

# Family Structures

By Yessica R.  
Intro to Sociology [SOC 11]  
Bronx Community College, CUNY  
Prof. Remi Alapo  
Winter 2019



# Introduction

Over the past 30 years family compositions have changed. The idea that a traditional family consist of heterosexual parents and their children is widely rejected. The compositions of families are constantly changing as we personalize the definition “a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household.” We have distanced ourselves from what societal norms are and have established our own definition of family structures.

# Different Family Compositions

Nuclear Families : Often considered traditional type of family consisting of two parent and children.

Single parent Families: One single parent raising one or more children.

Extended Families: Two or more adults who can be either family by blood or marriage living under one house. This can be different relatives in the same household, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Childless Families: Typically husband and wife or partners that cannot have children or wish not to have children.

Blended Families: Two people that unite, in which one might have had children from previous marriage or relationship. This might include children from either person or children from one in combination with children together.

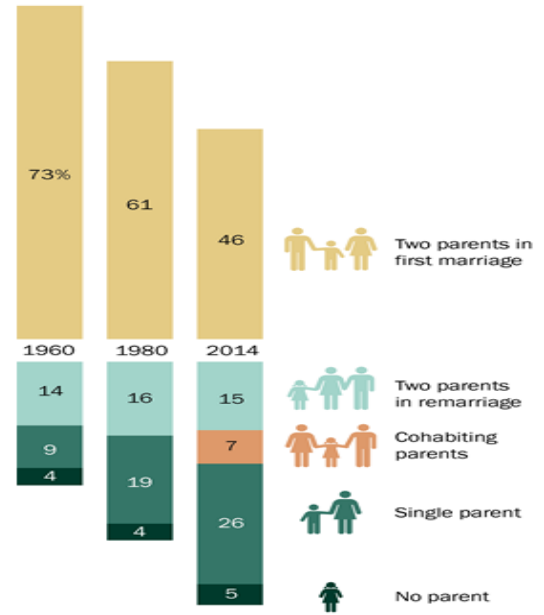
Grandparent families: This could be due to parents' death, addiction, abandonment or being unfit parents.

# Families Across time

- During 1960 post WW2 73 % of children were born within two parent marriage.
- During 1980 only 61% of children were born to two parent marriage.
- In 2014 on 46% were born to two parent marriage.
  
- In 1960 , 14 where born to remarriage, 9% to single parents and 4% to no parents.
- In 1980, 16% to remarriage, 19% to single parents, and 4% to no parents.
- In 2014, 15% to remarriage,7% to cohabiting parents, 26% to single parents and 5% to no parents.

## For children, growing diversity in family living arrangements

% of children living with ...



Note: Based on children under 18. Data regarding cohabitation are not available for 1960 and 1980; in those years, children with cohabiting parents are included in "one parent." For 2014, the total share of children living with two married parents is 62% after rounding. Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 decennial census and 2014 American Community Survey (IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Factors of change

1. Women have entered workforce. This has changed the roles of male and female.
2. Parents are older and more educated. Families are trying to build stronger financial foundations that can assure of financial stability through education.
3. Financial Stability : Parents are trying to grasp the ever changing financial requirements of raising children.
4. Same sex marriage
5. The prevalence of marriage has continued to decline.
6. High poverty levels
7. Increase in Single parent raising

## Question

What do you believe is impacting family structures today?

## Participant 1

“Families are changing because the dynamics are changing. Marriages are down, divorces rates are increasing up as well as single parent households. These single parents due to circumstances are forced to take on multiple roles.”

## Participant 2

“Education. Financial necessities. Lack of jobs resulting in both parents working. Poverty resulting in hardships within families causing divorce and impacts partners having multiple children. Insecurities regarding the raising of a child and being able to provide for them.”



## Participant 3

“There are changes in what is acceptable and unacceptable. People are now more concerned in long term stability. Marriage is seen less important and the value is placed on parenting and what they can provide. Millenials are more focused on their education in order to live comfortably. The newer generations raised by parents who struggled to make ends meet are trying to change the cycle. Also women are more independent. Often times families result to co-parenting as ona parent takes on a heavier load. This is new as mother work and can provide as well as fathers in contrast to early years.”

# Similarities and Differences

1. Importance of Education
2. Financial Stability
3. Cultural Norms
4. Decrease in the  
importance of marriage

1. Acceptance
2. Morality
3. Independence
4. Expectations

## Conclusion

As family composition continues to change we notice a wide variety of underlying factors. I have noticed that although there are different perceptions on what the cause might be many of the answers include reflections of time. Culturally people are choosing to follow their independent needs and adjust their family composition. I have concluded that the perception of what is acceptable and unacceptable is drastically different versus the ideal “nuclear family” of the 1960. As people change and break “tradition” so do their approach on societal norms.

## References

1. NUCLEAR FAMILY: The traditional. (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2019, from [http://punasecsocial.weebly.com/uploads/5/8/3/5/58355423/nuclear\\_families.pdf](http://punasecsocial.weebly.com/uploads/5/8/3/5/58355423/nuclear_families.pdf)
2. Parenting in America. (2019, January 17). Retrieved January 21, 2019, from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/>