



Household and Family in Past Time: Comparative Studies in the Size and Structure of the Domestic Group.

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The controversy over whether 'history' and 'anthropology' are different disciplines continues and this book provides a useful contribution to the debate. It briefly summarises some of the theoretical issues and points out that, in practice, the anthropologist will miss large areas of both the present and the past if he does not use documentary historical material. Professor Pitt then provides a practical account of how such sources are to be used: where the materials are to be found, the types of document that are likely to survive and be of value to the anthropologist, how to use guides to records. Suggestions are made as to how to record and index the material and how to evaluate the contents. Finally, the author's own fieldwork in Samoa is drawn on to illustrate how a particular community study benefited from the use of historical sources. There is a useful bibliography, though one could add items, for example G. Kitson Clark, *Guide for research students working on historical subjects* and William Matthews's two works on *British diaries* and *British autobiographies*.

Excluding the case study there are sixty-two pages, most of which are devoted to practical problems. It is not, therefore, fair to expect the author to get much involved in the larger issues of the way in which historical material, once invoked, requires a new explanatory framework. Such sources wreak a peculiar destructive magic, turning to dust the beautiful but insubstantial functional and structural models. It is arguable that it was only by excluding historical material that anthropologists were able to simplify the complexity of human life to a level where it seemed possible to achieve a new synthesis. By delimiting in time, as they did in space, they seemed able to achieve an overview of all thoughts and actions. They could then show how these were linked. We now know that this was largely a deception, but in the agony of destruction it is uncertain how much can be saved from the wreck. Here Professor Pitt is least helpful. It is not clear from the summary of his own work what lasting advantage he has gained from *anthropology*. But then, that is not the purpose of the book. Judged in its own terms, it is a helpful contribution.

ALAN MACFARLANE

LASLETT, PETER (ed.). *Household and family in past time: comparative studies in the size and structure of the domestic group* . . . ; with the assistance of Richard Wall. xii, 623 pp., illus., tables, bibliogr. Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1972. £12

The accidental discovery of a seventeenth-century English list of inhabitants, combined with the enthusiasm of Peter Laslett, has led to the publication of this very large book. It has

also helped to add a new dimension to historical studies. Listings have proliferated. This volume is perhaps most important as evidence for the enormous quantity of such documents, scattered over time and space. The contributors analyse lists for England from 1574 onwards, France in 1644 and the nineteenth century, Corsica in the eighteenth century, the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Liège in 1801, Serbia from the sixteenth century onwards, and north America from the eighteenth century. The most fascinating documents are a listing for Tuscany made in 1427 and covering 264,000 persons, and the repetitive listings of certain Japanese communities from 1671 onwards. The latter provide almost annual censuses of the population covered.

Perhaps the most striking conclusion is that households (defined residentially), have changed little in size, in England and Japan at least, between about 1600 and 1900. Thus Laslett writes of England that household size has 'remained fairly constant at 4.75 or a little under, from the earliest point for which we have found figures, until as late as 1901' (p. 126). Chie Nakane concludes that 'There is a remarkable similarity in mean household size in 1663 and in 1959' (p. 520), for Japan. Industrialisation and urbanisation have had little effect. As for the structure of the household, if anything, it became *more* complex with the first phases of industrialisation. For instance, as Anderston shows for Preston, there is evidence that households had more co-resident kin in 1851 than either before or after that date (p. 220). The variations in household size and structure are exhaustively analysed, and there is considerable discussion of how a household is to be defined. A number of contributors, however, disagree with the general editor's theoretical distinctions (e.g. notes to pp. 279 and 297). The pictorial representation of listings in 'ideographs' is of interest to anthropologists.

The major criticism one can make is of the source, a listing. As Laslett himself warns, 'obviously there is little to be gained from recovering the facts about the size and composition of the domestic group unless their influence on behaviour can be gauged' (p. 10). Goody makes the same point in several places (e.g. p. 119), but none of the contributors has been able to heed the warning. Demos alone has ventured on to the effect of structures, and his article is a warning of the dangers of conjecture based on very little evidence. An enormous amount can be squeezed from good listings, and this is best illustrated by the superb article by Hayami and Uchida on Tokugawa era Japan. This raises many hypotheses concerning the relation between social structure and industrial-

isation. Pre-industrial Japan shared the following features with pre-industrial England; high geographical mobility, impartible inheritance, small residential units, bilateral kinship terminology, very slowly growing population, contraception (probably), a moderately late age at marriage for males and females. It seems likely that these were interconnected variables and may help to explain the location and timing of industrialisation. Several contributors allude to this problem, but are unable to pursue it far because of the data used.

This is an extremely expensive book. By cutting out many of the more detailed tables and diagrams (e.g. pp. 224 sqq., 443–71), and merely summarising them, at least a third could have been taken off the price. The detailed figures will only be of interest to specialists and should have appeared as periodical articles. The expense is especially unfortunate since this *is* an important and stimulating volume. It is an enormous storehouse of data and helps to open up many important areas where social anthropologists could make an invaluable contribution.

ALAN MACFARLANE

WYNN, MARGARET. *Family policy: a study of the economic costs of rearing children and their social and political consequences*. 384 pp., tables, bibliogr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972. 65p

The general message of this book is that instead of the almost inevitable poverty with which they are rewarded, parents who have more than one or two children should be subsidised by the rest of society. Margaret Wynn, the mother of four, rightly points out that usually 'the standard of living of a family falls as each new baby is added' (p. 47), and that the assessments of the cost of children upon which social security payments are made are very inaccurate. This leads to considerable 'under-investment in children, with all its very long-term social consequences' (p. 113). A specially added epilogue to this edition argues, somewhat unconvincingly, that such subsidising does not clash with birth control campaigns. Of what value to anthropologists is this book?

No anthropological work is cited; the argument rests on a limited range of Western studies. This is understandable since there are still very few analyses of the cost of child-rearing and of family budgeting by anthropologists. The growing interest in this branch of economic anthropology should benefit from this book since Margaret Wynn has assembled a very useful survey of studies of domestic expenditure in Europe and north America. Much of this is well presented in visual form, and there is a good bibliography.

Anyone who is interested, for example, in the way family budgets fluctuate over the life-cycle, the problems of constructing 'consumption units', or of measuring 'poverty', will find this book most helpful.

ALAN MACFARLANE

ETHNIES: Anglo-French Conference on Race Relations in France and Great Britain . . . Vol. 1. 209 pp., tables. Paris, The Hague: Mouton, 1972. F 28

The appearance of a journal such as *Ethnies* reminds us of the usefulness of comparative and historical perspectives in race relation studies. This first issue concentrates on reporting a conference held in September, 1968—the slowness of publication is unwittingly reinforced by Deakin when referring to studies of the survey of Race Relations conducted over five years ago, and not yet published. The conference (at Sussex University) was jointly organised by the Centre for Multi-Racial Studies and the Institute for Inter-Ethnic Study and Research at Nice—the latter organisation hopes to publish *Ethnies* annually.

Volume 1 contains seventeen articles, divided about equally between representatives from the thirty or so English and French conference participants—half the pieces are printed fully in French with short translations in summary form. The 1972 edition would seem to be an exclusively French production.

The English contributions are familiar stuff—e.g. Little and Deakin looking backwards into the mists of the 1950's and early 1960's, Bagley and Hashmi on stress, and Rex theorising about conflict in the urban context. A sense of *déjà vu* is not helped by liberal doses of conference *politesse*, e.g. 'Perhaps I could summarise for our English/French friends', or 'As Professor X has put it so well . . .'—all of which could have been edited out during the four-year interval.

Some of the French articles parallel their English work, e.g. psychological aspects of colour (Raveau and Morin) and a review of the organisation of inter-ethnic study (Bes-saignet). More interesting are the unfulfilled possibilities of two articles on gypsies—the distribution of questionnaires via police-stations seems to be a somewhat counter-productive method! Work on Senegalese and Haitians seems familiar enough, even in the apparent minimal employment of participatory techniques. Perhaps the most useful article is that by Bastide. Here the pivotal significance of inter-ethnic research, using inter-disciplinary terms, is underlined—a point also developed by Jullien and Rocheteau in their concern to clarify concepts such as ethnicity.