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GEARY LECTURE, 1970

THE DUAL CAREER FAMILY

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In the welter of changes going on in the world - urbanisation, increasing affluence, migrations and mass communications, more complex options for young people and so on - there seem to be two contrapuntal family processes. One tends to make families everywhere more alike in some ways; thus the ideal of an independent monogamous nuclear family is more worldwide now than ever before - missionaries or no missionaries. It is a "modern" adaptation that goes with the flexibility required for success in the urban-industrial way of life. At the same time, it is no longer useful to think of the isolated nuclear family as the family of the modern Western world because within this framework it is now clear that there are many variant patterns. Families vary in composition, division of labour and authority structure, external kin and friendship relationships and general styles of life. And, with every turn of the wheel of social change, new patterns come into prominence with the endlessly fascinating inventiveness of a gigantic social kaleidoscope.

The particular turn of the wheel that has partly been activated by the efforts of women has produced new patterns. We have only begun to feel these on this side of the Atlantic, if the activities of the Women's Liberation Front in America which I witnessed on a recent visit are predictive. Our (i.e. Fogarty, Rapoport and Rapoport) recent study of highly qualified women and their careers would seem to support the impression of new patterns of differentiation in families with increasing participation by both family heads - male and female - in the economy. Within the range of variations observed there is a type of family structure that we have given particular attention - the dual-career family. 'Dual-career' because both husband and wife are involved in the kind of work that is highly salient personally, has a developmental sequence, and requires a high degree of commitment. Paradoxically, this pattern is both innovative and old-fashioned, reminiscent of pre-industrial revolution patterns prior to the separation of productive work from the family life but at the same time highly modern as an adaptation to the facts and ideals of equal ability and opportunity between the sexes. This is not to imply that the dual-career family is a homogeneous social type. It is a structural variant of the nuclear family, and as such has its own range of variations as will be seen. However, to the extent that it is distinctive, we are interested here in examining what the overall pattern is like, where it fits among the various patterns that are emerging, what seems to have produced it, its cost and its benefits and finally, its future prospects. The relevance of English and American trends for Irish social changes is something you can judge better than I, but whether the changes are viewed with relish or horror there is no doubt but that they are here on your doorstep.

As far as being "with it", or socially innovative in the sense of thinking of themselves as a vanguard group in a social change movement, if anything the reverse has tended to be true. In one instance an architect couple felt that in deliberately cultivating a home-based craftsman-styled work they were like pre-industrial revolution cottage industry types. One or two felt like old-fashioned upper class types without so many servants or stately homes, but perhaps with children at boarding school and with a very individualistic approach to "his life" and "her life", separate but with a benign interest in one another's activities. Only one couple was in fact revolutionary in their personal or political outlook and their new form of family structure was consistent with this. The fact that our study group tended to be in their forties because of our criteria of success in careers plus families, they would have tended to be at the stage of life where sensitivity to the generation gap would be coming into evidence. By now all of the couples were established occupationally and seen to be so. Often they were under attack by younger colleagues as being "establishment" and therefore reactionary. Many, having been orientated all their lives to definite liberality of outlook which made it possible for them to entertain the dual-career pattern at the outset, felt irritated or confused in this situation.

Thus dual-career families as we conceptualised them were seen by themselves in various contexts, from pioneers to social accidents. Our view of them is that whatever their motivations or self-conceptions they have evolved a form of social structure that may have importance for future developments in the relationship between family life and work.

#### Where does the dual-career family fit?

Dual-career families at the present time are a variant minority. Though it is true that the proportions of married women employed have been rising steadily - 10% in the 1930's to one-third in the 1960's in Britain - the employment of women generally, particularly married women, tends to be less continuous through the life cycle than that of men, and to be less committed. The modal pattern, even for highly qualified women as in our study, is to work a bit prior to having children but then to drop out until some later time, usually when the children are grown, and then to return if possible - what we call the "in-out-in" pattern. Four-fifths of the women graduates in our national study intended to be at work by the time their eldest child was grown. Only about one-third of the sample, however, were continuous workers as defined by having the intention to be back at work before their youngest child was three. Being a continuous worker, however, is only one of the criteria that we have had for defining the female side of the dual-career family. Some women, it is known, work out of necessity, their husbands being incapacitated for some reason; some work reluctantly but to support their husbands through an economically awkward period of activity (e.g. establishing oneself as a sculptor); still others work compensatorily, having experienced disappointment in their married life. Having children effectively curbs the occupational participation of all types. The dual-career family wife works because she believes that women ought to have an equal opportunity to develop a career as men; and that she personally wishes to do so because she derives satisfaction from her work.

Unlike men, however, even these career-committed wives have to face the residue of responsibility which society still places on them individually for the care of their children. According to the information available from the DEP's Family Expenditure Survey for 1968 (p.82), one-third of ordinary families have a wife employed; half of these have no children, half of the rest have only one child, and nearly all of the balance have two. Only 3½% of working married women have more than two children. Information from our survey of highly qualified women shows that the outline of this picture holds by and large, but with a higher proportion of women working along with having children. Twenty-eight per cent of women graduates even with three or more children, continue to work, though this is usually a very part-time proposition for most.

Now, what is the point of being interested in such a small minority group? It is not the kind of minority group that is in need of public assistance. Having two earners in a family is the best way to get into the higher income bracket; according to the DEP Report (p.85). Nor, as we have indicated, is this the kind of minority group that is flagrantly radical. Again, the fact that they have, as a group, been involved in the process of social creation is fascinating, but not yet compelling for others than social scientists. The thing about them that seems most impressive and which compels interest is the hypothesis that they are a vanguard group - whether or not they see themselves as such. The issues which they have faced, the dilemmas with which they have grappled, and the new patterns they have forged are probably forerunners of what many people will be attempting very shortly. If the attitudes and behaviour of young people are any indication of what they are likely to be attempting in later phases of family life, it would seem probable that the egalitarian ideal in sex roles is likely to become increasingly prevalent.

Our data show that young people (both men and women) want the satisfaction of both career and family. Characteristically even those women that highly idealise family life and intend to drop work in favour of family life when their first child arrives, find that the fulfilment that they expected is shorter-lived than anticipated and so their intention to participate in both spheres becomes enlivened perhaps earlier than expected. It becomes a matter of how to do it. Similarly, even the young men who are very ambitious seem to be tending to have a familistic or at least a humanistic component to their life conceptions. In this the dual-career families of today may provide guidelines for the young people coming up now, who wish to operate this pattern and it may help to spare them some of the stresses and strains of doing so by having an analysis of them available.

#### The stresses and strains of the dual-career families

If you choose to live in a dual-career family, chances are that you will experience both strains and gains from this experience. First the strains, the analysis of which derives from a small sample of such families studied rather intensively but which seem to be pervasive.

We have isolated five characteristic strains and discussed them together with the patterns that are often used to deal with them. These patterns are found in London, but it is probable that they are not qualitatively different from what is to be found in the Western metropolitan centres generally.

## 1. Overload

It is perhaps only really appreciated when a departure is made from it, how well the conventional form of the nuclear family has worked to facilitate the life and work of the male. All of the back-up of housekeeping, shopping, childcare, social arrangements, communications and information functions and other maintenance functions for the male's non-work life have been taken care of by his wife with more or less exquisite attention to his personal requirements and at a give-away price. Of course where conventional ideas and ideals prevail, and where the wife is highly involved in domestic and maternal activities as a source of personal satisfaction, the conventional arrangement is mutually satisfying and its withdrawal would distress wife as well as husband. On the other hand, when it is altered - though this may be to gain something both for husband and wife - both feel the pinch.

The couples studied varied in terms of whether they considered the re-arrangements that had to be made to 'their' responsibility, or 'hers'. The more conventional view is that "she can do what she likes in regard to her career so long as it does not interfere with me". The more revisionist view, probably becoming more prevalent, is that if the couple chooses the option of both working for whatever reasons, they work out jointly what accommodations are needed to make it work.

In fact, the accommodations seem to be made on two fronts, given the relative lack of external institutionalised supports either in the form of Swedish style family hotels or Israeli style children's houses, or even our own old-style extended kin except in the odd instance. The first front is the privately arranged support staff - domestic 'daily' workers; au pairs; mothers' helpers; live-in housekeepers; nannies; and the like. The second front is the actual definition of sex roles between the pair and the changes in division of labour involving greater participation by the husband. This is a point of possible tension - particularly where the husband is conventional in his orientation to sex-roles. One wag suggested some years ago that what a woman really needs to develop a career is her own wife. The modern version of this is to say that what a woman needs who wishes to develop a career is either a loyal, stable and highly qualified domestic service staff or an unusually supportive husband. In most cases it is some combination of the two, and part of the overload observed in all dual-career families stems from the fact that all three of these participants are often sore-pressed to make things run, particularly when things consist of a fairly large and elaborate household with children. The more mechanised households become, the more machines there are to go wrong; even the most highly qualified domestic staff collapse at points; even the most willing and supportive husband has his limits - and so, because of the residual allocation of these responsibilities in the wife given the current state of definition of sex roles, the career woman wife must be resilient in these different directions to keep the system operating. But there is no doubt that the result tends to be overload, chronic and often fairly severe.

There have been several ways of dealing with these overloads - and only part of the problem is manageable in sheer efficiency terms. Where possible, all of the couples have both simplified their lives (convenience foods, little entertainment, less elaborate decor), and have invested heavily in mechanical aids such as washing machines, and in service plans to keep them running. They have planned domestic help with great care and at great expense in order to assume maximum stability and reliability, particularly in relation to childcare. They have sacrificed other things to make the set-up work - notably their leisure activities. However, one positive by-product of this situation often seems to have been the heightening of appreciation for leisure when it could be arranged. Most of the couples took some deliberate precaution to see that they did get recreational activity - e.g. every other weekend in the country, family evenings together - and the cost to them of having to go without these interludes seems to have made them all the sweeter.

In the end, the limits of management of overloads, however, seem to depend on factors other than efficiency. Lacking external supports for this pattern, the overloads inevitably tended to get thrown back into the family and their management depended in large degree on the way in which the couple was prepared to revise their conceptions of sex roles. Flexibility and tolerance would seem to have been crucial elements in this. The costs of sheer overload include a degree of irritability which has to be absorbed. When both husband and wife come home from a hard day in the office wanting to be cosseted, there is a considerable challenge to the personal resources of both if the benefits of the pattern are to be kept in mind. While au pairs and domestic helpers tend to free couples of many of the chore elements of housework so that they could give affection and time to their children, the appropriate supports to facilitate the full flow of affection and love at the end of a workday full of strains are less clearly established. The more or less conscious keeping alive of romantic rituals - dining by candlelight with wine, holiday trips away from the home and children - are among the devices used. Other dilemmas present different issues.

## 2. Dilemmas of norms

Dilemmas of norms are found to arise when the individual or couple's conceptions of what is right and proper conflict with those of their surrounding community - their social circle, neighbourhood, and so on. The dual-career family is not merely a statistical rarity - it is a pattern that often rouses complex and heightened feelings.

Some women who have given up their career aspirations at great cost to themselves personally for a range of reasons experience feelings of envy when they encounter women who are not following suit. Such women are not immune to passing remarks at social occasions such as "Of course you won't mind when your babies don't know you later on"; or "I know of a fascinating case of psychopathic personality that developed because of maternal deprivation when the mother went out to work". Such remarks have the support by misinterpretation of a certain amount of highly respectable scientific research and medical opinion.

Men, too, may express directly or indirectly their fear or criticism of women who pursue careers, particularly married women with children. Male jokes about such women being not really women at all in some sense - bearded women, battleaxes, man-eaters, etc - are part of the standard fare of unfriendly stereotyping that women of this kind have learned to deal with. Much of what is encountered - whether at work or in the community more generally - has the character of the self-fulfilling prophecy. The sociologist Robert Merton described this process amusingly in the following way:-

"Did Lincoln work far into the night? This testifies that he was industrious, resolute, perseverant and eager to realise his capacities to the full. Do the out-group Jews or Japanese keep these same hours? This only bears witness of their sweat-shop mentality, their ruthless undercutting of American standards, their unfair competitive practices. Is the in-group hero frugal, thrifty and sparing? Then the out-group villain is stingy, miserly and penny-pinching. All honour is due the in-group Abe for his having been smart, shrewd and intelligent, and by the same token all contempt is owing to the out-group Abes for their being sharp, cunning, crafty and too clever by far."

The woman who is occupationally competitive may be seen as a battleaxe; the one who is less so only demonstrates the deplorable lack of drive that women have and therefore their unworthiness for responsible jobs. Whereas one set of stereotypes says that women are practical, the next asserts their impracticability; whereas one maintains that they are devoted seconds in command ready to take subordination quite happily on a permanent basis, the next states that they cannot be depended on to be loyal to work organisations or dependably there - and so on. Most modern women in career jobs, if our sample is representative, no longer try to play their roles in masculine terms to prove that they are as tough, ruthless, perseverant etc, as men. Nor do they seek special treatment through the use of sex-appeal (though 'charm', a quality available to both sexes, may be liberally applied). What they seem to feel is that they must be extra-careful and extra-good because if things slip up negative sex stereotypes will be applied rather than, as among men, individual judgements and allowances. But, they perform in their work roles as individuals - some fitting certain stereotypes well (e.g. women are volatile, emotional) others not. Indeed, this is the only way to survive what is really a jungle of normative dilemmas.

Many women deal with these normative 'binds' by insulating themselves in one way or another. Their selection of friends is likely to be from among those who demonstrate their own commitment to the ideal of women having careers by also participating in something like dual-career families themselves, though this is not always easy to arrange due to the paucity of such families and the fact that friendships often stem from other ties. The fact that overload lessens casual social contacts and voluntary activities cut down on some of the contact with families operating according to the support norms.

It is not only the women, of course, who encounter normative dilemmas. The man who supports his wife by returning early from the office rather than stopping for drinks with his colleagues or attending a non-essential but ceremonially important meeting must often endure a certain amount of disapproval. Not every job has the flexibility to allow a husband to cover an emergency at home - e.g. when the au pair or daily help folds up and the wife has an important meeting on. Even the idea of having a high-powered wife arouses mixed feelings among colleagues - ranging from the negative pole of ideas such as that she's not very feminine or that she's a handful, to the more positive pole especially that may emerge in mid-life of more positive recognition of the value of having a wife who had developed intellectually along with the husband.

In all instances, positive as well as negative, the dual-career families have had to develop some competence in dealing with their divergence from normative patterns in their social environment. The "normalising" tendency is there, but in most instances gives way at some point to the recognition of difference and the acceptance of the differences with the mixed bag of advantages and disadvantages associated with them. One of the husbands in our sample - an architect recognised in his profession as one of the most highly creative and unusual men in his generation - said that he always had the idea that he was "dead ordinary" from schooldays onward, until one day he looked at an old class picture and felt that he was the only ordinary one, the rest of them appearing to be a bit "kooky" in one way or another. Only at that point did he accept the notion of the variation shown in their pattern as being something other than a rather painful and awkward set of accidental circumstances.

### 3. Network dilemmas

The normative dilemmas represent conflicts in ideas and definitions of the meaning and value of activities. These are mediated, in many instances by the interactions with actual people in one's social network - relatives, friends and neighbours, (though not always in the McLuhan age, where it is not only the printed word that is being bypassed but also the human relationship). Of these, there seem to be two types of relational patterns, each with a characteristic strain. The first is the type of relationship that is ascribed, i.e. that one is expected to participate in because of one's very existence - relations with mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, and so on. The second are the more optional kinds of relationships, chosen because of utility or of inclination.

In the area of kin relationships, not surprisingly for any kind of modern family, the in-law relationship (specifically the one involving the man's mother) proved most awkward. One of the patterns that emerges from the examination of personality or motivational syndromes associated with the dual-career family is that many of the men who are in fact facilitators of their wives' careers turn out to be men who had a specially close relationship with their mothers. Our interpretation of this finding is that these men have tended to have a very highly developed sense of empathy with the needs and wishes of women, and when they found themselves married to women who had career aspirations they acted to enable this, as they would also have done were their wives more domestically inclined.



The critical point arises when there is a conflict of demands - the ageing mother in need of help from her son who has always been the one in the family who was most empathic to her needs vs. the aspiring wife whose needs for back-up and support in her career are at a peak, particularly when there are also children to be managed. If this strain comes into sharp focus, say with an acute illness that runs a rapid course, it may be weathered. But when it drags out and involves difficult decisions for the care of the elderly person, the strains may become nearly intolerable and something may give. More usually the problem is simply how to deal with the powerful expectations that are usually involved in these relationships without giving offence or feeling too guilty. One of the wives characterised the situation as follows:-

"She'll call up and ask if she can just drop around for a visit. I've got her pretty well trained now to realise that I cannot just have a chat with her or prepare things for her. Early on my husband didn't realise what a problem this was. When she telephoned once I heard him say - 'Yes, she'll be home on Thursday, drop in anytime in the afternoon'. He didn't realise how precious that afternoon was for me . . . how many things I'd saved and planned to get done on that day. I couldn't spend it chatting with his mother. I've got her trained now to accept every third weekend."

This is the same wife who maintained a certain easy quality in the relationship with her in-laws (though this also worked against her in another sense) by allowing the misconception to continue that she was the same kind of secretary as her sister-in-law. In fact she was an Assistant Secretary in the Administrative Class of the Civil Service.

The optional patterns have a different sort of problem. They tend to be trimmed to the bone of a chosen few close relationships in most dual-career families - the wider range of acquaintance being left with the work situation. There are, of course, dilemmas about which the chosen few will be, but this can be left aside for the moment. The main round of relationships in the neighbourhood and community tend to be based on an "exchange" pattern that is both difficult and essential for the dual-career family. Particularly where there are children, car-pooling, neighbourhood visiting, transportation and associated tasks in relation to leisure activities - art classes, dancing, music, etc, it is important in the dual-career family to make use of any cooperative arrangements that may be possible in order to reduce the extra activity in already overloaded schedules. On the other hand, these cooperative services must be regarded in a very carefully tallied framework of reciprocity. There are, of course, problems about providing reciprocities. In some cases it is just impossible - as when children are invited to tea and entertained by their friends' mums. An au pair or domestic helper may or may not be considered an acceptable equivalent in the world of the children. The reason for keeping very close to exact tallies on all this, however, is to avoid surplus obligations which must be repaid somehow, and the costs of doing this in another way may be greater than the couple want to bear. Social contacts, for example, may not only entail squeezing an unwanted event into an overcrowded schedule, but it may be adumbrated with the normative conflicts already mentioned, the faint smell of disapproval colouring an occasion which should have recreational value.

#### 4. Role cycling

Every role, work or family, has a cycle. Initiation follows anticipation and is followed by a state of establishment (with or without 'honeymoon' elements). A plateau is reached, and this may persist for some time but is eventually followed by role disengagement after which the role relationship becomes inactive. It is during the establishment phase that the greatest demands are made on the person to be involved, to learn, to prove oneself, and to perform creditably. Most of the families studied, because of the criteria for selection, had already reached plateau stages of functioning, both in their careers and in their family life cycles. A number of important earlier dilemmas were mentioned by them, however, and two in particular are mentioned because of their apparent pervasiveness. These are the dilemmas associated with potential conflict between husband's and wife's career development pressures; and the set of cycling issues associated with having children.

Take the second first. There seem to be two prominent strategies associated with the timing of having children, where this is controlled. One is to defer having children as long as possible so as to become occupationally established. This means not only a higher income, but the possibility of greater flexibility by having reached the plateau stage of career development and having things going somewhat more comfortably than is true in the earlier competitive establishment phases. At the same time the wives' occupational commitment was by this time so well established that dropping out is often unthinkable. The reverse strategy, not prominent among our couples but found more often among younger people now, is early marriage and childbearing, with earlier consequent return to work. This pattern fits the American scene, perhaps better, though in Britain the Open University and other developments making for easier continued contact and re-entry may alter the picture.

There are a number of patterns relative to the number of children wanted that are of interest in terms of motivational syndromes, but it can only be mentioned here that dual-career families show a great range, from those who wish few or no children to those who wish many and continue to reproduce despite the availability to them of contraceptive devices and despite the complexity that this brings into their already overloaded lives. Two of the sixteen dual-career families studied intensively had six children.

The other cycling problem is in the relationship between the two careers; this seems most acute in the stages immediately following having children, whenever this comes. If the couple are childless, they can work out the competing demands of one another's careers on a more or less egalitarian basis, with variations stemming from variations in their individual commitment to work and their individual work situation. After having a child, the woman is less likely to be deployable elsewhere than the man because of the fact that if she is continuously in work she is likely to have reached a stage in her firm where she has earned the flexibility to accommodate the demands of childbirth and care. This means that she is not as likely to move or easily to find a substitute situation, being tied in a way that most men are not. On the other hand, if she does wish to move following childbirth, e.g. to find a less demanding type of job, the timing of her move and the availability of satisfactory jobs for her may not mesh with the husband's career developmental pressures and opportunities. However, migration is not the only issue. Pressures of decisions and of work crises may arise and intrude into the family arena from both work spheres simultaneously, putting severe strain on the family as a supportive system.

Now the final set of dilemmas, and perhaps the most central in many ways:-

### 5. Dilemmas of personal identity

It is our impression that for the generation studied - in the forties mostly - dilemmas of identity were stronger than they will be for succeeding generations, where the idea of sexual equality and role interchangeability is better established, particularly among the more highly educated parts of the population which is growing in size.

Now it is perfectly reasonable to suppose, and there is some evidence to support the supposition, that couples who depart from the normative standards of their society are likely to feel abnormal. In the sexual sphere this means that the woman may feel herself - aside from what anyone says to her or what ideas she derives from the media - that she is unfeminine; and the man who does more cooking or washing up than what he feels is usual may feel henpecked or even a bit queer. Whether or not a woman is attacked - overtly or covertly - for the possible harm she may be doing her children by leaving their care partly to others, she may feel pangs of remorse, regrets about not having more of those ordinary pleasures of wheeling the pram in the park, chatting with friends and neighbours on the High Street, curling up with a box of chocolates or a good novel. Whatever the Women's Liberation Front may feel about women being an oppressed minority, all of the statistics of longevity, morbidity and of particular stress disorders seem to indicate that women are a sheltered and protected group, less exposed than men to the hazards of "civilised" life. The path of work for a woman is the hard not the easy option. How do couples actually resolve identity dilemmas that arise when they find themselves engaged in new sex-role alignments?

First of all it must be said that even in dual career families, not all the couples experience their arrangements as departing from conventional sex-roles to the same degree. One definite pattern is for the women to absorb the brunt of the new arrangement, bringing to her husband the benefits of a rich life but not making any unusual demands on him. These women function with what might be called a "cinderella" pattern. When the clock strikes six they hang up their lab coats, put away their director's portfolios, lock up their offices and race for home where they become their husbands' little wives. Even where there is a more egalitarian division of labour in the household, the change of identity and style of relationship may be quite marked. The husband in one of our most 'jointly organised' families described his feelings when on seeing his wife on a visit to her firm on some other business in terms of how he literally didn't recognise her. Not only was her costume different, but her whole manner was that of a senior manager, not a loving partner.

Not all women and not all jobs allow this. More often it is a matter of barter and struggle and perhaps a bit of rational working out of who is to do what on the basis of availability and inclination rather than preconceived notions of what is woman's work and what is man's. With most of the couples studied there seems to exist tacitly recognised 'tension lines' beyond which each knew the other would be pushed only at peril to the relationship.

One conclusion to which we have come, after considering the ways in which re-alignments of sex-roles have been observed to occur (and not to occur) is that it requires considerable strength to allow changes to occur. There are certainly very deep resistances, both on the male and the female side to having very radical changes occur. One pediatrician at a recent Ciba Foundation seminar on the future of the family pointed out that biologically a few men could serve a very large community of women, and it may be that there is a very deep-rooted terror in males that women will in fact supersede them and that they will become virtually redundant. Many women too, at the point of the conscious or near conscious thought, seem to fear their own power in the world of men. The battle cry "we shall overcome", taken literally, may leave them without the men they may want at a very deep level to be there and if not strong for them at least strong with them.

### The dual-career family and marital satisfaction

Where the conventional conception of sex roles is held, even among psychiatrists, pediatricians and other professionals in our culture, the notion of a work-component in women's identities and a domestic component in men's, arouses the assumption of some kind of deviant tendencies, however much basic psychoanalytic theory poses a fundamental bisexuality in all human beings. The woman who really wants a career is assumed not to want a family, not to be maternal, to fear intimacy and so on. The man who wants to share domestic obligations and privileges and to facilitate his wife is thought to be either feminine in some major aspect of his make-up (in the unfriendly sense of the term) or at least to be a milque-toast, under the thumb of a domineering wife. In the Eastern countries, where the 'normal' conception of a woman's role includes a work component, psychiatrists make the contrary assumption, according to the Czech psychiatrist Knobloch. When a couple comes in with marital problems associated with the woman and her career, the tendency is to query the man's capacity to accept his wife as a full-valued person. Why does he have to keep her subordinated? What are his problems of insecurity about his own sexual and other aspects of identity that make him uncomfortable about allowing her to be a fully functioning woman with a family and a job? Clearly cultural elements are operative here, channelling whatever is true underlying human nature.

Now, the pessimistic view on the potential impact of an arrangement like the dual-career family on family life generally is quite devastating. Effects on children include the possibility in extremis of the development of disturbed or confused children, in their sex-role orientations and therefore their capacity to find a personal identity and a love partner and so on. Expectations of disastrous effects on the marital relationship have also been prevalent, with the assumption that the woman's competitiveness, the male's acquiescence might lead to a relationship characterised by frigidity and impotence.

No one has sufficient evidence on either of these accounts to make definitive pronouncements. Specific instances can be produced - and often are in the correspondence columns of the major newspapers - both to support the pessimistic view and to support the more optimistic view, emphasising the gains in self-fulfilment, enrichment of the relationships, productivity and so on that ensue from dual-career or similar arrangements. Our own information contributes something to the discussion, but is far from conclusive. We have very little on effects on children, and would like very much to pursue this topic in greater detail.

in future. Within our intensive study of sixteen dual-career families (with roughly 30 children), there were only two that showed problems with their children of sufficient severity to compel major concern and professional help. In one case the difficulties arose from a series of disasters in the domestic help area, and the disturbance subsided when the mother made the decision to leave work and return to a domestic role. She was one of the 'drop outs' in our series, and it was clear on studying the background of her situation that she was highly ambivalent about working in the first place, and it would not seem unreasonable to suppose that this was communicated in various ways, some of which may have contributed to the disturbance in the domestic management situation in the first place. This is speculative, clearly. In the other instance, the family was the only one in our series that was primarily work-oriented, and characterised themselves as not really familistic. The couple relationship was important to them, for companionship and in a rather old-fashioned romantic way. However, though they wanted a child - "people think you're funny otherwise, and one doesn't want to find oneself too old ever to have that life experience and regret not having taken the opportunity" - they didn't really want the trouble and sacrifice that is realistically entailed in seeing a baby through its early infancy. After mixed experiences with nannies and nurseries, the infant did show signs of disturbance, but now that he is past that stage and a proper boarding school boy to whom they relate as a person and his difficulties with speech (stuttering) relationships seem to be getting better. Indeed, even in this couple, as among many, there seems to be the notion that there are gains through not overwhelming the child with parental attention - such as the greater independence and originality of mind that the children seem to show in many instances. There are, of course, innumerable examples of this from the past, where lonely children reared in nurseries of upper class country homes turn out to be extremely creative and independent-minded, but obviously as a mass prescription for the middle classes there are a number of hazards in the way.

Our contribution is perhaps clearer in the area of marital satisfactions. Though it is true to say that our small intensive study of dual-career families was biased by virtue of being intact families and therefore more likely to show a positive balance on the satisfaction side, they do seem to support in general patterning the findings we also derive from the analysis of our survey data on graduates where we have information from both members of the couple - on their work and family orientations and on their assessments of marital satisfactions.

Our first set of tabulations provided some cause for suggesting that there was substance in the more pessimistic view. On the whole - possibly because of early family stage and sampling and response bias - this is a "happy" population - with 60% indicating that they are very happily married, and nearly 30% quite happily married, and only about 10% in less contented states. Given the type of response bias one knows to exist in questionnaires of this type it seemed most sensible to contrast the "very" happy couples with all others. Taking altogether the women who were continuous workers, whether career oriented or simply work oriented without having the more egalitarian notions about women's careers, they were discernibly lower in their degree of marital satisfactions than the more conventional and non-continuous working women.

Even bearing in mind that this tendency meant only a drop in the idyllic extreme, or at least an apparent drop, perhaps brought about by the greater tendency of housewives to reply idealistically, we tended to regard this as a real phenomenon and discussed it in terms of John Stuart Mill's observations that:-

"It is indisputable that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and the highly endowed being will always feel that any happiness which he can look for as the world is constituted is imperfect. But he can learn to bear its imperfections, if they are at all bearable; and they will not make him envy the being who is indeed unconscious of the imperfections, but only because he feels not at all the good which those imperfections qualify. It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other parties of the comparison know both sides."

Leaving aside the somewhat noxious quality of the metaphor, we were not entirely happy with this formulation. We know that sheer overload could produce the kinds of tensions that might make for a drop in marital satisfactions, but what about all those gains in the dual-career family, for which we had ample testimonial as well? Further analysis of the survey data accomplished with the help of Dr Lotte Bailyn emphasised the bearing on this pattern of the husband's orientation to work and family life as well as the sheer fact of the wife's working. Her analysis showed a very interesting distinction between those working wives who were married to husbands who were 'familistic' in orientation (i.e. derived major satisfaction from family life) and those who were mainly 'careerist' (i.e. derived their main satisfactions from work or career and not from family life). Though many of the latter's wives worked, often with their husbands' blessing - perhaps to alleviate guilt at the neglect of family considerations, they worked with a different attitude than those who worked out of personal commitment and with the sympathetic support of their husbands. The upshot of this analysis is that the level of marital satisfaction is roughly the same regardless of whether the wife works or not, so long as the husband is family-involved (50-60%, more or less, are very happy in this population of graduates). It is only among the 'careerist' husbands' wives that the percentage of 'very' happy marriages is low for the working wives - dropping to below 40%. Here the chances for the wife to feel happily married are slightly better if she remains at home, perhaps creating the feeling in domesticity that there is a happy marriage in some sense. If she goes to work but without ideological commitment to the notion, it may be with the constant nagging feeling that this is as a substitution for something preferred but not had.

The formulation that we now tend to favour is that couples will work out whichever arrangements are going to produce satisfaction for them and achieve about the same levels of satisfaction by different combinations of husband and wife orientations to work and family so long as family is important to both of them. Once 'family' drops as an area from which either derives major personal gratifications, the level of marital satisfaction drops for the couple. This may seem tautologous, but it has the merit of taking the issue away from an over-concentration of the woman and whether or not she works, and placing it squarely on the couple relationship, making marital satisfaction an interaction-effect of husbands and wives' attitudes and behaviour.

### Gains of the dual career family

It may be that the dominant impression given so far has been that it is all too difficult. Even in cultures more driven by the ethic of joy through work than perhaps prevails in Ireland, the idea of involving oneself in all these complexities to double that joy in one's work may become tenuous. If one adds to this that the dual career family will probably only work if both partners are strong and healthy, and if one is efficient and lucky in the procurement and management of a host of familial support, the prospect is daunting to say the least. It would therefore seem important to finish with the arguments in favour, not from the demographic, manpower and educational trends standpoints, but from the point of view of the couples experiencing and operating dual-career families of different kinds.

The most important gain, in the personal rather than in the national economy sense, is that those women who are motivated to work or to have careers are able to have this facilitated in a dual-career family structure, whereas in other more conventional family structures they are not. In extreme situations of non-facilitation, one finds the classical 'captive wife' syndrome brought to focus in a recent study by Hana Gavron. A modern conception of a 'good family' is one that emphasises how a family enhances the development of its members. The key issue for the functions of the family in changing contemporary society is how to keep families 'good' for all their members. What is a good family from one person's or collection of persons' points of view may not be good for others. Social pressures are in the direction of the conventional structure - families with children, husband as breadwinner, wife as homebody. While there are many unresolved issues of the limits of a more variegated and permissive pattern, the dual-career family shows how a new structural type can facilitate a family member's development, namely that of a highly qualified and highly motivated wife.

A second kind of gain seems to occur even in the face of overloads and strains in relation to the appreciation for leisure. Like the couples who endure quarrels for the joy of reconciliation, the dual-career families seem to endure considerable overload gladly not only for the intrinsic satisfactions entailed but for the experience of heightened pleasure in their recreational activities.

Third, the very need to deal with dilemmas and complexities beyond those presented to most conventional families in their environments has put dual-career families on their mettle to be relatively efficient and to be relatively competent at diagnosing problems and difficulties in their lives so that remedies may be sought out. They are, in short, competent families, and though competence imposes strains it also has its own rewards through the achievement of difficult tasks of various kinds. Much is to be learned from these families and their patterns of coping with complexity, not only for other dual-career families but for families generally in a world of incessant change and new challenge.

### The future

Aside from the factors that will affect the viability of the dual-career family as a type or set of types (factors like continued increase in women receiving higher education and developing career aspirations; changes in housing arrangements and the upgrading of service occupations relating to domestic and housing arrangements),

there are larger issues about the future of the family that may be mentioned. As we have already indicated, the conceptions of 'good families' in modern society is changing. Reproduction, the provision of a social status and socialising experiences for the dependent young and affectional supports for the grown-ups are still important functions and will unquestionably remain there. However, what is meant by these rather vague and global functions of the family is changing rather considerably. As the child psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim said several years ago about child-rearing practices in modern society, so we would say about family relationships generally - Love is not enough! Families have to facilitate the development of their members in a more active way because of the complexities and dilemmas posed in their various experiences with a range of institutions in the outside world. The dual-career family has been found to be one type of family structure which has, at considerable cost but gladly on the whole, functioned to facilitate the wives taking their desired occupational roles. The effects of this pattern on the members of the family who have no choice in the options taken - namely the children - seem less disastrous than pessimistic predictions based on clinical research have presumed, and may have even had some positive gains - but this is not yet known in any exact sense. Possibly a different type of child is being produced in these families than in the more conventional ones, but not necessarily less adapted to the requirements of modern life.

The dual-career family is only one of many variant types known to be functioning in metropolitan environments under the vague umbrella of the independent nuclear family structure in our society. This type has been given attention because of our specific research mandate on women's roles. What is now indicated is more detailed studies of other variant types, so that the strains and gains of different patterns for different family members may be more closely assessed, for it is certain that many other types are around and coming into awareness. One of the central dilemmas of our times is that of determining what are to be meaningful limits and which forms of social living are to be supported, which merely tolerated, and which to be avoided in a society that is increasingly permissive in outlook but at the same time is humane and protective where harm may be done. These limits can be rationally established only on the basis of careful investigation encompassing the different components of the situation - psychobiological, psychological, social and economic.