

*Introduction to Sociology*



- I. Defining the Family: What it's so difficult to do
- II. Family Structure: Key Concepts
- III. Functional vs. Conflict Perspectives on the Family
- IV. Changing Family Structures: Putting this in historical and sociological context—US vs. Japan
- V. What's changed? Is the family in decline?
- VI. The Reproduction Rate Issue

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**Why is the family so difficult to define?**



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- **The problem of universality**
- **The problem of different meanings in different contexts**
- **Contested definitions**



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**Family Structure: Basic Concepts**

*Monogamy, polygamy, polygyny, polyandry*

*Endogamous vs. exogamous marriage*

*Patriarchal, matriarchal, egalitarian*

*Patrilineal, matrilineal, bilateral descent*

*Nuclear and extended families*

*Families vs. households*

*Domestic partnerships and civil unions*

*Patrilocal, matrilineal, neolocal residence*

*See Ferrante p. 333*



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**Functional vs. Conflict Analyses of the Family**

• *Functional analyses of the family—contributions to society*

• *Conflict perspectives on the family:*

• *the family as a site of conflict and inequality*

• *the family as a site in the social reproduction of broader inequalities in society*

• *continuing devaluation of “reproductive work.” The “double shift”*



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**U.S. and Japanese Families**

**Discuss: How do Japan and the United States compare on the “health” of the family?**

*Note: Noriko Ikarashi’s testimony (pp. 352-3)*

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**Changing Family Structures in Historical and Sociological Context**

**Discussion:**

Why was the “breadwinner system” so historically unique, limited, and short-lived?



What do these pictures tell us about the “breadwinner family”?




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**Social Trends Changing Family Structures and Family Life**

- Declines in total fertility
  - Increased life expectancy
  - *Missing in Ferrante’s discussion: the decline of the family wage*
  - Increased divorce rate
  - Increased employment opportunities for women
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- decline in parental authority
  - altered economic status of children
  - the issue of care-giving

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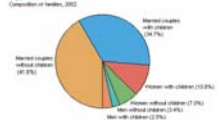
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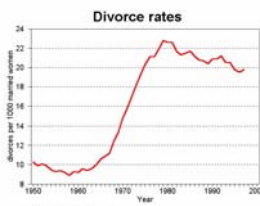
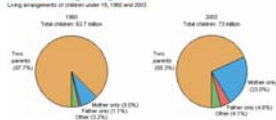
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Types of families



Children’s living arrangements



An estimated 50% of marriages currently contracted will end in divorce

**Question: Is the family in decline?**

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**Micro-credit and Family Change in Bangladesh: Excerpt from Beyond Beijing: Women and Economic Development**

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