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Family Focus

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In the next issue of Family Focus: Fictive Kin

White Parents of Transracial Adoptees Navigating Race

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In Brief

- **White adoptive parents approach race choice and racial socialization from their own social position.**
- **Lived adoption experiences often shift ideas and priorities parents had before adoption.**
- **Agencies should teach parents how to better discuss race, understand racism, and approach racial socialization.**

Racial Preferences

As a result of cultural norms and limited interaction across race lines, most couples and families in the United States remain monoracial, particularly White couples and families. The fact that society reinforces positive portrayals of White people combined with the dominant "color-blind" ideas about race that allow White people to view themselves as raceless and cultureless means that White parents tend not to think about or directly address race or racial socialization. While people and parents of color must be familiar with whiteness to navigate race in society, White people can live with little interaction across race lines or knowledge of norms and cultures associated with other racial/ethnic groups (Anderson, 2015). Yet when White parents adopt across race lines, they need to help their children understand race and prepare for racism in ways that monoracial White families do not.

Confronting race to some degree starts early in the adoption process, because those looking to adopt have to state directly which categories of children they are (and are not) willing to parent, including child race. Research shows that those who were not willing to adopt a Black child often discussed their reasons in coded language, such as not knowing how to care for "Black hair" (Quiroz, 2007; Sweeney, 2013). This may indicate genuine concern about preparing a Black child for the racism he or she will encounter or a fear of judgment and thus an inability or unwillingness to parent a Black child. But it also reflects the lack of language and discomfort that White people have talking about race. This difficulty stems from dominant color-blind logic that equates discussing or recognizing race as racism and may limit the capacity of White adoptive parents to evaluate their own abilities to parent across race lines.

Kathryn A. Sweeney

At the same time, my research shows that some parents who were uncomfortable adopting a Black child viewed those identified as multiracial as less raced and more acceptable (Sweeney, 2013). This contradicts perceptions and norms in the U.S. that reinforce the "one-drop rule" and racially assign multiracial children with any Black heritage as Black. These parents said that before adoption they assumed that a

multiracial child would not experience as much racism or difficulty with racial identity as a child identified as Black while being raised by White parents. This assumption likely stems in part from the racialized adoption system that often categorizes biracial or multiracial as distinct and separate from Black (Quiroz, 2007). This may reinforce perceptions of differences and commonalities. For instance, Samuels (2009) theorized that some White parents think they have more in common or can better control the narrative of ethnicity for children who are "part White," and thus are more comfortable choosing a multiracial or biracial child than a child identified as Black. The racialization of children by agencies and the ideas that White parents have about race and ethnicity shape decisions of which children they adopt as well as the preparation and socialization that White parents provide for their children of color.

Some of the parents in my research who had adopted multiracial children because they thought they would comfortably fit into their lives ended up prioritizing a child who would be perceived as Black when adopting a second child (Sweeney, 2013). Their experiences of difference as a multiracial family and as White parents of a multiracial adoptee led them to seek children who would be phenotypically similar to their child, regardless of agency classification or knowledge of biological family identity. These parents noted that their child's experiences and sense of belonging were heavily influenced by skin color and the perceptions of others. Because they realized that their whiteness limited their ability to understand their child's experiences, they chose to address this difference by purposefully expanding their family to include additional children perceived as Black. Increased parental awareness and resulting changes likely improve experiences for transracially adopted children, but only after their negative experiences taught parents the importance of exposure and impact of racial isolation. Prior recognition of how multiracial children are racialized may mean fewer instances of learning by White parents at the expense of their children (Quiroz, 2007; Samuels, 2009).

Exposure to Environments

How families approach racial socialization, particularly when they differ from the expected norm, is also important to understand and address (Sweeney, 2017), because strategies of racial socialization influence child identity, development, and well-being (Samuels, 2009). Racial socialization includes exposure and interaction as preparation for racism along with learning knowledge and history; thus, the racial makeup of where people live and send their kids to school matters as well. Research indicates that White parents raising children of other races follow similar neighborhood choice patterns as monoracial White families and are less likely than multiracial families headed by interracial couples to live in diverse communities and with others who share their child's racial identity (Kreider & Raleigh, 2016).

Similarly, my research found that White parents who adopted Black and multiracial children with Black heritage typically did not move out of predominantly White areas, although some did move somewhere with more racial diversity than where they previously lived (Sweeney, 2017). While parents worried about their child being the only Black child or child of color in their classroom or school, their ideas of what constituted diversity were rooted in dominant thinking and maintained their comfort in terms of class and race. Parents stressed that they did not want to add another layer of difference to navigate by having their child be the only child of color, thinking that this would help protect them from racism and feeling isolated. However, their children are different in that they are adopted and being raised by White parents, and focusing on neighborhoods and schools matching national demographics meant that children may not have been the only children of color at their school, but they would be one of few.

Choices about where to live and send kids to school were further complicated by perceptions of school quality, in that "good" schools were thought to be in affluent White neighborhoods and "bad" schools in predominantly Black ones (Sweeney, 2017). This calls into question ideas of school quality, which measures are used, and what should take prominence for non-white adoptees in White homes. School composition and neighborhood makeup are even more important for children of color when their parents do not share the same racial identity or lived experiences. Being raised by White parents, living in predominantly White neighborhoods, and attending predominantly White schools means that transracial adoptees spend most of their time in "white spaces" without the relief of going home to "black spaces" (Anderson, 2015).

Implications

Additional resources are needed to support transracial families at all stages. Research suggests that White parents adopting across racial groups need help learning how to discuss race, understand racism, and make choices that will best help their child develop. Transracial adoptees are often racially isolated in their homes, as their parents do not share the experiences of living in the U.S. as a person of color. They also may be isolated from communities of color. White people in general typically lack the tools to address racism or racial socialization. This is evident from research on White adoptive parents (Quiroz, 2007; Samuels, 2009; Sweeney, 2017). However, White parents raising children of color tend to be concerned and want their children to develop a strong racial identity and thrive. Many are looking for help.

White parents who do not want to adopt Black children, for whatever reason, should not be pushed to do so. However, those working in the adoption field can better provide tools for parents to discuss race and make a well-informed decision. Family Science, sociology, psychology, and social work curricula at the undergraduate and graduate level need to include the study of race and ethnicity so that those working in the field are equipped to directly discuss race and racism. Professionals and parents would benefit from expanded knowledge of the lived experiences of various racial/ethnic groups and the particular experiences of those who are multiracial. The impact of racial isolation also should be addressed. Given the lack of understanding of race and the difficulty White adoptive parents have discussing it, findings suggest that those working in the adoption field should move to provide additional support before and after adoption and make necessary changes in how children are distinguished to avoid perpetuating false perceptions that multiracial children will not face racism.

In addition, given the importance of racial socialization and exposure, agencies should seriously consider diversity of networks, neighborhoods, and school composition in adoption qualifications. Those who adopt children of color should be helped to obtain more diverse networks in preparation for adoption and continuing post-adoption. Training and assistance should teach parents how race affects experiences and life outcomes, the importance of various aspects of racial socialization, approaches to racial socialization, and the importance of contact for themselves and their children. This may help parents address what they see as contradictory goals of school quality and racial makeup of schools, recognizing that contact may be of higher importance for positive life outcomes, especially for Black and multiracial adoptees being raised by White parents. ✻

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Overview and Introduction

Families with Differences

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Judith A. Myers-Walls

In recent decades family scholars and family professionals have become increasingly aware of and responsive to family diversity. This broadened perspective has focused most often on diversity across families, and that is a positive change. At the same time, there is another type of family diversity—heterogeneity *within* families. This edition of *Family Focus* offers reflections on a number of such internally heterogeneous families.

We begin with articles that review issues faced by families living with differences of racial, ethnic, or cultural background and/or identity. Katheryn A. Sweeney discusses the choices and challenges of White parents who adopt children of a different race, honing in on children identified as Black or multiracial. Marcy L. Peake presents a personal and a scholarly perspective on the historical context and current realities of intermarriage, especially between Black and White partners in the United States. Sarah Almalki also looks at intermarriage, examining the situation of Arab American immigrants and explores how intermarriage and cultural integration are linked. A fourth article by K. Anh Do deals with cross-cultural concerns of families who move together from one culture to another and acculturate at different paces. She explores how different rates of acculturation can be beneficial or problematic for families.

The next three articles look at the implications when individuals in a family have different experiences, identities, or attitudes. Julie Leventhal and Katelynn Kirby report on research that has examined the family implications of a trafficked family member attempting to reintegrate after being freed. Shane A. Kavanaugh, Greta L. Stuhlsatz, Ashley B. Taylor, Tricia K. Neppl, and Brenda J. Lohman reflect on the role and importance of families of color dealing with their adolescents' coming-out as a sexual minority. So Young Park, Hanjin Bae, and Cheong-Ah Huh introduce the attitudinal differences regarding marriage across generations in South Korea. While situating these differences in their cultural context, the authors provide suggestions for understanding the differences and supporting families.

The final two articles present internal differences in families related to location and legal status. Shuang Qiu introduces the concept of Chinese "study mothers" who live with their child to support his or her education while the father lives in another location to earn money to support the family. The last article by Aaron Bart Fricke, Bridget A. Walsh, and Jinan A. Barghouti grapples with the family situation of more than two parents that can result from modern procreation options. They review the current status of state laws and how those laws and the actions of family professionals can either support or challenge families.

As you read these articles, I encourage you to consider how internal heterogeneity in families is relevant to your own work. ✻

Marcy L. Peake

Diverse Family Systems and the Lack of Empirical Research to Guide Practice and Policy

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In Brief

- **It is critical for professionals working with interracial families in the U.S. to understand current and historical events.**
- **Public opinions regarding the repeal of anti-miscegenation laws are complex.**
- **Diverse families are often studied through a lens of deviance, but that is not the only approach.**
- **A lack of empirical research limits practice and policy recommendations for diverse family systems.**

The violent upheaval in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 underscored the work that yet needs to occur for cultural change to catch up with federal law in the area of race relations in the United States. It also highlighted the need for reflective practitioners to become culturally aware, agile, and adept in working with families who have members of different races and skin tones. There are approaches to working with such families that can be unhelpful and others that can lead to engaged and insightful work. Knowledge of historical and current events related to U.S. race relations is necessary to begin to understand the additional dynamics that occur within multiracial families.

History of Interracial Families

In colonial America, as early as 1664 interracial marriages were illegal (Head, 2017). The concepts of race, race mixing, and interracial marriage were apparently more important to colonial settlers than was creating a unified government. White supremacists and slave owners of the 1600's appear to have much in common with white supremacists of 2017: a commitment to preserving the "purity" of the White race.

Although concepts of race and racism were not identified constructs in the 1660s, Selfa writes of these concepts, "They arose and became part of the dominant ideology of society in the context of the African slave trade at the dawn of capitalism in the 1500s and 1600s" (Selfa, 2010, para. 4). The lack of change since the 1600s, 1930s, and 1940s was evidenced in Charlottesville by the "blood and soil" chant, originally a Nazi slogan to indicate racial purity and territorial boundaries (Epstein, 2017).

Interracial families and their biracial and multiracial offspring have existed for hundreds of years in the United States, even prior to the establishment and later repeal of anti-miscegenation laws. In 1967, in *Loving v. Virginia*, the Supreme Court invalidated all laws that made interracial marriages illegal. Although the laws were changed, public opinion was slow to change in many areas of the United States, and today stereotypes, myths, and disagreement with interracial relationships and families continue to exist. In 2016, a Twitter advertisement by State Farm Insurance depicting a man of color proposing marriage to a White woman drew much criticism, disgust, and threats to boycott the company (Quinn, 2016). A few years before that, General Mills Cereal faced similar protest for a Cheerios commercial featuring an interracial family (Demby, 2014). Who knew that such ire could exist in a marriage proposal and a bowl of cereal?

My family's history with interracial relationships precedes current law and public opinion. My paternal family heritage comprises folks indigenous to the land known as the United States, colonists who pilfered then dominated the land, and slaves forced to tend to it. My great-grandparents, Gilbert and Mildred Peake (pictured), married in the early 1800s and had 12 children. Many of their descendants have also interracially married in the years since, including my parents, Jackie and Christine Peake, in 1972.

Mildred and Gilbert Peake

My parents' courtship was not without obstacles that still occur today for many couples. The church asked my White grandparents to leave and discontinue their membership when my mom started dating my dad. They left and persevered in their faith with God. At that time, and still in some places of worship in 2017, racial segregation has been a long-term reality: 86% of U.S. churches today lack any significant racial diversity (Equal Justice Initiative, 2017). My parents decided to get married by a judge at the local family court. My mom scheduled the appointment in advance via telephone, but on arrival the White judge refused to marry them, because my mom was White and my dad was not. The judge stated this explicitly, without fear of consequence, in 1972—five years after the Supreme Court ruling. This was not the Jim Crow South; it was in Michigan.

My family's experiences are far less violent than torturous and brutal beatings, rapes, and murders carried out in the name of racial purification. A glaring historical example is that of Emmitt Till, a 14-year-old boy who allegedly said, "Bye, baby" to a White woman in 1955. His punishment included forcible removal from his uncle's home—that is, kidnapping; having his eye gouged out; being forced to undress and beaten; and then shot and discarded in a river. His body was unrecognizable to his own mother. His murderers were arrested, charged, and found not guilty by a jury of their peers—all of whom were White (House, 2014).

We still see today that the burden of proof is fluid and facts from both sides abound in cases with victims and defendants of different races. "Racial bias does not rest only or even primarily in the minds of those who implement the system; racism is ingrained in the very construction of the system and implicated in its every aspect—how crimes are defined, how suspects are identified, how charging decisions are made, how trials are conducted, and how punishments are imposed" (Roberts, 2008, p. 262). Knowledge and the implications of historical and current events related to interracial dating, marriage, and procreation can assist reflective practitioners in serving multiracial families with awareness of some of the dynamics of their diverse family systems.

Research Portrayals of Interracial Families

Empirical research and theories before the 1960s portrayed diverse families as deviant and in need of fixing; this led to a universally accepted deficient view of diverse families (Stewart & Goldfarb, 2007). More recent literature reviews have stressed that little research has been conducted to investigate issues important to interracial couples and problems these couples encounter (Lewis, 2013). In one study, Lewis (2013) concluded that "virtually no empirical information exists from the perspective of those married interracially" (p. 16).

As a young person, I was always curious as to why the depiction of multiracial families typically included issues that would implode any family—including drug and alcohol abuse, physical and emotional abuse, and other harmful behaviors—with all attention focused on race and not the behaviors. The conclusion of any article, television show, or other medium was that the difference in parents' race was the root cause of all the family's issues. These conclusions, also when applied clinically and in popular culture for bicultural and multiracial individuals, are reminiscent of the fear-mongering myths of the "abhorrent mulatto," which began in 1691, when the colony of Virginia banned interracial marriage and threatened banishment of anyone involved in an interracial relationship to prevent biracial and interracial offspring (Head, 2017).

Three approaches have been used to frame diverse families: cultural deviance, cultural equivalence, and cultural variance (Allen, 1978). According to Allen (1978), the cultural deviant approach views characteristics of diverse families as negative or pathological; the cultural equivalent approach views all families as being the same, with no distinct characteristics of diverse families; and the cultural variant approach acknowledges the distinct characteristics of diverse families. These approaches frame published research and public opinion about interracial families and bicultural and multiracial individuals. They clarify that the standard that many researchers and society used was that of a middle-class, Western European-based nuclear family, and that all other variables, with the exception of race, were of no consequence. Not much has changed since this statement in 2007: "Current definitions of family diversity tend to reference the extent to which families do or do not follow the western European model of the nuclear family" (Stewart & Goldfarb, 2007, p. 3). It is through this lens that the observation, evaluation, and treatment of diverse families oftentimes occurs.

Implications for Family Professionals

There is a need for more research and empirical studies regarding interracial families to guide practice and policy. In the absence of this research, practitioners and policymakers must utilize what is available, which may not lead to effective outcomes and could even further exacerbate confusion on how to serve these families. It is important to note that "currently, there is a striking disconnect between the demographic reality of the United States and the populations family scientists study" (Trask & Marotz-Baden, 2007, p. 45).

My career is that of practitioner, not researcher. In my 25 years of serving diverse families, I have found that the single most useful and engaging technique is to allow each family (from each family member's optic) to inform me of what an experience means to them. Through such conversations and a willingness to adopt a cultural variant approach to diverse families, one can gain insight into the particular dynamics of each family. Alberta and Wood (2009) developed the Practical Skills Model for Multicultural Engagement, which emphasizes mutually respectful relationships and open exploration of cultural variations between practitioners and clients to drive practitioner movement from cultural encapsulation to cultural engagement.

Additionally, formal and informal studies of historical and current events allow practitioners to remain informed of how these events might affect diverse family systems. As Trask and Marotz-Baden (2007) pointed out, "It is important to understand not just what is happening in families but also how these internal processes are reflected in the larger culture" (p. 57). I encourage family professionals not to abandon other theories in family sciences but instead intentionally use them as context while extending the opportunity to family members to provide their own content. ✻

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Sarah Almalki

Arab Americans' Intermarriage and Integration in U.S. Society

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In Brief

- **Intermarriage can reflect the level of social and cultural integration between immigrants and their hosting society.**
- **80% of Arab Americans have a non-Arab spouse.**
- **Cultural stereotypes, such as terrorism, might threaten marital quality.**
- **Culturally sensitive education for interethnic couples can be helpful.**

The United States has become multiethnic and multiracial due to the number of immigrants in the country (Lichter, Qian, & Tumin, 2015). Arab Americans comprise a fairly small percentage of immigrants in the United States, and research has shown that they integrate relatively quickly into the U.S. social fabric and have high rates of out-marriage. Research on mate selection and marriage has shown that, in general, individuals tend to date or marry someone from their ethnic group and with whom they share similarities in terms of culture and ethnicity (Kalmijn, 1998). In this context, the high level of interethnic marital relationships of Arab Americans in a multiethnic society like the United States may be an indicator of a high level of assimilation and integration between this immigrant group and their host society (Alba & Nee, 2003). Which raises an important question: what does the future of interethnic dating and marriage look like in the United States? This article focuses on research findings on the context of Arab-Americans partnering outside their ethnic group.

Intermarriage as an Indicator of Social Integration

In this article, the concept of intermarriage refers to marriage between heterosexual individuals from different ethnic or minority groups. It has been argued that marriage between different ethnic groups is a sign of the level of social and ethnic acceptance of "others" in a society and an indicator of a well-integrated community (Alba & Nee, 2003; Lichter et al., 2015). Previous research has supported the notion that interethnic marriage can reflect immigrants' level of acculturation and assimilation in their host society. In contrast, endogamy, which refers to marrying from one's specific ethnic community, might be a sign of a low level of acceptance of ethnic differences or unequal power in society (Kalmijn, 1998). Some researchers have proposed finer cultural considerations to account for intermarriage such as being a second- or third-generation immigrant, which can override some of the distancing effects of ethnic differences (Song, 2009).

Population statistics show that intermarriages have become more common than ever in the United States, and people are less likely to oppose marriages between different ethnic groups (Bohra-Mishra & Massey, 2015). Today, about one in six new marriages in the United States involves intermarriage, and in 2015, approximately 10% of total marriages (new and existing) in the United States were intermarriages, compared to 3% in 1967. Moreover, 14% of infants in the United States are born to parents from different ethnicities. These numbers reveal a decreasing rate of monoethnic children in the United States. Most intermarriages happen between a Caucasian and a European, Latino, or Asian immigrant (Bohra-Mishra & Massey, 2015). While research shows that intermarriage seems to be growing in the United States among these different groups, there is little known about the practice of intermarriage involving other race/ethnicities, such as Arab Americans.

Defining the Arab American Community

Understanding the context of intermarriage between Arab Americans and individuals from other ethnic groups contributes to the larger study of ethnic minorities in the United States and to cross-cultural research on marriage and partnership behaviors. Arab Americans represent different cultural and religious backgrounds. By definition, Arab Americans are those who immigrated from a country where the main language is Arabic or whose family of origin did so. The classification is independent of religious affiliation.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Arab Americans are classified as White, and thus are combined in Census results with European Americans, which makes it hard to find an accurate estimate of their population in the United States. However, according to the Arab American Institute (2014), an organization that has been actively involved in providing demographic information regarding the Arab American population, the number of U. S. residents of Arab heritage is approximately 3.7 million. The first waves of Arab immigration to the United States consisted mostly of Christian immigrants from Syria and Lebanon (Al Wekhian, 2016). Today, the Arab American community is heterogeneous in terms of faith, family rituals, skin color, and English fluency—all characteristics that have great influence on acculturation and assimilation into the U.S. mainstream. Also, Arab Americans, like some other Middle Eastern groups in the United States, became stigmatized after the 9/11 attacks on the United States,

significantly increasing their levels of anxiety and depression (Amer & Hovey, 2012) and perhaps creating more cultural and psychological boundaries between Arab Americans and other ethnic groups.

Intermarriage and Arab Americans

In spite of the potential boundaries listed above, research based mostly on census data has documented a high rate of intermarriage between Arab Americans and people from different ethnicities. Between 1990 and 2002, about 80% of Arab American individuals had a non-Arab spouse. The numbers are higher for men and those who are U.S.-born and of Lebanese or Syrian descent (Kulczycki & Lobo, 2001, 2002). Moreover, Arab American individuals who have strong English skills and high education levels are more likely to marry a partner from a different ethnic group.

These levels of intermarriage involving Arab Americans can be interpreted as a reflection of acculturation and assimilation. However, with men out-marrying more frequently than women, there are questions about what accounts for such a gender gap. A possible explanation is that there could be a limited number of marriageable Arab American women, so Arab American men looked for women outside their ethnic group. It is also possible that such gender differences are related to cultural expectations and traditions, such as that Arab American women should marry men within their ethnic group.

Nonetheless, high rates of intermarriage among Arab Americans raise important research questions about parenting, the experience of raising bicultural children, and the experiences of non–Arab American spouses (e.g., negative cultural reactions, stereotypes) that may result in poor marital adjustment. Discrimination aimed at the Arab American community might threaten the relationship even further. Culturally sensitive marriage education that also increases awareness about interethnic unions might be helpful.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the available research helps develop an understanding of the context of intermarriage among Arab Americans, this research focuses mainly on the factors that link to acculturation and assimilation and their association with the probability of intermarriage. To further this understanding, it will be important both to examine marital quality and stability of intermarriages to inform the future practice of Family Life Education (FLE) and to study the barriers to intermarriage that Arab American women face.

Implications for Practice

There are several ways that family practitioners, including Family Life Educators, could support and educate interethnic families that include Arab Americans. Applying the following culturally specific practical considerations can inform couples and FLE programs: First, family practitioners and educators should enhance their own knowledge of the cultural groups with which they work and learn to recognize and avoid cultural stereotypes. Second, they should provide couple education programs that are culturally sensitive, to help interethnic couples understand each other's cultural context. Third, program content should address key issues related to interethnic family relationships, including gender expectations in each culture, the needs of children, and important family values and traditions. For example, the Arab culture's collectivism, which emphasizes family closeness, interdependence, group bonding, and hierarchy, is in contrast to some individualistic cultures, like that of the United States, that emphasize values such as independence and self-expression. Educators can help families balance these contrasting expectations. Finally, interventions designed for family and extended family members are likely to have important benefits, given that in Arab culture in-laws and family members usually have close involvement with their married children. For example, in Arab culture parents often participate heavily in solving marital problems and in child rearing. Programs should recognize this and provide guidelines for dealing with multigenerational decision making, perhaps even including multiple generations in programming. ✻

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K. Anh Do

Acculturative Differences in Families: Adaptive and Maladaptive Outcomes

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In Brief

- **Acculturation gaps are common in immigrant and refugee families.**
- **There are different types of acculturation gaps, each affecting families in different ways.**
- **Family-centered programs can help families deal with the stresses related to acculturative differences.**

Family Acculturation

Acculturation is "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry, 2005, p. 698). When immigrant and refugee families arrive in the receiving society, children and adolescents tend to adapt more quickly than their parents and other adult family members, who are more likely to adhere to their cultural heritage. This differential adaptation has been called many names, including the *acculturation gap* (Szapocznik, Rio, Perez-Vidal, Kurtines, Hervis, & Santisteban, 1986), *acculturative dissonance* (Rumbaut & Portes, 2002), *acculturative mismatch* (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002), and *acculturative family distancing* (Hwang & Wood, 2009).

Mind the Gaps

The differential rates of adaptation among family members often contribute to adverse individual and family outcomes. Research has shown that large acculturation gaps between parents and their children contribute to many internalizing and externalizing problems in children and youths, such as depression, anxiety, substance use, and delinquency (see Liu, 2015; Yoon et al., 2013). These gaps also have predicted poorer parent-adolescent communication (Buki, Ma, Strom, & Strom, 2003) and more frequent and intense conflicts between parents and their children (Farver, Narang, & Bhada, 2002).

However, other studies have not found these negative outcomes (e.g., Lau, McCabe, Yeh, Garland, Wood, & Hough, 2005; Telzer, Yuen, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2016). The inconsistent findings may be due to differences in measurement, sample characteristics, geographic locations, and temporal influences (Telzer, 2010). In her 2010 review, however, Eva Telzer critically challenged the acculturation gap-distress model and focused on the complexities in the family acculturation process that the model overlooks. Instead of merely examining acculturative differences between parents and their children, she proposed four different types of gaps using two dimensions: host cultural orientation and native cultural orientation. The types of gaps identified in Telzer's model include the child's host cultural orientation being higher than the parents', the child's host cultural orientation being lower than the parents', the child's native cultural orientation being higher than the parents', and, finally, the child's native cultural orientation being lower than the parents'.

Based on the studies that Telzer (2010) examined, the first category, in which child's host orientation is higher, and the fourth, in which the child's native orientation is lower than parents', seems to be more common in immigrant and refugee families. Telzer further showed that each type of gap functioned in particular ways and that acculturation gaps did not always predict negative outcomes. For instance, most studies did not find adverse effects resulting from the first type of gap, where the child was more acculturated to the host culture than the parent. Telzer proposed that this type of acculturation gap may be perceived as advantageous to the adaptation of the family in the host society.

Emerging research further shows that acculturation gaps alone may not be the sole contributors to adverse outcomes. For example, Hwang and Wood (2009) found that acculturative family distancing (which consists of differences in cultural values and communication failures) predicted higher risks of adolescent psychopathology among both Asian and Latino youth; however, family conflict mediated the effect. This finding supported Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao's (2008) distinction between acculturation conflicts and acculturation gaps. According to the authors, acculturation conflicts describe "the stress inherent in being caught between cultural systems," whereas acculturation gaps simply describe "differences between parents' and adolescents' levels of involvement in different cultures" (p. 305). Therefore, differences within families do not always lead to dysfunction, but stress and conflict resulting from those differences should be examined in future research.

Implications for Researchers

Research on family acculturation is growing exponentially, revealing deeper complexities of the acculturation process. In her 2010 commentary, Catherine Costigan offered five important recommendations for the future of acculturation research. She also advocated for the adoption of standardized methods of measuring acculturation and its associated gaps in order for researchers to make appropriate comparisons of their findings. Costigan also suggested looking into the mechanisms and outcomes that result from the different types of acculturative gaps. She recommended that researchers assess the frequency and specific conditions of the various gaps as they occur and take into consideration the family system. Acculturation researchers need to expand the focus beyond the parent–child dyad by including other family members, such

as siblings, spouses, and grandparents. As a process, acculturation and how it changes across an individual's life course has not been well studied; therefore, the use of longitudinal designs to examine these changes is much needed.

Interventions and Implications for Family Practitioners

Certified Family Life Educators (CFLEs) and helping professionals can use this information in working with immigrant and refugee families. First, we must keep in mind that not all families have one typical pattern of acculturation. Family members may also adapt at different rates across different cultural domains (e.g., behavior, language, identity, values). Even though family members may have different acculturation orientations, this is not always a problem, and many families are resilient and find ways to thrive. At the same time, we also cannot overlook families who are struggling with their acculturative differences. How to help these families navigate their new environment is a delicate issue that requires careful considerations.

A few prevention and intervention programs have been developed to address the acculturation gaps and conflicts in immigrant families. One earlier effort was bicultural effectiveness training (BET), developed by José Szapocznik and his colleagues in the late 1980s (Szapocznik, Santisteban, Kurtines, Perez-Vidal, & Hervis, 1984), specifically targeting Cuban American families. The intervention was designed to reduce acculturative conflicts between parents and adolescents by using reframing techniques and helping family members develop bicultural skills and understanding through the building of cultural alliances. BET was compared with structural family therapy in an evaluation study. Participants in both groups reported comparable results relating to improvements in their family interactions, fewer adolescent problems, and lower psychopathology; however, BET participants reported higher biculturalism scores than did structural family therapy participants (Szapocznik et al., 1986).

Another example is the Strengthening of Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties in Immigrant Chinese American Families, developed by Yu-Wen Ying (1999). This community-based education intervention was developed for Chinese American parents and can be delivered in either Mandarin or Cantonese. The program consists of eight weekly, 2-hour sessions using lectures, experiential activities, and homework. The goals were to provide parents with information about cultural differences and parenting strategies to increase parental empathy and improve intergenerational communication and intimacy. The newer version of the intervention is known as Strengthening Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties in Immigrant Families (Ying, 2009). Comparison of participants' pre- and postscores showed that parents reported closer relationships with their children after having gone through the program. They also felt a greater sense of control and efficacy as parents (Ying, 1999). The vast majority of parents (90%) also reported at least one change in their parenting method as a result of participating in the program (Ying, 2009).

More recently, the Entre Dos Mundos (Between Two Worlds) prevention program, developed by Paul Smokowski and Martica Bacallao (2009), also shows promising results for Latino families. It consists of eight weekly sessions using a multifamily format (8–10 families), with attendance by at least one parent and one adolescent from each family. The program addresses acculturation stress and challenges between parents and their adolescents to improve problematic relationships, develop coping strategies, and increase adaptability and biculturalism in Latino families. The program is flexible and can be delivered using different formats (e.g., action-oriented skills training, support groups). Results from the randomized pretest and posttest experimental evaluation showed improvements in both adolescent and family outcomes. Families who attended four or more sessions showed a decrease in adolescent aggression and oppositional-defiant behavior, as well as increasing bicultural support, identity integration, and family adaptability.

Overall, utilizing family-centered approaches to help families identify and take advantage of intercultural resources and to develop bicultural adaptation patterns has been found to be effective in reducing and preventing negative outcomes (Cheung & Jahn, 2017; Smokowski & Bacallao, 2009; Szapocznik et al., 1984; Ying, 1999). In certain contexts, such as those with high concentrations of ethnic diversity, moving beyond the bicultural framework to help families develop a multicultural pattern of adjustment may be most relevant and can be a new direction for professionals in the near future. We should also be aware of potential acculturative differences between us as professionals and the families we serve. Our cultural orientation and values may interact with those of the families in unexpected ways, sometimes leading to cultural misunderstandings and conflicts. This information calls us to be reflective in our work and in our understanding of how families adapt to different contexts.

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Vulnerability and Reintegration: How Families Change and Adapt in the Face of Human Trafficking

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In Brief

- **Vulnerabilities and traumatic experiences that contribute to risks of trafficking often also result in negative outcomes that persist even after freedom is restored.**
- **Family integration after the experience of trafficking is complex when individual outcomes influence interactions and relationships within the family.**

Human trafficking is defined as the exploitation of an individual through force, fraud, or coercion (Chung, 2009). The past three decades have seen a significant increase in the prevalence of human trafficking as a result of numerous economic and social shifts, such as economic instability and migration. The International Labor Organization reported that approximately 20.9 million people were trafficked worldwide in 2012, with 1.5 million of those individuals trafficked within North America. Vulnerabilities and traumatic experiences that contribute to risks of trafficking also often result in negative outcomes that persist even after an individual's freedom is restored, such as depression, anxiety, abuse, sexual abuse, phobias, substance use and abuse, compounded health issues, and difficulties with relationships; these outcomes are experienced by and affect survivors and families alike (Slotts & Ramey, 2009).

After having been trafficked, individuals return to families that may see them as distant and different from who they were beforehand and from the rest of the family. Given that both individual and family changes may have occurred during the time away, families may either facilitate reintegration or inhibit this process for survivors. Various family characteristics such as interpersonal dynamics, family structure, and family coping styles help explain how families adapt when faced with this adversity. Understanding these processes is extremely valuable for assisting individuals and families who are at risk or who have experienced human trafficking (Surtees, 2017).

Family Functioning and Vulnerability

Families and their vulnerabilities can play a significant role in how individuals end up being trafficked. Although some broader factors like government corruption or deception related to various employment or relationship opportunities need to be recognized, many factors are related to the family context, such as economic hardship or instability, abuse in the family environment, and poverty (Bryant-Davis, Tillman, Marks, & Smith, 2009). When these types of vulnerabilities exist, individuals may seek out what appears to be either promising opportunities to escape from their families or situations or opportunities to provide support for their families. Family members may also be involved in the trafficking process, and parents or siblings may even sell their family members into servitude, ignore an individual's involvement in exploitation, or create an environment that encourages an individual to return to an exploitive situation (Vijeyarasa, 2010).

Internal Dynamics of the Family After Reintegration

Reintegration is the process of recovery and inclusion that occurs after an experience with trafficking. Important elements in the reintegration process include creating a safe environment with a reasonable standard of living, supporting psychological well-being, locating opportunities for development (e.g., social, personal, economic), accessing support, and possibly restoring relationships in a family or community (Surtees, 2017). Individuals may experience numerous reintegration issues when they are able to leave, or even escape from, their traffickers and return home. For example, when family members are instigators of the trafficking of a family member, the victim can face difficult reintegration dilemmas. If a family sells another family member into trafficking, it probably would not be beneficial for the family to reintegrate. If the family was unaware of the trafficking situation and believed they were sending a family member to legitimate employment, the family may be faced with feelings of guilt or shame upon reunification with the trafficked family member.

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Individuals who have been trafficked often experience the most direct negative outcomes of being trafficked, such as educational delays, possible retaliation from trafficker(s), and psychological difficulties. At the same time, the family unit can experience massive upheaval and degeneration as a result of both the trafficking and the eventual reintegration as well. In addition, individual and family factors may exacerbate each other; negative individual outcomes such as depression, anxiety, fear, and anger may inhibit bonding within the family. Individuals who have been trafficked may struggle in relationships with others as the result of lacking trust, feeling betrayed, or feeling stigmatized as a result of their experiences. Victims may shy away from revealing details about their trafficking or even acknowledging that they were trafficked in order to avoid stigmatization in the family; this denial or secrecy can

lead to further difficulty with interpersonal relationships and a lack of cohesion among family members (Crawford & Kaufman, 2008).

The family as a whole may respond negatively to the individual who has been trafficked or to the reintegration process, which can cause further detachment among family members. For example, some families perceive stigma internally and express it toward family members by shaming or even harming victims for fear of social rejection (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012). Stigma in the family may be further reinforced when victims are viewed as the offender by those within their social and cultural contexts and are incarcerated or punished through the legal system. Another concern is when an individual is a survivor of sex trafficking and the spouse no longer recognizes the marriage after the victim has returned home, possibly viewing the victim as unfaithful, unclean, or promiscuous. These instances of intrafamily stigmatization can cause increased disintegration in the family and may lead to gossip, discrimination, and ostracism in the community (Surtees, 2017). When these negative outcomes persist, further social stigmatization, revictimization, or isolation may occur and continue to disrupt the rebuilding of the family.

How Can Family Professionals Help Increase Family Cohesion After Reintegration?

Oftentimes, the trauma of being trafficked and the challenges of reintegration into family and community affect survivors long after they have found their freedom (Le, 2017). Much of the emphasis in the research on human trafficking takes an individual focus on survivor rehabilitation or on policies related to prosecuting traffickers (Pearson, 2002); addressing reintegration into the family or how trafficking affects the family unit is often secondary. While the trafficking survivor may be the primary victim, family members should be considered secondary victims who are also affected by trafficking and reintegration (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012). Furthermore, focusing on more macro-level changes (e.g., social upheaval, migration) may be needed, because during such changes individuals experience the greatest risk of being trafficked; as society changes, so do family needs, which may increase vulnerability (Crawford & Kaufman, 2008).

Several approaches have emerged regarding how to proceed with helping both individuals and families cope with reintegration and reunification. These include the following (Muraya & Fry, 2016):

- trauma-informed care (i.e., adaptive care based on individual trauma experiences)
- rights-based care (i.e., making individuals aware of their rights)
- comprehensive case management (i.e., needs assessment, comprehensive care from recovery to reintegration, and evaluation)
- multiagency and multidisciplinary services (i.e., holistic services)
- effective rescue (i.e., first response dealing with basic needs)
- recovery (i.e., legal aid, security, medical care, and psychosocial care)
- reintegration and repatriation (i.e., learning useful and sustainable life skills)

However, many of these services focus solely on the individual survivor and do not explore the greater impact experienced by both family and society. Post-trafficking assistance for families need to include support for and within each system affected by trafficking. This includes addressing societal and cultural norms responsible for systemic failure to address the impact of families themselves being complicit in trafficking.

It is evident that family members play a significant role in either the successful reintegration with the family or the hindrance of trafficking survivors' recovery. Family professionals and educators assisting in these situations should understand that effective treatment and support plans are rooted in a family-focused framework, in which protective support factors are identified at each level in order to help survivors cope with stigma and fear. Evidence supporting this idea has shown that gradual reintroduction to family members, slower integration back into a specific community or village, and teaching survivors income-generating skills (which can also contribute to later acceptance within the family and community) are especially helpful (Le, 2017). Furthermore, trauma-informed care provided by family therapists that focuses on emotion maintenance, forming healthy relationships, identifying and understanding trauma responses, creating a sense of personal agency, and creating a safe environment are also crucial to helping individuals adapt within their family and society after being trafficked (Sapiro, Johnson, Postmus, & Simmel, 2016). Finally, evidence exists showing that rehabilitative programs delivered by licensed family therapists and other trained professionals that offer counseling and social assistance for both individuals and families are vital to the success of reintegration for survivors of human trafficking. The times prior to being trafficked, during trafficking, and throughout reintegration are all equally important to address family functioning. Family Life Educators can help circumvent trafficking and the associated negative outcomes through prevention and education programs that help families understand how they might ultimately be encouraging the occurrence of trafficking (Caretta, 2015). ✻

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The Importance of Family Support and Resilience Among Sexual Minorities of Color

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In Brief

- **Individuals who experience family rejection after disclosing sexual minority status are at high risk of substance abuse, depression, risky sexual behavior, and suicide attempts.**
- **Assumptions of heteronormativity in families of color have been perpetuated by researchers, although one third of sexual minorities identify as people of color.**
- **Strategies to enhance family support and acceptance are needed as sexual minority youth continue to come out at younger ages.**

What We Know About Sexual Minority People of Color

The concept of resilience has received relatively little attention in connection with understanding responses to stress among sexual minority people of color. Although there is no widely agreed-on definition of resilience, Luthar, Crossman, and Small (2015) have characterized it as achieving positive outcomes despite adversity, improving coping strategies, and increasing psychological well-being. In the context of sexual minority people of color, some experts have suggested that the stigma this population has already experienced due to racism serves as a protective factor against the effects of stigma related to homophobia (Adams, Cahill, & Ackerlind, 2005; Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black, & Burkholder, 2003; Wilson & Miller, 2002). However, as heteronormativity has rarely been challenged in communities of color (Pastrana, 2016), and researchers have perpetuated the assumption of heterosexuality within families of color (e.g., Chito Childs, Laudone, & Tavernier, 2010), information about sexual minority people of color has largely been missing from research, including research related to resilience (Bennett & Battle, 2001).

As a first step, researchers must change the heteronormative narrative of families of color and acknowledge that one third of sexual minorities identify as a person of color, and people of color are more likely than their White counterparts to identify as a sexual minority (Gates & Newport, 2012). Moreover, sexual minority people of color are more likely to be raising children than are White sexual minorities (Gates, 2013). Therefore, it is important that sexual minorities of color are understood in the context of family and resilience.

The Importance of Family

Support from parents appears to be the most foundational type of social support when considering resilience (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Prior studies have found that the negative effects related to stigma or discrimination among sexual minority people of color may be offset by family support through social cohesion, racial socialization, or other minority coping processes (Cochran, Mays, Alegria, Ortega, & Takeuchi, 2007; Ryff, Keys, & Hughes, 2003). For example, those who experience family rejection after disclosing sexual orientation are at higher risk of substance abuse (Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2009), depression, risky sexual behavior, and suicide attempts (Mustanski, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011; Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). Conversely, affirming relationships with family members are associated with higher self-esteem, improved physical health, and lower levels of psychological distress and substance abuse among sexual minority adolescents (Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010). One strategy sexual minority people of color may use to manage and reduce exposure to stigma is role flexing, which involves reorienting oneself toward an identity that receives more support or is less stigmatizing in a given social situation (Bowleg et al., 2003; Wilson & Miller, 2002). In other words, they may still be able to draw support from family through other familial identities (e.g., sibling, parent, provider) even though family members may not be affirming of their sexual identity.

Recent Studies

Two studies we conducted were presented at the 2017 NCFR Annual Conference as part of a symposium on well-being among sexual minority people of color. These studies utilized data from the Social Justice Sexuality Project (Battle, Pastrana, & Daniels, 2013). The first study included 961 Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander lesbian, gay,

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bisexual, and queer young adults and utilized a resilience perspective to assess the extent to which prominence (i.e., importance) and salience (i.e., outness) of one's sexual minority status explained associations among family support, LGBT community involvement, perceived community homophobia, and overall psychological well-being. Findings indicated that family support more accurately predicted psychological well-being than community-level factors. Moreover, findings also indicated that family support was indirectly associated with psychological well-being through identity prominence and salience. Thus, this study adds to the growing literature that identifies potential resilience strategies that minorities can draw from as sources of support—specifically, their families.

The second study examined multiple minority identities and utilized queer intersectionality theory. It investigated the influence of family support, LGBT community involvement, and spirituality on the psychological well-being of sexual minority Muslims in the United States. The study examined data from the 84 LGBT+ people of color in the project who fell into one of three categories: raised Muslim but not currently practicing, currently practicing but not raised Muslim, or raised Muslim and currently practicing. Initial findings indicated that, though significant at the bivariate level, family support was not a significant predictor of psychological well-being in this population. Rather, spirituality, outness, and association with Islam were significantly and positively associated with psychological well-being. It is not clear whether the varying results are related to religious group or some other variable. Although family support was not significantly associated beyond the bivariate level, further research is warranted on the impact of the family on psychological well-being, considering that families are often greatly involved in an individuals' religious practice.

Future Directions

Gender nonconformity is the conveyance of femininity or masculinity through one's appearance or behavior that is contrary to the expectations society has assigned to one's biological sex (Grossman, D'Augelli, Salter, & Hubbard, 2005). Within families, individuals who are perceived as expressing gender nonconformity can experience verbal and physical abuse from parents and siblings (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2005; Grossman et al., 2005; Rosario et al., 2009). Gordon and Meyer (2008) have proposed that, as a first step to improve the research base, gender nonconformity be included when examining sexual minority identities. As studies of adults (Lippa, 2002; Skidmore, Linsenmeier, & Bailey, 2006) and youth (Blashill & Powlishta 2009; D'Augelli et al., 2005) have found lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals to be more gender nonconforming than their heterosexual counterparts, including gender identity in research examining sexual minority identities may enhance our understanding of this population. For example, Ryan et al. (2010) found that parental support of sexual orientation and gender expression was associated with higher self-esteem and lower depression and suicidal ideation. In addition, as the majority of gender research has focused on predominantly White samples, future studies must include racially diverse participants so as to enhance generalizability across populations (Halim, Ruble, Tamis-LeMonda, & Shrout, 2013).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Understanding family support as a resilience factor and building family-centered policy and programs are particularly important as sexual minority youth continue to come out at younger ages (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). Moreover, the cost of family rejection is underscored by the fact that sexual minority youth are disproportionately affected by homelessness (Durso & Gates, 2012) and overrepresented in the foster-care system (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). To maintain positive family relationships and increase support, practitioners must educate families on how supportive and accepting behaviors regarding adolescents' sexual minority status can contribute to their positive mental and physical health outcomes (Ryan & Chen-Hayes, 2013), then help them to adopt those behaviors. These behaviors include showing children affection after they have come out, requiring other family members to respect their children, talking with clergy to develop support in a faith community to support LGBT people, and welcoming a young person's LGBT friends or romantic partners to the home (Ryan, 2009).

Even if families are not accepting of an adolescent's sexual minority identity, professionals can help them support their children while still maintaining their values and strongly held beliefs (e.g., Ryan & Rees, 2012). For example, the Family Acceptance Project has developed a strengths-based family intervention framework (Ryan & Chen-Hayes, 2013; Ryan & Diaz, 2011) that views families as allies and their cultural values as strengths. A key step for practitioners instilling family acceptance is to create an alliance with family members by allowing them to express their hopes and fears regarding their child, which few parents have had the chance to do with a nonjudgmental, supportive professional (Ryan & Chen-Hayes, 2013). As family acceptance in adolescence has been found to predict positive mental and physical health outcomes in young adulthood (Ryan et al., 2010), culturally competent practitioners and service providers are needed to implement family-centered programs and interventions to enhance family support. Further research of specific acceptance and support behaviors among families of sexual minorities of color will enhance our understanding of family support as a resilience factor and thereby improve programming. ✻

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Differences Abound: Understanding the Generational Divides in Attitudes on Marriage in South Korea

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In Brief

- **Despite the ongoing popularity of marriage, support for it is far from monolithic across countries, within societies, or even within families.**
- **Family conflict and a generational divide on marriage exist in the South Korean context.**

While marriage remains a touchstone for many people in various countries, commitment to the institution is far from monolithic. Stark differences in marital beliefs and practices can abound within societies and even within families. For instance, in the United States, more than two thirds (68%) of adults indicated that marriage was important for couples planning to spend their lives together (Wang & Parker, 2014), while more than half (57%) of adults in South Korea stated that marriage was desirable (Statistics Korea, 2016). However, in both cases, the responses to a second question found that the proportion of adults aged 65 or older affirming marriage as a formal institution was at least double that of their counterparts younger than age 30.

Even as marriage has experienced some loss of prominence in many countries, the way this has happened escapes a one-size-fits-all explanation. Some of the variability in marriage perceptions is due to differences in the meaning of marriage. As Chung (2011) has argued, marriage is difficult to define even within a particular culture, and its meaning is subject to the ebb and flow of competing ideologies, which are themselves the product of rapidly shifting historical conditions. Thus, in the case of South Korea, the divergent generational views on marriage that sometimes lead to family conflict cannot be fully understood except in their proper cultural context (Lee & Kim, 2016; Sung, 2014). That context includes ethical norms, wedding traditions and customs, and an increased emphasis on personal fulfillment over larger intergenerational familial goals.

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First, shifting attitudes toward marriage in South Korea can be partly explained by changing ethics related to the priority placed on the relationship with a domestic partner in comparison to that with the family of origin. One's relationship with family of origin, especially with parents, has long been a point of emphasis in Korean culture—an outgrowth of the concept of filial piety, or *hyo*. With parental respect being one of the principal values in Confucianism, adult children have long been expected to provide for their parents not only financially but also through acts of physical care and labor (Park, Phua, McNally, & Sun, 2005). The strong importance of hyo has historically entered into the calculus behind any major life decision adult children make, including marriage (Lee & Kim, 2016; Yoo, 2007). Recently, however, the value of hyo seems to have faded in conjunction with changes in family organization. When adults were asked whether their domestic partnership or their relationship with their family of origin came first, almost half (45%) younger than age 30 reported that their domestic partnership had priority, whereas nearly two thirds (60%) of adults aged 50 to 59 reported the opposite (Statistics Korea, 2016). The decreased emphasis on the family of origin and difficulty in reaching a consensus within the family have contributed to intergenerational (e.g., parent–child)—and, in some instances, intragenerational (e.g., among children) family disputes. Studies have found that parents voluntarily adjust their expectations of care and reciprocity with their children to avoid discord within the family, emotional hardship, and lower life satisfaction (Cha, 2014; Lowentein & Gur-Yaish, 2007).

In addition to ethical norms, perceptions related to wedding traditions and customs can be linked to generational differences concerning marriage in South Korea. When adults were asked about their thoughts on spending in South Korea's wedding culture, fully three fourths (76%) of adults in their 20s, and even more (82%) in their 30s, regarded the wedding culture as "excessive" (Statistics Korea, 2016). Distinctive aspects of modern South Korean wedding culture can easily overwhelm young adults, especially when the unemployment rate for recent graduates is at an all-time high (Kim, 2017). Traditionally, the groom is expected to provide a home while the bride provides furniture and household articles (*hon-su*). In addition, there is an extensive and elaborate practice of wedding gift giving. *Ye-mool* are gifts—often, luxury accessories—that newlyweds exchange with each other, and *ye-dan* is a gift that the bride offers to her in-laws. Although it has been suggested that such traditional rituals are becoming somewhat outmoded and small weddings are emerging as a new trend (Lee & Kim, 2015), it still is not uncommon for families to experience conflict, both within (e.g., between partners)

and across (e.g., parent–child) generations, based on contrasting attitudes toward long-established expectations (Lee, Park, Lee, Oh, Choi, & Song, 2015). According to a recent report published by the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (Kwon, Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2016), only half (51%) of those who planned a small wedding ended up having one, and parents' insistence on larger, more conventional weddings (23%) was found to be the most prevalent reason.

A greater emphasis placed on the goals of personal fulfillment and happiness has also contributed to differing views on marriage across generational lines. Marriage in South Korea has long been considered a developmental milestone, with generational implications for the continuation of a family line. Thus, for many Korean families, choosing a spouse remained a familial deliberation in which parents often got final say (Lee et al., 2015). However, studies have also noted high levels of distress experienced by both parents and their adult children because of their disparate expectations in accepting a new member of the family (Shin, 2017; Sung 2014).

Among younger generations of Koreans, marriage is no longer a means to bear progeny for the primary purpose of carrying on the family name. Instead, young people in South Korea increasingly perceive marriage as an opportunity for personal growth, as opposed to a familial obligation informed by societal expectations (Park, 2004). Yet because the idea of marriage as an act of personal fulfillment has not yet reached universal acceptance in South Korean society, especially among older Koreans (Campbell, Wright, & Flores, 2012; Lee et al., 2015), sharp intergenerational family disputes arise as younger Koreans seek to assert a version of marriage that is bound up with individual identity (Cha, 2014). One study of families with an unmarried child over the age of 40 found a sense of frustration among parents and even a lingering sense of guilt among children, where the children identified their unmarried status as filial impiety (*bulhyo*) (Sung, 2014). Moreover, even as fewer people get married, cohabitation and childbearing out of wedlock remain stigmatized, so birthrates have dropped considerably in South Korea. And with declining birthrates, the public discourse on marriage has come to be driven by the questions of what one needs in order to get married or what can lower the obstacles to marriage rather than the fundamental question of the reasons for an individual to marry in the first place.

These culture-specific factors—the diminution of hyo, an aversion to the excesses of wedding culture, and a greater focus on self in the marital context—have all contributed to the generational divide on marriage in South Korea. However, for family professionals, merely identifying external factors will not prove very useful in improving the specific situation presented by each family struggling with the question of marriage. Instead, they must approach each family as unique in its struggles while also understanding the degree to which the aforementioned systemic trends are applicable to that family. For instance, the marital decision-making process of couples in which the woman is older than her male partner is unique in terms of the hurdles they face related to the conventional expectation in Korea that a man should be at least the same age as his female partner (Lee & Kim, 2016). To better understand the wide variance in views on marriage, researchers must acknowledge the specific cultural context in which such views arise, without being bounded to that context. Further, research should extend our understanding of the motivations for marriage and continue to inquire why, even in the face of external constraints, marriage is still so compelling to many people. The findings of such research will in turn support Family Life Educators as they work with families in managing conflict and making family-related decisions. ✻

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Chinese "Study Mothers" in Living-Apart-Together Relationships

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In Brief

- **Chinese "study mothers" accompany and take care of their children during their course of study.**
- **The resulting couples' living-apart-together arrangements challenge societal assumptions that intimacy always entails physical proximity.**
- **Family professionals can help couples learn to maximize the advantages of the arrangement while managing the challenges.**

The past decade has seen a rise in the West of couples living separately, bringing about changes in individual personal life and a transformation in intimate relationships (Duncan, Phillips, Roseneil, Carter, & Stoilova, 2013; Jackson, 2015; Jamieson, 1998). Similarly, in contemporary China, some couples live in separate households but maintain their relationship. Several different terms have been used to describe this kind of non-cohabiting relationship, such as *commuter marriage, weekend couple, distance relationship*, and the term now gaining acceptance, *living-apart-together (LAT) relationships*.

Although some of the reasons couples live apart in China are similar to those in Western contexts, such as job or education (Holmes, 2004), others are different. Such differences can be seen with the category of middle-aged Chinese "study mothers," who live apart for the sake of their children's education. The term study mother (in Mandarin Chinese, *peidu mama*) describes women who physically accompany and take care of their children full-time to provide them with optimal living and study conditions, relocating their residences near their children's school. Under such circumstances, the household is split across a country or countries, as the husbands stay near the original home and shoulder the responsibility of financially supporting the family.

This arrangement creates a family with differences, that is, the family of the mother and the family of the father. Each parent is committed to supporting the family, but the lives of both are different in terms of location, purpose, activities, and focus. Chinese parents living in different locations affect the family's functioning, especially in the Chinese context, where Confucian ideology and the conventional family are highly valued. How does this arrangement influence the individual development of parents, what is the effect of the father's absence on children, and how do couples maintain their relationship and sense of intimacy?

Being a Study Mother

The phenomenon of mothers accompanying children, both physically and mentally, prevails in China, particularly for mothers of teenagers. This is partly because Chinese parents have a long tradition of emphasizing children's education and academic achievement (Fong, 2004; Huang & Yeoh, 2005); additionally, the male breadwinner remains dominant in China. Furthermore, with only one child in the household under China's one-child policy, this unintentionally led Chinese families to become child centered (Chan, 2013). Consequently, some are willing to do everything for their children, even sacrificing career or self-development while living apart. Being a study mother affects daily routines, roles and responsibilities in the family, and living arrangements.

Fixed Daily Routines

Being a study mother does not mean sitting alongside the child while studying. Instead, the most important responsibility is to take care of children's daily lives and prevent them from being distracted from their studies. The mothers' experience of time is cyclical and fixed in many ways (Scott, 2013). For example, when children go to school in the morning, study mothers shop for groceries and prepare the children's lunch. When the children return home, mothers watch the time and wake the children up from a midday nap. In the evening, they make dinner and turn off the television to provide children with a quiet environment for study. Preparing three meals a day for the children, along with the endless repetition of domestic chores, traps study mothers at home.

However, the father plays a different role in the ways of supporting family members compared to the study mother. In this case, the father, as the sole and primary financial contributor, is expected to provide economic support by finding jobs that are better paying and allow them to send money regularly to their wives. Considering that the fathers do not have to arrange their time around children and family things, their individualization can be high, whereas the mothers' daily lives are fundamentally constrained by their children's needs.

Parent–Child Relationships

These mothers who feel obligated to accompany their children to the location of the best schools give up their own established careers and take the risks of infidelity on the part of partners while living apart. The ideology of being a mother first prioritizes the children's needs and deprioritizes their own personal fulfillment and married life (see Bennett, 2008; Holmes, 2004). The need for them to privilege the child over self (and spouse) lasts throughout the child's school career.

Continuously living apart influences the parent–child relationship. Some study mothers have expressed concern over

the effects of the father's absence on the development of children and adolescents. Although children can be well cared for by their mother during separation, studies have shown the absence of the father in the children's life is associated with problems in adolescence. Luo, Wang, and Gao (2011) found that children who lived with a mother only were more likely to have lower self-esteem and higher anxiety. When the children are accepted into a university, women are still expected to make more sacrifices than men, as women "prioritize caring relationships with others over their own personal fulfillment" (Holmes, 2004, p. 256).

Separation From Partner

The spatial separation of couples brings about a series of changes and challenges that result in negative emotions, particularly for women, and particularly during the first six months (Kurdek, 2002). One of the greatest challenges for these families appears to be renegotiating family roles, as women encounter the difficulty of fitting into a home routine that has likely changed a great deal since the separation. But this difficulty transforms over time into a sense of independence, autonomy, and agency (Waters, 2010). Some study mothers state that they become familiar with the new environment and benefit from the living arrangement, as they have more personal space available to them.

With regard to couples' communication while living apart, technological innovations have enabled varied forms of communication, serving as a crucial link among family members. For example, WeChat (Chinese, *weixin*), a free messaging software, is widely used by young and middle-aged people in China. Parents can use messages and video calls to discuss children's academic performance, home conditions, health, and so forth.

While some people question couples' commitment and intimacy in LAT relationships, "the meaning and forms of close relationships are continually being defined and redefined without losing their deeply felt value" (Smock, 2004, p. 971) and can involve "considerable commitment to the relationship" (Holmes, 2004, p. 254). A great deal of effort is needed to maintain intimacy across distance. Chinese couples display love and intimacy mostly by practical means; study mothers take on the responsibility of caring for the children and the husband's parents, so that the husband can focus on his job without having to worry about family issues and can send money back, which both parties regard as an important way of caring for and supporting family, as well as loving family members. As Lynne Jamieson (1998) argued, acts of love and care expressed by practical doing and giving in the general context still plays a more important role than mutual self-disclosure.

Even though some study mothers see positives and benefit from couples' LAT relationships, increased childcare responsibilities, financial dependence, and loss of career and support networks all suggest a negative impact on women's personal and marital life (Waters, 2002). This finding is in contrast to some previous Western-based research on LAT relationships that has praised the autonomy, independence, and intimacy that LAT relationships offer, especially to women. This interpretation is partly a result of the differences in historical and societal context of each country, as family practices throughout China—and indeed, most of East Asia—remain heavily influenced by patriarchal Confucianism (Jackson, 2011; Sechiyama, 2013).

Summary

Chinese couples in LAT relationships for the sake of children's education have recently gained attention in the literature (de Brauw & Giles, 2017; Waters, 2005). Being a full-time study mother and homemaker, even at the expense of living separately from one's partner, is viewed as a way to privilege motherhood over wifehood (Chee, 2003). On the one hand, moving away from a focus on the role of wife can be somewhat liberating; on the other hand, the focus on motherhood can be overwhelming. And the result of these priorities can be further distancing from the husband. For men, finding jobs in urban areas and acting as the sole breadwinner demonstrates their masculinity and strengthens their status in the family. However, men may also experience pain and anxiety because of work pressure and family separation. Additionally, children who experience the absence of their fathers may be more susceptible to anxiety (Luo et al., 2011) than those children cared for

by both parents. Depression among these adolescents is commonly reported.

Professionals should recognize the prevalence of LAT relationships and offer a variety of programming options to accommodate these families' needs. By focusing on the lived experience of committed couples who live apart, family professionals can support communication as a key element for maintaining good couple and family relationships. Family Life Educators can help people learn how to express their thoughts, needs, and fears using technology and how to build strong relationships at a distance, as well as how to create trust, intimacy, and support for self-development of both parents as appropriate. ✻

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Tri-Parenting: Legal Developments and Strengths

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In Brief

- **Tri-parenting is increasingly being recognized by courts and policies.**
- **Tri-parenting can strengthen families if parents are supported legally and socially.**
- **Family professionals can support tri-parents by being sensitive to their needs and situations.**

Tri-parenting describes a relationship whereby more than two people hold parental rights and obligations. In light of the fact that the law traditionally has recognized only two parents, tri-parenting presents a particular set of challenges, including managing the legal relations between biological and nonbiological parents. Other challenges include dealing with daily life as a parenting team and understanding family roles and responsibilities. Greater legal recognition of and provisions for tri-parenting could reduce the potential for family conflict and expand current thought on family strengths. We aim to review the legal status of tri-parenting in the United States and consider tri-parenting in light of a family strengths approach. Family professionals must consider the implications of family law in their work (Bogenschneider, 2006), and we provide suggestions to support tri-parents in practice.

Legal Developments in Tri-Parenting

The law recognizes and determines parentage for various purposes: child support, physical custody and visitation, legal custody (i.e., the ability to make major decisions about the child's health, education, and religious upbringing), and rights of inheritance. The law has consistently affirmed that parentage is a fundamental, constitutional right and a liberty interest. Courts have ruled that persons related by blood, adoption, or marriage have a fundamental right to live together as a family (*In re Parental Rights*, 2000; *Moore v. City of East Cleveland*, 1977) and that a parent has a fundamental right to oversee the upbringing and education of his or her child (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 1925). Court cases have also ruled that individuals have a liberty interest "to engage in any of the common occupations of life, to acquire useful knowledge, to marry, establish a home and bring up children" (*Meyer v. Nebraska,* 1923, p. 399), and that "the interest of parents in the care, custody, and control of their children . . . is perhaps the oldest of the fundamental liberty interests recognized by this Court" (Troxel v. Granville, 2000, p. 65). Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) § 126.036(1) also recognizes that "the liberty interest of a parent in the care, custody and management of the parent's child is a fundamental right."

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Traditionally, the law confined parentage of any one child to one man (father) and one woman (mother). Motherhood was established by birth, and fatherhood was established by presumptions about his relationship to the mother (e.g., cohabitation, marriage), adoption, or proof of paternity to a court. However, recent legislation accommodates parentage arising from assisted reproduction (e.g., intrauterine insemination, donation of eggs or embryos, in vitro fertilization, intracytoplasmic sperm injection; NRS § 126.510) and gestational agreements (i.e., a contract between intended parent[s] and a gestational surrogate; NRS § 126.570), alone or in combination. In situations of surrogacy and assisted reproduction, traditionally recognized legal relationships of biological motherhood, cohabitation, and marriage are ill suited to accommodate parental intentions and expectations or ensure the protection and support of the child. Accordingly, the law has adjusted to better accommodate these arrangements.

Some individuals have also sought legal recognition of parentage for more than two persons with respect to one child. So-called tri-parenting arrangements have emerged whereby three persons (often two spousal men and a birth mother, or two spousal women and a biological father) desire legal recognition of parentage with respect to the same child.

At least 12 states' courts or lawmakers have enacted some accommodations of tri-parenting, or simply declared that a child may have more than two parents (Peltz, 2017). For example, a 2013 law was prompted by an unfortunate case in which a lesbian couple's infant daughter ended up in foster care, and her biological father lost a bid to be declared a third parent as he sought custody. California Senate Bill 274 (2013) says courts can declare that a child has more than two parents and consider them all in custody, child support, and other contexts. The law's sponsor said it gave courts leeway to protect children's best interests while families take on new forms. Opponents of the bill said it eroded traditional parental roles and would allow people to "parent by committee." Courts in Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington have recognized—at least in principle—that a child may have more than two parents. Maine lawmakers recently determined that courts may find a child to have more than two parents and laid out criteria for determining de facto parents.

As more would-be parents embrace extended parenting relationships, and legal conflicts arise as a result of these relationships and the inevitable exigencies of life, it seems likely that courts and lawmakers will act to address the novel challenges of tri-parenting. Family professionals who can support family strengths could play a crucial role in supporting tri-parents, beginning with family policy experts encouraging more states to consider this issue

Family Strengths and Tri-Parents

How does tri-parents' legal status influence family strengths? We apply several family strengths characteristics as presented by DeFrain and Asay (2007) and Moore, Chalk, Scarpa, and Vandivere (2002) to tri-parenting and consider how these strengths are influenced by legal recognition or lack thereof.

Strong children. Strong families tend to raise strong children according to family strengths theory. Three legally recognized parents may provide more support to adults and children than just two. For example, three parents may offer annual and long-term financial security to children with regard to inheritance (Skinner & Kohler, 2002). When children sense they live in a family structure that is different from the perceived mainstream (i.e., heterosexual, nuclear families), they learn to live biculturally (Maurer, 2012). Scholars have recognized for millennia that the law is instructive; the law presumes to teach people about what is right and just. When the law does not recognize tri-parenting, it implicitly teaches that such families are abnormal or unworthy of the same respect as "traditional" family arrangements. Legal recognition of tri-parents creates more social acceptance for children (Skinner & Kohler, 2002).

Challenges build strengths. Strong families handle adversity and further develop their strengths when faced with challenges. The interplay among parents and between parents and family courts and law enforcement is exceedingly complex. The courts usually get involved in policing parental conflict only when someone petitions the court to act on their behalf to resolve a dispute or compel some action. Therefore, society most often sees issues of parental rights in terms of disputes and conflicts. If all three tri-parents agree about their joint parental status, but one parent is not legally recognized, this may cause conflict as a result of anxiety about the status of the individual or integrity of the group. In other cases, conflict can arise when agreement among parents is lacking or changes. Collaboration inherent in legal tri-parenting relationships can help parents work together to overcome challenges and assist in enhancing the child's well-being (Skinner & Kohler, 2002).

Function matters. Internal family functioning matters more than family structure according to a family strengths approach. Legal status granted to three parties does not diminish biological parental rights. Tri-parenting permits naming of a primary decision maker for the child while legal recognition of three parents results in more people in the network to help the family function (Skinner & Kohler, 2002).

Implications for Family Professionals

Legal developments in tri-parenting have implications for a variety of professions and fields. Family Life Educators (FLEs) who acknowledge diverse family structures could support a sense of family stability and social structure for children (Skinner & Kohler, 2002). They and other professionals should seek information about tri-parents' roles and apply that understanding to programming. A leader within the American Psychological Association has speculated that the social support of three parents can benefit children (Goins-Phillips, 2017). FLEs should highlight families' strengths and teach them how to set goals and to make decisions as tri-parents.

Service providers, including early childhood educators, should help all families feel welcome and respected. Inclusive handbooks, intake forms, enrollment forms, and letters should allow space for more than two parents and respect all family identities (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Children between 3 and 4 years of age who are interested in knowing where they came from and where other babies come from often turn to adults for answers (Essa, Walsh, Burnham, & Shipley, 2015; Walsh, DeFlorio, Burnham, & Weiser, 2017). This can be a challenge for professionals supporting tri-parents. Storybooks like What Makes a Baby (Silverberg, 2012) are sensitive to many birth situations (Walsh et al., 2017) and can be helpful. Parents should be their child's main educators about sexuality and family life; however, parents often need support and guidance (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 2004). Working together with all parents before engaging in discussions about sexuality and family life is important.

Family therapists also can play an important role. Because many kinds of nontraditional parents "often have not been awarded the same legal rights as have biological parents" (Skinner & Kohler, 2002, p. 294), they may need support from therapists and educators in building resilience and coping skills. Legal recognition alone is not a panacea, so legally recognized tri-parents may also need support as they navigate systems that largely favor two-parent or single-parent families. If relationships break down in a tri-parenting situation, it might be an important time to suggest prompt legal counsel for respective parties' responsibilities and intents to best provide for the child.

More empirical attention to tri-parenting relationships is also needed to understand these families' strengths and challenges. Researchers studying tri-parents could recruit from a variety of sites, such as fertility clinics, family law sections of the American Bar Association, family and counseling organization Listservs, adoption agencies, and parent-support groups. Researchers should consider sharing findings with lawyers, representatives from courts, or state legislatures to help inform practice as parentage laws evolve. ❋

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Child development researchers and practitioners have stressed the critical role of play in childhood, calling play "children's work." Family strengths approaches also have emphasized the importance of play in families and families simply spending time together.

What is the role of play and downtime in families? How do families support children in the work of play? What types of leisure activities are most valuable to families? As work becomes more portable and often includes telecommuting, what has happened to family vacations and time off?

As global communication and collaboration shifts working hours, how does this affect family interactions and relationships?

The summer 2018 issue of Family Focus invites contributions on any of these or related topics. **Authors should indicate intent to submit by Feb. 1, 2017.** Contact the editor at reporteditor@ncfr.org with questions or about your interest in submitting, and include one to two sentences summarizing what you wish to cover. **Articles will be due Feb. 15, 2017.**

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