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With a focus on describing what families do, how they do it, and why they do what they do (family practices), Chambers et al. argue that, while there have been significant changes in the organization of family life, these changes "embody increasing diversity and complexity and patterning of older people's family relationships rather than declining importance" (p. 99). They contend that, while structural changes have occurred over time, the underlying bonds that construct and maintain families persist. They demonstrate this through a variety of examples (such as long-lasting relationships, grandparenting, retirement, and globalisation. The authors challenge many common stereotypes about the nature of family involvement as people age. The book explores family experiences through the lens of changing social and economic contexts, and it does so while avoiding a "care" or "dependency" approach. Indeed, the authors acknowledge that, although care can become a key issue for some older people, most of the time it does not provide the touchstone for their family lives.

Several theoretical perspectives on understanding different facets of families and family life are outlined in chapter 1. Notably, the authors highlight work on negotiating family responsibilities (Finch and Mason, 1993), conceptualization on how individuals build their own family patterns and the significance of everyday family routines (Morgan, 1996, 1999), and insights on multigenerational family bonds (Bengtson, 2001). Given the scope of this book, with an emphasis on family practices over the life course, these appropriate conceptual or theoretical perspectives set the stage for subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 demonstrates that families play a significant role in people's lives despite changes in family structure, family geography, and social policy. A particular strength of this chapter is that it highlights how substantial groups "experience problems of loneliness and social exclusions, reflecting vulnerabilities of class, gender and ethnicity" (p. 24).

Chapter 3 explores how change takes place within the continuity of family practice in the context of the adult child-parent relationship. It raises important issues related to the autonomy of older adults and how expectations regarding how much or how little generations should be involved with one another can conflict. The noteworthy contribution of this chapter is that it underscores the idea that parents and children are intertwined and are "aging together".

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 each examine a particular relationship, with a focus on long-lasting relationships, sibling relationships, and grandparenting. Common to each of these chapters is a discussion of how these specific relationships have changed over time and how – whether through divorce, the formation of new sibling bonds through remarriage, or multiple generations sharing more years together – the relationships' importance has remained central to family practices. The authors note that the book does not capture how ethno-cultural diversity may crosscut or influence these experiences; indeed, this is an area that could be further developed.

Chapter 7 focuses on widow(er)hood and highlights the ways in which widows and widowers interact with family. It does not, however, address the experience of young widows or widowers growing old, but instead focuses on the experiences of older widows and

widowers. The authors also discuss living apart together (LAT) relationships, a trend that is becoming more common in contemporary family life.

A unique contribution to this book is in chapter 8, in which the authors consider the challenges raised by globalisation on family practices in later life. With a focus on transnational communities, this chapter examines how families maintain ties across great distances, including an emphasis on the struggles faced in maintaining these relationships. The authors suggest that technological advances (e.g., email, video calling) can strengthen transnational relationships and have the potential to reduce exclusion. Overall, the authors make a significant point in this chapter – that the welfare state is withdrawing from "significant areas of responsibility" (p. 97). In short there is increasing emphasis on the role that families need to play in the care of there older relatives. For example, in the Canadian context as individuals are discharged from hospital earlier and/or are aging in the community with chronic illness and disease and as public home-based care provision is decreased there is increased responsibility on families to provide necessary care (Sims-Gould & Martin-Matthews, 2010). This withdrawal of the formal system is not just common to the Canadian system but in many industrialized countries.

Key themes on family practices are pulled together in chapter 9 through a vignette that highlights a number of the points raised throughout the book. The vignette illustrates the demographic and generational shifts that have been occurring in families, and it underscores the multiple relationships and bonds that constitute a family. It also demonstrates how these relationships are negotiated and how individual and family narratives can change over time.

Although the authors are explicit from the outset that this book focuses on a life course perspective and not on a "care" or "dependency" approach, their not thoroughly addressing these issues results in an underdeveloped point: namely, that the welfare state is withdrawing, which has an impact on family practices (especially with respect to care). It is true that much of the family discourse is shaped by discussion of caregiving and care receiving, but this is due to the tremendous impact of care experiences on family life. Some discussion of how family practices are affected by changing public policy with respect to expectations for caregiving would have enhanced this book.

The strength of this book is in its ability to demonstrate that, despite changes over time (i.e., in public policy, family structure, family geography, etc.), the family – in whatever structure or form it manifests – remains of central importance. The book aptly draws on theoretical ideas and research from a number of internationally renowned family and gerontology scholars. The voices of older adults are interspersed throughout the book, grounding it in the lived lives and experiences of older people. This book would be a very good addition to sociology, gerontology, social policy, and family studies reading lists at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Further, it would also be useful for academics, practitioners, and policy makers interested in timely and salient issues facing aging families.

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Beginning with the premise that over half of the world's older population already lives in urban areas (with a continuing trend in that direction), this book aims to further our understanding of the older person's relationship with such environments in order to inform better social policy and practice. Given the