Marriages Families and Relationships 15th edition Lamanna Test Bank

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Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

Chapter 1 - Making Family Choices in a Changing Society

1. Which of the following is a major family function?
   a. Raising children responsibly
   b. Meeting sexual desires
   c. Procreation
   d. Providing recreational activities

ANSWER: a

2. As families have become less traditional, the legal definition of a family has
   a. remained the same.
   b. become more rigid.
   c. narrowed to include only married couples and children.
   d. become much more flexible.

ANSWER: d

3. The definition of *family* includes:
   a. a group of individuals living together without any legal or biological ties.
   b. a collection of people who share a hobby or interest.
   c. a group of people related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption.
   d. a random assortment of people living in the same neighborhood.

ANSWER: c

4. Those with a family-change perspective view the family as _____.
   a. declining rapidly
   b. an adaptable institution
   c. a rigid institution
   d. slowly and steadily getting worse

ANSWER: b

5. Which of the following is attributed to the United States by family-change scholars?
   a. Patriotism as a source of family pride
   b. Declining values in family matters
   c. Inadequate support for families
   d. Rigid traditional ideas of family

ANSWER: c

6. What type of family theorist posits that today's family forms need to be seen as historically expected adjustments to changing conditions.
   a. decline
   b. social
   c. change
   d. marriage

ANSWER: c

7. In what year did the U.S. Supreme Court legalize same-sex marriage?

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a. 2000
b. 2005
c. 2010
d. 2015

ANSWER: d

8. Particularly among college-educated women, parenthood is _____.
a. not an option
b. postponed
c. embraced early in life
d. doubled

ANSWER: b

9. Today, what percent of American households live in multigenerational households.
a. 5
b. 10
c. 25
d. 33

ANSWER: a

10. Compared to the adult population in the U.S., the child population is:
a. Equally racially and ethnically diverse.
b. More racially and ethnically diverse.
c. Less racially and ethnically diverse.
d. far less racially and ethnically diverse.

ANSWER: b

11. What is the impact of communication technologies like e-mail, Zoom, and GPS tracking on families?
a. Technologies force themselves on families.
b. The impact is unknown at this time.
c. Communication technologies change the way families interact.
d. Technology increases the amount of face-to-face time together.

ANSWER: c

12. Which of the following is a path young adults took in response to the recession?
a. Dropped out of school
b. Opted to have children sooner
c. Held out for a higher salary
d. Postponed marriage

ANSWER: d

13. People are influenced by the society around them. Societal or structural conditions
a. have no impact on our options.
b. can limit or expand our options.

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c. always limit our options
d. always expand our options.

ANSWER: b

14. The best way to make decisions about our personal lives is to make them_____.
a. by default
b. knowledgeably
c. unconsciously
d. by following the path of least resistance

ANSWER: b

15. Which of the following is an example of a structural constraint that limits personal choices?
a. Personal preferences
b. Socioeconomic status
c. Peer pressure
d. Individual ambitions

ANSWER: b

16. Which of the following is one of the steps involved with making knowledgeable choices?
a. Ignore advice from others.
b. Rely solely on intuition.
c. Consider the consequences of each alternative.
d. Rely on others to make the decision for you.

ANSWER: c

17. If you wanted to make a knowledgeable decision about choosing which class to take,_____.
a. take the first class that is open and will fit your schedule
b. find out what your friends are taking, and do the same
c. wait until the last possible minute, and then let your advisor find a class
d. look through the catalog at all the possibilities, consider what will benefit you in the future, and register early to get the class you consider best

ANSWER: d

18. What factor may cause a father to make choices about his family by sliding into a decision?
a. Careful consideration of family needs and personal time
b. Strong day-to-day pressures on the job cutting into time at home
c. Remembering how important his wife and children are to him and acting on it
d. Ignoring the phone, television, and computer in order to talk at the dinner table

ANSWER: b

19. Parents, siblings, and other relatives are usually highly influential in developing a child's
a. self-concept
b. genetic code
c. nickname

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d. temperament

ANSWER: a

20. The ideas and feelings about the uniqueness and value of one's family unitis called _____.
    a. individualism
    b. familistic values
    c. family identity
    d. individualistic values

ANSWER: c

21. Life in American families reflects a tension in American culture between family solidarity and_____.
    a. individual freedom
    b. the prenuptial contract
    c. divorce
    d. childlessness

ANSWER: a

22. Family togetherness, stability, and loyalty are all examples of_____.
    a. proscriptive norms
    b. familistic (communal) values
    c. self-fulfillment values
    d. outdated norms

ANSWER: b

23. Since the mid-twentieth century, the social institutions of marriage and the family have become _____
    a. more predictable
    b. more functional
    c. less predictable
    d. less functional

ANSWER: c

24. Which of the following reflects the relationship between personal decision making and society?
    a. Personal decisions are impacted by, but also influence, society.
    b. Society impacts personal decisions, but rarely do our decisions impact society.
    c. One has no real impact on the other.
    d. The relationship is too difficult to study.

ANSWER: a

25. Which of the following describes society-wide structural conditions that impact American families?
    a. Individual family preferences and choices
    b. Local community events and activities
    c. Economic policies, social norms, and demographic trends
    d. Personal hobbies and interests of family members

ANSWER: c

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26. Structural definitions emphasize what the family *does*.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: False

27. Many immigrant families are binational.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: True

28. The proportion of Americans living in multigenerational households is roughly the same now as it was in 1950.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: True

29. "Sharenting" occurs when parents use social media apps to share personal stories, videos, and photos of their children online.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: True

30. The term minority is used to identify groups that comprise less than 50 percent.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: False

31. The more common infertility interventions involve prescription drugs and microscopic surgical procedures to repair a female's fallopian tubes or a male's sperm ducts.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: True

32. Some of our choices are not conscious, and we slide into them.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: True

33. You should never listen to the emotional dimension of decision making, sometimes called the gut factor.
    a. True
    b. False
ANSWER: False

34. Family identity can be established through cultural traditions and rituals.
    a. True

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b. False

ANSWER: True

35. Every time someone makes a choice, they affect their social environment.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: True

36. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the *nuclear family and the postmodern family*. How might each of these impact children?

ANSWER: Will vary

37. Using discussion in the text as a guide, address the question, "Is the family *declining* or is the family *changing*?

ANSWER: Will vary

38. Suppose you were faced with a decision about an unplanned pregnancy. Explain the process you would use to *choose knowledgeably*. Include in your discussion the major components of knowledgeable decision making.

ANSWER: Will vary

39. What is family identity? Using your own family, or one with which you are familiar, provide several examples of this phenomenon.

ANSWER: Will vary

40. What is the difference between *individualistic* and *familistic values*? Provide an illustration of each.

ANSWER: Will vary

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Instructor Manual

Lamanna, Marriages, Families, and Relationships: Making Choices in a Diverse Society, 15e, 2025, 9780357948552; Chapter 1: Making Family Choices in a Changing Society

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Purpose and Perspective of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the need for clear definitions of family. Family structures are increasingly diverse and more fluid than just decades ago. This chapter covers some of the social conditions that impact families, such as biological and communication technologies, economic conditions, historical events, demographic characteristics, and family policies. There is a section focusing on why and how to make good life-course decisions. This is followed by a discussion on how families provide individuals with a place to belong while living in a culture that focuses on both familistic and individualistic values. The chapter concludes with four themes for marriages and families.

Chapter Objectives

The following objectives are addressed in this chapter:

1. Explain why researchers and policy makers need to define family.
2. Explain the ways that family structure or form is increasingly diverse.
3. Describe the various society-wide structural conditions that impact families.
4. Discuss why the best life-course decisions are informed ones made consciously.
5. Explain how families provide individuals with a place to belong.
6. Demonstrate why there is tension in American culture between familistic values and individualistic values.
7. Identify how global situations and events affect family life in the United States.

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Chapter Outline

The following outline organizes activities (including any existing discussion questions in PowerPoints or other supplements) and assessments by chapter (and, therefore, by topic) so that you can see how all the content relates to the topics covered in the text.

I. Defining Family (01.01, 01.02, 01.07, PPT Slides 5–17)
   a. Family Functions
      i. Raising Children Responsibly
      ii. Providing Economic and Other Practical Support
      iii. Offering Emotional Security
   b. Structural Family Definitions

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i. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as two or more persons who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption residing together in a household.

c. Postmodern: There is No Typical Family
   i. Today, family forms can include
      - single-parent families
      - stepfamilies
      - families with children of more than one father
      - two-earner couples
      - stay-at-home fathers
      - cohabitating heterosexual couples
      - LGBTQIA+ marriages and families
      - three-generation families
      - communal households

d. Adapting Family Definitions to the Postmodern Family
   i. As family forms have changed, social scientists have proposed—and often struggled with—new, more flexible definitions of family. Ultimately, there is no one correct answer to the question, “What is a family?”

e. Relaxed Institutional Control over Relationship Choices: “Family Decline” or “Family Change?”
   i. Those with a family-decline perspective believe that cultural change towards excessive individualism and self-indulgence has hurt relationships, led to high divorce rates, and undermined responsible parenting.
   ii. Those with a family-change perspective point out that family changes can be for the better, with longer life expectancy leading to more positive years with parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

II. A Sociological Imagination: Personal Troubles and Some Social Conditions That Impact Families (01.03, PPT Slides 18–29)
   a. Ever-New Biological and Communication Technologies
      i. Biological Technologies
         - Assistive Reproduction Technologies (ART) involve the manipulation of sperm or egg or both in the absence of sexual intercourse, including artificial insemination, donor insemination, in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, egg sale or donation, and embryo transfers.
            (a) Advantage: ART allows singles, infertile heterosexual couples, and LGBTQIA+ couples to have biological children.
            (b) Disadvantage: Frozen embryos can be ruined if a freezer fails (Ravitz 2018).

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ii. Communication Technologies
- Communication by cell phones, internet sites, and GPS facilitates constant and global access to children, parents, and extended family.
- Internet access causes family boundaries to be more permeable.
- Results in a "digital divide" between those who have access to technology and those who do not.
- Increase in cyberbullying for children and adolescents.

b. Economic Conditions
   i. Over the past 35 years, the inequality gap has increased.
   ii. The recent Great Recession affected nearly all of America's families but took a greater toll on the middle and working class than the wealthy.
   iii. The COVID-19 pandemic also created financial hardship for low- and middle-income families.
   iv. Income, wealth, and poverty rates diverge by race/ethnicity, education, parents' education, and gender.
   v. Life chances depend on a family's economic resources.

c. Historical Periods and Events
   i. The shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy changed family life irrevocably.
   ii. Historical periods also influence attitudes and values and interact with economics to impact life chances.

d. Demographic Characteristics: Age Structure
   i. Life expectancy has increased dramatically and has had vast consequences for family life.

e. Demographic Characteristics: Religion
   i. Religious affiliation and practice have a significant influence on family life.
   ii. For many Americans, finding a balance between participating in the larger society and preserving religious values is challenging.

f. Demographic Characteristics: Race and Ethnicity
   i. Although race is a social construction, very real practices and outcomes are associated with different races.
      - America is increasingly ethnically diverse due to
        (a) Immigration
        (b) Refugees in America
        (c) Higher fertility rates among racial and ethnic minorities
        (d) Transnational and binational families also add to America's diversity
      - Racial and ethnic stratification continues to exist.

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(a) On average, the income and wealth of Asian and non-Hispanic White households are much higher and poverty rates significantly lower than Black, Hispanic, and Native American households (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015).

g. Family Policy: A Family Impact Lens
   i. Family policy involves all the procedures, regulations, attitudes, and goals of programs and agencies, workplaces, educational institutions, and government that affect families.
   ii. Political decisions regarding families should take a family impact lens approach, by which we ask how the policy in question impacts families.

III. The Freedom and Pressures of Choosing (01.04, PPT Slides 30–32)
   a. Making Informed Decisions
      i. Social factors influence people's personal choices in three ways.
         - Common choices are easier for people to make.
         - Some factors expand options (e.g., availability of effective contraception).
         - Some factors limit options (e.g., United States laws against polygamy).
      ii. The best decisions are informed ones.
         - They involve rational consideration of many alternatives and recognize the social pressures that influence choices.
         - They influence the beliefs and values of society on our choices.
         - Their structural constraints are economic and social forces that limit personal choices.
      iii. Influence of people on society.
         - Individuals can inspire social change through new insights.
         - Increased discussions about social issues and involvement in organizations.
         - Living by personal values rather than accepted cultural norms.
      iv. Making informed decisions.
         - An important component of informed decision making involves recognizing as many options as possible.
         - A second component involves recognizing the social pressures that can influence your choices.
         - A third aspect of informed decision making involves considering the consequences of each alternative rather than just gravitating towards the one that initially seems easier or most attractive.

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- Part of the process might involve finding research studies on the options available.
- There is also a need to be aware of personal values and understand how they relate to each of the options available.

IV. Families of Individuals (01.05, 01.06, PPT Slides 33–37)
   a. Families as a Place to Belong
      i. Families create a place to belong, serving as a repository or archive of family memories and traditions.
      ii. Families create a place of individual and communal identity, or family identity (ideas and feelings about the uniqueness and value of one's family unit).
      iii. Families provide a setting for developing self-concept or basic feelings about a person's abilities, characteristics, and worth.
   b. Familistic (Communal) Values and Individualistic (Self-Fulfillment) Values
      i. Family members must negotiate a balance between individual separateness and family togetherness.
      ii. Opposing values of familism (including togetherness and family loyalty) and individualism create tensions within individuals, between individuals, and within society that must be resolved.
      iii. American society holds individuality and personal freedom over the tradition of familism.
   c. People as Individuals and Family Members
      i. Shifts in the balance of individuality and familism have made family members less predictable.
      ii. Individuals must take responsibility for their own choices rather than blaming the family.
      iii. Flexibility with changing family situations that can cause disruptions.

V. Marriages and Families: Four Themes (PPT Slides 38–39)
   i. Personal decisions must be made throughout the life course.
   ii. People are influenced by the society around them.
   iii. We live in a society characterized by considerable change, including increased economic, ethnic, and family diversity, where increased tension exists between family and individual values.
   iv. Personal decision-making feeds into society and changes it.

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Additional Discussion Questions

The following are discussion questions that do not appear in the text, PPTs, or courseware—they are for you to use as you wish. You can assign these questions in several ways: in a discussion forum in your LMS, as whole-class discussions in person, or as a partner or group activity in class.

1. Why is there so much disagreement concerning the definition of "family?" Do you think a "normal" or "typical" family exists? Why or why not? What makes a family? (Duration 5–10 minutes)
2. Do you think that you make knowledgeable decisions? Give a few examples that relate to marriage and family concerns in your personal life. (Duration 5–10 minutes)
3. Do you think your personal values align with familism or individualism? What influences have shaped your values in one direction or another? (Duration 10–15 minutes)
4. Do you think the American family is "declining" or "changing?" What is the basis for your answer? (Duration 15–20 minutes)
5. How do increased economic, ethnic, and family diversity affect the tension that exists between family and individual values? Cite some examples. (Duration 15–20 minutes)
6. What are some examples of a personal or family problem that is at least partly a result of problems in society? (Duration 10–15 minutes)
7. What changes in law and public policy would you like to see implemented to enhance family life? (Duration 10–15 minutes)
8. Perhaps Americans' greatest concern about contemporary family change is its impact on children. What do these family data tell us about the family lives of children today? (Duration 5–10 minutes)
9. Although the modern family form is much more diverse, most marriages and relationships attempt to recreate the traditional family form. Do you think that's healthy, or should we be working harder to change social expectations? (Duration 5–10 minutes)
10. What are some examples of structural constraints within our culture that limit personal choices? Are there ways that individuals or groups have tried to challenge these constraints? (Duration 10–15 minutes)

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Additional Activities and Assignments

The following are activities and assignments developed by Cengage but not included in the text, PPTs, or courseware (if courseware exists)—they are for you to use if you wish.

Discussion and Lecture Starters

1. Defining Family: Personal definitions of family.
    a. Ask each person in class to write their personal definition of family on a 3x5 note card without including their names. Collect the cards, mix them up, and pass them out randomly. Let each student read the definition on the card in front of them and make a comment about it. Allow each student to provide feedback or challenge it.

2. Choosing Family: Making knowledgeable decisions.
    a. Students usually have not thought *analytically* about how their marriage- and family-based decisions may be made by *default*, rather than *knowledgeably*. Ask them whether they have known anyone personally who may have married a person who was favored by parents or other family members or whether they are familiar with a situation where a person chose to have children because of social pressures rather than an *individual* desire.

3. Families in Television: Myths that surround marriage and family.
    a. Engage students in a discussion about the various myths that surround marriage and family. Ask them to list their three favorite television shows (not counting sports or shows that would not include a portrayal of marriages or families). Second, tell them to make note of how family issues are portrayed in these shows. Ask them to vocalize how their own families are similar to or different from what they see on television. Finally, pose the question, “How do television images contribute to myths about the family?”

4. Family Models: Understanding the traditional nuclear family model.
    a. Have students discuss the traditional nuclear family model, where the father works and the mother stays home with the children. How many were raised in this environment? Does our society value these roles? If both parents worked, which parent worked more and made a higher salary? Did anyone have a stay-at-home caretaker other than a parent? Did extended family members live at home?

5. Families and Technology: How technology has affected family relationships.
    a. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group the topic “Technology has positively affected family relationships,” and the second group the topic “Technology has negatively affected family relationships.” Give the

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students time within their group to develop their arguments and host a debate between the two groups.

Student Activities

1. Defining Family: Group Discussion or Paper
    a. Have students address the question, "What is a family?" In some instances, this query has no particular *legal* implications. For example, some people may not regard a childless couple as a "family," but there's nothing *legal* or *illegal* about having or not having children. In many other cases, however, some confusing legal issues are involved: Should same-sex couples be permitted to marry legally? Should cohabitating couples have legal obligations to each other, especially in the event that they terminate their relationships?

2. Understanding Family Rituals: Individual Paper
    a. Students tend to have an ethnocentric point of view about the family: They have preconceived notions about what *family* is. Diane E. Levy offers an interesting assignment for students in her article "Teaching Family Ritual: Sunday, Sausage, and Solidarity" (*Teaching Sociology*, October, 1992: 311–13). The project consists of asking students to recount *rituals* in their own families, not any connected to official holidays, but rather, family events that spontaneously originated and have developed their own traditions. Levy describes how this can be a valuable activity for each student and an excellent vehicle for class discussion.

3. Interviewing Married Couples: Survey Exercise and Presentation or Discussion
    a. Have students interview married couples regarding the factors that contributed to their choice of spouse. Include couples of varied ages and racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic (SES) groups. Students should structure their questions so that they can obtain information on
        i. the degree to which social factors contributed to the decision (i.e., age expectations, race, historical events, social class, religion, etc.), and
        ii. the extent to which their marriage decision resulted from knowledgeable or default decision-making (i.e., were alternatives explored, values clarified, a gut factor recognized, etc.?).
    b. Findings from interviews (conducted in or out of class) can be reported by students or summarized by the instructor.

4. The Ideal Marriage Partner: Group Activity
    a. Provide an opportunity for students to practice making personal and group decisions and to feel the effects of social factors on that decision making. Ask students to describe on paper various characteristics of their ideal marriage partner. After completing their own personal

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descriptions, arrange students into groups of four or five. Ask them to reach a group consensus on what would be the ideal marriage partner. Students, in many cases, will see their own descriptions challenged and will argue in support of them, while others will go along with whatever the group decides. After each small group achieves consensus and shares their descriptions, incorporate them into a discussion:
   i. whether a class consensus is possible,
   ii. the extent to which students feel their individual decisions are influenced by the group, and
   iii. the extent to which students feel the group's decision is influenced by individuals.

5. Individualistic and Familistic Values: Group Activity
   a. Divide the class into small groups of five or six students. Ask them to address the idea of family members honoring individualistic values while still maintaining a sense of family unity. Is it possible to honor both individualistic and familistic values? If so, how can families do this? If not, what are the challenges that come with this? If given the choice, which value set is more important in today's society? What about in different parts of the world?

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Additional Resources

Film Suggestions

This Is Where I Leave You (2014)

- Four siblings return to their childhood home after their father dies to live together under the same roof for a week. They confront the choices and decisions they have made in their adult lives with each other and reconnect as a family.
  - **Assignment**: Describe how the film addresses the tension that arises between familistic (communal) values and individualistic (self-fulfillment) values. Have students write about a situation that has occurred within their own family experience where they have felt this tension between these values. Ask students to identify if there are ways to balance better the tension between these sets of values where both can co-exist and what that might look like realistically.

The Kids Are All Right (2010)

- Two children conceived by artificial insemination bring their biological father into their non-traditional family life.

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- **Assignment**: Explore the definition of family in the context of the characters in this movie. How does the family in this movie recognize the diversity within the definition of family within the text while acknowledging the essential functions that are included within a family structure? How is this family the same or different than the traditional family structure? Do you feel these commonalities and differences are positive or negative?

The Family Stone (2005)

- An uptight, conservative businesswoman accompanies her boyfriend to his eccentric and outgoing family's annual Christmas celebration and finds she's a fish out of water in their free-spirited way of life.
  - **Assignment**: Note the diversity of this family (single, gay, hearing-impaired, rich, etc.) and discuss how each member responds to each other and to an "outside threat" to their common life together.

Away We Go (2009)

- A couple who is expecting their first child travels around the U.S. to find a perfect place to start their family. Along the way, they have misadventures and find fresh connections with an assortment of relatives and old friends who might help them discover "home" on their own terms for the first time.
  - **Assignment**: One of the enduring themes of this textbook is that decisions should be informed. In this movie, the characters are trying to make an informed decision about where to live and raise their child. What kinds of information are they using? What kinds of information would you use to make this decision? This movie also addresses extended family connections. Describe how these relationships were re-established and the importance of these types of family relationships.

Recommended Readings

- Allen, K. R. (2000). **A Conscious and Inclusive Family Studies**. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62*(1), 4–17.
- Coontz, S. (1993). *The Way We Never Were: American Families and The Nostalgia Trap*. Basic Books.
- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life, Second Edition with an Update a Decade Later* (2nd ed.) University of California Press.

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Marriage and Family YouTube Channel

Marriage and Family YouTube Channel - Watch selected YouTube videos to explore beyond the narrative of each chapter.

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Purpose and Perspective of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the need for clear definitions of family. Family structures are increasingly diverse and more fluid than just decades ago. This chapter covers some of the social conditions that impact families, such as biological and communication technologies, economic conditions, historical events, demographic characteristics, and family policies. There is a section focusing on why and how to make good life-course decisions. This is followed by a discussion on how families provide individuals with a place to belong while living in a culture that focuses on both familistic and individualistic values. The chapter concludes with four themes for marriages and families.

Chapter Objectives

The following objectives are addressed in this chapter:

1. Explain why researchers and policy makers need to define family.
2. Explain the ways that family structure or form is increasingly diverse.
3. Describe the various society-wide structural conditions that impact families.
4. Discuss why the best life-course decisions are informed ones made consciously.
5. Explain how families provide individuals with a place to belong.
6. Demonstrate why there is tension in American culture between familistic values and individualistic values.
7. Identify how global situations and events affect family life in the United States.

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Chapter Outline

The following outline organizes activities (including any existing discussion questions in PowerPoints or other supplements) and assessments by chapter (and, therefore, by topic) so that you can see how all the content relates to the topics covered in the text.

I. Defining Family (01.01, 01.02, 01.07, PPT Slides 5–17)
   a. Family Functions
      i. Raising Children Responsibly
      ii. Providing Economic and Other Practical Support
      iii. Offering Emotional Security
   b. Structural Family Definitions

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i. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as two or more persons who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption residing together in a household.

c. Postmodern: There is No Typical Family
   i. Today, family forms can include
      - single-parent families
      - stepfamilies
      - families with children of more than one father
      - two-earner couples
      - stay-at-home fathers
      - cohabitating heterosexual couples
      - LGBTQIA+ marriages and families
      - three-generation families
      - communal households

d. Adapting Family Definitions to the Postmodern Family
   i. As family forms have changed, social scientists have proposed—and often struggled with—new, more flexible definitions of family. Ultimately, there is no one correct answer to the question, “What is a family?”

e. Relaxed Institutional Control over Relationship Choices: “Family Decline” or “Family Change?”
   i. Those with a family-decline perspective believe that cultural change towards excessive individualism and self-indulgence has hurt relationships, led to high divorce rates, and undermined responsible parenting.
   ii. Those with a family-change perspective point out that family changes can be for the better, with longer life expectancy leading to more positive years with parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

II. A Sociological Imagination: Personal Troubles and Some Social Conditions That Impact Families (01.03, PPT Slides 18–29)
   a. Ever-New Biological and Communication Technologies
      i. Biological Technologies
         - Assistive Reproduction Technologies (ART) involve the manipulation of sperm or egg or both in the absence of sexual intercourse, including artificial insemination, donor insemination, in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, egg sale or donation, and embryo transfers.
            (a) Advantage: ART allows singles, infertile heterosexual couples, and LGBTQIA+ couples to have biological children.
            (b) Disadvantage: Frozen embryos can be ruined if a freezer fails (Ravitz 2018).

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ii. Communication Technologies
- Communication by cell phones, internet sites, and GPS facilitates constant and global access to children, parents, and extended family.
- Internet access causes family boundaries to be more permeable.
- Results in a "digital divide" between those who have access to technology and those who do not.
- Increase in cyberbullying for children and adolescents.

b. Economic Conditions
   i. Over the past 35 years, the inequality gap has increased.
   ii. The recent Great Recession affected nearly all of America's families but took a greater toll on the middle and working class than the wealthy.
   iii. The COVID-19 pandemic also created financial hardship for low- and middle-income families.
   iv. Income, wealth, and poverty rates diverge by race/ethnicity, education, parents' education, and gender.
   v. Life chances depend on a family's economic resources.

c. Historical Periods and Events
   i. The shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy changed family life irrevocably.
   ii. Historical periods also influence attitudes and values and interact with economics to impact life chances.

d. Demographic Characteristics: Age Structure
   i. Life expectancy has increased dramatically and has had vast consequences for family life.

e. Demographic Characteristics: Religion
   i. Religious affiliation and practice have a significant influence on family life.
   ii. For many Americans, finding a balance between participating in the larger society and preserving religious values is challenging.

f. Demographic Characteristics: Race and Ethnicity
   i. Although race is a social construction, very real practices and outcomes are associated with different races.
      - America is increasingly ethnically diverse due to
        (a) Immigration
        (b) Refugees in America
        (c) Higher fertility rates among racial and ethnic minorities
        (d) Transnational and binational families also add to America's diversity
      - Racial and ethnic stratification continues to exist.

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(a) On average, the income and wealth of Asian and non-Hispanic White households are much higher and poverty rates significantly lower than Black, Hispanic, and Native American households (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015).

g. Family Policy: A Family Impact Lens
   i. Family policy involves all the procedures, regulations, attitudes, and goals of programs and agencies, workplaces, educational institutions, and government that affect families.
   ii. Political decisions regarding families should take a family impact lens approach, by which we ask how the policy in question impacts families.

III. The Freedom and Pressures of Choosing (01.04, PPT Slides 30–32)
   a. Making Informed Decisions
      i. Social factors influence people's personal choices in three ways.
         - Common choices are easier for people to make.
         - Some factors expand options (e.g., availability of effective contraception).
         - Some factors limit options (e.g., United States laws against polygamy).
      ii. The best decisions are informed ones.
         - They involve rational consideration of many alternatives and recognize the social pressures that influence choices.
         - They influence the beliefs and values of society on our choices.
         - Their structural constraints are economic and social forces that limit personal choices.
      iii. Influence of people on society.
         - Individuals can inspire social change through new insights.
         - Increased discussions about social issues and involvement in organizations.
         - Living by personal values rather than accepted cultural norms.
      iv. Making informed decisions.
         - An important component of informed decision making involves recognizing as many options as possible.
         - A second component involves recognizing the social pressures that can influence your choices.
         - A third aspect of informed decision making involves considering the consequences of each alternative rather than just gravitating towards the one that initially seems easier or most attractive.

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- Part of the process might involve finding research studies on the options available.
- There is also a need to be aware of personal values and understand how they relate to each of the options available.

IV. Families of Individuals (01.05, 01.06, PPT Slides 33–37)
   a. Families as a Place to Belong
      i. Families create a place to belong, serving as a repository or archive of family memories and traditions.
      ii. Families create a place of individual and communal identity, or family identity (ideas and feelings about the uniqueness and value of one's family unit).
      iii. Families provide a setting for developing self-concept or basic feelings about a person's abilities, characteristics, and worth.
   b. Familistic (Communal) Values and Individualistic (Self-Fulfillment) Values
      i. Family members must negotiate a balance between individual separateness and family togetherness.
      ii. Opposing values of familism (including togetherness and family loyalty) and individualism create tensions within individuals, between individuals, and within society that must be resolved.
      iii. American society holds individuality and personal freedom over the tradition of familism.
   c. People as Individuals and Family Members
      i. Shifts in the balance of individuality and familism have made family members less predictable.
      ii. Individuals must take responsibility for their own choices rather than blaming the family.
      iii. Flexibility with changing family situations that can cause disruptions.

V. Marriages and Families: Four Themes (PPT Slides 38–39)
   i. Personal decisions must be made throughout the life course.
   ii. People are influenced by the society around them.
   iii. We live in a society characterized by considerable change, including increased economic, ethnic, and family diversity, where increased tension exists between family and individual values.
   iv. Personal decision-making feeds into society and changes it.

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Additional Discussion Questions

The following are discussion questions that do not appear in the text, PPTs, or courseware—they are for you to use as you wish. You can assign these questions in several ways: in a discussion forum in your LMS, as whole-class discussions in person, or as a partner or group activity in class.

1. Why is there so much disagreement concerning the definition of "family?" Do you think a "normal" or "typical" family exists? Why or why not? What makes a family? (Duration 5–10 minutes)
2. Do you think that you make knowledgeable decisions? Give a few examples that relate to marriage and family concerns in your personal life. (Duration 5–10 minutes)
3. Do you think your personal values align with familism or individualism? What influences have shaped your values in one direction or another? (Duration 10–15 minutes)
4. Do you think the American family is "declining" or "changing?" What is the basis for your answer? (Duration 15–20 minutes)
5. How do increased economic, ethnic, and family diversity affect the tension that exists between family and individual values? Cite some examples. (Duration 15–20 minutes)
6. What are some examples of a personal or family problem that is at least partly a result of problems in society? (Duration 10–15 minutes)
7. What changes in law and public policy would you like to see implemented to enhance family life? (Duration 10–15 minutes)
8. Perhaps Americans' greatest concern about contemporary family change is its impact on children. What do these family data tell us about the family lives of children today? (Duration 5–10 minutes)
9. Although the modern family form is much more diverse, most marriages and relationships attempt to recreate the traditional family form. Do you think that's healthy, or should we be working harder to change social expectations? (Duration 5–10 minutes)
10. What are some examples of structural constraints within our culture that limit personal choices? Are there ways that individuals or groups have tried to challenge these constraints? (Duration 10–15 minutes)

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Additional Activities and Assignments

The following are activities and assignments developed by Cengage but not included in the text, PPTs, or courseware (if courseware exists)—they are for you to use if you wish.

Discussion and Lecture Starters

1. Defining Family: Personal definitions of family.
    a. Ask each person in class to write their personal definition of family on a 3x5 note card without including their names. Collect the cards, mix them up, and pass them out randomly. Let each student read the definition on the card in front of them and make a comment about it. Allow each student to provide feedback or challenge it.

2. Choosing Family: Making knowledgeable decisions.
    a. Students usually have not thought *analytically* about how their marriage- and family-based decisions may be made by *default*, rather than *knowledgeably*. Ask them whether they have known anyone personally who may have married a person who was favored by parents or other family members or whether they are familiar with a situation where a person chose to have children because of social pressures rather than an *individual* desire.

3. Families in Television: Myths that surround marriage and family.
    a. Engage students in a discussion about the various myths that surround marriage and family. Ask them to list their three favorite television shows (not counting sports or shows that would not include a portrayal of marriages or families). Second, tell them to make note of how family issues are portrayed in these shows. Ask them to vocalize how their own families are similar to or different from what they see on television. Finally, pose the question, “How do television images contribute to myths about the family?”

4. Family Models: Understanding the traditional nuclear family model.
    a. Have students discuss the traditional nuclear family model, where the father works and the mother stays home with the children. How many were raised in this environment? Does our society value these roles? If both parents worked, which parent worked more and made a higher salary? Did anyone have a stay-at-home caretaker other than a parent? Did extended family members live at home?

5. Families and Technology: How technology has affected family relationships.
    a. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group the topic “Technology has positively affected family relationships,” and the second group the topic “Technology has negatively affected family relationships.” Give the

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students time within their group to develop their arguments and host a debate between the two groups.

Student Activities

1. Defining Family: Group Discussion or Paper
    a. Have students address the question, "What is a family?" In some instances, this query has no particular *legal* implications. For example, some people may not regard a childless couple as a "family," but there's nothing *legal* or *illegal* about having or not having children. In many other cases, however, some confusing legal issues are involved: Should same-sex couples be permitted to marry legally? Should cohabitating couples have legal obligations to each other, especially in the event that they terminate their relationships?

2. Understanding Family Rituals: Individual Paper
    a. Students tend to have an ethnocentric point of view about the family: They have preconceived notions about what *family* is. Diane E. Levy offers an interesting assignment for students in her article "Teaching Family Ritual: Sunday, Sausage, and Solidarity" (*Teaching Sociology*, October, 1992: 311–13). The project consists of asking students to recount *rituals* in their own families, not any connected to official holidays, but rather, family events that spontaneously originated and have developed their own traditions. Levy describes how this can be a valuable activity for each student and an excellent vehicle for class discussion.

3. Interviewing Married Couples: Survey Exercise and Presentation or Discussion
    a. Have students interview married couples regarding the factors that contributed to their choice of spouse. Include couples of varied ages and racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic (SES) groups. Students should structure their questions so that they can obtain information on
        i. the degree to which social factors contributed to the decision (i.e., age expectations, race, historical events, social class, religion, etc.), and
        ii. the extent to which their marriage decision resulted from knowledgeable or default decision-making (i.e., were alternatives explored, values clarified, a gut factor recognized, etc.?).
    b. Findings from interviews (conducted in or out of class) can be reported by students or summarized by the instructor.

4. The Ideal Marriage Partner: Group Activity
    a. Provide an opportunity for students to practice making personal and group decisions and to feel the effects of social factors on that decision making. Ask students to describe on paper various characteristics of their ideal marriage partner. After completing their own personal

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descriptions, arrange students into groups of four or five. Ask them to reach a group consensus on what would be the ideal marriage partner. Students, in many cases, will see their own descriptions challenged and will argue in support of them, while others will go along with whatever the group decides. After each small group achieves consensus and shares their descriptions, incorporate them into a discussion:
   i. whether a class consensus is possible,
   ii. the extent to which students feel their individual decisions are influenced by the group, and
   iii. the extent to which students feel the group's decision is influenced by individuals.

5. Individualistic and Familistic Values: Group Activity
   a. Divide the class into small groups of five or six students. Ask them to address the idea of family members honoring individualistic values while still maintaining a sense of family unity. Is it possible to honor both individualistic and familistic values? If so, how can families do this? If not, what are the challenges that come with this? If given the choice, which value set is more important in today's society? What about in different parts of the world?

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Additional Resources

Film Suggestions

This Is Where I Leave You (2014)

- Four siblings return to their childhood home after their father dies to live together under the same roof for a week. They confront the choices and decisions they have made in their adult lives with each other and reconnect as a family.
  - **Assignment**: Describe how the film addresses the tension that arises between familistic (communal) values and individualistic (self-fulfillment) values. Have students write about a situation that has occurred within their own family experience where they have felt this tension between these values. Ask students to identify if there are ways to balance better the tension between these sets of values where both can co-exist and what that might look like realistically.

The Kids Are All Right (2010)

- Two children conceived by artificial insemination bring their biological father into their non-traditional family life.

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- **Assignment**: Explore the definition of family in the context of the characters in this movie. How does the family in this movie recognize the diversity within the definition of family within the text while acknowledging the essential functions that are included within a family structure? How is this family the same or different than the traditional family structure? Do you feel these commonalities and differences are positive or negative?

The Family Stone (2005)

- An uptight, conservative businesswoman accompanies her boyfriend to his eccentric and outgoing family's annual Christmas celebration and finds she's a fish out of water in their free-spirited way of life.
  - **Assignment**: Note the diversity of this family (single, gay, hearing-impaired, rich, etc.) and discuss how each member responds to each other and to an "outside threat" to their common life together.

Away We Go (2009)

- A couple who is expecting their first child travels around the U.S. to find a perfect place to start their family. Along the way, they have misadventures and find fresh connections with an assortment of relatives and old friends who might help them discover "home" on their own terms for the first time.
  - **Assignment**: One of the enduring themes of this textbook is that decisions should be informed. In this movie, the characters are trying to make an informed decision about where to live and raise their child. What kinds of information are they using? What kinds of information would you use to make this decision? This movie also addresses extended family connections. Describe how these relationships were re-established and the importance of these types of family relationships.

Recommended Readings

- Allen, K. R. (2000). **A Conscious and Inclusive Family Studies**. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62*(1), 4–17.
- Coontz, S. (1993). *The Way We Never Were: American Families and The Nostalgia Trap*. Basic Books.
- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life, Second Edition with an Update a Decade Later* (2nd ed.) University of California Press.

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Marriage and Family YouTube Channel

Marriage and Family YouTube Channel - Watch selected YouTube videos to explore beyond the narrative of each chapter.

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