A METHOD OF CLASSIFYING FAMILY STRUCTURES*

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1. THE term "family" is used to connote varieties of grouping in society. "When we think of a family," explain Ogburn and Nimkoff, "we picture it as a more or less durable association of husband and wife with or without children, or of a man or woman alone, with children." (1953: 459). But, according to Professor Murdook, "the family is a social group consisting of two or more adults of different sex who are married to one another, and of one or more children, own or adopted, of the matried parents. It is to be distinguished alike from marriage, the social relationship uniting the parents of opposite sex, and from the household, the social group occupying a dwelling or other domicile." "Hence," he deduces, "strictly speaking, a married but childless couple or a widowed or divorced parent with children may form a household but not a family." (Murdook and others 1950: \$8).

Various other examples of different connotation of the term "family" may also be cited. For instance, in order to depiot a genealogical history some may consider roughly defined cognatic group as a family; such as, the Nehru family, the Tagore family, etc. Again, for the purpose of a social survey some others may consider a "family" as consisting of some "normally" co-residential and commensal individuals who are related to each other by blood or by marriage or by adoption.

2. All these connotations may not and should not be thought as irrelovant or unmeaningful. Rather such differences in defining the term vfamily" only reflect the objective necessity of taking into account the varying norms in different societies as affecting the family as a social institution as well as the specific objectives of different studies. They, therefore, suggest that any attempt to fix a set of attributes as constant for all societies and all purposes of study may be quite illogical.

In general, the "family" as a social institution would define some individuals rolated to each other by some sort of kinship rolations. And, in particular, the family-units would be distinguished amongst themselves "This paper evolved out of a critical discussion on the exhaustive study on the classification of family structures made by Professor Ramkrishna Mukherjee. To a certain extent, it summarises some of the concepts put forth by him, but it has its own orientation and elaboration for which the writers of this paper are entirely responsible. All the same, we remain grateful to Professor Mukherjee for his helpful suggestions to finalize it for publication. A part of his study is available in the Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutte, is a mirrogaraphed form.

by one or more attributes useful to the examination of the family as a social institution from one or another aspect.

- 3. In the light of the above-mentioned features of the family, instead of plunging into a lengthy discourse to define "a family" as such, it may be useful to attempt to evolve, if possible, such a schematic approach whereby the family-units can be classified exhaustibly into mutually exclusive categories by taking into account all probable variations in the composition of the family-units. Because such a scheme of classification would be equally applicable to whichever way the "family" is defined and the family-units are identified.
- 4. To be sure, no single classification of family-units may be able to deal with all the facets of the family as a social institution. Schemes of classification from various different aspects may be desirable, and in a certain situation some one may deserve priority over others. A scheme of structual classification of the family-units may, therefore, have its own nsefulness particularly for a society where the chain of kinship bonds within the family-units is complex, diverse, and lengthy; and/or when a large number of family-units are to be studied in a society which may require a preliminary sorting by their internal composition into similar categories. Therefore, one may continue further study by selecting a few family-units from such categories. It may therefore, be stated at the outset that the scheme of structural classification may primarily be considered as only an aid to a relevant, comprehensive, precise and systematic approach to the understanding of this social institution. It is neither an analysis of the phenomenon concerned nor its synthetic representation.
- 5. With the above aim in view, three dimensions of classification of family structures have been envisaged in the course of the present study. Namely: (1) Kinship composition, (2) levels of kinship articulation, i. e, family matrix, and (3) cohort composition. They may be expected to unravel step by step the characteristics of kinship and affinal relations the family-units are vested with.

Π

1. The probable kinship relations within a family-unit may broadly be classified into one of the following five categories. They are; (1) conjugal, between husband and wife; (2) parental-filial, between father and/or mother, on the one hand, and son and/or daughter, on the other; (3) stbling, between brother and sister; (4) lineal, between those related by common descent from the same ancestor as traced through males and/or famales, excluding those related by parental-filial or sibling relation; and (5) affinal, between those related through the spouse of one or both of them. These categories, than, would be exhaustive as well as distinctive in depicting types of kinship or affinal relation (s); all, some, or only one

of which may be relevant to the formation of a particular family-unit.

- 2. The aspect of structural categorization of family-units by taking into account the attribute of kinship relations within each of them may be regarded to represent the family types which has been considered as the first order of classification of family structure here. Accordingly, the following seven family types have been evolved. Namely: (1) "male" si-gle-m mber type, represented by a male individual without any kin or affine; (2) ' female' single-member type, represented by a female individual without any kin or affine; (3) conjugal type, represented by a couple; (4) sibling type, represented by two or more unmarried brothers and/or sisters. (5) elementary family type, represented by either husband and/or wife with at least one unmarried offspring; (6) joint family type, represented by such males, their wives (if any), and/or unmarried females who belong to the common line of descent and succession; and (7) kindred, which, however, arises as a special variety of joint family under bilocal* or alternating norms of residence, as quite contrary to the neclocal norms of residence, whereby any kin or affine of a member of a family-unit has the right to be included as one of its member (Rivers 1932: 16).
- 3 It is obvious that these seven categories of family structure correspond fairly closely to the five previously mentioned broad categories of kinchip relations. Thus, the "single-member type" represents such case where their is no kinship relation within a unit of this type. Such units have, however, been dichotomised by their sex. For this may have bearing upon the operation of the family as a social institution because the relative position of males and females is not the same in many societies and/or in different social strata. The "conjugal type" and the "sibling type" represent only the conjugal and the sibling kinship relations, respectively, within the units of these types; while the "elementary family type" involves one and only one conjugal kinship relation together with at least one parental-filial with or without sibling kinship relation. The "joint family type" as well as the "kindred" involves essentially different varieties of lineal kinship relations which may further be categorized as "lineal only". "collateral only", and "both lineal and collateral".
- 4. With respect to the dimension of kinship composition, a second order of structural estegorization of family-units may be attempted by considering the attributes of lineage and locality. According to this order, each member of a family-unit may be categorized as either belonging to the "stock" of that family by virtue of maintaining the social norm of resisfilical—either "patrilocal", i.e., male accestral house for the males and unmarried females, and husband's ancestral house for the married females, or "matrilocal", i.e., female ancestral house for the females and unmarried males, and wife's ancestral bouse for the married males. Alternating—sometimes "patrilocal" and sometimes "matrilocal" residence. Neolocal—an altogether new residence set up by an individual.

dence or locality or as being an "adhesion", so to say, to the unit because of deviating from that norm. Such an adhesion may be looked at as either an adhesion from the "male"-side (patrikin) or the "female"-side (matrikin) of the stook. Thus, the following four broad categories of family structure may be evolved. Namely: (1) stock only, (2) stock with patrikin, (3) stock with matrikin and (4) stock with both patrikin and matrikin.

5 To proceed, this concept of adhesion may next be utilised for further subdivision of the family types (except the "kindred" type) presented as the first order classification of family structures. That is excluding the types consisting of only such members who belong to the same stock, the others with any adhesion at all may be labelled as a particular type of family "with kin". Thus, the family types obtained earlier in course of the first order classification may now be further distinguished as follows. (1) "Male" single-member type, (2) "female" singlermember type, (3) conjugal type (4) sibling type, (5) elementary family type, (6) joint family type, (7) 'male' single member with kin, (8) "female' single-member with kin, (9) conjugal type with kin, (10) sibling type with kin, (11) elementary family type with kin, (12) joint family type with kin, and (13) kindred. If necessary, the joint family type may again be subdivided into lineal joint family type, collateral joint family type and both lineal and collateral joint family type for further study. And similarly for the joint family type with kin also. If required, kins may again be subdivided "patri-", "matri-", or both,

6. A necessary prerequisite to categorizing a family-unit by the above-mentioned firet and second orders of classification will be the proper assessment of the rights of a member of a family-unit vis-a-vis that family or, the reasons of his/her living with the family-unit. Otherwise, who is the real adhesion, i. e., who has grafted on whom cannot correctly be deduced. To illustrate the following example may be cited. In the village of Garubathan (Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal) a person was observed to live with his married sister and her minor sons. The brother-in-law was an employee of a Tea Garden and as such, he, of necessity, had to stay in that Tea Garden. In the course of a social survey, this person (brother) was returned as the head of the family. From other items of information it was gathered that the returned "head" was only 16 years old. a school student, while the land and the residential house, etc., belonged to the brother-in-law. And the earners in the family also were the "sister" and the "brother-in-law". Considering the "brother" as the "head", the family-unit under reference became "male single member with kin type" while logically it should have been of "elementary family with kin type". Such queries will arise in all cases when a family type is returned as "with kin". Therefore, in classifying any structure with kin, the legal or obligatory position of all individuals of the family in question must be previously

ascertained by the laws of residence and inheritance.

7. In the context of a large-scale social survey the procedure of how to structurally classify the families are suggested above has been shown in Appendix A. One usefulness of this procedure may be that this procedure can be worked out with the help of trained field investigators and computers instead of the employment of social scientists themselves.

III

- 1. Having classified a family-unit by its structural type, the next dimension of study may be its levels of kinship articulation indicating the degree as well as the direction of expansion of kinship relations with respect to the Ego. In this context, to indicate the structural houndaries as demarcated by the upward and downward generational extension and the lateral extension of the stock members in a family as well as the degree of structural completeness with respect to the presence or absence of at least one of ancestral root cohort, the following constants of a family-unit may be of some relevance. Namely : the degree of vertical extension may be labelled as (v) which may further be subdivided into two parts (g) and (g,). The number of generations to which the stock-members of a family-unit may extend above the Ego may be represented by (g) with a a positive (+) sign while (g,) would represent that below the Ego with a negative (-), sign, so that v=g -g +1 -1 representing Ego's generation). Concomitant to (v) may be studied the maximum degree of lateral extension among the stock-members of a family-unit labelled as 1) which may measure the positional distance of a stock-member from the Ego. The constants v, g, and l will indicate the structural boundaries
- 2. The vertical and the lateral extension being thus obtained, it may be ascertained that whether the consanguine stock-members could be genealogically connected directly through the existing generational level of the family-unit or any "extra" generational level (r) is required. For example, to obtain direct generational link between two brothers, F and/or M is required; to generationally complete the link of E with FBZ, at least one of the grand-parents (FF and/or FM) is required to be present together with E and FBZ. But, in the former case, if any one of F or M exists in the family-unit, none of any "extra", i. e., root cohort of upper-generational leval, would have been required to fill up the gap between the two brothers as parent (r=1). Similarly, in the latter case, if none of the parents or, the grand-parents were present r=2; if at least any parent were present, r=1; and if any grand-parent was present (with or without parental one), r=0. Thus, the constant (r) indicates the degree of structural completeness as stated above.

- 3. Together with the family type, the values of v, g,, g, l and r may synthetically represent the structure of a family. The following three orders of structural classification of the family-units may then be applied. Namely: (1) categorizing the family-units by their respective values of v or gu, g and l; 2) categorizing the family-units by the values of r as either O or greater than O; and, (3) the levels of articulation of the kins, i.e., the generational levels and the links of those of a family who do not belong to the stock of that family-unit but are regarded as family members. The latter may be specified as follows: (1) stock-members only, (2) patrikin of parental generations only. (3) patrikin of cousinifilial generation only, (4) patrikin of parental and cousin/filial generations only, (5) matrikin of parental generation only, (6) matrikin of cousinifilial generation only, (7) matriki of parental and cousinifilial generations only, (8) patrikin and matrikin of parental generations only, (9) patrikin and matrikin of causin/fillal generation only, (10) patrikin of parental generations but matrikin of cousin filial generation, (11) patrikin of cousin/filial generation but matrikin of parental generations, and (12) patrikin and matrikin of both parental and cousinifilial generations each. The generational categories may be treated separately as generational levels as well as generational links, as is required.
- 4. In the context of large-scale surveys, a tabulation design for kinship relations has been suggested and illustrated with an example in Appendix B. Following this design not only the required values of v, g, g, l, and r may be obtained in a routinewise computational manner, but additionally, it will also docket the kinship character, the exact kinship relation the generational position and the lateral distance of each of the stock members without losing any information about their respective age-status, and sex. It may also be noted that the information as to the type of a kin (a patrikin or a matrikin) together with his/her generational link will isolate whether a kin is through the "mother" or "wife" or "stater" or "daughter" of the Ego. Thus, having isolated the elementary family-unite and the joint family-units with or without any kin, this might be useful family.

TV

The third dimension of structural classification of the family-units
is their cohort composition, which may be envisaged in two following ways:
firstly, by examining their constellation and secondly, by their nasure of
completeness. The constellation may be and should be examined by
(a) the types of marriage (s) as monogamous, polygnous, polyandrous,
etc., that helped the formation of any coliort in the family, and (b) by the

nature of such marriage (s) i. e., whether the marriage (s) has/have occurred simultaneously or subsequently. Because this may focus any causal connections (s) between step relatives within a unit,

- 2. The second aspect of this study deals with the cohort-completeness of a unit. Or in other words, it is to examine whether all the cohorts required to trace the genealogical connection of any family member with the Ego of the unit are fully present (because of both the consorts) and/or partly present (because of any one consort of a cohort); or some or all of them are fully absent in the unit, being either dead or staying elsewhere. The usefulness of such an examinations lies in the fact that this may, to some extent, indicate the bonds of coordination or integration of different members within any family unit. As for example: whether the "siblings" are living together even after their parents are dead or otherwise.
- 3. With this aim in view a broad structural classification of the family-units may be visualized as follows: (1) root cohort is complete: (2) root cohort is broken (i. e., any one partner is absent); and (3) root cohort is completely absent. The composition of all other cohorte involved, however, may be categorized as-all of them are (1) complete. (2) broken, (3) absent; or (4) some are complete, some broken, (5) some complete, some absent, (6 some broken, some absent, and (7) some completer, some broken, some absent. If desired, a cross-classification by the composition of root-cohort as well as the other cohort(s) involved may be derived by pooling these two above-mentioned classification. [For operational procedure refer to Appendix (°C)].

APPENDIX A

- 1. In order to illustrate concretely the procedure of analysis, let a patrilineal-patrilocal society be considered. A family may be defined in any way one prefers; for example, one may refer to a "coresident family", a "commensal family", a "normally co-resident and commensal family", a consistent of such persons as family members who are regarded as such by a particular individual. Again, the person of reference, or the Ego of a family, many be chosen depending on the specific purpose of analysis. For example, the senior-most male member, or the person recognised as the head of a family, in order to obtain the kuship composition vis-a-vis persons of some sort of social importance; or the principal earner to indicate the kinship composition vis-a-vis the person of financial importance; etc. However, having defined a family and its Ego, the definitions must be strictly followed.
- Following therefrom, alongwith the enumeration of the members
 of a family-unit, their exact kinship relations with the Ego and their
 marital status are to be recorded as follows. "Ego (unmarried)", "father
 (widower)", "father's elder brother (married)", "father's elder brother's

wife (married)", "younger sister (married", younger sister's husband (married)", "younger sister (unmarried"), son's first son (unmarried)", son's second son (unmarried)", etc.

If there exist among the stock members of a family, more than one elder or younger brother, etc., they may be depicted by numerical suffixes 1, 2, etc., after their respective kinship notation, e.g. Father's brother (first) = FB, Father's brother (second) = FB.

- 4. When the Ego of a family-unit is any male person or an unmarried female person, examine whether M or S or D precedes any notation; such notations indicate kins who do not belong to the stock of the family-unit concerned: So also are to be treated any S or D $m_{|w|d/s}$ or D $m_{|w|d/s}$. A patrikin may be identified as (a) S $m_{|w|d/s}$ or D $m_{|w|d/s}$, or (b) any notation series beginning with S or D, or (c) any notation series preceded by S or D but itself being unpreceded by any M, or W.

A matrikin may be indentified as a notation series (a) beginning with M or W. or (b) preceded by M or W but itself unpreceded by any S or D. For any ever-married female person apply this rule for (a) and (b) notation series beginning with (H); or (c) any notation without (H) at its beginning is to be treated as also a "matrikin".

- 5. Thus, having separated the kine, if any:
- 1. Next examine (a) the residual notations in the light of whether any notation series consisting of 2 or more notations have occured together with Ego. The family structure would, then, be of the folial family type. If, however, all the notation-series consist of single notations, then examine whether the Ego is ever-married (E) along with (B) and/or (S), or there is at least one more married person, or (b) the Ego is unmarried (E) but there is atleast one more married person except F or M, in both these cases also the family is of foint family type.
- 2 If there is only one stock-member, i.e., the Ego, it is obviously a single-member type, male or female being determined by the sex of Ego.

- .3 If the notations are either H or W besides E, the family is of conjugal type; if they are of B or S besides E, the Family is of sibling type.
 - .4 The rest being elementary family type.

APPENDIX B

- 1. A notation-series depicting a kinship relation of a stock member with respect to a male Ego or an unmarried female Ego (as discussed in Appendix A) may be considered in four parts. Namely: (a) the notations F, M; (b) the notations B,S; (c) the notations Z, D; and (d) W, H. They oen occur in a notation-series of a stock-member in the sequence of (F/M, B/8, Z/D, W/H). In this sequence only F and Z can recur. On the basis of these characteristics of the notation-series of stock-members, a coding design has been evolved to docket the kinship relations together with their age-status and sex, after recording in col. (1) their respective kinship characteristics, i. e., whether a stock member or a patrikin or a matrikin as per appendix A [Cols. (2)-(5) of the "General tabulation design of a Family Structure (1)"). If the Ego is an ever-married female, consider the notation-series beginning as (H) F, etc.
- 2. The generational position (g) and the lateral distance (1) of each stock-member may be obtained in Cols. (6) and (7)-(10) against each notation-series. The required values of g_u , g_1 , v, l_1 and r may be computed as indicated in the design.
- 3. For a kin, to obtain his/her generational lew! vis-a-vis the Ego of the family-unit, the computational scheme of Col. (8) is to be modified as follows. Count the frequency of occurrence of F or M in the notation-series and subtract from it the frequency of occurrence of Z or D. For example, the generational level of F8, F8 Z, S, DHB, DHF with regard to Ego

becomes (1), (0), (0), (-1), and (0) respectively. Or in other words Father's elder sister (widow) is placed one generation above the Ego. Similarly Father's elder sister's son (unmarried) and sister (widow) are placed in the Ego's generation; while Daughter's husband's brother is placed one generation below the Ego. To obtain bis/her generational link vis-a-vis the Ego, however, examine which one of the notations M. S. W. D occur first in the sequence. Consider only the part of the notation series upto the first occurence of M, S, W, D including this specific notation. Count the frequency of F or M in this part and substract from it the frequency of Z or D occurring in the came part only. With reference to the same example, the generational link is obtained as (1), (1), (0), (-1), (-1). [Cols. (7) and (8) of "General tabulation design of Eamily Structure (II)"]. Similar to g,, g, for the stock of a family, the maximum and the minimum generation level and the link (k, k,', k, respectively) may be easily obtained therefrom, if required, as shown in the above mentioned table.

GENERAL TABULATION DESIGN OF A FAMILY STRUCTURE (1)

		Columns f	or coding	
				of a family-unit
SI.	who belon	ig to it by virtue of	social norm of r	esidence or locality
по				
	Kinship	Kin	ship codes	
	notation	0-1	0.11	
	lat code	2nd code	3rd code	4th code
(O)	(1) (2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ιΛ	io (H) F/M/F'/M	' 0 No (H) B/S /B'/5	n -No-Z/D	0 E (male) 0
2	(H) F/M	1 (H) B	I Z/D	1 E (female) 1
3	(H) FP/M	2 (H) B	2 ZZ/D	2 E (") 2
4	(H) FFF/M	3 (H) S	3 ZZZ/D	m 3 W/H 3
5	(H) FFFF/M	4 (H) S y	4 2222/D	4 F/B/Z 4
6		u		M/S /D 5
7	(H) F'/M'	6 (H) B'	6 Z ⁻ /D'	6 х
8	(H) FF'/M'	7 (H) B'	7 ZZ'/D'	7 x
9	(H) FFF/M	8 (H) S'	8 ZZZ./D.	8 x
10	(H) PFFF'/M'	9 (H) S,	9 ZZZZ-/D'	9 x
		Quitarra for		
	03.4		computation (6)> O Col. (6) <0 Col. (6)> 0
Col. (2 minus Col. (4	Col. (3)=O(C		(Col. (3)> O Cols [(7)+(8)+ -(10)] Cols [16)+ (7)+(8)+ (9)+(10)]
6)	(7)	(8) (9)	(10)	(12)
(givi	ing (giving	the value of 'l' for		ng the values, say,
		rial numbers.]		, for respective
of 'g	g' for		serie 8	si numbers.]
each	nerial			
num	ber.]			
gmin	=g l max	=l	(q _{aa}	—g)∝r
, _,	g _u -g _j +1			

GENERAL TABULATION DESIGN OF A FAMILY STRUCTURE (II)

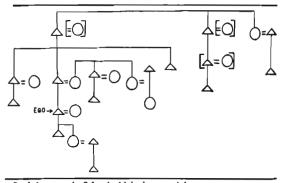
Only for "adhesions", i.e., those of the members of a family-unit
Sl. who should not have belonged to it according to the social norm of
no, residence or locality.

Kinship Notations upto notion and including the first occu-			ng Fr	equency notatio		Generat level		Generation link		
	M/W/		F/N Col. (1)		Z/D Col. (1)	Col (9)	ol. (3)- ol. (5)]	[Col. (4)- Col. (6)]		
(O)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)		
						[giving th values of, eay f, against each seris number.] f = k max	Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba Ba B	iving the slues of y h, gainst ach serial amber.] =k nax		

*If the Ego is an ever-married female, for any notation-series not belonging with notation 'H' put atonce in Col. (8) zero without any tabulation in the intermediate columns.

ILLUSTRATIVE TABULATION OF A FAMILY STRUCTURE

DIAGRAMATIC REPRESENTATION OF A FAMILY STRUCTURE



Symbols: A male; O female; [] dead; = married.

(General tabulation design of a family structure :I) : stock member									mbera	:a		
0	1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	E		0	0	0	0	0	0				0	
2	W		0	0	0	3	0	0				0	
3	Z		0	0	1	4	~1	0				0	
4	F		1	0	0	4	1			0			1
ď	M		ı	0	0	5	1			0			1
6	FB le		1	1	0	4	1				1		2
7	FB _{le} W		1	1	0	3	1				1		:
8	FB Z		1	1	1	4	0		2			2	
9	FB y		1	2	0	4	1				l		1
10	FF _w		2	0	0	4	2			0			!
11	FFB y w		2	2	0	4	2				1		;
12	FFB _y ZZ _u		2	2	2	4	0		3			3	
		¥				g _u	=2;	g _l =	-l;	l m	=3;	q	=
						▼=	=4					r=1	

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