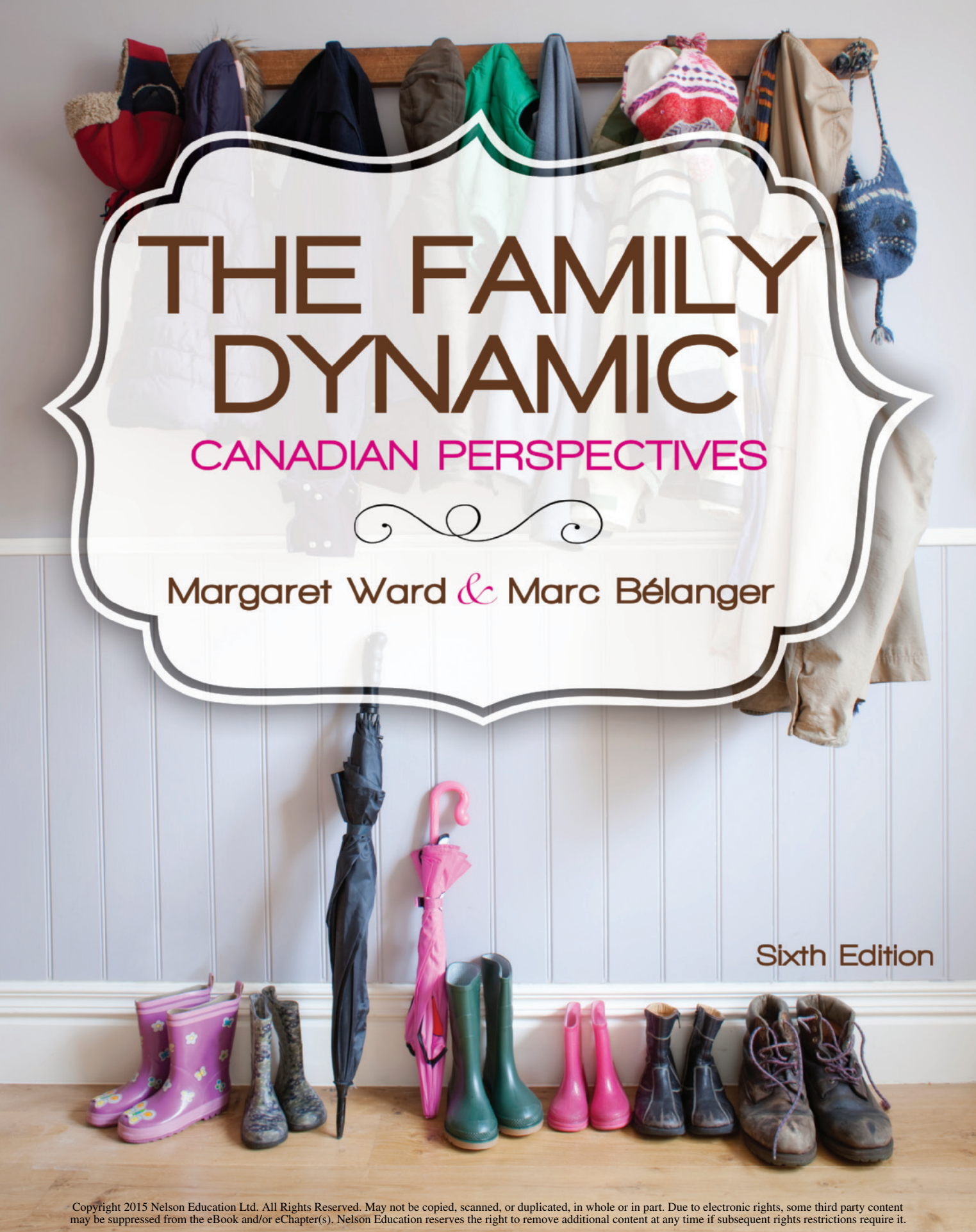

The Family Dynamic

Canadian Perspectives

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Cambrian College (retired)

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The Family Dynamic: Canadian Perspectives, **Sixth Edition**

by Margaret Ward and Marc Bélanger

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In Memory of

John Albert (Jack) Ward, 1928–1990
Devoted physician and family man

Denise Papadatos-Bélanger, 1965–2011
A wonderful wife and mother

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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 in this edition 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. New to this edition is a 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. Also new is a 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. On the website associated with this text, students will also find quiz questions, a full glossary, flashcards, and other resources to assist them in their studies.

The ancillary package includes an Instructor's Manual, a PowerPoint® presentation, and a Test Bank. These can be accessed at **www.nelson.com/site/thefamilydynamic6e**. Please contact your Nelson representative, who will gladly provide you with access to the instructor's resources online.

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 do 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 the book is practical and tries to show how the theory relates 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.

New to the Sixth Edition

An advantage of a new edition is the chance to benefit from the feedback of those who have used the text. In addition to updating the statistics and references, the following improvements have been made:

- For the first time, the text is in full colour.
- Several new and helpful pedagogical features have been added. Each chapter has a new section titled **"Where Do I Fit In?"** that encourages students to connect personally with the story, character, or situation discussed in the vignette. Each chapter also has two or three **"Time to Review"** sets of questions to recap the material. The definitions of **key terms** have been placed in the margins next to the paragraphs in which they are explained. A full glossary of key terms is available on the book's website.
- A **case study** has been added to the end of each chapter. These illustrate the issues and topics presented in the chapter in a real-world scenario. This feature will help students see the connection between the theoretical and the applied aspects of the topics. They may also serve as points of discussion.
- Mary Crea-Arsenio of the University of Guelph has contributed three excellent boxes in Chapter 6 ("Supportive School Environments: Students Fight Back"), Chapter 8 ("Healthy Aging: What Is the Government Doing?"), and Chapter 15 ("Hunger and Its Impact on Children").
- The growing diversity of families is reflected throughout the text. In Chapter 2, there is a greater focus on ethnic diversity and immigrant families. In Chapter 4, we have expanded the discussion of same-sex marriages, and in Chapter 8, there is more discussion of immigrant and Aboriginal seniors.
- Other areas have also been expanded. In Chapter 3, some theories of mate selection have been added, as well as the concepts of "the field of eligibles" and "assortative mating." In Chapter 5, the value of children (VOC) framework has been added. In Chapter 8, we added Kübler-Ross's five stages of psychological reactions to death. In Chapter 10, we added information about patterns of adjustment to divorce and about stressors and protective factors for children during divorce. In Chapter 12, we updated the sections on childcare and eldercare and work–family balance. We also added the cost of childcare in each province.
- We have updated the material on the impact of technology, especially social media, on mate selection (Chapter 3), on socialization of children (Chapter 6), and on the interface between the family and workplace (Chapter 12).
- We have also updated our discussion of federal and provincial laws and policies throughout the book. For example, in Chapter 5, we discuss Quebec's challenge of the *Assisted Human Reproduction Act* on constitutional grounds and the closing of the Assisted Human Reproduction Agency of Canada (AHRC). Marriage fraud is discussed in Chapter 4. There are updated sections on policies about

employment benefits and childcare (Chapter 12) and social assistance to needy families (Chapter 15).
- Some of the 2011 Census data on families was released in September 2012. These new data have been included wherever possible – for example, new data on foster children have been incorporated.

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—Maya Castle, Jacquelyn Busby, Claire Horsnell, Terry Fedorkiw, and Sheila Wawanash—for their expertise, patience, and helpfulness;
- to Ann Renee Belair of Vanier College, who provided many helpful comments and suggestions for this edition;
- to our relatives, friends, and colleagues for demonstrating so many variations on family living.

Margaret Ward especially recognizes her grandchildren, Andy, Victoria, Kimi, Robin, and Kodi, part of the generation who will be creating their own family forms and stories.

Marc Bélanger thanks Tommy and Katerina for being such wonderful kids. You always make me proud.

Finally, we thank Jim Douthit (MW) and Christine Lavoie (MB) for their generous practical help, unfailing interest, and encouragement. We dedicate this book to them with love.

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

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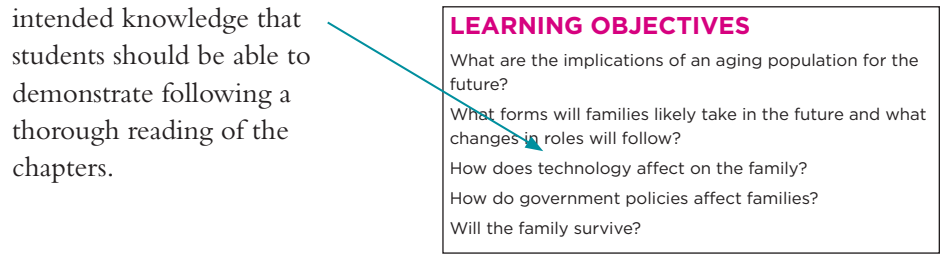
Mary Murphy-McHenry, Lambton College
Laura Pao, Vanier College
Penny Poole, Fanshawe College
Lori E. Weeks, University of Prince Edward Island
Elaine Weiner, McGill University

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 take the form of questions about the intended knowledge that students should be able to demonstrate following a thorough reading of the chapters.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What are the implications of an aging population for the future?

What forms will families likely take in the future and what changes in roles will follow?

How does technology affect on the family?

How do government policies affect families?

Will the family survive?

Adela and her granddaughter, Sara, are looking at a photo album.

Sara speaks first. "It's been fun looking at all the old pictures with you, Nana, and hearing about our families. I think I can write an interesting family tree assignment now. I didn't know that your grandfather homesteaded in Manitoba or that Grampa's ancestors left Ireland during the potato famine. It's nice to see what a good normal family we come from. Parents stayed married and looked after their children. Not like some of my friends."

"That's not the whole story, you know. Yes, Grampa and I got married when we were young and had your mom and your aunt and uncles, and we did all stay married," replies Adela. "But not all our relatives had lives like that.

"Look at these pictures. There's Marilyn, my cousin's daughter. Poor Marilyn! Marrying an alcoholic, becoming a widow when he crashed his car. She was only 35. She managed to raise her girls pretty well alone. Now she's living with Rodolfo, who's 12 years younger."

"Who are these two women holding hands?" asks Sara.

"That one's Sue, your second cousin on your grampa's side. It's odd to call Andrea her wife. But they got married once it was legal. Sue's parents never expected grandchildren through artificial insemination. But here's a picture of the twins, Josh and Brendan."

"Who's this dark-skinned man, Nana?"

"That's Mohandas. The women in the picture are his wife, Kate, and Kate's grandmother, Marty. Marty's my oldest friend—almost like a sister. His parents picked out a wife for him in India, but he wouldn't agree to an arranged marriage. Maybe his parents will forgive Kate and Mo now that they're expecting a baby.

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"Here's a picture of my niece Pauline and her husband, Brian. Her parents almost disowned her when she married a Roman Catholic, especially when she had to become a Catholic too. And they were good Presbyterians. It seems narrow now with so many people marrying across religious lines. Pauline complains her children will never make her a grandma—Stephen's a priest. And

Where Do I Fit In?

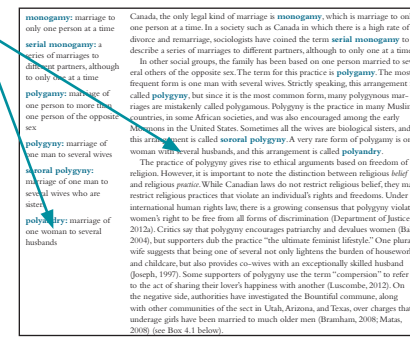
Do you think that the family in the opening vignette is unusual or is it a fair representation of many families in Canada today?

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?

- **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.

- **New—Running Glossary:** Also new to this edition is 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.



monogamy: marriage to only one person at a time

serial monogamy: a series of marriages to different partners, although to only one at a time

polygamy: marriage of one person to more than one person of the opposite sex

polygyny: marriage of one man to several wives

sororal polygyny: marriage of one man to several wives who are sisters

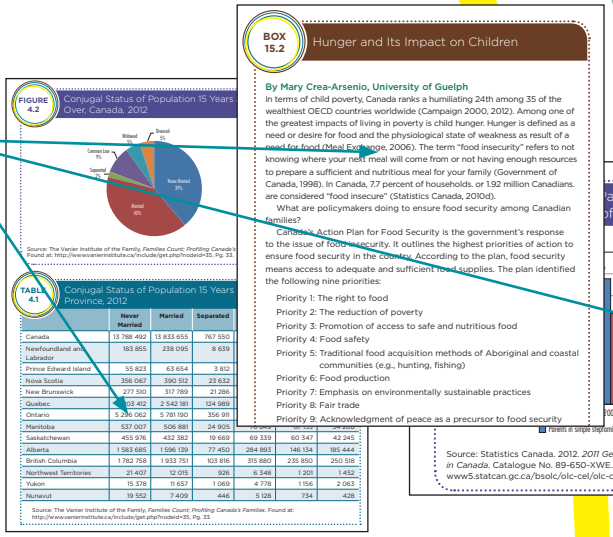
polyandry: marriage of one woman to several husbands

Canada, the only legal kind of marriage is **monogamy**, which is marriage to only one person at a time. In a society such as Canada in which there is a high rate of divorce and remarriage, sociologists have coined the term **serial monogamy** to describe a series of marriages to different partners, although to only one at a time.

In other social groups, the family has been based on one person married to several others of the opposite sex. The term for this practice is **polygamy**. The most frequent form is one man with several wives. Strictly speaking, this arrangement is called **polygyny**, but since it is the most common form, many polygynous marriages are mistakenly called polygamous. Polygyny is the practice in many Muslim countries, in some African societies, and was also encouraged among the early Mormons in the United States. Sometimes all the wives are biological sisters, and this arrangement is called **sororal polygyny**. A very rare form of polygamy is one woman with several husbands, and this arrangement is called **polyandry**.

The practice of polygyny gives rise to ethical arguments based on freedom of religion. However, it is important to note the distinction between religious *belief* and religious *practice*. While Canadian laws do not restrict religious belief, they may restrict religious practices that violate an individual's rights and freedoms. Under international human rights law, there is a growing consensus that polygyny violates women's right to be free from all forms of discrimination (Department of Justice, 2012a). Critics say that polygyny encourages patriarchy and devalues women (Bala, 2004), but supporters dub the practice "the ultimate feminist lifestyle." One plural wife suggests that being one of several not only lightens the burden of housework and childcare, but also provides co-wives with an exceptionally skilled husband (Joseph, 1997). Some supporters of polygyny use the term "compersion" to refer to the act of sharing their lover's happiness with another (Luscombe, 2012). On the negative side, authorities have investigated the Bountiful commune, along with other communities of the sect in Utah, Arizona, and Texas, over charges that underage girls have been married to much older men (Bramham, 2008; Matas, 2008) (see Box 4.1 below).

- **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). The term "food insecurity" refers to not knowing where your next meal will come from or not having enough resources to prepare a sufficient and nutritious meal for your family (Government of Canada, 1998). In Canada, 7.7 percent of households, or 1.92 million Canadians, are considered "food insecure" (Statistics Canada, 2010d).

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
Priority 5: Traditional food acquisition methods of Aboriginal and coastal communities (e.g., hunting, fishing)
Priority 6: Food production
Priority 7: Emphasis on environmentally sustainable practices
Priority 8: Fair trade
Priority 9: Acknowledgment of peace as a precursor to food security

FIGURE 4.2 Conjugal Status of Population 15 Years Over, Canada, 2012

Source: The Vanier Institute of the Family, *Families Count: Profiling Canada's Families*. Found at: http://www.vanierinstitute.ca/include/get.php?nodeid=35, Pg. 33.

TABLE 4.1 Conjugal Status of Population 15 Years Province, 2012

	Never Married	Married	Separated
Canada	13 788 492	13 833 655	767 550
Newfoundland and Labrador	183 855	238 095	8 639
Prince Edward Island	55 823	63 654	3 812
Nova Scotia	356 067	390 512	23 632
New Brunswick	277 510	317 789	21 286
Quebec	2 103 412	2 542 181	124 989
Ontario	5 206 062	5 781 190	356 911
Manitoba	537 007	506 881	24 905
Saskatchewan	455 976	432 382	19 669
Alberta	1 583 685	1 596 139	77 450
British Columbia	1 782 758	1 933 751	103 816
Northwest Territories	21 407	12 015	926
Yukon	15 378	11 657	1 069
Nunavut	19 552	7 409	446

Source: The Vanier Institute of the Family, *Families Count: Profiling Canada's Families*. Found at: http://www.vanierinstitute.ca/include/get.php?nodeid=35, Pg. 33.

Parents in Stepfamilies Aged 20 of Stepfamily, Canada, 1995–2011

Source: Statistics Canada. 2012. *2011 General Social Survey: Overview of Families in Canada*. Catalogue No. 89-650-XWE. Ottawa, Ontario. Statistics Canada. http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=89-650-X&lang=eng&format=disp

- **New—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 is the difference between race and ethnicity?
2. Name some characteristics of Aboriginal families.
3. What are some of the qualities of English Canadian and French Canadian families?
4. What are some of the features of the families of other immigrant groups?
5. Describe some characteristics of multiracial families.

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

A Matter of Gifts

Caitlyn and Carlos have been married for two years. Theirs is a complex stepfamily. Caitlyn was a never-married mother whose daughter, Emma, is seven. Carlos's first wife left him for another man and moved across the country. Carlos has custody of his two sons, Marco and Andres, aged nine and six, and they see their mother two or three times a year. The couple is considering having a baby to cement family relationships.

Although the couple had high hopes for their marriage, they have recently been quarreling over the attitude of Carlos's parents to the children. For Christmas, birthdays, and other occasions, they give expensive gifts to Marco and Andres but none to Emma. The boys delight in showing off their new tablets and smartphones. Carlos is the only son and his parents value carrying on the family name. In fact, the boys are named for their grandfather and great-grandfather. Caitlyn is part of a large extended family whose motto seems to be "the more the merrier." They have accepted her stepsons as part of the clan, just as they accepted the children of a young woman they informally fostered. All the youngsters are treated equally at Christmas and on birthdays. Emma is asking why her step-grandparents hate her.

In the most recent crisis, Carlos's parents are planning a big party for Marco's 10th birthday next month. They have told Carlos that it will be a "family only" party and that Caitlyn and Emma won't be welcome, especially since the boys' birth mother will be there. Caitlyn feels hurt and angry to be excluded. Carlos has been making excuses for his parents.

1. What social norms are contributing to the conflict in this family?
2. What factors within the stepfamily might be making the situation worse?
3. How do you think Caitlyn and Carlos could reduce the conflict?
4. Do you think that having a child together would improve relationships in the family? Explain your answer.

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

Summary

What Is the Difference between Race and Ethnicity?

Race and ethnicity are important social categories that can define who we are and how we are treated. While they are often grouped together, they are not the same thing. Race is a system of classifying people based on physical characteristics such as skin colour. Ethnicity denotes a group of people who share a common cultural heritage. In Canada, we use the term "visible minority" to refer to a person, other than an Aboriginal, who is non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. An Aboriginal is a person who is First Nations, Inuit, or Métis. A "minority group" refers to any group that has less power than the dominant group.

What Are Some Characteristics of the Canadian Population?

Canada has been populated by waves of immigrants. To Aboriginal people, the family signifies parents and children living together in a household. Family also means an extended network of other relatives. In recent years, the Aboriginal population has been growing nearly six times faster than the Canadian population as a whole. The character of English Canadian society has its roots in Britain. English Canadians have always seen the family as responsible for its members. In Quebec, the French colonial government encouraged a society that mirrored the homeland and discouraged dissidents. The 2006 Census enumerated more than 200 different ethnic origins. The diversity of Canada's population will continue to increase significantly over the next 20 years. Multiracial families have nearly always existed, though at times they were hidden or made illegal. Many Canadian children have been adopted internationally and transracially.

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

Class Assignments

1. Many people live together before marriage. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of this practice. Think about the relationship of the couple and family and community attitudes, as well as financial and legal factors. You may find information through library research or through interviews with couples and experts.
2. In a group, plan and conduct a survey concerning students' attitudes toward premarital sex. Be prepared to report the results and to discuss what factors might have affected the answers received.
3. As a group, prepare a list of questions to measure the homogamy of couples. Find different couples to interview. They may be married or unmarried. You may also want to find couples of different generations. Prepare a report on the presence or absence of homogamy in the couples that your group interviewed.

Personal Assignments

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

1. Make a list of the qualities you would like in a partner. Which ones are most important? Explain.
2. Do you and your parents have the same attitudes about relations between men and women? How are they similar, and how do they differ? How do you handle differences of opinion about a boyfriend or girlfriend?

About the Authors

Margaret Ward holds a B.A. degree in English from the University of Toronto, a master's degree in Child and Development Studies from Laurentian University, and a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Systems from the Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. She has written extensively on issues that have an impact on the family, especially adoption.

Outside of her academic pursuits, Margaret served as a member and secretary of the board of Sudbury Juvenile Services from 1981 to 1983. She also served on the board of directors of the Children's Aid Society for the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin from 1974 to 1982. The mother of 11 children, 8 of whom are adopted, she has received two Adoption Activist Awards for her writings on adoption. Currently she serves on the Foster Care Review Board for Pima County, Arizona.

Before her retirement in 1996, Margaret was a member of the Cambrian College faculty, where she had taught since 1985. During her tenure, she presented several courses, including Marriage and the Family, Developmental Psychology, and Introductory Behavioural Science. Before joining Cambrian, she taught at a number of high schools in the Sudbury and Toronto areas.

Margaret now lives in Arizona with her second husband and four cats that enjoy the quilts she makes.

A natural curiosity about why people do the things they do and a passion for anything academic led **Marc Bélanger** to study sociology. He holds both B.A. and M.A. degrees from McGill University in Montréal. Following an unintended career in the food service business, Marc has been teaching at Vanier College for over 10 years. Now that he is a teacher, he wants to more effectively transmit knowledge and passion to students, so he has nearly completed a master's in education degree from the Université de Sherbrooke. Marc lives on the South Shore of Montréal with his two wonderful children.

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. To ensure the high quality of these materials, all Nelson ancillaries have been professionally copy-edited.

Be sure to visit Nelson Education's **Inspired Instruction** website at http://www.nelson.com/inspired/ to find out more about NETA. Don't miss the testimonials of instructors who have used NETA supplements and seen student engagement increase!

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.

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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.

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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 Jaime Nikolaou, University of Toronto. There is an average of 40 slides per chapter, many featuring key figures, tables, and photographs from *The Family Dynamic: Canadian Perspectives, Sixth 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's Manual: This resource was also written by 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.

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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?

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PART 1

THE FAMILY

Chapter 1

What Is a Family?

Lisa F. Young/Shutterstock

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What are some definitions of the family?

What are the main theories used to study the family?

How do researchers get information about families?

Adela and her granddaughter, Sara, are looking at a photo album.

Sara speaks first. "It's been fun looking at all the old pictures with you, Nana, and hearing about our families. I think I can write an interesting family tree assignment now. I didn't know that your grandfather homesteaded in Manitoba or that Grampa's ancestors left Ireland during the potato famine. It's nice to see what a good normal family we come from. Parents stayed married and looked after their children. Not like some of my friends."

"That's not the whole story, you know. Yes, Grampa and I got married when we were young and had your mom and your aunt and uncles, and we did all stay married," replies Adela. "But not all our relatives had lives like that.

"Look at these pictures. There's Marilyn, my cousin's daughter. Poor Marilyn! Marrying an alcoholic, becoming a widow when he crashed his car. She was only 35. She managed to raise her girls pretty well alone. Now she's living with Rodolfo, who's 12 years younger."

"Who are these two women holding hands?" asks Sara.

"That one's Sue, your second cousin on your grampa's side. It's odd to call Andrea her wife. But they got married once it was legal. Sue's parents never expected grandchildren through artificial insemination. But here's a picture of the twins, Josh and Brendan."

"Who's this dark-skinned man, Nana?"

"That's Mohandas. The women in the picture are his wife, Kate, and Kate's grandmother, Marty. Marty's my oldest friend—almost like a sister. His parents picked out a wife for him in India, but he wouldn't agree to an arranged marriage. Maybe his parents will forgive Kate and Mo now that they're expecting a baby.

wavebreakmedia/Shutterstock

"Here's a picture of my niece Pauline and her husband, Brian. Her parents almost disowned her when she married a Roman Catholic, especially when she had to become a Catholic too. And they were good Presbyterians. It seems narrow now with so many people marrying across religious lines. Pauline complains her children will never make her a grandma—Stephen's a priest. And

Becky, who they adopted from Vietnam, has become a career woman without time for a husband and children."

"Look at the size of this family!" exclaims Sara.

"Alan's my youngest brother's son. This is his second wife, Angie. I think they met through the Internet. I remember how unhappy he was before his divorce from Sandra. Here are his children, Stephanie and Jan, and hers, Melanie and Sean, and theirs, Miranda, in the wheelchair. They've had a rough time with Miranda and her cerebral palsy, but she is so sweet and loving. They're worried about Stephanie, now that she's moved in with her friend Louis. They'd like it better if they'd got married first.

"And this one is Roger, Grampa's cousin's son. He works for some help agency in the Third World—I can't remember its name. Here's a picture of his wedding to Anna in Colombia. She's Australian. Anna says they won't have children because they move too often. It would be hard on kids and interfere with their work.

"Oh, there's your mom in the driveway, Sara. Maybe you can show me your assignment tomorrow."

What is a family? Almost all of us have been members of at least one family. We see families all around us, both in real life and in the media. We all know what families are, though not all are as complex as Adela and Sara's. Yet when we try to define "family," the task is not so simple. Do we include only the people who live with us? Should we count all of our relatives? One difficulty in defining "family" is that we use the word for many different things—our ancestors, our parents, brothers, sisters, our spouses and children, and all of our other relatives.

Where Do I Fit In?

Do you think that the family in the opening vignette is unusual or is it 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?

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, Wendat (Huron) families consisted of many people living together in a longhouse. The residents were often all descendants of a senior female (Baker, 2001). Nowadays we would tend to think of such a grouping as a **household** rather than a single family. According to Statistics Canada (2012a), a household refers to people who occupy

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

the same dwelling and can consist of one or more families, a single person, or a group of related or unrelated people, for example siblings, a live-in nanny, or apartment mates.

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

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

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, 2012b). Family members are also defined in a host of Canadian laws and regulations. For example, people cannot marry certain categories of relatives, such as parents or brothers and sisters, because they are too closely related. 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, 2012a). Government regulations determine family for services, such as medical and family benefits, bereavement leave, and special visiting programs in penitentiaries (Correctional Service of Canada, 2011). In fact, everyone who works in a social services field must learn specific legal definitions of the family in the course of their work.

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

BOX 1.1 Some Definitions of the Family

Statistics Canada

Census family is defined as 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 this child or these 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: Adapted from: Statistics Canada. 2007. *2006 Census Dictionary*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 92-566-XWE. Ottawa, Ontario. February 14. http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/dict/fam004-eng.cfm (accessed February 14, 2007).

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. Private Family Visiting Program. 2007.

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 same-sex partner.

Source: Air Canada, 2009.

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. Found at: http://www.vanierinstitute.ca/definition_of_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) 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.

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 as to financial support, employment benefits, and custody and support of children. In 2005, the federal government passed a law making same-sex marriages legal across Canada. 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, 2012a).

Social Definitions of the Family

Various groups and social institutions also define the family. A number of churches and religious organizations have studied the family and, in the process, have stated how they define a family (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006; Canadian Society of Muslims, 2005). Hospital intensive-care units usually 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. Aboriginal peoples in Canada tend to have a very broad definition of family membership, and children are often cared for by relatives. If child welfare workers define a family as consisting of parents and children only, then they may feel that some Aboriginal parents are neglecting or even abandoning their children, when these parents believe that their offspring are safe within their family circle. Such misunderstandings have led to unnecessary removal of children from their families (Fox, 2005).

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

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 advocates call "traditional family values" (Erera, 2002). Nuclear families come in two forms, depending on our perspective: **family of orientation** is one that we are born into and raised in; **family of procreation** is one that we form through marriage or cohabitation, and in which we raise our children. We can imagine society 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 may 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. With the current trend toward making contact with birth relatives, adoptees may resume membership in their birth families. 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 the nuclear family and all other relatives. Once again, there is variation in what constitutes membership. Some people include more distantly related cousins, while others include only first cousins. In the past, most families that lived in small rural communities in Canada were related through marriage or descent. For these individuals, the entire community could be considered their extended family. In both nuclear and extended families, genetic and "blood" relationships are important, although other types of relationships, such as marriage or adoption, are recognized by most people.

extended family: the nuclear family and all other relatives

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 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.

Ideas about the family fall along a continuum with biological and legal definitions at one end, and social and personal ones at the other. For most people, biological and social definitions coexist and are used to fit the circumstances. In stepfamilies, the term "father" can refer to both biological father and stepfather. The concept of family usually includes biological and legal ties as well as emotional attachment (Holtzman, 2005).

Intentional Families

Modern society often encourages frequent and dramatic changes, such as moving to another city or getting a new job. This reality makes stable and long-term relationships a challenge. In response to this, some people have decided to form **intentional 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. Because of relocation, separation, divorce, or the death of a loved one, a person may feel alone and isolated. The decision to join an intentional family often arises from the need for human companionship and the emotional connection that comes from shared experiences. The first intentional family was formed in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1972; it is now into its second generation (Graham, 1996).

intentional 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

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?

Thinking about Families

Just as there are many definitions of the family, so there are many theories about what makes families work and how they relate to society as a whole. A theory provides a general framework of ideas that can be used to answer questions about the world. Sociologists have used a number of approaches, either singly or in combination, to look for some order and meaning to questions about the social world. Understanding the theories is important because these theories help shape government policy, agency regulations, therapy methods, and other ways society relates to families. Each approach tells us something of interest about families; each, however, also has limitations on how much it can explain. As we discuss theories, we should keep in mind the following questions:

1. How does the theory account for both change and continuity in family patterns?
2. Does the theory show how society and the family influence each other?
3. What does the theory say about relationships within the family?
4. How has the theory affected the policies and practices of government, social agencies, and others who deal with families?

How Does Society Influence Families?

Families do not exist in isolation—they are part of a vast social network. Through membership and participation in neighbourhoods, schools, work, religious organizations, and social and recreational groups, family members are part of the larger society in which they live. The influence of society operates through social institutions, such as schools and religious groups, laws, political and economic factors, pressure from activist groups, and the mass media. Society provides expectations for behaviour. For example, family members are supposed to look after one another physically and emotionally, and are not supposed to harm one another. They are expected to socialize children to meet certain standards of behaviour. Society also limits family behaviour by means of laws such as those against violence, by the benefits provided through social assistance, and through stigma and labelling of those who do not meet societal expectations.

Macro or Micro?

Theoretical perspectives are broadly separated according to whether they take a macro or a micro perspective. **Macro** theories look at the big picture. They principally study the values of a society and the way those values affect the family. The structural functionalist and conflict theories are macro perspectives. **Micro** theories focus on individuals or small groups and emphasize relationships within individual families. These include symbolic interactionist theory, family systems theory, and exchange theory. The feminist perspective has both macro and micro branches, as does the ecological theory.

macro: a theoretical perspective that looks at the big picture and studies how the values of a society affect the family

micro: a theoretical perspective that focuses on individuals or small groups and emphasizes relationships within individual families

The Family as an Institution

The structural functionalist theory views the family as an institution among other social institutions, such as schools, the workplace, and the healthcare system. According to this view, the family has a number of important functions in society. George Murdock was an anthropologist who studied societies around the world. From his vast collection of data, he identified four basic functions that families perform—the sexual, the economic, the reproductive, and the educational (Murdock, 1949). Current theorists have expanded on Murdock's functions and identify five basic functions—reproduction, socialization, social placement, economic support, and emotional support (Berns, 2013). Families may also perform other functions, but these are fundamental. And while other social institutions may share in some of these functions, they can never entirely replace the family. For structural functionalists, when the family performs all these functions well, social stability results.

Knowledge of the "proper" way of doing things in society—mainly, how to survive and how to take part in social life—is passed on to each generation through the process of **socialization**. Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales claimed that the family has two basic and irreducible functions—the primary socialization of children, and the stabilization of adult personalities (Parsons & Bales, 1956). The cultural rules that outline what, where, when, how, and why we should do something are referred to as **social scripts**. If people don't behave in the expected way, they leave themselves open to criticism or pressure to conform.

socialization: a lifelong process in which the cultural knowledge of how to survive and how to take part in social life is passed on to each generation

social scripts: the cultural rules that outline what, where, when, how, and why we should do something

Structural functionalists generally believe that role specialization increases the efficiency of family functioning. In particular, they state the husband/father is an instrumental (active or doing) specialist and the wife/mother is an expressive (emotional) specialist. In other words, the man is responsible for economic support of the family members and the woman for their psychological and emotional nurture.

Evaluation of Structural Functionalist Theory

The most important strength of the structural functionalist theory is its explanation of how the family is related to other institutions and how it contributes to society as a whole. It also emphasizes family strengths, such as cooperation between