

FAMILY DIVERSITY - A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

FOCUSING ON WHITES IN GRAHAMSTOWN

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on developments in the field of family history and studies of families in contemporary settings, the study addresses the question of explaining variations in household patterns. Its empirical basis is a survey of White households in Grahamstown. The surveyed population was broken down in terms of class (occupation) and culture (language) and analyses conducted to determine if there are any statistically significant relationships between these variables and the tendency to reside in particular household structures. The question of 'family ideology' was also addressed as an attempt was made to uncover subjects' views on a variety of family-related issues. On the basis of the research results, a model of the relationship between class, culture and household structure was developed. Its application to a comparison of Black and White household structures in South Africa as well as the United States, is discussed. Finally, attempts at redefining the family are addressed and a new definition of the family proposed.

DEDICATION

To my father, sister and Joël.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This study arises out of three debates that have been taking place in family sociology: the question of the death, decline or resilience of the conventional nuclear family; of redefining the family and of explaining intra- and inter-societal variations in household structure.

The first of these is not new and is closely related to developments that have occurred in the field of family history. The contribution of the latter has been both of an empirical nature (improving our knowledge of families of the past) and methodological (drawing attention to the criteria used when making claims about the popularity or lack thereof of particular household structures). Developments in family history are discussed in Chapter 2.

In part, the second debate is a response to the first since it has been the view that the nuclear family is no longer the statistical norm, that has given rise to the demand for a redefinition of the family (Barrett & McIntosh, 1982; Chester, 1985; Bernardes, 1986b; Zinn & Eitzen, 1990). The increasing use of the term 'family diversity' underscores this view and emphasises the fact that at any point in time, any society is characterised by a variety of family structures. The debate about redefining the family also has a political\ideological aspect since it has also been informed by the view that no one particular family structure should (among family sociologists at least) enjoy the privileged position of the moral norm against which others are measured or be regarded as 'The Family'. As such, this debate owes much to the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960's as well as to the

ascendancy of marxist theory more generally - the common thread being a rejection of White middle class or 'bourgeois' standards in favour of the recognition of diverse life styles. Against this background single parent families, gay families, extended families and even communes, are seen as deserving of recognition as *bona fide* families as opposed to occupying a position on the fringes of family sociology and being regarded as deviations from 'The Family' itself. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the notion of family diversity as it applies to contemporary societies and in Chapter 5, various attempts at redefining the family are addressed. In Chapter 6 the author presents the definition of the family which served as a framework for her empirical research. The main point that is put forward in that chapter is that, as an object of study, the family should be seen as comprising both an ideological element (ideas about family-related issues) and a concrete element (actual domestic arrangements or households). More particularly, the family is seen as a social institution which includes both ideas about sex, parenting and residence (e.g. who may have sex with whom, who should parent whom, who should reside with whom) and practices relating to these (who is residing with whom etc.).

It is not only 'the family' but all of the major concepts employed in this study (household, ideology, class and ethnicity) that have histories of debate and contestation (Larrain,1979; Barrett,1980; Williams,1983; Thornton,1988; Saunders,1990; Bekker,1993; Hutchinson & Smith,1996). These are addressed in Chapter 9.

2. CLASS, CULTURE AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

The third debate relevant to this study, arises from a question that has most frequently been posed with reference to intra-societal variation in household structures within the United States. It is: Are the differences in the household patterns characteristic of Blacks (African-Americans) and Whites best

explained with reference to socio-economic factors or cultural predispositions? In the late 1970's, Allen (1979) took up this issue by conducting a statistical analysis of the U.S. census data on households. His findings confirm that there are both ethnic and class differences in the propensity to live in particular household types - conventional family structures (two-generational and headed by a married couple) being more common among Whites than Blacks and in the higher as opposed to lower socio-economic categories. But, contrary to expectations, Allen did not find that extended families *per se* were significantly more common in the lower than upper socio-economic categories (1979:308). However, Black families were found to be significantly more likely to be extended than White families. One of the ways in which Allen explains these findings is by pointing out that there is a relationship between 'headship' and 'extendedness'. More particularly, he found that female headed households were more common in the lower socio-economic categories and among Blacks and, since female headed households were more likely to be extended than others, this accounts for the relatively high level of extended family households among Blacks. With regard to his main analytical question (role of class and culture in explaining variations in household structure), Allen favours the 'class-side' of the debate claiming that it is because Black Americans are better represented in the lower socio-economic categories that they are also more likely to live in extended family households. However, he also points out that the impact of 'family values' on domestic arrangements cannot be discounted and that the question of the relative role of class and culture in explaining variations in household patterns "remains largely unresolved" (1979:310). More recently, Zinn & Eitzen have also favoured the class argument claiming that differential access to socio-economic resources produces different life chances and that these "determine patterns of family living" (1990:90). One of the findings that remains unexplained in both Allen (1979) and Zinn & Eitzen's (1990) analyses is why, if class is the main explanatory factor, there are such marked differences between lower class

Whites and Blacks in terms of their propensity to live in extended family households.

There are two broad perspectives at issue in this debate. The first is called the structuralist approach and claims that there is a direct relationship between class position and household structure (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990). In other words, material conditions are seen as acting as a constraint on the behaviour of lower class individuals, obliging them to live in particular kinds of household structures. The second approach can be described as weberian in that it claims that it is not material conditions themselves, but the particular ideas (meanings, interpretations or values) which individuals bring to bear on situations, that explain the decisions people make about household arrangements. In terms of this approach (also known as the culturalist approach) one would expect that if two groups ascribe to different ideas about family life (family ideologies) yet face the same material conditions, they would respond differently. Consequently, one would expect that in such a scenario, 'culture' would be a better predictor of household patterns than 'class'. These perspectives are discussed in Chapter 7 where it is also argued that there may be a need to reconsider both the labels that have been given to these approaches and the kinds of questions that have been asked with respect to this debate.

3. WHITES IN GRAHAMSTOWN

The aim of the empirical section of this study is to address the question of the relationship between class, culture and household patterns using data from a survey of Whites in Grahamstown. The choice of this particular empirical base was influenced by a number of considerations.

In the first instance, a number of factors have complicated the debate as it pertains to the United States. These are: racial

oppression and the close association between class and ethnicity when Blacks and Whites are compared. By exacerbating the impact of social class, racial oppression may be an additionally significant variable accounting for the greater propensity towards extended family arrangements among Blacks than Whites (McAdoo in Zinn & Eitzen, 1990). Consequently, the position of lower class Whites and lower class Blacks may not be directly comparable. Secondly, the fact that Blacks are far better represented in the lower than upper socio-economic categories means that the same group which is purported to ascribe to values which favour the extended family, is also more likely to be poor, thus making it difficult to 'tease out' the effect of class and culture. It was in an effort to avoid these factors while asking the same question about class, culture and household structure, that it was decided to focus on a community which is divided on the basis of ethnicity (as measured by language) but where the 'ethnic groups' or 'ethnic categories' are similar in terms of socio-economic status. More particularly, the surveyed population was broken down in terms of social class (as measured by occupation and residential area) and on the basis of the respondent's mother tongue (English and Afrikaans). The following questions were then asked: (1) Do English and Afrikaans speaking Whites differ significantly in terms of the 'family values' they ascribe to and/or the household structures they live in and (2) Do 'lower class' and 'upper class' Whites differ significantly in terms of the 'family values' they ascribe to and/or the household structures they live in? The main question that guided the empirical research was therefore: Can any observed variations in household patterns be explained with reference (a) to the respondent's mother tongue, (b) the 'family ideology' she identifies with and/or (c) her class position. Since it was anticipated that gender would be an additionally significant variable - especially with respect to 'family ideology' - an effort was made to only interview women thus 'neutralising' its potential effect.

The second reason for the choice of White Grahamstonians as the empirical base for the study is the marked lack of research on White households and/or families in South Africa generally. There is also a marked lack of research on ethnicity within the South African context - particularly as it applies to Whites (see Bekker,1993). As Bekker points out, one of the reasons for this state of affairs has been the fear that such research may lend legitimacy to the policy of apartheid (1993:103-104). Another reason has been the tendency among academics (who to date have been predominantly White) to study 'others' rather than themselves; the oppressed rather than privileged sectors of society, the 'unknown' rather than that which is presumed to be known (Argyle,1977). Indeed, as far as I am aware, the findings of only one survey of White households in South Africa had been published prior to the 1990's. It was conducted by Argyle and involved one lower-class Durban suburb (Argyle,1977). By contrast, a number of studies dealing with households and/or families among Blacks, both in South Africa generally and in Grahamstown in particular, have been undertaken. See, for example, the work of Pauw (1962); Marwick (1978) as well as Schlemmer and Stopforth (1974) and, in the Grahamstown context, that of Roux and St Leger (1971), van der Vliet (1982), Manona (1988) and Brown (1996). Asian and 'Coloured' households and/or families have also received their fair share of research interest. See, for example, the work of Meer (1969); Jithoo (1978); Buijs (1980); Butler-Adam and Venter (1984); Whisson (1976) and Rabie (1987).

Partly as a result of a programme initiated by the Human Sciences Research Council (Steyn et al,1987), more research has been conducted on family life in South Africa. So, for instance, in 1993 the results of Steyn's nation-wide survey of family\households became available (Steyn,1993). This has enabled the researcher to ascertain (1) whether White Grahamstonians are in any way unique in terms of their propensity to live in particular household structures and (2) whether any of the statistical relationships

that were found to exist with respect to the Grahamstown data, apply on a wider scale.

The collection of data took place in two stages. During the first phase, a number of case studies were conducted and during the second, a survey of 300 households (about 10% of the White population of Grahamstown) was undertaken. By proceeding in this manner it has been possible to reap the benefits associated with both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The case studies produced data of a verbal kind. They illustrate the fact that family life is a dynamic process and that domestic life cycles differ depending on factors such as divorce, death, remarriage and non-marriage. This contrasts with the cross-sectional (i.e. static) and largely numerical data generated by the survey. Since the case studies did not involve long-term participant observation nor were undertaken in the interests of providing answers to the theoretical questions posed, they are not of the kind one may expect in the case of an ethnographic study. Rather, the purpose of the case studies was purely descriptive - the intention being to illustrate the dynamic nature of family life by focusing on the domestic life cycle of a small number of women. It was by means of the survey data that the researcher undertook to address the analytical questions relevant to the study, namely, the relative role of 'class' and 'culture' in explaining variations in household patterns.

Chapter 8 contains an historical and socio-economic overview of Grahamstown. The research methods employed in the study are discussed in Chapter 9 and the results of the empirical enquiry in Chapters 10 to 13.

4. CONCLUSION

Much has happened since this project was initially conceived - not least of which has been the political transition to democracy in South Africa. On a personal note, this project has been an intellectual (and emotional) journey starting with confusion and many questions and ending with greater clarity about the questions originally posed. Since it has taken place over a relatively long period of time, the reader will notice a discrepancy in the academic rigour of different parts of the study. In particular, the empirical research (which is discussed in the second part) took place in 1991, while some of the theoretical work (in the first part) came later. Moreover, as new information became available, this has been incorporated. The material is therefore not presented in chronological order. The researcher has nevertheless been able to use both insights and information gleaned from more recent work to interpret her data and present a model of the relationship between class, culture and household structures that explains her findings and could be applicable in other contexts as well.

Some of the main findings of the study are:

1. That both nuclear families and conventional nuclear families (first time married couple living with biological offspring) were far more common than anticipated on the basis of the high divorce rate among White South Africans.
2. That it is in the relationship between and the combination of class and culture, rather than either of these on their own, that we should seek our explanation for intra-societal variation in household structures.

SECTION I

CHAPTER 2

SOME DEVELOPMENTS IN FAMILY HISTORY

1. INTRODUCTION

"The topic of the family is at once attractive and dangerous. Its very popularity has ensured that it is covered by a vast literature which is difficult for one person adequately to master ... Because it is so much part of the fabric of everyday life, its features tend to be indistinct through too great familiarity. How does one begin to probe this amoeba-like structure?" (Casey,1989:xi).

To date, both public opinion and a number of theories within the field of family sociology have been informed by the common sense view that as a result of modernisation, industrialisation or capitalism, 'the family' has changed from the extended type to the nuclear type (Poster,1978; Anderson,1980b; Elliot,1986; Hareven,1989; Marsh and Arber,1992; Kertzer & Laslett,1995). This view has its roots in the evolutionary theories proposed by Bachofen (1861), Maine (1861), Morgan (1877) and McLennan (1886), who, as Laslett indicates, "felt they had to account for the emergence from the 'primeval horde' of the family group which they themselves experienced and admired" (1972:4). Exceptions in this regard, and then only because of the moral position they adopted, are Le Play (1871) and Engels (1902) both of whom deplored the monogamous conjugal family while identifying the stages which supposedly preceded it. Le Play, for instance, distinguished between three family types: (1) the patriarchal family - characteristic of nomadic and herding societies; (2) the stem family or 'famille souche' associated with European peasant society and (3) the unstable egalitarian family - associated with the rise of manufacturing and poverty (Laslett,1972: 17; Anderson,1980b:23; Flandrin,1979:50-52).¹

In the twentieth century this conception of the development

of 'the family' was taken further by Talcott Parsons (1954;1956) who went to great lengths to describe the unique features of 'the family' in industrial society. In Parsons' view the distinctive features of 'the modern family', as expressed in the phrase 'relatively isolated nuclear family,' make this family form ideally suited to the 'needs' of an industrial society. Although the methodological approaches underlying these theories (evolutionism and structure-functionalism) became the targets of widespread attack in the latter half of this century, the conception of the family i.e. the idea that at any one time a family structure can be identified as 'the family' has remained largely intact. For example, none of the 'critical' theories of the family which became popular in the 1960's challenged the notion that the terms 'the family' and 'the nuclear family' are synonymous within the context of industrial/capitalist society. Rather, the main thrust of these theories was to show the detrimental effect of this family form on women (feminists); the working class (marxists) and the development of the individual personality (radical psychiatrists) (see Elliot,1986). Even as late as the 1970's, we find the marxist theorist Wally Seccombe indicating that his analysis of the contribution made by domestic labour to the value of labour power "leaves aside the question of class differences between working class and bourgeois families" and that "the objective character of the working class family is in no sense proletarian" (1974:392). In sum, then, much of the writing within the field of family sociology up until the 1970's was informed by a unitary view of the family. In industrial/capitalist/modern society, the family, it was alleged, was of one type.

By contrast, family sociologists of the post 1970's era have shown increasing concern with exploding what has come to be known as the 'myth of the monolithic family' (Gittins,1985; Barrett and McIntosh,1982; Rapoport et al,1982; Skolnick & Skolnick,1989; Zinn and Eitzen,1990). This trend was precipitated by developments within the field of family history when Laslett and his colleagues at Cambridge, using a technique refined by French

demographers called family reconstitution, provided evidence in support of the view that the nuclear family was already common in pre-industrial times (Anderson, 1980b:17; Laslett, 1972). While Laslett's analysis was still couched in the one-society-one-family mould, it represented an important corrective to previous approaches. It gave substance to the view that family patterns of contemporary society are a continuation of - rather than a radical departure from - those of the past (see Elliot, 1986). It was a short step from this, to the view that family diversity has been a feature of societies throughout history (Rapoport et al, 1982:75; Zinn and Eitzen, 1990:15). Furthermore, by raising the question of regional differences (rather than modernisation, industrialisation or capitalism) as an explanation for variation in family structures, Laslett's work effectively paved the way for a consideration of the influence of other factors such as class and culture.

2. NEW FAMILY HISTORY

2.1. PETER LASLETT (THE DEMOGRAPHIC APPROACH)

There seems to be little doubt among family sociologists today that the extended family of the past (like the relatively isolated nuclear family of today) is a utopian ideal rather than a description of families at that time (Hareven, 1989; Skolnick and Skolnick, 1989; Zinn and Eitzen, 1990). Hareven, for example, makes the following comment:

"The 'great extended families' that have become part of the folklore of modern industrial society were rarely actually in existence. Households and families were simple in their structure and not drastically different in their organisation from contemporary families. Nuclear households, consisting of parents and their children, were characteristic residential units ... Three generations rarely lived in the same household ... " (Hareven, 1989:41).

As indicated above, this 'new view' of the history of the family has much to do with the research conducted by the Cambridge Group. Making use of historical documents such as church

registers and small-scale censuses, these researchers have been able to obtain demographic data and to reconstruct family households in areas as far afield as England, France, Russia, Japan and the United States from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. On the basis of this information, which Laslett claims represents "the only numerical evidence on the comparative history of the household and family in past times" they take issue with the idea that "in the past the domestic group was universally and necessarily larger and more complex than it is today" (1972:25&5). Some of the data generated by the Cambridge Group is presented below:

TABLE 2.1

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN FIVE PRE-INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES (LASLETT, 1972:85)					
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	EALING ENGLAND 1599	LONGUENESSE FRANCE 1778	BELGRADE SERBIA 1733-4	NISHI-NOMIYA JAPAN 1713	BRISTOL U.S.A. 1689
SOLITARIES	12%	1%	2%	7%	7%
NO FAMILY	2%	6%	2%	2%	0%
SIMPLE FAMILY*	78%	76%	67%	43%	90%
EXTENDED & MULTIPLE FAMILY**	8%	17%	29%	48%	3%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<p>* Includes married couples alone, married couples with children; widows and widowers with children.</p> <p>** Refers to "a conjugal family unit with the addition of one or more relatives other than offspring, the whole group living together on its own with or without servants" (1972:29). Multiple family household refers to "all forms of domestic group which include two or more conjugal family units connected by kinship or marriage" (1972:30).</p>					

As regards the generational depth of households, Laslett (1972:58&76) contends that the vast majority of the households studied (93%) contained two generations or less and the average household size² was less than 6 persons. The latter ranged from

4.75 in England to 5.85 in Bristol (USA):

"The obvious message of the evidence presented ... has already been stressed. The nuclear family predominates. In all the communities we are comparing, households more complex than the simple family household were in a minority ... in fact the classic nuclear family of man, wife and children formed the household, with or without servants³, in more than half of the Western European cases, and in a third of the others" (Laslett, 1972:59-60).

It is important to note that Laslett defines a household as a group of coresident individuals who share certain activities like eating together but may or may not be related by blood or marriage (hence the inclusion of servants). Moreover, he distinguishes this unit from a houseful i.e. a physical structure that may contain more than one household. He uses the term premises for the former and dwelling for the latter (1972:36-37). As such, the data presented here may conceal complex living arrangements in 'housefuls'. In this regard Laslett points out that in Belgrade the size of the houseful was 7.14 whereas that of the household was 5.46 (1972:76). But while conceding that the communities in eastern Europe and Japan may be exceptional, Laslett claims that as far as the rest are concerned, household structures were far less complex and the distinction between household, houseful, dwelling and premises of less significance:

"In England and elsewhere in Northern and Western Europe the standard situation was one where each domestic group consisted of a simple family living in its own house, so that the conjugal family unit was identical with household and with houseful and where dwelling was coterminous with premises" (1972:40).

Laslett therefore finds no evidence to support the commonly held view that in pre-industrial times households were typically of the extended, multi-generational variety and that industrialisation led to "a simplification of social relationships based on kinship, the decline of the tribe ... (and) the progressive reduction of everything towards the rational, uncomplicated, small scale Western industrial model of familial life" (1972:5).

2.2. THE SENTIMENTS APPROACH:

Laslett's version of the history of the family in Western Europe has not gone unchallenged. His critics include Edward Shorter (1975); Jean-Louis Flandrin (1979, first published in 1976) and Lawrence Stone (1977) as well as Philippe Ariès (1973)⁴. Stone, for example, has taken issue both with what he describes as the old orthodoxy (families of the past were extended) and the new orthodoxy (the family has always been nuclear):

"In terms of residence, neither has there been a shift from an enlarged family full of kin relatives or an extended stem family of several generations to a simple nuclear or conjugal one, nor has the nuclear family always been predominant" (1977:26).

In making sense of this assertion it is essential that we bear in mind that it contains two different definitions or conceptions of the term 'nuclear family' - one derived from Laslett and other from Stone himself. More particularly, whereas Laslett defines a nuclear family, as a *household* (i.e. co-residential group) consisting of "a man, wife and children" (1972:29), Stone defines it as one in which "the *ties that bind its members* together are stronger than those which bind any one member to outsiders" (1977:26) (emphasis added). Shorter makes use of a similar definition claiming that "the nuclear family is a *state of mind* rather than a particular kind of structure or set of household arrangements" (1975:204) (emphasis added).

It is for this and other reasons that Anderson (1980b) draws a distinction between "The Demographic Approach" adopted by historians such as Laslett and "The Sentiments Approach" employed by writers such as Ariès (1973) and Flandrin (1979). The main feature of the latter approach is its concern, not so much with "the family as reality ... (but) the family as an idea" (Ariès, 1973:8) or, as Stone puts it:

"some massive shifts in world views and value systems ... cultural changes (which) express themselves in changes in the ways members of the family related to each other, in terms of legal arrangements, structure,

custom, power and sex ... how individuals thought about, treated and used each other ..." (1977:3).

Against this background, those within the 'Sentiments School' claim that 'the Western family' has indeed undergone a major transformation over the last 500 years which cannot be gleaned from a consideration of the structure of households (Anderson, 1980b:39). While differing among themselves as to the timing of such change and the factors responsible for it, these writers agree:

"that in the sixteenth century the notion of the nuclear group as a clearly differentiated unit, with a recognised right to maintain its differentiation through norms of privacy, was absent among almost all sections of the population" (Anderson, 1980b:42).

Shorter paints the most vivid picture of these changes by drawing an analogy between 'the family' in pre-modern times and a ship moored to a dock (traditional society). He contrasts this to 'the modern family' which has cut its ties to the surrounding community and "drifted on to the high seas" (1975:13). He furthermore claims that it was the transference of the "ethos of capitalism" i.e. egoism and individualism "learned in the market place" to the domestic domain which was responsible for the change. Another important factor in Shorter's theory is the increase in the standard of living which took place in the case of middle class women since it meant that these women were 'liberated' from the 'desperate need' to employ their time in production and could now devote themselves more to mothering. The child-centered family with its 'high walls of privacy' can therefore, according to Shorter, be explained as a consequence of the rise of capitalism (1975:253-254). It is this, he argues, that created "the wish to be free" on the part of the "ship's crew - Mum, Dad and the Kids - who severed the cables by gleefully reaching down and sawing through them so that the solitary voyage could commence" (1975:14).

Flandrin (1979:34) similarly, goes to great lengths to show the "coterminous nature of the social milieu and the kinship

system" in pre-industrial times both for the nobility and peasantry in France whereas Stone, focusing on England, claims that the rise of 'Affective Individualism' resulted in 'The Open Lineage Family' of the fifteenth century giving way first to the 'Restricted Patriarchal Nuclear Family' and then to 'The Closed Domesticated Nuclear Family' in the course of the eighteenth century (1977:4-7).

But in contrast to Shorter (1975) - Ariès (1973), Stone (1977) and Flandrin (1979) place emphasis on changes which occurred in religious, political and philosophical thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in their explanations of the changes which 'the family' has undergone historically (Anderson, 1980b:63). Flandrin, for instance, focuses on changes in religious thought claiming that by the time capitalism emerged the 'mentalité' which favoured the nuclear family in opposition to the wider kin-group and the community at large was already in existence (1979) while Ariès (1973) places more emphasis on the rise of the school as well as changes in scientific thought. While not disputing the influence of any of these, Stone pays more attention to the state. I will discuss Stone's ideas as an example of the work that has been conducted in this tradition.

2.2.1 Family Ideology In The Past

Stone depicts English society from medieval times to the early part of the sixteenth century, as one in which the family (read nuclear family) had extremely porous boundaries being subject to scrutiny and involvement from kin in the case of the nobility and the community in the case of the lower strata (1977:85). He furthermore depicts the individual as enmeshed in a network of support and obligation which he claims was a manifestation of the importance attached to two values: loyalty to kin and 'good lordship' (1977:85-91). On the question of loyalty to kin, he points out that the choice of a spouse was not only heavily influenced by economic considerations (due, in part, to the dowry system)⁵ but was undertaken by the wider kin group

and with its interests in mind. In this regard he points out that in contrast to those who accept the "modern Western culture-bound preconception(s)" that "personal autonomy ... and happiness is paramount":

"To an Elizabethan audience the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet ... lay not so much in their ill-starred romance as in the way they brought destruction upon themselves by violating the norms of the society in which they lived, which ... meant strict filial obedience and loyalty to the traditional friendships and enmities of the lineage" (1977:86-97).

Stone describes the 'second most highly prized value' of medieval English society ('good lordship') as follows:

"a reciprocal exchange of patronage, support and hospitality in return for attendance, deference, respect, advice and loyalty. This 'lordship' embraced not only the wider ramifications of the kin, but also the household retainers and servants, the client gentry and the tenants on the estates, all comprising a collective 'affinity' ... Its physical manifestation was the great house with its open hospitality, its lack of privacy, and its constant crowds of attendants, retainers, servants, clients and suitors" (1977:90).

Stone furthermore points out that one's relationship to this network of patronage was a crucial determinant of life-chances since to be outside it, was synonymous with being in a precarious position both politically and economically - something which gave support to patriarchy:

"For this was a society ... in which offices, favours and rewards were all distributed not according to merit or need, but according to partiality. Primogeniture and patriarchy meant that power tended to drift into the hands of the oldest males, and that in every family, village and county, and even at court, there was a constant struggle to win the approval of, or establish some reciprocal claim upon, some individual - often an old man - who controlled the levers of power" (1977:90).

In short, Stone's argument is that up until the sixteenth century, the nuclear family was 'a loose core' at the centre of networks based on kinship and patronage - loyalty to others enjoying precedence over loyalty to members of the nuclear family itself and the functions seen today as the prerogative of the

nuclear family, being undertaken within that wider context (1977:86).

Stone sees the rise of the state and the Protestant Reformation as crucial to the process whereby this value system was replaced by one which favoured the nuclear family based on 'affective individualism'. On the one hand, Stone sees the state as taking over some of the functions previously performed by the network of kin and patronage such as providing protection, law and order and, more generally, taking responsibility for the welfare of citizens (1977:133). On the other hand, he claims the state engaged in a "massive propaganda campaign" promoting a new set of values including nationalism i.e. loyalty to itself as opposed to the lineage (1977:133). Furthermore, in an effort to be effective in service provision, the state insisted on merit as a criterion for accession to office in opposition to the previously accepted practice of nepotism. The moral legitimacy previously enjoyed by nepotism (inheriting office for example) was further undermined by the practice of purchasing office from an incumbent or superior which Stone contends increased in the seventeenth century. According to Stone the competition between these alternative principles (money and merit on the one hand and ties of blood and marriage on the other) was won in favour of the former on the ideological level at least.⁶

Following Weber, Stone points out that in contrast to the medieval Catholic Church which propagated the view that 'virginity is angelical' and the monastic life-style 'ideal', Protestants sanctified marriage and turned the marital state into "the ethical norm for virtuous Christians" (1977:135). Moreover, by adding friendship and companionship to the other purposes of marriage, Protestantism paved the way for the idea that marriage is an association between two individuals undertaken for their mutual gratification rather than out of a sense of duty to others (1977:136). The Protestant notion that 'the individual stands alone before his Maker' also gave impetus to the idea of the individual as an entity in his\her own right - a subject before

the law and the state (1977:140). The ascendancy of the notion of individual legal responsibility can be detected in the decline of the vendetta (a system of justice in which individuals belonging to the same family were seen as interchangeable) (1977:126).

But not only did Protestantism bring marriage into the realm of religious significance, the family too, became the site of religious activity. For example, family prayers were added to church attendance on Sundays as a prerequisite for 'the good life' and fathers were given the responsibility of seeing to the moral well-being of wives and children (1977:140). Fathers therefore replaced priests as moral and religious guardians:

"...the household and its head ... filled the vacuum left by the decline of the Church and its priests as the central institution for moral and religious instruction" (1977:140).

Thus the developments Stone sketches are in two directions: on the one hand the state took over functions performed by the wider kin group (and relationships of patronage) and on the other the nuclear family took over the functions previously performed by the church. The result, however, was the same: the inward-looking relatively isolated nuclear family (1977:133). But more important than this, is that Stone sees "a fundamental shift in human values" taking place in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. In his view it is this change that manifested itself in the different functional relationship between the nuclear family and the outside world and thereby led to the rise of a new family type. The changes he documents concern not the family as "a unit of habitation but as a state of mind" (1977:123)⁷.

Against this background it may be wise to see the data generated by the 'sentiments school' and that provided by those making use of the 'demographic approach' as complementary. This complementarity is brought out by Berkner (in Kertzer, 1985) who claims that given the domestic life cycle as well as high rates of mortality, nuclear family households are likely to be the

statistical norm even in societies where the extended family is the cultural norm. If we approach the matter in this way, we can conclude from the information presented above that in pre-industrial English society, nuclear family households dominated statistically and that ideological changes have taken place which have legitimized the discreteness of this family unit vis-à-vis the outside world.

But by drawing attention to the complementarity of these two schools of thought we should not lose sight of the fact that Laslett's critics have made an important contribution to family studies by highlighting a number of methodological and theoretical issues which Laslett only touches on. Consideration of these, makes it clear that obtaining information about 'the family' in pre-industrial times (whether of England or any other society) is not as simple as it may appear. These issues are also of concern to the student of contemporary family life and include the question of the appropriate unit of analysis for family studies and inter- as well as intra-societal variation in family patterns.

3. UNIT OF ANALYSIS

In response to Laslett's contention that "families in former times were small in size ... (and) most ... were of the conjugal type", Flandrin (1979:53) questions the technique of taking the household rather than the individual as the unit of analysis. He shows that both in terms of household size and complexity one obtains a different picture when one calculates the **proportion of people** living in a household of a particular size or structure as opposed to the **proportion of households** that were of a particular type. Taking the example of Goodnestone-next-Wingham (England) which in 1676 had an average household size of 4.47 he shows that the majority (65%) of the population lived in households which comprised on average 6.2 persons (Flandrin, 1979:57). Also using the example of Bulan (France) he shows that although simple family households were in the majority

(54.7% of households) they accounted for only a third of the population (Flandrin, 1979:74) (See Berkner, 1975 in Kertzer, 1985).

Also preferring to approach the matter from the point of view of the individual, Stone draws attention to the domestic life cycle and therefore the domestic arrangements in which individuals can **expect** to participate in the course of a life time:

"It is true that at any given moment in time most families since the sixteenth century in England have been nuclear in type, but most of the individuals who composed them **at some stage of their lives** either belonged to, or were to belong in future to, families of a different type" (1977:26) (emphasis added).

This raises the question of when one can regard a particular family structure as predominant. Is it when it constitutes the highest proportion of all households identified at one point in time; one in which the majority of the population participates at any one point in time or can expect to participate in the course of a life-time or one that is promoted or supported by other major social institutions - the state, church and the economy? In other words when does a particular family structure qualify as 'the family' in a particular context?

4. INTER-SOCIETAL VARIATION

Concerning regional variations in family patterns, Flandrin (1979) accuses Laslett and the Cambridge Group of "displaying a curiously provincial attitude" by attempting to "relegate the extended family to the museum of sociological myths, in complete ignorance of the censuses held in southern France which confirm its existence" (1979:3). In Flandrin's view these regional differences in family patterns may have something to do with different customs relating to inheritance - partible areas favouring the nuclear family and impartible ones, the stem family (see Anderson, 1980b:30; Kertzer, 1991).

Shorter similarly, accuses the revisionists of having "created a little fantasy of their own: the nuclear family as a historical constant" in contradistinction to the equally unfounded traditional myth that before the industrial revolution families "were organized in clans or were at least highly 'extended'" (1975:38).

"Now many kinless families did exist, they often represented a majority of all households. But to get a sense of the typical experience of the average person, we must ask what kind of household a child would most likely have been socialized in: extended (stem) or nuclear? And there is a good chance that in east Europe as opposed to west Europe, the average child was raised in a dwelling that contained many relatives besides his mother and father. North America and the British Isles were the principal bastions of the kinless domestic unit" (1975:38).

This view coincides with Hanjal's claim that one can identify two pre-industrial marriage systems each associated with different household patterns. The first he called the North Western pattern or simple household system and is characterised by late age at marriage for women (above 23), a low propensity to marry, neolocal residence and the tendency for household labour needs to be supplied by servants rather than kin (Hanjal, 1965 & 1982 in Kertzer, 1991:158). The second, the 'joint family household system', is marked by a younger age at marriage for women (under 21), patrilocal post-marriage residence and therefore high incidence of complex family household arrangements (in Kertzer, 1991:158).

Writing in the 1990's Kertzer also criticises those who have shown over-enthusiasm for the revisionist thesis by generalising from Laslett's research on England to the whole of Europe or Western Europe (in Kertzer & Laslett, 1995:369). He claims that the revisionist theorists leave us with the (faulty) impression that in pre-industrial Europe old people were abandoned by their children and that "they have never been as well off as they are today, when government programs and social legislation protect them and transfer payments force the young to support them" (1995:364). By contrast, Kertzer cites research conducted on

communities in Southern Europe (Italy) as well as central and eastern Europe (Hungary and Serbia) which shows that:

"the supposed residential isolation of the elderly in the Western past pertains only to northwestern Europe and its descendant societies in North America and elsewhere. This, after all, is the area said to be the epicentre of individualism, neolocality, and nuclear family residence. Laslett's claims ... though generalized with undue haste by others to Europe as a whole, after all principally concerned England. It was in this context that he wrote - in words that he now believes overstate the case - of the 'rule of continued independent residence by the old' (1995:371).

As suggested here, the tendency to generalise from the English evidence to the whole of Western Europe has probably been greater among the followers of the Cambridge Group than among Laslett and his colleagues themselves. As Kertzer points out "Household and Family in Past Times" contains chapters on Serbia and France which show that in these areas households containing extra-nuclear kin were more prevalent than in the case of England (Kertzer,1985:99; Laslett,1972:81). This criticism has nevertheless spawned a number of studies that question the validity of making general statements about families in pre-industrial Europe without taking cognisance of regional variations both within this area as a whole and Western Europe in particular (see Kertzer,1985; Wall et al,1983; Kertzer,1991). But before discussing some of those, I would like to focus on an historian who makes a case for the uniqueness of English society prior to industrialisation not in terms of household structures but the **culture** which informs family behaviour.

4.1 Was England Unique?

In "The Origins of English Individualism" Macfarlane (1978) takes issue with a whole range of theories of the rise of capitalism in England (including the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber) by questioning the idea that England ever was 'a peasant society' - especially in relation to ideas, beliefs and attitudes concerning family matters. He also takes issue with all of the writers who I have discussed under the heading 'sentiments school' by claiming that in English society, the kind of cultural framework which favours the extended or joint family pattern has never existed. In family matters, Macfarlane contends, the English have always been individualistic.

In developing his argument, Macfarlane draws a distinction between what he calls the traditional or classical peasant societies which existed in Eastern Europe and Asia up until the twentieth century and the 'restricted peasant societies' which were\are found in the south of France and Ireland and claims that English society was unique in that as far back as the thirteenth century it did not resemble either of these models on most counts (1978:33). The first is associated with the joint family pattern, the second with the stem family pattern and English society with the nuclear family pattern. His main concern however, is comparing English society prior to the industrial revolution to the classic peasant societies of Eastern Europe on the question of the cultural framework which informed family patterns rather than the structure of domestic groups themselves.

Macfarlane contends that other historians have been mistaken in assuming that because English society resembled 'peasant' societies on some counts (such as the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture, the type of technology used and the size of the typical landholding) it should also have resembled them in other ways. The features which Macfarlane contends have never characterised English society are: that the units of production, consumption and ownership are the same and

identical to the family or kin group; that production is for subsistence rather than exchange; use is made of family labour rather than hired labour; early and universal marriage.

The first feature is often summarised under the heading 'a domestic mode of production' where families jointly own the land, work the land and consume as a unit (eat from the same pot). In Macfarlane's view this was indeed a feature of such classical peasant societies as Poland and Russia where "ownership was not individualised" (1978:18) and the idea that "an individual has rights to property as against other individuals" is completely foreign (1978:19). In these societies rights to property were regarded as a birth right and consequently held in common. Simply by virtue of being born into or being adopted into a particular family or kin group "is to have access to specified pieces of land" and to have the duty to contribute one's labour to maintain 'the family farm' (1978:18). Even though it was possible to identify a holder of property and property was handed down from generation to generation - the position and rights of the holder (or owner) were quite different from the English model. In the case of the Eastern European peasantry "heirs have as much right as the present 'owners'". The latter acts as a "manager" of property that belongs to the group rather than himself and his actions are curtailed by social custom:

"the parents are morally obliged to endow their children as well as they can, simply because they are not full and exclusive proprietors but rather managers of their inherited property ... being a manager rather than a proprietor, the father naturally has to retire when his son ... becomes more able than he to manage the main bulk of the property - the farm ... Land property is essentially familial; the individual is its temporary manager. Who manages it is therefore not essential provided he does it well ..." (Thomas and Znaniecki in Macfarlane, 1978:19).

It is easy to see how this attitude towards property (rights and duties associated with possession of property) leads to the formation of joint family households where more than one conjugal unit works together and lives together on a 'family farm' and household headship is acquired not at the death of a parent or

the formation of a new household but rather as a result of retirement. A related feature of such societies was that land had a symbolic value - there was an attachment to land which manifested itself in a desire "to keep the name on the land" (1978:23). Antithetical to this society or model is therefore a market in land and labour.

Macfarlane finds evidence of both of these in pre-industrial England. I will concentrate only on the first since it was the attitude of the English towards land that, Macfarlane contends, marks its uniqueness. Firstly, Macfarlane points out that in English law dating back to the fourteenth century women could hold property as individuals. They had exclusive rights to the property they brought into a marriage (dowry) and in addition had automatic rights to some of their husband's property (one third) both during and after a marriage - "as long as she did not elope and live with a lover" (1978:81). This was the situation in the case of freehold land. In the case of copyhold (i.e. where the occupier is not the owner of the land) the position of women differed but in neither of these cases did **children** have any automatic rights to the property of their parents. Already in the thirteenth century a parent had "a perfect right to disappoint his expectant heirs" by giving away or selling his land during his lifetime (1978:82). This was formalised in 1290 by a statute which stated that "from henceforth it shall be lawful for every freeman to sell at his own pleasure his land ... " (1978:83). In this regard English law contrasted with that on the continent - especially in France where the custom of 'restraint lignager' prevailed and meant that a landowner was not permitted to sell land before consulting with kin and offering them the opportunity to buy the land (1978:83). It is for this reason that Macfarlane sees the type of family system in France and Ireland as intermediate because, although it is based on primogeniture (i.e. only one son inherits rather than the whole family being simultaneous co-owners), non-heirs at least had to be consulted before any sale of 'family property'. The English system was different in that the law seemed to protect the property owner's

right to alienate land at will even to the point of disinheriting children. By English Common Law, Macfarlane writes, children had no birth right even under a system of primogeniture since "the eldest son was not a co-owner with the father during the latter's life time, in effect he had nothing except at the wish of his father or mother, except where the inheritance had been formally specified by the artificial device of an entail (which) ... could be broken quite easily" (1978:83). That this did not occur on a regular basis, is for Macfarlane, beside the point:

"It has been suggested (above) that fully developed, individual, private ownership with complete right of alienation was present (in England) by the sixteenth century. In no sense can father and son, or 'the family', be said to be joint-owners from birth, as they would have been in our model peasant society ... The point is not that peasants do not, on the whole, sell off or bequeath away their land; it is that they **cannot** do so, for it is not their individual property" (1978:86) (emphasis added).

Apart from this difference in the legal position concerning ownership of land, Macfarlane finds evidence of an active market in land in some parts of England from at least the fourteenth century and claims that the majority of these transactions concerned non-kin rather than kin (1978:86&95). He therefore finds no evidence of strong kin ties or a moral obligation to keep land in the family or the family on the land. Indeed any moral or legal obligation that existed concerned the husband-wife relationship rather than the parent-child or more distant kin relationships. It therefore favoured the integrity of the conjugal (marital) bond rather than the joint family - typical of peasant societies in Eastern Europe. On this point it is interesting to note that Macfarlane and Stone make reference to the same practice or custom but draw opposite conclusions - conclusions that are obviously in line with their own theses.

Wishing to emphasise the importance attached to extended kin ties, Stone asserts that "among the peasantry of Cambridgeshire ... it was normal for a man to stipulate in his will that a room be set aside in the house for his widow for her lifetime, so long

as she did not remarry ..." (1977:25). By contrast, Macfarlane argues that the necessity to stipulate such a provision in a will is suggestive of the fact that coresidence of extended families was not in fact institutionalised (1978:141). Put differently, it seems that it is because the will-maker could not rely on the custom of the time that he deemed such a provision necessary. This is very different, Macfarlane claims, from the situation in a 'proper' peasant society where:

" ... the old person has rights (in property) until his death. When strength and leadership fail, effectively leadership is passed on to a child, but the old person can expect automatically to have access to shelter and food and clothing for his lifetime ... it is not something they need to make a contract, a legally binding condition, without which they can be turned out to wander. We would expect that if England were 'peasant' in the thirteenth century that the old would gracefully retire, to be looked after without question, as their children when young had to be looked after out of a common fund" (1978:141).

Acknowledging that the strength of kin ties cannot be identified from a consideration of the composition of households alone, Macfarlane shows that contrary to the situation in a classic peasant society, geographic mobility was high and the typical English village was not "a body of kinsmen" (1978:139). Living near to relatives (which implies contact and is a prerequisite for cooperation in production) was therefore also not the norm in pre-industrial England. Macfarlane finds further evidence of the lack of importance attached to kin-ties in the fact that pledging records of the thirteenth and fourteenth century showed that the majority of those who stood surety were not related to the individual benefitting from the pledge (1978:140). Finally, he indicates that even as far back as the thirteenth century, servants and labourers represented an important part of the English population. Already then there was therefore a market for labour - the typical pattern being that "children were put out as servants in other people's households, and labour hired when needed" (1978:149). Macfarlane summarises his thesis as follows:

"the majority of ordinary people in England from at least the thirteenth century were rampant individualists, highly mobile both geographically and

socially, economically 'rational', market-oriented and acquisitive, ego-centred in kinship and social life" (1978:163). In this respect, the English were "highly idiosyncratic" (1978:202).

Macfarlane's views therefore complement those of Laslett by suggesting that in the area of family values too, there has been little change brought on by the process of industrialisation. Although Macfarlane's main bone of contention with other historians is that they have generalised on the basis of information from continental Europe to England, acceptance of his thesis about the uniqueness of English society also cautions against the tendency to generalise from 'the English experience' to other societies. Making generalised statements is further complicated by intra-societal variations based on the rural-urban divide as well as social class.

5. INTRA-SOCIETAL VARIATION:

Shorter (1975:31), Stone (1977:10) and Flandrin (1979) all warn against the tendency to generalise about 'the family' in pre-industrial times because social differentiation as well as regional variations within societies resulted in a variety of family patterns being present in one society at one point in time. Flandrin for instance, makes the following assertion in response to Laslett's contention that in pre-industrial times in England the majority of families were of the nuclear variety:

" ... it is unfortunate that the British historians have not indicated in which social sectors the(se) different types of family were to be found ... One would ... have liked to know whether among the propertied classes ... the conjugal family was as preponderant, and extended families and multinuclear households as uncommon ..." (1979:69).

In Flandrin's view this was not the case since "it is predominantly in the better-off sectors (of society) that one finds families with a complex structure" (1979:70). Stone and Shorter make similar assertions (1977:25;1975:32). Flandrin does not, however, question the idea that in England and certain parts

of Europe the nuclear family was the statistical norm in terms of the distribution of households at one point in time. Rather, his point is that the way Laslett presents his data "artificially reduces the importance of the complex structures" (1979:74)⁸ and does not reflect the variations in family patterns between social classes:

"From the tenth to the eighteenth centuries, without interruption, though in varying proportions, there existed in western Europe castles and thatched cottages, dominant large households and dependent small ones. It is this co-existence and this association that characterized western society in former times. The averages calculated on the basis of the parishes can give no indication of this" (Flandrin, 1979:65).

Focusing more on the diffusion of family values rather than the structure of households, Stone makes a similar assertion:

"Generalizations about family change have (therefore) always to be qualified by a careful definition of the class or status group Simple models of family evolution may work perfectly well for primitive and culturally homogeneous societies unaffected by the technology of printing ... the economic consequences of gigantic wealth alongside abject poverty and unemployment, and the intellectual consequences of Puritanism, Newtonian Science and the Enlightenment. But they will not work for so sophisticated, so diversified and so changing a society as seventeenth and eighteenth-century England, where there is a plurality of cultural worlds, and a consequent plurality of family styles and values" (1977:10).

Returning to the structure of households, Shorter contends that, compared to the urban areas, family households in rural areas were more likely to be complex in structure attributing this to the tendency to avoid the fragmentation of 'peasant patrimony' to such a point that "a family could no longer live off its inheritance" (1975:34) (See also de Woude, Helin & Halpern in Laslett, 1972).

In the case of the urban areas, Shorter draws a distinction between various social strata and in line with Flandrin's ideas on this matter claims that the prevalence of nuclear family

households varied inversely with social class:

" (In the cities) the higher the income or the more elevated the social class, the larger and more complex the household. Poverty and wage labour meant that few children would be in residence with the parents, and that kin would be few in number ... The independent proprietors who constituted most of the petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, had space enough to house spare kin and more importantly, the means to put them to work" (1975:32).

Subsequent research has, however, shown that it is not only in the urban areas but also in rural communities that a class analysis is imperative.

Smith's (1984) study of a wine-growing community of Languedoc (Cruzy) in the nineteenth century emphasises both the importance of the categories chosen for the analysis of data as well as class variation in family structure in a rural community. When the information for the village as a whole is presented, the nuclear family emerges as the dominant type - accounting for 72% of all households in 1836. However, when the data is broken down in terms of occupation and wealth, it becomes evident that landowners were almost twice as likely to live in extended family households than the poorer sections of the Cruzy community - 43% of landowners living in complex households against 22% of farmers and 17% of labourers. The corresponding figures for the distribution of households (as opposed to people) were: 36% of landowner households compared with 20% of farmer and labourer households being complex (1984:69). This brings Smith to the conclusion that "there was not one but two coexisting household types, each socially specific, each with its own logic and economic purpose" (1984:65).

"Here is clear evidence that by neglecting to disaggregate the village into subgroups, proponents of the universal nuclear family have failed to isolate those peasants (which includes wealthy landowners) among whom complex families were common, if not the norm" (1984:69-70).

Adopting what Anderson (1980b) refers to as 'the household economics approach' Smith (1984) claims that differences in

social status, economic resources and roles in the production process "produced different family strategies which in the long run directly influenced household organisation and family composition" (1984:65). To illustrate his argument Smith draws a distinction between four social classes: Day-labourers; Farmers; Artisans and Shopkeepers; Commerce and Professions and Landowners. Since Smith focuses mainly on the two extremes of this social structure, I will do the same. Despite the titles, the difference here is not between those who owned and did not own land because, as Smith points out, at that time complete landlessness was rare (1984:65). Rather the differences in wealth between these social strata (or in Smith's words 'rich and poor peasants') resides in the size of the land-holding - day-labourers owning on average 1.7 hectares, farmers 5 hectares and landowners (propriétaires) 30 hectares. This is significant since in Smith's view it was because of the small size of the holdings of day-labourers and farmers that they participated in a dual economy i.e. lived off produce from the land and wages in exchange for labour performed on farms owned by others and as noted above it is this that produced a distinct family strategy in their case.

Smith claims that even though the poor peasants of Cruzy could have found ways to circumvent the French law requiring the distribution of property in equal portions among heirs, they had little incentive to do so (1984:71). This was because, in the absence of economic resources to purchase the labour of others, the size of the holding that could be managed effectively was limited by the size of the family itself. The typical pattern here was therefore the parcelling up of land among children - a pattern which favoured the establishment of nuclear family households. This did not however result in the *ad infinitum* splitting up of land since, over time, children would acquire new land (either from kin or on the market) so that a larger tract of land would be available for dispersal once the new generation had matured:

"The principal purpose of land acquisition and inheritance strategies, then, was to permit each

couple to build up and control at the proper point in the household life cycle an adequate property that also remained manageable within the limited resources of the family ... Accumulating and then dispersing property in each generation furthered the formation of nuclear households, of course, and reflected the powerful influence of the dual family economy on inheritance strategies ... Unlike Chayanov's peasants, who adjusted family size and labor to fit the labor demands of large subsistence farms, laborers in the wine country of the Midi adjusted the size of their properties over the life-cycle to fit the resources of semidependent small nuclear families (1984:73).

In the case of large landowners, by contrast, inheritance strategies were such that land was kept both in the lineage and intact. This was achieved through showing preference for older sons (primogeniture); converting the inheritance of daughters into movables and skipping a generation "so as to pass directly to the third generation, thereby circumventing altogether the issue of equal partition among immediate heirs" (1984:76). As suggested earlier, keeping land intact was made possible by wealthy landowners' ability to purchase wage labour and therefore the absence of any restrictions on the size of the holding that could be managed effectively. This practice favoured the stem family by keeping in the household those who stood to inherit. It did not, however, result in households containing a variety of kin (uncles, aunts etc) as is sometimes assumed:

"Extended households in Cruzy and the French Midi were recruited from rather narrow and constricted circle of adult offspring of the parental couple, rarely becoming wider support systems for big families ... Accordingly, average household size varied by only one individual between nuclear and extended households in Cruzy ... Arranged in order to select and establish a favored heir, the extended household served the interests of the rather narrow, vertical lineage formed by attaching one younger couple to the patriarch's household, while discarding or disfavoring the other offspring" (1984:80).

I will return later to Smith's reasoning around this issue and more generally the difficulties associated with a household economics approach that does not take adequate account of cultural factors. But at this point it suffices to note that in

explaining how social differentiation contributed to different rates of extended households, Smith refers to different inheritance patterns and sources of subsistence between the social classes and sees household structures as the outcome of economic strategies undertaken within the context (constraints and opportunities) of these factors (1984:71).

In summary, all of the sources cited above point to the 'nuclearity' of 'the family' among the lower social strata and the greater prevalence of complex family households among the upper strata in pre-industrial times.

6. DEFINING TERMS

One of the most important issues to emerge from the debates and controversies surrounding Laslett's work on the history of the family is that of defining the area of enquiry. As Goody points out "the main problem for the evolution of the family is to understand just what is evolving" (1972:103). Poster makes a similar point when he writes "one must know what it is that is changing before one explains the change" (1978:164). In the discussion above the main focus has been on families as co-residential domestic arrangements. But in Goody's view this is neither the only nor the most meaningful avenue of approach (see also Casey, 1989). What is interesting here is that Goody uses a different definition of the household yet arrives at the same conclusion as Laslett and the Cambridge Group: namely the nuclearity of 'the family' in pre-industrial times. In fact he extends this argument to Africa and Asia arguing that "it is not only for England that we need to abandon the myth of 'the extended family'" (1972:124). He arrives at this conclusion through defining the household not as unit of co-residence but one of production, consumption and reproduction. Using the LoDagaba of Northern Ghana where in 1960 the average size of the 'dwelling unit' was 16.3 and that of Western Gonja where "half a village may be under one roof" as examples, Goody claims that "'the family' (in the shape of the units of reproduction,

production and consumption) was not greatly different in size from that found in Western Europe today" (1972:110). In his view the physiological limits of childbearing and other factors ensure that regardless of the economy or the continent in question, units of reproduction, consumption and production are and always have been relatively small - variation occurring within a range that is "not great" (1972:118). This does not mean that Goody believes that 'the family' has remained stagnant throughout history:

"(But) the main changes that have occurred do not centre upon the emergence of the 'elementary family' out of 'extended kin groups', for small domestic groups are virtually universal. They concern the disappearance of many functions of the wider ties of kinship, especially those centring on kin groups such as clans, lineages and kindred ... Changes of this kind cannot be derived from the study of the household alone, since they have to do with the relationships between members of separate households, and especially adjacent ones" (1972:119).

In a later work, Goody (1983) develops this argument further claiming that it was with the rise of Christianity as far back as 300 A.D. that the Western family pattern started diverging from that previously in existence in the western world as well as in the Middle East, Asia and which is still found in the whole Mediterranean area (1983). He identifies the following as features which pre-date the rise of Christianity: close marriage; sending out of children (adoption and making use of wet-nurses); the levirate and concubinage (1983:204). The significance of these behavioral patterns resides in the fact that they were all 'strategies of heirship' i.e. ways of ensuring that property remained within the kin group. In Goody's view, the fact that these were either discouraged or prohibited by the early Christian missionaries has less to do with the doctrine of the Christian faith than the desire of the early church to accumulate property in the process of developing from a sect to a church (1983:95). As evidence for his view, Goody cites instructions and advice given by some of the early Christian missionaries to "the pagans of the Anglo-Saxon world". For example, he refers to Constantine who in 321 A.D. decreed that a dying man may leave

property to the church even orally (1983:93) and Salvian, a writer and priest who in the fifth century, himself had given his property to the church and "commended the giving of alms to the Church, even encouraging parents to leave their wealth to that body rather than to their offspring, on the plea that it is better for the children to suffer in this world than that the parents should be damned in the next" (1983:100). Conformity with these pronouncements led to a strengthening of the nuclear family as we know it today since "all religious bequests were a kind of alienation from kin" (1983:93). On a more general note, Goody's argument is that the quality of relationships whether within nuclear families, between them or within more complex family structures as well as other aspects of family life such as fertility, age at marriage and migration will be influenced (constrained) by the particular system of inheritance that is followed - a view which concurs with that of Flandrin (1979) and Smith (1984).

6.1. Models Of 'The Family' And Social Class

Returning to the question of defining terms and therefore the phenomenon or phenomena whose history we seek to uncover, as well as the question of class-variation in family patterns, Poster (1978) provides us with a number of family models that can serve as a heuristic device for those working in this area. Below, I make use of some of these to further illustrate the notion that different definitions of the family result in different conclusions about the historical changes which this aspect of social life has undergone.

As noted above, historical evidence suggests that there were some important differences between (poor) peasant and aristocratic households (as co-residential groups) - those of the wealthy being larger, more complex and more likely to include individuals other than the conjugal pair and their biological offspring. Poster concurs claiming that among the aristocracy households "could consist of 40 to upwards of 200 people" and

comprised a "mixture of kin, servants, retainers and clients" (1978:178) while among the peasantry, "the norm ... was not the extended family, but a small conjugal family" (1978:184).

The differences between the aristocratic and peasant family models are, however, substantially reduced if our basis for comparison is the family conceptualised as "a distinct social space ... the place where psychic structure is formed and where experience is characterised in the first instance by emotional patterns" (1978:143). This is so since the aristocracy and peasantry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries engaged in child-rearing practices that were remarkably similar. In both cases socialisation involved harsh treatment with the aim of ensuring compliance to rigid traditions and customs. Moreover, in neither case do we find the close emotionally significant bond between biological mother and child we have come to expect today. Rather the wide-spread use of wet-nurses among the aristocracy as well as those peasant women who could afford it, swaddling and sending children away to be raised in other homes, meant not only that the physical nurturance of infants was often undertaken by individuals other than biological mothers but also that during this epoch children formed their first attachment to someone outside of the nuclear family. Similarly, the authoritative role was not confined to biological fathers alone. Among the peasantry, it was the village and among the aristocracy, the lineage which performed this function. Social authority was therefore dispersed throughout the community or kin-group rather than concentrated in the hands of one or two individuals. Finally, neither among the aristocracy nor the peasantry was family life a private affair. In the latter case this was because the boundaries between households were extremely porous:

"Nothing could occur in individual (peasant) families of any importance that was not known by the village and supervised by it. Marriages, relations between husbands and wives and parents and children were all scrutinized by the villagers and it was they who imposed sanctions ... Since daily interactions, even nightly interactions, were acted out in the presence of the community or a relevant section of it, privacy was unknown and not valued" (1978:185).

In the case of the aristocracy, the greater physical separation between households (lands surrounding the chateaux) and the fact that the king seldom interfered in 'family affairs' ensured that the household itself was more autonomous. But here too family life was a public affair since, as noted above, members of the community as well as the wider kin group were already present in the household:

"(Aristocratic) children were in the hands of servants from the moment they came into the world. Fathers and mothers rarely bothered with their children, especially during the formative years. Child-care was considered beneath the dignity of aristocratic mothers" (1978:180).

"Aristocrats saw themselves as part of a network of kin relations or lineage whose preservation was of paramount importance. The composition of the household was far from stable: servants and clients came and went ... The chateaux were public places ... Marriage was a political act of the highest order. The fate of the line depended on marriages which kept the family holdings intact ... In sum, the daily life in aristocratic families was a bustling, public round of exchanges, whose centre was the status of the house, not the conjugal unit" (1978:179).

The upshot of all this for Poster is that the bourgeois family model which serves as the basis for Freud's theory of socio-psychological development is an historically- and class-specific phenomenon that represents a deviation from the family patterns characteristic of European society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But for present purposes, the more significant point is that when we focus on 'the family as emotional structure' (i.e. the group of people with whom children form their first emotional attachments) we obtain a different picture of social class variation in family patterns than is the case when our point of comparison is the size and composition of the household alone. Poster highlights this when he refers to the differences between nuclear families among the peasantry in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe and nuclear families among the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century:

"... the impression of statistical similarity with bourgeois families is controverted by the force of collective dependence. European peasant families of the old regime were not nuclear families. Although

their numbers were small, the family was intermeshed in a wide circle of sociability. In fact, the basic unit of early modern peasant life was not the conjugal family at all but the village. The village was the peasant's 'family' ..." (1978:185).

Picking up on Poster's last point, yet another avenue of approach becomes apparent and that is to take as our point of comparison the family as defined by individuals themselves and/or the way it is used in every-day language. In this regard, Williams (1983) points out that the word 'family' entered the English language from the Latin word 'familia' meaning household and was used to refer to "a group of servants or a group of blood-relations and servants living together in one house" and from the early fifteenth century it was extended to "describe not a household but what was significantly called a house, in the sense of a particular lineage or kin-group" (1983:131) (Flandrin (1979) provides a similar analysis of the history of this concept in the French language). Williams furthermore refers to the latter usage as "the aristocratic usage of the term" (1983:132). If we accept this as well as Poster's contention that for the peasantry the village was 'the family' then social class variation in family patterns takes on still another form.

As can be noted from the diagrammatical presentation below, class differences in family patterns are significant when our basis for comparison is the composition of the co-residential domestic group, disappear when our basis is the family as 'emotional structure' and take on still a different form when we compare the family as defined by its members.

TABLE 2.2

FAMILY AS HOUSEHOLD AND SOCIAL CLASS			
	SIZE	COMPOSITION	DEGREE OF AUTONOMY
ARISTOCRACY	Large	Conjugal unit, offspring, kin and non-kin	High
PEASANTRY	Small	Conjugal unit & offspring	Low

TABLE 2.3

FAMILY AS EMOTIONAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL CLASS			
	SIZE	COMPOSITION	
ARISTOCRACY	Large	Conjugal unit, offspring, kin and non-kin	
PEASANTRY	Large	Conjugal unit, offspring, kin and non-kin	

TABLE 2.4

FAMILY AS DEFINED BY MEMBERS AND SOCIAL CLASS			
	SIZE	COMPOSITION	
ARISTOCRACY	Large	Kin only (lineage)	
PEASANTRY	Large	Kin & non-kin (village)	

In sum, one of the most important theoretical issues to emerge from recent work on the history of the family concerns the way in which the subject matter or object of enquiry is defined. Moreover, as Anderson indicates, it is because historians of the family have differed in this respect that they have provided us with "very different kinds of history" (1980b:15). This is also one of the reasons why decades after historians started becoming interested in the family the evidence "often appears fragmented and confusing, and the analysis ambiguous" (Anderson, 1980b:15). The question of defining the family is of paramount importance to the present study and is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

7. CONCLUSION

As may be apparent from the foregoing discussion, providing an answer to the question "What do we know about families in pre-industrial times?" is not a simple matter. This is partly due to the fact that one of the lessons we have learned in considering the information provided by family historians is that 'the family' is not a monolithic entity and can be approached from a number of angles:

" ... the one unambiguous fact which has emerged in the last 20 years is that there can be no simple history of the Western family since the 16th century because there is not, nor ever has been, a single family system. The West has always been characterised by diversity of family forms ... diversity of attitudes to family relationships not only over time but at any one time ... Identifying and trying to understand the diversity has been a major problem, particularly in any attempt to generalise about long-run trends ..." (Anderson, 1980b:14) (emphasis in original).

In what follows I have therefore been careful to stipulate the specific aspect of family life that is being referred to. Firstly, I will consider the historical evidence concerning the composition of households and once again show that different approaches result in different - even divergent - conclusions about the popularity of particular domestic arrangements in pre-industrial times. I will also discuss Laslett's response to some of the criticisms that have been made of his 1972 publication. Secondly, I will discuss the question of culture as it relates to family affairs.

7.1 COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Drawing on Laslett's work we can conclude that in pre-industrial England the most common household type at any one point in time was the two-generational nuclear family rather than the stem or joint family household. Laslett's research shows that all of the 100 English communities for which records exist in the period between 1571 and 1821, less than 6% of households

contained more than two generations and only 10% had 'resident kin' i.e. included non-nuclear relatives (1972:149 & 153). On this point we need to acknowledge that more than two decades after the publication of "Household and Family in Past Times" this conclusion still carries the status of a null-hypothesis since none of the sources cited above nor any other studies to my knowledge have produced evidence to the contrary - in England, at least, the three generational stem family was simply not as popular as once assumed. It did not constitute the majority of households or the mode, when these are measured at one point in time.

Two caveats must be introduced at this point: Firstly, the composition of households tells us very little (if anything) about the way people thought about each other, treated each other or the relationship between households. We cannot therefore make inferences about cultural norms from a consideration of household composition patterns alone. It is quite possible that a family type which constitutes the most common household type when these are compared at one moment in time, does not enjoy the status of a cultural ideal or vice versa (See Berkner, 1975 in Kertzer, 1985).

The second qualification concerns the role of servants. Laslett's data show that about one third of households in the 100 English communities studied contained servants. In this regard, Laslett comments: "the substantial proportion of persons who turn out to be living in the households other than those into which they were born, looks to us like something of a sociological discovery" (1972:151). Laslett considers the possibility that those classified as servants may indeed be "kin in disguise" but after comparing their surnames with those of household heads and neighbours, concludes that "servants were rarely kin in pre-industrial England" (1972:57 & 58). He nevertheless identifies the fact that the records do not permit the identification of servants related to the head's wife as "a problem" (1972:57).

We can circumvent this problem to some extent by **not** differentiating between servants and extra-nuclear kin. Taking the information provided for the hundred English communities we notice that a substantial proportion of households (40%) included either extra-nuclear kin, servants or both (Laslett, 1972:149 & 152). Moreover, taking the example of Ealing, if nuclear family households with servants are added to nuclear families with kin and other 'complex family households', we notice that households which extend beyond the mother, father, child triad accounted for just under one third of all households (27%) in Ealing at that time. The conventional nuclear family (i.e. without servants) still remains the mode, that is, the most common household type (37% of households in Ealing in 1599) and the majority of households are still two-generational (70% of those in the hundred communities studied) but when we change our approach, the relative strength of the conventional nuclear family (i.e. without resident servants) declines.

The idea that in pre-industrial England, the nuclear family (even without servants) as opposed to the three generational stem family was the statistical norm, in no way contradicts the view that there were significant class variations in family patterns in this region in the period under discussion. This is so since it seems reasonable to conclude that whatever the family pattern typical of the lower social strata (the bulk of the population), it is this rather than any other family structure that will be reflected as the statistical norm for the society as a whole. Put differently, since the sources cited above all indicate that where large extended families were found, these tended to be in the upper echelons of society, it follows that this family type would not emerge as the statistical norm when the distribution of households in the society as a whole is measured.

However, this is not the case when instead of asking: What was the distribution of household types?, we ask: In which households did the majority of the population live? The fact that we obtain a different picture when approaching the question from

this angle has to do with the age-profile of pre-industrial societies as well as the practice of 'sending children out' to work as servants in other households. If we accept that pre-industrial societies were 'young societies' and that it was common practice for lower strata children in particular to spend a large part of their childhood working as servants in the homes of others, it follows that the majority of the population would at any one point in time be living in households other than those headed by their biological parents. On the other hand, given that service usually ended with marriage and it appears to have been common practice for this to be followed by the establishment of independent households, the same pattern would not apply to the adult population - the majority of these being part of nuclear family households.

Against this background, we can better understand Flandrin's contention that in two pre-industrial communities, the majority of the population lived in households whose size was either above average or of the complex variety while these constituted only a minority of the households in the communities in question (Flandrin, 1979:57&74).

To summarise what may still appear confusing and contradictory: When we compare the distribution of households at one point in time and when we identify the household structure that the majority of **adults** are part of, then the nuclear family household emerges as the statistical norm - the most common household type being - and the majority of adults participating in - nuclear family households (without servants). On the other hand, at any one point in time the **majority of the population and the majority of children** in pre-industrial England were not part of conventional nuclear family households.

As far as the historical trend is concerned it therefore appears to be the case that in England there has not been a move from large three-generational households containing uncles, nieces, grandparents etc to 'kinless' nuclear family households

but rather a more subtle (less dramatic) change that revolves around a "loss of flexibility in regard to taking strangers into the household" (Hareven,1989:42).

Introducing a class dimension to a consideration of the historical trend gives us an idea as to why the 'common sense' understanding of family change has been misleading. As has already been stressed, there seems to be general consensus that smaller and simpler family structures were more common in the lower than the upper echelons of English society in pre-industrial times (Laslett,1972; Goody,1972; Shorter,1975; Stone,1977; Flandrin;1979). If we place this 'pattern' in relation to Anderson's research on Lancashire in 1850 (as Shorter does), we notice that in the case of the lower class the historical trend is the opposite of that usually identified in sociology and other textbooks concerning the development of the family. Anderson (1971) found that complex family arrangements were virtually non-existent among middle class families but "commonplace" among "factory, artisan and labourer families" (Shorter,1975:33). Therefore, keeping social mobility constant, in the case of the lower social strata, we have a movement from conventional nuclear to complex family households. This suggests that the common sense view is based on the trend associated with the urban petty bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, that is, the wealthier sections of society, where the movement has been from complex to nuclear family households. This is an illustration of the class bias in much historical and contemporary work on the family.

As noted previously, the tendency to generalise from England to the rest of Europe has been seen as problematic. "Family Forms in Historic Europe" (1983) edited by Wall, Robin & Laslett can be seen as a response to that criticism. In this work, Laslett draws a distinction between four "tendencies in domestic group organisation in traditional Europe" (1983:256). These are labelled North-West, Central, Mediterranean and East. They are contrasted in terms of a number of variables including the

proportion of 'resident kin' and multigenerational households. Laslett presents the first and the last of these as polar opposites - the West having households with a 'very low' proportion of non-nuclear kin and a 'low' proportion of multigenerational households. The other two areas are seen as intermediary - the Central area being close to the 'Western pattern' and the Mediterranean area having more in common with the Eastern pattern - that is a high proportion of households including extra-nuclear kin and 'very high' proportion of multigenerational households. The 'Eastern' pattern is aptly illustrated by Czap whose study of Karsnoe Sobkino in Russia revealed that in 1849, about 80% of households consisted of two or more conjugal units linked through ties of blood or marriage while only 11% consisted of married couples with offspring only (Laslett, 1983:520).

Laslett points out that these differences are related to the extent of neolocalism found in these areas - the English case being one where marriage is almost always followed by the establishment of an independent household while in the east, household formation tended to occur as a result of fusion and partition and coincide not with marriage but the death and/or retirement of the household head (1983:531). While Laslett appears to be convinced that "there does seem to be some pattern of a north-west\south-east character" he is also at pains to point out that his four-fold classification is an ideal type based on previous research and devised with the aim of guiding future research rather than precise and exhaustive descriptions of family patterns in specific geographical regions:

"The objects of making the fourfold division are to give structure to a difficult and confusing subject of inquiry, and to call forth the further information which we so badly need ... it will be understood that geographic boundaries separating distinct and fairly consistent areas can scarcely be meant, if only because our present knowledge is so scanty. Tendencies rather than demarcated practices are at issue, and these tendencies have a highly variable relationship with geographic distribution. This is perhaps what we ought to expect, bearing in mind the complex history of European populations, the extensive migrations and

intensive cultural influences which have been at work"
(1983:525-528).

7.2 CULTURE

Many family historians including those outside the 'Sentiments School' acknowledge the importance of paying attention to cultural factors in attempts to document and explain family forms (Smith,1984; Kertzer,1989). Smith, who has been classified as part of the household economics approach, for instance, indicates that his analysis "does not answer the question about the influence of cultural forces on peasant life, the meaning of courtship, marriage, sexuality, and attitudes towards children" and indicates that these "matters ... are beyond the scope of (t)his article" (1984:84). Similarly, Kertzer who places great emphasis on the power relations between landlords and sharecroppers in explaining high rates of complex family households among the latter, asserts that "household processes must be examined in terms of the interaction of economic, demographic, political and cultural conditions" (1989:12). However, he provides little information on the last-mentioned. Indeed, he refers to the complex family households pattern as a cultural norm ("culturally preferred" among sharecroppers), but gives no evidence in support of this view (1989:4). Neither does he provide any information on the cultural values or family forms of the landlords whose influence on the sharecroppers is so significant in his analysis. Laslett (1972), too, is not unaware of the importance of cultural factors claiming that demographic factors alone cannot account for the low proportion of complex family households in pre-industrial England. Rather, he contends "these low proportions must have been the result of choices made in accordance with cultural traditions" (1972:59).

This tendency to emphasise the importance of, yet provide very little analysis of the culture which informed family patterns in the past is perhaps not surprising since it is in this area, I feel, that our knowledge is on the least firm

ground. This, in turn, is related to the fact that there are severe problems with the reliability, representativity and interpretation of the historical material which have been consulted for this purpose - something which writers in the sentiments school readily acknowledge (Shorter, 1975; Stone, 1977; Flandrin, 1979).

We nevertheless have a whole body of literature purporting to describe the cultural values, mind-sets or *mentalité* in pre-industrial times. Shorter (1975), Stone (1977) and Flandrin (1979) all agree that family ideology of the pre-industrial era stressed the importance of community as well as extra-nuclear kin ties and did not place a high premium on privacy, individualism, egalitarianism or love\|affect. As such it can be seen as a set of ideas which favours large extended family households open to 'outside interference' and where relationships had minimal emotional significance for the individuals concerned. But we have also noticed that for England, this depiction has been challenged by Macfarlane (1978) who claims that the English have always been individualistic in family matters and by extension that the ideology which favours neolocalism and the nuclear family pattern was present long before industrialisation, the rise of Protestantism or the state.

Once again introducing a class dimension may solve this contradiction. Stone's analysis is based on information gathered from the elite or at least the literate classes (diaries, love letters, poems, novels etc) whereas Macfarlane claims to be writing about the ordinary people - the peasants who "by definition ... do not keep diaries" (Macfarlane, 1978:66). It is therefore possible that they are describing two distinct cultures associated with two distinct social classes - that of the elite favouring extended family arrangements and that of the lower strata, the nuclear family pattern. This hypothesis needs further analysis for it raises a number of methodological and theoretical questions similar to those I have raised in connection with 'the family' itself. For instance, how do we define culture and

related concepts such as values and norms and how do we uncover the culture of those who are no longer alive to express their desires, ideals or their views as to what is normal or acceptable behaviour?

As noted before, Macfarlane makes the point that documents such as wills should not be taken at face value since they could tell us more about what was not than what was the cultural practice of the community in question. Yet there is at least one instance where Macfarlane himself falls into the same trap (see 1978:75). It is not only in the case of literary or legal documents that there are problems of interpretation, but also those documents which provide data on the structure of households. In this regard, Hammel has indicated "we cannot infer cultural norms from family forms or vice versa, because the relationship is mediated by a variety of demographic, economic, and other factors" (in Kertzer, 1984:209). This then raises the theoretical question of the relationship between the various factors which could account for the nature of the family structures encountered in any given society (see Chapter 7).

Finally, the main lesson we can draw from the work of the family historians discussed in this chapter is the idea of family diversity as an historical reality. We have seen that families vary depending on the social class, region and society. We have also learned that there are many approaches to the study of families in former times. Each of these has its strengths and weaknesses and provides us with a partial view of the phenomenon in question (see Anderson, 1980b). The way forward must then surely be the bringing together of the various schools of thought that have dominated this field. Acknowledgement of the fact that different historians have been focusing on different aspects of 'the family' should assist in this process. In the next chapter I consider family diversity within the context of contemporary societies.

8. NOTES

1. Even though Le Play may never have asserted that large scale multiple households were predominant in peasant society, this is the way his work has been interpreted and, as Laslett indicates,

it is this which is important in considering his influence on the field of family studies (Laslett,1972:17).

2. Mean household size here refers to the figure obtained when the total population is divided by the number of households, institutions are excluded and inmate households are combined with host households (1972:76&133). Laslett calls this ratio 3 and inmates refer to "those casually rather than permanently connected with households" - also known as boarders, lodgers or visitors (1972:35). In the case of Belgrade, however, ratio 5 is used i.e. inmates are also excluded. Laslett contends that in England, at least, the various ratios do not differ significantly from one another. For instance, ratio 1 (total population divided by number of households with no exclusions) for the 100 English communities found in 1574-1821 was 4.841 and ratios 3 and 5 were 4.768 and 4.850 respectively. In other words they were all under 5 persons.

3. In Ealing, 37% of households were nuclear families without servants, 17% were nuclear families with servants and 8% were complex (Laslett,1972:85).

4. Even though Ariès does not take issue directly with Laslett, "Centuries of Childhood" first appearing in French in 1960 and in English two years later i.e. before the publication of Laslett's 1972 work, his work has much in common with the other writers in the 'sentiments school' and can therefore be classified alongside these.

5. The dowry refers to the custom whereby parents of the bride pay a cash amount ('portion') to the parents of the groom at the marriage in exchange for a guarantee that her material needs will be cared for, should she outlive her husband ('jointure') (Stone,1977:88).

6. Stone points out for instance that the practice of inheriting office continued well into the nineteenth century but from the seventeenth century it was no longer taken for granted that this was a legitimate course of action (1977:129).

7. This does not mean that Stone does not offer any insights into the composition of households. But comments such as "among the aristocracy, it was **not uncommon** in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for an enlarged or stem family to cohabit ... whether in England or elsewhere" and "among the impoverished members of the lesser gentry ... married children **also sometimes** lived in the same house as their parents" (Stone,1977:23) (emphasis added) hardly match the statistical rigour of the Cambridge scholars or call into question Laslett's contention that in pre-industrial times households (as co-residential units) were typically of the nuclear rather than the extended-family variety.

8. The opposite is also true. Laslett exaggerates the incidence of 'simple' or 'nuclear' or 'elementary' families by including under these titles households consisting of a married couple and "a widow with offspring" i.e. households which were or are expected to become nuclear families as the term is commonly understood (Laslett,1972:29).

CHAPTER 3

FAMILY DIVERSITY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES (I):

GENDER AND THE DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE

1. INTRODUCTION

Talcott Parsons has been described as "the most notable" and even "**the** modern theorist on the family" (Morgan, 1975:25) and his theory as "coherent", "carefully elaborated" (Elliot, 1986:35) and "critical to the development of sociology of family" (sic) (Aulette, 1994:11) (see also Cheal, 1991). The latter derives from the fact that Parsons' depiction of 'the family' in industrial society has generated a great deal of controversy and debate which has culminated (1) in a questioning of the concept the family (see Chapter 5) and (2) in the acknowledgement of family diversity. It is therefore fitting that this chapter should start with a brief overview of Parsons' theory.

Writing from a structural functionalist perspective, Parsons (1954, 1956) sees social change as a process of structural differentiation involving the transfer of functions from the family to specialised institutions such as the state, the economy, the polity and religion. The outcome of this process, according to Parsons, is not the demise of the family itself but rather its adaptation to the needs of an industrial society\economy and consequently, the emergence of a peculiarly modern type of family. He called this family type "the relatively isolated nuclear family" or "the conjugal family" (Parsons, 1956). It distinguishes itself from previous forms in that it is characterised by (1) a loosening of ties with the wider kin-group and (2) increasing specialisation.

In explaining the transition to this new family type, Parsons places great emphasis on the way in which families sustain themselves materially in a modern society. More particularly, his argument is that because the main source of



family income is now occupational earnings and occupational organisation is "the sociological antithesis" of work organised and performed in kinship units, the development of the occupational system "must be at the expense of the relative prominence of kinship organisation as a structural component (of society)" (1956:12) (emphasis in original). Moreover, the resultant 'isolation' of the family,

"... is manifested in the fact that the members of the nuclear family, consisting of parents and their still dependent children, ordinarily occupy a separate dwelling not shared by members of the family of orientation of either spouse, and that this household is in the typical case economically independent ..."
(Parsons, 1956:10).

While noting that it is "not uncommon" for extra-nuclear relatives to reside with nuclear families, Parsons dismisses these as statistically secondary and outside the norms of a modern society (1956:10)¹. A second reason given for the 'isolated' feature of 'the modern family' is that, to the extent that property is still passed on from one generation to the next, this occurs in an egalitarian manner so that "the fact or expectation of inheritance does not typically bind certain children to their families of orientation more closely than others" (1956:11).

With regard to functions, Parsons contends that although the family becomes 'almost functionless' from a macro-perspective (educative, political and economic functions now being performed in non-kin institutions), it retains some core functions namely socialisation and stabilization of adult personalities. Therefore, instead of performing functions "directly on behalf of society" (as had been the case previously), it now performs them "on behalf of personality". This, Parsons contends, makes the family in its modern form, a necessary institution:

"It is because the human personality is not 'born' but must be 'made' through the socialization process that in the first instance families are necessary ... It is the combination of these two functional imperatives (socialization and stabilization of adult personalities), which explains why, in the 'normal'

case, it is both true that every adult is a member of a nuclear family and that every child must begin his process of socialization in a nuclear family" (Parsons, 1956:16-17).

For 'the family' to be an effective agent of socialization Parsons claims that two conditions must be met: (1) "it must be a small group" and (2) "it must be differentiated into sub-systems" (1956:18). By the latter he means that *within* 'the family' too, there must be specialization of function. In particular, his argument here is that in 'the family', as in any other small group, there is a tendency for differentiation to occur along the instrumental and expressive axes and, given the biological differences between men and women, Parsons claims that it is almost inevitable that this specialization will coincide with the division between the sexes². In the 'modern family' then it is the husband\father who performs the 'boundary role' between 'the family' and the outside world by participating in the occupational sphere and providing materially for women and children i.e. he performs the instrumental function. Mother\wives by contrast, tend to families' emotional needs (expressive function).

Having described 'the modern family' as a small group composed of a husband, wife and their dependent children which maintains physical and economic independence from the families of orientation of both of the spouses and is characterised by a sexual division of labour, Parsons goes on to describe why this particular family form is ideally suited to the needs of a modern economy.

Firstly, because of its reduced size, the relatively isolated nuclear family permits greater mobility than large kin groups or nuclear families which maintain strong extended family ties. Put simply, it is easier for a family to move from place to place if it is not held back by responsibilities and\or emotional ties to a large group of individuals as is the case in extended family arrangements.

Secondly, the division of tasks between men and women also enhances its mobility since there is only one adult - the husband - who specialises in the instrumental function (breadwinner role), wives specialising in the expressive function i.e. tending to the emotional needs of families. This is further reinforced by the physical separation of home and work which comes about as a result of industrialisation. Following Weber, Parsons sees the family and the economy as governed by two contradictory sets of values - particularism and universalism respectively. Against this background, the sexual division of labour in families has the further advantage of avoiding a situation where both sets of values are brought to bear on the same relationship as may be the case if both husband and wife (or son and father) find themselves in the same occupation or firm. It also has the benefit of avoiding "any competition for status, especially between husband and wife, which might be disruptive of the solidarity of marriage" and makes the family's status in the community relatively definite thereby increasing both certainty in social interaction and psychological security (Parsons,1954:192).

Thirdly, the relatively isolated nuclear family also has benefits for the economy since it means that the process of allocating the most qualified people to the jobs where their skills are needed is not hampered by family considerations or connections whether in the form of extended family ties or conflict\competition between two or more breadwinners within families (1954:191-192).

The Parsonian view of the family is therefore one which sees 'the family' as having positive consequences not only for society or the economy but for the individuals who participate in them. Moreover, Parsons has been seen as portraying the family as 'a haven in a heartless world' (Lasch,1977) where children can be properly socialised and adults receive respite from the harsh realities of 'life outside'. As such, Parsons' theory can be seen as representative of a number of theories of the family produced in the 1940's and 1950's (particularly in the United States) and

which together can be grouped under the heading 'standard theory of the family' (Cheal,1991:3).

Beginning in the 1960's this approach became the subject of widespread attack producing what has been referred to as the 'Big Bang' in sociological theories of the family:

"That explosion blew the field apart, and the separate pieces have been flying off in different directions ever since" (Cheal,1991:8).

It is not fortuitous that the 1960's was also the period in the history of the United States which saw the rise of the civil rights, gay rights and women's movements - all of which sought to highlight oppression and emphasise the need for tolerance and acceptance of diversity in lifestyles. Against this background, theories such as that proposed by Parsons were seen as underplaying conflicts within families, differences between them and containing a bias in favour of the conventional nuclear family. More particularly, the Parsonian approach to the family has been accused of perpetuating a number of myths. Some of these are (1) the myth of the monolithic family, (2) the myth of separate spheres and (3) the myth of the undifferentiated family experience (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:11-19; Aulette,1994:4-25). All three issues have been central to the feminist attack against standard sociological theory of the family. In what follows the last two are discussed under the heading 'Gender and Families' while the first is discussed with reference to the domestic life cycle in this chapter and in the next when family diversity in terms of class and ethnicity are addressed.

2. GENDER AND FAMILIES

Feminist writers have been at the forefront of the critique against traditional family sociology. In contrast to the latter, they have emphasised the importance of deconstructing or decomposing 'the family' into its constituent parts and instead of characterising 'it' as either happy, strong, weak, et cetera have asked: For whom and because of whom are families happy,

strong, weak et cetera? (Barrett & McIntosh, 1982; Aulette, 1994:19). They have therefore emphasised divisions within families as well as the different interests and experiences emanating from those divisions. Hartmann, for instance, takes issue with traditional family sociology because:

"(it) assumes the unity of interests among family members: it stresses the role of the family as a unit and tends to downplay conflicts or differences of interest among family members ... I offer an alternative concept of the family as a locus of struggle ... It is a location where people with different activities and interest(s) ... come into conflict with one another" (Hartmann, 1981:368 in Aulette, 1994:19).

The dangers of assuming a convergence of interests between family members have been illustrated in studies conducted in developing societies which show that gender is important in understanding the unequal distribution of income in families. In particular, studies have shown that raising the income of women does more to improve the nutrition of children and the well-being of families as a whole than raising the income of men who are more likely to spend the money on their own personal needs (Blumberg, 1988 in Ferree, 1990: 877). The idea that families are unitary entities in which all have the same interests and experiences is further elaborated below with reference to the sexual division of labour in families.

2.1 The Sexual Division of Labour

In the 1970's Young and Wilmott claimed that they were witnessing the slow emergence of a new family type - the symmetrical family in which the tasks performed by men and women are less segregated and more equal (1973:30-31 in Abercrombie & Warde, 1988:284). They based this observation on changes that were occurring in related areas such as the increasing participation of married women in the paid labour force, the reduction in the fertility rate and changing attitudes towards the roles that men and women perform in families (in Abercrombie & Warde, 1988:284). It was also based on a large-scale study of couples in London

which revealed that despite some degree of 'lag' on the part of older couples and those in lower socio-economic categories, the majority of couples maintained a sexual division of labour in line with the features of 'the symmetrical family':

"Husbands also did a lot of work in the home, including many jobs which are not at all traditional men's ones ... there is now no sort of work in the home strictly reserved for wives. Even clothes-washing and bed-making, still ordinarily thought of as women's jobs, were frequently mentioned by husbands as things they did as well. The extent of the sharing is probably still increasing" (Young & Wilmott, 1973:94 in Abercrombie & Warde, 1988:184-285).

Subsequent research has shown that the changes which Young and Wilmott predicted have been slow and can be attributed, not to men's greater involvement in domestic affairs, but women's lesser involvement therein. Coverman's summary of research conducted on the sexual division of labour in families in the United States, for instance, reveals that between the 1960's and the 1980's women's involvement in domestic labour has declined by roughly 20% while men's involvement has remained relatively constant with only a slight increase of less than 2% from the late 1970's to the early 1980's (in Aulette, 1994:189). Coverman's research also shows that unemployed wives spend substantially more time on housework than employed ones (about 20% difference) but that the difference between the latter and men is also substantial - again about 20%. The greater participation of married women in the paid labour force has therefore been associated with a decline in their involvement in domestic labour but has left that of their husbands more or less intact. This is one of the reasons why studies which show that the **proportion** of housework performed by men and women has become more equal, are misleading - it has come about not because men do more but because (working) women do less. This change notwithstanding, men are still doing only about 30% of the total hours of unpaid work performed in and around the home (Elliot, 1986:85; Abercrombie & Warde, 1988:223; Ferree, 1990:875; Thompson & Walker, 1991:85; Aulette, 1994:191). This finding has prompted one researcher to comment that men's involvement in domestic labour is a question of "much ado about

nothing" (in Thompson & Walker,1991:85) (see also Bernard in Skolnick & Skolnick,1989 and Greson & Lowe,1993).

Research conducted in South Africa on this question suggests that neither the United States nor Britain are unique in terms of the findings that have emerged on the sexual division of labour in those societies. Maconachie's large scale study of White couples in South Africa revealed that the division of labour is highly segregated - the majority of domestic tasks being performed by either wives or husbands (1992a:13). Maconachie also found that those tasks which women performed were greater in number, needed to be done more regularly, were more time consuming and were more likely to be performed indoors than those undertaken by men (1992a:13-14).

An interesting aspect of Maconachie's research concerns the impact of the employment of a domestic worker on the division of labour between husbands and wives. In other societies, this has been identified as one of the possible 'solutions' to the problem of gender inequalities in terms of domestic labour (Aulette,1994). However, Maconachie found that the employment of a domestic worker (which applied in 80% of cases) **further reduced** men's involvement in housework. Put differently, Maconachie found that it was the absence of 'paid help' that increased men's contribution to domestic labour and that "more than half (58.1%) of all (domestic) tasks were at least twice as likely to be shared by those couples who did **not** employ a domestic worker" (1992a:17-18) (emphasis added).

Research conducted on the sexual division of labour therefore suggests that Parsons was not far off the mark when he described the family as divided between men and women in terms of the expressive and instrumental dichotomy. The main difference between Parsons and his feminist critics has, however, been in terms of the value judgement made of that division - the feminist argument being that what may be functional for society and even children is not functional for (beneficial to) women. The

'feminist position' on this issue has, however, not remained static.

2.1.1 Is Domestic Labour Bad ?

The question of whether the sexual division of labour is per definition oppressive to women has been a bone of contention both within the feminist movement and between feminists and non-feminists. In the 1970's it became commonplace for feminist writers to characterise the home as a prison and domestic labour as a burden which society unfairly expected women to bear. Moreover, acceptance by women of their place in the domestic division of labour was easily dismissed as a case of false consciousness in action. In support of the former contention, Oakley's work showed that apart from the fact that domestic labour is performed in social isolation and is not paid, housewives - more so than factory workers - experience their work as monotonous and fragmented (Oakley,1974 in Abercrombie & Warde,1988:287). Comer made the following comment having conducted similar research:

"I expected to hear complaints, but I never dreamed for a moment I would encounter so much sadness, bitterness and disillusion" (Comer,1974 in Barrett & McIntosh,1982:63).

In the 1980's Barrett and McIntosh continued the analogy between the home and a prison by arguing that the housewife role involves "long hours of working banged up in a solitary cell while the guards attend other, more important business" (1982:58). Bernard (1982 in Zinn & Eitzen,1990:271) gave substance to this view of housework by showing that while married men are generally healthier and happier than non-married men, the opposite is true when married and non-married women are compared - married women having a greater tendency to be depressed and to exhibit other mental health problems than unmarried women. This brings her to the conclusion that in any marital union "there are two marriages ... and his is better than hers" (Bernard,1982 quoted in Carlson,1990). In terms of this perspective, then, housework is

seen as something which - given the opportunity - any rational person would seek to avoid (Ferree,1990). More recently, however, feminist writers have paid more attention to the ambivalence rather than the outright negative feelings women have in relation to domestic work.

To some extent, this is a reaction to empirical studies which show that there is a great deal of support on the part of both men and women for the traditional division of labour between the sexes. For instance, studies conducted in the United States show that nearly half of all couples think that income earning should be solely the husbands' responsibility and that only a minority of women would like to do less housework (21%) and/or would like their husbands to do more housework (36%) (Ferree,1990:873). Other studies have shown that 61% of women in Britain and 68% of those in West Germany believe that a woman should stay at home when her children are under school age (Elliot,1996:31). A further 29% and 22% respectively showed a preference for part-time employment while only 3% and 2% respectively believed that she should work full-time (Elliot,1996). Even in a society like Sweden where progressive gender policies have been practised for more than two decades, studies show that the vast majority of the population (82% in one survey) feel that it is better for a woman to stay at home and not be employed while her children are young (in Ellingsaeter,1994:6). Moreover, although younger women and men tend to be less traditional, a significant proportion of them (about one third) support the traditional motherhood model (in Ellingsaeter,1994:6). Ellingsaeter's own research revealed that nearly two thirds of the men (60.1%) and just under half of the women (48.2%) interviewed, expressed a preference for the 'male as sole provider' or 'wife as junior provider' models (1994:30). Finally, Maconachie's study of White couples in South Africa revealed that 85% of subjects believe that the husband should be the head of the home and 73% expressed the view that women with preschool children should not be employed (1992b:314). Data such as these present a challenge to a feminist movement which wishes

to 'take seriously what women say about themselves' while at the same time highlighting women's oppression.

This realisation has resulted in the family and housework being portrayed in a much more complex and ambivalent way by feminists in the late 1980's and 1990's. In this regard, Ferree points out that the 'new gender approach' sees women as playing an active role in gender construction and "redefines families as ... crucibles of care and conflict ... (of) separateness and solidarity" (1990:880). She further indicates that according to the new gender model "family relationships ... may be simultaneously supportive and oppressive for women" (1990:879). The new gender approach, Ferree contends, also places emphasis on the symbolic meaning of housework and suggests that variation in this area may be the key to understanding the behaviour of men and women in families. For instance, Hochschild's research showed that where housework carries the meaning of subordination it is avoided by both men and women (in Ferree, 1990). While there is still a strong emphasis on the older structuralist (women as oppressed by structures beyond their control) approach, there is at least the suggestion that feminist writers of the late 1980's and 1990's are beginning to ask questions more in line with empirical research in the area of gender issues. Questions such as why there is so little conflict over housework in families, questions about the differences between women in their views on the sexual division of labour as fair or not and "when and how do women lower their standards for housework and challenge the equation of caring and cleaning?" are being posed (Ferree, 1990: 876).

Finally, as in the case of 'the family' it has become increasingly apparent that housework is not a unitary category. Rather, housework groups together a number of tasks some of which are experienced positively while others are not. Indeed, it is this distinction which goes some way towards explaining the reluctance on the part of many women to 'allow' their husbands to participate more fully in domestic tasks - husbands wishing

to share in the more pleasant tasks such as bathing children and cooking (Elliot,1986:85).

The upshot of this development in feminist writing is therefore that women are no longer portrayed as mere victims of structural\societal forces and the family seen as (nothing other than) a prison from which any rational woman would want to escape or at least radically transform. It would appear, then, that feminist writers of the 1990's have moved beyond the position where they are merely content to offer a different value judgement on the sexual division of labour to that underlying Parsons' theory.

2.2 The family-work connection:

Crucial to Parsons' theory is a rigid (and oppositional) distinction between home and work; family and the economy or the private and the public spheres. Feminist and other writers (see Donzelot, 1980 and Lasch,1977) have sought to challenge this distinction in a variety of ways:

"If any one statement can be said to define the most prevalent sociological position on work and family, it is the myth of separate worlds. The myth goes like this: In a modern industrial society, work life and family constitute two separate and non-overlapping worlds with their own functions, territories, and behavioural rules. Each operates by its own laws and can be studied independently ... a corollary of the myth is the assumed separation of men's and women's domains, with the family woman's place" (Kanter,1977:16&20 in Aulette,1994:20).

In industrialised societies the association between men and the provider role has been controverted in the course of this century by the increasing participation of women - particularly married women - in the paid labour force. Some societies have reached the point where the majority of women are now in paid employment (U.S.A., Sweden and Britain) whereas in South Africa, women constituted about 40% of the labour force in 1991 and the proportion of all women that is economically active (in the formal economy) was about one third (see Tables 3.1 & 3.2).³

Table 3.1

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY GENDER SOUTH AFRICA		
GENDER	1985	1991
Male	63.6%	60.6%
Female	36.4%	39.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Source: South African Labour Statistics 1993:2.72.

Table 3.2

PERCENTAGE OF ALL WOMEN IN LABOUR FORCE FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES				
COUNTRY	1970*	1980*	1988**	1991***
U.S.A.	43.3%	51.5%	60.0%	57.5%
Japan	49.3%	46.6%	-	-
France	40.1%	42.7%	46.0%	-
Germany	38.4%	38.2%	42.0%	-
Britain	42.4%	48.3%	51.5%	-
Italy	26.2%	29.9%	-	-
Sweden	50.0%	59.3%	-	-
South Africa	-	32.1%	-	35.0%

* Van der Walt, 1987:1&5
 ** USA figure from Schaefer and Lamm, 1992:337, rest from Lane 1993:274-301.
 *** U.S.A. figure from Aulette, 1994:155, South Africa figure from South African Labour Statistics, 1993:1.6 & 2.73).

The tendency has therefore been towards the sharing of the breadwinner role rather than its confinement to men. Seen in conjunction with the results of studies on the domestic division of labour this means that women have crossed over 'the gender line' by participating in the instrumental role but that there has been little movement in the other direction.

These statistics are, however, misleading in a number of respects. Firstly, they ignore participation by women in the

informal economy which in the case of South African black women is of particular significance. Secondly, they imply that women are becoming more economically active than they were in the past. The latter derives from the fact that they ignore the economic value of work performed by women in the home both in the form of domestic labour and other activities such as taking in boarders and lodgers (Thompson & Walker, 1991:81).

In industrial societies the physical separation between home and work as well as the distinction between paid and unpaid work therefore sustains the ideology of separate spheres by rendering women's economic contributions to their families invisible. In this regard, Ann Oakley's research has been described as groundbreaking in that it was the first attempt to analyse domestic labour using the same framework as is normally applied to paid labour (working conditions, hours, satisfaction etc) (Aulette, 1994:187). In the 1970's and 1980's this issue became the prime focus of what is known as the domestic labour debate the upshot of which is the idea that families are not just units of consumption (as Parsons contended) but by virtue of women's domestic labour, also units of production (Secombe, 1974 in Anderson, 1980a:370-395).⁴

More recently, feminist writers have shown that it is not only in the working class that women's activities have economic significance. They have, for instance, challenged the idea of 'a self-made man' by showing how the activities of middle and upper class wives contribute to and in fact enable their husbands to achieve success in the formal economy - entertaining colleagues, doing voluntary charity work and most importantly of course tending to household management and raising children (Elliot, 1986:89; Ferree, 1990:873). Against this background the notion of a 'two person career' where only one gets the recognition and the pay may be more appropriate than the notion of 'self-made man' (Papanek, 1973 in Ferree, 1990:873). Feminist writers and researchers have therefore gone some way towards demystifying what is usually defined as 'a labour of love' and

rendered invisible because it is unpaid, by showing that because of the domestic labour performed by women, the economic significance of the family extends beyond its role as a unit of consumption. As such, they have challenged the idea of 'separate spheres' - home and work, family and economy.

Returning to the distinction between paid and unpaid labour, the data contained in Tables 3.1 & 3.2 suggest that Maconachie is correct when she asserts that women's greater involvement in domestic labour should be seen against the background of their lesser involvement in paid employment (1992a:22). But it is also important to bear in mind that we are not dealing here with a simple trade-off between waged work and domestic labour. This observation is part of a critique which feminist writers have launched against the 'economistic' approach to the question of explaining the division of labour in families. Also known as the resource model, this approach has been put forward by Becker who claims that the domestic division of labour is the result of a rational decision making process involving both men and women and which takes account of two questions: Who earns the highest wages? and Who is the most skilled at housework? (Becker 1981 in Aulette, 1994:203). In other words, Becker sees the sexual division of labour as the result of a rational appraisal of the potential pay-off associated with different allocations of 'market work' and domestic work between the sexes. One of the ways in which feminist writers have responded to this theory is to challenge it on 'rational' grounds by pointing out (1) that even when men and women have full time jobs - women perform far more domestic labour than men and (2) while time availability has some bearing of the allocation of domestic tasks - gender has a greater influence (Ferree, 1990:877). The latter is based on the observation that when women take up full employment and reduce their involvement in domestic labour, the work they had previously done in the home is either left undone or taken over by other women (daughters and 'paid help'):

"At least for some households, it seems more acceptable to do without certain amounts or kinds of unpaid labour than to have it done by the person of

the 'wrong' gender" (Ferree,1990:875-876).

It is not only in terms of domestic labour per se but also the nature and consequences of men and women's patterns of employment that the connection between gender, family and paid work is apparent. In this regard, research shows that where women are in paid employment it is likely to be less continuous than is the case with men, they tend to be concentrated in those sectors that represent an extension of 'the expressive role' and that women's income from employment outside the home tends to be less than that of men (Elliot,1986; Zinn & Eitzen,1990; Aulette,1994). As regards the first of these, Inkeles and Sasaki (1996: 222-239) compared data from national representative samples of the adult population in twelve industrialised societies in the late 1960's and early 1970's and found that marriage has an important bearing on women's labour force participation rates. In some instances (Netherlands, West Germany and Northern Ireland) the difference in the labour force participation rate of 'ever married' and 'never married' women ranged from 35 to 45%. In other instances (Denmark, Finland and Sweden), the difference was small - less than 8%. But in all cases, with the exception of Japan, married women were less likely to be in paid employment than those who had never been married (1996:226).

To some extent, these statistics mask the fact that it is child-bearing rather than marriage per se that tends to influence women's labour force participation. In this regard, studies conducted in the 1980's show that only 16% of German women with children followed the typically male pattern of continuous employment (Lane,1993:82). The tendency on the part of women to interrupt their careers at the birth of their children is particularly marked in Britain where only 4% had continuous careers and only 40% of women (aged 25-49) with children under two years (compared with 70% of those with children aged 6-13) were employed outside the home in the 1980's (Elliot,1986:87; Lane,1993:82). More recent statistics suggest that while there has been some change, it has not been dramatic. For instance, the

British General Household Survey of 1992 shows that while there has been an increase in the proportion of women aged 16 to 59 in paid employment between 1973 and 1992 (58% to 66%) only 11% of women with children under 5 years and 20% all women with dependent children were in full time employment in 1992 compared with 7% and 17% in 1973 respectively (in Elliot,1996:30). Moreover, while women in each successive post-war generation in Britain are returning to work sooner after the birth of children than the previous one, the major change appears to be in the area of part-time employment: In 1973, 30% of women with dependent children in Britain were in part time employment compared with 39% in 1992 (Elliot,1996:30). These statistics therefore show that in the case of women, family considerations continue to have an important impact on employment patterns.

To the extent that marriage and child-bearing correlate with age, the table below indicates that the same is true of women in South Africa. There are however, a number of problems with the categories used here: (1) They are too large to enable an identification of the precise turning point of labour force participation; (2) they do not discriminate between married and unmarried women or those with and without children and (3) the data refer to all South African women and as such may mask important differences between women in different population groups. We can therefore only draw rather crude and tentative conclusions from the table: relative both to men and themselves, women's labour force participation tends to be low in the 20 to 24 age category when childbearing is most likely to occur, it increases thereafter and declines again - probably when women are in their early forties. The latter phase probably coincides with children leaving home and therefore a reduction in families' economic needs. By contrast, the statistics for men suggest that in their case, retirement is the main if not the only factor affecting labour force participation. In general, the table suggests that women's employment is conditional (on child-bearing and economic need) whereas men's is part of the normal course of events.

Table 3.3

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BY AGE AND GENDER (1991) SOUTH AFRICA				
AGE	TOTAL POPULATION		ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE	
	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE
- 20	49.6%	50.4%	3.4%	4.1%
20 - 24	49.6%	50.4%	49.8%	62.7%
25 - 34	48.9%	51.1%	63.6%	89.4%
35 - 54	49.6%	50.4%	57.4%	92.1%
55 - 64	52.6%	47.4%	28.5%	70.5%
65 +	58.6%	41.4%	5.2%	21.3%
TOTAL	51.5%	48.4%	34.7%	56.7%

Source: South African Labour Statistics, 1993:1.6 & 2.73.

The way in which 'the family' - particularly the idea of separate spheres - impacts on employment finds further manifestation in the phenomenon of job segregation by gender. In this regard, research shows that women continue to be employed in those occupations that represent an extension of 'the expressive role'. Table 3.4 illustrates this in the case of South Africa:

Table 3.4

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY ECONOMIC SECTOR AND GENDER - SOUTH AFRICA 1993			
ECONOMIC SECTOR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Construction	93.7%	6.3%	4.5%
Manufacturing	71.1%	28.9%	12.2%
Community, Social & Personal Services	37.6%	62.4%	22.7%
Wholesale, Retail, Catering & Accommodation Services	59.3%	40.7%	11.7%
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	52.1%	47.9%	4.3%
Mining & Quarrying	96.8%	3.2%	7.3%

* Selected sectors.
Source: South African Labour Statistics, 1993:2.18.
TBVC areas excluded.

As indicated here, women constitute the majority in only one sector: the Community, Social and personal services sector and are well represented in other occupations such as catering. Moreover, in the case of Black South African women, about 37% of those in formal employment, were working as domestic labourers in others' homes in 1993 (Makgetla,1995:11)⁵. In this regard, Barrett and McIntosh claim that the correspondence between the division of labour in families and that found in paid employment is a clear indication of the way in which "the imagery of idealized family life" has been extended to non-family spheres:

"the work women do for wages is, by and large, nothing other than domestic labour in a different context. Where there is cooking, cleaning, nursing the sick, minding and teaching small children, sewing, servicing men and being charming to be done - there will women be found ..." (1982:29).

Other writers have indicated how 'women's work' has shifted from unpaid to paid and back to unpaid depending on the financial position of the state. A case in point is nursing which was originally defined as part of domestic labour, then became a paid occupation and in Britain "is now being transferred back into the home as unpaid labor, as hospitals respond to cost-containment pressures by sending patients home 'quicker and sicker' to be cared for by family members, primarily wives, daughters, and daughters-in-law (Abel,1986;Glazer,1988)" (in Ferree,1990:875). This trend is likely to continue in industrialised societies where an ageing population is putting great pressure on the welfare state but is also likely to occur in third world societies where the welfare state is underdeveloped and medical costs are consequently high.

The similarity between the domestic division of labour and the division of labour in paid employment is therefore a further example of not only the interconnection between the family and the economy but the gendered nature of that interconnection.

Finally, the fact that women are more involved in domestic labour and child care than men, as well as the assumption\belief

that they *should* carry the greater responsibility for these activities, coalesce to create a situation where women have less economic power than men. This is the case both in terms of the kind of position held in the economy (rank or prestige) and income. In South Africa, White men held 76%, White women 13%, African men 2% and African women less than a half a percent of managerial positions in the formal economy in 1989 (Makgetla,1995:24). Moreover, a large scale study (N = 5244 individuals) conducted by van der Walt in the 1980's and including Asian, Coloured and White married couples, revealed that the average annual income of males in full-time employment was double that of females (1987:32 & 34). A more recent survey of South African graduates reveals that women in the public sector earn 72.8%, those in the private sector 77.6% and those in self-employment 62.6% of men's salaries (HSRC,1991:30%31).⁶ Again, South Africa is by no means unique in this respect (see Abercrombie & Warde,1988; Zinn & Eitzen,1990; Aulette,1994). In 1988, German, French and British women in the Banking and Finance sector were earning 78%, 75% and 53% of male wages respectively (Lane,1993:90). Moreover, German women made up only 8.1% of those in the top earning bracket in 1982 compared with 6.7% in the case of British women in 1985 (Lane,1993:90).

The lower earnings of women are of course related in part to the positions they hold and can be explained in terms of the fact that women tend to be concentrated in the lower echelons of economic organisations. What is also in need of explanation, though, is why women who have the same level of educational attainment, skills and work experience still earn substantially less than men (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:135). All indications are that the answer to this question lies in the tendency both among employers and women themselves to define women's employment as secondary and thereby of the influence of ideas about family life as well as the reality of women's domestic activities, on employment patterns. The expectation that women are 'secondary earners' can easily translate into a lack of willingness to pay women at the same rate as men, invest in their development as

workers which in turn reduces their chances of promotion and thereby their chances of obtaining better remunerated positions. Similarly, the fact that women shoulder the greater responsibility for housework and child care can hamper their occupational achievements.

Returning to Becker's explanation for the domestic division of labour as the outcome of a rational decision making process, it is important to note one is dealing here with a circular phenomenon or mutually reinforcing forces rather than a simple cause and effect relationship. It is not simply the case that men do less domestic labour because they have better and more time-consuming jobs. Rather it is that men have more economic power than women because they hold better jobs; because they hold better jobs they are 'freed' from the bulk of domestic labour; because of their minimal involvement in domestic labour they are 'freed' to acquire even better jobs. This circularity can also be illustrated in the case of women:

"Women are stuck: employers justify offering women bad jobs because they see women as unreliable workers who are committed first to their families and only secondarily to their jobs. Because of the scarcity of good jobs for women, however, women may as well stay secondary providers and be responsive to their families. The smaller earnings of women compared with men are a cause, as well as a result of women's lower participation in paid work ..." (Thompson & Walker, 1991:82).

The fact that family and paid work are "part of a single interlocking system" (Ferree, 1990:874) rather than separate sites of men and women's activities (or women's oppression) is one of the reasons why attempts to improve the position of women by focusing efforts on one or other of these spheres is unlikely to succeed. This is aptly illustrated by Hansson when she comments on the demand made by South African women in the 1980's to abolish a prohibition on women working at night (Convention 89, International Labour Organisation, 1948 in Hansson, 1994:42). When this demand was acceded to (see the South African Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1983) there was a great deal of

resistance from those women who found themselves in a precarious position in the labour market:

"They pointed out that the new law resulted in employers expecting women to work nights ... For these women, having to do night work had a number of negative consequences including for example, increased difficulty in finding child-care, greater costs associated with child care, and higher risks of violence when using public transport at night and in the early hours of the morning. For the many women workers who bore sole responsibility for domestic work and child rearing, but who could not afford to pay for domestic labour, this legal change meant that they would have to work both day and night" (1994:42).

The other side of the coin is the case where individual couples reorganise the domestic division of labour along egalitarian lines only to find that the men involved in such arrangements are disadvantaged relative to other men who continue to structure their family lives along traditional lines. Both cases illustrate the futility of attempts to reorganise either 'the family' or 'the economy' while leaving the other sphere intact.

The latter case also highlights the fact that to date most economies have been structured on the premise that a worker 'has a wife' i.e. a full-time support system at home (Ferree, 1990:873; Zinn & Eitzen, 1990). It is therefore not only in terms of women's but also men's employment that the ideology of the family has been transferred to the economic domain. One of the consequences of this is that "men's paid employment has been taken for granted (and) the demands it may place on other family members normalized" (Ferree, 1990:871) whereas women's employment continues to be seen as contingent on economic need and 'family circumstances'.

Acknowledgement of the interconnection between family, gender and paid work has led to the recognition that, in contrast to the 'ideology of separate spheres', it is important to "treat **both** men and women as family members and workers **simultaneously**" (Ferree, 1990:871 emphasis added). It has also led to the recognition that improving women's position in society requires

more than adjusting the economy to accommodate 'women's needs'. Rather, given that gender is relational rather than essential and the interconnections between family and economy referred to above, it **also** requires a transformation of the ideas about family life which informs the way in which the economy is presently structured as well as changes in the behaviour of men:

"It is not confinement in the home so much as the historically constructed structural and ideological incompatibilities between home and workplace that limit women's efforts to gain equality ... the gender perspective views both macro and micro structures of the work-family system (as in need of reform) ... Because men's jobs and career paths are gendered and built upon a structure of family support that is also gendered, changes for women necessarily also imply changes for men ..." (Ferree, 1990:874).

2.3 Conclusion

Since Parsons, writers have challenged the idea that families can be or should be analysed as unitary entities in which all have the same interests and experiences. Diversity *within* families has therefore been stressed. This has been illustrated above with reference to the sexual division of labour which continues to be a salient feature of the lived experience of family life in societies throughout the world. The data presented in this respect show that regardless of how women or feminists feel about domestic labour, the fact that women carry the bulk of this responsibility means that their experiences of family life are likely to be significantly different to those of men. The most important point to be made here is that *contra* Parsons, 'the family' is not a haven or a refuge from the world of work for women:

"When we acknowledge that family experiences are based on gender, we can better understand the problems associated with the image of the family as a haven or a domestic retreat. The family is idealized as a personal retreat, yet it is for women a workplace, a place of domestic labor and childcare. For whom then is the home a refuge, a nurturant haven? Barrie Thorne has provided the answer: 'For men, who do far less housework than women, the home indeed may be experienced as a refuge, or at least a place of leisure. But for almost all women, the home is a place

of considerable work ...' (Thorne,1982:15)" (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:18).

This inequality translates into differences in terms of the connection between home and paid work. Put simply, in the case of men it is much easier to maintain the illusion of separate spheres since for them the connection between home and work is more or less exhausted by the pay-package. By contrast women who do go into paid employment are more likely to - and be expected to - juggle home and work responsibilities and for that reason take up part-time employment, interrupt their careers and earn less money.

Above I have focused mainly on the sexual division of labour to illustrate the idea that gender continues to have an important impact on the way family life is experienced. I could have discussed other phenomena such as the divorce experience and family violence (see Zinn & Eitzen,1990; Aulette,1994). But the idea would have been the same: To paraphrase Ramphela (in Campbell,1990b:2), just as 'the family' is an important key to understanding gender so too is gender an important key to understanding the notion of 'family diversity'. 'The family' is simply not the same for men and women. It is this which the gendered interconnection between family, paid and unpaid work highlights.

3. THE DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE

There has been a great deal of controversy in the literature about the merits and demerits of various approaches to the domestic life cycle (see Wall et al,1983; Kertzner,1984; Kertzner,1985; Bernardes,1986a; Maconachie,1989a). One of these consists of taking the domestic group (household) itself as the unit of analysis and documenting the changes which it undergoes over time. This is the approach adopted by Fortes (in Goody,1958) who distinguishes between three phases in the developmental cycle of the domestic group: The first is the phase of expansion which, in his view, starts with the marriage of two people and lasts

until the birth of the youngest child; this is followed by the phase of dispersion which often overlaps with the first and begins with the marriage of the oldest child and continues until all the children are married. He calls the third phase the phase of replacement "which ends with the death of the parents and the replacement in the social structure of the family they founded by the families of their children ..." (Fortes in Goody, 1958:4-5). Two of the shortcomings of this approach are: (1) that it assumes a single normal experience of family life and (2) that it is difficult to apply in practice except where the household is connected to a particular physical structure or geographical location such as a house or an estate (Kertzer, 1984:211).

An alternative approach is the one which takes the individual as the unit of analysis and documents the nature of the domestic arrangement in which he/she participates over time. Without entering further into the above-mentioned debate, the domestic life cycle concept is used here to illustrate the fact that households change over time and that individuals participate in a number of households in the course of a life time - only some of which (and sometimes none) are conventional nuclear families. Events such as marriage, birth, death, employment, unemployment and divorce all mark stages in the life cycle of the individual which have implications for the nature of domestic arrangements and can influence attitudes towards family issues. Divorce or death can, for example, mean that the individual moves from a nuclear family to a single parent family and back into a nuclear family (reconstituted nuclear family in this case) if remarriage occurs. Similarly, unemployment can lead to a change from a dual-earner family to a one-earner family or alternatively the role of economic provider may shift from one individual to another (for example from a man to a woman) which could affect the way the division of labour within the family or household is organised. Finally, views on parenthood (who constitutes a parent and what is expected of parents) can be affected by divorce and remarriage. This approach then, places family life in a dynamic perspective. It is illustrated below using data pertaining to

White South Africans.

3.1 THE DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE AND WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS

The table below sets out what may be described as a 'normal' domestic life cycle for middle-class Whites and illustrates that even when there is no deviation from the norm, individuals participate in a number of household types and the nuclear family constitutes only one third of these:

Table 3.5

A 'NORMAL' DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE		
	HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	STAGE
1.	Nuclear Family	At birth.
2.	Single Person Household*	Upon completion of formal education.
3.	Couple Household	After marriage.
4.	Nuclear Family	After birth of first child.
5.	Couple Household	When youngest child leaves home.
6.	Single Person Household	When one spouse dies.
* Or other arrangement such as living with friend\s.		

By using data pertaining to age at marriage, fertility and life expectancy, it is furthermore possible to ascertain the approximate time spent in nuclear family households (see below).

Table 3.6

A 'NORMAL' DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE (YEARS)			
	HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	FEMALES	MALES
1.	Nuclear Family	0 - 18	0 - 18
2.	Single Person Household*	18 - 22	18 - 25
3.	Couple Household	22 - 24	25 - 27
4.	Nuclear Family	24 - 44	27 - 47
5.	Couple Household	44 - 65	47 - 65
6.	Single Person Household	65 - 70	----

* Or other arrangement such as living with friend\s.

Table 3.6 is based on the assumption that White children leave their parental home at the age of 18 and that married couples wait 2 years before having their first child. It is also based on census data which show that in 1980 the average age at marriage for White women and White men was 21.8 and 24.3 respectively; that the fertility of White women was 2.05 and the life expectancy of White males and White females was 64.5 and 70.1 respectively (Strijdom, 1987:454&456; Simkins, 1986:28).

These data suggest that White women and White men typically spend 54% and 58% of their life-time as members of a nuclear family respectively. But, being based on averages, the above information is obviously a simplification and as such does not necessarily reflect the life-course of any particular individual or individuals. The 'real situation' is further complicated by the fact that many White children spend a large part if not all of their school years in boarding schools and therefore away from their parental home. Table 3.6 can nevertheless serve as an ideal type against which the actual domestic life cycles of individuals can be measured (see Chapter 10)⁷. Some of the assumptions on which these calculations are based have already been mentioned. But more important than these, is the assumption that marriages remain intact. Since we know that for an increasing number of White South Africans this is not the case, this issue deserves more attention.

3.2 DIVORCE, COHABITATION AND THE DOMESTIC LIFE-CYCLE

White South Africans are known to have one of the highest divorce rates in the world. The specific divorce rate (number of divorces per 1000 marriages) for White South Africans has risen in the course of this century from 3.5 in 1935 to 16.3 in 1982. Since then it has declined slightly to 15.8 in 1989 (Central Statistical Services, 1989, Report Number 03-07-01:7-8). The crude divorce rate (number of divorces per 1000 population) for White South Africans has also risen from 0.11 in 1915 to 3.65 in 1984 (Strijdom, 1987:459). The table below compares the specific divorce rate for White South Africans with that for other countries. As can be noted, White South Africans are surpassed only by Americans in terms of their propensity to divorce⁸.

Table 3.7

SPECIFIC DIVORCE RATE FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES				
COUNTRY	1960	1970	1980	1990
United States	9.9	15.0	23.0	21.0
South Africa (Whites)	6.4	9.0	15.6	15.8
Denmark	6	8	11	13
Great Britain	2	5	12	13
Sweden	5	7	11	12
Canada	2	6	11	11
Germany	4	5	6	8
France	3	3	6	8
Netherlands	2	3	8	8
Japan	4	4	5	5
Italy	N.A.	1	1	2

Sources: South African data from Central Statistical Services, 1989, Report Number 03-07-01:7-8. The rest from Henslin (1996:313).
 Note: For France and South Africa the last column is 1989; and for Great Britain, it is 1988.

Further evidence of the rise of the divorce rate among White South Africans can be found by considering changes in the marital status of White women from 1970 to 1991 (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

MARITAL STATUS OF WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN (ALL AGES)			
MARITAL STATUS	1970*	1980*	1991**
Never Married: - 18	-	-	(27.5%)
18 +	-	-	(11.5%)
Total Never Married	45.3%	42.2%	39.0%
Married	44.9%	45.6%	45.5%
Living Together	0.3%	1.2%	1.9%
Widowed	7.7%	8.1%	9.1%
Divorced	1.8%	2.9%	4.5%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%
Sources:* Simkins, 1986:31; ** Central Statistical Services, 1991, Report Number 03-01-00:1.11.			

While the data in Table 3.8 suggest that the marriage rate among White women has remained relatively constant and that there has been a significant decline in the proportion not marrying, it is important to bear in mind that these statistics are sensitive to changes in the age structure of the population. In this regard, Simkins contends that if the propensity to marry had remained constant in each age category, the proportion of White women who were married in 1980 would have been 47.1% and concludes that there has therefore been a slight decline in the popularity of marriage in their case (Simkins, 1986:32). It is nevertheless also the case that remarriage among divorced and widowed people contributes towards keeping the popularity of marriage intact.

This can be gleaned from Table 3.9 (below) which shows a decline in the proportion of all marriages that are first

marriages for both spouses of 17.7% in the period between 1965 and 1988. This figure is only slightly lower than the increase in the proportion of marriages involving at least one divorcee (19.9%). On the basis of these data, one would therefore expect an increasing proportion of all households to be remarriage or reconstituted families.

Table 3.9

MARRIAGES: WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS		
YEAR	FIRST MARRIAGE FOR BOTH SPOUSES	INVOLVING AT LEAST ONE DIVORCEE
1965	77.4%	16.9%
1970	77.0%	11.2%
1975	72.7%	22.4%
1980	67.8%	28.1%
1984	63.8%	32.3%
1988	59.7%	36.8%

Sources: Strijdom, 1987:452; Steyn, 1991:29.
Totals do not add up to 100% because they exclude marriages involving widows\ers and non-divorcees.

Table 3.8 also suggests that there has been a rise in the rate of cohabitation among White South African women. While still low, it has increased more than 6 times since 1970 and means that an increasing proportion of White households are now being headed by unmarried couples. Taken together, these social trends imply that for an increasing proportion of White South African women, the 'normal' domestic life cycle depicted previously is becoming a less accurate reflection of their life experience and that the one depicted below may be more apt:

Table 3.10

DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE INVOLVING DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE AND LIVING TOGETHER		
	HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	STAGE
1	Conventional Nuclear Family	At birth.
2	Single Parent Household	When parents divorce.
3	Single Person Household*	Upon completion of formal education.
4	No-marriage Couple Household	Living together.
5	Married Couple Household	After marriage.
6	Conventional Nuclear Family	After birth of first child.
7	Single Parent Family	Upon divorce.
8	No-marriage Couple Household	Living together.
9	Re-marriage Family Household	Upon re-marriage.
10	Re-marriage Couple Household	When children leave home.
11	Single Person Household	When one spouse dies.
* Or other arrangement such as living with friend\s.		

As can be noted, when increasing divorce and cohabitation rates are taken into account the number of phases in the domestic life cycle almost doubles and the significance of the conventional nuclear family (first marriage couples and their biological offspring) declines. Other trends are having a similar effect: the trend towards lower fertility implies a reduction in absolute terms of phase 6 (conventional nuclear family) while the rise in the average age at marriage is likely to lead to an increase in phase 3 (single person household prior to marriage)⁹. The rise in the average age at first child birth could mean an extension of phase 5 (couple household before birth of children) or 3 (single person household) - as child-bearing becomes the rationale for marriage. Finally, the increase in life expectancy is associated with an extension of phase 11 (single person household). In sum, while some of these trends are rendering the domestic life cycle more complex and others are extending the length of some phases in the 'normal' domestic life cycle, taken together, their effect is a reduction in the proportion of a

life-time spent in the context of a conventional nuclear family - the basis of Parsons' theory of the family.

This trend is not unique to South Africa. Between 1960 and 1990 the proportion of all households that consisted of a married couple and dependent children has declined from 55% to 36% in the Netherlands; 51% to 32% in Canada; 49% to 36% in Japan; 44% to 27% in the United States; 38% to 28% in Britain and 36% to 22% in Sweden (Schaefer & Lamm,1992:383). Therefore, if we take the beginning of the twentieth century as our starting point, then it would appear that the nuclear family is declining in significance while other family and household types are becoming more common. In the United States, for instance, single person households and single parent households increased in the period between 1960 and 1990 from 21.5 to 37.1% and 3.8 to 8% respectively (Schaefer & Lamm,1992:382). Moreover, in 1989 15% of children in the United States were living in step-family arrangements (Schaefer & Lamm,1992:382). Against this background it is becoming increasingly inappropriate to treat 'the family' as if it were synonymous with the conventional nuclear family. Other family and household types are gaining significance and need to be accommodated both conceptually and theoretically.

It is therefore not surprising that there has been a move away from theories which have as their basis a unitary model of the family towards the acknowledgement and analysis of the phenomenon of family diversity. At the very least, the domestic life cycle concept shows that the conventional nuclear family captures only one part (and a decreasing part) of the process of family living.

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to illustrate the idea that it is inappropriate to treat the family as if it were 'one thing'. Rather, as has been shown above, the family is characterised by internal divisions based on gender and is a dynamic phenomenon. These affect the way family life is experienced both at one moment in time and during the course of a lifetime. As sources of family diversity, gender and the domestic life cycle are of course not isolated from one another. As noted, women's labour force participation continues to be influenced by 'family commitments' i.e the stage in the domestic life cycle which has been reached. Similarly, given that men's life expectancy continues to fall short of women's and the fact that men are more likely to remarry and remarry sooner than women, the latter are likely to spend a longer part of their life-time in non-nuclear family household arrangements such as single parent and single person households, than men. Research has also shown that girls are more likely to be raised in single parent families than boys (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:357)¹⁰. Moreover, given the economic inequalities between men and women discussed above, the divorce experience is likely to be significantly different for men and women. In particular, research has shown that divorce is associated with economic decline in the case of women but an increase in the standard of living for men (Arendell in Carlson, 1990:479). It is therefore not only family life *per se* but transitions from one stage to the next that are experienced differently by men and women.

In sum, when taken into account, gender and the domestic life cycle combine to produce a complex and dynamic picture of family life that contrasts with the monolithic and static conception of 'the family' that has informed family sociology to date. The theme of family diversity is continued in the next chapter.

5. NOTES

1. Parsons' theory is therefore clearly about that family form which he believes to be the norm - both in a statistical and moral sense.

2. Contrary to the way Parsons has been interpreted (see for instance Aulette, 1994:11) he did not see the sexual division of labour as entirely unproblematic in terms of its impact on women. For instance, he makes the point that the confinement of women to the domestic domain clashes with values such as equality and democracy since it means that a wife is "debarred from testing or demonstrating her fundamental equality with her husband in competitive occupational achievement" (Parsons, 1949:193). But Parsons does not seem to see any way out of this 'dilemma' given women's childbearing capacity and therefore does not foresee any major changes to the sexual division of labour (Parsons, 1949 & 1956).

3. The labour force participation rates for women would of course be higher if specific age categories are used and/or students are excluded. Lane for instance shows that in 1988, 72% of British, 68% of French and 58% of German women aged 25 to 49 were economically active while Maconachie indicates that in South Africa more than half (55.6%) of all 'potentially economically active' women were listed as economically active in the 1985 census (1992b:195).

4. Seccombe's argument was that the capitalist labour process consists of two interrelated units - the factory unit and the domestic unit which together operate to extract surplus value from the working class thereby enabling the capitalist class to accumulate profits (see Cheal, 1991:99-106 for a critique of this view).

5. In 1993 about 35% of employed African women held 'unspecified' jobs. This probably refers to informal employment (Magketla, 1995:11).

6. Median annual income including benefits for graduates only.

7. An ideal type is a model constructed by researchers for analytical purposes. It may or may not describe what a community regards as ideal or be based on averages. Its purpose is to make explicit a standard against which actual cases can be assessed without the implication of a normative value judgement.

8. The divorce statistic most commonly quoted in the popular press - the divorce\marriage ratio - is calculated by dividing the number of marriages contracted in a particular year by the number of divorce decrees granted in that year. This is the most inaccurate divorce measure since it fails to take account of the fact that the base-line for divorce decrees is all existing marriages rather than only those contracted in a particular

year(Zinn & Eitzen,1990:354).

9. It can also lead to an increase in phase 1 i.e. nuclear family of orientation as children stay in the parental home longer. The trend towards later age at marriage has been occurring since the 1960's and is a reversal of the trend which took place from the beginning of the century up to that period. In Britain the mean age at first marriage for women was above 25 years between 1900 and 1940 and declined to around 22 years in the 1960's (Abercrombie & Warde,1988:277). In the United States it declined from 22 in 1890 to around 20 in 1960 and increased since then to 24.1 in 1991. The same trend is discernable in the case of White South African women where it declined in the period between 1935 and 1965 (from 22.8 to 21.2) thereafter increasing to reach a level of 23 in 1990 (Strijdom,1987:456; South African Statistics, Central Statistical Services, 1993:3.12).

10. One of the explanations for this is that boys tend to act as an inhibitor to divorce due to the fact that women usually get custody after divorce and the belief that 'a boy needs a father' (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:357).

CHAPTER 4

FAMILY DIVERSITY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES (II):

SOCIAL CLASS AND ETHNICITY

1. INTRODUCTION

Probably the most trenchant criticism that has been made against Talcott Parsons is that he fails to take account of the way socio-economic factors impact on family life. Rather, he appears to assume that the family is the same regardless of its position in the socio-economic hierarchy or the cultural affiliations of its members. Indeed, Morgan (1975) claims that Parsons all but ignores social stratification, depicting American society as an homogeneous entity apparently devoid of classes, regions, ethnic or status groups. This criticism is not altogether fair since Parsons does acknowledge a number of exceptions to his theory such as families of the upper classes, those found among the urban poor and rural families (Elliot, 1986:51). But these are sizeable exceptions and raise serious doubts about a theory which purports to be of a general nature yet is clearly based on a particular view of family structures among middle-class (White) Americans.

In contrast to Parsons, post-1970's family sociologists have aimed at the systematic incorporation of social stratification into analyses of 'the family' in industrial society. Rather than ask, as Parsons did, how was 'the family' transformed by industrial capitalism, they are concerned with the question of how and why families differ by ethnicity, class and gender (that is, the different ways in which men and women experience family life). Although the latter was discussed in the previous chapter and the first two are discussed below under separate headings, all three represent different opportunities and constraints, are interrelated and sometimes overlap in terms of their impact on family life. The purpose of this chapter is not to discuss those

interconnections theoretically but rather to provide data to describe differences between families in terms of social class and ethnicity and to illustrate the idea that when these are taken into account the image of 'the family' which emerges is far more complex than that implied by the 'relatively isolated nuclear family' concept.¹

2. SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILY DIVERSITY

In the previous chapter the point was made that contrary to the 'myth of separate spheres' the connection between 'the family' and 'the economy' is not exhausted by the pay package which husbands\men bring home. Rather it was pointed out that women's unpaid domestic labour allows men to succeed in the economy while in the case of women, 'family commitments' continue to influence their employment patterns and is one of the reasons for their subordinate position in the economy. Therefore, in contrast to the tendency to define and analyse men in terms of their work and women in terms of their position in the family, it is necessary to treat both as simultaneously workers and family members. However, discussing gender in isolation from social class² as was done in that chapter is in many ways problematic since the differences in family experiences of women in different social classes can be as great as that which divides men and women. Indeed, the relationship between class and gender has proved to be the bane of the feminist movement - particularly as regards the call for the abolition of 'the family':

"Many of us have been to an archetypical meeting in which some-one stands up and asserts that the nuclear family ought to be abolished because it is degrading and constraining to women. Usually, someone else (often representing a Third World position) follows on her heels, pointing out that the attack on the family represents a White middle-class position and that other women need their families for support and survival. Evidently, both speakers are in some sense right. And just as evidently they aren't talking about the same families. We need to explore those different notions of family if we are to heal an important split in our movement ... we must take seriously the things women say about their experiences in their families, especially as they vary by class" (Rapp,1982:168).

While not disputing Rapp's contention that there may be class-based differences in the meaning of 'family' - lower class women being more reliant on family (beyond the nuclear unit) and all that it stands for (duty, support, reciprocity etc) - I am not sure that the *political* debate about the abolition of 'the family' between women of different classes involves different conceptions of this term. Rather, I would argue that in both cases it is used as a short-hand term for the conventional nuclear family characterised by a conventional sexual division of labour while the discrepancy between women of different classes lies in the families or family life they experience on a daily basis.

What I mean here is that it is only among upper income groups that the incomes deriving from the occupations of men are such that conventional nuclear families can be maintained (women do not have to work outside the home and are 'free' to devote their time to raising children and tending to a home). By contrast, the incomes of lower class men are usually insufficient to 'allow' women to 'escape' co-responsibility (and sometimes full responsibility) for providing economically for their families. Relatively speaking then, lower class women are more likely to be working because their husbands' incomes do not cover the family budget than for any other reason such as the need for self-fulfilment³. They are therefore more likely to be part of non-conventional family structures by force of circumstance rather than desire. Against this background, support for 'the family' on the part of lower class women could be seen as evidence of a wish to reduce or end their responsibility to provide economically for their families in favour of spending more time at home and with children. By contrast, upper class women's opposition to 'it' could be seen as a call to end that with which they are already familiar - confinement to the domestic domain and the isolation and boredom associated with that lifestyle. In this context then, 'the family' represents a prison to women of one social class and an escape to those of

another.

Having said this Rapp's depiction of the way in which lower class individuals use both their families and the ideology of the family to "cement and patch tenuous relations to survival" is enlightening (1982:179). It shows how the ideology of the family can and is sustained precisely in those circumstances where its concrete manifestation in the form of conventional\independent nuclear families is lacking. "Out of their belief in 'family'", Rapp writes, the poor "have invented networks capable of making next-to-nothing go a long way" and in the process establish non-conventional family structures (1982:179).

Other class-based differences in family life that have been documented in the literature concern socialisation patterns, the sexual division of labour and attitudes towards sex (Rapoport et al,1982:481; Rubin in Zinn and Eitzen,1990:258; Schaefer & Lamm,1992:398; Inkeles & Sasaki,1996:171-183). Below social class variation in phenomena that relate more directly to the structure of households (divorce, child-bearing and family\household autonomy) are discussed.

2.1 DIVORCE, MORTALITY AND SOCIAL CLASS

Research has shown that there is an association between divorce and social class (Elliot,1986:146; Haralambos & Holborn,1990:515; Zinn & Eitzen,1990:358; White, 1991:145; Elliot & Shamlin, 1992:291). Generally speaking, the relationship is an inverse one - those lower down the social scale having a higher divorce rate than those higher up. Statistics for England and Wales, show that the divorce rate among women married to men in unskilled occupations was more than four times as high as that for women married to men in professional occupations in 1979 (Elliot,1986:146) (see also Abercrombie & Warde,1988:293). Studies conducted in the United States have also shown that the lower the income and education of individuals, the higher the divorce rate - the highest divorce rate being among those women who have not

graduated from high school and those with very low incomes (White,1991:145; Aulette,1994:285; Zinn & Eitzen,1990:357).

As Goode (in Elliot,1986:147) points out, this can be explained with reference to differences in the 'economic costs' of divorce for different social classes. In the case of upper class men, long term investments in mortgages, insurance policies etc may act as an inhibitor to divorce. Similarly, the high incomes of upper class men mean that upper class wives are not obliged to work outside the home and can maintain a life-style based solely on husbands' incomes. This makes the economic costs of divorce in the case of upper class women high. Conversely, and because their economic dependence on men is mitigated by their own economic activity, "lower-strata wives may not be substantially less well-off divorced than married" (Elliot,1986:147). In other words, since lower class women are to a large extent already providing for themselves within marriage and the incomes of lower class men are low, the economic impact of divorce is lessened. This is not to deny that in absolute terms lower class women are economically worse off after divorce than their upper class counterparts nor that the payment of maintenance and/or alimony (where it occurs) can temper the economic decline of women after divorce nor indeed that many upper class wives work outside the home for economic reasons. But it is only among women previously married to very wealthy men that maintenance is usually successful in its intention, namely to reproduce the lifestyle to which women were accustomed during the marriage. For the rest, i.e. women married to men with low and middle level incomes, maintenance payments are less likely to occur and less likely to be of a substantial nature thus requiring those women not previously in paid employment outside the home to become economically active. In sum, since the difference between being married and not (both in terms of standard of living and lifestyle⁴) is likely to be less in the case of lower-strata women, the incentive to maintain an unsatisfactory marriage will also be less. The stress associated with economic marginality can be seen as further reason for the

greater instability of lower class marriages (Elliot,1986:146).

The idea that women's economic activity outside the home may have something to do with the relatively high divorce rate at the lower end of the social scale finds support in the fact that women who have very high incomes and education and are employed outside the home have above average divorce rates (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:357-359; Aulette,1994:285). Put differently,

"At the upper end of the income scale, couples are less likely to divorce, but only if the husband is the primary source of income. In wealthy households if the wife's earnings are a major source of the household income, divorce is more likely than average" (Aulette,1994:285).

Zinn & Eitzen explain this as follows:

"Economically successful women are not as dependent on their husbands and therefore have no need to remain in unsatisfactory marriages" (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:359).

Another demographic variable that tends to vary by social class and has implications for family patterns, is mortality. In England and Wales, for instance, the mortality rate for men aged 25 to 34 in the lowest social classes was almost double that for men in the highest social classes: 141 per 100 000 men in social classes IV & V compared with 72 per 100 000 for men in social classes I & II in the period 1970-1972 (Abercrombie & Warde,1988:383). In the case of married women, the difference was less but still substantial: 42 per 100 000 married women aged 25 to 34 in social classes I & II compared with 68 per 100 000 for women in social classes IV & V (Abercrombie & Warde,1988:383). The same pattern exists with respect to the older age categories though the difference is once again less: 1 710 per 100 000 upper class men compared with 2 409 in the case of working class men aged 55 to 64 (Abercrombie & Warde,1988:383)(see Zinn & Eitzen,1990:91 for data pertaining to the United States).

Taken together, these class differences in divorce and

mortality mean that for lower class individuals, in contrast to the situation among wealthier sectors of society, the domestic life cycle is likely to be far less predictable and is less likely to match the 'normal' domestic life cycle described in the previous chapter. In particular, one may expect to find more single parent and single person households in the lower than upper echelons of society⁵. Moreover, given that in both developing and developed societies, the mortality rate for men continues to outweigh that of women⁶ (Abercrombie & Warde, 1988:383; Whitaker's Almanack, 1995; Skolnick & Skolnick, 1989:95; Simkins, 1986:28) as well as the fact that women usually obtain custody of children upon divorce, the vast majority of single parents and persons living alone are likely to be female. This is an important factor to consider when explaining the relatively high proportion of female headed families in the lower strata of society.

In the United States, for example, a third of all families headed by women with no husband present were below the government poverty line compared with only 6% of dual-parent families (Schaefer & Lamm, 1992:398). Similarly, in South Africa, the average annual income of households headed by men was R48 000 compared to only R25 000 in the case of female-headed households (Central Statistical Services, 1995 in Sunday Independent Business, October 5, 1997:3). Moreover, a study conducted among Californian divorcees in 1981 found that the women in question experienced a 73% decrease and men a 42% increase in their standard of living during the first year after divorce, Arendell writes:

"Economic decline following divorce is unique to women ... Socio-economic decline shapes women's not men's divorce experience" (in Carlson, 1990:479).

While it is important to draw attention to the differential way in which men and women experience divorce, seeing divorce (or even widowhood) as the cause of the low socio-economic position of female headed households is misleading.

In the case of dual-earner families (whether lower or upper

class) divorce leading to single parenthood entails a move from dependence on two to dependence on one source of income and in most cases this will mean a move to dependence on the salary earned by the female spouse i.e. the lesser of the two salaries/wages. The same argument applies to male breadwinner nuclear families where the move to single parenthood after divorce usually entails a move from dependence on a 'male salary/wage' to a 'female' one. In cases where women do not work (outside the home) either before or after divorce, the latter usually implies dependence on a 'male' income which is now split between two households⁷. Either way, women are likely to experience a decline in economic well-being following divorce. Part of the explanation for the low socio-economic position of single parent families is therefore the fact that they are usually headed by women.

Even the small but growing number of men who retain custody of children after divorce are likely to experience a decline in economic or material well being if professional child-minders and housekeepers are employed to substitute for the services previously performed by wives. To a lesser extent this also applies to women but as noted above in their case this is not the only or main contributing factor to economic decline. Therefore while it is not incorrect to see divorce as one of the causes of poverty among female headed households or single parent families, it is also important to bear in mind that divorce actually **exposes** rather than brings into existence the economic marginality of women generally - before, during and after marriage.

2.2 SOCIAL CLASS AND CHILDBEARING

It is well known that there is an inverse relationship between social class and child-bearing - both in terms of the number of children and the timing of childbirth. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 1987 the birth rate (number of births per 1000 women 18 to 44 years) was 95.7 for women who had not

graduated from high school compared with 61.6 for those with 1 to 3 years university education and 58.4 for those with more than 5 years university education (in Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:292). The same pattern holds when income is considered⁸. As regards the timing of child-birth, Elliot (1986:88) reports that in England and Wales women married to men in professional or managerial occupations were about 4 years older at the birth of their first child than women married to men in semi-skilled or unskilled manual occupations both in 1973 and in 1983⁹. The pattern therefore is for lower class women to have more children and their first child earlier than other women.

This is often thought of as a contradiction since "those least able to afford children have more than those who are better able to afford larger families" (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:291\292). However, when considering class differences in the costs and benefits of children, one has reason to question whether one is dealing here with a contradiction as opposed to a paradox.

As regards the costs, the higher the socio-economic position of parents, the greater the capacity to provide for children (e.g. finance education and leisure activities), the greater the likelihood that these 'needs' will be provided for and the more 'expensive' children become. Similarly, the higher the socio-economic position of parents the less pressing the need for children to contribute to the household economy. In wealthy families then, the economic benefits of having children are practically non-existent¹⁰ while the costs are high. In the case of lower class families, the opposite pertains: Here there is great need for children to contribute to the household economy and the likelihood that they will do so is high. Furthermore, because the ability of lower class parents to provide for their children is less, the 'costs' of having children are also lower than in the case of wealthier parents. Among lower class families children also represent a source of security in old age particularly for women who are more likely to outlive their spouses than men. Finally, since the infant mortality rate for

the lower classes continues to be higher than that for the wealthier sections of society, having many children may be a way of ensuring that a few survive¹¹.

There are also a number of non-economic reasons for having children that are of particular relevance to lower class individuals. In this regard it has been argued that the lower the socio-economic position of individuals, the less the likelihood that work will serve as a source of status and the more attractive parenthood becomes. Although this pertains to both men and women, Zinn and Eitzen contend that in the case of lower class men in particular "parenthood ... can provide a source of pride and an opportunity for power not otherwise available" (1990:292).

Another explanation that has been offered for this phenomenon, is that the lower the educational level of women the less the likelihood that they will aspire to the goals of the feminist movement such as seeking self-fulfilment in a career and therefore the smaller the likelihood that they will be motivated to forfeit or postpone motherhood for the sake of attaining career goals (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:292). This argument should, however, be seen in conjunction with the objective differences in the positions of upper and lower class women with respect to work and family. In particular, what needs to be taken into account is the fact that it is because wealthy women can oscillate between work and child-bearing (confine these to separate stages in their lives) that it makes sense for them to postpone the latter in favour of the former. Secondly, it is because the work which wealthy women do is more likely to offer the prospect of advancement and fulfilment than those which lower class women are engaged in, that success in a career is seen as a goal worth striving for and making sacrifices for. By contrast, in the case of lower class women, adulthood usually means motherhood combined with paid employment on a continuous basis - regardless of marital status. The question of when to stop work for the sake of having children therefore seldom presents itself.

Similarly, since work is less likely to be experienced as fulfilling, striving for work-related goals is less likely to be an incentive for behaviour in the case of lower as compared to upper class women. Indeed it is precisely for these reasons, combined with the fact that for women too, parenthood represents "a source of pride and power not otherwise available" (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:292) that the mere extension of sex education to lower class women is unlikely to have the desired effect. Preston-Whyte and Allen comment as follows in their study of pregnancy among 'Coloured' teenagers in South Africa:

" ... for women who have no reason to prevent conception, intervention is probably doomed to failure. Women need an alternative option, either in the form of education or career opportunities, or the real chance of 'getting on in the world' ... For all the women, and particularly the younger women, who were interviewed the future seemed to offer nothing to warrant so-called 'sensible' attitudes to pre-marital pregnancy. Most felt a marked lack of any alternative to motherhood ... a conscious will to prevent pregnancy was generally absent" (in Burman & Preston-Whyte, 1992:221).

In sum, given objective class differences - particularly in the position of women - the real irony or paradox is that the lower the social class position, the lower the costs, the higher the economic and other benefits of having children and the lower the incentive to postpone childbearing for the sake of other goals.

The negative relationship between social class on the one hand, and the timing and the number of children on the other, could lead to the expectation that lower class women are more likely to spend a larger part of their domestic life cycle in nuclear families than their wealthier counterparts. The expected pattern would therefore be the opposite of that raised when class variations in mortality and divorce were discussed. There are, however, two important and often related intervening factors that could affect both sets of expectations: illegitimacy and extended family households.

2.3 SOCIAL CLASS AND ILLEGITIMACY

In some societies, the United States, Britain and South Africa, illegitimacy rates are highest among low income groups (Collins,1992:176; Burman & Preston-Whyte,1992). In Britain, for example, research has shown that "areas with high rates of birth outside marriage also had high levels of economic disadvantage and high crime rates" (Collins,1992:177). In their study of illegitimacy among 'Coloureds' in South Africa, Preston-Whyte and Allen note that "poverty, poor and overcrowded housing, few community recreational facilities and high unemployment are the most striking and consistently reported concomitants of early births in the Cape" (in Preston-Whyte & Burman,1992:212). Since illegitimacy represents one possible route to single parent families one could expect to find high rates of both of these in the lower echelons of society.

The relationship between social class, illegitimacy and single parenthood is, however, not a necessary one. In Scandinavian countries for instance, high rates of illegitimacy are matched by high rates of cohabitation and the latter can be seen as "a modern equivalent of conventional marriage" (Marsh & Arber,1992:20). Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere (Ziehl,1994) the fact that a child is born to unmarried parents does not necessarily mean that he or she is raised by only one parent since the parenting role may be shared by a number of adults (grandparents, sister and aunts for example)¹². Female headed households and households from which one (immediate) biological parent is absent, are therefore not necessarily single parent households. What is at issue here, however, is why there should be a relationship between social class and chances that pregnancy will be followed by marriage - social class differences in the propensity to marry are therefore at issue.

The explanation for this is the same as that raised above in relation to class differences in the divorce rate. Put simply, the lower the income levels of men, the greater the likelihood

that women will be working outside the home during marriage - regardless of whether or when they have children. Consequently, marriage is likely to have a smaller impact on the lives of lower class women and is therefore likely to be less attractive to them compared to their more affluent counterparts. It would seem then that we are dealing here with another irony namely that women most in need of economic support are most likely to eschew marriage.

But again this paradox can be cleared up if we consider that it is not women's needs or activities that is the main factor behind class differences in the propensity to marry. In their study of marriage in the United States, Lichter et al (1991) found that while women's economic opportunities have an important negative effect on marriage rates, men's employment status and income influences marriage rates more. In particular, they found a negative relationship between female employment, female earnings and public assistance (welfare) on the one hand and marriage rates on the other with welfare being the strongest of the 'female variables' representing the "economic alternatives to marriage" (1991:855-856). They found no significant relationship between the sex-ratio and marriage rates i.e. the availability of men per se. However, male non-employment and male earnings showed a negative and positive relationship with marriage rates respectively - with male earnings having a stronger relationship to marriage rates than any of the 'female variables' (1991:855). Thus the authors conclude that "marriage may have less to do with the overall scarcity of males than with the relative scarcity of males who are economically attractive to women as potential marital partners" (Lichter et al,1991:857). Finally, it is also important to bear in mind that for lower class men, the responsibilities associated with family life may be perceived as an unwelcome drain on already limited economic resources thus lowering their willingness to marry. The real irony is therefore that the lower the socio-economic status of women, the greater the need for economic assistance and the lower the capacity and possibly the willingness of potential spouses to provide.

2.4 SOCIAL CLASS AND EXTENDED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

Thus far I have considered a number of demographic variables - divorce, mortality, childbearing and illegitimacy - each of which appear to be negatively related to social class. Their impact on the domestic life cycle and the proportion of different household types characteristic of different social classes is not a simple matter. As noted, the propensity for lower class women to have more children and to have them earlier suggests a lengthening of the nuclear family phase of the domestic life cycle. But the negative relationship between social class and the other three variables (divorce, mortality and illegitimacy) suggests that the opposite pattern may apply i.e. that non-nuclear domestic arrangements (single parent families and no-marriage families and single person households) may be experienced more frequently by lower class individuals and may therefore constitute a higher proportion of households when these are measured at one point in time. An additional complicating factor is the fact that potentially single parent and single person households may be absorbed into extended family households in which case one would expect to find higher rates of the latter in lower class communities compared with the more wealthy sectors of society.

The connection between social class and extended family households can, however, also be a direct one. Since accommodation or housing is a resource that can be pooled in times of economic need, one may find more extended family households in the poorer sectors of society for this reason alone. This view is supported by Anderson's study on Lancashire (England) in the mid-nineteenth century which revealed that while the overwhelming majority of married couples in the professional, white collar and trade groups (99%) lived in households of their own, a significant proportion of working class couples lived either with relatives or as lodgers - particularly at the beginning stages of the domestic life cycle (1971:51). He furthermore found that

"as the income of the head of the household fell, so couples, although heading households of their own, were more and more likely to be forced to save rent by sharing a house" (1971:51).

In his study of family\households in the United States, Allen (1979) also found a relationship between social class and the prevalence of extended family households. But although the pattern was as expected, the differences were small - 13.49% of all households compared with 14.29% of 'Blue collar households' and 12.03% of 'White collar households' being extended families (1979:308)¹³.

The question of the relationship between social class and extended family households is crucial to this thesis and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Suffice it to note at this point that this issue has usually been raised in an attempt to explain the relatively high rates of non-nuclear family arrangements among Blacks in the United States (Allen,1979; Lee,1980; Rapp,1982; Tienda & Angel,1982; Zinn and Eitzen,1990). Ethnicity and family diversity is the subject of the next section.

4. ETHNICITY AND FAMILY DIVERSITY

4.1. ETHNICITY AND FAMILIES IN BRITAIN

Along with social class, ethnicity has been seen as 'a source of family diversity' (Haralambos and Holborn,1990:419) (see also Rapoport et al,1982). In the case of Britain, research in this area has consisted of comparing 'immigrant families' and 'other British families'. So, for example, Ballard (1982) has found that British families of South Asian origin distinguish themselves from 'other British families' in that parents play an active role in the choice of children's marital partners; marriage is an alliance between families as much as between individuals; divorce is rare and extended kin ties and family solidarity are strong. Oakley's research on families of Cypriot

origin in Britain also revealed that in this case, the relationships between individual families and the wider kin group as well as between parents and married children are relatively strong (Oakley,1982).

Having compared these family patterns with those in the respective countries of origin, these researchers agree that although there has been some change it has not been significant. Ballard (1982), for example, notes that South Asian women in Britain are more likely to work outside the home and that married couples are expecting more independence from kin and that (without rejecting the principle of arranged marriage) children expect a greater say in the choice of a marital partner than their counterparts in the country of origin. However, he also notes that these developments have not led to a breakdown of South Asian families or "to an erosion of family loyalties and reciprocities" (1982:201). Indeed Ballard contends that:

"although the proponents of 'modern' philosophies of freedom and self-determination have often expected that tradition would crumble in the face of 'progress', most members of most South Asian families are very sceptical of the wholesale acceptance of such ideas. They perceive that complete personal freedom can eliminate the advantages to be gained from familial reciprocity" (1982:201).

Research conducted among families of West Indian origin in Britain has focused not only on the differences between these families and others in Britain but also on variation within this group (Eversley and Bonnerjea,1982:84; Driver,1982; Barrow,1982). As in the Caribbean, Barrow (1982) found that families in Britain of West Indian origin fall within one of three categories: 'the conventional nuclear family' based on Christian marriage; 'the common law family' (cohabitation with children) and 'the mother household' i.e. households containing no adult males (1982:221). Once again Barrow points to some change as a result of migration - for example kin networks being replaced by neighbourhood based networks. Driver (1982), similarly points out that among first generation migrants from the West Indies, 'matri-focality' and

'male-marginality' characteristic of some families in the society 'back home' may have been replaced by conventional nuclear families based on the conjugal bond (Driver,1982:208). However, all of these writers agree that the changes which have taken place need to be seen against the background of extraneous factors such as the lack of availability of kin and lack of economic resources to purchase, for example, a shop or other concern which could function as a family business. With regard to families of West Indian origin, Driver is of the opinion that:

"with a second generation of West Indian mothers now producing their offspring, together with the possible availability of kin-support, in the prevalently adverse employment conditions suffered particularly by West Indian men in Britain, (it is possible) that externally apparent diverse family forms will, as in the West Indies, reassert themselves among the minority populations settled in Britain" (1982:209).

Finally, Eversely and Bonnerjea point out that it is not only immigrants from Asia, the West Indies and Cyprus, that are contributing to family diversity in Britain. In their view

"... it is important to note that the Irish, Orthodox Jews, the Eastern Europeans (and) the Italians ... all have somewhat different cultural family types, often with slightly above average number of children, stable family structure (and) extended kinship systems ... Ethnic diversity is multi-dimensional and has always existed in some form in Britain" (Eversey and Bonnerjea:1982:85).

4.2 ETHNICITY AND FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Research conducted in the United States on the question of ethnicity and family diversity has tended to focus on a comparison of Native American; Afro-American (Black); Hispanic and American families of European descent. Some research has also been done on American families of Japanese and Chinese origin (see for example, Steinmetz et al,1990:50-82 and Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:109-126). Two features have been identified as distinctive of Black families in the United States. These are: a relatively high incidence of female-headed households and strong extended

family ties (Zinn and Eitzen,1990:116-122). As regards female-headed households Zinn and Eitzen indicate that the number of Black families with children under 18 headed by a woman more than doubled in the period between 1970 and 1986 and in that year constituted 47,6% of all Black families (with children under 18) compared with only 15,2% in the case of Whites (1990:117). Moreover, as Allen (1979:304) indicates, a number of studies have shown that extra-familial kinship ties are stronger among Blacks than Whites in the United States. A number of researchers have also found that extended family households are more common among Blacks than Whites (Allen,1979; Tienda & Angel,1982; Hofferth, 1984; Beck & Beck,1989; Taylor et al,1990). In the case of Allen's research, extended family\households accounted for 23% of Black but only 11% of White family\households (1979:306). Racial differences in attitudes towards marriage and reasons for labour force participation have also been documented in the United States context (Bulcroft & Bulcroft,1993; Herring & Wilson-Sadberry,1993; South,1993). Finally, American statistics show that divorce is more common among Blacks than Whites (Carlson 1990:443; Zinn & Eitzen,1990:120; White,1991:144).

4.3 ETHNICITY AND FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.3.1 CENSUS DATA ON FAMILY\HOUSEHOLDS

At the time of this study research which directly compares the family structures of the various ethnic groups in South Africa or their views on family-related issues had not been undertaken. There are, however, some studies dealing with these groups separately. These are discussed after having considered the results of some national censuses which represent an additional though highly contentious source of information on families in South Africa. The 1970 South African census is the most recent one to contain information relating to families and forms the basis of the discussion that follows since, although dated, it raises interesting methodological issues. Indeed the problems encountered on this score are probably the reason for

its absence from more recent censuses. The shortcomings of this census include: (1) The fact that Blacks were excluded; (2) the basis of comparison is not households per se but 'the family' as defined by census organisers and (3) 'The family' is defined as if it were synonymous with the nuclear family. For instance, married children were seen as constituting "separate families even if they were living with their parents at the time of the census (and) other relatives of the head or wife living with the family, such as a widowed mother, a divorced father, a brother, an uncle, a grandchild, etc. were not regarded as members of the family" (1970 Population Census, Report No 02-03-02:xiii). No provision has therefore been made for extended family arrangements. Fourthly, since adopted and step-children (but not fostered children) were classified along side 'other children' it is not possible to distinguish between step-families, adoptive families and conventional nuclear families i.e. where the children are biologically related to both of spouses present in the household. Finally, since no distinction is drawn between those in "stable de facto unions" and those married, it is not possible to distinguish between conventional nuclear families and what I call 'no-marriage nuclear families' or no-marriage couple households. The results of this census are nevertheless presented below:

Table 4.1

COMPARISON OF 'FAMILIES' IN SOUTH AFRICA -1970			
FAMILY TYPE	ASIANS	'COLOUREDS'	WHITES
Husband and Wife	9.2%	10.7%	24.7%
Father, Mother and Children	77.4%	69.1%	68.2%
Father and Children	2.4%	3.0%	1.0%
Mother and Children	11.1%	17.2%	6.1%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%
Average Family Size	5.0	5.2	3.7
* Multi-occupancy rate	1.432	1.192	1.073
Source: 1970 Population Census in Simkins, 1986:33-35. * Simkins calculation (1986).			

This table suggests that Asians have the highest proportion of nuclear families and that Whites and 'Coloureds' are similar with regard to the proportion of families that are nuclear. However, as indicated above, since no provision has been made for extended family arrangements this categorisation may obscure significant differences between the various ethnic groups. The data contained in Table 4.1 also indicates that 'couple households' are more common in the case of Whites than the other two groups¹⁴ while the opposite is true when 'mother child units' are considered. But even here we do not know whether these units are independent households or part of more complex arrangements.

To obtain comparable data on extended and multiple family households, Simkins (1986) has calculated what he calls the 'multi-occupancy rate' that is the number of 'families' and single person units per dwelling. These show that households containing more than one 'family' or individuals other than the restricted nuclear family group, are most common in the case of Asians, less so in the case of 'Coloureds' and the lowest in the case of Whites.

The high 'multi-occupancy rate' among Asians attests to the continued significance of the joint family pattern among this section of the South African population. Meer, for example, found that in 1969 up to half of all households among Indians living in Durban were joint families (in Simkins, 1986:24). More recent studies suggest that this family form is becoming less common. Jithoo's (1991) research revealed that 40% of the households in her 1978 Durban study were joint families whereas Butler-Adam and Venter found that the joint family accounted for less than 20% of Indian households in Durban in 1984 (in Simkins, 1986:24). This change has been attributed to public housing policy and "the penetration of the nuclear family norm at the cultural level" (in Simkins, 1986:25). However, as Jithoo indicates, the mere numerical preponderance of the nuclear family household as a co-residential group is not in itself evidence of the complete destruction of the joint family pattern among Indians in South

Africa. In her study, 60% of the nuclear households had experienced a previously complex phase (1991:349). Moreover, she indicates that in Durban, as in Madras, even where joint families split up into nuclear units in terms of residence, they may continue to be coparcenary i.e. share property, "maintain joint family obligations, and continue to subscribe to the norms of that system" (1991:352).

Table 4.1 also suggests a marked similarity in the proportion of nuclear families among 'Coloureds' and Whites (about 68% in both cases) - a pattern which is also revealed by a comparison of Whisson's study of 'Coloureds' living in Ocean View near Cape Town in 1976 and Argyle's study of Whites living in Durban in 1977 (Whisson, 1976; Argyle, 1977). However, Simkins' calculation of the 'multi-occupancy rate' suggests a much greater difference in the household patterns of these two groups - the proportion of dwellings containing more than one 'family' being significantly higher in the case of 'Coloureds' (1.192) than Whites (1.073). Simkins attributes the relatively high proportion of nuclear families in Whisson's study to the fact that, at the time of the study, Ocean View was a new settlement and extended family structures had not yet taken root there (1986:24). Moreover, as Whisson claims, although state ideology as manifested in the provision of three to five roomed houses as well as the displacement of people, militated against extended family households they did not prevent families from operating along extended family lines: "The bonds of kinship remain as a set of moral obligations and rights, essential to the material and emotional security of the individuals in the community" (1976:268).

In summary, while census data suggest that the family patterns of Whites, 'Coloureds' and Asians are roughly similar (the nuclear family being the dominant form in all cases), this is partly due to the way the material was gathered and presented and the fact that the family (as defined by organisers of the census) rather than the household was taken as the point of

departure. As revealed by Simkins' calculation of the 'multi-occupancy rate' differences between the various ethnic groups are more marked than the census data indicate¹⁵. Therefore, as already mentioned, the table above obscures rather than illustrates differences between households. It gives no indication of the prevalence of the conventional nuclear family (first-time married couple with children living in a household of their own) among the various ethnic groups or how this type of household compares with other households. If different categories had been used, the proportion of conventional nuclear families would have been lower and the differences between the various ethnic categories, been more marked.

4.3.2 CENSUS DATA ON MARITAL STATUS

Obtaining and interpreting census data pertaining to families in South Africa is further complicated by the fact that marriages can take a number of forms. They can be civil marriages; traditional African marriages (also known as customary unions); religious marriages and common-law marriages (referred to as cohabitation) (Simkins, 1986:41-42). Only the first two are recognised as legal marriages and the third only if the ceremony was conducted by a state appointed marriage officer (Burman & Fuchs in Burman & Reynolds, 1986:117). Non legal religious marriages are particularly prevalent in the case of Asians since Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and some other religious leaders are not usually officially recognised as marriage officers. Over 80% of Asians and about 4% of Coloureds belonged to these religions in 1980 (Burman & Fuchs in Burman & Reynolds, 1986:117). From a legal point of view the children of these marriages will be regarded as illegitimate and if the couple breaks up this will not be recorded in the official statistics on divorce. Whether or not they will feature in census data pertaining to marital status is unclear. On the one hand, the census defines 'living together' as "a man and a woman living together as husband and wife without being lawfully married (in terms of legal requirements)" (1991 Population Census, Report Number 03-01-00:xv). On the other hand,

we do not know whether those completing the census questionnaire used this definition or how they interpreted the term 'legal'.

Census data which compare the marital status of Blacks and Whites further illustrate the problematic nature of this source of information. According to the 1991 census, 66% of Blacks had never been married compared with only 43% in the case of Whites. Furthermore, whereas nearly half of Whites (46%) were married at the time of the 1991 census this was true of only a quarter (25%) of the Black population. This is partially due to differences in the age structure of the two communities (the Black population being 'younger' than the White population). However, if the under 18 category is controlled for, we note that the proportion of Blacks who had never married is nearly double (23%) that of Whites (14%).

Table 4.2

MARITAL STATUS OF BLACKS AND WHITES (1991)			
MARITAL STATUS	TOTAL	BLACKS	WHITES
Never Married - 18	38%	41%	29%
Never Married 18 +	22%	23%	14%
Married	29%	25%	46%
Living Together	4%	5%	2%
Widowed	4%	4%	5%
Divorced	2%	1%	4%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%
Source Population Census 1991, Central Statistical Services Report Number 03-01-00 of 1991. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.			

These data must be seen against the background of the fact that many Blacks in South Africa marry according to customary law and although customary unions are legal, they differ in many respects from civil marriages (Segar & White, 1989:106). For instance, they involve the transfer of bridewealth and since this process can take a long time to complete it is difficult to

decide when or if such a marriage has taken place (Simkins,1986:42). Moreover, about 30% of the Black population in South Africa belong to the Zionist church, the leaders of which are also not regarded as official marriage officers (Burman & Fuchs in Burman & Reynolds,1986:118). Differences of interpretation would therefore also play a role here and could lead to an exaggeration of differences in marital status between Blacks and Whites. However, Simkins makes the point that although under-enumeration is clearly a factor, the impression that Blacks in South Africa are more likely than Whites to live outside marriage is an accurate one (Simkins,1986:31). It is nevertheless also clear that census data represent an unreliable source of information on families in South Africa.

4.3.3 SOCIAL RESEARCH - FAMILIES AND ETHNICITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Turning to research conducted on specific ethnic/racial groups in South Africa which focuses on the composition of households we note that there is some evidence to support the view that extended families are more common among Blacks than Whites in this society. In his study of Blacks living in Duncan Village (near East London) in the 1960's Pauw, for example, found that only 21% of households were nuclear families while 58% were either extended or multiple families (Pauw,1962). By contrast, Argyle's (1977) study of Whites in Durban in the 1970's suggests the opposite pattern: 22% of households being extended or multiple and 67% being nuclear. However, in his study of Blacks living in an urban township (close to Johannesburg) in 1961, Marwick found that the dominant household structure in his sample was the nuclear family (48%), extended and multiple families constituting only 27% of all the households surveyed (in Simkins,1986:26). These findings are more in line with those of Schlemmer and Stopforth who surveyed Black households in the mining town of Phalaborwa in 1970 and found that 69% of households had a simple, nuclear structure (in Simkins,1986:27).

These data suggest that there are regional differences

within the Black community that influence the composition of households. Simkins takes up this issue by comparing data on Black households located in metropolitan areas (cities), towns and rural areas outside the homelands in 1980 but finds little evidence of this : "between 45 and 56 per cent of the households are nuclear (complete or incomplete) (and) between 32 and 42 per cent are extended (complete or incomplete) (Simkins, 1986:38). Simkins reaches this conclusion by organising his data according to the marital status of the head of the household. He does not however define the latter except to say that "migrants are not counted as part of households" (1986:39)¹⁶. From this we can infer that a married woman whose husband works and lives elsewhere is regarded as the head of the household. Also, since we are given no information about the generational depth of households some of his categories overlap. For instance, he defines a compound household as one "containing two or more complete or incomplete married couples" and an incomplete extended family as "not headed by a complete married couple" (1986:37). This means that a married couple living with their children and a widowed parent of one of the spouses could fall into either category. Simkins also exaggerates the prevalence of nuclear family households by combining incomplete (i.e. single parent) and complete nuclear families. By separating these categories and combining extended and compound households we get a different picture from the one Simkins presents (see Table 4.3). As can be noted from this table, extended and compound households dominate statistically in all areas but they exceed the proportion of (complete) nuclear family by 16% in the rural areas and by only 4% in the urban areas. From this we can conclude that urban living which usually entails the use of state-provided housing does have a bearing on the prevalence of extended family households among Blacks. However, if we compare the highest proportion of complete nuclear families revealed by this data (43%) with the data presented in Table 4.1 for Whites as well as with Argyle's findings, we note that it is significantly lower.

Table 4.3

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY STRUCTURES - BLACKS			
STRUCTURE	CITY	TOWN	RURAL
Single Person	7	6	2
Single Parent	7	9	8
Nuclear Family	41	43	37
Extended and Compound	45	42	53
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%

Source: Bureau of Market Research and Current Population Survey in Simkins, 1986:37.

Finally, my own research among first year sociology students at Rhodes University in 1994, revealed that whereas a quarter of the Black students were part of extended family arrangements at the age of 15, this applied to only about 5% of the other students. Black students were also more inclined to feel that there is an obligation on the part of their parents to provide accomodation to a relative in need (see below).¹⁷

Table 4.4

STUDENTS' DOMESTIC SITUATIONS AT AGE 15						
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	BLACK STUDENTS		OTHER STUDENTS		TOTAL	
	Nuclear	22	45.8%	80	84.2%	102
Extended	12	25.0%	5	5.3%	17	11.9%
Single Parent	9	18.8%	7	7.4%	16	11.2%
Other	5	10.4%	3	3.2%	8	5.6%
TOTAL:	48	100%	95	100%	143	100%

Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.
Black students were differentiated from other students on the basis of home language.

Table 4.5

PARENTS OBLIGED TO TAKE IN A RELATIVE IN NEED						
ANSWER	BLACK STUDENTS		OTHER STUDENTS		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	34	72.3%	55	59.1%	89	63.6%
No	13	27.7%	38	40.8%	51	36.4%
TOTAL	47	100%	93	100%	140	100%

Question: If a relative (such as an aunt, cousin or grandparent) is unemployed and cannot afford to pay for accommodation, do you think there is an obligation on the part of your parents to 'take them in'?

Black students were differentiated from other students on the basis of home language.

As in the case of the United States, the question of female headed households among Blacks has enjoyed the attention of South African researchers. Pauw (1962) found that 34% of the households included in his study were female-headed and Simkins notes that in the rural part of the homelands, the proportion of female-headed households is as high as 59% (Simkins, 1986:37). Roux and St Leger (1971) indicate that 40% of the households included in their study of Blacks in Grahamstown were female headed. None of these researchers compare their findings to those obtained from studies of other ethnic groups. However, a study conducted by the Bureau for Market research revealed that only 7% of Asian and 15% of Coloured households were female headed in 1980 (Simkins, 1986: 37; see also Kellerman, 1987). Moreover, if the 1970 census is to be believed, only 6% of White families were female headed (i.e. consisted of a woman and her child or children) in that year (see Table 4.1).

5. CONCLUSION

The data presented in the last two chapters presents a challenge to those wishing to view 'the family' as a static and monolithic entity. Rather, as has been shown, family life is a dynamic process and there are both divisions within families

linked to gender and distinctions between families associated with class and ethnicity that need to be taken into account by family scholars.

In this chapter it was shown that because of the association between social class and various demographic variables and possibly with the exception of fertility rates, one would expect to find higher rates of non-nuclear family structures in the lower as compared to the wealthier sectors of society. It was also shown that in the case of some communities or ethnic groups, extended family ties are likely to be stronger and extended family households more common than in the case of White\Western communities. Family diversity in terms of class and ethnicity has therefore been documented.

The acknowledgement of family diversity however, also poses a number of questions that have implications for theory building in this area. For instance, does the acknowledgement of family diversity imply that we cannot say anything general about the family in society today; does it mean that any (general) statement should be qualified with reference to the class, culture, age, gender of the individuals concerned; does it imply that we should abandon the concept of 'the family' as some have suggested? By posing these questions I am wishing to draw attention to the fact that there is a tension between the acknowledgement of family diversity, on the one hand, and the need to theorise about the family on the other. This is so since the theorising process necessarily implies the use of concepts that are of a general nature and of a relatively high level of abstraction. In Chapter 6 I propose a way of resolving this tension which neither abandons the family as concept nor treats this phenomenon in monolithic terms. My response to the above questions is therefore a negative one. The next chapter considers other attempts to overcome the limitations of traditional definitions of the family.

6. NOTES

1. While some explanations for class variation in family-related behaviour are presented in this chapter, the theoretical perspectives which have informed the debate about the relative role of class and culture in explaining family diversity are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

2. The question of defining social class is discussed in Chapter 5 & 6. Here it is used very broadly to refer to inequalities based on differences in income, education and occupation. The terms lower and upper class are not used as labels for categories into which people can be fitted in an unambiguous manner. Rather they are used in a relational sense so that lower class families have less income, lower levels of education and lower status occupations than upper class families.

3. In their study Herring and Wilson-Sadberry (1993) provide data which shows that although women in the United States are beginning to resemble men in their reasons for working, the differences are still substantial. In particular these researchers report that surveys conducted in the United States among women and men aged 18 to 65 in the 1980's and 1990's showed that 70% of men compared with only 46.5% of women indicated that they would continue to work even if they had enough money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives (1993:320). It is therefore not surprising that their research confirms the common-sense view that "middle-class women were less likely to participate in the labor market than working-class and poor women ... (and) when in the labor market, they were more likely to participate out of preference than out of economic necessity" (1993:322). It is, however, also important to note that necessity and preference are not necessarily mutually exclusive reasons for working.

4. This includes whether or not the wife works outside the home.

5. The relationship between divorce and mortality on the one hand and single parent and single person households on the other, is by no means a necessary one (see further).

6. In the case of Britain this pattern holds for all age groups and for all social classes (see Abercrombie & Warde, 1988:383). It also applies in South Africa where the life expectancy for males is estimated at 63 years compared with 68 years in the case of women for 1995 (Green Paper on Population, Department of Welfare and Population Development, R.S.A. 1995:7).

7. This issue is of course more complex than I am treating it here *inter alia* since it depends on the type of custodial, maintenance and alimony arrangement reached between the parties.

8. In the United States, the birth rate (as measured by the number of women aged 18-44 who had a child in the previous year) per 1000 adult women, was 95.1 for women with a 'family income' of \$10 000 or less, compared with 54.7 in the case of women whose incomes exceeded \$35 000 in 1987 (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:292).

9. In Britain the mean age of women at first childbirth was 27.9 years for women married to men in professional occupations and 23.7 years for those married to men in manual occupations in 1983 (Elliot,1986:88).

10. Among wealthy families children could cement or create political and economic alliances through marriage. However, this benefit only comes in adulthood i.e. after a great deal of prior investment in education and other needs.

11. Statistics for England and Wales also show that the infant mortality rate for those in unskilled professions was double that for those in 'professional' occupations - 12 compared with 6 deaths per 1000 live births in 1985 (Abercrombie & Warde,1988:382).

12. This observation is based on the notion of social parenthood i.e. the performance of the parenting role (nurturing etc) as opposed to biological parenthood in the strict sense (the man whose sperm was used and the woman whose ova were used and who gave birth to the child).

13. These percentages were worked out on the basis of the raw data (on the number Black and White extended and nuclear family households headed by blue collar and white collar workers) provided by Allen on page 308.

14. The higher incidence of couple households in the case of Whites could be an indication of a longer lifespan and/or lower fertility rates when compared to other groups.

15. Census data on the type of dwelling occupied by families supports Simkins' calculations of the multi-occupancy rate. These reveal that while only 3.2% of White families lived as sub-tenants of a house rented or owned by 'another family' or single person, this applied to 13,7% of 'Coloureds' and 26,6% of Asians (1970 Population Census, Report Number 02-03-02:xix).15.

16. By means of computer simulation Simkins estimates that the proportion of husbands living away from their wives was 27% and of children living away from their (biological) mothers was 17% in 1980. He adds that while some of this may be due to divorce and separation "most can be attributed to influx control" (1986:38).

17. Black students were also more likely to feel that such a sense of obligation exists even where the relative was not in need of accommodation but simply expressed a wish to reside with

them (26% compared with 10%) (table not provided). Moreover, whereas 19% of the Black students said it would matter if the relative was related on their mother as opposed to their father's side, this applied to only 7% of the other students - the mother's side being preferred more often than the father's side.

CHAPTER 5

DEFINING THE FAMILY

" 'The family' is still a sign which denotes ... a distinct substantive area of social life,... (It) carries (except by association) no more methodological and theoretical baggage than does 'the English country house'" (Harris;1983:vii-viii).

"There is no such thing as the family - only families" (Gittins,1985:8).

"(We must) reject entirely the concept 'the family' as a sociological operand" (Bernardes,1986a:594).

1. INTRODUCTION

There can be no doubt that the concept 'the family' has become a contentious issue (Poster,1978; Thorne & Yalom,1982; Barrett & McIntosh,1982; Harris,1983; Gittins,1985; Bernardes, 1985,1986a,1986b; Zinn & Eitzen,1990; Trost,1990; Cheal,1991; Trost,1993). Evidence of this can be found in the frequent use of quotation marks; the omission of the definite or indefinite article (family); the use of the plural (families) and/or the outright rejection of 'the family' as a concept in sociological discourse and research. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and critique traditional definitions of the family as well as some recent attempts to overcome their limitations. The definition of the family which served as a framework for this study is discussed in the next chapter.

2. TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE FAMILY

One of the earliest and most controversial definitions of the family was proposed by Murdock (1949) who, in line with the functionalist tradition, claimed that:

"The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually

cohabiting adults" (quoted in Haralambos & Holborn, 1990:454).

It is this definition that led to the confused and now sterile debate about the universality of the family. Applying it to the Israeli kibbutz, Spiro, for example, came to the conclusion that "the family does not exist in the kibbutz" only to retract that statement a few years later claiming that it does exist there if Murdock's definition of the family is altered (in Haralambos & Holborn, 1990:455). The same ambiguity resulted when Murdock's definition was applied to Gough's research on the Nayar of South India (where husbands and wives do not form an economic, social or residential unit) (in Haralambos & Holborn, 1990:455). Therefore, far from systematising thinking around this issue, Murdock's definition only added to the confusion since we are brought back to the point from where we started - it is all a matter of definition.

Spiro quite correctly accuses Murdock of being 'unduly specific' in his definition since his general characterisation of the family contained in the first part is immediately followed by a description of a limited number of domestic arrangements. These are the extended nuclear family, the conventional nuclear family and nuclear families where children are adopted. Implicit here is the idea that the nuclear family is the core which may expand (but not contract) and that it is only in exceptional circumstance (e.g. infertility) that deviations occur. There is also the view that families can only be based on heterosexual unions and that domestic arrangements where only one person plays the parenting role are not 'real' or 'complete' families. Furthermore, whereas the use of the phrase 'socially approved sexual unions' as opposed to 'marriage' broadens the field somewhat, it still begs the question: Socially approved by whom? In other words, whose values are at issue here ?

The functionalist approach to defining the family was taken further in the 1950's and 1960's by Talcott Parsons (1954;1955). In contrast to Murdock, Parsons devoted little time to defining

the family in general terms (despite the titles of some of his work as well as his frequent use of the term 'the family') - his main concern being with "the American family". He characterises the latter as being of the 'isolated conjugal' type i.e. it consists exclusively of parents and children who live together in one unit and are economically independent of the parents of either spouse (1954:183). According to Parsons this family constitutes the "normal household unit" in the United States:

".. we clearly have none of the 'extended' kin groupings so prevalent among non-literate peoples ... (rather) the importance of the isolated conjugal family is brought out by the fact that it is the normal 'household' unit ... the typical conjugal family lives in a home segregated from those of both pairs of parents (if living) and is economically independent of both" (1954:183).

Parsons' conception of the family is therefore even more 'specific' or restrictive than that proposed by Murdock for it excludes even extended families from its ambit. This is not to say that Parsons does not make reference to other family forms. He does. But they are relegated to the position of 'deviations' and/or remnants from the past. It is under this heading that he discusses stem families in rural areas, families among the elite and 'matri-centered' families among the lower class (1954:185). The problem here is not just one of ethnocentrism or a class bias but that a family form which is thought to be typical of one sector of society is used as a basis for a theory of 'the family' in society as a whole. It is therefore an analytical problem that revolves around a restrictive definition of the subject being theorised.

Another shortcoming of Parsons' analysis is the unproblematic way in which he moves from discussing what he describes as 'the American kinship system' to discussing actual domestic groups in that society. As will be argued later, these are analytically separate phenomena, the first referring to the rules governing family formation and the second to the actual nature of families as households. Parsons seems to assume that

the latter flows automatically from the former i.e. he seems to be arguing that because the American kinship system is of a particular kind, families in that society will be of the same kind. In so doing he shows no regard for the structural constraints that prevent the realisation of cultural or individual ideals. (Bernardes, 1986a provides a similar critique of Parsons).

Although, the theory which Parsons proposes is both coherent and close to the 'common sense' understanding of 'the family' in modern society, it is not one that emanates from empirical research of family structures *per se*. It is probably best described as a theory about the relationship between the American kinship system and the requirements or needs of an industrial economy. The 'fit' which he claims exists is between the economy and the ideas (or the rules supposedly governing family formation) rather than actual composition and structure of families as concrete domestic arrangements (households). Consequently, it is not surprising that the large volume of work produced since the 1960's aimed explicitly at testing Parsons' propositions, found the latter wanting - the typical response being that (even middle class) families do not operate the way Parsons describes in his theory (see Litwak, 1960 in Elliot, 1986; Sussman & Burchinal, 1962 & Bell, 1968).

3. CRITICAL ANALYSES OF 'THE FAMILY'

3.1 Families

William Goode (1982) is among those writers who have recognised the need to move away from theorising about 'the family' in favour of 'families'. He notes, for example, that if one defines the family as a social unit made up of father, mother, and children then only 35% of American households fall within this category. This leads him to conclude that "we cannot think of the completed nuclear family (husband, wife and children) as 'the family' and all others as deviants ..."

(1982:xv).

In addressing the question of how this "problem can be avoided or answered" Goode considers the possibility of viewing the various kinds of families as phases in the domestic life cycle "so that the distribution of all families is simply a composite of those various phases" (1982:xv). He rejects this approach claiming that these phases, which include childless married couples and divorced individuals living with children, may be found to be "so different from one another that putting them all together does not suggest many fruitful ideas or hypotheses" (1982:xv). His eventual solution is to view the question of defining the family as "a matter of more or less". More specifically, he argues that a domestic arrangement is more likely to receive the label 'a family' the closer it approximates 'the traditional type' and therefore satisfies the following criteria:

- (1) That it must include at least two adults of opposite sexes;
- (2) who engage in some kind of division of labour;
- (3) make economic and social exchanges (do things for each other);
- (4) share many things in common such as food, sex, and residence;
- (5) have parental relations with their children who, in turn,
- (6) have sibling relations between themselves (1982:9).

"When all these conditions exist, few people would deny that the unit is a family. As we consider households in which more are missing, a larger number of people would express some doubt as to whether it really is a family. Thus, if two adults live together, but do nothing for each other, few people would agree that it is a family. If they do not even live together, fewer still would call the couple a family" (1982:9).

There are at least two lines of criticism against this way of defining families. The first is to question whether Goode is correct in identifying these as the criteria according to which people in everyday discourse define domestic groups as families. For example, a one-parent domestic arrangement qualifies for only 2 of the 6 criteria and only 1 if the child has no siblings

whereas a domestic arrangement consisting of a couple alone qualifies for 4 out of the 6, one in which a gay couple raises a child for 5 out of the 6 and a commune for all 6. Therefore, since Goode himself points out that people are likely to regard a widow and her children as a family but "many would not be willing to class a childless couple as a family ... (and) very few would be willing to accept a homosexual couple as a family" there does not seem to be any logical connection between the number of items on the list he provides and the way in which people define domestic arrangements as 'more or less families' (Goode,1982:9). The reason for this is that Goode has omitted two very important aspects of what can be described as 'the ideology of the family' in contemporary western societies. These are blood connections and heterosexual monogamous marriage. It seems to me that it is because of these factors that people are more likely to regard the widow and her children as a family and less likely to accord this status to a woman who raises a friend's child, a gay couple with children or a commune for that matter.

The second line of criticism is perhaps more important for it is not at all clear that people's preconceived ideas about what families ought to be like, is the appropriate starting point for theories of the family. Indeed it is precisely this tendency to base theories of the family on what people believe to be the ideal rather than on how they actually live, that has been the target of attack in recent times (see Gittins 1985; Bernardes,1985,1986a,1986b). In fact, one could argue that the only difference between Goode's way of defining the family and that proposed by Murdock and Parsons is that the former is more explicit in acknowledging the fact that his definition is based on value judgements.

3.2 Mother\Child Dyad - Biology or Society ?

The main problem with the definitions of the family discussed so far is that they confuse a general category - the family and a specific one - the conventional nuclear family. One

of the reasons why this has become so commonplace is the close association between the nuclear family and the roles played by men and women in human reproduction (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:21). Indeed the individuals who make up the biological category: father, mother and children are identical to those who make up conventional nuclear families. It is this coincidence or overlap that leads many to presume that the latter flows automatically from the former. However, as Harris (1983) points out there is no biological need for a father to wait for nine months to see the birth of his children. The nuclear family therefore needs to be seen as a social arrangement or, as Harris puts it, the result of an **arrangement** between a man and a woman (marriage) whereby the man **agrees** to assist the woman in rearing the children. Families then need to be seen as social constructs and not variations on a pre-given 'natural' theme derived from the 'biological facts' of human reproduction.

In line with this theme, a number of anthropologists have argued that the basic building block of society is not, as Malinowski and Murdock contended, the nuclear family but the mother-child dyad (Fortes, 1969; Fox, 1967, Goodenough, 1970, Gough 1959 and Smith, 1956 all in Moore, 1988:23). Consequently, it has been suggested that the mother-child dyad be seen as the basic building block of all families so that a nuclear family consists of this dyad plus a husband and, in the case of an extended single parent families, a parent of the mother would be added etcetera. While this way of categorising families has its advantages, it does not escape the biologism often associated with traditional definitions of the family. It is still based on the idea that there is some inextricable or fixed link between mother and child that does not apply to the father/child relationship and that families somehow flow automatically from that connection. But if we take Harris' argument one step further and assert that there is also no biological need for a woman to raise the child to whom she has given birth, we note that even this dyad is the result of a social arrangement rather than some biological imperative. In this case it would be the result of a

woman undertaking to rear her biological offspring. This approach to defining the family also cannot account for domestic arrangements where a single male or gay couple raise children and therefore once again raises the question of when and why certain and not other domestic arrangements are counted as families. It furthermore perpetuates an ideology which defines domestic arrangements involving individuals who are not related biologically and/or genetically (adoptive families, step-families, families created via a surrogate arrangement or through the use of genetic material from outside the couple) as inherently abnormal, unnatural, pathological or 'not real families' (see Ziehl,1990; Ziehl,1992). In short, the biological facts of human reproduction are an inadequate starting point for a concept and theory of the family that seeks to avoid making *a priori* statements about which domestic arrangements are normal, natural and/or inherently superior to others.

3.3 Families and Households

A number of writers have drawn attention to the fact that traditional definitions of the family conflate the household and the family or families (Ball in Elliot,1986; Gittins,1985; Barrett,1980; Rapp,1982; Walby,1990). Describing these as analytically discrete phenomena Ball (in Elliot,1986:4) claims that the term household "refers to a group of persons (or person) bound to a place whereas families are groups of persons bound together by ties of blood and marriage". In other words, Ball defines a household as a spatial group and the family as a group of kin. Gittins makes the same distinction when criticising Murdock's definition of the family indicating that he assumes that the household is "a defining characteristic of 'the family', and vice versa ... (but) there are numerous examples in contemporary society of families who do not form households ... families where the husband is in the armed services ... families where partners have jobs some distance away from one another ... children who are sent to boarding school .." (1985:61).

According to Gittins then, families are not always households and households are not always families. While this point is well-taken, it is not clear how Gittins proposes to distinguish between familial and non-familial households except with reference to the phenomenon of kinship. In discussing the latter she quotes approvingly from Eldholm who defines kinship as "the ties which exist between individuals who are seen as related both through birth (descent) and through mating (marriage)" (in Gittins, 1985: 64). For Gittins this definition of kinship is "a vast improvement on functionalist definitions of family" because it emphasises that kinship is a social construction and can vary "depending on how it is defined" (1985:64).

Are we to conclude from this that sociology of the family should simply change its name to sociology of kinship and all will be resolved? On one level this does seem to be what Gittins is suggesting since the whole thrust of her writing on this matter is to reject not only traditional definitions of the family but the concept 'the family' itself. So, for example, she asserts in an introductory chapter that "there is no such thing as the family - only families" and later that "the family is little more than an ideology that influences and informs the ways in which people interact and co-reside with one another" (1985:8&155). But having dismissed 'the family' as mere ideology, Gittins leaves us with no way of identifying families as concrete social arrangements. Indeed she claims that families are "but groups of individuals; individuals who age, work, die, may have children, marry or move" (1985:8). We are therefore still left with the question of how we, as analysts of society, are to distinguish between 'groups of individuals' that are families and those that are not. The value of Gittins' analysis is that she raises the question of family ideology as a subject in its own right i.e. a topic of investigation that has a history and varies between cultures. She does not, however, bring us very far down the road of defining families as actual domestic groups.

While the distinction between 'family' and 'household' is an important one, the view that (correctly defined), these terms have nothing to do with one another needs to be questioned. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 2, Williams points out that the term 'family' initially referred to a group of co-resident individuals some of whom were not kin (servants), later to a group of kin that is not necessarily co-resident and finally a group of co-resident kin (Williams, 1983:131) (see also Flandrin, 1979). The important lesson to be learned from this historical analysis of the word is that the conflation of household and family is not a modern phenomenon. Rather, what is unique about the modern usage of the term, is the fact that non-kin are excluded from the notion of 'family' - not that it is linked to the notion of household.

Moreover, the idea of the family as kin group AND as a group of co-resident kin is still present in contemporary discourse around the family. For example in the assertion "My family came to visit when my daughter was christened", it is the family as kin group to which is being alluded, whereas the family as coresident group is evoked in the following statement: "He is cooking supper for his family tonight". Since these two meanings of the term have coexisted in the English language for at least three centuries (see Barrett and McIntosh below), the question arises: Why should the first (the family as kin group) be given precedence over the second (the family as co-resident kin) or even the earlier meaning: the family as household that can include non-kin?

To reject the notion of household as a defining characteristic of the family is therefore to do an injustice not only to the history but the contemporary usage of the term 'family'. This is not to say that social scientific definitions should be based entirely on how people in everyday discourse define terms. Indeed I have argued against this above. Rather the point is that writers such as Gittins who have raised our awareness of the distinction between ideology and reality,

discourse and practice may have gone too far in the opposite direction by rejecting the notion 'the family' and proposing a definition of families that is so broad as to encompass almost anything and is too far removed from people's experience of family life.

3.4 Ideology Of The Family

Like Gittins (1985), Barrett and McIntosh (1982) highlight the importance of distinguishing between family ideology and the organisation of households (1982:8&77). Indeed, they go so far as to assert that the ideology of the family "has only a tenuous relation to co-residence and the organization of households as economic units" (1982:33). They are also acutely aware of the problematic nature of the concept the family and identify this as one of the main reasons for the failure to achieve consensus either within or between the feminist and socialist movements on the question of the family. For instance, they indicate that for some feminists the critique of the family is a critique of "the gap between the promise and reality of family life" and has led to "experimentation with alternative family forms" while for others it has led to "the search for the satisfactions that families sometimes provide ... outside families" (1982:41). Here then we have two feminist conceptions of the family leading to two different positions on the family - one seeking 'better families' and the other seeking alternatives to 'the family'. For Barrett and McIntosh, this is not just a semantic quibble:

"Confusing ... the empirical analysis of household organisation with ideological, political moral and religious dimensions of sexuality and kinship, has led to serious problems of interpretation. These difficulties are not simply analytic, however, since the analyses themselves are locked in political positions related to the desirability of the various possible arrangements. The definition of 'family' is in itself a politically contested one and the vehemence with which academic and historical points of view are argued bears tribute to this fact. At present, the debate is particularly explicit about the political significance of defining specific arrangements as 'family', but these political dimensions colour discussion and interpretation at all

levels" (1982:85).

While Barrett and McIntosh correctly identify the family as an ambiguous concept as well as the "need for rigorous specification of what is at stake" (1982:84), their own attempt at resolving this problem on *the conceptual level* is equally ambiguous. On the one hand, they deny that the family can be defined generically since, as they put it, "no general or essential category can be derived analytically from the many varied arrangements commonly lumped together as the family" (1982:81) and "no description of the family will hold true across classes or in a multi-cultural society such as Britain" (1982:90). On the other hand, they offer such a definition claiming that the family has a two-fold character: it is an economic and social institution as well as an ideology (1982:7 & 8). More particularly, they claim it is an institution "in which, by and large, households are assumed to be organised on the basis of close kinship relations ... a division of labour between a primary breadwinner (male) and a primary childrearer (female)" (1982:7). Since this is the only description we are given of the family as economic and social institution (a set of assumptions about household organisation) it is hard to see how this differs from the other aspect of the family, namely ideology. Indeed it is the latter which is the main preoccupation of their book and the only conceptual clarity they introduce to this debate is to make it explicit that their analysis of 'the anti-social family' is a critique of "a particular, historically and socially specific, form of family" i.e. the bourgeois nuclear family (1982:81).¹

But nowhere in their analysis is a serious attempt made to explain why families located at different points in the social structure may differ or to develop a concept of the family that may allow for such an analysis. In sum, although Barrett and McIntosh raise the problem of defining the family they do not provide an adequate solution. Like Gittins, they tend to dismiss the family as mere ideology (1982:34) and provide no answer to

the question of how social analysts are to account for "the family forms associated with particular class and ethnic groups" (1982:90). Once again then we have an awareness of the problem of defining the family and an acknowledgement of family diversity but no solution in the form of a concept that can serve as the basis of a theory aimed at explaining intra- and inter-societal variation in family structure and/or family ideology.

3.5 The Dyadic Approach

Trost is less dismissive of the concept the family claiming that although "there is no possibility of defining the family" for the sake of social scientific research, an attempt should at least be made (1988:301). However, he prefers the term 'family' to 'the family' i.e. without the definite (and indefinite) article and proposes that the former be analysed in dyadic terms. His specific solution is to regard any social group composed of "at least one parent-child and/or at least one spousal unit" as a family. He furthermore defines a parent-child unit as "one parent and one child related to each other" and the spousal unit as "two adults cohabiting (maritally or non-maritally)" (1988:301). Trost uses the following example to illustrate the use of dyads to "dissect the concept of family" (1988:303):

"Two men cohabit: they have one child each from previous relationships residing with them. They constitute a four-person household, which might be classified as two one-parent families sharing a household, or a two-parent family ... With the approach presented here ... only two parent-child units ... would be found unless the non-parent adult took over (socially or otherwise) a parental role in the relationship with the child. In such a case there would be four parent-child relationships. The taking over (of a) role relationship should not be taken for granted, but it often is in the censuses and otherwise. The relationship should be individually examined and not taken for granted" (1988:307).

What we have here then is a dyadic approach which to some extent avoids the biologism associated with the way this concept has been used by some of the scholars referred to above, as well as the conflation of the conventional nuclear family and the family

associated with traditional definitions of the family in sociology. It also has the advantage of drawing attention to the problematic nature of the concept 'parenthood' something which is particularly relevant in situations where divorce, separation, remarriage and cohabitation are involved. In this regard, Trost provides a useful starting point for an analysis of the various and often very complicated domestic arrangements arising out of different types of custodial arrangements and the relative status of different adults in the lives of children depending, for instance, on blood connection and social involvement.² To the extent that Trost's analysis provides a conceptual framework for such analyses, his contribution is to be welcomed. Moreover, Trost (like myself) emphasises the importance of seeing definitions of the family, not as sacrosanct, but against the background of the purpose for which they are devised (Trost, 1988:307). These merits notwithstanding, two problems remain:

Firstly, there is the question of the criteria used to identify the dyads which make up families. Do dyads come into existence because of regular face-to-face interaction, through playing a parenting role, through biological connections or through some other factor or combination of these? On this question Trost is inconsistent for he regards residence as the criterion for the establishment of spousal and cohabitational dyads and 'relatedness' as the criterion for the establishment of parent-child dyads. When discussing the example of individuals (biological parents and a child) involved in a joint alternate custody arrangement he writes:

"Using traditional language, we would say that the three persons make two one-parent families, or we might say that at every moment there would be only one one-parent family - defined by where the child lives at the moment - and one one-person household ... (But) with the approach offered here, one would simply conclude that there are two parent-child units. This would also be the case if the child remains stationary with one parent. Both parents are **still parents** even if their spousal relationship has dissolved; each of them is still a parent and **the child still has two parents**" (1988:306) (emphasis added).

Here Trost betrays his own acceptance of traditional family ideology which, as indicated above, sees parenthood as something guaranteed through the mere fact of biological connection between individuals. In this regard, his analysis does not escape the biologism of traditional definitions of the family which see the latter as arising 'naturally' from the facts of human reproduction. But more importantly, Trost does not justify the use of two separate criteria for the identification of the two dyads which make up families as he perceives them, nor does he explore the implications of these criteria. This brings me to the second shortcoming of Trost's analysis.

Trost fails to stipulate from whose point of view these dyads can be seen to exist i.e. ego is not specified. Rather he describes the dyadic relationships of all individuals whom he considers to be part of a particular family, simultaneously. This means that the dyadic approach can, at least in theory, be applied to family members *ad infinitum*: I am in a dyadic relationship with my mother who is in a dyadic relationship with her sister who is in a dyadic relationship with a friend etcetera. The question that arises here is once again why Trost chooses to 'draw the line' where he does - sometimes around those who live together and sometimes around those who are related in the first degree provided that the younger generation does not have children of their own. Nevertheless, as indicated above, Trost's analysis makes a useful contribution to the debate about defining the family. I will return to some of the issues he raises as well as some research he has conducted on the way the term family is defined in everyday discourse later.

3.6 Family Sociology Without 'The Family'

Probably the most explicit and vehement rejection of the concept 'the family' has come from Jon Bernardes (1985; 1986a; 1986b). He argues that other writers in this field have not gone far enough because they have "criticised 'The Family'", focused on "what 'The Family' is and does" rather than "doubted its

existence" (1985:280). In his view, the particular family form about which sociologists have been theorising (white, middle class and characterised by full time female housekeeper and full time male breadwinner) is not only a minority family form but statistically insignificant:

"... the 'normal family' is so rare as to render the whole idea of a single central type of 'family' quite redundant ... 'The Family, 'The Western Family', 'the Nuclear Family', 'the traditional Family' - none of these terms refers to an existent reality" (Bernardes, 1986b:833).

Bernardes also makes it clear that he arrives at this conclusion having 'looked for' diversity and that this is more interesting than the models of the family put forward by structuralists like Parsons:

"To put the point most simply: when you look for 'normal families' you tend to find them but when, with the same data, you look for variations from the normal you tend to find great diversity We need to recognise ... the fact of human individuality, the ultimate uniqueness of individual experience and the ultimate uniqueness of individual life-course. Put bluntly, the most interesting thing about individuals and 'families' is not the common nature of experience but rather the immensely rich and diverse experience of similar situations" (1986a:595 -597).

Here Bernardes makes explicit his rejection of structuralist analyses of the family and although we have reason to suspect that he may have gone too far in the opposite direction, his point is well taken - our concepts and the criteria we use to identify them when conducting empirical research, influence our results and therefore the 'picture' of the family which emerges from our studies.

In order to avoid the "mystification of family life" which the idea of 'the family' implies, Bernardes argues for the abandonment of the concept 'the family'. Following Weber, he suggests that we draw a distinction between ourselves as ordinary members of society and as sociologists (i.e. professionals) and that 'the family' only be used in the first context:

"The proposal involves three elements: first, to reject entirely the concept of 'the family' as a sociological operand; second, to admit the concept of 'the family' into sociological debate only as reflecting everyday usage; third, to indicate this specification of the concept by always enclosing it and related terms in quotation marks (e.g. 'the family', 'The Family', 'family life', 'family sociology')" (1986a:594).

"Rejection of the sociological use of 'the family' is the only way to avoid importing everyday assumptions and thereby to avoid sustaining 'family ideology'" (1986a:598).

In sum, because 'family ideology' "constitutes an idolistic mystification of human social life", any use of the concept 'the family', especially on the part of sociologists, serves to legitimise and promote the mystification which this ideology entails.

3.7 Life Course

When considering an alternative means of conceptualising and analysing "those areas of social life which everyday actors refer to as 'family'" Bernardes rejects the concept 'household' as well as his earlier proposal "ecocile" indicating that these "are little more than attempts to find another name for 'families' and do not necessarily ensure any improved analysis" (1986a:598). His own proposal is for the use of developmental pathways. This approach is similar to Elder's 'family life course' in the sense that in both cases the unit of analysis is the individual and his/her life history but it differs, according to Bernardes, "by not assuming a central conventional 'family type'" (1986a:604). In drawing this distinction Bernardes asserts that his proposal "is that we conceptualise social existence not as moving out of and back into 'structures' or 'institutions' such as 'the family' but rather as individual life-courses meeting, some times combining together and perhaps later parting" (1986:599).

The merit of Bernardes analysis is that he, like Gittins (1985), Barrett and McIntosh (1982) and others, draws attention

to the discrepancy between that which 'the family' represents or is usually taken to mean, on the one hand and the actual lived experience of family life and family diversity, on the other. Moreover, like these other writers he identifies family ideology as a subject in its own right, a necessary object of investigation for any student or researcher of family life. By taking the individual as his unit of analysis and illustrating the dynamic nature of family life, Bernardes complements the static and structuralist approach adopted by traditional family sociologists. However, as I will show in the following chapter, accepting these positive aspects of Bernardes analysis does not imply a complete rejection of the concept 'the family'. Moreover, even if we take Bernardes' advice and only use 'the family' in the sense that 'other people' use it, it still has to be defined. Finally, avoiding models or frameworks in favour of an extreme individualistic, even idiosyncratic, approach can result (as Bernardes himself indicates) "in an extremely complex picture ... (and runs) the danger of over-emphasising diversity and complexity ... thereby allowing the impression of chaos to emerge" (1986:603). His assertion that this should recommend rather than detract from his approach (1986:603) is neither convincing nor reassuring. In short, simply avoiding the explicit definition of terms is no solution.

5. CONCLUSION

Traditional conceptions of the family can be subjected to a number of criticisms the most important being that they have tended to conflate a general phenomenon 'the family' and a specific one 'the nuclear family'. As such, these analyses are firmly embedded in what people in some sectors of society believe to be an ideal domestic arrangement (family ideology) rather than the way domestic affairs are actually organised. In an attempt to overcome these limitations some writers have made the ideological component of their definitions more explicit (Goode) while others have rejected the concept itself (Gittins; Bernardes; Trost) and offered alternative terms (Gittins & Trost)

or approaches (Bernardes). The more specific solutions that have been proposed are: families are as people define them (Goode); families are but groups of individuals (Gittins); we should not be analysing families but developmental pathways (Bernardes) and families are composed of at least one parental and one spousal or cohabitational dyad (Trost). In my view none of these strategies is sufficient in themselves: Goode's approach simply highlights the problem; Gittins and Trost fail to provide adequate definitions of the concepts they suggest as alternatives and Bernardes' approach is tantamount to throwing in the towel. The latter is an option which, at one time or another, must appear enormously appealing to those who take it upon themselves to delve into the meaning of concepts whether it be the family, class or any other social scientific term. It is not, however, the option I have chosen here.

6. NOTES

1. It is with regard to this family type that Barrett and McIntosh attempt to forge a marriage between feminist and socialist concerns. They do this by defending individuals' (women's) motives for investing in the (this?) family while at the same time criticizing 'it' as anti-social. The upshot of their analysis is that "the family presents certain advantages within the context of a particular society" and that what is needed are "campaigns to transform not the family - but the society that needs it" (1982: 131 & 159) (emphasis in original). In their view the needs which 'the family' presently fulfils are not false ones but historically specific ones that would be different if the society changed.

2. For example, a one parent family following from death is usually (though need not be) different from one which arises from divorce in the sense that in the latter case the status of the non-custodial parent is at issue. This is partly due to the emphasis which contemporary family ideology places on the acquisition of parental rights and duties through biological connections and partly due to the wishes of biological parents for involvement with children after divorce or separation. The situation is of course further complicated by the variable nature of custody arrangements for here we need to distinguish not only between sole and joint custody but the various types of joint custody. But whatever the reasons or specificities of particular cases, the relative status of biological parents after divorce or separation is an issue which family sociologists (interested in defining the family) need to address.

CHAPTER 6

THE FAMILY AS SOCIAL INSTITUTION

"Just at a time when public concern for the family is widespread, social scientists have little theoretical clarity to offer ... Social science does not have an adequate definition of the family, or a coherent set of categories from which to analyse it, or a rigorous conceptual scheme to specify what is significant about it" (Poster, 1978:ix).

"... a great deal of energy has been expended on the task of tearing down the orthodox consensus about the normal family. That task is now complete. The challenge for us is to renew family theory, in the aftermath of the Big Bang ..." (Cheal, 1991:153).

1. INTRODUCTION

As has been noted in the previous chapter, family sociologists have been grappling with the question of how to define the family but do not appear to have found a solution to the problem of acknowledging family diversity on the one hand and defining the family as an object of investigation in its own right, on the other. As Elliot puts it, the problem seems to be that although the term 'families' is now more popular than 'the family', the question that still needs to be answered is: "What is it that is varying but is regarded as familial?" (1986:6). Against this background we can rightly ask if, in rejecting Parsons' neat and coherent definition and theory of 'the family', we have not 'thrown the baby out with the bath water'. But the challenge remains: how to reconcile the complex nature and diverse forms of family life and the task of producing theories which must of necessity make use of concepts of a general and reasonably abstract nature. The purpose of this chapter is to propose a definition of the family that aims at meeting this challenge. By way of introduction, I offer a few comments about the nature of concepts in general and the family in particular:

Firstly, concepts are artificial constructs and as such will

never fit reality in any perfect sense. There will always be disputes about the precise boundaries of concepts and therefore the objects to which they refer.

Secondly, there can be no correct or incorrect definition of any concept. Definitions are either useful or not, depending on the purposes for which they have been devised and the context within which they are used. In the case of everyday language the purpose is to communicate and the only criterion for deciding on the utility of a definition or meaning is whether or not it is shared by those with whom one is communicating. To the extent that we wish to communicate our ideas, this criterion also applies to sociologists. But in contrast to other social actors, we are also called upon to be explicit in this regard. This is necessary in our case since concepts are also means of identifying a particular area of analysis or investigation. I therefore agree with Poster when he writes:

"Epistemologically, a (critical) theory of the family must constitute the family as an object for research. It must provide a set of categories that point to the kinds of data needed for the comprehension of the family in a given society ... Theory does not produce a closed set of concepts that exhausts the meaning of its object, but provides a set of categorical guidelines enabling researchers to discover the concrete configurations of the object in question" (Poster, 1978:140).

Thirdly, as Barrett and McIntosh point out, one of the reasons why the family is such a 'slippery phenomenon' for sociologists is that the meaning attached to it in everyday discourse is itself ambiguous (1982:84). This is reflected in dictionary definitions which reveal "the fundamental ambiguity of the term 'family': does it refer to members of a residential household or to people connected by ties of marriage and kinship?" (1982:84). In other words, in terms of everyday usage, 'family' has both a narrow and wider meaning and although our interest as sociologists is primarily in families as groups of interacting individuals (narrow sense) this matter cannot be analysed adequately in isolation from the wider meaning of

'family' i.e. the whole area of kin relations - the way in which societies assign responsibilities and duties to different categories of individuals.

Fourthly, it may be useful to remind ourselves of the reason why 'the family' has become a contentious concept. It is not, as some have contended, because the nuclear family has become **completely irrelevant** as an empirical phenomenon. In this regard, Chester has challenged writers like Barrett and McIntosh (and by implication Bernardes, 1986b; Zinn and Eitzen, 1990:14 and others) who dismiss the idea of the nuclear family as 'mere ideology':

"If there were a direct correspondence between the imagery of the family represented in the media and the actual composition of households we would find the majority of the population living in nuclear residences of children and their parents. Yet if the 1971 census is to be believed, fewer than a third of Britain's households were enmeshed in such an arrangement and only one in ten was organized in the normatively sanctioned pattern of paternal breadwinner and maternal full-time housewife ... this hegemonic family form is a powerful ideological force that mirrors in an idealized way the characteristics attributed to contemporary family life. (However), it has only a tenuous relation to co-residence and the organisation of households as economic units ... the major significance of 'the family' today is ideological" (Barrett & McIntosh, 1982:33)

In response, Chester (1985 in Leonard & Hood-Williams, 1988) claims that with the exception of the increasing participation of married women in the paid labour force, there has been no significant decline in the popularity of the conventional nuclear family. In a manner reminiscent of Flandrin's critique of Laslett (Chapter 2), he criticises Barrett and McIntosh for ignoring the domestic life cycle and indicates that when the various phases of the 'normal domestic life cycle' are added together they constitute the majority of all households in Britain - 66% in 1981 (Chester in Leonard & Hood-Williams, 1988:31-32). Moreover, Chester contends that when we focus on individuals rather than households we notice that in Britain "about 80% of people live in households headed by a married couple (and) three quarters of

these families contain children, who represent 83% per cent of all children" (in Leonard & Hood-Williams,1988:31-32). Data from a study conducted among young people in the Netherlands give support to Chester's criticism of the idea that "only a diminishing minority now lives in the traditional 'nuclear' family of two parents with their children" (in Leonard & Hood-Williams,1988:31). Spruijt's study, which was based on a random sample of about 2000 young people in the Netherlands, revealed that 85% of these were part of conventional (i.e. first marriage) nuclear families in 1991 (Spruijt,1994:7&8)¹. In the United States too, about 90% of the population eventually marries, 85% of couples have children and about 73% of children under eighteen years were living with two-parents according to the 1989 census (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:268 &289; Schaefer & Lamm,1992:402).

In making sense of this debate it is important to note that claims about the decline or not in the popularity of any particular family type requires agreement on the starting point of the historical period in question. If it is the beginning of recorded history, the middle ages or simply 'pre-industrial times' then it is quite possible that there has been a trend towards the standardisation of family types in Western societies. The factors responsible for this would be the improvement in the standard of living which has made it possible for a larger proportion of the population to marry (assuming an emphasis on neo-locality) and the decline in mortality. The latter is associated with a reduction in widowhood thus "increasing the predictability of family living" and the "standardization of marital status" (Cheal,1991:122; see also Gee,1986 in Cheal,1991:122). On the other hand, if our starting point is the twentieth century, a different pattern emerges. Cheal sees the 1970's as the turning point, claiming that since then there has been a diversification of family types and life-styles and therefore increasing departure from the normative pattern of family living - getting married, having children and surviving until at least the age of 50 in an intact first marriage (Cheal,1991:124). Kohli (in Cheal,1991:124) concurs with this

view claiming that there has been a long-term trend of approximately 300 years towards increased standardisation and a short term trend (of about 20 years) towards increasing diversification of family life styles.

Against this background the writers whom Chester criticises appear to be correct in identifying a recent trend away from the conventional nuclear family. However, in support of Chester's position, it is equally important to note that the outcome of that trend has not been the complete elimination of the nuclear family - even in its conventional form - from the family life experiences of the majority of the population in western societies such as the United States and Britain. Moreover, the nuclear family may have retained both its ideological position and its position of statistical prominence in the appropriate phase of the individual's life cycle.

My second point with regard to this debate is that the popularity (or lack thereof) of the nuclear family is not the only reason for the need to redefine the family. An equally important reason is the desire on the part of some family sociologists to avoid imbuing family theory and thereby family sociology with an *a priori* commitment to the moral superiority of a particular family form and to recognize the diversity of family types that have existed and continue to exist in any given society. This is not to imply that those wishing to redefine the family are ideologically neutral in their endeavour since the desire to be more encompassing is itself informed by an ideological commitment to the importance of treating a variety of family and household forms as potentially viable and legitimate. This is in line with a trend which Boh describes as the "one uniform trend in the overall development of family patterns, (in European societies) ... the trend towards a recognition of diversity" (Boh, 1989:296 in Cheal, 1991:125) (emphasis in original).

In sum, as I see it, the challenge facing family

sociologists is twofold: It consists of devising a conception of the family that accommodates a variety of family structures without privileging one above the rest AND of providing a definition that is specific enough to allow us to differentiate between the family and other social phenomena. In other words, it involves finding a definition that is broad enough to take account of the many family structures which exist and specific enough to be meaningful as a tool for communication, analysis, research and theorising. In offering a definition that aims at meeting these criteria, I propose a reconsideration of the idea that the family is a social institution.

2. THE FAMILY AS INSTITUTION

Focusing on the concept institution as a way to get around some of the problems involved in defining the family may appear unwise since here, too, we are dealing with a concept that is defined in various ways and whose meaning is often assumed rather than stated explicitly (Harris,1990). Indeed a review of ten introductory sociology textbooks revealed that in half the cases the term does not even feature in the subject index. This is true, for example, of texts written by Bilton et al (1984), Giddens (1989) and Haralambos and Holborn (1990). It is also true of many sociology dictionaries.

Both in everyday language and in sociological discourse the term institution has been applied to a number of phenomena. These range from a person, object, behavioural pattern and organisations to an 'organ' or section of society. So, for example, 'mum', apple pie and Elvis Presley have been referred to as American institutions in the same way that biltong and braaivleis (and domestic 'servants') can be referred to as South African institutions. What is being alluded to here is the idea of institution as something which is part of a particular way of life and has been part of a way of life for a long time or as Mitchell puts it "that which is established or constituted in society" (Mitchell,1979:105). The 'thing' in question also

usually carries a positive connotation.²

On the other hand, many sociologists regard the family, religion, politics and the economy as institutions. The meaning of relevance here is the idea of an institution as referring to a particular aspect or 'slice' of society. There is also a tendency to conflate these two meanings and see an institution as synonymous with normative behaviour within a particular sphere of society. So, for instance, the institution of religion is seen as referring to normative i.e. accepted religious behaviour and ideas (Christianity, going to church etc).

It is in this sense that Parsons (in Camic,1990:314), Gittins (1985), Steyn (1990) and others refer to the family as an institution. What they are referring to are (primarily) the ideas governing familial behaviour and the expectations people have of family members as opposed to the actual behaviour of individuals within families. It is also in this sense that Berger refers to an institution as "a regulatory agency, channelling human actions in much the same way as instincts channel animal behaviour" (1963:104). While it is not entirely correct to say that this view of institutions ignores behaviour or is restricted to the level of ideas, only normative behaviour is at issue (see Camic,1990). Charon quite clearly holds this conception of institutions:

"... an institution is a pattern of behaviour which has become widely accepted and appears as a natural pattern - the only way for people to do something ... Marriage is an institution. People do not have to get married - but in our society this is the accepted, legitimate, right, moral, even healthy way that people are supposed to live ... Institutions are important to us for two reasons. First, they tell us the right way to do things and help us make many of our choices, from how to raise our children to how to spend our leisure time to how to deal with death. Second, institutions are necessary for the continuation of the social organization through regulating the members, fitting them into preestablished grooves " (Charon, 1980:130-133).

It is this conception of institutions (as ideal or normative

behaviour) combined with the view that the nuclear family is the only legitimate\correct way to raise children, that has led many to conclude that the family is crumbling or on its way out. To substantiate this claim, rates of illegitimacy, cohabitation, divorce etc are often cited. As in the case of traditional theories of the family, this view of institutions conflates a general category or phenomenon (the family, religion etc) and a specific normative pattern or social group such as the nuclear family, Christianity etc.

The definition of institutions I am proposing is broader in that it incorporates but is not exhausted by specific normative patterns. While not common or widespread, this broader view of institutions is not new for, as Mitchell (1979) points out, a number of writers have argued that the latter should not be restricted to 'approved or sanctioned behaviour' (1979:105-106). In terms of my definition, an institution refers to all ideas and practices that relate to a particular kind of social activity. So, for example, the institution of religion would be seen as grouping together all ideas and practices that relate to the sacred or belief in a transcendental realm and Christianity would be seen as part of, but not synonymous with, that institution.

Similarly, the institution of the family would be seen as referring to all ideas and practices which relate to sexual relationships, parenting and residence. In other words it is seen as synonymous with the social context within which sexuality is expressed, children are raised³ and people, more generally, live. This definition goes beyond 'common sense' understandings of the family in that it does not privilege one particular context or domestic arrangement above others. In terms of this approach, the specific features of the context within which sexuality is expressed, children are raised or people live (who is having sexual relations with whom, who is doing the parenting, what is the relationship between those engaged in parenting, who is living with whom etc) are left open. It is to be answered after investigation whether at the level of the household, community

or society. As such this approach is similar to that proposed by Ester Goody (1982) who has argued that the various activities which make up parenthood can be delegated, shared and even transferred rather than necessarily centered on the conventional nuclear family.

The rationale behind this definition of the family as institution is twofold: Firstly, (and at the risk of stating a banality) it has been devised in the interest of providing the concept with some meaning. To that end it is deemed necessary to identify boundaries, and sexuality, parenting and residence have been chosen as the 'hook' on which to hang family studies. The second rationale puts pressure in the opposite direction in that it is to define the family as broadly as possible so as not to privilege one domestic group above others. In particular, in terms of this definition those ideas which define marriage as the only acceptable context for the expression of sexuality and the nuclear family as the only acceptable way to raise children would therefore feature as part of the institution of the family but (as in the case of the institution of religion) are not synonymous with it. The notion of an institution referring to a particular sphere or section of society is therefore retained but also enlarged to encompass not only an ideological element but a concrete element which, in turn, is seen as comprising a variety of behaviours and domestic groups. It is illustrated below:

Table 6.3

THE FAMILY AS SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Ideological Level: The Ideology of The Family
Concrete Level: Practices and Social Groups

3. FAMILY IDEOLOGY

As I have noted numerous times above, one of the positive results of critical analyses of traditional conceptions of the family has been the identification of family ideology (or the ideology of The Family) as an area of investigation in its own right. Here again we enter contested terrain since the concept ideology has also been much debated (see Mitchell,1979; Larrain,1979; Barrett,1980; Williams,1983; Goldberg,1992).

One bone of contention, which can be traced back to the ambivalent way in which Marx and Engels used the term in their writings, concerns the question of whether ideology is a true reflection of material conditions (reality) or whether it is an illusion - an up-side-down version of reality (Williams,1983: 155). A related issue concerns the question of the relationship between ideology and science - whether they are per definition separate, separable or synonymous. This, in turn, is linked to the question of whether ideology carries a positive or negative connotation (Williams, 1983; Goldberg, 1992). As in the case of 'the family' itself, debates around these issues are bedeviled by a lack of consensus around the meaning of central terms. In this regard, Goldberg points out that at least four, not necessarily mutually exclusive, meanings have been attached to the term ideology: distortion (Marx); class's world view (Lukacs); discourse of domination (Critical theory) and medium (phenomenology\constructivism) (Goldberg,1992:2).

According to one reading of Marx, he counterposed science and ideology claiming that the former was capable of generating an unmediated (though not neutral) account of 'the real world'. In his view this was already the case in the natural sciences but the social sciences would have to await a classless society to achieve that status. For him, ideas (and therefore science and ideology) are clearly linked to classes and class interests. What made something ideological or scientific depended on whether it was forward looking (towards a classless society) or sought to

justify and legitimize the existing class relations. In other words, it depended on the **content** of the ideas and how they were used (Goldberg,1992:6)⁴. In a similar vein, Poster (1978) distinguishes between ideological and critical theories (of the family):

"Ideological theories present the social structure ahistorically, as a natural, inevitable, unchangeable or universal feature of human existence. Any theory that tells us that what we have is what we must have is ideological" (1978:xix).

This, he contrasts to a critical theory which:

"... is 'normative', providing a basis for reform of the structure in question" (1978:xix).

Poster's conception of ideology is in line, not only with that of Marx (as presented above) but also of Mannheim who as Mitchell (1979) puts it, saw ideology as "all thought distorted by the desire to conserve the present social order or restore the past ..." (1979:95). Against this background, ideology is evaluated negatively and counterposed to science or in the case of Poster 'critical theory' which carries a positive connotation.

On the other hand, Hegelian Marxists, do not usually make a distinction between science and ideology, claiming that science is ideological. Here then, science itself gains a pejorative meaning. For instance, as Goldberg points out, Lukacs sees science as "inadequate" because it presents "only a partial account of the world" whereas 'true' knowledge is knowledge which places 'facts' in the context of the totality of which they are part (Lukacs,1971 in Goldberg,1992:7). Further, Lukacs sees ideologies as the 'weltanschauung' of particular classes and claims that the world view of the bourgeoisie is more limited than that of the proletariat - the latter being "a universal class" and therefore able to articulate "not only its own interests but also those of society as a whole" (Goldberg,1992:8). He therefore makes provision for distinct ideologies associated with different classes and draws a qualitative distinction between them (Goldberg,1992:8) (See also

Williams,1983).

While the authors referred to above may differ amongst themselves in terms of their evaluation of ideology (and science), they seem to be in agreement that the term 'ideology' refers to a set of ideas. This notion has, however, also been disputed. The question here concerns on the one hand, the definitional issue (what ideology *is*) and on the other, the relationship between ideology and practice or material conditions - whether the former is synonymous with, autonomous or relatively autonomous from the latter and if the last option is accepted, what relative may mean (Barrett,1980:97).

The issues raised here are of a complex nature and I cannot hope to do justice to them within the confines of this study. Below I discuss the work of two writers who have focused specifically on family ideology paying attention to the way in which they define ideology, generally speaking, and their views on the content of contemporary family ideology.

3.1 Barrett and Bernardes On Ideology

Crucial to Barrett's discussion of family ideology are developments that have occurred both with marxism and feminism in an attempt to get away from the economic determinism associated with classical marxism or as she puts it:

"to resolve a classic paradox in Marxism: that being may determine consciousness but revolutionary transformation of the conditions of being will depend upon raising the level of class-consciousness" (1980:89).

One solution, put forward by Althusser, has been to assert the 'relative autonomy' of ideology from the material base while still seeing the latter as 'determining in the last instance' (Barrett,1980:30). While Barrett welcomes this development she fears that subsequent theoretical developments (on the question of women's oppression) are misguided in that they have seen women's oppression as located solely on the ideological level

albeit an ideology that is now seen as "a relatively autonomous element of the social formation" (1980:31). They have also led to the view that "ideology is material" and the 'sanctioning' of any marxist "caught artlessly counterposing 'material conditions' and 'ideology' ... but surely ideology *is* material will be the inevitable reproof" (1980:89) (emphasis in original). This view is reflected in the writings of Coward and Ellis who claim that ideology is:

"a **practice** of representation, it is the way an individual lives his or her life..." (in Barrett, 1980: 32) (emphasis added).

It is also the approach adopted by Bernardes:

"'Family ideology' refers here to that varied and multi-layered system of ideas **and practices** which holds 'The Family' to be a 'natural' and universally present feature of all human societies, an 'institution' which is positively functional and the basis of morality" (Bernardes, 1985:279) (emphasis added).

However, Bernardes' discussion of family ideology is essentially about a particular set of ideas as well as **the effects** of those ideas on society rather than practices as such. It is therefore unclear what importance should be attached to the fact that he includes 'practices' in his definition of ideology. Moreover, following Mannheim, Bernardes claims that "the concept of 'The Family' itself" would qualify for Mannheim's 'total' conception of ideology:

" ... we are here concerned with ... the total structure of the mind of this epoque or of this group" (Mannheim, 1972:49-50) ... The very existence of 'The Family' seems to be part of the 'total structure of the mind' (Mannheim, 1972:50) of contemporary society in much the same way as notions of ownership and wage labour seem to be" (Bernardes, 1985:276).

Barrett, on the other hand, is very clear in her rejection of the tendency to 'throw the net' so wide as to include practices or 'the material' in definitions of ideology. In the first instance she claims that "for the concept of ideology to have any analytical use it must be bounded" and cannot be seen as

synonymous with or as determining as 'the material' (1980:97).

In this respect, she quotes Eagleton who remarks:

"there is no possible sense in which meanings and values can be said to be 'material' other than in the most sloppily metaphorical use of the term ... If meanings are material, then the term 'materialism' naturally ceases to be intelligible. Since there is nothing which the concept excludes, it ceases to have value" (in Barrett, 1980:90).

Barrett articulates her own position on this issue as follows:

"I want to restrict the term to refer to phenomena that are mental rather than material. Hence the concept ideology refers to those processes which have to do with consciousness, motive, emotionality; it can best be located in the category of *meaning* ... Ideology is embedded historically in material practice but it does not follow either that ideology is theoretically indistinguishable from material practices or that it bears any direct relationship to them" (Barrett, 1980:97-98) (emphasis in original).

With regard to the relationship between ideology and the material base, Barrett firstly redefines the relations of production so as to include "divisions of gender, of race, definitions of different forms of labour (mental, manual and so on), of who should work and at what" (1980:99). Secondly, she claims that ideology (and in particular gender ideology) is an integral part of the relations of production but not necessarily of the means or forces of production which she describes as 'sex-blind' being capable of operating quite independently of gender (1980:99):

"It is impossible to understand the division of labour for instance, with its differential definitions of 'skill', without taking into account the material **effects** of gender ideology. The belief that a (white) man has a 'right' to work over and above any rights of married women or immigrants ... has to be taken into account when analysing the division of labour, but its location in material practice does not render it material in the same way" (1980:89) (emphasis added).

Here Barrett is making a distinction between the question of where ideology is **located** and its defining characteristics. That is, between where ideology is to be **found** and the **effects** it has as opposed to 'what it is'⁵. This is a useful distinction because

on this score Barrett and Bernardes hold almost opposite views - the latter claiming that ideology is "located in the level of meaning" (1985:277) but defines it as including both ideas and practices (see above).

Where these authors agree, is on their evaluation of ideology. In both cases family ideology is seen as 'a myth' that is, an incorrect, misleading portrayal of reality or a set of false ideas. This issue is best discussed with reference to their depiction of the content of (contemporary) family ideology.

3.2 Barrett and Bernardes on the Content of Family Ideology

One approach to defining the content of contemporary family ideology, has been to associate it with a particular family type: one consisting of a heterosexual married couple with biological offspring and characterised by the traditional division of labour (Segal, 1983:11 in Bernardes, 1985:279). Barrett provides a similar description, claiming that the ideology of the family is synonymous with the bourgeois definition of the family which, in turn, sees the family as

"'naturally' based on close kinship, as properly organized through a male breadwinner with financially dependent wife and children, and as a haven of privacy beyond the public realm of commerce and industry" (1980:204).

Skolnick and Skolnick go one step further, by including a number of ideas which go beyond a description of the conventional nuclear family but are nevertheless **about** that particular family type. These are, the assumption that: (1) 'the family' is universal; (2) 'the family' is necessary for survival; (3) 'the family' is the elementary unit of society; (4) 'the family' is characterised by a biologically based division of labour; (5) 'normal family life' is necessary for adequate socialisation and (6) 'other familial forms' are deviant (Skolnick & Skolnick, 1974 in Bernardes, 1985: 279).

Bernardes takes issue with these approaches since they conceptualise family ideology as "sets of partisan beliefs supporting a particular 'family form'" and focus on the merits and demerits of that family type without questioning "whether 'The Family' really exists to be attacked or defended" (1985:275)⁶. As can be noted, Bernardes' approach is more radical than those referred to above since he sees even belief in the existence of the family as a distortion. His approach to defining the content of (contemporary) family ideology is also broader in that it incorporates ideas\values\beliefs that do not relate directly to the conventional nuclear family as such. These are: individualism, naturalism, differentiation and idolistic mystification. Bernardes refers to these as the "more fundamental and basic, perhaps even irreducible, elements of 'family ideology'" (1985:281).

He describes the individualistic element as "the strangest feature of 'family ideology'" since 'the family' is usually taken to be "the fundamental natural human grouping" yet "'family ideology' requires and legitimates the inculcation of extreme individualism" (1985:281). What he means by this is that the roles or positions in 'the family' are based not only on ascription but "individualistically oriented ascription" (1985:281):

"Thus, being a 'father' is quite distinct from being a 'mother'; the roles of 'son' or 'daughter' depend upon age, sex and consanguinity. The structure of 'The Family' is filled with unique individuals and whilst replacement or substitution is possible, it is far from smoothly achieved. A non-related adopted child may 'be like a daughter' but it is less easy to ignore the lack of biological connection to claim that the child 'is a daughter'" (1985:281) (emphasis in original).

He furthermore claims that the individualistic aspect of family ideology is manifest in the emphasis on: individualistic child-rearing practices; privacy ('my' room); materialistic and individualistic achievement and competition; "the development, refinement and use of power"; romantic love as individualistic

and exclusive and sex "as a private activity between a married heterosexual pair of individuals" to the exclusion of others (1985:282-283).

With regard to the second element, Bernardes asserts that 'family ideology' encourages naturalistic and scientific (which he sees as synonymous) views of human behaviour and 'family behaviour':

"In asserting the biological bases of human behaviour, 'family ideology' legitimates and supports the power of science and scientists to define the 'proper' course of, and intervention in, our lives" (1985:283).

He also claims that family ideology encourages differentiation in terms of age, sex, stages in the life-cycle, power and authority, time, space and ethnicity:

"The very idea of The Family differentiates male and female, child and adult ... 'Family ideology' tends to be decidedly ethnocentric in terms of the naturalistic emphasis upon 'family types' and the technologically deterministic view of 'progress' which tends to regard the most recent 'advances' as the 'peak' of civilisation. Quite often the study of 'family life' in 'less developed' or 'less industrialised' societies implies, or is taken to imply, an inferior or archaic 'family' form" (1985:285-287).

The fourth aspect of family ideology identified by Bernardes (which appears more as a function or effect than an element) is that of 'idolistic mystification'. Here Bernardes reveals his view of ideology as a set of false ideas which hide the true nature of reality:

"Family ideology is idolistic in that it presents an image or idol of 'The Family' which is distinct from the reality of the phenomenon it represents. Thus 'family ideology' encourages the veneration of an idol rather than the examination of 'family life' **as lived**. The image or idol of 'The Family' rather than the reality of peoples' lives is taken as the object of attention.

Further, 'family ideology' mystifies in that it makes secret or obscures the 'lived reality' of our own lives. The very existence of the idol facilitates this mystification; attention is given to the idol as a fixed, apparently objective entity rather than given

to the complex realities of everyday life. In this way the concept of 'The Family' actually masks lived experience with an attractive but essentially spurious idol" (1985:288).

Bernardes sees language as one of the means through which this mystification operates since it objectifies the term 'the Family' and there is the (mistaken) assumption that its meaning is widely shared. Moreover, because family ideology operates in an 'assumptive world' (or consists of assumptions) it facilitates interaction but at the cost of hiding the complexities and reality of the lived experience of family life:

"This theme suggests that the idol of 'The Family' actually simplifies our lives in that we do not have to go to the trouble of inquiring into the detail of people's lives because the idol presents all the details we need. Thus the idea of a mother with a 'young family' communicates more than sufficient detail of the situation" (1985:289).

Bernardes therefore not only juxtaposes family ideology and the lived experience of family but also claims that the former (as well as the use of the term 'the family') prevents access to the latter or at the very least draws attention away from it. His acceptance of what has been described above as the marxian view of ideology as false consciousness, distortion or a set of misleading ideas, is therefore apparent. His contention that family ideology operates to encourage, justify and legitimate contemporary social and economic inequalities and is inimical to attempts to foster class and gender solidarity, gives further support to this interpretation (1985:287).

Barrett also sees family ideology as a myth and as oppressive. But what makes family ideology oppressive, in her view, is that it implies and promotes the idea that the nuclear family is the ideal which all should emulate:

"What is oppressive is the assumption that the present form taken by needs (such as the need for intimacy, sexual relations, emotional fulfilment and parenthood) is the only possible form, and that the manner in which they should be met is through the family as it

is today" (1980:251).

In sum, while both Barrett and Bernardes conceive of family ideology in negative terms, as false-consciousness or a distortion of reality, they disagree on the question of whether the term ideology should be seen as encompassing material practice or be restricted to ideas. Furthermore, while both see family ideology as oppressive, for Barrett this is because it elevates the conventional nuclear family to the position of 'The Family' while Bernardes includes a number of other ideas in his conception of contemporary family ideology.

3.3 Family Ideology in this Study:

On the question of ideas versus practices, the concept of family ideology used in this study is in line with that proposed by Barrett. In other words, family ideology is here seen as a set of ideas which may **inform** behaviour (practice), may gain strength and acceptance from being **reflected** in practice but is nevertheless analytically distinct from the 'material sphere'.

Secondly, on the question of the scope of the ideas comprising family ideology, I, like Bernardes, see the latter as encompassing both a set of ideas favouring a particular family structure and a range of other ideas which may have only a tenuous relationship to families as such and which define a particular world-view. The question of the content of family ideology requires further elaboration because it raises the question of whether one is justified in depicting a particular social formation as having only one ideology of the family or multiple family ideologies.

Bernardes acknowledges the existence of multiple family ideologies but associates this with different (individual) **readings** of one particular set of ideas and with the notion that family ideology is both a 'particular ideology' in the sense of referring to a specific phenomenon such as motherhood or the

nuclear family and a 'total' ideology in the sense of referring to "the total structure of the mind" (1985:276). The fact that Bernardes sees the ideology of the family as referring to one set of ideas (albeit ideas that are not necessarily logically consistent) is revealed in his frequent use of the terms 'us', 'we' and 'our lives' without specification of who is implied in these formulations. Indeed, nowhere in the article under discussion is reference made to the fact that his analysis is of family ideology in a particular society such as the United States or Britain. But the fact that he sees individualism as a crucial aspect of the ideology of the family and his assertion that 'it' is ethnocentric, reveals that he is indeed talking about contemporary **western** family ideology.

This kind of unconscious ethnocentrism is not appropriate in the context of ethnically divided societies regardless of the size of the so-called 'ethnic minorities' that are found. In this regard, it might be useful to distinguish between a dominant ideology of the family and subordinate ones where the former refers to the ideas regarding family life and more generally the 'world view' of those who control the state, the education system, the media and the economy and which is ascribed to by the majority of the population. Another approach would simply be to differentiate between different ideologies of the family associated with different ethnic communities regardless of their economic and political power in the society in question. So, for instance, one could differentiate between an African ideology of the family and a western one where the former emphasises collectivism and the extended family while the latter emphasises individualism and the nuclear family (see Nhlapo, 1991).

Finally, returning to the question of whether family ideology is an accurate or distorted picture of reality. Both conceptions can be valid if one approaches the matter from the point of view of a society divided on the basis of class and/or ethnicity. If a particular set of (family related) ideas has grown out of the material conditions faced by a particular sector

of society and serves their interests but is held to be in the interests of society at large, then they would be accurate from the point of view of the first group but false from that of other groups in society. Both views of the relationship between ideology and 'that which can be observed empirically' can therefore be accommodated in Larrain's definition of ideology as "a world-view expressing the values of a **particular** social group" (Larrain, 1979:11) (emphasis added). Having said this, the question of whether a particular set of ideas is an accurate reflection of the actual living arrangements of people in society cannot be adequately resolved on the abstract level. It is precisely for this reason that I have defined the institution of the family as comprising both an ideological and a concrete level. Both need empirical investigation so that the relationship between them can be identified whether for a society as a whole or for particular groups within a society.

4. CONCRETE LEVEL OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE FAMILY

Above I have conceptualised family ideology as a set of ideas which define a particular world-view, favours a particular family type and may or may not correspond to the actual domestic arrangements of people in the society or community in question. So, for instance, in a society where western family ideology dominates, couples are **expected** to set up independent households upon marriage, children **expect** and are **expected** to be raised by their immediate biological parents and generally the assumption is that people do live in nuclear family arrangements. In terms of the definition of the family as institution that I am proposing in this study, this does not however, mean that in such a society, other domestic arrangements are not families. Rather, what it does mean is that the nuclear family enjoys a privileged position within the institution of the family in that society because it carries greater moral sanction than any other living arrangement. To get a sense of 'families' in the society in question requires that we turn our attention to the second aspect of the institution of the family, namely the concrete aspect.

The concrete aspect of the institution of the family as here defined consists of (actual) behaviours and practices that have to do with sexuality and parenting as well as the social groups which flow from these and form the context within which these take place. Included in these practices or behaviours are: cohabitation; marriage; separation; divorce; sex - both homosexual and heterosexual; procreation - both within and outside marriage; the division of labour within households, providing for children's material needs; providing for children's emotional needs; adoption and fostering. This list is by no means exhaustive but it illustrates the notion that when we study the family from a concrete point of view, we need to consider a variety of behaviours - some of which conform to what has been described above as the western ideology of the family (or are 'normative' within that context), while others do not. Some of the activities mentioned above coincide with those practices which Ester Goody has described as "the tasks of parenthood" or "candidates for the universal problems of social replacement" namely "bearing and begetting children"; nurturance; training and sponsorship to adulthood (1982:8). The fifth aspect of parenthood as Goody defines it, is "endowment with civil and kinship status" (1982:8). Since this concerns jural rights and obligations as well as the social\ideological recognition (or lack thereof) of physiological links it falls within the ideological level of the institution of the family as I have defined it. But in broad terms my approach is similar to Goody's in that, by starting with the notion of functions rather than a particular structure (such as the nuclear family) I am wishing to emphasise that these can be performed within a variety of contexts and by a variety of people rather than necessarily concentrated within the confines of the conventional nuclear family. Put differently, just as the items on Goody's list can be delegated, shared or transferred and thus not be performed by a single set of physiological parents⁷, so the practices I have identified can and do take place in a number of different social groups. Here the terms 'a family' (as opposed to 'the family'), families and household are of relevance.

Although the term household is as complex and controversial as that of the family, there appears to be some consensus that it refers to a group of individuals who are co-resident, commensal and coparcenary. That is, members of households live together, eat together and share economic resources. The problem arises when it is recognised that these aspects of households need not overlap. So, for example, an individual may eat in one house and sleep in another or contribute economically to a household and only reside there for short periods of time as in the case of migrant labour. This phenomenon needs to be seen as an area of investigation in its own right so that differences in the extent to which these features of households coincide in different communities or societies can be documented and analysed.

Another fruitful line of enquiry is to take one or two of these criteria and to use that/those to delineate households for analytical purposes. This is the approach adopted in the present study - households being defined in terms of co-residence. But as mentioned, other options are equally plausible and could yield valuable data especially in the light of increasing divorce and separation rates which often involve children moving between households and adults contributing economically and otherwise to households in which they do not reside. These criteria can also be used to compare different communities both at one point in time and over time to determine the extent to which these three features (co-residence, commensality and coparcenary) are centered on the private household alone or shared out among the community at large and specialised agencies such as creches, day and boarding schools. So, for example, one can document historical trends focusing on commensality by comparing the number of meals taken in the private home and those taken at school or places of work. On the question of coparcenary one could also compare households in different communities to ascertain the sources of income - whether it be wages, salaries, transfer payments from the state or the wider kin group (inheritance or lobola for example). Here one could also draw a

distinction between financial and non-financial resources the latter referring to services such as baby-sitting, tasks around the home and the disciplining of children (see Rapp,1982 and Campbell,1990b). My point here is that depending on one's purpose, different criteria will be appropriate.

In this study I have also drawn a distinction between households generally and those that are families at one point in time. To that end I have defined a family\household as one which consists of more than one generation where the younger generation is below the age of maturity. The following typology is offered:

DOMESTIC GROUPS \ HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Single Parent Family Household
Conventional Nuclear Family Household
Adoptive Family Household
Married Couple Household (First Marriage)
Single Person Household
Extended Nuclear Family Household
Extended Single Parent Family Household
Re-marriage Nuclear Family Household
Re-marriage Couple Household
No-marriage Couple Household
No-marriage Nuclear Family Household
Other Households (e.g. hostels, homes for the aged and orphanages)

There are some problems with this typology. Firstly, the categories are not entirely mutually exclusive as in the case of what I have called the 'adoptive family household' which could be extended, nuclear, first marriage or remarriage. Secondly, the fact that in differentiating between family households and other households I have focused more on parenting than sexuality makes my definition of 'a family' somewhat inconsistent with my definition of 'The Family'. But this distinction needs to be underlined. The definition of 'a family' reflected in the above typology is one which I have chosen for the purposes of this study - one of the objectives of which is to determine the prevalence of the **conventional** nuclear family (first-time married couple with biological offspring) vis-à-vis other household types. It is entirely possible and indeed likely that

individuals involved in what (by implication) I have defined as non-family households (for example a couple household) consider themselves to be 'a family' or 'family'. It is also possible that the individuals I have classed as constituting 'a family' do not regard themselves as such or feel that they are part of a family in a different sense i.e. not on the basis of co-residence. These views of who is family and what is a family are important and deserve investigation. But in terms of the framework I am suggesting here such an investigation would fall within the ambit of what I have called 'family ideology' and would involve determining how people generally or the subjects in a particular study define these terms (see below).

Finally, in defining the family in this manner, the intention has not been to draw a firm line between this institution and others. Rather, there is a clear overlap between the state and the family as here defined - many of the households included in the 'other' category being financed from public funds. But again this is an area for investigation since it would be interesting to document the way in which the South African state has both encroached on an area which used to be considered the province of the family (providing crèche facilities, homes for the aged, juvenile detention centers etc) while at the same time has distanced itself from family affairs (for example through more liberal family law policies) (see Lasch,1977 and Donzelot,1980).

5. INVESTIGATING FAMILY IDEOLOGY

There are a number of mechanisms for uncovering the nature of the particular ideology of the family characteristic of a society or group. One could analyse family law, political speeches or sermons to determine the assumptions about 'ideal' or 'proper' family arrangements held by representatives of the state or religious leaders. So, for instance, if high rates of illegitimacy, men failing in their duty as 'good providers' and working mothers are deplored in the name of a decline in 'the

family', one could deduce an acceptance of a conservative western family ideology. Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere (Ziehl,1997), South African family law as presently constituted endorses the conventional nuclear family by prohibiting polygamy⁸, denying biological fathers of extra-marital children any rights in family law and by using the broader and narrower conception of the family for different purposes. What I mean by the latter is that the broad conception of the family (people related by blood and marriage) is used to proscribe sexual intercourse (incest), a narrower version thereof to identify those who have a duty of support vis-a-vis a particular individual and the most restricted definition (married couple and dependent children) to identify those who are accorded rights in family law.⁹ Movement from the wider to narrower definition is therefore synonymous with movement from an emphasis on **restrictions** and duties towards an emphasis on **rights**. This can be seen as reflective of an effort on the part of the state to reduce dependence on itself while maintaining the integrity of the conventional nuclear family.

Another fruitful avenue of approach would be to research the meaning ordinary citizens attach to a concept that has proved to be so problematic for family sociologists (see Trost,1990). This kind of research cannot, however, be seen independent of language and linguistic differences (particularly in terms of the formal rules of language). Indeed, one could see the kind of research I will discuss below, as a way of determining not only differences between linguistic communities in terms of the 'family values' underlying their particular languages but also a way of documenting changes in the use (and nature) of language historically. Cheal (1991) sees research of this nature as part of a post-positivist trend in family studies. Also known as discourse analysis, this approach recognises that in the final analysis the family is "an element in the everyday stock of knowledge about the social world" and instead of banishing lay-meanings in favour of culture-free or objective definitions of the family this research sees lay-meanings "as one part of the

subject matter of sociology" (1991:130).

With a view to studying "empirically how the phenomenon of the family is conceptualized" by "lay people", Trost conducted a postal survey using a representative sample of 1500 inhabitants (aged 20-59) of the Uppsala province, Sweden (Trost, 1990:433). One of the questions he asked was: "When you think upon **your** family, whom are you thinking of?" (1990:434) (emphasis in original). Respondents were then asked to list each family member on a different line.

Trost found that the number of people included in respondents' families (along with themselves) ranged from 0 to 40. The median was 5 and the mode 4 (20% of subjects). Regarding the relationship between the respondent and the people included in his\her family, Trost found that the following were mentioned:

Spouse\cohabitant	- Two thirds of respondents
Child\ren	- Two thirds of respondents
Parent\s	- Half of respondents
Sibling\s	- One third of respondents.

Persons mentioned in less than 10% of cases were grandchild\ren; children's spouse\cohabitant; parent\s-in-law; step-parents, step-children; siblings' spouses, siblings' children, ex-spouses\cohabitants; friends and pets (1990:435). On the basis of these data, Trost concludes that:

"the variety is enormous, not only for the number of members but also for the relationships. Some were inclined to include only nuclear family members; some broadened their definitions to include at least some of their kin, thus combining legal or social connections (conjuality) with biological connections (consanguinity). Some included other categories such as friends and pets" (1990:435).

In the second part of this study, Trost provided a list of 16 descriptions of domestic situations and asked subjects to indicate whether they regard the situation in question as 'a family'. Some of these were:

1. Bodi and Bertil are a married couple in their thirties; they have a 6 year old son Bengt. Are these a family?
2. Celia is divorced and has a 10-year-old daughter, Carin, who lives with Celia. Are these a family ?
3. Carin's father, Curt, lives at the other end of the city. Are Curt and Carin a family?
4. Are Celia and Curt a family ?
5. Lena and Lisa are both in their 30's and live together. Lisa has a 6-year-old daughter, Lotta. These three live together. Are these a family?
6. Karl and Krister are in their 30's and live together. Neither of them has a child. Are these two a family?

His findings show that almost all respondents (99%) regarded the first situation i.e. the conventional nuclear family as a family even though no mention was made of where these people lived. A similar degree of consensus was apparent with respect to four other situations: a cohabiting couple living with their child (97%); a conventional nuclear family where one of the children lives away from home (83%); a divorced mother living with her child (83%) and a married couple living alone (75%). A much lower degree of consensus was apparent when the individuals concerned did not live together. For instance only 33% and 8% respectively answered affirmatively to questions 3 and 4 above. Similarly, only 23% were prepared to regard grandparents and grandchildren as a family when they did not live together and only 13% said that a couple who previously cohabited and had a child, are a family and only 8% included "a good friend with whom she (Mona) can talk about anything" in Mona's family. On the other hand, where co-residence was mentioned but a friend included in the description, less than half of respondents (41%) regarded it as a family. It is interesting to note that only about a third of respondents described a situation where the couple was implied to be homosexual, a family - number 5 (38%) and 6 (30%) above (Trost,1990:436).

Finally, Trost also conducted a number of qualitative

studies asking therapists and social scientists (but not family sociologists) to describe their own families. As regards the latter, Trost once again claims to have found 'a wide variety' of responses since friends, siblings, ex-spouses and pets were amongst the categories included. The therapists on the other hand were more inclined to describe their families of procreation i.e. spouse and children and not include their own parents or siblings in their description of their own families. As a general conclusion Trost offers the following:

"... there is an enormous variety among the lay members of our society when classifying what is family and what is not. Some stress consanguinity; some stress conjugality; some stress the principle of the same domicile. Some do not stress any of these restrictions and accept a surprisingly wide variety of social groupings as families (measured in this way). The qualitative study also shows a wide variety in the descriptive meanings of the term *family* ...

... When we have mentioned these studies to lay people and even colleagues, almost everyone has been surprised at our choice of study - 'everyone knows what a family is!' Evidently, no one 'knows' what a family is; our perspectives vary to such a degree that to claim to know what a family is shows lack of knowledge" (1990:441-442) (emphasis in original).

While the research and findings presented above are a valuable resource for those of us interested in the concept of the family and in family ideology, I am not sure that Trost's general conclusion is warranted. To claim that 'evidently no one knows what a family is', is to leave the analysis at a point where it is beginning to become interesting and fruitful. These data need to be seen in the light of the language of the subjects and in particular the formal rules of that language.

As mentioned earlier, in English the term 'family' has at least two accepted meanings: a narrower one and a broader one. This is not, however, a universal phenomenon. In Afrikaans and Xhosa, separate words exist to designate these two meanings: familie (wide) and gesin (narrow) in the case of Afrikaans and izizalwane (wide) and Usapo (narrow) in Xhosa. If Trost's questionnaire had been formulated in Afrikaans, different

responses would have been given depending on whether 'gesin' or 'familie' was used. The differences would, however, not have been random - gesin implying co-residence (past or present) and 'familie' implying people related by blood and marriage. In this regard, Schoonees points out that 'gesin' is a typically Dutch (Hollandse) notion and that in other modern languages 'familie' refers to both 'gesin' and 'die groter familie' (1957:180). One would therefore assume that Swedish follows 'the English pattern'. But even here linguistic issues are important.

Firstly, since the narrow and broader meaning of 'family' are conflated, one would expect subjects to be uncertain about the meaning the researcher intended in asking the question: When you think of your family, of whom are you thinking? The interesting question here would be: When faced with a choice between the narrow and wider meaning of 'family', is one interpretation more popular than another? These data would be of great value for they could shed light on some recent developments in the evolution of 'the family' as a linguistic category which Williams (1983) has documented for earlier periods. What I am referring to here is whether the meaning which arose in the early nineteenth century (co-resident small kin group) has become so institutionalised that very few people today interpret 'family' in its older and wider sense of lineage or kin group that is not necessarily co-resident (see Williams, 1983:132-133). Since grandchildren, nieces and nephews were mentioned by less than 10% of respondents while cousins, aunts and uncles do not appear to have been mentioned at all, it would seem that this is indeed the case in Sweden today.

Secondly, in the case of those subjects who interpreted 'family' broadly, where did they draw the line around those whom they regard as part of their family in this sense. For instance, were only direct ascendants and descendants included or did collateral relatives (aunts, cousins etc) and/or step-relations feature and how often were these categories mentioned by those who assumed that the broad meaning was at issue. These data would

however have to be analysed against the background of the availability of kin which in turn is probably related to the point in the domestic life cycle at which the individual finds him\herself.

Data on the actual domestic situation of subjects would also have been useful in shedding light on the question of whether a particular event such as marriage or child-bearing is associated with a switch from the broad to the narrow conception of the family. Are married couples with young children more likely to restrict this concept to themselves and their children, while older married couples and single individuals of all ages tend to be more inclusive? Are married couples who have not yet had children likely to regard themselves as 'family'? Among those who had step-relations what proportion regarded these as 'family'.

The question of whether subjects interpreted 'family' in the broad or narrow sense would have been less of an issue in Trost's second exercise - describing a particular situation as 'a family' - since the latter immediately implies reference to a specific social group. If the questionnaire had been printed in Afrikaans, the researcher would probably have used the term 'gesin' here. But given that English and Swedish do not have the equivalent of 'gesin', it is important to note that responses to this question cannot be seen as simply a further exploration of the notion of 'family'. In linguistic terms, the notion of 'family' (who is family) and 'a family' (what is a family) are qualitatively different. So, for example, it is likely that a much higher proportion of respondents would regard a divorced man and his child (number 3 above) as 'family' as opposed to 'a family'. It would have been interesting to learn whether the same applies in the case of description number 4 - that is a divorced couple. Do they regard themselves as having been both 'family' and 'a family' but now only 'family' or does divorce signal the end of 'being family' as well as 'a family'?

It is furthermore noteworthy that in the South African

context, Afrikaans and Xhosa distinguish themselves from English not only by possessing specific words which differentiate between the nuclear family and the wider kin group but also in terms of linguistic practice. In both the above cases, terms which English speakers would reserve for biological relatives are applied to a wider domain. In the case of Afrikaans, for example, children often use the terms 'tannie' (aunty) and 'oom' (uncle) when addressing any adult female or male respectively thus implying or assuming a relatedness of the biological or marital kind. In the case of Xhosa there is more differentiation but the principle is the same. The term 'sissie' is used for a female who is roughly the same age as oneself (or one's social equivalent) and the terms 'mama' and 'makhulu' for women of one's mother's and grandmother's generation respectively. There is therefore an irony here since the languages which have specific words to delineate the nuclear family (or a restricted definition of family) and separate it from the wider notion of kin group, in linguistic **practice**, have a much broader conception of family than English speakers. My suspicion is that these differences in terms of the formal rules of language and its usage are suggestive of different family ideologies - English speakers having a more individualistic ideology which emphasises the nuclear family, Xhosa speakers placing greater emphasis on the community as a whole and Afrikaans-speakers falling somewhere in between.

In this regard, Nhlapo has identified what she calls "fundamental African thinking on the subject of the family" or the "nature of marriage and the family as conceived by the African value system" (1991:137&138). Two features stand out: (1) a 'collectivist' view of marriage as an alliance between groups rather than individuals and (2) the idea that the purpose of marriage is procreation and survival of the group rather than to serve the immediate interests of the spouses:

"... the overriding value in the African family is reflected in the non-individual nature of marriage, sometimes called the collective or communal aspect of the marriage relationship. This notion embodies the idea of marriage as an alliance between two kinship

groups for purposes of realizing goals beyond the immediate interests of the particular husband and wife. This does not mean that the two parties are unimportant - they are - but only as the point at which the two families, lineages or clans are joined for purposes which have community-wide significance ... the interests of the group are more important than those of the individual" (1991:137).

Some of the consequences of this view of marriage are: community-level or 'collectivist' solutions to infertility that involve sex with someone other than a spouse either with the wife's sister (sororate) or husband's brother (levirate), marriages involving minors and 'forced marriages' (1991:138). Furthermore, the movement of cattle upon marriage from the family of the groom to that of the bride (lobola or 'child-wealth') symbolises not only the importance attached to children in terms of this view of marriage but also the idea that rights and responsibility vis-a-vis children are vested in the patrilineal descent group rather than immediate biological parents. These views of marriage contrast with that found in western societies where great emphasis is placed on the rights of spouses vis-a-vis each other and their (immediate) biological offspring as well as the confinement of sex\procreation to marriage conceived as a union between two individuals to the exclusion of others (see Ziehl, 1992 & 1997).

In short, analysing family ideology can involve studying languages, discourse, the ideas and/or values underlying the customs or behaviours typical of a particular community.

6. CONCLUSION - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEVELS

Above, the family has been defined as an institution which comprises an ideological and concrete aspect and represents the social context within which people live, express their sexuality and undertake those activities which constitute parenthood. Two criteria have guided this definition: (1) the desire to avoid any a priori assumptions about the moral superiority of the

conventional nuclear family and (2) to provide a framework for family studies that is broad enough to accommodate a variety of domestic arrangements and a variety of ideas relating to family life while at the same time allowing one to differentiate between the family and other social phenomena.

Empirical investigation of particular societies or communities will reveal which ideas about family life enjoy widespread support, influence the state, impact on the educational system, the economy and underlie both the formal rules of language and its practical application. It will also reveal how domestic life is actually organised through documenting the prevalence of specific household types.

Crucial to the way I have defined the family is that its ideological and concrete elements need not coincide. So, for instance, people, generally, may regard the conventional nuclear family as the proper context for the expression of sexuality and raising children and this family form may enjoy the support of the state and other institutions, while the majority of the population do not live in household structures which conform to that ideal. Similarly, there may be a discrepancy within the ideological sphere between the family ideology supported by the majority of the population and that endorsed by the state and other institutions. This is likely to be the case in South Africa where Whites have traditionally controlled all the major social institutions and imbued these with Western family ideology while the majority of the population do not live in conventional nuclear family households and are likely to support an African version of family ideology. Since the 1994 democratic elections brought a predominantly Black government to power the question that arises at this point is whether African family values will in future be reflected in family law in this society.

In addition, an individual's domestic situation may be quite different from the ideology he or she subscribes to. For example, divorcees may attach great importance to marriage including the

idea that it is a life-long commitment. Similarly, as Rapp (1982) as well as Zinn & Eitzen have argued, even though the nuclear family may be "an ephemeral arrangement" for many poor people, the ideology of the family or 'the family' and all that it stands for is very important to poor people. It finds manifestation in the practice of 'turning friends into family' or the creation of 'fictive kinship' - a phenomenon which illustrates the way in which 'the family' has become dissociated from its original basis (biological group of mother, father and children) and turned into 'discourse':

"Fictive kinship is a prime example of family-as-ideology. In this process, reality is inverted. 'Everybody' gets a continuous family, even though the strains and mobility associated with poverty may conspire to keep biological families apart. The idiom of kinship brings people together despite centrifugal circumstances" (1982:178).

Finally, it is also possible that a set of ideas that constitute a particular family ideology are not logically consistent. An example here would be the emphasis in contemporary western family ideology on love as the basis of marriage and the view that marriage is a life-long commitment. As Elliot (1986) points out this contradiction has been offered as one of the reasons for the rise in the divorce rate as couples discover they are no longer 'in love' and divorce. Empirical investigation will reveal whether divorce has indeed been institutionalised to such an extent that individuals in society in general have resolved the above-mentioned contradiction by forfeiting the principle of marriage as a life-long commitment.

In sum, what I have proposed is a theoretical framework that can assist in empirical investigations of concrete social formations by revealing both the nature of family ideology and the distribution of household types and (thereby) the relationship between the ideological and concrete elements of the institution of the family in the society or community in question. It was also the framework used in the study of Whites in Grahamstown.

7. NOTES

1. This conclusion was drawn from an analysis of Spruijt's data. It is not a point made by Spruijt himself.

2. Another common practice is for the term institution to be used to refer to a social group consciously and deliberately brought into existence with the objective of obtaining a specified goal and characterised by rules, regulations and roles (usually written down in the form of 'job descriptions' and policy documents) whose fulfilment it is believed will lead to the attainment of the goal in question. While schools, universities and medical establishments are often referred to as institutions in this sense, in sociology, there has been a tendency to designate these as organisations in order to differentiate them from the more common sociological usage.

3. This would include organisations such as children's homes (orphanages), 'places of safety' and even boarding schools where various forms of sexuality are expressed and children are raised.

4. Marx was therefore able to define the theories put forward by Smith and Ricardo as both ideological and scientific. They were scientific to the extent that they exposed the contradictions in feudalism "by distinguishing appearances from the essence of the system" (Goldberg,1992:6). But later, as their ideas came to be used to justify capitalism - as Marx believed classical political economy sought to do - they became ideological (Goldberg,1992:6).

5. Barrett's view on this issue can be illustrated as follows: The fact that the cat is among the pigeons and that the behaviour of the pigeons cannot be understood in isolation from that of the cat, does not make the cat a pigeon.

6. He does, however, see Barrett's approach as an exception presumably because she questions the validity of the concept 'the family' as a general term to refer to "very different family forms" (Barrett,1980:187).

7. The wet nurse, fostering, adoption and 'the nanny' are some institutionalised forms of this.

8. At present, family law in South Africa operates in terms of a dual legal system: civil law and customary law. It is in terms of the former that polygamy is prohibited (see Ziehl,1997).

9. So for, instance, neither grandparents, aunts, uncles etc or men who are not (or have not been) married to the biological mothers of their children, have any legally recognised rights (such as the right of access) towards children. They do, however, have legally enforceable obligations towards such children (see Ziehl,1997).

CHAPTER 7

EXPLAINING FAMILY DIVERSITY

1. INTRODUCTION

While the notion of family diversity has become well-established in family sociology, there is still a great deal of unclarity about the factors which account for this phenomenon. This issue has also been a concern for family historians. As we noted in Chapter 2, even the 'new orthodoxy' stimulated by Laslett's work - families of the past have always been nuclear - has been challenged by research which shows "a much more complex western family heritage than earlier scholars recognized" through the discovery of "theoretically significant differences in household forms within ... regions" (Kertzer, 1991:155 & 157). As Kertzer points out, the question which we now need to address is "the basic question of what determines coresidential arrangements in any time or place" (Kertzer, 1991:157).

In this chapter I discuss the contribution made by family historians and researchers of contemporary family life to elucidating this issue. From this, it will be noted that the matter is by no means settled. Given the framework proposed in the previous chapter, my concern here is with attempts to explain variations within the concrete level of the institution of the family. Reference will nevertheless be made to the ideological level since culture or 'family values' has been identified as one of the possible explanations for variation in concrete domestic arrangements. Other factors are material conditions (class or political economy) and demography (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990; Kertzer, 1991; Aulette, 1994).

2. FAMILY HISTORY:

Two broad explanations have been put forward to account for the distribution of household types in pre-industrial times. The first draws on demographic conditions and the second on economic factors.

2.1. DEMOGRAPHIC EXPLANATIONS:

The demographic argument dates back to the work of Marion Levy who in 1965 asserted that high mortality rates in pre-industrial times prevented complex family households from forming and ensured that "the general outlines and nature of the actual family structures have been virtually identical in certain strategic respects in all known societies in world history ..." (Levy in Kertzer, 1989:2). In the 1970's this argument was taken forward by Berkner who, writing of the stem family in Austria claimed once again that because of high rates of mortality "one would only expect a rather small proportion of households to be complex in composition at any single point in time even in a society following complex family cultural norms" (Kertzer, 1989). Wheaton (1975 in Kertzer, 1989) has also put forward the demographic argument to explain low rates of joint families. His claim is that many families would not produce more than one son who would survive to maturity thus preventing a family from "passing through a joint phase". Similarly, among those who do produce sufficient numbers of sons, the short life expectancy of the father "may limit the length of time during which the family is joint" (Wheaton, 1975 in Kertzer, 1989:2-3). Ruggles (1987 in Kertzer, 1989) has also joined this group of writers arguing that "there were few extended families before the industrial revolution primarily because most people had a shortage of living relatives" (Ruggles, 1987:xviii in Kertzer, 1989:3).

The differences in rates of complex family structures between north-west Europe on the one hand and eastern Europe and other parts of the world such as Asia on the other, have also

been explained with reference to demographic factors. In this case the differences have been attributed to variations in the timing of marriage and the proportion of the population marrying - the north-western pattern being one where marriages occur relatively late and non-marriage rates are low (Hajnal,1983; Laslett,1983; Kertzer:1989). The standard that has been applied here is a mean female age at marriage of about 23 and above - the north-western pattern and about 20 and below - the eastern and Mediterranean pattern (Laslett,1983:533; Hajnal,1983:69). As Laslett indicates, whereas in the north-west the average age at marriage for women could be as high as 27 or even 30, in the east and south it was "almost never as high as 25 or above, and often such that a majority of all women could be described as ever-married by the end of their nineteenth year" (1983:533). Drawing the implications of these differences for family patterns and commenting on Czap's research on Russian serfs, Hajnal writes:

"What in terms of household formation behaviour, were the causes of large household size, large numbers of married men per household, and a very high proportion of joint households? The mean age at first marriage was under 20 for both sexes. The fact that both men and women became parents so young meant that they survived their sons' marriages by a longer period than in populations where marriage occurs at later ages; this tends to create more households comprising married sons, living under the headship of their father, than would occur with later marriage" (Hajnal,1983:90).

2.2 ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS

The demographic approach has been criticised for being overly empiricist and adopting a 'family in a thermos flask' approach (Anderson,1980b:65). That is, proponents of this approach have been accused of paying insufficient attention to social theory as well as to the socioeconomic and political context within which families exist and which impact on family life (Anderson,1980b:37 & 65). This is the viewpoint of Kertzer who places particular emphasis on the power relations between landlord and serf\sharecroppers when explaining the relatively high rates of complex (joint) family structures both in pre-

industrial Tuscany (Italy) as well as Russia (1989:1-15). In the sharecropping community which Kertzer studied (Casalechio in the Bologna area) multiple family households accounted for over 75% and simple family households for only 11% of households in 1861. By 1911 the relevant figures were 76% and 17% respectively (1989:5). Yet here the demographic features referred to by Laslett and Hajnal with respect to the timing of marriage did not pertain. Both in Italy as a whole and in the community in question the average age at marriage for women was above 22 years that is, in line with the 'western' rather than the 'Mediterranean' pattern (1989:7). What is more significant in explaining these high rates of multiple family households according to Kertzer was the desire of the landlords to ensure that there were as many adult labourers per household as possible and "since the contracts had to be renewed each year, landlords were in a position to eject sharecroppers deemed to have an insufficient domestic work force" (1989:4). One of the results of this was, of course, that those households which did not conform to the joint family model were evicted from the area thus increasing the proportion of joint households in the community in question. Another important factor according to Kertzer was the fact that what is at issue here are patrilocal **joint** family households. This means that not only one son (the heir) but usually all sons remain in the parental home after marriage. Such a family system is far less affected by high mortality rates if one bears in mind that both the older and the younger generation can contain numerous conjugal units (marital pairs) or members of such units:

"The generalized patrilocal pattern of the Italian sharecroppers allowed even greater possibility for continued complex family coresidence because of its longer-term developmental features. Given the coresidence of married brothers in the older generation, death of a young man's own parents did not necessarily mean that his household lacked a married couple in the ascendant generation. A young married man might thus find himself in a household headed not by his father, but by his father's brother or, in some cases, his father's brother's son" (1989:8).

Indeed, Kertzer estimates that if the individuals who were part

of joint family households followed the stem family pattern instead, less than half of them would have been living in multiple households and the majority of the total sharecropping community would have been living in simple family households (1989:9-10). As such Kertzer alerts us to the danger of generalising about complex family households since the fact that we are dealing here with a joint family pattern as opposed to a stem family one is of great significance in explaining the high proportion of multiple family households in the community in question.

Demographic factors also play a role in Kertzer's explanation but they are not the same as those identified by Laslett and Hajnal. Rather for him the fact that among Italian women in the eighteenth century the drop in the mortality rate was not matched by a drop in fertility was an additionally significant factor. It meant that the chances of producing sons and therefore that the patrilocal joint family pattern would continue were increased. Kertzer's main argument is nevertheless in opposition to those which have been put forward by writers in the 'demographic tradition':

"The classic demographic constraint thesis, first fully developed by Marion Levy and still accepted by many family historians, cannot withstand historical scrutiny. Substantial proportions of a population could live in large, complex family households in societies, following joint family norms, even where high mortality rates prevailed. The influential historical demographic thesis that links joint family household organization to early female age at marriage is likewise refuted by the Italian sharecropping case" (1989:11).

Kertzer's argument is in many ways similar to that raised by Smith (1984) in relation to the French community of Cruzy though the pattern which Smith wishes to explain is the opposite i.e. high rates of simple family households among poor peasants. As noted earlier, Smith claims that the small size of the peasant holdings resulted in the splitting up of peasant patrimony and favoured nuclear family households - the opposite being true of

large landowners among whom complex family households were more common. But that we are dealing here with a paradox rather than a contradiction becomes apparent when we consider that the poor peasants in Cruzy were landowners and thus not part of the same power relationship as existed in Italy between landowners and sharecroppers. They were therefore not subject to the same degree of pressure to conform to the wishes of their wealthier 'employers'. The paradox is also cleared up when we take note of the fact that Kertzer does not claim that the joint family pattern was characteristic of the lower-strata of pre-industrial Italian society as a whole. Rather he makes it clear that this pattern was peculiar to sharecroppers and an outflow of 'the political economy of sharecropping' - rural artisans, shopkeepers and agricultural wage labourers typically living in nuclear family households (1989:4). It is unfortunate that Kertzer does not provide us with any information about the household patterns of the landlords - the 'urban-based elite' who entered into contracts with the sharecroppers of the Tuscany region.

The idea that economic factors are of paramount importance when explaining family patterns is also shared by Goody (1976). In fact Goody introduces a completely different geographic dimension to the one that informs Laslett's four-fold classification by distinguishing between sub-Saharan (black) Africa on the one hand and Eurasia on the other. He links differences in the inheritance patterns as well as other family-related issues such as polygamy to different 'modes of production'. More particularly, he claims that simple shifting 'hoe' agriculture of Africa is associated with homogeneous systems of inheritance, exogamy, bridewealth, polygamy, classificatory style of kin nomenclature, fostering (as opposed to adoption) and the absence of roles such as bachelor, spinster, step-parents etc. By contrast, the intensive 'plough agriculture' of Eurasia involving the cultivation of land is associated with 'devolving inheritance' (daughters inheriting from their fathers); the dowry; endogamy; monogamy; descriptive kin terms which favour (isolate) the nuclear family, adoption for the

purposes of ensuring an heir for property, a large proportion of the population not marrying and roles of the step-variety.

The social differentiation which results from the surpluses produced by means of intensive plough agriculture creates (encourages) a desire to keep property in the direct line of descent rather than dispersed and devolved laterally as is the case in Africa. Goody sees the dowry as one way in which socio-economic status can be improved or maintained in a situation where lifestyles and social status vary greatly. The main point is that he sees cultural phenomena such as the rules which determine who may marry whom (endogamy vs exogamy); how many wives a man may have (monogamy vs polygamy); who inherits property (divergent devolution vs homogenous inheritance) as linked to or flowing from a specific way of producing the means of subsistence (the mode of production). Goody's analysis comes close to an economic reductionist one although that is clearly not his intention. According to Goody the quality of the relationship between biological relatives as well as the type of domestic arrangements entered into are influenced by the type of inheritance system that is followed. For instance, Goody (1972) claims that when brothers stand to inherit from one another (homogeneous and collateral inheritance system as in Africa) they are more likely to live together on 'the family farm' than would be the case if they inherited individually as in the Eurasian system. This is particularly the case where part of the inheritance is received at marriage (as a dowry) and invested in a conjugal fund which separates the family of the bride from that of her parents and siblings.

Anderson groups explanations of the kind I have considered here, under the heading "The Household Economics Approach" and describes it as follows:

"The main thrust of these theories involves attempts to isolate 'structural' constraints, arising from pressures often quite outside the consciousness of the individuals involved. Central among these factors are those which arise in economic or other exchange relationships within the family and between family

members and others. The main emphases are on the ways in which, and the conditions under which, resources (including human resources) become available to the family and to its members, on strategies which can be employed to generate and exploit resources, and on the power relationships which arise as a by-product of these activities. The particular form taken by family behaviour is seen as emerging out of these processes, and the norms, meanings and symbols associated with family behaviour are seen, very largely, not as free-floating independent variables, but as a corollary of these structural constraints" (Anderson, 1980b:65-66).

2.3 THE ROLE OF CULTURE:

Up to this point I have discussed demographic and economic explanations for the variety of family patterns that have been documented by family historians. Neither of these explanations can, however, stand on their own and by discussing them separately I am not wishing to imply that the authors themselves are unaware of the influence of other factors. It has nevertheless been the case that writers in this field have placed emphasis on one factor at the expense of others and as such cannot account for the way in which they interact to produce family patterns of a particular kind. This comment applies equally to the demographic and the household economics approach and the main problem in my view is that neither school of thought gives sufficient attention to the role of culture in explaining family behaviour and thereby the domestic groups which people have created.

Starting with the demographic approach we need to remind ourselves of the fact that demographic conditions acquire meaning only within a particular socio-cultural context and their impact is therefore mediated by the culture of the society in question. For instance, a 'shortage' of sons is only a problem in a society where it is accepted that only men inherit and/or only men are expected to work the land. Linked to this is of course the fact that in some cases demographic conditions are themselves the product of cultural values. For example, a practice such as female infanticide will influence the male:female ratio and is

clearly linked to a set of cultural beliefs and values known as patriarchy.

In this regard, Fallers criticises those who claim that complex family households were prevented from being formed because of a "shortage of living relatives" by referring to the practice in many African societies of creating 'fictional kin' to deal with particular demographic conditions (in Kertzer, 1989:3). He therefore reminds us of the fact that societies differ in terms of the rules which define who is and who is not kin, who may or who may not substitute for particular kinds of biological relatives and that these rules may be more important in explaining family patterns than the demographic conditions themselves. As Fallers indicates, a strictly demographic approach is based on "fundamental misconceptions about the nature of family and kinship structures" (Fallers, 1965:71 in Kertzer, 1989:3). To reiterate a point already made, biological (and marital) relationships only acquire meaning within a particular cultural context and can only influence behaviour through the medium of such meanings.

Similar comments can be made in relation to the 'household economics approach'. In my view, it too does not succeed in making economic factors the primary determinant of family behaviour and thereby household structures. To argue that economic factors constrain the behaviour of those of limited financial means and/or in an unfavourable power relationship vis-a-vis others, begs the question: Constrained from what? Put differently, to claim that economic (and political) factors restrict behaviour presupposes knowledge of how people would under different (less restrictive) circumstances have behaved. In short, it presupposes knowledge of values and beliefs i.e. of what the community in question regards as normal, acceptable and even ideal.

3. CONTEMPORARY FAMILIES:

The question of which factors are responsible for variations in family patterns within contemporary societies, has most frequently been asked by those wishing to explain the distinctive features of family life amongst Blacks in the United States (Allen,1978,1979; Tienda & Angel,1982; Zinn & Eitzen,1990; Aulette,1994). As noted in Chapter 4, rates of illegitimacy, marital disruption, 'female headed households' and extended families have been shown to be more common amongst Blacks than Whites and the question has arisen as to why this should be so.

One of the earliest attempts to provide an answer to this question was made by Frazier (Frazier,1932a, 1932b, 1939, 1957 in Allen 1979) who, writing at a time when biologically based arguments were being raised to explain this phenomenon, contended that racial discrimination placed Black men in a position of economic disadvantage thus preventing them from performing the role of economic provider and thus contributing to marital instability. He further claimed that once such family patterns were established, they were/are perpetuated through socialization within lower class Black communities. Thus, as Allen puts it, Frazier advanced "the idea of cultural continuities in family disorganisation" among Black Americans (Allen,1979:302).

According to Allen (1979:303), Frazier's approach has given rise to two perspectives on family diversity - each emphasising a different aspect of the original theory. The first has been called the 'Cultural Approach' or "Socio-cultural determinism" and the second the "Structuralist Approach' or "Socio-economic determinism" (Zinn & Eitzen,1990: 89-139; Allen,1979:303).

3.1 The Cultural Approach

The point of departure of the cultural approach is the view that different classes have (give rise to?) different cultures and that these, in turn, determine family structures. It

therefore revolves around two claims: an association between class and culture and an association between culture and family-related behaviour. However, most of the writers associated with this perspective have focused on the first relationship by identifying "class-specific values, attitudes and motives" (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:94). So, for instance, lower class individuals have been described as fatalistic, apathetic and incapable of delaying gratification. In turn, these have been seen as "value orientations" which "stem from specific occupational experiences" such as the fact that working class occupations require the following of orders whereas those of the middle class demand initiative and self-direction (in Zinn & Eitzen,1990:94). Lewis has also identified a specific material\class basis for these orientations arguing that "it (the culture of poverty) represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realization of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society" (Lewis,1966 in Zinn & Eitzen,1990:95). Rodman provides a similar approach arguing that so-called promiscuous sexual behaviour, the tendency for husbands and fathers to desert their wives and children and illegitimate births should not be seen as 'problems' but solutions to the problems which lower class individuals face (in Zinn & Eitzen,1990:97).

Rodman further claims that lower class individuals engage in what he calls 'value stretch' which involves the process of accommodating a variety and even opposing values - some associated with mainstream behaviour and some with behaviour typical of the lower class:

"By value stretch, I mean that the lower-class person, without abandoning the general values of society, develops an alternative set of values ... Without abandoning the values of marriage and legitimate childbirth he stretches these values so that a non-legal union and legally illegitimate children are also desirable. The result is that members of the lower class have a wider range of values than others within society (Rodman,1963:209)" (in Zinn & Eitzen,1990:98).

In terms of this approach then, the 'family values' of lower

class individuals arise out of specific material conditions and the family patterns characteristic of lower class communities are seen as the product of this distinctive culture. As such this approach to explaining family diversity has much in common with sub-culturalist theories of deviance which argue that criminal and related behaviours may be deviant from the point of view of main-stream society but in conformity with the (sub)culture of lower class communities (see Haralambos & Holborn, 1990:587-594).

2.2 The Structuralist\Socio-Economic Approach

Zinn & Eitzen are quite adamant in their rejection of culturalist approaches claiming that these seek to explain the family patterns characteristic of lower class communities in terms of "deficient cultural values and improper socialization" (1990:90). Instead, they offer what they call "a very different view of family diversity" - one which revolves around the argument that "patterned differences in family living are produced by the opportunity structure of the larger society" or that "occupation, education and income ... determine patterns of family living" (1990:99&90) (emphasis added). It is clear then, why this perspective has been called the socio-economic determinist approach.

Zinn & Eitzen's main argument is that 'family autonomy' is a characteristic only of the middle class and that this is due to the availability of non-familial sources of aid that can be called on in times of need. More particularly, their argument is that middle class jobs have "built-in ties with supportive institutions" such as banks and medical aid societies that this contributes to the autonomy of middle class families vis-a-vis the wider kin group (1990:108). By contrast, working class families have both lower incomes and are more likely to be unemployed. This, they argue, gives "the working class family" its distinctive feature: "the importance of kin in extended family networks" (1990:104). At the other end of the socio-economic spectrum, kin ties are also of importance but here, the

authors point out, they serve quite a different function. Whereas "the kin-based family form of the elite serves to preserve inherited wealth" (1990:109) among the lower and working class they are essential for survival:

"Many working-class families at one time or another live on a combination of wages, unemployment insurance, Social Security benefits (Bridenthal,1981) ... When these are insufficient the kin network provides various types of support and assistance" (Zinn & Eitzen,1990:104).

At the lowest end of the socio-economic scale resources are of course even more limited and insecure and here, Zinn & Eitzen argue, even kin-networks do not suffice to keep families afloat and intact. Rather, the distinctive features of very poor families are their instability and the pooling of resources with whoever is available which, in turn, is associated with the practice of turning 'friends into family':

"Pooling represents an attempt to cope with the tenuous nature of connections with the resources that are necessary for survival, and it requires that the boundaries of family be expanded" (1990:103).

Crucial to their theory is therefore the view that differential access to economic resources implies differences in the link between households and 'non-family' institutions and that this manifests itself in differences in the flexibility and fluidity of family and household boundaries:

"Thus, the boundaries of the middle class family are more circumscribed because institutional ties support a degree of autonomy from kin. Families lower on the socio-economic hierarchy display more openness of boundaries simply because kinship resources **must** be maximized in the absence of other forms of institutional support" (1990:108) (emphasis added).

What we have here then is a model of the relationship between social class and family boundaries which depicts the latter as fluid at both ends of the socio-economic scale and rigid in the middle sector. Moreover, the theory which is being advanced is one which sees differential access to economic resources as

responsible for this variation.

4. EXPLAINING BLACK FAMILY PATTERNS:

As noted, the theoretical question of the role of class and culture in explaining family diversity has arisen from the empirical observation of differences in family patterns between Whites and Blacks in the United States. Here, the structuralist approach has been the most popular in recent times. However, as I will argue later, there are many problems with the way in which the theoretical issues pertaining to this debate have been dealt with and in particular the way in which culture has been conceptualised.

As Allen points out, a number of researchers (Billingsley, 1968; Ladner, 1971; Scanzoni, 1971 & Stack, 1974 in Allen, 1979:303) stress "the primacy of immediate, economic factors over historic, cultural factors in the determination of Black family organisation" (Allen, 1979:303) (see also Zinn & Eitzen, 1990 & Aulette, 1994). Billingsley, for instance, claims that Black families are 'structural adjustments' made in response to 'economic imperatives' and an improvement in the economic conditions of Black families will enhance "their ability to maintain conventional patterns of organisation, fulfil member needs and conform to societal norms" (in Allen, 1979:303).

From a processual point of view the class or 'structuralist' argument revolves around the question of Black male joblessness which in turn is seen as related to the structural changes that have occurred in the American economy away from manufacturing and towards service sector employment (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:117; Staples, 1990). Wilson (in Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:118) has found that male joblessness is associated with high rates of divorce, low marriage rates and high rates of illegitimacy. In short, the argument here is that the economic marginality of black males reduces their 'suitability' as marital partners. This situation is further exacerbated by the relatively large number of Black

males in prison, in mental institutions and who are killed in wars and through criminal homicide (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:118; Staples, 1990:288):

"This shortage of Black men with the ability to support a family makes it necessary for many Black women to leave a marriage or forego marriage altogether" (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:118).

Staples provides a similar argument claiming that individuals often make a cost-benefit analysis when considering marriage and that the high rates of non-marriage among Black women should be seen as an indication that for them, the benefits of marriage do not outweigh the costs:

"The fact that a near majority of black Americans are not married and living in traditional nuclear family units is not a result of any devaluation of marriage *qua* institution but rather a function of the limited (chances) to find individuals in a restricted pool of potential partners who can successfully fulfil the normatively prescribed familial roles ... Exchange theory suggests that a person will not remain in a relationship where the services provided seem relatively meagre compared with what the person knows about other relationships. It appears, then, that blacks do not marry because the perceived outcome, derived from knowledge of past rewards and costs, is one where alternative sources of goal mediation are preferred risks ..." "The major problem for black women, however, is not the quantity in the available supply of potential mates, but the quality" (Staples, 1990:281 & 284).

Allen (1979) is among those writers who have explicitly tested the proposition that class is more important than culture in explaining Black family patterns. To that end, he analysed data from 18 000 Black and White urban households drawn from the 1970 U.S. census. He describes his approach as follows:

"It is assumed here that where rates of family disorganisation (measured by conventional indices, e.g. divorce, desertion, illegitimacy, and nonsupport rates) are high among Blacks it is due more to economic deprivation than to values which esteem such conditions. If this hypothesis is rejected, that is, if significant Black-White differences in family structure exist apart from SES, then cultural factors should be granted more credence as independent

determinants of such differences" (Allen, 1979:304).

In Allen's study, the concept 'family structure' was operationalised by the variables: family headship (whether the marriage is intact or not i.e. married couple or single female as head) and family composition (extended or nuclear family). Socio-economic status (SES) was operationalised in terms of education, income and occupation and culture, in terms of the Black/White distinction.

On the question of family headship, Allen found a statistically significant relationship with the variable social class even when race was controlled for. In both races, husband-wife families were much better represented in the high-income category than female-headed ones. Only 28% of Black and 54% of White female headed families having earnings in the high-income bracket compared with 68% and 85% of husband-wife families respectively (1979:307).

He also found a statistically significant relationship between family composition and socio-economic status - extended families being less common than nuclear families among families of high socio-economic standing but, contrary to expectations, not more common among families of low socio-economic standing in both races. This relationship was, however, weaker than that between headship and SES and was further reduced when race was controlled for.

As expected, Black families were more likely to be extended than White families. Allen also discovered a strong relationship between the two dependent variables in his analysis: headship and composition - female headed households showing a greater tendency to extend than others. This relationship remained strong even when race was controlled for. In other words in both races, female headed families were more likely to be extended than others. By the same token, female headed families were more common among Blacks than Whites. From this, Allen concludes that

family composition (extended vs nuclear) seems to be more greatly influenced by race than socio-economic status.

Below is an extract from Allen's data which shows race differences in family patterns at the two extremes of the socio-economic scale. As can be noted, even among Whites with low income, low occupational status and low educational levels, conventional nuclear families are clearly in the majority whereas the opposite is true of low SES Blacks. In fact the proportion of conventional nuclear families for low SES Whites exceeds that of high SES Blacks. It would seem then that factors other than mere economic need are responsible for these differences.

By the same token the large differences between high and low SES Blacks in the proportion of conventional nuclear families compared with the small difference between high and low SES Whites suggests that it is mainly among Blacks that SES impacts on family structures.

Table 7.1

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS		LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	
	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK
Husband\Wife Nuclear	87%	73%	75%	49%
Husband\Wife Extended	7%	10%	5%	11%
Female Head Nuclear	3%	10%	14%	26%
Female Head Extended	3%	7%	6%	14%
Total:	100%	100%	100%	100%
Source: Allen, 1979:309. ¹				

While expressing a great deal of caution, Allen's general conclusion is nevertheless on the side of socio-economic factors:

"Strong associations between family SES and family structure (family headship and composition) suggest significant class effects on family structure across races. Thus, non-conventional family structure is more common among lower than upper SES families; at the

same time more Black families are concentrated at the lower SES levels. So clearly, economic deprivation must be a factor in the decision of Black families to improvise and adopt alternatives to conventional family structure ... Given the relationships observed in these data, it seems reasonable to expect that class will be a better predictor of family structure than race.

Our conclusions notwithstanding, questions surrounding the relative effects of class and culture on Black family life in the urban United States remain largely unresolved" (Allen, 1979:310).

Similarly 'mixed' findings have emerged from more recent attempts to 'test' these explanations for race differences in family patterns in the United States. Tienda and Angel (1982), for example, also found that even after adjustments were made for differences in socio-economic factors, black households were 12% more likely to be extended than white households (1982:521). But contrary to Allen, they found that education is negatively related to household extension - each year of schooling reducing the likelihood of extended family households by 2% (1982:521). The greater tendency for households headed by never married female heads to be extended forms an important part of their analysis. In fact they hypothesise that it is because Black families are more likely to be headed by never married women that they are also more likely to be extended. But their analysis also showed that among female headed households, education is positively related to extendedness and claim that among low educated female heads welfare and other forms of public assistance act as a substitute for kin thereby reducing the likelihood of living with others in order to overcome economic difficulties. They draw the following conclusion:

"On balance, the results provide some support for both the economic and the cultural explanations of the formation of extended households. It is impossible to choose unequivocally between these two explanations ... The fact that female headship and education exert consistently significant effects, although in opposite directions, on the three measures of family extension² is perhaps the strongest evidence for the indeterminacy of the relative importance of the cultural versus the economic argument of extended household structure ... While it might seem

appropriate to infer that cultural norms in favour of extended family living arrangements do operate to condition the differences in the composition of minority and non-minority families, our sense is that this conclusion would be premature, except on a tentative basis" (Tienda & Angel, 1982:526-528).

Another contributor to this debate has been McAdoo who has shown that even upwardly mobile blacks maintain strong extended family ties. This, she explains, both with reference to racial discrimination and culture. Zinn & Eitzen, summarise McAdoo's argument as follows:

"... socially mobile Blacks draw upon their families for more than financial aid. They depend on their families for strong emotional and cultural support as well ... the extended family pattern has developed into a strong and valuable cultural pattern because even for more secure Blacks, wider community support is always problematic. Racism has often necessitated the use of internal family resources that may not need to be tapped in by other families in society (McAdoo, 1978:775)" (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:122).

As I see it the argument here is that poor material circumstances have necessitated strong extended family ties and that these have become a cultural norm which, in turn, has been reinforced by racial discrimination.

5. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REVISITED:

The studies referred to above have been premised on a distinction which has been made between what has been called the 'culturalist' and 'structuralist' approaches to explaining family diversity - in particular intra-societal variation in household structure. There are however, a number of difficulties with the way in which these concepts and labels have been used.

Firstly, although the idea that family patterns are a product of distinctive cultures has been seen as one possible explanation for Black family patterns in the United States, I have found no description of 'Black culture' as such in the

studies referred to above. Indeed Allen makes it clear that in his analysis 'culture' is a residual category and that the culturalist hypothesis can only be substantiated by default i.e. if socio-economic factors are shown not to vary with family patterns. Tienda and Angel make a similar assertion:

"(So) we compute racial/ethnic differences in the propensity to extend after taking into account differences in economic need and education. Using this approach, the conclusion that culture plays a part in determining household structure is necessarily inferential ... In effect, cultural preference as a determinant of extension is a residual. In the absence of any direct measurement of this construct it is not possible to examine it directly" (1982:519 & 528).

Secondly, where a particular lower class subculture has been described, the behaviours and traits associated with it have been conceived of in negative terms and represent a reversal of what has been seen as white middle class culture. So, for instance, apathy and fatalism have been defined as lower class 'value orientations' and Rodman goes so far as to say that members of the lower class have a wider range of values than others because for them, "a non-legal union and legally illegitimate children are also desirable" (Rodman,1963:209 in Zinn & Eitzen,1990:98).

In my view Rodman would be hard pressed to find any society or community where illegitimacy is a value i.e. something that people strive to achieve or see as a desirable goal (see Haralambos & Holborn,1990:6 for a definition of a value). This does not mean that illegitimacy is not viewed differently and treated differently in communities where it is common as compared with those where it is rare. But the difference is between norms rather than values.

The case study reported by Preston Whyte and Louw of an unmarried Zulu girl who falls pregnant illustrates this well (1986). There, the announcement of an impending illegitimate birth was not greeted with the calamity that is usually associated with such events among Whites. Rather, the authors' main point is that even where marriage between the biological

parents of an illegitimate child does not occur, certain mechanisms exist which not only 'place' the child in the social structure but identify the people responsible for his or her care. These mechanisms, they argue, have the effect of 'normalising' and even 'institutionalising' the potentially disruptive situation brought about by an unwanted extra-marital pregnancy. This is not to say that teenage pregnancies are viewed in wholly positive terms. In the case they document, the announcement of the girl's pregnancy was followed by a number of ceremonies involving members of both the biological father's and the mother's kin group. These, the authors indicate, were undertaken to celebrate the girl's fertility as well as 'cleanse' her, her family and the other young girls in the community from the 'bad luck' that had befallen them (1986:373). It was also followed by a series of negotiations between members of the two kin groups according to which the biological father gave money and two beasts (imigezo) to the mother's family. This was done to compensate for the 'damage' his seduction of the girl had caused them:

"Despite the fact that the parents did not marry immediately, and no marriage negotiations were begun for at least two years, those responsible for the child's conception and future care were clearly and publicly indicated at the ceremony ... We believe that what happened, in terms of both the handing over of the imigezo beasts and the subsequent structural arrangements for taking care of the child, represent a typically Zulu cultural response to a contemporary problem faced at one time or another by a very high proportion of black parents and children" (1986:362).

This case illustrates that what is valued in this community is not illegitimacy per se but children and that it is in this context that we need to understand race differences in rates of illegitimacy, abortion and the practice of putting children up for adoption. Herein may also lie an explanation for higher rates of extended families among Blacks than Whites for as I have argued elsewhere (1994) among Blacks extra-marital pregnancy is often followed by the absorption of the mother-child dyad into an existing family structure (thus creating an extended family

arrangement) rather than the establishment of a single parent family as is commonly assumed.

Returning to Rodman's description of lower class culture, it therefore seems more reasonable to argue that in communities characterised by high rates of illegitimacy the latter is a **norm** which exists side-by-side with **values** which emphasise children and legitimate births. One could therefore say that the culture of the community in question is characterised by a disjunction between the values its members hold dear and its normative practices. Therefore, instead of seeing cultures and subcultures as a negative mirror image of so-called 'mainstream culture' (or Western middle class culture), a more complex view of culture (and subculture) is being advanced.

My third concern is whether the term 'culturalist' is appropriate for describing the perspective of those categorised as falling within this camp. As noted, the so-called culturalists see distinctive cultures as arising out of distinctive class situations or material conditions. As such, an economic determinist view of culture (ideology) is at the heart of the so-called culturalist approach.

There are also problems with the structuralist label since those who ascribe to this approach tend to start their analyses with certain assumptions about culture and see class as a mediator between a given set of cultural norms and values on the one hand and family patterns on the other. So, for instance, Tienda and Angel's argument that low marriage rates amongst Blacks can be explained with reference to the scarcity of Black males who can provide for their families, implies the acceptance on the part of Black women of traditional sex roles. It is only because both men and women have internalised and therefore desire the realisation of traditional sexual norms that the cost-benefit analysis works against marriage in the cases where men are not gainfully employed. From a purely economic point of view, a marriage between individuals, one of whom is not able to make a

monetary contribution, does not have to be unprofitable or unfeasible. We have plenty of evidence of this in conventional nuclear families where women provide a domestic service while men go out to work. In the case of unemployed Black men, making such an arrangement viable would require gender role reversal and to the extent that that does not occur and is seldom considered as an option, we must conclude that Tienda and Angel's argument (page 192 above) is not a structuralist one as such but one based on a certain view of the interrelationship between structural and ideological factors in the determination of Black family patterns. It is a perspective that takes certain cultural assumptions as its starting point and sees class factors as preventing the realisation of those cultural ideals in the case of the lower class.

Zinn & Eitzen (1990) also start their analysis with certain assumptions about 'family values' or culture. They claim that "all families in America are under cultural constraint to appear autonomous but there are class-based differences in the abilities of households to realize the ideal of autonomy and self-support" (Thorne in Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:103). The implication here is that members of all social strata ascribe to the same set of 'family values' - in this instance the idea that households should be economically independent entities. Moreover, access to economic resources (class) is seen as preventing those with limited means from realizing this value and enabling those with larger incomes to do so.

This approach is however difficult to sustain given Zinn & Eitzen's argument that family and household autonomy is absent from both the very poor and very wealthy socio-economic strata. If the elite have all the options available to them yet have family patterns which resemble those of the lower class (albeit for different economic reasons) then either the two classes do not share the same values (elite value extended kin ties and the lower class value independence) or both value extended kin ties and class does not act as an inhibitor in the case of the lower

class. My point here is that the so-called structuralist perspective cannot avoid taking account of cultural factors and in some senses is more culturalist than theories which go by that name.

Against this background the distinction between the two schools of thought is not that one sees class and the other culture as the 'cause' of family patterns. Rather it is that one sees culture as the mediating factor between class and family patterns (Culturalists) while the other sees class as the mediating factor between culture and family patterns:

Culturalist perspective:

Class ———> Culture ———> Family patterns

Structuralist perspective:

Culture ———> Class ———> Family patterns.

The above labels are therefore only appropriate if our focus is on what is regarded as the **immediate** determinant of family patterns.

But looking at the issue more holistically is important since it is only in this way that one gets a sense of one of the major yet unacknowledged questions affecting this debate and that is the question of the relationship between class and culture (rather than either of these vis-a-vis family behaviour). In this respect one could say that the culturalists start their analysis with a class divided society and see cultures as arising out of different class conditions. Provision is therefore made for both class divisions and cultural diversity:

Culturalist:

Class 1 —> Culture 1 —> Family Pattern 1
Class 2 —> Culture 2 —> Family Pattern 2
Class 3 —> Culture 3 —> Family Pattern 3

The structuralists on the other hand start their analysis not only with the assumption of cultural homogeneity but see culture as existing independently of specific material conditions or 'free-floating'. The role of class in their analysis is that of preventing or enabling the realisation of generally agreed upon cultural values in practice.

Structuralist:

CULTURE1 —>
 |> Class 1 —> Family Pattern 1
 |> Class 2 —> Family Pattern 2
 |> Class 3 —> Family Pattern 3

Presented in this way the theoretical perspectives which have informed the debate about the relative role of class and culture in explaining family diversity take on not only a more complex form but are seen as involving a dispute about the existence or not of cultural diversity in the area of family values.

6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have presented and discussed some of the theoretical perspectives that have informed the debate about explaining family diversity - or in terms of my definition - explaining variations on the concrete level of the institution of the family. They can be grouped as follows: those focusing on economic and demographic factors see family patterns as the result of necessity whereas those focusing on culture see them, if not as a result of choice, at least as being in line with the culture of the community concerned. One could say that one group sees people as having the families they must have while the other

sees families as the outflow of cultural ideals (beliefs and values).

I have suggested that these perspectives may be more complex than is often assumed and involve questions other than the relative role of class and culture in explaining differences in household structures - questions such as the relationship between class and culture and the existence or not of diversity in the area of family values. In my opinion it is with regard to the latter that more research is needed since it is only once we have investigated the ideological level of the institution of the family that we will know whether in the case of a particular society or community the term 'the ideology of the family' is more appropriate than 'ideologies of the family' and, if the latter, whether these are linked to social classes or with specific ethnic groups that cut across class divisions.

Moreover, it is only once we know what people aspire to and the characteristics and behaviours to which they attach positive significance, that we can justifiably make claims about material factors preventing or enabling the achievement of those ideals. What I am suggesting here is that investigations of the family in any particular social context need to include studies of both the ideological and concrete levels of this institution.

7. NOTES

1. Data reworked for presentation. Only households where the head has either high or low scores on all three measures of socio-economic status have been included. Other permutations, example low income and high education have been omitted.

2. Measures of extension: (1) presence of one or more non-nuclear members of any age; (2) the presence of one or more adult non-nuclear members, and (3) the presence of one or more economically active non-nuclear members (1982:518).

SECTION II:

WHITE HOUSEHOLDS IN GRAHAMSTOWN

This section reports on and discusses the results of an empirical study of White households in Grahamstown. The aims of the study were:

1. To ascertain the distribution of household types in the White Grahamstown community.
2. To document subjects' views on family-related issues.
3. To explain any systematic variations that may be found to exist with respect to 1 and 2. 'Class' and 'culture' were identified as possible explanatory variables.

The next chapter situates the study by describing the town where the empirical research took place. This is followed by a discussion of the methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER 8

GRAHAMSTOWN: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

In terms of contemporary political boundaries, Grahamstown is located in the western part of the Eastern Cape Province. It is situated in the interior, about half-way between East London and Port Elizabeth in an area known as the Zuurveld which stretches from the Fish River in the east to the Bushman's River in the west (Map 1 in Appendix 1).

Like most other South African cities, Grahamstown has two faces. On the one hand it is renowned for being the cultural centre of the Eastern Cape. There are twenty three schools and three of the nine high schools are well-known and prestigious private schools - St Andrew's, Diocesan School for Girls and Kingswood College. There is a seminary, a school of music, a school of art, a national library for the blind and a university. But apart from these educational institutions, Grahamstown is today best known for the fact that the National Arts Festival is held here every year. The main venue of this event is the 1820 Settlers Monument built to commemorate the arrival of the first British colonists. The wide streets and the old buildings are reminiscent of that era.

The other face of Grahamstown is its high rate of unemployment (especially among Blacks); the lack of labour intensive industry; regular water shortages; bleak prospects for future industrial development and a high crime rate. In 1993, 1276 incidents of theft, 1179 of housebreaking (including businesses); 1886 of assault, 126 of robbery, 141 of rape and 77 of murder were reported to the Grahamstown police (Midgley & Wood, 1995:13-14). As can be noted from the table below in certain categories (theft from motor vehicles, housebreaking, assault, rape and murder) the crime rate for Grahamstown is about double

that for the country as a whole¹.

Table 8.1

CRIME STATISTICS: GRAHAMSTOWN AND SOUTH AFRICA 1993				
DESCRIPTION OF CRIME	GRAHAMSTOWN		SOUTH AFRICA	
	N *	RATE PER 100 000 OF POPULATION	N #	RATE PER 100 000 OF POPULATION
Theft	1 276	1 576.32	-	-
Theft of motor vehicles	130	160.59	77 906	191.65
Theft from motor vehicles	507	626.32	166 295	409.10
Housebreaking (including businesses)	1 179	1 456.49	259 645	638.75
Assault	1 886	2 329.89	144 504	355.49
Robbery	126	155.65	87 102	214.28
Rape	141	174.18	27 037	66.51
Murder	77	95.12	19 583	48.17

* Raw figures from Midgley and Wood, 1995:13-14.
 # Raw figures from South African Survey, 1995\6:67.
 Grahamstown population taken as 80 948 (see next page) and South African population taken as 40 648 574 (South African Survey, 1995\6:15).

2. THE POPULATION

There has been a great deal of dispute about the size of the Grahamstown population (see Williams & Davies, 1989). The Central Statistical Services puts the figure for Blacks alone at 29 949 for 1985 (Report number 02-85-01) and provide a corrected figure of 40 771 (in Williams & Davies, 1989:1). The enumerated figure for 1991 was 27 386 (Report Number 03-10-02, 1991:7). However, Williams and Davies of the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University claim that in 1989 the Black population of Grahamstown was at least double the enumerated figure for 1985 (Williams & Davies, 1989:21). They arrive at their

estimation by extrapolating from a number of known statistical bases such as the number of people receiving pension grants (1988, 58 000); number of children enrolled in schools (1989, 57 558); water consumption (1988, 56 000); the amount of sewerage collected from the township (1988, 63 000) as well as Manona's estimation (1985: 57 700). Since these figures range from 1985 to 1989, the authors contend that "it seems prudent to conclude ... that the population of Rhini² should be accepted to be **at least** 60 000" in 1989 (1989:21) (emphasis in original). As far as the other sections of the Grahamstown community are concerned there is less controversy. There are about 11 000 Whites, 6 500 'Coloureds' and under 500 Asians living in Grahamstown.

Table 8.2

DISTRIBUTION OF GRAHAMSTOWN POPULATION				
	1985		1991	
BLACK	# 57 700	75.72%	## 62 915	77.72%
WHITE	12 004	15.75%	11 043	13.64%
'COLOURED'	6 140	8.06%	6 529	8.07%
ASIAN	359	0.47%	461	0.57%
TOTAL:	76 203	100.00%	80 948	100.00%
#	Manona, 1988 in Williams & Davies, 1989:21.			
##	Extrapolation from Williams and Davies' estimate using an average annual population increase of 2.4% (South African Survey, 1996:12).			
Rest:	Central Statistical Services, Report Numbers 02-85-01 (1985) & 03-10-02 (1991).			

Statistics concerning home language are also problematic. The 1991 census only makes provision for the whole of the Albany district which includes Alicedale and Riebeeck East. However, since the total White population of Alicedale and Riebeeck East was less than 300 in that year and the total Black population was also less than 300, it is doubtful that the inclusion of this area will have any marked effect of the ratio between the various language groups.

As far as the Black population is concerned, there can be little doubt that the overwhelming majority are Xhosa-speaking. According to the 1991 census, 98% of Blacks living in the urban part of the Albany district were Xhosa-speaking (Report Number 03-01-06,1991:537). In the case of Whites, 78% were English-speaking, 21% Afrikaans speaking and 0.6% indicated that they spoke both English and Afrikaans at home (Report Number 03-01-06,1991:74). In the case of Asians, 400 out of a total of 461 (87%) gave English as their home language (Report Number 03-01-06,1991:380) while Afrikaans was more commonly reported in the case of those classified as 'Coloured' (96%). Only 2.4% and 0.5% of the latter group gave English or both English and Afrikaans as their home language respectively (Report Number 03-01-06,1991:235).

3. RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Grahamstown is spread around a valley overlooked by Gun Fire Hill in the west (home to the Settlers Monument) and Makanaskop in the east (named after a Xhosa war leader who besieged the garrison town in 1819).

From a social and business point of view Church Square is literally the centre of town. The White residential areas lie to the north, west and south of this point. Those to the north and west tend to be home to the wealthier White residents. Many old colonial homesteads are still to be found in these areas. To the south, two areas known as P.J.Olivier (by virtue of the Afrikaans school by the same name) and Fort England (named after the mental hospital which forms one of its boundaries) are located. While labels are difficult to apply, these areas are probably best described as middle and lower middle class areas respectively. It is also here that many original settler cottages are still to be found.

The station is situated to the east of Church square beyond which a small business area is to be found. Still further east

an 'African township' is located. This area is divided into three parts: Fingo Village; Tanty and Joza. To the north east of the station there is a small 'coloured' township and to its west an even smaller but far more prosperous Indian residential area (Currie Park) is to be found.

The 'two faces of Grahamstown' referred to earlier tend to correspond to the residential lay-out of the town as is aptly illustrated in the following poem written by a township resident looking over to the 'White side of town':

"Foamy white clouds dance above town.
All the houses are white.
Did it snow over there?
I wish it would snow here too"
(Lungile Lose in O'Meara, 1995:87).

4. THE ECONOMY

A walk from Gun Fire Hill through the botanical gardens and down High street towards the station takes one past most of the major socio-economic landmarks of the town: the university; the magistracy and supreme court; the Post Office; retail stores; restaurants; the cathedral; banks and hotels. There is also an industrial area (Goodwin's Kloof) on the western outskirts of the town and a military base on the north-western side (for information regarding the establishment of the industrial site see Davenport, 1980 & Davies, 1986).

As noted above, the negative aspect of the city centres around the lack of employment opportunities. One of the reasons for this is that there are no heavy (primary) industries in the area. In April 1990 a brick-manufacturing company (Corobrick) closed down leaving National Lamps, a lamp and bulb-making concern, the only manufacturing firm of note in the area (Davies, n.d.).³ Clay deposits represent Grahamstown's only natural resource and ceramics the only other manufacturing industry that provides employment opportunities to local residents. The Goodwin's Kloof industrial area was proclaimed in 1983 and

comprises 42 sites. Three years later only 8 sites (17%) had been developed and a further 21 (51%) had been sold or were under option (Davies, 1986:53-54). Today, 60% of the sites are available for development (Human, 1997)⁴.

The closure of Corobrick directly affected 2400 workers and their families (Davies n.d.). This has further exacerbated the already high unemployment rate amongst Blacks. Davies estimates that about 10 000 (60%) of the economically active Black population of Grahamstown is unemployed (1986:79)⁵. Unemployment among the 'Coloured' population is estimated at between 20% and 30% of the work force and that among the White population around 2% (Davies, 1986:79). According to the 1994 October Household Survey the Eastern Cape province had the highest rural unemployment rate (56.3%) in that year. It also had the second highest general unemployment rate in the country (45.3%) - 1.7% lower than that for the Northern Province and 12.7% higher than that for the country as a whole (South African Survey, 1995\6:263)⁶.

Residents' main source of income is so-called service industries: the educational institutions; the courts ; hotels and retail stores. According to Davies, 81% of employed Africans; 60% of 'coloureds' and 91% of Whites are employed in the tertiary/services sector (1986:80). Tourism appears to be the most rapidly developing industry in Grahamstown. The National Arts Festival represents an important source of income to the local community. In 1996 about 25 000 people attended the festival and are estimated to have spent about R26 million⁷. Attempts are also being made to develop the tourist potential of the whole Eastern Cape region.

5. AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Identifying a starting point for the historical origin of any village, town or city is problematic since it is likely to reveal more about the interests of the writer than the history

of the place itself. So, for instance, it has become customary to see Grahamstown as beginning in 1812 when Col. John Graham established a military post on the land where the cathedral is now located (O'Meara,1995:17). In contrast to this White Anglo-Saxon perspective, Afrikaans speakers would probably show greater interest in the biography of Lucas Meyer and the movements of the trek boers in the area, while Xhosa-speakers and descendants of the Khoi and San would find a different starting point for 'their histories'. Already in 1974 Butler expressed the hope that a balanced account of the history of the Eastern Cape produced by "a team of scholars representing all groups" and focusing specifically on the period 1770 to 1870 would see the light of day (1974: Preface to 'The 1820 Settlers'). It would appear though that this has not as yet been achieved as far as Grahamstown itself is concerned. The discrepancy in the different perspectives on the origin of this town are still reflected in the fact that Grahamstown also has a 'Xhosa name': eRhini⁸. The latter is said to derive from the name of "a Xhosa homestead head who once lived in the valley" (O'Meara,1995:12). This explanation has, however, been disputed on the grounds that the word 'Rhini' bears closer resemblance to the Khoisan than the Xhosa language (Tisani,1997 personal communication).

What does appear to be clear is that the establishment of the town is closely linked to clashes between the Khoi, Africans and Europeans who inhabited the area in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. Webster describes the situation as follows:

"The Cape Colony, which begun merely as a Dutch East India Company refreshment station in the mid seventeenth century, began to expand northwards and eastwards in the eighteenth century. New social structures began to evolve as the trekboers moved through Khoisan territory, appropriating large tracts of land for farms and spreading the influence of the European monetary economy. Towards the end of the century this ease of movement eastward was halted by the large Rharhabe (Xhosa) settlements between the Gamtoos and Sundays Rivers. For the first (and only) time in African history, white colonists met a large mass of Africans along an extended frontier In 1778 Governor von Plettenberg declared the eastern

boundary of the Colony to be the Fish (Nxuba) River. This claim was repeatedly challenged; it made the Zuurveld ... an area of dispute for thirty years ... The Africans most affected by the advent of this new force in the area were the Rharhabe. Rharhabe had seceded from his brother Gcaleka in the late eighteenth century, and his land was divided between his grandsons Ngqika and Ndlambe. Ngqika and Ndlambe were the two main chiefs of the Rharhabe in the first three decades of the nineteenth-century. Their combined territory stretched between the Sundays and Kei Rivers before 1811" (Webster, 1991:33).

Webster furthermore points out that one of the reasons for the conflict which ensued was that for the Rharhabe, the imposition of a boundary was a foreign concept:

"(it) undermined the traditional practice of fission to alleviate intra-clan tensions and population growth. Previously, if more land had been needed, herds and families were merely gathered and moved. Rivers and geographical formations had never before delineated hegemony. There had been no 'private property' or legally defined farms" (1991:34).

More specifically, the development of Grahamstown is associated with two recommendations made by Col. Collins to the first British Governor of the Cape. These were, (1) that the Xhosa be expelled to the eastern side of the Fish and the area between the Fish and the Kei rivers be made into an unoccupied buffer zone and (2) that the European population of the Zuurveld be augmented (Sprigg, 1970:1; Butler, 1974:38; Mostert, 1992:372). It was in response to the first recommendation, that Graham established a military post on the abandoned farm of Lucas Meyer called "De Rietfontein" in 1812. The implementation of the second, resulted in the arrival in 1820 of some 4000 British settlers (1 000 men and 3 000 women and children) "to become a living line of defence against the Xhosa" (Nash, 1986:95; Sprigg, 1970:2).

Selected from up to 90 000 applicants, the settlers were as much recruited as a cheap defence of the Cape's eastern frontier as to alleviate unemployment in Britain at that time (Nash, 1986:94). They were a heterogenous group - about half of the men being farmers and agricultural labourers, a tenth coming

from the armed forces and 'the professions' while the rest were artisans and traders (Butler,1974:67). Cock points out that although the majority of the settlers were drawn from the lower classes, a number of them brought domestic servants with them and that this accounts for the fact that "for the next 50 years domestic service (in the Eastern Cape) included a significant number of Europeans" (1980:178). Most of the settlers were not only unaware of the military purpose behind the British government's sponsorship of their emigration but were ill-equipped to deal with the farming conditions of the Eastern Cape (Butler,1974). It was only a matter of time before drought, floods, crop failure and inexperience in farming propelled many of them to leave their farms in search of employment and economic opportunities elsewhere. Butler (1986:100) estimates that eight years after their arrival, only about a third of the settlers were still on the farms they had been allocated. Some went to other towns or continued farming in other areas but many came to Grahamstown to become traders, artisans and the like - thus establishing the core of the White English-speaking population of Grahamstown.

The settlement soon transformed itself into a trading centre of note and by the 1830's was second only to Cape Town in terms of its importance as a town in the Cape Colony (Butler,1986:100; Daniel et al,1985:3)⁹. Grahamstown's prosperity would not, however, last long. With the discovery of diamonds in 1860 and the development of the gold-mining industry, the centre of economic activity was diverted to Kimberley and Johannesburg and the main transport routes (rail and road) bypassed Grahamstown. Consequently, the latter found itself on the periphery rather than at the centre of economic activity (Daniel et al,1985:5) - a position it has held ever since.

Returning to the pre-1850's era, the fact that merchants used Grahamstown as a base for trade to the interior, meant that the consequence of the British settler programme was to be exactly the opposite of that anticipated by the colonial

authorities - instead of closing the frontier, it was opened up (Butler,1986:100). Increasing contact between Whites in Grahamstown and Black inhabitants of the region was further stimulated when in 1828 the Cape government finally relented to the colonists' complaints about a labour shortage and, in terms of Ordinance 49, permitted Blacks from beyond the frontier to enter the colony in search of work (Butler,1986:101). A year later, Khoi inhabitants of the colony were released from the obligation to carry passes (Butler,1986:101) (see also Webster,1991:48). Butler describes the effect of this turn-about as far as restrictions on labour is concerned as follows:

"The effect of available labour on the economy of the settlement was considerable, but it accelerated the unforeseen transformation of the settlers into a white elite. While late into the forties there were still establishments in which every task was performed by whites, the process had begun of differentiation between skilled and menial tasks along racial lines. The children of the settlers would inherit frontiers besides the boundaries of the colony; the far more complex, difficult and dangerous frontiers of class compounded with race" (1986:101).

Many of the Black residents of Grahamstown are descendants of the Xhosa who entered the colony at that time or who had escaped the colonists' efforts to expel them from the Zuurveld during the Fourth Frontier War (1811-12). However, some are descended from the Mfengu or Fingo people who entered the Cape Colony in the 1830's (Davenport,1980:4; Webster, 1991).

Stimulated by Cobbing's 'revolutionary' reinterpretation of the events surrounding and the cause of what is known as 'the mfecane', a polemic and academic debate has arisen around the question of the Fingo¹⁰. The orthodox position has been that they were "refugees from Shaka's wars of the 1820's, who had first been given hospitality by the Gcaleka paramount Hintsa before moving into the Cape Colony by agreement with Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban in 1835" (Davenport,1980:5). An added aspect of the orthodox view is that the Fingo had been oppressed by the Gcaleka and that the colonists had therefore 'rescued them' (Webster,1991:15-17). By contrast, Webster claims that they

arrived involuntarily, having been brought to the Cape under military 'protection' in order to fulfil the colonists' need for labour (1991:1-10;155). He furthermore contends that only a few of them came from Natal:

"... most of the Fingo were Gcaleka and Rharhabe who had been seized during the war of 1835, which explained why the majority were women and children¹¹ ... The Fingo were destined to solve the colonial labour shortage, and were 'supplied with a fictitious past' to disguise their illegality" (Webster,1991:3).

Controversy also surrounds the granting of free-hold title to the Fingo in Grahamstown. Tradition has it that this was done by Queen Victoria in recognition of the assistance they gave to the British troops during the frontier wars of 1846 and 1850-3 (Davies,1986:7; Roux and St Leger,1971:3). Davenport disputes this, indicating that plans for the establishment of a Fingo township were already underway in 1843 (1980:11). Whatever the details of the granting of freehold rights, until recently, Fingo Village was "one of only a handful of places in South Africa where Africans (held) freehold title to land outside of homelands" (Davies,1986:7). This unusual situation caused much controversy and conflict firstly when the municipality made repeated attempts (dating back to at least the beginning of this century) to gain control of the area¹² in order to enforce the payments of rates and deal with problems such as overcrowding (Torlesse,1993:5-7;138-142) and later when the Group Areas Act was implemented in Grahamstown in 1970 (Davenport,1980). With regard to the first period, Torlesse reports that in 1945 the town council launched an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the national government to expropriate the land on its behalf and that officials expressed extreme disappointment with the Council's attitude (towards Fingo residents) as they had long considered Grahamstown to be a "town that stood for a liberal and progressive policy" (in Torlesse, 1993:142). Davenport (1980) provides a detailed account of the events surrounding the implementation of the Group Areas Act in Grahamstown - the crux of which can be summarised as follows: In 1970 parts of Fingo village were rezoned as a 'coloured' residential area, about 6000

Blacks were to be moved to a township 40 km away and bordering the Fish River (Committee's Drift) and an industrial area established on the eastern side of the town (Davenport, 1980; Manona, 1988:303). After much controversy and protest, these decisions were reversed in 1980 (Davenport, 1980:45).

Very little is known about the historical origins of the rest of the Grahamstown population. This is possibly a reflection of the tendency to write history about 'major political actors' which in this case were the English-speaking White community and the Xhosa-speaking Black community. The present-day so-called 'Coloured' population of Grahamstown probably stems from the nomadic groups of Khoi (Hottentot) and San (Bushmen) who inhabited the Zuurveld prior to the arrival of the White settlers as well as subsequent unions between Blacks and Whites (Butler, 1974:5). Some could also be descendants of the Cape regiment (also known as the Cape Corps) that accompanied Graham when he led an attack on the Xhosa during the 1812 frontier war (Mostert, 1992:378 & 386). A so-called 'Hottentot Village' was established in Grahamstown as early as 1829 (Davenport, 1980:4).

It is likely that the Indian and Asian section of the Grahamstown population started coming to the area in the latter part of the 19th century in response to the opening up of trading opportunities. In 1921 people of Asian descent constituted only 0.75% of the Grahamstown population (134 individuals) and by 1951 this group had grown by only 53 individuals (Watts, 1957:176).

Information on the historical roots of the Afrikaans-speaking population is also scant. We know, however, that Piet Retief, an adventurous entrepreneur and leader of one of the trekker parties, owned property in Grahamstown before the arrival of the British settlers. According to Butler, there were probably about 30 "Boer dwellings" in Albany district in January 1820 (1974:123). However, since most of these were abandoned and/or burnt it is difficult to determine how many Afrikaans-speaking White inhabitants of Grahamstown there were in the 19th century.

It is likely that the Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking population of Grahamstown decreased significantly in the 1830's (the era of the Great Trek) and increased after the Anglo-Boer War when appointments in the civil service became a way of dealing with poverty among landless Afrikaners. This conjecture is partially substantiated by the fact that a Dutch Reformed Church was established in Grahamstown as late as 1916 - there being too few congregants to warrant an independent church before that time (Sellick, 1983:203). It is also supported by the fact that P.J. Olivier, the only Afrikaans medium school in Grahamstown, was established in 1956 - just 8 years after the coming to power of the Nationalist government. It is therefore conceivable that many of the present Afrikaans-speakers in Grahamstown are descended from people drawn to the town by the opening up of positions in the municipality, the courts, the police and other public sector organisations.

6. CONCLUSION

Grahamstown has been described as the city of saints¹³, a sleepy hollow and as 'a dorp with a difference' (O'Meara, 1995:5). The latter derives from the fact that it is one of the few South African towns (possibly outside Natal) where the White population is predominantly English-speaking and which has a long tradition of political liberalism. It is also unusual in that - although technically a city - industry is minimal while educational and legal institutions play an exceptionally large part in the economy and culture of the town. In addition, many White Grahamstonians show strong attachment to their settler roots inter alia in their efforts to preserve both colonial architecture and 'a small town atmosphere'. Torlesse (1993:13) points out that at times this may have exacerbated the town's inability to attract industry.¹⁴ In other ways Grahamstown is like any other South African city, town or village: it has a large and impoverished black community; Whites dominate the high status and well-remunerated positions in the economy and it has a long history of inter-racial conflict and a struggling economy.

7. NOTES

1. South Africa's general reported crime rate is itself more than double the international average: 5 651 vs 2662 per 100 000 (South African Institute of Race Relations, Fast Facts: No 10, October 1996:2).

2. Williams and Davies use 'Rhini' to refer to only the Black residential areas of Grahamstown whereas others use it to refer to the city as whole (see Davenport,1980:5).

3. Another brickmaking concern has subsequently started up.

4. Personal interview with Mr Human, City Secretary's Department, Grahamstown Municipality, 10 February 1997.

5. Davies arrives at this figure by subtracting the number of registered Black workers in Grahamstown in 1983\4 from the total number of economically active Black population (18 000) in the same period. Both figures are derived from the Rive Committee report to the East Cape Council (1984) which estimated that about 40% of the Black population was economically active at that time. The resultant figure of 11 000 unemployed Black persons works out to over 60% of the economically active Black population. This unemployment rate does not therefore take account of informal economic activity.

6. These figures are based on an expanded definition of unemployment which refers to "persons 15 years and older who are not in paid employment or self-employed; are available for paid employment or self-employment; and have a desire to work and to take up employment or self-employment" (South African Survey,1995\6:261).

7. Media release, Marketing and Communication Division, Rhodes University, November 20,1996.

8. It is unclear whether this name is used to refer only to the African township, or the town as a whole (see endnote 2).

9. Daniel et al (1985:3) point out that whereas only 33 erven had been surveyed in 1815 and four years later, the civilian male population stood at only 25 by 1830, 400 houses had been built and in 1834 the population was estimated to be around 3500.

10. Cobbing challenges the view that the destabilization which characterised Natal at the beginning of the 19th century was caused by 'the mfecane' i.e. the rise of Shaka and the expansion of Zulu military power resulting in the death of between 1 and 2 million people and causing many Zulu to flee from Natal (Webster,1991:16). In contrast to the view that the conflict was internally generated, Cobbing proposes that "African societies did not generate the regional violence on their own. Rather, caught within the European net, they were transformed over a lengthy period in reaction to the attentions of external plunderers" (Cobbing in Webster,1991:1). As in the case of

Webster's analysis of the Fingo, Cobbing's thesis places great emphasis on the colonists' attempts to secure labour. For further information see Cobbing, J. 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo' *Journal of African History*, Vol 29, 1988.

11. Webster claims that women and children were 'the preferred captures' because they were "pliable and the children young enough to be subdued and inculcated to fulfil colonial labour demands. Men could defend themselves." (1991:155).

12. Davenport points out that "information as to the method of control of (Grahamstown's) three locations is vague. Although situated within the municipal area, the management (of Fingo Village) remained in the hands of the (national) Government, the Council having no direct control except for the collection of municipal rates" (Davenport, 1980:59).

13. One explanation for this appellation is the relatively large number of churches and other places of worship in the town.

14. Torlesse also reports that some local protests against potential industrial developments were not made in the interests of maintaining the 'scenic beauty and tranquillity' of the town but in order to maintain racial segregation (1993:33). Proposals for the establishment of a jam factory in Fitzroy Street in 1919 and for extensions to a needle factory in Park Road in 1928 are examples. In the former case, protestors complained about "the Native traffic to and fro" if the factory came into existence (Torlesse, 1993:44).

CHAPTER 9

RESEARCH METHODS

1. INTRODUCTION

Previously, the family was described as a multi-faceted and dynamic social institution. With a view to generating empirical data with respect to this phenomenon within one section of the White South African community and contributing to the debate about explaining 'family diversity', a social survey and case studies were undertaken. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and discuss these techniques of enquiry as well as the sampling procedures and mode of data analysis that were employed. Some methodological issues are also addressed.

2. SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Triangulation - the combination of two or more research methods in one study is by no means institutionalised in sociology (Denzin, 1978; Bryman, 1988; Haralambos & Holborn, 1990; Harvey and MacDonald, 1993:223). One of the obstacles is that considerations of cost and time may make it difficult to do justice to more than one research method. Another is 'trained incapacity' i.e. the fact that researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds are likely to have a better grounding in one type of technique than another. So, for instance, sociology students are usually better trained in social surveys and anthropology students in 'field work' while psychology has tended to emphasise 'the case study method'. A third obstacle derives from the long standing belief that methods are not neutral from an epistemological point of view. The argument here has been that since epistemologies represent mutually exclusive views of how to generate valid knowledge of society, and methods are tied to these, "triangulation raises epistemological problems" (Harvey and Macdonald, 1993:223):

"Quantitative and qualitative methods are more than just differences between research strategies and data collection procedures. These approaches represent fundamentally different epistemological frameworks for conceptualizing the nature of knowing, social reality, and procedures for comprehending these phenomena (Filstead,1979:45 in Bryman,1988:105).

Commenting on attempts to combine different research methods, Guba argues:

"we are dealing with an either-or proposition, in which one must pledge allegiance to one paradigm or the other" (Guba,1985:80 in Bryman,1988:106-107) (emphasis in original).

More particularly, the point is often made that since quantitative research techniques (such as the survey) yield numerical data which are similar to that which natural scientists work with and seek to identify the causes of phenomena, they are informed by positivist assumptions i.e. the view that the social sciences should model themselves on the natural sciences. By contrast, qualitative techniques (participant observation, field research and/or the case study method) work with data of a verbal kind, seek 'meanings' rather than causes and aim at looking at society from the actor's point of view rather than that of a 'detached observer\scientist', they have more in common with non-positivist epistemologies. The latter go by various names: the hermeneutic tradition; subjectivism; the interpretative school; ethnography; ethnomethodology and phenomenology (Bailey, 1982:35; Haralambos & Holborn,1990:698; Pawson, 1989:4-5; Harvey and MacDonald,1993:9; Neuman,1997:67).

The question of whether sociology should be, should try to be and/or can be scientific as well as the question of what the latter means, has preoccupied scholars for a long time - Pawson (1989) claims that it can be taken back to Plato - and a resolution does not seem to be in sight. While space constraints do not permit a detailed discussion of these issues, I would like to make a few points about epistemologies and research methods.

Firstly, as noted above, there has been a tendency for epistemologies to be presented in an either/or, oppositional and mutually exclusive form. So, for instance, Johnson et al (1984) claim that 'subjectivists' accept idealism which is defined as the view that "social reality is **nothing more** than a negotiated outcome between individuals' interpretations of 'what is going on'" and "that social science ... should **merely** seek to replicate what actors interpretations of social reality are" (1984:20) (emphasis added). Similarly, materialism (one of the pillars of empiricism) is described as the view that "the **only** certain reality is made up of material things" (1984:190). Against this background, it is not surprising that those who have combined ideas from different strategies are accused of inconsistency or contradiction¹.

Recently a third position has been added to what used to be a 'two-cornered fight' with respect to the naturalism debate i.e. between positivist and non-positivist epistemologies (Pawson,1989). Two of the most common labels it has been given are 'realism' and 'critical social science' (Sayer,1984; Pawson,1989; Neuman,1997). But even though this position draws on the others and is in many ways a 'synthesis' of them, it is still its *opposition* to the other perspectives that is emphasised. So, for instance, Neuman (1997) differentiates between positivism, interpretive social science and critical social science claiming that they "represent fundamental differences in outlook and alternative assumptions about social science research ... (and) are different ways of looking at the world - ways to observe, measure, and understand social reality" (Neuman,1997:62). In particular the critical approach is defined as one that views social science as a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change the conditions and build a better world for themselves" (1997:74).

Secondly, there has been a tendency to present these epistemologies as a type of menu from which a choice must be

made. For instance, after having taken less than three pages to describe specific 'paradigms' (a large part of which consists of a discussion of Malthus and Marx's theories of population), Bailey writes:

"By now the reader should have some idea of the paradigm with which he or she identifies (ethnography, statistical, and so on) and **consequently** the type of research project he or she is interested in pursuing" (1982:35) (emphasis added).

Neuman makes a similar comment indicating that by the end of his chapter on methodology, the reader should have knowledge not only of three different answers to the question "what is scientific about social scientific research" but that his discussion of these approaches gives the reader "an opportunity to make an informed choice among alternatives for the type of research (he or she) may want to pursue" (1997:61) (see also Harvey and MacDonald, 1993).

In my view, this way of presenting methodological positions is not only dishonest but unsociological. It fails to give adequate attention to the very different socio-historical contexts within which each of these perspectives arose and to the present status of positivism in the social sciences. Turner puts it mildly when he writes:

"Positivism no longer has any clear referent², but it is evident that, for many, being a positivist is not a good thing" (Turner, 1992:1511 in Neuman, 1997:63).

But one could also say that today it has become a 'term of abuse' or a stick with which some scholars choose to beat others and to present it as but one legitimate option among others, is simply misleading. Moreover, writers of research texts are seldom successful in hiding their disdain for this approach. For instance, Harvey and MacDonald present positivism in the most dogmatic terms while the critical approach (and to a lesser extent, phenomenology) is presented in a far more encompassing and nuanced way (1993:7).³ Moreover, the reader is told that positivists claim that "no attempt should be made to understand

the inner meaning or essence of things" (1993:58); that phenomenologists "think laterally" (1993:177) and that anti-racists and anti-sexists use the critical approach in order to determine how the social world "really works" (1993:8). Some opportunity for 'informed choice' !

Thirdly, by their nature, epistemological discussions tend to be conducted at a highly abstract level making it difficult for the researcher to draw a connection between those concerns and the empirical project he or she is interested in pursuing. Here one could ask how a statement such as 'all swans are white' relates to drug use on campus or household composition patterns (see Johnson et al, 1984:193). This situation is exacerbated by the indeterminacy of epistemological debates (Pawson, 1989) as well as the lack of practical guidelines for empirical research⁴. As Pawson puts it:

"(one of) the less admirable features of methodological writing in sociology (is) ... that it produces literature which is long on critique, short on positive alternatives, and shows a high regard for principles and a low esteem for applications" (1989:26).

Fourthly, the view that research methods are intricately linked to specific epistemologies has not gone unchallenged. Platt (1986), for example, has questioned the purported connection between functionalism (a theory which is usually linked to positivism) and the survey. Bryman (1988) similarly points out that so-called qualitative researchers often make claims of a quantitative nature (many, frequently etc); that participant observation can be seen as a form of empiricism (especially when linked to grounded theory or induction because of the tendency to "defer to what is directly observable"); that analyses committed to 'the actors' point of view' are not incompatible with causes; that survey researchers have documented meanings and that although theory testing is associated with positivism and theory generation with non-positivist methodologies, theories can be tested by means of case studies (1988:119 -127). Haralambos and Holborn concur with this last point indicating that Gough's

case study of Nayar society, was used to test the theory of the universality of family structures based on the marital bond (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990:726). Bryman furthermore points out that while representativity is not a strength of 'qualitative research techniques', those using the latter still express a **concern** about it. Similarly, 'reactivity' (impact of research on subjects) is another common concern identified by Bryman. In short, Bryman's argument is that those who claim that research methods belong to different sides of the epistemological divide have exaggerated the differences between methods and ignored their common features.

My position in this debate is as follows: qualitative and quantitative research methods **are** different and **historically** they have been linked to different epistemological views. So, for instance, it is true that qualitative research techniques were introduced to sociology in the 1960's and 1970's not simply by adding them to the existing repertoire of techniques but by making claims against the epistemological position which enjoyed a hegemonic position at that time (positivism) (Bryman, 1988:1-3;45). Moreover, while researchers may share common concerns, quantitative and qualitative techniques not only have different strengths and weaknesses but the strengths of the one tend to be weaknesses of the other. So for instance, it is difficult to generalise from information obtained from one or a few instances as is the case in case studies. Conversely, the larger the sample the more confident one can be that the information obtained has more general applicability. On the other hand, by focusing on one or a few cases the researcher is able to probe issues, allow subjects room to raise issues of importance to them and generally produce information of a more detailed or 'richer' kind than is the case in a large-scale study.

Being a newer approach the 'critical perspective' has been able to draw on older ones - dissociating itself from their discredited aspects while retaining their useful aspects. As such, it is much more appealing than the other approaches.

Moreover, we are told that "critical researchers may use any research technique" (Neuman,1997:80) - another appealing feature. But I do not believe that in its present form, it is a panacea for the confusion and division which characterise the field of methodology in sociology. This is because it still retains some of the less appealing aspects both of positivism and the way methodologies generally have been presented. For example, its search for 'the truth' is reminiscent of erstwhile attempts to replace religion with science and a concomitant naive faith in the latter. Relatedly, the idea that the purpose of science is to reduce illusions and ignorance and to "help free us from domination by hitherto unacknowledged constraints, dogmas and falsehoods" (Sayer,1992 in Neuman,1997:74) as well as the rejection of 'subjectivism' because "it does not take a strong value position or actively help people to see false illusions so that they can improve their lives" (Neuman,1997:74) reveals an attitude towards 'ordinary people' that can only be described as arrogant.

Finally, one of the reasons the 'critical approach' is seldom used by full-time researchers (Neuman,1997:80) is that it still remains on a relatively high level of abstraction and complexity, making it difficult for researchers to draw a connection between their interest in empirical research and the ideas being expounded as part of the 'realist' or 'critical' project. Indeed, anyone wishing to adopt this approach is now required not only to study philosophy but to know about transducers; "the forces on a pendulum bob"; "electric resistance temperature gauge (motor vehicle type)" and "Galileo's diagram for the motion of projectiles" and why copper conducts electricity (Pawson,1989: 141,112,231; Sayer,1984:154). Against this background one could ask whether, in an age when it would appear that anyone can do a survey and journalists have replaced academics as the source of information about 'what is happening on the ground', this detour into engineering and physics is not yet another attempt to bolster the professional status of the sociologist.

If sociology is to continue to "place its hopes in the prescriptive power of epistemology" (Pawson,1989:10), then the way forward must surely be in the direction of more accommodative approaches such as 'the critical' approach. But it should be an approach that avoids the arrogance, machoism and in-fighting that 'perspectivism' engenders and that, in my view, are still features of the 'critical approach'. What is needed is a critical approach that incorporates more of the subjectivist or interpretive framework and shows respect for, rather than an *a priori* rejection of, 'ordinary people's world views'. What I am arguing for is an epistemological position that acknowledges both the existence of structures and meaningful social action; that human behaviour is patterned and that such patterns do not depend on any particular individual for their existence; that human beings interpret their surroundings and that these interpretations as well as material conditions influence the course of events. Such an epistemology would involve the search for causal relationships, for understanding meanings *and* the analysis of social structures. It would also be compatible with an ontological position which claims that social reality is both 'ideal' and 'material'.

3. RESEARCH STRATEGY

As indicated above, the research strategy employed in this study involved case studies and a social survey. While both were employed to generate empirical information about the institution of the family in one White South African community, they served different purposes. By means of data obtained from a small number of individuals, the case studies were aimed at **illustrating the domestic life cycle**, that is, the fact that individuals participate in a number of domestic arrangements in the course of a life-time. A related aim was to document a range of different domestic life cycles depending on factors like, divorce, death and remarriage. The case studies also enabled the researcher to provide relatively detailed and in-depth information pertaining to specific individuals' **experience** of

family life and their views on family related issues such as pre-marital sex, the importance of children and the relationship between adult children and their parents. Apart from the above, the case studies served as a pilot for the survey in that an initial questionnaire was used as a guide for the interviews. Subjects were not, however, confined to it. A tape recorder was used to gather information and the results are presented in the form of verbal transcripts of responses and commentary.

By contrast, the survey covered a larger group of individuals and the questionnaire was mainly of a structured nature. Moreover, one of the aims of the survey was to document the distribution of household types and family ideology among the surveyed population at the time of the study. In other words, a general pattern as identified at one point in time was at issue in the case of the survey. The second aim of the survey was to explain any variations that were found to exist with respect of household type and family ideology by determining whether there was any relationship between these phenomena and the variables 'social class' and 'culture'.

3.1 Operationalisation of Concepts

3.1.1 Social Class

Like most sociological concepts, that of 'social class' has a long and complicated history. There have been debates concerning both the role of social class in explaining social change and the question of how to generate empirical information about social classes. In this study, a broadly weberian approach to social class was adopted (See Poulantzas, 1975; Wright, 1978 and Saunders, 1990 on Marx's approach to social class). This approach is most frequently used by family sociologists (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:92) and has been shown to have a number of advantages over other approaches. For instance, Marshall et al (1988 in Saunders, 1990) studied social class using a number of different class models - including that devised by Wright (a neo-marxist)

and Goldthorpe (a neo-weberian) and conclude that Goldthorpe's scheme:

"was most successful in avoiding anomalies and discrepancies (Wright's approach, for example, led to some lawyers and some cleaners being included in the same class category as 'semi-autonomous employees'), that it was best suited to analysing new and important class positions, and that it corresponded most closely to how interviewees themselves thought about their class situation" (Saunders,1990:33).

By introducing the notion of 'market capacity' and focusing on income differentials and 'life chances' rather than ownership or non-ownership of the means of production, Weber sought to render Marx's dichotomous class model more complex. However, there are numerous practical problems surrounding the question of income determination. Firstly, there is always the possibility that subjects may over- or under-represent income depending on how they perceive the objectives of the study. They may also refuse to divulge such information on the basis that it is a personal/private matter. Furthermore, in cases where one individual is asked to report the income of a household he or she may simply not know or have false information about the income of other members. Finally, there is room for disagreement about what constitutes income (pay package, share dividends, rent etc). For these reasons, many researchers use occupation as an indicator of income and thereby of social class.

But the relationship between income and occupation is by no means a simple one. In strict weberian terms, classes have to do with economic power, that is, the possession of material means (money) which can be employed to get others to do what one wants them to do (Saunders,1990:20). Indeed Weber distinguished classes from 'status groups' which are defined in terms of the degree of prestige which its members hold in society. However, when it comes to the actual ranking of occupations for the purposes of empirical research, there is a tendency to include both of these factors and in cases where they do not coincide, it is usually 'prestige' which is the deciding factor. So, for instance, 'lower

professionals' such as nurses, social workers and teachers are usually classified in the middle class category (see Schlemmer and Stopforth,1979; Haralambos & Holborn,1990:65) while many of them may earn less than certain manual workers (electricians and plumbers, for example). But in this regard it is important to bear in mind that, on its own, occupational prestige can have important economic consequences. So, for example, banks may be more inclined to extend credit in the form of home loans etc. to professionals such as nurses and teachers, than manual workers resulting in higher 'life chances' for the former. The occupations of 'lower professionals' usually also have better fringe benefits (Haralambos & Holborn,1990:67). The problem here once again concerns the question of how income is defined. It can be conceptualised very narrowly as the pay package one brings home or broadly as access to financial means or socially desirable goods and services. On the other hand, research conducted in Britain shows that, on average, the gross weekly earnings of non-manual workers has consistently exceeded that of manual workers since the beginning of this century and that there is a clear positive relationship between occupational category and earnings (Haralambos & Holborn,1990:64-66). My main point here is that social classes should not be seen purely as economic categories and that the ranking of occupations according to 'work status' attests to this. What is at issue, then, is socio-economic status rather than 'class' defined purely in economic or financial terms.

In this study too, occupation was used as a means of identifying the class position of subjects and a class scheme similar (though by no means identical) to Goldthorpe's was used to organise the results. This decision was influenced by the advantages of the weberian approach mentioned above and facilitated by the availability of a local guide to the coding of occupations. I am referring here to Schlemmer and Stopforth (1979) who have produced a coding system and elaborated a classification of occupational categories specifically adapted to South African conditions. It is based on fifteen years of

research under the auspices of the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Natal (Durban) and is broadly based on British and American models of occupational status as well as local surveys (1979:1-2). They describe their classification system as:

"a way of differentiating systematically between occupations which represent different levels of achievement in work-status. It is an empirically derived classification of what we may call the job-status value placed by our population on virtually all the occupations which are likely to be encountered in any survey ... occupational status is an index of social achievement of a particular kind. Here we refer to what is variously called social status, social prestige or honour, socio-economic status, social standing or (using the concept loosely) social class" (1979:3).

The categories identified by Schlemmer and Stopforth are:

- 1) Professional and Managerial
- 2) Middle White-Collar
- 3) Manual Foreman, Skilled Artisans, Farmers, and Status equivalent
- 4) Routine Non-Manual and Semi-Skilled Manual
- 5) Unskilled Manual and Menial

The concept 'social class' was therefore operationalised by means of questions relating to occupation. These were categorised in terms of the scheme provided above with the addition of 4 categories - farmer, armed forces, student and 'housewife' (see question 3 in Appendix 3). Schlemmer and Stopforth point out that white farmers in South Africa enjoy a higher social and occupational status than is the case in other modern societies which may warrant their classification separately - possibly between the second and third categories of their scheme (1979:9). In this study they were initially classified separately and later incorporated into the 'middle' occupational group. They further classify 'army officers' and 'lieutenants' in category one i.e. alongside professionals and those in managerial positions and no information is given on the classification of other ranks such as 'corporal'. Given that there is a military base in Grahamstown

and the various ranks that officers hold, it was decided to initially categorise army employees separately and later to incorporate them into the 'middle' class category. Schlemmer and Stopforth classify students in the first category. This may seem problematic since students come from various socio-economic backgrounds. In this study they were also classified in the first category on the understanding that university qualifications are likely to lead to employment in professional and/or managerial positions. In the end then, the occupations of respondents in this study were categorised in terms of the following three broad categories:

- 1) Professional:
This category includes those in professional and managerial occupations as well as students.
- 2) Middle:
This category includes those in middle white-collar occupations; farmers and employees of the armed forces.
- 3) Manual:
Manual Foremen and skilled occupations; routine non-manual and semi-skilled manual; unskilled manual and menial were combined under this heading.

There are numerous problems surrounding the classification of the class position of women - especially the tendency to assume that a woman's class position is the same as that of her husband or father (Schlemmer and Stopforth, 1979:8). Steinmetz points out that this practice persists, "even though large numbers of women have incomes, education, or occupational status higher than that of their husband or father" (in Langman, 1988:217) (emphasis added). While space does not permit further discussion of this very crucial issue, it needs to be pointed out that the large numbers to which Steinmetz refers probably do not translate into a large proportion of all cases - especially in a society such as ours where gender equality in the workplace is far from being realised. Furthermore, a gender-neutral class schemata would have to take account of the different levels of remuneration and benefits associated with part-time, temporary, full time and permanent positions as women are more likely to be employed in

the former than the latter capacities. In view of these complications, it has been suggested that women should be seen as falling into a different and unequal stratification system to that of men (Bernard in Langman,1988:217). This issue represents one of the major challenges to contemporary theorists of stratification (see Saunders,1990:33-34). To address it, the occupations of both adult males and adult females were asked in this survey and the results compared (see Chapter 11). Since the surveyed population was divided in terms of the socio-economic status of the residential areas where their homes are located, area is used as an additional indicator of social class.

3.1.2 Culture

There is a close connection between the terms culture and ethnicity as used in sociological discourse. Williams describes culture as "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" and identifies the following as one of the meanings commonly attached to this term: "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general" (1983:87&90)⁵. Schlemmer indicates that "culture can be so defined as to include the particular characteristics of everything people in recognizable groups say, signal, do and make, as well as the values, perceptions, symbols, codes and assumptions which are the blueprints or templates for their behaviour (1979:45). As can be noted from these definitions, culture is a broad concept and includes behaviour and ideas which distinguish a particular social group.

While the noun 'culture' has been in the English language since at least the 15th century (Williams,1983:87), the term 'ethnicity' is a much more recent arrival appearing in the Oxford English dictionary for the first time in 1953 (Hutchinson & Smith,1996:4). The meaning of this term is often regarded as problematic (Bekker,1993:1; Hutchinson & Smith,1996:4;5;15) though in my view this has more to do with a dispute about which groups should be designated as 'ethnic' and when 'ethnicity'

becomes salient, rather than the referent of the concept itself. So, for instance, Eriksen points out that "all of the approaches (to ethnicity) agree that ethnicity has something to do with the *classification of people and group relationships*" (1996:28). Hutchinson and Smith provide a more specific definition indicating that an 'ethnie' or 'ethnic community' refers to:

"a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland (a desire for physical occupation or symbolic attachment) and a sense of solidarity among some of its members" (1996:6-7).

This is a reformulation of Schlemmerhorn's well-known definition which includes the idea that an ethnic group is "a collectivity within a larger society" (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:6). Here lies one of the points of dispute because of the tendency to associate ethnicity with 'others' and with 'minority groups' within a larger society. This derives from the way it was used in Ancient Greece to refer to gentiles i.e. non-Christian and non-Jewish pagans (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:4). But this idea of a "non-ethnic 'us' and ethnic 'others'" has been perpetuated particularly in the United States where an ethnic group is seen as one which does not share the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture and is thus designated as a 'minority group'. For instance, writing about the United States, Zinn and Eitzen refer to Jews, Poles, Italians, Blacks, Chicanos, Vietnamese, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans as 'ethnic groups' because each of them "has a culture distinctive from the dominant one" (1990:110).

It is interesting to note that one of the disputes around the concept culture has been whether it should refer only to a particular interpretation of 'civilization' or the way of life of 'high society' (being 'cultured' means listening to classical music for example) or whether it refers generally to all those practices, products, values, beliefs and norms that distinguish humanity from animals (Giddens, 1989; Williams, 1983:90). It is therefore ironic that although 'culture' and 'ethnicity' essentially refer to the same thing, there has been a tendency

to draw a distinction between 'cultured us' and 'ethnic them'.

It is with regard to the notion of 'drawing distinctions' that there has been a further dispute between scholars of both culture and ethnicity. Bekker points out that one the main reasons why ethnicity has been neglected by South African scholars (sociologists, historians and political scholars) is the fear that they would be reinforcing or lending legitimacy to the racial distinctions which formed the basis of apartheid (Bekker,1993:103-104). Similarly, Thornton has argued against the notion of 'cultures' indicating that "the problem is the little 's' that makes 'cultures' from 'culture'" (in Boonzaier & Sharp,1988:18):

"Today culture is best thought of as a resource (which) ... cannot belong exclusively to any particular individual or group of individuals ... culture is the information which humans are not born with but which they need in order to interact with each other in social life ... " (in Boonzaier & Sharp,1988:24).

Thornton is therefore prepared to accept the wide definition of culture as that which people learn through being socialised in human society but not a narrower or more specific one which refers to the particular values, norms and beliefs that individuals learn from being socialised within particular subsections of society (or one of the communities that make up the society). But, in my view, there is no reason why both a broad and narrower conception of culture should not be accepted. Just as 'majorities' are no less ethnic than 'minorities', so culture (in the singular) separates humans from animals while cultures distinguish between specific groups within human society.

Thornton's use of the term 'resource' brings me to what is probably the most important debate around the question of ethnicity. That is whether it refers to an objective phenomenon so that human groups can be divided from one another in terms of objective criteria such as language, religion, dress and

sometimes physical appearance⁶ or whether it is only present when individuals subjectively identify themselves on the basis of these factors and is therefore socially constructed (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:15). The first position is also referred to as 'primordialist' in that it "emphasises the importance of cultural 'givens' like religion, language, race, nationality and customs to which people attach a 'primordial' quality, at once overpowering and ineffable" (Geertz, 1963 in Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:8&32). Sociobiologists have developed a variant of this and see "genetic reproductive capacity as the basis, not only of families and clans, but of wider kinship-based groupings like ethnies" (1996:8). For instance, van den Berg has argued that the source of peoples' attachment to ethnic characteristics lies "in the genetic reproductive drives of individuals and their propensity to favour close kin groups ('nepotism') and extend their range of relationships to wider groups like ethnies and races ('inclusive fitness' strategy)" (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:32).

Rejecting the reduction of social and cultural behaviour to biological drives, 'instrumentalists' claim that ethnicity is something that is socially constructed and used for political and economic ends. They also place emphasis on "the ability of individuals to 'cut and mix' from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to forge their own individual or group identities" which may also include non-ethnic factors like gender and class (1996:9). This group has been criticised for defining interests purely in material terms and for downplaying the affective aspects of ethnicity or neglecting the fact that ethnicity has "aroused collective passions of a quasi-physical kind in ways that even classes failed to do" (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:9). Since this is an ongoing debate, I will not take a stand with respect to it except to say that once again it is not necessary to adopt an either/or approach. Rather, it needs to be acknowledged that different definitions and/or approaches will be applicable depending on one's purposes and vantage point. So, for example, one could draw on the objectivist approach and devise an ideal type of ethnic groups in a particular society and

then study the identities of specific individuals so classified, to ascertain whether they (the identities) are structured in terms of those distinctions and possibly the material or other factors underlying such identification. Although my purpose is not to study 'personal or social identity', a similar approach will be adopted in this study.

Respondents will be categorised in terms of language and divided into two broad categories: Afrikaans and English speaking on the basis of the respondent's mother tongue⁷. Their responses to questions dealing with 'family ideology' will then be cross-tabulated with the variable language to determine whether there are any significant differences in terms of the 'family values' to which members of these groups ascribe. The same will be done with respect to household types. As such, the results of the study can cast light on the question of whether the assumed ethnic differences between English and Afrikaans speakers apply to the area of family values (as opposed to religious and political beliefs) and/or practices such as those affecting household formation.

That such differences are to be expected comes from the well-known fact that historically, a large section of White Afrikaans speaking South Africans has mobilised as an ethnic group distinct, *inter alia*, from white English speaking South Africans. This process has been linked to particular events in the history of South Africa such as the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War during which twenty-six thousand Afrikaans speaking women and children died i.e. about a tenth of the total Afrikaner population at war with England at that time (Le Roux, 1986). Slabbert (1975) claims that events such as these may have favoured the development of a sense of self-awareness among Afrikaners but that the real process of unity-building only took root after 1910 when 'Afrikaner bureaucracies' began to develop and a collective ethos started to take root (1975:6). These organisations extended across the whole spectrum of social institutions: economic (SANLAM, SANTAM, Afrikaanse Handels

Instituut); cultural (Akademie vir Taal, Lettere en Kuns; Broederbond, the FAK) as well as political (National Party) (Slabbert, 1975:6-7). Slabbert (1975) further views the coming to power of the National Party in 1948 as marking the period of consolidation of Afrikaner unity as these organisations began interlocking at the elite level and the trafficking of personnel between them began to take place. One of the many examples of this is Andries Treurnicht who moved from minister of religion (Dutch Reformed Church) to editor of an Afrikaans newspaper, to member of Parliament and finally to leader of the Conservative Party (1975:9). The result of these developments was an 'Afrikaner establishment' committed to the principle of unity among White Afrikaans speakers and the protection of their interests.

Handelman has devised a typology of different levels of "incorporation which named human culture communities display" (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:6). It can be simplified by drawing a distinction between an 'ethnic category' "the loosest level of incorporation where there is simply a perceived cultural difference between the group and outsiders" and "an ethnic community which possesses a permanent, physically bounded territory, over and above (regular interaction between members, 'ethnic associations' and) its political organisations ... for example an ethnic community in command of a national state" (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996:6). Against this background, one could say that until 1994, Afrikaans speaking White South Africans qualified for the latter while their English speaking counterparts are an example of an 'ethnic category'. As Alan Paton once said:

"We (English speaking White South Africans) are a mixed bunch, and we don't have the bonds that bind so many Afrikaners together; we never had a Karoo, we never trekked, we never developed a new language, we never were defeated in a war, we never had to pick ourselves up out of the dust" (Sunday Times, November 29, 1981).

Welsh indicates that one of the consequences of the lack of unity among English speakers has been the inefficacy of White opposition to National Party (Afrikaner) policies:

"Religious, class, regional, and other differences and, above all, the need to make political alliances with non-Nationalist Afrikaners have muted any sense of group identity" (Welsh,1975:73-74).

English and Afrikaans speaking Whites therefore constitute different kinds of ethnic 'groups' - the latter showing greater cohesion and solidarity than the former. This does not, however, negate the fact that they differ in terms of ethnicity or the possibility that they may differ significantly in terms of the family values they subscribe to or the practices they engage in with respect to living arrangements. Given the paucity of research on ethnicity (see Bekker,1993) and White family patterns in South Africa, it is unclear at this stage what *kind* of differences can be expected. In this respect my 'educated guess' is that the stronger community solidarity among Afrikaans speakers suggests a greater proclivity for ideas and practices which favour extended as opposed to nuclear family households.

3.1.3. Household

Since this concept has been addressed in previous chapters, it will not be discussed in detail here. Suffice it to note that 'household type' was operationalised by asking respondents to indicate firstly, the number of people who normally resides with them in the particular dwelling where the interview took place⁸ and secondly, his or her relationship to co-residents (mother, daughter, non-relative etc). The age and marital status of the respondent and (where applicable) co-residents was also asked. To facilitate analysis, a diagram illustrating the structure of the household was drawn (see Chapter 10). Households were then classified on the basis of the number of parents (single parent vs conventional nuclear family households); whether one or both of the adults had previously been married (couple households vs remarriage couple households); whether they were presently

married (conventional nuclear family households and no-marriage nuclear family households) and the number of generations (extended vs nuclear family households). For a full list of categories used see page 6 of questionnaire in Appendix 3.

The first objective in obtaining this information was to assess the prevalence of the *conventional* nuclear family (first time married couple with biological offspring) vis-a-vis other households and family\household types. With respect to the second objective (cross-tabulation with 'class' and 'culture') some of these categories were combined - for example 'adoptive families' were combined with conventional nuclear families and extended single parent families with extended nuclear families. Here the main, though not only, concern was with the prevalence of the nuclear family vis-a-vis extended family arrangements.

3.1.4. Family Ideology

Kellerman's (1987) description of contemporary western family ideology was used as an ideal type or framework for devising questions relating to respondents' 'family values'. It consists of the following ideas:

- 1) "Sexual Relations (should be) restricted to marriage;
- 2) between one man and one woman;
- 3) who, through mutual attraction;
- 4) are bound to each other for life
- 5) with the object of producing and raising children;
- 6) in a neo-local residential setting;
- 7) with the husband as breadwinner and
- 8) the wife as housekeeper;
- 9) so that the husband occupies a dominant position of authority" (Kellerman,1987:535).

So, for instance, respondents were asked whether they regard pre-marital sex as acceptable, unacceptable or acceptable under certain circumstances; about polygamy and working mothers. In relation to the question of 'neo-local' residence they were asked whether they feel it is unhealthy for a married couple to live very close to their parents. Respondents views on the importance of children in marriage were also assessed (see pages 9-11 in

questionnaire in Appendix 3)⁹. The first objective here was to see whether respondents as a whole expressed views consonant with contemporary western family ideology. The second objective was to determine whether variations in responses are related to the social class and/or culture of the respondent.

In sum, the concept 'social class' was operationalised in terms of occupation; that of 'culture' by means of language; the concept 'household' was operationalised in terms of co-residence and that of 'family ideology' or 'family values' in terms of questions aimed at determining whether respondents accept or reject those ideas described as part of contemporary family ideology. Because it was anticipated that gender would also have an impact on the subject under investigation, it was decided to neutralise it by only interviewing women. Furthermore, responses were correlated with age since it was anticipated that this could be an additionally significant variable.

4. SELECTING RESEARCH SUBJECTS

In selecting subjects for the case studies, the major consideration was accessibility to the information sought. Since family matters are usually regarded as a private issue, it was anticipated that subjects would be unlikely to reveal details of their family life experiences - especially where divorce had occurred - to someone they had no prior knowledge of and whom they could not trust. The researcher consequently decided to use her contacts in the community and ask these to introduce her to subjects who fitted the required profile and who they thought would be agreeable to an interview. An attempt was made to identify subjects who differ in terms of socio-economic status, home language and marital history.

In three cases the subject was in her first marriage, in two cases it was her second marriage and in one case the subject had never married. In three of the six cases the subject's mother tongue was English and in the other three, it was Afrikaans.

Subjects' occupations were as follows: secretary (two cases); a nurse; a retired teacher; a clerk and a lawyer. In terms of age, two subjects were in their thirties (33 & 34); one was forty; two were in their fifties (50 & 54) while one was eighty years old at the time of the interview.

Representativity was a greater concern in the selection of respondents for the survey because, as indicated above, one of the aims was to document the general pattern with respect to household types and family ideology that characterises the White Grahamstown community as a whole. This objective was, however, undermined by the second aim namely to explain any variations that were found to exist with respect to these phenomena. This point needs elaboration.

Because social class was one of the major variables in the survey and the White Grahamstown community is known to be skewed in favour of the higher socio-economic categories, it was anticipated that a probability sample (simple random, systematic or even stratified) would yield too few cases of lower class households. Indeed, the 1991 census revealed that less than 7% of economically active persons in the urban part of the Albany district¹⁰ were employed as artisans, apprentices and in related occupations (Central Statistical Services: Report Number 03-01-08:282). Therefore, in the interests of producing a sample that would enable meaningful statistical analysis of the variable 'social class', it was necessary to increase the proportion of 'lower class households' beyond their representation in the population as a whole. In a sense then, the sample was made deliberately unrepresentative of the White Grahamstown population in order to allow the researcher to 'test' her theoretical ideas.

This procedure does not, however, preclude the drawing of inferences from the actual sample to Whites in the wider Grahamstown community. By comparing the actual sample and the population in terms of age, occupation and language, it is possible to calculate the degree to which the sample was skewed

with respect to these variables. By weighting responses on the basis of that information, it is possible to draw up a composite picture for the community as a whole.

The specific procedure employed for the selection of subjects for the survey was as follows: Residential areas which contrast in terms of socio-economic status were identified. Initially, three had been selected: Fort England (lower class area), Oatlands (middle class area) and Somerset Heights and Hill Sixty (upper class area). However, as a result of interviews with individuals included in the case studies (two of whom lived in the Oatlands area) and observation of the size of the houses in that area, it was surmised that Oatlands is not a 'middle class' area but one where families of diverse socio-economic standing reside. This suspicion was borne out by interviews with two local estate agents who confirmed that property values in Oatlands vary from R60 000 to R100 000 while those in Fort England range from R60 000 to R80 000 and those in Somerset Heights and Hill Sixty between R100 000 and R200 000 (1991 estimates). One of the main reasons for the wider range of property values in the Oatlands area is that many old colonial mansions are located there - the upkeep of which requires significant economic resources. However, the plots on which these houses were originally built have been subdivided and are presently occupied by much smaller low-cost houses. As a result of this discovery, it was decided to drop the Oatlands area from the list of sample areas. As indicated above, the remaining two areas contrast more strongly in terms of property values. Quotas were devised for each of these areas: 125 respondents living in Somerset Heights or Hill Sixty (Area I) and 125 respondents in the Fort England area (Area II).

Another quota (Area III) was devised to ensure the inclusion of flats. This was done to avoid a bias in favour of conventional nuclear families on the assumption that flat dwellers are more likely to live in single person, single parent and couple households. Fifty respondents lived in flats around the center of town. The final sample therefore included 300 households i.e.

about 10% of all White households in Grahamstown. Finally, students were excluded from the survey. This is partly because there are no student residences (as opposed to 'student digs') in the areas targeted. The impact of this exclusion for drawing a composite picture for Whites in Grahamstown as a whole will be addressed in Chapter 11.

5. FIELD WORKERS

All of the case studies were conducted by the author while the survey data was collected by field workers. In order to minimise the interviewer effect only White women who were fluent in both English and Afrikaans and over twenty five years of age, were recruited as field workers. Eight were selected. They received three training sessions during which they were instructed in the drawing of household ideographs, introductions etc. Each field worker conducted two pilot interviews (one in English and one in Afrikaans). The feedback from these proved valuable and the questionnaire was subsequently revised. Field-workers were furnished with maps indicating the plot layout in the areas to be covered by the survey. They were instructed to interview households in the designated areas until their quota was filled. Apart from two field workers being bitten by dogs and one subject objecting to the questions which she felt was an intrusion into her privacy, the field workers reported that they experienced few problems administering the questionnaire and obtaining the relevant information.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the case studies is organised according to the following themes: present domestic situation; domestic life cycle; work and children and relationship with wider kin group. The main consideration in analysing these data was not to draw out any patterns or trends but rather to illustrate differences in the domestic life cycle as experienced by a small number of White Grahamstown women. While the aim here

was to produce data of a **descriptive** nature, the case studies did suggest a theoretical proposition that was followed up in the survey¹¹.

The results of the survey are presented in the form of frequency distributions and cross-tabulations. The Pearson Chi-square test was used to assist in the analysis of the latter. This test is based on the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the variables in question (that the relationship is equal to zero) (Bailey, 1982:405). It produces three calculations: Chi-square value, degrees of freedom and Chi-square probability. The first is based on a formula which describes the difference between observed frequencies and those one would have expected if the variables were not related¹². The larger the value "the greater the likelihood that the relationship is statistically different from zero" i.e. that the variables are not independent of one another (Bailey, 1982:406). As is conventional, a cut-off point of 0.05 was used in this study. That is, only in those instances where there is a 5% or less chance that the observed frequencies would have been achieved if the variables were not related, is the conclusion drawn that the variables are related in a statistically significant manner. (See Bailey, 1982; Babbie, 1995 and Neuman, 1997 for further information about these concepts).

It is of course important to note that the fact that a relationship is shown to exist does not mean that it is theoretically or sociologically meaningful (Bailey, 1982:404). In this study the chi-square test has simply been used to identify those instances where the variables are related in a statistically significant manner. Inferences about the nature, strength or direction of the relationships is based on interpretation of the actual contents of the tables (observed frequencies for different categories of variables). The 'p' value is therefore a guide to analysis and facilitates the presentation of the data rather than an end in itself. Moreover, while the chi-square test is usually used to make inferences from a sample

to a population, here it is used only in relation to the sample.¹³

6. CONCLUSION

The research methods employed in this study were used in such a manner that the information they produced complements each other. The survey provides information of a **general** nature about the distribution of household types at one point in time as it pertains to a large number of individuals, that is numerical and that will be used to assist the researcher in answering her **analytical\theoretical** question about the factors that may explain variations in household patterns. By contrast, the case studies provide **descriptive** information about a small number of individuals' **particular experiences** of family life over time and is presented in verbal form. By employing these methods the researcher was therefore able to produce a more complete picture of the institution of the family in one White South African community than would otherwise have been the case.

7. NOTES

1. Ironically, Johnson et al also point out that those who have combined ideas from different 'strategies' "appear to generate the more interesting and fruitful analyses" (1984:184).

2. Halfpenny has identified 12 different versions of positivism (Halfpenny, 1982 in Bryman, 1988:14).

3. Moreover, a quantitative content analysis reveals that in the introduction, positivism is described in only six lines, phenomenology gets eight while the critical approach is allocated a full thirty lines of text (1993:7-8).

4. Johnson et al claim that it is possible to choose between the various perspectives (subjectivism, empiricism, rationalism and substantialism) on the basis of their 'adequacy', but then add that this is futile since all "are equally deficient" and "who would knowingly choose failure?" (1984:189). The reader has to wait until the third last page of their book to find a discussion of 'the way forward' which in their view is by way of a 'dialectical synthesis' that still "has to be thought; to be worked toward" (1984:226).

5. The other two are "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development" and "the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity" such as classical music, literature, painting and sculpture (Williams, 1988:90).

6. Rex (1986:16) points out that once it is accepted that race is a social category that is dependent on the meaning people attach to physical features, the difference between race and ethnicity becomes blurred.

7. Both the respondent's and where applicable her spouse's mother tongue will be asked for as well as their present home language. These will be cross-tabulated to ascertain whether there are any major discrepancies between the three categories.

8. In retrospect a distinction should probably have been drawn between those living with the respondent at the time of the study and those temporarily living elsewhere as in the case of children in boarding school or people whose work involves spending short or long periods away from home.

9. Responses to questions relating to reproductive technology have not been included in this study.

10. The three towns included in the urban part of the Albany district are Grahamstown, Alicedale and Riebeeck East. Together the latter two towns had less than 300 White residents in 1991 (CSS Report Number 03-01-02, 1991:7).

11. In particular it drew attention to the importance of a woman's relationship with her mother as a factor in the formation of extended family households.

12. The formula is: the summed difference between observed and expected values as a ratio of expected values (Bailey, 1982:406).

13. As noted previously, weighting will be used to make inferences from the sample to the population. However, this will be confined to descriptive data only.


CHAPTER 10
CASE STUDIES

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the results of the case studies. The material is organised in terms of the themes mentioned in the previous chapter: present domestic situation; domestic life cycle; work and children and relationship with wider kin group. Each case is presented separately and a summary provided. In order to protect their anonymity, fictitious names have been used and in some cases it has been necessary to change the subject or her husband's occupation and to omit information about the location of her home.

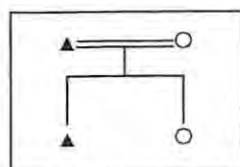
Information concerning the domestic life-cycle is presented in diagrammatical form using Preston Whyte and Cross's manual (1989) for drawing household ideographs as a guide. These show the subjects' blood relations and who is living with her at any particular point in time. In this way it is possible to see how both the individual's family and household has changed over time.

KEY FOR DRAWING HOUSEHOLD IDEOGRAPHS

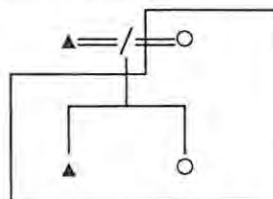
▲	for a male	=====	for marriage
○	for a female	==/==	for divorce
⊙	for respondent	φ	for death
	for sibling-link	○(a)	for adopted person

To indicate a household, a line is drawn around those residing in the same house.

e.g. married couple with son and daughter.



Divorced couple, children living with mother



2. CASE 1: PETRA

2.1. Present Domestic Situation

The first case is of a thirty-four-year-old lawyer who lives with her husband (a successful artist) and two daughters aged 6 and 3. It is a first marriage for both of them and says Petra "hopefully the last". They married when Petra was 24 and her husband (Jan) was 25 years old. Their first child was born when she was 29 and the second when she was 31 years old. Petra's mother tongue is German while those of her husband are both English and Afrikaans. However, Jan has a special love for Afrikaans - their present home-language. She is a devout Catholic and describes her husband as "dissident N.G. Kerk".

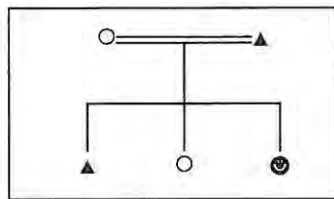
Their home is an immaculately restored settler cottage. It stands on a large plot containing a swimming pool, a double garage and a well-kept garden. It is surrounded by a high brick wall. The condition of the brass on the front door as well as the interior decor suggested that this family is 'house-proud' and have the means to maintain their home at an above-average standard. At the time of the interview, Jan was overseas on a business trip. Both children were at home and, although watching television and playing in the next room, came into the lounge where the interview was taking place to ask Petra something a few times. Each time she responded to them. There was another interruption when it started to thunder and Petra got up to calm the dogs and put them in another room. In the course of the interview Petra became increasingly emotional - possibly because of her husband's prolonged absence (he had been away for about a month) and possibly because the interview raised issues that were painful for her to talk about. But she was extremely frank and friendly throughout the interview, at times surprising me with the detail she provided about her family-life experiences.

2.2. Domestic Life Cycle

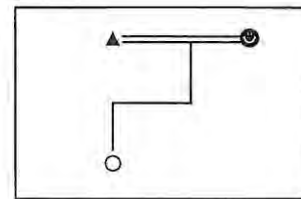
Petra met Jan while at school and lived with her parents until she matriculated. She then enrolled at university for a degree in law and stayed in residence. They married almost immediately after Petra graduated. Her domestic cycle is therefore relatively straightforward as indicated by the diagram below:

PETRA'S DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE

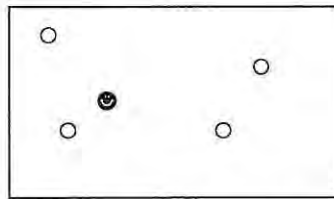
at 17



at 29

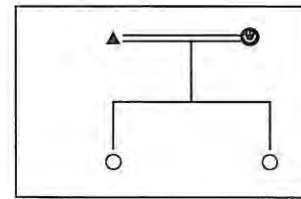


at 18

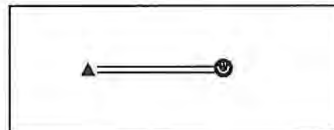


(residence)

at 34



at 24



2.3. Work and Children

Petra works part-time for a local law firm. She indicated that she prefers it that way. She sees part-time work as a good compromise between her desire to work and her desire to be available to her children. She indicated that she is a better mother for working - attributing her desire to work to 'her personality'. She further indicated that her job allows her great flexibility which enables her to work while the children are at school in the mornings and be with them at home in the

afternoons. She commented as follows when asked about working women:

"When my second daughter was two months old, I stayed at home and became so depressed. On the other hand, a friend of mine dropped out of university when she married and is now quite content staying at home but that is not for me ... I can't ... I can't handle the tea-drinking scene where everyone sits around and talks about the birth of their children,... how difficult it was etc. It may work for someone else but not for me. I don't know if it is because I chose this particular profession. When I'm at home I know what I am missing ... things develop so quickly. It is so easy to get behind. One always has this guilt- feeling towards your work ... So for me, working part time works out well..

I would not start working full-time until my children have finished school. One is inclined to think that children need their mother when they are young but I think their needs grow greater as they get older. That is one thing that I always appreciated about my mother - she was always at home. O.K. so sometimes I work in the afternoons and on those days things are rather rough at home. But it is not a permanent thing. I explain to the children and they understand ...

My husband's job is also quite flexible and on such occasions he helps out and keeps an eye on them. I would not like things to be any different ... I don't think my children would be better off if I stayed at home all the time ... not with my personality.

I am very sceptical about this thing they call quality time. I think it is something that people who work full-time hide behind. It is impossible to make supper, eat, clean the house and still spend quality time with your children after a full-day's work. When I come back at 5 'o clock I'm finished. I don't want the children near me - once again - my personality."

When I asked her whether she would ever consider working full-time and having her husband stay at home with the children she responded as follows:

"No, I think children need a mother. I think our situation is good. I think the children are very happy. They are spoilt and when their father is away like now they miss him terribly. I, for example, never saw my father. He was a workaholic. So I am happy for my children. I think our situation is ideal - I hope the children think so ... There are lawyers who ask me to come and work full-

time. But I always say: I have made this decision ...I just can't They don't always understand. I think they see me as old-fashioned. But I'm going to hold on for a little longer."

Interviewer: "... till the children have finished school? "

She laughs and wipes away some tears.

"No, maybe I'm being a little idealistic. I'll see."

That Petra is torn between her need and desire to work on the one hand and be with her children (possibly to give her children something which she did not get as a child) on the other, should be apparent from the above. Furthermore, being reminded (by other lawyers) that she could work full time and that in compromising her work for her children she is neglecting others (clients) who need her seems to be very painful for her. One may say that Petra's case illustrates that the decision to compromise one's career for the sake of one's children is never an easy one.

From the above it is clear that despite her career, Petra identifies and accepts the traditional role of women in society. She seems to have taken almost total responsibility for the nurture of her children and sees her husband as a temporary stand-in when she is unable to fulfil this role. She also articulates the taken-for-granted conception of children i.e. that it is a natural part of life. This was shown by her referring to having children as a 'need' like eating and sleeping.

2.4. Relationship with Wider Kin Group

In response to a question enquiring about how often they see her and her husband's family (in the wider sense), Petra indicated that her husband's cousin lives close by but they hardly ever see him: "He stood for the C.P." , she explained and added:

"We see Jan's parents and my mother once a year - during the Christmas holidays. They both live in the same town. My mother claims that we see Jan's parents

more than her . But we try very hard not to favour one side of the family above the other. Our holidays are literally cut in half. It takes away a lot of the spontaneity of a holiday but I think it must be done for the sake of the children."

A question aimed at determining whether she had received and would like to receive more help from her family with regard to the children unleashed memories and feelings in Petra that she would probably have preferred to keep submerged. She responded as follows:

"No, never again. Once, when my husband and I had to go to a very important function, I asked my mother to look after my youngest daughter. She was very small at the time - a premature baby. My mother kicked up such a fuss - no I will never ask her again".

Later she described the dynamics of her family of origin as follows:

"We started going out at school. So our relationship has been going for more than 19 years. My father was a professor of Engineering. My husband was, already then, an artist. We have been through very trying times. That my husband still speaks to my mother is fantastic.

I come from a typical Prussian family. You have an autocratic father and the mother absolutely adores him. She puts him on a pedestal. 'Fatie' there above everyone else. The whole family revolves around him and the children are neglected. He was a terribly difficult man. You could not reason with him. If he said 'no' then it was 'no'. You couldn't talk to him.

My father was a typical German - quiet and rigid. Work 'uber als'. He died of a heart attack. He did not want me to marry Jan.' How can a man who paints pictures for a living support you', he would always say".

With these words Petra revealed the pain and disappointment caused by her parents' rejection of her husband. There can be little doubt that her upbringing was strict and emotionless.

2.5 Summary

To the outside observer, Petra's present domestic situation, is nothing more than a conventional nuclear family and her domestic life-cycle very normal. If one of the children had been male, one may even have been tempted to describe them as an ideal nuclear family - the husband works full-time and the wife has made the decision to put her career on hold for the sake of her children.

However, if one scratches beneath the surface (as the interview did) one discovers that all is not well. Her case illustrates the difficulties many career-women experience in reconciling their love for and dedication to their work on the one hand and their love for and dedication to their children as well as their belief in traditional conceptions of motherhood, on the other. This was borne out in Petra's disdain for the concept of 'quality time'. For her, spending only a few hours with her children a day would be to neglect her duty as a mother. She was also very sceptical of role-reversal. At the same time, the interview reminded her of her 'need' to be more immersed in her work. It seems to me that the interview unearthed the fact that she had rationalised her decision to work part-time and that by the end of the interview she was no longer convinced that the situation she describes as 'ideal' satisfies her needs. While Petra tends to personalise her dilemma (predicament) by attributing her desire to work to 'her personality', feminists have, for a long time now, identified this conflict as one of the sources of strain within the conventional nuclear family.

Furthermore, the pain Petra suffered as a child and adolescent from not being understood and accepted has been carried forward into her present family situation. The fact that they plan their holidays so that they spend exactly the same amount of time with her mother as they do with her husband's parents indicates a deep desire to please her mother as a means to avoiding conflict. It also illustrates her strong commitment

to her children by compromising her own feelings for what she believes is right for them (having access to their grandmother). Against this background, the application of the concepts 'isolation' or 'autonomy' to this family is problematic for although there are no visible or physical connections between this family and Petra's family of origin, the ties run much deeper. This is something Parsons acknowledges (albeit in response to his critics) when he writes "the concept of isolation applies in the first instance to kinship structure ... It does not follow that all relations to kin outside the nuclear family are broken. Indeed the very psychological importance for the individual of the nuclear family in which he (sic) was born and brought up would make any such conception impossible" (in Anderson, 1980a:223).

3. CASE 2: BELINDA

3.1. Present Domestic Situation

Belinda, lives with her second husband, Mike (an agricultural engineer). She has four children from her previous marriage only one of which lives with them on a permanent basis. Her son (aged 16) attends a local boarding school and two other children (aged 20 and 23) are living in Zimbabwe. It is a second marriage for Mike as well and his two children from his previous marriage live with their mother in Australia. It seems, then, that if the family is defined in terms of blood ties and marriage, this family is spread all across the globe.

The family home is located on a small-holding on the outskirts of Grahamstown. It is an old settler house which bears testimony to the saying 'a house is never complete'. At the time of the interview, Mike had just completed the renovation of the kitchen.

3.2 Domestic Life Cycle

Belinda was brought up on a farm and attended boarding school for most of her primary and secondary education. She then completed a training course for nurses and again resided in a hostel. Once qualified, she 'hitch-hiked' around Europe, working as the financial need arose. She describes her experiences as an industrial nurse in London as the most valuable of her life. She met her first husband when she travelled to Zimbabwe to visit a friend. He was a farmer and, given her background, Belinda had no problem fitting into the role of a farmer's wife. She was not, however, prepared for the peculiar circumstances prevailing in Zimbabwe at that time - there was a war going on. She described the circumstances leading up to and immediately after her divorce as follows:

"I think our divorce was very much tied up with the war. We went right through the war. It was jolly tough going let me tell you. We lived on the border of the international boundary with Mozambique and I had four tiny babies. The house was security fenced. You didn't walk from the sitting room to the dining room without a weapon. It was hairy, make no error, it was hairy. Your husband gets taken away to the army and if you're lucky you get sent what they call bright lights. They were the old men who were bank clerks and things like that who were not fit enough to go and fight. They were sent to protect the farmers' wives and children - to give them company - that all added strain on the marriage. Whenever we went out we went out in mine-proof vehicles. I had tiny children - we had to have drills... All the houses had double walls so if you were mortared it would explode on the outside. I was running a clinic at the same time. The Mozambicans used to come into the clinic and then go home across the border at night. There was no fence between us and them. We used to sit on our lawn and watch the Frelimo patrolling up on the hill

After the divorce I came down to be with my parents. I was in a bit of a state. I was panicking about losing the kids - I didn't know how I was going to support four kids. I landed with the four kids on my dear old folk. They said "well we'll find a way - we'll sort something out" and I started working here. My ex-husband's idea was that I wouldn't have the kids. I wasn't even there when the divorce case was heard. I just wanted to get out as soon as I could. However, I was given custody. I don't even know if he

sued for custody. I don't know. I was in no state to cope with anything. I just cleared out.

The two elder ones remained on in boarding school. They eventually came down here after a bit of a fight. I still stayed with mum and dad. And so looked around and found that Mike was going through more or less the same trauma at the same time. His wife and two kids had left to go to Australia. We were introduced by a mutual friend."

Without being asked, Belinda gave the following as the reason for her second marriage :

"I think it was mutual need. He was very lonely. I needed somewhere to stay. It wasn't just that but it was largely motivated by that. We were married soon afterwards. He wanted a home, a wife and a few kids around him. I needed a father for my kids - somewhere to stay. I suppose we found we were compatible enough - and that's it."

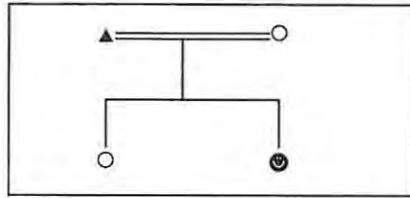
Given the fact that Belinda has divorced and remarried, her domestic life cycle is a great deal more complex than that of Petra (see next page).

3.3 Work and Children

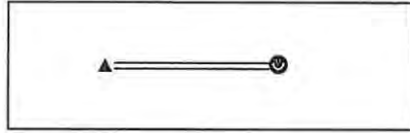
As a farmer's wife and with all her children attending boarding school, Belinda did not experience a conflict between work and children for the duration of her first marriage. However, the divorce changed things and her decision to move to Grahamstown (where her parents had retired) at the termination of her marriage, was in all probability motivated by the desire to ensure that her children were well cared-for while she went out to earn a living. Compared to Petra's situation, Belinda was quite fortunate not only to have a good relationship with her parents but to be welcomed back into the family home without hesitation.

BELINDA'S DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE

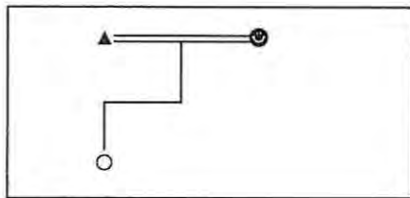
At 17



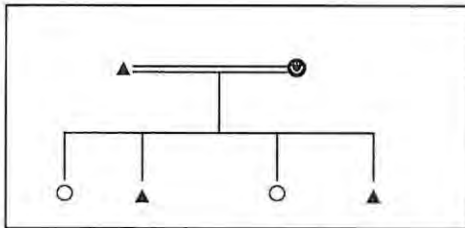
At 26



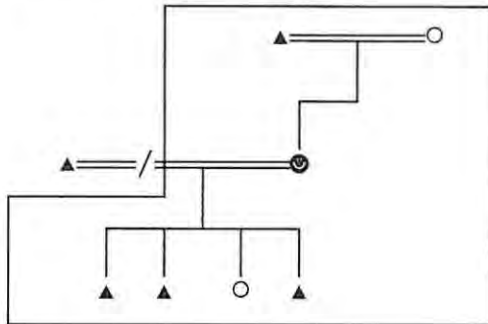
At 27



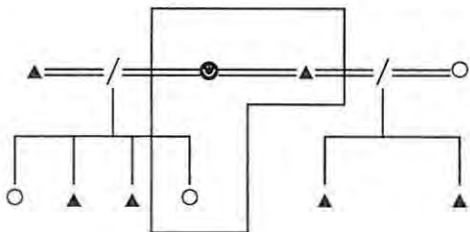
At 36



At 40



At 50



At the moment Belinda works full-time at a local clinic. Since her youngest children are nearing adulthood they did not impact on her decision to work outside the home in full-time employment. She does, however have quite strong views on women with small children who voluntarily work outside the home :

"I think it is better for a woman to spend the larger part of her day with her children. Voluntary work is fair enough to keep her up with whatever is going on but I do think the majority of her time should be spent with or near to her children so that the children can have access to her. I would say mornings - the half day sort of situation would be better for her.

Once the child is happily coping in the school situation the mother can use those hours to do whatever she is doing. Weekends with parents are important. Time spent together as a family is very important - quality time".

If her children's age made her decision to work outside the home a relatively easy one, her second husband's views on the matter did not:

"I think he found it a bit difficult to start off with. He is torn between two. He came from a family where his mother was very much the person at home and she supervised the kitchen. She was always cooking and always at home. Very much an old fashioned mother at home. I think he has battled all along ... because he feels that women ought to be given the chance to go out and compete on an equal basis to make a career in life - but I can see he is definitely divided on that. He is much more relaxed and happier when I'm at home than when I am not here".

3.4. Relationship With Wider Kin Group

Belinda's relationship to the wider kin group (particularly her family of origin) has to a large extent been discussed above. Belinda not only gets along well with her parents but sees them often:

"I see my folks very regularly - two or three times a week. Often. We keep very good contact. Go to P.E together. We're a very close family. We have a very good relationship. I'm very fortunate."

She also spoke proudly and with much affection of her grandparents:

"My grandparents were very cared-for people and they were very caring. We respected them I suppose we are just an old fashioned family. My children now have a very close relationship with their grandparents. When we stayed in Zimbabwe my grandparents came to stay with us".

Belinda's relationship with her husband's family of origin is cordial but far more distant (in both the physical and emotional sense of the word):

"Mike's family lives far away - Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban - He is one of five children. The 'Joburg' family travels down a lot. When he travels he stays with them - for his work. We get along well - quite happy sisters-in-law".

Interviewer: "Has any relative offered help with the children?"

"Yes any time I've gone away. Even so we don't even think to ask. We just say Andy (her son) is coming over to spend the night tonight. Every day my youngest daughter has lunch with mum and dad - they enjoy her going in for lunch. When I was up here alone with the children I used to go down there to spend the nights. There's no formality there at all - it is very much your house is my house. We even ask each other's opinions on things".

3.5 Summary

There appears to be a contradiction between Belinda's views on working women and her actions. When she expressed her views on working mothers she made it clear that she (and Mike) feel that a woman's prime responsibility is towards her children and her husband. Despite these views, Belinda worked in the period between her divorce and her second marriage and she is still working outside the home.

Furthermore, as has been illustrated in other studies, the wider kin group (in this case her parents) were a resource she

could make use of in this time of need and crisis. According to Burchinal and Sussman, empirical studies conducted in the United States show the existence of "a sense of moral obligation to give service or acknowledgement of one's kin appropriate to the occasion ... The turning to kin when in trouble before using other agencies established for such purposes is the mode rather than the exception" (in Anderson, 1980a:215). In this instance, assistance from the wider kin group seems to have been facilitated by the good relationship Belinda has with her parents. She also spoke very fondly of her grand-parents suggesting that good family ties (in the broader sense) are a tradition in her family.

In most respects Belinda identifies with the values associated with the conventional nuclear family. However, since her divorce, her domestic arrangements have not coincided with that ideal - a further illustration of the discrepancy between ideology and practice in her life. Her present domestic arrangement is a remarriage family that maintains close ties with the wider kin group. Given the emphasis on blood relations within contemporary family ideology, I asked her whether or not there is a division in the family between herself and her children on the one hand, and her second husband on the other. In responding to this question she reluctantly acknowledged the existence of such a division. She further emphasised the importance of socialisation by indicating that the younger children had a better relationship with her second husband than the others:

"No not really. The children have not seen very much of each other. I believe we would have got on alright. Mike has taken umbrage at the kids and I have felt sorry for the kids and I have wanted to go against him in the argument because I felt his argument is not very logical. It hasn't all been happy sailing. We've had good old rows - have no doubt about that. But the kids are growing up with a good amount of affection for Mike. I don't think they hold him in quite the same affection as they have for my first husband. But the younger ones get on better with Mike than the older ones because they got to know him while they were growing up".

In commenting on the future of marriage and the family, Belinda articulated the traditional conception of the family:

"No marriage is not outdated. I approve of the idea that some marriages are happier later in life. People wait longer. I think the stabilising influence of that unit is still important. I think all my children will get married. They already talk about 'when I get married'. I think it is very much taken for granted. It is in the general trend of things - part of life".

4. CASE 3: CELIA

4.1 Present Domestic Situation

The Steyn family home is located in an area where both the plots and the houses are small. Like many of the other houses in the street, theirs is neat and bordered in front by a low face-brick wall. The medium-sized motor boat and brand new Mazda 626 which stood in the drive-way were somewhat out of place in the area and are probably a function of the fringe-benefits associated with Celia and her husband's occupations. She works for the Supreme Court as a clerk and he is a senior traffic officer. The inside of the house was also neat. The 'doilies' on dark-stained side tables, a large wedding photograph prominently displayed in the entrance and the friendly manner in which she greeted me (although we had never met) as well as the fact that she had prepared 'koekies' and tea for us to have after the interview, reminded me of Celia's Afrikaans background. Throughout the interview she remained relaxed and open. It was as if I was just another 'tannie' who had come for a visit.

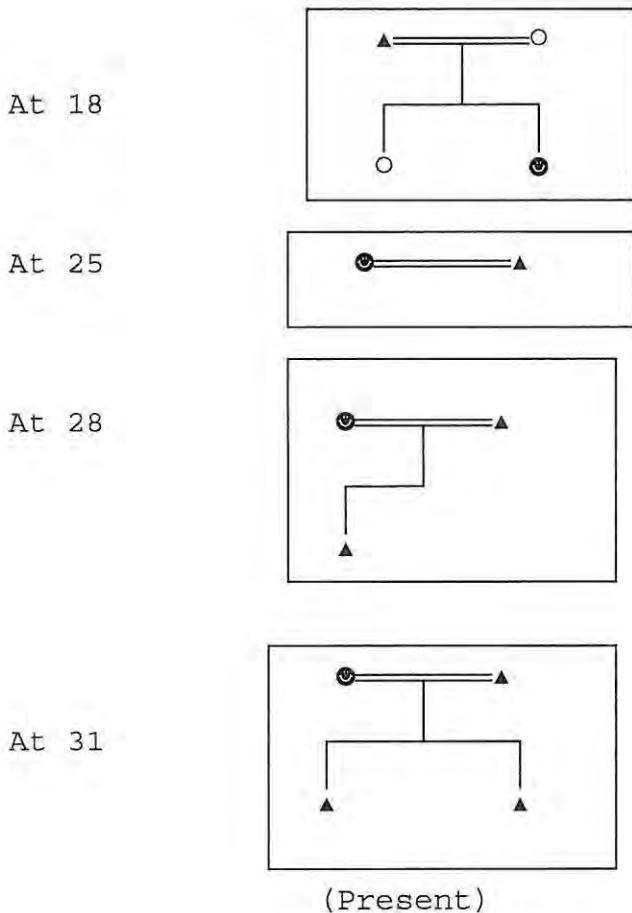
Celia is indeed from an Afrikaans speaking family while her husband - two years her junior - is English speaking. His family live in Port Elizabeth which she referred to as 'die Baai' and her family, in Grahamstown. Their home language is English - they speak English to the children and Afrikaans or English to their friends depending on the company. They are both active members of the Assembly of God church. Celia and Graham married when she was 25 years old. They have been married for eight years and have

two sons aged 6 and 2.

4.2 Domestic Life Cycle

Celia's domestic life cycle is very simple. She was raised by both her parents and lived with them and her sister until she married.

CELIA'S DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE



4.3 Children and Work

Celia's present domestic situation (like that of Petra) comes closest to the ideal conventional nuclear family. However, even here, reality falls short of the ideal. When questioned on her views concerning working mothers, she articulated the traditional view that mothers should stay at home with their children at least until they reach school-going age. It seems

though, that financial necessity and the desire to be active outside of the home have made it difficult for Celia to live up to this ideal:

"I love my children but I think I will go a little crazy if I had to sit at home with them all day. Work distracts one. It stimulates you a bit. I would not be working outside the home if it were not necessary - especially during for the first few years - till 5 or 6. It would have been ideal if I could have stayed at home with them. Then you form them."

Celia appears to have a very good relationship with the woman whom she employs as a domestic worker and who tends to the children while she is at work. She described her as 'the black mother' in the home:

"She is very involved with us - nearly like my mother. She sometimes scolds me. She is a lot older than me. She isn't married but has a grown child. When I'm not at home then she is the black mother. I am the white mother and she is the black mother. The children treat her the way they treat me. When they are cheeky she said 'No Peter, my heart is sore'. She never hits them. I hit them. She's very good with them and they are very fond of her. She looks after me. When my husband goes away she says: 'Lock the door and don't tell (the people) next door that he is away - otherwise the garden boy will hear.'"

4.4 Relationship with Wider Kin Group

Celia has a good relationship with her mother (her father is deceased) and her sister, both of whom live in Grahamstown. She sees them regularly and helps her mother with shopping and gardening chores. In return her mother baby-sits the children when she and her husband go out at night.

Like Petra, Celia also expressed the view that one side of the family should not be given preference above the other. Since her husband's family lives in a different town she invoked the term 'quality time' to express the ideal of equality:

"We often phone my husband's parents in P.E. after nine o' clock in the evening, that is. And they phone

here. They are a very close family. When we go there it is quality time rather than the amount of time that matters. It's just that they live further away".

When responding to a question concerning the receipt of financial aid from the wider kin group, Celia described an incident reminiscent of the subjects studied by Bell in the United States. Bell (in Anderson, 1980a) claims that financial aid from kin is a normal part of family life though its transference is often hidden so as to maintain the appearance of independent households. He further claims that such aid is essential for the acquisition of status symbols or 'props' associated with a middle-class lifestyle.

"Financial aid has never been necessary. But if it were, my mother and my husband's mother would help us out. On one occasion we wanted to buy a video recorder which was on special. My husband was getting his bonus the next month. So my mother gave us the money so that we could get it cheaper.

I would not feel good if my mother gave us large amounts of money or bought large items for us. We were not raised like royalty but we learned to work with what we had. I know people who just take five hundred or a thousand rand (from their parents) and then 'splash' it without really being able to say what they have done with the money. If I had come from a wealthy family - maybe it would not have mattered."

The last phrase of the above quote emphasises Hubert's (in Anderson, 1980a: 232) description of this aspect of contemporary family ideology: "It is not the done thing to be on the receiving end of kin help and influence, but to use one's influence is quite acceptable. Though they do not necessarily see it in these terms, status is conferred by giving rather than receiving" (in Anderson, 1980a: 232). That Celia identifies with this notion became more apparent when she recounted an earlier incident between her father and herself. She wanted to buy a car and her father offered to pay the deposit:

"When my father was ill, I was the only breadwinner in the family. Someone had to take the children to school. My father had a very big car and I did not want to drive it. I wanted to buy a smaller one and my

father offered to pay the deposit. I said : "I'll take it, but I'll pay it back - even though he was in a position to give me the money and he wanted to ... No, I gave the money back. He did not want the interest. I probably would not have been able to buy the car without his help. With one's first car, the deposit is always large."

This quote illustrates the low-level conflict between herself and her father - Celia wanting a car as well as her (financial) independence and her father wanting to improve his status by expressing his ability to give (financial aid) to others. Like some of Bell's subjects, Celia attempted to resolve this conflict by not asking for money directly, accepting it after insistence from her father, reimbursing it but without interest (ostensibly to please him). She also validates Bell's contention that financial aid from kin may be essential for the acquisition of a middle-class life-style by indicating that she would not have been able to purchase the car without the 'loan' from her father.

4.5 Summary

Celia's acceptance of traditional family values is possibly a reflection of her active involvement in the church. This idea was borne out when I asked her her views on pre-marital sex and she indicated that she objects to it on religious grounds. In conclusion, Celia's present domestic situation coincides to a large extent with the conventional nuclear family with the exception that she works full-time outside of the home. Her relationship with her family of origin further indicates the way nuclear families may be enmeshed in an (often hidden) network of mutual aid and assistance. In contrast to Belinda, the extent of aid received from the wider kin group is minimal. But this is probably because Celia has not experienced the effects of a divorce. It is my impression that, if this were to occur, her mother and sister would be the first people Celia turned to for aid and assistance.

5. CASE 4: DIANE

5.1 Present Domestic Situation

The fourth case is of an English-speaking couple who have been married for 34 years. They have three children aged 30, 26 and 24. The youngest - Steven, though officially in 'digs', visits home at least three times a week "When he gets hungry," Diane says. He has meals with them about twice a week. The couple converted to the Methodist church about 32 years ago and have been avid church-goers ever since. The conversation revealed that the couple have had to endure a number of serious difficulties and that religion is a sustaining force in their lives.

Finances have always been a problem to this family. When asked why they moved to Grahamstown, Diane replied "for bread and butter". She also told me about a car accident involving the whole family which put severe strain on the family's resources. At that stage neither she nor her husband were members of a medical aid scheme.

Diane's home is a modern face-brick one located in what can be described as a 'good area'. It is an established area containing many old colonial homes. Since Diane works as a secretary and her husband is employed in the town-planning division of the municipality, the size and position of their home once again attests to the fringe-benefits associated with employment in the civil service.

5.2 Domestic Life Cycle

Like Celia, Diane moved from a domestic situation in which she was someone's child to one in which she is someone's wife. Diane and Celia's situations are, however, different as in Diane's case it was not financial need or choice that caused this situation but parental pressure. She described her father and his influence on her as follows:

"He was a very old-fashioned father. He would not allow us to wear slacks and shorts. When I finished school and wanted to study art he would not hear of it. It would have meant travelling to Cape Town from the Strand every day or staying in Cape Town. He would not allow me to. He wanted his children to stay at home until they married. That is what happened. I ended up going to business college and only leaving home when I married David. I was 20 and he was 28 at that time."

5.3 Children and Work

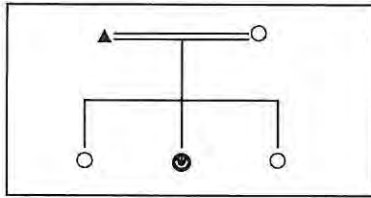
Being of an older generation, Diane like Belinda, articulated the taken-for-granted conception that children are a natural part of marriage. In response to a question about what influenced her decision to have children, she replied :

"When I got married it was just the done thing. You got married and had children and I never questioned not having children. I never thought of not having children. I thought it was automatic to have children. I think my children's generation is in a better position because I have seen many people who have children but shouldn't have".

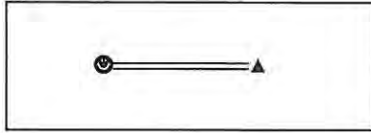
However, having children did not come easily to Diane and David. After four spontaneous abortions and being diagnosed as having an infantile uterus three doctors told her she would never have children. She proved them wrong when at the age of 23 she gave birth to her first child - a daughter. Despite this the doctors were still adamant that she would not conceive again. Once again she proved them wrong by giving birth to a son 16 months after adopting another daughter.

DIANE'S DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE

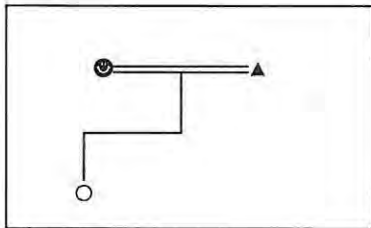
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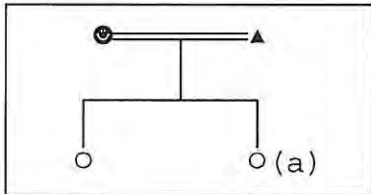
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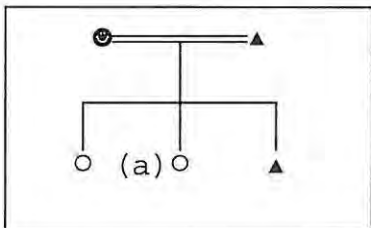
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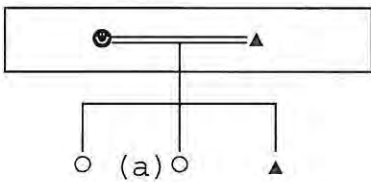
At 26



At 27



At 50



Diane works on a full-time basis and all indications are that this is out of financial need rather than choice.

Interviewer: "How do you feel about mothers with young children who voluntarily work outside the home ?"

Diane: "They should make adequate arrangements for the child. I would have preferred to have stayed at home until the children were at school. My youngest was four when I had to go back to work part-time."

4.4 Relationship With Wider Kin Group

Diane used the words "fear and trembling" to describe her relationship with her mother-in-law:

"She was an extremely intimidating person. My father-in-law was even more intimidated by her than I was. In all the years I knew them I never ever had a conversation with his father. He never communicated. He sat still and did what he was told all his life."

Interviewer: "At any stage during your married life did any relative offer aid for the children?"

Diane: "No unfortunately. They did not even as much as darn a sock for them - let alone any financial help that would have been very welcome. When his parents lived in Port Alfred they never even had one child for a weekend and not even for an afternoon - the offer never came. They were not demonstrative people. I never saw them as much as put a small child on their knee."

"I would have loved to have palmed them off at times but it never happened for us. In fact it worked the other way around. I was the one who knitted jerseys for them."

5.5 Summary

Religion plays an important role in Diane's life and influences her outlook on life including her views on marriage

and the family. The division of labour in the Brown family runs very much along traditional lines. Diane is an excellent cook and housekeeper and a far better communicator on emotional and personal issues than her husband. However, Diane showed an acute awareness of the way traditional roles are structured and, while accepting her role, indicated that she would have preferred things to be different. When asked whether her husband would feel uncomfortable if she earned more money or had a higher position than him, she replied:

"I don't think he should, but I think he would. He doesn't have that much of a self-image that could handle it. He grew up with a very domineering mother and I think he needs to feel in charge. I don't think men should feel this way but I think they do. I hope my son won't feel like that but we are a different generation ... You know the saying the man is the head of the house and the woman is the neck that turns the head. I think women have enough sensitivity to handle that kind of thing without the man feeling inadequate. But if it were obvious like having a higher position I don't think many husbands would be happy with that."

Diane's present domestic situation can be classified as a couple household or a denuded family as, except for her son who sporadically shares meals with them, her children have reached adulthood and have moved out of the family home. As in Petra's case, Diane's case illustrates that where the relationship between a woman and her parents or parents-in-law is not good, the amount of contact and transference of aid between individual families is minimal.

6. CASE 5: ELLEN

6.1 Present Domestic Situation

Ellen is an outwardly confident person with a tragic and complex family background. She is forty years old and married to a man 11 years her junior. Her mother tongue is Afrikaans while his is English. Their home language is English. Both spouses are presently affiliated to and involved with the Full Gospel Church.

It is Ellen's second marriage. Her two daughters aged 20 and 16 live with them in a house that appears to be well above their means. She works as a sales clerk and her husband, who qualified through technical college, works as a computer technologist. It was her husband's age (29), rather than his occupation, that left this researcher wondering about the financial backing of the family. Later in the interview, Ellen indicated that the house and all its contents had been a gift from her husband's mother. It is a newly built face-brick home on a medium-sized plot and surrounded by a well-kept and well-designed garden. The interior, too, was tastefully decorated and fitted with modern conveniences (modern fitted kitchen for example).

6.2 Domestic Life Cycle

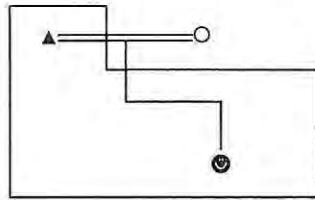
Ellen's mother committed suicide when she was five years old. "I was brought up in hotels and by family " she said. Since then her father has been married four times. She married at the age of 19. She had her first child two years later and the second at 24. When asked what influenced her decision to have children she responded :

"I was a Jehovah's Witness at that stage. Family is very important to them. They live very differently to other people - men who go to pubs etc. They are very family orientated. I wanted something of my own - stability and security and the rest. The second one was a mistake because my marriage was already starting to go wrong. And everyone else was having babies."

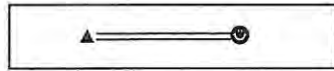
The marriage lasted 10 years. After the divorce she stayed with her father and step-mother for three weeks before moving into a boarding house where she lived with her two daughters for six years. She met her second husband - Kevin - at dancing classes. They married soon after meeting. Given her family history, Ellen's domestic life cycle is the most complex of all those included in the study. The presentation below is a simplification since, in the absence of sufficient information, I am unable to include the various domestic situations she was part of between the ages of 5 and 19.

ELLEN'S DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE

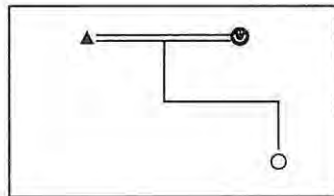
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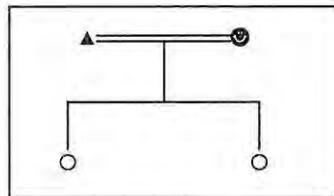
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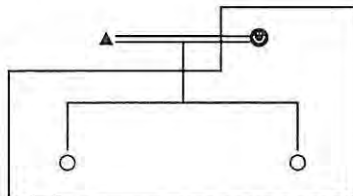
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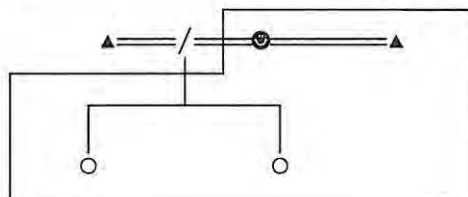
At 24



At 30



At 36



6.3 Ties With Wider Kin Group

As indicated above, Ellen's mother died when she was very young. Furthermore, she does not have a close relationship with her father or any of his subsequent wives. Although her father lives only a few blocks away, she hardly ever sees him. She described her relationship with him as "not what it should be" and added "I feel a little resentful towards him having children

of my own and knowing what that relationship can be like".

While Ellen did not elaborate on this aspect of her life, she spoke a great deal about her relationship with her mother-in-law possibly because that relationship is more immediate and of material importance to her at this stage in her life. When I asked whether she and Kevin see one side of the family more than the other, she volunteered the following information after a long silence:

"Put it this way - If it depended on my mother-in-law we would be extremely involved with her. But we have had to put our foot down. She has a very strong nature. It caused a lot of strain in the past but it is sort of under control now. It has taken time and effort and sweat and tears. I'm more at ease with her now because I am speaking my mind. I'm not so intimidated with her any more. She gave us a lot."

Interviewer: "Do you mean things like furniture" ?

"Everything" she said pointing around the room and added "even the house".

Interviewer: "So do you value your independence?"

"I did more before I met my husband. Because I feel that when you are married you shouldn't be that independent otherwise why bother. You might as well live with someone or go out with someone and not have all the hassles of marriage - which there are. If you marry you have a certain amount of independence. If you have too much then there is something wrong with the marriage - that's how I feel.

I have realised looking at other women whose husbands die on them or who get divorced that you must keep a certain amount of independence if it is only for your own sake when you are left alone one day. That is what I have learned looking at my aunts and mother-in-law. My mother-in-law made Kevin her sole objective. It's not healthy because they do leave you. You've got to have other interests other than your children and your husband. You've got to do something for yourself. Have outside friends but not too much 'cause otherwise your marriage is not healthy ".

As can be deduced from the above, Ellen is clearly divided on the

question of independence. This is, in all probability, due to the difficulties she experiences in reconciling her lack of independence (i.e. her material dependence on Kevin's mother) and her desire to reduce if not eliminate her influence on the family.

It is also clear that the relationship between Kevin and his mother is a close one and that Ellen has to compete with her for Kevin's attention and affection. At a later stage Ellen said this about her husband and his mother: "she treated him like a husband and now can't let go". This is not surprising given that Kevin's father died when he was very young and he is an only child. It seems probable that Kevin's mother sees Ellen as interfering in her relationship with her son and Ellen, in turn, wants to loosen the ties between her husband and his mother.

In conclusion, material need and Kevin's involvement with his mother ensure that this family maintains strong ties with at least one member of the wider kin group.

6.4 Work and Children

Ellen did not work for the duration of her first marriage and enjoyed that state of affairs. Upon divorce she was forced to find employment and (given her poor relationship with her father and step-mothers) made use of the services of a domestic worker to tend to the children who were then 9 and 4 years old. Commenting on the period immediately following her divorce she said:

"We stayed in a boarding house for six years and I raised them on my own. One hundred percent fine. In fact it was easy because there is one person giving the orders. It was actually a piece of cake.

I had a maid who looked after them full time and when I went out at night I dragged them everywhere with me. ... in the lounge (of a hotel), popcorn, ice cream, chocolates, sweets, cushions, blankets in front of the T.V. but they went there."

As indicated above, Ellen yearns for the life-style she had when she was married to her first husband - an important aspect of which was the fact that she did not have to work. Referring to her first marriage she volunteered the following:

"The Jehovah's Witnesses get married very young. They settle down and that is it. Not very career oriented. The men are usually in very good positions but the wives were mostly housewives. The men did not like them to work. I never worked. Not for ten years. I was very happy at home. Ag ja... It was going to the clinic, going to the library, fashion parades with the kids and fancy dress competitions and taking them to the beach, taking them for swimming lessons. All sorts of things. I was active.

In the morning I was active and in the afternoons I slept till four 'o clock. Then I got up to make supper. The night, we went out - that sort of thing, you know. It was nice it was restful - I miss being involved with day-time friends and groups and that sort of thing. I'm not really a office person."

Interviewer: "So it is not what you would choose ... "

"No, no ways ... My first husband was a laboratory technician . He studied while the kids were small and is now fully qualified . He supported us. I had my own car. Now we both have to work and I get maintenance - otherwise we couldn't survive ".

An interesting development occurred when I asked Ellen whether her husband objected to her working outside the home. She first responded by saying that he wanted her to work "Otherwise we don't come out". When I asked her whether he would object if she earned more money than him she called him into the room and the following interchange took place:

Kevin: "Yes it would bother me. I think that from a man's point of view ... he feels that he should be the breadwinner, be the provider and therefore he should bring the majority of the money home. In fact if I could have it my way I would like to be the sole breadwinner and I would like my wife to stay at home."

Ellen: "It shows you how little you know your husband. You see his dad worked as an accountant and his mother just stayed home and reared him. Now that's what I've always wanted."

Kevin: "Nowadays things have got so much worse that it is impossible to do that any more".

Interviewer: "Do you think your attitude would change at all if the situation remained as bad as it is and families continue to be dependent on two pay-cheques?"

Kevin: "No, I wouldn't feel so good about myself if Ellen had to come home and say she was earning more than I was. I would feel very uncomfortable. In fact, I would feel that I am not fulfilling the actual role of a husband. Maybe we are just brought up to believe that things should work in a certain way."

From the above it is clear that both Ellen and her husband have very traditional views on the roles of men and women in the home. This was further substantiated when Ellen expressed her views on working mothers:

"It is very bad to work outside the home. I firmly believe that my children turned out the way they did because I spent those first five six years at home with them. I would have had many more problems than I have. During those years I gave them love and affection - a mother always being at home. You can go to work when they start school. But before they start school then there is no ways you can go to work. But nowadays things are different. If you can put them in a crèche - in a white crèche as ugly as it may sound - it is better than leaving them with the maid. At least there they get stimulated and taught how to draw, how to paint. It is those kids that lie around at home bored as you saw in the 'You's' that 's a problem. It is not necessary that mummy must be around. They must just be kept busy creatively".

Interviewer: "You don't think a 'maid' can provide that stimulation?"

Ellen: "No, because she has got to clean the house. Rather put them in a creche it is healthier. But the best arrangement is if the mother is at home for the first four years".

6.5 Summary

Ellen and Kevin's input is important as it exposes some of the problems faced by individuals involved in remarriage families. In this case individualistic and biologically based notions of parenthood appear to be at the basis of the tension that permeates the family. An additional complicating factor could be that in terms of normative dating and marriage patterns, Kevin is closer in age to his step-daughters than his wife.

The couple is about to become involved with an in vitro fertilisation programme. After her divorce Ellen had her 'tubes tied' and now wants to have a child that is genetically related to Kevin. All indications are that this marriage is on unfirm ground and that the attempt at having another child is a symptom of a problem rather than the solution thereto.

This became clear when both Ellen and Kevin spoke to me about adopted children. What also became apparent from the interchange reproduced below is the rift which exists between Kevin on the one hand and Ellen and 'her' children on the other:

Interviewer: "Do you think adopted children are necessarily at a disadvantage when compared to other children?"

Ellen: "Yes - the bond's not there. An adopted child will probably have to be better behaved than a child who is a blood child - because a blood child just gets accepted. You know what I mean ..."

Interviewer: "Do you think the adoptive parents should tell the child about his or her adoptive status?"

Ellen: "No, I think it should be a secret. When I read these stories about

children looking for their real mother and father I always think why ever tell them ? Those parents did not want those children so stuff them ... finish and klaar. "

Kevin: "I would still tell that child eventually."

Ellen: "You wouldn't Kevin. You just say you would. You've never been a parent."

This last phrase made me realise that one of the main problems in this marriage is Ellen's inability to see her present husband as 'another' father to her children. In other words her (ideologically informed) views on what a parent is prevents her from sharing the parenting role with Kevin despite her statements to the contrary.

Kevin: "If I have any discrepancy or argument with Ellen - without being able to help myself I tend to take it out on the whole family - that is her children. I just feel Susan and Sally are yours and I am irritated with you and I can be like that with everybody else. I think if I had my own children I would be able to handle that better in the sense that I could treat them as individuals. "

Ellen: "I've always said to him he should try and develop an individual relationship with each person. "

Kevin: "I agree with you. But it is difficult "

Ellen: "My kids will come to me and say ' why is he cross with me. What have I done? and I'll say we've had an argument. I feel sorry for them 'cause it is my flesh and blood and it is hard. But they understand. I try to look at it from Kevin's point of view because I don't know what I'd be like in a similar situation. If I look at my dad's children from his last wife - they irritate me to death but they are irritating children and I feel that my kids aren't irritating at all."

Kevin: "I can't help myself. I can't divorce myself from it"

Ellen: "But that is where his only child upbringing comes in ..."

Kevin: "That's what you say ..."

Ellen: "He never learned to share things and give and communicate with lots of people. He never had to. It was just his mother and him. In my heart that is where the problem lies. But he has got better."

Interviewer: "How would you feel if he criticised one of your children ?"

Ellen: "If it is legitimate I would accept it. If he and the kids would discuss and say Mum is a bloomin' pain I would be happy in my heart because I would feel there is at least some communication between them. He keeps aside and they feel left out. He doesn't communicate with them."

Kevin: "Sometimes you do feel threatened because you feel there are three other people in the ... I feel I have three people against me".

(At this stage Kevin left the room.)

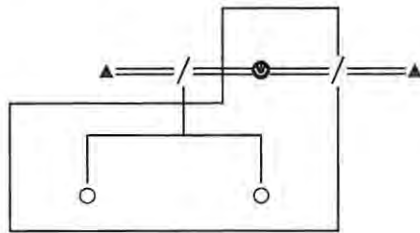
Ellen: "But I can't complain - he's a very loyal and moral person. When he went overseas he phoned me every second night which a lot of men wouldn't have done. He brought my kids presents something their own father might forget to do. He would do things that I would never think he would do with the way he acts towards them. I would prefer Kevin to show more warmth and less presents" (or did she say presence?).

As can be deduced from the above, there are some fundamental problems with this marriage. It is my belief that these stem in part from traditional notions of parenthood held by both Ellen

and Kevin. In other words, because both of them believe that one is only a parent when one has a genetic tie with a child, makes Kevin feel isolated and in many respects 'useless'. It appears that the two main relationships which characterise this family (Ellen and Kevin's on the one hand and Ellen's relationship with her daughters) are separate and in conflict with each other. The couple's attempt to have a child genetically related to both can be seen as a desperate attempt to integrate these relationships and save the family from destruction. Subsequent to the interview I learned that the couple has indeed divorced. Ellen and her two daughters are now renting an apartment.

ELLEN'S DOMESTIC SITUATION AFTER THE INTERVIEW

at 40



7. CASE 6: SARAH

7.1 Introduction

The final case is of an eighty-year-old spinster who prides herself, not only on being directly descended from the 1820 British settlers, but on her marital status. She does not belong to any church and employs a char three times a week. Spinsterhood seems to be a tradition in Sarah's family. Her mother was one of seven children and her father one of thirteen. Of these, only three married: Sarah's mother, her father and one of her father's sisters. Referring to those who had married, she said:

"They were more marriageable ladies. The Lunnon ladies were all spinsters. Out of my cousins only one married and out of our lot also only one married. Only my youngest sister married. The others we were all spinsters. My brother is an old bachelor. We're not a marrying family. I notice the younger generation is

marrying. As I said there is only one Miss Lunnon left to carry on the tradition."

When asked to describe her relationship with her mother, she said:

"Oh very good, my mother was a charming person " .

Interviewer: "And your father? "

"We respected him very much. They were very fine handsome people I don't know why they bore such awful plain children. My mother was a very charming lady and my father was a very handsome man".

Interviewer: "Did you get along with one better than the other?"

"We were intimate with my mother. We respected my father but we weren't intimate with him. He didn't have the knack of getting on with kids. He was still a very fine man. You know some people just have the knack - children are drawn to them. My father just didn't have it but he was a very good father to us".

What emerges from these lines is an attitude of acceptance towards traditional sex-role divisions in the family. Unlike Diane, who has resigned herself to this state of affairs by attributing it to 'her generation', Sarah's acceptance thereof appears to be more unreflected.

7.2 Present Domestic Situation

At present Sarah lives alone. She rents a section of a large colonial homestead which has recently changed hands. As the new owners do not intend to take occupation for a while, the rest of the house has been rented out to students. I interviewed her during the students' vacation and she indicated that she was not pleased with this new arrangement.

"I like living alone. Not completely alone as this. I like someone next door".

7.3 Domestic Life Cycle

Since Sarah has never married, her domestic life cycle is quite different from any of the other subjects interviewed. After leaving home (the family farm) she attended a teachers' training college and lived in residence. She described her life after graduating as a teacher as follows :

"Well in the good old days when you became a primary school teacher you had to go out into the bundu. I lived on a mission station for seven years. Until the war came and teachers were valuable I came back to Grahamstown. At the mission I stayed with other families. In the days before electricity and before water borne sewerage that means no inside loos".

When asked whether she ever stayed with family during that time, she gave an interesting response :

"I always boarded with family in my teaching time. I boarded with about four or five families. In only one place there was a country hotel but otherwise I always boarded with families because there wasn't anywhere else to stay".

Interviewer: "Did you ever stay with your family for example your sister or aunt ?

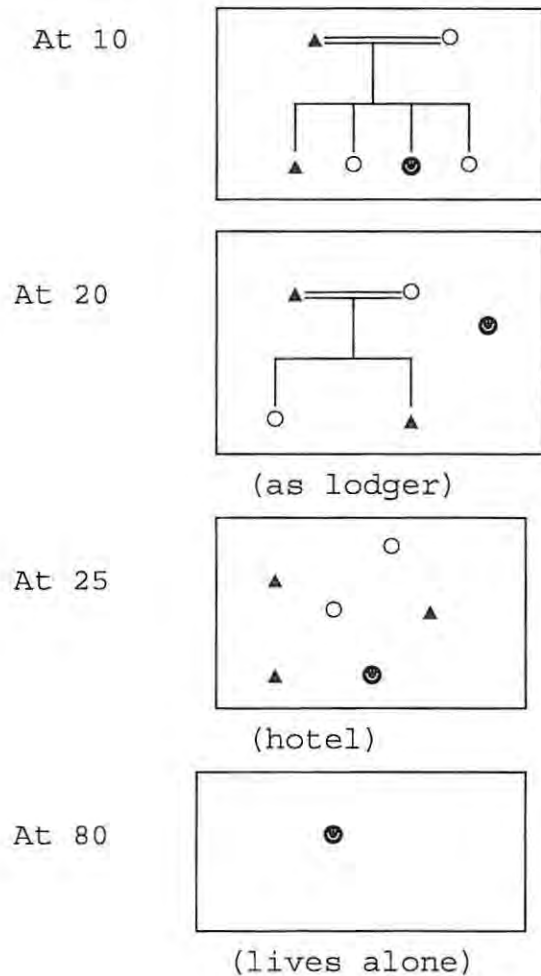
"No."

Sarah's conception of the family reflects the era in which she was raised. In this regard, Skolnick asserts that in the pre-industrial era, families were large because they contained extended kin and because it was common practice to take in lodgers:

"The tendency of families to include strangers in the household was connected with an entirely different concept of family life ... Boarding and lodging fulfilled the function of what Taeuber has referred to as 'the social equalization of the family' (1969,p.5). Young men and women in their late teens and 20's who had left their own parents' households, or who had migrated from other communities, lived as boarders in the households of older people whose own children had left home. This practice thus enabled young people to stay in surrogate family arrangements, while at the

same time it provided old people with the opportunity to continue heading their own households without being isolated" (in Skolnick and Skolnick, 1989:42).

SARAH'S DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE



7.4 Children and Work

Since she does not have any children, the conflict between work and family commitments expressed by Petra (case 1) does not apply. She does, however, have strong views on the subject and during the interview related a disagreement she had with a colleague who wanted what she called 'special treatment' because she had a young child. For Sarah, children and work are separate careers and should not be undertaken by the same person:

Interviewer: "How do you feel about working mothers with young children?"

Sarah: "I think it is very bad and very sad to neglect a child like that. You hear of these terrible cases of child abuse, of people dumping their kids with someone else. I know from when I was teaching. When you are teaching you belong to the school. It is no good thinking that she (referring to her colleague) can look after children and still work - teaching is a very demanding career. Her first job is to the school. She gets paid here. Her husband used to give me skew looks. But it is very difficult I think to do both. I hold down a job like teaching which is a heavy job and to look after the kids and a house and a husband is far too much for any female."

Interviewer: "So you think such a mother neglects her child?"

Sarah: "It can't be helped. A maid can't do the job. A woman should stay home until the children go to school at least. But even then you don't want a heavy job. There are enough part time jobs. But it is very sad because people want the two salaries. Its financial - especially now that they have to pay so much for schooling. I'm very sorry about it. It's very hard because the first place for a married woman is at her home. There is lots she can do. There is lots of charity work, fetes to organise, attend parents teachers meetings and all kinds of things to keep her busy."

Interviewer: "What would you say is the ideal number of children?"

Sarah: "No I'm an old spinster I don't have any ideas on the subject. It depends how many you can afford and how many you can put up with and how fond you are of children. I'm a good old fashioned person I think several children is very nice to have but I see in the modern times it is not that easy".

7.5 Relationship With Wider Kin Group

Despite (or possibly because of) her marital status, family is very important to Sarah. But in her case 'family' means brothers and sisters rather than husband and children. One of her sisters lives in Grahamstown and her brother lives on the family farm nearby. She spends every weekend with her sister and the latter's husband. When asked whether any of her relatives has come to live with her, she responded:

"No, They come to visit quite often. My brother comes for Christmas. My sister and her husband are coming for quite a long time. They have decided to go on a spree. They have rented their house out for a year. And they will be travelling around the country using my place as their headquarters. She's the one I get on most fine with. She has a very kind husband so we get along well.

My older sister also used to come here to visit.

I think it is wonderful to have relations. I have a friend across the road who has no relations nearby. It is very sad. Now she is saying who is going to come and see her at Christmas time and so on. I like to be independent but I would like to have a family in the background.

I'm the centre of the family because I have all the family history. I edited all the letters my grandmother had collected and got in touch with all my various cousins (hundreds). It was very nice to be in the middle and send out these letters. You can keep in touch with them.

7.6 Summary

Sarah's contribution is a valuable one. Because of her age and marital status she brings a different perspective to the issues under discussion. Given her age, it is not surprising that Sarah has very traditional views on marriage and the family. She also expressed some unusual (at least in modern times) on divorce:

Interviewer: "What are your feelings on divorce ?"

Sarah: "I think it is very unfortunate when there are children."

Interviewer: "If a couple is thinking about divorce do you think they should stay together because of the children?"

Sarah: "Yes. What I think is the more terrible thing is when they tell me it is a friendly divorce. I think that is really stinking. If they are friendly then they must stay together. They've lived together several years and they have had children and they have got to stick it out. I think it is wicked if they divorce. If it is a horrible person then it is another matter. But if they are ordinary friendly people - they must stick together for the sake of the kids."

Interviewer: "If one spouse was having an affair ?"

Sarah: "They better just keep it quiet."

Interviewer: "Do you think they should talk it over and ..."

Sarah: "No not necessarily talk it over. Just carry on quietly - let it pass - it will pass. Yes remember that. Don't make a big to do and a fuss about it. It's human nature."

Interviewer: "Do you think a biological mother is usually a better mother than a step-mother?"

Sarah: "Definitely. But I think it depends on the person. But I have seen such sad kids of divorced families. They get put in boarding school and the little girl will sit there and then they have the nerve to tell me it is a friendly divorce."

"Children resent a step-parent. They just do. Even if it is a widowed mother."

Interviewer: "Do you think that it is right ?"

Sarah: "It is just natural."

Interviewer: "What are your views on marriage and the family today?"

Sarah: "Yes I think the family is decaying. I'm old fashioned. I think family is the only way for children to live. But today there are very small families, parents are either divorced or out at work. It's a sad thing. I don't know what one can do about it. It is the way the world is going. And if you look at Black families. It is also very sad. Their families are all split up terribly. That is where all the criminality comes from - mothers are working in town and the children get sent to grandmothers on the farm. In the old days the whole family lived on the farm and when the father gave orders the children listened. Today it is not like that. It's no good."

By expressing her views in this way, Sarah articulates contemporary family ideology. By using phrases like 'it is natural' and 'it can't be helped' she revealed her acceptance of the notion that an ideal, acceptable or proper family is something 'given' by the nature of things. Moreover, she is aware that many people do not behave in this manner and clearly disapproves.

8. CONCLUSION

These case studies illustrate many of the issues that have been raised in the literature on families: the tendency to fall back on kin in times of crisis (mainly divorce); the way religion or the Bible is used as a rationalisation for contemporary family ideology; the sexual division of labour within families; the tensions that characterise re-marriage families; the belief that parenthood comes from giving birth to or donating the genetic material of a child and finally the idea that marriage and child-bearing are natural activities.

It is also interesting to note the contradiction between ideology and practice in the lives of the subjects included in this study. With the exception of Sarah, all of the women interviewed are working and at the same time believe that a woman's first responsibility is towards her children and that she should in fact be at home with them while they are young. Sarah is the only one who has avoided the conflict between home and work commitments by not having children. It is also of interest to note the variety of arrangements these women have entered into to ensure that their children are cared for while they work: Petra makes use of day-care facilities and a domestic worker; Belinda relies on her parents and Celia makes use of the services of a domestic worker alone.

The sharing of the nurturer role between White mothers and Black domestic workers is a common feature of family life among White South Africans. In this society it has been the exception rather than the rule for a (middle class) White child **not** to have been fed, dressed, put to bed and accompanied to school by a Black (or 'Coloured') domestic worker ('nanny'). Consequently, it is not uncommon to hear White women refer to their Black employees as "part of the family" thereby evoking a conception of the family which dominated in the pre-industrial era i.e. when a family was seen as all those who are subject to the authority of the same *pater familias* and therefore included servants (Williams, 1983). This tendency is enhanced by the practice of domestic workers living on the premises of their employers - a custom (or institution) that is far less common today when child-care facilities are more readily available. Having 'live-in' domestic workers may also be less common in Grahamstown than other cities and villages due to the proximity of the township, the costs involved and the demand for accommodation by university students.

The women included in these case studies were asked to describe their relationship with their domestic workers. Their responses ranged from indifferent to warm and caring. Diane and

Ellen fall into the first category:

"She's just a char. She is not part of the family. We don't communicate because of a language barrier".
(Diane)

"She keeps my home clean and tidy" (Ellen).

By contrast, Celia indicated that she has a much closer relationship with their domestic worker describing her as "the Black mother" in her home (see page 258). Petra also emphasised the involvement of her domestic worker in her family and her own dependence on her:

"We are very attached to her but she is rather withdrawn. Our relationship is more than the usual 'boss-underling' (baas-klaas) relationship. I see her as my equal. I can't get by without her. She is extremely fond of the youngest one. She raised her ... I teach them (the children) to respect her, to speak to her the way they speak to me. She looks after them when I am out in the afternoons. I don't like to scold her. At such times I prefer to write her a letter (telling her what she did wrong)".

Since it is quite common for White children to be raised by Black women, the role of the latter in the socialisation of White children would make for an interesting research topic. In the two cases where there was close involvement, both women were Afrikaans speakers - is it possible that Afrikaans speakers have closer relationships with their domestic workers and if so, does this have anything to do with their history as a rural people?

Apart from illustrating the variety of ways in which family life is experienced, these case studies raise an important theoretical issue concerning the relationship between individual families and the wider kin group - they suggest that contact between and reliance upon the wider kin group is contingent upon the nature of the personal relationship between the individuals concerned (in these cases between the woman and her mother). Compare the cases of Petra and Diane (where the relationship is of a poor quality and contact is little) with the cases of Celia and Belinda (where the relationship is good). In the case of

Petra, for example, it seems highly unlikely that she would return to her mother if she became divorced or had to endure any other 'family crisis'. The same would probably hold true for Diane. By contrast, the fact that Belinda's return to her parents after her divorce seemed to be part of the 'natural course of events' must at least in part be due to the good relationship she has and always has had with her parents. It is likely that if Celia experienced a crisis, she would do the same - or, despite the size of her house, would provide accommodation for her mother if the need arose. From these case studies, it would appear then that the extended family is not institutionalised in the sense of being a normal part of the normal domestic life cycle but rather a 'coping device' that can be activated depending not only on the nature of a crisis but also on the personal relationship between ego and her family of orientation prior to the crisis. Commenting on extended families among Whites in Durban, Argyle writes:

"the elementary family is for them often not so much 'a separate social unit', as a particular phase in a developmental process which, not invariably but commonly, includes complex families as other phases of it ... the process follows, in various cases, different patterns resulting from sets of individual choices made within the constraints obtaining at the time the choices are made" (Argyle, 1977:115).

My suggestion here is that the nature of personal relationships needs to be seen as part of the 'constraints' which influence the choices people make about domestic arrangements. This issue was taken up in the survey.

CHAPTER 11

SURVEY RESULTS: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the demographic features of the surveyed population, the distribution of household types as well as the results of cross-tabulations of the latter with language, occupation and area of residence. The weighting of responses in light of the demographic features of the White Grahamstown community as a whole is also addressed. Of the 300 households, there was one instance where the respondent and her spouse's mother tongue was Xhosa and another where it was Tamil. There were a further 10 cases where the respondent was male. These cases have been included in most of the analyses presented in this chapter on the assumption that they would not affect the results significantly. In some instances, the male respondents have been excluded and this has been indicated in the table concerned. All of the male respondents were excluded from the data pertaining to family ideology discussed in Chapter 12.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

2.1 Age

The survey covered a wide range of age groups in the adult population - the youngest respondent being 18 and the oldest 85 years. But given that there were no student residences in the areas surveyed, the vast majority of respondents (94%) were 25 years or older at the time of the study. In 6 cases the respondent did not give his\her age and there were only 17 cases of respondents aged 24 and below. The mean was 44.6 years, the mode 32 and the median 42 years. The table below compares the distribution of the age groups in this study with census data for

the urban part of Albany and for White South Africans as a whole. Since 98% of the population in urban Albany were living in Grahamstown, data pertaining to urban Albany can be seen as a reasonably accurate portrayal of the age distribution in the wider Grahamstown community (Central Statistical Services, 03-01-02:7).

TABLE 11.1

AGE DISTRIBUTION: GRAHAMSTOWN SAMPLE, ALBANY & SOUTH AFRICA						
	GRAHAMSTOWN SAMPLE		ALBANY*		SOUTH AFRICA	
AGE	N	%	N	%	N	%
25-34	77	27.8%	649	22.8%	362 926	26.0%
35-44	66	23.8%	601	21.2%	330 267	23.7%
45-54	56	20.2%	549	19.3%	256 796	18.4%
55-59	21	7.6%	218	7.7%	97 982	7.0%
60-64	18	6.5%	179	6.3%	93 550	6.7%
65 +	39	14.1	645	22.7%	252 402	18.1%
TOTAL	277	100%	2841	100.0%	1393 923	100.0%

SOURCES:
 Central Statistical Services (03-01-03) 1991:238 (Albany)
 Central Statistical Services (03-01-00) 1991:1.10 (R.S.A.)
 * Urban Albany includes Alicedale and Riebeeck East, combined population of 273 in 1991 (2.4%) Central Statistical Services (03-01-02) 1991:7.

As can be noted, with the exception of the 65 years and over category, there are no major differences between the sample and the over 25 years section of the wider Grahamstown community. The same is true when the sample is compared to the data for South Africa, although here the discrepancy in the 65 plus category is less (14% in the sample compared with 18% aged 65 years and over in the general White population of South Africa).

2.2 Marital Status

The overwhelming majority of respondents (71.3%) were married at the time of the study (Table 11.2). Thirteen percent of those who were not married and 3.3% of the total population covered in this study were living together (cohabiting). Only 6% of respondents were divorced while 15% were widowed. These figures do not, of course, reflect the number of people who have experienced divorce or widowhood. To ascertain this, respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they have been married and if they had been previously married, the reason for the termination of that\those marriage(s). As Tables 11.3 and 11.4 show, the vast majority had only married once (93%) and in about 60% of cases where a previous marriage was at issue, death was the cause of its termination while in 40% of these cases a divorce had occurred. Respondents who had experienced the termination of a marriage as a result of divorce constituted 9.3% of the total population surveyed (twenty eight respondents). Of these, just under half (46,4%) had remarried (Table 11.5).

Table 11.2

MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS		
STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Married	214	71.3%
Divorced	18	6.0%
Separated	2	0.7%
Widowed	45	15.0%
Never Married	21	7.0%
TOTAL:	300	100%

Table 11.3

NUMBER OF TIMES RESPONDENT HAS MARRIED		
TIMES	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
One	249	92.6%
Two	18	6.7%
Three	0	0.0%
More	2	0.7%
TOTAL:	269	100.0%
No response: 10 cases.		

Table 11.4

REASON FOR TERMINATION OF FIRST MARRIAGE		
REASON	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Divorce	28	38.9%
Death	43	59.7%
Desertion	1	1.4%
TOTAL	72	100.0%
N = respondents whose marriages had ended.		

Table 11.5

MARITAL STATUS OF DIVORCEES		
STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Remarried	13	46.5%
Cohabiting	1	3.6%
Not Married	13	46.5%
No Answer	1	3.6%
TOTAL:	28	100.0%

Although the question about the number of times a respondent had married was aimed at those presently married, most of those who were no longer married, also responded to this question - only 10 of them not doing so. The information in Table 11.3 is therefore a more accurate reflection of the marital history of

all respondents who had married rather than those married at the time of the survey. To get an idea of the latter the number who were divorced or widowed at the time of the study (63) can be subtracted from the number who indicated that a previous marriage had been terminated (72). The resulting 9 cases (4.2% of total sample) are of those who were married at the time of the study and who had been married before. Table 11.4 also shows that about a quarter of all the respondents (72 out of 300) had experienced divorce and/or widowhood.

2.3 Children

The vast majority of respondents had children (87.3%). The average number of children from first marriages was 2.46. The mode was 2, nearly half of all respondents with children from a first marriage (46.5%) having this number of children. Four subjects had 6 and one subject had 8 children from her first marriage. About 4% of respondents had children from second marriages. The average number of children from such marriages was 1.9. Four respondents had illegitimate children. In one case the respondent had two and in another three illegitimate children.

Table 11.6

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Have Children	261	87.3%
Do not have Children	38	12.7%
TOTAL:	299	100.0%

The mean age of women at the time of their first marriage was 22.88 years (nearly 70% of respondents being between 20 and 25 when entering marriage for the first time), while that for men was 25.86 years. The discrepancy of almost three years between men and women here is in line both with popular conceptions and national statistics (see Strijdom, 1987:456&457). Indeed, the

proportion of wives who were under 21 years of age at the time of their first marriage (27.2%), was more than four times higher than the proportion of husbands who married in that age category (6.6%) (see Table 11.7). The proportion of husbands who were in the 26-30 year age bracket at the time of their first marriage was also double that of the wives.

Table 11.7

MEN AND WOMEN'S AGE AT MARRIAGE				
AGE	WOMEN		MEN	
Under 21	74	27.2%	18	6.6%
21 - 25	148	54.4%	144	52.9%
26 - 30	40	14.7%	78	28.7%
31 - 35	6	2.2%	17	6.3%
36 - 40	2	0.7%	8	2.9%
Over 40	2	0.7%	7	2.6%
TOTAL:	272 *	100.0%	272 *	100.0%
	MEAN: 22.88		MEAN: 25.86	
* Excludes male respondents.				

Just under half of the respondents were between 21 and 25 years old at the birth of their first child. The mean here was 24.86 years. As far as second children are concerned, again just under half were in the 26-30 age bracket. The mean here was 27.16 years. Since the average number of children per respondent is 2.46 (for first marriages) it can be deduced that the most common child-bearing period for the women included in this study is between 20 and 30 years of age. In other words, by thirty years of age most of the women in this study would have had all their children.

Table 11.8

RESPONDENT'S AGE AT BIRTH OF FIRST AND SECOND CHILDREN				
AGE	FIRST CHILD		SECOND CHILD	
Under 21	32	12.7%	4	1.9%
21 - 25	115	45.6%	70	33.5%
26 - 30	86	34.1%	97	46.4%
31 - 35	16	6.3%	35	16.8%
Over 35	3	1.2%	3	1.4%
TOTAL:	252 *	100.0%	209	100.0%
	MEAN: 24.86		MEAN: 27.16	
* Excludes male respondents.				

Table 11.9

AGE AT MARRIAGE AND CHILD BIRTH			
AGE AT:	MEAN	MODE	MEDIAN*
Marriage (Respondent)	22.88	22	22 (54.3%)
Marriage (Spouse)	25.86	23	24 (50.4%)
Birth of First Child **	24.86	24	25 (58.3%)
Birth of Second Child **	27.16	27	27 (56.9%)
Birth of Third Child **	29.33	30	29 (54.1%)
* Cumulative percentage in brackets.			
** Respondent's age.			

4.2 Religion

As indicated in Table 11.10 the vast majority of respondents (93.3%) claimed that they are affiliated to some religious denomination. As regards church attendance, again the majority of respondents (58%) reported that they attend church regularly compared with only 47% of their husbands¹.

Table 11.10

RESPONDENT'S RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION		
DENOMINATION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
No Affiliation	20	6.7%
Catholic	13	4.3%
Jewish	6	2.0%
Dutch Reformed	78	26.0%
Anglican	58	19.3%
Methodist	49	16.3%
Presbyterian	18	6.0%
Full Gospel	21	7.0%
Other	37	12.3%
TOTAL	300	100.0%

Table 11.11

REGULARITY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE				
ATTENDS CHURCH REGULARLY	RESPONDENT		SPOUSE	
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	172	57.7%	120	48.0%
No	126	42.3%	130	52.0%
TOTAL:	298	100%	250	100.0%

Here it may be interesting to note that there was a clear association between religious denomination and reported regularity of church attendance. More particularly, whereas over 80% of respondents affiliated to the Dutch Reformed church indicated that they attend church regularly, this was the case for only 51% of Anglicans and 42% of Methodists (table not provided). The respective figures for spouses was 72%; 43% and 29%.

2.5 Language

Since Grahamstown is known to be a predominantly English speaking town, it is not surprising that there were far more English-speaking (62%) than Afrikaans-speaking (31%) subjects in the sampled population. Comparing these data to that for White South Africans generally, one notices that the ratio of English and Afrikaans speakers in the Grahamstown sample is the reverse of that which pertains to the population as a whole. The proportion of Afrikaans speakers in the sample was also higher than that in Albany when the total population of the region is considered (31% vs 20.5%) (Central Statistical Services, 03-01-06, 1991:74). However, since students and school children in residences constitute a relatively large proportion of the White Grahamstown community (over one third) and the vast majority of these are English speaking, when these are excluded, the ratio of Afrikaans to English speakers in the sample is roughly equivalent to that for the Grahamstown community as a whole.

Table 11.12

LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION: WHITES IN GRAHAMSTOWN SAMPLE; ALBANY AND SOUTH AFRICA						
LANGUAGE	GRAHAMSTOWN SAMPLE		URBAN ALBANY EXCLUDING STUDENTS*		SOUTH AFRICA **	
English	186	62.0%	4 792	65.5%	1751 968	38.7%
Afrikaans	92	30.7%	2 319	31.7%	2602 744	57.6%
Both	17	5.7%	63	0.9%	35 986	0.8%
Other	5	1.7%	142	1.9%	131 175	2.9%
TOTAL:	300	100%	7 316	100%	4521 873	100.0%
SOURCES: Central Statistical Services (03-01-06) 1991:74 (Albany). Central Statistical Services (03-01-00) 1991:1.17 (R.S.A.). * Students and school pupils in residences estimated at 4000 in 1991. ** Includes visitors\tourists and excludes South Africans living abroad.						

The above data with respect to the Grahamstown survey are based

on the mother tongue of the respondent. Cross-tabulation of this variable with spouse's mother tongue and present home language revealed that in the vast majority of cases where the respondent's mother tongue was English, she was married to a man whose mother tongue was English and in almost all cases, the home language was also English. The fact that there was greater discrepancy as far as Afrikaans speaking respondents are concerned is probably a reflection of the minority status of Afrikaans speakers in Grahamstown and therefore of the availability of Afrikaans speaking spouses. The data nevertheless show that despite the numerical imbalance, there is very little intermarriage between the language groups. Respondent's mother tongue has been used for further analysis of respondent's cultural affiliation.

Table 11.3

CROSS-TABULATION: RESPONDENT'S MOTHER TONGUE AND SPOUSE'S MOTHER TONGUE		
SPOUSE'S MOTHER TONGUE	RESPONDENT'S MOTHER TONGUE*	
	English	Afrikaans
English	90.0%	24.0%
Afrikaans	10.0%	76.0%
TOTAL:	100.0%	100.0%
* Excluding male respondents, both and 'other' language categories. Value: 100.092 D.F. 1 Probability: 0.0000		

Table 11.4

CROSS-TABULATION: RESPONDENT'S MOTHER TONGUE AND PRESENT HOME LANGUAGE		
PRESENT HOME LANGUAGE	RESPONDENT'S MOTHER TONGUE	
	English	Afrikaans
English	99.4%	14.3%
Afrikaans	0.6%	85.7%
TOTAL:	100%	100%
* Excluding male respondents, both and 'other' language categories. Value: 194.274 D.F. 1 Probability: 0.0000		

2.5 Occupation

Given the difficulties involved in classifying the class position of households when there is more than one earner (see Chapter 9), it was decided to draw a distinction between the occupations of female respondents who were married, living together or had been married and that of their husbands. Cross-tabulation of these variables revealed that they are related in a statistically significant manner (probability equal to 0). However, it also shows that 23 of the women who were employed in the 'professional' category were married to men whose occupations were classified as 'middle' or 'manual'. Moreover, half of the women whose occupations were in the middle category were married to men in the 'manual' category. When housewives are excluded from the analysis one notices that 47% of respondents (90 out of 191) had married a man whose occupation was classified alongside their own, 34% (64 respondents) had 'married down' while 19% (37 respondents) had married a man in a higher occupational category.

Table 11.5

OCCUPATIONS OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR HUSBANDS									
HUSBAND	RESPONDENT								
	PROF		MIDDLE		MANUAL		HOUSEWIFE		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
PROF	53	69.7	23	27.1	9	30.0	19	34.5	104
MIDDLE	10	13.2	21	24.7	5	16.7	15	27.3	51
MANUAL	13	17.1	41	48.2	16	53.3	21	38.2	91
	76	100%	85	100%	30	100%	55	100%	246*

* Students (2 cases) and male respondents excluded.
Value: 538.00 D.F. 12 (categories adjusted for presentation)
Probability 0.000

To facilitate analysis and given that in the majority of cases husbands' occupations were rated either above or alongside those of their wives, the former was combined with the occupations of single women. Excluding male respondents, the results were as follows:

Table 11.16

OCCUPATIONS OF MARRIED MEN AND SINGLE WOMEN		
OCCUPATION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Professional & Managerial	108	38.7%
Middle White-collar Occupations	46	16.5%
Manual Foreman & Skilled Occupations	67	24.0%
Routine Non-manual & Semi-skilled	28	10.0%
Unskilled Manual and Menial	2	0.7%
Farmer	12	4.3%
Armed Forces	5	1.8%
Housewife	5	1.8%
Student	6	2.2%
TOTAL:	279	100%

* Excluding male respondents. No response: 11 cases.

As indicated in Chapter 9, the data were grouped into three main categories: Professional, Middle and Manual. Moreover, given the difficulties involved in classifying the 'housewife' category, it was left out of reckoning in further analysis of the variable 'occupation'.

Table 11.17

OCCUPATIONS OF MARRIED MEN AND SINGLE WOMEN		
OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY:	NUMBER	%
PROFESSIONAL (Professional & managerial & students)	114	41.6%
MIDDLE (Middle white-collar occupations & farmers & armed forces)	63	23.0%
MANUAL (Manual foreman & skilled occupations & Routine non-manual & semi-skilled manual & Unskilled manual and menial)	97	35.4%
TOTAL:	274*	100%
* Excluding male respondents and housewives.		

This table shows both the bias in the Grahamstown community in favour of service sector employment and its relative wealth - about two thirds of occupations being either professional, managerial or in the service sector. The fact that about one third of occupations were of the manual type is also an indication of the bias in the sample in favour of 'lower class households'. Since the census uses different occupational categories from the ones used in this study, an exact comparison is not possible. It is nevertheless noteworthy that whereas 30% of the total economically active White population of South Africa, was employed in professional, semi-professional, managerial and executive positions, this applies to 42% of the Whites in urban Albany (see Chapter 8 and Central Statistical Services, 03-01-00, 1991:1.14; 03-01-08, 1991:282). Moreover, less than 10% of the economically active White population of Albany was employed as artisans, apprentices and in related occupations (Central Statistical Services, 03-01-08, 1991:282). This means that

a more representative sample of White households in Grahamstown would have yielded about a third of the households dependent on incomes from 'manual' occupations.

Finally, given that occupation is not always the best indicator of social class, in further analysis it will be used in conjunction with area of residence to ascertain the socio-economic or class position of households. As noted previously, the sample was drawn in such a way that there would be an equal representation of households from two residential areas that contrast in terms of socio-economic status as measured by property values and that a third area consisting of flats would be included. As indicated below, cross-tabulation of the variable occupation and area of residence shows that these are indeed related in a statistically significant manner:

Table 11.18

CROSS-TABULATION: AREA AND OCCUPATION			
OCCUPATION	AREA I: UPPER	AREA II: LOWER	AREA III:FLATS
Professional	63.4%	6.3%	51.1%
Middle	17.1%	16.2%	15.6%
Manual	10.6%	45.9%	6.7%
Non-manual	3.3%	19.8%	4.4%
Unskilled	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%
Farmer	4.9%	2.7%	6.7%
Armed Forces	0.8%	3.6%	0.0%
Housewife	0.0%	3.6%	2.2%
Student	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%
Value: 149.452 D.F. 16 Probability: 0.0000			

3. HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

One of the main objectives of this study was to ascertain the frequency of the conventional nuclear family (first time married couple with biological offspring) vis-a-vis other family and household types (single person, single parent, remarriage nuclear families etc). Given the high divorce rate among White South Africans (see Chapter 4), it was surprising to learn that the conventional nuclear family was not only the mode but was by far the most common household type among the surveyed population. It accounted for just under half (48%) of all the households surveyed. Moreover, the only other household types that were present in more than 10% of cases, were the single person household (16.7%) and first time married couple household (16.1%). Consequently, if one places these data in relation to what can be described as the ideal typical domestic life cycle for white adults: couple household; nuclear family; single person household - then one notices that the vast majority of households (80.6%) fell into one of these phases. Conversely, households where one of the spouses had been in a previous marriage (remarriage family) accounted for less than 3% of households. When the various other types of nuclear family households (reconstituted and no-marriage nuclear families and 'adoptive families') are added we note that just over half (51.5%) of households were nuclear families of some kind while extended family households were present in less than 4% of cases.

Cross-tabulation of household type and number of people also shows that the conventional nuclear family as well as those where adoption had taken place, account for 64% of the population covered by the survey (Table 11.20). If couple and single person households are added to these, then about 80% of the population was part of one of these phases of the domestic life cycle.

Table 11.19

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Single Parent	13	4.4%
Conventional Nuclear	143	47.8%
Adoptive Family	2	0.7%
Couple (First Marriage)	48	16.1%
Single Person	50	16.7%
Extended Nuclear	10	3.3%
Extended Single Parent	0	0.0%
Re-marriage Nuclear	3	1.0%
Re-marriage Couple	4	1.3%
No-marriage Couple	2	0.7%
No-marriage Nuclear	6	2.0%
Other	18	6.0%
TOTAL:	299	100.0%

Table 11.20

CROSS-TABULATION: HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE		
HOUSEHOLD TYPE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Single Parent	35	3.94%
Nuclear Family *	558	62.84%
Couple Household	97	10.92%
Single Person	53	5.92%
Extended Family **	63	7.09%
Remarriage Family ***	14	1.58%
No-Marriage Family ****	28	3.15%
Other	40	4.51%
TOTAL:	888	100.0%
Average size of household = 2.98 N = 297		
* Conventional and adoptive nuclear families combined.		
** Extended single parent and extended nuclear families.		
*** Remarriage couple households and remarriage nuclear families combined.		
**** No marriage couple households and no-marriage nuclear families combined.		

Cross-tabulation of respondent's age and household structure makes the same point: in all of the age groups except the 61 and over category, the majority of respondents (60% and over) were living in either nuclear family or couple households. The majority is even higher (70% and over) if single person households are added to these.

Table 11.21

CROSS-TABULATION: RESPONDENTS' AGE AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE						
HOUSEHOLD	-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	TOTAL
Single Parent	2.2%	3.6%	10.9%	4.9%	2.0%	4.9%
Nuclear*	47.8%	76.2%	64.1%	31.7%	4.1%	50.0%
Couple	13.0%	7.1%	9.4%	31.7%	32.7%	16.5%
Single Person	8.7%	3.6%	6.3%	17.1%	44.9%	14.1%
Extended**	4.3%	2.4%	1.6%	7.3%	6.1%	3.9%
Remarriage***	4.3%	1.2%	3.1%	4.9%	2.0%	2.8%
No-Marriage ****	6.5%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Other	13.0%	6.0%	1.6%	2.4%	8.2%	6.0%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Value 147.939 D.F. 44 Probability 0.000						
* Conventional and adoptive nuclear families combined						
** Extended single parent and extended nuclear families						
*** Remarriage couple households and remarriage nuclear families combined						
**** No marriage couple households and no-marriage nuclear families combined						
CONVENTIONAL NUCLEAR & COUPLE	60.8%	83.3%	73.5%	63.4%	36.8%	66.5%
CONVENTIONAL NUCLEAR, COUPLE & SINGLE PERSON	69.5%	86.9%	79.8%	80.5%	81.7%	80.6%

Using the survey data pertaining to age at marriage, number of children and age at the birth of children as well as national statistics on the life-expectancy of White males and females, one can calculate the approximate proportion of a life-time spent in the various household types that make up the domestic life cycle.

In the case of age at marriage and childbirth the median has been used i.e. the figure refers to the age at which most women in the survey would have been married or given birth to a child\ren. It is, however, not significantly different from the mean or average (see above pg 292). Assumptions on which the table below is based are that, on average, couples have 3 children and that the latter leave the parental home at the age of 18 years.

Table 11.22

IDEAL TYPE: DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE						
HOUSEHOLD	MEN			WOMEN		
	AGE	YEARS	LIFE-TIME %	AGE	YEARS	LIFE-TIME %
Nuclear Family	0-18	18	27.7%	0-18	18	25.7%
Single Person or Other	18-24	6	9.2%	18-22	4	5.7%
Couple Household	24-27	3	4.6%	22-25	3	4.3%
Nuclear Family	27-49	22	33.9%	25-47	22	31.4%
Couple Household	49-65	16	24.6%	47-63	16	22.9%
Single Person		0	0.0%	63-70	7	10.0%
TOTAL:		65*	100%		70*	100%

* Life expectancy at 5 years for White males and females in South Africa in 1980 (Simkins,1986:28).

As can be noted, the men and women in this study would spend about 60% and 57% percent of their life-time as members of nuclear families and a further 29% and 27% in couple households, respectively. Together these phases account for about 91% of the lives of men and 84% of the lives of women. The discrepancy between men and women is of course related to differences in life expectancy which means that while most women can expect to spend time in a single person household or in institutional care during the latter part of their lives, this does not apply to most men.

4. HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE, CLASS AND CULTURE

As noted previously, the sample was drawn in such a way as to ensure an adequate representation of lower class households and that flats would be included. This was done not only to facilitate analysis of the data but also to prevent a bias in favour of nuclear families. The latter assumption proved to be warranted since, as indicated below, nuclear family households were almost twice as common in Area I (Upper) than II (lower) and in Area III (flats) they accounted for less than a fifth of all households. Moreover, the number of extended family households in Area II was double that for Area I.

Table 11.23

CROSS-TABULATION: HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE BY AREA						
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	AREA I (UPPER)		AREA II (LOWER)		AREA III (FLATS)	
Single Parent	3	2.4%	8	6.5%	2	4.2%
Nuclear	93	74.4%	54	43.5%	6	12.5%
Couple	17	13.6%	27	21.8%	10	20.8%
Extended	3	2.4%	6	4.8%	0	0.0%
Single Person	7	5.6%	19	15.3%	24	50.0%
Other	2	1.6%	10	8.1%	6	12.5%
TOTAL:	125	100%	124#	100%	48#	100%
# Xhosa and Tamil families excluded and 1 non-response.						
Value: 82.764 D..F. 10 Probability: 0.000						

More or less the same pattern was revealed when household type was correlated with occupation. But while the data show an inverse relationship between occupation and extended family households and that nuclear families were more common in the professional than manual categories, there were also relatively more nuclear families in the manual as compared to the middle category. Moreover, single parent families were most common in the middle category. This can be attributed to the fact that most

single parent families are headed by women and clerical work constitutes a major part of the 'middle' occupational category.

Table 11.24

HOUSEHOLD TYPE BY OCCUPATION				
STRUCTURE	PROF	MIDDLE	MANUAL	TOTAL
Single Parent	2.7%	10.1%	2.9%	4.4%
Nuclear Family	62.8%	45.8%	52.9%	55.5%
Couple Household	10.6%	25.4%	25.5%	19.3%
Single Person	19.5%	11.9%	8.8%	13.9%
Extended Family	0.9%	3.4%	3.9%	2.5%
Other	3.5%	3.4%	5.9%	4.4%
TOTAL:	100% #	100%	100%#	100%
# Xhosa and Tamil families excluded. Value 21.512 D.F. 10 Probability 0.0178				

Cross-tabulation of household structure and language showed that the differences were not substantial nor significant. The most important difference here is that English speakers were twice as likely to reside in single person households as Afrikaans speakers.

Table 11.25

CROSS-TABULATION: MOTHER TONGUE AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE			
HOUSEHOLD	ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS	TOTAL
Single Parent	3.8%	6.5%	4.7%
Nuclear	50.8%	52.2%	51.3%
Couple	16.8%	20.7%	18.1%
Single Person	18.9%	10.9%	16.2%
Extended	2.7%	4.3%	3.2%
Other	7.0%	5.4%	6.5%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%
Value: 4.722 D.F. 5 Probability: 0.4507			

In sum, nuclear family households were shown to be significantly more common among respondents aged 31-40 than others; in the upper than the lower class area; among those residing in houses as opposed to flats and among 'professionals' as opposed to those in manual occupations.

While some of these findings may be what one might have expected on the basis of 'common sense', an unanticipated and highly significant finding was that 'class' and 'culture' were themselves related. More specifically, the results show that English speakers were better represented in the 'professional' category than Afrikaans speakers (50% vs 28%) and that the opposite is true of the manual category (43% vs 30%). This pattern becomes even more apparent if the 'professional' and 'middle' categories are combined. By reworking the data in this manner, we see that just under 70% of English households compared with just over half of Afrikaans households are dependent on incomes deriving from professional, managerial or middle white-collar occupations.

Table 11.26

CROSS-TABULATION: LANGUAGE BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY		
OCCUPATION	ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS
Professional	50.3%	28.3%
Middle	18.9%	23.9%
Manual	30.8%	47.8%
TOTAL:	100.0%	100.0%
Value: 11.320 D.F. 2 Probability: 0.0035		

Language was also shown to be related to area of residence: a larger proportion of Afrikaans speakers residing in the lower than upper areas and the converse being true of English speakers.

Table 11.27

CROSS-TABULATION: LANGUAGE AND AREA OF RESIDENCE			
	RESPONDENT'S MOTHER TONGUE		Total
	English	Afrikaans	
Area I: Upper	45.9%	36.4%	42.8%
Area II: Lower	32.6%	56.8%	40.5%
Area III: Flats	21.5%	6.8%	16.7%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%
Value: 17.500 D.F. 2 Probability: 0.0002			

Since household structure was shown to be related to age and class (as measured both by occupation and area of residence) while the latter was shown to be related to culture, a multi-variate analysis was undertaken involving all of these variables. In the presentation below, the variable 'age' has been kept constant by only focusing on the 31 - 50 age category. Furthermore, only the two extreme occupational categories have been used. In other words, the table compares the household structures of English and Afrikaans speakers aged 31 - 50 in the professional and manual occupational categories.

Table 11.28

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE BY LANGUAGE AND OCCUPATION IN 31 - 50 AGE CATEGORY					
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		TOTAL
	PROF	MANUAL	PROF	MANUAL	
Single Parent	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	4.7%
Nuclear	80.4%	81.8%	75.0%	58.8%	76.4%
Couple	3.9%	18.2%	12.5%	17.6%	10.4%
Extended	2.0%	0.0%	6.3%	11.8%	3.8%
Single Person	5.9%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	3.8%
Other	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Although the numbers which make up the data involved in this table are small, the data suggest that Afrikaans speakers in the manual occupations differ from all of the other categories in terms of their propensity to live in particular kinds of household structures. Indeed, whereas nuclear families account for the vast majority of all of the other categories including English speakers in the manual occupational category (82%), they constitute less than 60% of 'lower class' Afrikaans households. The comparable figures for **conventional** (i.e. first marriage) nuclear families is: 80.3% of 'Professional' English speakers; 81.8% 'Manual' English speakers; 75% 'Professional' Afrikaans speakers and only 47.1% of 'Manual' Afrikaans speakers (table not provided). Moreover, if one adds together nuclear families, couple households and single person households one notices that 90% of 'Professional' English speakers, all of the 'Manual' English speakers and 94% of 'Professional' Afrikaans speakers live in such households while the comparable figure for 'lower class' Afrikaans speakers is 76%. Since class only seems to make a difference within the Afrikaans category, this suggests that culture cannot be discounted in explanations for variations in household structures.

5. IMPACT OF SURVEY METHOD

The main descriptive finding of this part of the survey was the statistical preponderance of the nuclear family as well as the phases in the domestic life cycle associated with it. While one cannot be certain of the number of households which had experienced an extended family phase, the very low proportion of extended family arrangements in the forty to fifty age category - when respondents can be expected to have at least one elderly parent alive (1.6%) and in the 65 plus category (6%) suggests that this family structure is by no means the norm as far as Whites included in this study are concerned. The question I address below is: In what way could the manner in which the sample was selected impact on this finding?

Comparison of the age distribution of the population included in the survey and that of the wider White Grahamstown community aged 25 and over, revealed that there are no significant differences. People over the age of 65 were, however, under-represented in the sample about one and a half times (factor 1.6) (14.1% in actual sample and 22.7% in general population). Moreover, the sample excluded those in university residences and school hostels. In 1991 there were 30 university residences; 34 school hostels and 3 homes for the aged. These accounted for 2.4% of all the dwellings recorded in the 1991 census for urban Albany². Since these constitute a significant proportion of the population (about one third)³ and residences\hostels tend to contain more people than houses or flats, their inclusion would have had an important impact on the average size of households. Their inclusion would not, however, have had a marked effect on the distribution of households as such. It is nevertheless the case that the combined impact of the under-representation of those in the older age category and the exclusion of young people in boarding schools and university residences, would have been a reduction in the absolute number of nuclear family households. A representative sample drawn from the whole White Grahamstown community would therefore have

yielded a slightly lower number of nuclear family households than was the case in the actual sample in favour of more single person households, couple households and, particularly in the case of students, the 'other' category.

As regards language, the actual sample contained roughly the same proportions of English and Afrikaans speakers as that which applies to the wider Grahamstown community when students are excluded but 10% more Afrikaans speakers than would have been the case if students were included. But since Afrikaans speakers were only slightly less likely to reside in nuclear family households than English speakers, their over-representation in the sample when compared to the total White population of Grahamstown, is unlikely to have affected the statistical predominance of the nuclear family household as such.

The most significant bias in the sample was in favour of 'lower class households'. As noted this was done to ensure a sufficient number of them to enable statistical analysis of the data with the variable 'social class'. In fact, households dependent on income from 'manual' occupations were 35% of the sample but less than 10% of the economically active White population of urban Albany were employed in 'manual' occupations. To get an idea of the distribution of household types that would have been produced by a randomly drawn sample, the responses of those classified in the 'manual' category to the question of household type, are negatively weighted by the factor 3.

Table 11.29

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES - RECORDED AND WEIGHTED COMPARED		
STRUCTURE	TOTAL RECORDED	TOTAL WEIGHTED
Single parent	4.4%	4.8%
Nuclear Family *	55.4%	56.3%
Couple **	19.2%	17.3%
Single Person	13.8%	15.4%
Extended #	2.9%	2.4%
Other	4.4%	3.8%
TOTAL:	100%	100%
* Conventional, adoptive, remarriage and no-marriage nuclear families combined. ** First marriage, remarriage and no-marriage couple households combined. # Extended nuclear and extended single parent families combined. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.		

Though the differences are not substantial, the results of this comparison are as expected: a randomly drawn sample would have yielded even more nuclear family households and less extended family households than was the case in the actual sample. The small difference could be attributed to the very small number of extended family households in the sample. It could also be an indication of the fact that while the relationship between occupation and household structure is statistically significant, it is not very strong.

6. CONCLUSION:

Given that White South Africans have one of the highest divorce rates in the world, the finding that re-marriage and single parent families constituted a very small proportion of all households and that the conventional nuclear family was by far the most common household structure, may seem surprising. However, closer examination reveals that a high divorce rate is not at all incompatible with the statistical dominance of

conventional nuclear families. This is so since, contrary to the way in which divorce is often reported in the media⁴, the divorce rate has not increased to such an extent that either the majority of individuals or of families are affected by it. More particularly, the specific divorce rate for White South Africans was 16 in 1989. This means that out of every 1000 existing marriages, 16 ended in divorce. The crude divorce rate (number of divorces per 1000 of the population) is of course even lower (Central Statistical Services, 1989, Report Number 03-07-01:7-8).⁵ These rates are reflected in the fact that only about 5% of Whites over the age of 18 were divorced at the time of the 1991 census (CSS, 03-01-00, 1991:1.11). This does not mean that divorce does not affect a large number of individuals - particularly children. But what it does mean is that divorce has not reached such proportions that non-conventional family structures such as remarriage or single parent families are threatening to take over the position of the conventional nuclear family as the statistical norm .

The other major finding to emerge from this part of the analysis is the fact that age, occupation and area of residence were all shown to have a statistically significant relationship to household structure. Moreover, although English speakers were not significantly more or less likely to reside in particular household structures, multi-variate analysis involving age, occupation and language suggests that the influence of the latter cannot be discounted. The following chapter considers the results of the survey with respect to family ideology.

7. NOTES

1. The notion of 'regular church attendance' is, of course open to many interpretations. It could mean attending church once a week, once a month or once a year. There is no way of knowing how individual respondents interpreted this question or if their actual behaviour coincides with their interpretation. What the data does reveal, however, is that a certain proportion of respondents *described themselves* as regular church goers while certain proportion did not.

2. This has been calculated as follows: Total number of dwellings in urban Albany in 1991 excluding hostels and homes for the aged (2 717) (CSS,03-01-25,1991:128) plus my enumeration of hostels and homes for the aged (67) = 2784. Sixty seven as a percentage of 2784 is 2.4%.

3. Total population Albany (rural and urban Whites) =12 641. Total number of people in dwellings other than hostels and homes for the aged = 8679. Remainder = 3 962 as proportion of total population of urban Albany (11 317) = 35% (CSS,03-01-07,1991:250; CSS,03-01-00,1991:55) .

4. It is on the basis of the marriage/divorce ratio (number of divorce decrees granted in a particular year as a proportion of the number of marriages contracted in that year) that one gets the statement that 'half of all marriages today, end in divorce'. The marriage/divorce ratio was 51.3 in the United States in 1990 (Schaefer and Lamm,1992:401). This misleading portrayal has done much to encourage the view that non-conventional families have become the statistical norm.

5. The comparable figure for the United States was 24.2 divorces per 1000 married women 15 years and older (Schaefer and Lamm,1992:401) and only about 10% of the total population was divorced according to the 1991 census (Aulette,1994:285) .

CHAPTER 12

SURVEY RESULTS: FAMILY IDEOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapter 9, Kellerman's (1987) description of contemporary family ideology was used as a framework for the formulation of questions concerning subjects' views on family-related behaviour. They have been reformulated as follows:

- 1) Pre-marital sex is unacceptable.
- 2) Only monogamy is acceptable.
- 3) Marriage should be based on mutual (sexual) attraction or 'love'.
- 4) Marriage is for life.
- 5) The object of marriage is to produce children.
- 6) Married couples should set up home away from their families of orientation (either sets of parents).
- 7) Husbands should provide materially for families.
- 8) Wives should do housework and look after children as their first priority.
- 9) Husbands should have authority over wives.

Where possible, data from the case studies have been used to illustrate the views expressed by subjects in the survey and where appropriate, the relationship between responses and the variables 'class' and 'culture' are indicated.

2. PRE-MARITAL SEX

Table 12.1

VIEWS ON PRE-MARITAL SEX		
FIND PRE-MARITAL SEX :	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Acceptable	80	27.7%
Conditionally acceptable	73	25.3%
Unacceptable	136	47.0%
TOTAL:	289	100.0%

While most of the women included in this study were not, in principle, against pre-marital sex, the majority is small - 47% of respondents indicating that they are opposed to this

practice under any circumstances. Celia, articulated this view, when she responded as follows to this question:

"Pre-marital sex? I'm old fashioned. I say 'no'. The Bible says no."

Belinda, on the other hand expressed the 'conditional' viewpoint:

"My advice is go 'gashly'. It must be within a genuine commitment. Not just a fling now and then for the hell of it".

The degree of opposition to pre-marital sex exhibited by those included in the survey is significantly lower than that reported by either de Witt (in Le Roux, 1987) or Fouché (in Le Roux, 1987) in their studies of whites in Pretoria and Bloemfontein respectively. De Witt, for example, found that over half the men and 70% of the women in his study disagreed with the practice of pre-marital sex and that 68% of the men and 81% of the women agreed with the statement that "sexual intercourse should only take place within marriage" (Le Roux, 1987:222). One of the reasons for the discrepancy between my own and de Witt's findings is that de Witt's subjects were all members of the Dutch Reformed Church and, as such, predominantly Afrikaans speaking. As indicated in the table below, Afrikaans speakers in the Grahamstown study, were more likely to object to pre-marital sex than English speakers (60% vs 40%). No statistically significant relationship was found with respect to occupation (Value 3.664;d.f. 4 and probability 0.4533). The data nevertheless show that whereas 41% in the 'professional' category regarded pre-marital sex as unacceptable, this applied to 50% and 51% of those in the 'middle' and 'manual' categories respectively (table not provided).

Table 12.2

VIEWS ON PRE-MARITAL SEX BY MOTHER TONGUE				
	ACCEPTABLE	AGAINST	DEPENDS	TOTAL
English	30.6%	38.9%	30.6%	100%
Afrikaans	23.9%	59.1%	17.0%	100%
TOTAL	28.4%	45.5%	26.1%	100%
Value 10.362	D.F. 2	Probability: 0.0056		

3. MONOGAMY

The notion that monogamy is the only acceptable form of marriage, is institutionalised in Western societies in the form of laws prohibiting bigamy. Indeed, Laslett has argued that if any particular behavioral pattern can be regarded as 'an institution' in Western societies then it must be monogamous marriage "for no other distinct practice-with-belief exists alongside it as an alternative" (1972:63). To test the views of White Grahamstown residents on the question of monogamous marriage, they were asked if they felt a man should be permitted to have more than one wife. The results leave little doubt as to where the women included in this study stand on this issue (see Table 12.3 below). It can therefore be concluded that the overwhelming majority of subjects identify with this aspect of contemporary family ideology.

Table 12.3

VIEWS ON POLYGAMY		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Acceptable	4	1.4%
Unacceptable	277	95.8%
Depends	8	2.8%
TOTAL:	289	100%

4. SEX-LOVE AS THE BASIS OF THE CONJUGAL BOND

Gittins (1985:73) has argued that the real foundation of marriage today - as in the past - is economic. My concern here, however, is with subjects' *beliefs* i.e ideological notions about what marriages ought to be based on and, as Goode (1982:54) points out, in contemporary western societies, people are socialised to regard 'love' as the appropriate basis of marriage. Moreover, what is at issue here is not just the notion of 'love' but that of sex-love. That is, individuals who marry are expected not only to love one another but be physically or sexually attracted to one another. The latter is conveyed by the term 'being in love' as opposed to 'loving someone' as one may love a brother or sister. In other words it is the integration of sex and romantic love that is at issue here.

To operationalise this notion, two questions were devised. The first asked subjects to indicate what they regard as the most important ingredient in a good marriage. The second enquired as to whether they feel a marriage between individuals who are not physically (that is sexually) attracted to one another could succeed.

On the first question, surprising results were achieved - especially if one expected the subjects to respond in the ideologically correct manner: A wide variety of answers were given. This is illustrated by the size of the category 'other' in Table 12.4. Moreover, of those responses that were given frequently enough to warrant categorisation, 'trust' emerged as the most popular response, 'love' being identified in only 18% of cases. These findings can be interpreted in a number of ways.

Firstly, the notion that 'love' is the basis of marriage could be so entrenched in the minds of individuals that, in responding the way they did, they were identifying *another*

necessary or important ingredient. That this explanation may have merit was revealed in one of case studies when Petra identified "communication" as the most important ingredient and when asked "what about love?" said "Oh, I forgot about that".

Secondly, the high percentage of respondents who identified 'trust' as the most important ingredient could have been influenced by the fact that the two previous questions asked their opinions on extra-marital affairs. However, this result was also achieved in another study which focused on the social values of South Africans where faithfulness was mentioned as a very important ingredient in marriage in 92% of cases and as such took 'first place' - 'a good sexual relationship' occupying fourth place (Markinor, 1982:15).

Table 12.4

VIEWS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN MARRIAGE		
INGREDIENT	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Trust	81	29.9%
Love	49	18.0%
Communication	46	17.0%
Friendship	27	9.9%
Compatibility	11	4.1%
Security	1	0.4%
Other	56	20.7%
TOTAL:	271	100%

A third way of interpreting these results is simply to point out that the majority of respondents did not identify 'love' as the most important ingredient in marriage and therefore do not identify with this aspect of contemporary family ideology. This could be related to the fact that the vast majority of respondents were already married at the time of the study and had been married for quite some time (the average age of respondents was 44). It is therefore possible that many respondents have become disillusioned with the notion that 'love conquers all' and as a result adopt a more

pragmatic attitude to marriage. This interpretation was not however supported by the data: the proportion of respondents over 60 years who identified 'love' as the most important ingredient in marriage (26%) was higher than that for any other age category - trust emerging as the most common response among those under 30 years of age (table not provided) (Value 24.910 d.f. 24 probability 0.4107).

Finally, the results may bear testimony to the elusive and essentially indefinable character of the term 'love'. That is to say, 'love' means different things to different people. If this is accepted then 'trust' and 'communication' can be seen as different aspects of love and since these three together account for about 70% of responses we are drawn to the conclusion that the majority do indeed accept this aspect of contemporary family ideology. The results of the second question pertaining to this issue concur with this view (see below)¹.

While English and Afrikaans speakers did not differ significantly with respect to this question (Probability 0.4029), the same was not true when class was considered. Here it is noteworthy that those in the manual and middle categories were more likely to identify love as the most important ingredient in marriage than those in the professional category and whereas 17% of the latter identified 'friendship' this applied to less than 4% of both the middle and manual categories (table not provided) (Value 21.195; D.F. 12; Probability 0.0476).

On the question of a marriage without physical attraction between spouses, the vast majority (71%) indicated that such a marriage would not have worked for them (Table 12.5). They were less pessimistic about the success rate of such marriages generally - just under half indicating that they would not be successful even for others.

Table 12.5

VIEWS ON WHETHER A MARRIAGE WITHOUT PHYSICAL ATTRACTION CAN BE SUCCESSFUL		
CAN BE SUCCESSFUL:	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Personally:		
Yes	82	28.8%
No	203	71.2%
TOTAL:	285	100%
For Others:		
Yes	90	31.6%
No	134	47.0%
Depends on ...	61	21.4%
TOTAL:	285	100%

Here differences between the two language groups were marked: Afrikaans speakers being more inclined to see physical attraction as an essential ingredient in marriage than English speakers. No significant relationship was found with respect to occupation (Value 1.824; d.f.4; Probability 0.7681).

Table 12.6

GENERAL VIEWS ON SUCCESS OF MARRIAGE WITHOUT PHYSICAL ATTRACTION BY LANGUAGE GROUP				
	YES	NO	DEPENDS	TOTAL
English	36.2%	36.2%	27.7%	100%
Afrikaans	23.0%	64.4%	12.6%	100%
TOTAL:	31.8%	45.5%	22.7%	100%
Value 19.197 D.F. 2 Probability: 0.0001				

In conclusion, more than 70% of subjects identified either trust, love or communication as the most important ingredient in a good marriage. Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents indicated that physical attraction is a necessary ingredient in their own marriage and just under half

of the sample indicated that this is also the case for marriages generally. These findings suggest a reasonably strong commitment to the notion that, in order to be successful, a marriage should be based on a sex-love relationship.

5. MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE

Shorter (1975:271) claims that "the legal institution of marriage isn't coming to an end just the idea that you have to stay with the same person all your life". To find out whether this also applies to Grahamstown residents, responses to two questions need to be analyzed together. The first was phrased as follows: "If you discovered your husband was having an (extra-marital) affair, would you feel *compelled* to divorce him?" The word 'compelled' was used because the aim was to uncover what respondents feel is the *appropriate* response to adultery rather than to ascertain what they would in fact do under similar circumstance. In other words, the aim was to uncover their beliefs as to what is correct rather than predict their behaviour. The second question asked whether subjects feel an extra-marital affair destroys the foundations of a marriage.

Given that White South Africans have one of the highest divorce rates in the world, the results on this issue were somewhat surprising. As indicated in the table below, the majority (66%) indicated that they would not (necessarily) feel obliged to divorce a cheating husband ('Depends on' and 'no' responses combined).

Table 12.7

VIEWS ON WHETHER DIVORCE IS AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO ADULTERY		
RESPONSE:	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	97	34.5%
Depends on	84	29.9%
No	100	35.6%
TOTAL:	281	100%

Diane articulated this view when she said:

"I don't think one affair is reason for divorce. I think the couple should try and work through it and the innocent party ought to look very carefully at him or herself. If couples go for counselling they very often pull straight and live happily ever after."

Celia, by contrast, expressed the minority view :

"It will jolly well be in this marriage. Just once and then it is finished. It is about trust. If you destroy that trust just once, then it will never be the same again."

When asked whether an extra-marital affair destroys the foundations of marriage, the overwhelming majority (74%) responded in the affirmative.

Table 12.8

VIEWS ON WHETHER DIVORCE IS AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO ADULTERY		
RESPONSE	NUMBER	%
Yes	97	34.5%
Depends on	84	29.9%
No	100	35.6%
TOTAL:	281	100%

Table 12.9

VIEWS ON WHETHER ADULTERY DESTROYS THE FOUNDATIONS OF A MARRIAGE		
RESPONSE	NUMBER	%
Yes	212	73.6%
No	52	18.1%
Depends on	24	8.3%
TOTAL:	288	100%

Since only a minority (35%) indicated that they would feel compelled to divorce a cheating husband, it seems that a substantial proportion of respondents would continue with a marriage even after its foundations have been destroyed². This shows a strong ideological commitment to the notion that marriage is for life. These, somewhat contradictory findings, concur with those relating the question on pre-marital sex and suggest that the women in this study identify more strongly with the notion that marriage is for life than the idea that sex should be restricted to marriage. They also suggest that most of these women have a pragmatic approach to marriage. Even though 'trust' emerged as the most popular response on the question of the most important ingredient in a good marriage, it seems that many women are prepared to forfeit this ideal for the sake of expediency.

Cross-tabulation of responses to this question and social class revealed that lower class women showed a greater resolve to divorce a cheating husband. Only about a quarter of the women married to men in professional occupations indicated that they regard divorce as the appropriate response to adultery compared with 43% in the case of women married to men in 'manual' occupations. Conversely, while 75% of women in the 'professional' category felt that divorce was not necessarily the appropriate response, this was true for only 57% of those in the 'manual' category. The fact that lower class women showed a greater resolve to divorce a cheating husband confirms the view that there are class differences in the 'economic cost' of divorce (Elliot, 1986:147). In other words, since middle and upper class wives have more to lose from divorce in economic terms, they are more likely than their lower class counterparts to overlook their husbands' improprieties. On this issue then, lower class women identify more strongly with the ideology of the family than middle or upper class women. (No statistically significant relationship was found with respect to language - probability 0.0729).

Table 12.10

VIEWS ON ADULTERY BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY				
	PROFESSIONAL	MIDDLE	MANUAL	TOTAL
Would divorce	25.2%	32.1%	43.3%	33.5%
Would not divorce	44.9%	48.2%	18.6%	35.8%
Depends on	29.9%	19.6%	38.1%	30.8%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%	100%
Value 21.924	D.F. 4	Probability: 0.0002		

6. SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Since the middle of this century, sociologists have been predicting the break down of traditional gender roles (Young and Wilmott, 1957; Marwick, 1958; Elliot, 1986). About three decades ago, Marwick (1958:21), for example, claimed that "the sharp differentiation of male and female roles is breaking down. Men change nappies and women drive cars". However, recent research has shown that despite changing attitudes towards gender roles and the increasing involvement of (middle-class) wives in paid employment outside the home, very little change has occurred in terms of the actual division of labour within families (Elliot, 1986:84; Skolnick & Skolnick, 1989:191). It seems that while women drive cars today, few men change nappies.

To determine the extent to which White Grahamstown women identify with traditional gender-roles, they were asked to express their views on women who have young children and work outside the home voluntarily, that is, not out of economic necessity. Here 57% indicated that they find this practice unacceptable (Table 12.11). This shows that the majority of the women surveyed identify with traditional gender-roles. This is an interesting finding, since only 22% of the married women included in the survey were not working outside the home. The notion that a woman's primary responsibility is

towards her children was illustrated in the case studies when Diane indicated that she regrets the fact that she was forced to work while her children were still young and Petra, a lawyer, described her half-day job as 'ideal'.

Once again Afrikaans speakers were more likely to be opposed to working mothers than English speakers, nearly 70% indicating that they were against this practice compared with only 48% in the case of English speakers. Age was also a significant variable - less than 10% of those aged 50 and over indicating that they accept this practice compared with 33% of those in the 31-40 age category (Value 31.508 D.F. 8 Probability 0.0001).

Table 12.11

VIEWS ON WORKING MOTHERS		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Acceptable	95	32.9%
Unacceptable	164	56.7%
Other response	30	10.4%
TOTAL:	289	100.0%

Table 12.12

VIEWS ON WORKING MOTHERS BY MOTHER TONGUE				
	ACCEPTABLE	AGAINST	OTHER	TOTAL
English	38.3%	47.8%	13.9%	100%
Afrikaans	26.1%	69.3%	4.5%	100%
TOTAL:	34.3%	54.9%	10.8%	100%
Value 12.329 D.F. 2 Probability: 0.0021				

Another aspect of gender roles concerns the distribution of authority within families. This notion was addressed in the case studies but not in the survey. The conversation which took place when the question of husband's authority over wives was raised with Ellen, has been reproduced below. Her husband, Kevin, was present at the time.

Interviewer: "How would you feel if Ellen had a higher position in a company than you?"

Kevin: "No, I wouldn't like it ... but I am trying to say why ... To have to report to your wife ... I don't know ... I think it is just something in a man's genes ... in his make up that makes him want to be on top ... I think it is part of human nature".

Ellen: "I think men who accept it (women in higher positions than themselves) are a bit weak ... I tell you why. What else does a man have today for a wife to look up to. Ingrained in a woman A wife's got to bear the children. A wife has got to run the household. The man's role has always been that of provider and security. If you take all that away from him.... he's not bearing the children....he's not raising them ... what is he doing ? ...what has he got left?"

Interviewer: "He could raise the children or they could do it together. "

Ellen: "Yes but Biblically speaking. God made the wife to bear the children and the man to be the provider ... the Bible says ... for the wife to look up to the man as the head of the house. That's talking about it in a very unliberated sense but that is actually how it is."

Interviewer: "That's the model but it doesn't always work in practice."

Ellen: "It doesn't always work in practice when you get problem women and weak men."

This excerpt illustrates how both men and women - but particularly women - have internalised traditional gender

roles. Furthermore, by making reference to the Bible and 'genes', Ellen and Kevin expressed the commonly-held belief that the behaviours associated with traditional gender roles are morally and biologically based.

7. CHILDREN AND MARRIAGE

According to Gittins (1985:95), childbearing is "the principal way in which a woman becomes socially recognised as a 'real woman', a woman who has fulfilled her destiny and role in life". To test the views of white women on this question, they were asked to indicate whether they feel children are necessary for personal fulfilment generally and for them in particular. They were also asked whether they regard children as an essential part of marriage both in the case of their own marriages and marriages generally.

When answering in their personal capacity, a clear pattern emerged. The vast majority responded positively to both questions (Tables 12.13 and 12.14). More specifically, 74% indicated that children are an essential part of their own marriages and 77% indicated that they are necessary for their own personal fulfilment. The same pattern emerged from an analysis of their more general views though the majority is weaker: 56% indicating that children are essential for marriage and 60% saying that they are necessary for personal fulfilment generally.

The question of whether a childless marriage should be regarded as incomplete was also posed and here, again, the majority (57%) responded positively. Significant differences between English and Afrikaans speaking respondents were discernable on this question. However, this was also the case as far as the different class categories are concerned. In other words, Afrikaans speakers and lower-class women were more inclined to regard children as an essential part of marriage than English speakers and women married to men in

professional positions. This finding is partially explained by the fact that the variables 'language' and 'class' are themselves related.

Table 12.13

VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MARRIAGE		
	NUMBER	%
PERSONALLY:		
Agree	219	76.3%
Disagree	68	23.7%
TOTAL:	287	100%
GENERALLY:		
Agree	155	56.2%
Disagree	120	43.4%
Depends	1	0.4
TOTAL:	276	100%

Table 12.14

VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE NECESSARY FOR FULFILMENT		
	NUMBER	%
PERSONALLY:		
Agree	222	76.8%
Disagree	67	23.2%
TOTAL:	289	100%
GENERALLY:		
Agree	165	59.8%
Disagree	111	40.2%
Depends	0	0.0%
TOTAL:	276	100%

Table 12.15

VIEWS ON WHETHER A CHILDLESS MARRIAGE IS INCOMPLETE		
RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	166	57.4%
No	109	37.7%
Other	14	4.8%
TOTAL:	289	100.0%

Table 12.16

VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MARRIAGE BY LANGUAGE (GENERAL)				
	Yes	No	Depends	Total
English	47.4%	52.6%	0.0%	100%
Afrikaans	70.7%	28.0%	1.2%	100%
TOTAL:	54.9%	44.7%	0.4%	100%
Value 15.128 D.F. 2 Probability : 0.0005				

Table 12.17

VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MARRIAGE BY OCCUPATION (GENERAL)			
OCCUPATION	YES	NO	TOTAL
Professional	39.4%	59.6%	100%
Middle	51.7%	48.3%	100%
Manual	77.7%	22.3%	100%
TOTAL:	56.2%	43.4%	100%
Value 30.807 D.F. 4 Probability : 0.000			

Though phrased differently, these issues were also raised with subjects in the case-studies. They were asked to name the advantages and disadvantages of having children as well as the factors which influenced their decision to have children. What emerged from those interviews was that this was not something that had been given much thought. In most cases this question was followed by a long silence. Petra eventually said "Ek weet nie, dis net lekker" (I don't know, its just nice). To this she added:

" ... One can perhaps ... no you can't ... relive your youth through them. They give you a different perspective on life ... Its a need like sleeping and eating. I'm crazy about my children."

Belinda identified the following advantages:

"A wholeness - of the natural life cycle and also companionship. I find them very companionable. I enjoy them."

And Diane said:

"When I got married it was just the done thing. You got married and had children and I never questioned having children. I never thought of not having children. I thought it was automatic to have children."

For these subjects then, having children is something they regard as a 'natural' part of marriage - it is something that is taken for granted rather than decided upon after careful deliberation. What was carefully considered by most of these women was the timing of child-birth, not the question of whether or not to have children. Belinda, for example, responded as follows to the question "What influenced your decision to have a child?"

"I always knew that I wanted to have a family. It is something I always expected of a marriage. I anticipated it. I did take family planning. Waited until we were settled."

Sarah, the only subject in the case studies who did not have children, gave a very different response to the question of the advantages of children:

"I don't know, I suppose if parents can put up with them (there are advantages)".

On the question of the disadvantages to having children, Belinda responded as follows:

"No - it depends on your priorities. A lot of people put careers first. For me the career did not come first. I wasn't ambitious. I wasn't an academic. I wasn't very clever at anything so I was happy to be myself and be a mother".

And Sarah again looked at the matter from a different angle:

"No, unless they are unhealthy and miserable and horrid kids. Kids can be horrid. I'm glad I don't have any small ones pattering about here. I have never been crazy on small kids. (But) I think it is very nice to have relations".

8. NEOLOCAL RESIDENTIAL SETTING

In terms of contemporary Western family ideology, each nuclear family is expected to constitute a household independent of other households - particularly that of their parents. Parsons (1954;1956) used the phrase 'relatively isolated nuclear family' to convey this idea. In her study of Whites living in Durban, Clark (1978) found that despite the fact of co-residence with kin, most of her subjects disapproved of living with kin. They did not, however, show the same degree of opposition to living near kin. In fact, this was often the preferred option. She, furthermore, indicates that one of the reasons people find it difficult to live in complex family households, are unhappy and apologetic about it, is that they are aware of the fact that 'living with kin' is "not really approved of, and it is expected that a young couple, for example, on marriage will want to set up 'a home of their own'" (1978:90). Van der Merwe (in Simkins, 1986) also found a high degree of opposition to sharing a household with extra-nuclear kin in his study of Afrikaans speaking Whites. More specifically, the majority of his subjects disapproved of: "parents living with a nuclear family" (86%); "married children living with their parents" (95%) and "other kin living with a nuclear family" (95%) (in Simkins, 1986:20).

Working with the expectation (derived from the above mentioned studies) that the vast majority of Whites in the Grahamstown study would also disagree with the notion that it is acceptable for individuals to live with their parents after attaining adulthood, it was decided to test their views on living close to kin after marriage. The question was phrased as follows: "Do you think it is unhealthy for a married couple to live very close to their parents?" Once again subjects were asked to give an opinion on how this applies to them personally as well as to people in general.

Table 12.18

VIEWS ON WHETHER IT IS UNHEALTHY FOR MARRIED CHILDREN TO LIVE VERY CLOSE TO THEIR PARENTS				
	PERSONALLY		GENERALLY	
Unhealthy	132	46.6%	122	44.5%
Not Unhealthy	150	53.0%	112	40.9%
Depends on	1	0.4%	40	14.6%
TOTAL:	283	100%	274	100%

As shown in this table, just under half of respondents (47%) indicated that this situation would be unhealthy for them personally and 45% indicated that it would be unhealthy for other people as well. Given the comments made above about Clark's findings, it is therefore to be expected that a far higher proportion of subjects would object to living in the same household as their parents. In other words, given the way the question was phrased, it is highly significant that nearly half of the respondents objected even to living in very close proximity to their parents. This suggests a strong identification with the notion that, upon marriage, a couple should set up home away from their respective parents. In this respect it is important to note that while occupation was not shown to have a statistically significant relationship with respondents' general views on neo-local residence, language was. The specific pattern here was that Afrikaans speakers were less likely to regard extended family households as 'unhealthy' - only 39% responding 'yes' to this question compared with 47% of English speakers.

Table 12.9

GENERAL VIEWS ON NEO-LOCAL RESIDENTIAL SETTING BY LANGUAGE			
UNHEALTHY	ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS	TOTAL
Yes	47.3%	38.8%	31.8%
No	42.6%	37.6%	45.5%
Depends	10.1%	23.5%	22.7%
TOTAL:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Value 8.305 D.F. 2 Probability 0.0157			

Since the difference between the various categories identified above are not very great and those in the 'manual' occupational category were also less likely than those in the 'professional' category to respond affirmatively to this question (38.5% vs 49.1%), multivariate analysis has been conducted on this question. Once again age has been kept constant by focusing only on the 31-40 age category and only the two extremes of the occupational hierarchy are considered (professional and manual).

Table 12.20

GENERAL VIEWS ON NEO-LOCAL RESIDENTIAL SETTING BY LANGUAGE AND OCCUPATION IN THE 31-40 AGE CATEGORY				
IS LIVING VERY CLOSE TO PARENTS AFTER MARRIAGE UNHEALTHY ?	ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS	
	PROF	MANUAL	PROF	MANUAL
Yes	40.8%	52.4%	46.2%	29.4%
No	49.0%	33.3%	30.8%	52.9%
Depends	10.2%	14.3%	23.1%	17.1%
TOTAL:	100%	100%	100%	100%

On the assumption that 'yes' to the above question means disapproval of extended family living arrangements, it is noteworthy that Afrikaans respondents in the 'manual' category were less likely to hold this view compared to all other categories but particularly English speakers in the manual

category (29% vs 52%). Conversely, while 70% of 'lower class' Afrikaans speakers were not in principle against extended family arrangements ('no' and 'depends on' categories combined), this applies to only 48% of 'lower class' English speakers. This could suggest that lower class Afrikaans speakers have more experience of such arrangements than the others.

9. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

If we place the results of the survey in relation to the ideas described at the outset of this chapter, we note that in most instances the majority of respondents accept them as valid. More specifically, with the exception of the notion that sex should be restricted to marriage, most of the subjects included in the survey identify with contemporary family ideology as it has been defined in this study.

Concerning the role of 'class' and 'culture' in explaining differences in views expressed by subjects, we note that Afrikaans speakers were more likely than English speakers to object to pre-marital sex as well as working mothers (of young children); to agree with the view that children are necessary for the fulfilment of a marriage and less likely to express negative views about co-residence with parents after marriage. As regards occupation, those in the 'manual' category were less likely to divorce a cheating husband and were more likely to regard children as necessary for personal fulfilment and marriage. The table below provides a summary of these findings as well as results of cross-tabulation with age and regularity of church attendance. The latter will however not be discussed in any detail since the main 'ideological' issue with respect to the theoretical question pursued in this study (i.e. the role of class and culture in explaining variations in household structures) concerns the issue of the approval or disapproval of co-residence with parents after marriage.

Table 12.21

PEARSON CHI-SQUARE TEST RESULTS FOR FOUR VARIABLES				
	Language	Class	Age	Church Attendance
Premarital Sex	0.0056*	0.4533	0.0001*	0.0000*
Monogamy	0.3255	0.9172	0.9886	0.3827
Attraction (gen)	0.0001*	0.7681	0.7535	0.1041
Attraction (pers)	0.3365	0.7876	0.7286	0.5604
Divorce/Adultery	0.0729	0.0002*	0.4683	0.9332
Working Mothers	0.0021*	0.2544	0.0020*	0.0000*
Child/Marriage (gen)	0.0005*	0.0000*	0.8563	0.2941
Child/Marriage (pers)	0.1447	0.0043*	0.3749	0.0103*
Child/Fulfilment (gen)	0.0009*	0.0058*	0.0485*	0.5095
Child/Fulfilment (pers)	0.1260	0.0517	0.6162	0.0025*
Neo-local (gen)	0.0157*	0.0767	0.3194	0.1103
Neo-local (pers)	0.1693	0.3545	0.5691	0.0086*

* Relationship statistically significant (<0.05).

As noted, in the manual occupational category, Afrikaans speakers were far less likely to object to such arrangements than English speakers. This finding once again draws attention to culturally based predispositions in family related issues.

10. NOTES

1. When this approach is adopted, age becomes a factor since together 'love', 'trust' and 'communication' were mentioned as the most important ingredient in marriage by 73% of those under 31 years of age; 70% aged 31-40; 66% of those aged 41 - 50; 54% of those aged 51-60 and 55% of those in the 61 plus age category (table not provided).

2. This can be calculated by subtracting the proportion of subjects who would divorce a cheating husband (35%) from those who regard an extra-marital affair as destructive of a marriage (74%). The resulting figure of 39% indicates the proportion of respondents who are prepared to continue with a marriage regardless of whether their spouse has been involved in an affair.

CHAPTER 13

EXTENDED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS - A CLOSER LOOK

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main findings of the survey was that extended family households constituted a very small proportion of all the households surveyed - 9 out of 298 White households i.e. 3%. But in interpreting this finding it is important to bear in mind that the survey showed the distribution of household types at one point in time and it is possible that the households which at that time were designated nuclear, single person etc may have experienced an extended phase in the past. This was illustrated in the case studies discussed in Chapter Ten. In particular, after her divorce, Belinda returned to her parental home thus creating a phase of extended family living between her divorce and remarriage both for herself, her children and her parents. To address this issue, subjects in the survey were asked whether they had received visits exceeding two weeks from a relative and if so, the reason for such visits. Those who had experienced a marital break-up were furthermore asked to describe their domestic situation immediately after that event. The present Chapter reports on those results. It also takes a closer look at the 9 instances where the household was actually in an extended phases at the time of the survey.

2. VISITS FROM RELATIVES

As indicated in the table below the majority of respondents (65%) indicated that they had received visits of two weeks or more from a relative.

Table 13.1

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD RECEIVED VISITS FROM RELATIVES		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	178	64.5%
No	98	35.5%
TOTAL:	276	100%

As regards the reasons for these visits, an analysis has been done of 50 respondents drawn randomly from the total. In particular, systematic random sampling was used: starting with an arbitrary number (in this case 3) every 6th questionnaire was analysed.

Table 13.2

REASONS FOR VISITS (EXCEEDING TWO WEEKS) FROM RELATIVES		
REASON	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Visit	14	47%
Birth of a child	3	10%
Death or Illness	4	13%
Divorce	3	10%
Other (work etc)	6	20%
TOTAL:	30	100%
N = 30 (those respondents in sample who had received visits).		

As can be noted, in many cases the relative simply came for a holiday or 'a visit'. Some of these are, however, of longer duration than one usually associates with the term 'visit' - one respondent indicating that her mother-in-law came for a six month visit while another indicated that her father-in-law visited for 4 years.

Table 13.2 also shows that the majority (53%) gave other reasons for these visits. These include birth of a child, death of a spouse and seeking accommodation. Responses other than simply 'visit' or 'holiday' have been reproduced below:

Table 13.3

REASONS FOR VISITS EXCEEDING TWO WEEKS	
RESPONDENT NUMBER	REASON
39	Mother came for births; Mother-in-law for barmitzva.
45	Mother looked after her, after an operation.
57	Mother-in-law (husband died).
63	Mother frail (husband died).
69	Suster - Ouers bly vêr, sy't gewerk en gebly.
81	Mother-in-law (given up home).
99	Sister - birth of child.
105	"Mother lives here".
123	Mother came for visits; father-in-law stayed for 4 years.
129	Daughter got divorced, stayed for 3 months.
135	Mother lives with respondent (health).
141	Sister (divorced) occasionally comes to stay to give parents a break as sister stays with them.
177	Mother lived with family.
207	"Hulle het nêrens anders gehad om te bly nie".
237	Man se broer - egskeiding.
249	Brother-in-law (holidays); Mother-in-law (when baby was born) "I kicked her out".
255	Mother-in-law and brother-in-law (visits).
261	Mother lived with them.
285	Mother-in-law came for a six month visit.

It is noteworthy that of the 22 relatives mentioned, 18 (or 82%) were female relatives (in 8 cases it was the respondent's mother, in 6 cases her mother-in-law, in three her sister and in one case her daughter). There were only 4 cases of male relatives (3 brothers-in-law and one father-in-law). It is also noteworthy that most of these cases consist of a mother assisting a daughter during or after the birth of a child or a daughter assisting a mother after widowhood or illness. Divorce is an additionally

significant factor. These data therefore confirm those of other studies concerning the predominant role played by women in extended family networks or arrangements (Preston-Whyte and Louw, 1986).

3. DOMESTIC SITUATION AFTER DIVORCE

To further explore the notion that divorce is an important factor in the formation of extended families among Whites, subjects were asked to describe their domestic arrangement immediately after the break-up of their marriage. Table 13.4 shows the responses given by those who were divorced, separated or who had been married more than once. As can be noted, just under half (45.2%) remained in their existing domestic arrangement (with the obvious exception of a spouse). But what is also noteworthy is that about a third (36%) returned to their parental home. It is also interesting to note that in one case the subject moved in with her sister and the latter's family and in another, she lived in a boarding house where her sister also had a room.

Table 13.4

DOMESTIC SITUATION AFTER DIVORCE AND SEPARATION		
DOMESTIC SITUATION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Remained in existing domestic situation	14	45.2%
Moved back with parents	11	35.5%
Other arrangement	2	6.4%
No Response	4	12.9%
TOTAL:	31	100%

The information provided above therefore indicates that at least some of the individuals who were part of non-extended family arrangements at the time of the survey, had been part of extended family arrangements in the past as a result of a marital break-up. While it is not possible to determine what proportion of all the cases these represent, it is likely that such extended family phases are only at issue when children are involved and are

probably of short duration - ending when the woman remarries.

4. EXTENDED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS - A CLOSER LOOK

The question of the relationship between a woman and her mother in explaining the prevalence of specific household types, was taken up in the survey. Here it is noteworthy that out of a total of 282 respondents, 166 (58.9%) reported an excellent relationship with their mother, a further 28% describing it as 'good'. Only 30 respondents (11%) described this relationship 'reasonably good' and only 8 (3%) said that it was strained or of a poor quality. It is also noteworthy that while no statistically significant relationship was found to exist between reported mother-daughter relationship and household structure, this was not the case when class was considered. As can be noted below, lower class women were far more likely to report an excellent relationship with their mothers and other women.

Table 13.5

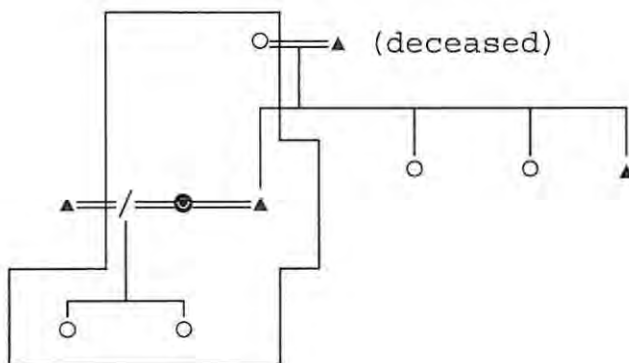
CROSS-TABULATION: RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER AND SOCIAL CLASS				
RELATIONSHIP	PROFESSIONAL	MIDDLE	MANUAL	TOTAL
Excellent	46.3	56.9	71.9	58.0
Good	32.4	32.8	19.8	27.9
Reasonably Good	16.7	10.3	5.2	11.1
Strained	4.6	0.0	1.0	2.3
Poor	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.8
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%
Value: 23.377 D.F. 8 Probability : 0.0029				

Below the nine instances where the household was in an extended phase at the time of the study are discussed individually and as a group to ascertain, inter alia, whether marital break-up and/or mother-daughter relationships are at issue. [In the absence of a computer-generated symbol for deceased males (triangle with slash), the word 'deceased' has been written next to the triangle concerned].

4.1 Respondent Number 6:

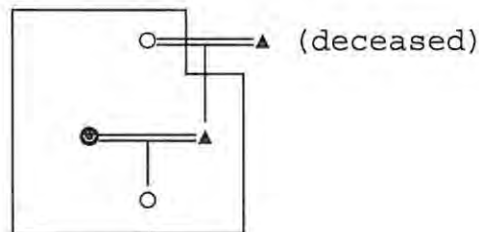
The respondent is a 40 year old Afrikaans speaking divorcee. She lives with her second husband (aged 35) and two daughters from her first marriage (aged 18 and 14) as well as her widowed fifty-five year old mother-in-law. Their house is located in Area I and they were classified as falling into the 'professional' occupational category.

The respondent's mother lives outside the Eastern Cape and they see each other about once every 3 months. She described their relationship as 'excellent'. Before she was married she lived with her parents in a conventional nuclear family. Upon her divorce, she lived alone with her daughters for five years (single parent family). It is interesting to note that she responded negatively to the question: "Since your marriage has any member of your family come to stay for a period exceeding two weeks?" This could be because she regards her mother-in-law, not as part of her family but that of her husband. But it could also be because, upon her second marriage, her husband was already living with his mother and it was she and her daughters who moved in with them rather than her mother-in-law moving in with her. She also responded negatively to the question of whether it is unhealthy for a married couple to live very close to their parents adding that it is only unhealthy if the parents "interfere" and that "for some it works, for some it doesn't".



4.2 Respondent Number 120:

This is a case of an English speaking married couple who live with their daughter (1 year old) and the respondent's widowed mother-in-law (64 years old). The respondent is 34 and her husband is 33 years old. They live in area I and were classified as falling into occupational category I. The respondent's mother lives outside the Eastern Cape and they see each other about twice a year. She described their relationship as 'strained but cordial'. Prior to her marriage she stayed with her parents and three siblings. She answered 'yes' to the question of whether a family member had come to stay for a period exceeding two weeks referring to her mother-in-law after the latter's husband's death. Personally, she did not think it is unhealthy for a married couple to live with their parents but thought that for other people, it is. She did not elaborate on this.

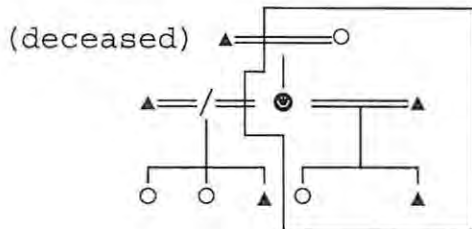


4.3 Respondent Number 123:

This is an Afrikaans speaking woman (aged 45) who lives with her second husband (aged 40), her children from her second marriage and her mother (aged 69). Her first marriage ended in divorce. She has three adult children from that marriage who live elsewhere. She described her relationship with her mother as excellent and answered 'yes' to the question of whether a family member had come to stay referring to her mother and added "when she comes to stay she stays for a few months". She furthermore indicated that her mother lives in Cape Town suggesting that the extended family household she was part of at the time of the study is not a permanent arrangement. However, she also pointed

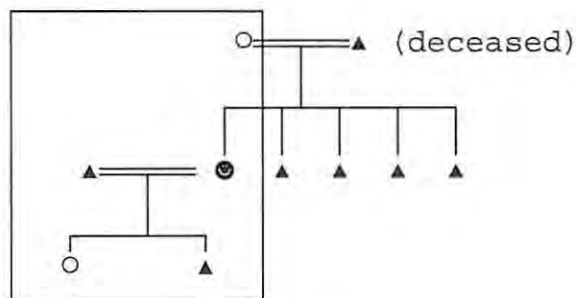
out that her father-in-law from her first marriage stayed with her and her husband for four years.

Prior to her marriage she lived with her parents and two sisters. Four months after the break-up of her first marriage, she and her children moved back to her parents' house. She does not regard an extended family household arrangement as unhealthy but added that it can be if "they (the parents) interfere".



4.4 Respondent Number 135:

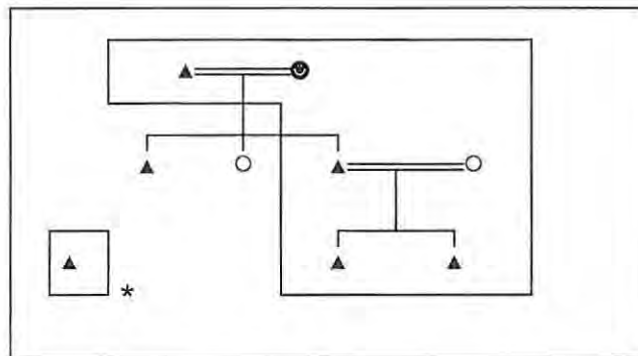
This is a case of a first time married couple (respondent 27 years; husband 31 years) living with their children and the respondent's widowed mother (56 years). The respondent's mother tongue is English while that of her spouse is Afrikaans. Their home language is English. They were categorised as falling into the 'middle' occupational category. Since the respondent's mother lives with her, they see each other all the time and she responded 'yes' to the question of whether a family member had come to stay adding that her mother lives with her at the moment "because of her health". She described her relationship with her mother as 'good' and indicated that, although she gets along with her parents-in-law, living very close to them "could be unhealthy". Before her marriage she lived with her future husband in a flat.



4.5 Respondent Number 140:

This is the only case which can be called a complete extended family household i.e. two conjugal units living together. The respondent is 61 years old and lives with her husband (64 years), her son (33), daughter-in-law (30) and two grandchildren (10 and 7 years). A 57 year old widower, whom she describes as a friend, also lives on the property as a boarder. Her husband's occupation is classified as manual. When asked if a family member has come to stay for more than two weeks, she indicated that her siblings have come for a holiday - but not to stay. Prior to her marriage she and her four siblings lived with her grandparents. Her father died when she was 12 years old.

It is interesting that she said 'yes' to the question of whether it is unhealthy for a married couple to live very close to their parents adding that she would not like to live with her children. Yet, this is precisely her domestic arrangement. She also indicated that generally speaking such arrangements are unhealthy. She described her relationship with her mother as 'excellent'.

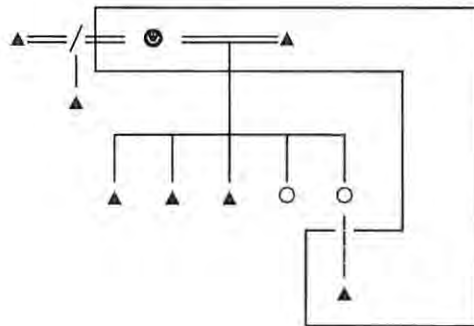


* Flat on property

4.6 Respondent Number 152:

This is a case of an Afrikaans-speaking married couple living with their daughter's 12 year old illegitimate child. The respondent has been married before, her first marriage ending in divorce. She is 59 years old and her husband 64. They live in Area II and the husband's occupation is classified as manual. She described her relationship with her mother as excellent and responded 'no' to the question as to whether a member of her family has come to stay for more than two weeks.

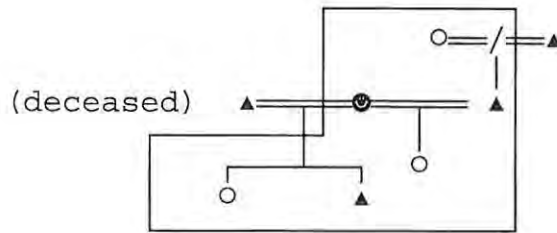
Prior to her marriage she was living with her parents and upon the break-up of her first marriage she moved back with them. Both personally and generally she regards married couples living very close to their parents as unhealthy.



4.7 Respondent Number 209:

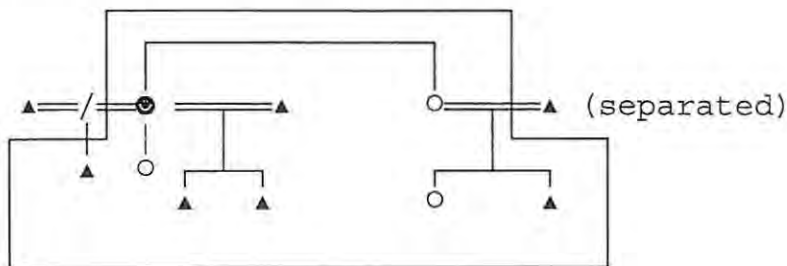
This is a case of an Afrikaans speaking widow who has remarried and is living with her husband, two children from her first marriage and one child from her present marriage as well as her 71 year old divorced mother-in-law. She is 34 years old and her second husband is 39. The latter's occupation is classified as 'manual' and his mother tongue is English. Their home languages are both English and Afrikaans. She described her relationship with her mother as 'uiters goed' i.e. excellent and indicated that she sees her about twice a month. Prior to her first marriage she lived with her parents and when her husband died, she moved back with them. Personally she does not regard

living very close to parents after marriage as unhealthy but added that generally speaking this is the case "as hulle nie inmeng nie" (if they don't interfere).



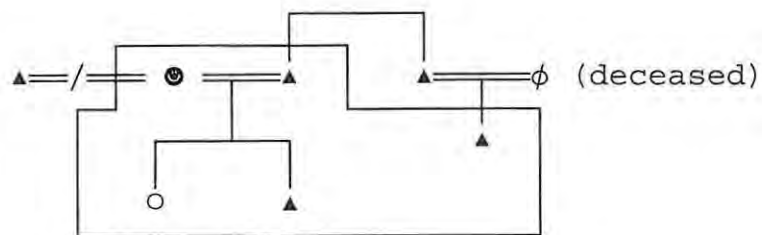
4.8 Respondent number 226:

The respondent lives with her second husband (previously divorced); one child from her previous marriage, one illegitimate child, two children from her second marriage plus her sister who is separated and her sister's two children. The respondent is 37 years old, her second husband is 29 and her sister is 34 years old. She works as a laundry assistant and her husband's occupation was classified as 'middle'. Although English is the mother tongue of both the respondent and her present husband, their home languages are both English and Afrikaans. In response to the question of where her mother lives, the respondent indicated that she is now deceased but that "she lived with me". She described their relationship as excellent. Prior to her marriage she lived with her parents and when she divorced, she moved back with them. Her sister came to stay when she separated from her husband. Both personally and generally she feels that it is unhealthy for married children to live very close to their parents. Her present domestic situation can be described as a remarriage family horizontally extended.



4.9 Respondent Number 246:

This is a case of an Afrikaans speaking couple both aged 36. It is the respondent's second marriage, the first having ended in divorce. Her nephew (brother-in-law's son) aged 23 lives with them. Her sister-in-law is deceased. She works as a clerk and her husband's occupation is classified as 'manual'. She described her relationship with her mother as 'excellent' and indicated that she had come to visit for more than two weeks. Both prior to her first marriage and when it broke-up she lived with her parents. Both personally and generally, she considers it unhealthy for married children to live very close to their parents.



The table below provides a summary of the above information:

Table 13.6

EXTENDED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS						
LANG*	CLASS	RESP. HAS EXPERIENCED MARITAL BREAK-UP	RELATIONSHIP TO ADDITIONAL MEMBER	RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER	LIVING CLOSE TO PARENTS IS UNHEALTHY	
AREA I					PERS	GEN
A	Prof	YES (D)	Widowed mother-in-law	Excellent	N	N
E	Prof	NO	widowed mother-in-law	Strained	N	Y
A	Mid	YES (D)	Widowed mother	Excellent	N	N
AREA II						
E(R) A(S) E(H)	Mid	NO	Widowed Mother	Good	Y	-
E	Man	NO	Daughter & Son-in-law	Excellent	Y	Y
A	Man	YES (D)	Grandchild (Illeg)	Excellent	Y	Y
A(R) E(S) B(H)	Man	YES (W)	Divorced Mother-in-law	Excellent	N	N
E(R) A(S) B(H)	Mid	YES (D)	Sister, niece	Excellent	Y	Y
A	Man	YES (D)	Nephew	Excellent	Y	Y
<p>* Respondent's mother tongue, spouse's mother tongue and home language unless otherwise indicated. A = Afrikaans; E = English; B = Both English & Afrikaans; D = Divorced; W = Widowed; Y = Yes; N = No.</p>						

As is to be expected, the above information confirms the finding of the survey with respect to the relationship between class and household structure: in most cases the household is located in the lower class area (Area II) and in only two of the

nine cases was the household classified as falling into the 'professional' occupational category. Furthermore, in only two instances is Afrikaans not the respondent's mother tongue, that of her husband or their present home language. But given the small number of cases involved, not too much significance can be attached to these findings.

What is significant in my view is the fact that with only one exception, all of these cases involve not two conjugal units sharing a home but the 'taking in' of a relative who has experienced a marital break-up of some kind or whose parents were never married. What is also noteworthy is that in most instances a marital break-up was also at issue with respect to the 'core family'. Indeed in 6 of the 9 cases the respondent had either been divorced or widowed which means that the prevalence of marital break-up in this group is much higher (67%) than that for the population as a whole - only 29% of respondents who were or had been married, having experienced the termination of a marriage as a result of divorce, death or separation. This could mean that those who found themselves in a vulnerable position with respect to accommodation and/or finances at a previous stage and whose families were accommodating of them, are more inclined than others to offer accommodation to non-nuclear family members at a later stage. In only one case where the respondent had experienced the dissolution of a marriage, did she not return to her parental home. I am referring here to respondent number 6 whose home is located in Area I and who was classified as falling into the 'professional' occupational category.

With regard to subjects' relationships to their mothers, those presently in extended families were as likely as those in the survey as a whole to report a good or excellent relationship (87% vs 89%) but more likely to report an excellent relationship (78% vs 58%). This does not, however, appear to have a bearing on the extended family arrangements which the respondent was part of at the time of the study, since in all but one of the cases where the additional member was of an older generation, it was the respondent's mother-in-law, rather than her mother who was

responsible for the family being of an extended variety. A possible explanation for this finding is that, given the fact that men tend to be between 2 and 3 years older than their wives, the loss of a parent due to old age is likely to affect them earlier than is the case with women. Another possibility is that the greater decision-making power of husbands means that their wishes concerning who will reside in the household will hold sway over those of their wives.

The mother-daughter relationship could of course have an influence on the tendency to return to the parental home after divorce and therefore the experience of extended family living at a previous stage. Indeed, in all the cases where the respondent moved back to the parental home, the relationship between daughter and mother was reportedly 'excellent'. But again, these interpretations are offered as tentative suggestions, given the small number of cases involved.

Finally, with one exception, all of those who lived in Area II expressed negative views about extended family arrangements when responding in their personal capacity while all of those in Area I held positive views. This seems to suggest that where resources are limited, family extension (taking in a relative in need of accommodation) is accepted as a necessity rather than regarded as a preferred option or part of the natural course of events. This, in turn, could be due to differences in the size of houses and number of rooms per house between social classes and is reminiscent of the paradox which pertains to the inverse relationship between social class and fertility: those least likely to be able to afford large families (in this instance through the addition of family members other than children) are more likely than others to have them.

Taken as a whole then, the above data suggest that marital break-up (divorce, widowhood or separation) play a major role in the formation of extended family households among the Whites surveyed.

CHAPTER 14

CONCLUSION

1. INTRODUCTION

Bringing together the results of the survey of White households in Grahamstown, we are drawn to the following conclusion: with the exception of views on pre-marital sex, the majority (and in some instances the vast majority) of respondents identify with what has been described as contemporary Western ideology of the family and, from the point of view of concrete domestic arrangements, the vast majority once again live either in conventional nuclear family households or two of the phases in the domestic life cycle associated with it (single person and couple households). Given the way in which the institution of the family has been defined previously, we can say then, that in this instance, there is a coincidence of ideological notions about family life (family ideology) and actual domestic arrangements (the concrete level of the institution of the family).

This conclusion has to be modified to some extent when the community surveyed is broken down in terms of 'class' and 'culture' and we focus specifically on ideological notions surrounding the question of neo-local residence after marriage. With regard to 'class', it was found that whereas those in manual occupations were more likely to espouse positive ideas with regard to extended family arrangements (62% vs 51%)¹, in terms of concrete domestic arrangements they were also more likely to reside in non-nuclear family households - particularly in the case of extended families (3.9% vs 0.9%). In the case of nuclear family households, the difference was 63% of 'professionals' vs 53% of those in the 'manual' occupational category. This would suggest that for each of the classes there is a coincidence of 'ideology' and 'concrete arrangements' but that the content of each of these is different - 'lower class households' being more likely to be extended and to espouse values consonant with that

family pattern. However, it is important to remember that in both instances the vast majority of respondents were living in one of the three phases of the domestic life cycle associated with the nuclear family (93% in the case of 'professionals' and 87% in the case of those in 'manual' category).

When language is considered, it is noteworthy that when Afrikaans speakers are taken as a whole, they are not significantly less likely than English speakers to reside in nuclear family households. But when Afrikaans speakers are broken down in terms of class, significant differences emerge that do not apply to English speakers: over 80% of English speakers in the 'professional' and 'manual' categories compared with 75% of Afrikaans speakers in the 'professional' category and only 59% in the 'manual' category living in nuclear family households. Indeed when the various phases are added together over 90% of 'professional' Afrikaans speakers as well as 'professional' and 'manual' English speakers compared with only 76% of 'manual' Afrikaans speakers were living in single person, couple or nuclear family households. These findings therefore suggest that it is only among Afrikaans speakers that 'class' impacts significantly on household structure.

As regards 'family ideology' with respect to neo-local residential setting and language, the data show that, in comparison with English speakers, Afrikaans speakers are more likely to espouse positive views with regard to extended family arrangements (61.2% vs 52%) or less likely to regard such arrangements as 'unhealthy' (38.8% vs 47.3%). But as in the case of household structure, 'lower class' Afrikaans speakers are significantly more likely to espouse positive views with respect to extended family arrangements compared to their more affluent counterparts (70% vs 53%). With regard to English speakers, the opposite pattern pertains: 59% of 'professionals' having positive views with respect to extended family arrangements compared with 47% of their less wealthy counterparts.

From this one can draw the conclusion that 'lower class' Afrikaans speakers distinguish themselves from other Whites both by being less inclined to have negative views about extended family arrangements and by being more likely to reside in such households. Once again then, one sees a coincidence of ideological notions (family ideology) and concrete domestic arrangements with respect to a particular subsection of the White community surveyed. However, not all lower class Afrikaans speakers were part of extended family arrangements at the time of the study and among those who were, all but one (five out of the six) expressed negative views about living very close to parents after marriage. This could be indicative of the acceptance of an ideological notion that involves difficulties when it is applied in practice. In other words, some 'lower class' Afrikaans speakers may have expressed positive views about co-residence after marriage because they were not part of such an arrangement at that time and therefore did not have to deal with the difficulties it poses.

In sum, we notice that generally speaking respondents both espouse contemporary Western family ideology and live in domestic arrangements consonant with that ideology with the qualification that 'lower class' Afrikaans speakers are less likely to do so than others.

In this chapter the results of the survey of Whites in Grahamstown are compared with those which have been obtained from studies of Whites elsewhere in South Africa as well as of Blacks in Grahamstown. The results of Allen's comparison of Black and White households in the United States are also addressed. Finally, a theoretical model setting out the relationship between class, culture and household structure is presented and discussed both in relation to the data from the study of Whites in Grahamstown and the other studies.

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER STUDIES

2.1. White South Africans

In 1988 and 1989, Steyn undertook a nation-wide survey of households (Steyn,1993). Below her data for White South Africans are compared to the results of the Grahamstown survey. As can be noted the differences are minimal. In both instances, nuclear family households predominate and extended family households are extremely rare.

Table 14.1

GRAHAMSTOWN SAMPLE COMPARED TO NATIONAL SAMPLE OF WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS		
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	WHITES IN GRAHAMSTOWN (1991)	WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS (1988 & 1989)
Nuclear	51%	46%
Couple	17%	24%
Single Person	17%	15%
Extended	4%	6%
Single Parent	5%	5%
Other	7%	4%
TOTAL:*	100%	100%
SOURCE: Steyn,1993:39. * Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.		

As has been noted, the small number of extended family households revealed by the Grahamstown study limits the value one can place on the conclusions or interpretations drawn from the information pertaining to them. It is therefore of significance that Steyn's study involved a much larger number of extended family households in absolute terms (112 of a total of 1 746) and revealed the same pattern with respect to social class and family extension that was found in the Grahamstown study. Steyn did not consider home language.

Taking educational achievement as an indicator of social class, Steyn found that with respect to male-headed households, extended families were present in 23.3% of cases where the man's highest educational achievement was matric or below, compared to 3.6% of cases where he had attained a higher educational level (1993:50). In the case of female headed households, the respective percentages are 9.1% (matric and below) compared with 0.8% (above matric) (Steyn,1993:50).

2.2. Whites in Durban

To further scrutinize the notion that household structure is related to social class amongst Whites, the results of the Grahamstown survey are compared to those obtained from a survey of Whites living in Durban in the 1970's. While this study is now dated, it is the only survey other than my own and Steyn's of White households in South Africa. Moreover, such a comparison is instructive since the suburb covered in the survey is predominantly 'lower class' whereas the Grahamstown sample was biased in favour of the higher socio-economic categories.

As noted previously, this study was undertaken by Argyle and the suburb in question was given the fictitious name of 'Hartfield'. It involved 225 households, 66% of which were classified as falling within the 'manual' occupational category and only 10% of the men and 8% of the women had an educational level of standard ten or above (Argyle,1977:106; Clark,1978:58). Moreover, in 67% of households, English was the language spoken compared to 14% where it was Afrikaans, 12% where both English and Afrikaans were spoken and in 7% of cases another European language was at issue (Argyle,1977:106). The two samples therefore contain roughly the same proportion of English speakers but contrast each other in terms of socio-economic status. In comparing these two samples I have relied on Clark's presentation of the data from Argyle's study (Clark,1978). The results are presented below.

Table 14.2

COMPARISON: HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES IN DURBAN SUBURB AND GRAHAMSTOWN (WHITES) .		
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE	DURBAN (1972)	GRAHAMSTOWN (1991)
Nuclear	39%	51%
Couple	20%	17%
Single Person	8%	17%
Extended/Complex	24%	4%
Single Parent	8%	5%
Other	2%	7%
TOTAL:*	100%	100%
*Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.		

In line with the view that class is inversely related to the prevalence of extended family households, there was a much higher proportion of extended families and a lower proportion of nuclear families in the Durban suburb than in Grahamstown. Furthermore, the fact that the proportion of single person households in the Grahamstown study was more than double that in Argyle's study is due both to the omission of flats from the Durban study and the fact that such households are less common in the lower than the higher socio-economic strata.

2.3. COMPARISON WITH BLACKS IN GRAHAMSTOWN

In the 1980's, Manona studied 100 households located in the Black residential areas of Grahamstown (Manona, 1988). Since his main interest was with migration and adaptation to city life, Manona purposively selected only households whose members had migrated to Grahamstown from White-owned farms in the surrounding districts. While this introduces a bias to his sample, his study is one of the two most recent ones which focuses on Black Grahamstonians and for this reason is considered below in conjunction with Brown's 1994 study of a block of 100 households in the Joza section of the township (Brown, 1996).

Table 14.3

COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES OF BLACK AND WHITE RESIDENTS OF GRAHAMSTOWN			
HOUSEHOLD TYPE	BLACK RESIDENTS		WHITE RESIDENTS
	MANONA 1988	BROWN 1994	ZIEHL 1991
Nuclear	18%	17%	51%
Couple	5%	1%	17%
Single Person	4%	2%	17%
Extended	58%#	63%#	4%
Single Parent	10%	13%	5%
Other	5%	4%	7%
TOTAL:*	100%	100%	100%
# Extended and nuclear plus collaterals combined.			
* Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.			

The most striking finding to emerge from this comparison is that whereas the extended family clearly constitutes the mode in the case of Black residents, this position is held by the nuclear family in the case of White residents (58% and 63% compared with 51% respectively). What is also evident is the very low proportion of couple and single person households in the two Black samples i.e. phases in the domestic life cycle associated with the nuclear family pattern and the very low percentage of extended family households in the case of Whites. Indeed the data show that 76% of the households in Manona's study and 80% of Brown's sample represent one of the phases of the domestic life cycle associated with the extended family pattern (nuclear plus extended family households) while 85% of the White households are in one of the phases of the domestic life cycle associated with the nuclear family (single person, couple and nuclear family households). Commenting on the results of his study, Manona writes:

"The most common type of household is one which is based on the nuclear family. However, the members of a household are rarely restricted to the husband, wife and children and it is also unusual for people to live

either alone or only with their spouses."

He furthermore, explains the high incidence of extended (or multiple family households) among Blacks in Grahamstown as follows:

"The reason for the prevalence of these co-residential arrangements is that the household must assume responsibility for the welfare of the wider kinship group and this measure of inter-dependence gives support to those who are in need. Some people who had been unemployed for extended periods were supported by other household members until they could find work. The household also provides security to the sick and the aged ... Even in the course of daily life there are calamities which cannot be foreseen. In October and November 1985 sustained heavy rains destroyed many houses and made it necessary for some of the people to seek accommodation elsewhere in the townships. Those with houses which had either collapsed or were flooded usually moved in with their close relatives ... In some cases kin support can ameliorate what could otherwise be a serious crisis: one of the people interviewed was a 35 year old mother who had just joined a household of a relative after she had been driven out of her house by her husband - this happening just a few months after she lost her job ..." (Manona, 1988:393/394).

Manona therefore suggests that unemployment, illness, natural disasters and personal crises are among the factors accounting for the high prevalence of extended family households among Blacks in Grahamstown. This 'class' explanation is supported by the clear differences in socio-economic status when White and Black Grahamstonians are compared². While the latter point hardly needs proving, presenting a simple class argument without taking account of differences in cultural disposition, brings us back to the question that was asked at the outset of this study: what is the role of class and/or culture in explaining variation in household structure between different communities?

3. TOWARDS A THEORETICAL MODEL

The comparison of Black and White households in Grahamstown and nation-wide (see Steyn, 1993) largely confirms Allen's finding with respect to the United States, namely that there are distinct race-differences in the propensity to live in extended family households (Allen, 1979). Allen also found that class was related to household structure (conventional family structures being more common in the upper than lower socio-economic categories). But contrary to the South African data, Allen did not find that extended families were more common in the lower than upper socio-economic categories (1979:308). I submit that this has something to do with the population structure of the United States i.e. the fact that Whites are clearly in the majority and that within this community, extended family households are extremely rare - even in the lower socio-economic categories. Indeed, Allen found that lower class Whites have more in common with upper class Blacks as far as the tendency to live in conventional family structures is concerned, than with lower-class Blacks. Below I present a model of the relationship between class, culture and household structure derived from the Grahamstown survey of Whites that may elucidate this finding.

If class was the only or even the major variable in explaining variations in household structures among White Grahamstonians, one would have expected lower class English and Afrikaans speakers to exhibit similar household patterns. In particular, one would have expected both groups to have an above average propensity to live in extended family households.

POOR MATERIAL CONDITIONS —————> EXTENDED FAMILY HH

GOOD MATERIAL CONDITIONS —————> NUCLEAR FAMILY HH

This was not found to be the case since lower class Afrikaans speakers were far less likely than lower class English speakers to live in nuclear family households and more likely to

live in extended family households. As noted, the same is true of Allen's study when lower class Whites are compared to lower class Blacks (1979:309).

On the other hand, if culture was the overriding variable, one would have expected Afrikaans speakers to be significantly more likely than English speakers to reside in extended family households regardless of socio-economic factors.

ENGLISH SPEAKERS —————> NUCLEAR FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

AFRIKAANS SPEAKERS —————> EXTENDED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

Again, this was not found to be the case since in both groups nuclear family households constituted about 50% of the total. Moreover, 'upper class' Afrikaans speakers had more in common with both lower and upper class English speakers than with lower class Afrikaans speakers. In other words, there were distinct differences between lower and upper class Afrikaans speakers that did not apply to English speakers.

In Allen's study the equivalent expectation would have been that lower and upper class Blacks are similar in terms of their propensity to reside in extended family households. Allen's data showed that this is not the case. Rather, in line with the results of the Grahamstown study, Allen's data show that there are distinct differences between lower and upper class Blacks and that this does not apply in the case of Whites. Allen's data also show that upper class Blacks have more in common with lower class Whites than lower class Blacks in terms of their propensity to reside in non-conventional family structures. Both studies therefore show that it is only among a particular community that class appears to impact on household structure.

These findings bring us to the conclusion that 'class' and 'culture' combine in a particular way to produce different propensities to live in different types of households. The clue

to understanding the nature of this combination in the Grahamstown study, is provided by lower class Afrikaans speakers, who, as mentioned, distinguish themselves from all the other groups by having both a greater propensity to favour extended family arrangements and by being more inclined to live in them. The following general statements have been deduced from the above findings:

1. Extended family households are unlikely when the culture of the group proscribes them and material conditions do not necessitate them ('Professional' English Speakers) (Upper class Whites).

2. Extended family households are also unlikely to occur when the culture of the group does not proscribe them but material conditions do not necessitate them ('Professional' Afrikaans speakers) (Upper class Blacks).

3. Extended family households are only likely to occur in significant numbers in those instances where a culture which positively evaluates them, combines with low socio-economic status. ('Manual' Afrikaans speakers) ('Lower class' Blacks).

The model below summarises these observations:

Table 14.4

MODEL OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MATERIAL CONDITIONS, CULTURE AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE I		
CULTURAL GROUP FAVOURS:	MATERIAL CONDITIONS	HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE
Nuclear Families	Good	Nuclear
Nuclear Families	Poor	Nuclear
Extended Families	Good	Nuclear
Extended Families	Poor	Extended

In terms of this model then, poor material conditions represent

a necessary but not sufficient condition for an above average propensity to live in extended family households. Here, lower class English speakers (and lower-class Whites generally) would be an example of a group whose material conditions favour extended family arrangements but whose culture proscribes them.

This seems to suggest that culture is the dominant variable since class only comes into play in those instances where its direction of influence (poor material conditions favouring extended family households) is the same as that which the culture in any event defines as desirable. Such a conclusion would, however, be premature since the notion of culture needs further analysis and more needs to be said about the relationship between class and culture themselves.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLASS AND CULTURE

Above I have used the phrase 'the culture of the group' deliberately in order to differentiate it from the culture to which the individual ascribes or aspires. It is of course possible that individuals who, on the basis of an objective criterion such as home language, are assigned to a particular cultural or ethnic group, aspire to a set of cultural ideals and practices associated with another group. This is likely to occur in those instances where the individual's cultural group (objectively defined) is not the dominant one.

Under such circumstances, upward mobility may involve not only an improvement in 'life chances' but also acculturation i.e. the acceptance of the culture of another group. In those instances where the dominant group proscribes extended family arrangements (and favours nuclear ones) while the cultural groups to which the individual belongs in an objective sense does not, nuclear families are likely to predominate (a) because material conditions permit them and (b) because the individual identifies with the values and norms of the dominant group. I submit that this is the case with respect to 'upper class' or 'professional'

Afrikaans speakers for whom English speakers represent a reference group. While it is true that Afrikaans speakers have dominated the state from the 1940's to the 1990's, it is likely that because of their economic dominance, it has been the life-style of English speakers that has served as the aspirational ideal for Afrikaans speakers capable of emulating the behavioural patterns which make up that life-style.

On the basis of these observations, the proposed model is revised in the following manner:

Table 14.5

MODEL OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MATERIAL CONDITIONS, CULTURE AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE II			
CULTURAL GROUP FAVOURS:	MATERIAL CONDITIONS	IDENTIFY WITH DOMINANT CULTURE	HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE
Nuclear Families	Good	Yes	Nuclear
Nuclear Families	Poor	Yes	Nuclear
Extended Families	Good	Yes	Nuclear
Extended Families	Poor	No	Extended

From a processual point of view one can present this interpretation as follows:

Example I: 'Upper class' Afrikaans speakers.

1. Objective culture does not proscribe extended family arrangements.
2. Material conditions are good.
3. Subjective identification with another culture which does proscribe extended family arrangements.
4. Low prevalence of extended family arrangements.

Example II: 'Lower class' Afrikaans speakers.

1. Objective culture does not proscribe extended family arrangements.
2. Material conditions are poor.
3. Subjective identification with 'native' culture (or the culture of the group to which the individual has been objectively assigned).
4. High prevalence of extended family arrangements.

This would suggest that 'lower class' English speakers are the exception in that they are the only group where the impact of material conditions is not reinforced by the impact of culture. As noted then, social class is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the prevalence of extended family households - its impact being mediated by the cultural disposition of the individuals concerned.

Applying this model to a comparison of Black and White household structures, 'lower class' Whites would be in a similar position to lower class English speakers in that material conditions may favour extended family households but their culture proscribes them. Upper class Blacks would be in the opposite position if it is assumed that there is cultural homogeneity within the Black community. On the other hand, if 'upper class' Blacks ascribe to 'Western family values' then they would be in a situation similar to 'upper class' Afrikaans speakers: material conditions do not necessitate extended family arrangements and the culture with which they identify does not favour them. Finally, it is only among 'lower class' Blacks that one is likely to find both a relatively high incidence of extended family arrangements and 'family values' consonant with that reality.

The application of the model derived from the study of Whites in Grahamstown to a comparison of Blacks and Whites, is limited by the dearth of research on the question of family ideology - particularly in the case of Blacks. Neither Allen (1979), Steyn

(1993), Manona (1988) nor Brown (1996) considered this question in a manner similar to their consideration of household structures themselves. Indeed, I am aware of no large scale survey of family ideology as it applies to Blacks or a comparison of Blacks and Whites - either in the United States or in South Africa.

In the South African context there are some small scale studies which suggest that despite the acceptance of Christianity by Black South Africans, there is still a strong attachment to customs which historically have been associated with the 'African' as opposed to 'Western' way of life. So, for instance, in her study of 12 Black middle class couples in Grahamstown, van der Vliet (1982) found that in all cases the marriage had taken place according to Christian rites **and** that lobola had been paid to the parents of the bride.

Moreover, the survey of first year students at Rhodes (referred to in Chapter 4) showed that the type of school from which a student matriculated had a bearing on their views concerning whether there is an obligation on the part of their parents to provide accommodation to a relative in need. In particular, whereas about half of the Black students who had matriculated from a private school responded affirmatively to that question, this applied to about 80% of the other Black students. Therefore, while students cannot be seen as representative of the wider society, there is at least the suggestion here that the above model may well apply in the South African context when Blacks and Whites are considered.

5. CONCLUSION

At the outset of this study, it was anticipated that Afrikaans speakers would hold more conservative family values than English speakers but it was not known whether they would be significantly more likely than English speakers to hold views which favour extended family arrangements. It was nevertheless surmised that this would be the case and that the two groups are similar in terms of socio-economic status. One of the most significant findings of the study was that the latter assumption proved to be unfounded: Afrikaans speakers were better represented in the lower socio-economic categories than English speakers and vice versa. This suggests that the prediction of socio-economic convergence between English and Afrikaans speaking Whites has not come true in Grahamstown. The researcher was therefore unable to avoid the one of the factors that was initially considered to be a complicating factor with respect to comparisons of Black and White household structures.

But the fact that the same group which is purported to ascribe to values which favour non-nuclear family arrangements is also of a relatively low socio-economic status, may tell us something about the relationship between class and culture. To date these have been treated independently i.e. as alternative explanations for variation in household structure. However, the findings of this study show that these variables combine in a particular way to produce different propensities to live in particular household structures. They also suggest that in a society where a particular ethnic category dominates economically, upward mobility from within another ethnic category may be associated with the acceptance of the dominant culture. This observation raises the question of the relationship between class and culture generally. Do poor material conditions always produce family ideologies which favour extended family arrangements while wealth is associated with the nuclear family ideology? If our answer to this is in the affirmative,

another one arises: If Macfarlane (1978) is correct in his historical analysis, why have the English (particularly the lower strata) always been individualistic in matters which concern the family?

Finally, in contrast to some other studies, the question of family ideology was addressed explicitly in this study. However, an effort was made to be comprehensive by ascertaining subjects' views on a variety of family-related issues (pre-marital sex, division of labour etc) rather than to provide a detailed analysis of those ideas that directly affect decisions concerning the structure of households (questions about feelings of obligation towards non-nuclear family members in need of accommodation, particularly elderly relatives). Future research should focus more specifically on these issues and, while I agree with Allen (1979) that they are probably best researched by means of ethnographic studies or in-depth interviewing, our knowledge of the family can only be enhanced if such information is complemented by large-scale studies which show how common particular views are, both for the community as a whole and sub-sections within it. As difficult a concept as 'culture' may be, the challenge facing family sociologists today is to provide information on family ideology that matches what we now know about household structures - both past and present.

6. NOTES

1. This refers to the combination of 'no' and 'it depends' to the question of whether it is unhealthy for a married couple to live with their parents. Despite this difference of about 10% the relationship between occupation and responses to this question was not shown to be statistically significant. The reason for this could be that it only holds with respect to Afrikaans speakers.

2. The per capita income of those included in Manona's study ranged from nothing to R150.00 per month, 74% having an income of between R20 and R80 per month (1988:393) while the income of Whites in the Eastern Cape and Border region is estimated to be about five times as high as those of Blacks (Erwee and Radder in Black et al, 1986:21).

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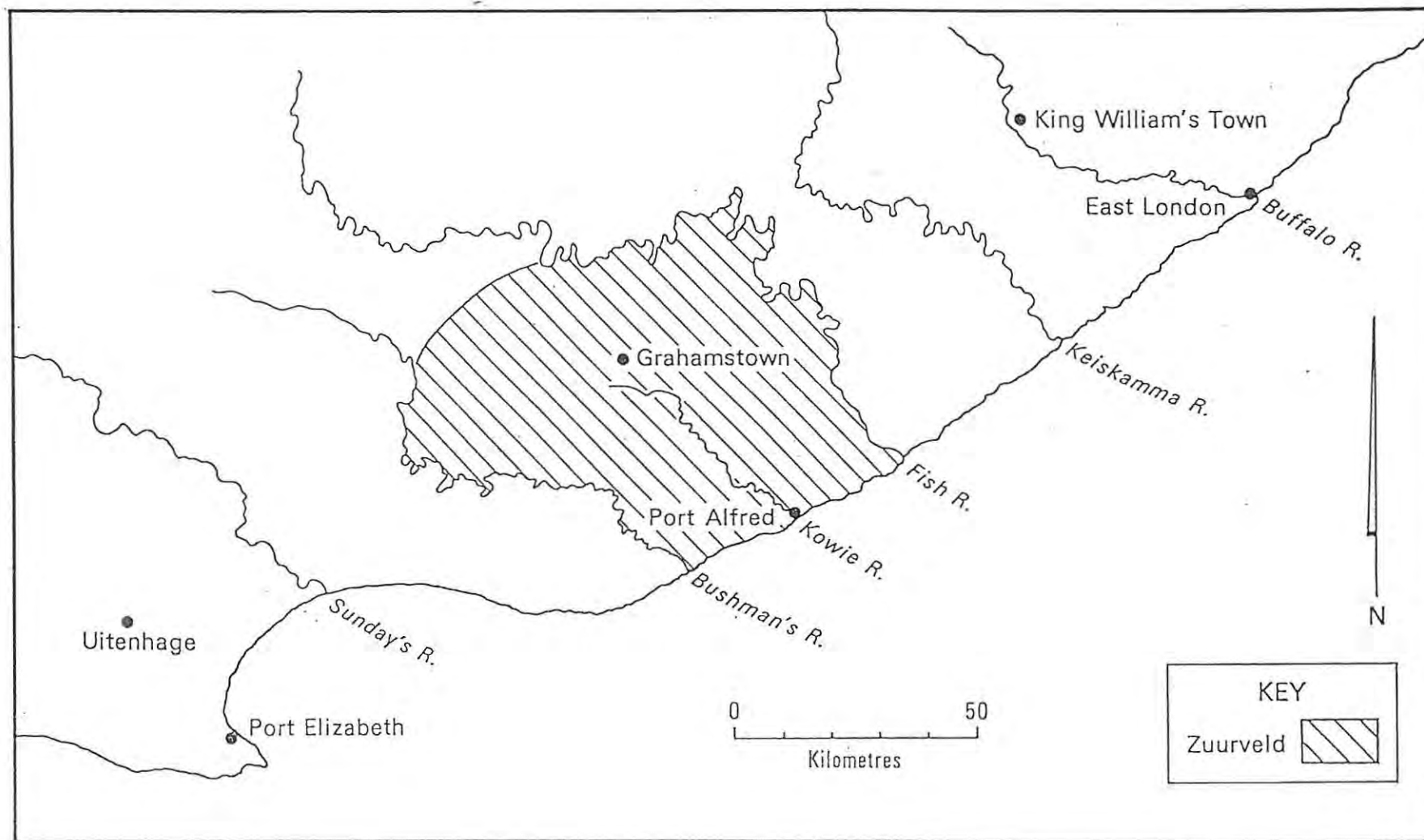
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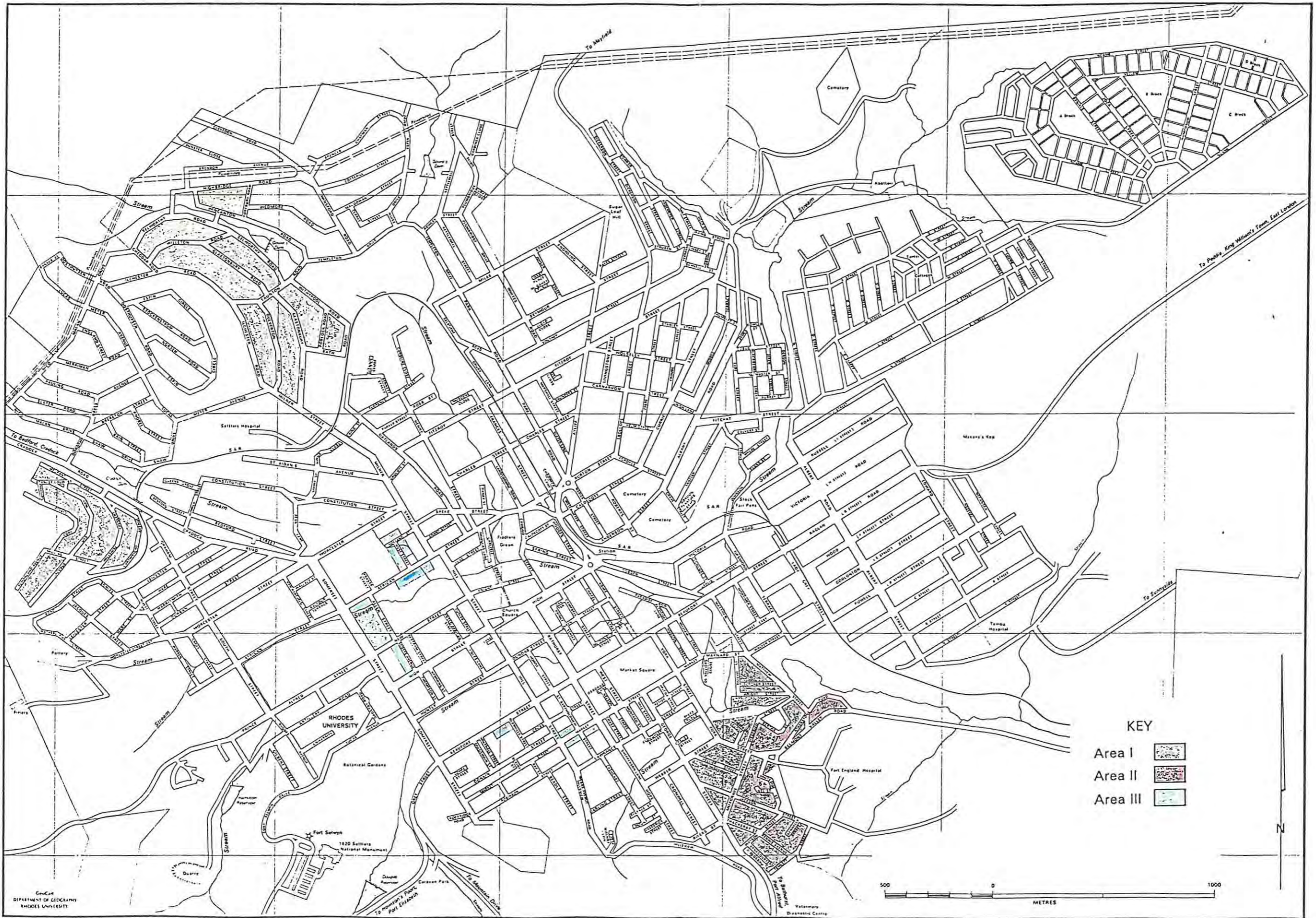
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MAP OF SECTION OF EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

MAP OF GRAHAMSTOWN INDICATING AREAS OF STUDY



KEY
 Area I [stippled box]
 Area II [cross-hatched box]
 Area III [solid light green box]

500 0 1000
 METRES

N

QUESTIONNAIRE

Area (circle) 1, 2, or 3

Address

RESPONDENT NUMBER

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1

2-4

5

6

7-10

11

1. What is your present marital status?

- 1 Married
- 2 Divorced
- 3 Separated
- 4 Widowed
- 5 Never married

1.1 If married, how many times?

- 1 Once
- 2 Twice
- 3 Three times
- 4 More

1.2 If any of your marriages has ended how did it/they end?

	Divorce 1	Desertion 2	Death 3	Separation 4
First
Second
Third
Fourth

1.3 If not presently married, are you living with a boyfriend?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

2. Please indicate your mother tongue, that of your spouse (or partner) and your present home language:

	English 1	Afrikaans 2	Both 3	Other 4
Respondent
Spouse
Home language

12-14

3. Please indicate your and your spouse's present occupations:
(If retired or unemployed indicate the last occupation with (r) or (u) after the name of the occupation).

3.1 Respondent's occupation

.....

3.2 Spouse's occupation

.....

3.3 Please describe the nature of these occupations (if not obvious).

15

16

Respondent

Spouse/Partner

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

- 1 Professional and Managerial
- 2 Middle White-collar occupations
- 3 Manual Foreman and Skilled occupations
- 4 Routine non-manual and semi-skilled Manual
- 5 Unskilled Manual and Menial
- 6 Farmer
- 7 Armed Forces (permanent) (excluding Police)
- 8 Housewife

4. Do you or your spouse/partner belong to any religious denomination?

- 1 No church affiliation
- 2 Catholic
- 3 Jewish
- 4 Nederduits Gereformeerde (N.G.)
- 5 Anglican
- 6 Methodist
- 7 Assembly of God
- 8 Full Gospel
- 9 Apostolic
- 10 Jehovah's Witness
- 11 Seventh Day Adventist
- 12 Baptist
- 13 Presbyterian
- 14 Other (specify)

Respondent ...

Husband/friend ...

17-18

4.1 Are you a regular church goer?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

19

--

4.2 Is your spouse/partner a regular church goer?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

20

--

21

5. Have you had any children? 1 Yes 2 No

--

6. If yes, how many?

- | | <i>Number</i> |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 Adopted | |
| 2 First marriage | |
| 3 Second marriage | |
| 4 Third marriage | |
| 5 Fourth marriage | |
| 6 Out of marriage | |
| 7 Other response | |

22-28

7. How many people normally reside with you in this dwelling (including yourself and those temporarily residing elsewhere, e.g. at boarding school).

Number

29

8. Please indicate their relationship to you, their ages and marital status.

Relationship to Respondent	Age	Marital status (1NM; 2M; 3D; 4Sep; 5Widow)
----------------------------	-----	---

1 Respondent
--------------	-----	-------

2
---	-------	-------

3
---	-------	-------

4
---	-------	-------

30-31

32-33

34

35-36

37-38

39

40-41

42-43

44

45-46

47-48

49

5

50-51	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
52-53	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
54	<input type="text"/>	

6

55-56	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
57-58	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
59	<input type="text"/>	

7

60-61	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
62-63	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
64	<input type="text"/>	

8

65-66	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
67-68	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
69	<input type="text"/>	

9

70-71	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
72-73	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
74	<input type="text"/>	

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1 = First husband; 2 = second husband; 3 = third husband; 4 = fourth husband; 5 = boyfriend; 6-11 = daughters; 12-17 = sons; 18-22 = step daughters; 23-27 = step sons; 28-32 = adopted daughters; 33-37 = adopted sons; 38 = mother; 39 = father; 40 = mother-in-law; 41 = father-in-law; 42-44 = brother; 45-47 = sisters; 48-52 = other relative; 53-55 = other persons

Diagram

9. Household type:

75

- 1 Single parent family household (one parent with child or children)
- 2 Conventional nuclear family (married couple with their biological offspring)
- 3 Adoptive family (married couple with adopted child/children)
- 4 Couple household (childless married couple)
- 5 Single person household (an individual living alone)
- 6 Extended nuclear family household (conventional nuclear family plus relatives)
- 7 Extended single parent family household (single parent family plus other relatives)
- 8 Remarriage family household (nuclear family where one or more of the adults has been previously married)
- 9 Remarriage couple household (married couple without children where at least one of the couple has been previously married)
- 10 No marriage couple household
- 11 No marriage nuclear family
- 12 Other

10. How old were you when you married?
(First marriage)

Age

76-77

--	--

11. How old was your spouse when you married?
(First marriage)

Age

78-79

--	--

12. How old were you at the birth of your children?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

80-81

82-83

84-85

86-87

88-89

90-91

92-93

94-95

96-97

98-99

13. How often do you see your mother ?

1. More than once a week

2. Once a week

3. About once a month

4. About once a year

5. Other response

.....

100

--

14. Where does your mother live?

1. In Grahamstown

2. Port Elizabeth or East London

3. On a farm or town nearby

4. Somewhere in the Eastern Cape

5. Elsewhere in South Africa

6. Overseas

101

--

15. How would you describe your relationship with your mother ? (If deceased, please describe your relationship prior to her death)

- 1. Excellent
- 2. Good
- 3. Reasonably good
- 4 Strained but cordial / It could be better
- 5 Poor

102

16. Please describe your domestic situation prior to your first marriage:

.....

.....

.....

Diagram:

17. Since your marriage, has a member of your family (e.g. mother, sister, mother-in-law) come to stay with your for a period exceeding two weeks?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

103

20.1 What was the reason for their stay?

.....

.....

18. If you have been married before, please describe your domestic situation immediately after the termination of your first marriage.

.....

.....

.....

Diagram:

ATTITUDES

19. Do you regard pre-marital sex as

1 Acceptable

2 Unacceptable

3 Depends on

104

20. If you discovered that your husband was having an extra marital affair would you feel compelled to divorce him?

1 Yes

2 No

3 Depends on

.....

.....

105

21. Do you think an extra-marital affair destroys the foundations of a marriage?

1 Yes

2 No

3 Not necessarily

.....

106

22. How do you feel about women with small children who willing^{ly} work outside the home (i.e. not out of economic necessity)?

1 Find it acceptable

2 Against it

3 Other response

.....

107

23. What would you describe as the most important ingredient in a good marriage?

.....

.....

.....

108

24. Do you think a marriage without physical attraction between the spouses can be successful?

For you : 1 Yes

2 No

109

For others: 1 Yes

2 No

3 Depends on

.....

110

25. Do you think it is unhealthy for a married couple to live very close to their parents?

For you : 1 Yes

2 No

111

For others: 1 Yes

2 No

112

26. Do you think a man should be allowed to have more than one wife?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 It depends on
-

113

27. Do you regard children as an essential part of marriage?

- For you: 1 Yes
- 2 No
- For others: 1 Yes
- 2 No

114

115

28. Do you think children are necessary for personal fulfilment?

- For you: 1 Yes
- 2 No
- For others: 1 Yes
- 2 No

116

117

29. In your opinion, is the husband usually the best candidate for the breadwinner role?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Other response
-

118

Reason

.....

34. Do you object to any of these techniques?

1 Yes 2 No

Donor insemination

Surrogacy

125

126

35. What are the reasons for your objections?

Donor insemination

.....

Surrogacy

.....

36. In principle are you against the idea that one woman carries and bears the child of another?

1 Yes

2 No

Please give reasons

.....

.....

127

37. If you and your husband were infertile and you had a choice between remaining childless, adoption and surrogacy, which would you prefer?

1 Childless

2 Adoption

3 Surrogacy

Please give reasons

.....

.....

128

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION