
THE FAMILY

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FROM INSTITUTION TO COMPANIONSHIP

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Burgess and Locke, *The Family*

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To Our Students for Their Contribution to This Book

Preface

THE central thesis of this volume is that the family in historical times has been, and at present is, in transition from an institution to a companionship. In the past the important factors unifying the family have been external, formal, and authoritarian, as the law, the mores, public opinion, tradition, the authority of the family head, rigid discipline, and elaborate ritual. At present, in the new emerging form of the companionship family, its unity inheres less and less in community pressures and more and more in such interpersonal relations as the mutual affection, the sympathetic understanding, and the comradeship of its members.

Materials have been drawn from a wide variety of sources to document and to analyze this fundamental trend in family organization. Part I, "The Family in Social Change," presents the changing patterns of family life in five widely diverse contemporary situations—those of the Chinese, the rural, the urban, the Negro, and the Russian family. Part II, "The Family and Personality Development," analyzes the cultural and psychological conditioning of the child and the interpersonal relations within the family which stimulate or frustrate the personality growth of its members. Part III, "Family Organization," stresses the intercommunication of the members of the family as the vital element in its unity and success. Part IV, "Family Disorganization and Reorganization," treats disorganization not as personal and social pathology but rather as a response to a changing society and as incidental to the transition from the institutional to the companionship family.

The emphasis in this volume, then, is upon the family as a unity of interacting persons (1) that shapes the personality development of its members and (2) that is adaptable to social change.

A distinctive feature of this book is the systematic use of personal documents to introduce in their human implications the problems discussed in each chapter and to illuminate the concepts employed for analysis. Life histories and other human documents reveal the attitudes, desires, and values of family members that are difficult to perceive in the external behavior of the family or from reports of outsiders.¹

¹The case studies in the text, unless otherwise indicated, are documents in the files of the authors. Names of persons and other identifying information have been changed. These personal documents as well as quotations from other writers are sometimes slightly adapted by the omission of words, phrases, and sentences in the interest of space, but with care not to alter the meaning.

A second characteristic of this work is the employment of the ideal-type method as developed by Max Weber and other sociologists. In essence, this is the procedure followed in the definition of every concept. The special form of the ideal-type analysis as a scientific method involves the identification, isolation, and accentuation of the logical extreme of the selected attribute. For example, selecting the *institutional* attribute as a significant characteristic of the family, it is then accentuated to provide the ideal type with the institutional factors at the maximum and the personal at the minimum. The ideal type of *companionship* family may be correspondingly defined with personal factors at the maximum and institutional ones at the minimum. Thus these two polar conceptions become an instrument of measurement by which all families existing in time and space may be classified, compared, and analyzed.

A third feature of this book is the research projects that are presented at the end of each chapter to indicate the scope and value of further study. More knowledge is needed not alone for social action but for the individual in his own planning for marriage and family life.

In developing the theoretical standpoint for the study of the family the authors are indebted to Charles H. Cooley, Ellsworth Faris, George H. Mead, Robert E. Park, and W. I. Thomas. They have relied largely in their analysis of the emotional aspects of interpersonal relationships within the family upon the work of psychiatrists.

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We have made liberal use of published and unpublished findings

from our own research projects. Grateful acknowledgment is made for the financial support by the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago of the study of *One Thousand Engaged Couples* and for grants by the Social Science Research Council and by Indiana University for the study of *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage Through a Comparison of a Divorced and Married Group*.

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The Family in Social Change

The Family in Social Change

The Family in Time and Space

An understanding of the American family is best obtained by a comparison with families in other countries and at other times. Was the family a human invention, or did it grow up naturally? Is it also found among animals? What are the forms of marriage and the family in primitive, medieval, and ancient societies? To what extent are American families alike or different? Are the trends for or against the democratic and companionship family? These are some of the interesting and significant questions raised by a consideration of the family in time and space.

Family Life Among Apes

The family as a group of parents and offspring existed long before the appearance of man upon this planet. It was and is prevalent among birds¹ and the higher mammals. The following account from Yerkes gives a vivid portrayal of "family" behavior among chimpanzees, gorillas, and other anthropoid apes:²

The chimpanzee is a highly social creature which lives in family groups or small bands and which only exceptionally, aside from senility or ostracism, lives in solitude. The chimpanzee is averse to solitude; the male is supreme in the family group; there may be three or four females with a single male. We find no adequate evidence that the chimpanzee is monogamous, and we therefore suspect (that it is) polygamous.

The social and gregarious nature of the animal (is) established by the character and arrangement of nests and by direct observation of their behavior. It appears that only mature and old males venture to build isolated nests or to place them very near the ground. The young for a number of years may sleep with the mother or together.

In the wild chimpanzee, courtship and mating have not been definitely described. Indeed, even the existence of courtship may not be affirmed. But captive specimens are well known to exhibit various activities which seem to have sexual significance or relations. Among them are personal adorn-

¹Wallace Craig, "The Voices of Pigeons Regarded as a Means of Social Control," *American Journal of Sociology*, 14, 1908, pp. 89-96.

²Robert M. Yerkes and Ada W. Yerkes, *The Great Apes: A Study of Anthropoid Life*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1934, pp. 246, 247, 256, 260, 270, 433, 542, 543.

See also Robert M. Yerkes, *Chimpanzees, a Laboratory Colony*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1943, pp. 40-87.

ment or decoration, rhythmic limb and body movements, forms of vocalization, and bodily contact by patting, stroking, rubbing cheeks, and kissing.

(Sokolowsky describes the behavior of a family group in captivity): "The troupe consisted of a large adult male, a few younger females and a young male. The old male was even in captivity the undisputed guardian and ruler of all the other members. He kept himself aloof up at the top of the cage, seated on a board, observing and controlling the doings of the others. If a quarrel arose he sprang down from his seat, and made an end to it by blows and bites. He never indulged in games or sports, but preserved his austerity which was respected by the others. The sexual appetite of this male was very interesting to note. He was very exacting in this respect, and demanded repeated intercourse every day with females. For this purpose he sprang down, and seized one of the females who even if she struggled at first had to yield finally to his superior strength, and submit to copulation. When he saw the young male attempt intercourse with the females, he sprang upon the couple, and drove the young male off with bites and blows. The young male succeeded in effecting intercourse only when he waited until the old male was asleep, and then made advances to the females who acceded. From my observations the old male exercised his power and strength in a despotic manner, and demanded sexually implicit submission."

(The mother cleans the infant immediately after birth.) Like attention to the bodily condition of offspring continued during subsequent weeks. The skin was examined frequently, although not systematically and completely, and in general the body of the infant kept clean and in entirely hygienic condition. . . . Very gradually it achieved independence.

"Preparation to free the infant from dependence upon the mother thus manifested itself. It began when Rana, seated with legs outstretched upon the ground, laid the infant on the ground without removing her supporting hand. At the same period she was permitting him much greater freedom on her own body, for he was allowed to creep up to her ears and along the side under her arm, whence he could feel even along her back. It was the middle of June when such behavior appeared and the little one was well advanced in his third month of post-natal life. Next he was permitted as the mother sat on the ground to crawl over her legs, but not so far that he entirely lost touch with her. Seemingly he did not as yet dare to risk such measure of independence, for with one hand at least he always held fast energetically to his mother. At first he was not able to stand upright on his legs, but with each effort tumbled down. It was at this time that the mother discovered a wonderful play. Lying upon her back and holding one leg of the infant with one of her feet she would let him scramble over her body and then suddenly pull him back into position." (Translation from von Allesch.)

The gorilla family consists of male, female, and young. Families often associate to the number of as many as five, thus constituting bands which feed in the same general locality and camp together. But whereas the nests of a family are placed close together, a space of several yards may separate the sleeping places of one family group from those of another. The type of

nest constructed depends on sex and the presence and age of young. Solitary males construct carelessly very crude ground nests. Adult males, with female and young, fashion their nests somewhat more carefully. The most securely built and most comfortable by far are the nests which (are) constructed by females with infants. (Summary of Reichenow's conclusions.)

Our tentative inference is that both monogamy and polygamy exist in one or another of the anthropoid types and that in all probability both relationships are discoverable in each of the manlike apes. Indicated as points of contrast among the three types of great ape are temporary monogamous or polygamous relations in the orangoutang, relatively permanent monogamous and possibly also polygamous relations in the chimpanzee, and in the gorilla a patriarchal family, with polygamy presumably in the mountain species and monogamy, possibly, in the lowland species.

From this account of behavior among anthropoid apes a comparison may be made between family life among apes and among humans. In many ways it appears to be the same. There is selection of a mate, interaction between the male and the female, levels of control among father, mother, and children, and care of the child primarily by the mother.

One great difference exists, however, between the family behavior of apes, as well as other mammals, birds and insects, and that of man. In the former family life throughout the world is much the same in any given species, whereas with man family behavior varies greatly from place to place.

The reason is that the animal family is largely biological in nature, while the human family in its structure and functions is shaped by culture. Because there have been and are many cultures there are many forms of the family.

Monogamy and polygamy are found both among the anthropoid apes and in human societies. Superficially it might seem that the explanation is the same in the two cases and in terms of their biological natures; however, actually there is no evidence of differences in the sexual impulses in societies where polygamy rather than monogamy is practiced. Among humans, the explanation of the difference is to be found entirely in the mores.

The study of the sexual and family life of the anthropoid apes has no conclusive bearing on what the type of family organization of primordial man was, nor what that of modern or future man should be. It does, however, indicate that man in his evolution might have developed one or another family form as determined by situational and historical factors. In other words, geographic environment, economic conditions, and culture rather than biological factors were the determinants of human family patterns.