

# THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN FAMILY

## Summary

This article was aimed at elucidating the origin, evolution and models of the human family as well as kin organization. The family can be defined as a cohabiting or married couple or other group of adult kinsfolk who cooperate economically and in the upbringing of children. The traditional view, according to which a nuclear Murdock's family is the smallest basic unit of a society, is no longer current. Humans are definitely social animals and the majority of them live in a polygamous relationship (polygyny), albeit in the civilized societies marital and social (but not sexual) monogamy is highly prevalent. *Homo sapiens* can be viewed as an inherently polygamous creature with many other systems of organization, which preserved to date, i.e. polygyny, polyandry or even polygynandry. Social systems and

lines of descent encompass matrilineality, patrilineality or bilineality. According to evolutionary biologists, the degree of sexual dimorphism in humans, a sperm competition strategy as well as genomic imprinting preclude the possibility that our ancestors lived in a monogamous society. Moreover, adultery (extra-pair copulations, EPCs) is frequent in both sexes even nowadays. There are several hypotheses about the evolution of monogamy. One simply argues that when two-parent care is markedly more effective than maternal care alone, monogamy will evolve. Another one suggests that monogamy evolves when mated males are able to protect themselves and their infants from other males in the group, which brings to mind some ecological factors or tools discovery and use in human evolution.