

Susan J. Ferguson, *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*, 5e

SAGE Publishing, 2019

Reading 1: The Family in Question: What Is the Family? Is It Universal?

Test Bank

Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is NOT an assumption made by Murdock in his definition of a family?

- a. All family members must live in the same residence.
- b. Families have a shared culture around eating, sleeping, and grooming.
- c. Families must include a heterosexual, married couple.
- d. All adults in the family must contribute financially.

Ans: D

Cognitive Domain: Knowledge

Answer Location: The Family in Question: What Is the Family? Is It Universal?

Difficulty Level: Easy

2. According to Gittins, why is Edholm's anthropological definition of kinship preferable to the functionalist definition of the family?

- a. It argues that there is no biological base to kinship.
- b. It argues that kinship is a straightforward biological relationship.
- c. It stresses the fact that kinship is a social construct and emphasizes the variability of kinship.
- d. It specifically outlines the importance of gender and age in understanding families.

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Ans: C

Cognitive Domain: Knowledge

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Difficulty Level: Easy

3. The negative impact of the socially constructed nature of biological kinship in western societies can be seen in which of the following examples?

- a. A child physically looks like both her mother and her father.
- b. A child who was conceived via a sperm donor feels no need to meet the donor.
- c. A child with two mothers is often teased about “not having a real family.”
- d. A child is given her father’s last name on her birth certificate.

Ans: C

Cognitive Domain: Comprehension

Answer Location: The Family in Question: What Is the Family? Is It Universal?

Difficulty Level: Medium

4. Social constructs often result in double standards between the ways humans behave and the ways in which they are expected to behave. Which of the following is a social construct that results in double standards?

- a. the patriarchy
- b. notherhood/womanhood
- c. family values
- d. wage earning

Ans: B

Cognitive Domain: Application

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Difficulty Level: Medium

5. Because of the historical emphasis on studying *vertical* relationships in families and neglecting *lateral* relationships, in addition to siblings, which potential kin group has been underexamined?

- a. aunts and uncles
- b. mothers
- c. fathers
- d. children

Ans: A

Cognitive Domain: Comprehension

Answer Location: The Family in Question: What Is the Family? Is It Universal?

Difficulty Level: Easy

6. Which of the following concepts of family are NOT variable over time and among cultures?

- a. childrearing
- b. age
- c. siblings
- d. resource allocation

Ans: C

Cognitive Domain: Knowledge

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Difficulty Level: Easy

7. Which of these statements supports the notion that maternal instinct is a social fallacy?

- a. Maternity is always known, while paternity is potentially contestable.
- b. The biological basis of motherhood begins with carrying and giving birth to a child.
- c. Women feel a drive to procreate and nurture above and beyond what is felt by men.
- d. Women employ a number of different techniques to mitigate, delay, or alter motherhood, including contraception, nannies, extended relatives, and more.

Ans: D

Cognitive Domain: Comprehension

Answer Location: The Family in Question: What Is the Family? Is It Universal?

Difficulty Level: Easy

8. What conclusion can you draw from the universality of an incest taboo?

- a. Cultures vary in the definition of incest, but it is has never been tolerated.
- b. All societies have social rules and norms for sexuality and reproduction.
- c. A universal trait should be included in the definition of kinship.
- d. People are universally concerned with keeping bloodlines “pure.”

Ans: B

Cognitive Domain: Analysis

Answer Location: The Family in Question: What is the Family? Is It Universal?

Difficulty Level: Medium

Essay

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1. Using examples from Gittins, describe the relationship between gender and age in determining the allocation of work within a society. Then, provide an example from your own life demonstrating how gender and/or age impacted your understanding of family.

Ans: Varies. May include the following:

- Although gender is ascribed in all societies, very few jobs are performed solely by men or women and are instead allocated through a combination of gender and age.
- Young men may hunt, while old men and women may care for children.
- Young men and women may work in fields, while old women prepare food.
- Eldest daughters often take responsibility for younger siblings, whereas sons tend to have more free time for playing and socializing

Cognitive Domain: Analysis

Answer Location: The Family in Question: What Is the Family? Is It Universal?

Difficulty Level: Medium

2. Using at least two pieces of evidence that demonstrate why many definitions of family do not adequately account for the diversity within and outside of contemporary western society, explain why “the family” is a social construction.

Ans: Varies. May include the following:

- Many definitions’ inclusion of the term “household” excludes families who do not consistently live in the same residence: military families, traveling parents, incarcerated parents, etc.
- Definitions often assume that families have a shared culture around eating, sleeping, and grooming, though this is not unique to nor the rule for families: prisoners, not eating together, different customs with different parts of the family, etc.
- Definitions can limit families to those including a heterosexual, monogamous romantic relationship, overlooking other sexualities, polygamy, and cultural customs.
- Do not consider the important impact of siblings, aunts, uncles, neighbors, etc.

Cognitive Domain: Comprehension

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Difficulty Level: Medium