Household and family

(Haviland et al. al. 2005, Chapter 9)

[…..] notes of the instructor


What is family? (pp. 236-238)

p. 235-236. A group of two or more people related by blood, marriage and adoption.

p. 236

- Husband – wife – children family unit. Function
- Different family pattern which change over time
- Family can take many forms
  - George Murdock: “a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction” (1949).
  - Smaller groups are typically embedded in larger familial groups.

pp. 236-237

- Historical excurse: the regulation of the Roman Catholic Church in the 4th century.
- Development of the social institution of the nuclear families
  - Industrialization and further isolation of the nuclear family from the other kin
  - A mobile labor force vs kinship based sedentary subsistence economy
  - In the US independent nuclear family reached their higher frequency around 1950
  - Since 1950s – increasing of the households of divorced, separated and never-married individuals
  - Violence domestic crime

pp. 238

Family and society (p.238)

Different family forms and interrelations (Figure 1)

- Interrelation, but not opposition
  [we have studies the household as the elementary social unit in the society]
  family and the family forms: 1. a product of particular historical and social circumstances (differences and changes within different societies and within each society)
  - 2. a part of the cultural system (intricately interconnected)
Functions of the family (pp. 240-242)

Reliance on group living for survival (inheritance from the primate ancestors)
Different functions of the individuals based on the gender and age peculiarities

- **Nurturing the children (pp. 240-241)**
  Primary function of the adult primate female
  Within the human families – variations
  - Biological mother
  - Father (the picture on p. 240)
  - [grandparents, siblings]
  - Other – e.g. communal agricultural settlement (the picture on p. 241)
  - [you can compare with the independence and dependence training]

- **Economic cooperation (p. 241)**
  The economic activities of women generally have complemented those of men (sharing the results as well)
  - *Family of orientation* [a born/adopted child(en)]
  - *Family of procreation* - [foster parents], residential groups with paired teams of male and female specialists, community sharing of the responsibilities of child care
  - Family vs gender separate households and community groups - *Mundurucu* case study (p.242) [Mundurucu – a tropical rainforest tribe in Brazil]
Family and household (pp. 242-246)

p. 242 Household – definition
[1. this definition is for purposes of cross-cultural comparison; 2. no kinship relations criteria, residential (domestic) criterion and as a base economic unit which is common for all definitions of household, cp. some of the definitions at http://www.answers.com/topic/household]

Elements in the definitions:
1. common residence and shelter
2. economic production [and reproduction], consumption and inheritance
3. child raring [but see the instance of Munduruku when in the male households – only boys older than 13 (adolescence); also many modern households – without children ]

universally present and common in many forms
co-residents of a household may be related or unrelated (instances)

Forms of family (pp. 242-246)

Conjugal family (Latin conjugere – “to join together”) (marital ties) – nuclear and extended families

Consanguineal family (consanguineous, “of the same blood”) rare (instances)
[Cp. consanguineal family A family system of nuclear families linked through shared descent from a common ancestor. The individual nuclear families are bound into complex ties of obligation and daily activity with each other. Consanguineal families can be linked either matrilineally or patrilineally. (http://openet.ola.bc.ca/sociglossary/consang.html)

Blended family

The nuclear family
The smallest conjugal domestic unit
The most popular type includes one or more parents and dependent offspring (stepparent, stepsiblings, and adopted children)
Instances
Mobile forms of family units – reasons (p. 244)
Functions of the nuclear families [give your own instances]

**The extended family**

Two or more closely related nuclear families clustered together into a large domestic group

Instances

Figure 9.2

▲ Male ○ Female

**The polygamous family (p. 246)**

One individual with multiple spouses and all of their children

Polygynous
Polyandrous

**Residence (postmarital) patterns (pp. 246-248)**

**Patrilocal residence**

Bride → Household of the groom

[in many traditions: the marriage - in the place of the bride]

**Matrilocal residence**

Household of the bride ← Groom

**Ambilocal residence** (Latin *ambi* “both”) Patrilocal or matrilocal residence

**Neolocal residence** – a new location [e.g. from smaller to bigger city]

**Avunculocal residence** – Figure 9.3 (the married couple lives with the groom’s mother’s brother). Reason: descent through women is deemed crucial for the transmission of important rights and property. Instance: Chiefs from the Trobriand Islands.
Challenges of family and household organization (pp. 249-254)

Nuclear family challenges (p. 250-251)
  Employment outside the home (p.250)
  Neolocal residence tends to isolate husbands and wives from both sets of kin (p.250-251)
  The problems of the housewives (future after the children grow up)
  Women, marriage, children and career [add your own instances]

[Problem: Is the nuclear family impermanent (p. 251) and what is its future?]

Extended family challenges (pp. 249-250)
  Potential areas of stress
    Decision making and authority (the role of dependent training and
    The concept of saving face for resolving the problems)
  Divorce
  Mothers-in-law

Polygamous challenges (pp. 249)
  Sororal polygyny (the wives are sisters) and the system of rotation
  Polyandrous families. Problems:
    1. Older husbands apt to dominate the younger ones
    2. Biological reproduction and fraternal polyandry

Nonfamily or one person households (p. 251)
  Figure 9.4 – 32% in the USA

Nontraditional families (pp. 251-254)
  Single-parent household
    Female-headed households. Peculiarities.
    [What does it mean living below the poverty line in different countries?
    Why do some women prefer single-headed household than support from
    the husband?]