpler terms, welfare families do not reproduce welfare offspring (Corcoran, Duncan, Gurin, & Gurin, 1985). Second, motivation cannot be linked to poverty. Such measures as parental sense of efficacy, future orientation, and achievement motivation have no effect on welfare dependency (Hill & Ponza, 1983). Economic opportunities are necessary for the expression of people's motivation. Ambition alone does not catapult individuals out of poverty. Furthermore, poverty is not the result of female-headed households but rather the result of the breakup of *poor* two-parent households (Bane, 1986). For Anglo families, marital dissolution does result in increased poverty among female-headed households. Put more poignantly, African American children in two-parent households have less income than Anglo children in mother-only households (Baca Zinn, 1989; Hill, 1983). Variations in welfare payments across states are not related to systematic variations in family structure, such as female-headed households and number of children (Darity & Meyers, 1984; Ellwood, 1988; Ellwood & Summers, 1986). In effect, the changing nature of the family in society at large has set the context for the reevaluation of the Latino family in particular.

THE CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-HISPANIC WHITE FAMILIES

Non-Hispanic White families have changed dramatically since the early 1960s, when the lack of assimilation that resulted in the cultural deficit model flourished as the preferred explanation for Latinos' and other racial/ethnic groups' lack of economic advancement. Families

from the dominant culture no longer look the way they did in the 1950s or early 1960s. Massive cultural and economic changes have modified Anglo families to look more like racial/ethnic families: more female-headed households, higher rates of divorce, more children living in poverty, and higher school dropout rates (Staples & Mirandé, 1980).

As Baca Zinn (1990) observes,

As social and economic changes produce new family arrangements, a family pluralism, if you will, has broadened the definition of what constitutes a family. Although many of these family alternatives appear new to middle-class Anglo Americans, they are actually variants of family patterns within ethnic communities. Presented as the new lifestyles of the mainstream, they are, in fact, the same lifestyles that have in the past been deemed pathological, deviant, or unacceptable when observed in Black families. (p. 79)

Married Anglo women are now participating in the labor force at a rate that, until recently, was seen exclusively among women of color (Smith, 1987). The consequence has been Anglo women's decrease in fertility and changes in marriage patterns. Anglo women marry late, have fewer children, and live alone or as heads of their own households (Hartmann, 1987). Different family arrangements include non-marital cohabitation, single-parent households, extended kinship units, and expanded households, dual wage-earner families, commuter marriages, gay and lesbian households, and collectives (Baca Zinn, 1990). Of foremost importance in advancing these changes has been the feminist movement, the gay movement, and the changing labor market.

The Functionalist Reevaluation of Chicano Families

The dramatic changes in structure experienced by dominant families happened primarily during the 1970s and early 1980s, providing a practical and theoretical aperture for reexamining all racial/ethnic families. Most scholars undertaking this "revisionist scholarship" were Chicanos. Their focus was exclusively on Chicano families because Latino immigration at this time had not reached its current rate. Revisionist scholars unwittingly followed Parsons and Bales's (1955) functionalist approach to the study of families. From a functionalist theoretical framework,

the "modern" nuclear family—the husband working while wife stays at home model—is viewed not only as an inevitable consequence of "modernization," but as the institution best suited to perform society's most vital functions: the socialization of children and the stabilization of adult personalities. (Pierce, 1984, p. 93)

Chicano scholars asserted that there were cultural variations in how these functions were carried out (Mirandé & Enriquez, 1979; Montiel, 1970). Chicano families, like Anglo families, indeed carried out these functions, but they performed them within the context of Chicano culture.

In general, scholars in ethnic studies took the lead in providing a functionalist reevaluation of racial/ethnic families in the United States. They approached the project by documenting how the family characteristics of Chicanos were the result of specific historical events and cultural processes. The experience of conquest, in particular, resulted in cultural adaptations to subordination that included a strong sense of family and collective commitment to their group for economic survival. Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the functional reevaluation of Latino families was to highlight that although Latino families live in poverty, they do not have many of the characteristics delineated in the underclass model, such as high divorce rates (Moore, 1989). Their traditional family characteristics, however, have not resulted in increased economic advancement (Hayes-Bautista, Hurtado, Valdez, & Hernández, 1992). The underclass model assumes that the gendered division of labor, with men being the providers and women the homemakers, is the preferred familial arrangement to solve poverty (Baca Zinn, 1982a; Comas-Díaz & Duncan, 1985). Latinos fit this model to a certain extent, but the overriding goal to keep their families together has forced Latina women to underplay their concerns.

The Feminist Critique of the Functionalist Approach to Studying Chicano Families

The functionalist reevaluation of Chicano families, however, was reactive. At the core of this analysis was the rebuttal of previously derogated characteristics, such as familism, mutual aid, and cooperation. The functionalist reevaluation did not result in elucidating the

internal dynamics of Chicano family life, but instead perpetuated the stereotypical views of Chicano families by simply recasting the previously described negative characteristics as positive ones. However, revisionist scholars did make an enormous contribution by beginning to delineate how the negative characteristics attributed to Chicano families might be ways to cope with structural barriers, such as racism and labor force discrimination, rather than cultural deficits. Nonetheless, many questions remained unanswered because they fell outside the functionalist analysis and therefore might present a "dysfunctional" picture of Chicanos' internal family dynamics. Of foremost importance is the position of women within Latino families.

Chicana feminists have been at the forefront of the critique of the functionalist perspective on Chicano families (Andrade, 1982; Baca Zinn, 1980, 1982b, 1982c; Pesquera, 1984; Ybarra, 1982b). Their work has challenged the notion that Chicano families are exempt from sexism because Chicanas have power within the domestic sphere:

Her [the Chicana's] domestic role is not passive. She is charged with the essential familial functions . . . transmission of values and beliefs to the next generation and the provision of needed warmth, support and affection for family members. . . . Men have power and authority relative to outside institutions and women are responsible for the daily affairs of the family. (Mirandé & Enriquez, 1979, pp. 116-117)

The assertion that Chicanas are separate but equal within Chicano families, however, was challenged by researchers who focused on the internal dynamics of Chicano families. For example, Chicanas' and other Latinas' authority to participate in family decisions increased as a result of working outside the home, not as a result of Latino men in these families voluntarily relinquishing power (Baca Zinn, 1980; Coney et al., 1982; Pesquera, 1984; Ybarra, 1982b). Furthermore, Chicanas' and other Latinas' position in the labor force placed them in a disadvantaged relationship to men so that their ability to make life decisions about marriage, children, and career was severely limited. Their experience of "triple oppression" because of class, race, and gender is not adequately accounted for in the functionalist reevaluation of the Chicano family (Segura, 1984).

Women's Issues Within the Context of the Latino Families

Overall, our understanding of Latino/Chicano families has been most advanced in the study of gender relations. Researchers have begun to portray an accurate picture of Latino family life by focusing on Latinos' conceptions of womanhood and manhood and their relationship to structural variables such as participation in the labor force. This approach has resulted in focusing on family phenomena such as marital decision making (Baca Zinn, 1980; Cooney et al., 1982; Rogler & Cooney, 1991; Ybarra, 1982b), gender subordination within the family (Comas-Diaz, 1988; Pesquera, 1984), conceptions of masculinity (Mirandé, 1988b; Baca Zinn, 1982a) and femininity (Comas-Diaz & Duncan, 1985), and the role of fathers in the socialization of children (Bronstein, 1984; Mirandé, 1988b; Nieto, 1983). The focus on gender averted the persistent conceptual cul de sac where Latino families are either a tangle of pathology or an undifferentiated human mass of collective values. Instead, gender studies view Latino families as a relational unit where power between men and women is negotiated and a unit where structural forces, such as racism and labor market segmentation, affect family members. Furthermore, the most recent scholarship on Latino families refuses to categorize the family as "either a refuge or an institution determined by relations of production, [but as] both" (Baca Zinn, 1983, p. 142).

As a result, a considerable amount of research now examines the distribution of power within Latino households (Cooney et al., 1982; N. Williams, 1990; Zavella, 1985). For example, N. Williams found that both men and women took it for granted that significant changes had occurred between generations. Even those working-class husbands who had expressed traditional views of marriage expected their wives to work outside the home and depended on their spouses' incomes to sustain their standard of living, as well as advance their aspirations of upward mobility in the educational and the occupational spheres.

Researchers have also begun to examine how Latina women exert their authority over their bodies. Amaro (1988) found evidence to counter the stereotypes that Mexican American women are dominated by Catholic doctrine, passive in fertility decisions, and desirous of large families. Instead, she found that the women in her sample (83.1%) used contraception (even though most of them [81.6%] were

Catholic) and did not want more children (66.7%); some (11.1%) wished that they had fewer children, and almost all the women (91.1%) felt that the woman (not the man) should make the final decision whether to use contraception or not. These results were independent of the women's acculturation levels.

Obviously, there are salient contradictions between the competing economic demands that force women into the labor force and the demand that they remain loyal to outmoded norms for proper "female" conduct. Women are more likely to feel the contradiction when they join the public realm, such as when they enter the labor force or when they become politically involved. For example, in her study of Chicana cannery workers, Zavella (1985) found that husbands complained that their wives' political organizing at work took too much time and resulted in their wives neglecting their families.

The contradiction between economic and educational accomplishment and "proper" conduct for women is especially salient for Latina who pursue higher education. Chicanas who are strongly ethnically identified and would prefer to marry within their own group are more likely to experience psychological stress and to perceive their educational achievements as threatening Chicano men. Chicanas who either are not ethnically identified or are willing to marry outside their ethnic group do not experience stress as a result of their educational achievements (Gonzalez, 1988). Zambrana and Frith (1988) also found that Mexican American women's professional satisfaction is not related to whether they are single, with a partner only, with children only, or with partner and children. In fact, the women who experienced most professional stress were single women, and the women with partner and children experienced the least. The most personally satisfied, however, were the women with partners only. These authors (1988) propose that this group of women are benefiting from the loosening of the norms requiring them to have children and instead enjoy the careers and their family lives with their partners.

To be sure, family now has a broader definition, but there are still racial meanings that create a hierarchy in which some family forms are privileged and others are subordinated (Baca Zinn, 1990). Therefore, much of the latest research on Latino families, produced mostly by scholars in ethnic studies, proposes a framework that integrates class, race, culture, and gender to fully understand the family lives of Latinos.

Structural Deficiency Model

The emergent structural deficiency paradigm explains the diversity of family structures as related to but not causing the social location of people of color. Latino families, like other ethnic families, developed their adaptations in a historical context of labor exploitation. Social institutions were organized to support Anglo families and their family structure, which encouraged and rewarded women for staying at home (with all the disadvantages that entailed). However, the social function of Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups was primarily to provide a source of cheap labor, regardless of the consequences for family life. Under these circumstances a diversity of family structures developed simultaneously (Griswold del Castillo, 1984). In this view, the characteristics of racial/ethnic families are adaptations to structural limitations and sources of strength, rather than of deviance. More important, the differences are not necessarily caused by cultural differences, but rather they are adaptations and resistance to the economic facts of group membership. The most recent research from this perspective focuses on how particular family adaptations are the result of culture and class. Furthermore, as Baca Zinn (1990) indicates:

With respect to single-parent families, teenage childbirth, working mothers, and a host of other behaviors, Black families and other racial/ethnic families serve as barometers of social change and as forerunners of adaptive patterns that will be progressively experienced by the more privileged sectors of American society. (p. 79)

Indeed, several studies have already shown that when social class is held constant, there is little variation in the family dynamics of Mexican American and Anglo families on several dimensions.

To be sure, disentangling the effects of race, class, culture, and gender is a promising direction for future research on families. No longer will research results be attributed to particular racial/ethnic groups; rather, the focus will be on the social contexts that produce specific family patterns.

Future Directions for Research

Three areas of Latino family life have remained virtually unexamined: sexuality, intermarriage among different racial/ethnic Latino

groups other than Anglos, and the elderly. Issues of sexuality and the negotiation of sexual orientation, such as how Latino gays and lesbians are treated within Latino families and Latino communities, have not been the focus of Latino family research. Similarly, how does ethnicity influence the subjective meanings of masculinity and femininity (Baca Zinn, 1982a). References to sexuality are made when related issues are under study (Amaro, 1988), but there are no studies in the social sciences *per se* in the area of sexuality and Latino families (Almaguer, 1991). For example, the fact that Latino families restrict their daughters' sexuality is used as an indicator of Latino families' traditionalism in comparison to Anglo families (Soto, 1983). Or normative restrictions on sexuality are mentioned when they have implications for the psychotherapies used with Latina women (Espín, 1984). Family scholars, however, have not specifically focused on how Latino families negotiate sexuality. Theoretical analyses of sexuality among Latinos are based on historical, literary, philosophical, and autobiographic materials (see, among others, Alarcón, 1981; Almaguer, 1991; Arguella & Rich, 1984; Bruce-Novoa, 1986). However, the empirical base for the study of sexuality within the context of Latino families is virtually nonexistent (Almaguer, 1991; Amaro, 1988).

Intermarriage is also another important area for future research. The focus of most work has been on marriages between Anglos and Mexican-origin individuals. However, future research will have to address intermarriage between individuals from different Latino groups and its implications for ethnic identification and ethnic socialization of children. Recent work suggests that perhaps there is an emerging ethnic identity that is indeed *Latino*, rather than based on a specific Latino group such as Puerto Rican, Mexican, Salvadoran, and so on.

The intergenerational family is not uncommon among Latinos, and little is known of how family dynamics are enhanced or hampered by the presence of more than one generation in the household. Sotomayor (1989) proposes three major functions that elderly family members can perform in an intergenerational household:

1. The socialization of younger household members
2. The provision of emotional support
3. The transmission of Latino culture and language

However, there are insufficient empirical studies to assess whether, in fact, these functions are accomplished in intergenerational families.

and whether Latino families are different from other racial/ethnic families in the United States.

Conclusions

There has been considerable advancement in our understanding of Latino families. The evidence is overwhelming that all groups of Latinos have a strong commitment to maintaining their language, culture, and ethnic identity. Furthermore, regardless of their national origins, all groups of Latinos want their children to maintain their cultural traditions and language, regardless of the number of generations in the United States. Although Latino groups vary in their knowledge and degree of exclusive identification with their ethnic group, no study of ethnic identification and cultural maintenance has found individuals who identify exclusively as Anglo or as North American (Hurtado et al., 1993; Rogler et al., 1980). Cultural and language transition does occur, but it takes the form of a stable biculturalism rather than complete assimilation into the dominant mainstream. Furthermore, whereas actual cultural knowledge and skills in reading and writing Spanish may decline with each subsequent generation in the United States, a strong ethnic loyalty remains, which may be mobilized to reacquire some of the cultural awareness lost in younger generations (Padilla, 1980). In conclusion, levels of acculturation and/or assimilation are unrelated to levels of ethnic identification, language maintenance, shared decision making in marriage, and husbands' power within the home (Cooney et al., 1982).

Immigration from Latin America is likely to continue and research indicates that its status as documented (or undocumented) affects the structure of households, child care arrangements, and labor force participation (Chávez, 1985). The continuing influx of immigrants to the United States from Mexico and other Latin American countries reminds U.S.-born Latinos of the differences in socialization processes in the United States and the rest of Latin America. Future research will have to have at its core an understanding of the sociodemographic realities of the Latino population. Immigrant status (documented versus undocumented) and number of generations in the United States are important in determining the internal dynamics of family life.

Scholars have developed a strong theoretical argument for why it is necessary to take into account race, ethnicity, and social class in the

study of families. Unfortunately, with very few exceptions, racial/ethnic families are still compared to Anglo families without attention to class variation. Furthermore, research on Latino families has for the most part not adequately documented *intragroup* variation in family structure and culture. Future research on Latino families will also have to disentangle the effects of class and membership in different Latino groups.

In conclusion, the internal diversity of the Latino group by national origins, history, immigration patterns, and sociodemographic characteristics has implications not only for scholarly work but also for the social policy developed from this work. Social policies effective for Mexican descendants in the Southwest may be disastrous for Puerto Ricans in the Northeast. Massive immigration and internal migration have important consequences for Latino families in the United States. This situation, however, is not unprecedented, and it represents the latest cycle in this country's history. Research that focuses on the family lives of Latinos may help us understand how families of a racial/ethnic background change in response to changing social situations and cultural influences.