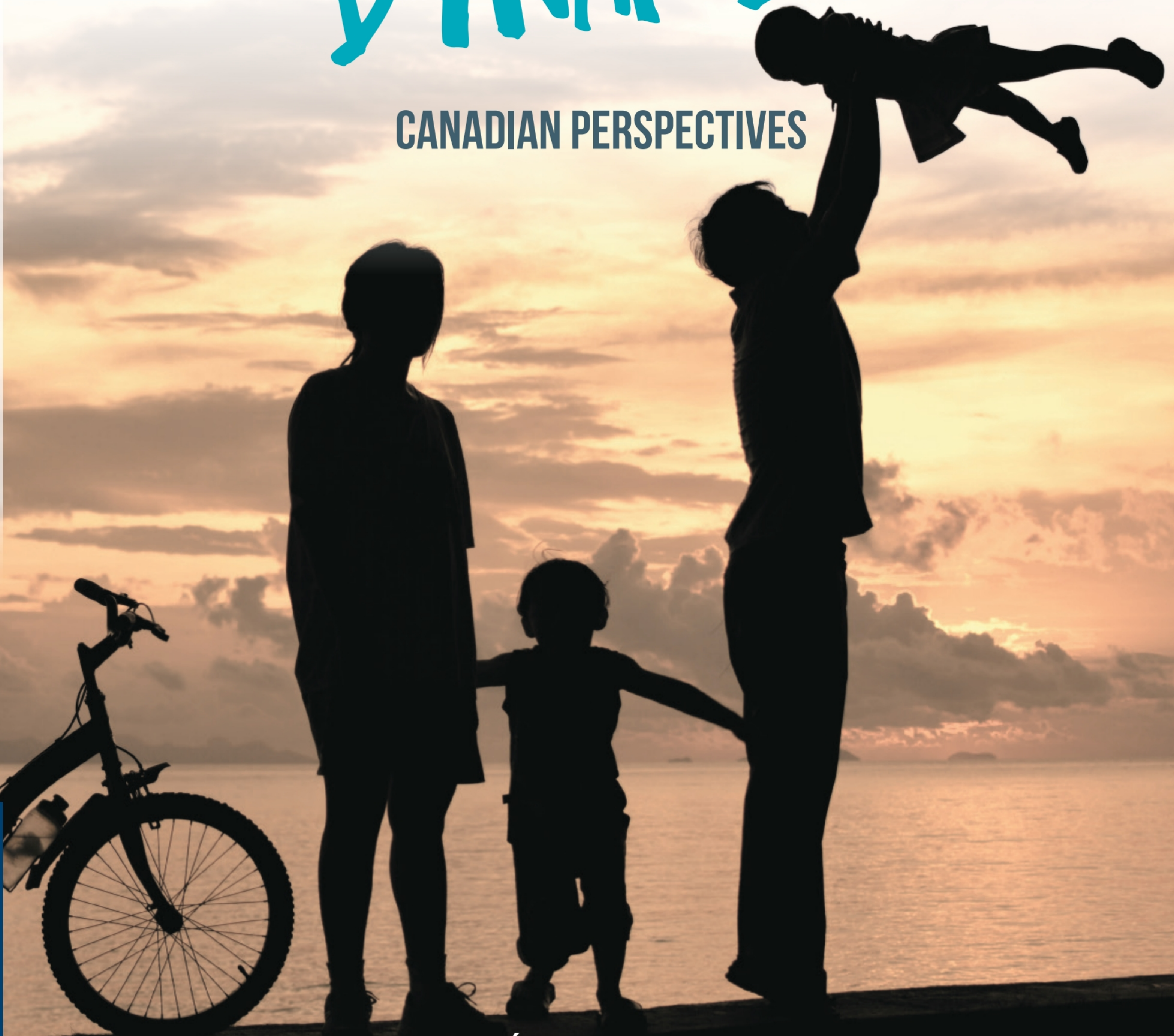


SEVENTH EDITION

THE FAMILY DYNAMIC

CANADIAN PERSPECTIVES



BÉLANGER WARD

THE FAMILY DYNAMIC

CANADIAN PERSPECTIVES

SEVENTH EDITION

Marc Bélanger

Vanier College

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Cambrian College (retired)

NELSON

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The Family Dynamic: Canadian Perspectives, Seventh Edition

by Marc Bélanger and Margaret Ward

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Nelson Education Ltd.

Printed and bound in Canada
1 2 3 4 19 18

For more information contact
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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Ward, Margaret, 1935-, author
The family dynamic : Canadian
perspectives / Margaret Ward
(Cambrian College (retired)), Marc
Bélanger (Vanier College). — Seventh
edition.

Includes bibliographical references
and index.
ISBN 978-0-17-670000-3 (softcover)

1. Families—Canada—Textbooks.
2. Families—Textbooks. 3. Textbooks.
I. Bélanger, Marc, 1967-, author
II. Title.

HQ560.W37 2018
306.850971 C2017-904634-9

ISBN-13: 978-0-17-670000-3
ISBN-10: 0-17-670000-5

BRIEF CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
PART 1: The Family	1
Chapter 1: What Is a Family?	1
Chapter 2: History, Culture, and Canadian Families	25
PART 2: The Couple Relationship: Merging Differences	57
Chapter 3: Getting Together	57
Chapter 4: Wedding Bells . . . or Not	85
PART 3: The Expanding Family	124
Chapter 5: Children—Yes or No?	124
Chapter 6: Bringing Up Baby	156
PART 4: The Middle Years of the Family	191
Chapter 7: The Middle Years of the Family and the Not-So-Empty Nest	191
Chapter 8: Grey Power and the Sunset Years	216
PART 5: Changes in the Family	247
Chapter 9: The Lone-Parent Family—The Future Majority?	247
Chapter 10: Coming Apart—The Divorce Experience	271
Chapter 11: The Second Time Around	299
Chapter 12: The Family, Work, and Caregiving	319

PART 6: Problems in the Family	347
Chapter 13: The Family Beleaguered—When Problems Come	347
Chapter 14: Home Dangerous Home—Violence in the Family	367
Chapter 15: Poverty and the Family	403
PART 7: The Future of Canadian Families	421
Chapter 16: The Crystal Ball—Predicting the Future of the Family	421
APPENDIX: MAJOR SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES	434
REFERENCES	440
INDEX	470

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	xi	Evaluation of Family Development Theory	17
PART 1: THE FAMILY	1	And Other Theories . . .	18
Chapter 1:		Researching the Family	19
What Is a Family?	1	Research Methods	19
What Is a Family?	3	Immediate Family Members Only	22
The Legal Family	4	Summary	23
Social Definitions of the Family	6	Class Assignments	24
Personal Definitions of the Family	7	Personal Assignments	24
Intentional Families	8	Chapter 2:	
Thinking about Families	9	History, Culture, and Canadian Families	25
How Does Society Influence Families?	9	Race and Ethnicity	27
Macro or Micro?	9	Census Definitions of Race and Ethnicity	28
The Family as an Institution	10	Minority and Dominant Groups	29
Evaluation of Structural Functionalist Theory	10	Prejudice and Discrimination	30
The Family in Conflict	11	Stereotypes	33
Evaluation of Conflict Theory	11	Responses to Minority Status	33
The Family as Interacting Members	11	The Canadian Population	36
Evaluation of Symbolic Interactionist Theory	12	Indigenous Peoples	36
The Family as a System	12	English Canadians and French Canadians	38
Evaluation of Family Systems Theory	13	Other Immigrant Groups	39
The Role of Gender in the Family	13	Patterns of Immigration to Canada	40
Evaluation of Feminist Theory	14	The Desire to Retain Canada’s “British” Character	41
The Wider Social Context	14	The Need for Labour	42
The Microsystem	14	Humanitarian Motives	43
The Mesosystem	15	Changes to Citizenship and Immigration since World War II	44
The Exosystem	15	The Experience of Immigrants in Canada	46
The Macrosystem	16	Providing Services to Immigrants	51
The Chronosystem	16	Sociological Perspectives on Diversity	51
Evaluation of the Ecological Theory	16	Differences and the Study of the Family	52
The Family through Time	16		

Merry Christmas, Xiao Bo	52	Cohabitation	89
Summary	54	Living Apart Together	90
Class Assignments	55	Polyamory	90
Personal Assignments	56	Society and Marriage	90
PART 2:		The Law and Marriage	93
THE COUPLE RELATIONSHIP:		Mixed Unions	97
MERGING DIFFERENCES	57	Same-Sex Marriages	98
Chapter 3:		Why Marry?	100
Getting Together	57	Status	100
Setting the Family Cycle Turning	59	Economics	100
Arranged Marriages	60	Sex	101
Romantic Love	61	Children	101
The Wheel of Love	63	Identity	101
The Relationship Continuum	64	Love and Support	101
Freedom of Choice?	64	Sociological Perspectives on Marriage	102
Theories of Mate Selection	66	Together, but Not Married	103
Sociological Perspectives on		Living Together and the Law	105
Mate Selection	69	Cohabitation and Marriage	
Sexuality	69	Compared	107
Sex and Gender	69	Marital and Relationship Happiness	108
Sexual Orientation	70	Individual Qualities	111
A New Custom—Dating (and Beyond)	71	Interaction between Partners	111
Dating in Adolescence	72	Conflict in the Relationship	113
Contraception and STIs	75	The Influence of Others	114
Technology and Dating	76	Types of Marriage	115
The Disadvantaged in Romance	78	Infidelity in the Relationship	116
Obstacles to Relationships	79	Married Happiness throughout Life	117
The Communication Gap	79	Does Marriage Have a Future?	118
Infidelity	80	An Unhappy Bride	119
Dating Violence	80	Summary	120
Rehtaeh Parsons	81	Class Assignments	122
Summary	82	Personal Assignments	123
Class Assignments	83	PART 3:	
Personal Assignments	84	THE EXPANDING FAMILY	124
Chapter 4:		Chapter 5:	
Wedding Bells . . . or Not	85	Children—Yes or No?	124
Married to One . . . or Many	87	Enlarging the Family Circle	126
Alternatives to Marriage	89		

Fertility in Canada	126	Torn Between Two Worlds	188
Why Is the Canadian Family Shrinking?	131	Summary	188
The Social Script	133	Class Assignments	190
Sociological Perspectives on Having Children	134	Personal Assignments	190
Voluntarily Childless	134	PART 4:	
Unwanted Children	136	THE MIDDLE YEARS OF THE FAMILY	191
Abortion	136	<hr/>	
Foster Care	140	Chapter 7:	
Adoption	141	The Middle Years of the Family and the Not-So-Empty Nest	191
Raising the Child Oneself	144	The Middle Years—A Time of Changes	192
“Desperately Seeking Baby”	145	Adolescence	193
Assisted Reproductive Technologies	146	Emerging Adulthood	196
Social and Ethical Issues	149	Indigenous and Immigrant Young Adults	198
Individual Rights versus Social Policy	152	The Parent Generation at Midlife	199
Complicated Choices	153	Midlife: A Time for Evaluation	200
Summary	154	The Empty Nest	204
Class Assignments	155	The Not-So-Empty Nest	205
Personal Assignments	155	Caregiving	208
Chapter 6:		The Sandwich Generation	211
Bringing Up Baby	156	The Social Time Clock	212
Defining Children	158	A Death Too Soon	213
Family—The First Socializers	159	Summary	214
Family Structure	160	Class Assignments	215
Family Interaction	166	Personal Assignments	215
Diversity in Parenting	175	Chapter 8:	
Society at Large	178	Grey Power and the Sunset Years	216
Childcare	179	Dimensions of Aging	217
School	179	The Aging of Canada	219
Peers	183	Living Arrangements	220
The Media	184	Health and Interests	221
Children and Parental Happiness	186	Sociological Perspectives on Aging	222
		Family Relationships	223
		Three Key Issues	223
		Couple Relationships	225
		Relationships with Siblings	227

Relationships with Children	227	Chapter 10:	
Relationships with Grandchildren	228	Coming Apart—The Divorce	
Death of Family Members	233	Experience	271
Minority Groups and Aging	236	A Short History of Divorce in Canada	273
Immigrants	236	Divorce in Canada	275
Indigenous Peoples	237	Why People Divorce	276
Social Policies and Seniors	238	Sociological Perspectives on Divorce	278
Economic Factors	240	The Road to Divorce	279
Caring for Seniors	241	The Decision to Divorce	279
What to Do with Mother	244	Planning the Breakup	280
Summary	244	Separation and Family Reorganization	281
Class Assignments	246	The Crises of Divorce	281
Personal Assignments	246	The Emotional Crisis	281
PART 5:		The Economic Crisis	283
CHANGES IN THE FAMILY	247	The Parenting Crisis	285
Chapter 9:		Children and Divorce	286
The Lone-Parent Family—The Future		Impacts of Divorce on Children	286
Majority?	247	Stressors and Protective Factors	287
Lone-Parent Families in Canada	249	Custody and Parenting	290
The Paths to Lone Parenthood	253	The Custodial Parent–Child	
Lone Parenthood and the Life Cycle	253	Relationship	291
How Long Does It Last?	254	The Non-Resident Parent–Child	
Sociological Perspectives		Relationship	291
on Lone Parenthood	255	Types of Custody	292
Issues Faced by Lone-Parent Families	256	Factors Determining Custody	
Economic Survival	256	Arrangements	294
Housing	258	Child Support	294
Social Support	259	The Future	295
Family Life	259	Paul’s Experience of Divorce	296
Are Children in Lone-Parent Families		Summary	296
at Risk?	260	Class Assignments	298
Explanations for Difficulties	262	Personal Assignments	298
A Special Worry—The Teen Mother	263	Chapter 11:	
The Lone Father	264	The Second Time Around	299
What of the Future?	266	Stepfamilies in Canada	300
A New Situation	267	Forming a New Family System	303
Summary	268	Stages of Stepfamily Formation	303
Class Assignments	270	Stepfamily Types	305
Personal Assignments	270		

Boundaries	305	Caregiver Strain	338
Roles	306	Work–Family Balance	340
The Couple Relationship	308	Flexible Work Arrangements	341
The Stepparent–Stepchild Relationship	309	The Family, Work, and Society	343
Relationships between Stepbrothers and Stepsisters	311	To Go or Not to Go	344
The Child Born into a Stepfamily	311	Summary	345
Effects of Stepfamily Living on Children	312	Class Assignments	346
Family Adaptation	313	Personal Assignments	346
The Stepfamily and the Wider Society	314	PART 6:	
A Matter of Gifts	316	PROBLEMS IN THE FAMILY	347
Summary	317		
Class Assignments	318	Chapter 13:	
Personal Assignments	318	The Family Beleaguered—When Problems Come	347
Chapter 12:		What Are Family Problems?	348
The Family, Work, and Caregiving	319	Families Facing Problems	350
One Family, Two Incomes—The New Reality	321	The ABCX Model	350
Work and Families	322	The Double ABCX Model	351
Changing Gender Roles	322	Resilience	353
Role Expectations	323	Two Specific Family Problems	356
Household Responsibilities	324	Chronic Illness or Disability	356
The Working Couple and Their Social Network	325	The Alcoholic Family System	360
Care for Family Members	326	Communication and Problem Solving	363
Childcare	326	The Long View	363
Eldercare	332	Larry	364
Conflict between Work and Family	335	Summary	365
Family Interference with Work (FIW)	336	Class Assignments	366
Work Interference with Family (WIF)	336	Personal Assignments	366
Blurred Boundaries	337	Chapter 14:	
Role Spillover and Role Overload	337	Home Dangerous Home—Violence in the Family	367
Burnout	338	What Is Family Violence?	369
		Forms of Family Violence	369
		Measuring Family Violence in Canada	371
		Sociological Theories of Family Violence	372
		Social Learning	372
		Social Control	373

Family Systems	373	Why Are Some Families in Canada Poor?	405
Sub-culture of Violence	373	What Is Beyond the Numbers?	408
Feminist Theories	375	What Can Poverty Do to Children?	412
Child Abuse	375	What Can Be Done to Reduce Family Poverty in Canada?	414
Child Abuse as a Social Issue in Canada	375	The Social Safety Net	414
What Is Child Abuse?	376	Create Jobs	415
The Prevalence of Child Abuse in Canada	377	Address Food Insecurity	416
Risk Factors for Abuse or Neglect Children and Adolescents as Abusers	380	Raise Wages	416
	381	Increase Social Assistance	416
Effects of Abuse on Children	384	Support Families with Children	416
Societal Responses to Child Abuse	384	Focus on Disadvantaged Groups An Important Challenge	416
	384		418
Abuse between Partners	385	Life on the Reserve	418
Intimate Partner Violence	385	Summary	419
History of Intimate Partner Violence in Canada	386	Class Assignments	420
	386	Personal Assignments	420
Prevalence of Spousal Violence in Canada	387	PART 7: THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN FAMILIES	421
Risk Factors for Spousal Abuse	387		
Dating Violence	390	Chapter 16: The Crystal Ball—Predicting the Future of the Family	421
Why Do Partners Stay?	391	An Aging Population	423
Abuse of Older Adults	396	Different Types of Families	423
Elder Abuse	396	Changes in Family Roles	426
Who Is at Risk?	397	Technology and Family Life	427
Elder Abuse and Society	397	The Family in Society	428
Preventing Family Violence	398	The Unknowns	429
Finding the Courage to Break Free	399	Will the Family Survive?	430
Summary	400	Summary	431
Class Assignments	401	Class Assignments	432
Personal Assignments	402	Personal Assignments	433
Chapter 15: Poverty and the Family	403	APPENDIX: MAJOR SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES	434
Poverty (or Low Income), Officially Defined	404	REFERENCES	440
Low Income Cut-Offs	404	INDEX	470
Low Income Measure	405		
Market Basket Measure	405		

PREFACE

The Family Dynamic serves as a basic introduction to family studies, particularly for people who are interested in finding employment in a human services field. As such, it provides a firm theoretical grounding. In addition, because postsecondary students, like all of us, learn best if they can relate concepts to their own experience or that of others, we have provided many examples throughout the text, as well as in boxes and in questions at the end of each chapter.

The Family Dynamic is set up to help students approach the subject matter, and the full-colour design helps capture interest. Each chapter begins with learning objectives and an opening vignette to stir interest and curiosity, as well as to introduce the topic of the chapter. We have kept the section headed “Where Do I Fit In?” that asks students a few personal reflection questions to get them thinking about how the topic of the chapter relates to them. We have also continued the series of sections throughout each chapter called “Time to Review.” These include both factual and critical-thinking questions that allow students to review and think about the material as they finish reading a section. Each chapter ends with a case study, a chapter summary, and questions for personal reflection or group discussion. Within the chapters, boxes are included to amplify points made within the text or to present issues—some of them diverting—for class discussion. Definitions of key terms are in the margin next to the paragraph in which the term is explained. An appendix summarizes various sociological theories for students who do not already have this background, and a running glossary allows quick reference to key terms.

As with previous editions, we have not attempted to write an exhaustive study of Canadian families but rather to open up the subject and present the variety in our family experiences. We have also introduced challenges and issues to stimulate thought and discussion about the current state and the future direction of families. When exploring these issues, we have tried not to take sides, although we all have beliefs and opinions; rather, we have sought to lay out arguments for competing positions to encourage students to form their own opinions. The orientation of this book is practical and tries to show how the theories and concepts relate to students’ lives and their future work situations.

Early in this book’s history, one reviewer referred to it as a “smorgasbook,” a term we consider a compliment. In this edition, as in earlier ones, we have tried to spread out a sampling of the rich fare of information available on Canadian families in the hope that readers will be tempted to feast where they have tasted.

ANCILLARIES

About the Nelson Education Teaching Advantage (NETA)

The Nelson Education Teaching Advantage (NETA) program delivers research-based instructor resources that promote student engagement and higher-order thinking to enable the success of Canadian students and educators. Visit Nelson Education's Inspired Instruction website at nelson.com/inspired/ to find out more about NETA.

The following instructor resources have been created for *The Family Dynamic: Canadian Perspectives*, Seventh Edition. Access these ultimate tools for customizing lectures and presentations at nelson.com/instructor.

Planning Your Course: NETA Engagement presents materials that help instructors deliver engaging content and activities to their classes. **NETA Instructor's Manuals** not only identify the topics that cause students the most difficulty, but also describe techniques and resources to help students master these concepts. Dr. Roger Fisher's *Instructor's Guide to Classroom Engagement* accompanies every Instructor's Manual.

Assessing Your Students: *NETA Assessment* relates to testing materials. **NETA Test Bank** authors create multiple-choice questions that reflect research-based best practices for constructing effective questions and testing not just recall but also higher-order thinking. Our guidelines were developed by David DiBattista, psychology professor at Brock University and 3M National Teaching Fellow, whose research has focused on multiple-choice testing. All Test Bank authors receive training at workshops conducted by Prof. DiBattista, as do the copy-editors assigned to each Test Bank. A copy of *Multiple Choice Tests: Getting Beyond Remembering*, Prof. DiBattista's guide to writing effective tests, is included with every Nelson Test Bank.

Teaching Your Students: *NETA Presentation* has been developed to help instructors make the best use of Microsoft® PowerPoint® in their classrooms. With a clean and uncluttered design developed by Maureen Stone of StoneSoup Consulting, **NETA PowerPoints** features slides with improved readability, more multi-media and graphic materials, activities to use in class, and tips for instructors on the Notes page. A copy of *NETA Guidelines for Classroom Presentations* by Maureen Stone is included with each set of PowerPoint slides.

Technology in Teaching: *NETA Digital* is a framework based on Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson's seminal work "Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" (AAHE Bulletin, 1987) and the follow-up work by Chickering and Stephen C. Ehrmann, "Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever" (AAHE Bulletin, 1996). This aspect of the NETA program guides the writing and development of our **digital products** to ensure that they appropriately reflect the core goals of contact, collaboration, multimodal learning,



time on task, prompt feedback, active learning, and high expectations. The resulting focus on pedagogical utility, rather than technological wizardry, ensures that all of our technology supports better outcomes for students.

Instructor Resources

NETA Test Bank: This resource was written by Mary Crea, University of Guelph. It includes over 1000 multiple-choice questions written according to NETA guidelines for effective construction and development of higher-order questions. The Test Bank was copy-edited by a NETA-trained editor. Also included are 180 completion, 170 short answer, and 100 essay questions.

The NETA Test Bank is available in a new, cloud-based platform. **Testing Powered by Cognero®** is a secure online testing system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from any place you have Internet access. No special installations or downloads are needed, and the desktop-inspired interface, with its drop-down menus and familiar, intuitive tools, allows you to create and manage tests with ease. You can create multiple test versions in an instant, and import or export content into other systems. Tests can be delivered from your learning management system, your classroom, or wherever you want.

NETA PowerPoint: Microsoft® PowerPoint® lecture slides for every chapter have been created by Mary Crea, University of Guelph. There is an average of 40 slides per chapter, many featuring key figures, tables, and photographs from *The Family Dynamic: Canadian Perspectives*, Seventh Edition. NETA principles of clear design and engaging content have been incorporated throughout, making it simple for instructors to customize the deck for their courses.

Image Library: This resource consists of digital copies of figures, short tables, and photographs used in the book. Instructors may use these jpegs to customize the NETA PowerPoint or create their own PowerPoint presentations.

NETA Instructor Guide: This resource was written by one of the authors of the textbook, Marc Bélanger, Vanier College. It is organized according to the textbook chapters and addresses key educational concerns, such as typical stumbling blocks student face and how to address them. Other features include a chapter overview, chapter outline, learning objectives, terms and concepts, engagement strategies for use in class or online, multimedia resources, and sources for further information.

CourseMate

Engaging. Trackable. Affordable.

Nelson Education's *The Family Dynamic* CourseMate, authored by Nancy Doetzal, Mount Royal University, brings course concepts to life with interactive learning and exam preparation tools that integrate with the printed textbook. Students activate their knowledge through quizzes, flashcards, and short answer questions, among many other tools.



CourseMate provides immediate feedback that enables students to connect results to the work they have just produced, increasing their learning efficiency. It encourages contact between students and faculty: you can select to monitor your students' level of engagement with CourseMate, correlating their efforts to their outcomes. You can even use CourseMate's quizzes to practise "just in time" teaching by tracking results in the Engagement Tracker and customizing your lesson plans to address students' learning needs.

Engagement Tracker: How do instructors assess their students' engagement in the course? How do instructors know their students have read the material or viewed the resources assigned?

Good practice encourages frequent contacts between students and faculty: with CourseMate, instructors can use the included Engagement Tracker to assess student preparation and engagement. Instructors can use the tracking tools to see progress for the class as a whole or for individual students. This helps instructors identify students at risk early in the course, uncover which concepts are most difficult for the class, monitor time on tasks, and keep students engaged.

Interactive Teaching and Learning Tools

CourseMate includes interactive teaching and learning tools:

- Quizzes
- Flashcards
- Chapter overviews
- Case studies
- Critical-thinking questions
- And more

The variety of tools in CourseMate respects diverse ways of learning and give students ample opportunity to actively engage with the course concepts. Students receive prompt feedback, which helps them focus their learning efforts on the concepts they have yet to master. Time plus energy equals learning, and CourseMate offers an engaging way for students to increase their time on task.

Interactive eBook: In addition to interactive teaching and learning tools, CourseMate includes an interactive eBook. Instructors can use it as a supplement to the printed text, or as a substitute. Students can take notes, highlight, search, and interact with embedded media specific to their book. To access CourseMate, please ask your Nelson sales representative for an SSO account. To provide your students with access to CourseMate, please direct them to **nelsonbrain.com**

Special Features

The text contains valuable pedagogical features that enhance learning:

- **Learning Objectives:** Each chapter begins with a set of learning objectives to set the stage for what follows. These provide an outline of the intended knowledge that students should be able to demonstrate following a thorough reading of the chapters.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the difference between race and ethnicity.
- Distinguish between minority and dominant groups.
- Identify some characteristics of the Canadian population.
- Describe the patterns of immigration to Canada.
- Compare the experiences of immigrant families in Canada.
- Understand why it is important for us to be aware of racial and ethnic differences when studying families.

- **Vignettes:** Each chapter opens with a vignette followed by questions headed “Where Do I Fit In?” These are “reflection” questions that encourage students to connect with the story, character, or situation discussed in the vignette.

STEPHEN, HALIFAX

He seemed like a pretty decent guy. He told me he was working as an investment broker at a bank, and making a good salary. For our first date, he invited me to meet him at one of the fanciest (and most expensive) restaurants in Halifax. He insisted that we have appetizers, and he ordered the most expensive meal on the menu for himself. I ordered something more modest. He also got a bottle of wine that cost over \$100. He was very charming during dinner, but while we were eating dessert, he started telling me that his boss at work was a jerk, so he had just recently quit his job. When the bill came, he asked if I could pay since he was tight on money. The best part of the evening? After leaving the restaurant, he asked if I could give him \$20 for a taxi.

MELANIE, OTTAWA

I met a guy one weekend on a ski trip. We hooked up, and before we left, I friended him on Facebook. A few days later, he started making postings in which he called me his “angelic soulmate” and described things that were very intimate (and not always true). He even posted a (not very flattering) picture that he had taken of me while I was asleep. I was horrified, because I thought that we had agreed to keep things discreet.

AMIR, GUELPH

Some friends had set me up with this girl who was a friend of a friend of a friend. We met at a small, cheap bar that looked like it was run by criminals. She was covered in tattoos and piercings (which is not my thing), and kept ordering shots with beer chasers. Within an hour, she was so drunk she kept sliding off her seat. I offered to help her get home, but some tough-looking guy stepped in and told me to leave her alone. “This guy bothering you, Steph?” he asked. She just shook her head and fell off her seat again. I said good night and left.

Where Do I Fit In?

1. What characteristics do you wish for in an intimate partner?
2. Would you like to start your own family, or have you started your own family? If so, how will/did you do this?

- **Running Glossary:** Each chapter contains a running glossary, where key terms are highlighted and defined on the page where they first appear. The full glossary, which can be found on the book’s website, allows students to quickly review the chapter’s material: names, terms, and theories.

keep up religious and cultural traditions. In a study of second-generation South Asian immigrants living in North America, 25 percent of the participants indicated that their parents would likely arrange their marriage (Buunk et al., 2010). In the past decade, the arranged marriage custom has increased among Indian immigrants in Canada. Because of uneven sex ratios in India (120 boys for every 100 girls due to sex-selective abortions and female infanticide), Indo-Canadian families with unmarried daughters can more easily find a potential husband from India (Merali et al., 2015).

Even when not directly arranging their children’s marriages, parents often attempt to influence the choice of a mate. There may be pressure on children of new Canadians to marry within their ethnic group. A common strategy used by parents is to restrict the social interactions of their children. Because they may want to follow customs they have learned in Canada instead of those of their ethnic group, second-generation immigrants indicate that conflicts with their parents in the realm of dating and marriage are common (Buunk et al., 2010).

A forced marriage occurs when people are coerced into a marriage against their will. It is very different from an arranged marriage, in which the free and informed consent of both parties is present. Forced marriage often affects young people who may be taken abroad on false pretexts or pressured to marry to sponsor their new spouse for immigration purposes. In many if not all instances, it is the parents who are forcing the young person to marry. Every major faith condemns the practice, and it is considered a human rights violation. Many countries have taken both legislative and non-legislative routes to combat the practice (Government of Canada, 2015a).

forced marriage: a marriage in which people are coerced into marrying against their will

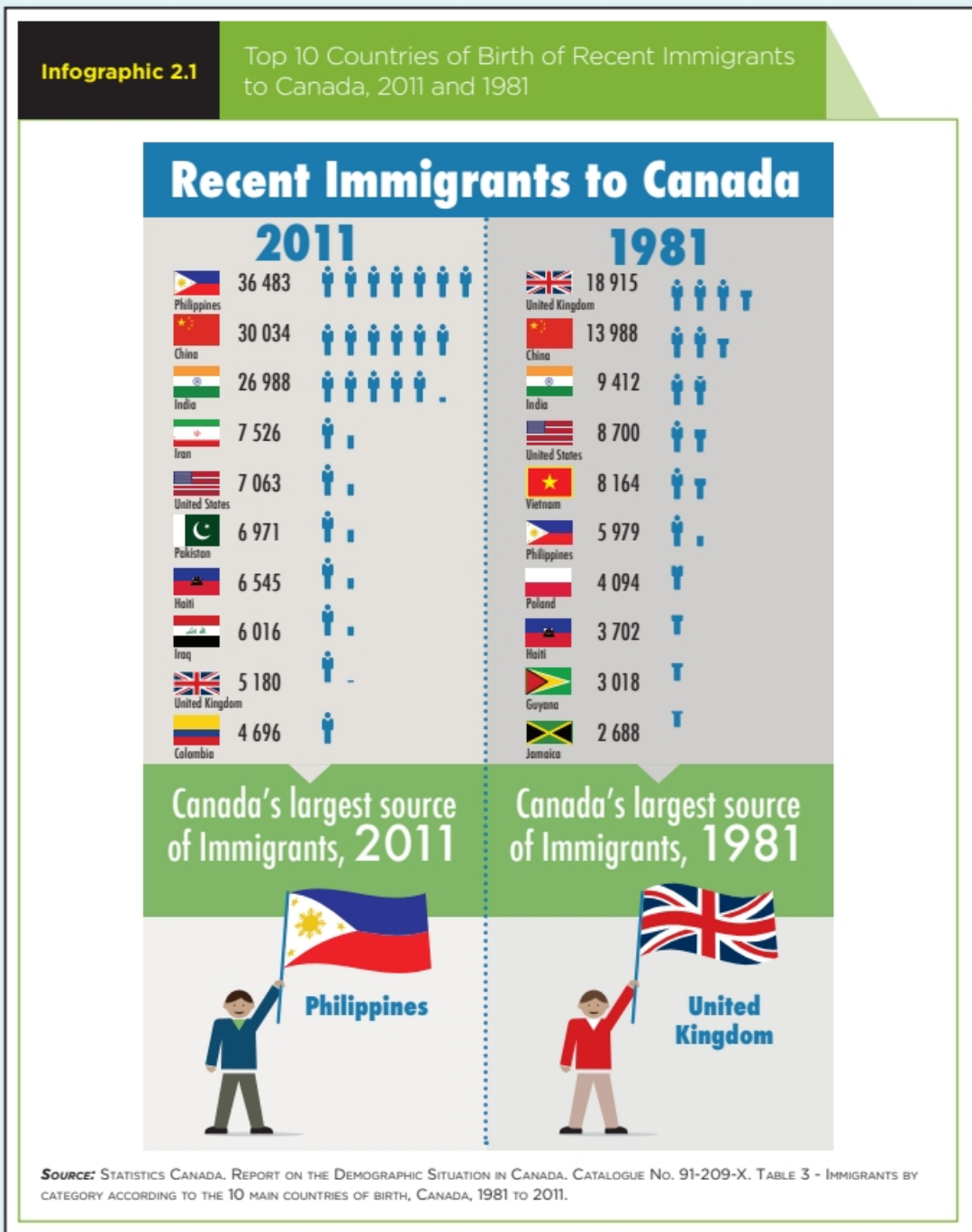
Romantic Love

If marriages are not arranged by families, couples need some basis for selecting their own partners. In the individualist European and North American societies, **romantic love**, defined as a strong emotional attachment between two people, or as a mixture of sexual desire and tenderness, of affection and playfulness—has become the popular standard (Regan, 2008). Researchers have identified three components in romantic love. Intimacy reflects the feelings of togetherness, caring, supportiveness, and warmth; commitment refers to trust, fidelity, and responsibility; and passion includes excitement, affection, and desire (Morales et al., 2015).

Anthropologist Helen Fisher has stated that romantic love is an evolutionary adaptation that motivates us to prefer and to pursue specific mating partners. It helps us to focus our efforts at mate selection. Romantic love is a cultural universal; it has been, and still is, found in every society (Fisher, 1994, 2004). But it first became a cultural element of mate selection in western Europe about 800 years ago. During the 12th century in Provence, in southern France, many young knights did not have the financial resources for marriage, especially if they were younger sons. They diverted their sexual energy by worshipping the lady of the manor and by doing deeds to prove themselves worthy of love. This emotion became known as “courtly love” and provides the origin of the term “courtship” (Lee, 1975).

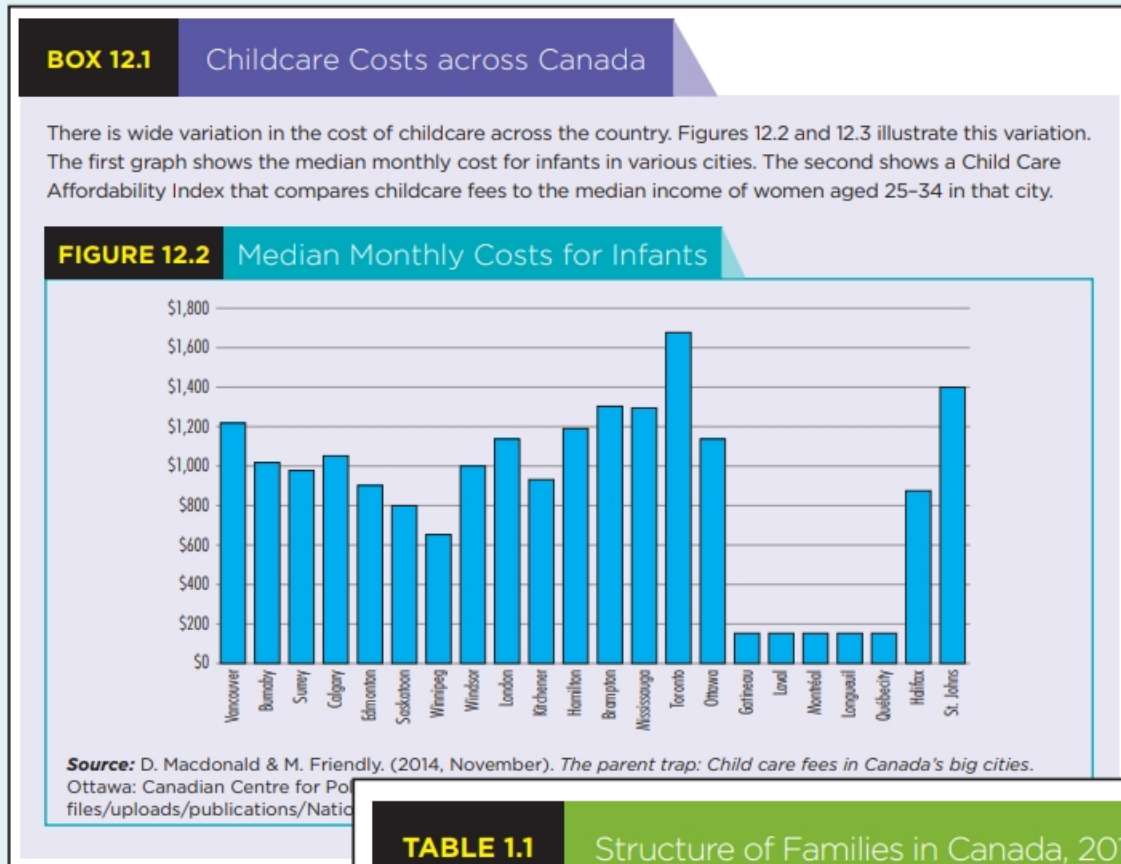
During the Industrial Revolution, emphasis on individuality grew. Young people wanted the right to choose their own mates and love came to be used as the basis for

romantic love: a strong emotional attachment often including a mixture of sexual desire, tenderness, affection, and playfulness



- **New—Infographics:** These bold, graphic representations of data from the chapter are designed to help students with data literacy.

- **Boxes** present examples, charts, and graphs to illustrate points in the text. These exhibits engage students in questions that probe their understanding. Many exhibits ask students to reflect on their personal views on a topic.



BOX 15.2 Hunger and Its Impact on Children

By Mary Crea-Arsenio, University of Guelph

In terms of child poverty, Canada ranks a humiliating 24th among 35 of the wealthiest OECD countries worldwide (Campaign 2000, 2012). Among one of the greatest impacts of living in poverty is child hunger. Hunger is defined as a need or desire for food and the physiological state of weakness as result of a need for food (Meal Exchange, 2006). In Canada, 7.7 percent of households, or 1.92 million Canadians, are considered “food insecure” (Statistics Canada, 2010a).

What are policymakers doing to ensure food security among Canadian families?

Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security is the government’s response to the issue of food insecurity. It outlines the highest priorities of action to ensure food security in the country. According to the plan, food security means access to adequate and sufficient food supplies. The plan identified the following nine priorities:

Priority 1: The right to food
 Priority 2: The reduction of poverty
 Priority 3: Promotion of access to safe and nutritious food
 Priority 4: Food safety

TABLE 1.1 Structure of Families in Canada, 2011 Census

	Number	Percentage
Total families	9 389 700	100.0
Couple families	7 861 860	83.7
Married families	6 293 950	67.0
Common-law families	1 567 910	16.7
Lone-parent families	1 527 840	16.3
Female parent	1 200 295	12.8
Male parent	337 545	3.5

Note: In 2011, the largest percentage growth was among common-law couples. Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada. (2011). Distribution (number and percentage) and percentage change of census families by family structure (table). *Portrait of families and living arrangements in Canada, 2011 Census*. Catalogue No. 98-312-X2011001. Ottawa: Author. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-312-x/2011001/tbl/tbl1-eng.cfm>

- **Case Studies** appear at the end of each chapter and include focus questions that help students think through a challenging family situation.

Rehtaeh Parsons

Rehtaeh Parsons was born on December 9, 1995, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her life was forever changed one dreadful night in November 2011. Rehtaeh had joined a girlfriend for a sleepover; the friend suggested they visit some people she knew. Someone produced a bottle of vodka and passed it around for everyone to share, including Rehtaeh, who drank as well. Rehtaeh quickly became disoriented and described the night afterwards as a blur. During that night she was raped by four boys. One of those boys took a photo of her being raped and distributed the photo to members of Rehtaeh’s school and her community.

The photo quickly went viral and Rehtaeh suddenly became shunned by almost everyone she knew. She was constantly harassed and bullied on Facebook and in text messages. The harassment become so bad that she had to move out of her own community to try to start a new life in Halifax. She struggled emotionally with depression and anger. In the end, the pain of the rape, and her disappointment in others she thought she could count on, was simply too much. Rehtaeh took her own life on April 4, 2013. She was 17 years old.

Following Rehtaeh’s death her parents used social media to go public with her story, drawing attention both nationally and internationally. The public outcry and pressure that followed contributed to the reopening of Rehtaeh’s case in May of 2012. In August of 2013, two of the four boys participating in the rape of Rehtaeh were charged, one with “creation and distribution of child pornography,” the other with “distribution of child pornography.” No other charges were laid. The first received a conditional discharge for the production of child pornography. The second received a one-year probationary sentence for the distribution of child pornography.

1. Discuss the use and abuse of technology in this case.
2. This is a very tragic story, but one that is unfortunately becoming more frequent. If you were a friend of Rehtaeh’s, what would you have done?
3. If you were a journalist, how would you have reported this story?

Source: Rehtaeh Parsons Society. (2017). About Rehtaeh. Retrieved from <http://rehtaehparsons.ca/rehtaeh/about-rehtaeh/>

- **Time to Review** questions at the end of each major section highlight key points and provide students with a built-in test of their understanding of the material before they proceed to the next section.

Time to Review

1. What has been the history of divorce in Canada?
2. What are some of the factors involved in a couple’s decision to divorce?
3. How do the different sociological perspectives see divorce?

- **Chapter Summary:** Each chapter ends with summary points that review the key concepts and facts covered in the chapter.

Summary

Why Are the Middle Years of a Family Described as a Time of Transition?

The middle years of a family are a time of change and transition for both parents and their adolescent and emerging adult children. Children become independent following various timetables. Midlife adults adapt to changes in their own lives.

What Developmental Tasks do Adolescents and Emerging Adults Face?

Adolescence brings physical, emotional, and social changes. The major task for young people moving into adulthood is the development of a sense of identity. There are four identity statuses at this stage of psychosocial development. Currently, independence is often delayed as emerging adults complete their education and build a foundation for adult life. Many continue to live with their parents. Emerging adults have the greatest freedom to decide present actions and future life courses. Parents who encourage their children’s desire for independence foster healthy development.

Why Is Midlife a Time for Assessment and What Areas of Their Lives Do Individuals Typically Assess?

Midlife is a time for evaluation. Individuals look at themselves to see if they have made a difference to society through various forms of generativity. Midlife is a time for assessing work goals. Close relationships are also evaluated. Many change their existing relationship, often finding increased satisfaction, especially after children leave home. Sex life remains important for most individuals, who consider it vital in a relationship.

- **Class and Personal Assignments:** These assignments include questions for group discussions and individual reflection.

Class Assignments

1. Think about two television shows that present family life. What roles do men and women play in them? Do you think these roles are typical of society today? Explain.
2. Interview two individuals about the division of responsibilities, chores, and privileges in marriage. Do you feel that their answers are related to their age or cultural background? Why or why not? Compare your information with that gained by your classmates.
3. Conduct a survey of the class or another group about reasons to marry. Were the six reasons discussed in the text also given by your respondents? What other reasons were given? Present these findings.

Personal Assignments

The following assignments are designed to help you think about your own family experiences:

1. Describe the kind of marriage your parents have, if they are currently married. How has this affected your ideas about the roles of husbands and wives in marriage? If your parents are not married, describe how this has affected your ideas about marriage and intimate relationships.
2. If you had a marriage contract or prenuptial agreement, what would you choose to include? Why? Would you want such a contract? Give your reasons.
3. For this journal entry, discuss what you think are the greatest challenges marriage faces today. What are the greatest opportunities? Give reasons for your answers.

New Content by Chapter

Chapter 1: What Is a Family?

- New opening vignette

Chapter 2: History, Culture, and Canadian Families

- New Box 2.2: A Note on Terminology
- New Box 2.3: The Residential School System
- Infographic 2.1: Top 10 Countries of Birth of Recent Immigrants to Canada, 2011 and 1981

Chapter 3: Getting Together

- New opening vignette
- Infographic 3.1: Theories of Mate Selection
- New Figure 3.3: The Genderbread Person
- Expanded material on sexuality
- Expanded material on dating
- New Box 3.1: Hooking Up—Some Data
- New case study: Rehtaeh Parsons

Chapter 4: Wedding Bells . . . or Not

- Expanded material on alternatives to marriage
- Infographic 4.1: Marriage in Canada
- New Box 4.1: Polygamy in Canada
- New Box 4.3: Queer Family Support

Chapter 5: Children—Yes or No?

- New opening vignette
- Infographic 5.1: Fertility in Canada
- New Box 5.4: My Story: What IVF Is Really Like . . .
- New case study: Complicated Choices

Chapter 6: Bringing Up Baby

- Infographic 6.1: Parenting Styles
- Expanded material on diversity in parenting
- New case study: Torn Between Two Worlds

Chapter 7: The Middle Years of the Family and the Not-So-Empty Nest

- New opening vignette
- Expanded material on Indigenous and immigrant young adults
- Infographic 7.1: Four Stages of Identity Formation
- New case study: A Death Too Soon

Chapter 8: Grey Power and the Sunset Years

- New opening vignette
- New section: Sociological Perspectives on Aging
- Infographic: The Aging Population

Chapter 9: The Lone-Parent Family—The Future Majority?

- New section: Sociological Perspectives on Lone Parenthood
- Infographic 9.1: Lone-Parent Families in Canada

Chapter 10: Coming Apart—The Divorce Experience

- New opening vignette
- New section: Sociological Perspectives on Divorce
- Infographic: 30-year total divorce rate per 100 marriages, Canada, Provinces, and Territories, 2008

Chapter 11: The Second Time Around

- New opening vignette
- Infographic 11.1: Stepfamilies in Canada

Chapter 12: The Family, Work, and Caregiving

- New Figure 12.4: Seniors, 2012: Where Do They Live?
- Expanded material on conflict between work and family

Chapter 13: The Family Beleaguered—When Problems Come

- New Box 13.1: Parenting Capacity Assessments
- New case study: Larry

Chapter 14: Home Dangerous Home—Violence in the Family

- Expanded material on forms of family violence
- New section: Sociological Theories of Family Violence
- New Box 14.3: Intergenerational Transmission of Abuse in Indigenous Families

Chapter 15: Poverty and the Family

- New opening vignette
- New case study: Life on the Reserve

Acknowledgments

It is a joy to be able to thank people publicly for their many private kindnesses. We offer our gratitude:

- foremost, to our students over the years, who both infuriated and challenged us in ways impossible to catalogue through their questions, arguments, comments, and stories;
- to our colleagues at Cambrian College and Vanier College for their past and continuing support;
- to Mary Crea-Arsenio, University of Guelph, for writing the excellent boxes in Chapters 6, 8, and 15;
- to the editors and marketing manager at Nelson Education—Leanna MacLean, Jenny O’Reilly, Jaime Smith, Marcia Gallego, and Terry Fedorkiw;
- to our relatives, friends, and colleagues for demonstrating so many variations on family living.

Margaret Ward wishes to say, “I have been delighted to work with Marc on previous editions and have valued his insights and contributions. I am happy to leave the book in his capable hands.”

Marc Bélanger is proud and happy to thank Tommy, Katerina, and Eden. It is a joy to watch you all as you set out to make your ways in this wonderful world. You may soon be starting families of your own.

Finally, thanks to Christine Lavoie for her generous practical help, many conversations, and encouragement. I dedicate this book to her with love.

I would also like to thank the reviewers for their insightful feedback.

Mary Crea-Arsenio, University of Guelph-Humber

Helene A. Cummins, Brescia University College, University of
Western Ontario

Keith Dudley, Lethbridge College

Dianne Hamilton, Conestoga College

Cameile Henry, Sheridan College

Sarah Knudson, St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan

Caroline McDonald-Harker, Mount Royal College

C. Tracey McGruthers, Georgian College

Kathleen Moss, Carleton University

Penny Poole, Fanshawe College

Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, MacEwan University

Renu Sharma-Persaud, University of Windsor

Annette Tezli, University of Calgary

Kelly Train, Ryerson University

PART 1
THE FAMILY

Chapter

1

What Is a Family?



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Compare various definitions of the family.
- Describe the main theories used to study the family.
- Identify how researchers and others get information about families.

It was the first day of class and the teacher had just finished explaining the activity.

“So, get into groups of four and describe your family to the others in your group.” Brooke looked at the other and spoke first. “Hey, I’m Brooke. I live with my parents and my younger sister. My father is Haitian and my mother is Italian. We have lots of relatives on both sides. Every Sunday after church, we go to see my Italian grandparents and have a huge dinner there, with my aunts and uncles and cousins, too.”

“So, do you consider yourself more Italian or more Haitian?” asked Dimitri.

“I think I’m more Italian, because I see that side of my family more often. But when I’m with my father’s family, they all tell me that I should be proud to be Haitian.”

“Well, I’m all Greek,” said Dimitri. “Both my parents were born here, but we’re Greek all the way. My dad died last year of cancer, so now it’s just me and my mom and my younger brother. My mom works, but it’s hard financially. I registered for this semester, but I might have to drop out and start working full time. The only other option would be to move in with my grandparents, my mom’s parents, which wouldn’t be so bad, I guess. They’re getting old and could use the help, too.”

Falen decided to speak. “I live with my grandmother and my younger brother. We went to live there after my dad split and then my mom asked this guy named Richard to move in. My brother and I didn’t like him because he used to hit my mom. He left, too, and so did Maurice and Lionel, and there was another one but I can’t even remember his name. Anyhow, my mom has trouble staying in relationships; she always picks these losers.”

“So, who would you say is your family?” asked Brooke.

“Sometimes I wish I had a big family like yours. But I guess it’s just me and my brother and my grandmother, that’s the family I live with. Of course, I have a mother, but I don’t live with her, and I haven’t seen my real dad since I was five years old,” replied Falen.

“Wow, that’s tough,” said Cory.



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“Not really,” answered Falen, a bit defensively. “My grandmother is really cool, and she takes good care of me and my brother. She also helps my mom out a lot, but my mom doesn’t appreciate it. But I’m happy to be living with my grandmother.”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to be rude,” said Cory. “My family is complicated, too. My parents divorced ten years ago. I spend most of the time with my mom, but I visit my dad usually every other weekend. My mom was dating this guy for a few months, but I never got to meet him, and they broke up. I guess it was rough on my mom, because she hasn’t dated anyone else since. My dad got remarried, and I have a stepsister, but she lives with them all the time. She’s seven; we get along, but she can be a bit spoiled and annoying.”

“Sounds like we all have very different families,” said Brooke.

“Yeah, but I guess they’re all kinda the same, too,” said Dimitri. “We love them anyway . . .”

What is a family? We have all been members of at least one family, and we see families all around us, both in real life and in the media. We all know what families are, yet when we try to define “family,” the task is not so simple. After reading about Brooke’s, Dimitri’s, Falen’s, and Cory’s families, you can see that families come in many forms. Do we include only the people who live with us? Should we count all our relatives? One difficulty in defining “family” is that we use the word for many different things—our ancestors; our parents, brothers, and sisters; our spouses and children; and all our other relatives.

Where Do I Fit In?

Do you think that the families described by Brooke, Dimitri, Falen, and Cory are unusual, or are they a fair representation of many families in Canada today? Think about your own family . . .

1. Who do you consider to be in your family?
2. Are the people in your family different from other people you know? If so, in what ways?

What Is a Family?

In trying to define a family, we can focus on who is in the family (family structure), or we can focus on what a family does (family functions). For sociologists, the term “family” refers to the **social institution** that fulfils certain functions such as reproduction, the socialization of children, and sexual regulation. It also refers to a group of people who are related to one another biologically or through legal ties.

Definitions of the family change according to time and place. When the French and English arrived in Canada, they encountered First Nations groups with family structures quite different from those found in Europe. For example, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) lived in large longhouses, each one headed by a powerful matriarch. On the Pacific Coast, houses were so large they could accommodate several families, each with its own separate living area and hearth (Aboriginal Affairs and

social institution: a structure of relationships that organizes social behaviour around a central activity or social need

household: a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling

communal living: a group of people, who may or may not be related by birth or marriage, sharing financial resources and living arrangements

census family: a legal definition of the family used by Statistics Canada

Northern Development Canada, 2013). Nowadays we would tend to think of such groupings as a **household** rather than a single family. According to Statistics Canada (2015d), a household refers to people who occupy the same dwelling and can consist of one or more families, a single person, or a group of related or unrelated people. Two parents and their children still living at home are a family and a household. One person living alone is a household but not a family. Three students sharing an apartment are a household but not a family. A live-in nanny is part of the household but not part of the family.

Communal living, which exists in Canada among some groups, provides another image of family. Hutterites traditionally share financial resources, work assignments, and even meals on a community basis. From about the age of three, children spend most of their days in school, and they eat their meals in the communal dining hall, seated separately from their parents and according to age and gender. Although family ties are recognized, community takes precedence over the individual family unit (Smith & Ingoldsby, 2009).

In Toronto, recent immigrants from Somalia often end up in situations that would be called “communal living.” In traditional Somali culture, communal living is common, and families live together or near one another because they want to be together. But for the immigrants, the motive for choosing this type of arrangement is different. In Toronto, many Somalis live in big groups because most of them came with nothing and they cannot afford to live alone. But as soon as they are financially able to, individuals move out. Communal living is therefore a matter of choice or a matter of necessity depending on whether one is in Somalia or Toronto (Mensah & Williams, 2014).

The Legal Family

In Canada, the term “family” differs according to who is defining it. A variety of legal definitions exist. The census, which is taken every five years, counts what it calls the **census family** (see Box 1.1) (Statistics Canada, 2015b). Family members are also defined in a host of Canadian laws and regulations. For example, the law states that people cannot marry certain categories of relatives, such as brothers and sisters, because they are too closely related (Government of Canada, 2015e). Child welfare laws define parents and specify which relatives are close enough to be allowed to adopt a child without agency approval (Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ontario, 2011). Immigration law considers certain relatives close family members and thus to be given preference in entering the country (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014a). Government regulations determine who is considered to be family for services such as medical and family benefits, bereavement leave, and special visiting programs in penitentiaries. In fact, everyone working in a social services field must learn the specific and relevant legal definitions of the family in the course of their work.

Legal definitions are not fixed; they have changed as a result of court cases and legislation. For example, in most provinces, common-law spouses have been given many of the rights and responsibilities of married couples in terms of financial support, employment benefits, and custody and support of children. Alberta legally

BOX 1.1

Some Definitions of the Family

Statistics Canada

Census family refers to a married couple and the children, if any, of either or both spouses; a couple living common law and the children, if any, of either or both partners; or, a lone parent of any marital status with at least one child living in the same dwelling and that child or those children. All members of a particular census family live in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. Children may be children by birth, marriage or adoption regardless of their age or marital status as long as they live in the dwelling and do not have their own spouse or child living in the dwelling. Grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present also constitute a census family.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2015, April 21). Census family. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/concepts/definitions/c-r-fam-eng.htm>.

Correctional Service of Canada

Family members eligible to participate in the Private Family Visiting Program are spouse, common-law partner, children, parents, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, and persons with whom, in the opinion of the institutional head, the inmate has a close familial bond, provided they are not inmates.

Source: Correctional Service of Canada. (2012, October 18). Private family visiting. Retrieved from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/visit/index-eng.shtml>

Air Canada

The Bereavement Fare Policy allows people to fly at the last minute in the event of a death or imminent death in their immediate family. Immediate family includes spouse (common-law as well as same-sex partners), child (includes adopted, step, grand, and great-grand), parent (includes step, grand, great-grand, in-law, and common-law in-law), daughter, son, father, mother (includes legal, in-law, and common-law in-law), brother, sister (includes step, half, in-law, and common-law in-law), aunt, uncle, niece, nephew (includes those of spouse and common-law spouse), legal guardian (with proof of judgment), and spouse of legal guardian. All above include in-laws of a same-sex partner.

Source: Air Canada. (2015). Bereavement fares. Retrieved from <http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/before/bereavement.html>

Vanier Institute of the Family

The Vanier Institute of the Family defines “family” as any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption or placement and who, together, assume responsibilities for variant combinations of some of the following: physical maintenance and care of group members; addition of new members through procreation or adoption; socialization of children; social control of members; production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services; and affective nurturance—love.

Source: Vanier Institute of the Family. (2017). Definition of family. Retrieved from <http://vanierinstitute.ca/definition-family/>

Children's Aid Society of Toronto

CAST defines family to include anyone with a meaningful relationship to a child either through blood ties, community, or culture.

Source: Children's Aid Society of Toronto (2009).

If you look carefully at the definitions above, you can see that some of them (Statistics Canada, Correctional Service of Canada, Air Canada) define a family by *who is included*. Others (the Vanier Institute of the Family, Children's Aid Society of Toronto) define a family as a particular *kind of relationship*. Sociologists look at both aspects when studying families—which people make up a family, and what is the nature of their relationship.

recognizes relationships of interdependence, which are relationships outside marriage in which two people share each other's lives, are emotionally committed to each other, and function as an economic and domestic unit (Province of Alberta, 2014). In 2005, the federal government passed a law making same-sex marriages legal across Canada. However, some legal definitions are not consistent across the country, or even within provinces, and may lead to confusion about rights and responsibilities. As well as deciding which government services will be provided to individuals, legal definitions also determine what individuals are legally entitled to within their relationship. In Quebec, for example, programs such as worker's compensation and the Quebec Pension Plan treat *de facto*, or common-law, couples like legally married couples. Yet *de facto* couples in Quebec have no property or support rights (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015).

Social Definitions of the Family

Various groups and social institutions also define the family. A number of churches and religious organizations have stated how they define a family (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014; Canadian Society of Muslims, 2005). Many hospital intensive-care units permit visits by immediate family members only. Schools accept permission and absence notes from parents only, unless they are informed otherwise. Even restaurants, museums, and amusement parks offer special deals only to families. Of course, they often have some kind of definition of what constitutes a family.

Various ethnic groups may regard family membership in different ways. Many new immigrants as well as many First Nations peoples in Canada tend to have a very broad definition of family membership, and children are often cared for by relatives other than their parents. If child welfare workers define a family as consisting of parents and children only, then they may feel that some parents are neglecting or even abandoning their children, while these parents believe that their offspring are properly cared for within their family circle. Such misunderstandings have led to the unnecessary removal of children from their parents (Sinha & Kozlowski, 2013).

Underlying many of the differences in the way people regard families are two basic concepts: the nuclear family and the extended family. The **nuclear family** is usually regarded as married parents and their children. Sometimes called the **standard North American family**, or SNAF (Smith, 1993), it forms the basis for what some advocates call “traditional family values.” Nuclear families come in two forms, depending on your perspective: **family of orientation** is one that you are born into and raised in; **family of procreation** is one that you form through marriage or cohabitation, and in which you raise your children. Society is made up of interlocking sets of nuclear families with many individuals being members of both forms; however, this pattern works neatly only if all couples get married, have biological children, and never divorce.

In reality, many families do not fit this description. Children may have more than one family of orientation. When parents divorce, their children have two families to which they are connected, with one parent in each. Adopted children start out in one family and are raised in another. Some adults have more than one family of procreation. This situation occurs most often with parents who later have children with another partner. Occasionally, two families of procreation result when someone enters an illegal, bigamous relationship or lives common-law while still married to someone else.

The second concept is the **extended family**, which encompasses all other relatives. When discussing extended families, it is important to distinguish between extended family households, in which the members all live together, and extended family networks. In many First Nations communities, the extended family coordinates the care and nurture of its members over a large network of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins (Castellano, 2002). The extended family network is what is also referred to as **kinship**. Kinship is a set of social relations based on blood, marriage, and other social connections.

There are two basic kinds of kinship ties. The first is based on blood ties that trace biological descent. These are the people you are genetically related to, such as your parents, grandparents, and biological siblings. The second is ties based on marriage, adoption, or other connections. These are people such as your spouse, in-laws, and stepbrothers or stepsisters. Because kinship ties are socially defined, there is much variation in what constitutes membership. Some people include more distantly related cousins, while others include only first cousins. In the past, most people who lived in small rural communities in Canada were related through marriage or descent. For these individuals, the entire community could almost be considered their kinship network.

The traditional definition of kinship has been criticized for being **heteronormative**, a world view that presumes that heterosexuality is the normal or preferred sexual orientation. This bias is being challenged by studies of kinship networks among gay and lesbian families (Bos, 2010; Weston, 1991).

Personal Definitions of the Family

Some definitions of the family are quite personal. In some families, a close friend is counted as a member. In other cases, such as those where there has been a

nuclear family: a family consisting of a husband, a wife, and their children

standard North American family (SNAF): a term used to describe a family form based on a breadwinner-father and homemaker-mother raising their children

family of orientation: the family that we are born into and raised in

family of procreation: the family that we form through marriage or cohabitation, and in which we raise our children

extended family: the nuclear family and all other relatives

kinship: a set of social relations based on blood, marriage, and other social connections

heteronormative: a world view that presumes that heterosexuality is the normal or preferred sexual orientation

high level of conflict and where there is continuing bad feeling, a family may not consider one member as belonging, even though he or she is a legal or biological member. This is especially true when parents have disowned a child or when a marital partner has disappeared, but no divorce has occurred. Different family members may have separate ideas of who belongs. For example, a child may include her divorced father, while her mother does not.

There is a growing tendency to consider pets as family members. These are referred to as “nonhuman family members.” One study of nearly 1000 adults found that during periods of emotional distress, some participants were more likely to turn to their dogs than they were to turn to their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, best friends, and children (Kurdek, 2009). Pet custody is increasingly an issue in divorce agreements (Taylor, 2015).

Intentional Families

Modern society often encourages frequent and dramatic changes, such as moving to another city or changing careers. Because of relocation, separation, divorce, or the death of a loved one, a person may feel alone and isolated. In response to this, some people have decided to form **intentional (or chosen) families**. The members, though not related by blood or marriage, call themselves a family and may share residence, finances, and a common lifestyle. Intentional family members may also live apart but meet regularly for meals, holidays, and milestones such as birthdays. Although not legally or officially recognized, the decision to join an intentional family often arises from the need for human companionship and the emotional connection that comes from shared experiences. Because they are often formed for a specific need, they are also called “situational families.”

The concept of intentional or chosen family is of great importance in many **LGBTQ** communities. The image of the traditional family is based on marriage and having children, and some people simply do not have access to these conventional methods of building families. Same-sex marriage has been legal in Canada only since 2005. Because sexual reproduction requires a male and a female, for some people, starting a biological family is not so straightforward. Unfortunately, some LGBTQ individuals may be rejected by their family of orientation, and for them, chosen families are made out of necessity (Steinmann, 2013).

intentional (or chosen) family: two or more individuals, not related by blood or marriage, who call themselves a family and may share residence, finances, and a common lifestyle

LGBTQ: refers to someone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer

Time to Review

1. Look at one of the legal definitions of family. According to this definition, who is in your family?
2. Do you have a personal definition of family that is different from the legal definition?
3. Are you part of a nuclear family?
4. Who is in your extended family?
5. Do you currently live with a family of orientation or a family of procreation, or neither?