Epistemologies That Lead to Primary Explanations in Family Science

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This paper is an attempt to describe several aspects of the epistemologies that are used in the family discipline. It argues that phenomena such as the birth process and generations make the "family realm" unique in the same way economic, psychic, social, and historical phenomena are unique, and this has allowed scholars in the last four decades to begin developing a family discipline that is as basic or primary as the other social sciences. The four intellectual traditions that have been using these new epistemologies in studying the family are described, and it is suggested that they have constructed more primary explanations than is generally recognized. Several examples of their primary explanations are described, and the paper concludes with some speculations about future possibilities the new epistemologies may make possible.

The field of family science is multidisciplinary in the sense that a large number of disciplines are contributing to our knowledge about families and how they interact with their subsystems and ecosystems. Some of the more involved disciplines are sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, and biology. In addition to these older fields, there is a growing recognition that a familial discipline has emerged in the last several decades and it is providing insights that complement the ideas developed in the older disciplines (Burr & Leigh, 1982; Kantor & Lehr, 1975; NCFR Task Force, 1987). There has been considerable dialogue about what to call the emerging familial discipline, and a consensus has not yet emerged. Our present preference is famiology, but whatever the new field eventually is called our view of it is that it is the scholarly field that was begun about four decades ago by a creative group of intellectual rebels and innovators that included Gregory Bateson, Evelyn Duvall, Henry Osborne, Virginia Satir, Nathan Ackerman, Elizabeth Force, Murray Bowen, Beatrice Paolucci, Jay Haley, Francile Firebaugh, Henry Bowman, and Ruth Deacon.

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When a new discipline emerges, there are new questions that are asked and new methodologies that are developed to try to answer the questions. In other words, there are new epistemologies. The first person to write extensively about these epistemological issues in the family field was Gregory Bateson (1972, 1979), and his ideas led to some spirited debates about the nature and value of an ecosystemic epistemology (Dell, 1982; Keeney & Dell, 1982; Gurman, 1983; and Bogdan, 1987). The intent of this paper is to extend earlier attempts to identify the epistemologies used in the family field and describe what seem to us to be several additional aspects of its epistemologies. These issues are extremely complex, and our understanding of them is a gradually evolving construct (Watzlawick, 1984), so we are aware that this attempt to help describe these epistemologies is rudimentary; and we welcome the additional dialogue that undoubtedly will occur.

THE BIRTH PROCESS CREATES A FAMILY "REALM"

A recent paper by Kingsley Davis helped us better understand the epistemologies that are used in the new family discipline. The paper included a description of Davis' unsuccessful attempt to find or create a family field in the 1930s, and his subsequent attempt to identify the intellectual bedrock upon which a family field could be created.

As a graduate student I set out to specialize in the study of marriage and the family. In due course I became dissatisfied with the relatively unsystematic literatures in the field; and long before Murdock, I sought to find a central criterion of relevance by which the whole field could be ordered. I felt, and still feel, that I found this criterion. It is the recognition and use of connection through birth as a basis of group structure and social organization. Marriage normally involves the connection of husband and wife through common offspring; the nuclear family is composed of parents and children; siblings are related by having common parents; the wider kinship structure is built out of a network of interlocking nuclear families. Hence all marital and familial phenomena ultimately come back to connection through birth. Given this criterion of relevance, hypothetical propositions can be generated, mathematics can be applied, and a science of famalogy can be developed. Furthermore, this science can link up closely with genetics, because genetics is the study of connection through reproductive cells. And it can link up with the social sciences, for these deal with other bases of connection which limit the consanguinity basis. (Davis, 1984, p 5. Italics added.)

Thus, Davis argued that birth and the connections that are created through birth are sufficiently unique and influential that they can be the basis for the family field being a separate area of scholarly inquiry. This insight seems to us to identify at least one aspect of the epistemological foundations of the family field because it provides a basis for primary, familial explanations. This insight alone, however, as potentially profound and important as it may be or become, is only the beginning of an important line of reasoning. By itself, it does not help us much until the ramifications it has and the issues and questions it raises are made explicit. One of these questions is: How can birth and the connections it creates be sufficiently unique that they can be, in Davis' words "a central criterion of relevance by which the whole field could be ordered?" This is one of several crucial questions on which we hope to shed light in this paper.

It seems to us that birth is an irreducible, essential, and universal phenomenon that is much more than a biological or social process. It inherently involves a number of complicated interpersonal, mental, emotional, temporal, genetic, spatial, hormonal, and even further, the family realm (Watzlawick, 1984, p 5. Italics added.)
generational, experiential, sexual, and developmental processes that are inextricably intertwined. For example, physiologically the mother experiences dramatic changes in hormones, discomfort, pain, and the shape of her body. The movement inside her own body of the person she is helping to create also creates a variety of changes. The necessary concern and care after birth involves and impacts many individuals. These processes of conception, pregnancy, birth, and nurturing create a unique set of connections that are mental, temporal, spatial, interpersonal, emotional, generational, experiential, and developmental. In addition, these connections involve such things as plans, goals, aspirations, deeply experienced affect, decision making, life cycle transitions, priorities, developmental tasks, boundaries, and the allocation of resources.

In an earlier paper, Beutler et al., (1987) suggested that the complicated set of connections that are created by birth be labeled the family realm. This conceptualization broadens and deepens the definition of what we think family things are. Traditionally, the conceptualization of family has been that it is "a cultural unit which contains a husband and wife who are the mother and father of their child or children" (Schneider, 1980, p.33). More recently many scholars have argued that "non-traditional" forms of the family also need to be included in a definition of family. The family realm concept goes even further by including more than just nuclear families and non-traditional forms. The family realm includes married couples who do not have children, families with adopted children, stepfamilies, remarriages, and even single people living alone because they all have parents and they experience part of their life in a "family realm." Also most people, regardless of their unique family situation, have siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc., and these are parts of the family realm. In addition, most people have familial memories, hopes, aspirations, heritage, experiences, ethics, processes, development, rules, patterns, and bonds, and these are part of the family realm.

Another way the family realm concept is different from traditional views of the family is that traditionally the "family" has been viewed as nothing more than a social institution. Social institutions are structures, such as governments, religions, and educational systems, that are created by humans to accomplish certain functions. According to the family realm conceptualization, some parts of the family realm are "institutionalized" but there are some parts of the family realm that are not socially determined. For example, the family realm is influenced by biological, environmental, and nutritional phenomena in addition to cultural patterns. Also, at its most fundamental level, there are familial phenomena that are as basic and fundamental to the human species as the biological and cultural phenomena. For example, Rich (1976) has demonstrated that the family realm has experiential dimensions that are different from the institutionalized patterns that are created by cultures, and Bowen (1978) has discovered affective aspects of the family realm that are not reducible to biological or cultural patterns. Also developmentalists such as Duvall (1955) have identified developmental processes that occur in the family realm that are more than merely biological and cultural processes. Thus, two advantages of the family realm concept are that it has enough flexibility that it includes all of the "non-traditional" forms of the family, and it includes phenomena that are as fundamental as the cultural, biological, historical, and technological factors that shape, mold, and influence the details and appearance of family processes.

The family realm is unique in many ways. For example, it is the part of the human experience that has generational relationships. None of the other realms in which humans participate have the same type of generational relationships. It also tends to have a unique set of rules, ethics, standards, priorities, and processes (Fortes, 1969). Also, the nature of aspirations, feelings, frustrations, temporal orientations, achievements, interacting, bonding, managing, choosing, excluding, healing, etc., are

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different than when these same processes occur outside the family realm. Beutler et al., (1987) and Burr et al., (1988, ch 1) have begun the process of describing what the family realm is like, and their work is helpful, but it is still in a pioneering stage in understanding what is and is not in the family realm. Much more needs to be done to refine and qualify the conceptualization of the family realm.

HOW DOES SENSITIVITY TO THE FAMILY REALM MAKE A DIFFERENCE EPISTEMOLOGICALLY?

There are several ways a recognition of the family realm makes a difference epistemologically. One way is that when scholars begin with a sensitivity to the family realm, it creates a "familial" perspective, and this perspective leads these scholars to ask different questions and create different explanations than scholars who have other perspectives. For example, when therapists such as Jackson, Satir, and Bowen began to look for familial causes of the problems they were dealing with in their therapy they made an epistemological shift. They began looking in a different place for the problems and treatments. They began to think of problems and treatments as being in familial systems in addition to individual systems. One way of describing this epistemological shift is that they began punctuating (Watzlawick et al., 1967) their thinking differently by thinking about the role of familial phenomena, and Keeney has suggested that this was enough of a change that he called it an "alternative paradigm" (1979, p.117).

Another way of describing this epistemological shift is that the family-realm perspective appeals to familial factors as the explicans so they are familial rather than sociological, psychological, genetic, economic, chemical, or historical explanations. Even though some psychologists, such as Bogdan (1987), propose that family therapy can be reduced to psychological explanations and some sociologists, such as Bards (1984) and Sprey (1983), have argued that the earlier perspectives are enough, we suggest that familogists have been developing profound and useful familial explanations that have not been developed in the older fields.

A second effect the "family realm" perspective has had on epistemologies is that scholars who use this perspective tend to emphasize a slightly different set of concepts in their explanations and interventions. The concepts tend to deal much more with the non-rational, affective, developmental, gender related, bonded, intergenerational, life span, purposive, nurturing, circular, altruistic, particularistic, goal-oriented, intimate, experiential, generative, close interpersonal, resource, inefficient, aesthetic, and cooperative parts of the human experience.

The influence of a family realm perspective on epistemologies is similar to some larger trends and issues in all of the sciences. For example, a family-realm point of view is incompatible in many ways with the traditional view of causality that has dominated scientific thought in the last several centuries. The traditional view has been that all sciences assume reality is governed by law-like, causal processes that operate in a mechanistic and linear way. Scholars such as Capra (1982) argue that many disciplines are moving away from the belief that this Cartesian perspective that is based on Newtonian physics is the only way to view reality. They argue that the natural and social sciences are moving toward a set of assumptions that is also sensitive to more holistic, ecosystemic, and interactive processes. The systemic ideas of Bateson (1972, 1979) that were such an important part of the emergence of the family-realm perspective have placed the study of families in the vanguard of this development in the social sciences, and the result is a search for a different type of knowledge utilizing a unique perspective. At the present time many scholars are arguing that we need to choose between the
Cartesian and ecosystemic perspectives, but we suspect that when the dust settles we will find it useful to again follow Bateson and adopt a "both and" rather than an "either or" view.

There are many aspects to these epistemological shifts, and another one deals with determinism versus indeterminism. Determinism assumes there are law-like causes that can be identified. This is different from the indeterministic assumption that some things occur because of purposive or teleological processes. The home management (Paolucci, 1977), family therapy (Hoffman, 1981), and family life education parts of the field have focused on the purposive parts of family systems. This emphasis is fairly different from the more traditional perspectives we have inherited from the older sciences.

Some aspects of the epistemological shifts and debates are fairly unique to the family field. For example, a group of familialogists have argued that we should use a circular rather than linear view of causation in studying families, and Hoffman (1981) seems to suggest that we should only think with circular causation. Others, such as Dell (1980), argue that ignoring linear causation in families would merely err in a different direction. A slightly different approach was suggested by Watzlawick et al., (1967) when they suggested that it is more productive to think about effects than causes. It seems to us that we need to recognize that linear and circular processes both occur in families, and we ought to adopt epistemological approaches that allow us to get knowledge about both.

Two other ways the emergence of a familological perspective has influenced epistemologies are that familologists tend to focus on rather than exclude values (Arcus, 1980), and they tend to have an interventionist orientation (Guerney & Guerney, 1981). This concern with values and the priority that is given to creating change prompt familologists to seek a different kind of knowledge than the family scholars who operate from the more traditional perspectives. The difference is that familologists tend to give more emphasis to knowledge they can use to create change in families, and the more traditional approaches tend to emphasize an approach that seeks to "account for variance" in populations (Jurich & Burr, 1988).

Another way a familological perspective influences epistemologies has to do with the intrinsic, fundamental, or basic nature of some family phenomena. In most of the older perspectives the family is viewed as being only a social institution. When this assumption is made, it logically follows that all of the important aspects of families are assumed to be products of cultural or social phenomena. These assumptions lead to epistemologies that can be described as "social determinism" or "cultural determinism" because they assume there is nothing that is familial that is not determined by social conditions. The family realm perspective makes two assumptions that are different. It assumes that social factors are only one of the important things that influence family processes. There are also biological, ecosystemic, nutritional, etc., factors that are as important as the social and cultural factors. A familological perspective also assumes there are some familial factors that are just as fundamental, basic, or intrinsic as the the other factors that influence families.

Several colleagues who reviewed earlier drafts of this paper suggested that all of the non-cultural aspects of the family realm are all biological aspects. We suggest, however, that scholars also have been identifying experiential (Rich, 1976), developmental (Falicov, 1988), ecosystemic (Paolucci et al., 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), affective (Bowen, 1978), gender related (Gilligan 1982; Gouldner, 1988), generational (Litz, 1963; Minuchin, 1974; Olson et al., 1984), distance regulation (Kantor and Lehr, 1975),
communication (Watzlawick et al., 1967), family paradigmatic (Reiss, 1981), and other kinds of factors that are not completely reducible to social or biological factors and they are some of the epistemological reasons scholars have been constructing for the last four decades primary explanations that complement the explanations that have been developed in the older disciplines. One of the things this means is that the emergence of familiality in the last half of the twentieth century does not mean that the older disciplines need to "move over," or that family is merely duplicating or "taking away" ideas from the older disciplines. The new epistemologies have allowed familologists to add new ideas that add to the insights developed in the older disciplines.

While familial factors can provide primary explanations, we are not arguing that other phenomena do not influence family processes. Cultural differences, technological developments, climate, nutrition, historical events, and many other phenomena all influence what happens in the family sphere. More, specifically cultural mores will influence how families live and interact with family and non-family members. Our point is merely that what happens in the family realm also influences what happens in these other spheres in ways that are not understood when we think that all of the important effects originate outside the family. And, epistemologically speaking, the best understanding we can get of these familial effects does not come when we think that the explanations of them are all in the intellectual traditions of the older disciplines. Said differently, when we think that all of the important explanations are psychological, economic, historical, geographic, chemical, sociological, anthropological, etc., we are missing more insights than we have realized.

There is one final way a family realm perspective has epistemological implications. Historically, the family realm has been identified with women's place in the private and domestic sphere. Because of this connection, much of the recent scholarship in feminist epistemology (Belenky et al., 1986; Bleier, 1986; Bowles & Duelli Klein, 1983; Harding, 1986; Harding & Hintikka, 1983; Jaggar, 1983; Keller, 1985; Reinhart & Davidman, in press; Spender, 1981; Stanley a Wise, 1983; Whitbeck, 1983b) also is germane to the epistemologies we use in studying the family realm.

These are neither minor nor irrelevant epistemological differences. They do not seem to us to be what Kuhn (1970) would call a paradigmatic shift, even though some of them are part of some larger shifts in the academic community that are of paradigmatic proportions. These developments do signal, however, the emergence of a new discipline that is a primary or basic field. Thus far the emerging field is still small when we compare the number of new concepts and theories that have been developed in it to the number of ideas that have been developed in the older disciplines. However, it has only been around for a few decades, and it has the potential to develop enough primary explanations that eventually it may become a major primary discipline.

In summary, the main point in this section is that when we start with a familial perspective, compared to the many other effective and helpful perspectives that exist in the academic community, we see things differently. We ask different questions, focus on different parts of reality, and construct ideas that are different.

WHY DIDN'T A "FAMILY-REALM" PERSPECTIVE EMERGE EARLIER?

There are many reasons the older social sciences developed perspectives that were relatively insensitive to the unique aspects of the family realm. Some of the reasons are that the dominant ideologies and perspectives in the academic community when the older social sciences emerged emphasized the rational aspects of humans, assumed an individualistic view of human emotion, and the family realm was largely ignored. The family realm perspective has not emerged earlier because the family realm had a unique epistemological perspective. Historically, the family realm has been identified with women's place in the private and domestic sphere. Because of this connection, much of the recent scholarship in feminist epistemology (Belenky et al., 1986; Bleier, 1986; Bowles & Duelli Klein, 1983; Harding, 1986; Harding & Hintikka, 1983; Jaggar, 1983; Keller, 1985; Reinhart & Davidman, in press; Spender, 1981; Stanley a Wise, 1983; Whitbeck, 1983b) also is germane to the epistemologies we use in studying the family realm.

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individualistic orientation, focused primarily on public rather than private areas of the human experience, and centered on the hedonistic aspects of humans. Also, they were dominated by a male-oriented Newtonian/Cartesian view of the world (Capra, 1982), and this led to mechanical, atomistic, economic, and political rather than domestic and nurturing views of social phenomena. The result is that the older social sciences tended to become public-sphere disciplines rather than family-sphere disciplines. They assumed that the problematic and salient parts of the human experience are in the commercial, individualistic, political, economic, military, legal, and educational realms—not the family realm. This led scholars in these fields to develop questions, theories, concepts, methodologies, and explanations that rectified the doctrine of separate spheres and largely ignored the unique characteristics of the family realm.

It seems to us that cultural anthropology started out with the most sensitivity to the uniqueness of the family realm. Unfortunately, however, ethnographers and anthropological theorists inherited enough of the dominant intellectual traditions in Western thought that the individualistic, hedonistic, rational, monochronic, and controlling themes dominated the emerging explanations. Therefore, cultural anthropology, as its label indicates, developed more cultural explanations rather than familial explanations.

Some parts of sociology also came close to developing a familial perspective. If sociology had become a study of "socio" phenomena in the broadest sense it might have included the entire family realm, but the problematic and explanatory phenomena, the explicandum and explicans, on which sociology tends to focus are public-realm phenomena such as class, status, power, and social change. The sociology of the family is an important area in the family field, but it has a public-realm, sociological orientation rather than a perspective that grew from attention to the unique characteristics of the family realm. Certainly, it continues to make an important contribution in understanding the public aspects and connections of families, but these insights are quite different from the ideas developed by the more familial perspectives.

Several of the other social sciences did not even come close to having a family-realm perspective. Economists, for example, have traditionally assumed that humans are rational and motivated by a desire to maximize gain, and this is incompatible with the essence of the family realm. The economic perspective can be used to study the more rational and gain-oriented aspects of the family realm, but it does not fit with most family phenomena.

The idea of self interest is a central principle in political science. Thus, political theory focuses on a controlling rather than developmental or nurturing type of human relationship. These ideas are inherently different from the family realm, and they are probably the reason that the family was almost totally ignored in political theory until recently (Abbott, 1981, Diamond, 1983; Eisenstein, 1984; Elshlaim, 1981; Grimshaw, 1986; Morgan, 1985; Nicholson, 1986).

Most of the dominant concerns in psychology also are not family-oriented. For example, intelligence is defined and operationalized as an aptitude for dealing with public-sphere phenomena rather than the more familial phenomena such as nurturing, care, amity, and bonds. Another example is the extensive array of concepts in the study of personality because most of these constructs tend to deal with public-sphere aspects of the human condition. Some psychologists continue to embrace a family perspective with regard to interaction, and some overlap with their current research, but this appears to be a small proportion of the field and fairly recent.
An additional reason that none of the older disciplines evolved into a family-realm discipline is that they emerged in a historical era when individualism was almost unquestioned. They therefore tended to emphasize the individualistic aspects of the human condition, and when connections were considered they were almost always public spheres of the state, city, or commercial arenas that were examined. The domestic sphere was not viewed as problematic inasmuch as it was defined as women's place, men's haven, and the locale of the family in the private sphere (Cott, 1977; Degler, 1980; Leach, 1980; Ryan, 1981; Smith-Rosenberg, 1985; Welte, 1966). The private domain was not viewed as a helpful explanatory sphere until fairly recently when it became a major focus of family therapeutic and feminist scholarship.

Thus, the established social science disciplines have discovered many ideas about family phenomena, but the knowledge tends to be about the public-realm parts of the family rather than the family-realm parts. Such knowledge is valuable in understanding the aspects of the family realm that are part of the public spheres and the parts that interact with the public spheres. Much of the essence of the family realm, however, has not been included in the intellectual nets of the earlier disciplines.

Another reason familyology did not develop earlier was that there was not enough interest until recently. Davis indicated that the reason he eventually gave up in trying to create the field in the 1930's was because....

nobody seemed interested. I did write several articles on what I considered to be fundamental aspects of the family field as I conceived it, and I even at that time (around 1938) advocated a separate journal on marriage and the family, but I was discouraged by lack of interest. (Davis, 1984, p.4)

Scholars have been aware for millennia that our economic systems have been fraught with difficulty, and they were aware that political systems have been chaotic. They also have been aware that many people were mentally troubled and social conditions could be improved. These problematic conditions led, respectively, to economics, political science, and psychology, and sociology. The family, however, was not generally perceived as problematic until after the industrial revolution, and it was not apparent that we needed to think about family phenomena in a new way until well into the twentieth century. The result was that the family area did not even start to emerge as an area of inquiry in the early part of this century, and then it began as an interdisciplinary area.

A few scholars, such as Kingsley Davis and Ernest Groves, started seeking a primary family field in the 30s and 40s, but the intellectual community was not ready. Groves observed in the 1940s that we needed a "science of marriage and the family," and he recognized that it would have a different "point of view." He also realized that it would emerge only after a group of "pioneers" laid the groundwork. His comments, almost a half century before their time are illuminating:

The establishment of a definite program for the training of specialists in the field of marriage and the family means that several sciences must contribute to the instruction. The outcome will be a science of marriage and the family carried out by specialists who will draw their data from a wide range of resources. They will not be sociologists, home economists, or social workers, but persons who are committed to the gathering and the giving of information that concerns marriage and the family, who have prepared themselves for such an undertaking, and have approached their task from a background shared by no other science ...

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The two things needful are recognition that the time has come to do this, and the commitment of able men and women to the task. The development of graduate programs of training should go hand in hand with the emergence of the science of marriage and the family. Although the pioneers in the building of this science necessarily must be persons who have been trained in some other specialty, any exaggeration of the value of the material that falls within any one of the older specialties can be avoided if those giving graduate instruction fairly represent a wide range of the scientific investigations of concern to marriage. (Groves, 1946, p.26. Italics added.)

A final reason we believe the family field did not emerge until recently is that scholars did not realize the limitations of the existing disciplines. The feminist literature and the new scholarship on women has been enormously helpful in this area because it has helped us realize the limitations of the traditional, male-oriented view that has dominated all of science. This helped us become aware that additional points of view are feasible, desirable, and necessary.

AREAS IN THE FAMILY FIELD THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING PRIMARY FAMILIAL EXPLANATIONS

In our evolving view of what has happened in recent decades, we believe there are at least four areas of inquiry that have for decades been constructing what we consider to be a familological perspective because their attention to "family realm" phenomena created insights that were not developed with other perspectives. The four are the familologically oriented parts of family therapy, child development and family relationships, the home management part of home economics, and the family-oriented parts of feminist theory. The first three of these areas emerged as deliberate attempts to focus on family phenomena, but the insights created in the feminist area were by-products of the feminist critique of the family.

Family Therapy

Family therapy began as an area of academic inquiry when a number of therapists such as Nathan Ackerman (1958) and Don D. Jackson (1957) became dissatisfied with the therapies they had learned in psychiatry and began to look for familial explanations. One of the reasons for their dissatisfaction was that the psychiatric therapies they had been using focused on treating individuals rather than families. Some of these therapies ignored the family factors so much that they "actually proscribed therapist contact with family members" (Bavelas & Segal, 1982, p.99).

These clinicians started their search with some clinical impressions that the family was important in the etiology and treatment of mental illnesses, but they had no systematic theory, no research, no set of assumptions, and no academic tradition or intellectual foundation to guide them. They were a group of revolutionaries who had little more than a vague awareness of several perspectives that they did not want to use as their intellectual foundation. For example, they knew they did not want to use the individual orientations that had dominated psychiatry and psychology. Fortunately, their clinical inferences were enough to launch them in a new direction that has proven fruitful and exciting.

In the four decades since family therapy began, it has developed an impressive number of explanations of how families operate, how pathologies develop in families,
and what is needed to avoid and correct pathological family conditions. The theorists did not have the benefit of the philosophical rationale that is provided by Davis' (1984) idea about the connections created by the birth process. They also did not have the benefit of the conceptual model that demonstrates how these connections make up the family realm (Beutler et al., 1987). And, the theories that were developed were not developed by philosopher-theorists. They were created by soldiers in the trenches who were trying to understand why some therapeutic worked and some did not work.

Lidz's model on coalitions. There are many examples of primary familial explanations in the family therapy literature. An older example is a principle developed by Theodore Lidz (1963) and his colleagues in their studies of the families of schizophrenic children. Lidz and his colleagues were some of the first scholars to break with the older psychiatric perspectives and look for familial explanations of mental illnesses. The heart of Lidz's ideas about coalitions are that...

Children receive their primary training in group living within the family, remaining dependent upon the parents for many years, forming intense emotional bonds to them, and developing through assimilation from the parents and introjection of their characteristics, and yet must so learn to live within the family in a way that will enable them to emerge from it and start families of their own as members of the parental generation.

The parents serve as guides, educators, and models for offspring. They provide nurturance and give of themselves so that the children can develop. Though individuals, as parents they function as a coalition, dividing roles and tasks in which they support one another. The parents are properly dependent upon one another, and the children must be dependent upon parents, but parents should not be dependent upon immature children.

Parents can, of course, form a reasonably satisfactory coalition in respect to their children despite marital disharmony, to some extent even despite separation. They can maintain agreement about how the children should be raised. They can even support their spouses to the children as worthwhile persons and good parents, as when a mother tells a child that her husband is a good father and a fine man whom she has loved, but that their ways and ideas differ.

In the high schismatic marriages of parents of schizophrenic patients which we studied, the marriages were not simply unhappy; the spouses were hostilely depreciative of one another, rivalrous for a child, considering loyalty to the other parent as rejection, and making it clear that growing up to be like the other parent would be unacceptable. The pseudocoalition that existed in the skewed families in which one parent abdicated the parental role--usually the husband who was but an adjunct to a disturbed but dominant wife-created serious role imbalances and promoted unhealthy dyad formation between mother and son. (Lidz, 1963, p.56)

Thus, the principle these scholars developed is that there are several boundaries between parent and child generations that are natural and desirable; and when families maintain these boundaries it contributes to the healthy development of the members of the family. Conversely, when these boundaries become blurred it interferes with healthy development.
This explanation of one factor that makes a difference in the healthy development of humans is a helpful example of a primary familological explanation because it was neither developed nor reducible to a psychological, sociological, historical, economic, or historical perspective. It was developed by appealing to familial phenomena, generational differences and boundaries, for the explanation.

The construction of reality in families. The work of David Reiss and his colleagues (1981) on the ways families construct reality is a more recent example of primary familial explanations that are being developed by family therapists. In the introduction to the book, he states that the purpose of their work was to discover how the family... through the course of its own development, fashions fundamental and enduring assumptions about the world in which it lives. The assumptions are shared by all family members... Indeed, the core of an individual's membership in his own family is acceptance of, belief in, and creative elaboration of these abiding assumptions. When a member distances himself from these assumptions, when he can see no further possibility for creatively elaborating them, he is diluting his own membership and begins the process of alienation from his family. (Reiss, 1981, Preface.)

The idea that families fashion and construct their own reality is a novel insight, and dramatically different from the view of family that dominates in the older disciplines. The "traditional perspective...sees the family as a passive receptacle of influence from the wider social context in which it lives" (Reiss, 1981, p.4). The Reiss approach to family process assigns the creativity to the family itself as an active, dynamic force molding and shaping its world as it attempts to survive.

Reiss' model also helps us understand that the process of constructing assumptions is primarily covert. As the family constructs it's reality, the process is private and non-rational. It's goals are complex, and many times obscure. When exposed to the light of the non-family world, the patterns and subtle nuances carefully and quickly retreat from view. Instead, a front stage presentation is arranged and acted out for those present. Only when the coast is clear do the patterns reemerge and resurface. Reiss also suggests a rather innovative definition of the family which focuses on membership rather than social structure. He states that membership in the family is a function of the acceptance or willingness of the family to participate in the constructed reality. This is a unique processual approach quite different from macro level constructions focusing on structure.

The methods used by the Reiss team contributed to their ability to focus on and develop ideas consistent with the uniqueness of the family realm. They relied heavily on observations of families and attempted to build from the "ground up", beginning with the observations of family phenomena which would lead to explanations. Most current theories of the family have operated in the exact reverse. As Reiss observes that:

most current theorizing about the family... comes upward from the psychology of the individual: psychoanalysis, stimulus-response theory, and symbolic interactionism. Some of it - for example, exchange theory and role theory - comes laterally from social psychology. And still more comes downward from anthropology, sociology, economics, and political theory. (Reiss, 1981, p.4.)

There are many other examples of primary explanations that could be identified in the family therapy literature, but space precludes their description. They use creative concepts such as: punctuation (Watzlawick et al., 1967), differentiation (Bowen, 1978), distance regulation (Kantor & Lehr, 1975), hierarchy (Minuchin, 1974), regimes...
A large number of CDFR³ departments were organized in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Love identified over fifty of them that had graduate programs in 1981 (Love, 1982). These departments had a different perspective than the older, more traditional social science fields. They were more interested in values, affectional relationships, optimal development, and strategies for helping people attain their family goals. The ideas that have been developed in this area reflect such emphases.

The combination of child development and family relations in these departments was not an accident. It was a deliberate strategy because a number of the individuals who influenced the design of the programs were committed to studying the development of children in a family context rather than as isolated individuals. For example, the efforts of Cora Bussey Hillis in getting resources for the child development institute at Iowa State University and the efforts of Lawrence K. Frank in overseeing the distribution of grants to promote the study of child development were attempts to study child development in a family context (Irwin & Bushnell, 1980; Sears, 1975). Some child development programs since have become so dominated by developmental psychologists that they have lost a familial perspective, but most of them are still sensitive to the central role of the family in human development.

Even though the intellectual traditions that developed in the CDFR departments were relatively unique, the scholars in these departments did not explicate the philosophical basis of their uniqueness. Their differences were apparent to themselves and to related disciplines such as psychology and sociology, and frequently these differences were viewed suspiciously. For example, a sizeable number of scholars in the older disciplines viewed the CDFR area as being more soft or inept intellectually. Some thought that it did not have the empirical or methodological rigor it should have. At the same time, many of the scholars in the CDFR departments viewed the older disciplines as irrelevant because they focused on phenomena that had little value in creating change in families. We believe that the basis for these differences can now be identified more clearly, and both groups can be appreciated, understood, and utilized (Jurich & Burr, 1988). The key to understanding the differences is to recognize the difference between the family-realm perspective in the CDFR area and the more public-realm perspectives that were the dominant approach in the older areas.

Hess and Handel's model. Robert Hess and Gerald Handel (1959) developed a number of primary familial explanations while they were in the human development program at the University of Chicago. They viewed the family as a unique type of psychosocial organization, and they developed innovative concepts to help us understand how families strive to achieve a satisfactory pattern of separateness and connectedness; how they develop and manage images; how they test, explore, and affirm the images to create family themes; and how they establish and manage boundaries.

Hess and Handel helped us become aware that the images family members have of each other and of their family are influential and also quite different from non-family images. They state that the "the intimate and constant exchange that characterizes the nuclear family makes" an.....

emotionalized conception of another... The image emerges from the holder's past and bears the imprint of his experience, delimiting what versions of others
are possible for him. It says something about him as a person. But it is also a cast into the future, providing the holder with direction in relating to and interacting with the object. While it represents the holder's needs and wishes, it also represents the object as a source of fulfillment ... (and) it draws from cultural values, role expectations, and the residue of the parents' experiences in their families of origin. (Hess & Handel, 1967, p. 14.)

According to Hess and Handel, families create central concerns or themes. A family theme is defined as a shared position the family adopts in relationship to the outer world, the non-family realms. "A family theme is a pattern of feelings, motives, fantasies, and conventionalized understandings grouped about some locus of concern" (1959, p.18). Usually these loci of concern reflect the complex nature of the personalities of the individuals in the family but only exist in the collective represented by the family. Sample themes may include issues of security, strength in times of crisis, dependability, and religiosity. It is from these themes that life's directives are established. They provide the logic of why families do certain things and why they do not do others. Additionally, they regulate the delicate nature of interaction between the family and non-family realms.

Olson's generational ties model. The work of Terry Olson (1984) and his colleagues is a more recent example of primary familialogical explanations developed in the CDFR area. Their work is a helpful example because it also illustrates the harmony and interdependence of theory, research, and application that is being seen increasingly in the field.

The Olson program began as an attempt to improve the effectiveness of programs designed to decrease premature teenage pregnancy. They observed that attempts to deal with teenage pregnancy from biological, legal, and sociological approaches were not meeting with much success, and they deliberately decided to approach the problem from a familial point of view. They also observed that several characteristics of the family realm have important consequences for decision making about sexual behavior and pregnancy. For example, the process of giving birth is not an isolated event that only involves the mother and child. It is a part of a complex web of connections that unavoidably include several generations. The child that a teenage mother gives birth to creates a grandchild for the teen's parents, and this means the connections between the teen and the grandparents are involved.

These scholars also reasoned that the process of giving birth to a child influences the affectional, mental, emotional, occupational, educational, nurturing, responsibility aspects of the teen's life in many and complicated ways. Also, many teens have little understanding of these effects. However, if teens did understand these connections, their insights would probably influence the decisions they make about sexual behavior and pregnancy. When teens are unaware of the effects of the birth process, they would tend to make decisions that would lead to consequences they would not prefer. Thus, their decisions about sexual behavior would tend to be less informed, less moral, and less wise. On the other hand, if teens were to become aware of the familial connections that are intertwined with their sexual behavior and pregnancy, their insights would lead them to decision making that would lead to more desirable consequences. This reasoning therefore provides familialogical explanations of teenage decision making, and the explanations are not reducible to economic, psychological, or sociological explanations.

If space allowed, many other examples from the CDFR area could be identified. David Olson's (Olson et al., 1983) circumplex model, for example, was developed by selectively using ideas that had been dealt with in the older disciplines, but it has become
a familologial model because he and his colleagues modified the ideas and extended it in ways that are consistent with the characteristics of the family realm. It is likely that the model would have developed in different ways if he and his colleagues had not had a family perspective. Other examples include Vogel and Bell's (1960) scapegoating theory, the additions McCubbin and his colleagues (1982) made with the coping dimensions to the family stress literature, the use of developmental tasks (DuVal & Miller, 1985), and the work on the role of support in the family (Rollins & Thomas, 1979).

Resource Management

Resource management, the oldest of the four areas that have developed theories with a family-realm perspective, had its intellectual roots in home economics, and it has evolved through four eras (Vickers, 1984). Era one occurred during the first quarter of the century when great strides were being realized in public health. During this first period, the management literature emphasized attaining prescriptive standards in sanitation and hygiene (Richards, 1910).

Era two occurred during the years around word war II when there was a growing awareness of the benefits of powered appliances and planned physical facilities in the home; e.g. the appropriate location of doors and cupboards, and the height of counter and table tops. The management literature during this period focused on how these physical facilities could be combined with the efficient use of human time and energy to bring about task simplification (Bratton, 1959; Gross & Everett, 1945; Heiner & McCullough, 1947; Steidl, 1955).

Components of management were emphasized during the third era of the 1950's and 1960's. During this period concepts such as family, values, goals, standards, resources, decision making, organization, and process were developed and refined. The progression of thought concerning these concepts can be traced in the text books and subsequent editions of Gross and Crandall (1947) and Nickell and Dorsey (1942). During this era there was a gradual shift away from an economic perspective that emphasized work performance in the home. A more family realm perspective emerged with a focus on the development of the individuals living in the home (Vickers, 1984).

During the fourth era of thought, the emphasis shifted to the development of systems oriented management frameworks. The two major approaches that were developed during this period were a social systems framework (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975) and an ecological framework (Paolucci, Hall, & Axinn, 1977). Both of these approaches moved the literature to more of a family realm perspective. As observed by Vickers (1984), these systems theories provided a framework that helped conceptualize the multiple bonds among family members and the multidirectional influences of home management, technology, and larger economic, political, physical and socio-cultural systems.

One of the important contributions of the resource management models is that they both have indeterministic views of individuals and families. They focus on the purposive, teleological parts of family processes where choices are at least somewhat free. This is important because most of the other systems models in the family field have been basically deterministic, even when the scholars have tried to avoid a causal or deterministic approach.

Demands. The concept of demands is one of the management concepts that has a family-realm orientation and is useful in primary explanations. Deacon and Firebaugh (1975), for example, view the family as a system with personal and managerial
subsystems, and two of the important system inputs are resources and demands. Although the concept of resources is widely used in a number of disciplines, the concept of demands is not. Conventional micro economic theory posits that choices in the family are made in consideration of maximizing behavior which is subject to income as a resource, exogenously determined market prices (including wages) and production technologies, and stable preferences (Becker 1976). However, in the home management systems models, "demands" is used as a concept to more adequately recognize forces internal and external to the family that go beyond market conditions and production technologies.

Internal demands include the effects of goals and values that originate from within the family and circumstances that result from the family's immediate shared environment. The shared environment may include the living units, available objects, and the biological systems including plants, animals, and individual family members. The family also is bombarded constantly with external demands in the form of requests, requirements, and expectations from the macro-environment. Their are regulations for school attendance, driving on public roads, zoning ordinances, and safety requirements. Their are also socio-cultural normative demands or expectations that serve as a demand input to the family system (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975). Many demands are experienced by most families of a given type, while others are particular to a given family. The polychronic nature of "demands" in the home management literature is entirely consistent with a family realm view.

Standards. Standards is a second home management concept that has been developed with a family realm perspective. Standards are quality and/or quantity measures that exist in the minds of family members as a result of attempts to reconcile resources with demands. In meeting goals and events, and in living with the circumstances of reality, standards are established in the minds of family members and shared between them to help bring the family system into equilibrium or some degree of balance. Families have their own unique array of standards, some of which may be flexible and situation defined, while others may be relatively inflexible. Standards may define the parameters of interpersonal relationships as well as the allocation of resources to a given type of activity.

The concept of standards and standard setting explains salient aspects of expectations, the setting of limits, planning, implementation, and decision making. It is a useful concept that could be used to great advantage by scholars and practitioners in other family realm areas of study such as family relations and family therapy. The idea of standards as explained here, was developed by Deacon and Firebaugh (1975) in a way that is not unlike the development of many other family realm concepts. They found that the idea of prescriptive standards permeated the home management literature. Yet, this did not fit with their experience and observations of families, and they felt prescriptive standards were not very useful to families as they were likely to have different standards from one another.

Grants. A third family resource management example is taken from family economics which is closely allied with the home management/resource management literature. With his talent for making nonconventional observations, Kenneth Boulding (1972) introduced the idea of the 'grants economy.' The concept, however, is so foreign to the main concerns in economics that it has been seen as little more than an interesting idea, but Bivens (1976) recognized that from a family realm perspective, it is a useful idea.
Grants are one-way transfers in which one person gives resources to another without a contractual agreement, formal expectation or usually even an informal expectation that the favor will be returned. Grants involve the one-way transfer of a broad range of both concrete and abstract resources. Even though grants and exchange often look a lot alike, their underlying motivations are different. In exchange you give me something, if and only if, I give you something deemed to be of equal value. In grants, I give you something out of the sheer goodness of my heart and you may or may not return the favor.

Bivens (1976) recognized the family to be an important granting organization in society, and he described how grants contribute to the integrative family structure, to its' effective functioning, and to the central role of the family in the successful and efficient functioning of the market economy. He estimated that grants inside the family accounted for more than 75 percent of the 5 billion dollars annual value of grants made in the United States. The integrative function of grants in the family is manifest in the way they accomplish more than the distribution of resources and contribute to intimacy, closeness, commitment, bonds, nurturing and a willingness to sacrifice, serve and nurture in the family realm. Bivens (1976) expressed concern that these side benefits may be lost as families move away from the use of grants to the more extensive use of exchange and monetization which is typical with industrialization.

Bivens (1976) suggests that the extensive use of grants in the family realm is essential in developing a wide range of abilities that are essential for the public-realms to operate. For example, the grants economy in families develops the ability to trust others enough to be willing to operate an exchange-oriented market economy. They also help in developing minimal levels of conformity in the myriad of otherwise unenforceable social conventions. These primary familial explanations provide new insights into ways the family makes essential contributions to the processes that occur in the public realms.

There are other examples which could have been used from the family resource management literature dealing with such things as resources (Rowland, Dodder & Nickols, 1985; Hogan & Buehler, 1983; Foa, 1971) and activity in the home (Beutler, Owen & Hefferan, 1988).

Feminist Theory

Not unlike other scholarly areas where multiple theories co-exist under the general rubric of "theory," feminist theory is also a general term that refers to the pluralism of conceptual frameworks that are concerned with improving the position of women in our contemporary and future society.

Feminist frameworks are systems of ideas, conceptual structures that feminists can use in explaining, justifying, and guiding their actions. Typically, a feminist framework is a comprehensive analysis of the nature and causes of women's oppression and a correlated set of proposals for ending it. It is an integrated theory of women's place both in contemporary society and in the new society that feminists are struggling to build. (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1984, p. xii)

Most topologies of feminist frameworks or theories include liberal, Marxist, socialist, and radical feminist perspectives as well as a more recent perspective that attempts to represent women of color. Each perspective articulates reasons why changes need to be made and asks a set of questions about what those changes need to be and who such changes will effect and how. Feminism questions methods of analyses,
categories, stereotypes, critical variables, divisions between spheres, realms, and domains as well as the social construction of biological sex and gender.

For example, to the extent that the family has been considered a part of the private sphere and women's place, feminists question, often by deconstruction, the place of "the family" in the oppression of women in society. Feminism confronts the contradiction that becomes more glaring each day that while the idealized traditional nuclear family locates women only in the home and family realm where the father is virtually absent, her experience of reality finds her taking care of the home and family in addition to her also needing to be in the marketplace in order to take care of or provide for her home and family. Feminists question any non-critical analysis of the family that assigns the women and family to the private sphere and ignores gender as a separate category of critical analysis that is subsequently kept invisible and unanalyzed.

Most feminists are concerned with questions about the presence of sexual politics in the family and the state. To uncover such politics, the boundaries and language of the public/private and political/personal must be deconstructed. The fundamental assumption is that the relations of the family are political but that is inappropriate. Hence the focus of feminists on demystifying the hierarchical nature of social relationships in the family. In this way it becomes possible to explore the relationships between childbearing and lactation and childcaring and childrearing practices in our society.

One of the immediate consequences of drawing on alternative frameworks for analyzing women's condition is that almost every aspect of women's life becomes problematic. A central question in this regard is whether or not women's experience of everyday life is categorically and qualitatively different than men's experience of everyday life. That is, is human nature dualistic? Is there a female essence and a male essence or just human essence? This is a critical issue in feminist critiques of the family. Do analyses of the family by feminists capitalize on the cultural differences that exist between women and men at the expense of the similarities? Useful examples of this problematic that are also representative of feminist contributions to a family realm perspective are discussed below. Unlike family therapy, child development and family relations, and resource management, feminist critique of the family was not developed with the overt intent of developing familial explanations. Nor is it an example of a familial perspective. Yet, this literature is in fact very informative and helpful to our construction of the familial perspective.

*Bernard's two marriages--his and hers.* In the early 1970s, Jessie Bernard (who was a feminist long before the emergence of the women's movement in the 1960s) produced a number of important discussions (e.g., 1972, 1974, 1975) about marriage, motherhood, and families based on the premise that women experienced the institutions of marriage, motherhood, and the family in ways different from men. This was because they did very different things as wives and/or mothers than did husbands and/or fathers. Her analyses and interpretations argued that in any given marriage, there were two different sets of perceptions, feelings, views, and interpretations about that marriage--one for the husband and one for the wife.

Bernard (1975, 1981) maintained that as a society, we had institutionalized fatherhood by casting fathers in the "good-provider role." Similarly, motherhood had been institutionalized by casting mothers in the role of housewife. The resulting institutionalized family, as well as the institutions of fatherhood and motherhood, were all products of affluence and a privileged white middle class view of the world.
Bernard's arguments have never been taken seriously by most professionals in the field. Bernard's work, spanning several decades, is a useful example, in similar ways to the experience of Kingsley Davis, of how disciplines respond in disinterested and discouraging ways when confronted with new directions or definitions that are at odds with accepted ways of thinking and knowing. Her major premise has been added to considerably through the feminist conceptualizations that have been advanced and articulated since then.

Motherhood as experience and institution. A few years after Bernard's initial discussion about his and her marriages, Adrienne Rich wrote an important book (1976) entitled Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution. Rich's book was one of many discussions about motherhood to be written during the next decade (Arcana, 1979; Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1976; Eisenstein, 1983; Ferguson, 1983; Flax, 1978; Lazarre, 1976; Rossi, 1977; Sokoloff, 1980; Trebilcot, 1983) that grappled with a wide range of issues and relationships, across a host of disciplines, that placed mothers at their center. But Rich's analysis was particularly timely and poignant because of the unique differentiations and examinations she made between the man-made institution of motherhood and women's experience of motherhood. At a time when male child-rearing experts were highly visible, Rich called for bold and courageous mothering as women's united response to the institutionalized, sacrificial "motherlove" that men demanded.

When we think of the institution of motherhood, no symbolic architecture comes to mind, no visible embodiment of authority, power, or of potential and actual violence....We do not think of the laws which determine how we got to these places, the penalties imposed on those of us who have tried to live our lives according to a different plan, the art which depicts us in an unnatural serenity or resignation, the medical establishment which has robbed so many women of the act of giving birth, the experts--almost all male--who have told us how, as mothers, we should behave and feel. We do not think of the Marxist intellectuals arguing as to whether we produce "surplus value" in a day of washing clothes, cooking food, and caring for children, or the psychoanalysts who are certain that the work of motherhood suits us by nature. We do not think of the power stolen from us and the power withheld from us in the name of the institution of motherhood....Women [must] never again forget that our many fragments of lived experience belong to a whole which is not of our creation. (Rich, 1976, pp. 274-275, 276)

The institution of motherhood idealizes "motherwork" (Bernard, 1974) as being natural, biological, blessed, and instrumental to the perpetuation and preservation of human activities and the human race. Through this idealization, the ongoing, everyday acts women perform are perceived, analyzed, and articulated differently than they are experienced by women. The needs (which are presumed and never critically analyzed) of children and men, to be met by women as mothers, are reified as demanding full and undivided attention if men, children, and families are to survive. Women's needs are assumed to be met by motherhood.

Rich argues that the experience of motherhood makes visible how the apparent innateness of what the institution of motherhood expects of women is actually a matter of social, political, and economic construction. This particular construction of motherhood is done in men's best interest because they are the primary beneficiaries and gatekeepers of the institution of motherhood. It reveals how men in their marriages
are assumed to have the right to sexual services without consequences or reproductive responsibility, the right to have children without childrearing and childrearing responsibilities, and the right to have a concerned interested partner nurture, care for, and attend to (be mothered by) them without having to reciprocate.

Renate Bridenthal (1982), a contemporary historian, has recently commented on these incongruous perceptions of motherhood in the context of the contemporary family.

The major feminist contribution [to a critique of the family] has been to view women as individuals within the family, rather than as mere components of it or anchors to it; that is, to view women as persons involved in familial and nonfamilial activities, as men routinely have been perceived. From that vantage point, everything looks different. [For example], while it has been shown repeatedly that married women take jobs either to improve their family’s living standard or to keep it from falling, the interpretation persists that such work for the family is actually destroying it. This opinion is possible only if one sees women as the core of the family, rather than as one member of the family. It also suggests that only a permanent presence in the household makes family possible. (p. 231)

Contrary to many perceptions held about feminism in general, Rich (as a mother and radical feminist) is not asking for the end of motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, and the family. She is maintaining that these institutionalized categories of activities and roles are inaccurately constructed, by design, to be responsive to a social, political, and economic agenda that does not represent or recognize the actual experiences of mothers, fathers, and children.

What is astonishing, what can give us enormous hope and belief in a future in which the lives of women and children shall be mended and rewoven by women’s hands, is all that we have managed to salvage, of ourselves, for our children, even within the destructiveness of the institution: the tenderness, the passion, the trust in our instincts, the evocation of a courage we did not know we owned, the detailed apprehension of another human existence, the full realization of the cost and precariousness of life. The mother’s battle for her child—with sickness, with poverty, with war, with all the forces of exploitation and callousness that cheapen human life—needs to become a common human battle, waged in love and in the passion for survival. But for this to happen, the institution of motherhood must be destroyed. To destroy the institution is not to abolish motherhood. It is to release the creation and sustenance of life into the same realm of decision, struggle, surprise, imagination, and conscious intelligence, as any other difficult, but freely chosen work. (Rich, 1976, pp. 279-280)

Ruddick’s maternal thinking. Ruddick (1980, 1983) has described nurturing and other processes of the work that mothers do as a set of practices that give rise to a specific way of being and thinking. She calls this maternal thinking. And just like any other kind of thinking, maternal thinking has its own givens, demands, concerns, interests, virtues, trappings, and experiences. Ruddick explains that “a distinctive kind of thinking arises when one attempts to understand, control, and communicate the strategies and aims of maternal practice” (Ruddick, 1983, p. 234). The relationship between mothers and maternal practice is not unlike the relationship between scientists and the practices of science.
If the mental and emotional activities of mothers are taken seriously, on their own terms and in terms of any model of intellectual and cognitive functions, the forms of thinking characteristic of mothering or primary caregiving are complex and demanding. Ruddick maintains that maternal thinking can be experienced by men who engage in considerable primary caregiving activities. She argues the need for both husbands and wives to be experienced practitioners of mothering, only then can they both be considered parents in a family realm orientation.

To some, such a statement concerning mothering by men may seem more hyperbole than realistic. But she argues that if what men do in structuring institutions and organizations is an indication of their values as fathers, then they are oblivious to the true impact of organizations and institutions on families. Such men are oblivious to this impact because they seldom are in a position of mothering or nurturing, attending to, and caring long enough to know how the pertinent activities within the family are compromised and jeopardized by the demanding insensitivity and structured, ends-oriented nature of the relations between institutions, organizations, and those who work in them and who are affected by them.

Ruddick argues that if men really understood caregiving, nurturing, and the mental and emotional constancy of the responsibilities for attending to others as well as themselves, then they would revolutionize the institutional, organizational, and corporate worlds. Otherwise they continue to sustain, perpetuate and benefit from the oppressive institutions of motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood by not taking upon themselves the responsibilities to nurture, care, and attend to others. In fact, by necessity, men must become experienced in maternal practice if the institutions of our society are to become a truly supportive social, political, economical, and psychological fabric for the family.

The major contribution of these examples is that they enable us to see aspects of family life that we have not been able to see and conceptualize in other perspectives about family phenomena. Elise Boulding (1983) has pointed out that traditional views of the family that embrace the "doctrines of separate spheres" obscure much of what takes place in the everyday occurrences of home and family. "When men define family interaction processes as the women's domain, as they generally do, they demonstrate that they can be present in the household without learning from these processes," (p. 279).

From this perspective, men can be present in the family realm and not perceive accurately what is going on around them. The critical point is that men (or for that matter, women and children) can be within the family realm and still not see and understand the family and non-family realms with a family realm orientation. Just as Rich's analysis highlights what can be seen and understood about motherhood by differentiating the experience of motherhood from the institution of motherhood, the feminist critique of the family informs our understanding of family phenomena by suggesting the merits of our exploring the family in a similar way. That is, given the research traditions of the family that defines family as an institution, other views can be seen and explored about family phenomena when we begin our inquiry in the family realm.

SOME FUTURE POSSIBILITIES
(Said differently: Some dreamers' dreams.)

At the current time, it is not possible to guess what the future holds for familial explanations and how much the family field will become a recognized primary discipline. But some of us suspect it may be a much richer vein than anyone has previously anticipated. For science, the future is facing many new opportunities for social, political, economical, and psychological development. If more family phenomena are studied and explored as they are now, a much more valuable contribution to the human sciences can be expected.

A final word: Having a family, helping them, and being the family as a unit of society are in the new economic and societal structures that have been developed since the eighteenth century. This is particularly true of the family as a social institution and the family realm as a segregated area of social life. The family realm has been the focus of increased interest and concern. But the family realm has not been the focus of increased economic effort and activity. In the new kind of family, there is an increased need for new and better solutions to social, political, economical, and psychological problems.
anticipated or articulated. It is possible that it may become one of the major social science areas. It is also possible that it may be much more effective than we have realized in helping us understand some of the most serious problems that are being faced by world leaders. It also may help us much more than we have realized in finding better strategies for managing and dealing with these problems.

One way it may become more helpful than we currently think possible is that it may help us realize that seeing our problems from a familial point of view may help us deal with them more effectively than we have been able to when we have looked at them only from our individualistic, hedonistic, public-realm-oriented points of view. Also, to expand this point slightly more, it may be that the familial perspective, rather than the economic and individual perspectives that prevail in most social science thought, will turn out in the long run to be much more consistent with the fundamental cords of the human experience. It may be that the familial point of view will sensitize us and highlight to us ways to attain some of humankind’s most desired goals such as peace, a widely shared prosperity, optimal care, nurturance for all members of society, and loving each other. It also may help us more fully understand the fragile nature of a caring and nurturing society.

Faced with the immediate pressures of the last two decades of the twentieth century, it is important to think about possibilities that may be more attainable if we have a familological point of view that is widely accepted as an important intellectual approach. The familological point of view may be of enormous value in helping us cope with our current problems such as alienation, substance abuse, violence, lack of performance in the public sphere, lack of perspective, educational problems, low productivity, and absenteeism on the job. The familial point of view also may help us appreciate and integrate artistic experience, the humanities, and literature much more effectively than we have with only the public sphere disciplines.

Thus, a discipline that has a family-realm perspective may have a very promising future. It is possible that as scholars mine this intellectual approach, with its unique perspective and epistemology, they will develop insights, that will be comparable in value in the coming decades to earlier insights such as psychoanalysis tapping into the unconscious and economics tapping into the effects of the production and exchange of goods and services. Thus, fifty or seventy five years from now, it may be that family science, familology, or famology, or whatever it will be called, will be one of the most valuable basic perspectives from which to analyze human conditions; and the insights that will develop by taking this perspective will be of enormous value in helping manage human problems and attain human potential.

A few colleagues who have reacted to this paper have wondered why we think it is helpful to spend so much time fussing with these epistemological issues. One reviewer suggested that the paper belongs in a philosophy journal rather than family journal. We believe there are several reasons it is helpful for family scholars to fuss with these kinds of issues. Some of our reasons are that a more clear understanding of our epistemological foundations, and a more clear awareness of the primary or basic nature of familology may have several immediate and beneficial results. We believe that the family realm has a much greater effect on the human condition than most people realize, and if more of us were to realize that our field is a basic discipline that deals with a profoundly important part of the human condition, it may help usher in a period of unusual creativity in the next several decades. The twentieth century has been primarily a century of psychological explanations of what people believe is important in the human sphere; but if more family scholars were to better realize the potential of familial explanations, the twenty first century might become a century of familological explanations; and in the
FOOTNOTES

1. The NCFR Task Force on the Development of the Family Discipline deliberated for two years about the nature of the field and the name that should be used for the field. A series of position papers, suggestions, and debates were published in the Task Force’s Newsletter, which was published with the NCFR Reports in 1984 and 1985. The dialogue included a paper by Davis (1984) in which he developed a typology of disciplines. Davis differentiated between primary, secondary, and tertiary fields. A primary discipline is one that develops original explanations. A secondary field is one that integrates the primary explanations from several fields and develops new applications. After this typology was published, the majority of those involved in the discussions concluded that the family field is a secondary area, and recommended that the term family science be used as the name for the field. A minority of the group believed that enough primary explanations had been developed and potentially could be developed that a primary field was emerging within the larger secondary field. Over the next several years, the group who believe there is an emerging primary discipline encountered others who shared their view (Groves, 1944; Kantor & Lehr, 1975), and they began clarifying the conceptual uniqueness (Beutler et al., 1987) in the primary field. This paper is an extension of this effort, and is an attempt to help describe the epistemological foundations of the field. In the meantime, the terminology for the field has continued to be confusing. Fortunately, a new term was created in April, 1988 that seems to satisfy the group who are convinced that a new primary discipline had emerged within the larger secondary field. The term was first coined by Kingsley Davis in some correspondence with Wesley Burr, and it is familology. Thus, in our view, familology is an emerging primary discipline that has developed in the last four decades within the larger secondary field of family science --- or as some prefer to call it family studies.

2. Some family therapists (Bogdan, 1987) view family therapy as a subset of psychotherapy. This is a psychological perspective that is relatively different from the familial perspective developed by scholars such as Ackerman, Haley, Watzlawick, Minuchin, etc.

3. These departments have many different names. Burr and Leigh (1982) identified over twenty five different names that were being used at that time. Some of them are human development and family relationships, family environment, family ecology, family studies, child and family studies, family and human development, child and family development, etc.

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