Families and Schools

ESSAY
2

"A Family Is Two Parents, Their Children, and the White Picket Fence"

The Impact of Invisible Intersections on How We Talk About "The Family"

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Writing more than 20 years ago, Patricia Hill Collins (Collins, 1998, p. 62) describes the "imagined traditional family ideal." She writes:

> *Formed through a combination of marital and blood ties, ideal families consist of heterosexual couples that produce their own biological children. Such families have a specific authority structure; namely, a fatherhead earning an adequate family wage, a stay-at-home wife, and children.*
>
> (Collins, 1998, p. 62)

However, even families that conform to this ideal are at risk of dissolution, separation, and poverty. Evidence makes it clear that the broader social, political, and economic context influences the ability to maintain families (see Ferree, 2010) and conform to White, heteronormative, patriarchal, nativist, ableist, and classist notions of "the family."

Consider how the conditions of a global pandemic, COVID-19, made shockingly clear the fragility of a society built on the assumption that all families fit the nuclear family model, as well as reminding us of the fragility of the model itself. The quick shift to remote schooling during the spring of 2020 assumed that there was a parent (i.e., a mom) that could help supervise children's learning, high speed internet, and a quiet place to study. Even after the return to school, these assumptions are still in place and little has changed. During earlier stages of the pandemic, high-income families hired private tutors to assist with their child's remote learning or turned to private schools altogether (Calarco, 2020; Miller, 2020b). Dual-income parents were faced with one earner reducing hours or quitting altogether to supervise their child's schooling. Low-income parents often had little choice but to send their children back to in-person schooling (if available) regardless of how safe it was (Calarco, 2020). Solo parents were in an impossible situation. Women provided a disproportionate share of the labor supervising children's remote schooling (Miller, 2020a). In short, the pandemic has not been equally disruptive to all family types and the long-term educational outcomes for children according to family type (i.e., social class, number of parents providing daily care) remain to be seen.

This chapter uses an intersectional approach to uncover how families vary and how larger social context structures their experiences. I focus on single-parent families, mixed-status families, gay, and lesbian adoptive and foster families, and families with disabled children. Throughout, I describe how race, gender, and class impact belonging to any one of these family types. For example, most single parents are mothers and women are more likely to have lower incomes than men. Therefore, a child raised by a single mother is likelier to experience economic hardship as compared to a child raised by a single father.

Importantly, families belong to various social groups, and individuals within a family may belong to social groups that differ from other family members. For example, a family may include members from various gender, racial, or citizenship categories. In addition, multiple intersecting identities shape an individual's and a family's identity.

To focus too closely on any one part of an individual's identity runs the risk of only superficially examining their experiences (see Chevrette, 2013). For example, the ability of mothers remaining fully employed while raising a disabled child depends on her level of education. In part, this is because children can have any range of disabilities—physical, emotional, cognitive, or learning—but regardless of the disability, extra parental work is required in an ableist society that often fails to make the appropriate medical and educational accommodations for these children and their families (see also Rudolph in this volume). Parents (i.e., mothers) of disabled children must take on the time-consuming work of navigating the complex and fragmented system bridging both medical and educational institutions (Brewer, 2018). Therefore, mothers with more education, for example, tend to have more flexibility over reducing their work hours while continuing to provide care for a disabled child and thus are better able to maintain full employment. However, mothers with disabled children who don't have this education and job security are at risk of poverty or unemployment (as will be discussed in greater detail below). To use another example, the ability to maintain the family unit in a mixed-status family is dependent on how forcefully the government is deporting unauthorized immigrants at any point in time. Recently, for instance, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and massive deportations of mothers, fathers, and grandparents in mixed-status families raise real questions about our ideas concerning the family.

By the end of this chapter, it should be clear that social policies need to account for diverse family formations and give further consideration to how a given policy may disproportionately harm or help a group due to their intersecting identities. Some identities are pushed to the fore in this chapter (e.g., single parenthood, gender, social class) to understand a little bit about how these intersecting systems operate; it would be a mistake to discount other identities as having little or no effect simply because of their absence in this chapter. For example, this chapter does not consider grandparents raising grandchildren, incarcerated parents, older parents, or family size. There are many family forms that are more or less advantaged as compared to others. Importantly, no form of oppression is privileged over others (Chevrette, 2013, p. 180).

Single-Parent Families

A majority (69%) of US children live in families with two parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). However, the likelihood of a child living in a two-parent family varies by race. The majority of White (78%), Latinx (66%), and Asian American children (84%) live in a two-parent household (Pew Research Center, 2015). However, only 38% of Black children live in a two-parent household (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Single-parent households are the second most common living arrangement for children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). The number of children living with a single parent has increased from about one in ten children in 1960 to a little more than one in four children in 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Single mothers head the majority of these homes. Overall, only 8.8% of Americans live in a single-mother household (Brady, Finnigan, & Hübgen, 2018). The number of single-father homes is small, but growing where 4% of US children live with a single father (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Single-parent households are a growing and common family type, yet negative attitudes towards single parents persist. For example, 66% of Americans view single mothers as bad for society (Livingston, 2018). A key reason for this disapproval is the association between single motherhood and poverty. The poverty rate among all families is 13.6%. Married couple families have the lowest poverty rate at 5.8%. Single fathers see a higher poverty rate at 16.6%, but single-mother poverty is twice as likely (33.8%) (see also Coles, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Single-mother households experience significantly higher poverty rates as compared to other household types. Using an intersectional lens allows us to dig even deeper to uncover the contours of the relationship between poverty, gender, and single parenthood and thus helps us to see how the risk of poverty in these families varies by gender, for example.

The relationship between single parenthood and poverty is complicated. Since the 1970s, marriage rates have declined sharply for men and women with low and middle incomes (Greenstone & Looney, 2012). People in the United States tend to have higher standards for marriage now than in the past. Evidence of this is available in research on poor single mothers who are White, Latinx, and Black (where Black single mothers have been historically demonized; see Moynihan, 1965). Yet, research indicates that these mothers are looking for more than simply marriage like a true partnership, a friend, a spouse that can offer financial stability, and trust (Edin & Kefalas, 2011; see also Edin et al. 2004). Contrary to popular belief, the poor hold higher marital standards than other groups, which might make them *less* likely to marry (Edin et al., 2004; Reid & Golub, 2015). What happens, then, is that higher-income people are more likely to marry and when they do, they are likely to marry someone of a similar income (Miller & Bui, 2016; Parker & Stepler, 2017). For many single parents, they were already poor before becoming a single parent; therefore, marriage may lessen, but not eliminate their poverty (Cohen, 2018).

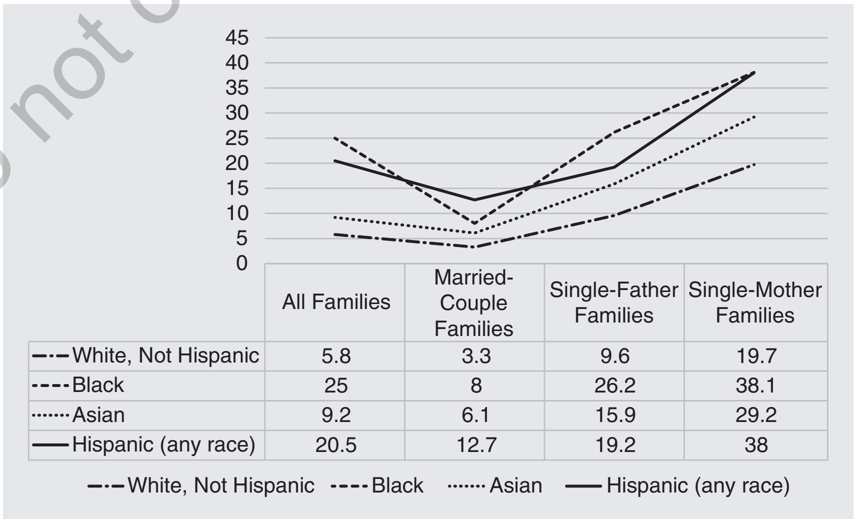
When racial and ethnic identity are added to the mix, we observe that the risk of poverty for single-parent households varies widely from a low of 9.6% for White, non-Hispanic single fathers as compared to 38.1% for Black single mothers. Figure 2.1 shows how race, poverty, and family type are related (see also Thomas, Overmyer, & McClure in this volume).

This figure shows the relationship between race and ethnicity and single-parent status (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). As is clear from the chart, the poverty rate for single-mother Black and Latinx families is nearly 40%, with Asian American single mother families faring a bit better at 29%, and White single-mother families at roughly 20%. These disparities indicate how the intersections of race, class, and gender challenge the well-being of these families.

In the United States, the risk of poverty for single parents also differs by region where we see increases among single parents living in rural areas. Single-mother households in rural areas experience the highest poverty rate at 49.4% (Mattingly & Bean, 2010, p. 1). Moreover, poor rural children are more likely to live in persistent poverty (i.e., long-term poverty) as compared to other groups experiencing poverty (Schaefer et al., 2016; The Rural Policy Research Institute, 1999). There are fewer employment options in rural areas thereby contributing to a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty and have it be long-lasting (Sano & Manoogian, 2011). Thus, the ability of rural single parents to raise children out of poverty is largely about social class.

The way that gender, socioeconomic status, and single parenthood intersect also varies globally. For example, the risk of poverty for single-mother families is unique to the United States. This country is an outlier among rich democracies in that there is a persistent correlation between poverty and single parenthood. Brady, Finnigan, and Hübgen (2017) argue that single parenthood is a risk factor for poverty in the United States because of our weak social safety net that does not protect families from hardship. In nations with stronger social safety nets, single-parent households have lower

Figure 2.1 Poverty Rates for Families with Children Under 18 by Race and Family Type



	All Families	Married-Couple Families	Single-Father Families	Single-Mother Families
–·– White, Not Hispanic	5.8	3.3	9.6	19.7
- - - Black	25	8	26.2	38.1
······ Asian	9.2	6.1	15.9	29.2
—— Hispanic (any race)	20.5	12.7	19.2	38

poverty rates. For example, many nations (e.g., Canada, Germany, and Norway) provide a child allowance (i.e., cash) to all families with children, thereby reducing the overall poverty rate for single-parent households (Shaefer et al., 2018).

Race, gender, rurality, and nation are just a few of the factors that contribute to the effects of single parenthood. The likelihood of a child with a single-parent living in poverty has a great deal to do with factors (i.e., parents' race, ethnicity, gender) that are independent of them having a single parent, suggesting that policies promoting marriage will not lift these children out of poverty. Instead, policies need to address a multitude of factors that are correlated with poverty in order to be effective.

Mixed-Status Immigrant Families with Children

Mixed-status immigrant families refer to families "with at least one member who is a citizen or legal resident and one who is not" (Green, 2019, p. 128). There are approximately 2.3 million mixed-status families in the United States (Passel, 2011), where approximately 16.6 million people are in mixed-status families (Enriquez, 2015). The number of children under the age of 18 living with at least one immigrant parent has doubled from 13% in 1990 to 26% in 2017 (Zong, Batalova, & Burrows, 2019). The majority of these children were born in the United States, with only 12% born outside of the United States (Zong et al., 2019).

Some of these families include US citizen children with at least one undocumented parent (Rodriguez, 2016, p. 706). About 5.1 million or 7% of children live with at least one undocumented parent (Zong et al., 2019). Mixed-status immigrant families with children are a sizeable portion of the United States population (Cardoso & Scott, 2018). However, births to unauthorized immigrants have been declining, and account for 6% of all births in 2016 (Passel, Cohn, & Gramlich, 2017). The majority (91%) of these births were to unauthorized immigrants who arrived in the United States in 2007 or earlier (Passel, 2011). According to the Migration Policy Institute, a majority (82%) of unauthorized immigrants live with US citizen children under the age of 18 (Zong et al., 2019).

For mixed-status families with at least one unauthorized immigrant, the fear of deportation profoundly shapes their lives (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Their fear is very real, as data indicate that "[b]etween 2010 and 2013, an estimated 300,000 parents of U.S. citizen children were deported" (Cardoso & Scott, 2018, p. 301). Moreover, the risk and effects of deportation are felt unequally, where Latinx men are most likely to be deported. Under the last two presidents, Obama and Trump, there has been a dramatic increase in the deportations of people of color, many of whom are from Latin America or the African diaspora. BIPOC folks are already disproportionately policed, putting both unauthorized and legal immigrants of color at heightened risk of deportation (Golash-Boza, 2015). For example, even immigrants of color who are legal permanent residents may be deported due to low-level criminal activity. Golash-Boza (2015) found that BIPOC people have been deported due to low-level drug offenses. This group faces more police scrutiny, placing their families at higher risk of deportation and separation.

Mixed-status families must always prepare for the possibility of deportation and constantly live in fear of it; ultimately, they must decide if they will remain separated or move the family to the country of origin of the deported family member (Rodriguez, 2016). Relocating the family is an expense that many cannot afford (Schueths, 2018). In addition, for some families, moving to the country of origin means dealing with the threat of gang violence, especially in Central America. In particular, gang violence is pushing many families from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to seek asylum in the United States. For US citizen children who do relocate with their deported parents, they find themselves living in a country that is not their own (Boehm, 2017) and where they may not know the language or have any familiarity with its customs and norms. Therefore, many families remain separated after deportation.

The risks and effects of deportation are definitely gendered. When undocumented men are deported, they often leave behind families. Schueths (2018) argues that in mixed-status marriages among US citizen mothers and undocumented Latin American fathers, deportation thrusts these women into the role of a single mother and onto the pathway of welfare assistance (see also Dreby, 2012; Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). Furthermore, it is a misperception that marriage will prevent the deportation of noncitizen spouses (Yee, 2018). Under the Trump administration, any immigrant with prior deportation orders could be deported. Legally, this has long been the case but it was not regularly enforced. Immigrants with unenforced prior deportation orders that had made a life for themselves (e.g., were employed, married with families, and so on) were typically spared from deportation. Under the Trump administration, that was no longer the case.

The effects of deportation are not the only challenges faced by mixed-status families. The threat of deportation impacts US citizen children of unauthorized parents. US citizen children are excluded from accessing the social safety net (e.g., Medicare, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP) due to their parent's unauthorized status (Baker & Marchevsky, 2019; Cardoso & Scott, 2018; Enriquez, 2015; Fix & Zimmermann, 2001; Gonzales, 2016; Yoshikawa, Suárez-Orozco, & Gonzales, 2017). These children are, therefore, less likely to be enrolled in preschool as compared to other children of immigrants or the entire US child population (Capps, Fix, & Zong, 2016). These children are also more likely to experience poverty and are less likely to see socioeconomic progress as they age (Capps et al., 2016). Moreover, young adult Latinx US citizens with undocumented parents can access legal work, but often face the responsibility of providing financial support to their families (Rodriguez, 2019, p. 724). In these ways, the intersections of ethnicity and citizenship have class implications for young Latinx people who already experience a precarious journey to class mobility.

Many children with unauthorized parents are also unauthorized. Over a million unauthorized children live in the United States (Gonzales, 2011). As unauthorized children reach adulthood, however, they move from protected to unprotected (Gonzales, 2011, p. 602; Gonzales, 2016; Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). These children come to experience blocked mobility in that they work hard and experience educational achievement, yet are limited to low-wage jobs due to their unauthorized immigration status (Abrego, 2006; Gonzales, 2011, 2016; Yoshikawa et al., 2017).

A popular myth around mixed-status families is that US citizen children can sponsor their unauthorized parents in order to make them legal residents. However, there are significant barriers to doing so. To sponsor a relative's immigration, an individual must be at least 21 years old and earn an income that is 125% above the poverty line (thereby demonstrating that they can support the sponsored family member) (Kendall, 2012). In 2019, 125% of the poverty line amounted to $32,187.50 for a family of four (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2020). Undocumented parents must also leave the country for three to ten years before the sponsorship may be approved (Cianciarulo, 2015). This may leave the family without an income earner for a significant amount of time. Moreover, an unauthorized parent may still be providing care for younger US citizen children. They would then have to decide to return the entire family to the country of origin while they await their application for legal entry—an application the US government may ultimately deny.

As the above evidence indicates, many myths persist regarding the ease with which one may immigrate and remain in the United States. Moreover, despite already declining unauthorized immigration rates (Qui, 2018), the political climate is such that immigration policies are becoming stricter. More mixed-status families are at risk of their family being separated and at the very least are facing greater marginalization due to their citizenship status. Further, mixed-status BIPOC families are at an increased risk of deportation due to racialized policing strategies.

Gay and Lesbian Adoptive and Foster Families

LGBT people follow a variety of paths to becoming parents. For example, Jennings et al. (2014, p. 207), identify four routes to parenthood for lesbians: "donor insemination, either with a known or unknown donor; co-parenting arrangements, where biological parents who are not in a relationship, and/or their respective partners, bring up children together but usually in separate households; fostering; or adoption, either international or domestic." About one in four lesbians are parents (Brewster, Tillman, & Jokinen-Gordon, 2014). In contrast, about two-thirds of heterosexual and a little more than half of bisexual women are parents (Brewster et al., 2014). Among LGBT people under the age of 50, 48% of LGBT women and 20% of LGBT men are raising children under the age of 18 (Gates, 2013). Lesbian and gay parents are also much more likely to be raising an adopted or fostered child compared to heterosexual parents (Brewster et al., 2014; Gates, 2013). As marginalized adopters, some may only reach their dream of parenthood by adopting through foster care, where they more frequently foster-adopt older children, sibling groups, or children with special needs (Raleigh, 2016; see also Fisher, 2003); these children frequently require more therapeutic parenting and greater resources (Gailey, 2010; see also Harris in this volume). Overall, gay and lesbian parents are raising 4% of all adopted children and

3% of foster children in the United States (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, & Chambers, 2007). LGBT people face social, political, and legal barriers to adoption and fostering as compared to heterosexual people, in large part because of a heteronormative culture that frequently only recognizes families with a cisgender husband and wife. Heterosexual couples may face financial barriers to adoption, but they still enjoy the legal right to adopt. Lesbian and gay couples, however, face legal restrictions that vary from state to state and frequently change (Kazyak, 2015). For example, ten states permit "state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBT people and same-sex couples, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs" (Movement Advancement Project, 2019). Eight states "explicitly [prohibit] discrimination in adoption based on sexual orientation" (Movement Advancement Project, 2019).

Presently, both married heterosexual and same-sex couples can adopt a child as a couple, but only since 2015 has same-sex marriage been legal in all 50 states. For same-sex couples starting families through adoption before marriage equality, additional steps needed to be taken to ensure the rights of both parents to their children. Before marriage equality, one gay or lesbian parent could adopt as a single parent, and then the other parent could petition for second-parent adoption (Goldberg, Moyer, Weber, & Shapiro, 2013). However, second-parent adoptions are not available in all 50 states (Goldberg et al., 2013), nor have they been consistently recognized across state lines (Vaughn, 2017).

Where same-sex parents are not able to co-adopt or seek a second-parent adoption, parents pursue diverse legal strategies to ensure rights that heterosexual parents take for granted (Goldberg et al., 2013). Couples indicate taking steps such as drawing up wills so that the nonlegal parent could become the guardian of any children in case the legal parent dies, and establishing powers of attorney or healthcare proxies so that the nonlegal parent could "make health care decisions on behalf of the child" (Goldberg et al., 2013, p. 119). Same-sex couples frequently experience stress due to the "legal invisibility of one partner's parental status" (Goldberg et al., 2013, p. 117).

Adoption and the additional legal steps that same-sex parents take to add children to their families are expensive. Adoption outside of the foster care system can cost between $15,000 and $50,000 (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016). Therefore, LGBT people who seek to become parents through adoption tend to be higher income; lower-income LGBT people may be excluded from parenting or have less legal protection for their families. In a study of gay fathers, Carroll (2018) reports that the fathers who had their children through a heterosexual relationship were the only fathers experiencing economic hardship, while gay fathers who adopted or used a surrogate were wealthier. Among all adoptive parents, LGBT adoptive parents "are older, more educated, and have more economic resources than other adoptive parents" (Gates et al., 2007).

The information above suggests that LGBT parents—both prospective and actual parents—still face multiple obstacles to forming and maintaining their families. Denying or making it exceedingly difficult for them to create their families is an indictment on our heterosexist and homophobic culture that refuses to recognize families outside of the heterosexual norm.

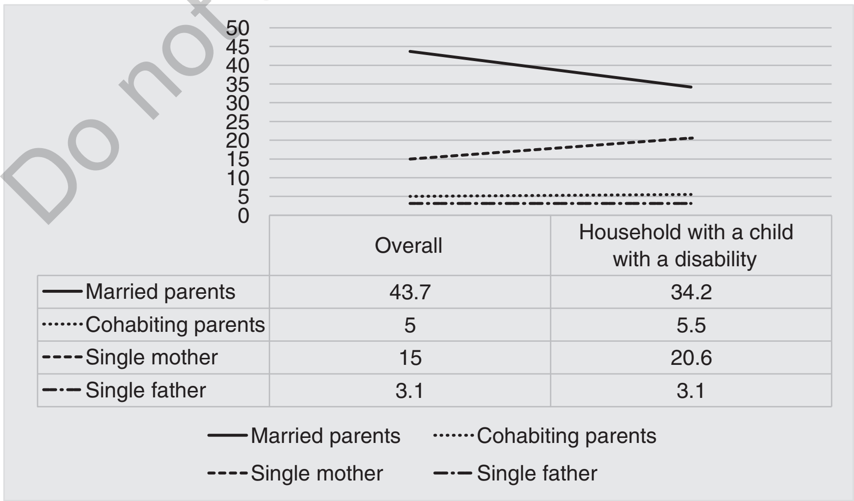
Furthermore, the challenges around adoption suggest that we would rather let children grow up in foster care, for instance, rather than give them access to parents (and even an extended family) who will love and take care of them.

Families Raising Children with Disabilities

In the United States, about one in twenty children aged 5–17 has a disability (Kraus, Lauer, Coleman, & Houtenville, 2018, p. 2). It is likely, however, that some families have multiple disabled children. Hogan (2012) reports that more than one in eight families with children under age 18, includes a child with a disability. Moreover, the composition and characteristics of families raising disabled children differ from families without disabled children. Disabled children are less likely to live with their married biological parents as compared to other children (Altman & Blackwell, 2014; Cohen & Petrescu-Prahova, 2006). Overall, 43.7% of children live with their married parents; however, only 34.2% of disabled children live with their married parents (Altman & Blackwell, 2014).

Furthermore, disabled children are more likely to live with a single mother as compared to abled children (Altman & Blackwell, 2014; Cohen & Petrescu-Prahova, 2006). Fifteen percent of all children live with a single mother compared with 20.6% of disabled children (see Figure 2.2) (Altman & Blackwell, 2014). These statistics indicate that families raising disabled children suffer considerable strain than those without disabled children, in large part because they grow up in an ableist social world that may not respond appropriately to disability and that creates obstacles to proper accommodations in schools, the healthcare system, and even public spaces (see Rudolph in this volume).

Figure 2.2 Percent of Households with a Child with a Disability



	Overall	Household with a child with a disability
—— Married parents	43.7	34.2
······· Cohabiting parents	5	5.5
---- Single mother	15	20.6
—·— Single father	3.1	3.1

Given these challenges of raising disabled children, it may not be a great surprise that these children are less likely to live with married biological parents. Nevertheless, the research is somewhat unclear in this area. Some research suggests that parents of disabled children are more likely to divorce (Cohen & Petrescu-Prahova, 2006; Hogan, 2012), other scholars find these parents are no more likely to divorce (Namkung, Song, Greenberg, Mailick, & Floyd, 2015), and finally, others find that these parents are less likely to marry in the first place (Cohen and Petrescu-Prahova, 2006). Cohen and Petrescu-Prahova (2006) suggest that because disabled children require more specialized and time-consuming care as compared to other children, this care is even more likely to fall upon women and may be why disabled children are disproportionately likely to be living with a single mother. Importantly (as alluded to above), disability encompasses a wide range of conditions that often require parents to agree on treatment options and accommodations. For example, parents with a child who is hard of hearing may find it easier to agree to sign language accommodations at school, while parents of a child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may disagree over whether or not to give their child medication to help treat the disorder. In these ways, it is clearer how families raising disabled children face emotional strain that may make it difficult for parents to stay in a relationship and thus lead to more single mothers who take on the primary care for their children.

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed how single-mother households are disproportionately likely to be lower-income. Thus, the presence of a disabled family member exacerbates economic challenges. Overall, poverty rates are higher for children aged 5–17 with a disability as compared to their peers without a disability. The difference in poverty rates "range[s] from a low of 1.3 percentage points in Hawaii to 19 [percentage] points in Maine" (Kraus et al., 2018, p. 25). Where the intersections of gender, class, and ability converge, single-mother families with children who have disabilities may also experience economic fragility, where economic resources are often essential for addressing the very issues they face.

Returning to two-parent families, having a child with a disability or a chronic health condition is associated with reduced parental employment (DeRigne & Porterfield, 2017; Kish, Newcombe, & Haslam, 2018; Kuhlthau & Perrin, 2001; Thyen, Kuhlthau, & Perrin, 1999), where mothers are the parent most likely to stop working (DeRigne & Porterfield, 2017). A majority of mothers of disabled children report that their child's disability impacted their employment (Leiter, Krauss, Anderson, & Wells, 2004). Mothers reduce work hours and may opt out of the workforce altogether to become full-time caregivers for their child (Hogan, 2012; Leiter et al., 2004; Scott, 2010). However, mothers with college degrees are better able to find work that offers the kind of autonomy and flexibility to also care for a disabled child (Scott, 2018). In contrast, Hogan (Hogan, 2012, p. 9) reports that fathers of disabled children "are more likely to work longer hours, work at two jobs, or continue working beyond retirement age." In short, having a disabled child impacts the employment of mothers and fathers differently.

Compounding the economic hardship described above is that disability and chronic health conditions are typically expensive to treat and manage. Stabile and Allin (2012) estimate that families face both direct (e.g., out-of-pocket medical expenses) and indirect (e.g., reduced labor) costs on average of $30,500 per year in order to support a disabled child. These expenses may include a variety of therapies (e.g., occupational, physical, mental health), medications, and specialist's appointments, all while acquiring missed days of work in order to take the child for these appointments or even to regularly meet with school officials to discuss their child's education and classroom accommodations. As Hogan (2012, p. 44) points out, "families raising children with disabilities need more income because of their child's health conditions." Importantly, the economic costs of raising a child with a disability or chronic illness are associated with low-income families sliding into deep poverty (Lukemeyer, Meyers, & Smeeding, 2000). For BIPOC families of color already experiencing poverty, having a disabled child likely only compounds their economic fragility. These challenges raise questions about why the needs of families with disabled children are routinely ignored, minimized, or forgotten.

Conclusion

Using an intersectional approach allows us to uncover a wide range of family experiences and helps us to begin stretching our sociological imaginations so that we can develop social policies that work for diverse families. In this chapter, I described some of the ways that families vary with attention on single-parent families, mixed-status families, gay and lesbian adoptive and foster families, and families with children with disabilities. Race, class, gender, and sexuality structure the experiences of individuals within these family types. Indeed, families vary considerably from the stereotypical family with two (White) parents, their children, and a white picket fence and better social policy is needed to support what US families actually look like.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Websites

Single Parent Advocate: https://singleparentadvocate.org/

National Immigration Law Center: https://www.nilc.org/

The Mighty: https://themighty.com/

Gays with Kids: https://www.gayswithkids.com/

Family Equality: https://www.familyequality.org/

Family Inequality: https://familyinequality.wordpress.com/

Books

Blum, L. M. (2015). *Raising generation Rx: Mothering kids with invisible disabilities in an age of inequality*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Cohen, P. N. (2018). *Enduring bonds: Inequality, marriage, parenting, and everything else that makes families great and terrible*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

DePaulo, B. (2015). *How we live now: Redefining home and family in the 21st century*. New York, NY: Atria Books.

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Edin, K., & Kefalas, M. ([2005] 2011). *Promises I can keep: Why poor women put motherhood before marriage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Golash-Boza, T. M. (2015). *Deported: Immigrant policing, disposable labor, and global capitalism*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Gonzales, R. G. (2016). *Lives in limbo: Undocumented and coming of age in America*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Hertz, R. (2008). *Single by chance, mothers by choice: How women are choosing parenthood without marriage and creating the new American family*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Savage, D. (2000). *The kid: What happened after my boyfriend and I decided to go get pregnant*. New York, NY: Plume.

Schueths, A., & Lawston, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Living together, living apart: Mixed status families and US immigration policy*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Film/TV

Boyhood. (2014). 2 hours 45 minutes (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1065073/)

One Day at a Time. (2017–2019). Netflix. 2020 – present. PopTV. (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5339440/)

Illegal. (2010). Produced by Film Movement. 95 min. https://www.filmmovement.com/product/illegal

The Fosters. (2013–2018). Freeform. https://freeform.go.com/shows/the-fosters/news

Speechless. (2016–2019). ABC. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5592146/

Atypical. 2017 – Present. Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/title/80117540

Modern Family. (2009–2020). ABC. https://abc.com/shows/modern-family

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. Select one of the family groups discussed in this chapter. Consider how their family experience might differ if we consider additional social identities, too. For example, think about the section on raising disabled children. How might raising a child with a disability be impacted by differences in race and/or rurality?

2. Do you believe it is a human right to both have and maintain a family? Why or why not? If you do believe it is a right, what implications does this have for immigration policy, social support for low income families, same-sex couples, and parents of disabled children? Each family type considered in this chapter included children. How might families without children or with adult children present a different set of experiences for social policy to consider?

INTERSECTIONS IRL

1. Visit the US Census website subtopic on "Families and Living Arrangements" (https://www.census.gov/topics/families.html). Choose a subtopic to learn more about. For example:
   a. Select "Marriage and Divorce."
   b. From the drop down menu, select "Marriage and Divorce Data."
   c. Next choose "Marriage and Divorce Data Tools."
   d. Choose "American FactFinder."
   e. Under "Community Facts" enter your state, county, city, town, or zip code and select "go"
   f. Select "Population" and then you should be able to select "Households and Families (Relationships, Children, Household Size, ...)."
   g. Interpret the data in the table. How many people in your community live in various types of households?
2. Select one of the following topics impacting immigrant families today: 1) Family Separation Policy or 2) Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Prepare a brief summary of what the policy is and how many people are estimated to be impacted this policy. Describe how this policy impacts families.
3. Visit Movement Advancement Project's Equality Maps at http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps. Choose an issue from the drop-down tab on Relationship and Parental Recognition. Answer the following questions:
   a. Summarize the law for your selected issue.
   b. How does your state compare to the nation on this issue?
4. Disabled parents are at risk of having social services intervene and remove their children from their care. Select one of the cases from the Disabled Parenting Project (https://www.disabledparenting.com/library/disabled-parents-in-the-news/). Bring your case to class to share with your group. What happened in the case? If possible, try to locate the most recent information about the case you selected and also provide your group updates on the case. Assess the situation. Why did social services intervene? In your judgment, are there reasonable alternatives instead of removing children from a disabled parent? What might these alternatives look like?

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