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Sociology of Families
and Intimate Lives

Towards a typology of intergenerational relations:
continuities and change in families

Julia Brannen

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Abstract

This paper focuses on 'beanpole' families, that is those with several living generations; it analyses patterns of care and paid work across the generations and the resource transfers which take place between generations. Drawing on a small-scale study of four generation families, it provides a typology of intergenerational relations with respect to the transmission of material assets, childcare and elder care, sociability, emotional support, and values. It examines two *a fortiori* conditions which are considered to shape intergenerational relations: (a) occupational status continuity/ mobility and (b) geographical proximity/ mobility. Four types of intergenerational relations are generated by this examination: traditional solidaristic; differentiated; incorporation of difference; and reparation in estrangement. The paper looks at families holistically and draws on the concept of ambivalence to describe the forces which push family members to carry on family patterns and those which pull them apart and lead them to strike out on their own. It shows how, whatever the type of intergenerational pattern, each generational unit seeks to make its own mark.

PAPER

The paper, and the study [1] upon which it draws, sets out to explore change and continuity between generations within families, in relation to paid work and care and the ways in which employment, breadwinning, motherhood, fatherhood, grandparenthood and great grandparenthood are both enacted and constructed intergenerationally. The paper sheds light on broader sociological and demographic questions concerning family life in the context of increased longevity, and the prevalence of multi-generational family bonds [2] which, as others have suggested (Bengston 2001), may constitute a valuable new resource for families in the 21st century particularly in the context of the weakening of conjugal ties. The paper examines two structural axes which are likely to shape the patterning of intergenerational relations - male occupational mobility and household geographical mobility. It offers a typology of intergenerational relations in families shaped by these axes in terms of the ways in which families deploy and exchange resources of different kinds across the generations.

The study focused upon four generation families in which young children constituted the fourth generation. Such families, while they constitute a significant proportion of the population[3], may be less common and less long lived among the middle classes where age of mothers at first birth is higher and rising faster compared with working class families. While such families provide considerable resources, they are also likely to be make heavy demands upon resources notably with respect to childcare and elder care. These demands may have gendered consequences and may fall disproportionately on women in the grandparent or 'pivot generation'.

Intergenerational ties have a particular significance in relation to current developments in family life. They have however long been a focus for sociological debate. In the 1940s Parsons (1943) argued that increasing social and geographical mobility demanded by industrial society and by the occupational system, together with the emphasis on romantic love, weakened intergenerational ties and strengthened the conjugal nuclear family. Against this a series of empirical studies carried out from the 1960s of both middle class and working class families showed that the extended family was alive and well albeit in a modified form (see Morgan 1975 p65).

The study's approach and design

The study upon which this paper draws was small scale and intensive. It focussed on the concept of generation in both a family and an historical sense. The family members who were interviewed were born in three historical periods: the great grandparents born 1911-1921; grandparents born 1940-1948; parents born 1965-1975. These generations grew up in very particular times[4]. The great grandparents experienced the 1930s Depression. The grandparents were children of postwar reconstruction and the growth of the welfare state while the parent generation experienced the neoliberal economic policies of the 1980s' 'Thatcher' period.

The study adopted biographical methods[5] which we take to include (a) the study and the analysis of the *life course*, that is the chronology of events which constitute a life lived in historical time, and (b) the subjective dimension, that is the *biographical account* or subjective interpretation of life events (for a fuller account of our approach see Brannen and Nilsen 2003 and Erben 1998 for a similar discussion). In an ontological sense our assumption is that reality exists; we were therefore interested not only in the accounts family members gave but also in the events in their lives and the patterning of the life course. As well as suggesting what the past has to offer the future, our focus was on the past for its own sake; so often it seems today's sociologists 'prefer an image of adults

creating their futures' (Rossi and Rossi, 1990:20). We have also adopted an *interpretative* perspective and have been concerned with the ways in which people's accounts of the past are mediated by time, meaning and audience (the research context). While suggesting that we pay equal attention to both life course/ history and life story, we recognize that they are integrally interwoven in the accounts which informants provide. In this paper it has not been possible to present the different dimensions of the approach (see Brannen and Nilsen 2003; Brannen et al forthcoming). We have therefore limited the time devoted to 'discussing the telescope' through which the past is often viewed (Abbott 2001: 223)[6]. Rather, our aim is to develop an understanding of how structural changes related to occupation and geographical mobility shape family relations and the different patterns and practices in which families support one another across the generations.

The life course is strongly gendered in each generation of men and women in the study. However, our main focus in this paper is not on gender *per se* but on the patterning of resource transmission at the level of the *multi-generation family* and its structuration by occupational and geographical mobility. Moreover, it is important to add that the analysis presented and discussed here arose out of a particular division of labour in the research team in which the author took responsibility for analysing intergenerational patterns of *men's* employment and occupations. This analysis led her to develop a broader conceptualisation of the processes taking place in the case study families.

In order to examine how employment and care play out over the life course and across the generations we considered that a focus upon a small number of case studies was an appropriate research design. We make no claim to the representativeness of our sample and cannot generalize from it. Our aim is rather to provide a thorough description of the families, to identify patterns, and to generate theoretical interpretations. Twelve case study kin groups were theoretically sampled where the third generation had at least one young child[7]; the three adult generations are referred to from the vantage point of the youngest generation accordingly as: the parent, grandparent and great grandparent generations. The kin groups were sampled to 'represent' a diversity of different employment and occupational statuses at different ends of the socio-economic spectrum, that is in the grandparent generation. In recruiting the families, we approached the grandparent generation first and sought to divide the sample according to those grandparents employed, either currently or in the past, in a professional or managerial occupation, and to include an equal proportion who worked, or had worked, in lower status or manual (skilled and unskilled) occupations. We also sought to ensure that the grandparent generation would be split between those in employment and

those outside the labour market, so that we might create variation in their respective roles in relation to employment and care. A final criterion related to marital status. We decided to rule out further complexity by including only those grand parents who were still in the same relationship as when they were bringing up their own children and, similarly, to include only those in the current parent generation who were living with the parent of their children. This study has therefore little to say about the impact of divorce on intergenerational relations.

We recruited our families via the grand parent generation; we hypothesized that grandmothers would be pivotal 'kin keepers' among these families (Firth, Hubert and Forge 1969). We screened and recruited families through a variety of means some of which were located in the London area where the research team was situated[8]. We chose families who were all living in England - South West, the North, East Anglia, South East and London - since we had limited time and money available for travel. Despite great efforts to make contact with minority ethnic families, we found none which matched our criteria in terms of numbers of generations and geographical location. Our completed sample included:

- Five families where *both* grandparents were employed full-time

- Four families in which the grandfather still worked full-time and the grandmother was not employed

- Two families in which couples were retired or both working part-time

- One family in which the grandfather worked part-time and the grandmother was retired

Five couples were in or had held professional or managerial jobs; two grandfathers were in lower level nonmanual occupations; two were in skilled manual and three in low skilled jobs.

Our aim was not to interview the whole family but to cover the following: one set of grandparents; one child of the grandparents (with at least one child under 10 years) and his or her partner; both sets of the grandparents' parents (i.e. both the grandfather's and grandmother's parents). We did not interview the youngest generation of children. In the event, we interviewed between five and eight members of the families[9], amounting to 71 family members: all 24 parents and 24 grandparents, and 23 great-grandparents, of whom one was a step-great grandfather[10].

Reproduction and innovation in intergenerational relations
There is a creative tension between change and continuity, between processes of reproduction and innovation. In intergenerational families, many values and practices are transmitted, while each generation may also develop or subscribe to its own. Parenting is passed on while new practices are adopted in succeeding generations. Indeed the passing on of one resource may lead to a change in

another resource. For example, parents may transmit educational aspirations to their children, a consequence of which may be that children move into different kinds of occupations from their parents. The transmission of resources is typically reciprocated. However, as family members' life chances change across the generations, some may lack the resources to repay their parents or to provide similar resources to the next generation down. For example, employed grandmothers may not be able to provide care for their grandchildren in the way their mothers had provided care for grandmothers' own children. Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame describe such tension between continuity and change in the following way and suggest how one resource may be transformed into another:

*'Because transmission of sameness reifies the heir (treats him as an object), it seems to carry the kiss of death. To become the subject of the heritage, the heir must act upon it by leaving his or her mark upon it. ….The new element involving both the rejection of the past and innovation, enables the heir to take possession of something that actually was passed on to him. The point is not simply that he must 'make something of what was made of him' as Sartre put it so aptly, but that he make something of what has been passed on to him' (*Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame 1997, 93)

The tension between change and continuity generates *ambivalence.* Luscher (2000) identifies ambivalences in which different generations are caught up in a tension: between on the one hand, the reproduction of some aspects of their 'family systems', and innovation of other aspects, on the other hand. Ambivalence has to be managed; it is *not* resolvable. As Luscher (2000) and Luscher and Pillemer (1998) suggest, ambivalences are expressed structurally as demonstrated in a change in occupational status across family generations, which may *not* be interpreted by the participants concerned as having any particular significance. Ambivalence is also present in family strategies as, for example, when family members (at the household level) *seek* to put geographical distance between different family generations or choose to remain geographically close at hand. Ambivalence is expressed through feelings and also in social interaction and interpersonal relations; it is also expressed in values.

These different types of ambivalence may not however work in tandem. Structural aspects of people's lives may pull in one direction, for example towards the reproduction of aspects of family relations while, at a strategic level or, in Bourdieu's terms, their habitus (Bourdieu 1986) creates a divergent lifestyle. Thus, over the generations, some families may reproduce the life chances of the older generation, as when wealth and educational capital are transmitted. However, younger generations may, at the same time, also seek divergence from older generations despite the

transmission of assets and wealth which cushion their life chances. They may seek to differentiate themselves from older generation typically through values and life styles.

It is important in this discussion of ambivalence not to counterpose simplistically structural factors against the agency of actors. The transmission of resources of different kinds is likely to involve processes in which much of what passes on, or is passed on, is taken for granted for the cultural transmission of class and family cultures can be implicit as well as explicit (Bernstein 1996). As Bourdieu (1986) suggests in his elaboration of the concept of habitus, the dispositions of individuals and groups are cumulative and not necessarily intentional or strategic.

The paper's focus and questions

This paper develops and discusses some analysis of these four generation families and offers a typology of intergenerational relations. It starts out by examining a set of *a fortiori* conditions which, on the basis of both theory and empirical evidence, are considered highly likely to shape intergenerational family relations. They are: (a) male occupational status continuity/ mobility and (b) geographical proximity/ mobility of the household. In the former case, there is a wealth of evidence that men's occupational status shapes family resources and life chances; it therefore seems likely to affect the capacity of different generations to provide support, especially material support. Inequalities in resources across family generations are likely also to make reciprocity difficult for both status and resource reasons. Changes in occupational status may also manifest themselves in changes in values and lifestyles. In the case of geographical mobility of households, which may be associated with occupational mobility, this is likely to make the provision of certain kinds of services between family generations difficult to accomplish at least on a frequent basis and may also affect sociability patterns among kin.

In the second part of the paper, the twelve case study families are plotted on a matrix in which male occupational status mobility is one parameter and household geographical mobility the other. Through an analysis of the life histories and life stories of these case study families, the cases are then explored in each of the quadrants to see how far each quadrant is suggestive of a particular type of intergenerational family relations with respect to the transmission of resources. A wide range of resources are covered including financial transfers and other material assets, the supply of services including care, sociability, emotional support, the (in)congruence of values and beliefs, and commitment to specific norms concerning family obligations (Bengston 2001). It is important to

recognize that these different forms of intergenerational support or 'capital' are often inextricably intertwined; for example the economic is bound up with the cultural and symbolic (Bourdieu 1986; see also Allatt 1993). It is important also to take into account that one form of capital may be transformed into another. Thus, while occupational and geographical mobility may shape the conditions for the transmission of capital, they may also shape their transformation into other forms of capital.

The paper is seeking to sketch out *wider* patterns of intergenerational relations as they are shaped by these structural/ strategic dimensions and to ask the following questions: How far do multi-generation families pool resources across generations to support one another? How far does each generational unit differentiate itself from other generational units by being self-reliant or reliant on formal services? Further questions are framed in terms of ambivalences between generational units at different levels: at the structural level or in terms of social interaction, feelings and values. Thus the aim is to look at these families *holistically* in relation to the social forces which push them to carry on family patterns and those which pull them apart and lead them to strike out on their own.

Occupational mobility

Over the twentieth century and up until the late 1970s[11], there has been an absolute increase in social mobility for both men and women (actual increases in numbers of children in higher status occupations compared with their parents); more space at the top was created for men and more in the middle for women (Goldthorpe and Mills 2000; Aldridge 2001). This is largely due to the expansion in employment opportunities for the middle classes which have substantially grown in size relative to the working class (Heath and Payne 2000).

This analysis of the case study families has concentrated on men's jobs since women in the two older generations had intermittent employment careers following motherhood. Moreover, when the older generation mothers did work they typically worked part-time. Moreover, the women in the middle or grandparent generation (born in the post war period) who were married to middle class husbands climbed their own occupational ladders later in their life course, that is *after* they had brought up their children. This *intra*-generational occupational mobility on the part of women thereby matched the occupational progress which their husbands had achieved *inter*-generationally. Some wives of manual workers also rose occupationally; they entered nonmanual clerical employment, also doing so late in their work careers when their children were older. Their husbands however typically remained in manual work.

In five of the twelve case study families no occupational status change took place between fathers and sons / sons in law (Table 1) over three generations; this fits with national data for cohorts of men born in 1910-19 and in 1940-48. In four families, one or more generation of men was upwardly mobile occupationally, while in two families there was downwardly mobility. In one family there was both upward and downward mobility in occupational status among the

three male generations. As nationally, most upward mobility across male generations is rarely long range: most involved a move from skilled manual or clerical work in the older generation to professional/managerial occupations in the younger generation. No unskilled worker had a son or son in law who entered a professional or managerial occupation.

Table 1 Men's Occupational Mobility over three generations (12 families)

Continuity of occupational status: low skilled (3)	2 families of unskilled/ semi-skilled men 1 family of self-employed family builders
Continuity of occupational status: high skilled (2)	1 family of senior managers/ managing directors 1 family of electrical engineers (middle management level)
Downward mobility in occupational status from skilled to unskilled work (2)	1 family with a great grandfather in skilled work and a grandfather and father in semi-skilled work 1 family with a great grandfather and grandfather in skilled work and a father (son in law) in unskilled work
Upward occupational mobility from skilled to professional/ managerial work (4)	2 families of great grandfathers and grandfathers in skilled work and a father in a managerial occupation; 2 families of great grandfathers in manual/ clerical work and grandfathers and fathers in professional occupations
Upward and downward occupational status (1)	1 family of a great grandfather in skilled manual work/shopkeeper, a grandfather a professional worker, a father (son in law) in unskilled work

Geographical mobility

Historically, there has been much movement in the British population. However, currently four in ten people nationally stay in the same local authority where they were born and only one in 100 households moves any great distance (PIU 2002). According to Grundy et al (1999), half of people who have a father or mother or eldest child alive see them at least once a week and half of these live within a half hour's journey time of them. Half of the case study families lived close to one another in the same town or same part of a large city (London), while half were living at a significant distance from the other one or two generational units. Moreover, all but two generational units were living in the same parts of the country as their kin; the exception was one upwardly mobile family in which the grandfather had moved from Northern England to the South East and a working class family where the grandparents moved from London to the South West of England. On the other hand, reflecting the historical movement of the population, members of the great grandparent generation in the 'stayer families' were often incomers to an area.
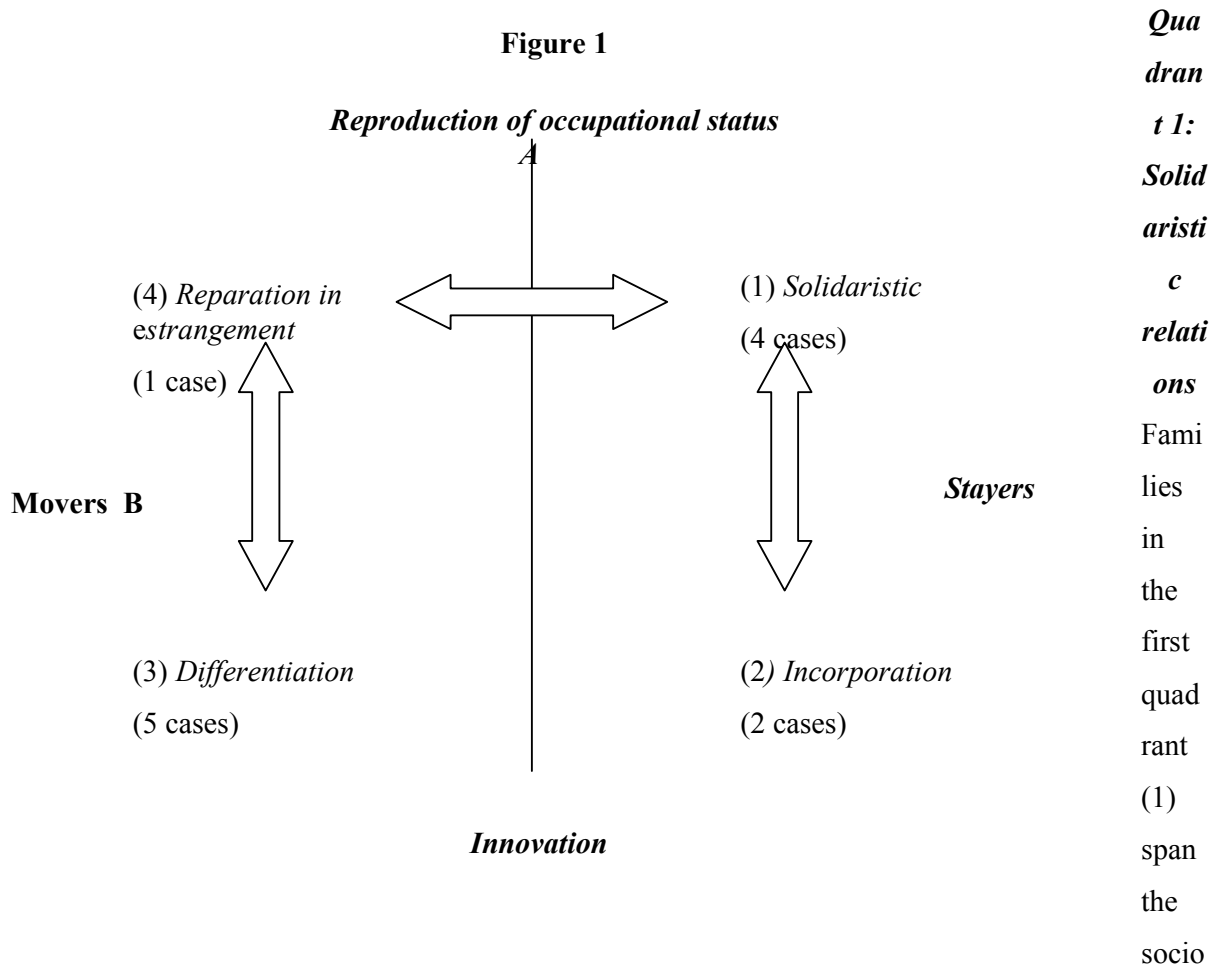
In this study, as is the case nationally, most moves had rather less to with jobs and rather more to do with significant life events or with improving the quality of life notably with respect to housing. But graduates were more likely to move than nongraduates, as is the case nationally. Some men in the past traveled to work rather than relocate and some relocated temporarily (two grandfathers in skilled work), again a common trend in the population. Working class families, particularly among the middle and oldest generations, provided housing for their children when they started married life (see for example Rosser and Harris 1965) thereby inhibiting movement (this was the case for 5 couples in the great grandparent generation, 3 in the grandparent generation, and 1 in the parent generation). Yet it is important to note that, despite the movement of half the families away from close kin, they maintained 'close ties at a distance' (Mason 1999) and were increasingly able to do so with because of technological advance (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988). On the other hand, it is significant that the two families who moved farthest away were those whose ties were affectively less close; these 'movers' sought to put distance between them and their kin.

Processes of reproduction and innovation in families

The following data analysis involved plotting the two axes of occupational mobility and geographical mobility against one another and locating the case study families accordingly in the four quadrants of a matrix (Figure 1). Some of these families 'fit' the quadrant better than others; as the multi-direction arrows in Figure 1 suggest, this is not a hard and fast classification. Intergenerational relations were next explored on a number of dimensions of intergenerational support, as discussed earlier, in respect of each of the cases; and similarities and differences among

the cases were examined within and across quadrants. Four types of intergenerational support were identified:

Figure 1

Reproduction of occupational status

(4) *Reparation in estrangement*

(1 case)

Movers B

(1) *Solidaristic*

(4 cases)

Stayers

(3) *Differentiation*

(5 cases)

(2*) Incorporation*

(2 cases)

Innovation

Quadrant 1: Solidaristic relations

Families in the first quadrant (1) span the socio-economic spectrum. The occupations of the men in each family generation reproduced the occupations/ occupational status of the older male generations, while geographically the different families remained close to each other[12].   Intergenerational relations in these families are *solidaristic* (Luscher 2000) in a traditional sense. There are of course many different kinds of solidarity in families (see Crow 2001). In these families, habits and general dispositions lead family members to provide functional support of different kinds to one another - jobs, housing, childcare and elder care – largely along *gendered lines*. In all four families, the grandmother generation is pivotal in the provision of informal care services which involves specific reciprocities[13] (Finch 1989), as in the case of the Brand family which closely approximates to this ideal type. Two generations of mothers in the Brand family helped with their grandchildren when they were growing up and two generations of daughters reciprocated their mothers' care by helping them

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when they reached frail old age (see also Brannen et al 2003). The grandmother had given up her career which she had developed in later life to take care of her grandchildren and to help her frail elderly parents. The three generations of fathers and sons in this family built up a family building business which both provided work and generated good returns. All three men spent long hours at work, including weekends, but when they were not working they were involved in similar types of work/ leisure activity notably doing up houses (their own or one another's), boat building and sailing. Thus occupations, jobs, business capital, housing and leisure pursuits were passed from father to son. Sons described learning the building trade when they were children through working alongside their fathers in the school holidays ' *I loved it... I just liked working for my dad'*. Sons helped fathers as well as fathers sons; the youngest (father) generation was currently building up the family business with a view not only to providing his family of procreation with a better lifestyle but also to generate a pension for his father. The couple in the parent generation was at the time of the interview living each with their respective parents while their house was being totally refurbished through the family building business.

The large amount of informal help and care given by and received from female members of the family, together with the men's work in and around the family business, provided for a great deal of family mutuality intergenerationally. This transmission in turn served to reproduce similar lifestyles and life chances across the generations. The family members, both men and women, were also bound by a strong sense of family obligations which were sharply gendered. As the daughter in law in the youngest generation said: *'We keep to our own'* . The family lived near a river estuary and all the members interviewed expressed a strong attachment to 'water'. This was reflected in the families' leisure pursuits but originated in the men's commitment to boat building and sailing. They were also strongly attached to 'place' which figured a great deal in the accounts of the women in the family where reference was made on a number of occasions to the importance of the villages they lived in or near. When the mother in the youngest generation married into the Brand family, she said she had chosen to get married in the same church as her parents in law, albeit the couple or parents were not living in the parish at the time.   Thus while being 'close' meant ties of love and care, it also meant 'belonging'.

The women who married into the Brand family (i.e. the grandmother and mother generations) admired the entrepreneurial ethos of the Brand men. However they retained their gendered responsibility for home and children. Even though the grandmother and the mother had developed employment careers, home and family obligations prevailed over their employment commitments. (The   great grandmother only had one

'little job', working as a dinner lady at her children's school.) The grandmother began work part-time when her children started school and eventually moved to a full-time position working as a manager in her local health centre. But, as noted above, she retired early to provide care for both younger and older family generations. Her daughter in law worked in banking since leaving school. She returned to her job following child birth but decided to work part-time and intended giving up at the (immanent) birth of her second child.

Yet despite strong pressures towards continuity within the Brand family, forces for transformation were also at work. Solidaristic relations were accompanied by some ambivalence. Ambivalence emerged at the structural level: the father, Pete, broke the educational mould by gaining a string of GCSEs while his father and grandfather had left school with no qualifications. Ambivalence was also expressed in differences in values across the generations. From the current vantage point of history and his status as a new father, Pete remarked that his father had prevented him from being more educationally aspirant. Pete had now come to the view that qualifications were crucial to 'getting on' in life.   Jane, his wife, also wanted more for her own children than she had had in her own childhood. Like her husband, she wanted her children to get on well at school and to escape from some aspects of the rather narrow upbringing provided by her own (working class) parents. This ambivalence did not however prevent her from choosing her own parents to look after her son while she continued to work part-time following the birth. Jane was torn between identification with the values of her own working class family and those of her husband's more entrepreneurial family, seeking at one level to emulate the risk-taking spirit of the latter, while feeling rooted in the security and protection of her own family of origin. For herself, she also harboured educational aspirations '*something to fall back on when the children are older… I'd like to look back and say I've achieved this'*. These tensions were currently contained since Jane intended giving up work with her second child, while still hoping at some later date to pursue further education. For the time being the desire to 'keep close' to both families geographically, emotionally and socially – both in terms of sociability and the provision of support – was over riding. Such a family pattern, as Harris (1980:39 quoted in Crow 2001) suggests, may constitute an 'idealization of their mutuality'. On the other hand, there was a clear desire in the new generation to put its own stamp upon the resources which were passed on to them (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, 1997).

Quadrant 2: Processes of Incorporation

In the second quadrant, with two cases, the generations stayed close geographically but there was discontinuity in the men's occupational statuses. In the family which is first discussed here – the

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Hillyards, the father in the youngest generation was in lower skilled employment while the older generations were skilled workers. However this structural fact made little impact on family intergenerational relations; the downwardly mobile male member (a son in law) was readily incorporated. The fact that the father marrying into this family was a labourer was considered unimportant by the family[14]. Indeed, all the other family members interviewed commented emphatically and spontaneously upon the father's propensity for 'hard work', a characteristic which his father in law (the grandfather) suggested might lead to promotion: *'an absolute grafter from that point of view, you couldn't wish for her (his daughter) to have a better partner... the last six months, he's been working seven days a week... if he lost his job ... he wouldn't just sit there and think oh, that's it, I'm not going to bother. He would find a job doing something, I know he would. But it looks like he's going to be made up from, sort of the shop floor to a foreman's job, so'*. This pattern we have termed the '*incorporation of difference'*.

In many respects the two families in this quadrant resemble the families in the solidaristic quadrant; the family generations provided considerable functional support for one another (help with money, housing, employment and so on). The grandparent generation in the Hillyard family provided help to the older and younger generations, just as their own parents had helped them[15]. In this family, the inclusiveness of kinship ties is also sustained by a strong commitment to place. However their family practices are *less gendered* compared with the Brand family, with the women having an equally strong commitment to work as to family commitments. Moreover, in the grandmother's case, care commitments (of which she undertook a great number including the care of her parents, parents in law and her nephews and nieces) had not so far overtaken her strong commitment to her paid work. The generational units in the family were in addition emotionally close and they saw a lot of one another socially.

There was little expressed ambivalence in the Hillyard family. One reason for this might be that the youngest generation was about to become parents (the baby's birth was imminent). Depending upon whether the mother in this family decided to stay in work after the birth, ambivalences may emerge between the strong commitment of the father to paid work and the mother to both care and paid work. Such tensions may play out *intra*-generationally rather than inter-generationally. (The grandmother in this family had given up work when she became a mother. When she later resumed employment she worked very hard at both work and care.)

In the other family in this quadrant, the Acton family, ambivalences emerged at the level of expressed values – between those of the great grandparents and those of the two younger generations. Value differences reflected the structural difference in the men's occupational statuses. The great grandfather, a highly skilled worker, expressed considerable disappointment in his interview concerning his son's lack of application at school and his failure to learn a skilled trade in the way he had done[16]. In the Acton family an innovative pattern seems to be emerging which relates to changing *gender roles (*and possibly also in the Hillyard family when parenthood arrives). The new generation of parents adopts a dual earner employment pattern; they share the breadwinning (both working full-time) and the parenting of their young children. The father in the Acton family changed his job and his hours to enable him to participate more fully in parenthood; the older family generations had readily accepted this new practice and provided support (including full-time childcare which was provided by the mother's sister who was a nonemployed lone parent).

Quadrant 3: Processes of differentiation

The third quadrant contains five families in which there was significant upward mobility among the men: from skilled manual or clerical work to professional/ managerial occupational status. This shift occurred in all but one case in the grandparent generation; the grandfathers took advantage of the increased educational opportunities available in the post war period. The main occupations held by the wives also represent upward occupational mobility compared with their own mothers. Moreover, the rise in occupational status of the grandfather generation was *followed* in three cases by a rise in their wives' occupational status which occurred post motherhood. In this group of families, at least one generational unit moved away – three far from their kin; in one case the move away was born out of a clear desire to be distant, reflecting differences in values but also a rejection of family 'closeness' and obligations. This pattern is termed *differentiation[17]* since, despite providing little everyday, functional support across the generations, family ties were maintained and were often affectively close. Intergenerational relations were more specialised compared with those in the solidaristic quadrant; there was little care and service support provided, fewer opportunities for regular socialising and in some families clear differences in values and lifestyles. As support was more specialised and provided on a less regular basis, there appeared to less of a concern for balancing reciprocity. (For further examples and discussion of this, see Brannen et al 2003). Support might increase in the future if elderly parents become frail although this did not

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appear to have happened. More significantly, there was less of a commitment to gender norms in this quadrant, that is that *women* should be the ones to provide care for grandchildren and for elderly parents. Instead a strong commitment was expressed in favour of *formal* sources of support.

To take one family as an example, there were several forces for change in the Hurd family. The grandfather, Cliff, experienced a significant rise in occupational status which lifted him out of the skilled working class into the professional class. Cliff grew up in Northern England; he took advantage of the increased educational opportunities after the second World War, passed for the grammar school and went away to university in the South of England. Later in his life course, the incentive to move South was not only to do with greater job opportunities there, but also to do with the fact that Cliff's wife, whom he met at university, came from the South (and was also from a working class family though they never lived near them). However, upward mobility and the move away were facilitated rather than constrained by Cliff's family. Cliff expressed gratitude to his parents for the '*freedom … they gave me just to do it…There was no pressure to follow a particular career, to go to a particular school, to go out with a particular girl, to read particular books*.' Cliff's affirmation of self-reliance was not however a rejection of his kin but was accompanied by strong support for and from formal institutions. Indeed the (state) school he attended, the (public) university he entered, the church he belonged to, and the public sector which employed him provided Cliff with considerable resources over his life course including both as a young man and later as a parent. This history of and commitment to public support was reflected in Cliff's unwillingness to 'interfere' in his children's lives, even including when his youngest daughter (the parent generation) became a working mother. In general he said: *We encouraged (our own children) to make up their own minds and decide for themselves…By all means discuss it with parents but really it had to be their decision.*

This intergenerationally transmitted freedom emerges in the parent generation and significantly crossed the *gender divide*. Cliff's daughter, Alice, married an unskilled worker and when they became parents she took on the main breadwinner role, thereby reversing the gendered pattern of work and care in her family of origin. Following a return to higher education which Alice undertook when she became a mother, she took a full-time teaching job while her partner, who had few work ambitions, stayed at home to look after the children. Indeed Alice was highly critical of her own mother for not having used her nursing qualifications after marriage and for having been at home mother. This independence is present in the way in which Cliff and his wife desist from too much interference in the young couple's lives. While providing some financial help during their daughter's return to education, they have not undertaken any childcare.

When they visit the young family, they try not to stay 'too long'. It is interesting that Alice was somewhat ambivalent about her parents' attitude - described by her as 'standoffish'. Despite her reservations though, Alice concluded: '..*in some ways it's a good thing because... I couldn't bear to have the kind of parents who… stuck their oar in'.*

Quadrant 4: Reparation in estrangement

The sole case in the fourth quadrant, the Prentice family, also represents change as well as continuity in intergenerational relations. The occupational statuses of both men and women in this family were almost all unskilled[18]. Remarkably, in this family, the grandparent and parent generations together made the break from the inner city to the countryside[19], with some surprisingly positive consequences. Yet the move away made little difference to their economic situation. They simply exchanged urban poverty for rural poverty, and were no longer able to draw upon local family resources. In many respects until the move away, intergenerational relations in this family closely resembled those of a working class family in the solidaristic quadrant. The family generations provided accommodation with different generations sharing housing, in one case over many years. On the other hand, it is clear that family ties across the generations in this family have long been marked by strongly expressed ambivalences. These were most apparent among the women in the family who expressed strongly felt resentment about the lack of emotional support and childcare provided by their mothers at critical moments in the life course, especially when their children were young. It is significant that many of these tensions were expressed by the *women,* by the great grandmother and grandmother, a tension repeated over the generations. In close-knit, working class families, grandmothers have traditionally been the main source of intergenerational support often knitting families together. This was very clear among the working class families in this study. Strong grandmothers appeared to be able to counteract any lack of support from or failure to provide by the men in these families.

Through the move away, it was the youngest generation in the Prentice family – the young father and his wife - who were self-consciously   remaking their lives. This transformation was not however economic, it had more to do with a change in lifestyles, values and *gender identities*, in particular a commitment to care on the part of the youngest male generation (Brannen and Nilsen 2003). At a number of levels and in a number of domains, the young father and his partner were engaged in a process of reparation, hence our use of this term to describe this type of

intergenerational relations as *reparation in estrangement*. The couple sought not so much to repair kin relations but to break the cycle of transmission of negativity between generations, evident in the accounts of the women in particular especially in relation to childhood and the transition to motherhood. The couple in the parent generation appeared to be making a conscious attempt to break with the patterns of their parents and grandparents, while also remaining close in several senses to the grandparent generation. The father graphically described how his childhood and adolescence were affected when his parents had to keep moving on in search of new (short life) accommodation for their large family. Both he and his wife wanted to create stability in their own children's lives by staying put; they had also developed a strong commitment to the countryside as a 'better place' to bring up children. In contrast to the parenting practices of their parents and grandparents, the young couple was committed to gender equality by sharing the bringing up of their two young children. Neither entered employment until the children were at school; instead they drew upon the resources of the state to support them. At an intra psychic level, the young father went through a process of coming to terms with the disruptions and disruptive relationships of his childhood and youth. He spoke of a journey of reflection which led to understanding himself and others: '*My own life, how I perceived that and, from looking at that, trying to see how I should bring up my own children. Watching other people and seeing how they do it.*' However, he was silent in his interview about the enabling structural aspects which had supported him in being a hands on fathers - namely the provision of state support (social security).

Conclusion

It has not been possible in this paper to present detailed analysis of the families. Instead the families have been discussed rather schematically to represent different types of intergenerational relations. These patterns of solidarity, incorporation, differentiation and reparation are only several among many possible patterns. A typology is of its nature static. To understand intergenerational family relations, it is crucial to take account of life course and historical time which it has been possible to do here only fleetingly. This typology refers to *broad* processes of resource transmission and support which take place within families over time and which emerged at a single point in time (when the families were interviewed). These types of intergenerational relations are shaped by patterns of mobility, of male occupational status, on the one hand, and geographical household (im)mobility on the other. However, the transfers and reciprocation of resources which take place within families also have their own dynamic.

In the analysis of the case study families, two types of intergenerational relations stand out – the traditional solidaristic and the differentiated. These represent, in Durkheim's terms, two forms of solidarity – mechanical and organic. In the case of the solidaristic type (representing mechanical solidarity), there is less specialization in the family's division of labour; these families provide and exchange a wide variety of resources intergenerationally. In the differentiated model, there is greater specialisation in the division of labour; the families transmit certain kinds of resources and support intergenerationally but have greater recourse to *formal* sources of support. These patterns are generated by, but also serve to reproduce, occupational (dis)continuity and geographical (im)mobility. The other two types of intergenerational relations represent cases in transit; they may lie on a continuum between the solidaristic and the differentiated. In the case of 'reparation in estrangement', the youngest (parent) generational unit seemed to be moving away from a pattern of traditional solidarity towards a process of differentiation. Yet the father in the Prentice family was silent about their reliance upon the state to support sharing parenting; indeed he seemed to be still remarkably committed to the notion of family support. The pattern of incorporation in the other quadrant suggests that these families are resisting forces of differentiation, notably the differentiating pressures of the labour market (as indicated in the Hillyard father's lower status job and the grandmother's determination to work equally hard at both paid work and informal care). They are currently closer to the solidaristic type of intergenerational relations than to the differentiated model.

A key aspect of intergenerational resource transfers concerns gender. As the case analysis has indicated, in some families the transfer of resources is strongly gendered so that women are the key providers and reiprocators of care while men transfer other types of resources relating to self maintenance and paid work. The family in the solidaristic quadrant was characterized by a strongly gendered division of labour, with the women members specializing in the provision of care and prioritizing family obligations over their own employment; the resources transmitted by the men were similarly gendered. Mother – adult daughter relations were critical in reciprocating resources. The pattern of incorporation of difference was less gendered in the two families considered namely in the youngest generation where the men and the women were sharing, or were about to share, care and employment. In the differentiated intergenerational pattern, there was greater reliance and an articulated investment in and commitment to formal sources of support as provided by the state, professionals and the community. Moreover, the youngest 'cross class' generation in the family discussed in this quadrant (the Hurds) was reversing the gendered pattern, though with much less

support provided by family. Finally, in the fourth type, reparation in estrangement, the force for renewal in this working class family is vested in both men and women in the youngest generation while the support for their nongendered pattern was the state. However, there is no reference made by this in the accounts of the young generation who emphasised their own agency and the impetus to come to terms with their past disrupted childhood. However, it is also is clearly the case that gendered patterns of work and care are breaking down *intra*-generationally, as men and women share breadwinning and parenting or become full-time parents. It is notable that all cases of this in the study occurred in working class or cross-class families. It is hard to speculate what effects this may have upon intergenerational relations in the longer term. On the other hand, it is possible that where the mother-daughter tie was less strong, as is the case in some families in the differentiated quadrant and in the reparation in estrangement quadrant, this weak tie may constitute an integral part of the process of intergenerational change and innovation. (It is perhaps worth noting that the tie between the grandmother and the daughter in law in the Brand family as were the ties between fathers and sons.) Thus while occupational and geographical mobility may be critical discriminants of intergenerational patterns, the nature of relations between mothers and daughters may be also critical. Since the study did not set out to select and compare matrilineal (or patrilineal) lineages, it has not been possible to carry out such an analysis.

In this analysis there has been no attempt to unpack the meanings of solidarity in relation to the understandings of the families themselves. Undoubtedly, whatever the *overall* pattern of intergenerational transmission, families and family members may view their relations as being characterized by solidarity e.g. mutual trust, sense of belonging, and the transmission of at least some resources (Crow 2002). As Cornwell notes (cited in Crow 2002), we should not assume 'that the formal properties of relationships are a valid indicator of their content and quality' (Cornwell, 1984: 115). In drawing upon the concept of ambivalence, I have suggested that tensions arise and persist in families whatever their pattern of intergenerational relations and may be expressed in terms of interests, feelings, values and interpersonal relations. Even within traditionally solidaristic families, each generation seeks to strike out on its own while their 'strategies' may seek, or result in, the containment of such tensions.

In analyzing patterns of intergenerational relations and processes of reproduction and innovation, questions arise concerning the agency-structure dilemma. How far do different patterns of intergenerational relations represent strategies which family members adopt and how far do they occur as a consequence of habits and dispositions? This is

not an issue which the paper has sought to address. An analysis might well be conducted to take more explicit account of these distinctions and could form the axes of a matrix as proposed in the paper. However, in so far as intergenerational relations reflect both structural and strategic aspects of human behaviour, it is perhaps worth quoting Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) who suggest *'...socio-structural components may be found in those decisions and acts apparently most clearly powered by will.. the idea that a life trajectory may be determined – or rather, conditioned – much more easily by the supplying of a resource than by the imposition of a constraint lends an entirely new content to the concept of determination: one which includes both the socio-structural dimension and praxis'* (p95). Thus, in so far as innovation takes place in families, it may be helpful to understand it in relation to the availability and deployment of *new* resources (for example of place, occupation, ideas), as it is also useful to examine how existing patterns of continuity in families are reproduced and how they limit change. As Bertaux and Bertaux Wiame suggest, this gives a whole new meaning to the concept of determination.

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Notes