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in a New Industrial Town

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by

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FAMILY STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES IN A NEW INDUSTRIAL TOWN

The family system, as it exists in the new industrial town of Kwun Tong, has undergone a long process of change and stabilization over the past twenty years. It has developed a structure of its own and operated through a set of functional processes in order to maintain itself as well as to contribute toward the functioning of other social systems and the society as a whole. It is therefore of great significance to study its structure and processes and to analyze them along these lines of questioning: (1) what is it like?, (2) how does it operate internally?, and (3) how is it related to external social systems?

Conceptually, the family is to be viewed as a social system and analyzed in terms of its structure and functional processes. With regard to its structural aspects, it will be examined in its ecological location and regional origin, family type, family size and composition, rules of lineality and locality, and the pattern of marriage. Its internal functional processes will be analyzed in terms of its power and decision-making participation, role differentiation and performance, and other patterns of family interaction. Lastly, its relations with external systems will cover such areas as educational attainment and mobility, economic involvement and occupational mobility, and social and religious participation.

The data for the present study are drawn mainly from two recent empirical studies. The first study is a general survey of the family life of the people in Kwun Tong (Ng, 1975). It was conducted on a net representative sample of 818 households which were randomly selected from a total universe of some 100,000 households living in five types of housing in the district. Its data were collected through the form of a structured interview, and both the household heads and their spouses, as well as two of their eldest children, were interviewed. The second study is a more specific research project which focuses on the patterns of the differentiation of marital power and household tasks inside the family (Wong, 1972). It was done on a representative sample of 637 Chinese families which were randomly drawn from a total population of about 450,000 in Kwun Tong. It had also made use of a structured interview, and only the wives of the family heads were interviewed.

Family Structure and Composition

The families under study came from the industrial town of Kwun Tong which is located on the southern region of East Kowloon and has at present a population of half a million spreading in an area of about five square miles. Fifty-eight percent of these families resided in the Government resettlement blocks, one-third of them in the low-cost housing estates, eight percent in the private housing, and only a very small fraction in the squatter huts. These housings were scattered around in various parts of the Great Kwun Tong District, and many of the housing units provided only minimum living facilities sufficient for a small household at a relatively low rent. The families originally lived in various districts all over the Colony, and they moved into this district mainly because they were assigned to these housing units as part of the Government resettlement plan, with some seeking for better living conditions, and the rest for cheaper rent or in order to be near to their working place. Most of these families moved in only during the past ten years, and they were in general satisfied with the living environment of the district.

The heads of these families immigrated overwhelmingly from the mainland of China, and they came to the Colony mainly after the Second World War and especially during the

years around the Communist take-over of China in 1949. Their age distribution ranged primarily from 30 to 59 years old, with the median age of the husbands being 44 and that of the wives 39. The regional origin of these people was mainly from Canton, Macau and nearby areas, occupying about one-third of them, next in importance were the areas of Chiu Chau, Sze Yap, Wai Yeung and others, and only 18 percent of them were actually born in Hong Kong. As they were born and brought up respectively in their native towns and villages in China, they were endowed with different traditions, customs and dialects, and they brought along these regional differences to their newly settled place. As a result, like Hong Kong as a whole, Kwun Tong became a town composed of people with multi-regional origins, multi-dialects, and multi-styles of living.

The structure and composition of these families varies rather widely among one another, and, in order to study them properly, it is viable to classify them in accordance with certain criteria. The type of family structure is here defined in terms of the number of generations existing in a family and the nature of relationships among its family members. Accordingly, there is formed a typology of family structure which consists of several distinctive types with their respective operational definitions (Cf. Wong, 1975:987) as follows:

(1) Nuclear: consists of one married couple with or without unmarried children, and with or without unmarried relatives.

(2) Stem: consists of one married couple with unmarried children and the parents of the husband, and with or without unmarried relatives.

(3) Joint: consists of one married couple with or without unmarried children, and with at least one married brother/sister of the husband and his/her family.

(4) Stem-joint: consists of one married couple with unmarried children and the parents of the husband, and with at least one married brother/sister of the husband and his/her family.

(5) Other extended: consists of a miscellaneous group of relatives who are related to one another either consanguineously or by marriage.

According to this typology, the studied families were classified and presented in the following table:

Table 1 : Distribution of the Families by Family Type

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Nuclear</u>	<u>599</u>	<u>73.2</u>
Single couple	13	1.6
Couple with husband's relatives	4	0.5
Couple with wife's relatives	1	0.1
Couple with unmarried children	550	67.2
Couple with unmarried children and husband's relatives	24	2.9
Couple with unmarried children and wife's relatives	7	0.9
<u>Stem</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>25.2</u>
Couple with unmarried children and husband's father/mother	137	16.7
Couple with unmarried children and husband's parents	39	4.8
Couple with unmarried children and wife's father/mother	24	2.9
Couple with unmarried children and wife's parents	6	0.7
<u>Joint</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.1</u>
Couple with unmarried children and husband's brother's family	1	0.1
<u>Stem-Joint</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Couple with unmarried children, husband's parents and his brother's/sister's family	8	1.0
<u>Other Extended</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0.5</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>818</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 1 shows that, among the general types of families, the nuclear family was the most prevalent one, being practised by 73.2 percent of all the families under study. The next most common type was the stem family which was adopted by 25.2 percent of these families. Taking these two types of families together, they accounted for almost all or exactly 98.4 percent of the families, whereas only a very small fraction of them spread among the joint, stem-joint and other extended types. Of the nuclear variants, the most popular unit was the family which consisted of the husband and wife and their unmarried children. Next in popularity was the family of a couple with their unmarried children and one or more relatives on the husband's side. Close to this unit was the single couple which would in time become a typical nuclear family after having given birth to their children. The unpopular nuclear units were those which were composed of a couple with their unmarried children and the wife's relatives, or a single couple with either the husband's relatives or the wife's kinsmen. Among the stem sub-types, the most common ones were the families which consisted of the spouses, their unmarried children, and one or both of the parents of the husband. The less common stem units were families which included a married couple with their unmarried children and one or both of the parents of the wife. In regard to the large extended types, the stem-joint unit

was more often adopted than either the joint or the other extended ones. The distribution pattern of family types among the present families was very similar to that of the families in the Colony as a whole, with only a slightly greater preference for the stem type than for the other extended ones (Cf. Wong, 1975:992).

The size of these families ranged widely from two to sixteen persons, with one exceptional case of a family which was reported to have twenty-one persons. The modal family size tended to cluster on those families with five to eight persons, and the overall average family size was 6.57 persons, as compared to 6.45 persons of an earlier Kwun Tong study (Wong, 1972:7). As family type is defined in terms of its lineal and lateral extensions, the size of a family is expected to correlate with its type. So, as it was found, the nuclear families generally had a smaller number of members than the extended ones. The typical nuclear family accommodated about five-and-a-half persons under its roof which were composed of the husband, his wife and three to four children, whereas the stem unit usually had a little over seven members including the married couple, three to four children, and one or both of the husband's parents. The large extended families often consisted of more than nine persons, and varied rather widely in their forms of composition. Occasionally one or more relatives, often on the husband's side, were

accommodated in these families either temporarily or on a more permanent basis.

The rules of lineality and locality as practised in these families also varied with the types of families. On the whole, these rules had been slackened and deemphasized with the increasing trend toward the nuclear family structure, and were therefore modified in both their nature and form when adopted by the studied families. Thus, the prevalent nuclear families tended to practise the patterns of bilineality and neolocality. This meant that, by the former pattern, descent and inheritance were passed on to both sons and daughters even though sons were often more favored and might receive a larger share of it. Likewise, both the father's and the mother's relatives were accepted equally as kin, but relations with paternal kinsmen were usually stronger and more extensive. By the latter pattern, the newly wed was expected to set up their own independent family, but they might, and often did, stay with the husband's parents for some time before doing so. In fact, when they married, almost half of these couples set up their own home, slightly over one-third of them lived with the husband's parents for a while or permanently, and the remaining portion stayed either with the wife's parents or with other relatives.

In contrast, the large extended families were more likely to adopt the rules of patrilineality and patrilocality.

Both descent and inheritance were determined by the father's line and interaction with paternal kin was much honored and closely maintained. The married couple was also supposed to join and function as part of the husband's parents' household. This practice applied only to a very small number of the families and therefore signified a greatly diminishing tendency. With the substantially practised stem families, the patterns of lineality and locality were basically mixed. They were mainly patrilineal and patrilocal. The father's line was usually emphasized in considering matters concerning descent and inheritance, but the status and rights of daughters were respected and relations with a limited number of maternal relatives were also maintained. Regarding their residence pattern, instead of joining their parents' families, most of these men invited their parents, or increasingly the parents of their wife, to stay with them, or they alternated among the siblings in accommodating the parents and gave them money when not staying with them.

The marriage pattern as adopted by these couples was monogamous as was required by law. The practice of plural wives or concubinage had not only lost its legal status but its normative support as well. It was basically homogamous in terms of the matched socio-economic characteristics of the marital partners, even though the husband was preferred to come from a slightly higher social status.

This meant the women often wished and did marry up the social ladder, with their husbands being a bit older in age, better in education, higher in occupational position, and larger in income, whereas the men were expected to marry either only their social equals or down the status scale a little but not too far. Thus, the age of the husbands at marriage was somewhat older, ranging from 23 to 30 years old and with an average age of 27, and that of the wives was between 18 and 24 years old, with an average age of 22. Furthermore, these marital couples were very similar in their regional origin and religious belief. Homogamy in terms of their place of birth was overwhelmingly practised by those couples coming from Hong Kong, Canton and Chiu Chau, and only a little less so among the groupings of Sze Yap, Wai Yeung and other districts. Likewise, both of the spouses either identified themselves as having no religion, or claimed to share the same belief mostly in traditional deities, Buddhism and Catholicism, and slightly less so in Protestantism.

Internal Processes of the Family

Having analyzed their structure and composition, it is time to examine the functional aspects of the studied families. The functions of these families may be viewed in two ways: on the one hand, they are regarded as a set of functional processes which take place inside the family and help it to operate and maintain as a social system of interacting individuals, and, on the other, they are treated as a series of functional interchanges which occur between the family and other social systems. This section will concentrate on the internal processes of the family which include several dimensions such as power and decision-making participation, role differentiation and performance, and other forms of family interaction.

Power and Decision-Making Participation

The family is full of a wide variety of household activities or tasks which must be carried out in order to maintain it as a viable, operating unit. To do so, it involves the power to make decisions as to what tasks should be done and when and how they should be done. Family power is here defined as the potential ability of one member to influence the behavior of other members in the family. It is acquired in the process of negotiating mainly between the spouses over family matters and is manifested in their ability to make decisions affecting

the life of the family. It may derive basically from either cultural prescription or individual competence or both (Blood and Wolfe, 1960:12-15), but in fact these two sources of power often work together or complement each other in deciding over the balance of power between the marital partners. In other words, a patriarchal system may favor the husband in the distribution of marital power, but it still depends on his ability to manipulate and actualize such power in the decision-making process. Both of these perspectives are therefore equally important and helpful in analyzing the division of power between the spouses.

As defined, family power is reflected in the making of decisions over household tasks. In order to measure the balance of power between husbands and wives, the range of household tasks was classified into four areas: economic activities, social activities, child care and control, and household duties, and each of these task areas was in turn composed of several specific tasks. Thus, the area of economic activities was defined to include such tasks as choosing an occupation, purchasing various household items from more expensive one like an apartment to some less valuable ones like a television set and an electric fan, and planning family budget. The components of the social activities area consisted of various participations in religious and welfare programs; forms of interaction among

kinsmen like mutual visits, exchange of gifts and financial assistance; kinds of family celebration like birthday parties, social festivals and wedding feasts; and social entertainment events like dinning out, going to movies and attending functional feasts. The area of child care and control included such forms of physical care like feeding, clothing and consulting doctor; behavioral controls like supervising school work, giving pocket money and handling general discipline; and career controls like selecting school, making educational plan and helping to choose an occupation. The last task area was household duties which covered various routine household chores like grocery shopping, cooking, dish-washing, washing clothes, ironing, mending, and house cleaning, decorating and maintaining.

To compute the power score for the spouses, several steps were followed. First, the respondents (only the wives in this case) were questioned as to who was usually the one to make decisions concerning a particular household task and their responses were recorded on a five-point descending scale from 'husband always,' 'husband more than wife,' 'husband and wife equally,' 'wife more than husband,' to 'wife always.' Secondly, each point on this scale was given a numerical weight so that a precise power score could be obtained. Thirdly, a mean power score was calculated for each specific task by summing up all the points on its scale and dividing them up by the

number of respondents. Finally, an overall mean power score was also acquired for each task area by adding up all the power scores for its constituent tasks and dividing them up by the number of tasks.

As a result, the distribution of the husband's mean power scores for the various household tasks and task areas were obtained and tabulated in the table below:

Table 2 : Distribution of Husband's Mean Power on Household Tasks

<u>Household Tasks</u>	<u>Husband's Mean Power</u>
<u>Economic Activities</u>	<u>3.17</u>
Occupational activities	4.20
Purchase of electric fan	3.13
Purchase of apartment	3.10
Purchase of television set	3.08
Family budgeting	2.32
<u>Social Activities</u>	<u>2.85</u>
Dining out	3.29
Participation in welfare programs	3.26
Going to movie	3.18
Attending feast	3.15
Celebration of wedding	2.93
Giving financial assistance	2.82
Gift-giving	2.66
Celebration of birthday	2.66
Visiting relatives	2.65
Participation in church activities	2.48
Celebration of social festivals	2.27
<u>Child Care and Control</u>	<u>2.25</u>
Making educational plan	2.76
Choosing occupation	2.68
Selecting school	2.47
Handling discipline	2.36
Supervising homework	2.28
Giving pocket money	2.09
Consulting doctor	1.90
Clothing	1.86
Feeding	1.82
<u>Household Duties</u>	<u>1.70</u>
House maintaining	2.63
House decorating	2.06
House cleaning	1.66
Shopping	1.56
Cooking	1.50
Dish-washing	1.50
Ironing	1.48
Washing	1.47
Mending clothes	1.46

Table 2 shows that, on the one hand, in terms of the overall mean power over the task areas, it was basically an equalitarian pattern being practised by the spouses in the areas of economic activities (Husband's Mean Power = 3.17) and social activities (HMP = 2.85), even though the husbands were slightly more powerful in the former area and a bit less so in the latter one than their wives. With regard to the other areas of child care and control (HMP = 2.25) and household duties (HMP = 1.70), a wife-dominant pattern was being adopted among these families as the wives were more likely to make decisions on family matters concerning child care and control and overwhelmingly so in the area of household duties. On the other hand, in terms of the mean power on specific tasks within each task area, the husbands were much more likely than their spouses to make decisions regarding their occupational activities, slightly more so in the purchase of household furniture items like electric fan and television set, and even the apartment itself, but much less so in the budgeting of family expenditure within the area of economic activities. In the social activities area, the husbands were more likely to initiate decisions about taking the family out for dinner, participating in social welfare programs, going to a movie or attending a functional feast, less so in participating in the celebration of weddings and birthdays and exchanging

financial assistance, gifts and visits with relatives, and much less so in taking part in church and social festival activities. Concerning the area of child care and control, the wives were playing a much more active role. As compared with their husbands, they were much more likely to decide about what their children should eat and wear and when they should see a doctor, and slightly more so in those matters of giving them pocket money to spend, supervising their homework and handling their discipline, but they tended to consult their husbands in making educational plan and selecting school and occupation for their children. Finally, the wives enjoyed much autonomy in the area of household duties. Except for the tasks of maintaining and decorating the household which required the assistance of their husbands, they made almost all the decisions regarding those matters of mending, washing and ironing clothes as well as those of dishing-washing, cooking, shopping and house-cleaning.

Task Performance and Role Differentiation

In order to maintain the viability of a family, decisions about household tasks must be not only made but actually carried out. This section is concerned with the routine daily tasks which have to be performed in every family in order to keep the home going. Two key questions are: (1) how do the husband and wife divide

up the house work, and (2) what kinds of role do they assume in the family? The question of relative task performance between the husband and wife was first dealt with and could be seen in the distribution of the husband's mean performance on household tasks as tabulated in the following table:

Table 3 : Distribution of Husband's Mean Performance on Household Tasks

Household Tasks	Husband's Mean Performance
<u>Economic Activities</u>	<u>3.29</u>
Occupational activities	4.10
Purchase of electric fan	3.26
Purchase of television set	3.24
Purchase of apartment	3.17
Family budgeting	2.66
<u>Social Activities</u>	<u>2.78</u>
Dining out	3.22
Going to movie	3.19
Participation in welfare programs	3.19
Attending feast	3.14
Celebration of wedding	2.87
Giving financial assistance	2.76
Visiting relatives	2.61
Gift-giving	2.59
Participation in church activities	2.55
Celebration of birthday	2.40
Celebration of social festivals	2.05
<u>Child Care and Control</u>	<u>2.14</u>
Making educational plan	2.67
Choosing occupation	2.64
Handling discipline	2.31
Selecting school	2.28
Supervising homework	2.24
Giving pocket money	2.00
Consulting doctor	1.75
Clothing	1.73
Feeding	1.68
<u>Household Duties</u>	<u>1.71</u>
House maintaining	2.84
House decorating	2.12
House cleaning	1.69
Shopping	1.51
Cooking	1.48
Dish-washing	1.47
Ironing	1.43
Washing	1.43
Mending clothes	1.43

As shown in Table 3, the husbands' overall mean performance scores for the four task areas were: economic activities 3.29, social activities 2.78, child care and control 2.14, and household duties 1.71. This indicated that, in general, the husbands participated jointly and more or less equally with their wives in those household tasks concerning economic and social activities, but the latter were found to be more responsible than the former for the performance of those tasks relating to child care and control and household duties. As to their participation in specific task area like economic activities, the husbands were almost solely engaged in their occupational activities, but tended to consult their spouses in making major household purchases of such items as electric fan, television set and apartment as well as in the budgeting of family expenditure. In the area of social activities, the husband were more likely to be the ones to take their spouses or their families out for dinner, going to a movie, attending a functional feast, or engaging in welfare programs, whereas the wives were more involved in kinship activities like participating in the celebration of a wedding and exchanging financial aid, visits and gifts with their relatives, and especially so in attending church functions and preparing for the celebration of birthdays and social festivals. With respect to the area of child care and control, the wives played a much more

active role and were more likely to be responsible for such matters as feeding, clothing, consulting doctor, giving pocket money, supervising homework, selecting school and handling discipline, even though they would ask for the advice of their husbands in carrying out long-term matters like making educational plan and advising on the choice of occupation for their children. Finally, the performance of household duties was mostly in the hands of the wives. While they tended to request the help of their husbands in maintaining and decorating the house, they did all the household work almost all by themselves including mending, ironing and washing clothes, dish-washing, cooking, shopping, and cleaning the house.

The other question of role differentiation between the marital partners was to be examined in terms of both the patterns of the division of power and that of labor. A spousal role can be defined as a pattern of behavior which is structured around specific rights and duties and associated with one's particular status within the family. This pattern of behavior is seen to consist of both the dimensions of the making of decisions about and the performance of household tasks, which taken together, may reflect the nature of a specific role. Furthermore, the substance of this behavior pattern will provide for the content of this role which may then be classified and interpreted.

To compare Table 2 to Table 3, it was found that the two distributions of the husband's mean power and mean performance on household tasks were very much similar to each other in terms of the rank order of these various tasks and their respective scores. This meant, as far as the participation in household tasks was concerned, the making of decisions about them was mostly consistent with their performance. In other words, the same person who made decisions about a specific task also carried them out. This might be explained by the fact that the family was usually a small arena with only two major partners and the tasks they were to undertake were mostly routine and trivial, so that there was no need for a clear differentiation of their decision-making and performance. This consistency had a significant effect upon the role-playing of the marital partners so much so that they were able to avoid such role conflicts as existing between the making of decisions and their actualization and therefore increase their role efficiency.

The four areas of household tasks could in fact be seen as four broad family roles differentiated between and undertaken by the husband and wife. These roles were not separate, discrete categories, but extended into one another making a continuum of interrelated and intertwined roles. This indicated that, in assuming their roles, the husbands and the wives did not differentiate themselves

so distinctively as to carrying out separate roles, but rather participated jointly in these role activities in terms of their decision-making and performance. While these couples usually collaborated in fulfilling those duties of the economic and the social roles, it was still possible to distinguish the former as slightly more masculine, i.e., being performed mainly by the husbands, and the latter as slightly more feminine, i.e., as carried out mainly by the wives. Furthermore, the role of child care and control was even more feminine as its duties were most likely to be assumed by the wives. Finally, the role of household duties was basically a feminine one because the wives were almost solely responsible for such activities.

Other Patterns of Family Interaction

In addition to those patterns of family decision-making and role differentiation which were concerned with the family as a whole, there were other patterns of interaction among family members on an individual basis. These latter patterns of family interaction were analyzed along two major dimensions: husband-wife and parent-child. These dimensions were in fact the most fundamental lines of interaction as the families under study were found to be mostly nuclear in structure and consisting of two generations.

Husband-wife. The relationship between the husbands and wives was basically determined by their relative participation in the making of decisions about and the performance of household tasks. As it was already shown, the pattern of their division of power was increasingly more equalitarian. The husband was no longer the irrefutable master of his family, being dominant in all family relations and making all major decisions about family life. Instead, he now tended to consult his wife concerning major family matters and reach joint decisions about them. With respect to their participation in household tasks, they began to practise a collaborative pattern. There was no distinct separation of roles between them, with each partner tending a different sphere of roles. While they usually shared with each other in the undertaking of family affairs, the husband was mainly concerned with the economic and social tasks of the family, whereas the wife was predominantly engaged in household duties, child care and control, and social activities (Cf. Wong, 1972:17-18).

On the basis of these fundamental patterns of their differentiation in power and task performance, the husband-wife relationship was moving further toward a companionship pattern (Burgess, et al., 1963:3-5). They were found to have increased their communication in both frequency and depth with each other, as the majority of the husbands and especially of the wives claimed to have often, or at least

sometimes, shared both interesting episodes and unpleasant experiences with their partners. A large number of these couples said they had developed personal hobbies in common with each other, and they enjoyed these hobbies either together or consecutively, such as, in preferential order, going to movie and Chinese opera, playing mah-jong game, visiting the teahouse, watching television programs, shopping, listening to music, and others. Most of them were sometimes or often engaged in some kind of recreation on holidays and sundays, and they usually went together even if one partner did not really like the nature of the specific item of recreation. They also exchanged gifts with each other on special occasions like birthdays and wedding anniversaries. Furthermore, most of these spouses claimed to have known a few or many of each other's good friends, and they often went out together or singly to socialize with them or entertained them at home.

These marital partners also shared with each other some common family values and the emphasis on family planning in general. Hence, they were both in favor of such values as small family size, fewer children, little sex preference of children, obedience of children toward parents, neolocal residence, independence of children after marriage, and children's responsibility for the support of aged parents, and they concurred in emphasizing the importance of general family planning such as budgeting

their family expenses, planning their children, and designing their life style in general. However, when marital disagreements occurred concerning usually the discipline of children or family expenditure, they tended to discuss openly about the problems in question and try to solve them peacefully and rationally rather than resort to outright conflict and quarrel with each other.

Parent-child. The parent-child relationship is basically related to the structure of the family as well as the value and meaning in having children. On the one hand, as it was found, the overwhelming majority of the studied families were adopting the nuclear type of structure. This meant these families were composed mainly of a small number of members, i.e., parents and two to four children, who were related to one another on an increasingly more cooperative and equalitarian basis. As such, they became structurally isolated from external social systems, and tended to evolve into an independent, closely knitted system of their own. Their members were interdependent among one another not only for economic support and protection, but also for emotional sustenance. Hence, the relations between the parents and their children were strong and sharpened, capable of being transformed into a pure or mixed pattern of love, trust and suspicion, as they interacted and imposed upon one another constantly with their role expectations and personal needs.

Furthermore, the gap of understanding between them seemed to have increasingly widened as they were found to differ more and more in their family values, general outlooks and personal styles of living. For example, as compared with their children, the parents were much more likely to endorse the traditional family values, accept a conservative and realistic outlook, and follow a practical and comfort-oriented style of living.

On the other hand, the value and meaning in having children as perceived by the parents had a significant bearing on their relations with the children. Despite of their endorsement of the traditional value of having children, over 84 percent of these parents considered child-raising as a very laborious job. They identified the major disadvantages of having children as causing emotional burden on the parents, increased financial expenses in running the family, and inconvenience to family members concerned. However, they also believed children brought along such major advantages as adding fun to the family, being sources of emotional satisfaction, providing for security against old age, and perpetuating the family line. Besides, some parents confessed having children improved their marital relations as well as those between them and their kinsmen.

In raising their children, the parents were most concerned about their studies, as was resulted from the cultural value on education and the highly competitive nature of the local education system. They cared next about their conduct, making sure their children would not be led astray, then about their physical safety, and lastly about their career prospect. As far as the education of their children was concerned, these parents showed some sexual preference slightly more in favor of the boys. Almost two-thirds of them expected their sons to complete a university or secondary education, and only a small fraction even ventured to think of sending their children abroad for further studies. As for girls, they were expected to finish mostly the secondary school, perhaps even the university, and leastly further studies abroad. However, these parents stated that, in spite of their ideal goals for their children's education, three-fourths of them found themselves unable or very difficult to provide financial support for the realization of such goals, and only a small proportion claimed to be able to do so. Thus, in allocating their limited financial resources, they would try hard to provide for the education of their children, but they were somewhat more willing to support their sons than their daughters.

Moreover, about three-fourths of the parents considered it a filial duty of the children to support

them and expected them to do so even when they were employed themselves and had regular income or even when the latter were married and had their own families to maintain, but others were quite lenient about it and said it would depend on the situations. Both boys and girls were expected to help the family financially as early as when they were fourteen years of age, but they were supposed to do so mostly around seventeen to twenty years old. There was a slight tendency for the girls to begin as well as to end supporting the family a little earlier. They were expected to first complete their secondary or university education which was supposedly regarded as the basic qualification for entering the labor market, and contribute toward the family budget from then on.

The relations between parents and children were shown in three ways: children's assistance in household work, their communication with the parents, and their responsibility toward the parents. First, the children claimed to have actively participated in all kinds of household tasks. In fact, this had become necessary, if not indispensable, for the daily functioning of the household as domestic help from outside sources, e.g., house-maids or relatives, had dwindled down drastically and become very difficult or expensive to obtain in recent years. Consequently, they were expected to give a hand in whatever tasks they were able and ready to do. Hence, they

had helped mostly in washing dishes and shopping for various household items, next in doing cooking, laundry and grocery shopping, and lastly in writing letters for their parents, conducting domestic repairs and paying utility bills.

Secondly, both the parents and their children were reported to have shared with one another a wide variety of family and other matters. They either communicated mutually on various subjects for the exchange of information and the fun of interaction, or consulted one another for opinions and suggestions as to what and how major forms of family action should be carried out. In fact, most of the children said to have made use of such chance and given their opinions prior to major family decisions, and most of these opinions were taken into consideration before such decisions were enforced. Thus, the range of subjects they communicated in with one another included such personal and family matters as children's educational matters, their career potentials and future work opportunities, their relations with siblings and peers, the nature of their leisure activities, general household matters and major purchases, and local as well as world news.

Lastly, the parents' expectation of their children's responsibility, i.e., financial support of the parents in old age, tended to come true in both the views and conduct

of their children. An overwhelming majority of the children, especially the first child, deemed in their duty to give money to their parents when they were gainfully employed. This was considered so even when they were married and had to support their own families or even if they happened to live away from their parents. In actual practice, of those who had started working, almost all claimed to have given money to their parents in one form or another. Most of them did it regularly once every month, whereas others did so only during social festivals, or on their parents' birthdays, or when they needed money, or at any time irregularly. The amount of money they contributed ranged widely but clustered mainly around \$100 to \$400, the latter of which amounted to about one-third of their total monthly income. This money indeed contributed significantly toward the physical subsistence of most of the parents as there was still far insufficient welfare provisions for the aged, and only a small proportion of them claimed not to depend on it at all.

Family Relations with External Systems

As a system the family not only operates through its internal processes, but also maintains a set of relations with external social systems. These family relations are considered as a series of functional interchanges which take place between the family and other systems and enable them to interact and complement one another within the social structure as a whole. Hence, by sustaining these relations, the family can establish itself as a viable system as well as contribute toward the maintenance of other social systems, which together help to enable the existence and development of the society as a total system. The relations of the family with external systems will be analyzed in terms of such areas as educational attainment and mobility, occupational engagement and mobility, and social and religious participation.

Educational Attainment and Mobility

There was increasingly a trend toward the practice of universal education for the local population, including members of the studied families. Most of these people had gone to school, and they were much more likely to receive the modern formalized education rather than the traditional, private-tutorial one. On the whole, they had attained a relatively low level of education, mainly the primary level,

and only a small proportion of them had been able to go beyond the secondary school. The men were usually better educated than their spouses. Thus, over half of them were able to complete some form of primary education, 22 percent went to the secondary school, 4 percent attended the post-secondary school or above, and only 15 percent received no schooling at all, as compared to 47 percent, 11 percent, 2 percent and 40 percent of the women respectively.

With respect to educational mobility, the level of these men's education can be compared to that of their fathers' education, and the distribution of the levels of education for both the generations is given as follows:

Table 4 : Comparison of Intergenerational Levels of Education

Family Head's Level of Education	Father's Level of Education				Total Cases
	No Schooling	Primary School	Secondary School	Post-Second- ary School	
No Schooling	69.9%	28.9%	1.2%	0.0%	83 (16.3%)
Primary School	23.6	70.8	4.2	1.4	288 (56.7)
Secondary School	14.4	66.7	11.7	7.2	111 (21.9)
Post-Secondary School	7.7	46.2	19.2	26.9	26 (5.1)
Total Cases	144 (28.3%)	314 (61.8)	31 (6.1)	19 (3.7)	508 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 150.47; p < .001.$

Table 4 shows that, first of all, there was a very strong correlation between the level of education of the family heads and that of their fathers. This was found especially in the categories of no schooling and primary school, which indicated over two-thirds of the family heads had completed the same level of education as that of their fathers, having either been deprived of the opportunity to go to school or gone as far as only the primary school. Secondly, looking at the columns of Total Cases, it is shown that, even though both the generations had mostly had only a relatively low level of education, the heads of these families were generally better educated than their fathers. In other words, they had obviously enjoyed some upward mobility in education, with smaller proportions, i.e., 16.3 percent and 56.7 percent, having no schooling or the primary education, and larger percentages of 21.9 and 5.1 going to the secondary and post-secondary schools, as compared to their fathers with 28.3 percent and 61.8 percent, and 6.1 percent and 3.7 percent respectively. Lastly, as shown in the detailed content of Table 4, upward educational mobility occurred in favor of the family heads as well as their fathers, even though the latter had less such mobility than the former. Thus, among those family heads with no schooling, almost one-third of their fathers had obtained some level of education, mostly the primary level. On the other hand, these family

heads were found to have a markedly greater upward mobility than their parents, as was clearly demonstrated by the fact that almost one-fourth of the fathers in the primary school category, slightly over four-fifths of those at the secondary level and almost three-fourths of those at the post-secondary level had a lower education than the family heads.

Occupational Engagement and Mobility

As to their occupational engagement, while the men were as a rule employed in some gainful activities, the women had also increasingly participated in various forms of economic enterprise, with about 41 percent of them being fully or partially employed. Both of them tended to work mainly in manufacturing and service industries and less so in transport and communication, commerce and construction, and were more likely to be employed in blue-collar or clerical posts than in highly technical and administrative positions. Being the major bread-winner of the family, the husband usually worked full-time, with a better job, and away from home, whereas a substantial number of the wives were engaged only in part-time work, with a lower job, and more at home. Consequently, the former was able to earn a much larger income ranging mainly from \$500 to \$1,250 per month and with a monthly average of \$870, as compared to the income range of \$200 to \$750 and with an average monthly total of \$372 of the latter.

With increasing participation of the wife and grown-up children in economic activities, these families were often able to increase the sources of their family income. While the husband's income still constituted the major income of his family, the wages of his wife and other family members also contributed substantially to the family coffer. Consequently, the family income was increased by one-third over the husband's salary and ranged from \$500 to \$1,750 per month, amounting to an average monthly total of \$1,192. This enlarged income, in turn, made it possible for them to improve their living conditions. Thus, in general, these families were able to enjoy a relatively decent standard of living. Most of them were equipped with modern home appliances including electric fan, radio, television, refrigerator and sewing machine, one-third of them with camera and washing machine, and a small portion even with such luxurious items as private motor car and air-conditioner.

In order to enable the measurement of the inter-generational occupational mobility of these people, an analytical scheme was followed. First, occupations were classified into three types in terms of their nature of work, such as administrative and clerical, production, and service work. Secondly, each type of occupation was differentiated into four levels of position on the basis of several factors including the amount of training,

degree of autonomy, amount of social prestige and size of income involved. Hence, for the administrative and clerical type of occupation, there are the positions of directors and managers, supervisory staff, clerks, and office boys; for the occupation in production work, the positions are engineers and system analysts, technicians and skilled workers, semi-skilled workers, and unskilled workers; for service occupation, the positions include higher professionals like physicians and lawyers, lower professionals like school teachers and nurses, semi-skilled service workers, and unskilled service workers. Lastly, the three types of occupations were combined into a single category of occupational position and their respective levels of positions were incorporated into a four-point vertical scale with positions ranging from upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, to lower level. Thus, the actual distribution of the intergenerational occupational positions of the studied sample was given in the following table:

Table 5 : Comparison of Intergenerational Occupational Positions

Family Head's Occupational Position	Father's Occupational Position				Total Cases
	Upper	Upper-Middle	Lower-Middle	Lower	
Upper	19.0%	52.4%	19.0%	9.5%	21 (3.5%)
Upper-Middle	4.0	26.4	52.0	17.6	125 (21.0)
Lower-Middle	5.2	28.0	51.1	15.7	325 (54.6)
Lower	0.0	17.7	61.3	21.0	124 (20.8)
Total Cases	26 (4.4%)	157 (26.4)	311 (52.3)	101 (17.0)	595 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 34.22; p < .001.$

As shown in Table 5, there was a strong association of the occupational positions of the family heads with those of their fathers. This meant that, by and large, one's occupational position was very likely to follow that of one's father. This was especially true in the category of lower-middle positions where slightly over half of these family heads had occupied the similar occupational positions as those of their parents, whereas between one-fourth and one-fifth of them did so among the upper, upper-middle and lower categories. Furthermore, looking at the columns of Total Cases, it is shown that around three-fourths of both the family heads and their fathers had occupied merely lower-middle and lower occupational positions, with only about one-fourth of them being able to enjoy the upper-middle and upper positions. There were also slightly larger proportions of the fathers having upper-middle and upper positions, as compared with their sons, which might be explained as an effect of the more advanced position of the former in their occupational career. Lastly, as demonstrated in the specific figures of Table 5, there was found a slightly upward occupational mobility in favor of the heads of these families. Thus, in the upper and upper-middle categories of the family head's occupational position, 81 percent and 70 percent of the fathers respectively had lower positions than their sons, whereas only 79 percent and 33 percent of the former

in the lower and lower-middle categories respectively occupied higher positions than the latter.

Social and Religious Participation

Hong Kong residents as a whole has often been criticized for lack of social consciousness and participation. They are said to be selfish and self-centered, tending their own affairs and not caring about others' business. Consequently they tend to isolate themselves and lead their own lives, and seldom participate in community activities and welfare programs. However, as shown in the present data, the Kwun Tong people had demonstrated a moderate and reasonable amount of social awareness and participation. Most of them knew exactly where the community playgrounds, post offices and the City Hall are and had often visited these places, but they were not able to locate the City District Office, Kaifong (Neighborhood) Associations and other community services, and therefore did not fully utilize these facilities and services. Many of them had contributed to the welfare fund-raising campaigns such as various Flag's Days and the Community Chest, and had actively participated in their community action programs like the Clean-Hong-Kong Campaign.

Moreover, most of these people believed in the freedom of speech as a right of every citizen, even though

they had some doubt in the effectiveness of the opinions of the individuals. As a result, they were prepared and ready to take up social issues with the authorities concerned either by forming sit-in petitions or by making direct individual complaints. For example, they had voiced a strong disapproval of the legalization of the off-course betting issue and made complaints by telephone or writing to the Department concerned regarding the unattended rubbish piled up in their neighborhood. In general, they were supportive of the Government and would like their children to work in its various Departments. However, if the Government enforced certain public policies which had adverse effects upon them, they would complain mostly to the Government, next to the local City District Office, and mostly to the Government, next to the local City District Office, and least to their 'Kaifong' Associations and the press for help, even though a substantial proportion of them would not do a thing about them. Many of them would even think of putting up group sit-in petitions at the Governor's House, which were believed to be effective for solving such issues. Lastly, most of them did clearly express a sense of belonging to Hong Kong, as they said they would live there even after they had made a great deal of money and could make a choice about the place of their residence.

As far as their spiritual life was concerned, over half of the heads of these families were adherents of one form of religion or another, and the rest claimed to have no religious belief at all. Among the religious, most or 38 percent worshipped traditional Chinese Deities like Tu Ti (Earth God), Tsao Tsun (Kitchen God), and Kwan Ti (God of Loyalty), and many of them even kept miniature shrines for them at home and prayed and burned incense to them regularly. The other less practised religions included Buddhism (8.4 percent), Catholicism (4.8 percent), Protestantism (4.5 percent), Taoism and others (0.2 percent). As their major religion was of the "diffused religion" type whose "theology, rituals, and organization (are) intimately merged with the concepts and structure of secular institutions and other aspects of the social order" (Yang, 1961:20), only a small number of them claimed to have affiliated with any church or religious association. In addition, the majority of these people still worshipped their ancestors, which might be deemed as a semi-religious practice with mixed beliefs ranging from treating ancestors as gods and asking for their supernatural blessings to accepting them only as senior family members and paying filial respect to them. As compared with the family heads, the wives were as a rule even more religious, being particularly devoted to the traditional Deities. On the other hand, the young people were much less religious than

their parents, and those who had a religious faith tended to identify less the traditional Deities and more the modern sects of Christianity.

The Family in A Nutshell

In conclusion, the family in Kwun Tong could be defined as a unique form of the modern Chinese family with its distinctive structure and functional processes. Regarding its structure and composition, the family was mainly a first-generation immigrant Chinese family which came to Hong Kong from the various nearby districts inside the province of Kwangtung, China, and had mostly moved into this town during the past ten years. It was predominantly nuclear in structure, and was composed of about six persons including typically the husband, his wife and three to four children. It practised mainly the rules of bilineality and neolocality which meant its descent and inheritance were usually passed on to both sons and daughters and the newly-wed mostly tended to set up their own home. Its marriage pattern was both monogamous and homogamous, as the practice of plural wives or concubinage had already lost its legal status as well as its normative support and the marital partners were basically similar in their socio-economic background, region of origin and religious belief.

The functional aspects of the Kwun Tong family were examined in terms of its internal processes on the one hand and its relations with other social systems on the other. The internal processes of the family were focused

mainly on the power and decision-making participation of its members, their role differentiation and performance, and other forms of their interaction inside the family. First, in its daily operation, family power was generated through the decision-making participation of the marital partners over family matters and usually manifested in the potential ability of one partner to influence the other's attitude and behavior. Thus, in general, the pattern of power differentiation practised among these couples was a relatively equalitarian one as decisions about major family matters were usually made through a process of mutual consultation and agreement between the spouses. Specifically, while the husband was more dominant in making decisions over the areas of economic and social activities of the family, the wife had demonstrated her power mainly in those of child care and control and household duties.

Secondly, as it was found, there was a high degree of consistency between the pattern of marital task performance and that of their decision-making participation; this meant the same spouse who made decisions about certain household tasks also tended to carry them out. Thus, generally, the pattern of marital collaboration in household task performance was being practised among these couples. In particular, the husband was more responsible for managing the economic activities and taking his family

out for social events, whereas the wife was more involved in taking care of routine household tasks and supervising her children's studies and conduct. Lastly, the other patterns of family interaction were analyzed along two major dimensions: husband-wife and parent-child. The relationship between the husband and the wife had been moving toward a companionship type. They claimed to have held many family values in common, communicated with each other frequently and often participated jointly in social and recreational activities when marital disagreements occurred, they were tackled and solved rationally and peacefully. The parent-child relations had become closer and more intense as the family shrank into a small, nuclear type. They consisted of a mixed yet balanced set of feelings including mostly mutual love and trust as well as some mutual suspicion, but this balance was liable to being tipped off by any lack of mutual understanding due to their differences in family values, general outlooks and personal styles of living.

The relations of the family with external social systems were seen to include mainly the processes of educational attainment and mobility, occupational engagement and mobility, and social and religious participation. First, educational attainment was very widespread particularly among the male heads of the families, even though the majority of them had finished merely as far as the

primary school and only one-fourth were able to go beyond this level of education. With respect to their educational mobility, the heads of these families were generally better educated than their fathers. This was especially so with those in the secondary and the post-secondary categories who had attained at least one or two levels of education higher than their fathers, while those with no schooling or only primary education mostly had completed the same level of education as that of their fathers.

Secondly, regarding their occupational engagement, the men were as a rule employed in the economic enterprise, but the women had also increasingly participated in some gainful activities. Both of them tended to work mainly in manufacturing and service industries and were employed mostly in blue-collar and clerical posts. Hence, the husband's role as the sole bread-winner of the family was now challenged, and his income was often supplemented by those of the wife and their grown-up children. In terms of intergenerational occupational mobility, the heads of these families in both the upper and lower categories of position had rather limited mobility as their positions were very close to those of their fathers, whereas those especially in the upper-middle stratum had enjoyed much upward mobility, being mostly one or two levels of position higher than those of their fathers.

And, finally, as far as their social and religious activities were concerned, they were found to have demonstrated a reasonable amount of social awareness and participation. They had taken part in various social welfare campaigns and community events, and had voiced their views or even taken various forms of action about several controversial social issues. Moreover, the majority of these people still worshipped their ancestors in one form or another and many of them believed in some god, especially traditional Chinese Deities, and participated regularly in some related religious activities.

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