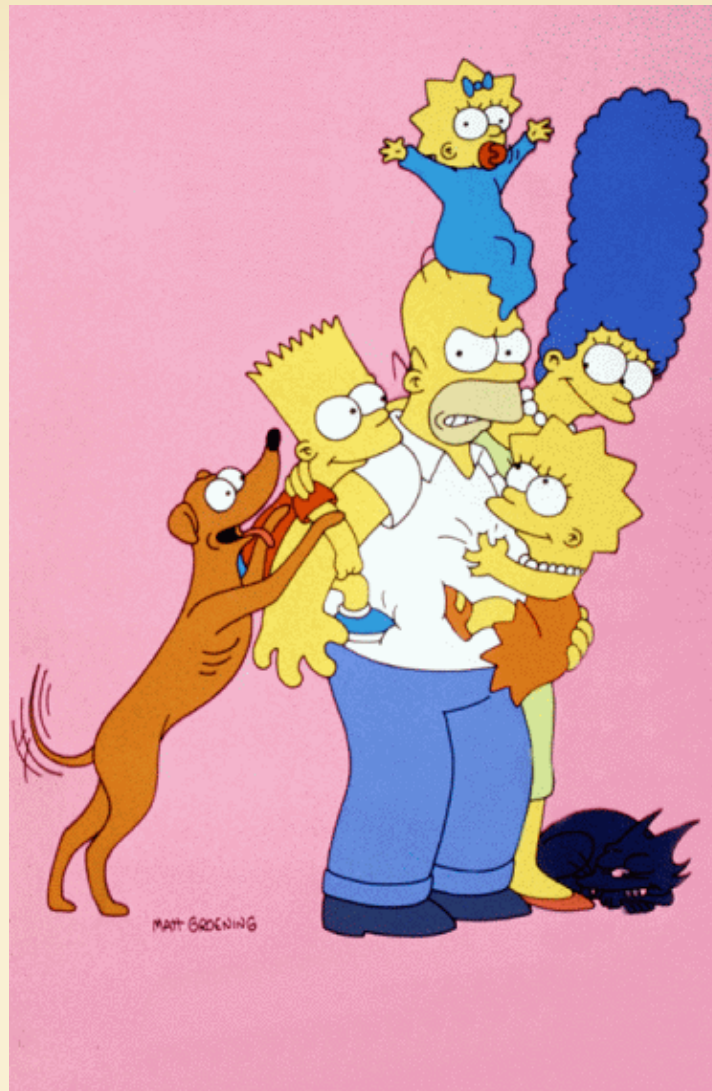


The Family



What is a family?

- Traditional view:

- **Nuclear Family**

- Mum and Dad, plus their children, biologically related and resident together
 - Romantic love
 - Procreation
 - Division of labour

- **Extended Family**

- Nuclear family plus grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and other kin

Murdock (1949) – Defining the Family

- The family as a universal social institution
- Common attributes
 - Common residence
 - Economic cooperation
 - Reproduction
 - Adults of both sexes
 - Child or children

Criticisms of Murdock

- Not all families fit the pattern set out by Murdock – there are single-parent families, and other kinds of family
- Lesbian and gay households do not fit into Murdock's ideas
- Sheeran (1993) – identified a “female-carer core” to many families where women played the main roles
- Gough (1959) – looked at Nayar households where men are traditionally absent

The flexible family

- Modern families may differ from the traditional view
- Lone-parent / single parent families
 - May be headed by a male or a female
 - Parents may
 - Have never married
 - Divorced after marriage
 - Separated

The flexible family (cont.)

- Lesbian / gay families
- Reconstituted families
 - “step families”
 - “half” brothers and sisters
 - Divorce/separation and re-marriage / new partnerships

What is the family?

- So:
 - There are many different types of family and therefore it is difficult to define the family

Families and Households

- What's the difference??
 - Household – common residence
 - Is a single person household a family?