

The family life cycle in European societies

Le cycle de la vie familiale dans les sociétés européennes

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The family life cycle
in European societies

Le cycle de la vie familiale
dans les sociétés européennes

edited by / sous la direction de

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Mouton · The Hague · Paris

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Foreword

GERRIT A. KOOY

This publication enables the reader to experience something of the atmosphere and the scientific importance of a seminar held in Paris in 1973 under the auspices of the Committee on Family Research. Therefore, the chairman of that organization in the period 1970–1974 could not possibly decline the invitation received from the editor of this book to “compose a prelude to its central themes”. (Accepting such invitations is inherent to the role of chairmen and ex-chairmen of sponsoring organizations.) It is to be hoped, then, that what immediately follows will meet the expectations of the inviting party and satisfy the possible curiosity of the reader concerning the historical background of this publication.

In 1949 a group of sociologists from various countries established the International Sociological Association. This new organization did not accept individual membership, but became a kind of federation of existing national sociological associations. As such it was able to serve the interests of sociologists throughout the world. Among its important achievements, quadrennial world congresses with mass participation as well as a number of publications of high scientific standing can be mentioned. Nevertheless, the ISA did not seem to serve the interests of the various sociological subdisciplines to such an extent as it might do, if the organization were to provide an infra-structure for international communication and interaction between the representatives of these subdisciplines. Consequently, the ISA began to encourage the establishment of so-called research committees, small groups of people who accepted the task to further the interests of their subdiscipline within the organization. One of the several committees which were established was the Committee on Family

Research, formed in 1959. According to the rules of the ISA as they held until 1966, membership in the committee was limited to 18 persons. The concept of membership in the committee was rather ambiguous until the ISA revised its statutes in 1970. The creation of new categories of ISA membership in that year opened the possibility that the committee might become an organization of all those individuals paying individual membership and research committee fees to the ISA and having been accepted as members by the committee. Thus, what actually had been a service center being led by a few individuals, was given opportunity to continue its development in a democratic professional association of family sociologists all over the world. At the present moment, the committee has evolved from its original character to that of such a professional association. However, the objectives of the CFR – an organization with some 145 members from 26 different countries in the middle of 1974 – have remained the same.

From the very beginning, the objectives of the CFR have been the following: to stimulate family research in all countries, but with special emphasis on methodologically underdeveloped countries; to stimulate comparative family research; to improve the quality and efficiency of international and intranational family research. In order to fulfill this three-fold task the committee has developed and is still developing five types of activities: namely, sponsorship of international seminars on family research; organizing of world congress programs on family sociology each fourth year; publication of inventories of research; furtherance of cross-national research projects; publication of papers presented during CFR meetings. Thanks to considerable sacrifices in time and energy of a relatively small group of activists these objectives have been realized to a substantial extent. *Hic* and *nunc* it would go too far, if an attempt were made to enumerate all CFR achievements, but it seems appropriate to deal with the ISFR's (International Seminars on Family Research) at some length.

The first ISFR was organized at a moment that the Committee on Family Research had not yet been established. It was Nels Anderson, then director of the Unesco Institute in Cologne, who succeeded in bringing together a group of family researchers from various countries for a seminar in 1954. After this first ISFR, four others followed which also had no relation with the Committee on Family Research. However, the sixth seminar which was held at Opatija, Yugoslavia, in 1961, took place under the auspices and thanks to the active involvement of the CFR. The

six seminars that have been held in Washington, D.C. (1962), Oslo (1963), Tokyo (1965), Teheran (1968), London (1970), and Moscow (1972) also owe their realization to CFR's active participation in the preparatory activities. So far each ISFR attempted to encourage close relations between researchers who were either established in or just beginning a career in family sociology. The main purpose of each of the seminars was training and furtherance of good sociological research on the family. As between 150 and 200 different family sociologists from widely diverse countries have participated in these exhausting, but scientifically stimulating meetings, one already can reasonably hypothesize that this main purpose has been fulfilled. However, the series of seminars also resulted in several more or less voluminous publications which reached a large group of readers. Just one example of these publications may be mentioned. The Tokyo seminar of 1965 led to the publication of *Families in East and West*, an excellent source book for those who are interested in socialization practices or the importance of consanguineal groupings in various parts of the world. Hitherto, the Moscow seminar has not yet resulted in a publication of a selection from its papers. However, it seems plausible that the Karchew-Sussman editing team will be able to publish a Russian and an English version of the twelfth ISFR in the near future.

From the point of view of the CFR, the thirteenth seminar in the French capital meant a change in policy. Although the strange phenomenon *family sociologist* can be considered in a *fundamentalist* and in a *heterodox* way, it can be maintained that the non-family sociologist was traditionally excluded from participation in the ISFR's. The seminars were organized for the in-group and, when a representative of another discipline or sub-discipline intruded, it was more or less by accident. Honesty requires one to say that this first interdisciplinary seminar had not been purposefully pursued as an interdisciplinary meeting by the committee's governing board. The board just did its best to seduce another decent and over-busy *VIP* somewhere in this world to render the material and personal services for another seminar. The results were not overwhelming in the beginning. Several solicitations were declined, but then it happened that secretary John Moge found the *VIP* who seemed to guarantee the continuation of CFR's most cherished tradition: Jean Cuisenier. Thanks to him a thirteenth seminar within a measurable space of time became a realizable possibility. However, what Dr. Cuisenier had clearly in mind was an interdisciplinary seminar. According to him, the seminar in Paris should imply the mutual confrontation of the family sociologist, the anthropo-

logist, the demographer, and the historian. The board members of the CFR, although they saw no reason to oppose this wish of their discussion partner in the French capital, realized that they accepted a considerable risk. Exchanges of thought among family sociologists should always be perfectly clear for the participants in the discussion, for all of them have studied at least a number of the same American textbooks. Nevertheless, these exchanges are often deeply frustrating and confusing, not so much because of the scientific level of most family sociologists, but rather because of the multidimensional character of their field which encompasses various theoretical views, often reconcilable only with difficulty. Due to wise leadership, the discussions of the past had normally been positive learning experiences instead of seriously traumatic events. Although the leadership of this thirteenth seminar might be as excellent or even more excellent, the risk of frustration and confusion was considerably greater this time. In the meanwhile, all those involved hoped that this meeting of birds of such different feathers would prove to non-family sociologists as well as family sociologists that an interdisciplinary seminar can be highly rewarding, too.

The theme chosen for the thirteenth ISFR immediately received the full consent of the governing board of the CFR. The chairman agreed with Dr. Cuisenier and the other board members in selecting "the European family cycle" as the theme of the thirteenth seminar. This agreement represented a reaction to an apparent lack of interest among European family sociologists in a theoretical and research development that has taken place 99% in the United States. Irrespective of one's personal evaluation of the sophisticated developmental approach, this youngest of the various approaches within family sociology finds its defendants among the most outstanding contemporary family sociologists. Therefore, continuing negligence of the developmental approach might hamper the further growth of a practically relevant European family sociology. In the opinion of the chairman a seminar on the European family cycle would enable us to discover through research done in Europe and theoretical discussion with the most renowned American defendants of the developmental approach, whether European family sociology should change its course.

The 1973 ISFR became a great success both as a scientific meeting and as a social event. Jean Cuisenier, the instrumental leader, and Martine Segalen, the expressive leader, assisted by an efficient and friendly staff, provided what the seminar participants from 21 countries had hoped the

meeting alongside the Bois de Boulogne would produce. As a matter of course, it is absolutely impossible to make the reader a full participant in the Paris venture of 1973. What might be maximally realized is to provide him or her with an ordered selection of the 37 papers, plus an introduction and conclusion. Jean Cuisenier who had already carried the heavy burden of the seminar as such, was prepared to accept a further exhausting CFR assignment. The Director of the Centre d'Ethnologie Française fulfilled his editing role with the same skill as his role of seminar leader. Therefore, this book on the European family cycle should find many users among both researchers and policy makers.

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Introduction

Le cycle de la vie familiale : origine et champ de l'interrogation

JEAN CUISENIER

Moins de trois ans se sont écoulés depuis que j'ai proposé à notre comité de prendre comme thème de séminaire "le cycle de la vie familiale dans les sociétés européennes". Le sujet, certes, n'était pas absolument neuf – puisque les premières formulations, que l'on doit à Reuben Hill et Evelyn Duval, datent de 1948 –. Mais le moment me paraissait venu pour qu'on tente une évaluation des recherches entreprises dans cette perspective, qu'on examine les acquisitions les plus récentes, qu'on se demande si le corps de concepts élaborés à cette fin était bien appliqué et réellement pertinent pour le traitement des données européennes. Je risquais donc une première esquisse de l'interrogation dans la lettre adressée aux participants, et dont il faut ici rappeler les termes :

Par cycle de la vie familiale, on entend la succession des moments qui marquent les opérations d'une unité de vie familiale depuis sa formation jusqu'à sa dissolution. Du concept de cycle, il y a un premier usage, purement *descriptif* : il sert également aux ethnographes pour exposer la succession typique des grands événements de la vie familiale, formation du couple, naissance et éducation des enfants, mariage et formation de nouveaux couples, transformation ou non du vieux couple par divorce ou remariage, dissolution de l'unité par divorce ou mort des conjoints. On ne s'interroge pas, en ce cas, sur les facteurs qui déterminent les événements, ou sur les rapports de position qui lient ces événements. On n'insiste pas sur la spécificité du temps propre dans lequel les acteurs de la vie familiale ordonnent leurs opérations. On ne relève pas les différences qui existent entre ce temps propre et le temps calendaire, qui règle les

activités des êtres humains comme membres d'une société globale, d'une part, et le temps biologique, qui scande leurs rythmes d'êtres vivants selon la loi du grandissement, de la maturation et de la sénescence.

Du concept de cycle, il y a un autre usage, *analytique*, qu'il faut définir. Par cycle de la vie familiale, on vise alors une succession de moments marqués par des coupures spécifiques. Des économistes, comme Chayanov, Titmuss ou Fooke ont montré que la balance producteurs/consommateurs, telle qu'elle change dans l'unité domestique avec les années de mariage, est, si l'on veut rendre compte de certains comportements, une variable d'un pouvoir explicatif plus grand que l'âge du chef de famille. Des psychosociologues comme Evelyn Duvall ou comme Rodgers se sont attachés à discerner dans le cycle des séquences et des unités temporelles partiellement indépendantes des séquences calendaires et des rapports d'âge entre membres de l'unité domestique. En tous ces cas, le cycle est traité comme une suite de *phases* distinctes, et le travail de l'analyse consiste à découper l'unité du cycle en autant de phases qu'il est pertinent pour le traitement d'un problème particulier.

Mais il faut tenter d'aller plus loin, et rechercher si la suite des phases du cycle, telles qu'elles apparaissent à l'analyse, obéit à une logique, et laquelle. Il faut, pour cela, prendre au sérieux le précepte qui veut que l'on traite la famille comme un système social. S'il est vrai que la société familiale fonctionne selon un temps cyclique, alors chaque phase est à considérer comme un état de système, la succession des phases comme un système d'états de système. Les dernières questions à formuler sont donc les suivantes : la succession des phases du cycle, qui sont chacune autant d'états du système familial, peut-elle être traitée comme une série de positions dans un espace de relations? Si oui, la succession des phases du cycle obéit-elle à des lois structurales, et lesquelles? Comment ces lois varient-elles selon les cultures, les sociétés, les classes de la société?

En posant ces questions, on vise moins à bâtir une théorie du cycle de la vie familiale qu'à proposer un cadre d'analyse. Trop souvent, on traite des grands faits de la vie familiale séparément. Mariage, fécondité du couple, éducation des enfants, divorce, distribution des rôles dans la société familiale sont plutôt à considérer dans leurs relations réciproques. Si l'on invite à analyser la vie familiale par le concept du *cycle*, c'est pour marquer l'importance

qu'il y a aujourd'hui, à ressaisir, dans une vue unitaire, la variété des transformations qui affectent le système familial.

Mon but, dans ce propos liminaire, n'est évidemment pas de répondre à ces questions: c'est aux contributions soumises à ce séminaire de le faire. Mon but n'est pas, non plus, de construire le sujet lui-même: c'est à Reuben Hill et Roy Rodgers de s'expliquer pleinement eux-mêmes. Je dois plus simplement introduire aux débats, tracer la portée et les limites de notre interrogation.

Introduire veut dire: "mener jusqu'au sujet lui-même". Il se peut que le but soit unique et indivisible. Les cheminements vers le but sont, en revanche, nombreux et variés, parce que les terrains d'où naissent les questions sont eux-mêmes divers et distincts. Ainsi l'introduction doit-elle expliciter quelles sont les origines de l'interrogation, quel est son champ, quelles sont les perspectives selon lesquelles il convient de la développer.

Où se placer pour s'interroger sur le cycle de la vie familiale dans les sociétés européennes?

Un choix possible est de prendre comme société de référence la nôtre propre à chacun de nous, là où il est situé, et de repérer les problèmes qui viennent à l'expression dans cette société. Et de fait, en France comme en Angleterre, en Yougoslavie comme en Roumanie, les transformations de la vie familiale dans le temps sont si vives et si profondes que la société globale est concernée, et que de multiples problèmes sociaux sont posés. Des agences gouvernementales fonctionnent, un peu partout, pour traiter ces problèmes pratiquement. Mais leurs responsables savent aussi bien que les sociologues, sinon mieux, que pour changer une réglementation, définir une jurisprudence, doser des dépenses, il faut anticiper sur l'évolution en cours, avoir quelques idées, donc, des formes sociales à l'œuvre, et des conflits qui s'engagent. Dans quelle mesure les idées des responsables d'agences gouvernementales sont-elles les idées qui prévalent dans la société globale, dans quelle mesure sont-elles des idées propres à des groupes d'acteurs déterminés? Le discerner est une tâche assez difficile pour justifier à elle seule les efforts les plus soutenus. Ce n'était pas, toutefois, la tâche de ce séminaire. Qu'il suffise, ici, de caractériser le premier choix: partir des *problèmes* sociaux que posent les transformations du cycle familial dans les sociétés européennes, c'est s'engager dans la voie d'une évaluation des *réponses sociales* qu'y apportent les familles, les associations et les agences gouvernementales.

Un deuxième choix consiste à partir d'un type de l'organisation

familiale délibérément construit, et tenu pour idéal, puis à définir les variables d'après lesquelles un groupe ainsi organisé évolue dans le temps, enfin à examiner comment les données européennes appelées selon un tel schéma varient en effet. Le type généralement pris comme référence est le type idéal de la famille conjugale, dont on peut se demander quel idéal il figure : celui que visent les familles européennes elles-mêmes, ou celui que leur attribuent les sociologues dans leur projet de référer à un modèle unique, pour mieux en saisir, les formes diverses d'organisation familiale effectivement observables en Europe. Or rien, théoriquement, ne désigne la famille conjugale comme type idéal par rapport auquel saisir la réalité des cycles familiaux. La méthode qui consiste à bâtir un modèle de l'organisation familiale et du cycle, à dresser la liste des variantes possibles, à examiner les variantes effectivement données dans l'observation, est parfaitement détachable de l'usage qui en a été fait, et qui a toujours privilégié la famille conjugale et son cycle comme type de référence. D'autres modèles peuvent être bâtis, comme cela a été fait pour d'autres sociétés que les sociétés européennes.

La troisième voie a pour point de départ l'étude des formes diverses d'organisation familiale et du cycle qui apparaissent réellement dans l'histoire des sociétés européennes. Au lieu d'être fait par construction, comme dans le cas précédent, l'inventaire des formes est dressé par observation et reconstitution sur pièces d'archives. Les catégories à manier sont alors celles de la pratique sociale et des règles administratives, puisque ce sont les catégories que manipulent les documents. Mais pour être comparables et mobilisables dans un projet de connaissance scientifique, ces catégories doivent être subsumées sous des catégories plus larges, que seule une orientation théorique de la description peut fournir.

Telles sont les trois voies qu'on peut distinguer pour en venir au cycle lui-même, les trois voies qu'ont réellement suivi les contributions soumises à discussion. Mais dans quel champ limiter l'investigation ?

Il faut bien, par convention, prendre des décisions.

Décidons donc que nous nous limiterons, dans l'espace, au continent européen, et aux sources européennes des types de familles observables dans les pays non-européens de peuplement européen. Cette limitation se justifie moins pour des raisons théoriques, car le concept de cycle est d'ambition universelle, que pour des raisons pratiques liées aux conditions du recueil et de l'exploitation des données. Il n'y aurait pas grand sens, en effet, pour notre propos à comparer des types d'organisation familiale aussi différente que ceux qu'offre un échantillonnage ethnographique des cultures.

Décidons aussi de nous limiter dans le temps. Ce que nous allons considérer, ce sera l'organisation familiale et son cycle dans les sociétés européennes contemporaines. Par contemporanéité, entendons ici la similitude de position historique des sociétés qui sont passées par la révolution démographique. La date de celle-ci varie, on le sait, selon les sociétés : du 18^e siècle au début du 20^e siècle probablement. Sur ce point comme sur le point précédent, ce sont des raisons pratiques qui prévalent pour le découpage du champ.

Ainsi repéré, le champ est assez vaste pour que l'interrogation s'y déploie à l'aise : c'est la tâche à laquelle les contributions présentées dans cet ouvrage vont maintenant se livrer.

I. *Cycle theories and history
of the concept*

*Théories du cycle et histoire
du concept*

1. Social theory and family development

REUBEN HILL

In this introductory chapter I seek to stimulate the reader to reexamine the family life cycle concepts he may have been using and to develop a frame for analysis that is more encompassing than the frameworks currently in vogue for ordering family life cycle data. Eleven years ago Professor John Mogeey convened the Seventh International Family Research Seminar in Washington D.C. to discuss research and theory bearing on the theme, "The transition from marital to parental roles in marriage", in which several of the concepts of the family development conceptual framework were explicated and their utility for generating research propositions was assessed.

Has anything new been added over the past decade, either methodologically or theoretically to which we should be paying attention? My impression based on the published literature is that there has been precious little progress in the past decade on the issue of measurement and the sharpening of the classificatory categories we use for distinguishing phases of the family life cycle, whereas the picture with respect to conceptualization seems much brighter. Perhaps, this is as it should be; namely, that progress in conceptualizing should precede improvement in operationalization and measurement of concepts, but I would argue that the two activities should be mutually reinforcing and should move forward together rather than in lead-lag sequence.

CHALLENGES FOR CONCEPTUALIZATION IN FAMILY DEVELOPMENT FROM RELEVANT FORMULATIONS IN CONTIGUOUS SPECIALISMS

There has been in the past decade an increasing stimulation from the intersecting of several disciplines addressing the issues of development and change for which the family is becoming a common object of study. For example, family historians and historical demographers for the first time are challenging the ahistorical views of many family scholars. The incipient field of study on the sociology of time offers many challenging concepts relevant to family development. Social anthropologists and ethnographers are being increasingly read for their observations of the critical transitions in the developmental cycle of domestic groups. The meticulous work of consumption economists and statisticians on family budgets is being belatedly recognized by family historians and family sociologists as a means of assessing trends in values and in life cycle variations, in levels of living and in "life satisfactions" which they term "subjective welfare". Anthropologists, consumption economists and family sociologists are converging in their interests about intergenerational continuities, intergenerational transfers, and intergenerational solidarities. Sociologists seeking a better way of comparing societies have recently developed a program of scholarly conceptualization and work on age stratification paralleling earlier productive work on social stratification. Their formulations intersect at a number of points with the interests of family scholars on life cycle phenomena. Finally, we should note that genetic psychologists and human development researchers have conducted longitudinal research, now being analyzed from a life course perspective.

These several developments, originating in different disciplines, have added enormously to the vocabulary of concepts which scholars in family development will need to rework into their own taxonomy of preferred concepts, and present an abundance of empirical generalizations challenging previous views. The net effect has been to increase the diffuseness of family development as a research domain, to augment the redundancy of terms and concepts, and the richness of descriptive work to be integrated by family scholars. Let me treat some of these issues in more detail in the pages which follow.

Time concepts requiring attention by family development scholars

Of the three basic conditions affecting all social systems, *numbers*, *space*, and *time*, family development and the issues of categorizing such development into phases are primarily concerned with the pervasive issue of *time*. The numerical dimension of societies has been the preoccupation of demography, whereas the concentration and dispersion of human populations in social space has generated the science of human ecology. (In family sociology the study of family situations reflects this interest: see Bossard and Boll, 1943; Chombart de Lauwe, 1956; and Schefflen, 1971.) But the temporal boundaries of life and the sequential ordering of action as a central feature of social order is so minimally developed that no one has even invented a name for the science of the temporal dimensions of life, according to Wilbert Moore whose book, *Man, Time and Society* (1963) would be a challenge to family scholars. Historians may argue that their concern with chronology, the ordering and dating of past events, makes them eligible for this task, but their work has tended to exclude the rhythms and cycles, the speed and direction, the strains in time allocations, and the strategies of planning that mark the phenomena of time in human experience. To be sure, contemporary family historians are focusing on some of the above issues for historical time periods. But their contributions to date have been mainly in reconstructing family structure (size of families, degree of extendedness of families, reflecting *numbers*) and to a limited extent the utilization of space by families, discovering over historical time relatively recent concern by the masses with the value of privacy in family living. To my knowledge, with the possible exception of Lutz Berkner (1972) on Austrian data, family historians have not yet coped with the dimensions of time and career management, or with the way family structure changes over its developmental cycle, or with the changes in normative content of family positions over the life span of families for any historical period of time.

Let me extend our horizons a bit by examining the aspects of time that family development as a conceptual approach renders residual. From Rodgers' chapter in this book, it will be apparent that the focus taken by students of the family life cycle narrowed relatively early to the issues of development of the *conjugal family*. Attention has been given almost exclusively to the temporal boundaries demarcated by the ceremonialization of the formation of the conjugal family unit in marriage and the dissolution of this family unit by the death of the participants, and to the

orderly changes in family structure which occur within that social time span. This focus has left residual many of the most interesting issues of family time, namely, the sequential ordering of events, timing of actions, and the synchronization of activities in rhythms by day and night, by days of the week, by seasons of the year, by family rituals occurring annually (anniversaries) and by significant rites of passage such as birth ceremonies, coming of age ceremonies and so on. Beginnings are being made, however, to incorporate some of the ceremonies of passage in the work of the Rapoport (1963) and the social anthropologists (Fortes, 1962) as critical episodes of transition demarcating phases of the developmental cycle.

The *timing* of family actions and their *synchronization* over the family's career have not yet been incorporated in the family literature nor have the several "time utilization" studies in Europe and America undertaken the analysis of the family as a time budgeting association. Hill (1970) and his colleagues have made a beginning at examining this phenomenon descriptively for three different generations of the same family line. He discovered variations in achievement "on time" of family long term goals by generation, with some families seeing themselves as "behind schedule", some "on schedule", and some "ahead of schedule". The concept of "career management" was coined by Hill in this study to account for the relative success and failure of families to synchronize their activities and to husband their resources to achieve their goals *on schedule*.

The reader may wish to ask what problems would be encountered in incorporating into a more encompassing approach to family development the several aspects of timing and career management that have been treated as residual to date.

If we take the focus of the scholars in family development as given, namely, the orderly changes in family structure and functioning over the life span of the family formed by the marriage of two adults, there is the necessity of differentiating this new nuclear unit from the parental families in which the new family heads were reared. The social anthropologist Lloyd Warner has coined the term "family of procreation" for the former and "family of orientation" for the latter. Most Western family scholars take the family of procreation as their point of reference and treat the families of orientation of the new family heads as significant kinsmen (central members of the kinship network) with whom a variety of transactions occur over the family's developmental cycle. In contrast, many Eastern scholars and social anthropologists¹ located in societies where extended families are normatively supported find the most interest-

ing unit to study developmentally to be what the Japanese sociologists term the “lineal family”, the vertically linked multi-generation family. In Japan the form such a lineal family takes is the “stem family” pattern of one married son and his wife remaining in his family of orientation while his siblings leave the parental family at marriage to establish conjugal units of their own (Eitaro Suzuki, 1942: 1–50). The developmental cycle of the stem family is divided by Morioka (1967) into four demarcated stages:

Stage I: Two couples of successive generations cohabit, but headship lies with the father. This is an especially difficult period for the daughter-in-law and not too comfortable for her husband and parents-in-law. The service the daughter-in-law renders to her parents-in-law is more important than the love of the young couple. If she fails to gain the acceptance of her husband’s parents, she is very often divorced by them regardless of the love or will of her husband (Koyama, 1961: 35).

Stage II: The headship has been transferred to the son, with the retirement or death of the father. This is a stage of transfer of authority not only for the son but also for his wife who assumes hegemony over the household – it may be a period of tension between the generations since succession is accompanied by a shift of management of the resources accumulated by the parents.

Stage III: This stage begins with the death of the mother and ushers in the first experience of the couple and their children as a conjugal or nuclear family. It ends with the marriage of their heir and the renewal once again of Stage I, thus completing the cycle.

Morioka has brought together data from Suzuki’s work in the 1930’s with data from the Japanese census for 1950 and 1960 to compare the average length of time each of these stages lasts for the three time periods (see Table 1). Nuclear family living (Stage III) appears shorter and multi-generation living longer, it would appear, over the time periods compared by Morioka.

I.P. Desai (1964) finds the normative support for the extended family which Indians call the “joint family” so strong in his study, *Some Aspects of the Family in Mahuva* (1964), that he questions the wisdom of regarding the nuclear family form as legitimate in India. It is in effect either “a

Table 1. *Years in four stages of the stem family life cycle in Japan*

Stage	1930 (in years)	1950 (in years)	1960 (in years)
I	5.5	14.4	15.7
II	4.0	5.5	0.3
III	20.0	7.0	6.8
	29.5	26.9	29.0

joint family in becoming” or the remnants of a “joint family that was”. Examining the histories of more than 383 families, he ascertains that only two percent have been nuclear in form over their entire history; 24 percent began as nuclear units, experienced joint family living for a period and are now once again nuclear units; another 20 percent began as nuclear, became joint and have persisted as joint families for the balance of their career; an important proportion began their family career in the joint form and ultimately contracted to the nuclear form (36 percent), and the balance of the families reported a continuous condition of joint family living for the entire family span (16 percent). Desai offers this variety of patterns as evidence for the numerical importance of nuclearity as a form experienced by the great majority of Indian families at some point in their careers (just as a period of childlessness is a part of the experience of all Western marriages). He notes, however, that there is a high tendency to turn to joint family living as the desirable form of family life (just as the great majority of Western marriages undertake the status of natural or adoptive parenthood to fulfill the normative requirements for becoming a family in the Western world). The sheer variety of Desai’s family careers in moving back and forth from conjugal to joint family forms suggests that to do justice to the developmental cycle would require a more complex arrangement of phases than the three stages demarcated by Morioka for the Japanese stem family. Indeed, when Morioka seeks to make cross-national comparisons of the Japanese and the Chinese lineal families and later the American conjugal family life cycle, he utilizes a more elaborate system of classification.²

An intriguing question which has not been pursued by advocates either of the conjugal or of the lineal family, as the preferred focus for family developmental analysis, is the issue of temporal boundaries where lineages are the focus of attention. There is more than mild interest in what types of family lines persist over hundreds of years and what types die out. The Japanese as contrasted with the Chinese and the Koreans have developed

a system of adoption of the son-in-law when they face the prospects of no surviving sons, or no sons willing to continue the family traditions and care for the aging parents. If one of the major tasks of a family is to assure its own replacement, this issue begs attention by students of family development and is perhaps even more critical in a period of debate over the desirability of zero population growth.

I do not pretend to have exhausted in the preceding pages the potentialities as yet little realized of assessing *family time* in its manifold aspects, but perhaps some of the concepts I have presented from the vocabulary of social time will stimulate readers to put them to use: temporal boundary setting by phases of equilibrium and of transition; sequential ordering of events; timing of plans and actions, and the synchronizing of activities of family members internally and externally with extra-familial agencies; career and life cycle management, structuring the future by forward planning, and, finally, managing time, a scarce commodity of increasing value over much of the family's career. These several issues will obviously be approached differently if the "lineal family" is the point of reference rather than the conjugal unit that Western scholars have preferred to date.

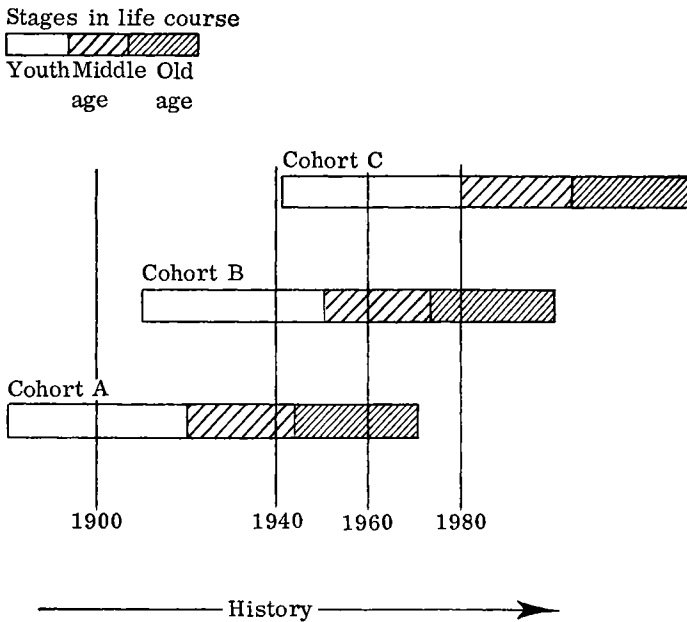
The sociology of age stratification and family development

The emerging sociology of age stratification provides a broad approach that can guide and stimulate scholars in family development. Translations can be made directly of a number of age stratification concepts that pertain to the "life course of individuals", such as "birth cohorts" and "generations" to their family equivalents, namely, the "developmental careers of families", "marital cohorts", and "vertically linked generations of nuclear families". To assess this burgeoning field of study I commend for reading especially Volume III, *A Sociology of Age Stratification*, in *Aging and Society* by Matilda Riley, Marilyn Johnson, and Anne Foner (1972). A chapter in that volume by John Clausen on "The life course of individuals" treats the developmental careers of individuals, marriage and the family cycle, occupational career development, cross-age relationships (intercohort and intergeneration), aging and identity changes and an overview of the life course where all of these are interrelated. I can only hint at challenges to our conceptualizations in family development in the paragraphs that follow.

The conceptual approach of the sociology of age structure and strati-

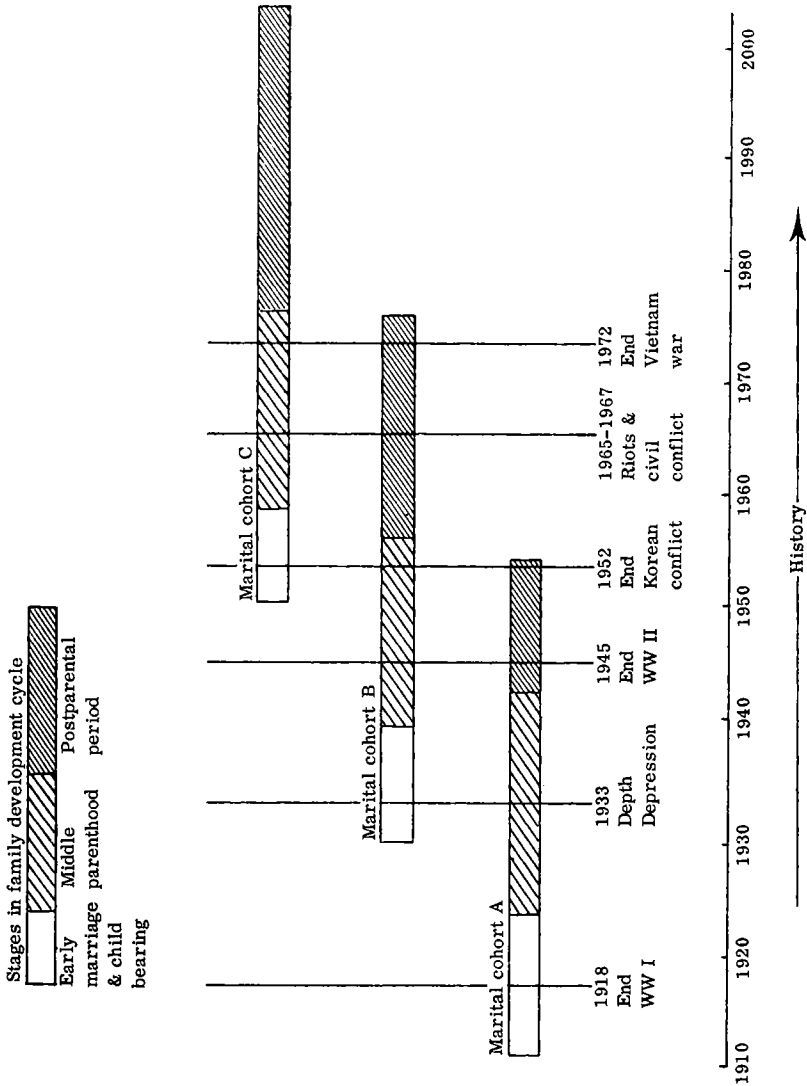
fication emphasizes three universal processes: (1) aging and (2) cohort succession, as these interpenetrate and interact with (3) social change.³ Certain rudiments of the sociological theory of age can be suggested by Figure 1. This figure represents schematically the life spans of three selected cohorts; each cohort consists of people born at the same time. The people within each cohort *age*. That is, over time they pass through a sequence of roles from birth to death (such as dependent child, student, worker, spouse, retiree), learning to play new roles and relinquish old ones, striving to maintain their identities, accumulating knowledge and attitudes and social experiences, and undergoing biological and psychological

Figure 1. *Processes of cohort flow and aging showing selected cohorts over time*



Source: Matilda White Riley, Marilyn Johnson and Anne Foner (1972), *Aging and Society*, Volume III: *A Sociology of Age Stratification*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation: 10.

Figure 2. Processes of marital cohort flow and development showing selected cohorts over the developmental cycle



Source: Based on actual data from the first two generations and estimates for the third generation of the same family lines from the study by Reuben Hill (1970), *Family Development in Three Generations*, Cambridge, Schenkman: 84, Chart 4.01.

development and change. Moreover, changes in the social structure – designated as “history” at the bottom of Figure 1 – are constantly occurring (as society undergoes wars, famines, periods of prosperity and depression, changes in the state of science and the arts, revolutions in tastes and life styles, and so on). As society changes, each new cohort encounters a unique sequence of social and environmental events. Hence the life-course patterns of people in one cohort will differ in some respects from the life course patterns of other cohorts. In this sense, different cohorts age in different ways.

Let us now redraw Figure 1 as Figure 2, this time depicting the processes of *marital cohort flow* and *development* showing selected marital cohorts over time. We will use some events as indicators of social change which have had decisive impacts on many U.S. and European families to illustrate the principles at the family development level that are rendered salient by the age stratification model. The length of the bars in Figure 2 take their shape from actual data on marital duration and developmental stage from three generations of the same family lines from the metropolitan areas of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota (see Hill, 1970: 84, Chart 4.01). I have had to estimate from actuarial tables, however, the duration of the postparental period for the youngest of the three marital generations (Marital cohort C) included in the Minnesota study, because its career has many years to go before reaching the end of its developmental cycle.

Figure 2 represents schematically the developmental careers of three marital generations. Each marital generation consists of couples married at roughly the same time. The couples within each generation mature over time while taking on increasing family responsibilities. That is, over time they pass through a sequence of family role clusters, learning to play new roles and relinquish old ones, striving to build an acceptable reputation and identity as a family, accumulating knowledge and social experience as well as developing increasing competence in their several roles of spouses and parents.

As one cohort is traversing its developmental career, other cohorts are being formed and beginning their careers – new marital cohorts are continually being formed. Our illustration in Figure 2 only provides a picture of three of many possible cohorts, but these three are selected because they represent generations as well as cohorts, separated as they are by the years required for new marital generations to be generated. The length of time that marital cohorts spend in given stages of child

bearing, and child rearing before launching their children into marriages of their own, and indeed the discretionary time of the postparental period varies by marital generations as is depicted in Figure 2. Note that the grandparent generation (Cohort A) had a more elongated period of childbearing and childrearing with a much shorter postparental period before widowhood than the subsequent generations. Closer childspacing and an earlier return to the labor force accounts for the shorter period of child bearing for Cohort C, but later entrance into the labor force and later age at marriage of this cohort's children will prolong the child-rearing phase for this generation now in middle parenthood.

Changes in social structure shown at the bottom of Figure 2 as the impact of history are illustrated by the critical events of World War I, the severe economic depression of the 1930's, the prolonged affluence and prosperity associated for some countries following World War II and the Korean war, the race riots and civil disturbances of the sixties, and the debilitating and socially divisive experiences associated with the prolonged Vietnam conflict. As society responds to such changes, each new marital cohort encounters a unique sequence of social and environmental events. Hence, not only the life course patterns of people in one cohort will differ from the life-course patterns of other cohorts in some respects, but the developmental patterns of families of different generations work themselves out in different ways. Let me illustrate by drawing from the career strategies of Cohorts A, B, and C; the three generations in my Minnesota research (Hill, 1970: 310-311):

The career strategies of the grandparent generation appear to have involved settling for most modest goals, a more cautious development of resources, and a less achievement oriented occupational career, lagging the succeeding generations year by year from early marriage onward.

The grandparent generation entered marriage at a later age, and lacking knowledge and competence in family planning methods, bore more children at closer intervals over a longer period of time than its generational successor. At the mercy of an unplanned economy and limited occupational opportunities, this generation shifted jobs infrequently while remaining in the blue collar class, acquired home and adequate amenities only after children were launched. Unprotected by life insurance over most of its career and prevented from building a nest egg for retirement after launching its children because

of the economic depression, this generation launched its children into marriage later and over a longer period of time with altogether a longer period of childbearing, childrearing and leave taking. Educational aspirations for its children were lowest of the generations, with most of its children over achieving these goals.

The career strategy of the parent generation appears to have been most prudent in its family planning and development of resources. Having high educational aspirations for its children, over half setting college education as the goal, and having high housing aspirations, the middle generation has had a strategy of controlling spacing and number of children, high occupational mobility, delayed home ownership, but early acquisition of protective life insurances and retirement provisions to achieve a high level of life cycle management.

This generation entered marriage during the Great Depression at a prudent age, spaced children farthest apart and closed their families early with the smallest total number of children, augmented the family income by the early reentry of the wife into the labor force to take advantage of war-born opportunities for employment. Deferred from military service because of age and family responsibilities, the breadwinner upgraded his occupational position by shifting jobs frequently. Home ownership was postponed latest of the generations, whereas children were launched nine years earlier, thus enabling this generation to be in a position to be helpful financially to both the grandparent and married child generations.

The married child generation's career strategy shows the most forward planning of any generation, acquiring more rapidly than its predecessors both life insurance and retirement provisions and being most precocious in its timing of home ownership. It leads all the generations in its acquisitions and economic achievements year by year over its shorter life span, although it is also the most extended in its utilization of credit. Its strategy of life cycle management is a combination of risk taking in the volume of its durable goods and automobile acquisitions and of prudential hedging in its heavy investments in protective insurances and retirement plans.

Couples of the married child generation entered marriage youngest at slightly more modest jobs than their parents when they married, but with more than half its wives working and expecting to remain in the labor force. Although they have the highest aspirations for their children, they have spaced them closest together of the

generations and have expectations of a larger family size than their parents. The close spacing may cause this generation to be badly off-phase later in the life span compared with their parents, since by now their closer spaced children are in college and will be getting married within a short period bringing a pile-up of expenses which occur in educating and marrying off children. The child generation may gain enough margin to survive this error in life cycle management, however, since it leads the generations year by year in its acquisitions of housing amenities and durable goods, in its occupational advancement, and in its rapidly advancing income level.

Implications for cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. In an earlier paper (Hill, 1964) I discussed in some detail the advantages and limitations of longitudinal research and cross-sectional research for testing hypotheses about family development. Figure 2 further clarifies, it seems to me, the issues to which we should become sensitized. First, cross-sectional studies conducted at a given time and in a given place (indicated by the vertical lines in Figure 2) are indispensable for comparing families of different durations of marriage, as we found it convenient to do at a period of overlap in Figure 2 in the aftermath of the Korean conflict. Each generation of couples was coping with the events of that period in similar and in different ways. The typical cross-sectional study, however, usually samples the entire marital duration spectrum (rather than a tri-modal sample such as is depicted in Figure 2) to study at one point in time the responses of several different marital cohorts on such issues as labor force participation, consumer behavior, leisure time use, family life styles and so on.

Informative as cross-sectional studies are, they are often open to fallacious interpretation (Riley, 1973). The difficulties arise because couples in the several marital duration categories at a given time differ both in developmental stage and in the cohorts to which they belong. The cross-sectional differences reflect a combination of differences in stages of development and generational or cohort differences. Thus, by overlooking the possibility of developmental stage differences, the investigator runs the danger of a "generation fallacy". Conversely, by overlooking the possibility of generational differences, the researcher can – and all too frequently does – run into the alternative danger of a "developmental fallacy". The task is to disentangle the impacts of maturation of the marital couples over their developmental careers (which vary with time)

from the impacts of historical events (which vary with time) from the impacts of the differences among the generations (which vary cross-sectionally).

Widely regarded as a remedy for avoiding such fallacies is the longitudinal study, suggested by a single bar in Figure 2. Family histories of the members of a single marital cohort do indeed focus on developmental processes, yielding much valuable information on the intercontingent careers of family members at crucial points of transition. There remains, however, a special hazard in interpreting longitudinal data, since the developmental career of any particular cohort or generation reflects its own unique historical background, the number of children and age composition of the families involved, and the special sociocultural and environmental events to which these families are exposed. Riley (1971) has coined the expression, "cohort centrism", to designate this generation specific bias that tends to color all generalizations derived from such longitudinal data. Our illustrations presented earlier in this discussion of the differences in developmental strategies in career management developed by the three generations appear to be due to the peculiar social and economic impacts of the historical times in which they lived and point up well the formation of cohort centrism in the Minnesota generations studied (see pp. 19–21).

Correctives possible through cohort studies. Cohort centrism may be avoided through comparisons of the developmental career patterns of successive cohorts, suggesting the ranges of variation in developmental patterns by different cohorts and possible clues to historical or environmental correlates. Analysis of the full set of data schematized in Figure 2, for example, has the special property of allowing simultaneous examination of developmental differences and differences among generations, thus helping to map the complicated interrelationships between the two. Clearly size of samples required may make the full analysis prohibitively expensive for most of us at this time.

A most ingenious attempt to establish the linkage of life course patterns with historical events in social change is the longitudinal analysis undertaken by Professor Glen H. Elder (1974) of the University of North Carolina from baseline data gathered on California children and their parents in 1934–1935, followed up in postwar interviews in the 1950's and 1960's. Two cohorts of children, born in 1920–1921 and 1928–1929, respectively, were therefore adolescents and young children respectively

when their families experienced the impoverishment of the depression years. The Elder research is a unique work which joins together the contextual data about the depression period with base line data about the personality and family characteristics of participants in that period against which to measure short term and long term adaptations to the changing conditions between the 1930's and the 1950's and the 1960's. He is enabled by his combination of cohort analysis (with two cohorts), longitudinal analysis (with four time measures), and period analysis (with depression and World War II) to address a number of issues that have not been adequately joined in family sociology:

1. Do families grow in the face of economic deprivation in their capacities to cope with stress and critical situations, or do they experience defeat and demoralization?
2. Do families socialize their children in line with the critical situations they encounter in the present or do they prepare them for a more beneficent future?
3. Is there a generation gap in the present time? If yes, is it a consequence of the peculiar upbringing of today's middle aged parents marked by their depression socialization which prepares them poorly to understand their own adolescent young functioning under affluent conditions?

The utility of combining longitudinal with cohort analysis to correct for the misinterpretations of cross-sectional findings is nowhere better illustrated than in the different interpretations of maternal employment data. The cross-sectional data for recent decades (U.S. National Manpower Council, 1957: 125-129) show peak participation of women in the labor force in their early twenties and again at about ages 40-50, with a dip among women during the child rearing years. Rephrased in terms of the developmental careers of families, this information would be read as high employment in early marriage, dropping sharply during the years of childbearing and middle parenthood with a sharp rise in the launching and postparental years. A direct interpretation would be that there are family norms against the wife-mother working during the period of childrearing that depress her participation for that period. A cohort analysis of the underlying processes shows the insufficiency of such a direct interpretation. There appears from the analysis of the experiences of successive cohorts to be a long-term revolution in the occupational involvement of women - from the cohorts marrying at the turn of the century whose participation

remained uniformly low until the postparental period just before the retirement of the husband from the labor force, to the participation of more recent cohorts that seems to be rising (with a smaller and smaller dip for childbearing) over most of the family's developmental careers. For example, the three generational cohorts in Figure 2 had quite different longitudinal careers which do not coincide at all with the National Manpower's cross-sectional picture (Hill, 1970):

Timing the entry, departure, and the reentry of the wife into the labor force differs sharply for each of the generations. Fewer than ten per cent of the wives of the grandparent generation were working gainfully until the postparental period when 20 percent entered the work force. In the parent generation, 20 percent were already employed at marriage (during the Depression), about half dropping out for the childbearing period and by the third decade 50 percent were back in the labor force. Sixty percent of wives in the youngest generation were employed at marriage dropping to 25 percent during the first years of the childbearing period but reentering quickly, to reach 40 percent employed by the tenth year of marriage.

Cohort analysis redirects the search for explanation of a key aspect of family life in the middle years, shifting the focus from cross-sectional factors (such as family norms about when it is decent and respectable for a mother to work) to societal trends (such as rising education and equality of opportunity) in the radical restructuring of masculine and feminine roles in the interface between the family and the occupational structure. Imaginative use of cohort analysis – judiciously interspersed with cross-sectional and longitudinal studies – can generate fresh insights and testable hypotheses about the processes of family development, generational (cohort) succession, and social change that condition the wide range of issues of concern to family development scholars.

Developmental implications of modern systems theory

In a paper prepared for colleagues in Belgium (Hill, 1971) I presented the consequences of a confrontation between the general non-substantive modern systems theory as interpreted by Buckley (1967) and the substance-bound family development framework as it has developed in the United States (Hill and Rodgers, 1964) on three issues of systemness: (1) The issue of interdependence of units, (2) The issue of openness and boundaries, and

(3) The issue of equilibrium seeking versus growth and change of structure in response to internal and external stressors. There can be identified a number of points where the use of the modern systems perspective would liberate the conceptual framework of family development from some of the shortcomings of the organismic and mechanical models from which the framework has drawn so many of its analogies.

Interdependence of units in the family system. In espousing the view of the family as a social system, the developmental approach has emphasized the interrelatedness of parts which exist in the family association. The concept of system has carried with it the idea that change in one part brings about changes in other parts of the system, a state of interdependency which in the family involves interacting positions and reciprocal roles.

The phenomenon of interdependence of parts as stated by the family development framework would appear to modern systems theorists to be much too simple in organization and rigid in the interrelations of its parts. It resembles too closely the workings of mechanical models and does not allow for the complexity and fluidity of a socio-cultural system as viewed by modern systems scholars. They see "sub-units" as at least partially interrelated within the relatively stable patterns of social order. In Gestaltist fashion, they subscribe to the premise of non-summativity of parts; that is, the effects of system membership on individual or system behavior are greater and at times lesser than a simple summation of the behavior tendencies or characteristics of the individuals comprising the system. Indeed, the identifying characteristic of a system is the organizing network of these relatively causal and constraining interrelationships of the components. In these respects the two perspectives are in fundamental agreement. But the modern systems theorists part company with family developmentalists who say that every part of the system is related to all its companion parts so that a change in one part will effect a change in all other parts and subsequently the whole system. Modern systems theory would make room for the frequent empirical observations that the marital sub-system within the family is often quite insulated from the perturbations in the sibling sub-system and the parent-child sub-system. There is room within their conceptualizations for the phenomenon of "role slippage" and "role strain", to which Goode (1960) has referred, and for the development of mechanisms which buffer between contending units to delay and even nullify the impacts of role changes in one position on other positions. Relations between parts can often be expressed better as

“step functions” than as linear functions, consonant with threshold theories of change.

To sum up, the family development framework might well be rewritten to present the phenomenon of interdependence of parts as a variable, changing in degree over the family life cycle, low in the beginning of marriage as the phenomenon of organization emerges and varying over time thereafter. Interdependence will also vary from family to family in a cross section of the population, leaving room for a possible judgment of “over-organization” or “under-organization” for some families when viewed from the standpoint of coping with the needs of their growing members and an ever-changing social environment.

Boundary maintenance and the family. Viewing the family as a boundary maintaining system suggests that it is partially closed, semi-autonomous, and when coping with internal issues may seem to exclude the world from its affairs. The network of relationships that links family members together arises from shared normative expectations. These shared expectations unite family members and at the same time they also serve to differentiate the family unit from other associations. Our kinship terminology, too, emphasizes the distinctness of the nuclear family, set apart from the rest of its kindred.

The issues of boundary setting and boundary maintenance appear to be most pressing at the beginning of the family cycle when the young husband and wife feel more at home in the predictable network of expectations of their respective parental families than in the new husband-wife relationship. Again, much later in the cycle, boundary problems recur when the family is launching its young adult members into jobs and marriage because of the uncertainties about the precise obligations of their attenuated membership in the parental family, especially where they may not yet have achieved economic independence.

In the most recent revisions of the family development framework (Rodgers, 1973) greater attention is now being given to linkages between the family and other associations. Viewing the transactional aspects constitutes a real modification of the earlier view of the family as a closed system. The family is now viewed as neither independent of other social systems nor is it wholly dependent; thus it is termed a “semi-closed system”, opening up *selectively* to transact business with other associations. I commend Rodgers’ discussion of family careers-transactional analysis as the most definitive treatment of this issue (Rodgers, 1973).

The family can be seen to have liaison roles built into its positions including rules for transacting business with teachers, employers and the helping professions. Thus, for example, among the many roles of the wife-mother position is the integrating role of tension management within the family. The liaison role with the helping professions concerned with tension management is often built into the wife-mother position to support this integrative role. The wife-mother position also often contains the role of liaison with the school, the church, and the retail enterprises of the marketplace. The breadwinning role of the husband-father, quite as naturally, links the family to the occupational world and, to a more limited extent, to the political structure. Thus both parental positions have roles linking the family to the wider community.

The differences between the modern systems theorists and the family development scholars on the degree of openness may be largely semantic. Modern systems writers reserve the term "closed system" for mechanical models that have no exchange whatsoever with their environment. Such systems if not fed with renewed energy from the environment tend to run down and lose whatever differentiated structure they have. In contrast to closed systems, open systems are found primarily in the biological and social realm where there is a constant exchange between the system and its environment. Energy continually flows in and out of the system through permeable boundaries. As a result of this exchange, the environment is able to effect change in the system and, conversely, the system can alter its environment. Olson's (1968: 267) definition of a social system assumes openness, but stresses a clearly defined boundary: "A social system is a model of a social organization that possesses a distinctive total unity beyond its component parts, that is distinguished from its environment by a *clearly defined boundary*, and whose sub-units are at least interrelated within a relatively stable pattern of social order".

The family development perspective chooses to speak of the family as a "relatively closed system". Its advocates have been impressed by the problematic nature of establishing and maintaining boundaries. With the accent on the family as *closed* except when *selectively opening*, this framework has taken the view that events occurring within the family are likely to be better explained by antecedent influences originating within the family than from external events.

Operating at the more abstract level of socio-cultural systems, modern systems theorists assert that the establishing of boundaries for social organizations is more problematic than for physical objects since they lack

natural and clearly delineated physical limits. They assert that boundaries can be partially defined in terms of the degree of permeability of boundaries. In general, boundaries serve to separate the system from its environment and are one of the qualities of "systemness". In the case of the family, it should be noted that the coincidence of the household with the nuclear family unit does demarcate rather well certain physical boundaries between the family and non-family units, making the family an easier system than many other social organizations to differentiate visually and physically. The phenomenon of neo-local residence also tends to facilitate boundary establishment between nuclear family units of the same family lines.

The confrontation between the two perspectives on this issue has highlighted for me the gain from undertaking a comparative analysis of different social cultural systems with respect to the dimensions of openness, permeability of boundaries, and accessibility of the public to information about decisions which occur within the system. From such a comparative analysis, the family as a social system may turn out to be maintaining its privacy more successfully than most other social systems because of the intimate functions performed behind its closed doors and the legal sanctions that can be brought to bear against violating the sanctity of the home.⁴

The family as an equilibrium-seeking system. In its present formulation, the family developmental framework is at war within itself about the issue of equilibrium seeking and equilibrium maintenance, and we may welcome a resolution of this dilemma from the formulations of the modern systems perspective. In one part of the family developmental framework, the family is seen as a growing, changing structure due to its ever variable size and age composition, making equilibrium an ephemeral phenomenon of questionable heuristic value. A successful family from this vantage point would need to be responsive to the new needs of its members, to changes in the environment in the form of expectations for modification in family performance, and would make a virtue out of providing a wide range of experiences to promote the growth of members which would require still further changes in its structure.

To give conceptual support for this view of the family, the concepts of individual and family developmental tasks were incorporated into the framework. Each position in the family system is open to change in its normative content as a consequence of changes in role definitions in any other positions to which it is related reciprocally. At the level of the family

collectivity, a similar responsiveness is implied to the changing expectations of external agencies for family performance over its career. Such a developmental view of the family has not been exactly compatible with assertions in the framework about the family as an equilibrium-seeking system which have been drawn from the conceptual vocabulary of the structure-function theorists.

I think the resolution of the dilemma of the family development framework by modern systems perspectives lies in the discussion of feedback processes which Buckley believes are centrally characteristic of social systems. He believes that social systems are open internally as well as externally, that is, social systems use as a partial basis for their functioning and programming mismatch information from both within and outside the system. Our usual view of feedback in family development has been essentially negative, as input information from outside the system indicating a discrepancy, incongruence, or divergence between the system's behavior and some desirable developmental goal. This information about the effects of the system's behavior or actions has served as input data which the system uses as a basis for altering its operations and reducing its divergence from the internally represented environmental goal. In addition, however, the social system receives feedback information about the status or condition of its members and their relationships, which again signals incongruence or disparity between component states and the system's values. This internal feedback, a form of "systemic self awareness", can be again used as input on the basis of which the system may alter its operations, its organization, or its goals. Thus we have a double system of feedback to reduce errors and bring family behaviors into congruence, drawing on information both from the external environment and from the internal system. Maruyama (1963) has characterized feedback into *negative* (error activated, deviations counteracting) and *positive* (also deviation activated, but deviation amplifying) feedback processes. It is the latter type of feedback process which would be quite new to family development thinking. The primary difference between positive and negative feedback processes is the nature of the systemic changes following the input of internal or external deviation information. The negative feedback process is such that, after receiving mismatch information, deviation counteracting operations are triggered so as to bring the system's behavior back into congruence or convergence with the extant internal standards or the system's governing criterion values. The negative feedback process then, is basically toward maintaining a "sameness", or status

quo. It is a change resistant set of operations!

The positive feedback, or deviation amplifying process, also begins with error or mismatch information, resulting from a comparison of data about behavior with internal standards or external criteria. The difference is that the subsequent operations do not act to reduce the discrepancy but rather to increase the divergence between the system's status and the original goal or values. Buckley and others view positive feedback processes as constructive, as system enhancing, and as centrally contributing to the maintenance of system viability, while recognizing that they may also occasionally have potentially destructive outcomes. Indeed, positive feedback processes are the vehicles by which social systems grow, create, and innovate and are referred to as morphogenic processes (literally, form or structure changing processes). Is it possible that the naming and classifying of this second type of feedback process is what the family development framework has required in order to integrate its irreconcilables, equilibrium seeking, and the changes needed in structure to cope with the changing age composition of its members?

Modern systems scholars postulate that social systems must be capable of changing their basic structure, organizations, and values in order to remain viable. Viewing the family system over its career, it is evident that it must be capable of enduring basic changes of structure with each of its several crises of transition: when the childless couple become parents, when the first child enters kindergarten, and when adolescents are launched into jobs and marriage, among others. The impetus for basic changes in structure can come from within the system and its components (as, for example, might occur by spontaneous or induced change in the state of a component) as well as from the environment (as in adaptation to environmental forces and pressures).

Morphogenesis can take the form of change in inter-component relations (greater autonomy and decreased constraint); qualitative changes in the nature of relationships (such as between a sexually maturing son and his mother), change of governing values, purposes, and standards; basic changes in internal and external input operations (as in the increased earning power of the adolescent); and the ascendance of components or sub-systems with new and different properties and attributes in the governing or management of the system (such as may occur in family *governance* when adolescents graduate into young adulthood while still living at home).

Another idea integrally related to positive feedback suggested by

Cadwallader (1959: 154–157) is the necessity of a constant flow of varied information, experience, and input into the system called “variety”. A family mapping the environment for variety would be willing to hear and consider a wide range of political or moral views even though some of these ideas conflicted with their own values. Cadwallader has also postulated that creative, viable systems must contain a mechanism for preventing the locking in of old but dysfunctional operations and programs. This would be most relevant for family development where the protective nurturing patterns, functional for the care of helpless and dependent infants, become rapidly dysfunctional for the supervision of mobile children and autonomy seeking adolescents. I have elsewhere termed this process “de-parentalization”, giving up the protective, possessive, care-taking roles of early parenthood to enter into a new set of reciprocities with one’s adolescent children in what approaches the symmetry and mutual respect of colleague relationships. If the infant-care phase is overvalued by parents, the later pressures from growing children and adolescents for redefinition of their positions in line with their changing capacities will be resisted, and the recognition of autonomy implied in collegial relations among family members who have become young adults may not be achieved.

In my judgment, with these concepts of positive feedback, mapping for variety, and morphogenesis, the modern systems perspective has opened for view a wider scope of operation for the family as a social system by identifying the range of processes at work in the adaptations of social systems to their environments. To be sure, for those goals of family living which are relatively timeless or are likely to change only over a long span, the type of negative feedback and self correcting processes usually referred to as morphostatic may well be appropriate. The family surely incorporates some such goal states. In mapping the changing environment and the responses of its members to bring about a minimizing of incongruity and mismatching, the family may be reinforcing what is a desirable organization on behalf of its members. *However, to promote growth and development* of the family as a system over its life span with respect to the continuously changing needs of its members, coordinated with its increasing responsibilities in the society, the positive feedback processes which make for deviation amplification and changed structure appear important to insure the viability of the family system. I would hope we would soon reconceptualize family development to incorporate these features of morphogenesis into its framework.

To recapitulate, the confrontation which we have undertaken has suggested a number of points where the use of the modern systems perspective would emancipate and liberate the family development framework from the shortcomings of the organismic and mechanical models from which the framework has drawn so many of its analogies. The socio-cultural systems of our society, of which the family is surely a prototype, may be assumed to be organized systems, internally and externally open, purposeful, self-regulating, and self-directing, dependent on communication and information as the basis for organization, and governed by the principle of maximizing viability. A maximally viable social system is characterized by complex structural relationships, high levels of communication and interaction between its components and subsystems, by highly flexible organization, a minimum of rigid constraints in inter-component relationships, and considerable intra-system determinism and causality of system and component behavior. To become maximally viable, a system must possess effective morphogenic or positive feedback processes, and must have available to it a constant flow of varied and novel inputs, plus provision for information, storage and retrieval.

MAY A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOOM!

I have tried in the foregoing pages to translate for family oriented scholars the seminal concepts and propositions from general social theory dealing with social time, age stratification, and modern cybernetics systems that should be taken into account as we revise the conceptual framework of family development from which improved developmental career categories can be constructed:

<i>Social time concepts</i>	<i>Age stratification concepts</i>	<i>Modern systems concepts</i>
Temporal boundaries	Life course	Systemness
Time allocation	Birth and marital cohorts	Boundary setting
Timing of actions	Cohort succession	Closed vs. open systems
Synchronizing of activities	Cohort centrism	Permeability of boundaries
Career management	Cohort effects	Step functions
Career strategies	Period effects	Mismatch information
Life cycle management	Generation fallacy	Feedback, negative and positive
	Developmental fallacy	Morphogenesis
		Morphostasis

There are two parallel tasks which developmentally oriented scholars

confront. The first is conceptualizing family development as a dependent variable with sufficient scope and clarity to promote its understanding and suggest its determinants. This requires attention to the multiple dimensions involved, to the systemic properties of the concepts, and at least, descriptively, would argue for a rich and varied bundle of sensitizing concepts to do the phenomenon justice. It is to the task of explicating and elaborating on family development as a dependent variable that the foregoing pages of challenging concepts from contiguous disciplines would be most profitably directed. Such a bundle of interrelated and interdefined concepts would be maximally useful in undertaking family histories where the task was systematic ideographic description. Unfortunately, such a multi-faceted cluster of concepts would be too cumbersome to operationalize for use in survey research with hundreds of families. A drastic process of factorial reduction would be required to achieve a manageable set of dimensions.

The second task is to construct a classificatory device which is simple enough to be readily used as an independent variable where the "family developmental effects" could be specified as a means of limiting the generalizability of propositions. This is, in effect, what the current versions of the family life cycle stages are used for. The device needs to be sufficiently simple and manageable that it can be used widely. Therefore a limited number of dimensions would be incorporated which could be easily assessed in questionnaires along with other demographic type data.

RÉSUMÉ

Théorie sociale et développement de la famille

Au cours des dix dernières années, un climat d'émulation grandissante est dérivé de la rencontre de plusieurs disciplines autour des problèmes du développement et du changement pour lesquelles la famille est en passe de devenir l'objet commun de leur étude. Ainsi, les spécialistes de l'histoire de la famille et ceux de la démographie historique critiquent les vues an-historiques de nombreux sociologues de la famille. Le tout nouveau champ d'études que nous offre la sociologie du temps ne manque pas de concepts stimulants ayant trait au développement de la famille. Grâce à leurs observations, les anthropologues sociaux et les ethnologues sont devenus de plus en plus pour leurs observations relatives aux périodes critiques de transition du cycle développemental des groupes familiaux. Les historiens et sociologues de la famille ont fini par reconnaître que les travaux méticuleux réalisés par les statisticiens et les économistes de la consommation sur les budgets des familles constituaient un moyen d'évaluer certaines tendances dans les valeurs et les variations du cycle de vie, dans le niveau de vie et les satisfactions qu'ils appellent "le bien-être subjectif". Les anthropo-

logues, économistes de la consommation et sociologues de la famille témoignent le même intérêt pour les manifestations de continuité, de transfert et de solidarité d'une génération à l'autre. Cherchant à améliorer les méthodes de comparaison entre sociétés, les sociologues ont récemment établi un programme de conceptualisation scientifique et d'étude sur la stratification des âges parallèle aux travaux antérieurs sur la stratification sociale. Les chercheurs, qui se penchent sur les problèmes de psychologie génétique et de développement humain, ont effectué des études longitudinales qui sont actuellement analysées sous l'angle du cycle de vie.

Tous ces travaux ont beaucoup enrichi le vocabulaire conceptuel dont les chercheurs traitant du développement de la famille auront besoin pour leur propre taxonomie de concepts préférés et pour présenter toute une série de généralisations empiriques remettant en question les conceptions antérieures. Ces travaux ont en outre permis d'accroître la diffusion du développement de la famille en tant que domaine de recherche, d'augmenter le nombre de certains termes et concepts, et d'enrichir les matériaux de nouveaux travaux descriptifs.

Les concepts de temps. Des trois conditions fondamentales affectant tous les systèmes sociaux, *nombre*, *espace* et *temps*, le développement de la famille et les problèmes consistant à établir des phases pour analyser ce développement sont avant toute chose conditionnés par le *temps*. Le *réglage temporel* des diverses actions de la famille et leur *synchronisation* dans le cycle de la famille n'ont pas encore été incorporés dans la littérature traitant des problèmes de la famille; par ailleurs, les nombreuses "études d'utilisation du temps" effectuées aux USA et en Europe n'ont pas encore produit d'analyses de la famille en tant qu'association disposant d'un budget temps. Le concept de "gestion du cycle de vie" (career management) a été créé pour expliquer comment les familles parviennent tant bien que mal à synchroniser leurs activités et gérer leurs ressources pour parvenir *en temps voulu* aux objectifs qu'elles s'étaient fixés.

La structure des âges. Cette nouvelle discipline qu'est la sociologie de la stratification des âges fournit une méthode très souple à ceux qui s'intéressent au développement de la famille. On peut ainsi directement traduire un certain nombre de concepts de stratification des âges appartenant au "cycle de vie des individus" comme les "cohortes de naissances" et les "générations", en leurs équivalents familiaux, par exemple le "cycle développemental des familles", les "cohortes conjugales" et les "générations de familles nucléaires à liens verticaux".

L'approche conceptuelle de la sociologie de la structure et de la stratification des âges souligne trois processus universels: 1) le vieillissement et 2) la succession des cohortes s'imprégnant 3) du changement social et interagissant avec lui. Il conviendrait ici d'expliquer certains des principes de la théorie sociologique de l'âge. Une cohorte désigne un groupe d'individus nés au même moment. Dans chaque cohorte, les individus vieillissent. Autrement dit, avec le temps, ils passent par une série de rôles de la naissance à la mort, (comme par exemple enfant-charge, étudiant, adulte actif, époux, retraité) en apprenant de nouveaux rôles et abandonnant ceux qui deviennent périmés, s'efforçant de maintenir leur identité, accumulant connaissances, attitudes et expériences sociales, subissant les phénomènes d'évolution et de changements biologiques et psychologiques. En outre, des changements appelés "histoire" surviennent constamment dans la structure sociale: la société passe par des périodes de guerre, de famine, de prospérité et de dépression, d'évolution dans les sciences et les arts, par des révolutions dans les goûts, et les styles de vie, etc. A mesure que la société évolue, chaque nouvelle cohorte rencontre une séquence unique d'événements sociaux. Dès lors, le schéma du cycle de vie des individus d'une cohorte diffèrera en certains points de celui d'une autre cohorte.

Dans le cadre du développement de la famille, on peut traduire ce phénomène en

transformant les cohortes d'âges en cohortes conjugales ou générations conjugales. Chacune de ces générations consiste en couples qui se sont mariés environ à la même époque. Les couples de chaque génération évoluent dans le temps à mesure que leurs responsabilités familiales s'accroissent. En d'autres termes, ils passent, dans le temps, par une série d'ensembles de rôles familiaux, apprenant à en assumer de nouveaux et à renoncer aux anciens, s'efforçant de se bâtir une solide réputation et une identité en tant que famille, accumulant connaissances et expériences sociales, et acquérant une compétence grandissante dans leurs divers rôles de conjoints et de parents.

En faisant un bon usage de l'analyse des cohortes – judicieusement combinée à des études transversales et longitudinales – on peut aboutir à des perspectives tout à fait inattendues ainsi qu'à des hypothèses vérifiables sur les processus du développement de la famille, la succession des générations et le changement social qui conditionnent tout le vaste champ des problèmes sur lesquels se penchent les spécialistes du développement de la famille.

Les effets de la théorie des systèmes. Pour un certain nombre de problèmes, on pourrait, en employant la théorie des systèmes, débarrasser le cadre conceptuel du développement de la famille de certains défauts dus à des modèles mécaniques et organicistes d'où ce cadre a tiré tant de ses analogies.

Interdépendance des unités dans le système de la famille. En adoptant le point de vue de la famille comme système social, l'approche utilisée par les théoriciens du développement de la famille a mis en lumière l'interdépendance des éléments existant dans l'association familiale; cette interdépendance sous-entend des positions interagissantes et des rôles réciproques.

Cette approche pourrait bien être réécrite de façon à présenter ce phénomène d'interdépendance des divers éléments comme une *variable* qui change de degré tout au long du cycle de la vie de la famille, commençant par être faible au début du mariage – lorsque ce phénomène d'organisation se met en place – puis variant avec le temps. L'interdépendance variera également d'une famille à l'autre si l'on étudie une population à un certain moment, tout en laissant la possibilité de juger si les familles sont "sur-organisées" ou "sous-organisées" en ce qui concerne la manière dont elles font face aux besoins de leurs membres et d'un environnement social en constante évolution.

Le maintien des limites et la famille. Si l'on considère la famille comme un système qui maintient des limites, on constate qu'il est partiellement fermé, semi-autonome et lorsqu'il est aux prises avec des problèmes internes, il semble exclure le reste du monde de ses affaires. En se plaçant sur le plan plus abstrait des systèmes socio-culturels, les théoriciens des systèmes estiment qu'il est plus malaisé d'établir les limites d'organisations sociales que d'objets physiques puisque ceux-là n'ont pas les limites physiques bien clairement définies de ceux-ci. Toujours selon eux, ces frontières peuvent être partiellement définies en termes de leur degré de perméabilité. En général, les frontières servent à séparer le système de son environnement et sont l'une des caractéristiques de "système".

La famille comme système de recherche d'un équilibre. D'un côté la famille est perçue comme une structure qui grandit et qui change selon sa taille et l'âge de ses composants, faisant de l'équilibre un phénomène éphémère ayant une valeur heuristique discutable. Cette conception de la famille n'est pas tout à fait compatible avec celle qui la considère comme un système à la recherche d'un équilibre, selon les arguments tirés du vocabulaire conceptuel des théoriciens de la fonction-structure.

Les théoriciens des systèmes postulent que les systèmes sociaux doivent être capables de modifier leur structure de base, leur organisations et leurs valeurs afin de rester viables. Si l'on juge le système familial d'après son cycle, il est évident qu'il doit être en mesure de supporter des changements de structure à chacune de ses multiples crises de transition.

Pour conclure brièvement, cette discussion s'est efforcée de traduire pour les sociologues de la famille, les concepts et propositions de base de la théorie sociale générale – portant sur le temps social, la stratification des âges, les systèmes de cybernétique – qui devraient être pris en considération à mesure que nous révisons le cadre conceptuel du développement de la famille à partir duquel on pourrait construire des catégories améliorées du développement du cycle de la vie des familles. Certains des concepts-clé de chacun des trois secteurs de la théorie sociale sont énumérés ci-dessous afin de rappeler ce que chacun peut ajouter au vocabulaire des chercheurs qui s'intéressent au développement de la famille.

<i>Concepts de temps social</i>	<i>Concepts de la stratification des âges</i>	<i>Concepts des systèmes</i>
Frontières temporelles	Cours de vie	Etat de système
Allocation de temps	Cohortes des naissances,	Etablissement des limites
Réglage temporel des actions	cohortes conjugales	Systèmes fermés opposés à
Synchronisation des activités	Succession de cohortes	systèmes ouverts
Gestion du cycle	Importance des cohortes	Perméabilité des frontières
Stratégies du cycle	Effets des cohortes	Fonctions graduelles
Gestion du cycle de vie	Effets des périodes	Information non cohérente
	Erreur de perspective	Effet rétroactif, négatif,
	générationnelle	positif
	Erreur de perspective	Morphogénèse
	développementale	Morphostase

NOTES

1. Cambridge social anthropologists Fortes and Goody (in Goody, ed., 1962: 4–6) find merit in expanding the developmental cycle into phases which will encompass both the family of orientation of participants and their families of procreation in a developmental cycle which they term the “developmental cycle of domestic groups”. Three main phases are identified: (1) The phase of expansion that lasts from the marriage of two people until the completion of their family of procreation (during which all the offspring are economically, affectively and jurally dependent upon them); (2) the phase of dispersion or fission which begins with the marriage of the oldest child and continues until all the children are married; and (3) the phase of replacement which begins with the struggle for control of the parental family resources and only ends with the death of the parents and their replacement in the social structure of the family they founded by the families of their children, more specifically by the family of the father's heir among the children.
2. Morioka's ingenuity in comparing the effects of demographic constraints, nuptiality and fertility norms on the length of stages of the Japanese and American families for two decades is well worth noting. He used Glick's demographic stages which