# Families and Households: Clarifying the Concepts

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June, 1993

Acknowledgements

Funding for this research was provided by a Fulbright-Hayes Research Grant for Southeast Asia, and by the Hewlett Foundation.

I wish to thank Kathleen Cloud and Nan Di Bello for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

The family has recently received unprecedented attention. In addition to the interest focussed on the United Nations' "Year of the Family," the family was an emotional rallying point in last year's presidential and vice-presidential campaigns in the United States, and a continuing popular discussion is manifest in publications as diverse as The Atlantic Monthly ("Dan Quayle Was Right," March, 1993) and Mirabella ("Family Happiness--What Do You Mean By Family?", March, 1993). Few question what the family means, or whether all these people are talking about the same social phenomenon. The vagueness of the concept is aptly captured in a New Yorker cartoon which depicts a fish bowl containing two large fish, and many smaller fish, with a caption which reads, "I guess we'd be considered a family. We're living together, we love each other, and we haven't eaten the children yet." Although universally a number of important social and political issues relate to the family and its companion institution, the household, too many researchers approach the family and domestic groups with little more rigor than this "fish bowl" definition.

This paper aims to distinguish between the "family" and the "household" by identifying the purposes each serves, exploring how they differ in their capacity to serve these purposes and showing how they interact with each other as social groups. Family, to the degree that it is a universally applicable concept at all, is a realm of values, the means by which cultures strive to prescribe normative behavior; households are the domestic groups people organize to meet their daily, recurring needs, perhaps guided by cultural expectations, or "family rules," but, if necessary, deviating from them. Too often, both of these realms are identified as "family" with resulting confusion for research and policy. Beyond these basic conceptual issues, I offer new exploration of the proposition that, in addition to

productive functions of "family" or "households--which have been well examined--both households and families work to focus resources on the care of children. They are able to serve that end in different ways, and this underscores the importance of recognizing the essential differences between household and family as concepts, and as social groups. I begin this discussion by documenting some of the apparent confusion surrounding the uses of these concepts, and then explore the importance of making distinctions between them, trace the sources of confusion, and offer clarification and examples of how the two work together as social groups, and how they relate to one another theoretically and in terms of policy relevance.

## FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD: CLEAR AS MUD

It is frequently argued that the concepts of "household" and "family" reflect distinct social phenomena, but there remains a tendency to use the two terms interchangeably, or at least a failure to differentiate between them consistently and rigorously. In its Handbook for National Statistical Data Bases on Women and Development (United Nations, 1990: 46), the United Nations Statistical Office differentiates between these two concepts, but then suggests that examination of either can adequately generate data on "the central role of the household or family." Specifically, following the United Nations Multilingual Demographic Dictionary, they define household (p. 46) as "a socio-economic unit consisting of individuals who live together, and a family primarily in terms of relationships associated with the reproductive process which are regulated by law or custom." They elaborate as follows:

> The concept of the household is based on the arrangements made by persons, individually or in groups, for providing themselves with food or other essentials for

> living . . . Persons in the group may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or lesser extent; they may also be related or unrelated or a combination of both. The concept of family is more restricted than the concept of household in that a household may consist of only one person but a family must contain at least two members, and the members of a multi-person household need not be related to each other while the members of the family must be related.

Having established these distinctions between household and family, the authors assert that, "Either set of data (JTP: that is, on families or households) may be used in the analysis of the central role of the household or family" (my emphasis) and further that, "The study of households and families can be effectively carried out using information on household composition" (my emphasis). These latter statements seem to suggest an equivalence between family and household that, I believe, does not exist, and that both, somehow, have to do with the membership of the household or what we might call household form. Implicit in this discussion is a concern with coresidence; while that concern is explicit in the U.N. definition of the household, its relationship to the concept of family is less clear.

Jacquette's (n.d.) recent review titled "The Family as a Development Issue," prepared for the United States Agency for International Development Family and Development Initiative, provides another example of this persistent confusion. She observes (p. 7) that "definitions of the family are discipline-specific," characterizes the sociological definition as "functionalist," and says of anthropology that,

> Faced with an immense variety of living arrangements that can be recognized as "family" in different cultures, anthropologists tend to find a satisfactory definition of

> the family more elusive and have struggled to find a satisfactory way to classify different family forms. They prefer the term "household" (p. 8).

She implies here that living arrangements are somehow pertinent to defining the family, and that households and families are equivalent, or at least that anthropologists have treated them as if they were. I suggest that this is not generally the case (see Yanagisako 1979), although there are some notable exceptions (see eg. Murdock 1949: 1). Jacquette goes on to define the "household" following Messer (1990) and Robertson (1984) as units which may or may not coreside, but which share some common fund of resources. She draws on Bennett (1990) to clarify the difference between the two:

> . . .[F]amily implies that household members are related by some "conjugal or consanguineal tie," though the form of that tie varies greatly between cultures. "Families may be composed of many 'households.'" This is true of "polygamous marriages or the husband's long-term migration for employment," as Bennett writes (110) or in concubinage, as the Latin American example attests (ibid.).

Unfortunately, from there Jacquette goes on to use the two concepts interchangeably throughout her paper. For example, under the heading "New Household Economics" (p. 11) she discusses "families" as consumer units, and under the heading "Family Nutrition" refers to what she calls nutritional studies of intrahousehold attributes of infant and childhood nutrition. The equivalence implicit in these sections is conspicuous in some statements as when she says,

> It is significant that attention to patterns of gender allocation in the <u>family</u> has been forthcoming when it appears that project success is dependent on knowing how the

household makes decisions. These support the view that women should receive more resources in the family. (my emphasis; p. 17, see also pp. 16, 20).

## WHY ALL THE FUSS?

Concern continues to focus on these domains of household and family because universally there is a range of critically important social issues and interests including the welfare of children, decision-making, property transfer, and labor, which fall within the realm of what we think of as "household" and "family." Some researchers have attended to the distinctions between these social phenomena for some time. For example, writing of Black Caribs in Guatemala, Gonzalez (1969, p. 84) points out that,

> Although the members of the household may be bound by kinship relationships, no particular type of tie is necessarily characteristic. In any given society a particular family may or may not form a household. The Carib data show that in some societies it is necessary to make a rigid distinction between the two concepts, 'family' and 'household'" (my emphasis).

This distinction is applicable, as well, to some urban-industrial populations. Gans (1962), for example, in a study of Italian-Americans in Boston discusses it at some length (p. 45 ff.), and observes that "The nature of the family, however, can best be understood if one can distinguish between households and families."

Kovar, a statistician for the National Center for Health Statistics in the United States captures some of the relevance of this distinction in the following statement:

> The Census Bureau--and by default everybody else--defines family as 'people related by blood or marriage living in the same household' and household is defined by

> separate entrance and cooking facilities. So you could have children living with unmarried parents but (the statistics) don't pick it up appropriately. Or a woman lives next door to her kids and sees them all the time, but we interview that woman and say she is living alone (Stanfield, 1992).

Another example is offered in a recent paper on female-headed households (Bruce and Lloyd, 1993) which recognizes that, "The meaning of the family necessarily transcends the boundaries of the household and, in the long run, the strength of family links. . . may be the more important determinant of women's and children's welfare and the viability of households" (p. 3). They argue (ibid.) for "a new research focus on the family that transcends the physical and temporal boundaries of the household, and for a policy focus that inquires into meaningful family relationships" (see also Buvinic et al. 1992). The distinction between family and household--and the research and policy relevance of each--is implicit in this treatment.

Clearly, we do need to distinguish between "household," "family," and "coresidence" in order to adequately understand the social, economic, and interpersonal processes researchers and policy-makers try to address. We need to make these distinctions to generate reliable demographic and economic data, and certainly to interpret them (compare Thorne 1982: p.5).

## CLARIFYING THE CONCEPTS

The terms "household" and "family" carry a great deal of historical and cultural baggage, and if they are to be useful scientific tools, we must separate them from their connotations, and use them precisely. In this section I attempt that clarification by exploring

attributes of both the definitions and the social groups these terms reflect, and contrast them with each other.

Households

The greatest strides toward clarity and precision have come in studies of the household, probably because this concept is easier to operationalize, and carries fewer specific cultural connotations. Households, as noted above, have been defined in terms of coresidence and function (Wilk and Netting, 1984; see Peterson 1993a for a discussion). Coresidential definitions are based on who shares a dwelling or eats food prepared at a common hearth. Coresidential definitions are characteristic of censuses because these definitions are easy to operationalize and, therefore, facilitate the training of census enumerators. Functional definitions, which are characteristic of recent anthropological work, are based on observation of shared activities including production, social reproduction (providing for the care of children), pooling resources and labor, and transmitting property. These functions may or may not include coresidence, depending upon the practices of the populations being studied. Coresidence alone as a criterion for identifying households is inadequate for many kinds of research. Functional approaches recognize that meaningful activities may transcend coresidential household boundaries.

This distinction has very basic implications for research (Peterson 1993a). Coresidentially based studies de facto sample residences, while functionally based studies first operationalize and identify functional units --those who pool resources,and so forth-- and sample them. To appreciate the implications of these distinctions for results, interpretations, and ultimately policy, consider the different experiences of a 23-year-old mother of three

who lives and functions autonomously, and a 23-year-old mother of three who lives apart from kin, but functions as part of a multiple residence household which, functionally defined and sampled, coordinates or pools labor and child care, draws on a common granary at will, and manages farmland together. The former, in a coresidentially based study, would be assessed as poorer than the latter, but neither "household" form nor coresidence could explain the difference in resources and responsibilities between the two women. Only a functional approach to the household could adequately describe the identified differences.

Among the various approaches to the household there is a shared recognition of certain attributes of households. These definitions are all concerned with domestic arrangements, that is, with the "social groups people form to pool and manage labor, to allocate food, money and other resources, to manage childcare, and to transmit property" (Peterson 1993), or as the United Nations expresses it (1990: 46), "Persons in the groups may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or lesser extent; they may also be related or unrelated or a combination of both."

Other attributes of households have been less well explored. For example, households are flexible and responsive to changes in various aspects of the environment and, therefore, the form and organization of households varies not only across cultures, but within cultures. They may even represent deviation from prescribed cultural rules regarding who should cooperate domestically, or who should live together, and they may change rather quickly. Change in household composition or organization can occur idiosyncratically; predictably, for example on a seasonal basis; in response to new technologies or economic change; or as members mature, marry, argue, divorce, or die. Households, in short, are

often very unstable.

Families

While there are some disparities among definitions of the household, overall it has received much more careful attention than has the concept of the family. Perhaps the most important attribute of family, as opposed to household, is that it is a relatively static arena, and generates relatively stable groups. McNicoll and Cain (1990) observe that "family systems are notably resilient in the face of economic, demographic, and cultural change in societies. The essential forms persist relatively intact over many generations." "Family" as a social phenomenon seeks to replicate successful forms over time, generation after generation; "household" as a social phenomenon offers the potential for change and short-term adaptation. I propose, then, a functional definition of family, as well as household. Universally family can best be defined by what it DOES, although we may describe forms and values of families, given that we know we are talking about the SAME functional phenomenon.

The United Nations' definition of family cited above characterizes the family principally in terms of its reproductive function. I have elaborated that definition somewhat, suggesting (1993a) the term "family" refers to a set of kin defined by cultural rules, expectations, values, or ideas which both define those kin relationships and "prescribe the behavior of kin to each other, including exchange behavior and relationships, rights and obligations, marriage rules, and the responsibility for, and rights in children" (compare Bennett 1990). Family, if we intend to use it as a universally applicable concept must be defined as having to do with culturally constructed rules which prescribe how persons are

related to each other through descent (compare Scheffler 1991 and Collier and Yanagisako 1987), marriage, and adoption. Among these prescriptions are rules identifying a child's membership in some group (eg. a matrilineage, patrilineage, or kindred), a socially identified father and his rights and responsibilities for that child, rights of inheritance or claims to property, expectations of mutual support (or avoidance in some cases) among certain culturally identified categories of kin. Significantly, many of these rules have to do with rights in and responsibility for the next generation.[1] Further, I would emphasize that the functional definitions I propose are a different order of activity from the functional explanations or theories of the family (Malinowski 1944) which have been justly criticized (Collier et al. 1982).

Comparing Households and Families

I propose that for research and policy purposes, the concepts "household" and "family" are best reserved to describe two different kinds of social groupings, the first focussed, immediate, and highly responsive to environmental change, and the other diffuse and relatively stable. Both are concerned with processes of reproduction and social reproduction, management and transmission of property, labor, rights in labor and in the products of labor. They are different, however, in that they function differently relative to the domains of reproduction, resource management, labor, and so forth. Households or domestic units can, on a daily basis, coordinate short-term recurring labor needs; short-term recurring child-care needs, or needs of other dependents; pool resources and contribute to and draw on pooled resources, thus achieving economies of scale; and achieve flexibility, that is, the ability to change membership and organization frequently and on short notice.

These are the advantages of household organization, but households are characterized by some disadvantages, as well. Individuals who produce for the household also draw upon the resources of that household, and shared endeavor and pooling of resources leave the household vulnerable to shared failure, with little potential to recover (Peterson 1993b).

The realm of family functions quite differently. By prescribing expectations for kin relationships, family addresses a more global and enduring realm. Families as social groups, responding to cultural prescriptions, can meet crises beyond the abilities of single domestic units and provide stability over time. Economic diversification is achieved among households within extended families, and with diversification, reduced risk. Stability is a corollary of the relative inflexibility of family rules and practices (ibid.). Stability may also take the form of regular remittances from emigrant members of the family--those who have left a household, perhaps--who responding to cultural prescriptions of family obligations, provide support without drawing upon the resources of the household to which they provide remittances.

## WHY SO MUCH CONFUSION?

Certainly clarification of these concepts is attainable, and I suggest that the confusion demonstrated above stems from principally three factors: 1) confusion in the definition of the family itself; 2) ethnocentrism, especially the influence of the European and Euro-American traditions; and, 3) deviation within cultures from normative prescriptions for domestic life.

### Confusion in Defining the Family

The persistent muddle over the definition of the family, in and of itself, deserves some attention. Perusal of various sources easily identifies conflicting assertions about the

family including that the family is a coresidential unit, or not a coresidential unit; that it involves marriage between a man and a woman, or that it does not necessarily involve marriage at all; that it involves intimacy, or that it does not; and, importantly, that it is universal, or that it is not.[2]

Although there are repeated and credible references to the fact that the family is not a universal, it is not clear what is meant by the family, even in the context of assertions about its lack of universality. What is not universal? I offer the following summary of which attributes or behaviors often associated with family or used to define it, are NOT universal:

1) "Family" form is not universal. Different cultures define and categorize kin differently, and within these categories of kin, differentially prescribe rights, obligations, and other relational expectations such as intimacy, respect, avoidance, or trust.

2) Coresidence is not universally a component or expectation of kin relations or domestic arrangements. Cultural expectations of family life sometimes even prohibit coresidence of certain categories of kin.

3) Marriage is not always a central relationship, the nexus, basis or principle expression of kin relations or domestic arrangements.

4) An adult heterosexual relationship is not everywhere a prerequisite of domestic life.

5) The IDEA of "family" is not a cultural universal if what we mean by that is either a particular form, or the particular value connotations associated with it in the recent European and American traditions (compare Collier et al. 1982: 32-33).

Although I expect convention dictates use of the term "family," we must recognize its

limitations. As it is inappropriate and useless to try to understand the operations of a non-market economy in terms of principles of market economies, so it may be inappropriate and useless to attempt to understand the kin relations and domestic life of some cultures in terms of The Family. Some languages have no term that glosses specifically to "family" (Collier et al. 1982: 32), or they might have several terms, each a generic for different categories of kin with different sets of rules governing each category. It is a socio-linguistic truism that lack of a term suggests lack of cognitive salience in that culture for what that term represents. This is not to deny that ANY language might not develop a term/concept, or adopt the concept and assign a pre-existing term to cover it. It does suggest absolutely that we cannot assume that every culture conceives of "family" in the same way; diverse cultures follow different kinship rules, and attach their own values and expectations to that realm.

These statements suggest what I mean to say when I indicate that The Family is not a universal. I can perhaps further clarify my intent if I offer examples of what we do know to be universal.

1) A reproductive unit can be identified in any social context. It will always include a male, a female, and one or more offspring. THAT is a biological fact. <u>It may or may not have social meaning attached to it</u>.

2) Sociological fatherhood exists in every cultural context. How the status of "father" is formalized varies, and culture can also redefine motherhood.

3) Marriage of some kind occurs in every culture. Its form, meanings and centrality vary among cultures. In some contexts siblingship or parenthood may be more important relationships.

4) An incest taboo occurs in every culture. The specific relationships which might be considered incestuous may vary among cultures.

5) Every culture has some system of distinguishing kin from non-kin; the specific systems vary among cultures, and rights and obligations among kin vary among systems.

6) Domestic groups can be identified in every culture. Their cultural meanings have not been well explored.

7) In every society some social group(s) and network(s) assume primary responsibility for the care and socialization of children.

Although these universals exist we cannot assume that universally "family" has cultural meaning, or that among the cultures in which they are culturally relevant, there is uniformity in meaning. As social constructs, the content or meaning of these terms and their equivalents in other languages and cultures necessarily vary.

Ethnocentrism

In part confusion and contradictions in the definition of the "family" stem from the tendency to impose Euro-American and European standards on kin and domestic groups encountered around the world (Collier et al. 1982). Let me emphasize, as others have, that the family is a social construct, not a "natural" unit (Collier et al. 1982). Consequently, a second set of factors affecting our understanding of the family, and the related concept of household, has to do with ethnocentrism. Although anthropologists, particularly feminist anthropologists, repeatedly caution against an ethnocentric conception of the family, I believe we are not often reminded that ethnocentrism not only assumes the superiority of one's own cultural practices, but also the naturalness of one's own cultural practices. By extension, and

sometimes explicitly, other cultural practices are seen as unnatural. This, I believe, accounts for a recurring tendency to see the realm and forms of kin relations as both "natural" and "universal", and to conceive of this realm in terms of the dominant European or Euro-American expectations of the family.

In fact, European conceptions of family and household have varied, as well, and, on an evolutionary scale, emerged quite recently. Consider that in the European tradition "family" in the sense in which we think of it--as a coresidential, intimate, private, kin-related group--did not begin to be identified until relatively recent centuries, and probably did not fully develop until the Industrial Revolution.[3] By the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe, a conception of "family life" was amplified to include a privatized nuclear family, specific sentimental expectations, and what we might call hyper-specialization of gender roles, with males assuming responsibility for things (their own and everyone else's) and females assuming responsibility for feelings (their own and everyone else's). All of this has been amply described in various writings as the "cult of domesticity" (see Coontz 1989 for a summary). It is significant that during the same time period Darwinism held sway, Social Darwinism came into play, and scholars postulated a unilinear course of evolution which placed this "ideal" European "family," which was only one expression of domestic life and kin relations, at the apex of human achievement, an inevitable, natural eventuality for all "modern" peoples (compare Linton 1947 with Morgan 1877 or Maine 1861; see also Silverblatt 1991: 144ff). We now understand that unilinear evolutionary models are flawed; nonetheless, this singular image of monogamous, nuclear, coresidential, highly privatized "families" still prevails, and missionary and colonial efforts have carried these expectations

of marriage and family life to much of the world today (compare Silverblatt 1991: 142). This, I suggest, continues to muddle our personal expectations, our scientific examinations of families and households, and our family policy. If there are attributes of industrialization, per se, which promote this kind of "family" life, or other "family" forms and expectations which might serve as well, we would not easily discover them, because we are too convinced of the natural supremacy and spontaneous development of these behaviors and values (see Le Vine and White 1992 or Engels 1884, reprinted 1972; see also Silverblatt 1991).

Intracultural Deviation from Prescribed Norms

As anthropologists in the earlier part of this century began to explore culturally diverse systems of classifying kin, they also identified deviation within cultures from the normative cultural prescriptions. Some people in any culture did not follow the recognized rules. Much of this anthropological investigation had to do with post-marriage residence rules, that is, cultural expectations for normative behavior which prescribe where a newly married couple should reside, whether with "her" kin, "his" kin, some combination of kin, or in a new place. Residence rules received attention in part because they were the basis for formation of domestic groups and, therefore, were important to social organization, but substantially, I believe, simply because they are so salient. It ought to have been easy to describe residence, but, in fact, it was not (Goodenough 1956; Bohannan 1963). Deviations from expressed cultural norms were common and were explained in terms of disintegration of the traditional family; predictable variations from cultural norms, or "real" versus "ideal" culture (Fortes, 1949); and developmental cycles in which households were seen to vary over time as they matured (Goody, 1958). These efforts to understand variation in behavior

stimulated increased attention to the household or domestic group.

More recent efforts to explain the household abandon any concern with formal rules and recognize the household as a functional, task oriented social unit, with fluid boundaries, groups which respond to immediate circumstances such a labor needs, the demands of child care, and so forth (Wilk and Netting 1984). These more recent authors, in turn, attend only SLIGHTLY to the "family."[4]

Economists, too, have focused on the "household," recognizing as White (1980:3) observes that, "it manifests some unique characteristics as a unit of economic behavior, and that there is a need for the development of appropriate concepts, theories, and methods of research which may be different from those conventionally applied to the behavior of other units such as the individual, the 'firm', or the 'farm'." In both farming systems research and the New Household Economics economists have addressed households as rational actors (Wharton 1968), exhibiting variation in strategies and goals, and engaging in both market production and production for use, and social reproduction, as well (Becker, 1981; see Cloud 1993 for a review).

With the focus on the "household" we have tended to reify that unit, to overlook its integration in larger social networks, to ignore variation in individual experience within households, and, to treat it as a"black box" (Barlett 1989; Wilk 1989; Collier 1982). Realization of some of these deficiencies have led us back to The Family as a focus of enquiry. I fervently hope that we will not abandon the household as a unit of analysis, that we will distinguish adequately between the two, and that we can be clear about what it is we mean by "family."

## EXAMPLES OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

Data on Thai and Philippine households and families illustrate these two concepts as I have defined them, and show how they are related to each other.[5] Specifically, these examples demonstrate some ways in which households serve to manage daily, recurring productive and reproductive tasks, while families promote structural and economic stability by complementing and spanning household endeavor.

### Thai and Philippine Families

Examination of mutual aid--assistance which flows between households--within Philippine extended families offers an example of several attributes of "family" as I have defined it (Peterson 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993a and b). First, the exchanges identified are governed by cultural rules, or expectations which prescribe rights and obligations within the kin network. These rules are expressed in statements regarding how people are expected to behave and supported in this and many other cases by religious sanction. Second, it is an active exchange, and one responsive to needs which cannot be met by a household alone. Importantly, the patterns of exchange suggest a flow of resources principally to households during their reproductive years, that is, they focus especially on rights in and responsibility for the next generation. Finally, these rules and exchanges promote social and economic stability, and the family itself, both as cultural expectations and in terms of actual group membership, is resistant to change.

The existence of explicit cultural rules is evident in the fact that supernatural sanction supports and encourages mutual support among family members, especially siblings. Leano (1965: 163) describes Ibaloy exchange in this area of the Philippines as follows: "An Ibaloy

who does not share his wealth with his living kin or spirit relatives will have no wealth" (my emphasis). The cultural or familial mandate for mutual support, in other words, extends even beyond the grave. One mechanism for this exchange involves traditional ritual feasts which are still held in this area on a number of occasions, but most conspicuously for annual death anniversaries to honor spirit relatives. These are costly affairs, which could easily drive a single household into debt. It is expected that the expense of these feasts--which must involve the sacrifice of at least several pigs, and may involve slaughter of hundreds of animals--are borne by the family of the deceased, "and so cannot be shared with other persons except siblings and close relatives" (my emphasis; ibid.), who are typically members of different households. Further, "each sibling must give his share or else the spirit-relative will make his life unhealthy" (ibid.). These feasts, then, exemplify a supernatural or symbolic sanction for support among extended kin, and "to the degree that sibling exchange supports the sponsorship of these rituals, we can also say that ritual sponsorship supports sibling ties and intergenerational family cohesion. When sibling ties are activated to sponsor a ritual, these ties are reinforced through the potential created for future reciprocity" (Peterson 1989: 140). The relationship described here between family cohesion and ritual practice illustrates one mechanism of family stability over time.

Exchange within the family meets very practical, productive needs, as well. For example, one woman, asked about management of a commercial farming endeavor said, "Brothers and sisters lend the equipment, money. I lend them money when I have it. Whoever has the money just gives it. When you need to borrow you go to the family," and she adds, "I think there is no farmer here who made good in farming without the help of the

family. They can't farm on their own. They must have some help. All in the family are working" (cited in Peterson, 1993b). She, like others, is quite explicit in her description of cultural expectations for exchange among kin which transcend household boundaries, promote economic and social stability, and which meet economic requirements that exceed the capacity of single households.

The focus on rights in and responsibility for the next generation, that is social reproduction, is evident in the fact that assistance within the extended family is frequently cited as the source of educational support for young people. Thus a man says of the education his daughter received, "That is where we put everything. My brothers and sisters helped." Probably, in this case, MOST of the support for education, especially higher education, comes from the EXTENDED family, and is seen, explicitly, as a source of investment FOR the extended family. This too is an example of endeavor which single households would find difficult to manage.

Further evidence of the productive and social reproductive functions of the family is apparent in specific patterns of exchange among adult siblings living in different households (Peterson 1989, 1990). Typically, more than half, and on some variables, 90% of respondents have received support, principally in the form of labor, goods, and money. Strikingly, by every measure, resources flow principally to children and households which include dependent children (compare Turke 1989).[6] These are resources which move beyond household boundaries, in accord with cultural expectations regarding appropriate behavior among kin, appropriate behavior within the family.

This resource flow promotes stability over time, levelling the disparate fortunes of

individual households, and provides support which single, isolated households cannot meet. Further, the rules themselves have been remarkably stable, as best we can tell, throughout five centuries of colonial rule, prolonged and concerted missionary effort, dramatic economic change, wars, political oppression, and, in recent decades, access to modern media. For example, although most residents are Christian and in spite of a half a millennium of diligent mission effort, spirit relatives are still honored according to the cultural rules, less frequently perhaps than previously. Further, in spite of Spanish concern over the autonomy of Filipinas, and pronounced effort to mold them to European expectations of subordinate and reclusive womanhood (de Castro n.d.), women in the Philippines remain productive members of their families, and public and often influential actors, with status that surpasses that of women in many other countries. In fact, women are more likely than men to receive higher education. Finally, although there are family planning programs in place in the Philippines, family size remains large, in part, I believe, because of the importance of a large family in family functioning (Peterson 1993b). Certainly some changes have occurred in family life, but considering the longevity and persistence of colonial effort there, and the impact of recent decades, I believe we can safely say that "family" is a stable social institution.

The Thai data (Singha 1987) offer a particularly apt illustration of one variation on family functioning. They demonstrate a flow of resources within the family to households in their reproductive years especially through migration of some members with remittances from those migrants. Among those who had participated in the government family planning program, only one had never received remittances from former members of the household who had emigrated to work elsewhere; among those who practiced contraception most

reported no emigrants, and most who did report some emigrants, received no remittances from them. This suggests that migration and remittance are related strategies of households which actively support reproduction, but that migration and remittance are much less important to households with completed families and older children. Migration as a strategy not only promises steady cash income, it also reduces household size, creating producers for the household who are not consumers in the household, and I propose that emigration from households is frequently a component of extended family strategies, especially during the demanding period of reproducing and meeting the needs of infants and very young children. These Thai data offer another example of the flexibility of households, the interplay between household and family as household members move away and engage in extended family exchange. Moreover it again demonstrates "family" as a realm of interhousehold resource flows, and a source of support for reproduction, as well as production.

Philippine and Thai Households

While data on family behavior, specifically exchange behavior, demonstrate stability and resilience of the family and its capacity to meet occasional or short-term, exceptional demands, household data illustrate domestic groups as mechanisms for meeting daily, recurring needs. Further, the household data demonstrate the flexibility of households, their capacity to respond to change, and to violate cultural ideals without necessarily altering them. Like family, important functions of the household include production and social reproduction, but whereas families satisfy these functions through periodic exchange, migration, and so forth, households satisfy them by pooling their resources and labor on a regular, often a daily basis. Using the Philippine data, these principles are illustrated in

examination of dependency values and scheduling of farm labor in one community in which a few households have begun to engage in commercial farming.

Dependency values were measured in terms of numbers of producers in the household (those who worked on the land) relative to consumers or dependents. This ratio is expressed as a value. This variable is of interest because although the anthropological literature on households characteristically acknowledges the importance of reproduction as a function of households, relatively little research has fully explored the role of reproduction relative to other functions of the household.[7,8]

Principally two patterns of household organization are evident. One set of households (n=13) spends relatively little time (fewer than five months of the year) in complex simultaneous labor mobilization, and maintains dependency values of one or less (Figure 1; quadrant A). These are, in other words, households which invest in young children, but grow only the traditional rice and yam crops, avoiding investment in more complex cropping strategies (compare Nerlove 1979). These include some three generation extended family households which conform to traditional cultural expectations. Their labor scheduling permits flexibility which is compatible with meeting childcare needs in the household on a daily, recurring basis.

----------Insert Figure 1 about here----------

Other households (n=11) have dependency values of one or less and practice simultaneous labor mobilization for five months or more (Figure 1; quadrant B) suitable to growing commercial vegetables while minimizing risk. A majority (n=7) of these households are extended family households, but most of these have RECRUITED ADULT

LABOR, both near and distant kin, and non-kin, in order to meet labor needs. Moreover, they do not include a third generation and, thus, avoid costly investment in young children. They do not adhere strictly to the traditional cultural rules of family life; they do illustrate flexibility of households in responding to technological change. Most grow rice, yams, and two or more crops of commercial vegetables.

Only four households exhibit dependency values exceeding one, but fewer than five months engaged in simultaneous labor mobilization (Figure 1; quadrant C). These households are typically only two generations deep, but do include young children. All practice LINEAR labor scheduling (Figure 4), which limits the crops which can be grown, and thus increases risk, but all of these households are able to offset that risk with generation of income from some off-farm source, such as wage employment of the wife, or savings from a job formerly held in the city. No households have high dependency values and engage in more than five months in simultaneous labor mobilization; this suggests that care of young children and a complex, labor intensive commercial vegetable farming operation are INCOMPATIBLE. People can best adopt commercial farming in this area if they deviate from cultural expectations of family residence patterns, and intergenerational commitment.

This example illustrates several attributes of households. First, there are relationships between household reproductive and productive activities. Two sets of activities are managed. Second, the capacity of households to maintain flexibility is evident in variation among households in their capacity to organize production and reproduction in different ways in order to meet their needs. Wilk (1984) offers another example of different household organizations in response to diverse production needs in Belize. Similarly, Hackenberg and

his colleagues (1984) examine the productive and reproductive attributes of diverse household forms in Mexico and the Philippines. This variation is specifically a response to the management of work and, the Philippine data suggest, childcare demands. Finally, these data demonstrate the efficacy of households in managing daily, recurring needs. It is specifically every day life which they seek to manage. In doing so, they tend to specialize, and thus incur some risk of failure; diversity of economic endeavor among households within a family, and cooperation among them, offsets that risk. Thus, the household is a mechanism of specific adaptation, and family a source of economic stability (Peterson 1993b).

The Thai household data (Singha 1987) show other specific relationships among the size and composition of households and reproductive behavior. Again, it appears that households form around couples to address the tasks and demands of child rearing. Among those who practice contraception, the nuclear family household is the most common residential pattern (52%), while among those who do not practice contraception the majority of married females (68%) reside in extended family households dependent on daily, recurring support from either their parents or other household members. Cultural expectations prescribe extended family household form immediately following marriage in this region, and certainly newlyweds are least likely to control fertility because they want to have children.[9] While this has been observed in many cultural contexts, and interpreted as a household effort to retain and attract labor (Reyna 1986), or simply as a "normal developmental cycle," we suggest, as noted, that extended family households may form around these young couples especially to meet child rearing needs and cooperate in income generation during their early

reproductive years. Pooling resources within the household is certainly the most effective means of meeting some child-rearing needs, especially the needs of childcare and coordination of childcare with other labor needs on a daily, recurring basis.

These two cases suggest that a primary concern in household formation is with meeting the needs of dependent children, and the Philippine case particularly demonstrates how the household coordinates productive and reproductive needs. The significance of these household studies are twofold. First, they illustrate the reproductive function of households, as opposed to the frequent emphasis on productive activities of households. Both the Philippine and Thai cases demonstrates variation among households and flexibility in household formation. This variation enables people to form and reform their households so as to meet their needs. Second, they suggest particularly that household strategies may be especially responsive to FEMALE time allocation since women typically contribute significantly to productive activities, and bear the primary responsibility for children, as well. Finally, they offer insight into how families and households manage relationships between technological change productive activity, economic need, and the bearing and rearing of children.

**Interaction of households and families in Thailand and the Philippines**

In the illustrations offered above households manage daily, recurring tasks that typically require physical proximity. The actual social group within the household, as illustrated in the Philippine case, may be a family, part of a family, or non-kin. These households may or may not conform to cultural expectations for formation of domestic groups. They are, however, CONSISTENTLY responsive to technological change,

economic circumstance, and life cycle changes.

"Family" as a cultural concept in both of these cases establishes guidelines and expectations. As social groups families promote stability. Both rules and the social groups they generate tend to be static, and offer a source of security beyond the household. Family and household complement each other. Both are necessary to human welfare in concrete terms, because both stability and flexibility are essential to survival. Family assures persistence of that which is tried and true, demonstrated to work, while households provide opportunity to react, respond to both opportunity and challenge beyond what the cultural rules explicitly endorse. Family is conservative; households are responsive to altered circumstances. I suggest that, in fact, households may provide the mechanisms for change in the family: as the norms manifest in household behavior shift, cultural rules which prescribe family form and behavior may eventually follow.

## IMPLICATIONS

Distinguishing between household and family certainly has implications for research and practice as noted above. I conclude by offering some examples of the kinds of policy relevance this distinction offers.

We are coming to recognize that female-headed households are not all alike. There is reason to believe that differences among them may, in part, be accounted for in terms of the support they are receiving from outside the household, or because the household, functionally defined, actually includes two or more houses. This observation, as well as ethnographic and other studies of extended family support, suggest that a related proposition must address the question of WHO is providing that support and how much and how often. There are

then, a number of related policy issues. Consider, for example, the single or divorced mother who receives support from her own parents, but none from the father of her children. In keeping with Eurocentric expectations of family life, policy efforts continue to focus on what Americans would call the "Deadbeat Dad" in this case, largely inattentive to grandparents or other kin who do support those children. This is a realm of "family" as opposed to or in addition to household, and it demonstrates a policy tendency to promote expectations of a particular family form as opposed to effective support of a viable family function (compare Moynihan et al. 1965 with Stack 1974 for a detailed example).

In this and other cultures, family policy also addresses inheritance and other rights of children. Where conjugal relationships are not the norm, or at least do not represent a large majority of the population, other standards for insuring children's rights need to be put in place, and in some countries have been put in place. Similarly, in countries which include both matrilineal and patrilineal societies, with intermarriage between the two, there are children who belong to no lineage, and family policy appropriately addresses their rights, as well. These examples illustrate the enduring realm of family as opposed to household.

The policy relevance of the household has been rather amply explored; these explorations have included labor management and labor flow, allocation of resources as relevant to nutritional policy, and daily recurring child care as relevant to women's work loads, human resource investment, and so forth. These are all examples of the more focussed, daily, recurring realm of the household.

As families and households reflect different social processes, serving different ends, so policy needs to address both. Policy which supports the cultural, symbolic, or normative

realm of family, --while defining "family" too narrowly or ignoring the daily, variable realities of the household -- will be unenforceable. Policy which focusses too narrowly on the household may overlook cultural aspirations, may inadvertently discourage effective functioning of the family, and certainly will not address a relevant range of behavior. Although family and household are related concepts, and interact as social groups, treating them as equivalent obscures the complexity of social behavior, and encourages vague, "fishbowl" approaches to research and policy which very basically affect human welfare everywhere.

1. I should, perhaps point out here that while this distinction between "household" and "family" accommodates the cases of polygamous households and concubinage cited by Jacquette (n.d., p. 8), and certainly allows for the existence of several households within a family, or even of all or parts of several families within a household, it is not limited to cases of polygamy or concubinage. Both of these examples rest on the centrality of a marital or quasi-marital relationship. Any relationship--including, for example, siblingship or friendship--could serve as the basis for forming a common household, which might be coresidential or not.

2. These disparities among positions on the family are so widespread that specific references are almost superfluous. The following sociological and anthropological sources, which span the past three decades, offer a small sampling of persistent and contradictory assertions about the family in which the specific issues I have mentioned are addressed: Spiro 1968; Levy and Fallers 1968; Murdock 1949; Queen and Habenstein 1985; Linton 1968; Gough 1973; Goode 1964; Lamanna and Riedmann 1985; Collins and Coltrane 1991; Barrett and McIntosh 1982; Thorne 1982; Collier and Yanagisako 1987; Silverblatt 1991: 144ff).

3. See Rybzynski (1987) on the development of the concept of "home" in the European tradition, and Collier (1982) or Peterson (1989) for discussions of the inappropriate application universally of the concepts of "public" and "private." In spite of the culture-specific origins of the concept of "family" in the European and Euro-American traditions, we often apply it to every culture--even to primate groupings (see Skolnick 1976 for an example of the apparently irresistible temptation to refer to "primate families")--as if it were a given of nature. It was not until the designation of marriage as a sacrament--stipulated by the Christian Church in the late 12th century to promote fertility and insure legitimacy--that we came to expect domestic groups to necessarily be based on a conjugal relationship (Herlihy 1985; Klapisch-Zuber 1992) or exalted marriage to the central position it holds today. Prior to that time promiscuity was common and a man's clearest relationship to the next generation was through his sisters' children (Herlihy, ). In some cultures the sibling bond still holds a central place which rivals marriage (Marshall 1983; Peterson 1991; Ross 1961; Sacks 1989), or adoption is a means of acquiring kin (Carroll 1970) which is at least as important as marriage in serving that function.

4. Netting, Wilk, and Arnould (1984), describing the symposium on the household which gave rise to their frequently cited book on households, offer the following:

> . . .questions of definition were both absorbing and critical. From the beginning the household/family distinction was emphasized. While both households and families are culturally defined, the former are task-oriented residence units and the latter are conceived of as kinship groupings that need not be localized. . . Nonrelatives who live together, as well as servants and lodgers who cooperate in some common activities, are household members, whereas nonresident kin are usually (but not always) affiliated principally with other households (p. xx).

Later they refer to,

> . . .The seeming opposition between a functional, economic view focusing on

> householding--the common productive, consumptive, and reproductive activities directed toward the satisfaction of needs. . . --and an emphasis on the symbols, values, and meanings that characterize the family. . . the household cannot be divorced from ideas that people have of the domestic group and from symbolic concepts like family and home. . . that influence decisions and guide actions (pp. xx-xxi).

5. The Philippine data were collected from farmers in Benguet Province in the Cordillera Central of northern Luzon. Three communities were studied to show a range of economic orientations including traditional farming practices, recently adopted commercial vegetable production, and participation in the urban economy of Baguio City. The Thai data were collected from a Northeastern Thai village which was a target community in Thailand's highly successful development and family planning program, the Community-Based Integrated Rural Development (CBIRD) project. It has high rates of contraceptive acceptance, and the focus of the research was on comparison of household and family attributes of contraceptive users and a residual category of those who were not practicing contraception. In both cases the household was operationalized according to Wilk and Nettings' (1984) definition.

6. These exchanges, examined in terms of attributes of givers and receivers, using Chi square, achieve significance at .0001 to .005 levels. For example, those 36-50 years of age--that is those with the largest numbers of children in the home--receive 58.2% of all labor contributed. By contrast, those over 50, receive only 29.5% of labor and 9.5% of money. Taking all forms of contribution together, those age 36-50 receive 38.7% of all contributions, and those aged 16-35 receive 42.7% of total contributions.

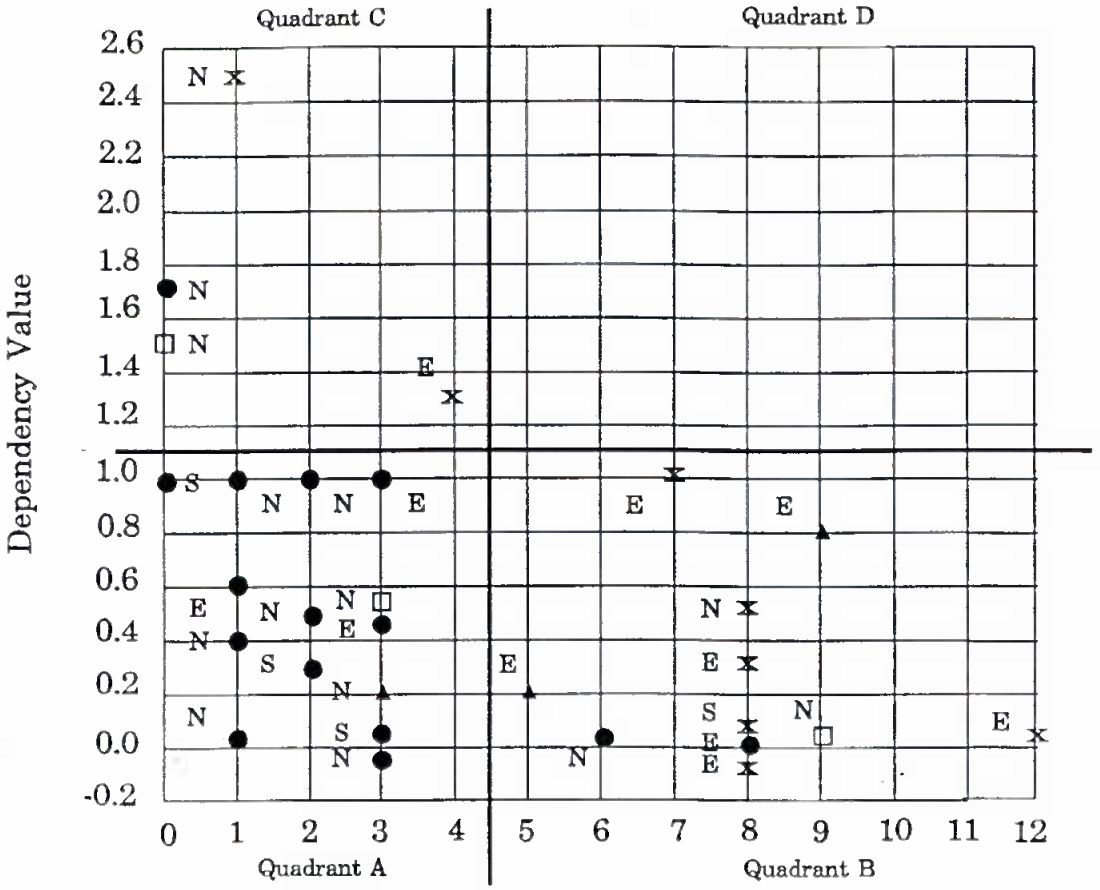
7. For example, retention of married children in the household, which conforms to cultural expectations of family life in this highland region of the Philippines, has been treated in other cultural contexts as a means of expanding the labor force (see e.g., Reyna 1976), ignoring the fact that with this strategy there is a predictable future increase in the dependency value as a third generation is born. Retention of married children, therefore, suggests a willingness to share in responsibility for future generations.

8. Scheduling of farm labor was analyzed following Wilk's (1984) distinction between simultaneous labor scheduling and linear labor scheduling. Simultaneous labor scheduling --allocating time to two or more crops or two or more activities on a single crop simultaneously-- requires a larger labor force than simple linear scheduling in which a single activity is carried out at a time. It may also reflect the inflexibility in timing of labor allocation inherent in the crops which are grown. Simultaneous scheduling allows for a more complex cropping pattern, cultivation of multiple crops and, therefore, a greater measure of security, but it may be incompatible with the reproductive needs of a household.

9. Females among the non-adopters overall are age 35 and above, while among the extended family household category of non-adopters, more than half the females are 25 years of age or younger and have been married for less than 5 years.

Figure 1

Distribution of households by scheduling pattern and dependency value




Total months of simultaneous labor scheduling

Crops grown:

- ● Rice & roots
- ▲ Rice, roots & vegetable
- X Rice, roots & 2+ vegetables
- □ Vegetables only

Household form:

- N = nuclear family household
- E = extended family household (may include non-kin)
- S = stem family household

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