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FAMILY NUCLEATION AND FERTILITY CHANGE IN TROPICAL AFRICA:
PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION THEORY
WITH FOCUS GROUP EXPLORATIONS

FINAL REPORT

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Nine focus groups were recorded in Cross River State, Nigeria, in late 1984 and early 1985, including seven groups of urban residents (five male groups, two female) and two groups (one male, one female) of residents of nearby villages. The "findings" are a codification of likely developments implied by common themes in the group discussions.

Fertility

Age at marriage seems to be on the rise as schooling becomes more widespread and lasts longer. Sexual activity also seems to be more widespread and to commence earlier in life. In a more permissive atmosphere, young people no longer wait until marriage. But there seems to be little use of contraception, within or outside marriage. Thus accidental pregnancy before marriage is becoming more prevalent. Significantly, deliberate premarital pregnancy also seems to be on the rise: with abortions on the increase, young men intending to marry want to be sure their prospective wives will still be able to produce children.

Postpartum abstinence also seems to be on the decline, the traditional interval of six months being shortened to six weeks or less. Duration and intensity of breastfeeding also appear to be on the decline, imported infant formula coming increasingly into use, even replacing traditional infant food supplements. Meanwhile, terminal abstinence is not culturally prescribed, nor is it desired.

Childlessness is altogether undesirable in this culture, for the sake of descent for the husband and "fulfillment" for the wife. Correspondingly, there is a strong preference for sons--

at a ratio of about 3 sons to 2 daughters. An absolute minimum of at least one son to carry on the family name seems universally desired.

Today's couples are seen to be having fewer children than did their parents. The reasons cited include improved health care and nutrition, greater knowledge concerning child care, the ensuing lowering of infant mortality and increased security about child survival, and especially also the role of economic constraints, as in the impact of hard times on the ability to provide for children. Large families are clearly seen as a definite hardship. Yet the targets elicited by probing for a "good" number of children are still high throughout, only varying between four and seven across all socioeconomic levels. As for childspacing, there seems little support for delay of childbearing after marriage, especially in view of the husband's family's desire for descendants. Afterwards, intervals of one to two years between births were cited as ideal. Meanwhile, responses to various probes indicated almost universally poor knowledge of reproductive physiology. As for the perception of population pressure, village women noted that land which they used to farm was increasingly cleared for housing construction.

Women's Status

Local custom held women to inferior status. At marriage a woman left her family of origin and became a member of her husband's family, where she was assigned a dependent status even though she often provided the real day-to-day support of the family. During the group discussions, men initially paid lip service to the importance of discussing matters with wives and

heeding their counsel when justified, but soon betrayed a deep-seated attachment to the principle of male dominance regardless of the age or educational level of group members. Adherence to the traditional division of labor within the household similarly emerged. Even working women whose income affords them a measure of economic independence (husband-wife pooling of income is rare), and who were expected to contribute to household finances, were still expected to fulfill prescribed roles. The husband was expected to provide the larger share of housekeeping money, the wife to do the work. Indeed, highly educated husbands who helped with child care or cooking abroad would stop doing so when they returned home, largely under peer pressure.

For their part, women acknowledged that in this culture men were supposed to play the dominant role. Village women indicated greater acceptance of this prescription than did the more educated, who indicated considerable debate and tension with their husbands. The demands of a husband's relatives--and in particular, of his mother--on a wife were also reported to be frequently irritating. In that connection village women noted that amid a general breakdown of old rules, young wives were becoming less obedient to their mothers-in-law, and in the face of economic hardship their sons increasingly sided with their wives against their mothers.

Role of Children

Although desired family sizes remain relatively high, with the rise of quality-of-life considerations in the face of hard times, the cost of children has become a universal concern. Areas of expenditure include education, health care, child care and

househelp, and amenities--nutritional and other consumer imports, clothing, etc. Some of the expenses arise from a desire to maintain one's children suitably in comparison with other families of similar status. Children do not seem to help around the house as much as in the past. The less well off expect their older children to help with the expenses involved in bringing up the younger ones, which limits how much schooling the older children can have. Child fosterage seems to be taking on the new form of an incipient child labor market, with cash being paid to parents in exchange for children going to live with other families. The less well off expect old age support from their children, as do their own parents. The well off support their parents but emphasize providing for their own future. Emotional support in the form of visits and other tokens is still widely expected.

Kinship

The Western concept of "extended family" is an alien term lacking translation in the local language. In addition to his wife and children, a man's family includes all relatives. Obligations to his in-laws are also routinized. The closest meaning that could be found for the phrase, extended family, in indigenous terms was the totality of relatives and nonrelatives--such as live-in help--for whom he had assumed responsibility. Exchanges with kin indicate incipient nucleation of family life.

Other-Networks

Mutual assistance networks formed with nonrelatives are emerging as useful adaptations in the structure of risk devolution.

Introduction

With the emergence of clear fertility declines in several Asian and Latin American countries, interest has grown in the factors responsible for those declines. The question also arises, what are the prospects for fertility decline in Africa? Much analysis has centered on changes in the proximate determinants of fertility--especially marriage, contraception, abortion and breastfeeding patterns. But a question remains about the underlying factors in social structure which bring about fertility change through their impact on the behavioral changes represented by the intermediate variables. And whereas the established theoretical perspectives on demographic transition have primarily drawn on analyses of the European experience, it may be necessary to seek supplementary perspectives reflecting the distinctive situation of tropical Africa today.

After a review of theories of demographic transition, this paper presents a conceptualization of factors providing the background to fertility transition in Africa. Nucleation of family life emerges as a key institutional link between wider shifts in social structure on one hand and changes in fertility related attitudes and behavior on the other, by means of its accompanying shift in the cost of children and in the status of women within the family unit. Following the discussion of backgrounds to demographic transition in Africa, we present an exploration based on focus group research in southeastern Nigeria.

Theories of Demographic Transition

With a long look back at the experience of Europe as a whole and a cross-sectional look at underdeveloped societies, the classical theory of demographic transition tended to regard pre-modern high fertility as essentially irrational from the individual's point of view. Given high and stable death rates, the high birth rates were thought to be determined by "religious doctrines, moral codes, laws, education, community customs, marriage habits and family organizations...all focused toward maintaining high fertility." (Notestein, 1945, quoted by Caldwell, 1982, p. 117) After death rates fell under the impact of public health measures and improvements in medical care, birth rates were understood to decline in the transitional stage because of a combination of factors associated with the broad evolutionary forces variously called "modernization," "urbanization," "secularization" and "industrialization." (Morgan, 1975, p. 192) These interacting forces were thought to challenge, weaken and eventually overthrow traditional values, which were then replaced by small-family ideals. According to Stolnitz (1964, p. 34), "such downtrends require a shift in attitudes from the traditional fatalism of peasant societies to a belief that one's destiny can be affected by one's deeds, in childbearing as in other spheres of behavior." Thus modernization was supposed to promote the increasing introduction of rationalism into fertility decision making.

Detailed studies at the level of villages and provinces, however, have since made it clear that this formulation was oversimplified. (Freedman, 1979) Instead, birthrate declines

took place under a wide variety of economic, social and demographic conditions, including a wide variety of infant mortality conditions. (Coale, 1973) In Germany, for instance, there was actually a tendency for marital fertility to decline earlier in areas with higher infant mortality than in areas with lower levels. (Knodel and van de Walle, 1979) Furthermore, a basic question remains about the structural shifts that conduce to or actually precipitate the fertility transition.

Lesthaeghe (1980) has recently proposed a functionalist formulation stressing the mechanisms by which fertility is controlled in pretransitional societies. To him, "long-term demographic homeostasis is the result of enforced, rather than self-imposed, restraint...(for example), in the traditional African context, control of the reproductive pool and of female and child labor are only two among many elements of an overall pattern of gerontocratic control over people in lineages and crops on lineage land." (1980, p. 530) He goes on to state, concerning the onset of fertility transition, that "homeostatic regimes can be fundamentally altered by technological innovations, new modes of production, or new patterns of appropriation or control." (p. 534) But he does not elaborate on the sources of technological innovation or the genesis of new modes of production. And in the European context, Smith argues that the English case does not accord with Lesthaeghe's view that the control system is imposed by a social and economic elite who have appropriated resources and are intent on maintaining the prevailing social structure (1981, p. 616): "for in that society we can observe a long tradition of differentiated social structure with

a deep tradition of social reciprocity across economic strata."

On the other hand, Caldwell's restatement of demographic transition theory begins by assuming that all societies are economically rational. To him the key issue is "the direction and magnitude of intergenerational wealth flows." (1982, p. 140) Initially, he argues, the net flow is from child to parent; hence high fertility is rational. Later the flow favors children, and rationality dictates zero fertility. The reversal, he further argues, only occurs when the economy of the nuclear family becomes isolated from that of the extended family, and this economic nucleation in turn requires emotional nucleation.

Smith (1981), however, has forcibly argued that a flow of resources from child to parent was not a prominent feature of pretransitional England, for example, where kinship was not an important organizing principle in social relations (see also Smith, 1984, Wrightson, 1984). The parish, rather than kin, took care of the poor, out of a communal fund for which individual assessments were scaled according to affluence. (Lesthaeghe calls this system "communal risk devolution:" 1980, p. 531.) For example, detailed work with seventeenth-century county tax records and parish registers shows that many widows in English villages had children married and resident in the parish while they themselves were receiving relief (Newman-Brown, 1984, Wales, 1984). Also, Thadani (1978) has argued that in principle the sequencing of emotional and economic nucleation is reversible, and, further, that a reversal of resource flows from parents to children is not contingent upon economic nucleation. Rather, it is an aspect of it, and both are a function of the social-

structural conditions underlying the emergence of the autonomous nuclear family.

Two questions now arise. The first is repeated from above: what structural shifts actually lead to fertility transition? And the second follows in that light: what role does family nucleation play? Caldwell has attempted to answer the first question (1982, p. 231): "the study of fertility transition is the study of the transformation of familial production into production through the labor market." But as Schultz (1983) and other commentators have observed, Caldwell's elaboration of that answer only raises many more questions. Note also that the transformation he refers to entails a changeover from the situation where most people live in households which exercise considerable control over their means of production, however meager those means, to a situation where they work for wages using a means of production over the disposition of which they have little or no control. Tilly has identified this changeover as the process of proletarianization, and he is emphatic about its consequences in Europe (1984, pp. 1-2):

The growth of wage labor at expropriated means of production transformed family life, altered the structure of local communities, created whole new varieties of politics, and overturned the conditions determining the life chances of individuals and households....Proletarianization was arguably the most far-reaching change in the quality of everyday life to occur in the modern era. It had a more profound impact than urbanization, secularization, bureaucratization, and any of the other "izations" which occurred in its company.

As for its impact on fertility, proletarianization sets the stage for fertility to respond directly to economic conditions. Tilly argues that European artisans and peasants adjusted their

marriage and fertility to the availability of adult places in crafts and on the land. (Lesthaeghe points out that this "nuptiality valve" was regulated by the force of mortality: 1980, p. 529.) Proletarians, on the other hand, could acquire the means of survival as adults at quite a young age. So long as employment opportunities were available, they had no more grounds for postponing their marriages. They could establish their own households and be economically independent at an earlier age (see also Levine, 1984).

Tilly goes on to argue (p. 44), citing Wrigley and Schofield's reconstruction of English population dynamics from 1541 to 1871, that a "wage-driven demographic system" emerged, with nuptiality and fertility rising and falling with real wages, at a lag of about forty years. Smith (1981, 1983), on the other hand, vigorously disputes this modified Marxist view of population dynamics, preferring to emphasize the stability of a nuptiality-driven system deriving from a "culturally determined moral economy" linking the family, demographic, economic and political systems (1981, p. 615):

worsening or improving economic conditions would slow down or hasten the speed with which young adults entered into marriage. Fertility was almost totally determined by the incidence and age of female marriage, with no conscious limitation of numbers of births within marriage.

Yet Tilly's review of the evidence on parity-dependent fertility responses to economic conditions leads him to suggest that differential natural increase was the principal component in the

relative growth of the European proletariat from 1500 to 1900 (1984, p. 39):

on the average, proletarians responded to economic expansion with greater declines in mortality and greater increases in fertility than nonproletarians did and responded to economic contraction with greater increases in mortality and greater declines in fertility than nonproletarians did.

As for the final downturn in fertility late in the nineteenth century, few dispute Caldwell's (1982) argument of prohibitive increases in the cost of children, accelerated by the imposition of mass education.

What, then, is the role of family nucleation, granting proletarianization a decisive impact on fertility? Nuclear family structure emerged early on in northern and western Europe, with a system of household formation characterized by late marriage for both sexes, and married people almost always in charge of their own households. Before marriage, young people often circulated between households as "life cycle" servants. Hajnal (1982) traces this to the early development of European societies with economies based on household farms, although Smith stresses the "highly distinctive cultural situation which demanded economic independence for the newlymarried." (1981, p. 615) With respect to fertility trends and the onset of fertility transition in this region, therefore, the question of family nucleation--that is, a changeover from extended family systems to an emphasis on the conjugal unit--does not arise. But what is the significance of extended family structure elsewhere? For example, might family nucleation be necessary for fertility decline?

On one hand, Freedman (1979) notes that in Taiwan the rapid fall in fertility occurred while the family retained many traditional forms and attitudes. Similarly, Lesthaeghe (1980) argues that fertility limitation may just as well be associated with the maintenance or strengthening of kinship ties as with their weakening. On the other hand, the ready availability from kin of assistance with child care could also work to maintain high fertility, whereas the responsibility for offspring would otherwise devolve more exclusively on the individual couple. At least, nuclear family structure would foster flexibility and adaptability by allowing wider scope for decision making within the smaller household unit. Here the example of loosely structured Thai society stands out (Rosenfield et al., 1982). Therefore it seems plausible to hypothesize that in societies, such as in Africa, where the extended family system dominates at present, nucleation of family life will likely lead to fertility reduction.

What would occasion family nucleation in such societies? Caldwell (1982) lays great stress on the impact of ideas imported from outside--specifically, from the West, through mass education and mass media. Thadani (1978) has commented, however, on Caldwell's failure to specify the structural factors that facilitate acceptance of the new family forms. Needed is an analytic perspective that makes explicit the structural impetus to change and highlights the genesis of new modes of production, which Lesthaeghe (1980) points out can alter the homeostatic regimes that at present yield high fertility. Figure 1 represents an attempt to sketch such a conceptual framework.

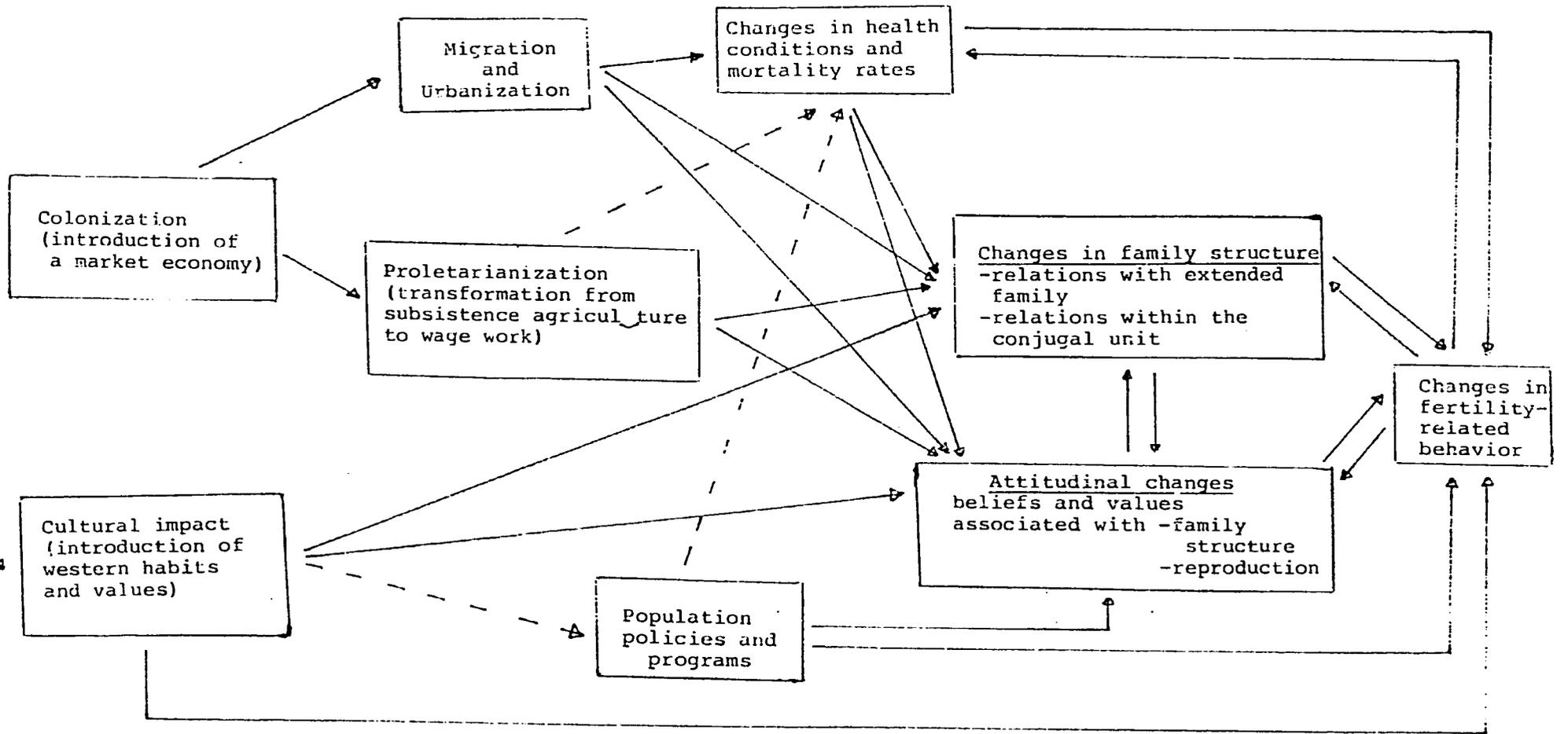
Background to the Fertility Transition in Africa

In brief, Figure 1 embodies the view that the historical impact of the West--beginning at least with colonization--was to set in motion an ongoing reorganization of African society that may in fact be picking up pace at present. This reorganization reaches far into the social fabric, affecting institutions as well as habits and values.

First of all, the introduction of a market economy initiated a transformation in the pattern of life, from peasant subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture and wage work, as individuals were forced to seek the means to pay the new monetary taxes imposed by the colonial authorities and to buy the manufactured goods that were offered on the market. Thus was precipitated as well the migration of workers and others displaced from the land (sometimes by force), in search of economic opportunity. And a related consequence of the introduction of a market economy is the rapid urbanization that characterizes modern Africa as a whole.

These larger changes in the pattern of life, powerfully augmented by the continuing impact of Western culture, are bringing about fundamental changes in family structure and in reproductive attitudes and behavior. Especially, the extended family system is giving way to an emphasis on the nuclear family, and the burden of offspring falls more exclusively than ever on the individual couple living on wages in an increasingly monetized economy. For some time, there will likely be considerable flux as emerging circumstances conflict with the pronatalist pressures of traditional society. But the pressures

Figure 1. Background to the Fertility Transition in Tropical Africa: Western Impact on Family Structure and Reproductive Behavior



all

of the new situation will likely cause widespread changes in reproductive attitudes and behavior, as manifested in preferences for and appropriate actions taken to achieve smaller family sizes. Finally, the changes in family structure and in reproductive attitudes and behavior will probably cumulate with mutually reinforcing feedback effects.

Several comments are in order. First, how do the larger changes in the pattern of life bring about fundamental changes in family structure, and how do the pressures of the new situation cause changes in reproductive attitudes and behavior? To begin with, colonization institutionalized the penetration of capitalism--"an historically specific system of property relations which...originated in Europe and...came to dominate the entire world." (Tilly 1978, p. 52) In that process were created new uses of labor and new labor markets. Proletarianization, in essence, describes the attendant changes in the use of labor, by age and sex, and in the use of land--previous relations of familial production in peasant subsistence agriculture are increasingly transformed into a new pattern of life wherein for survival individuals are essentially dependent on the sale of their own labor power to wage work at expropriated means of production. The migration that has taken place concomitantly also has the effect of removing individuals from intimate contact with kin and the traditional nexus of communal relationships, although many migrants send remittances home. And when, as for the majority, the destination of migration is an urban community, the consequent reevaluation of traditional systems is reinforced by exposure to alternative lifestyles and ideas, quite apart from

the vicissitudes of the urban labor market itself. New accommodations and relationships emerge, further distancing traditional ties. Thus proletarianization, migration and urbanization conduce to family nucleation.

And in Africa today, the new ideas having the main impact via mass media and educational programs can be identified as part of a specific historical process of Westernization. This encompasses "modernization" to the extent that over the period of Western impact on Africa, aspects of Western culture have themselves modernized. The recent spread of feminist ideals may be the outstanding example here. But Westernization goes beyond modernization inasmuch as its impact also conveys the force of other aspects of culture which are distinctively Western, such as, in particular, an orientation toward nuclear family structure and an emphasis on individualism.

As for the conflict between emerging circumstances and the pronatalist pressures of traditional society, Tilly (1984) has pointed out that proletarianization need not connote destitution. Yet in Africa, widespread impoverishment resulting from the precariousness of marginal dependency on the rise and fall of demand for raw materials in distant markets cannot be denied. Together with the premium that emerging circumstances place on the education of children, this condition drives home the often prohibitive cost of bearing and raising children in an increasingly monetized economy where the responsibility devolves on the individual couple more exclusively than ever before, when extended family networks provided more support. Thus family nucleation engenders pressure to limit family size. To be sure,

the transitional stages before fertility reduction becomes widespread will probably witness great flux, with shifting combinations of old and new attitudes and behavior. For example, Johnson (1983) reports the case of an impoverished migrant in Ibadan, Nigeria, who, driven to desperation trying to provide for his family of six children, wondered how something that earlier seemed such a blessing later seemed such a burden.

The second comment is that although nuclear family structure in the long run conduces to a more equal relationship between the sexes (Buvinic, 1976), the immediate impact of ongoing changes seems to be a loss of status for women (Boserup, 1985, Baylies et al., 1984). Against the background of female subordination in the patriarchal, extended family structures of peasant society, the process of proletarianization of women has been slower than that of men and has taken a different form (Roberts, 1984). Men early on gained control of cash/export crop production, relegating women to the subsistence sector (Jacobs, 1984). Thus women lost whatever measure of independence they had when, even under widespread polygyny, they could cultivate their own fields and keep the proceeds from trade or barter (Ware, 1975, Crehan, 1984). Since women still bear most of the burden for the subsistence needs of the family and for household maintenance and child care, participation in outside activity only compounds their workload (Urdang, 1984). And then, when they do go out to work, they find the wage labor market also discriminates against them (Baylies et al., 1984). In addition to a restructuring of the wage labor market, therefore, one clear need that emerges is for a change in the form of gender relations in the family and in

the division of labor within the household. Nucleation likely engenders pressures for such change.

Traditionally, (arranged) marriage was an alliance between lineages, and close husband/wife solidarity was prevented by an elaborate system of taboos (e.g. against postpartum intercourse) and other proscriptions and prescriptions (Ware, 1975, Lesthaeghe, 1980). With the continuing penetration of Western influence, marriage for romantic love begins to rise and polygyny to decline, and the conjugal unit begins to disengage from the control of the extended family. In close attendance comes pressure for greater solidarity between husband and wife, and the ascendancy of quality-of-life considerations not only for their children, but also for themselves. For example, women may seek redefinitions of life goals that afford them meaningful alternatives to a lifelong career in childbearing and childrearing, as well as a restructuring of family and household relationships that improves their overall quality of life. In all of these changes, the relatively small proportion of Africans who live in urban centers probably take the lead.

The third comment arises in that the "privatist" organization of Western society (here Lesthaeghe, 1980, echoes Warner, 1968) was complemented by institutions to care for the poor. In contrast, Africa lacks such alternative systems of support outside the kin group. Thus Lesthaeghe argues (1980, p.541) that "risk-sharing is likely to remain within the kinship context, and kinship ties may even be strengthened rather than weakened." (See also Boserup, 1985.) Freedman (1979) also notes that several Asian societies where fertility has declined are marked by

changes such as the development of welfare institutions which decrease dependence on children. Yet Ohadike (1969) has found growing resentment of the extended family system of obligations in Lagos, Nigeria, and Dow and Werner (1983) report evidence of emotional as well as what may be interpreted as economic nucleation in rural Kenya. Western individualism will likely also continue to penetrate African cultures.

Who nucleates first? It would seem to be those who can best afford to go it on their own, and then a reciprocal effect devolves on their kin (Whiting, 1977). These effects will likely also cumulate. Dow and Werner (1983) seem to suggest that anomie might result. The challenge to individuals bears on what adaptations they can effect in the structure of risk devolution. For instance, the Nigerian Civil Service Union has called for the establishment of a national social security scheme (The Guardian, 1984). Meanwhile, the challenge to research is to document the changes that are taking place, and their consequences.

The fourth comment on Figure 1 is that the conventional approach to the question of fertility decline has emphasized analysis of the intermediate fertility variables (Bongaarts, 1982, Lesthaeghe, 1984). This self-contained logical system facilitates comparisons across a wide variety of cases and circumstances. But it does not afford sufficient insight into the complex reality of any given culture or society under consideration. It would be useful to attain a fuller perspective on the substance of social change--structural shifts and their institutional ramifications--in which context arise the behavioral and attitudinal modifications that are manifested by

changes in the intermediate fertility variables. Mauldin (1982) has pointed out the need to come to an understanding of the underlying factors in social structure which affect the proximate determinants of fertility. Freedman (1979) has also noted the need to take account of changes in family life, the institutional context of most fertility behavior, linking macrostructural factors and fertility variables. Figure 1 represents an attempt to develop for Africa a conceptual framework that codifies the historical impetus to change in social structure and the resulting changes in family structure and in the behavioral and attitudinal aspects of the proximate determinants of fertility.

As for the prospects for fertility decline, there is evidence that some birth rates may be rising--with improvements in health, for example, in noncontracepting populations who previously suffered infertility of pathological origin (Romaniuk, 1980, Frank, 1983), or with reductions in traditional practices such as breastfeeding and postpartum sexual abstinence (Lesthaeghe, 1984; Page and Lesthaeghe, 1981; Morgan, 1975; Oluşanya, 1971). Furthermore, Dow and Werner report that in rural Kenya the most impoverished men, the landless, had the highest desired and actual fertility (1983, p. 91), "in an attempt to guarantee their own future security...(although this) can only increase the overall level of poverty." Yet Dow and Werner also report that the more emotionally nucleated men also had the lower desired and actual fertility. Caldwell (1982) also discovered that the few "demographic innovators" he found in Ibadan, Nigeria--women who had relatively few children, desired no more and employed modern contraception to that end--were

distinguished from others not by lack of superstition or by their rationalism, but by their attitudes toward family and children. They had emotionally nucleated their families. In sum, as social change gathers momentum, its impact on fertility will likely grow.

Significantly, Dyson and Murphy's analysis of turning points shows that both in historical Europe and in the recent past in less developed countries, fertility has frequently undergone a period of increase prior to the advent of sustained decline (1985, p. 432):

the initial impact of the nexus of changes that eventually cause fertility decline is so to alter the balance of factors determining fertility that birth rates rise.... So a fertility rise has to be viewed as an integral part of the opening phase of transition. Indeed, the first sign of an impending decline is a rise, which often starts many years before the predecline peak.

It is not premature to anticipate fertility declines in Africa, which offers a distinctive opportunity to compile a full history of the demographic transition as it takes place.

Family Nucleation and the Prospects for Fertility Change: A Qualitative Analysis

To initiate research on the many issues arising from the conceptual framework presented above, an exploratory study based on the focus group technique was carried out in southeastern Nigeria. Nine groups were interviewed in late 1984 and early 1985 in the two main towns of Cross River State, Nigeria--Calabar and Uyo--including seven groups of urban residents and two groups of residents of nearby villages. Calabar, the state capital, is a port city, and Uyo is some 150 kilometers inland. Both have undergone rapid population growth, mainly from in-migration. Calabar has grown especially since the state was first created along with others in 1967, out of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria. Uyo, as a central place inland, has also attracted large numbers of migrants from surrounding areas. The 1983 populations have been projected as around 420,000 for Calabar, and around 240,000 for Uyo (Ekanem, 1980).

Most of the demographic research in Nigeria in the past--including Caldwell's (1982) well known project--was done in the southwest, perhaps because of the early establishment of the university at Ibadan and the convenient access to other Yoruba towns and the surrounding villages (Morgan, 1975, Lesthaeghe, 1980). Thus a tendency may have emerged, in the absence of other data, to generalize the situation in one culture area to all the other populations of southern Nigeria, if not of the country as a whole (Uche, 1976). Yet as the store of data increases from such sources as the World Fertility Surveys and the Contraceptive Prevalence Surveys, the fact also emerges of considerable differ-

all across the African continent in traditional practices relevant to fertility--breastfeeding, abstinence, etc. (Lesthaeghe, 1984) Therefore detailed studies are needed in a variety of cultural settings for the purpose of comparison. Cross River State, at the opposite end of the Nigerian coast, has different culture (Ibibio/Efik) and historical experience of external influences from Yorubaland.

Research Approach and Study Design

The design of the focus group technique is to bring together a small group of participants (usually six to twelve) for an informal group discussion, led by a moderator working from a prepared discussion guide. Participants should feel comfortable and secure and at ease to express their views frankly, even when they differ from prevailing norms. The session works best when participants respond one to another in a dynamic that stimulates the discussion to far deeper probing of issues than would be possible in a formalized interview. Experience shows this to be most feasible when the participants are more or less of equal status and have similar perspectives on the subject under discussion (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981). Care must be taken to conduct the session properly--to dispel inhibitions and draw out the participants without letting anyone dominate, and to be flexible and let the discussion flow freely while regulating it so that important topics are covered adequately. Someone is assigned to take notes, and the session is recorded on tape as well. The basic data to analyze consist of the statements recorded in the session.

Although Bogardus wrote on this technique as early as 1926 (Stycos, 1981), it has not been widely used by academic social scientists. Instead, it has mainly been used in market research to test consumer reactions to new products. It was only recently re-introduced into social science, with a general discussion and examples of application in a special issue of Studies in Family Planning (vol. 12, no. 12, December 1981, Part 1). Knodel et al. (1983, 1984) have also applied it successfully to a qualitative analysis of the perceptions of individuals regarding the nature and causes of the rapid fertility transition in Thailand.

Unlike the sample survey, this approach yields qualitative information that is inappropriate for statistical analysis or statistical generalization--the samples are small, and participants are purposely selected according to categories germane to the concerns of the study. Furthermore, the conclusions depend entirely upon the analyst's judgment and interpretation. Hence the often asked question, are the results replicable? Stycos (1981) has commented on a case in Mexico where a focus group study and an independent sample survey conducted at the same time arrived at similar conclusions on some topics but had discrepancies on others. Knodel et al. (1983) have also provided a detailed discussion of the possible uses and the limitations and potential problems of the focus group technique. But there is need for deliberate testing of the fit between focus group findings and the results of independent, simultaneous sample surveys.

Much probably depends on the purpose of the focus group study and the pattern of the findings. Where a distinct climate

of opinion has crystallized, such as may result in severe and widespread underutilization of government health facilities in a given area, this approach can uncover such consensus views efficiently (Attah, 1986). On the other hand, Stycos (1981) has pointed out that with the application of fewer standardized stimuli and the emphasis on deep probing and spontaneous responses, the focus group approach will likely elicit a wider variety of views than will standardized interview techniques. In an exploratory study such as the present, therefore, the focus group approach proves especially advantageous since, as Knodel et al. (1984) have pointed out, the insights thus gained into the range of underlying attitudes, opinions and behavior patterns can serve to clarify the issues and generate hypotheses to test subsequently with surveys on a broader population base. In addition, the manner in which opinions are expressed in the group discussions can facilitate the formulation of appropriate questions and delineation of response categories for a subsequent questionnaire. And unlike the participant observation approach of ethnographic research, which yields similar insights but requires long immersion in a specific community, the focus group approach produces results quickly and each study can encompass a multiplicity of settings.

Given the conceptual framework, participants in this study were selected so as to provide variation with respect to the structural antecedents of family nucleation--proletarianization, migration and urbanization. Therefore, in addition to such basic factors as sex, age, education and income, they varied as to migration and urban experience as well as the degree of control

they exercised over the means of production by which they made their living, and what access their occupations afforded to sources of support outside of kin (such as insurance and pension plans, etc.). Eight groups were initially planned, five of males and three of females. As explained below, two of the groups comprised non-indigenes of the state. Therefore the insights they offered can only be drawn upon in the light of the comparative perspective their nonmembership provides on the cultural context of the study. While in the field, a ninth group was discovered serendipitously and yielded some of the most intriguing insights.

Focus Groups and Discussion Topics

Males

- i) Physicians in private practice in Uyo. Independent, wealthy and highly educated, all had spent most of their lives in urban settings outside the state, including at least two years abroad. Of the older generation (aged 40+), their views generally reflected their adaptation to new circumstances and ideas, but they were by no means uniformly nontraditional. In addition to offering their own views, this group was particularly helpful in providing insights also on the attitudes and practices of their patient population regarding pregnancy, childbearing and maternal and child health.
- ii) Self-employed tailors. All lifetime residents of villages near Uyo, these older generation artisans were also independent, but they had no schooling beyond the primary level, and their economic circumstances were precarious, their payments often coming in late and in fragments. They made a particular point of the need for development planners in government to institute programs to assist them in capitalizing their cottage industry.
- iii) Older-generation University faculty in Calabar. All born and raised in rural communities, they went away to boarding school in their teens, but returned to their home villages on vacation. Postsecondary education took them farther away, including at least two years abroad each. With fully subsidized housing and medical care and a university school for staff children, these privileged proletarians also enjoyed considerable insurance and pension provisions.

- iv) Younger-generation brewery workers in Uyo. Aged 25-30, these members of the classical urban industrial proletariat were all lifetime urban residents, each with at least two years' residence in larger towns within as well as outside the state, and education up to the secondary level. The group included both the secretary and assistant secretary of the workers' union, and their discussion displayed the highest level of collectivity orientation among all nine groups, in terms of considering issues in view of the need to balance the interests of individuals and society as a whole. Their work situation afforded the security of a livable wage on a monthly basis, some medical benefits and annual leave with an allowance, but their benefits were not as extensive as those of managerial staff, and they had no pension plan.
- v) Members of the National Youth Service Corps are recent university graduates on required national service, with assigned placements outside their home states. Graduates of domestic universities serve in their first year and graduates of foreign universities in the first year after their return. This group consisted of domestic graduates only, in Calabar. They came from seven different states all across the country. Their views also evidenced a similarly wide diversity in some respects, but they displayed a remarkable congruence in those aspects of fertility related attitudes and behavior which reflected emerging differences between their generation and their parents' generation. During the year of service allowances were meager, but they all could look forward to the relatively privileged life of university graduates immediately afterwards.
- vi) By fortunate happenstance, a social club known as The Committee of Friends was encountered in Calabar. In their mid-20s to early-30s, all were university graduates with extensive urban experience within as well as outside the state, though none had been abroad. All were salaried employees, mostly of government ministries, with entitlement to housing and other allowances. Most of them had married recently or were soon to marry. Club membership was by invitation only, and they operated under a constitution and bye-laws, with elected officials. In vigorous, orderly debate, they provided such stimulating perspectives on likely future trends that it was clearly advantageous to tape their discussions in two sessions totalling more than five hours in all.

Females

- vii) Younger-generation faculty wives in Calabar. In their early- to mid-30s, all were university graduates who also had salaried jobs of their own. Four were lifetime urban residents, and five had lived in urban areas for a minimum of fifteen years each. All had extensive migration experience, including at least four years abroad each.

- viii) Village women. Of twelve in the group, two were in their mid-twenties and the rest over 40 years old. All were lifetime residents of remote villages outside Uyo, except two who had lived in urban places outside the state for four years and ten years respectively. Group members had had no formal schooling and subsisted on farming, trading of surplus produce and occasional assistance from kin.
- ix) Members of the National Youth Service Corps in Calabar. One was indigenous to the state, exempted from the home-state rule on account of having been married before graduation. The rest came from five other states. One had spent four years abroad in university, and the rest were educated within the country.

The sessions with groups ii (tailors) and viii (village women) were conducted in the local language (Efik/Ibibio), and all the rest in English. A typical discussion guide is attached (Annex A). After establishing background perspectives on participants in terms of age, education, migration and urban experience, work situation, etc., the discussions ranged over three main topics:

- a) Fertility related perceptions, attitudes and behavior--age at marriage; number, spacing and sex distribution of children; child survival; contraception, breastfeeding, abstinence.
- b) Relations within the conjugal unit--openness of husband/wife communication; decision making about household expenditures and about number and timing of children, use of contraception, etc.; division of responsibility for household maintenance, child care, etc.; priority of children's education, daughters' and sons'; role of children in the household.
- c) Relations with kin--exchange of visits, information, advice and material economic and social assistance with wider kin group; support of parents; expected old-age support from children.

Findings

As noted above, the conclusions arise from interpreting what was expressed in the discussions. The summary under each topic below is in the form of likely developments implied by common themes echoing across the range of expression. Selected quotations are for illustration only. Background on attitudes and behavior which are viewed as cultural tradition is drawn from Esen (1982), as confirmed in the sessions. In the fieldwork period the Nigerian national economy was in deep depression throughout, and this state was especially depressed, having lagged in development during the preceding oil boom. After-effects of the disruptions caused by civil war fifteen years earlier were also evident, such as in the many overgrown remains of unfinished construction projects. Indeed, members of the National Youth Service Corps (groups v and ix), from eight other states in all, having also traveled widely in the country, were particularly expressive about the economic backwardness they saw in Cross River State.

Fertility

Age at marriage seems to be on the rise as schooling becomes more widespread and lasts longer. Expressions of a "good" age to marry typically cited the need to complete schooling first, with the targets varying from university graduation (among faculty men) to secondary school (among brewers). At the traditional extreme, village women cited puberty (age 17 for males and 14 or 15 for females), so that the children would have the opportunity to grow up with their parents.

Sexual activity also seems to be more widespread and to commence earlier in life. In a more permissive atmosphere, young people no longer wait until marriage. On the other hand, there seems to be little use of contraception, within or outside marriage (men almost universally leave it up to women to "protect themselves.") Thus accidental pregnancy before marriage is becoming more prevalent. Significantly, deliberate premarital pregnancy also seems to be on the rise: with abortions on the increase, young men intending to marry want (and are often advised) to be sure their prospective wives will still be able to produce children.

Postpartum abstinence also seems to be on the decline, the traditional interval of six months when the woman was in confinement being shortened to six weeks or less. Duration and intensity of breastfeeding also appear to be on the decline, imported infant formula coming increasingly into use, even replacing traditional infant food supplements. Meanwhile, terminal abstinence is not culturally prescribed, nor is it desired. It is only practised by default, such as in polyginous marriages where the husband loses interest in older wives.

Concerning family size, childlessness is altogether undesirable in this culture, for the sake of descent for the husband and "fulfillment" for the wife. Correspondingly, there is a strong preference for sons-- at a ratio of about 3 sons to 2 daughters. An absolute minimum of at least one son to carry on the family name seems universally desired. One faculty man, who taught English literature, spoke of "new values" and cited Shakespeare whose name lives on solely through what he

accomplished himself. Yet concerning expectations of old age support from children, the same individual hastened to quote a local proverb underscoring the traditional expectation that children would provide for their old parents.

Today's couples are seen to be having fewer children than did their parents. The reasons cited include improved health care and nutrition, greater knowledge concerning child care, the ensuing lowering of infant mortality and increased security about child survival, and especially also the role of economic constraints, as in the impact of hard times on the ability to provide for children. Contrary to previous findings (e.g. Caldwell), there are clear indications here that large families are seen as a definite hardship. Yet the targets elicited by probing for a "good" number of children are still high throughout, only varying between four and seven over the wide range of focus groups. As for childspacing, there seems little support for delay of childbearing after marriage, especially in view of the husband's family's desire for descendants. After the first birth, most expressions cited intervals of one to two years between births as ideal, but one village woman reported having nursed two babies simultaneously.

Meanwhile, except for the physicians, the responses of all other focus groups to various probes indicated universally poor knowledge of reproductive physiology. As for the perception of population pressure, village women noted that land which they used to farm was being increasingly cleared to build houses. Only among the brewery workers' group, however, did anyone raise population growth as a national issue. The assistant secretary

of the labor union was the one who commented that "to avoid overpopulation...the government (should) take steps (to) control...family size," in view of the economy as a whole, but he also conceded, "it's not possible to legislate family size."

Women's Status

Local custom held women to inferior status. According to Esen (1982, pp. 79-84):

The old traditional Ibibio society was a man's society... Women were seen mostly as necessary appendages with clearly defined and circumscribed roles... Women were expected to be faithful as wives, fruitful as mothers, good as cooks and industrious in crafts, farming and other womanly occupations... The father was the head of the family, and there was no room for doubt on that issue. As head, he was in control, with all his wives, children, servants and other dependents submitting themselves to his direction and authority. He took the major decisions on family matters himself without consulting anyone else... He was the owner of the house, and his views on matters affecting his house were not normally subject to debate... (as the proverb illustrates: enie ufök odomo mboi (the owner of the house decides the dimensions of its frame)).

At marriage a woman left her family of origin and became a member of her husband's family, where she was assigned a dependent status even though (Esen, p. 81) "in many cases women were the real day-to-day bread-winners of the family."

Initial expressions in the men's focus groups paid lip service to the importance of discussing matters with wives and heeding their counsel when justified--as judged by the men. Soon, however, a deep-seated attachment to the principle of male dominance would emerge, regardless of the age or educational level of group members. For example, opinions about a "good" age for men to marry typically began by emphasizing the need to be able to provide for a family, but soon centered on a need for readiness, when a man was mature enough to control a family.

Adherence to the traditional division of labor within the household similarly emerged. Even working women whose income affords them a measure of economic independence (husband-wife pooling of income is rare), and who were expected to contribute to household finances, were still expected to fulfill prescribed roles. The husband was expected to provide the larger share of housekeeping money, the wife to do the work. The exposure of women to alternative modes of thought--such as through university experience--was looked upon by men as a "corrupting" influence. Indeed, the faculty wives noted that husbands who helped with child care or cooking when they were abroad would stop doing so when they returned home, largely under peer pressure. A younger-generation tailor who went so far as to admit that he would help his wife with household chores from time to time also noted that she was not to tell anyone. Interestingly, the most marked departure from the traditional outlook was also expressed by a tailor, a man in his mid-forties who at thirty six had married a woman considerably younger than himself: "My wife is myself, that's why I'll help her in spite of insult from outside."

For their part, women acknowledged that in this culture men were supposed to play the dominant role. Village women indicated greater acceptance of this prescription than did faculty wives, who indicated considerable debate and tension with their husbands. Among many reports of similar arguments by other participants, for example, one faculty wife noted that her husband had been forced to declare, "This house will never have two heads." Concerning decision making about family size, with probing the discussions in the faculty men's group and the

faculty wives' group revealed a sequential, interactive process that sometimes took several years to resolve. Important considerations included the supply of sons and developments in the family's economic circumstances. The demands of a husband's relatives--and in particular, of his mother--on a wife were also reported to be frequently irritating. In that connection village women noted that amid a general breakdown of old rules, young wives were becoming less obedient to their mothers-in-law, and in the face of economic hardship their sons increasingly sided with their wives against their mothers.

Members of the National Youth Service corps, both male and female, indicated that the traditional outlook of this culture was widely shared across the country. The males also paid lip service to granting their wives more say in family matters while also betraying a reluctance to relinquish dominance. The females expressed considerable discontent with the old order and a determination to resist it in their own lives, but they also conceded that change would be difficult. One member of the female group, however, of northern Muslim origin, insisted on the obligation of women to maintain positions of subordination to their husbands.

Role of Children

Although desired family sizes remain relatively high, with the rise of quality-of-life considerations in the face of hard times, the cost of children has become a universal concern. Areas of expenditure include education, health care, child care and househelp, and amenities--nutritional and other consumer imports, clothing, etc. Some of the expenses arise from a desire to

maintain one's children suitably in comparison with other families of similar status.

Do children help around the house? Village women reported declines from the past, citing increased schooling and a general decline in obedience. Physicians and faculty men talked of assigning tasks for the sake of instilling discipline and inculcating responsibility. Yet one of the faculty men commented, "It's just cosmetic. The tasks are not as demanding as what we had to do." Their obligations included taking part in farming and utom utop eyog--the hard manual labor of harvesting palm oil seeds, the premier cash crop of the area. Their families' ability to afford their school fees often depended on their work. As for contributing to family finances, the less well off expected their older children to help with the expenses involved in bringing up the younger ones, which would limit how much schooling the older ones can have.

The less well off likewise expressed expectations of old age support from their children, as they reported their own parents did. The well off indicated that they supported their parents, but they emphasized providing for their own future. As a physician summed up:

It is difficult to compare the past and the present. Looking back on our fathers, you could see that these fellows had to sacrifice a lot to make you become what you are today, and that their circumstances have not changed at all. You alone can change their circumstances. Therefore it is an obligation to look after them. But now we are in a position to try to provide for our own old age, so that now to start thinking that we are going to depend on our children, we might in fact misplace a number of factors because who knows, these children might not even grow up to accept any responsibilities, or may not be near you. So while we are trying to care for them, we have to make our own provisions.

Expectations of emotional support, however, in the form of visits and other tokens, were widely expressed regardless of economic position.

The practice of child fosterage emerges here in a new light. With probing the village women's group indicated that children were frequently sent to live with other families. In some cases these were difficult children who were sent to live with a schoolmaster for the purpose of discipline. In most cases, however, such children were sent to families who needed help with child care, or with errands such as fetching water or firewood, or with farmwork. Note that this meant the fostered children were in effect live-in servants. In the past there was no direct payment to their parents. The only expectation was that the foster family would provide for the children's well being and perhaps give them an opportunity for some schooling. Significantly, the foster family had to be people whom the children's parents knew well enough to entrust with their children. Over time, however, the children themselves grew ever more reluctant to go and live as other peoples' servants, preferring to attend school for themselves. Consequently, families that send out their children today are driven by dire need to do so and require direct payment from the foster families not only to the children but also to themselves. Furthermore, there is greater readiness to send out the children to unknown families, even from unfamiliar ethnic backgrounds. The faculty wives' group confirmed the increasing difficulty of finding live-in help, and expressed consternation at the rising demand of cash payment from the servants' parents in addition to paying the servants

themselves and sending them to school. The picture emerges from all this of an incipient child labor market, with cash being paid to parents in exchange for children going to live with and work for other families. The rise of such new uses of labor and of new labor markets classically signals the penetration of capitalism.

Kinship

The Western notion of "extended family" is an alien concept lacking translation in the local language, despite a variety of terms describing spans of kin networks--ekpuk, onung, ufök, ubon. In addition to his wife and children, a man's family includes all relatives. Obligations to his in-laws are also routinized. The faculty men's group, made up of social scientists and humanists educated in the West, noted that although they employed the phrase, extended family, in discussion in English, the closest meaning they could find for it in indigenous terms was the totality of relatives and nonrelatives--such as live-in help--for whom they had assumed responsibility.

Expressions about exchanges with kin indicate incipient nucleation of family life. For example, a faculty man summed up the nucleating effect of migration taking place as part of proletarian life in a market economy: "The modern job has taken us away from our extended families." Yet the old ties remain strong. As another faculty man remarked, "If my brothers were living here, I would associate more with them than with others." Concerning material assistance, proletarianization in combination with mass impoverishment seems to be fostering family nucleation and a general individuation of outlook. A faculty wife summed

up: "You give as you can afford. If you don't have anything, you can't help anybody."

Other-Networks

The Committee of Friends exemplifies the emergence of new networks as an adaptation in the structure of risk devolution. They consciously set out to constitute itself as a social support network: "This group tries to live like a family." In response to the question, suppose any of you came upon circumstances where you needed some help, would you prefer to come to this group, or would you rather go to relatives? several members spoke of the traditional obligation to go to the agnatic family first. One member, however, spoke emphatically of emerging strains: "When I lost my father, I thought my family would be more useful to me...it is normal to expect it...but I realized that my friends were more useful to me than my family."

In response to the question, what expectations do you have of future help or support from your children? the topic of family nucleation came up without any prompting, and the consensus view was summed up by three of the members as follows:

In fifty years' time, I think the (span) of this extended family will be highly reduced. There is going to be something very close to the nuclear family.

Extended family, what is the basic cause? It is because you are not self-sufficient, so you look for help from your relatives...but the present generation is moving towards self-sufficiency. My children will live an independent life, not dependent, and with this sense of direction, you will see that in about thirty years' time, the issue of extended family must have come to a minimum.

In fact, some families have already developed (nuclear form. On the whole) we are about 35% tied to this extended family system. Before now, we were about 100% tied to it. When the time comes, we shall have been able to completely extricate ourselves from the extended family system.

Implications for Research

The larger issue in this study concerns the approach to understanding Africa, and to understanding social change. The purpose of beginning with a question about the prospects for fertility decline in Africa is to explore supplementary perspectives to the conventional approach. What emerges is a need in the first place to clarify terms, such as extended family vs. family networks of varying span; modernization vs. proletarianization and Westernization; child fosterage vs. the emergence of a child labor market; rise of the modern sector vs. penetration of capitalism. Note that it requires no avowal of socialist teleology to recognize concrete historical processes for what they are.

The view presented here recognizes family nucleation as an adaptation in the structure of risk devolution. Adaptation to what? Following Tilly (1984), first, seek to understand underlying structural shifts--most markedly, proletarianization, following from the penetration of capitalist economic relations and the monetization of exchange. The overlaying impact of new ideas and Western culture through mass education, mass media and family planning programs can only reinforce attitudinal adjustments for which the structural shifts will already have created a predisposition. Culture is significant, according to Lavelly (1986), as "a filter through which ideas from outside are adapted to local circumstances." Thus the form of disengagement from networks of kin could differ (ben Baruch, 1986).

In this light, family nucleation emerges as one of several possible adaptations to meet the challenges in the emerging circumstances. Other adaptations include migration, urbanization, child fosterage, mutual assistance associations, trade unions and other secondary networks. In this culture, similar networks have long existed--efe etibe were mutual savings societies, whether made up men or women, and gowana were women's mutual assistance groups for farm upkeep (weeding, etc.). A club like the Committee of Friends therefore represents a new form of collective adaptation with a long standing background indeed. Thus the outstanding research need which emerges is for analysis of mutual assistance networks and associations. For example, it should be especially enlightening to compile a collective biography of the Committee of Friends over time.

As for the prospects for fertility decline in Africa, a possible approach to understanding the persistence of desire for large families may lie in understanding the extent to which such networks are able to sustain high fertility. Might it be the case on the other hand that present perceptions have yet to catch up with an underlying fact that high fertility is already no longer sustainable? Questions arising include how quickly successive cohorts reduce their estimates of maximum numbers of children, how much of stopping short of earlier desired numbers takes place over time, how much age difference between cohorts it requires for given reductions in completed fertility, and what strains and tensions emerge meanwhile.

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Annex A

FAMILY NUCLEATION AND FERTILITY CHANGE IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Discussion Guide for Village Women's Group

A. Introduction

- Welcome, and thanks for coming
- Reason for session -- to learn about family life today
- Need your help -- open expression of opinions and outlook
- Session will be tape recorded
- General introductions

B. Background

- ✓ First, for general background, have group members spent most of their lives in a village setting?
- ✓ Have you ever lived in a town? Where? For how long?

C. Marriage

- ✓ How old were you when you got married, and how old was your husband?
- ✓ On the whole, what is a good age at marriage for women and for men? Why?

D. Family size

- ✓ How many children do you have? .
- ✓ Are you going to have any more? Why?
- ✓ Are young people today having fewer children than their parents did? Why?

*****PROBE FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION AND CONSUMER GOODS*****

- ✓ Do children today help around the house more or less than before?

E. Child survival

- ✓ Do many children or babies die today because of serious sickness?
- ✓ Does this happen more or less than before?
 - Do people in your village worry much about losing children?
 - Does this affect how many children they have? In what way?
- ✓ What of the saying, a man or woman without a child might as well not have been born?

F. Child spacing and childbearing

- ✓ Is it better to have a child right after marriage or to wait? Why? And for how long?

- ✓ Do you know any couples who got married and did not have a child immediately? Why?
- ✓ Is it better to space children or to have them in quick succession? Why?
- ✓ Does breastfeeding a child help delay the next pregnancy? How?
- ✓ After giving birth, how long should a husband and wife wait before resuming sex together?
- ✓ What is a good age for the wife to finish childbearing? Why?
- ✓ Should married couples stop having sex together when they get old? When should they stop? Why?

G. Reproductive decision making

- ✓ Who has primary responsibility for deciding on number of children -- husband, wife, others? Why?
- ✓ Did you ever discuss desired number of children with your husband?
 - Did he agree with you on the desired number?
 - In case of disagreement, whose desired number was higher?
 - Who made the final decision? Why?
- ✓ If husband and wife disagree about how soon to have a child after marriage or how many children to have, whose opinion should prevail? Why?
- ✓ Have you ever said anything to your children about how many children they should have, or when?
- ✓ Do your children agree with you? Do parents generally advise their children on this matter?

H. Birth control

- ✓ If a couple wants no more children, what can they do to prevent having more? *****PROBE FOR SPECIFIC METHODS*****
- ✓ Is birth control practiced widely today? More than in earlier days?
- ✓ Twenty years ago, before modern methods were available, what could couples do to stop having children?
- ✓ Did couples ever practice ~~abstinence~~ or withdrawal?
 - When did you first learn about birth control?
 - From what source(s) of information?
- ✓ By the way, who should decide about birth control? The husband or the wife? Why?
- ✓ In the past, did people send out children to live with others? Why? To Whom?

✓ Is this done today? Under what circumstances?

I. Other husband-wife relations

✓ Does your husband often discuss things with you before making important decisions, or does he like to make decisions by himself?

✓ In case of disagreement, whose view prevails? Why?

◦ Are there certain activities that your husband strongly objects to you undertaking?

◦ What are these activities? Why does he object?

◦ Are there certain activities that you strongly object to your husband undertaking?

◦ What are these activities? Why do you object?

✓ Who has primary responsibility for taking care of the children and the household? Why?

J. Support in old age

✓ What are your expectations about support and help from your children? In what ways (economic/non-economic)?

◦ What kind of help are you receiving?

✓ Has the extent of help children give parents in old age changed? How so?

✓ Is the type of help changing? How? And why?

K. Relations with extended family

Thinking of your extended family (that is, nditö mfo, ye nditö nditö uka y'usö, ye mm'uyaka, ye ntoro):

◦ What are your expectations about support and help from them?

◦ What kind of help are you receiving? *From whom?*

✓ Are younger people today honoring their family obligations as much as before?

L. Other social networks

◦ Is the person that you think of as your best friend related to you in any way?

✓ By the way, on what basis do you take this person as your best friend?

◦ Considering all the people with whom you exchange visits and assistance, what is the approximate ratio of relatives to non-relatives?

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PRESENTATIONS BASED ON THE PROJECT

1. Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America, 1985.
2. Annual Meetings of the Georgia Sociological Association, 1986.
3. W.E.B. DuBois Conference, Atlanta University, 1987.
4. World Bank Seminar, June 1985 (in combination with results of another focus group study).
5. Reproductive Health Group Seminar, Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta GA, 1986.
6. Lecture to Population and Resources class, Emory University, Atlanta GA, 1986.
7. Political Science Departmental Seminar, Atlanta University, 1984.

PROPOSED PUBLICATIONS FROM THE PROJECT

1. Family Nucleation and Fertility Decline in Tropical Africa: Adaptations in the Structure of Risk Devolution
target: Population and Development Review
2. Family Life in Transition?
target: Research for Development (Ibadan)
3. Focus Group Research in Africa