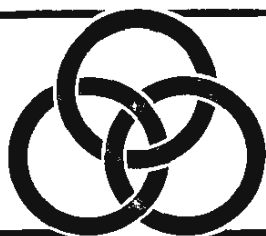


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# Task Force For The Development Of A Family Discipline

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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 1984

## Task Force Activities Report By Wes Burr

About 50 people attended the "open meeting" of the Task Force held October 18th in San Francisco. There was enough consensus among the group that a discipline is emerging. A formal and unanimous vote was taken declaring this belief. The discussion then turned to the tasks that should be addressed to help the field mature. The result was that five "Task Groups" were organized to deal with specific needs. These task groups are:

**Task Group No. 1: Alternative Careers In the Field:** This task group will develop strategies for identifying new career opportunities for family professionals. Special attention will be given to possibilities in business, industry and governmental possibilities. The group will assemble and publicize what is being done in family programs to develop these opportunities, and coordinate additional efforts. This group will be chaired by **Barbara Vance**, Department of Family Sciences, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84604.

**Task Group No. 2: Organizational Issues:** This task group will identify issues and proposals about organizational, political, and interdisciplinary concerns. The Orthner Commission in NCFR will be bringing recommendations to the NCFR board of directors soon, and this task group will then work within the resulting structure and policies to find the best ways to develop the organizations the new field needs. This group will be chaired by **Carolyn Love**, South-Western Publishing Co., 5101 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236.

**Task Group No. 3: Internships and Practica in the Family Field:** This group will identify the innovations that are being made nationally in family internships/practica and make this information available so these programs can be improved in family departments. This group will be chaired by **Stephan Bollman**, Department of Family and Child Development, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

**Task Group No. 4: Justification that there is a Discipline:** This group will continue to explicate the justification for the discipline by identifying unique aspects of family science scholarship, unique perspectives, and the advantages of having a discipline. This justification has been partially written, but more needs to be said, in particular about the relationships of the discipline with home economics and sociology. **Margaret Bubolz**, Department of Family Ecology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, will chair this group.

**Task Group No. 5: Name for the Discipline:** This group will promote dialogue and then decision making about which term is the best label for the family field. After a lengthy discussion in the October 18th meeting, it was decided that a decision should be made about the term "in a few months." This group will be chaired by **Godfrey Ellis**, Department of Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

Those who were in attendance at the NCFR meeting identified which of these task groups they wished to work on. What this will

probably mean in practical terms is that the chair of the task group will consult with, invite ideas from, circulate proposals among, etc., the members of their task group to gradually identify the issues that should be addressed and make whatever recommendations seem appropriate. If any of you wish to become involved with a task group please let me and/or the chair of the group know so we can get you into the communication network.

Several other issues were also dealt with in the meeting. One was the definition of the new discipline, and there was consensus that the field should be defined as the discovery and application of knowledge about the family. This will, it is hoped, help theory, research, and application all be components of the family field.

It was also decided that it is important to rotate leadership in the discipline, and this should be done with the NCFR Task Force. Therefore, after nominations from the floor and later discussion by the board, several recommendations were made to **Sharon Price**, NCFR president. Sharon subsequently appointed **Carolyn Love** and **James Walters** to the board of the task force, and **Nelwyn Moore** was rotated off the board. **Jay Schvaneveldt** was appointed chair-elect of the task force, and **Gary Peterson** was appointed secretary-treasurer.

One final item is that the next issue of the Task Force's Newsletter is being prepared, and those who wish to submit ideas should send them to **Gerry Neubeck**.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Nelwyn B. Moore October 12, 1984

Items of business pertaining to the office of treasurer are as follows:

-58 paid memberships including students and professionals - list of names and addresses attached.

-A non-profit checking account was opened under the name Association for the Development of a Family Discipline at the State Bank & Trust Company of San Marcos, Texas.

-\$240.00 is the current balance of ADFD account.

-No expenses have been incurred.

## Call For Comments

As most of us agree, many professionals in the family field (discipline?) suffer from somewhat of an identity crisis. A clear label for the field would build a sense of self-esteem among those working in the area and facilitate recognition by other professionals.

At our recent meeting of the NCFR Task Force, a straw vote was taken regarding the name issue. The majority felt that, while a decision in San Francisco was premature, a definite name choice needed to be made within the next few months.

It looks as if the choice of a label has narrowed down to two possibilities:

- Family Science
- Familiology

In the next newsletter, we would like to air some last comments, pro and con, for each of the names. We are inviting short statements on any of four themes:

1. The case for, "Family Science"
2. The case against, "Family Science"
3. The case for, "Familiology"
4. The case against, "Familiology"

If response is brisk, I will edit out a series of the strongest statements or paragraphs for each theme. If input is more limited, we would be able to include complete statements.

If anyone feels passionately about another alternative, such as "Famology", we would be willing to include those arguments as well. At the conclusion of the mini-debate, we will have some kind of ballot and decide the name once and for all.

Let's hear from you!

Godfrey J. Ellis, Chair  
Task Group No. 5: Discipline Name

This excerpt from a New York Times article by Glenn Collins, who covered the San Francisco NCFR meeting, singles out the "birth" of a new discipline. The title of his piece was: EXPERTS AT 2 GATHERINGS TAKE VARYING VIEWS ON STATE OF FAMILY.

"This may have been a historic moment," said Dr. Gerhard Neubeck, professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota. "We have given birth to a new discipline." He was referring to the unanimous recommendation by a committee of 45 scholars at the National Council on Family Relations that the study of the family be a distinct academic discipline. It has been a stepchild, as one scholar put it, of such realms as sociology, psychology, anthropology and home economics.

Would the new discipline be called family science, famology or family ecology? Committee members could not agree. That will have to be resolved in 1985 - at the next big family reunion.

Glenn Collins  
New York Times

## A Family Discipline and Home Economics: Relationships and Implications

By Margaret M. Bubolz

Proponents of the formation of a family discipline have asserted that none of the older disciplines which have provided knowledge about the family and given service to families focus on the family as its central concern. Home economics is one of these older disciplines or fields of study and practice which has claimed the family as its historical core (1) and continuing focus (2). It is necessary, therefore, that questions about the disciplinary and structural relationships between a new family discipline and the field of home economics be explored.

Family Discipline cont.

## Family Discipline cont.

Home economics grew out of a concern in the latter part of the 19th century to strengthen families and households and out of the growing interest in applying principles of science to the home environment. The early emphasis on sanitation and nutrition quickly expanded to include child development, family relations, parenthood, as well as clothing, furnishings, housing, design, home management and family economics. The natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities were all seen as contributing to home economics and to improvement of family well-being. Home economics was, thus, conceived as an interdisciplinary field with a mission orientation. Recently, its original definition and purpose have been reaffirmed and restated as that of being a practical science with the mission of enabling families as individual units and as social institutions to build and maintain systems of action which lead to maturing self-formation, to developing and protecting the human qualities of families and individuals, and to participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them (3, 4). Home economics views the family as the major source of nurturance and renewal of the individual, helping prepare its members for effective productivity for self and society. The family ecosystem is seen as the core of home economics (2).

Given this stated mission and focus, one may well ask: How is this different from what might be the focus and goals of a family discipline? What will be the relationship of a family discipline to home economics? Before answering these questions, additional historical and contemporary developments in home economics must be examined.

The history of home economics as an interdisciplinary field and its subsequent development illustrate a general tendency in the history of science (5). Specializations in science did not take place according to a rationally defined plan. Instead, individual disciplines emerged to deal with particular aspects of the natural social world and of experience. Research in the disciplines and emerging theoretical and practical problems as well as socio-political conditions led to the need to bring about some kind of interaction between disciplines. In some cases this led to the growth of new disciplines which, in turn, subdivided into specialized disciplines. The early emphasis in home economics was on integration of concepts and principles from various disciplines, applied to the home and family as a totality, recognizing that family problems did not separate themselves into problems related to family relations or management, child growth, or food or housing. These areas were interrelated in the everyday life of families, in which decision and actions in any one sphere influenced the others. Home economics was considered to be especially concerned with relations between resources and conditions of the environment and with man's nature as a social being (6).

However, in order to develop the knowledge base in home economics, to teach and apply its content, and to prepare professionals in the field separate and distinct areas emerged with their own names and identities. These included dietetics and nutrition, interior design and related art, textiles and clothing, family relations, child or human development, family and consumer economics and home economics education. In some instances these fields have become or are emerging as separate disciplines with their own theoretical frameworks, professional organizations, journals and designations.

Home economics is increasingly identified as a professional field, encompassing a variety of specialties and disciplines. Professionals practice in many settings and work environments. Service to families ranges on a continuum from direct service as in education or counseling to more indirect provision of products and services. An important issue within the field as present is whether or not the various subfields in home economics have a common, unifying core of knowledge and a continuing, central focus on the family (7)\*.

Of particular relevance to a family discipline is the component of home economics identified as family relationships, often coupled with child or human development. This area has long been a component of home economics (8, 9). Home management and family economics have also been significant components of home economics and in recent years have become structurally and conceptually joined with family relations in such units as Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota and in Family and Child Ecology at Michigan State University. This development suggests that a family discipline can incorporate managerial-productive (instrumental) and nurturant-developmental (socio-emotional) processes and functions and their interaction within the family.

The significance of the family/child component in home economics is illustrated by the following:

In 1980-81, of 109 member institutions in the Association of Administrators of Home Economics (AAHE) of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), 92% offered bachelor's degrees in a family or child major; 52% masters' degrees and 17% Ph.D. degrees in numbers of graduates at the bachelors and masters levels, child and family majors were the second most numerous, while at the Ph.D. level, this field awarded the highest number of degrees (10).

In the 1982 Guide To Graduate Family Programs, compiled by Carolyn Love for NCFR, 71 programs, including masters and doctoral programs, were identified. Of these, at least 58 were affiliated with home economics units, or with units formerly called home economics. These figures support the AAHE data and indicate that about 60% of the graduate programs in the family are allied with home economics units (11).

How, then, shall we answer the questions raised earlier regarding the relationships between a family discipline and home economics? It seems to me that a family discipline has emerged with roots in the natural and social sciences, the arts, humanities and integrated or "interdisciplinary disciplines" such as home economics. The family discipline has foundations, too, in many professional fields, but it is not the same as any one profession or discipline. Home economics may be considered both a professional field and an interdisciplinary field to which several disciplines contribute. The family discipline can occupy a relationship to home economics similar to that of anthropology, sociology, economics, psychology, chemistry, physics, biology, philosophy and other disciplines. Each of these contributes assumptions, conceptual frameworks, theoretical formulations and methodologies used in knowledge genera-

tion in the specialized fields of home economics and applied in fulfilling its mission and goals. I expect that a family discipline would be used and applied in the same manner. Obviously there are political and structural as well as conceptual and theoretical implications to be considered as the family discipline moves into further stages of development. That's another paper.

Margaret M. Bubolz  
Professor, Family and Child Ecology  
Michigan State University

\*Another issue in the field of home economics concerns the name. A survey reported at the 1984 meeting of the American Home Economics Association indicated that of 240 units surveyed, 26% had changed their name, 4% were in process, while the remaining 70% had not changed (12). From a structural perspective, in some educational institutions some components of home economics are no longer parts of home economics, while others are joint departments with Colleges of Agriculture. In other cases, new unions are forming. Social work and other human service programs are becoming allied with home economics; in other cases social science disciplines and home economics are becoming administrative units (13). These developments have implications for a family discipline.

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