

Furstenberg, Frank. 2014. "Fifty Years of Family Change: From Consensus to Complexity." *ANNALS* 654:12-29.

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The author argues that the movement away from gendered division of labor as a means of adapting to economic, demographic, technological and cultural changes is a main factor in the development of more complex family systems.

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- Two-Tier Family System: The difference in marriage trends between individuals in the top tier of society who are well-educated, more financially stable, marry later, and have more stable marriages and individuals in the second tier that conceive children early and begin periods of cohabitation that rarely result in lasting marriage.
- Multiple-Partner Fertility: Men and women who had children from an early relationship commonly moved quickly to another relationship that bore a subsequent child and appeared to do so in the hope that having another child would lead to greater family stability, though this rarely proves to be the case.
- Social Class Reproduction: How economic and social benefits or drawbacks are transmitted from one generation to the next. It covers the ways in which children's educational attainment, employment opportunities, and income level are influenced by their parents' socioeconomic status.

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. The United States has higher rates of multiple-partner fertility than other nations with comparably advanced economies due to higher levels of poverty, early formation of relationships, relationships more prone to change, and lower understanding of proper contraceptive practices.
2. If the first child born is unplanned, there is a higher likelihood that the union of the parents will not last and at least one of the parents will go on to have a child with another partner compared to relationships in which the parents practiced cohabitation before bearing children.
3. In affluent families, they often wait for their relationship to be tested by cohabitation before having children which lead to stronger unions. While in lower income families, their first births are often unplanned and occur before the couple has had the experience to live together which leads to less successful unions.
4. Educational attainment also significantly impacts family behaviors, with higher rates of marriage and stability among those with a college education, while less-educated individuals face more instability and single parenthood.

KEY QUOTE: "What we do know is that from the late 1960s to the present day, in a broadly linear fashion women entered the labor force in growing proportions, marriage age began to rise, women began to feel more empowered and even compelled to pursue careers and full-time employment, use of contraceptives steadily increased, and the fertility of married couples declined accordingly." (17)

QUESTION: How does having a multiple-partner relationship affect the development of children and their perception of love and marriage? Can living in cohabitation with your partner lead to higher chances of marriage or breakups?