

AN APPROACH TO THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF  
KINSHIP IN A WESTERN-TYPE SOCIETY

by

GORDON RAHAN INGLIS  
B.A., University of British Columbia, 1959

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

ANTHROPOLOGY and SOCIOLOGY

We accept this thesis as conforming to the  
required standard

The University of British Columbia

August, 1964

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Department of ANTHROPOLOGY and SOCIOLOGY

The University of British Columbia,  
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date Sept. 20, 1964

ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the development of some methods and concepts by which kinship behaviour in Western urban societies may be studied quantitatively, and with the data derived from an experimental application of them.

Questionnaires filled out by 185 students in the introductory course in Anthropology were analyzed. In the light of this analysis, the inadequacies of some definitions and uses of the term "kindred" are demonstrated, and the concepts of "potential kindred" and "effective kindred" are suggested. In an approach to the investigation of the importance of kin relationships, kin terminology and the naming of children are considered, and a "kin-use index" is derived for the quantitative expression of dependence upon kin for support. Findings stress the importance of the nuclear family, and suggest a matrilateral bias in kinship knowledge and behaviour.

The influence of propinquity and separation upon kin relationships is explored by means of an application of the concept of pheric distance and the development of a numerical index of interaction between kinsmen. Again the findings show a nuclear family pattern with a matrilateral bias. Also considered in this connection are findings that suggest an uxori-local pattern of residence.

In conclusion, the implications of the findings are discussed in comparison with the model of American kinship presented by Talcott Parsons, and some suggestions about the application of modified versions of the methods and concepts used in this study are made.

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## INTRODUCTION

The study here reported was planned as an investigation of kinship behaviour among a group of middle class residents of Vancouver, with particular emphasis upon demography and upon the exchange among kinsmen of tangible assistance and support. The study was intended to test no particular hypothesis, but rather to investigate the validity of certain assumptions about North American kinship that are to be found in our system of folk-belief and - at least implicitly - in some of the professional literature.

An important ideal in our folk-system concerns the independence of the nuclear family. Emphasis upon separate households, upon self-determination, and upon privacy for the nuclear family unit reinforce the idea of its independence. It is obvious, however, that no such unit can be truly independent, except possibly through subsisting by the efforts of its members alone, remote from other human beings. In reality, the nuclear family in our society is embedded in a complex network of relationships, linking it, as a unit and through its individual members, to other units and individuals of the larger society. How much of this network is a kin network? What part do friendly and pseudo-kin relationships play?

Talcott Parsons, in an article on the kinship system of the contemporary United States, writes: "...the typical conjugal family lives in a home segregated from those of both pairs of parents (if living) and is economically independent from both" (1943:27). How many "independent" households are set

up on funds borrowed from or given by the parents of the marriage partners? To what extent is the material basis for the new family's way of life provided by wedding presents, and to what extent is it enabled to maintain a way of life because of the provision of "baby-sitting" and other services by kin and friends?

Parsons' paragraph continues: "In a very large proportion of cases the geographical separation is considerable" (1943:27). How large a proportion of cases, and how great is the separation?

Questions such as these must be answered with some precision before valid generalizations about our kinship system can be made, and it was as an exploration of some of them that the present study took shape.

A questionnaire was drawn up in which informants were asked to supply, anonymously, the following data:

- (a) age, religion, place of birth, and so on, for themselves and both of their parents,
- (b) the present location of, and the extent of their contact with, as many of their kinsmen as they could remember,
- (c) the source of their own names, and the terms of address commonly used by them for their parents and collaterals in the first ascending generation,
- (d) statements about commensality and the sources from which they would seek assistance and financial support in case of need.

(See Appendix for a full copy of the questionnaire.)

Initially, it was planned to collect a number of responses to this questionnaire and to use the results as a guide to more intensive investigation by means of interviews. As the work progressed, two factors emerged to change this plan. First, the questionnaire, although possessing many flaws that are now obvious, seemed to provide by itself data of a quantity and type to be worthy of more extensive analysis than was originally intended. Second, the few experimental interviews conducted took so long that it became apparent that the collection of the sort of information desired from a significant

number of informants by this method would demand much more time than a single investigator could devote to the project.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this report is based upon questionnaires completed by students in the Introductory Anthropology class. Some dozen interviews, formal and informal, with members of the class and with others, are drawn upon in speculating about the interpretation of the data derived from the questionnaires.

Before proceeding with the report, some further defence of this method of approach seems desirable. It is my opinion that in this, as in most other areas of anthropological investigation, the pressing current need is for quantitative information. If we wish to claim any validity for qualitative statements about behaviour, attitudes, or beliefs, relating to kinship or to any other aspect of human social action, those statements must be based upon clearly quantifiable data. If we are to say, for example, that the North American nuclear family is an independent unit, we must also be able to say of what this independence consists, and what measurements may be applied to ascertain it.

Because so much of North American social action - at least among the middle and upper socioeconomic strata - is carried on with a well-nigh unparalleled degree of privacy, direct observation of behaviour will not provide an adequate quantitative base for generalizations about many aspects of our society. Informants can be asked to report behaviour, but the interview method is fraught with difficulties besides those already mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup> A related problem which might be expected to have been of more importance if I had been depending solely upon interviews to get information about numbers of kin is described by Helen Codere in writing of a genealogical study among her students at Vassar: "Collecting genealogies in an interview was experimented with, but proved to be impractical, principally because it seemed impossible to control in any non-interfering way the flood of reminiscence and reflection about self, kin, and society that the interview situation touched off. There were so many digressions that the interviewee was understandably never ready to vouch for completeness and was never able to keep that goal in mind" (1955:67).



If it is desired to explore very far the complexities and inter-relationships of even a limited segment of social action, the demands on the time of the investigator make a team approach the only efficient one, with a resulting diminution in consistency of interpretation. Finding members of our bustling society who are willing to spend the time required of good informants may present a real problem; if they are found, the group of talkative informants so formed can hardly be represented as typical of their society. There is also the question of how far the information gained from interviews represents statements about actual behaviour and how far it represents the values of the informant and the norms of his society. It may be expected that face-to-face confrontation will lead the informant to reflect upon the impression he is making on the interviewer, and upon the "right" answers to his questions. The limitations already mentioned on the possibility of observation make checking the accuracy of interview responses difficult. In short, the ordinary methods of anthropological field-work cannot be depended upon to yield from complex western societies the kind of results yielded by the same methods employed among societies of smaller size composed of non-literate people.

It is my opinion that some of these difficulties can be avoided by an approach like the one employed in this study.

It is apparent that, although as many sociological studies are conducted among university students as among convicts and slum-dwellers, there is a strong professional feeling that such studies are in some way less creditable than others. Certainly, the difficulties of reaching and establishing rapport are less with a student group than with almost any other, but difficulty of access can hardly be taken as a measure of the value of a study. Indeed, if the need for the large-scale collection of quantifiable data be admitted, the accessibility of these informants must be a strong argument in favour of their use.

It is true, of course, that a group of university students do not constitute a sample "typical" of their society. However, sampling methods that are feasible for a small-scale study are unlikely to produce a group of informants that is much better in this regard. In sum, I feel that whatever the students used in this study may lack in desirability as a group of informants is more than made up for by the fact that, since they are themselves engaged in introductory studies in the social sciences, they can be made aware of the importance of care and accuracy in giving information. The suitability of using informants of this age group for a study of this kind will be discussed later.

One of the major drawbacks to the questionnaire as a method of collecting data of any depth is the difficulty of presenting instructions in such a way as to ensure consistency and accuracy of responses. Printed directions that attempt to allow for all possible misinterpretations become tedious to read, and a comprehensive questionnaire is likely to be unwieldy and discouraging to even a cooperative informant.<sup>2</sup> However, when questionnaires are administered to a large group under the direction of an investigator who is fully familiar with the questions and the purposes of the investigation, and who "works through" the items with the group, many of these difficulties can be avoided. Printed directions can be kept to a minimum, and the director of the questionnaire can, by vocal emphasis, illustration, and repetition, deliver a set of carefully prepared instructions much more efficiently than he could in print. If points are missed or inadequately covered, the informants can ask for clarification.

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<sup>2</sup> Ideally, questions should be presented in such a way as not to require instructions. However, framing such questions to elicit information of the sort dealt with here is, if not impossible, at least well beyond the capabilities of this writer.

It seems to me that this method of administering a questionnaire, through the stimulation of participation in a group activity and the encouragement of the person administering it, provides for the informants much more motivation to respond than they would have if they were to complete the questionnaire in private. At the same time, anonymity is preserved, and it seems reasonable to expect that the informants will feel able to respond more frankly than they might in a face-to-face encounter.

The rather lengthy questionnaire used in this study was presented in a single lecture period. It now appears that a better method might have been to present a series of shorter questionnaires during portions of a number of lecture periods. One of the problems with the larger questionnaire is the fact that some informants can complete some sections faster than other informants, and it becomes difficult to keep the attention of the whole group focussed on the same section. Also, the interest and participation of the informants could, presumably, be maintained at a more consistent level during shorter sessions. On the other hand, positive aspects of the method that was employed are, first, that the questionnaires could be completed anonymously, and second, that all of the required data were obtained from each informant who completed a questionnaire. If it had been administered in sections, some system of identification of informants would have been necessary, and it might be expected that irregular attendance at lecture periods would result in gaps in the information obtained from some informants.

Over-all, I feel that, in spite of the inadequacies of this study already touched upon, and more that will be dealt with later in the report, the method of investigation used has much to recommend it. At the very least, data such as these, collected from a large number of individuals and tabulated, is a major prerequisite for any study in depth of many aspects of social action in a large, complex, urban society.

## I

THE NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

Completed questionnaires were collected from a total of 248 informants. Since the married informants, 19 men and 6 women, because of the wide range in their ages, did not constitute a sub-group within the larger sample, but rather a set of 25 special cases, their questionnaires were eliminated. To further increase the homogeneity of the sample, the questionnaires of 20 males and 15 females born outside of Canada were also eliminated, leaving a total sample of 188; 107 females and 81 males, all single and all born in Canada.

These 188 informants formed a homogeneous group according to a variety of other criteria. Eighty-one per cent of them were between 19 and 22 years of age (see Table I), eighty-two per cent were registered in their second or third year of university (see Table II), and only twelve per cent had ever been employed on other than a "summer job" basis (see Table III). Most claimed Protestant religious affiliations (see Table IV). Ninety-two per cent claimed their parents' home as their permanent residence (see Table V (a)). Most had been born in British Columbia, and most had been born in urban areas (see Table VI).

TABLE I - Age of Informants

<u>Age</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
18	4	6	10	5.32
19	13	38	51	27.13
20	18	33	51	27.13
21	16	17	33	17.55
22	11	6	17	9.04
23	4	2	6	3.19
24	5	0	5	2.66
25	5	0	5	2.66
26	3	0	3	1.58
27	1	1	2	1.06
28	0	1	1	.53
29	1	1	2	1.06
45	0	1	1	.53
No response	0	1	1	.53
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>99.97</u>

TABLE II - Year of University

<u>Year</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1st	2	5	7	3.72
2nd	46	70	116	61.70
3rd	20	19	39	20.75
4th	12	13	25	13.29
5th	1	0	1	.53
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>99.99</u>

TABLE III - Occupations

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Teaching	1	5	6	3.19
Clerical	1	5	6	3.19
Technical	4	0	4	2.13
Nursing	0	1	1	2.66
Labour	5	0	5	.53
Armed Service	1	0	1	.53
No Occupation	69	96	165	87.75
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>99.98</u>

TABLE IV - Religion

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
United Church	18	38	56	29.79
Anglican	13	22	35	18.62
Other Protestant	11	19	30	15.96
Roman Catholic	8	7	15	7.98
Others	0	6	6	3.19
None *	25	11	36	19.15
No response	6	4	10	5.32
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.01</u>

\* This includes those reporting "none", "atheist", and "agnostic".

TABLE V (a) - Permanent Residencei. Location

<u>Place</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Greater Vancouver	61	78	139	73.93
Other in B.C.	12	26	38	20.21
Ontario	3	1	4	2.13
Nova Scotia	0	1	1	.53
None	2	0	2	1.06
No response	3	1	4	2.13
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>99.99</u>

ii. Type

<u>Household</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Parents	75	98	173	92.02
Friends	1	0	1	.53
Independent	5	9	14	7.45
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.00</u>

TABLE V (b) - Present Residence

<u>Household</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Parents	47	64	111	59.04
Other Kin	1	3	4	2.13
Friends	3	2	5	2.66
Independent	30	38	68	36.17
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.00</u>

TABLE VI - Place of Birth

<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Greater Vancouver	45	52	97	51.60
Other B.C.	15	25	40	21.28
Alberta	5	5	10	5.32
Saskatchewan	2	4	6	3.19
Manitoba	3	7	10	5.32
Ontario	7	6	13	6.91
Quebec	3	3	6	3.19
Nova Scotia	0	1	1	.53
New Brunswick	1	1	2	1.06
No response	0	3	3	1.58
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>99.98</u>
Urban	61	91	152	18.62
Rural	20	15	35	80.85
No response	0	1	1	.53
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.00</u>

As might be expected, the parents of the informants constituted a less homogeneous grouping than did the informants themselves. Twenty-six per cent of all parents were born outside of Canada, and although most of the parents, too, were born in urban areas, more parents than informants were born in rural areas (see Table VII (a)). As might be expected from the fact that all of the informants were Canadian-born, practically all of the parents not born in Canada have lived here for twenty years or more (see Table VII (b)). In religious affiliation, the parents show much the same proportions as the informants themselves, although fewer parents than informants are described as having no religion (see Table VIII).

TABLE VII (a) - Parents' Place of Birth

<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>		<u>Female Informants</u>		<u>Total</u>		<u>% of Total</u>	
	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
Canada	53	63	65	92	118	155	62.77	82.45
Other								
Br. Commonwealth	16	8	18	6	34	14	18.09	7.45
U.S.A.	4	1	6	2	10	3	5.32	1.58
Other	8	7	17	6	25	13	13.29	6.91
No response	0	2	1	1	1	3	.53	1.58
	<u>81</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>99.97</u>
Urban	44	42	68	71	112	113	59.57	60.10
Rural	35	38	39	36	74	74	39.36	39.36
No response	2	1	0	0	2	1	1.06	.53
	<u>81</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>99.99</u>	<u>99.99</u>



TABLE VII (b) - Length of Parents'  
Residence in Canada

<u>Approximate Date of Arrival</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>		<u>Female Informants</u>		<u>Total</u>		<u>% of Total</u>	
	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
1890 - 1900	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.45	-
1901 - 1910	6	2	4	2	10	4	14.49	13.33
1911 - 1920	10	6	5	3	15	9	21.74	30.00
1921 - 1930	8	8	19	4	27	12	39.13	40.00
1931 - 1940	0	0	9	3	9	3	13.04	10.00
1941 - 1950	1	0	2	0	3	0	4.35	-
1951 - 1960	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.45	-
No response	1	0	2	2	3	2	4.35	6.67
	<u>28</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>

TABLE VIII - Parents' Religion

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>		<u>Female Informants</u>		<u>Total</u>		<u>% of Total</u>	
	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
United Church	20	26	30	34	50	60	26.60	31.90
Anglican	15	18	17	21	32	39	17.02	20.75
Other Protestant	12	17	24	20	36	37	19.15	19.69
Roman Catholic	9	8	8	7	17	15	9.04	7.98
Others	0	0	7	7	7	7	3.72	3.72
None	16	5	19	16	35	21	18.62	11.17
No response	9	7	2	2	11	9	5.85	4.79
	<u>81</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>99.98</u>

My original plan was to pursue this study among the "middle class", or people of average socioeconomic status, but any attempt at this sort of selection of informants had to be discarded as the study developed into its present form. However, since there is ample reason to believe that socioeconomic status is an important factor in kinship behaviour,<sup>1</sup> some attempt will be made here to consider it. As a rough measurement of the socioeconomic status of the natal families of the informants, their fathers' occupations have been classified according to Otis Dudley Duncan's population decile scale (Reiss 1961:263 - 275). The results of this classification are shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX - Socioeconomic Status

<u>Population Decile Rank</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>	<u>Female Informants</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
10	16	33	49	30.06
9	16	12	28	17.18
8	16	7	23	14.11
7	5	11	16	9.82
6	5	6	11	6.75
5	4	8	12	7.36
4	2	1	3	1.84
3	2	5	7	4.29
2	2	6	8	4.91
1	1	5	6	3.68
	<u>69</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>163 *</u>	<u>100.00</u>

\* Because of the vagueness of some responses, not all fathers' occupations could be classified.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Young and Willmott, 1962; Firth 1956.

## II

KIN RECOGNIZED1. Kin Groupings

Kinship, which may be defined as socially recognized biological relationship, provides the individual with ready-made avenues for social interaction. A kinship system, by prescription and proscription, by ascription and provision for the achievement of status and role, channels the interaction among kinsmen into a discernible pattern.

Of the American (i.e. United States) kinship system, Schneider and Homans write:

"The American kinship system is marked by bilateral descent, and the nuclear family and the kindred are the basic kin groups. Marriage is monogamous, residence neolocal, and inheritance by political or other office simply through kinship ties. The range of kinship is narrow, and kinship tends to be sharply divorced from other institutions such as the occupational system..." (1955:1194).

Talcott Parsons has described the same system as an "open, multilinear, conjugal system" (1943:24).

I am not aware of any similar descriptions of a specifically Canadian system, and this study is in no sense an attempt to describe one. It is an attempt to examine certain aspects of whatever system exists in the society of which my informants are a part, and to draw some comparisons with existing studies of systems that may be assumed to be similar.

The questionnaire used in this study contained a blank chart upon which informants were asked to enter, by category, as many of their kinsmen as they could, along with information about each kinsman's location and the extent of

contact between him and the informant. The chart included spaces designated for the named categories of own siblings, mother, father, siblings of both parents, paternal and maternal cousins, four grandparents, and grandparents' siblings. Spaces entitled "other" provided room for any other categories of relationship, and there was provision for the spouses and offspring of kin in the named categories.

Since this study has come to focus on kin contacts and the potential use of kin as sources of assistance, deceased kinsmen have been excluded from consideration. Apparently because of poor arrangement of categories on the chart, a number of informants neglected to enter their parents on it, although they had given information about them earlier; since the importance to these informants of their natal families is clearly established by such data as the high percentage claiming their parents' home as their own permanent residence and by other data to be dealt with later, parents have also been excluded in any consideration of the total numbers of kin recognized.<sup>1</sup>

The resulting data show, for each informant, as far as he was able to report it, the group of people, excluding his parents, with whom he recognized a kin relationship, and with whom there is some potential for his interaction.

There is some question about the best term for this group. In her Vassar study, Codere has used "kin-group" for the total group of living and dead relatives reported by each of her informants, and she makes comparisons with "the kin-group of primitive and folk societies" (1955:68). With this terminology, there is danger of confusing the kinds of groupings referred to.

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No provision was made in the chart for re-marriages after divorce or the death of one marriage partner. Only three informants reported the results of such arrangements (two sets of "mother's" siblings, for example) and these have been excluded in any consideration of the particular categories of kin affected. This seems to be a low proportion of re-marriages, and I suspect that some informants may have neglected to include this kind of information because of the difficulty of fitting it into the chart provided.

George Peter Murdock defines kin groups as "social groupings based on kinship ties" (1960:41). Paul Bohannan gives a clearer definition when he writes:

"A kinship group is a number of roles bound together in socially recognized kinship relationships and syndromes; it is an entity in the "real" world in the sense that people who play the roles recognize it in their daily lives and perhaps give it a name. The kinship group must be distinguished from the kinship category, which is a group of kinsmen who happen to be called by the same term. It must also be distinguished from a kinship network, which is composed of the biological relationships among human beings. There are two kinds of kinship groups. One is called a family; it contains affines as well as consanguines. The other can be called the consanguine kinship group; it contains no affines"(1963:72).

It is clear that in this study and Codere's we are concerned with groups containing "affines as well as consanguines". The question remains: are we dealing with kinship groups?

Murdock appears to think so:

"The commonest type of bilateral kin group...is the kindred. In our society, where its members are collectively called "kinfolk" or "relatives", it includes that group of near kinsmen who may be expected to be present and participant on important ceremonial occasions, such as weddings, christenings, funerals, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, and "family reunions". Members of a kindred visit and entertain one another freely, and between them marriage and pecuniary transactions for profit are ordinarily taboo. One turns to them for aid when one finds oneself in difficulties. However much they may disagree or quarrel, they are expected to support one another against criticism or affronts from outsiders. The kindred in other societies has comparable characteristics" (1950:56-57).

This definition of the kindred is unsuitable for the present purpose and, in many ways, inconsistent with "common knowledge" about Western kinship. The qualification of "near" kinsmen, and the specification of the kinds of behaviour expected of members of the kindred suggest that it is a kinship group as defined by Bohannan. However, the collective terms "kinfolk" and "relatives" make it clear that Murdock is referring to a group

of people who simply happen to be related in some way to a given individual, which is more like Bohannan's "kinship network".

As Murdock himself points out (1960:60), kindreds "can never be the same for any two individuals with the exception of own siblings",<sup>2</sup> and thus, for obvious reasons, kindreds "can rarely act as a collectivity" (1960:61). In view of this, it is difficult to understand why he suggests that members must "support one another against criticisms or affronts from outsiders", for they are defined as "members" or "outsiders" only by reference to a given individual.

Bohannan's description of the same kind of grouping in our society seems to me to be preferable, although I feel that he does not carry it far enough:

"The English word "family" is, in popular usage, extended to include any group of kinsmen. "Family business", "family council", and "family picnic" are examples in which the word is used for any group of people, tracing kinship links to one another, who carry out some activity. "Family" groups of this sort are limited by nonkinship factors - personal interest and propinquity being the secondary limiting factors after the primary criterion of kinship itself. They are groups of kinsmen, but they are not kinship groups - membership may be restricted, but it is not compulsory. Kinship, in such a group, is a criterion for admission, not an organizing principle"(1963:124).

We can distinguish in our society three kinds of grouping. There is the nuclear family which is a kinship group by Bohannan's definition; there is the group formed by all the people with whom a given ego can trace a relationship, which is Bohannan's "kinship network"; and there is the group of kinsmen with whom a given ego has social interaction, which is neither. In the structurally normal case, these three groupings may be thought of,

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<sup>2</sup> It might be pedantically argued that not even the kindreds of two siblings would be identical, for each would contain the other. In this paper I shall follow the convention of using "natal family" and "conjugal family" for the two ego-oriented nuclear families. Whenever the term "nuclear family" is used in relation to the present informants, it obviously refers to the natal family since none of the informants are married.

from ego's point of view, as concentric circles. The important fact is that the latter two are not "groups" to all the "members" but only to ego.

I am reluctant to add confusion by coining new terms, so I shall risk the lesser confusion of qualifying old ones. I shall use the term potential kindred to designate the largest circle, including all those persons with whom ego recognizes a kin relationship; and effective kindred to designate the second circle, including those members of the potential kindred with whom ego actually has some sort of interaction.

## 2. The Potential Kindred

As far as I am aware, there is nothing in our system of folk-belief that defines the limits of the potential kindred. Rather, we recognize merely degrees of "distance" of relationship. By the use of modifiers like "second" and "once removed", the term "cousin" is capable of extension to include almost any collateral at any genealogical distance. Thus, there seems to be no reason to set up, for this study, any arbitrary limits.

The effective kindred, of course, is defined by each individual and his kinsmen, for beyond the nuclear family - or perhaps the extended family - there are no prescriptions for behaviour between kinsmen apart from vague folk-sayings of the "blood is thicker than water" type. Social interaction may be continued or discontinued at the choice of the individuals concerned.

The range of kin reported by my informants is, as Parsons and Homans and Schneider reported for the Americans, narrow. Few kinsmen were reported beyond first cousins, but most informants reported kin in the categories within that range (see Table X). Thus, it appears that, although the limits of the potential kindred are not prescribed, the customary limits may be discerned empirically with some precision.

Emphasis upon the nuclear family is apparently the major factor here.

TABLE X - Range of the Potential Kindred

<u>Categories Named on Questionnaire</u>	<u>Total Number of Kin Reported</u>	<u>Informants Reporting</u>		<u>Average Number per Informants Reporting</u>
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	
Own siblings, their spouses and offspring	608	170	90.43	3.57
Fathers' siblings and their spouses	960	163	86.70	5.89
Paternal cousins, their spouses and offspring	2,073	149	79.26	13.91
Mothers' siblings and their spouses	1,030	164	87.23	6.28
Maternal cousins, their spouses and offspring	2,233	154	81.91	14.50
Fathers' fathers	27	27	14.36	1.00
Fathers' mothers	42	42	22.34	1.00
Fathers' fathers' siblings, their spouses and offspring	153	35	18.62	4.37
Fathers' mothers' siblings, their spouses and offspring	109	26	13.83	4.19
Mothers' fathers	39	39	20.74	1.00
Mothers' mothers	72	72	38.30	1.00
Mothers' fathers' siblings, their spouses and offspring	130	28	14.89	4.64
Mothers' mothers' siblings, their spouses and offspring	259	54	28.72	4.80
<u>Other Categories Reported by Informants</u>				
Mother's step-sister	2	1	.53	-
"2nd Cousins" (no other designation of relationship)	2	1	.53	-
Father's sister's husband's sister	1	1	.53	-
Mother's mother's cousin	1	1	.53	-



Each marriage partner carries with him detailed knowledge of his own natal family. This knowledge is passed on to his offspring, but most of it is apparently not transmitted to the next descending generation. This is consistent with Parsons' description of the American system as "a 'conjugal' system that is 'made up' exclusively of interlocking conjugal families" (1943:24).

Some indication of a matrilateral emphasis is given by the fact that ten per cent more of the informants reported mothers' parents' siblings than report fathers' parents' siblings. The fact that more of the informants' mothers were Canadian-born, along with a probable lower average age at marriage for women would help to account for this. Further indications of a matrilateral bias and their implications will be discussed later.

If the customary range of the potential kindred is taken as established, it would appear that its size is dependent largely upon the vagaries of fertility, and influenced by geographical separation and whatever personal selections of relationships have been made by the two ascending generations of ego's lineal kin. Correlation of the size of the potential kindreds reported with religion, rural or urban birth, and social status suggest that such factors as these may also have some influence, but more precise measurements for a larger sample would be required before generalizations could be made. In Tables XII, XIII, and XIV, the numbers involved are too small and the correlations not definite enough to draw any conclusions.

In any discussion of the potential kindred it must be borne in mind that the age of the informants is also a factor. As an individual grows from childhood to adulthood to old age, his knowledge of kin may increase; almost certainly new individuals will be added to the total by birth. As Table XI shows, a majority of these informants have a potential kindred of from eleven to fifty persons. It might be expected that a group less homogeneous in age would also be less homogeneous in size of potential kindred.

TABLE XI - Size of Potential Kindred

<u>Number of Kin Recognized</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>		<u>Female Informants</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
1 - 10	3	3.75	0	-	3	1.62
11 - 20	14	17.50	20	19.05	34	18.38
21 - 30	20	25.00	24	22.86	44	23.78
31 - 40	9	11.25	18	17.14	27	14.59
41 - 50	12	15.00	14	13.33	26	14.05
51 - 60	8	10.00	8	7.62	16	8.65
61 - 70	7	8.75	6	5.71	13	7.03
71 - 80	1	1.25	3	2.86	4	2.16
81 - 90	3	3.75	4	3.81	7	3.78
91 - 100	2	2.50	4	3.81	6	3.24
101 - 110	1	1.25	1	.95	2	1.08
111 - 120	0	-	1	.95	1	.54
141 - 150	0	-	1	.95	1	.54
191 - 200	0	-	1	.95	1 *	.54
	<u>80</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>99.99</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>99.98</u>

Average size of Potential kindred	39.61	42.94	41.50
Range	4 - 95	11 - 199	4 - 199

\* Because of inconsistencies in reporting, the potential kindreds of three informants could not be calculated.

TABLE XII - Potential Kindred and Religion

<u>Number of Kin Recognized</u>	<u>% of Total Sample</u>	<u>Roman Catholic</u>		<u>Protestant</u>		<u>None</u>		<u>Others</u>	
		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1 - 10	1.62	1	6.67	0	-	2	5.56	0	-
11 - 20	18.38	0	-	24	20.34	5	13.89	5	31.25
21 - 30	23.78	4	26.67	24	20.34	10	27.78	6	37.50
31 - 40	14.59	3	20.00	16	13.56	3	8.33	4	25.00
41 - 50	14.05	0	-	17	14.41	9	25.00	0	-
51 - 60	8.65	0	-	13	11.02	4	11.11	0	-
61 - 70	7.03	0	-	11	9.32	2	5.56	0	-
71 - 80	2.16	0	-	4	3.40	0	-	0	-
81 - 90	3.78	3	20.00	3	2.55	1	2.78	0	-
91 - 100	3.24	2	13.33	3	2.55	0	-	1	6.25
101 - 110	1.08	0	-	2	1.70	0	-	0	-
111 - 120	.54	1	6.67	0	-	0	-	0	-
141 - 150	.54	1	6.67	0	-	0	-	0	-
191 - 200	.54	0	-	1	.85	0	-	0	-
		<u>15</u>	<u>100.01</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>100.04</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>100.01</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>100.00</u>

TABLE XIII - Potential Kindred and Rural or Urban Birth

<u>Number of Kin Recognized</u>	<u>% of Total Sample</u>	<u>All Urban</u>		<u>One Parent Rural</u>		<u>Ego Rural</u>		<u>Ego and One Parent Rural</u>		<u>Both Parents Rural</u>		<u>All Rural</u>	
		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1 - 10	1.62	0	-	3	5.88	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
11 - 20	18.38	18	23.35	6	11.76	1	11.11	5	38.46	3	10.34	1	8.33
21 - 30	23.78	21	29.58	13	25.49	3	33.33	1	7.69	3	10.34	3	25.00
31 - 40	14.59	14	19.72	4	7.84	3	33.33	1	7.69	4	13.79	1	8.33
41 - 50	14.05	10	14.08	8	15.69	1	11.11	2	15.38	4	13.79	1	8.33
51 - 60	8.65	2	2.82	6	11.76	1	11.11	0	-	5	17.24	2	16.66
61 - 70	7.03	1	1.41	5	9.80	0	-	1	7.69	3	10.34	3	25.00
71 - 80	2.16	2	2.82	1	1.96	0	-	0	-	1	3.45	0	-
81 - 90	3.78	3	4.23	1	1.96	0	-	1	7.69	2	6.90	0	-
91 - 100	3.24	0	-	2	3.92	0	-	2	15.38	2	6.90	0	-
101 - 110	1.08	0	-	1	1.96	0	-	0	-	1	3.45	0	-
111 - 120	.54	0	-	1	1.96	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
141 - 150	.54	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
191 - 200	.54	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	-	0	-
	<u>99.98</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>100.01</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>99.98</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>99.99</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>99.98</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>99.99</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>99.99</u>

TABLE XIV - Potential Kindred and Social Status

<u>Number of Kin Recognized</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Decile Ranks</u> <u>1 to 3</u>		<u>Decile Ranks</u> <u>4 to 7</u>		<u>Decile Ranks</u> <u>8 to 10</u>	
		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1 - 10	1.62	0	-	0	-	2	2.00
11 - 20	18.38	1	4.76	8	19.07	23	23.00
21 - 30	23.78	5	23.81	7	16.69	25	25.00
31 - 40	14.59	3	14.28	9	21.45	13	13.00
41 - 50	14.05	2	9.52	7	16.69	13	13.00
51 - 60	8.65	2	9.52	4	9.52	7	7.00
61 - 70	7.03	0	-	2	4.76	10	10.00
71 - 80	2.16	1	4.76	1	2.38	2	2.00
81 - 90	3.78	2	9.52	1	2.38	3	3.00
91 - 100	3.24	3	14.28	1	2.38	1	1.00
101 - 110	1.08	1	4.76	1	2.38	0	-
111 - 120	.54	0	-	0	-	1	1.00
141 - 150	.54	1	4.76	0	-	0	-
191 - 200	.54	0	-	1	2.38	0	-
	<u>99.98</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>99.97</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>100.08</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100.00</u>

### 3. The Effective Kindred

The effective kindred is made up of those kin with whom ego has actual social contact, and it is formed mainly by a process of mutual selection by individuals.<sup>3</sup> In childhood, ego has little or no opportunity for selection, but interacts with kin selected by his parents, and possibly his grandparents. As he becomes adult, he makes his own selection, and either continues or discontinues the relationships selected for him in his childhood. Because of the age of the informants used in this study, we may assume that the effective kindreds they report consist partly of relationships selected for them, and partly of their own selection.

The kin chart on the questionnaire used in this study provided spaces in which the informants were asked to give, for each kinsman entered, information about his present location, marital status, and number of offspring.

<sup>3</sup> "One-sided" selection is possible, too, of course; as, for example, when an individual forces an unwanted relationship upon another, trading on the vague norms of propriety and obligation associated with kinship.

Informants were also asked to indicate whether they corresponded with the kinsman or had direct contact with him "frequently", "occasionally", or "never". In calculating the potential kindred, all kinsmen entered were counted along with their spouses and offspring, with the exceptions noted in Section 1 of this chapter; in calculating the effective kindred, all those for whom the informant checked the "never" column for both correspondence and direct contact were eliminated. For ego's own siblings and parents' parents' siblings, a report of no interaction with the individual himself is taken to mean that the informant also has no contact with that kinsman's spouse and offspring, if any. For parents' siblings, a report of no contact with the individual is taken to mean no contact with his spouse, if any.

Dealing with cousins, however, was not so simple. Preliminary draughts of the questionnaire and experimental interviews made it clear that to ask for information on each individual cousin and his spouse and children would be to present many informants with an extremely difficult task. It was felt that the questionnaire was already rather long, and asking for the same information for cousins as for other categories might cause some informants to withhold their cooperation. Thus, it was decided to ask the informants to give only the total number of cousins and their spouses and offspring, dividing them into "paternal" and "maternal" categories. The informants were then asked to give the number with whom they had correspondence or direct contact.

Because of this method, a problem in calculation arises. If, for example, an informant reports ten individuals in one of the "cousin" categories, and reports correspondence with three and direct contact with six, there is no way of knowing whether the three he corresponds with are also represented in the six direct contacts. Thus, he may have no interaction at all with from one to four individuals out of the total of ten. The only

feasible solution was to treat each correspondence and each contact as representing a single individual. Fortunately, relatively little correspondence with people in this category was reported, so the inaccuracies resulting from this method of analysis were minimized. Nevertheless, figures for cousins and the total effective kindred figures must be regarded as estimates only. I do feel, however, that they probably represent fairly close estimates in most cases.

The difference between the potential kindreds and the effective kindreds ranged from none to eighty-four, with an average difference of 14.90, or thirty-five per cent of the average potential kindred. The male informants showed a seven per cent greater average difference than the females (see Table XV).

Relationships were discontinued in most categories, with grandparents showing the lowest rate of discontinuance, and own siblings the next lowest. This is consistent with what has already been noted on the structure of the kindred and nuclear family. The matrilateral emphasis is shown again by the fact that mothers' siblings show a rate of discontinuance of 16.91 per cent as compared with 28.49 per cent for fathers' siblings, and mothers' parents' siblings a rate of 40.44 per cent as compared with 51.09 per cent for their patrilateral counterparts (see Table XVI).

TABLE XV - Size of Effective Kindred

<u>Effective Kindred</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>		<u>Female Informants</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
1 - 10	15	18.75	11	10.48	26	14.05
11 - 20	27	33.75	33	31.43	60	32.43
21 - 30	14	17.50	24	22.86	38	20.54
31 - 40	13	16.25	18	17.14	31	16.75
41 - 50	4	5.00	7	6.67	11	5.95
51 - 60	3	3.75	3	2.86	6	3.24
61 - 70	0	-	2	1.91	2	1.08
71 - 80	3	3.75	3	2.86	6	3.24
81 - 90	1	1.25	1	.95	2	1.08
91 - 100	0	-	1	.95	1	.54
100 - 101	0	-	0	-	-	-
111 - 120	0	-	1	.95	1	.54
151 - 160	0	-	1	.95	1	.54
	<u>80</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>100.01</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>99.95</u>
Average						
Potential kindred	39.61		42.94		42.04	
Average						
Effective kindred	<u>24.23</u>		<u>29.41</u>		<u>27.14</u>	
Difference	15.38	(38.58%)	13.53	(31.58%)	14.90	(35.03%)

TABLE XVI - Relationships Discontinued, by Category

<u>Category</u>	<u>Males</u>			<u>Females</u>			<u>Total</u>		
	<u>Number in</u> <u>Category</u>	<u>Relationships</u> <u>Discontinued</u>		<u>Number in</u> <u>Category</u>	<u>Relationships</u> <u>Discontinued</u>		<u>Number in</u> <u>Category</u>	<u>Relationships</u> <u>Discontinued</u>	
Own siblings	144	2	( 1.39%)	194	9	( 4.64%)	338	11	( 3.85%)
Fathers' siblings	232	76	(32.76%)	277	69	(24.9% )	509	145	(28.49%)
Paternal cousins	759	409	(53.89%)	1,314	686	(52.21%)	2,073	1,095	(52.82%)
Mothers' siblings	242	56	(23.14%)	308	37	(12.01%)	550	93	(16.91%)
Maternal cousins	972	455	(46.81%)	1,261	416	(32.99%)	2,233	871	(39.01%)
Fathers' fathers	9	0	-	18	1	( 5.56%)	27	1	( 3.70%)
Fathers' mothers	20	1	( 5.00%)	22	0	-	42	1	( 2.38%)
Fathers' fathers' siblings	16	10	(62.50%)	34	18	(52.94%)	50	28	(56.00%)
Fathers' mothers' siblings	12	5	(41.67%)	30	14	(46.67%)	42	19	(45.24%)
Mothers' fathers	13	0	-	26	0	-	39	0	-
Mothers' mothers	31	0	-	41	0	-	72	0	-
Mothers' fathers' siblings	14	5	(35.71%)	33	19	(57.58%)	47	24	(51.06%)
Mothers' mothers' siblings	29	15	(51.72%)	60	16	(26.67%)	89	31	(34.83%)

Note: The two categories of cousins include spouses and offspring. All other categories include only individuals in the named relationship to ego.



### III

#### KIN RELATIONSHIPS

##### 1. Terminology

Schneider and Homans write: "Perhaps the fundamental characteristics of the American system of terms for kinsmen is the presence of a wide variety of alternate terms" (1955:1195). They go on to state that:

"The distinction we find most useful in dealing with this efflorescence of terminology is one we believe to be universal for kinship terms. Each term has two aspects or functions; first, an ordering or classifying aspect and, second, a role or relationship-designating aspect" (1955:1195).

That is, any term places a kinsman in a category or class of kinsmen, and, at the same time, it designates the role the kinsman is expected to play in relation to the user of the term.

Schneider and Homans point out that the alternate terms do not re-order the relationships in the American system; they "never transgress the basic scheme of Eskimo-type classification". Rather, "the different alternates designate different roles or relationships or, more precisely in some cases, differently emphasized aspects of a given relationship" (1955:1197).

On the questionnaire used in this study, informants were asked to give the forms of address which they "most commonly" used for mother, father, and most of their uncles and aunts. They were also asked if they used any other form for some of their uncles and aunts, and whether they commonly made any distinction between parents' siblings and parents' siblings' spouses.

It is clear from the data derived that it is not customary to make any

distinction in terms of address between parents' siblings and parents' siblings' spouses (see Table XVII). This is not to say that no distinction of any kind is made, but rather that the affine is sufficiently "absorbed" into the system to make the use of the term of address acceptable.

TABLE XVII - Terminological Distinction  
Between Affines and Consanguines  
in the First Ascending Generation

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per cent</u> <u>of Total</u>
No distinction	78	99	177	94.15
No kin term for affines	1	4	5	2.66
No response or special cases *	2	4	6	3.19
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100.00</u>

\* Two informants reported using terms in languages other than English

I do not have enough data from the questionnaire to generalize, but I feel that what data there are plus inferences that may be drawn from "common" knowledge" suggest that in this area the ordering aspect of our kinship terminology is fully consistent with Parsons' characterization of a "conjugal" system. On the own-generation level, where no terms of address are commonly used, the distinction is made in terms of reference between members of one's own natal family ("brother", "sister") and individuals who "marry into" it ("brother-in-law", "sister-in-law"). On the level of the first ascendant generation, affines and consanguines are classified together as "uncle" and "aunt", since pairs of them constitute nuclear families linked to ego's own. It is membership in, or linkage to, ego's natal family that is stressed.

Among the alternate forms of address open for most, and possibly all, categories of relationship is the use of the individual's first name with no kin term attached. This is apparently most common among members of the same generation, and from upper generations to lower, and thus seems to imply equality or superiority of status. Although most of my informants stated that their "most common" form of address for uncles and aunts was the kin term plus the name, twenty-seven per cent stated that they most commonly use the uncle's or aunt's name alone. Only three reported using the term alone.

Schneider and Homans report that, for their sample:

"The pattern seemed to be that wherever there was strong affect, either positive or negative, the "uncle" form would be dropped and the first name alone used. Alternatively, if we think of these terms as status designators, the first name may imply either the equality of the speaker with the person referred to or the inferiority of the latter. Where the affect was mild, one way or the other, and the relative statuses were simply those expected in the kinship norms, the uncle term was used" (1955:1200).

Both the status differences and the influence of affect are shown in the responses of those of my informants who reported addressing some of their uncles and aunts in a manner different from the one they had reported as "most common". One male informant, for example, who used the "term plus name" form for most of his uncles and aunts called one uncle by his first name because he had "only met him recently", implying that they had met as near-equals rather than as adult and child. Another reported using names alone for most uncles and aunts, but the term and the name for "the married ones", which also implies a difference in status. Of twenty-two informants, eight gave age similarity or difference as a reason for using a variant form of address for some uncles and aunts, and eleven gave answers involving familiarity or friendliness.

Schneider and Homans sum up their findings on the subject thus:

"Whenever uncles or aunts were designated by their first names alone, the relationship seemed to be predominantly a person-to-person relationship and whatever elements of kinship were in it were kept at an implicit level"(1955:1201).

In an attempt to explore the implications of this, I correlated the incidence of the use of first names alone as the "most common" form for uncles and aunts with the use of kin for service and support. The criteria of measurement for service and support will be explained in Section 5 of this chapter, but for the present it will suffice to say that a numerical index of support from kin was derived. An index of six means complete reliance on kin for all types of support investigated. The average kin index for the whole group is 3.73; for those using the name alone for uncles and aunts it is 3.25, a difference of eight per cent. For the whole group, the index for the use of uncles and aunts is .32, and for the "name alone" group it is .20, a difference of two per cent.

These figures are far from conclusive, and the criteria of measurement are lacking in precision, but there does seem to be some indication that formality of recognition and the use of kin for service and support may be related factors.

## 2. Fictive Kin

A phenomenon that seems to underline the importance of kin relationships is the existence of fictive kin. It is apparently a common pattern for children to call some close friends of their parents by the kin terms "uncle" and "aunt", and it is equally apparent that at least some of these fictive kin relationships persist into the young adulthood of the subjects, for more than half of my informants reported them (see Table XVIII). It may be assumed that the titles "Mister" and "Mrs." plus the surname are considered too formal

for children to use for their parents' close friends, and first names alone do not give recognition to the status difference consequent to the difference in age. The use of the kin terms can be a solution to a problem in etiquette as well as a recognition of a kin-like relationship. However, the process can be seen as in some ways opposite to the use of names alone for "real" uncles and aunts. The child is encouraged to use an "honorary" kin term for a non-kinsman in recognition of a relationship between that person and the child's parents.

As forms of address, the terms "uncle" and "aunt" appear to be the only ones in our system capable of such extension. They, and the terms for lineal kin in ascending generations, appear to be the only ones commonly used as terms of address. The terms for lineal kin above ego customarily refer not to a category but rather to certain specific individuals; that is, ego has one father and one mother, two grandfathers and two grandmothers, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

Two informants stated that they would call upon their fictive kin for support, but no adequate provision was made on the questionnaire for reporting this, and no estimate can be made of how common it might be. There is no indication that small potential kindreds are "filled out" by the adoption of fictive kin. Rather, their existence seems to be merely evidence of selected associations by ego's parents.

One informant added a note in her questionnaire to the effect that her relationship with a fictive "uncle" and "aunt" was closer than that with her "real" uncles and aunts, and two or three others expressed similar sentiments during informal interviews. Another indicated that she extended the terms to the "real" uncles and aunts of her closest friend, which seems to be a way of expressing a sibling-like relationship between her and her friend.

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<sup>1</sup> I have noticed some extension of parent and grandparent terms to non-kin, but I have no idea of how prevalent it is. It seems to be confined to "special cases", but some investigation of the phenomenon would be of value.

On the subject of fictive kin, Schneider and Homans write; "It is true that courtesy aunts and uncles occur, but there is never any doubt about their status as courtesy kin and not 'real' kin." From personal experience I have noted young children who do not understand the difference, and young adults who are mildly surprised when the difference is brought to their attention. Further, the evidence cited above shows that some fictive kin relationships may be maintained by an individual while his "real" relationships are discontinued. The statement by Schneider and Homans may be literally true for adults, but its implications are misleading. I see nothing in the findings of Schneider and Homans, in my own, or in personal experience to suggest that the relationship between an individual and his fictive uncles and aunts need be materially any different from the "real" relationship..

TABLE XVIII - Fictive Kin

<u>Number of Fictive Kin</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>	<u>Female Informants</u>	<u>Total</u>
0	38	44	82
1	13	10	23
2	10	20	30
3	2	3	5
4	8	11	19
5	2	1	3
6	2	7	9
7	0	1	1
8	1	3	4
9	0	0	0
10	1	2	3
20	0	1	1
"many"	2	3	5
no response	2	1	3
	<u>81</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>188</u>

### 3. Naming

The custom of demonstrating respect or affection for someone by giving his name to one's offspring is well established. Of the informants used in this study, sixty-five per cent were aware that their own names had been chosen in this way. Some indication of the importance of kin relationships is given by the fact that of the informants so named, eighty-seven per cent, or fifty-six per cent of all the informants, were named in honour of kinsmen (see Table XIX).

TABLE XIX - Source of Informants' Names

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per cent of Sample</u>
Not "named for" anyone	20	39	59	31.38
Do not know	5	1	6	3.19
"Named for" kin	44	61	105	55.85
"Named for" others *	11	6	17	9.04
No response	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>.53</u>
	81	107	188	99.99

\* "Others" include friends, saints, movie actors, etc.

From discussions with married informants I am led to believe that the choice of which kinsman is to be honoured by giving his name to a new baby is the source of much argument and anxiety. The choice of a name from one "side" of the family may be taken as a slight by the other "side". Even if it is decided that a name will be selected for its own sake, the names of kinsmen and friends must be carefully reviewed to discover whether one of them may happen to bear the same name and believe that he is being honoured.

A fairly large number of my informants were named after their own parents. Discussions with married informants suggest that this may not be a first choice, but it is a "safe" choice, unlikely to offend anyone. However, successive births of same-sexed siblings present the problem anew without this avenue of escape.

From the present data, there seems to be no indication that one "side" or "line" is favoured in the choice of names, although there is a slight preponderance of names in the male line. What does seem to be clearly shown again is the importance of the nuclear family, for sixty-seven per cent of the choices represent either one of the parents or else a member of one of the parents' natal families (see Table XX). No correlation is apparent between the size of the potential or effective kindred and the choice of names,

TABLE XX - Kin as a Source of Names

<u>Source of Name</u>	<u>Male Informants</u>	<u>Female Informants</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mother	2	16	18
Mother's natal family	10	14	24
Mother's mother's mother	-	1	1
Mother's mother's sister	-	1	1
Mother's cousin	-	2	2
Mother's friend	2	5	7
Father	20	3	23
Father's natal family	10	16	26
Father's brother's son	2	0	2
Father's mother's father	1	0	1
Father's father's mother	-	1	1
Father's friend	4	0	4
Unclassified kin (uncles, grandparents, etc. not identified by "line")	5	21	26
	<u>56</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>136</u>



#### 4. Commensality

On the questionnaire informants were asked whom they invited most often to meals at their homes, and to whose home they were most often invited. This was included when my intention was to collect responses from a less homogeneous sample and to conduct interviews with married couples. Since so many of the present group of informants live with their parents or are in temporary quarters, the question of commensality is not an appropriate one.

#### 5. Service and Support

Informants were asked four questions about service and support. In the first, they were asked to tell from whom they would seek assistance in carrying out some small personal business if they were incapacitated through illness or injury. Financial affairs were given as an example on the questionnaire, and some personal purchasing was mentioned in the oral instructions. In the other three questions, informants were asked to tell from whom they would seek to borrow a small sum of money, a medium sum, and a large sum. In each question, they were requested to indicate a first, second, and third choice, assuming for the latter two responses that their first choices for some reason could not carry out the request.

It is apparent now that the inclusion of these questions at the end of the questionnaire was inadvisable, for the informants came to them after spending up to forty minutes struggling to give kinship information. Although it was emphasized in the oral instructions that they were to consider all sources of assistance, including friends and official agencies, the previous emphasis on kin could not be completely neutralized. The results would probably be more dependable had these questions been given separately or at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Because of this arrangement, kin may be over-emphasized in the informants' responses, but there is no reason to believe that the distribution

of choices within the effective kindred would be affected.

To tabulate the responses in this section, a simple six-point scale has been used. Numerical values were assigned to the choices; three for a first choice, two for a second, and one for a third. Thus, a "kin-use index" of six would indicate that the informant had named kin as a source of assistance in all three choices.

Again, the importance of the nuclear family is emphasized. The average kin-use index for this grouping is nearly three times that for any other. Again, too, the matrilateral emphasis is shown, with the average index for mothers' kin nearly twice that for fathers'. A most interesting finding is in the order of importance of sources of assistance. In spite of the positioning of the questions and the emphasis on kinship throughout the questionnaire, kin other than members of ego's natal family have a lower index of use than either friends or official agencies like banks or finance companies. The index is so low - only 8.67 per cent of all choices - that it does not seem worthwhile to correlate kin use with such other factors as size of the effective kindred.

The female informants show a slightly but consistently higher index of kin use and a lower index of use of friends than the males.

One of the factors affecting the results in this section is, of course, the age of the informants, for they are just emerging from almost complete dependence upon parents who are at or near the peak of their productivity. However, the fact that the informants would apparently turn to friends before other kin for assistance is not without significance. If the same questions could be asked of the informants' parents themselves, the results would be most interesting.

TABLE XXI - Service and Support

	<u>Service</u>			<u>Small Sum</u>			<u>Medium Sum</u>			<u>Large Sum</u>		
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Nuclear family	3.77	3.85	3.81	3.19	3.45	3.32	3.07	3.51	3.29	2.21	2.58	2.40
Mother's kin	.23	.24	.24	.14	.23	.19	.32	.25	.29	.16	.19	.18
Father's kin	.15	.10	.13	.10	.07	.09	.14	.11	.13	.09	.15	.12
Unspecified kin *	.12	.26	.19	.12	.18	.15	.14	.27	.21	.11	.18	.15
Total kin	<u>4.27</u>	<u>4.45</u>	<u>4.37</u>	<u>3.55</u>	<u>3.93</u>	<u>3.75</u>	<u>3.67</u>	<u>4.14</u>	<u>3.92</u>	<u>2.57</u>	<u>3.10</u>	<u>2.85</u>
Friends **	1.28	1.25	1.27	2.00	1.74	1.87	.96	.87	.92	.43	.30	.37
Others ***	.07	.14	.11	.20	.14	.17	1.02	.79	.91	2.26	2.08	2.17
No response	<u>.37</u>	<u>.13</u>	<u>.25</u>	<u>.26</u>	<u>.19</u>	<u>.23</u>	<u>.32</u>	<u>.23</u>	<u>.28</u>	<u>.74</u>	<u>.52</u>	<u>.63</u>
	5.99	5.97	6.00	6.01	6.00	6.02	5.97	6.03	6.03	6.00	6.00	6.02

Averages for All Types of  
Service and Support

Nuclear family	3.21
Other kin	.52
Friends	1.11
Others	.84
No response	.35
	<u>6.03</u>

\* Kin outside the nuclear family not identified by "line"

\*\* Including fiancées and, possibly, fictive kin

\*\*\* Official agencies and public officials such as banks, credit unions, government agencies, and so on.

## IV

PROPINQUITY AND KIN RELATIONSHIPS1. Method and Expectations

There is little doubt that it is easier to interact with a person who is close at hand than with one who is far away. There is also little doubt that members of the affluent societies of the West have a greater opportunity for geographical mobility than other peoples. For these reasons, it may be expected that the typical informant living in Vancouver would have knowledge of groups of kin who live in distant places, and with whom he has little or no contact. It may also be expected that, on the whole, the frequency and intensity of contact between kinsmen would diminish with increasing geographical separation. There is nothing startling about these expectations; they amount to little more than truisms. However, if such statements are to be made with any scientific validity, it is necessary to develop some system of measurement to make quantitative statements possible. In this chapter I shall explore some of the possibilities of this kind of analysis.

It seems to me that the concept of pherie distance, or distance measured in the length of time it takes to cover it,<sup>1</sup> is a useful starting point.

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<sup>1</sup> The only place I have seen this term used is in a mimeographed preliminary draught of a paper by A.P. Vayda (1959). The term is not listed in any of the standard dictionaries. Vayda cites Military Organization and Society by Stanislaw Andrzejewski (Routledge, London, 1954, p. 191) as his source. This book is not available in the University of British Columbia library.

In our society, probably the most important considerations in travel are the cost, and the time required to make the journey. In a more ambitious study, it might be worthwhile to develop a variation on the pheric distance concept which would include the cost factor in order to make more precise any calculations of the ease of accessibility of kin. However, for the present purposes I have contented myself with laying out five geographical areas, basing the first three on pheric distance, by automobile, from Vancouver. According to a representative of the Canadian Automobile Association, an average speed of fifty miles an hour is a reasonable estimate for highway travel, and this figure was used in the calculation. The five areas are as follows:

- Area 1 - Within approximately one hour's drive, or forty miles. Visiting is possible on any day. Approximate limits are Haney, Langley, White Rock, etc.
- Area 2 - From one hour's to approximately six hours' drive, or 300 miles. Visiting is possible on week-ends. This area includes all of Vancouver Island served by main roads, and extends to Hundred Mile House; Vernon; Wenatchee, Washington; Olympia, Washington; etc.
- Area 3 - From six to approximately eighteen hours' drive, or 900 miles. Visiting would require at lease three days, and two days' drive each way is most likely for most of the area. This includes the rest of British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, and Oregon, and extends into Montana and Idaho.
- Area 4 - The rest of North America.
- Area 5 - South America and Overseas.

The forty-mile radius for Area 1 is to allow for urban traffic conditions. Places difficult of access because of special considerations are placed in the appropriate area by a rough calculation of extra time. For example, the Sechelt Peninsula is geographically in Area 1, but is classed as Area 2 because of the ferry schedule.

For all categories of kin named in the questionnaire except cousins, the informants were asked to give the location of each kinsman entered, and to indicate whether they corresponded or had direct contact with him

"frequently", "occasionally", or "never". In the first step of the analysis of data from the questionnaire, each kinsman entered was assigned to one of the five areas.

## 2. Propinquity and the Effective Kindred

As has been noted, an important feature of our kinship system is the fact that relationships may be continued or discontinued at the choice of the individuals concerned. A relationship may be maintained over distance by correspondence or visiting, or it may be allowed to lapse.

Table XXII shows the rate of discontinuance of relationships, by kin categories, for the five areas. As expected, the average rate of discontinuance rises with increasing distance from ego. However, in twelve instances out of forty, the rate is actually lower in one area than in the one immediately preceding it. Since the number of informants is small and some of them claim permanent residence outside of Area 1, the picture may be somewhat distorted. It might be that with a larger sample, all having permanent residence in the same city, a more consistent pattern of discontinuance would be seen.

It seems significant that in all areas the male informants show a higher rate of discontinuance than do the females; for all areas combined, the females have a rate of discontinuance of 19.01 per cent compared to the males' rate of 22.69 per cent. The matrilateral bias in discontinuance of relationships has been mentioned in Section 3 of Chapter II.

## 3. Proximity and Contact

That the influence of geographical separation renders the complexities of social relationships even more complex was brought out clearly in some of the interviews conducted in connection with this study. One informant, a married woman of 36, whose permanent residence is in Vancouver, reported

TABLE XXII - Discontinuance of Relationships, by Area

<u>Kinsmen</u>	<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>	<u>Area 3</u>	<u>Area 4</u>	<u>Area 5</u>
Own brothers	0 ( 0/121 )	0 ( 0/24 )	0 ( 0/13 )	13.64 ( 3/22 )	20.00 ( 1/5 )
Own sisters	0 ( 0/89 )	0 ( 0/25 )	9.09 ( 2/22 )	16.67 ( 2/12 )	60.00 ( 3/5 )
Fathers' brothers	11.27 ( 8/71 )	17.24 ( 5/29 )	14.58 ( 7/48 )	37.93 ( 22/58 )	50.00 ( 20/40 )
Fathers' sisters	3.80 ( 3/79 )	15.38 ( 4/26 )	24.24 ( 8/33 )	32.69 ( 17/52 )	60.04 ( 32/53 )
Mothers' brothers	8.04 ( 9/112 )	4.55 ( 1/22 )	29.41 ( 20/68 )	22.41 ( 13/58 )	35.71 ( 5/14 )
Mothers' sisters	5.62 ( 5/89 )	2.86 ( 1/35 )	28.57 ( 12/42 )	22.35 ( 19/85 )	20.00 ( 3/15 )
Fathers' fathers' siblings	25.00 ( 1/4 )	33.33 ( 2/6 )	60.00 ( 6/10 )	46.67 ( 7/15 )	80.00 ( 12/15 )
Fathers' mothers' siblings	44.44 ( 5/9 )	18.18 ( 2/11 )	50.00 ( 2/4 )	33.33 ( 2/6 )	66.67 ( 8/12 )
Mothers' fathers' siblings	43.75 ( 7/16 )	25.00 ( 2/8 )	66.67 ( 4/6 )	63.64 ( 7/11 )	66.67 ( 4/6 )
Mothers' mothers' siblings	23.81 ( 5/21 )	10.00 ( 1/10 )	20.00 ( 2/10 )	36.84 ( 7/19 )	61.54 ( 16/26 )
<u>Averages (All Categories)</u>					
Male informants	7.14 ( 20/280 )	15.38 ( 12/78 )	32.46 ( 37/114 )	29.32 ( 39/133 )	75.00 ( 42/56 )
Female informants	6.94 ( 23/331 )	5.09 ( 6/118 )	18.31 ( 26/142 )	29.27 ( 60/205 )	45.92 ( 62/135 )
Total	7.04 ( 43/611 )	9.08 ( 18/196 )	24.61 ( 63/256 )	29.29 ( 99/338 )	54.45 ( 104/191 )

occasional contact with a male maternal cousin a few years younger than herself whose permanent residence is in Alberta. This man makes occasional business trips to Vancouver, and, on each occasion, calls on the informant. During these visits, he always shares at least one meal with the informant and her family, and sometimes stays with them overnight. He carries news of a group of the informant's kin in Alberta with whom she has no interaction, and his visits are apparently enjoyed by both parties. However, when the question was pursued, the informant suggested that her relationship with her cousin would be quite a different one if they lived in the same city. She pointed out that in political and religious opinion, and in many other respects, she and her cousin differ widely. As the relationship now stands, she apparently enjoys fulfilling obligations of hospitality to her cousin, and maintaining through him indirect contact with other kin. However, she feels that if they should find themselves living in the same city, their many differences would make it unlikely that they would maintain anything more than minimal contact.

Two other female informants, 18 and 19 years old, reported that although they maintain no relationship with many of their kin in North America, they each correspond with genealogically more distant kin in Ireland and Germany. Both girls are planning to travel in Europe, and both expressed their intention of visiting as many kin as possible while there. These intentions are apparently not entirely motivated by the hope of free accommodation and hospitality, but also by a feeling of excitement at the thought of possessing relationships in foreign places. One male informant reported that, although he would "have nothing to do with" a number of his first cousins in Vancouver, he looked forward with pleasure to meeting some second cousins who were planning to immigrate from Scotland. Another informant with an unusual surname reported twice receiving telephone calls from American tourists with the



same name who had found her listing in the telephone directory and hoped to trace a kin relationship to her.

Apparently geographical separation can stimulate and help to maintain effective kin relationships as well as causing them to lapse.

It is not possible to express the complexities and nuances of a social relationship in simple, quantitative terms. However, one aspect of social relationships - frequency of interaction - lends itself to quantification and may serve as a rough indicator of the intensity of the relationship.

An objective measurement of the frequency of interaction among kinsmen would yield information about the habits of the informants, but for a structural analysis it is the informants' own ideas of the frequency that is important. Two contacts a week with an uncle might be frequent to one informant and infrequent to another. It is for this reason that the informants in this study were asked whether they had direct contact with each kinsman entered on their questionnaires "never", "occasionally", or "frequently". Since social relationships may be maintained over distance by mail, the informants were asked to make the same assessment of their correspondence with kinsmen outside of Area 1.

These subjective estimates of the frequency of interaction have been converted into numerical values on an eight-point scale which will be referred to hereafter as the "interaction index". In Area 1, frequent contact was assigned a value of eight, and occasional contact a value of four; in all areas, a response of "never" was assigned a value of zero. In Area 2, where direct contact is still relatively easy, but may be supplemented by correspondence, direct contact was counted with values of six, three, and zero; and correspondence with values of two, one, and zero. In Areas 3 and 4, correspondence and direct contact were counted equally, at values of four, two, and zero. Finally, in Area 5, where direct contact involves the

TABLE XXIII - Interaction Indexes, by Area (eight-point scale)

<u>Kinsmen</u>	<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>	<u>Area 3</u>	<u>Area 4</u>	<u>Area 5</u>
Own brothers	7.73	5.25	5.23	3.73	4.20
Own sisters	7.69	5.64	5.55	5.17	2.80
Fathers' brothers	4.07	3.24	2.25	1.90	1.75
Fathers' sisters	4.91	3.12	2.91	2.47	1.45
Mothers' brothers	5.18	3.77	2.12	2.66	2.71
Mothers' sisters	6.07	4.11	2.33	2.85	2.73
Fathers' fathers	6.54	5.40	4.00	4.00	-
Fathers' mothers	6.32	5.38	4.22	3.00	0.00
Mothers' fathers	7.30	4.71	1.60	4.00	-
Mothers' mothers	7.40	6.00	4.22	4.17	6.00
Fathers' fathers' siblings	4.00	2.00	1.20	1.07	.60
Fathers' mothers' siblings	2.22	2.45	1.50	1.67	1.25
Mothers' fathers' siblings	2.25	2.37	1.67	1.09	.67
Mothers' mothers' siblings	3.81	3.60	3.00	2.21	1.23
<u>Averages</u>					
Male informants	5.76	3.74	2.41	2.11	.94
Female informants	6.24	4.28	2.69	2.69	2.08
Total	6.03	4.06	2.51	2.51	1.76

greatest amount of expense and time, correspondence was weighted more heavily, at six, three, and zero; direct contact was given less importance at two, one, and zero.

In a more ambitious study, along with the elaboration of the pheric distance concept already mentioned, a more precise set of criteria for the interaction index could probably be worked out. For example, the weighting of the values for correspondence and direct contact has been done arbitrarily here; perhaps interviews in depth would provide the basis for a more accurate system of assigning values. However, in spite of the crudity of the measurement, I feel that the interaction index as I have employed it is of some value in a preliminary study, and it has the virtue of simplicity.

Table XXIII shows interaction indexes for named categories of kin in the five areas. Again according to expectations, the average index shows a steady decline with increasing distance from Area 1. As with the rates of discontinuance, in some instances - 10 out of 56 - the index is higher in one area than in the area immediately preceding it. The factors suggested as helping to account for this pattern under rates of discontinuance might also be operating here.

In all areas, the female informants show a higher interaction index than the males.

Average interaction indexes for all areas (Table XXIV) are consistent with the nuclear family pattern noted above. Own siblings show the highest index, parents' parents the next highest, and parents' siblings the next. The matrilateral emphasis is demonstrated again in that mothers' parents, siblings, and parents' siblings show higher indexes than their patrilateral counterparts.

TABLE XXIV - Average Interaction Indexes for All Areas

<u>Kinsmen</u>	<u>Interaction Indexes</u>
Own brothers	6.75 )
Own sisters	6.62 ) 6.69
Fathers' brothers	2.73 )
Fathers' sisters	3.17 ) 2.95
Mothers' brothers	3.64 )
Mothers' sisters	4.58 ) 4.10
Fathers' fathers	5.35 )
Fathers' mothers	5.09 ) 5.19
Mothers' fathers	5.82 )
Mothers' mothers	6.85 ) 6.46
Fathers' fathers' siblings	1.30 )
Fathers' mothers' siblings	1.86 ) 1.55
Mothers' fathers' siblings	1.72 )
Mothers' mothers' siblings	2.70 ) 2.35

#### 4. Sex, Propinquity, and Interaction

A matrilinear emphasis has been noted in a number of different connections above, and the apparent greater recognition and use of kin by female informants has been pointed out. Table XXV, showing the proportion of informants' surviving parents' parents living in the same city or town as the informants' parents, demonstrates another interesting difference by sex. Sixty-five per cent of surviving mothers' parents live in the same city as the informants' parents, compared to thirty-nine per cent of surviving fathers' parents.

I am aware of no suggestion of a similar pattern in the studies from the United States.

However, Young and Willmott report of their studies of an English working-class group:

"The figures...show that twice as many married women as men live in the same dwelling as their parents, and nearly twice as many in the same street or block. This suggests that residence is (to use an anthropological term) more often 'matrilocal' than 'patrilocal' in as much as couples more often live near to the wife's parents than to the husband's. We can, so far as this district is concerned, corroborate Gorer's previous findings that there is 'a marked tendency towards matrilocality in the English working class'..."(1962:36,37).

The scale within which this "matrilocality" is described is smaller in the English sample than in mine; Young and Willmott write of residence in the same house, street, or block, while my figures show only residence in the same city or town. However, if we assume that my informants have access to a greater amount and extent of geographic mobility, the figures retain their interest.

TABLE XXV - Parents' Parents Living in Same City as Parents

	<u>Male Informants</u>		<u>Female Informants</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number in</u> <u>Same City</u>	<u>Total in</u> <u>Category</u>	<u>Number in</u> <u>Same City</u>	<u>Total in</u> <u>Category</u>	<u>Number in</u> <u>Same City</u>	<u>Total in</u> <u>Category</u>
Fathers'						
father	3	9 (33%)	10	18 (55%)	13	27 (48%)
Fathers'						
mother	6	20 (30%)	8	22 (36%)	14	42 (33%)
Mothers'						
father	10	13 (77%)	15	26 (57%)	25	39 (64%)
Mothers'						
mother	21	31 (68%)	26	41 (63%)	47	72 (65%)

A further question is raised by these findings. Bethnal Green, where Young and Willmott conducted their study, was a "settled" community, and long-term residence spanning generations was the rule (1962:104-107). In

this setting, the terms "patrilocal" and "matrilocal" have some suitability. However, personal observation leads me to believe that in the Vancouver area it is not uncommon for retired parents to take up residence near their married offspring, perhaps moving a considerable distance to do so. If this were a statistically significant phenomenon, the resulting residence pattern would be indistinguishable "on the ground" from matrilateral or patrilateral patterns as the terms are used by Young and Willmott, but the terms themselves would hardly be appropriate. There is nothing in my data to suggest the manner in which sixty-five per cent of the surviving mothers' parents happen to live in the same city as the informants' parents, save the fact that more of the informants' mothers than fathers were born in Canada. It may be that males tend to be more mobile and, upon marriage, to take up residence uxorilocally. However, part of the pattern could be accounted for by ageing parents settling near a married daughter to spend their retirement.

If the former pattern is more common, and something like matrilocal residence as Young and Willmott use the term is statistically more prevalent among Vancouverites, this fact would help to account for the matrilateral bias noted earlier, for the present informants might be expected to have greater access to knowledge of their mothers' kin, and greater opportunity for making use of that knowledge.

## V

CONCLUSION

I feel that this study, in spite of its inadequacies, has some virtue as a preliminary investigation, both in the methods employed and in some of the findings. The kin-use index, interaction index, and the pheric area concept could, with suitable elaboration and modification, be useful tools in further study. With the use of a simplified questionnaire and more sophisticated analytical techniques - possibly employing computing machines - a large body of quantitative data could be collected which would be of considerable value in discerning patterns of kinship behaviour in Western societies.

Even the rather sparse data presented here allow some inferences to be drawn about the nature of the kinship system from which they are derived, and embolden the writer to speculate upon some possible modifications in the structural model presented by Talcoott Parsons.

Parsons begins his article with an analysis of kinship terminology, observing that, since the differences of terminology between English and other modern European languages are slight, and the terminology has been "essentially stable" for a long time, "all analysis of terminology can do is indicate a very broad type within which the more distinctively American system falls" (1943:24).

His statement that the American system is "a 'conjugal' system that is 'made up' exclusively of interlocking conjugal families" has been quoted above.

He goes on to state:

"The principle of structural relation of these families is founded on the fact that, as a consequence of the incest tabu, ego is always in the structurally normal case a member not of one, but of two conjugal families... Moreover, he is the only common member of the two families" (1943:24,25).

Parsons follows the convention of calling these two families the "family of orientation" and the "family of procreation". He presents a diagram, a simplified version of which appears in Figure 1, and states:

"From ego's point of view, then, the core of the kinship system is constituted by families 1 and 2 in the diagram, in the one case his father, mother, brothers and sisters, in the other, his spouse (wife or husband according to ego's sex), sons and daughters... These two conjugal families may conveniently be treated as constituting the 'inner circle' of the kinship structure...

"Now each member of ego's inner kinship circle is the connecting link with one other terminologically recognized conjugal family. Moreover, he links the family of orientation or procreation, as the case may be, with only one farther conjugal family, and each individual with a separate one" (1943:25).

The "outer circle" of families in Parsons' diagram contains the natal families of ego's parents, the conjugal families of his siblings and offspring, and his "in-law" family.

"... if we take the total inner and outer circle group of ego's kin as a 'system', it is articulated to another entirely distinct system of the same structure by every peripheral relative (i.e. who is not a connecting link between the inner and outer circles), except in the direct line of descent. The consequence is a maximum dispersion of the lines of descent and prevention of the structuring of kinship groups on any other principle than the 'onion' principle, which implies proportionately increasing 'distantness' with each circle of linked conjugal families" (1943:26).

He points out that the structure may be thrown into relief in another way by recalling that "ego's family of orientation and his in-law family are, from the point of view of his children, both first ascendent families whose members are equally grandparents, aunts and uncles" (1943:26).



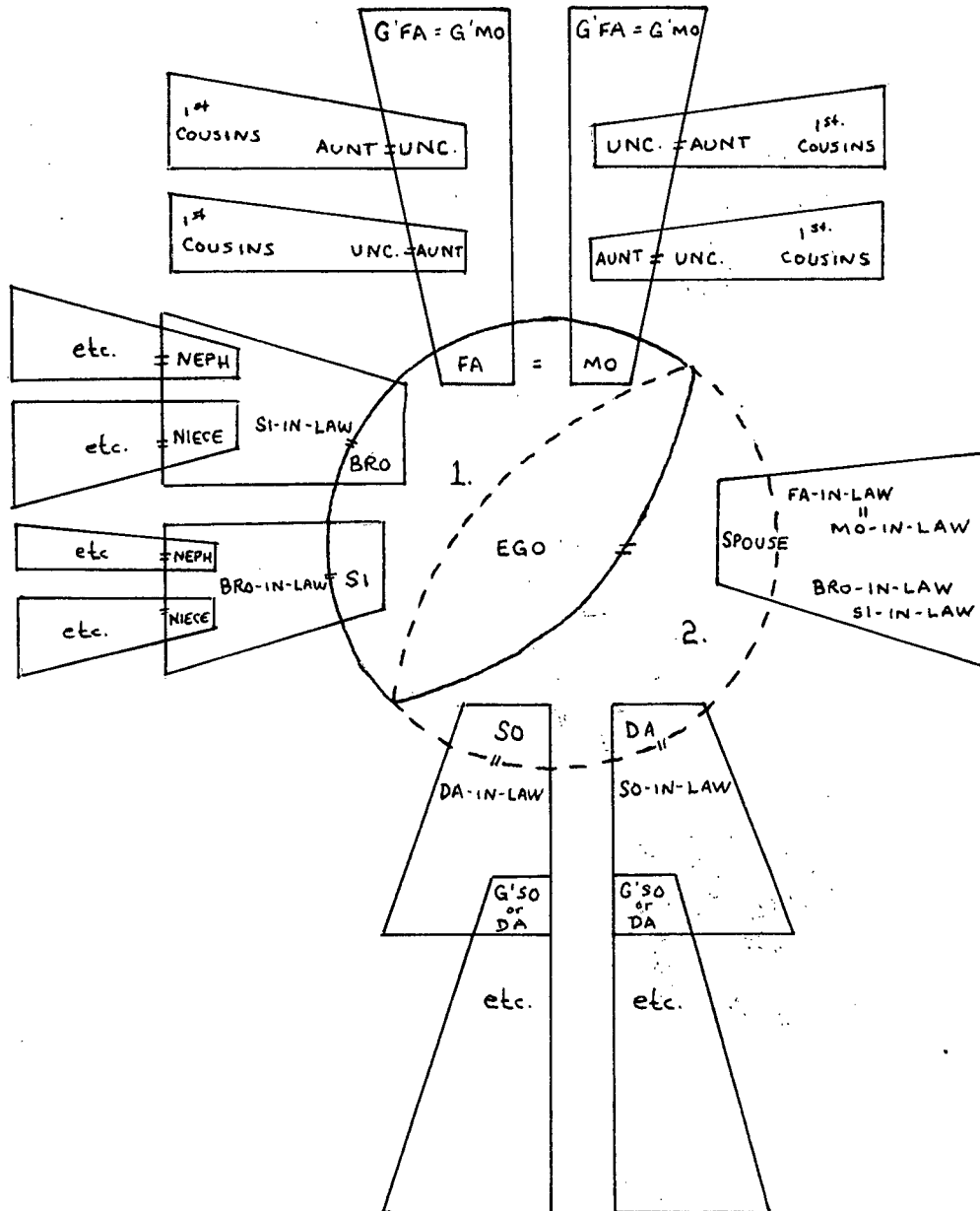


Figure 1.

(adapted from Parsons 1943:24)

Parsons then turns to "a different order of evidence" to explore the distinctively American version of the system he has outlined. He suggests that this pattern of "an essentially open system, with a primary stress on the conjugal family and corresponding absence of groupings of collaterals cutting across conjugal families" (1943:28), has existed since the kinship terminology took shape. However, he feels that the American system has become more "symmetrically multilineal" than its European forebears in which, in the past, inheritance of "home, source of economic support, and specific occupational status" played a part (1943:27,28). He recognizes the probable existence of deviance from the pattern he is describing as "American" on the basis of regional, occupational, and status differences, and states that the pattern described "is most conspicuously developed in the urban middle class areas of the society" (1943:29).

Parsons goes on:

"In approaching the functional analysis of the central American kinship type, the focal point of departure must lie in the crucial fact that ego is a member not of one but of two conjugal families. This fact is of course of central significance in all kinship systems, but in ours it acquires a special importance because of the structural prominence of the conjugal family and its peculiar isolation. In most kinship systems many persons retain throughout life a fundamentally stable - though changing - status in one or more extended kinship units. In our system this is not the case for anyone" (1943:29).

He feels that, because of the structural isolation of the nuclear family and the fact that the married couple do not have kin ties with other adults comparable to the tie between them, "the marriage bond is, in our society, the main structural keystone of the kinship system". Upon marriage, the individual becomes "drastically segregated" from his natal family, and his "first kinship loyalty" is to his spouse and offspring (1943:30).

Thus far, Parsons' model is consistent with the data derived from this study. However, in discussing further the implications of the individual's

"segregation" from his natal family, he states:

"Since all known kinship systems impose an incest tabu, the transition from a sexual intrafamilial relationship to the sexual relationship of marriage - generally to a previously relatively unknown person - is general. But with us this transition is accompanied by a process of "emancipation" from the ties both to parents and siblings, which is considerably more drastic than in most kinship systems, especially in that it applies to both sexes about equally, and includes emancipation from solidarity with all members of the family or orientation about equally, so there is relatively little continuity with any kinship ties established by birth for anyone" (1943:32).

In the foregoing chapters, I have drawn attention to what I have termed a matrilateral bias or emphasis in the figures presented for the potential kindred, the effective kindred, for kin use and interaction, and I have suggested the possibility of a statistical bias in favour of "matrilocal" - or perhaps more accurately, uxorilocal - residence patterns. All of this suggests strongly that the mothers of my informants were not "emancipated" as fully as their fathers. Further, the differences between my male and female informants in kin use, in discontinuing relationships, and in interaction indexes suggest that the pattern is being repeated in their generation.

The interaction indexes and rates of discontinuance of relationships strongly suggest, too, that the parents of my informants have not "emancipated" themselves equally from solidarity with all members of their natal families; rather, they suggest what was tentatively referred to as an "extended family" pattern, with parents' parents showing a lower rate of discontinuance and higher interaction indexes than parents' siblings. Finally, I do not understand the statement that "there is relatively little continuity with any kinship ties established by birth for anyone", unless it be taken to mean that the nature of an individual's relationships with his kin changes as he moves through the life cycle, and surely this is true of any kinship system.

At another point, Parsons states that the American kinship system "does

not, as do so many kinship systems, place a structural premium on the role of either sex in the maintenance of the continuity of kinship relations" (1943:33). Commenting upon the same point in her genealogical study, Helen Codere writes:

"There seems to be an American cultural myth that women are the custodians of kinship lore. If this is so, these genealogies would be fuller than those of young college men of a similar socioeconomic group. While this has not been directly tested, there is an indirect test that yields fairly conclusive results. These women students seem to know as much about their fathers' side of the family as they do about their mothers'. This could hardly be the case if there were a major difference in the degree to which the sexes possessed and transmitted such knowledge..." (1955:68).

Throughout the data I have presented, there are a number of statistical indications - some slight, and some pronounced - that seem to challenge these statements. The potential kindreds of my female informants are slightly larger; the number of informants reporting maternal kin is slightly larger than those reporting paternal kin; more maternal kin are reported than paternal kin. Differences in rate of discontinuance, interaction, and kin-use have been mentioned above.

It is my opinion that the differences between my findings and the statements of Parsons and Codere result from the fact that I have tried to explore aspects of our kinship behaviour that have not, as far as I am aware, been given much attention; that is, the selection and rejection of relationships within the kinship network, and the relative intensity of the selected relationships. The matrilateral bias in the potential kindreds is slight; it becomes much more noticeable in the effective kindreds and in the indexes measuring the nature of the relationships. It seems to me that this is an aspect of our system that would merit further study.

For most kinship systems described in the anthropological literature, a static model is adequate for most purposes of the description, since a

stable framework is provided by kin groupings that cut across nuclear family units, and individuals move through a set of ascribed statuses in relation to their kin during their life cycle. In our system, however, the only kin grouping that is recognized as a unit by all of its members is the nuclear family. The individual is born into one of these, and, in the structurally typical case, becomes a partner in the establishment of another by marrying someone whom he has chosen for himself from among non-kin. The family into which he is born is linked to a number of other nuclear families through kin ties of his parents; as the individual grows toward maturity, he rejects some of these and maintains others. In a sense, then, each individual creates his own network of kin relationships, partly from the network left him by his parents.

This process is subject to a high degree of predictability in some of its aspects. For example, first cousins constitute the largest category in the potential kindreds of my informants, and remain a large category in the effective kindreds, but practically no parents' cousins are reported. Thus it appears that, by the time these young informants have near-adult offspring of their own, their relationships with their first cousins will have declined drastically in importance. Other aspects of the process of selection, however, are less easily discernible.

It seems to me that informants of the age and kinship status of the ones used in this study are valuable ones for a preliminary investigation, for by their reports we can see something of the relationship between the effective kindreds of one generation and the next. However, to describe our kinship system adequately, it would be necessary to collect data from groups of informants at key points along the life cycle. Then, a quantitative analysis along the lines of the one essayed in this paper would provide the basis for a dynamic model that would reveal more of the essential attributes of our system.

Finally, I would suggest that, because of the structural isolation of the nuclear family in our society, and the importance of the selection of relationships, along with data presented here on fictive kin and the use of friends for assistance and support, any study of our kinship system must pay some attention to friendly and "kin-like" relationships between people who are not biologically related.

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## **APPENDIX**

**A facsimile of the questionnaire used in the study**



## ANTHROPOLOGY

March, 1964

---

1. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_

---

2. Marital Status: Single \_\_\_\_\_  
Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Divorced, separated, widowed, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

---

3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

---

4. Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Rural \_\_\_\_\_  
Urban \_\_\_\_\_

---

5. Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

---

6. Education: (a) Year of University \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) Majors \_\_\_\_\_

---

7. Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

---

8. What occupation do you hope  
to enter after University? \_\_\_\_\_

---

9. Present residence:

(a) With parents \_\_\_\_\_

(b) With other relatives \_\_\_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

(c) With family friends \_\_\_\_\_ Identify \_\_\_\_\_  
by fictitious initials or pseudonym

(d) Independent \_\_\_\_\_

---

10. Permanent residence: (location)

(a) As in #9 above \_\_\_\_\_ (b) In Greater Vancouver  
but different from #9 \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Other \_\_\_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

11. Permanent residence: (type)

(a) With parents \_\_\_\_\_ (b) With other relatives \_\_\_\_\_

Specify \_\_\_\_\_

(c) With family friends \_\_\_\_\_

Identify \_\_\_\_\_ (d) Other \_\_\_\_\_  
by fictitious initials or pseudonym

---









---

31. Are you "named after" anybody?

(a) No \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Don't know \_\_\_\_\_ (c) Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

32. If you have children, are they "named after" anybody?

(a) No \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

33. What do you commonly call your father when speaking to him?

(First name, "father", "dad", etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

---

34. What do you commonly call your mother when speaking to her?

(First name, "mother", "mom", etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

---

35. What do you commonly call most of your  
uncles and aunts when  
speaking to them?

(a) "Uncle" or "aunt" plus first name \_\_\_\_\_

(b) "Uncle" or "aunt" alone \_\_\_\_\_

(c) First name alone \_\_\_\_\_

(d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

36. Do you call some of your uncles and/or aunts  
by a different term from the one listed in 35?

(a) No \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Why the difference? \_\_\_\_\_

---

37. When speaking to them, do you commonly make any distinction in terms  
between uncles/aunts "by blood" and uncles/aunts "by marriage"?

(a) No \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

38. Are there people whom you call (or called) "uncle" or "aunt" who are  
not really related to you by "blood" or marriage?

(a) No \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Yes \_\_\_\_\_

How many? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

39. If you have children, are there people whom they call "uncle" or "aunt" who are not really relatives?

(a) No \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_

---

40. To whose home are you invited most often for meals?

(a) a relative \_\_\_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

(b) a friend \_\_\_\_\_ Identify \_\_\_\_\_  
by fictitious initials or pseudonym

(c) Other \_\_\_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

41. Whom do you invite most often to have meals at your home?

(a) a relative \_\_\_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

(b) a friend \_\_\_\_\_ Identify \_\_\_\_\_  
by fictitious initials or pseudonym

(c) Other \_\_\_\_\_ Specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

42. If you were temporarily incapacitated through an illness or injury, and needed somebody to conduct some personal business for you (dealing with insurance company, etc.,) whom would you ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

(List three in order of preference. Identify relatives by category, friends by fictitious initials, etc.)

---

43. If you needed to borrow a small sum of money, whom would you ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

(List three in order of preference. Identify as above)

---

44. If you needed to borrow a medium-sized sum of money, whom would you ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

(List three in order of preference. Identify as above.)

---

45. If you needed to borrow a large sum of money, whom would you ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

(List three in order of preference. Identify as above.)

---

Note: In items 18 and 21, the word "regularly" is a misprint for "frequently", left unchanged from an earlier draught of the questionnaire. This was explained orally to the informants.