

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT STATISTICS: BASIC CONCEPTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

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Why do we want statistics about women? In this paper I consider three main reasons. The first is the physical difference in that women bear children and to this extent have a different function from men. The second, which is deeply rooted in cultural tradition, is that women lead different lives from men: if we ignore their contribution we can only half understand what is happening in society. The third is that women and women's lives are not just different but unequal. Inequality is concerned with exploitation, power, influence and living standards; with giving too much and receiving too little. If the human injustice which this implies is to be remedied then we must be able to identify its incidence.

Information about women has a comparatively short history. Governments usually collect statistics to help administer policies more effectively. For example, raising taxes and armies has long been a function of government and the origin of statistical data based on these needs is thus very old.<sup>1</sup> Originally it meant information about grown men who could fight or had sufficient wealth to pay taxes. For this purpose, women were not interesting. Indeed, it is often the case that policies have been concerned more with men than women (who have been regarded as dependants of men) and the statistics that can be derived from administering them, not surprisingly, yield more information about men than women.

However, as government became more sophisticated, more knowledge was sought about demographic changes and the way society functions. This meant knowing something about women and children. Thus, the second Registrar General, George Graham, writing in 1849, said, "Marriage, births and deaths produce important effects; are influenced by the prosperity of the country; and express the hopes, fears, enjoyments and sufferings of the people." He went on to emphasise the importance of counting these events, in order to "correct the fallacy of judging of the state of a great and various kingdom either from the field of one man's experience -- from his own parish or county -- or from vague, accidental, prejudiced representations."

From this time onwards, the Census of Population, which was first carried out in 1801, became increasingly complex and one of the first comprehensive sources of statistics about women. A further major source, which became available at the beginning of the century, was the 1911 Fertility Census. This was a mine of information about the extent to which women's

lives were taken up with childbearing and childrearing: it showed, for example, that although the average number of children was high, there were nonetheless large numbers of women who lived their lives either mainly or entirely child-free. Another significant development in information was the analysis in the Census of women's as well as men's occupations. The recognition, particularly in the 1931 Census, that women could be employed to work independently in the "higher" occupations and professions, however few they might be, at least made it possible to pinpoint the extent of inequality.

Despite the steadily increasing flow of information, particularly since the second world war, there are still whole areas of life which are male-dominated and where, for example, classifications are related to men's rather than women's activities or where critical statistics about status, opportunity and other constraints are not available. Moreover, the assumption that women are dependent on men and therefore don't matter has led to surprising gaps in knowledge about how women live both at any one point of time or over the life cycle. In some cases data are not collected and in others they are not processed or published.<sup>2</sup> For example, the Census of Population schedules contain far more information than is revealed in the official reports and their further analysis has shown that women in fact have held a more important position in society than is suggested by those published reports.<sup>3</sup>

Society is changing, politically, economically and socially. Policies concerned with, for example, employment, incomes, taxation, social security, Child Benefit and education must increasingly take account of their impact on women's attitudes and lives. The latter part of this paper looks in rather more detail at some of the gaps in information arising from assumptions about the unimportance of women in society. However, possibly more dangerous because less obvious, are some of the assumptions about reality underlying many of the concepts used in collecting and analysing existing statistics. The first part of this paper looks in particular at the Census of Population. I concentrate especially on the Census because the concepts and assumptions which it contains are carried over and set the example for many other important surveys, such as the Family Expenditure Survey and the General Household Survey. Also, as the information is derived from a survey, it need not suffer the same problems of deriving statistics about women from administrative sources where procedures are so often designed with men in mind.

#### The Census of Population

The first Census was held in 1801. Many of the concepts and assumptions

about family life which were developed in these early censuses prevail today. The household was dominated by the male. His wife was his property and so were the children. He was the head of household, head of family, chief economic supporter. His wife derived her social status from him: she was the housewife and economically inactive. This was how the law, the Church and the middle class saw society. The social reality, at least for the middle class, is described in Mrs. Beeton's "Book of Household Management," first published in 1861. I have the 1909 edition, backed in leather and containing over 2,000 closely packed pages, which was given to my mother as a wedding present. I quote from it at some length because it epitomises the kind of attitudes towards and assumptions about women which I suspect, consciously or unconsciously, still underlie the compilation of the Census of Population and other surveys carried out by government.

The first chapter opens with a quotation from the Book of Proverbs and then goes on to set out the functions of the mistress of the house which "resemble those of the general of an army or the manager of a great business concern. Her spirit will be seen in the whole establishment, and if she performs her duties well and intelligently, her domestics will usually follow in her path. Among the gifts that nature has bestowed on women, few rank higher than the capacity for domestic management, for the exercise of this faculty constantly affects the happiness, comfort and prosperity of the whole family." In this opinion, writes Mrs. Beeton, we are borne out by the author of "The Vicar of Wakefield" who says, "The modest virgin, the prudent wife, and the careful matron are much more serviceable in life than petticoated philosophers, blustering heroines, or virago queens." This first chapter then goes on to describe very fully the functions of the housewife, including marketing, household expenditure accounts, engaging and treatment of servants, etc. There is also a table (see Appendix A) of suggested wages and the complement of servants suitable to different levels of household income. Nothing is said about children, except to see that they "receive proper care and are clean and comfortable." The kind of house management job which she describes would certainly qualify in any impartial job evaluation as skilled or at least semi-skilled. In a recent article in "The Observer" entitled, "The Profits in Womanly Virtue," Professor Galbraith has somewhat facetiously described the functions of the middle- and upper-income wife today in not very dissimilar terms.<sup>4</sup>

Though only a tiny proportion of households had them, domestic servants

still figured as a separate category in the tabulations of the 1966 Census: they disappeared from the analyses in 1971. But the assumptions underlying many of the other important classifications in the 1971 Census (and other surveys) still seem to stem from Mrs. Beeton's generation. In the succeeding paragraphs I examine some of the more important ones, such as head of household, economic activity and social class, and suggest modifications. In less than a year's time the next Census of Population will be taken, and although the form itself has been finalised and cannot be altered, the Census Office is now preparing the ground for the tabulations and -- hopefully -- will take account of proposals from this seminar.

### The Household

The Census is a household survey designed to identify the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals living in the household. On the surface the concept seems fairly straightforward, with some form of common housekeeping being the basis of most definitions. However, various assumptions are usually built into them. Above all there is a tendency to assume that the household is an entity in itself and to forget that it is made up of individuals of varying characteristics, each with different roles, making and receiving different contributions. We know very little about these contributions, but there is good reason to suspect that the subordinate position of women has its roots in the family and household. I return to this theme later in my paper.

### Head of Household

The form for the 1981 test census carried out last year provides in the first column for head or joint head of household: the second and subsequent columns ask for relationship to the person cited in the first column and specifies husband or wife, son or daughter, etc. What is meant by head of household? It is presumably the person who bosses or controls the other members. In Mrs. Beeton's day the man in the house was head and general manager of the household and his wife was the housewife and managing director under his overall authority: the terms were complementary and described a function rather than an activity. Although bearing children (which now takes up a much shorter span than it used to) is specific to women, house management is not predetermined by sex. Mrs. Beeton obviously had women in mind but she correctly described the function of household management without reference to mothers and children. Today the functions of head and housewife are increasingly shared between the partners in a marriage: they are joint heads and house managers. Likewise, in the many households composed of young unmarried

adults, responsibilities are shared. There is no one decision-maker with ultimate power over the other members. In these situations, head of household is a meaningless term.

In the 1981 Census form, head of household is carefully not defined. I have been told by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys that whoever fills in this first column will be classified as head regardless of sex. This seems a cowardly way of avoiding an issue. I would like to think that it is a device designed to try to placate a feminist lobby strong enough to succeed in jeopardising the Census. Statisticians at the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys will say that the term is merely a statistical concept used as a classifier. If in fact it is used solely at the collecting stage as a tool for establishing the structure of the household from the relationship of its members, then there can be no objection to it. It should not, however, be used for analysis because it has no reliable meaning in reality.

The real difficulties arise at the tabulation stage. For example, if the concept of joint head is adopted, then it follows that there will be more heads than households. On the other hand, the Census Office intention of picking, as heads of households, only those who happen to fill in the first column on the 1981 Census form must result in a hotch potch of males and females, with, probably, the more highly educated feminists being over-represented in that first column. In practice it might not matter whether a man or a woman happened to qualify as head if there were no great difference or possibly a close correlation between the socio-demographic characteristics of the two sexes. But this is of course not true: in particular, among the classifiers most commonly used -- age, occupation and qualifications -- there is often a considerable difference.

The bluntly sexist approach used in the General Household Survey is at least honest and lets us know where we stand. It is related to a property qualification and says quite clearly that, where there is a husband, the head of household is male:-

The head of the household is a member of the household and (in order of precedence) either the husband of the person, or the person, who:-

- a) owns the household accommodation, or
  - b) is legally responsible for the rent of the accommodation, or
  - c) has the accommodation as an emolument or perquisite, or
  - d) has the accommodation by virtue of some relationship to the owner
- in cases where the owner or lessee is not a member of the household.

When two members of different sex have equal claim, the male is taken as head of household. When two members of the same sex have equal claim, the elder is taken as head of household.<sup>5</sup>

The problem, which the Census and other surveys are trying to solve, is to deduce the characteristics of a household through those of one particular individual within it. However well this may have worked in the past, it does not work well any longer. The roles of the different members and the nature of the household itself are changing. Tabulations thus need to relate to different individuals depending on the purpose of the analysis. For example, there are now far more households with both husbands and wives in paid employment and many more households containing elderly single women or single women with children. Their characteristics are very different from other household types and for many analyses they need to be separately identified. The General Household Survey recognises this problem in its annual report and, as soon as the concept of head of household occurs in the analysis, there is a table (Table 2.8, 1977 GHS) showing that three-quarters of heads are male and one-quarter female: of that one-quarter, over a half are aged 60 or over and 14 per cent have a child under 16. We can thus use this knowledge to infer something about the limitation of the tabulations where the concept is used.

In a muddled kind of way the 1971 Census was already aware that there was a problem. In most cases, in its analyses, it quietly dropped or modified the concept of head of household. Thus in the household composition tables, where the purpose is to analyse family characteristics, e.g. family type by age of head, dependent children and type of household (Census 1971, Summary Tables, Table 31), head means head of family, not head of household, and it is defined quite specifically as being the husband in a married couple, or the lone mother or father in families with no married couple. The tables then show a three-way subdivision between married couple families, lone parent mothers and lone parent fathers. I recommend that the 1981 Census tabulations should be extended to recognise that married couple families, which by definition contain wives as well as husbands, have both female and male heads and that two sets of tabulations should be compiled -- one related to wives in married couple families plus lone parent mothers and the other to husbands in married couple families plus lone parent fathers. It would then be possible to compare sets of tables for male and female heads separately, showing age, economic activity, hours worked, etc. of head by number of children, type of household, etc.

Similarly, the 1971 Census contains many analyses based on the concept of chief economic supporter. This is a dishonest term because it is not what

common sense would tell us it is. I quote the full definition given in the 1971 Census analysis:-

The CHIEF ECONOMIC SUPPORTER of a household (C.E.S. for short) was selected from those members of the household who were 15 years of age and over and were either the head of the household or related to the head, by applying the following rules:-

Rule (1) Employment status is considered first. Those in full-time employment (that is who worked more than 30 hours in the week before the Census -- see definition of 'hours worked' on page xxiv) or out of employment were selected before those in part-time employment, who in turn were selected before those retired, who in turn were selected before any others.

Rule (2) Among those selected by Rule (1) above, position in family was considered next, married men or widowed or divorced persons in families being considered before other members of families or persons not in families.

Rule (3) Among those selected by Rules (1) and (2), sex was considered next, males being selected before females.

Rule (4) Among those selected by Rules (1), (2) and (3), age was considered next, older persons being selected before younger.

If these rules finally select two or more persons, the person whose name appears first on the census schedule was selected as C.E.S.<sup>6</sup>

So even if a man is unemployed and his wife working either full-time or part-time, he is the chief economic supporter. If she earns twice as much as he does, he is the chief economic supporter. In most circumstances, the husband in the family does earn more than his wife and in this sense he is the chief economic supporter. But the assumption is less likely to be true than it used to be and the reality of present-day life is that analyses of living standards of households based on the characteristics of one "economic supporter" are less likely to describe that family than in the past. Of far greater importance are the number of earners in the household and, where there are children, of the presence or absence of two parents. It is these factors which market researchers, who are one of the principal customers for tabulations based on the classification, must take increasingly into account.

My concluding recommendation to the Census Office on the use of the terms, head of household, head of family and chief economic supporter, is to forget them and try to replace them with terms and table headings which correctly

describe what is intended (such as wife, husband, mother, father, etc.). The task may not be easy and it needs a lot of thought, but it is unsatisfactory to continue to use terms which do not reflect what common sense would suggest they mean. Not only do more women today consider themselves to be joint heads of household, joint heads of family and joint economic supporters, but the reality is such that their changing roles mean that they have more impact on the nature of the households in which they live. Households cannot today be defined in terms of men alone and, depending on the purpose of its analyses, the 1981 Census must expect to tabulate many more of its results for the two sexes separately (see Appendix B).

### Economic Activity

After head of household at the beginning of the 1981 Census form, the next contentious set of questions is headed, "Whether working, retired, housewife, etc. last week." Being a housewife is quite clearly not being "in a job," whilst being on strike is. This group, and its conventional analysis in the Census and other surveys, contains a bundle of assumptions, some of which are functions and others activities, which are dangerously misleading and unrelated to reality. The purpose of the section should be to identify different types of economic activity, and the basic distinction is between paid and unpaid activities. Those who are in a paid job or seeking paid work, or temporarily away from it because of sickness, holiday or strike are all involved in paid economic activities. Those, such as parents looking after children and people keeping house, are, as I argue later in this paper, economically active in unpaid jobs. The retired live off capital earned in previous paid activities and students are society's investment for the future.

So what about the "housewife"?<sup>7</sup> Today, in common usage, the concept has the wrong flavour and should be dropped. As I have said earlier in this paper, it is in any case a function related to household management and not an activity.

I do not pretend that analysis of this group of economic activities is easy, particularly if an exclusive classification is required. Most people fall into more than one category if only because every household involves some degree of housekeeping. But there is already confusion in different surveys as to whether there can be more than one "housewife" per household and OPCS needs to put some deep thought into what it is trying to do and how best to achieve it. Maybe the answer lies in classifying according to which activity clearly takes most time and splitting it only where the subdivision

is less obvious, e.g. parents working in paid part-time jobs and looking after children or keeping house would be classified under both activities.

### Social Class

The questions on economic activity are followed in the Census form by a set of questions on employment and occupation. I am not going to discuss either the questions or their tabulation in any detail because this is the subject of another paper for this seminar, but it is worth noting that the jobs specified as examples of job titles all relate to what are at present predominantly male occupations.

I do, however, want to discuss social class. The concept has been variously interpreted. Social Trends, in its sixth issue, contained an article on it and warned that it is "a very imprecise concept which means different things to different people." Sociologists will take issue with me but I interpret it to mean the life style of a person, particularly in the sense of bestowing normative attributes such as "life chances." There is no one independent variable which determines what this shall be; many components combine to compose it. But the most powerful are family background and income and wealth. Family background determines the genes a person inherits and the childhood environment which shapes values and aspirations. Income and wealth to a large degree determine the extent to which these aptitudes and aspirations can be implemented. The problem is to find a social indicator which can represent these factors. Traditionally occupation has been regarded as appropriate.<sup>8</sup> For men, occupation stems from much of what an individual derives from his family -- health, wealth, education, friends -- and it correlates well with other aspects which make up the quality of life, such as earnings, health, housing, education and leisure interests.

But what about women? Is occupation a good indicator? The difficulty is that the occupations which a woman follows tend not to relate closely to her education, training and background. If she is in a paid job and has no children, the prejudices of society may confine her to an occupational level which, other things being equal, is below what should be her earning capacity. If she is married and has children, she may well work part-time or in an occupation well below her potential so as to combine the dual functions of earning

money and looking after the family. Occupation is even less of an indicator of social class for single parents, many of whom are dependent on Supplementary Benefit and have perhaps never had a job. I suggest that those who propose basing a woman's social class on her occupation do some research on the correlation between it and other indicators of the quality of life, such as health, education, housing, etc., and see just how far it does not work. To decry this approach, however, is not to deny that there is a very real and important problem and one which needs serious study.

If occupation is not a suitable indicator of social class for a woman, it does not follow that, if she is married, the occupation of her husband is a satisfactory alternative. Moreover, a distinction needs to be made between a woman's own social class and that of the household in which she lives. In attempting to describe the household, we are once again up against the problem of using the characteristics of one individual to represent what is in fact a composite entity comprising different people, each with separate characteristics. Although the choice of one person can be appropriate in some circumstances, it is increasingly less so in general as individuals within households have a greater influence on its composite style of living. For example, fertility and family size do not correlate well with social class based on husband's occupation. This could be because these variables are less likely to conform to a ranking process

or it could also be because the number of children a family has is determined more by the wife's social class than by her husband's.

The article in Social Trends contains the following table of social class based on occupation:-

Table 1.1 Social Class composition of people aged 15 and over, 1971, for various groups

	Great Britain						Percentages and thousands		
	Men only			Women only			Men and women aged 15 and over		
	Economically active	Retired	Economically active and retired	Married		Single, widowed and divorced	Own occupation of economically active and retired	Head of family	Chief economic supporter
				Own <sup>1</sup> class	Husband's <sup>2</sup> class				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	
Percentage in each Social Class:									
I	5.2	3.0	5.0	0.9	5.3	1.2	3.6	5.1	4.9
II	17.8	19.1	18.0	16.2	19.8	19.2	17.8	20.0	19.8
III N	11.9	12.1	11.9	35.4	11.3	41.2	21.1	11.9	14.2
III M	39.0	34.2	38.5	10.0	39.0	10.8	28.4	37.9	34.8
IV	17.8	20.3	18.1	28.2	17.5	22.7	20.9	18.0	18.6
V	8.3	11.2	8.6	9.4	7.1	4.9	8.2	7.3	7.7
Total classified ( = 100%)	15,368	1,911	17,279	5,697	12,365	3,834	26,809	13,150	15,907
Total* unclassified	516	323	809	1,101	471	1,549	3,438	694	1,374
Total in Great Britain	15,884	2,304	18,180	6,797	12,835	5,383	30,367	13,844	17,281

<sup>1</sup> Economically active and retired married women by own sex of class.

<sup>2</sup> Married women enumerated with their husband by the social class of husband including both the economically active and retired, and those economically active.

<sup>3</sup> Economically active and retired single, widowed, and divorced women.

<sup>4</sup> Unclassified persons, those for whom no occupation or inadequate information was reported in the Census. A large proportion of this group were out of work, retired, or inactive at Census date.

Source: Census of Population, 1971, Economic Activity Tables.

The interesting feature of this table is the concentration of women, when classified by their own occupations, in non-manual Social Class III. This may partly reflect their downgrading in jobs below their capacity but it also raises doubts about the homogeneity of the group and the validity of the assumptions underlying the classification. The class lumps together skilled non-manual occupations and jobs of an increasingly rationalised and deskilled nature, requiring little training and attracting low pay. The attitudes of mind which this latter type of work engenders may well be very different and more "working" class in nature than has been traditionally associated with white-collar jobs. If the social class grouping and the occupational classification on which it is based is to be useful in analysing the structure of society, then it must conform with reality: this is an area to which the Government Statistical Service might give some serious thought.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Life Cycle

In the remaining part of this paper I want to concentrate less on the concepts and assumptions of existing statistics and more on the gaps in our knowledge about women arising from assumptions about their unimportance.

The first of these is the absence of information about what happens over the life cycle. Though childbearing itself in fact now takes up a very short span of a woman's life, the rearing of children has traditionally been associated with a woman's role and her activity patterns over the life cycle have thus been more complex than those of men. If we are to understand women's lives and problems, it is important to understand more about these life cycle patterns and the impact of child bearing, particularly on income and expenditure and on employment. As Jan Pahl says in her paper on "Patterns of Money Management within Marriage," "It would be particularly revealing to be able to look in detail at times when patterns of allocation [of financial resources] might be expected to change, for example, in households where the wife is leaving or returning to paid employment, where teenage children are beginning to contribute financially, or where the chief earner is about to retire from paid work."<sup>10</sup> In the United States, the Institute of Social Research at Ann Arbor instituted in 1968 a longitudinal study of 5,000 families and the regular follow-up of the original panel has yielded invaluable information, not just about family living, but about the position of women within families. We have no comparable study in this country but we do have three longitudinal studies related to children born in 1946, 1958 and 1970. Those born in 1946 (the National Survey of Health and Development) are now in their 30s and contact

has been maintained with a selected number. Studies have been carried out, not only of medical history, but of education, earnings, employment, marriage, etc. The most recent sweeps of the cohort were in 1972/73 and 1977/78 and further sweeps are planned. The study is now under the aegis of the Department of Community Health at the University of Bristol and funds have been made available for contact to be maintained over the next seven years. It is most important that attention should continue to be given to analyses of the changing pattern of activities and fortunes of the women in the cohort.<sup>11</sup> Those identified in the 1958 cohort (the National Child Development Study) are now aged 22. The National Children's Bureau has done follow-up studies in 1965, 1969 and 1974 and is at present carrying out a feasibility study into the continuation of further work on the cohort into early adult life. As with the 1946 cohort, it is important that adequate money should be available for analysing the information and for continued contact with the cohort. It might also be feasible, from existing material about the families, to undertake now a study of the activity patterns of the mothers of the children in the cohort.

The OPCS have also established a longitudinal study based on a one per cent sample taken from the 1971 Census. The cohort is linked to subsequent demographic events derived from registration of births and deaths and it will also be picked up in the 1981 Census. Unfortunately, plans for the next Census do not include date of marriage so a key event in family life will be missing.

#### Living Standards

Not only do we know little about women's lives as a whole over the life cycle and how these lives are changing between different generations, but we have very little precise information about the roles of women within the family. In discussing the concept of the household, this paper has already noted the problems which can arise from assuming that it is an entity in itself rather than a composite group of different individuals. Professor Galbraith, in his article in The Observer, also drew attention to what might appear almost as a tacit conspiracy to conceal the conflicts of choice between husband and wife by treating the concept of the household as though it were an individual.<sup>12</sup>

This concealment applies particularly to living standards where, in the absence of knowledge about family relationships, there is a tendency to equate the separate individuals with the households in which they live. But sharing

of income and other benefits cannot be taken for granted. Poverty studies based on households, for example, will inevitably be misleading. All they can do is to show that, if the income coming into a household were shared equitably amongst its members, there would not be enough to keep each household member out of poverty. They cannot identify poverty amongst individuals, such as elderly relatives, children or housewives, in households with seemingly adequate incomes.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it seems likely that, when money is short, it is the wife who makes the sacrifice. Amongst married women who are not working, as Pauline Hunt has described in her 1976 study of cash transactions and household tasks amongst working class families in an industrial and mining village in North Staffordshire, "The houseworker's attitude to money is . . . directly related to her function. It goes against the grain for an efficient, cost-conscious housekeeper to lash out on herself. Furthermore, since she buys the family's daily needs, the money in her purse is likely to be a general resource from which it is hard, both practically and mentally, to separate money for herself. By contrast, excused from the task of shopping for the family, the money in the breadwinner's pocket is likely to be his own, for his own use."<sup>14</sup> Other studies have indicated that when married women are working they devote a higher proportion of their earnings to household expenditure, particularly for their children, than do married men.<sup>15</sup>

Information is much needed on income distribution and housekeeping arrangements within the household. Control of cash is a crucial factor in domestic power relationships. When a married woman is not working, how often is the man's whole wage packet passed over to her and how much is passed back to him as pocket money? How often does she receive part only as a housekeeping allowance? (The word "allowance" itself is significant, implying the bestowal of a favour.) How many couples really share the household income? Who really decides how it is spent? What happens when both couples are breadwinners? Answers to these questions would help towards a better understanding of how families react to inflation, taxation, wage increases and employment opportunities. For example, as Richard Layard, David Piachaud and Mark Stewart have shown in their evidence to the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, many families depend on two earners to keep them out of poverty.<sup>15</sup> At higher levels of income, wives' earnings fulfil a different function and can be regarded as meeting different needs. For example, in households with seemingly adequate total incomes, housekeeping allowances, particularly in times of rapid inflation, may well be inadequate

and mothers see the possibility of earning money as a means of sustaining themselves and their children. In such a situation Child Benefit is particularly important. Moreover, one might well ask why, if the wife usually does the housekeeping, Supplementary Benefit should not also be paid direct to her rather than her husband.

Fifty years ago, in her book on Family Allowances, Eleanor Rathbone wrote, "I doubt whether there is any subject in the world of equal importance that has received so little serious and articulate consideration as the economic status of the family -- of its members in relation to each other and to the other units of which the community is made up."<sup>17</sup> The situation is not much changed today. Statistics are urgently needed to demonstrate the facts about financial arrangements within the household and the family. Some basic information is already collected for the FES. The Survey contains a household schedule, completed by the interviewer, covering information about regularly recurring expenditure such as payments for housing, gas, electricity, telephone, insurance, credit transactions and purchase of motor vehicles, but each household member over the age of 16 is also required to keep a record of other expenditure during 14 consecutive days. An analysis of these individual expenditure diaries is overdue. Though this analysis would be complicated by the many items which household members buy for each other (and possibly for relatives and others living outside), it could begin to throw some light on who buys what in the household. In a study on family care which I am at present doing for the EOC, two relevant questions have been included, one on the way mothers view Child Benefit and the other on housekeeping arrangements, particularly the coverage of housekeeping allowances. Although this is a research study, the borderline between statistics and research information is a fine one and much basic data, such as housekeeping arrangements, could be derived from existing government surveys.

#### The Family Economy

Income and expenditure, defined in terms of hard cash, are important because money brings power. Standards of living in a family, however, also depend on those less tangible benefits which spring from the mutual services which its members render to each other. Indeed, living standards for the country as a whole depend not just on those transactions which happen formally in the market place but also on those which occur informally in the community. Women in particular play a very active and economically productive part in this informal non-market economy, both inside and outside the home. The value

of their unpaid work, however, is not included in the national accounts. For example, though the cost of the care of a child or an old person in an institution is included, a similar person cared for at home is not. In terms of human welfare, which form of caring has the greater value?

No one can pretend that valuing household production is easy. For example, when does production become consumption? Are eating and sleeping productive activities? What is the distinction between work and leisure? Into which category does gardening fall? If productive non-market activities are defined as those which may be regarded as being, at least in principle, substitutable for the purchase of goods and services in the market, should only those goods and services be included for which there is a market substitute? Should the market substitute be considered only if it is a real alternative? Many activities are particularistic, performed by a particular person for a particular person in a particular way. There are many problems not only in categorising but also in valuing activities. Should the basis be opportunity cost, such as hourly average earnings (less taxes?) for women in the economy as a whole, or some form of weighted average of market earnings for a mix of household activities? Of course there are problems but we must remember that those who pioneered the national accounts also had problems, and conventions had to be adopted as they will have to be in evaluating home production.<sup>18</sup>

The various estimates which have been made to value home production in developed countries range from 30-40 per cent of GNP. However, there is no general agreement on concepts and definitions and, until a concerted attempt at evaluation is made, women's unpaid contribution to standards of living will remain largely unappreciated. The very size of the estimates gives food for thought. To quote Professor Galbraith once again, "To keep these estimates out of the statistical totals is to keep the required toil within the sacred domain of the family and the soul. Being a moral thing, it carries its own reward."<sup>19</sup>

An understanding of time spent and the contribution made by family members in producing non-market goods and services for the household is of special importance to the development of family policy. Moreover, from the point of view of broader economic policy, more information is needed on the relationship between economic growth in the formal economy, which is largely measured by the national accounts, and the informal economy. Perhaps economists might make a more positive contribution to policy if they could broaden their

concept of economic growth and more fully appreciate some of the social and environmental forces which bear upon economic development. While the system of national accounts is self-balancing in an accounting sense, the dynamics of change come largely from outside the system.<sup>20</sup>

### Time Budgets

Estimates of the unpaid contribution of people to the informal or family economy need to be based on the amount of time spent in the various activities. The most satisfactory way of finding this out is to conduct time budget studies whereby each adult household member keeps a diary of his activities on a particular day. In 1965 twelve countries participated in an international time budget study: the UK did not participate. Apart from studies carried out by the BBC for audience research and the survey of the London Region which Willmott and Young undertook for their book on "The Symmetrical Family," there is no comprehensive information on time use available for this country. Jonathan Gershuny, at the University of Sussex Science Policy Research Unit, has recently been recoding the BBC surveys to classify activities according to the system adopted for the international study conducted in 1965: this work should provide the basic material for estimates of the value of the household contribution to the economy.

The situation, however, is changing and it is very important that reliable up-to-date information should be available. Time budget data of course provide basic material for social analysis of very many different kinds. They are already used in this country, though in rather piecemeal fashion, for leisure, transport and work studies. Collecting and processing the data is complex and costly and, although in some countries, such as the United States, time budget surveys are mainly conducted by private research institutes, in most countries they are carried out by the government statistical offices. This would seem the most suitable way to proceed in this country.

### Conclusions

This paper has ranged broadly over some of the concepts and assumptions and some of the gaps in government statistics about women. It has concentrated particularly on the Census of Population and other data derived from household surveys and has drawn attention to the dangers of trying to deduce household characteristics from the characteristics of one (usually male) individual. It has suggested that, because the concepts "head of household," "head of family," "chief economic supporter" and "housewife" do not relate to reality

in the way they did in the last century, they should no longer be used. It has suggested that more thought might be given to what is meant by social class of women and how it might be measured. The paper has stressed the dangers of assuming that "economically active" people are confined to those with paid jobs and recommends that more attention be paid to non-market economic production by the household and to the different roles and contributions of those individuals who form the household. It is also important to find out more about employment and financial arrangements within the household and the family, not only at one point of time but over the life cycle. Time budget surveys are needed to throw light both on role-sharing and on the extent and variety of economic activity of household members.

Many of the gaps in information are not so much in the collection of statistics as in their analysis. Very often the material is available but unappreciated and unanalysed. For example, there is within Inland Revenue -- possibly the most male chauvinist of all departments -- a wealth of information about wives' earnings and about dependants' allowances which could help to provide information on family finances. Millions of pounds are spent by the GSS, and OPCS in particular, in collecting social statistics but too little on their analysis. If public money is spent collecting statistics, then there is an obligation to make the results publicly available in a form which can be understood and used. If the GSS has not the staff to carry out analysis, then help should be given to outside bodies to do it.

As a final conclusion to the paper, it is appropriate to ask why so little attention has been given to statistics which could throw light on many areas of life relating to women who, after all, make up half the population of the country. The answer may lie in the structure of the Government Statistical Service itself. I attach, as Appendix C, detailed figures kindly supplied by the Central Statistical Office on the male/female balance in the various grades at 1 April 1980. They show the following approximate ratios of men to women:-

Assistant Statistician	1 : 1
Senior Assistant Statistician	3 : 2
Statistician	6 : 1
Chief Statistician	10 : 1
Under Secretary and above	20 : 1

The origins of this structure span the postwar years. A small part of the imbalance may be lower recruitment of women in the early years and greater

wastage of women in the two junior grades but it is by no means clear that these two factors are significant. Of much greater importance are the much higher direct recruitment of men rather than women to the rapidly expanding Statistician grade in the 1960s and the consistent over-promotion of men to the higher grades throughout the period.<sup>21</sup>

It is important that steps should be taken to rectify the situation, possibly by some overt discrimination in favour of women. The GSS, of course, only mirrors the situation elsewhere in the Civil Service and indeed in Parliament itself. If the position of women is not important to those who make and administer policies, then men's attitudes towards the world will continue to be reflected in the government statistics they demand.

Appendix A

16

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

employers far more than her wages and keep amount to, a bad one would be a poor bargain if she gave her services for nothing.

MEN SERVANTS.

House Steward . . . . .	From £60 to £100
Groom of the Chambers . . . . .	£45 .. £85
Valet . . . . .	£35 .. £50
Cook . . . . .	£100
Head Gardener (not in the house) . . . . .	£70 to £120
Under Gardener . . . . .	£40 .. £45
Butler . . . . .	£55 .. £90
Under Butler . . . . .	£35 .. £45
Footman . . . . .	£15 .. £40
Under Footman . . . . .	£13 .. £34
Second Footman . . . . .	£18 .. £34
Coachman . . . . .	£40 .. £70
Coachman (not in the house) . . . . .	£70 .. £90
Groom . . . . .	£25 .. £35
Under Groom . . . . .	£18 .. £25
Page . . . . .	£12 .. £18
Stable Boy . . . . .	£6 .. £12
Servants' Hall Boy . . . . .	£6 .. £12
Steward's Boy . . . . .	£8 .. £15
Head Gamekeeper . . . . .	£100 .. £150
Under Gamekeeper . . . . .	£50 .. £70

WOMEN SERVANTS.

Everything found, or an allowance for the same.

Housekeeper . . . . .	From £30 to £60
Lady's Maid . . . . .	£25 .. £40
Cook . . . . .	£20 .. £90
Kitchen Maid . . . . .	£16 .. £28
Scullery Maid . . . . .	£14 .. £18
Stairroom Maid . . . . .	£18 .. £28
Head Nurse . . . . .	£25 .. £35
Under Nurse . . . . .	£12 .. £18
Head Laundry Maid . . . . .	£22 .. £30
Under Laundry Maid . . . . .	£12 .. £20
Parlour Maid . . . . .	£20 .. £35
Head Housemaid . . . . .	£20 .. £28
Under Housemaid . . . . .	£14 .. £18
General Servant . . . . .	£12 .. £28

These are the wages that prevail in or near the Metropolis. The wages of under servants vary considerably according to locality; and they are often much lower in large establishments where young servants receive a good training than in middle class households.

Number of Servants suited to different incomes.—The following is a rough scale of servants suited to various incomes. It is, however, impossible to give any general rule in these matters. Whether in a household of moderate means such as our scales deal with, a man servant is required, will depend upon whether the house is situated in town or country, and if the possession of horses or a

Appendix B

I know nothing of the OPCS plans for tabulating the 1981 Census, and radical changes may be in progress. The Policy Studies Institute has given a good deal of thought to ways of analysing family data to give maximum flexibility for different purposes, including analysis by sex, and has proposed a system based on a concept of Minimal Household Units. The following note, written by one of its originators, Elizabeth Overton, summarises the main features of the system.

Minimal Household Units

Note by Elizabeth Overton

The Policy Studies Institute has recently developed a new approach to classifying households known as analysis by Minimal Household Units (MHUs). It was used for household projection purposes in a report for the Department of the Environment on household formation.<sup>1</sup> Its particular advantage is that it allows the characteristics of all adult individuals<sup>2</sup> to be examined within the context of the household in which they live. The MHU distinguishes all adults in the first instance by a simple life cycle classification which is then usually sub-divided into male and female:

- MHU 1 Any non-married adult
- MHU 2 A lone parent (with dependent children, by definition)
- MHU 5 A married couple (without dependent children)
- MHU 4 A married couple with one or more dependent children

These MHUs, rather than individuals or complete households, then become the units of analysis. For the DOE project, the individual and household information on GHS data tapes for two years was restructured in terms of MHUs. The new records then contained relevant information about the individual (and his/her spouse or dependent children, where relevant) and also about the household structure in terms of the number and type of other MHUs in the household.<sup>3</sup>

The new scheme overcomes several of the problems mentioned in the earlier part of Muriel Nissel's paper. Information about all women becomes directly available and can be analysed in the family context in which "life style" or "life chances" are determined. Women's income, for example, can be looked at by their marital status and also, for women in married couples, by the characteristics (including the income) of the husband. The system makes

it possible to avoid using one particular person to try to describe the characteristics of a household comprising a number of different individuals. In particular it makes unnecessary the use of such concepts as head of household, head of family and chief economic supporter.<sup>4</sup> Whether or not a woman is the chief earner, whether she owns the house or is responsible for the shopping, all become variables whose changes can be examined over time.

In the DOE project (and, it is to be hoped, for other policy-orientated studies in the future), the MHU scheme has proved particularly valuable in studying two groups of women previously neglected in government statistics: the non-married (MHU 1) and lone parents (MHU 2). Labour force and housing<sup>5</sup> statistics, for example, give men and women by marital status but not by whether or not they have dependent children, despite the fact that the economic activity and housing preferences of single or divorced lone mothers are likely to be quite different from childless single or divorced women. In most currently available household analyses, information about some of these women is even more inaccessible than information about married women; information about wives of married couples (deficient though it may be) is more plentiful than about single women or lone parents who live in households headed by another adult or by a married couple. In the new scheme, information is equally available for all women, as each forms a part of one type of MHU.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. "DOE/PSI Household Formation Research Project B: Report of the First Year's Work," by John Ermisch, David Eversley and Elizabeth Overton, to be published later this year by PSI.
2. Adult individuals -- individuals above the minimum school leaving age. The definition is intended to exclude 'dependent children' who have not yet had the opportunity to earn and so make their own economic decisions.
3. All GHS data could be included on such a record or alternatively other sub-sets of it could be chosen for different purposes.
4. E.g. the 1971 Household Composition Tables 28 and 46 which give "persons in families/households by age and sex and by sex and social class of family head/chief economic supporter."
5. Headship rates are broken down by age and marital status but not by whether or not there are dependent children.

Appendix C

Government Statistical Service

STATISTICIAN GROUP STAFF IN POST (INCLUDING STAFF ON SECONDMENT, ETC.)  
ANALYSIS BY GRADE AND AGE

	All grades		Open structure grades		Chief Statistician		Statistician		Senior Assistant Statistician		Assistant Statistician	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<u>Age in 1980</u>	<u>At 1 April 1980</u>											
60 or over	8	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	1	-	-	-
55-59	32	2	5	-	16	1	11	1	-	-	-	-
50-54	31	4	11	1	12	3	8	-	-	-	-	-
45-49	48	2	4	-	19	-	24	2	1	-	-	-
40-44	46	3	-	-	18	2	26	1	2	-	-	-
35-39	78	10	-	-	9	1	69	9	-	-	-	-
30-34	121	28	-	-	1	-	110	27	9	1	1	-
25-29	69	44	-	-	-	-	22	5	37	28	10	11
20-24	16	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	15	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>

Notes and References

1. For example, the Pharoahs carried out Censuses of Population and the Bible tells us that Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus wanted to know how many people there were in the Roman Empire so that he could tax them: our own kings compiled the Domesday Book for similar purposes.
2. For a discussion of the way "sexism" enters into the production of social statistics, see Ann and Robin Oakley, "Sexism in Official Statistics," in John Irvine, Ian Miles and Jeff Evans, eds., Demystifying Social Statistics (London: Pluto Press, 1979).
3. See, for example, W. A. Armstrong, "Stability and Change in an English County Town, a Social Study of York, 1801-1851," in The Census and Social Structure, ed. Richard Layton (London, 1978); J. Foster, "Nineteenth Century Towns, a Class Dimension," in The Study of Urban History, ed. H. J. Dyos (Leicester, 1968); and M. Anderson, "The Study of Family Structure," in Nineteenth Century Society, ed. E. A. Wrigley (London, 1972).
4. Galbraith, J. K., "The Profits in Womanly Virtue," The Observer, 13 April 1980.
5. General Household Survey Report, 1977: Appendix A, p. 146.
6. Census 1971: Summary Tables, 1 per cent sample, p. xxii.
7. The term is defined in Part I of the General Report on the 1971 Census for England and Wales, p. 24:

The housewife is defined as that member of the household, male or female, who is mainly responsible for the household shopping. There was no question on this subject in the census but the following rules were developed for selecting the housewife for each household.

- (a) If the head of the household is female she is the housewife.
- (b) If the head of the household is a married man, his wife is the housewife.
- (c) If the head of the household is a single, widowed or divorced man, or a married man whose wife is not shown as a member of the household then
  - (i) if there are no females aged 20 or over in the household the head himself is the housewife or
  - (ii) if there are females aged 20 or over in the household the eldest related member is housewife and if none are related then the eldest female is housewife.

These rules were developed in consultation with interested Government Departments, the Royal Statistical Society, the Market Research Society and the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising.

8. John H. Goldthorpe's recent study of Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) is concerned only with men. He uses a collapsed version of the Hope-Goldthorpe occupational scale which differentiates both occupational function and employment status, thus bringing together "occupations whose incumbents will typically share in broadly similar market and work situations which . . . we take as the two major components of class position."
9. Jackie West, "Women, Sex and Class," in Feminism and Materialism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

10. Jan Pahl, "Patterns of Money Management within Marriage" (to be published in The Sociological Review).
11. Dr. James W. B. Douglas (who originally devised the study) and Nicola Cherry are the authors of a recent study based on the cohort: see "Does Sex Make any Difference," Times Educational Supplement, 9 December 1977.
12. Galbraith, op. cit.
13. This problem has been discussed by many authors concerned with measuring poverty but see particularly Piegehen, Lansley and Smith, Poverty and Progress in Britain, 1955-1975 (Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 43-47.
14. Pauline Hunt, "Cash Transactions and Household Tasks," in The Sociological Review, 1978, Vol. 26, pp. 555-571.
15. For further discussion of the issue, see Jan Pahl, op. cit.
16. R. Layard, D. Piachaud and M. Stewart, The Causes of Poverty, Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth," Background Paper No. 5, pp. 87-90.
17. Quoted in Land and Parker, "Family Policy in the United Kingdom," in Kahn and Kamerman, eds., Family Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 366.
18. Kathryn Walker and Margaret Sanik, Cornell University, "The Potential for Measurement of Non-Market Household Production with Time Use Data," August 1978, IX World Congress of Sociology; John W. Kendrick, George Washington University and National Bureau of Economic Research, "Expanding Imputed Values in the National Income and Production Accounts," International Association for Research into Income and Wealth, 1977; also papers by Nordhaus and Tobin, Richard and Nancy Ruggles in Milton Moss, The Measurement of Economic and Social Performance (Studies in Income and Wealth, Vol. 58, New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1973); Net National Welfare Measurement Committee: Economic Council of Japan; Oli Hawrylyshyn, "The Value of Household Services: A Survey of Empirical Estimates," in Review of Income and Wealth.
19. Galbraith, op. cit.
20. Christopher T. Saunders, University of Sussex, "The feasibility of welfare-orientated measures to supplement the national accounts and balances," IN Statistical Commission, February 1976, E/CN, 3/477, p. 9.
21. Interestingly, the staffing of the Social Survey Division of the OPCS is very different:-

Social Survey Officers	Men	Women
Assistant Survey (and EO's)	25	31
Survey (and HEO's)	9	20
Seniors (and SEO's)	7	8
Principals	5	9
Chiefs and above	3	2

These figures show that disproportionate numbers of women are recruited at the junior (and, compared with the GSS, less prestigious) level. Many of these women seem to make their way to the top, and their work is now being reflected in some of the imaginative reports, including that on the GHS, which is now being published by the Division.