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CORRECT ANSWERS ARE LOCATED IN THE 2ND HALF OF THIS DOC.

TRUE/FALSE - Write 'T' if the statement is true and 'F' if the statement is false.

1) Emerging adulthood refers to the life stage between adolescence and adulthood.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

2) In the United States, before 1900, pursuing personal pleasures and emotional satisfactions was not as predominant among Americans, primarily because they were too busy simply trying to live.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

3) Kinship developed from a need for love, intimacy, and financial support.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

4) Despite idealistic notions to the contrary, kinship developed primarily as a means of survival.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

5) American Indian children were less likely to experience physical punishment and more likely to enjoy independence than were European American children.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

6) The Great Depression forced many young Americans of that period into a lifetime of childlessness.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

7) U.S. women of the 1950s married at an earlier age (for their first marriage) than U.S. women in previous generations.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

8) The larger extended family unit has always been a predominant family form in the United States.
   - ◎ true
   - ◎ false

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9) African American families maintained weaker kinship links than other groups.
- ◎ true
- ◎ false

10) Although a good marriage was thought to require a good sex life in the early decades of the twentieth century, it was more important that the wife be satisfied rather than the husband.
- ◎ true
- ◎ false

11) The introduction of the birth control pill corresponded with a drop in the age at which women got married.
- ◎ true
- ◎ false

12) Lineages are advantageous because they limit the number of people with whom an individual has to share resources.
- ◎ true
- ◎ false

13) Most African American families had just one parent before and after slavery.
- ◎ true
- ◎ false

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MULTIPLE CHOICE - Choose the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

14) The emergence of a protected, extended stage of childhood in the 1800s occurred as a result of:
- A) legal restrictions on how children were treated.
- B) a growing population of elderly (and therefore grandparents).
- C) greater economic resources of parents.
- D) the spread of schooling and a decline in child deaths.

15) Historians such as Phillippe Ariès and John Demos argue that the concept of childhood as a distinct stage of life was not recognized prior to the 1700s primarily because:
- A) families were trying to survive.
- B) so many infants and toddlers died.
- C) families had so few children.
- D) families did not understand the needs of children.

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16) European colonists did not have lineages but lived in:
A) matrilineal or patrilineal families.
B) conjugal and extended families.
C) nuclear families.
D) single-parent families.

17) A study of the history of family reveals that the _____ family is as old as human civilization but that the _____ family emerged much more recently.
A) public; private
B) extended; nuclear
C) private; public
D) nuclear; extended

18) Which of the following terms is used to describe a lineage in which descent is traced through the mother's line?
A) Patrilineal
B) Matrilineal
C) Matrilocal
D) Patrilocal

19) Which of the following events was the primary cause for the rise of individualism between the 1700s and early 1800s?
A) The abolition of polygyny
B) The large-scale immigration of Asians into America
C) The abolition of slavery
D) The growth of commercial capitalism

20) The True Woman was:
A) sexually active prior to marriage.
B) religious, spiritual, domestic, and pure.
C) a hard worker.
D) independently wealthy.

21) Before the arrival of the Europeans, most Native Americans lived in:
A) urban communities.
B) extended families similar to the Europeans.
C) tribal societies based on lineages.
D) husband-wife conjugal units.

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22) Which of the following is one of the characteristics of the True Woman as described by historian Barbara Welter?
A) Assertiveness
B) Fearlessness
C) Piousness
D) Talkativeness

23) The only stable bond that existed among disrupted African slave families was between:
A) husbands and their wives.
B) grandparents and their grandchildren.
C) mothers and their children.
D) fathers and their children.

24) The American Revolution of 1776 brought about many changes including:
A) strengthening of the role of fathers.
B) children being seen as sinful.
C) mothers being perceived as the worse parent.
D) increased autonomy of women within the family.

25) A benefit that may have resulted from women's restriction to the world of home, and which may have laid the groundwork for subsequent women's social and political movements, was:
A) the creation of a subculture of sisterhood.
B) the ability of women to set their own schedules.
C) an increase in their knowledge of children and home.
D) their isolation.

26) The primary job available to African American women prior to the 1960s was:
A) file clerk.
B) domestic servant.
C) personal assistant.
D) secretary.

27) The spread of industrial capitalism in the mid-1800s led to many social changes including:
A) more children being born.
B) men exchanging labor for wages.
C) the merging of the spheres of men and women.
D) the transition to an increased familial mode of production.

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28) Informal marriage was common in all but which of the following groups?
A) Colonists in the Middle Colonies
B) Europeans
C) Mexican Americans
D) Chinese immigrants

29) According to contemporary research, the breadwinner-homemaker family was:
A) dominant in the aftermath of the Depression and World War II in the 1950s.
B) always dominant in U.S. history.
C) never dominant in U.S. history.
D) only found among African Americans.

30) In the traditional _____ family, parents controlled whom their children would marry and when.
A) Mexican
B) East Asian
C) American
D) European colonists'

31) Which immigrant group sent monetary remittances home to family members in their country of origin?
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A) Irish Americans
B) Mexican Americans
C) Chinese Americans
D) African Americans

32) The family system in which descent is reckoned through both the mother's and the father's line is followed in the United States and is called:
A) unilateral kinship.
B) extended kinship.
C) multilateral kinship.
D) bilateral kinship.

33) In the United States, levels of lifetime childlessness were higher among women who reached their peak childbearing years in the _____ than in any other generation of women in the twentieth century.
A) 1960s
B) 1950s
C) 1930s
D) 1990s

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34) By _____, 77 percent of all married women with school-aged children and 63 percent of married women with pre-school-aged children were working outside the home.
A) 1950
B) 2000
C) 1930
D) 1970

35) The *mestizo* group of Mexican American settlers:
A) were large landowners.
B) arranged their children's marriages with care and held elaborate ceremonies.
C) were of pure Spanish decent.
D) were farmers.

36) The 1965 Immigration Act drastically changed the number of people allowed in the United States from Asia, and the largest group to migrate since then has been from:
A) Japan.
B) China.
C) Korea.
D) Vietnam.

37) Which of the following is the main factor behind the lengthening of emerging adulthood?
A) The increased importance of education in the lives of young people
B) The obsession of young people with technology
C) The availability of more effective contraceptives to young Americans
D) The depleting pool of young people in America who wish to get married

38) Which of the following groups was historically known to emphasize conjugal family units?
A) European colonists of America
B) American Indians
C) Mexican Americans
D) African slaves brought to America

39) Which of the following was a cause for the rise in divorce rates in the early decades of the twentieth century?
A) A shift in the basis for marriage from economic partnership to emotional satisfaction and companionship
B) An increase in employment through family farms
C) A decrease in the privacy available to people due to a housing crunch
D) A decline in the rate of marriage in that era and the consequent disillusionment with marriage

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ESSAY. Write your answer in the space provided or on a separate sheet of paper.

40) Why was the "empty nest" phase (the period of time after children have left the parental home) more of a topic of family concern in the 1940s and 50s than it is today?

41) Describe the life-course perspective and its application in research by social scientists.

42) How did children during the Great Depression adopt a "downward extension of adultlike experience"?

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43) Why is the birth cohort to which you were born so significant?

44) What is meant by cohabitation? How did living in cohabiting relationships influence birthrates during the twentieth century?

45) What were some of the characteristics of families in colonial America? How did their functions differ from families' functions today?

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46) What changes in the American family have taken place since the 1950s?

47) What changes were brought about by the disruption of African slave families?

48) Discuss the public goods your family produces in contrast to the public services families in colonial America produced.

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49) What do you think is meant by the statement "Kinship developed as a 'weapon in the struggle for survival'"?

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50) Why were lineages so important to Native American families?

51) Describe how a matrilineage would work. Explain the matrilineal tradition that was present among the Apache of Arizona.

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52) Describe the 1965 Immigration Act and how immigrants benefitted from it.

53) What is meant by the concept of separate spheres for women and men?

54) What evidence exists that childhood is a relatively recent phenomenon?

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55) Though the idea may seem foreign to us in the present-day United States, what societal conditions of the late 1600s and the 1700s may have led to parents not lamenting the death of an infant?

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56) How might the life expectancy of a particular society affect the creation of extended family structures in that society?

57) The family and kinship patterns of small Native American kinship groups were affected by external influences with the arrival of the Europeans. What were some of the changes experienced?

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58) Discuss the services that conjugal families in the European colonies were expected to contribute and provide to the community.

59) Why was informal marriage particularly common in the Middle Colonies?

60) Explain the emergence of heterosexuality and homosexuality. Why were homosexual persons seen as suffering from a psychological illness?

61) Though stereotypes persist about the structure of the black family, what surprising evidence did Herbert Gutman discover about slave families as he analyzed census and other records?

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Answer Key

Test name: Chapter 02

1) TRUE
2) TRUE
3) FALSE
4) TRUE
5) TRUE
6) TRUE
7) TRUE
8) FALSE
9) FALSE
10) FALSE
11) FALSE
12) TRUE
13) FALSE
14) D
15) B
16) B
17) A
18) B
19) D
20) B
21) C
22) C
23) C
24) D
25) A
26) B
27) B
28) D
29) A
30) B
31) C
32) D
33) C
34) B
35) D
36) B
37) A

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38) A
39) A
40) Essay
Answers will vary.

41) Essay
Answers will vary.

42) Essay
Answers will vary.

43) Essay
Answers will vary.

44) Essay
Answers will vary.

45) Essay
Answers will vary.

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46) Essay
Answers will vary.

47) Essay
Answers will vary.

48) Essay
Answers will vary.

49) Essay
Answers will vary.

50) Essay
Answers will vary.

51) Essay
Answers will vary.

52) Essay
Answers will vary.

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53) Essay
Answers will vary.

54) Essay
Answers will vary.

55) Essay
Answers will vary.

56) Essay
Answers will vary.

57) Essay
Answers will vary.

58) Essay
Answers will vary.

59) Essay
Answers will vary.

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60) Essay
Answers will vary.

61) Essay
Answers will vary.

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Chapter 2
The History of the Family

Lecture Outline

I. Introduction

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

Until the 1700s, wrote Ariès, the long stage of life we call childhood wasn't recognized by most people. American historian John Demos put forth a similar argument about the Puritans in Plymouth Colony in the 1600s: "Childhood as such was barely recognized in the period spanned by Plymouth Colony. There was little sense that children might somehow be a special group, with their own needs and interests and capacities" (Demos, 1970). According to historians such as Ariès and Demos, parents withheld love and affection from infants and toddlers because so many of them died. If children survived, wrote Ariès and Demos, they were treated as little adults.

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I. The American Family Before 1776

There were several American families prior to the Revolution. There were, first of all, the families of the indigenous people who would become known as American Indians. There were the families of the European colonists. And there were the families of the African slaves, who were transported involuntarily to the Americas beginning in the 1500s.

A. American Indian families: The Primacy of the Tribe

The term **American Indian** is often used for a subset of the original, indigenous people who had settled in North America thousands of years before Columbus, namely, those who had settled in the territory that later became the 48 contiguous United States. Although there is little direct evidence about American Indian societies before the 1800s, scholars think that most American Indians lived in tribal societies based on **lineages**: kinship groups in which

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people trace their descent either through the father's or through the mother's line but not both. If descent is traced through the father's line, the lineage is described as **patrilineal**; and if descent is traced through the mother's line, the lineage is described as **matrilineal**. Both patrilineal and matrilineal tribes existed. Related lineages were often organized into larger clans that provided the basis for social organization and governing.

B. European Colonists: The Primacy of the Public Family

Among the European colonists, there were no lineages. There were only the smaller kinship groups known as the **conjugal family** of husband, wife, and children, and the **extended family**, comprising the conjugal family plus any other relatives present in the household, such as a grandparent or uncle. In Plymouth Colony, children received their basic education from their parents or, if they were working as servants, in another family's home. Selected Plymouth Colony families functioned as hospitals, houses of correction, orphanages, nursing homes, and poorhouses. Today, all these activities, with the exception of caring for the elderly, are carried out primarily outside the home, mostly by publicly supported institutions. In contrast, the family's private role was much smaller.

C. Family Diversity

Not all colonial families fit the ideal of two married, biological parents and their children. Particularly outside of New England, families were diverse. For one thing, death rates were so high that children commonly lost a parent and lived in a stepfamily after their remaining parent remarried. In addition, people sometimes proclaimed themselves married in front of family or friends, without the participation of clergy, and were accepted as married by their communities. Europeans, it turns out, had a long tradition of informal marriage.

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

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

Between 1776 and 1830, the outlines emerged of a kind of family that would remain prominent well into the twentieth century. Clearest among the white middle class, it had four new characteristics:

- Marriage was increasingly based on affection and mutual respect rather than on male authority and custom.

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- The primary role of the wife became the care of children and the maintenance of the home.
- The attention and energy of the husband and wife were increasingly centered on their children.
- The number of children per family declined, in part as a consequence of the greater investment of emotion and time that they were seen to need.

The role of romantic love probably increased within marriage during this period, at least among the middle and upper classes who left diaries and letters that historians can read today. But romantic love needed to be tempered by a careful judgment of whether a potential spouse was a reliable and dependable person—someone with whom one could build a family.

A. From Cooperation to Separation: Women's and Men's Spheres

Another spur to family change was the transition from subsistence farming to wage labor. Instead of growing crops and tending animals, more husbands took paying jobs. It began sometime in the 1700s and early 1800s, with the growth of commercial capitalism—an economic system that emphasizes the buying, selling, and distribution of goods such as grain, tobacco, or cotton. Commercial capitalism created jobs for merchants, clerks, shippers, dockworkers, wagon builders, and others like them, who were paid money for their labor. The opportunity to earn money outside the home undermined the authority of fathers.

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The heart of this change was the movement of men's work out of the home. Instead of working together in a common household enterprise, husbands and wives now worked on separate enterprises—he exchanging his labor for wages, she maintaining the home and raising the children.

III. African American, Mexican American, and Asian Immigrant Families

Europeans were not the only immigrants to the United States in the 1700s and 1800s. Three other groups were present early in the nation's history: Africans, Mexicans, and Asians.

A. African American Families

Until the appearance of new scholarship in the 1970s, most historians thought that the oppression and harsh conditions of slavery had destroyed most of the culture African slaves brought with them, leaving little in its place. The writings of both white and black scholars emphasized the losses imposed by slavery: the uprooting from Africa, the disruption of families through sales of family members to new owners, the inability of fathers to protect their families from the abuses imposed by masters.

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From E. Franklin Frazier, a sociologist and an African American, and others came the idea that both during and after slavery, most African American families were headed by women and that African American men were relatively powerless in and outside the home. But in 1976, historian Herbert Gutman argued, before and after slavery, in both the North and the South, most African American families included two parents.

B. Mexican American Families

In the early nineteenth century, well before migrants from the eastern United States arrived, Mexicans settled the frontier of what was then northern Mexico. These pioneers crossed deserts and fought with American Indians to reach as far west as California and as far north as Colorado.

Numerous were the laborers who worked the great estates or farmed or grazed animals on their own smaller holdings. They tended to be **mestizos**, people whose ancestors included both Spanish settlers and Native Americans from Mexico. There is some evidence that informal marriages were more common among this group. Informal marriages allowed couples to evade the control of their parents and other kin; and with fewer resources to protect than among the elite, the *mestizo* classes had less reason to control who married whom. These small landholders and laborers attempted to enlist the sponsorship and support of the well-to-do through the tradition of **compadrazgo**, a godparent relationship in which a wealthy or influential person outside the kinship group became the *compadre*, or godparent, of a newborn child, particularly at its baptism.

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As the number of Anglo immigrants rose, Mexican Americans were forced into **barrios,** segregated neighborhoods in the city. Residents of the *barrios* faced high unemployment or low income if they provided low-wage labor to Anglo employers.

C. Asian Immigrant Families

The Asian Heritage

Before the middle of the twentieth century, most Asian American families in the United States consisted of immigrants from China and Japan and their descendants. Family systems in East Asia (where China and Japan are located) were sharply different from those in the United States and other Western countries, although these differences are currently diminishing.

Asian Immigrants

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Chinese immigrants first began to arrive during the California gold rush in the 1850s. After the Civil War, they were hired to build the railroads of the Southwest. In the 1880s, significant numbers of Japanese immigrants began to arrive in Hawaii (which the United States would soon annex) and the mainland United States. The ratio of women to men was more balanced among the Japanese than among Chinese immigrants, so more families were formed.

Overall, Asian immigration was modest until Congress passed the **1965 Immigration Act**, which ended restrictions that had blocked most Asian immigration and substituted an annual quota. Unlike Chinese and Japanese families, Filipino families trace descent through both the father's and mother's line, a system called **bilateral kinship** (the system followed in the United States).

IV. The Emergence of Sexual Identities

The best-known study of same-sex intimacy in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's "The Female World of Love and Ritual." Smith-Rosenberg explored the separate sphere of middle-class women and found that they often formed strong emotional bonds with other women. Some of their correspondence seems, by today's standards at least, to have a romantic and even erotic tone. In the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this more fluid conception of sexuality congealed into two master categories that people saw as central to their senses of themselves—two sexual identities, then known as heterosexual and homosexual. Sexual acts and preferences are organized into sexual identities— the formation in people's minds of an identity such as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual based on romantic and sexual attraction.

A. Sexual Acts versus Sexual Identities

Until the nineteenth century, not only the terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual" but also the idea of "being" homosexual or heterosexual had not yet been invented. There were only two categories of sexual activities: the socially approved (sexual intercourse within marriage, in moderation, and undertaken mainly to have children) and the socially disapproved (all other activities, including acts between persons of the same sex, masturbation, oral sex regardless of the genders of the partners, and so forth). During the nineteenth century the concept of an orientation toward the same sex began to emerge. Men and women were recognized and sometimes punished and persecuted for their same-sex attraction, and some participated in clandestine social clubs and searched for persons of similar orientations.

B. The Emergence of "Heterosexuality" and "Homosexuality"

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Americans defined these categories in part by mounting a public campaign against homosexuality beginning in the late nineteenth century. The medical model remained dominant until 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. The medical model stigmatized gay people and served as a basis for prejudice and discrimination. Much as the ideology of separate spheres created conditions that allowed for social and political action by women's groups, so the discourse on homosexuality as an illness created conditions that ultimately provoked social and political actions by gays and lesbians. There are intellectuals and researchers today who claim that these identities are becoming more fluid again and some who argue against even using the concept of a sexual identity anymore.

V. The Rise of the Private Family: 1900–Present

A. The Early Decades

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

The flourishing new youth culture was exemplified in the 1920s by the "flapper" girls. Independent, often employed outside the home, and brazen enough to bob their hair and wear lipstick and eyeliner in public, the flappers patronized dance halls and movie theaters with their male companions.

Perhaps the greatest source of concern, the divorce rate had risen to the point where a marriage begun in 1910 had about a 1-in-7 chance of ending in divorce. This may seem like a small risk today, but it represented a substantial increase over the 1-in-12 chance in 1880 or the 1-in-20 chance at the end of the Civil War (Cherlin, 1992).

Before the twentieth century, emotional satisfaction had been less important to both husbands and wives, but not because they were ignorant of the concept—no Ariès-like claim is made here that people of the twentieth century discovered happiness. Rather, before the twentieth century the standard of living had been so low that most people needed to concentrate on keeping themselves clothed, housed, and fed.

Before 1900, pursuing personal pleasure was a luxury few could indulge in. Most were too busy just trying to get by. Still, Americans (and the citizens of other Western nations) were gradually enlarging the scope of the *private family*.

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B. The Depression Generation

The prosperity of the early decades of the century was interrupted by the Great Depression, which began in 1929 and continued until the late 1930s. In addition to its severe effects on family finances, the Depression also undermined the authority and prestige of the father. If he lost his job, his family might view him as having failed in his role as breadwinner. If his wife or his children were forced to find jobs, as many were, their labor was a constant reminder of his inability to fulfill their expectations. The experiences of families during the Great Depression can help people understand the strains families are facing today as the United States struggles to surmount the Great Recession.

The economic hardships forced many young adults to postpone marriage and childbearing. The Depression was so long and so severe that some couples never had the opportunity to have children.

As fathers and mothers struggled to make a living, their children helped out. Teenage boys took whatever jobs they could find; teenage girls took over more of the household work for mothers who were forced to work outside the home.

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C. The 1950s

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When the young adults of the Depression generation began to marry and have children after World War II, they created the most unusual and distinctive family patterns of the century. They married younger and had more children than any other twentieth-century generation.

The years after World War II were also the time of the great **baby boom**. Couples not only married at younger ages but also had children faster—and had more of them—than their parents' generation or, as statistics would later show, than even their children's generation.

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

Birthrates rose not only among newlyweds in their early twenties but also among women in

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their thirties who had been married for years. These older women belonged to larger cohorts, so the small-cohort-size theory can't account for their behavior.

Together, the strong economy and the marriage-and-childbearing orientation produced the high point of the breadwinner–homemaker family. The federal government helped by granting low-interest mortgages to armed forces veterans, allowing millions of families to purchase single-family homes in the growing suburbs.

D. The 1960s through the 1990s

The birthrate plunged from the heights of the baby boom to an all-time low in the 1970. Women who were in their peak childbearing years in the 1970s had an average of 1.8 children.

In the first half of the twentieth century, it was rare for an unmarried person in his or her twenties to be living alone. Either one remained with one's parents or one rented a room in another family's house. Young people couldn't afford to live on their own; there was a shortage of adequate housing; and anyway it was morally questionable, especially for an unmarried woman, to live alone. But by 2000, the proportion of unmarried twenty-somethings heading their own households had risen to 36 percent for women and 28 percent for men (Rosenfeld, 2007). Not all of these young household heads, however, were *truly* alone. After about 1970, **cohabitation**—the sharing of a household by unmarried persons in a sexual relationship—accounted for some of the postponement of marriage.

Change occurred not only in how and when people entered marriage but also in how and when they ended marriage. The divorce rate, which had been stable during the 1950s, doubled during the 1960s and 1970s.

After the 1950s, married women continued to work outside the home in ever larger numbers. Even women with pre-school-aged children joined the workforce in large numbers.

VI. The Changing Life Course

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

A. Social Change in the Twentieth Century

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

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

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For example, the figure shows that in 1950, as the baby boom started, members of the depression cohort were still in their childbearing years; therefore, they became the parents of the baby boomers. The figure also shows that by the time the baby boom cohort reached age 30 in 1980, a sharp rise in divorce had occurred. This way of looking at changes in family and personal life is an example of the life-course perspective. Rather than study families as an undifferentiated group, sociologists and historians who use this perspective tend to study the lives of individuals within families.

B. The New Life Stage of Emerging Adulthood

Recently, social scientists have used the life-course perspective to suggest the appearance of a new stage of life: **emerging adulthood**. It can be defined as the period between the mid-teens and about age 30 when individuals finish their education, enter the labor force, and begin their own families. The **labor force** is defined as all people who are working for pay or who are looking for paid work. It is the stage of life when one makes the transition from adolescence (itself only a century old) to adulthood. Most young people made the transition to adulthood quickly in the mid-twentieth century, marrying at historically young ages and having children soon afterwards.

The Role of Education

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The main factor in the lengthening of emerging adulthood is education. Changes in the labor force have put a premium on schooling: Employment opportunities have improved much more for the college-educated than for those without a college degree.

Constrained Opportunities

Emerging adults with more limited education take other, usually shorter, paths to reach the traditional markers of adulthood. Most of those who don't graduate from high school, or who graduate but don't go on to college, enter the job market well before their college-bound peers.

Consequently, some non-college-educated adults are postponing marriage not because they are still studying but rather because they (or their prospective marriage partners) don't think their economic prospects are good enough to support a marriage. But forgoing marriage no longer means one must forgo having children because childbearing outside of marriage has become more acceptable.

LGBTQ Emerging Adults and Their Families

A study of white, middle-class gay and lesbian emerging adults during the last half of the twentieth century suggests that they often had ambivalent relations with their parents and other biological kin. In the 1960s and 1970s, coming out— publicly declaring one's homosexuality—became possible as liberation movements (gay, feminist, civil rights) swept the country. In some families, parents rejected children who came out to them. Yet by the late 1970s and 1980s, a significant number of parents were accepting their children's sexuality. A new organization, Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, grew into a national movement in the 1980s to provide support to gay and lesbian emerging adults.

C. Emerging Adulthood and the Life-Course Perspective

The growing literature on emerging adulthood is a good example of the life-course perspective for several reasons. It focuses on a key transition in the lives of individuals—in this case the lengthening period from adolescence to adulthood. It demonstrates the substantial social changes that have occurred in this stage of life. And importantly, it places that transition in historical perspective by showing the influences of the decline in manufacturing jobs, the growing employment opportunities for the well-educated, and the greater acceptance of cohabitation and childbearing outside of marriage.

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D. What History Tells Us

The history of the family tells us that Americans come from regions of the world that have different family traditions. To some extent, the American mixing bowl blends those traditions together and reduces the differences.

Americans of European ancestry hail from a system that has emphasized the conjugal unit of the married couple and children more than have family systems in other regions of the world. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European-American conjugal families developed a sharp division of labor between the husband, who worked outside the home, and the wife, who by and large worked inside the home. That sharp division, however, broke down in the last half of the twentieth century as more married women entered the workforce. And during the twentieth century, Americans placed increasing weight on personal satisfaction as the standard people should use in judging the quality of their relationships. European American family traditions are important because they have been the basis for American law and custom.

The family systems of American Indians and of Americans from other regions (such as Latin America, Asia, and Africa) have traditionally placed more emphasis on kin beyond the conjugal family. Sometimes these family systems consisted of tightly organized lineages.

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Marriage was still central to most of these systems. But married couples were embedded in larger family structures that could provide assistance and support.

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