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Social Class as a Factor in Inter-Parental Conflict in Child Training: A Survey of Sixty Families in the Chicago Area

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SOCIAL CLASS AS A FACTOR IN INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT

IN CHILD TRAINING:

A SURVEY OF SIXTY FAMILIES IN THE CHICAGO AREA

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LIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social Class as a Factor in Interparental Disagreement

In this chapter the writer intends to present the conceptual framework of the study which he intends to do. The first part gives a brief picture of the development of family studies in the past and its present status. Against such a background the problem under study is presented and discussed.

Different Conceptual Approaches to Studies in Family

Speaking of the early history of Sociology, R.K. Merton says:

> The early history of sociology as represented in the speculations of Comte and Spencer, a Hobhouse or a Ratzenhofer is very far from cumulative. The conception of each seldom builds upon the work of those who have gone before. They are typically laid out as alternative and competing conceptions rather than consolidated and extended into a cumulative output.[1]

What Merton said of sociological theory in general, seems true, though not in the same sense, in the case of the history of the sociology of the family. On the one hand, we do not see a cooperative effort among family sociologists of different countries and on the other,

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[1] Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1963), p. 5.

one observes the same lack of co-ordination of effort among sociologists of the same country. A quick review of the bibliography on family researches done in Europe and in the United States will reveal, that in spite of their common background, the one and the other were proceeding in different directions.[2] Researches done in Europe were centered on the socio-economic aspect of the family whereas those done in the United States were centered on its stability aspect. Difference in orientation might have been due to the difference in problems which these studies necessitated.

As in other fields of sociology, it is the United States that has contributed most in the field of family studies. But even in the States one does not observe a uniform approach to the subject. Different theories of human behavior provided the different conceptual frameworks for those studies in the past and no serious attempt has been made until a decade ago to present a uniform approach in the form of a family theory.[3]

Reviewing the earlier studies in the sociology of the family, Reuben Hill and Donald A. Hansen found that these studies could be divided into five major groups depending on the conceptual framework used by researchers for their studies. These five conceptual frameworks are: Interactional Approach, Structure-function Approach, Situational Approach, Institutional

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[2]Reuben Hill, "New Knowledge About the Family: A Review of Family Research in Europe and in America," Social Compass, XI (1964), p. 5. The article includes a bibliography of the main works in family sociology published in Europe and in the United States.

[3]At the Minnesota family center, Reuben Hill, Alvin M. Katz and Richard L. Simpson are attempting to bring together findings of researches in the field.

Approach and Developmental Approach.[4]

Interactional Approach. -- Earnest W. Burgess in 1926 suggested that the family be looked upon as an interacting unity. The Interactional Approach which was based on the thinking of Burgess may be summarized as follows:

> The family is a unity of interacting persons, each occupying a position within the family to which a number of roles are assigned, i.e., the individual perceives norms or role expectations held individually or collectively by other family members for his attributes and behavior. In a given situation the individual defines these role expectations primarily in view of their source (reference group) and of his own self-conception. Then he role plays. Most immediately the family is studied through analysis of overt interacts (inter-action of role-playing family members) case in this structure.[5]

The Structure-function Approach. -- Having its roots in anthropology and general sociology, this approach looks upon the family as a social system. The present study is done against this approach. Details will be further explained in the latter part of this chapter.

The Situational Approach. -- The Situational Approach developed from the theoretical works of W. I. Thomas, agree with the Interactional Approach that the family is a unity of interacting persons. But one differs from the other in the sense that the Situational Approach instead of emphasizing the interaction, turns to the study of the family as a social situation for behavior.

> Situationists would agree with the Interactionists that the family is a unity of interacting persons, who experience

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[4]Reuben Hill and Donald A. Hansen, "The Identification of Conceptual Frameworks Utilized in Family Study," Marriage and Family Living, XXII (November, 1960), 299-311.

[5]Ibid., p. 302.

relatively continuing relationships. But rather than
emphasizing interaction, situationists turn to the study
of family as a social situation for behavior. . .
The family then is seen as a unit of stimuli acting toward
a focal point. . .   All behavior is purposive in relation
to the situation which calls it forth. It is a solution to
the problem or crisis which the situation presents, an
answer to or definition of the situation, made by the indi-
vidual on the basis of other situations and previous
experiences.[6]

The Institutional Approach. — The Institutional Approach
was strongly allied with historical analysis. Two different tendencies
may be observed in this approach. According to the first one proposed by
C. C. Zimmerman, family is part of the organismic whole called society.
The society is supported and maintained by its component parts. The indi-
vidual, in this theory, has a passive role only. Zimmerman distinguishes
three types of families—Trustee, Domestic and Atomistic. Trusteeship
family is characteristic of the agricultural rural society and Atomistic
that of industrial urban society. Domestic is the middle type indicating
the period of transition from rural to urban.

Modern institutionalists representing the second tendency studies the
family as a cultural pattern. The members of the family are active members
in the society. Contrary to the advocates of the organismic approach
institutional nominalists (modern institutionalists) emphasize the family
as a social unit in which individual and cultural values are of central
concern.

The Developmental Approach. — This is the least developed among the
five conceptual frameworks. Professors Hill and Hansen remark, "The
developmental approach is not at this moment a precisely unique framework

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[6]Ibid., p. 305.

but is really an attempt to transcend the boundaries of several approaches through incorporation of their compatible parts into one unique scheme."

The Structure-Function Approach: The Conceptual Framework for the Present Study

In the study proposed in the following pages the writer is concerned with the study of the power distribution in the husband-wife relationship in the families belonging to different socio-economic strata. As suggested above he intends to use the Structure-Function Approach in this study.

The Institutional Approach (that of Zimmerman) has been used mainly in historical and cross cultural studies. The purpose here cannot be served by such a conceptual framework. The Situational Approach does not give enough importance to the personality system as a factor in human behavior. The Interactional Approach, on the other hand, looks upon family as a closed unit and hence ignores the role played by the economic, religious, and political systems (situations) in molding human behavior.

Because human behavior is a function of both personality and environment, any theory that does not give equal importance to both factors seems not suited for the purpose. The premature status of the developmental approach made it necessary to rule out this also from our study. The very fact that the Structure-Function Approach has been sponsored by two of the leading theoreticians of sociology in the United States (Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton) is an additional guarantee of the legitimacy of selecting the Structure-Function Approach for the present study.

The hyphenated use of "structure-function" is to indicate the inseparability or integrity of structure and function in any actual space time

situation process. The concepts of structure and function are valuable tools for the objective analysis of social systems. These three concepts, social system, structure and function and a few other derivations from these concepts will be explained in detail in this section.

Beginning with the appearance of The Social System of Talcott Parsons, one observes a definite change in the way sociologists look at society. A comparison of two text books used for an introductory course in sociology will prove this statement.[7]   A study of the group is the method used for the study of society in one. In the other social system is analyzed for an understanding of the societal system. In the former, it is the study of persons constituting the group that attract the attention of the researcher. In the latter, it is the role held by the person that is the concern of the researcher. "The reason for placing heavier emphasis on system rather than group is that the dynamic interrelationship of human behavior appears clearer when the elements of the study objects are acts rather than individuals."[8]

In the dictionary of sociology, Fairchild defines system as follows:

An aggregate of related interests or activities. There is the assumption of an organization of parts or phases in orderly arrangement. A philosophy in all its related phases may be so regarded; also a communication or transportation system; or an economic system. Whatever the system, its related character is identified by harmony in operation and in the

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[7]The two textbooks which are referred to are: Joseph H. Fichter, Sociology (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1959), and Harry M. Johnson, Sociology: A Systematic Introduction (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1960).

[8]G. Karlsson, Adaptability and Communication in Marriage (New Jersey: The Bedminster Press, 1963), p. 14.

integration of its structure.[9]

Parsons applied this concept to the social behavior of human beings. He says:

> The interaction of individual actors, that is, takes place under such conditions that it is possible to treat such a process of interaction as a system in the scientific sense and subject it to the same order of theoretical analysis which has been success-fully applied to other types of systems in other sciences.[10]

Sociology is the study of the interactions of people. Millions of interactions take place in the world every moment of the day. If it were possible that a man from another planet were to look at the inter-actions taking place in the world, he would certainly observe that these are not isolated units but they cluster together into different groups. The interactions take place through the instrumentality of persons. If the observer were to look at the persons performing the interactions, he would call each clustering a group. But that is not the only way of looking at it. Persons in a group are very often substituted by other persons. But the group continues to exist. Hence the clustering of interactions has an existence independent of the individual persons constituting it. The observer would call this independent existence of the interactions a so-cial system. As the interaction, in fact, takes place through persons, the concept of social system is an abstract concept but an abstraction having a firm basis in reality.

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[9]Henry Pratt Fairchild (ed.), _Dictionary of Sociology and Related Sciences_ (New Jersey: Littlefield Adams and Co., 1962), p. 315.

[10]Talcott Parsons, _The Social System_ (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1964), p. 3.

The basic element of a social system is the human act. The acts of the individual stand to each other in the relation of interaction. The act of the individual "A" depends upon the immediately preceding act of individual "B". All acts of system which require one single individual for their performance is called a role. An example from the inorganic world illustrates this better. Roles may be compared to molecules and acts to atoms.

A sophisticated analysis of the social system would require, to start with, an analysis of the simplest of its elements—the human act. The science of sociology is not sufficiently developed for such an analysis. Karlsson says:

> What is to be regarded as one behavior or act (we are using these terms synonymously) is difficult to determine at the present stage of sociological theory and knowledge. We have no valid scales with generally applicable units of behavior. The studies of social systems today are done through the analysis of roles.[11]

The distribution of roles in the system is referred to as the structure of the system. The functioning of the roles is referred to as the function of the social system. These two concepts are explained below.

"Structure is a relatively permanent or persistent organization of parts which as an organization can go into action in specified ways and whose type is defined by the type of action into which it can go."[12] This definition is applicable to any kind of structure, also to the social structure. The parts of the social structure includes sub-groups, roles,

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[11] Karlsson, p. 14.

[12] Fairchild, p. 310.

relational and regulative norms (institutions) and cultural values.

Intimately related to the elements of the structure of the social system, there are others called the quasi-structural aspects of the social system. Johnson lists them as follows:[13]

1. The number of sub-groups of each distinct type, and the ratio between the number of sub-groups of one type and the number of sub-groups of closely related types.

2. The distribution of members among the sub-groups of each type.

3. The number of occupants of various roles within the sub-groups and within the system as a whole.

4. The distribution of facilities.

5. The distribution of rewards.

Distribution of facilities and rewards are the bases of power in the social system. As the study proposed is concerned with the power distribution in the family system, these need further clarification. Parsons has the following to say about the matter.

> Facilities, it will be remembered from the last chapter, are possessions which are significant as means to further goals in complexes of instrumental orientation. The criteria of a facility are therefore intrinsic transferability between actors, individual or collective and relevant to instrumental orientation. The former distinguishes it from the modality of an actor as an object; neither his qualities nor his performances are intrinsically transferable, they are always and indeniably his. Facilities must also be distinguished from rewards. Rewards may or may not be the same concrete possessions in another aspect. But in any case, analytically the distinction is crucial. Rewards are always to be understood as part of the complex of expressive symbolism, not part of the instrumental means-end complex.[14]

Facilities and rewards are different. Facilities are valued as means

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[13]Johnson, p. 60.

[14]Parsons, p. 119.

Facilities and rewards are different. Facilities are valued as means to attain a goal. A television set bought from the market is looked upon as a means for recreation. Rewards are valued for themselves, not as means to something else. A medal which the soldier gets for his bravery in the battlefield has a market value. Still it is valued by the soldier not for its market value, but as a symbol of the appreciation his country-men have towards him.

Facilities and rewards are not necessarily different. The home which a family possesses may be a facility and a reward. As a facility it provides residence for the family. As a reward it may be the symbol of the long years of longing and saving of both husband and wife. But the fact remains that their longing was to have a residence of their own.

We might say, in short, that there is an emotional connotation involved in reward which is absent in facility. To the extent that the facility is required for the fulfillment of the physical needs of the individual and the reward for the fulfillment of his emotional needs, facilities and rewards will be valued by the individual. The person possessing the facilities and rewards will be able to manipulate the behavior of the person needing them. In other words the former has power over the latter.

"Function is the type or types of action of which a structure is distinctively capable."[15]   Merton clarifies this better.

> The concept of function involves the standpoint of the observer, not necessarily of the participant. Social function refers to the observable objective consequences and not to the subjective dispositions. . .   Subjective disposition may coincide with

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[15]Fairchild, p. 125.

objective consequences, but again it may not.[16]

Thus, it is clear that the definition of function given by Fairchild and quoted on the previous page is not a normative one, but an empirical one.

Merton makes a distinction between manifest function and latent function. He also distinguishes functions from dysfunctions in terms of their contribution to the adaptation or integration of the system.

> Manifest functions are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognised by the participants of the system. Latent functions being those which are neither intended nor recognized. Dysfunctions are those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system.[17]

Every structure in effecting the objective consequences of which it is capable of, meets with four functional problems. They are pattern maintenance and tension management, adaptation, goal attainment and integration.[18]

The present study is concerned with the integrative problems of the family system. If the integrative problems of the system are not solved, the system becomes disintegrated and ceases to exist. Integration of the system becomes disintegrated and ceases to exist. Integration of the system can be effected in different ways. In a totalitarian system the will of the leader is the principle of integration. Another way of effecting integration is the institutionalization of roles and the hierarchization of positions. In both cases, one observes an intimate relation between the integration of the system and its power structure.

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[16] Merton, p. 24.

[17] Ibid., p. 51.

[18] Johnson, pp. 51-56.

It was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter that structure and function are related concepts. It was said later on that the structure, when certain conditions obtain, produces certain consequences. Objective consequences of a partial structure are functional, not only to the entire social system but also to each other. It is also possible that the consequences of one partial structure are functional to one and dysfunctional to another.

It was the purpose of the writer until now to present the general principles of functional analysis. We have been deliberately careful to restrict the discussion to those principles which have a direct bearing on the study proposed here. The study itself is concerned with two partial structures of the society, social class and family. Social class is the independent variable and family power structure the dependent variable. Before proposing the hypothesis, it seems necessary to know how the above-mentioned principles of functional analysis are applied to the study of family and what exactly is the position of our hypothesis in Structure-Function Approach to the study of family system.

Structure-Function Approach to the Study of Family System

Family system can be best studied by examining its structure and function. Patriarchal, matriarchal and egalitarian are types of family structures of which family sociologists speak very often. The difference is based on the location of power in the family system. Ideal types of patriarchal, matriarchal and egalitarian systems exist only in the imagination of the writers. But there have been and there are even today family types that come closer to these ideal types. The traditional Chinese family may be considered to be representing the patriarchal system. The family of Kibbutzim in Israel comes closer to the egalitarian type. The average

American family falls in between these two extremes. By comparing and contrasting the above-said family types, we are able to get a better insight into the subject matter of our discussion.

Speaking of the functions of the family a distinction has to be made between the basic and derived functions.

In order that any society may continue to exist it has to meet five basic requirements. They may be listed as follows:

1. Replacement of dying members.

2. Distribution of goods and services produced.

3. Provision for accommodating conflicts and maintaining order.

4. Socialization of the human replacements so that they may participate in the society.

5. Procedure for dealing with emotional crises.

In the traditional Chinese family all these functions of the society were fulfilled by the family. In the Kibbutz, the family has the function of replacing dying members. The American family falls in between these two extremes. The following excerpts clarify this distinction.

> With respect to the economic function, the Chinese family was the unit both of production and of consumption. In the Kibbutz, the unit of production is (not the family but the community, and the unit of consumption is not the family but the individual.... For the most part in America the corporation and not the family is the unit of economic production; but the family is a widely recognized unit of consumption—we do speak of the 'family car', the 'family television', and so on.
> The Chinese family served as a unit of political function in that it maintained order in the family and assumed at least, part of the responsibility for protecting its members from the aggression and depradation of outsiders. The adjudication of disputes, both within the family and between family members and outsiders, was the responsibility of elders. No such arrangement prevails in the Kibbutz, where the Kibbutz as a whole enforces sanctions and provides for such protection as may be needed. In America we have known families functioning

as political units—e.g., the feuding Hatfields and McCoys of Kentucky—but we are much closer to the Kibbuts in placing political functioning in extra-familial institutions.

The entire socializing-educational process for a peasant child was performed within the Chinese family—to a large degree by the parent of the same sex. In sharp contrast, the Kibbutz baby is taken from the mother at the age of four days and is reared to adulthood by the community. All responsibility for instruction resides with the teachers. With the development in America of kindergartens and pre-kindergartens, and nursery schools there has been an increasing disposition to turn over children to the schools at younger age levels.

For the Chinese the religious function of integrating goals was performed, in part at least, by the formal religions (Tadam and Buddhism); the expression and reinforcement of group solidarity—another aspect of the religious function—was centered in ancestor worship, a family ritual that was a kind of religious worship. In America, it seems that the integration of goals is carried out mostly by four extra-familial institutions. Such economic organizations as corporations, advertising media, and occupational groups define goals.[19]

The above-mentioned functions, which are society-oriented have individual-oriented functions, too. Thus, the society-oriented function of providing replacement for dying members, provides at the same time a sense of immortality or temporal continuity to the individual. The society-oriented function of production and distribution of goods and services provides the material means of maintenance, pleasure and status improvement to the individual. The society-oriented political function provides the individual with protection. Socializing educational function provides the individual with the skills required to participate in the society. Religion helps the individual to meet crises and gives explanation for otherwise unexplainable occurrences.

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[19]Robert F. Winch, The Modern Family, (2d ed. rev., Chicago: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1963), pp. 73-75.

Regarding the derived functions of the three types of families, Winch says:

> For the Chinese peasant, position conferring was carried almost entirely by the family. . . . If we accept Spiro's denial of the existence of status differentials, there is no social position in the sense of invidious distinctions for the Kibbutz family to confer. . . . In America the family provides the child with an initial ascribed status, and the occupational system provides him with an opportunity to alter that ascribed status either upward or downward. . . . The parental functions of nurturance and control are, of course, carried out within the Chinese family. In the Kibbutz, a good deal of the "parentifying", especially with respect to control, is carried out within the children's residences by nurses and teachers. In America, parental functioning is graded with the age of the child. . . . In the matter of emotional gratification, it appears that intra-familial relationships were seen as important sources of affection and gratification in China. In Kibbutz, parents and children usually treat each other with a considerable show of affection. . . . In middle-class America, there is a cultural expectation that mates should select each other on the basis of mutual love.[20]

The individual-oriented functions as mentioned above, are the rewards in the family system. The power to control rewards, implies the power to control the behavior of others who are in need of those rewards.

The three families differ also in terms of their structure. The traditional Chinese family included ten positions, the Kibbutz two, and the American nuclear family three. The following outline clarifies the matter.

> In this way, the father (or oldest family member) was responsible to other families for the good conduct of other members of the family. Within the family he had power to command obedience and right, if necessary to use force to implement his orders. Although the father did not have absolute power over life and death as was held by the Roman pater-familias, his power was very great, and the punishment of a father for killing his son was relatively mild.[21]

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[20]Winch, pp. 73-75.

[21]Ibid., p. 39.

FAMILIAL POSITIONS RESULTING FROM GENERATION AND SEX CATEGORIES
IN
(A)   STEM FAMILY OF THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE PEASANTRY
(B)   AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY
(C)   KIBBUTZ FAMILY

(a) CHINESE FAMILY			(b) AMERICAN	(c) KIBBUTZ FAMILY
Stay in the Home	Join the Home	Leave the Home	Establish a New Home	Leave the Home
Dead Ancestors (a)				
Grandfather	Grandmother			
Father	Mother		Husband	Their children (c)
Eldest Son	Wife of Eldest Son	Brothers (b) and sisters of Eldest Son	Father and Wife Mother	
Eldest Son of Eldest Son				

(a) The dead ancestors are included because they are potentially present and spiritually active in the affairs of the household.

(b) In the joint family of the traditional Chinese peasantry, younger as well as eldest sons would remain in the home.

(c) American children leave home in their late teens or early twenties — to get married or to take a job away from home.
    In the Kibbutz, children never live in the homes of their parents.

In the words of Parsons, the head of the household of the Chinese family had control over the facilities and rewards of the system. Wife and children could not find a living (facilities) outside the home. If they obeyed the family head, they would be protected by him and praised by him for their good conduct. If they disobeyed him, they would equally be sanctioned by him (rewards and sanctions in the system). The mores and legal structure of the society supported this arrangement.

In the Kibbutz, the facilities and rewards belong entirely to the community. The community distributes them to man and woman as they need them. Professor Melford E. Spiro has intensively studied life in Israeli Kibbutz. He makes the following remarks about the Kibbutz in general, and the husband and wife relationship in particular.

> Each mate works in some branch of the Kibbutz economy and each as a member of the Kibbutz receives his equal share of the goods and services that the Kibbutz distributes. Neither, however, engages in economic activities that are exclusively directed to the satisfaction of the needs of his mate. Women cook, sew, launder, etc. for the entire Kibbutz -- not for their mates exclusively. Men produce goods, but the economic returns from their labor go to the Kibbutz -- not to their mates and themselves; although they, like all the members of the Kibbutz share in these economic returns. Hence, though there is economic cooperation between the sexes within the community as a whole, this cooperation does not take place between mates, because the social structure of this society precludes the necessity for such cooperation.[22]

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[22]Melford E. Spiro, "Is the Family Universal? The Israeli Case," in Norman W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel (eds.), A Modern Introduction to the Family (Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1963), p. 66. According to Murdock, the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of them maintaining a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children born or adopted of the sexually cohabiting adults. According to this definition, family of Kibbutz cannot be called a family. But Professor Spiro who studied the Kibbutz, observes certain characteristics that are proper to husband-wife relationship. He suggests that this two-person group is different from other man and woman relationships existing in Kibbutz itself.

The American family has a middle position. It is moving more and more towards the Kibbutzim type. But this was not the case two or three hundred years ago. Then, the nation was heavily rural and the family came close to being a self-sufficient economic unit. Socialization and education of the children was done in the family. The political and religious function of the family was also comparatively greater. The facilities and rewards of the home being in the possession of the head of the household, the family had a patriarchal structure.

With the industrialization and urbanization and other changes that accompanied them, the functionality of the family began to decline. The members began to be more and more economically independent. Education of the children is done, today, mostly in schools. In other words, the rewards and facilities are not entirely at the possession of the head of the household. How does this affect the power structure in the family? What is the method for studying the changes which the family is encountering? Have the changes affected all families equally or differently? These are some of the questions to which family sociologists sought an answer. A few of their studies and their findings are listed below.

<u>Review of Literature</u>

Professors Ivan Nye and Alan E. Bayer in a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, reviewed the family studies done up to 1961 in the United States. In the first part of the paper, the authors evaluate a similar study that was done in 1947-1948 by Professors Burgess, Cottrell and Nimkoff. In the second part of the paper, they describe family researches in the period 1947 to 1961 in terms of changes in statistical techniques, samples, hypothesis, orientation to prior

research, data-gathering technique and the variables studied.

The paper was later published in _Social Forces_. The listing of independent and dependent variables by the authors, as shown on the following page, is taken from this article.[23]

The differential bringing-up of boys and girls in the family depends upon the role conception the parents have about the role of husband and wife in the family. This role conception is different for different sub-cultures. Mirra Komarovsky studied the way middle-class parents were bringing up their children, their role conception and its function for the family system of the children in their family of procreation.[24]

Seventy-three biographical documents prepared by women graduates were analyzed by the author. The documents revealed that despite increasing similarity in the up-bringing of the sexes among the middle-class families, some sex differences could be observed. The author observed three distinct patterns in the behavior of parents towards their children.

[23]Ivan Ney and Alan E. Bayer, "Some Recent Trends in Family Research," _Social Forces_, XLI (March, 1963), pp. 290-301.

[24]Mirra Komarovsky, "Functional Analysis of Sex Roles," _American Sociological Review_, XV (Aug., 1950), pp. 508-516.

DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES IN FAMILY RESEARCH

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. Age
2. Age at marriage

3. Dating patterns
4. Employment of wife-mother

5. Education
6. Family composition
7. Family relationships
8. Length of marriage
9. Marital adjustment
10. Marital status
11. Personality characteristics
12. Place of residence

13. Pre-marital sexual experience
14. Race and ethnic origin

15. Religion
16. Sex
17. Social class
18. Type of marriage ceremony
19. Miscellaneous

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. Age at marriage
2. Dating, courtship and mate selection
3. Family composition
4. Family planning, birth-control and sterility
5. Family solidarity
6. In-law relationship
7. Marital roles
8. Marital status
9. Parent-child relationships
10. Parental roles
11. Religious behavior
12. Marital success, failure and satisfaction
13. Sexual behavior and attitudes
14. Social and personality problems of children
15. Socialization of children
16. Miscellaneous

1. The parents tended to speed-up, most often unwittingly, but also deliberately, the emancipation of the boy from the family, while they retarded it in the case of the girl.

2. A higher degree of privacy is allowed for boys than for girls.

3. The girls of the family are held to a more exacting code of filial and kinship behavior.

How this type of training becomes functional to the family of pro-

creation of the children has been explained by the author.

These patterns of differential training of the sexes in the parental family are generally recognized to be functionally oriented to their respective adult roles. The role of the provider on the one hand and of the home-maker on the other, calls for different attitudes and skills. Competitiveness, independence, aggressiveness, dominance all are traits felt to be needed by the future head of the family. Although the girl can train for her adult role and rehearse it within

the home, the boy prepares for his role outside the home, by taking a paper route year-round, or a summer job away from home.[25]

The effect of women's work outside the home on the family behavior was studied by Marvin E. Olsen.[26] The dependent variables which the author was concerned with were task participation, routine decision making and power structure in the family. The author believes that money is an important basis of power so that the control of money leads to the possession of power. A person has more control over the money he earns himself than other persons have. The role of wage earner carries with it greater opportunities of developing feelings of achievement, competence and contribution than does the role of housewife. On these assumptions he hypothesized:

1. The employment of the mother outside the home will function to decrease her participation in household tasks and to increase that of the husband.

2. The employment of the mother outside the home will function to decrease her decision making in household tasks (activity control) and to increase that of her husband.

3. The employment of the mother outside the home will function to increase her power vis-a-vis her husband.

The third hypothesis deals with the power aspect of the husband-wife relationship with which we are concerned in the study. Power as can be noted is different from activity control. The latter concerns the sheer volume of decisions made, most of which are relatively of little concern to other persons. Power on the other hand, involves decisions which may have important effects on others.

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[25]Komarovsky, p. 511.

[26]Marvin E. Olsen, "Distributions of Family Responsibilities and Social Stratification," Marriage and Family Living, XXII (Feb., 1960), pp. 60-65.

The total sample included 324 families having at least one child in the elementary school. The findings may be summarized as follows:

1. Working mothers participated less than non-working mothers in household tasks and their husbands participated more.

2. Working mothers made fewer decisions about routine household tasks than non-working mothers and their husbands made more.

3. There was no difference in the husband-wife power between working and non-working women.

A similar conclusion was arrived at by Hoffman regarding the effect of women's work on the family power structure.[27]

What is the effect of woman's work outside on the domestic role of the husband was the concern of the author. He studied eighty-nine (89) working mothers and eighty-nine (89) non-working mothers.

One of the traditional elements of masculinity is the dominance of the male in the family. Dominance implies control over other persons, as well as control over their possessions. Hoffman suggests that control in the family situation may function in two ways. As activity control, it refers to the control a person has over a given area of activities, regardless of whether or not this control has an important effect on others. It may also refer to the degree to which one person makes decisions which control another person's behavior.

In relation to activity control Hoffman found that working wives had less control and their husbands more, than in families where wives did not work.

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[27] Lois W. Hoffman, "Effects of the Employment of Mothers on Parental Power Relations and the Division of Household Tasks," *Marriage* and *Family Living*, XXII (Feb., 1960), pp. 27-35.

In relation to the power component, no difference was found between working men and matched non-working women.

Although the husband of the working wives may have participated more in household tasks after the women went to work, than they had before, this apparently did not perceptibly affect the quality of their status in the family group.

A distinctive contribution to our understanding of the decision making process in the family was made by Professor Kenkel. Two groups, each including twenty-five couples were studied. His findings are reported in an article titled: "Observational Studies of Husband-Wife Interaction in Family Decision Making."[28] He describes the decision making process and gives his interpretation of the process.

His description of the phenomena may be summarized as follows:

> The traditional conception of spousal roles seems to run through the whole pattern. Spouses expected influences to be differentiated in the direction of the husbands having the greater influence. Husbands did have more influence, although not nearly so much more as expected by the spouses. Husbands were likely to do most of the talking, which would be expected in the traditional, more authoritarian pattern, especially when the expenditure of the money was involved. Husbands, furthermore, contributed most of the ideas, while wives were decidedly more likely to be the high performers in the social emotional area. All of this seems much more in keeping with the traditional role conceptions of husbands and wives than it does with the newer conception of democratic family decision making and equality between the sexes. This occurs even though the sample studied consisted of young middle-class, better educated couples, a group most likely to favor the democratic, equalitarian family tradition.[29]

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[28]William F. Kenkel, "Observational Studies of Husband-Wife Interaction in Family Decision Making," Marvin B. Sussman (ed.), Sourcebook in Marriage and Family (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963), pp. 144-156.

[29]Sussman, p. 150.

In short, the author was concerned with middle-class families. The patriarchal structure was in agreement with the traditional role conception of husband-wife relationship; but was in disagreement with the present day common belief that middle-class families are tending towards a more egalitarian type.

The author tried to correlate the personality characteristics of the individuals to this phenomena. But no relationship was found. The variables which he had tried to reckon with, and which he thinks are related to decision making process are social class, ethnic group, religious factor, family of orientation of the spouses and the roles the spouses play in the nuclear family and in the society generally.

Mirra Komarovsky, in an article titled, "Class Differences in Family Decision-Making on Expenditures", reviews some of the studies that have been done in the field of decision making in the family.[30]

Wilkening studied the extent of joint involvement of farm operators and their wives in joint decision making. He found that, in general, there is low involvement for the low-income group, high for the middle-income group and again low for the high-income group.[31]

Olsen's study of the distribution of responsibility within the family in five different socio-economic classes found a similar result. He concluded that the transition from the traditional to the companionship form of family is not equally noticeable in the different strata of society.

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[30]Sussman, p. 261.

[31]Eugene A. Wilkening, "Joint Decision-Making in Farm Families", American Sociological Review, XXIII (April, 1958), pp. 187-192.

In general, it is more evident in middle status families and less evident in high and low status families.[32]

Van Bortek and Gross in an interview study of twenty-six upper-lower and twenty-four upper-middle class homemakers, found that lower-class homemakers had more of a voice in financial planning than middle-class homemakers.[33]

Sharp and Mott found that in Detroit, in low income families, the wife was twice as likely as her husband to handle household bills.[34]

Mirra Komarovsky suggests that three hypotheses can be proposed regarding the decision making in the family, the curvilinear hypothesis of class differences, the greater influence of the wife in the lower socioeconomic classes and the higher rate of joint involvement among the young couples. She says that there is enough support for these generalizations to warrant provisional acceptance and further study.[35]

Fred L. Strodtbeck used the "Revealed Difference Technique" to study the power and influence in the family group.[36]

Three communities were selected by the author which differed in terms of the degree to which the wife was favored by the cultural placing of

[32]Marvin E. Olsen, "Distribution of Responsibility Within the Family as Related to Social Stratification," Grinnel College, 1956-1957.

[33]Dorothy G. Van Bortel and Irma H. Gross, "A Comparison of Home Management in Two Socio-Economic Groups," Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, Michigan State College, (April 1952), 240.

[34]H. Sharp and P. Mott, "Consumer Decisions in the Makeup of Family," Journal of Marketing, XXI (October, 1956), pp. 149-156.

[35]Sussman, p. 266.

[36]Fred L. Strodtbeck, "Husband-Wife Interaction Over Revealed Differences" American Sociological Review, XLI (Aug., 1951), pp. 468-473.

power. The communities are Navaho, Texan and Mormon.

In the Navaho group, both men and women own sheep. But the women do the processing of wool into rugs and blankets. This assures the women a regular income throughout the year. The man has greater earning power when he does wage work. But this is scarce and seasonal. The man is considered the head of the household; but the relative economic independence of the wife limits his exercise of power.

The relative position of husband and wife in the family of Mormons can be clarified from the following theological statement of their church.

> There must be a presiding authority in the family. The father is the head or the president or spokesman of the family. This arrangement is of divine origin. It also conforms to the physical and psychological laws under which humanity lives. A home, as viewed by the church, is composed of a family group, so organized as to be presided over by the father, under the authority and in the spirit of the priesthood conferred upon him.[37]

The Texan group is composed of migrants who came from eastern Texas during the drought and depression of the early 1930's.

Ten families from each group were selected and the couples were subjected to an experiment in a laboratory situation. The purpose of the study was to know how they arrived at a decision in case of difference of opinion. The hypothesis was that the decision would tend to be in favor of the person who had more power in the family structure. The findings are presented on the following page.

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[37]Strodtbeck, p. 470.

CULTURE	NUMBER OF COUPLES	DECISION WON BY: HUSBAND	WIFE
Navaho	10	34	46
Texan	10	39	33
Mormon	10	42	29

The hypothesis was verified.

Behavior is influenced by the personality of the actor. The difference
between the personality of the middle-class women and working-class women
has been studied by Lee Reinwater, Richard P. Coleman and Gerlad Handel.
The following excerpts from the book of the authors indicate that there is
a difference between the personality of the middle-class women and the
working-class women in terms of their attitudes, emotions, personal re-
sources, skills and apprehensions which according to the authors constitute
the personality.

> A central characteristic of the working-class wife is her underlying
> conviction that most significant action results from the world
> external to herself, rather than from within herself. In comparison
> with the middle-class wife, reality is, in its ordinary presentation
> to her, flat, unvarnished, and not highly differentiated...
> The working-class wife's outlook is shaded by a pervasive anxiety
> over possible fundamental deprivations... In comparison with the
> middle-class woman, the working-class woman's emotionality is not
> well organised or easily controlled...
> Strong feelings can be elicited by less intense stimulation as
> compared to the middle-class women. She differs somewhat from the
> middle-class woman in the way she maintains her moral goodness in
> that she is governed somewhat more immediately by what others will
> think of her. This outward orientation has several facets.
> 1. She believes that most significant action originates from the
>   world external to herself.
> 2. She relies upon being presented stimulation, rather than
>   initiating courses of action herself (and her passivity is one
>   of her main controls.)
> 3. She is more interested in what goes on in her immediate surroundings

than in her own thoughts. She is more concerned about being punished by others, than she is about punishing herself.[38]

The above excerpts notes that there is a difference between the personality of the middle-class and working-class, and that the personality factor should be taken into consideration in comparing the behavior of both groups.

Franklin Frazier distinguishes four types of family structures among the Negroes.[39] The first one called the maternal family pattern, in its purest and most primitive form, is found in the rural South. This type is based primarily upon the affectional ties and common interests existing among the offspring and the mother who is the head of the family. The man has no authority in the family and the children may not even be aware of their relationship to him.

The second type of family pattern shows many of the characteristics of the traditional family pattern of the American whites. The status of the husband in the family was patterned against the status of the husband in the white family of which he was the slave. Even after gaining freedom, his authority was undisputed in the family.

Families belonging to the third type originated in the communities of the free Negroes, usually of white and Negro, and sometimes of Indian, ancestry. The founders of these families inherited, in some cases, wealth from their white ancestors and generally showed the advantages of educational opportunities and contact with the whites. These families were as a rule

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[39]Franklin E. Frazier, "The Impact of Urban Civilization Upon Negro Family Life," American Sociological Review, II (Oct., 1937), pp. 609-618.

patriarchal in organization.

The fourth type of families is relatively isolated from the main currents of Negro life. These families originated in isolated communities of persons of Negro, white and Indian ancestry. Usually they regard themselves as a distinct race from the Negros and show in their behavior the clannishness of an isolated group. The family organization of this group is strictly patriarchal and is usually tied-up with the religious organization of the community.

A study conducted by Maccoby and her associates of the Laboratory of Human Development at Harvard University was intended to reveal the different methods used in child rearing by different social classes. Interviews were conducted with 198 upper-middle class, and 174 upper-lower class mothers of kindergarten children. They were asked about their methods of bringing-up their children. The techniques the mothers used for disciplining the children, the number and identity of the people involved in the child's early training were also the object of study. A few of the findings from the study which are relevant for our purpose are the following.

> The relationship between the father and the mother differ somewhat along the class lines. The upper-lower mothers are more critical of their husbands, and there is more open quarelling between the two parents in this group over child rearing practices, than among the upper-middle class families. Similarly the amount of disagreement between mothers and fathers on child rearing policy appears to be a function of class rather than education.[40]

A paper of Allison Davis published in The Family in a Democratic

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[40] Eleanor E. Maccoby, Patricia K. Gibbs and the Staff of the Laboratory of Human Development, Harvard Univ., "Method of Child Rearing in Two Social Classes," in William E. Martin and Celia Burns Stendler, (eds.), Readings in Child Development (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954), pp. 380-395.

Society is considered to be one of the often quoted source with regard to the social class difference in child rearing.[41] The author compares the pattern existing in different social classes. His findings have significance for the present study in the sense that the personalities of husband and wife inter-acting in the family of procreation is a function of the experiences they had in their own family of orientation.

A similar study was co-authored by Richard A. Littman, Robert C. A. Moore and John Pierce Jones.[42] Studies on child-rearing and social class completed in Chicago, Illinois, and Newton, Massachusetts, are used as control for comparison with a study of a sample of parents in Eugene, Oregon.

The independent variable was the social class position and the dependent variables are practices of child-rearing such as feeding, weaning, toilet training, aggression control, technique of discipline, household routine requirements, father-child relations and sex permissiveness.

One of the four objectives of the study was to determine if fathers differ from mothers on various aspects of the socialization process. The findings are contained in the following passage from the article.

> The Chicago data indicate no difference between the classes with respect to the agent of punishment. In both classes, the mothers claimed that they punished the child the most. The Boston data, like those of Chicago, fail to show class differences; however,

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[41] Allison W. Davis, "Child Rearing in the Class Structure of the American Society," The Family in Democratic Society, Anniversary Papers of the Community Service Society of New York (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 50-59.

[42] Richard A. Littman, Robert C. A. Moore and John Pierce-Jones, "Social Class Difference in Child Rearing: A Third Community," American Sociological Review, XXII (Dec., 1957), 694-704.

the percentage of mothers who do more punishing than fathers
is considerably less. The most apparent reason for the difference
lies in the questions on which the data are based. In Chicago,
the question dealt with punishment in general; while in Boston,
the question dealt with punishment of children only when both
parents are present. The Eugene data indicate no class difference
in the punishment agent. Almost all fathers and mothers believe
that the father of a household should not be the sole punitive
agent. However, no inquiry was made to determine how the burden
of punishment is actually divided.[43]

The inconsistencies observed between the three studies might have been
due to the difference in sampling, the time when the study was made, the
concepts used, and the methods of measurement.

The method used by Fred L. Strodtbeck as mentioned elsewhere, was used
by James G. March to examine some aspects of the decision making balance of
power within a married couple as it is revealed in the discussion of
different questions of public policy.[44]

It was the assumption that the influence pattern between a husband and
wife would vary from situation to situation, and from policy to policy, and
that the general character of the variability was predictable from our under-
standing of the family as a relatively established system of interaction.

Traditionally, political matters were allocated to the husband. But
during the past one hundred years, the ideology of political equality
between the sexes has been accepted and this has altered the form of special-
ization within the family, particularly among urban, middle-class, college
educated families. Sub-specialization began to occur in the family.

In the study, three policy areas were considered: foreign affairs,

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[43] Ibid., p. 701

[44] James G. March, "Husband-Wife Interaction Over Political Issues,"
Public Opinion Quarterly, XVII (Spring, 1953), pp. 461-470.

labor affairs, and local affairs. The prediction was that the wife would tend to be most influential in dealing with local affairs, and least influential in dealing with labor affairs.

Eight couples were subjected to the experiment. Different problems were suggested and their opinion on each was separately sought for. In cases of disagreement, they were asked to discuss and come to an agreement. The discussion was recorded and was later analysed.

The author remarks: "These data would seem to indicate that within the social and cultural groups represented by this sample, the sharing of political power between a husband and wife tends to result in a form of specialization in which each spouse has more or less clearly defined areas of competence."[45]

A family is considered stable, if it maintains itself as a unit from its onset at marriage to old age. According to Professor Hollingshead, factors responsible for stability in the family are different for different social classes.[46]

Among the upper-class, family control of mate selection is the most determinant of family stability. In the middle-class, on the other hand, conformity to class pressures, self-discipline, moral emphasis in marriage, submission to the demands of the job, and ready acceptance of geographic and social mobility, minimize family instability among its members. Within the working-class, family instability increases; here it is the result of

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[45]March, p. 468.

[46]August B. Hollingshead, "Class Difference in Family Stability", The Annals of the American Academy of Political Sciences, 72 (November, 1950) pp. 39-46.

stressful conditions.

Professor E. H. Mowrer in his Domestic Discord and Disorganization:
Personal and Social seems to think that family discord may result in dis-
organization and eventually in instability.[47]

Professor Hollingshead found that lower-class families are comparatively
less stable, than families of middle-class and upper-class. Does this also
mean that there is more discord in the lower-class families? If this is
true, has it something to do with the structure (in our study - the power
structure of the family) of the family?

Blood and Wolfe conducted a study in Michigan to measure power dis-
tribution in the family. Power within the family was measured by the pre-
dominance of husband or wife in making decisions on eight items. By
constructing a scale of dominance, the authors were able to compare decision
making among families at different levels of social status. The middle-
status group showed the highest degree of equality between husband and wife.
In high-status groups the husband made more decisions than the wife,
especially in matters involving income or the handling of money. In low-
status groups the wife tended to be more dominant than in either the high
or middle-status families.[48]

When wives are employed, they share power in decision making with their
husbands. Since a higher percentage of lower-class wives work than wives

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[47] Ernest R. Mowrer, Domestic Discord: Its Analysis and Treatment,
(Chicago, Illinois: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1928). Also: Ernest R. Mowrer,
Disorganization: Personal and Social, (Chicago: J.B. Lippincott & Co.,1942).

[48] R. O. Blood and D. M. Wolfe, "Husbands and Wives," The Dynamics of
Married Living (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960).
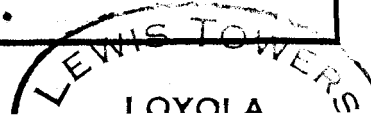
in other classes, the loss of power of lower-class husbands may occur, at least in part, by the increased power of working wives.

Heer's study, however, showed that non-working wives in the lower-class also have more power than middle-class wives.[49]

Roles of husband and wife in the home also show some variation by sub-cultural groups. Responsibility for the performance of household duties rests more heavily on low-status wives, and least heavily on high-status wives, according to the Olsen study.[50] He found that husbands are more active in the middle-income groups. The high-income group wives transfer ten percent of household duties to servants, whereas middle and low-status wives have little outside help. Although middle-class husbands and wives tend to share responsibility for household tasks in slightly greater degree than do couples in other classes, the study does not imply that they actually carry out tasks together.

Reuben Hill distinguishes normal families from those in crisis.[51] In an article published by the author in Social Case Work, he discusses the different aspects of the problem. He presents the broad outlines of the conceptual framework most used by family sociologists in crisis studies, catalogues the stressful events that have been studied, and those that remain unstudied, presents the findings to date and gives a theory as to how the family adjusts itself to crisis situations. He also discusses the

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[49]D. M. Heer, "Dominance and the Working Wife," Social Forces, XXXVI (April 1958), pp. 341-347.

[50]M. E. Olsen, "Distribution of Family Responsibilities and Social Stratification", Marriage and Family Living, XXII (February 1960) pp. 60-65.

[51]Reuben Hill, "Social Stresses on the Family," Social Case Work, XXXIX (Feb.-March, 1958), pp. 129-150.

implications of crisis for the members of the family.

A family may be said to be in crisis when it meets with a stress situation. The stress situations listed by the author are:

> Death of child, spouse or parent
> Hospitalization of spouse
> War separation
> Unwanted pregnancy
> Deserter returns
> Stepfather, stepmother additions
> War reunions
> Some adoptions, aged grandparents, orphaned kin
> Non-support; infidelity
> Alcoholism, drug addiction and delinquency
> Illegitimacy
> Runaways, desertion and divorce
> Imprisonment
> Suicide or homicide
> Institutionalization for mental illness

From the moment the family meets the crisis event until it is re-adjusted, it goes through different stages. They are:

> 1. Attempts to deny the problem.
> 2. Attempts to eliminate the problem.
> 3. Disorganization.
> 4. Attempts to reorganize in spite of the problem.
> 5. Efforts to escape the problem: decision to separate from the alcoholic spouse.
> 6. Reorganization of the family without the spouse.
> 7. Reorganization of the entire family.

In exposing the theory of family re-adjustment to the crisis situations, the author has not said how much time will it take for a normal family to get adjusted after having faced a crisis situation.

The type of role differentiation between husband and wife reflected on the relationship the couple has towards the community and neighborhood, says Elizabeth Bott.[52] She distinguishes three types of organization of

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[52]Elizabeth Bott, "Conjugal Roles and Social Networks," Normal W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel, A Modern Introduction to the Family, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1963), pp. 249-257.

familial activities, complementary, independent and joint organization.
In the first two cases, the role relationship is segregated conjugal role
relationship. In the third, the role relationship is joint conjugal.

Regarding the relationship of these types to the relationship the
couple has towards the community, the author remarks:

> A qualitative examination of the research data suggests that the
> degree of segregation of conjugal roles is related to the degree
> of connectedness in the total network of the family. Those
> families that had a high degree of segregation in the role relation-
> ship of husband and wife had a close-knit network; many of their
> friends, neighbors and relatives knew each other. Families that
> had a relatively joint role relationship between husband and wife
> had a loose-knit network; few of their relatives, neighbors and
> friends knew one another. There were many degrees of variation
> between these extremes. On the basis of our data, I should like
> to put forward the following hypothesis: the degree of segregation
> in the role relationship of husband and wife varies directly with
> the connectedness of the family's social network. The more
> connected the network, the greater the degree of segregation be-
> tween the roles of husband and wife. The less connected the net-
> work, the smaller the degree of segregation between the roles of
> husband and wife.[53]

Thus, the type of relationship that exists between the family and the
community may be indicative of the structure of the family.

The present section dealing with the studies done in the past might be
concluded giving a resume of what the researchers have found, regarding the
topic of discussion. This it seems will help clarify the relationship of
the study proposed here with those done in the past.

Authority, influence, power and dominance are very often synonymously
used, to indicate the relative position of husband and wife in the family.
Operationally, this means the extent to which one parent decides over the
other parent's behavior more than the other decides his behavior. In this

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[53]Ibid., p. 252.

paper, the word "power" will be used to indicate this phenomenon.

Husband-wife interaction on revealed differences has been used as a technique to study the power structure of the family. Even though there are different areas in which husband and wife may have difference of opinion, the main two areas are child-rearing and economic life of the family. The economic life has been the main concern of many of the studies that have as yet been done.

The objective of the present study is centered on child-rearing. But the authors seem not to agree as to the distribution of responsibility between husband and wife. It is at this objective that the present study is directed.

Power distribution, or the actual distribution of it in the family, depends on many factors. The personality of husband and wife, their racial or religious background, years of marriage, social class, etc., are some of the factors that determine family power structure. Studies in family should distinguish between those facing the crisis and those not facing the crisis.

Findings from previous studies suggest that upper and lower-class families are patriarchal and the middle-class families egalitarian. Difference of opinion between husband and wife in the former cases are resolved mostly in favor of the husband. In the latter, the tendency is towards a compromise position. Examining the way in which inter-parental conflicts are resolved in the family, it is possible to find out the structure of the family.

The main areas of family life in which parents may disagree have been outlined by specialists in the field. Mowrer in his book Domestic Discord gives a list of twenty-nine problems taken from 639 case records of the

United Charities of Chicago. Volume 23 of *Marriage* and *Family Living* reports a study that was done among the members of the United Presbyterian Church. A list of twenty-five problems was presented to a national sample of 448 members of the group with the instruction to check the most common among problems observed in family life.[54]

The data gathered from the above sources may be grouped under five main headings in the following order of importance:

> Child Rearing; Style of Life; Involvement in Community Affairs; Husband-Wife Relationship; and, Religious Practice.

The major part of the disagreements were related to child-rearing. An analysis of this, it seems, will give a cross-section of the family disagreements in general.

The Hypothesis

The hypothesis for the present study may be presented as follows:

There are differences in terms of inter-parental conflict in the socialization and education of children between American white Catholic parents of the middle-income group and those of the low-income group.

Social class is the independent variable and inter-parental conflict in the socialization and education of children is the dependent variable.

Socialization is the process by which someone learns the ways of a given society or social group so that he can function within it.[55]

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[54] Orville G. Brim, Jr., Roy W. Fairchild, and Edgar F. Bregatta, "Relations Between Family Problems," *Marriage* and *Family Living*, XXIII (August, 1961), pp. 210-226.

[55] Frederick Elkin, *The Child and Society: The Process of Socialization* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 4.

Education is formalized socialization.[56] The term "child-rearing" has been

purposely omitted to make it clear that the inter-parental conflicts

analyzed in this study extend also to children who are adolescents.

The term "conflict" has been defined differently by different authors.

Among the various definitions, however, two definite trends can be observed.

There are those who consider conflict as a dissociative process. Thus,

according to G. A. Lundberg, conflict is characterized by a "suspension of

communication between opposing parties."[57] Wilson and Kolb think the same

and consider conflict as a disjunctive process.[58]

In contrast to the above view is the opinion of others who consider

conflict as a form of interaction. This view stems mainly from the work of

George Simmel. He writes:

> If every interaction among men is a sociation, conflict must
> certainly be considered as sociation. Conflict is designed to
> resolve divergent dualisms, it is a way of achieving some kind
> of unity, even if it be through the annihilation of one of the
> conflicting parties.[59]

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[56] Winch, p. 115.

[57] G. A. Lundberg, The Foundations of Sociology (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1939), p. 275.

[58] Lewis Wilson and W. L. Kolb, Sociological Analysis (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), p. 714.

[59] George Simmel, Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations, trans. by K. H. Wolf and R. Bendix (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955), p. 13.

R. E. Park and his followers were mainly responsible for spreading the ideas of Simmel in the United States.

Those who see in conflict a form of social interaction have tried to distinguish it from competition. According to Park and Burgess, conflict as distinct from competition is always conscious and involves direct communication.

> Both are forms of interaction, but competition is a struggle
> between individuals or groups of individuals who are not
> necessarily in contact and communication; while conflict is
> a contest in which contact is an indispensable condition.
> Competition is unconscious; conflict is always conscious.
> Both conflict and competition are forms of struggle. Competition
> is, however, continuous and impersonal and conflict is
> intermittent and personal.[60]

A number of scholars have attempted to distinguish between conflict and competition, mainly in terms of the means used by goal-oriented antagonists. According to MacIver conflict is "all activity in which men contend against one another for any objective."[61]   He makes a distinction between direct conflict and indirect conflict. Direct conflict occurs where individuals or groups thwart or impede, or restrain, or injure, or destroy one another in the effort to attain some goal. Indirect conflict occurs where individuals or groups do not actually impede the efforts of one another, but neverthe-less seek to attain their ends in ways which obstruct the attainment of the same end by others.[62]

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[60] R. E. Park and W. E. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 574.

[61] R. M. MacIver, Society (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937), p. 51.

[62] Ibid.,

Robin M. Williams, Jr., defines conflict as a struggle over values (distributive or non-distributive) in which the immediate aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Conflict results from conscious pursuit of exclusive values. Competition to Williams is focused on reaching a goal, rather than removing competitors.[63]

Kingsley Davis says that an actor engaged in conflict tries to destroy the opposition while in competition the actor tries to outdo the competitor.[64]

Howard Becker's distinction between conflict and competition is based on the function each one has for the social system. According to him, there are three dissociative processes, competition, contravention and conflict. Competition may be boundary maintaining, for the members of a system, when these members are confronted with a competition from members of another system. Boundary maintenance is equally apparent as a result of contravention. Conflict is always boundary maintaining.[65]

The difference between competition and conflict may be summarized as follows: Competition is unconscious, continuous and impersonal. Conflict, on the other hand, is intermittent, personal and conscious.

The opponent in competition is not an enemy. It is focused on reaching the goal, rather than eliminating the competitor. On the other hand, in conflict situation, the opponent is looked upon as an enemy to be eliminated.

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[63]R. M. Williams, Jr., The Reduction of Intergroup Tensions (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947) p. 43.

[64]Charles P. Loomis and Zona K. Loomis, Modern Social Theories (New York: D. Van Vostrand Co., 1965), p. 121.

[65]Ibid., p. 75.

The characteristics of conflict as given above may not be verified in all cases. A much simpler definition has been given by Ralf Dahrendorf. "For him, the most useful definition is one in terms of opposition between two, and only two parties whether conscious or unconscious.[66] This definition will be used in the present analysis.

The purpose of this study is to identify inter-parental conflict in two different socio-economic groups, and not to explain it. If the concern of the sociologist is defined in terms of "who did what and why", the present study is mainly concerned with the "who and what" of conflict of family systems and not the "why" of it. Any explanation that may be found in these pages, regarding the reason for conflict, is suggested as a guide for future researches.

Going through the sociological literature, one observes difference of opinion among authors as to the definition of social class. A general theory of social class has not yet been proposed. In the absence of a general theory, different operational definitions have been used by individual researchers. Most of these authors agree that occupation, income and education are the three factors determining the social class of the individual.[67]

Method

As researches in the family developed, there was a shift in the method, too. From the clinic observation or the verstehen method, it

[66]Elton B. McNeil (ed.), The Nature of Human Conflict (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 91.

[67]Ruth Shonle Cavan,"Sub-cultural Variations and Mobility," in Harold T. Christensen (ed.), Handbook of Marriage and the Family (Chicago: Rand-McNally and Co., 1965), p. 535.

developed into interview or questionnaire. Even today, interview remains to be the method most commonly used in family studies.

But in the past decade, there have been attempts to substitute the interview method with other more sophisticated ones, as used in psychology, statistics, social psychology and other related fields. Some of these modern methods are Record Linkage, Marital Projection Series, a new version of the observation method, and the interaction process analysis as used in small group studies.

Record Linkage was first used by Professor Harold T. Christensen.[68] He used the marriage, birth, divorce and death records to study such problems as family mobility, incidence and prevalence of pre-marital pregnancy, child spacing and family size. The reliability of the records in this method is taken for granted. But the reliability of the records depends upon the reliability of the reporting person and the time in which it was reported.

Dr. Huntington used the "Marital Projection Series", to study the relationship of personality to the interaction of marriage partners.[69] Pictures similar to those used in TAT were used by the author to study the interaction process of ten couples. The method is too expensive and time-consuming to be used for any large scale studies. The method is centered more on the process of interaction itself, rather than the causes of the interaction.

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[68]Harold T. Christensen, "The Method of Record Linkage Applied to Family Data," Marriage and Family Living, XX (Feb., 1958), pp. 38-42.

[69]Robert M. Huntington, "The Personality Interaction Approach to Study of the Marital Relationship," Marriage and Family Living, XX (Feb., 1958), pp. 47-52.

According to the observation method suggested by Dr. Blood, the investigator visits a family several times a week and records his observations.[70] Dr. Blood contends that the investigator, after some time, would be regarded as one of the members of the household, and from then on he would be able to have a clear picture of the situation. This assumption is to be questioned. Admitting that this is true, the method meets with another objection. The selected occasions at which the investigator visits the family do not give a cross-section of the family behavior. Thus, the findings of such an investigation may be valid for those particular cases, but not for the family behavior, in general.

The interaction process analysis as used in small group studies is suggested by Professor Strodtbeck for the study of husband-wife interaction in the family.[71] Techniques used in small group analysis were used by the author to determine the locus of power in a decision making situation involving husband and wife. The method is suitable for the interaction approach studies of families.

The validity of the above methods for studies of family behavior, in general, has not been established. Even for those areas for which they were first used, their reliability has not been proven. The writer intends to use the interview method for this study.

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[70]Robert O. Blood, "The Use of Observational Methods in Family Research," Marriage and Family Living, XX (Feb., 1958), pp. 47-52.

[71]Fred L. Strodtbeck, "Husband-Wife Interaction Over Revealed Differences," American Sociological Review, XVI (August, 1951), pp. 468-473.

Two groups of families, differing one from the other for the socio-economic status of the couples, are compared. Sixty families have been selected on a random basis -- thirty from a middle-class neighborhood and thirty from a lower-class neighborhood. Negroes were excluded from the study. Language barrier made it necessary to exclude those of Spanish origin, also. A schedule (a sample of which is appended to this paper) was used for the interview. Fifty per cent of those interviewed were men and fifty per cent were women.

The analysis presented in the following pages are based on the data collected from these interviews.

The schedule itself consisted of four parts. The first part was devoted to gathering information regarding the couples. Many items such as the age of the couples, their ethnic background, grade of education, type of occupation of the couples, years of marriage, the socio-economic status of the family, of orientation of the couples, etc., found place in the schedule. This section of the schedule was split into two parts. The first part served as Introduction and the second part as Conclusion. This was done with intention of not embarrassing the respondent with so many personal questions at one time.

The second part of the schedule was intended to identify the object of disagreement between couples. A list of twelve areas of child-training in which parents usually disagreed was proposed.

The third and fourth sections of the schedule attempted to find out why couples disagree, and how they resolve their disagreement. Both were open-ended questions.

The descriptive data regarding the couples are presented in Chapter II. Analysis of the conflict itself (the number of conflicts, the object and nature of conflicts, the reason for conflict and conflict resolution) is found in Chapter III. Chapter IV gives a summary of the study with the pertinent findings.

CHAPTER II

THE SAMPLE

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold:

> To describe the population from which the sample was selected.

> To describe the sample itself.

The Population From Which the Sample Was Selected

The study is aimed at comparing the behavior of married couples of two different socio-economic groups. One of the means used for identifying socio-economic background of the couples is to select the sample from neighborhoods which, according to the generally accepted criteria (income and educational level) could be characterized as belonging to different social classes.

Fifty per cent of the sample was selected from Oak Loan, a suburb of Chicago. The description of the area is given on the following page.

According to the latest report, 94.6 per cent of the residents in Oak Lawn own their homes. Many types of homes are available in Oak Lawn, priced from $14,000 to $50,000, with an average price of $25,000. New homes start in the $20,000 area, and there are some 500 apartment units in town, renting from $110.00 to $250.00 per month.[1]

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[1]Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce, Oak Lawn: Crossroads of Residence and Industry (Oak Lawn, Ill.: Edwards and Calven, Inc., 1966).

TABLE I

OAK LAWN FAMILY INCOME IN 1959[a]
(Total Number of Families -- 6,883)

Under - - - - - $ 1,000.	126
$ 1,000 - - - - 1,999.	64
2,000 - - - - 2,999.	87
3,000 - - - - 3,999.	130
4,000 - - - - 4,999.	190
5,000 - - - - 5,999.	536
6,000 - - - - 6,999.	815
7,000 - - - - 7,999.	980
8,000 - - - - 8,999.	874
9,000 - - - - 9,999.	726
10,000 - - - - 14,000.	1,789
15,000 - - - - 24,999.	489
25,000 and over	77

[a]U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960, Census Tracts: Chicago, Illinois (Washington: U.S. Government Printing House), p. 20.

TABLE 2

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD[a]

Persons 25 years and older.	14,350
No. school years completed.	66
Elementary School:	
1-4 years	253
5-7 years	854
8 years	2,037
High School:	
1-3 years	3,241
4 years	4,918
College:	
1-3 years	1,757
4 years and more.	1,224
MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS	13.1

[a]U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960, p. 20.

The directory of the Catholic Parish covering the area was used to select the sample. The families were numbered and the numbers recorded and were deposited in the receptacle from which thirty were selected at random. Six of those thus selected could not be reached for interviewing. Two of them had no children living with them. The other four refused to be interviewed. So another six were selected using the same process.

The families of the low-income group were selected from census tracts 127, 128 and 129 in Chicago. The area is in the vicinity of Loyola University (Downtown Campus) and extends from Chicago Avenue on the south to Division Street on the north, and from Michigan Avenue on the east to the Chicago River on the west. Description of the three tracts is given below.

TABLE 3

CHICAGO CENSUS TRACTS 127, 128, 129: FAMILY INCOME IN 1959[a]

	CENSUS TRACT NO.		
	127	128	129
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES	1,843	553	1,048
Under - - - - - $ 1,000.	220	36	147
$ 1,000 - - - - - 1,999.	302	49	99
2,000 - - - - 2,999.	292	62	100
3,000 - - - - 3,999.	398	60	179
4,000 - - - - 4,999.	322	123	129
5,000 - - - - 5,999.	176	56	105
6,000 - - - - 6,999.	31	35	63
7,000 - - - - 7,999.	31	36	51
8,000 - - - - 8,999.	42	47	45
9,000 - - - - 9,999.	4	8	29
10,000 - - - - 14,999.	21	29	77
15,000 - - - - 24,999.	4	12	24
25,000 and over	...	...	...
MEDIAN INCOME - - - - - - - - - - - -	$ 3,270.	$ 4,565.	$ 3,994.

[a]U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960, p. 31.

TABLE 4

CHICAGO CENSUS TRACTS 127, 128, 129: YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED[a]

	CENSUS TRACT NO.		
	127	128	129
Persons 25 years of age and older	5,021	1,316	4,425
No School	—	—	—
Elementary Schooling:			
1-4 years	415	241	339
5-7 years	577	335	596
8 years	493	287	657
High School:			
1-3 years	879	241	752
4 years	387	98	852
College:			
1-3 years	158	54	557
4 or more years	19	37	575
MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED:	8.9	8.2	11.1

[a] U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960, p. 31.

The original plan was to select five families from each block, choosing the even number families. Twenty-one families thus selected only could be used for interviewing. The others were either not available or refused to be interviewed. An additional nine were selected from two blocks in the same area, using the same method. The thirty families thus selected represent the low-income families analysed in the present study.

Description of the Sample

Inter-parental conflict may be the function of different variables. Socio-economic status of the parents, ethnic factors, religious factors, age difference between the couples, in-law influence, etc., are some of those

factors that may have a decisive force on the inter-parental behavior. Any attempt to isolate one of these factors and measure its influence on the parental behavior would have to control for the influence of other factors. The design for such a study may be graphically presented as follows:

Independent Variable	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable
Socio-economic status of the parents	Stress situation Overall adjustment Working wife Ethnic factors Religious factors Age differences In-law influence	Inter-parental conflict

In studies done under laboratory situations, the researcher controls the mediating variables and manipulates the independent variable. But in survey type studies, as this study, a rigid controlling of the variables was not possible. The researcher on the other hand tries, as far as possible to match the compared groups in terms of the mediating variables. If he succeeds in matching both groups, his conclusions regarding the independent and dependent variables are almost unqualified. If not, they are presented with reservations.

This section is intended to examine if the middle and low-income groups studied could be matched in terms of the mediating variables, as shown in the following tables.

The number of cases in which husband and wife have the same schooling seems to be different in both groups. Table 7 derived from Tables 5 and 6 will clarify the difference.

TABLE 5

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY HUSBAND AND WIFE
MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP

Years of School HUSBAND:	Years of School - WIFE				
	9 or less	10-12	13-17	18 and more	TOTAL
9 or less					
10 to 12		1			1
13 to 17		7	13		20
18 and more		1	8		9
TOTAL		9	21		30

TABLE 6

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY HUSBAND AND WIFE
LOW-INCOME GROUP

Years of School HUSBAND:	Years of School - WIFE				
	9 or less	10-12	13-17	18 and more	TOTAL
9 or less	9				9
10 to 12	2	17			19
13 to 17		2			2
18 and more					
TOTAL	11	19			30

TABLE 7

COUPLES BY YEARS OF SCHOOLING

Socio-Economic Group	Couples With Equal No. Yrs. Schooling: No.	PER CENT	Husband With More School. Than Wife: No.	PER CENT	TOTAL	PER CENT
Middle-Income Group	14	46.6	16	53.4	30	100
Low-Income Group	26	86.6	4	13.4	30	100
TOTAL	40		20		60	

The percentage of couples having the same number of years of schooling is 46.6 per cent in the middle-income group, whereas the corresponding percentage in the low income group is 86.6 per cent.

The occupation of couples in the middle and low-income groups is shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

OCCUPATION OF COUPLES IN MIDDLE AND LOW-INCOME GROUPS

Occupation	Middle-Income Group			Low-Income Group		
	Husband	Wife	TOTAL	Husband	Wife	TOTAL
Professional-Managerial	24		24			
Clerical-Sales	3	6	9			
Skilled	2		2			
Semi-Skilled	-		-	20		20
Unskilled	-		-	9	7	16
Domestic	-	24	24		23	23
Others	1		1	1		1
TOTAL	30	30	60	30	30	60

The six cases of the working wives in the middle-income group are working full-time. In the low-income group, five are working full-time and the others only part-time.

The age of couples in the middle and low-income groups is shown in Tables 9 and 10.

TABLE 9

AGE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE IN MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP
BY FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS

| Age of HUSBAND: | Age of WIFE: | | | | | TOTAL |
	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50 and up	
30-34	10					10
35-39		9				9
40-44	2	1	3			6
45-49				3		3
50 and up					2	2
TOTAL	12	10	3	3	2	30

TABLE 10

AGE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE LOW-INCOME
GROUP BY FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS

| Age of HUSBAND: | Age of WIFE: | | | | | TOTAL |
	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50 and up	
30-34	5					5
35-39		3				3
40-44	3		10			13
45-49	2			3		5
50 and up					4	4
TOTAL	10	3	10	3	4	30

In both cases, a strong association between the age of the husband and the age of the wife at all age levels is observed. More instances of older husbands being associated with younger wives is observed in the low-income group. There are more younger couples in the middle-income group than in the low-income group.

The years of marriage in the middle and low-income groups is shown in the following table.

TABLE 11

YEARS OF MARRIAGE IN THE MIDDLE AND LOW-INCOME GROUPS

Years of Marriage	Families in Middle-Income Group	Families in Low-Income Group
5 to 9	8	4
10 to 14	10	4
15 to 19	7	11
20 to 24	4	8
25 to 29		2
30 to 34		
35 to 39	1	1
TOTAL	30	30

The mean number of years of marriage in the middle-income group is 13.8 years. In the low-income group, the mean is 17.6 years.

The number of children per family in the middle and low-income groups is shown in Table 12. The mean number of children in the middle-income group is 3.9, and in the low-income group the mean is 4.4. The difference is not statistically significant.

The number of children per family in the middle and low-income groups is shown in Table 13. Both in the middle and low-income groups, there are

more male children than female children. However, the ratio of male to
female is different in both groups. A concentration of younger children,
as against older children, is observed more in the low-income group than
in the middle-income group.

TABLE 12

NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY IN THE SAMPLE

No. Children Per Family	Middle-Income Group:		Low-Income Group:	
	No. of Families	TOTAL No. Children	No. of Families	TOTAL No. Children
1			1	1
2	2	4	2	4
3	10	30	5	15
4	10	40	5	20
5	7	35	8	40
6		0	3	18
7		0		0
8	1	8	2	16
9		0	1	9
10		0	1	10
TOTAL	30	117	30	133

TABLE 13

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN IN THE SAMPLE IN TERMS OF AGE AND SEX

Age Categories	Middle-Income Group:			Low-Income Group:		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	TOTAL
4	21	14	35	14	12	26
5 to 9	26	18	44	13	19	32
10 to 14	16	10	26	25	14	39
15 to 19	4	5	9	17	7	24
20 to 24	2		2	5	4	9
25 to 29	1		1		1	1
30 to 34			0		2	2
34 and up			0			0
TOTAL	70	47	117	74	59	133
TOTAL PERCENTAGE:	59.9	40.1	100.	50.4	43.6	100.

The ethnicity of couples is shown in the following table.

TABLE 14

COUPLES: INTER-ETHNIC OR INTRA-ETHNIC

	Middle-Income Group	Low-Income Group
Couples of the same nationality (Intra-ethnic)	16	8
Couples of different nationality (Inter-ethnic)	14	22
TOTAL	30	30

Couples of the low-income group are more of inter-ethnic nature, than intra-ethnic.

Extended Families

Of the sixty families in the middle and low-income groups, seven are extended families. In two of these cases, mothers-in-law are present. In the rest, a friend or a relative constitute the addition. All seven cases fall in the low-income group.

Summary

The sample of sixty families was selected from two neighborhoods (census tract 195 for middle-class; 127, 128, 129 for lower-class), are markedly different in terms of the socio-economic background of the residents. The study is aimed at comparing the reported behavior of couples of low socio-economic background with those of the middle socio-economic

background.   The percentage of cases in which the husband and wife have
the same years of schooling is greater in the low-income group, than in the
middle-income group.   In six families of the middle-income group wives were
working full-time.   Five families of the low-income group had wives working
full-time, and there was one case of the wife working part-time.   Both in
the middle and the low-income groups, a strong association between the age
of the husbands and the age of the wife at all age levels was observed.
However, in the low-income group more husbands were found to be married
to younger wives, than in the middle-income group.   There was a difference
between middle-income and low-income groups in terms of the years of
marriage of couples.   Mean years of marriage in the low-income group is
17.6, whereas it is 13.8 in the middle-income group.   There were more
children in the low-income group than in the middle.   In both groups,
there were more male children than female children.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL CLASS AND INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT IN CHILD-TRAINING

This chapter is concerned with comparing families of the low-income group with those of the middle-income group in terms of the number of conflicts, their nature and the way they are resolved.

Number of Inter-parental Conflicts as Reported in Two Socio-Economic Groups

TABLE 15

INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICTS AS REPORTED IN TWO SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

No. of Conflicts Per Family	No. of Families Middle-Income Group	No. of Families Low-Income Group
0.	3	2
1 - 3.	11	11
4 - 6.	11	10
7 - 9.	2	4
10--12.	2	0
13--15.	1	3
Total.	30	30

The mean of conflicts per family in the middle-income group and low-income group is 4.13 and 4.53, respectively. There is a difference of 0.4 between the means. "T" test was used to determine the significance of the difference. The difference is not significant at 0.5 level.

Two families from the low-income group and three from the middle-income group reported as having had no conflict for the reporting period.

In one of the families of the low-income group mentioned above, the husband works sixteen hours a day. He felt, he said, that it would be better to leave the whole business of child-training to the wife. Conflicts between two persons occur only when both get involved in the same issue. This did not happen in the case of the above family, it was reported. In the second case, no specific reason was given.

Three cases of the middle-income group reported as having had no conflict for the time reporting. In one case, the wife is a school teacher, and in the other case the wife is a nurse. The husbands reported that they felt that their wives were better qualified than they were to deal with the child-training problem. One of them said that his own attitude with regard to child-training was to go along with whatever the wife said. But he does not maintain the same attitude with regard to other issues in the family. In the third case, the wife reported that her husband "lets her have her own way."

Eleven families from the middle-income group, and eleven from the low-income group reported as having had between one and three conflicts for the reporting period. Eleven from the middle-income group, and ten from the low-income group reported as having had between four and six conflicts for the reporting period. Thus, the majority of both groups have had between one and six conflicts for the reporting period. The difference between both groups was not significant.

Two families of the middle-income group and four of the low-income group reported as having had between seven and nine conflicts for the

time reporting. In the two cases of the middle-income group, wives were working full-time. Whether this was related to the conflict, or not, could not be ascertained since the same was not observed in other families of the same group with wives working full-time. In the case of the four families from the low-income group, no specific difference could be observed between them and other families.

Two families of the middle-income group reported between ten and twelve conflicts. Another family from the same group falls in the 13-15 category. This writer who did the interviewing feels that in these three cases, the respondents were talking more freely than in other cases. So it seems difficult to determine whether the observed number of conflicts in these cases could in any way be related to the social background of the couples. In the three cases from the low-income group which reported as having had 13-15 conflicts for the time reporting, the families had 8, 9 and 10 children respectively.

Nature of Inter-parental Conflicts as Reported in Two Socio-Economic Groups

Sociologists distinguish conflicts that are intense from those that are not intense.[1] Others use the expression total or unlimited conflicts and limited conflicts to signify the above distinction. Total or limited conflicts can be physical or ideological. Duel is an example for a total physical conflict. The resolution of conflict in this case is through the

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[1] Elton B. McNeil, The Nature of Human Conflict (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 101.

elimination of one party by the other. Some of the religious conflicts
are ideological total conflicts. Resolution of conflict in this case is
through the assimilation of one party by the other (conversion). Hence,
it is necessary to make a distinction between different types of conflicts
based on the intensity involved.

In the case in question, the interviewee was asked to report whether
the conflict was strong or mild, as far as he or she was concerned. The
data gathered are presented in Table 16.

TABLE 16

NATURE OF INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICTS IN TWO SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

Social Class	No. of Families	No. Strong Conflicts	MEAN	No. Mild Conflicts	MEAN
Middle	30	10	0.33	114	3.8
Lower	30	16	0.53	120	4.0

There is a difference of 0.2 between the means of reported strong
conflicts in middle and low socio-economic groups. The difference is
not significant. The 0.2 difference between the means of reported mild
conflicts in middle and low socio-economic groups is also not significant.

Inter-Parental Conflict Issues

In both low and middle income groups, the total number of conflict
situations presented by male children differs from those presented by
female children. This may be explained by the fact that the ratio of boys
to girls is different in both groups. In middle-income groups, the ratio

of boys to girls is 60:40. The corresponding ratio of conflict is 53:47.

In the low-income group, the ratio of boys to girls is 56:44 and the

corresponding ratio of conflicts presented by the group is 67:33 (comparison

of tables 13, 17 and 18). According to Table 13, three children in the

middle-income group and twelve in the low-income group are more than twenty

years old. But Tables 17 and 18 do not report any inter-parental conflict

with regard to these children. In the middle-income group, the inter-

parental conflict reaches its peak with regard to children between the fifth

and tenth year. In the low-income group, the corresponding phenomenon is

observed with regard to children between the tenth and fourteenth year.

Why Parents Disagree

Sociologists look upon inter-parental conflict as an instance of

social interaction.[2]   Any interaction involves three elements, two actors

and a situation in which the actors are involved. For an interaction to be

social, it must possess five characteristics: it must be continuous,

reciprocal, contingent, purpose serving and meaningful.[3] The last one is

particularly important for the purpose of this analysis. If "purpose

serving" refers to the action as it is interpreted by the observer,

"meaningful" refers to the same action as seen by the inside actor. Each of

the actors has a meaning for himself, a meaning the other holds for him,

and a meaning which he gives to the situation. Taken together, these would

constitute what W.I. Thomas and others called "The Definition of the

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[2]See pages 38 and 39.

TABLE 17

THE OBJECT OF INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT
IN LOW-INCOME GROUP

Inter-Parental Conflict Situation	BOYS — Age Categories—5 Yr. Intervals							GIRLS — Age Categories—5 Yr. Intervals						
	to 4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	TOTAL	PER CENT	to 4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	TOTAL	PER CENT
Feeding or eating habits	2	5	3	5		15	15.9	1	2	2		1	6	13.3
Demonstrating affection	4	1	1			6	6.6							
Bedtime	1	1	2	2		6	6.6			6	7		13	28.6
General appearance	1	1	5	1		8	8.8		3	2	1		6	13.3
Behavior	1	4	4	3	1	13	13.9		1	2	5		8	17.8
Discipline	3	7	6	4		20	21.5		1	5	1		7	15.4
Money			3	3		6	6.6		2				2	4.5
Recreation			3	3		6	6.6							
Educational Issues		1	1	2		4	4.4		1				1	2.2
Choice of friends			2			2	2.2		2				2	4.5
Others			4	2		6	6.6							
TOTAL	12	20	34	25	1	92		1	7	22	14	1	45	
TOTAL PERCENT:	12.9	21.9	37.2	26.8	1.1	100.	100.0	2.2	15.6	48.8	30.8	2.2	100.	100.0

TABLE 18

THE OBJECT OF INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT IN MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP

Inter-Parental Conflict Situation	BOYS — Age Categories—5 Yr. Intervals							GIRLS — Age Categories—5 Yr. Intervals						
	to 4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	TOTAL	PER CENT	to 4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	TOTAL	PER CENT
Feeding or eating habits	3	7	1			11	18.2	3	3	2	1		9	16.4
Demonstrating affection		4	1			5	8.3		4	1	1		6	10.9
Bedtime	2	3	2	1		8	13.2		1	1	1		3	5.4
General appearance	2	1	4			7	11.5		5		1		6	10.9
Behavior	2	5				7	11.5		2		1		3	5.4
Discipline	7	7	1			15	24.8	3	8	1	2		14	25.4
Money				1		1	1.6			1			1	1.8
Recreation		1				1	1.6		4	1	1		6	10.9
Educational Issues		1				1	1.6		1				1	1.8
Choice of friends		2				2	3.2		1	1			2	3.6
Others	1		2			3	4.8		2	2			4	7.2
TOTAL	17	31	11	2		61		6	31	10	8		55	
TOTAL PERCENT:	28.0	51.0	18.2	3.2		100.	100.0	10.9	56.4	18.2	14.5		100.	100.0

Situation." Two actors involved in an interaction may have entirely different definitions of the situation. The setting for conflict is provided when such difference exists. Actual conflict takes place when the actors proceed to act according to the different definitions.

In question ten of the schedule, the interviewee was asked, "In the situations mentioned in question nine, why in your opinion did you disagree with your spouse?" The question was open-ended. Among the thirty families from each of the middle-income and low-income groups, three from the middle-income and two from the low-income reported as having had no conflict for the time reporting. The responses from the remaining families are presented on the following page in Table 19.

As might be observed from the table, there is difference between the middle-income and low-income groups in terms of the reasons given for inter-parental conflict. The following excerpts from the responses will clarify the different categories mentioned in Table 19. Role conflict in the present case may mean, first of all, the conflict between the roles husband and wife play in the family and their roles outside the family. Secondly, it may mean the conflict between husband and wife in the family itself as to which role belongs to which party. One of the male respondents from the middle-income group reported:

> My position at work is demanding of my time. I do very little work at home for my job. My wife desires more of my time and attention, and to get out to socialize more. I enjoy relaxing at home. I believe a man has a responsibility to his home, employer, community and church of which take time. The business world requires good Christian leaders and family life with business success are compatible.

TABLE 19

REASON FOR INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT IN TWO
SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS AS SUGGESTED
BY THE RESPONDENTS

Reasons for Conflict As Suggested by the Respondent	MIDDLE-INCOME Grp. Respondent		LOW-INCOME Grp. Respondent	
	WIFE	HUSBAND	WIFE	HUSBAND
1. Role conflict	4	1	3	1
2. Difference in value systems of husband and wife	3	2	1	2
3. Difference in nationality background of couples		2	2	3
4. Difference in family of orientation of husband and wife	1	2	3	1
5. Personality difference of husband and wife	2			3
6. Drinking			3	
7. Conflict over child-training as part of overall conflict in the family		2		
8. Lack of communication	3	3		
9. Don't know			3	
10. Husband or wife being influenced by the family of orientation				2
11. Others		2		1
TOTAL	13	14	15	13

The wife sees the husband as giving more attention to his work than to her and the family. She also sees the job of her husband as a threat to a successful family life. But the husband sees the same situation differently. He feels that his role in the family and in the business world are perfectly compatible.

Another respondent reported: "My wife does wish some help from me in caring for the children."

One of the female respondents gave the reason for conflict as "unfamiliarity with girls, nature of discipline and behavior by husband."

The difference between both cases is clear. In the former it is the definition of the wife by the husband; while in the latter, it is the definition of the husband by the wife that is reason for conflict.

The following response was given by a female respondent of the low-income group:

> Happens when my husband has to work unusually hard, comes home fatigued and often has the attitude that the wife has been home taking life easy while he's working, not realizing that cooking and caring for the family is a full-time job. He gets over this, but has to take-out this martyrdom on wife. Also, he is hardest to live with when he has problems with his job. This can become very frustrating, but I find the best situation is for the wife to keep herself very busy and mentally alert so that this situation does not get her down. When my husband is in these moods, everything I do is wrong. But when he is over with these moods, he is very good-hearted and strives to please, and then the suffering is worthwhile.

Another respondent had the following remarks:

> Husband comes home from work for only a few hours. He wants to be nice with the children. The mother, who is always with them, has to be more strict.

The role conflict as manifested above is different from the conflict as observed in the middle-income group. In the low-income group, the conflict

is centered on basic needs of the family. The wife feels that, "if only the husband knew that she was working as hard as him to support the family." In the case of the middle-income group on the other hand, the conflict is centered on secondary needs such as "getting out and socializing".

Conflict of values between husband and wife was reported as causing conflict in the family. The following response was given by one of the male respondents of the middle-income group.

> Widely divergent viewpoints about social conduct, family, life, amount of time to be spent together, etc., due to entirely dissimilar backgrounds in formative college years. My wife spent years from 17 to 23 in semi-cloistered religious life. I attended secular state university and catholic graduate institution.

The respondent does not mention family of orientation as having anything to do with the divergency in their value systems. He thinks that formal education as imparted by the different educational institutions were responsible for that difference in their values. He sees his wife as the product of a "semi-cloistered religious life," and himself as the product of "secular state university and catholic graduate school."

In the following case, a wife from the middle-income group was the respondent:

> I feel the child is not given a chance to express his opinion or reason. I feel they should be let to, because that is one way of showing whether they are right or wrong. My husband thinks differently.

She suggested the family background of the couples and the types of education they had as responsible for the disagreements.

One of the female respondents from the low-income group gave the following reason for their disagreements: "My husband is more mechanic and

I am more human." The inability of the working-class wife to probe into the situations is what is reflected in this response. Together with the inability to analyze the situation, is the tendency to accept things as they are. But the low-class male who is exposed to different value systems has an entirely different outlook on life.

In one case, one of the male respondents made the following remarks.

Being a television repairman, I visit 12 to 13 homes a day. Come into contact with different ways children behave in other homes. I want my children to behave like that, more forward and more sociable.

The husband in this case is exposed to value systems different from that of his group. He sees his wife as someone who wants to hold-on to the status quo. The wife, on the other hand, being unfamiliar with what is happening in the larger society, sees her husband as one disrupting the traditional way of doing things.

Among the seven responses (two from the middle-income group and five from the low-income group suggesting nationality difference as being responsible for inter-parental conflict, the two from the middle-income group and three from the low-income group associated difference in value systems to the nationality of the couples. Conflict was directly caused by the difference in value systems, which in turn was caused by the difference in nationality of the couples. In the two remaining cases, nationality difference as such was seen as providing the occasion for conflict. Thus, one of the respondents remarked: "My husband is Polish and I am Irish. It is natural to have disagreements in such a case." The wife in this case is looking upon her husband as one of different nationality and not as one of different value system.

The same tendency was observed with regard to the answers suggesting difference in family background as being responsible for inter-parental disagreements. In all the three cases of the middle-income group, the respondents associated value difference between couples with their family of orientation. In the low-income group, however, difference in family background as such was reported as causing disagreements between couples. This may be another illustration of the inability of working-class people to probe into the "why" of things and the tendency to accept things as they are. All the same, this distinction seems to be very relevant.

Two of the respondents from the low-income group said that had it not been for the influence exercised by the relatives of one party or another, there would not have been any conflict in the family. One of the respondents reported: "I am very much attached to my mother and sisters. My husband is not. In fact, he does not even care for his brother who is living next door. So he is annoyed that I am giving too much attention to my mother and sister."

No case of partner being influenced by his or her relative was reported in the middle-income group.

Two respondents from the middle-income group saw family conflict as a function of the competition that is going on in the society. One of them stated:

In this day and age, men work long hard hours in a highly competitive society. Family disagreements very often are the result of tension caused by this competitive situation.

By far, the one factor which was suggested more often by the middle-income respondents as causing conflict in the family was the lack of communication between husband and wife. One of the respondents stated:

> In most instances, a lack of communication exists mainly due to lack of any real time to simply sit down and discuss things. Seems as though there is always someone around or something that has to be done. Serious effort should be made to have some time alone.

No respondent from the low-income group suggested lack of communication as a reason for inter-parental conflict. But all three responses naming "drinking" by one of the partners as causing conflict in the family came from the low-income group.

The responses of two male respondents from the middle-income group and that of one from the low-income group could not be included in any one of the above categories. One of the middle-income respondents stated:

> We started an addition on our house. Have not been able to finish the job. This irritates my wife.

Another respondent stated that their disagreements started when they moved to the new house a year ago.

The respondent from the low-income group reported their arguments started when they bought a new television set for their home. She believes that this would interfere with the homework of the child. The husband does not think so.

In these three cases, an external factor happened to be the immediate cause that introduced conflict into the family. The inter-parental conflict in child-training was part of the overall conflict situation that was existing in the family.

Inter-Parental Conflict Resolution

Any discussion of conflict will have to deal with conflict resolution. Three possible ways in which conflict may be resolved are accommodation, assimilation and amalgamation. In the case of accommodation,

conflict is resolved in such a way that the identity of the opponents remains the same. When the conflict between the employer and the employee is resolved, both remain as employer and employee. In the case of assimilation, one party loses its identity when the conflict is resolved. An example of this would be the resolution of the catholic-protestant conflict through the latter converting to the Catholic church. In the case of amalgamation, both parties lose their identity and become a third party.

In all the three types of conflict resolutions, communication and control are the two factors that lead the parties towards resolving their conflict. The different definitions of the situations existing in opposing parties are brought together through communication. If communication affects the definitions of the situations from within, social control affects the actors from without and brings about the agreement in meaning. Control may be formal or informal according to the type and manner of application. Control can also be internal or external, depending on whether it was created by the interaction itself or by some outside agency.

Some of the conflicts in the sample were not resolved. The following table gives the details.

TABLE 20

RESOLVED VS. UNRESOLVED CONFLICTS
IN MIDDLE AND LOW-INCOME GROUPS

Social Class	Total No. Conflicts	RESOLVED Conflicts	Mean	UNRESOLVED Conflicts	Mean
Middle-Income Group	124	87	2.9	37	1.2
Low-Income Group	136	85	2.8	51	1.7
TOTAL	260	172		88	

More conflicts were reportedly resolved in the middle-income group

than in the low-income group. The data was subjected to further analysis

to see if this was related to the power distribution in the family, as shown

in the following table.

TABLE 21

INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN
MIDDLE AND LOW-INCOME GROUPS COMPARED

	In Favor of HUSBAND	In Favor of WIFE	In COMPROMISE	TOTAL
Middle-Income Group	32	28	27	87
Low-Income Group	29	30	26	85
TOTAL	61	58	53	172

In terms of the number of conflicts resolved in favor of one party or another, or in compromise, there was slight difference between the middle and low-income groups. More than the number itself, the reason suggested by the respondent for having the conflict resolved one way or another seems worth analyzing.

The reasons for conflict resolution is shown in Table 22.

Internal control is that which results from the interaction of couples. The following excerpts from the responses of one of the female respondents of the middle-income group will clarify the concept.

> It all amounts to keeping the peace; one or the other or both give-in for peace of mind. We do like this relationship and intend for it to last and be as pleasant as possible. Since husband won't discuss anything, he just says that's the way it's going to be and there isn't anything anyone can do about it.

The one or the other, or both, give-in for peace of mind. Both like the relationship and want it to continue. The desire to preserve peace of mind, and the intention to safeguard the existing relationship, are preferred to the object of disagreement itself. Both are the result of social interaction that has been existing between the couples.

The responses suggesting the possibility of an external control factor operating in the resolution of inter-parental conflict was given by female respondents in the low-income group. Both of them suggested their "religious belief" as being mainly responsible for the way conflicts were resolved in their home. More specifically, in one case it was the interference of the parish priest that solved the conflict.

Concern for the good of the children serves as a control factor in inter-parental conflict resolutions. The following responses are typical.

TABLE 22

REPORTED REASONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
(Middle-Income and Low-Income)

Reported Reasons for Conflict Resolution	Middle-Income Group Respondent		Low-Income Group Respondent	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
1. Internal Control	1	3	2	3
2. External Control			2	
3. Concern for the good of the children as a control factor.	3	3	3	4
4. Better communication between couples.	5	3	3	2
5. Adherence to certain rules of the game by both couples.	2	2	1	2
6. Well-defined role relationship	1	1		
7. Husband going along with wishes of wife.	1			2
8. Wife going along with wishes of husband.		1	3	
9. Others		1	1	
TOTAL	13	14	15	13

A male respondent from the middle-income group reported:

In order to raise a happy family, parents must compromise and each one must give-up a little. This has been a practice of my wife and me ever since we were married. As long as the problem is discussed intelligently and each one tried to understand the other, a fair settlement can be reached.

A female respondent from the low-income group reported:

Talking it over; and usually realising that being consistent with them (the children) is important for their training.

Discussion over the issue and better understanding of each other's position was reported both by the low-income and middle-income respondents.

Male respondent from the middle-income group gave the following response:

Our disagreements are always resolved, because we have talked them out and usually reach a mutual understanding. Each wishes to please the other.

The response given by a low-class husband was in the same line:

Both are able to sit down and reason. If the situation does not lend itself to logic there was a kind of give and take. Each one had to accept something less than what he thought was right.

Through the years a pattern of resolving disagreements has been built-up in some families. Conflict in this case is resolved when couples hold-on to these rules of the game. The following excerpts from some of the responses clarify the idea.

Male respondent from the middle-income group stated:

As the period of marriage grows, greater adjustments by both parties have allowed for some resolutions and some compromises.

A female respondent from the low-income group has the following view:

Resolution of disagreements was difficult when we were younger. But are now easier because I think that my husband has become more mature. Also, I have learned to accept his shortcomings.

In one of the middle-class families there was a definite division
of labor based on the merit of the parties. The husband reported that in
all those areas where he thought that the wife was better qualified, he let
her make the decisions. In other cases, the husband made the decisions.

One of the wife respondents from the low-income group reported as
follows:

> I am a firm believer in the father being the head of the house.
> My husband is an intelligent, kind and understanding person. I
> fully respect his judgment, and so far his treatment and guidance
> of our children has been above reproach.

More instances of conflicts being resolved by one party going along
with the other was observed among the low-income group, than in the middle-
income group. The nature of this type of conflict resolution is clear from
the following responses. One female respondent from the middle-income group
put it clearly when she remarked that, "My husband gives up very easily."

One of the wife respondents from the low-income group stated that her
husband "lets her have her own way."

Two responses could not be grouped under any of the above categories.
First of these, a male respondent from the middle income group, stated that
they were able to resolve their conflicts because: "both of us started with
nothing. Whatever we have today we have them because we worked together."
This could mean two things. If he meant that they do not want to permit any
conflict to jeopardize the good relationship that has been existing between
the two since their marriage, his answer could be grouped under the first
category of "internal" control, directing the resolution of their conflict.
On the other hand, if he meant that a pattern of conflict resolution has
been built between them, then his answer could be grouped under the fifth
category, "adherence to certain rules of the game." As the ambiguity

could not be clarified, it was felt necessary to put this answer under a separate category.

The second response, which was found difficult to be included in any of the categories, was given by one of the wife respondents from the low-income group. She reported that, "The husband does not like arguing. He was a quiet person from childhood."

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study comes under that section of the discipline called the sociology of the family. Sociologists have been interested in comparing family behavior in terms of social class. The present study is of this type.

The purpose of the study was to identify and explain inter-parental conflict regarding child-training in two socio-economic groups.

Various definitions have been given to conflict by different authors. Two different trends may be distinguished between these definitions. The first one considers conflict as a conjunctive process, and the second one as a disjunctive process.

Those who consider conflict as a conjunctive process look upon it as an instance of social interaction. In any interaction, three elements are involved -- two actors and the situation. It is the "Definition of the Situation" that determines how each individual reacts to another individual. In a conflict situation each one looks upon the other as an opponent.

Three possible ways in which conflicts may be resolved are accommodation, assimilation and amalgamation. In the case of accommodation, when the conflict is resolved the identity of the opponents remains the same. In the case of assimilation, one party loses its identity when conflict is resolved. Conflict resolution through amalgamation means both parties lose their identity and become a third party.

In all the three types of conflict, resolution, communication and control are the two factors that lead the parties to resolving their conflicts.

The "Definition of the Situation" which prepares the background for conflict and communication and control that lead the contestants towards resolving their conflicts may be different for different socio-economic groups. Hence, it is logical to assume that inter-parental conflict in child-training, their nature and the manner in which they are resolved, are a function of the socio-economic background of the couples.

The present study was aimed at testing this assumption. The hypothesis for the study was: "In terms of inter-parental conflict in the socialization and education of children, American white Catholic parents of the middle-income group differ from the low-income group."

The study was done in the Fall of 1965, in the Chicago area. Thirty families were selected from Oak Lawn, a suburb of Chicago. According to the report of the U.S. Bureau of Census and Population, the median income per family was $8,588., and the median years of schooling for the head of the household was 12.1 as of 1960. According to the 1965 survey of the Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce, 94.6 per cent of the residents in the area owned their homes. The directory of the Catholic parish covering the area was used to select the sample. The families were numbered, and the numbers recorded on pieces of paper and were deposited in a receptacle from which thirty were picked-up at random. Six of those thus selected could not be reached for the interview. Two of them had no children living with them. The other four refused to be interviewed. So another six were selected,

using the same process. The thirty families from Oak Lawn represent the middle-income group selected for the present analysis.

Another thirty families were selected from census tracts 127, 128 and 129. This area is in the vicinity of the downtown campus of the Loyola University in Chicago. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census and Population report, this area has a median income of $3,943. and 9.4 years of schooling for the head of the household. The original plan was to select five families from six blocks, selecting the even numbers. Twenty-one families only could be selected by this method. The others were either not available or refused to be interviewed. These nine were selected from two blocks in the same area using the same method. The thirty families thus selected represent the low-income group analyzed in the present study.

Both groups were interviewed with the same schedule. The schedule consisted of four parts. The first part was devoted to gathering information regarding the couples and their families. Many items such as age of the couples, their ethnic background, grade of education, type of occupation of the couples, years of marriage, socio-economic status of the family of orientation of the couples, etc., found place in the schedule. The second part was intended to find out the object of disagreement (bone of contention) between couples. A list of eleven areas of child training on which parents might disagree was proposed to the respondent. There was vacant space in the schedule for entering any additional comments made by the respondent. The third and fourth sections of the schedule were intended to find out why couples disagree and how their disagreements are resolved. Both were open-ended questions.

The following facts regarding the couples were observed. The percentage of cases in which the husband and the wife had the same years of schooling was greater in the low-income group, than in the middle-income group. In six families of the middle-income group wives were working full-time. In five cases in the low-income group, wives were working full-time, and in two cases working part-time. Both in the low and the middle-income group, a strong association between the age of the husbands and the age of wives at all age levels was observed. In the low-income group, more husbands were married to younger wives than in the middle-income group. There was a difference between the low-income group and the middle-income group in terms of the years of marriage of couples. Mean years of marriage in the low-income group was 17.6 and 13.8 in the middle-income group. There were more children in the low-income group, than in the middle-income group. In both groups, there were more male children than female children.

Three families from the middle-income group, and two from the low-income group, reported as having had no conflict for the reporting period. Twenty-two families from the middle-income group, and twenty-one families from the low-income group reported as having had between one and six conflicts for the reporting period. In the remaining cases of families, the greater number of conflicts was due probably to better reporting by the respondents.

The interviewee was asked to report whether the conflict was strong or mild, as far as he or she was concerned. Of the total of twenty-six strong conflicts, sixteen belonged to the low-income group and ten to the middle-income group. The difference between the means of both groups was not significant.

The ratio between the number of children in each group and the conflict situations presented by them was not the same in both groups. The difference again was not significant. In the middle-income group inter-parental conflict reaches its peak with regard to children between the fifth and the tenth year. In the low-income group, the corresponding phenomenon is observed with regard to children between the tenth and fourteenth year.

The reasons given by the respondents for inter-parental conflict could be grouped under eleven main categories. All the eleven categories are centered on the difference in the definition of situations of the couples or on an external factor that plunged the couples into conflict.

Of the 124 conflicts in the middle-income group, 87 were resolved and 37 remained unresolved. Of the 136 conflicts in the low-income group, 85 were resolved and 51 remained unresolved. Relatively, more conflicts were resolved in the middle-income group than in the low-income group. In terms of the number of conflicts resolved in favor of one party or another, or in compromise, there was slight difference between the low and the middle-income groups.

The reasons suggested for having the conflicts resolved one way or another could be grouped under nine categories.

Definite patterns could be observed in the way conflicts were resolved. This was true in both the low-income and the middle-income group. The pattern existed in the group, but not between the groups.

Human behavior is a function of different facts. Socio-economic factor, ethnic background of the couples, number of children in the family, presence of other members in the family, personality of the couples, their religious affiliation, years of marriage, age level of the couples, etc., are

some of the most common factors, which are considered in any type of family study. In order to measure the influence of any one of these factors, the other will have to be controlled. In survey type studies, the relative status of couples with regard to the mediating variables are controlled statistically. In the present study, the middle and low-income groups were not fully controlled statistically in terms of the mediating variables. Hence, the findings with regard to the possible influence of social class on inter-parental conflict is presented on a tentative basis.

This writer wants to give the following warning to any student of sociology who would want to evaluate the findings in another study. The schedule which was used did not assess the personality factor of the interviewees.

Dr. Gordon Zahn, in the last chapter of his book, "What Is Society", discusses the controversy surrounding the method called "verstehen." Answering the objections raised by those of the anti-"verstehen" school, he says:

> The objections are valid to the extent that they must alert the researcher to the dangers of relying on the use of this Verstehen method; yet they do not fully disprove of the great value of this approach, where its use may be quite appropriate, indeed where it may offer virtually the only chance of bringing the essential but quantifiable elements into the preview of sociological analysis.[1]

Elsewhere he says:

> I would go even further and insist that they are probably the most significant elements of all and that any failure to take them into account in the explanation of social behavior merely because the methods, the pure empirists will allow cannot reach them would be to render a distinct dis-service to the scientific study of society.[2]

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[1] Zahn, p. 129.

[2] Ibid., page 130.

The findings presented in the preceeding pages are based on data gathered by means of interviewees. In the course of the interview, the writer noticed a few facts which though not quantifiable have special relevance for an understanding of the family structure. There were not enough open-ended questions in the schedule to meet the above situations.

A few remarks regarding the method seems necessary. Conflict in the present study was looked upon as an instance of social interaction. Definition of the situation of the actor determines how he acts. It seems that the conflict between two parties can be better understood by analysing the definitions of the situation of both parties. Thus, better results can be obtained by interviewing both husband and wife. In a joint session with both parties, a fixed number of conflict situations should be determined. Each party then should be separately interviewed to determine how he or she defined that situation.

A model of conflict will have to include the definition of situation of the parties, the operator or the external factor that plunges the parties into conflict and the communication and control that lead the parties to the resolution of conflicts. The main attention for future researches, it seems, should be directed towards identifying and explaining these aspects of conflict.

Inter-parental conflict is one of the areas which has not been sufficiently explored. The study has revealed some of the facets of the inter-parental conflict in child-training. Child-training, however, is only one of the issues on which couples disagree. Economic life in the family, the religious life in the family, the relation of the family to the community, husband-wife relationship, etc., are other areas in which

couples might disagree. Future researches could be directed towards finding the correlation that exists between inter-parental conflict in these areas.

Whether or not inter-parental conflict can be equated to any other intra-group conflict is another question which the researcher should ask himself.

The family in the United States is going through a period of transition. The growing instability of family life is causing concern to the leaders. A better understanding of the inter-parental conflict can help toward a sophisticated approach to the solution of the problem.

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APPENDIX

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

Husband_____

Wife_____

1. RACE: White ( )   Negro ( )   Other ( )

2. NATIONALITY DESCENT - Wife_____

   Husband_____

3. Do you have any children living with you now? YES ( )   NO ( )

   If No, please stop the interview.

4. Does your spouse live with you now?   YES ( )   NO ( )

5. How many children do you have? Indicate below:

   Age ( ) age ( ) age ( ) age ( ) age ( ) age ( )

   Male:_____

   Female:_____

6. Do you have any in-laws or other relatives
   living with you at present?   YES ( )   NO ( )

   If Yes, specify relationship_____

   _____

7. Since January 1st of this year, did your family meet with
   any of the events mentioned below?

Death of a member of the family.	YES ( )	NO ( )
Hospitalization of a member of the family.	YES ( )	NO ( )
Spouse not living at home.	YES ( )	NO ( )
Birth of a child.	YES ( )	NO ( )
Addition of a relative, friend or stranger, (Including adoption of a child) to home.	YES ( )	NO ( )
Drug Addiction or Alcoholism of a member of the household or family.	YES ( )	NO ( )

Delinquency of child or children in the
family.   YES ( )   NO ( )

Non-support of family.   YES ( )   NO ( )

Birth of a child not desired.   YES ( )   NO ( )

Transfer of residence within current year.   YES ( )   NO ( )

A change of any kind in the neighborhood in
which you now reside.   YES ( )   NO ( )

Infidelity:
    Suspected   YES ( )   NO ( )
    Proven   YES ( )   NO ( )

Runaways   YES ( )   NO ( )

Institutionalization of any member of
the family.   YES ( )   NO ( )

Other causes of tension in the family not specified
above.

_____

_____

8. Do you and your spouse generally agree as to how your
children should behave or act?   YES ( )   NO ( )

If No, please explain:_____

_____

_____

If, Yes, please explain:_____

_____

_____

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE. FILL A PAGE FOR EACH ONE OF THE
CHILDREN, STARTING WITH THE OLDEST. GIVE THE AGE AND SEX OF
CHILD. CHECK ONLY THE RELEVANT COLUMNS.

e the 1st of January this year, have you and your spouse disagreed with regard to any of the below mentioned situations, concerning the child whose sex you have specified at the top?

	DISAGREED?		+ M	− G	NATURE OF DISAGREEMENT	★ S	★★ M	RESOLVED?		IF RESOLVED, HOW?		COM MI
	YES	NO						YES	NO	IN FAVOR OF WIFE	IN FAVOR OF HUSBAND	
or eating habits												
trating affection												
e or hour of nt												
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ion — T. V.												
onal issues												
of friends												

e the 1st of January this year, have you and your spouse disagreed with regard to any of the below mentioned situations, concerning the child whose sex you have specified at the top?

	DISAGREED?		+ M	– G	NATURE OF DISAGREEMENT	★ S	★★ M	RESOLVED?		IF RESOLVED, HOW?		
	YES	NO						YES	NO	IN FAVOR OF WIFE	IN FAVOR OF HUSBAND	CO M
g or eating habits												
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of friends												

the 1st of January this year, have you and your spouse disagreed with regard to any of the below mentioned situations, concerning the child whose a
x you have specified at the top?

| | DISAGREED? | | + M | - G | NATURE OF DISAGREEMENT | ★ S | ★★ M | RESOLVED? | | IF RESOLVED, HOW? | | COM MIS |
	YES	NO						YES	NO	IN FAVOR OF WIFE	IN FAVOR OF HUSBAND	
r eating habits												
ating affection												
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e												
on – T. V.												
nal issues												
f friends												

10. In the situations mentioned in Question No. 7, why, in your opinion did you disagree with your spouse?

   Please State Your Reasons Clearly:

   _____

   _____

   _____

11. If resolved, why were the the disagreements resolved as they were?

   _____

   _____

12. How long have you been married? _____

	WIFE	HUSBAND
13. How far did you go in school?		
Completed Grade School	( )	( )
Some High School	( )	( )
Completed High School	( )	( )
Some College	( )	( )
College Graduate	( )	( )
Graduate School	( )	( )
14. Are you employed?		
YES	( )	( )
NO	( )	( )
If "YES", full-time?	( )	( )
If "YES", part-time?	( )	( )
If part-time, how many hours per week	( )	( )
If full-time, what is your occupation		

	WIFE	HUSBAND

(14 Continued)

Is your full-time occupation:
Professional, Managerial	( )	( )
Clerical, Sales	( )	( )
Skilled	( )	( )
Unskilled	( )	( )
Semi-skilled	( )	( )

15. What type occupation did your father have?

Professional, Managerial	( )	( )
Clerical, Sales	( )	( )
Skilled	( )	( )
Unskilled	( )	( )
Semi-skilled	( )	( )

16. Do you or your spouse attend religious services?
| YES | ( ) | ( ) |
| NO | ( ) | ( ) |

If "YES", how frequently?
At least once a week	( )	( )
At least once a month	( )	( )
At least once a year	( )	( )

To which religious group do you belong?
Catholic	( )	( )
Protestant	( )	( )
Jewish	( )	( )

17. Into which of these Age categories do you fall?

	Under 29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over
WIFE	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
HUSBAND	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

18. All in All how would you say you and your spouse
    get along, compared to most other couples you know:

       Very much better   ( )

       Somewhat better   ( )

       About the same   ( )

       Not as well as most   ( )

       Not very well at all   ( )

* * * * * * *

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Reverend James Parappally has been read and approved by the director of the thesis. Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____   _____
Date   Signature of Adviser