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Midterm Paper: What 2035 Might Look Like

When I think about what a family might look like in 2035, I don't picture just the old fashioned version with a mom, dad, two kids, and a dog behind a white picket fence. That image already feels almost like an old Disney movie now. The families I know today rarely fit that mold. Some have single parents, others are blended through divorce and remarriage, and some have two moms or two dads. There are even people who think of their close friends as family more than their relatives. By 2035, I think this mix of families will just be seen as more normal, not something that needs to be over explained.

Reading about how marriage and family have changed over time really opened my eyes. Stephanie Coontz's chapter about the history of marriage made me realize how new our current idea of marrying for love actually is. For most of history, people didn't marry for romance, marriage was about money, survival, or family alliances. Coontz explained that love used to be seen as risky or even irresponsible because it could make people act crazy. It's kind of funny to think that marrying for love was once a rebellious act, now it's the opposite and most people can't imagine marrying without it.

At the same time, putting love at the center of marriage has made relationships more complicated. When people expect love to do all the work, it often doesn't last. That's one reason divorce rates went up over the past few decades, by 2035, I think people will still value love deeply, but they'll approach it more realistically. Relationships might be less about fantasy and more about emotional compatibility and mutual respect. I don't think everyone will want or need to get married, but the people who do might go into it with clearer expectations.

One of the most interesting ideas I came across was from Mignon Moore's work on LGBTQ+ families, she writes about how same sex couples had to fight to even be recognized as "legitimate" families. They often had to create "chosen families," building support systems with friends and loved ones who shared their values when society didn't. That really stuck with me because it shows how family isn't just about blood or legality but it's about care and connection.

By 2035, I imagine that kind of chosen family will be just as respected as any traditional household. There might be more blended parenting arrangements, like two people raising a child together even if they aren't a romantic couple, or multiple adults co parenting in different ways. Family law might even evolve to recognize more than two parents on legal documents. It wouldn't surprise me if workplaces updated benefits and leave policies to include all kinds of families, not just the "married with children" type.

Thinking about gender roles, Arlie Hochschild's book *The Second Shift* really made an impact on me. Her story about Nancy and Evan Holt still feels wild to me, even though it was written decades ago. Nancy worked full time but still did most of the housework and childcare, while Evan didn't see the problem. That kind of imbalance still happens, though we talk about it more now.

I think by 2035 we'll finally see more equality at home. Like we talked about in class, with more remote jobs and flexible hours, it's becoming easier for parents to share responsibilities. Younger generations also seem more aware of "emotional labor" the invisible work of caring, planning, and maintaining relationships. I hope that by then, the idea of men helping out around the house will sound outdated because both partners will automatically share that load.

What excites me most about the future of family is how emotionally open it could become. As a psychology major, I can't help but think that our generation values deep communication more than before. We talk about boundaries, therapy, and emotional health in ways that used to be taboo. I think that will shape how people raise their kids too. Families in 2035 might focus as much on emotional growth as they do on academics or discipline. Kids could grow up seeing multiple healthy relationship models around them, not just one "right" way to live.

Overall, I think the biggest change will be that family becomes something people design for themselves instead of something society hands them. Coontz showed that love changed marriage. Hochschild showed that equality inside families is still a work in progress. Moore showed that family can exist far beyond traditional limits. Together, those ideas make me hopeful.

When I picture a family in 2035, I see something diverse, flexible, and real. Maybe it's two parents who both work and share housework equally. Maybe it's a same-sex couple raising an adopted child. Maybe it's a group of close friends who support each other the way a family would. Whatever form it takes, I think families will be stronger because they'll be built on

choice, empathy, and genuine connection instead of social pressure. And honestly, I think that's a beautiful direction for us to be heading.

Works Cited

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