The Social Construction of the Family: Family Values and the Los Angeles Riots

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Geography

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August, 1994
Blacksburg, Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

The issue of "family values" was at the center of political debate during the 1992 presidential campaign. In this debate conflicting views over the conceptualization and understanding of just what constitutes a "family" were presented. This thesis examines how the "traditional family" model is used by the majority of Americans to marginalize and ignore the lives and needs of those whose family life does not conform to normative definitions of family. More specifically, it examines how the lives of inner-city racial and ethnic families have become a site around which a variety of discourses of danger about the erosion of "family values" are generated.

In this analysis, the relationship among space, race, gender and power in contemporary American society is discussed. A major focus will be the representation and construction of racial and gendered identities. Using the Los Angeles riots and Dan Quayle's response, I will review

the political discourse employed by the Bush-Quayle administration on traditional family values to discuss how family is constructed by the dominant political culture group in the U.S. Following an examination of these issues, I will then focus on community responses to Quayle's speech and discuss how these discursive practices are the process by which dominant scripts of the family are contested and resisted.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are a number of people whose help and support I would like to acknowledge. First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents Frank and Margarita Hernandez whose love and support have given me the confidence and the will to learn and grow.

I also have had the good fortune to have a wonderful committee. I want to thank Dr. Gerard Toal for his interest in my research. His contributions to the final work are most extensive and appreciated. Committee members, Dr. Marsha Ritzdorf and Dr. Paul Knox were encouraging and positive throughout the process. Their input was greatly appreciated.

I dedicate this thesis to my grandparents, Thomas and Refugia Hernandez and Eleuterio and Dominga Galindo. They are my greatest motivators of all.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the political construction of "the family" in the U.S. during the early 1990s. This thesis examines the processes that construct our social identities, it explores the interrelations of issues of race and gender across urban space and it considers the implications of these processes for understanding urban social phenomenon.

The "problem" of "the family" was a central issue in the political discourse of the 1992 presidential campaign. After the Los Angeles rebellion, former vice-president Dan Quayle cited the "collapse" or "breakdown" of the family as the root of a number of the nation's social problems, including the riots. He called for the restoration of the "traditional family" as a means of addressing inner-city social problems. Although reports document that individuals from a variety of social and economic backgrounds were involved in the rebellion, poor families headed by women were identified as being responsible for promoting a poverty of values and blamed for the civil disturbances (Quayle, 1992). This response is just one of a series of attacks on single mothers in Republican party political discourses.

The topic of this study is the figurative use of "the family" and its associated discursive representations of race, gender and space. I present a case study of the political narration of the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion to argue that "the family" as constituted in the Bush-Quayle political rhetoric contributes to and maintains the social and spatial marginalization of certain segments of society. This thesis is organized into four chapters. I begin with a review of theoretical and empirical research on the U.S. family and on families in Los Angeles. My investigation links family arrangements to a specific historical and geographical setting, Los Angeles county. I then address the discursive construction of "the family" by examining the political rhetoric of the Bush-Quayle administration. Finally, I address "the family" as constructed in counter discourses responding to the Bush-Quayle reading of the riots, especially the responses to Dan Quayle's "family values" speech.

Recent scholarly interest in the family is devoting great attention to the substantial differences that exist over the understanding and meaning of contemporary families. For instance, sociologist, James Davison Hunter, argues that debates over the nature of contemporary families are not over the status and quality of today's families. The contest, he states, reflects conflicting views associated

with how "the family" is defined. Further, he believes that the "task of defining the American family becomes integral to the very task of defining America itself" because the family is a symbol for larger societal relations (Hunter, 1991; 177).

Research on the social and political construction of family images and the concept of family is significant to scholars, policy makers and all individuals concerned with understanding the changing American family. My thesis is framed by some of the dominant research projects in family sociology and urban geographical research, specifically, the work exploring the "geographical specificity" of the construction of social identities (Dowling and Pratt, 1993; Pratt, 1988; Leslie, 1993; Peake, 1993) and the role representations play in constituting social identities, including the family.

Scholars interested in the status of American families are investigating the links between changing definitions of "the family" and recent family developments. The literature focuses on changing images and representations of the family in the context of greater economic and social forces (Stacey, 1993; Coontz, 1992; Baca-Zinn, 1987, 1989, 1990, Thompson, 1993). Family sociologist, Judith Stacey, who is critical of contemporary family scholarship believes that

"the family" as conceptualized in traditional scholarship ignores diverse family arrangements. Her research demonstrates the instability of contemporary family arrangements and challenges the dominant definitions of family. She argues that family research often uses the concept of family to signify the nuclear family unit and the gender roles associated with this arrangement ignoring diverse family arrangements. The family, states Stacey, "is not an institution, but an ideological, symbolic construct that has a history and a politics (Stacey, 1993; 545). Stacey's research is representative of recent trends in family studies.

The concepts critical to this study are defined below. They are "the family", "riots", and "conservatism". In this thesis I use "the family" to denote the social relations associated with the home space or the domestic sphere. It is not my intent to definitively define the family. I focus on the family as an object of discourse and the way that familial language is mobilized in academic and political discourses to reproduce dominant ideological views about race, gender and the family. In this study I focus on Dan Quayle's concept of family, the "traditional family". This particular notion of family is based on the patriarchal nuclear family unit and privileges "white" middle-class family ideals.

In this thesis I use the terms "riot", "rebellion", or "insurrection" interchangeably to acknowledge the contested nature of the event. Questions over the most accurate characterization of the Los Angeles civil disturbances have been addressed in both media and academic discourse. The term "riot" is defined as the disturbance of public peace, especially a violent public disorder. Webster's dictionary definition of "riot" provides a number of definitions and identifies changes that have occurred in the usage of the term. In the Los Angeles civil disturbances issues of "rage, race, and class" are involved (Davis, 1993; 147). Mike Davis's analysis of the civil disturbances identifies three major dimensions of the "riots": (1) a "revolutionary democratic protest characteristic of African-American history" (2) a "major postmodern bread riot" and (3) an "inter-ethnic conflict". In his assessment of this event he identifies the politics of characterizing the Los Angeles civil disturbances and provides some indication of the complexity involved in recent attempts to name and analyze the sources of the conflict.

My analysis of the 1992 presidential campaign political rhetoric focuses on the Republican party's right-wing, conservative family discourse. By conservative views, I refer to the political ideology and writings of a broad range of perspectives on the economic, social, and moral

responsibility of society and the state. Conservative economic and social policy is grounded in the notion that government intervention should be limited at the market level. However, at the private level, conservatives adhere to the view that the welfare state is responsible for undermining family relations and in particular "traditional family" relations. The family model conservatives seek to preserve is the patriarchal family unit and the traditional gender roles associated with this arrangement. Conservatives treat the patriarchal family unit as "God-given" and believe it is based on "essential biological differences between men, women and children" (Abbott and Wallace, 1992; 10). I follow Cohen and Katzenstein (1989) interchangeable use of the terms "the Right" and "Conservatism". Their work acknowledges that the views of these groups differ in many areas. However, they identify and focus on their shared beliefs in terms of the "idealization of the traditional nuclear family" (Cohen and Katzenstain, 1989; 26).

Chapter one of this thesis addresses the academic discourse investigating new family arrangements. I review the theoretical and empirical research in progress exploring contemporary gender relations and the ways in which social identities are produced and reinforced at home and in communities. More specifically, I review literature critical of traditional scholarly inquiry and approaches to

social science (Harding, 1990). A major topic of concern is the social construction of knowledge and involves efforts to demonstrate that scholarship is embedded in a specific historical context with a political agenda. Knowledge, states Thompson (1993), is connected to power and power then lies with those who are in the position to determine and establish truths. Feminist critiques question the way knowledge and approaches to knowledge are oppressive to women. This research provides an understanding of contemporary social processes surrounding the social construction of "the family". The authors are also questioning conventional categories rather than taking them for granted (Harding 1990, McDowell 1991, Scott 1989, Rose, 1993, Peake 1993, Dowling and Pratt 1993). The definitions of key analytical categories like the family, the household and "race" are under question.

The philosophical perspectives of deconstructionism, post-structuralism and feminism all share an interest in the links between power, knowledge and language. For instance, Rose (1993) addresses the prospect of a feminist theory geographic research. She demonstrates the "masculinism" in the discipline and the limitations of the various traditions within geography. Time geography, humanism, and economic geographical analyses of urban development are among the traditions in Geography that Rose addresses. She argues

that gender analyses are limited by these approaches to geography and calls for a research agenda that acknowledges that space, place, and knowledge should be treated as "insecure, precarious and fluctuating" ideas (Rose, 1993; 160).

Chapter two reveals more directly the issue of diverse American family arrangements and experiences. A case study of family and household composition in Los Angeles county is presented and serves as the basis of critique throughout this thesis. In this chapter I investigate the status of "the family" in Los Angeles. The purpose of this chapter is to determine to what extent families and households in the Los Angeles area conform to the images and definitions of the "ideal" family expressed in the Bush-Quayle reading of the riots. I begin by situating family and household arrangements in the Los Angeles area within a specific historical setting. The demographic, economic, and political environment of the area is examined. Second, I present and discuss family and household composition in the Los Angeles area. This descriptive analysis of family and household characteristics is limited to seven neighborhoods in Los Angeles county: San Marino, Rolling Hills Estates, Los Angeles, Huntington Park, East Compton CDP, East Los Angeles CDP and Florence-Graham CDP. The communities examined in this thesis where selected on the basis of

household median income level. Neighborhoods identified in recent Census reports as representing the areas with the lowest and highest household median incomes in Los Angeles county are reviewed (see chapter two for social and economic characteristics of the study area). The reason for limiting the study to these particular areas was to enable the study to focus more sharply on family and household composition across income status. I also compare family-household composition by race and ethnicity in each area (white, Black and Hispanic). The data was obtained from U.S. Census of Population and Household summary for the year of 1990. In addition to census data, my analysis of national and Los Angeles county family trends is based on demographic research reports. Also, selected maps obtained from the Census are presented to identify the study area.

Chapter three explores the ideological position of the Conservatives by examination of family discourse articulated in the political rhetoric of former vice-president Dan Quayle during the 1992 presidential campaign. This chapter focuses on the views of the Conservatives concerning issues related to "the family" and "family values". The goal of this particular chapter is to provide a critique of the ideological assumptions creating "the ideal family" and expose the way that dominant ideologies are produced and legitimized through political rhetoric. This analysis

involves identifying how meaning is invested in "the family" and identifying the groups responsible for producing those meanings. I examine "the family" as an object of discourse in order to demonstrate how it is constructed through elements of race, gender and space. This chapter presents a research method useful in investigating the management of meaning, a general hermeneutic approach. This method treats political rhetoric as a symbolic system, as text that requires interpretation (Thompson, 1981). I draw on an area in philosophy concerned with the nature of language and meanings and employ a textual analysis of the Bush-Quayle narration of the Los Angeles rebellion. Such an analysis involves examining the "family values" speech delivered by former vice president Dan Quayle on 21 May 1992, to the Commonwealth Club of California in Sacramento, California.

Chapter four addresses the contested nature of the Bush-Quayle conceptualization of "the family" and "the riots". I introduce the concept of discourses of resistance to investigate responses to the Bush-Quayle reading of the riots. In this thesis, the concept of discourses of resistance refers to the efforts by which people are working to formulate their social identities. I focus on the discursive construction of the family to acknowledge the existence of competing interpretations of "the family" and the "riots". Editorial responses are the topic of this

chapter, I analyze them to determine whether the counter discourses reinforce or disrupt Quayle's reading of the riots. My analysis involves comparing and contrasting the Bush-Quayle reading to national and local readings of the event. The editorials are organized into two levels of discourse: a national and a local editorial response. The national level editorials are from *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. The local level editorials are from *The Los Angeles Sentinel*, *The Call and Post*, *The Sun Reporter* and *La Opinion*. The editorials examines in these thesis were selected in order to survey from how individuals responded to the issues presented in Quayle's speech from a national and local level. By organizing the editorials into national level and local level categories, I am able to identify the critical issues for each group of editorials. This then provides the basis of my analysis of the local and national narratives.

This thesis is about how meaning is invested in "the family". I identify who is responsible for producing those meanings and demonstrate how they are contested. I also work to comprehend and connect family experiences to broader social context by considering the economic and political factors influencing family life. I critique "the family" as a political construction to demonstrate that normative definitions of the family associated with the "traditional

family" are discrediting family arrangements of certain segments of society which in many cases include the families of "minority" populations and women. By focusing on "the family" as social construct, I address some of the difficulties associated with the task of defining and arriving at a fixed meaning of family. I aim to contribute to research currently working to expand on the definition of family.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FAMILY IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSES:
The "traditional family" as a social construct

The structure of most American families and households have been significantly altered over the past three decades. If one were to compare today's family arrangements with family arrangements of the 1950s it would reveal some important differences (Coontz, 1992; Stacey, 1993; Sohomi, 1993). For instance, census figures indicate that "non-traditional" families (any family unit other than the patriarchal family unit) represent 70 percent of all U.S. families (Sohomi, 1993). An even more critical development is that the "traditional family" (the nuclear family unit) is quickly losing its status as the social norm. Recent family developments, states Coontz, demonstrate not just contemporary change but that "families have always been in flux and often in crisis" (Coontz, 1992; 1-2).

Family historian, Stephanie Coontz (1992), addresses a topic of growing interest among family scholars, the substantial differences that exist in academia and popular literature concerning interpreting contemporary family arrangements and family meanings (Stacey, 1993; Baca-Zinn, 1987). Like Coontz, family scholars are addressing the conflicting views associated with the meaning of family. Their research explores how definitions of the family have come to

act as the social norm (Coontz, 1992; Stacey, 1991; Baca-Zinn, 1987; Dill, 1988) and how family definitions are being constructed and contested (Pratt and Hanson, 1988; Veness, 1993; Allen, 1992). These authors are investigating how popular attitudes and beliefs about "the family" and family definitions are written into academic literature.

In this chapter I address the family as a representational object in order to demonstrate the contested nature of the concept the "traditional family". An underlying purpose is to investigate whose value structures do dominant definitions of the family reflect and how do dominant definitions of the family contribute to the oppression of certain segments of society. The literature reviewed represents a wide range of critical disciplines. Although substantively different, they all share a common interest namely the social and cultural construction of "the family". The authors in one way or another address issues related to the symbolic and ideological meanings of "the family" and discuss how popular attitudes and beliefs about the "traditional" family are ideological constructs. The research is multi-disciplinary and provides a more comprehensive theoretical discussion of the social processes shaping our understanding and attitudes about family relations than single discipline based discourses.

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section focuses on family myths, ideals and images in

academic discourses. I begin by reviewing the work of Stephanie Coontz (1992) who addresses conflicting family definitions by investigating the various forms the family has taken throughout U.S. history. Her research examines some myths associated with our understanding of the family, including the "traditional" family model. I review literature from Multicultural studies, Family studies, Urban Planning and Geography also addressing the limitations of conventional modes of analysis and theoretical frameworks in family studies. These authors challenge the applicability of the conceptual categories in traditional family research and are critical of normative family definitions and the assumptions being made about racial-ethnic families in conventional research practices (Baca-Zinn, 1987, 1990; Billingsly, 1993). These criticisms are primarily directed at the way differences of race, gender and class are treated in family scholarship.

In the second section I review feminist theoretical developments concerning the constitution of identities and the role representations play in the construction of social identities. I draw on a kind of feminist theory investigating interrelations of power, knowledge and subjectivity. These scholars promote a feminist mode of analysis that questions the biases in academic research. They reject the belief that scholarly inquiry is "value free", "neutral" or "objective". Their research efforts involve challenging and

redefining key theoretical ideas and concepts in conventional scholarship.

1.1 REPRESENTING "THE FAMILY" IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSES

Family scholars, the political project of "women of color" and feminist theorists from various critical disciplines are extending their interest to examining "the family" as a representational object and cultural construct. Their research is working towards acknowledging diversity and difference among women and families. Coontz, for instance, focuses on "white, middle-class myths" and their role in the construction of the "traditional family". She argues that the experiences of the "middle-class" are usually presented as "universal trends" (Coontz, 1992; 6). Therefore, by challenging these family "myths", she demonstrates how social norms "distort" the family experiences of those individuals who do not conform to the standard. Family scholarship addressing the experiences of racial-ethnic families argue that the ideological assumptions commonly associated with the "traditional" family model in many cases are not universally applicable. This literature illustrates how conflicts between family ideals and family realities function as yet another form of "constraint" for families who do not conform to the social norm.

An underlying theme in the literature presented in this chapter is that family meanings and family forms are embed-

ded within specific socio-historical contexts (Coontz, 1993; Stacey, 1993; Baca-Zinn, 1987). The topics of investigation range from the investigating family relations within specific socio-historical settings to examining the social and cultural construction of "the family".

1.1.1 How Family Studies constructs "the family"

Family scholars interested in the social and cultural construction of "the family" are investigating how family myths and ideals shape our perceptions and understanding of "the family" (Baca-Zinn 1987; Coontz, 1992; Stacey, 1993). Stephanie Coontz, investigates shifting definitions of "the family". The family, she states, did not evolve in a historical linear progression. Coontz examines various arrangements the family has taken from colonial times to the present. Her research illustrates that a variety of family arrangements have existed and they are linked to different socio-historical settings. The myth of the "traditional family" unit and "traditional family" relations are examined to demonstrate that this particular family model reflects an "amalgam of structures, values, and behaviors that never co-existed in the same time and place" (Coontz, 1992; 9). Further, Coontz contends that recent interest in restoring the "traditional family" is based on nostalgic rather than accurate images of family life of the past.

This critique of the "traditional" family challenges popular attitudes about this family model and presents myths commonly associated with American family life to argue that most assessments of family life fail to question dominant concepts of the family. According to Coontz, this practice contributes to the maintenance of "false generalizations and global judgments about past and present families" (Coontz, 1992; 14). For instance, Coontz examines the 19th century family which is reflective of a specific period in American history, namely the industrialization of society. This era is marked by an increasing social and spatial division of labor combined with an ideology of domesticity that reshaped family relations and gender roles. Another version of the "traditional family" model is also addressed, the 1950s model of the "traditional family". The 1950s or post-war era presents another period in history critical to redefining the family. Again, the family and gender roles are transformed as society responds to the economic and cultural developments of this period. Women are encouraged (indeed propagandized) by a strong ideological campaign directing them to leave the labor force to manage domestic responsibilities. An increasing differentiation between "public and private" spheres is developing at this time and is critical to establishing new family meanings and relations.

In Coontz's search for the origins of the popular "traditional family" model of the 1950s she illustrates that

family relations of the 1950s were more of a "new invention" and not the product of a modernization process (Coontz, 1992; 27). What is more important, the 1950s "traditional" family model is not connected to any specific family life-style of the past. Today, many Americans believe the 1950s "traditional family" model (also referred to as the "Leave it to Beaver" model) represents the "ideal" and typical family (Coontz, 1992). Yet as Coontz demonstrates, throughout American history this family lifestyle was never a reality for many families. Traditional family relations are in part the product of specific economic and cultural settings. Further, she demonstrates that family experiences are also the product of different experiences with race, gender and class (Coontz, 1992).

1.1.2 Multiculturalism and the construction of "the family"

Family scholars, Black feminists and "women of color" from various critical disciplines interested in the status of racial-ethnic families are also extending their interest to examining "the family" as a social construct. This literature investigates representations of racial-ethnic families and normative family definitions in academic research. The authors are critical of "white" middle-class family norms and argue that the patriarchal nuclear family is treated in family scholarship as the social norm and the standard. An underlying theme in the literature is that

normative definitions of "the family" function as another form of constraint because they reproduce stereotypical images of racial ethnic families.

Griswold del Castillo (1984), Baca-Zinn (1987, 1989, 1990) and Dill (1988) all address racial ethnic family life. Their research involves displacing stereotypical images of racial-ethnic families and redefining dominant constructions of "the family". This research concentrates on recovering racial-ethnic family histories by connecting family experiences to specific historical settings. The authors argue that conventional theoretical discussions and empirical research on race, gender and class are limited because cultural constructions like "the family" are going unchallenged.

1.1.2.1 Race and the construction of "the family"

The work of sociologist, Maxine Baca-Zinn (1990) integrates the category of "race" in her research. Family studies, states Baca-Zinn has always been guided by theoretical frameworks that rely on assumptions that the "traditional family" model can be applied universally when addressing racial ethnic families. She argues for a research agenda that expands on normative models of the family and contends that there are certain family forms in family studies that have legitimacy as a result of race based conceptual categories.

She states:

> [Family] alternatives that appear new to middle-class White Americans are actually variant family patterns that have been traditional with Black and other minority communities for many generations . . .they are in fact, the same lifestyles. . . deemed pathological, deviant, or unacceptable when observed in Black families (Baca-Zinn, 1990; 79).

According to Zinn, the theoretical treatment of "the family" functions as a setting where racial social categories are constructed and reproduced. She argues that "race" functions as a power system and should be treated as not only an element of culture, but as an element of the "hierarchical social relations" that families must interact with throughout society (Baca-Zinn, 1990; 71). Further, she calls for a mode of analysis that expands on the normative model of the family and. acknowledges that racial relations are experienced differently across class and gender.

1.1.2.2 Gender, race and the construction of "the family"

In addition to the social construction of family definitions, a topic receiving considerable attention among racial-ethnic family scholarship is the issue of difference and diversity among women. Family scholars interested in variation among American families are investigating the issue of difference within the category of women and their family experiences (Dill, 1988; Baca-Zinn, 1990;).

Dill (1988) for instance, examines the lives of African-American, Chinese-American, and Mexican American

women and their families during the 19th century and early 20th century. She compares the lives of racial-ethnic women with American women of Anglo-European descent to discuss how the industrialization of society was experienced across race and class based categories. Dill's comparisons demonstrate that the social changes that accompanied this period of industrialization generally resulted in increased control over women's lives. The social position of wealthy and middle-class women is privileged over racial-ethnic women. Also, their social status was protected by the fact that the family is considered essential to the "growth and development of American society" (Dill, 1988; 416). In contrast, racial-ethnic families were not recognized for their contribution to the growth of the nation. Instead, they are oppressed by a patriarchal and capitalist structured society.

Dill (1988) argues that racial-ethnic families, did not have the "social structural supports" or economic access to help maintain their families in the Anglo-European mode (p.429). Racial-ethnic women had to contribute to their families by working in the paid labor force. This was antithetical to the white middle class ideal. Dill (1988) explains that in order to maintain their families, racial-ethnic women had to reorganize their lives because they had to participate in both the private and public labor activities.

She observes:

> For racial-ethnic women . . . the notion of separate spheres served to reinforce their subordinate status and became, in effect another assault . . . they were denied the opportunity to embrace the dominant ideological definition of "good" wife or mother . . . (Dill, 1988; 429).

Dill's analysis identifies the emergence of the middle-class family ideology and the impact of the social and cultural attitudes of this period on racial-ethnic women.

1.1.2.3 Chicano/Chicana family experiences and the "traditional family"

The work of Griswold del Castillo (1984) examines the social history of Mexican-American families and produces a image of family relations different from more popular images, including the traditional family model. This research focuses on experiences of Mexican-American families going back to the early 19th century. Dominant themes in Griswold's work include: (a) the complex interrelationships among Native-American, Spanish, and American cultures, (b) the interactions between cultural ideals and greater economic and social pressures and (c) contradictions between 19th century Mexican-American families and their stereotypical family images as the rigid patriarchal family structure (Griswold del Castillo, 1984).

Griswold Del Castillo (1984) demonstrates that family diversity also exists within the Mexican-American culture by introducing the social, economic and geographic factors

shaping the Mexican-American family. One example provided is the link between the economic and political environment of the late 19th century and the disruption of the Mexican family relations. The new economic and social structure of this region left many Mexican men unemployed. Mexican-American women were left in charge of the household while the men sought employment away from home. Women, he states, were responsible for maintaining the household and were "far from trapped within the confines of a male-dominated family" (Griswold del Castillo, 1984; 33). They were responsible for every aspect, domestic and non-domestic, of household maintenance. The absence of husbands from wives and children, states Griswold del Castillo (1984), produced a different experience with matriarchy from other immigrant groups. He believes the social history of the matriarchal Afro-American family is the closest comparison.

1.1.3.3 Afro-American family experiences and the "traditional family"

In a more recent analysis of racial-ethnic Americans families, Andrew Billingsley (1993) looks at the history of Black families. This critical examination of Afro-American family experiences also challenges the "traditional family" model. However, instead of comparing American family patterns, Billingsley focuses on the adaptations and achievements of Black families.

According to Billingsley, the "traditional" household with the man as head of household does not apply in the Afro-American community. This comprehensive study looks at Black family life from its roots in ancient Africa to the Civil Rights movement. He argues Black family structures have mostly been treated by family scholars as the deviant family model. Billingsley focuses on the complexity of the Black community and argues that the Afro-American family is not monolithic it is a diverse community with very distinctive family structures. He examines family relations such as extended kinship relations as well as a wide variety of household relations to demonstrate how these relations have historically served to sustain Black families.

1.1.5 How Geography constructs "the family"

"The family-household", state Pratt and Hanson (1988), has only recently "been 'rediscovered' in urban geography" (p.55). Pratt and Hanson's critique of traditional urban literature remains a critical issue among feminist working in geography. Geographer Gillian Rose (1993) argues that "the home" and "family" as a social location is often constructed as "separate from and inferior to the supposedly normal world" (Rose, 1993; 121).

Feminist research in Geography addressing social relations at the household and the family level are working to reconceptualize these concepts. This research provides new

insights into the relationships between private and public spaces and it also identifies the importance of gender issues in geographic research (IBG Women and Geography Study Group, 1984; Pratt and Hanson, 1988; McDowell, 1991; Dowling and Pratt, 1993; Peake 1993; Rose 1993).

Concepts and categories like "the family" and "home" are being challenged by feminist doing urban geographic research. For instance, Pratt and Hanson (1988) are critical of the way "the family" and household relations are analyzed in geographic research. They argue that conventional urban analyses assume a suburban patriarchal nuclear family model and neglects the fact that the household is also a "site of labour". The household, state Hanson and Pratt, does not function separate from or outside of societal relations. These authors promote a research agenda that rejects the "conceptual separation between home and work"(Pratt and Hanson, 1988; 56).

England (1991) addresses these issues when she explores changing gender relations and urban spatial structures in her research on the links between ideologies of the family and urban space. She argues that the urban structure supports and reinforces patriarchal assumptions about family relations and gender roles within the family. Moreover, she asserts that the urban spatial structure reflects a "private-public" dichotomy where the "suburbs" represent the private sphere and the "city" represents the public sphere. According to England, this distinction is functioning as

spatial disadvantage and is presenting a number of constraints to women and families who do not conform to traditional family models. The urban spatial structure, states England, is failing to address the needs of women whose role in the family and labor market are being transformed (England, 1991; 135). Poor public transportation, inadequate access to childcare facilities and the lack of paid employment opportunities are among the spatial constraints many women today are adjusting to (England, 1991).

Gillian Rose (1993) is also critical of the "public/private" boundaries in geographic discourse. She argues that these spatial and social divisions have led to the exclusion of women's experiences. She states:

> Geographers have tended not to see the home as a social location. The divide between home and work is also reflected in the way in which geography as discipline studies the city . . ."(Rose, 1993; 133)

According to Rose, the project for feminist geographers involves a mode of theorizing that focuses on "women" and their interactions with urban structures, the state, and the family (Rose, 1993).

Feminist research efforts working to "dissolve" conventional analytical categories in geographic discourses are addressing how the interrelations of place, space and gender function in constructing individual identities. For instance, Dowling and Pratt (1993) review more recent

investigations addressing this topic. The works of Spigel (1992), Richards (1990) and March (1990) explores how the family and home function as cites for constituting gender and "raced" identities. They also explore how the home space serves as a site for reproducing traditional gender relations. Peake (1993) also address social relations at the family and household level, however, she approaches her investigation by examining the concept of "patriarchy" and patriarchal spatial relations. She argues that patriarchy is itself problematic and investigates the use of the concept of patriarchy in analyses of "urban social space". Further, she contends that geographical discourses are reluctant to acknowledge and "address the heterosexual, 'white', cultural constructions" in the discipline (Peake, 1993; 413). A case study examining low-income households is presented and addresses how household differences of "race", class and sexuality produce different experiences of patriarchy.

1.1.6 How Urban Planning constructs "the family"

Feminist critiques of urban research and planning practices are calling on planners to re-examine their modes of analysis so that they include investigations into family experiences and gender issues (Werkel et. al, 1980; Ritzdorf, 1994). A topic of interest is the connections between urban planning practices and definitions of family

(Ritzdorf, 1985, 1986, 1994; Madigan et al., 1993). These authors address U.S. zoning practices and the role family definitions play in shaping landuse patterns. For instance, Urban Planner, Marsha Ritzdorf (1994), addresses the question of how past and present landuse zoning and planning practices have been directed by a particular concept and definition of family, the patriarchal nuclear family model. This analysis of residential zoning practices investigates how zoning in the U.S. enforces a particular social agenda. Ritzdorf (1994) argues that planning not only functions to regulate the physical aspects of land use, but that implicit in the planning profession is a concept of family and family values that adheres to the view that the patriarchal nuclear family is the ideal family (Ritzdorf, 1993; 257). Urban planning policies, states Ritzdorf, contributes to the construction social norms and functions to maintain the spatial segregation of "nontraditional" families, which in most cases are the families headed by women and "minority" populations (Ritzdorf, 1994).

In another investigation on definitions of "the family" and "the meaning of home", Madigan et al. (1993), examine urban planning practices, housing design and consumption from a gender perspective.

The home, state Madigan et al. (1993), is a critical site in the political and cultural construction of a feminine identity:

> The home is, above all, the arena of family and the experience of housing consumption cannot be divorced from the policies and practices which shape family life in particular socioeconomic settings...through social policy, women's roles are being regulated or restricted to fit the imagery of wives, mothers and careers... (Madigan et al., 1992; 639-640).

These authors all are working to provide an understanding of the complex interrelationships that exist between dominant conceptions of "the family", urban planning and urban space and also address their impact on the lives of women and the "non-traditional" family.

1.2 THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT "THE FAMILY"

Up to this point this chapter has focused on the way family definitions are being applied in academia to address and investigate family experiences. The literature all demonstrate a concern for working towards a research agenda that expands on popular definitions of family and provides a more inclusive approach to family studies. In this section I address aspects of feminist theory and research that provides the theoretical foundation for understanding the social processes surrounding the social construction of "the family".

A wide range of literature exists that addresses contemporary family arrangements and family meanings. Haraway (1991) writes that "the family" and "specific forms of families dialectically relate to forms of capital and its political and cultural concomitants" (Haraway, 1991; 167). She alerts feminist to the idea that contemporary social processes and systems of power are forming new social identities. According to Haraway, social categories and identity boundaries are in part constructed through discursive practices and representations. She states:

> [Today] identities seem contradictory, partial, and strategic. . . The home, workplace, market, public arena, the body itself -all can be dispersed and interface in nearly infinite . . . ways. . .bodies as objects of knowledge are material-semiotic generative nodes. Their boundaries materialize in social interaction" (Haraway, 1991; 160-201).

> One important route for reconstructing socialist-feminist politics is through theory and practice addressed to . . .the systems of myth and meanings structuring our imaginations (Haraway, 1991; 160-163).

The challenge for family scholars then involves interpreting how recent economic developments, new technological advancements and the production of new forms of power and domination contribute to the formation of new forms of social relations and identities. Moreover, this mode of analysis emphasizes identifying how discursive practices function to produce social meaning.

1.2.1 Feminism and "the family"

In this thesis I draw on a mode of feminist analysis working towards recognizing gender issues and examining how women experience various social institutions, including the family (Allan, 1992; Thompson 1992). Initially, feminist research focused on women's experiences in the family and explored the links between changes in women's lives and family relations (Thompson, 1992). For instance, feminist critiques of traditional family relations have identified how it is women in both "traditional" and "non-traditional" families who experience the most social constraints (Allen, 1992; Ritzdorf, 1994; Thompson 1992). Thompson (1992) writes that feminist research is aimed at "emancipating women" and promoting an agenda that: (a) connects the personal experiences of women to "the larger social context" (b) provides a "vision of nonoppressive family relations" and (c) acknowledges diverse family experiences (p.4). In addition to the critical analysis of women's experiences in the family, a major topic of study involves identifying how the categories used to conceptualize "the family" and gender are themselves problematic. These projects address representations of gender identities in family research and their role in the social construction of family norms. Theoretical and empirical research re-examines and re-conceptualizes family relations and gender role definitions in this context (Haraway, 1991; Thompson, 1992;).

Some of the arguments also being made by feminist scholars are that knowledge is social and social science theories are embedded within a specific historical context (Harding, 1990; Thompson, 1992). Feminist argue that dualisms and binary oppositions in conventional theoretical frameworks (i.e. man/women, private/public, suburb/urban development models) serve to exclude "women" and their experiences (Harding, 1990; McDowell, 1991; Rose, 1993). Feminist also argue that gender and "the family" are social and ideological constructs. These theoretical discussions address the social processes constructing feminine and masculine identities (Haraway, 1991; Dowling and Pratt, 1993; Rose, 1993).

1.2.2 Knowledge is social

Feminist have identified the links between power, knowledge and subjectivity. These criticisms focus on the "generalizing tendencies" of "Western, white-male heterosexual" based knowledge. Feminist research efforts are emphasizing the "connections between the researcher and the researched" and they reject the authority that certain forms of knowledge receive (Thompson, 1992; 3). Nicholson (1990) writes feminist have "called into question the dominant philosophical project of seeking objectivity in the guise of a 'God's eyeview'" (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990;27). These arguments are being applied to challenge the defi-

nitional boundaries of "the family" and gender identities.

Criticisms are directed at the theoretical treatment of women and the conceptualization of the family to promote a research agenda that recognizes and approaches the discipline from the arguments outlined above. This research draws on philosophical positions and arguments of deconstructionist and poststructuralist who have identified the limitations of "modern Western" thought. Although, the projects and arguments are far more wide ranging and diverse than I outline, they share the position that knowledge is social, historical and always changing. In the view of Nicholson (1990), modernist critics claim that "science" and the construction of theories of knowledge fall within the traditions and ideals of modern modes of thought. Nicholson (1990) proposes that the "modern ideals of science, justice and art are simply ideals" that are historically specific and have a political agenda. These critiques have come to focus of the legitimacy claims of "Western" theories of knowledge and science. Their projects involve exposing the power relations embedded in the production of knowledge and science. Thompson (1992) asserts that the production and dissemination of knowledge is social and connected to power and power lies with those groups who are in a position to establish truths.

1.2.3 Challenging the discipline

Feminist theorists have "problematized the existence of gender relations" in traditional modes of thought and are working towards generating new understandings about women and their experiences in society (Harding, 1990; McDowell 1991; Bondi 1990). De Stefano (1990) explains that feminist have begun to "destabilize domestic notions of difference" between women and men demonstrating that the family and gender role differences are not basic or "natural" (p.65). They argue that the family is an ideological construct that does not necessarily reflect the realities of most families. This research challenges hegemonic ideas and categories and concepts like man/women, the dichotomy of public/private sphere, the family/household distinction and "race" based identities and involves exposing how conventional analytical categories have led to the exclusion of women's experiences.

Feminist in geography, for instance, are addressing some of the theoretical models in geographic research (Pratt and Hanson 1988, Dowling and Pratt, 1993; Rose, 1993). Rose (1993) questions the notion of an "objective gaze" in geography and argues that geographical knowledge and the traditions in geography are the product of the dominant culture or "the master" subject which at this time is "Western, white, heterosexual male" (Rose, 1993; 25) Time-geography, humanism and economic geographic analysis are among the traditions in geography that Rose critiques.

1.2.4 Constructing differences: Race, Femininity and "the family"

Feminist debates over issues of diversity and difference among women are focusing on the social processes constructing feminine identities. This work in part responds to criticisms of Black feminist and the political project of "women of color" who are critical of feminist constructions of a universal category of woman. Critiques of "white feminist" modes of theorizing charge that they exclude diversity among women as well as adhere to patriarchal systems of thought (hooks 1990, Higginbotham, 1992; Peake 1993, Nicholson, 1990; Haraway, 1991).

Baca-Zinn (1990), for instance, calls attention to some of the limits of feminist theory in assessing racial-ethnic family arrangements. She contends that theoretical discussions in feminist theory ignore the issue of "race" as a social construct. hooks (1991) argues that feminist research continues to theorize family relations in a way that maintains racial and class based categories. She critiques from a position that distinguishes between "marginality" imposed by oppressive structures and "marginality" that is chosen as a site of resistance. She asserts that feminists have overlooked that the "homeplace" serves as a site of escape from racist domination and oppression for both women and men. Anzaldua (1985) also addresses the issue of the

social construction of stereotypical images of racial-ethnic family relations. One example offered by Anzaldua is associated with the concept of "machismo". She writes that "machismo" is an Anglo social construct that has been re-inscribed with racial meaning and does not represent the character of Mexican-American family relations. She states:

> For men like my father, being "macho" meant being strong enough to protect and support my mother and us, yet being able to show love. Today's macho has doubts about his ability to feed and protect his family. His machismo is an adaptation to oppression and...the hierarchical male dominance (Anzaldua,1985; 85).

Following Haraway's argument on addressing contemporary "systems of myth and meaning", I wish to treat "the family" as a representational object and "system of myth and meaning" in order to investigate how family meanings are the outcome of discursive strategies. However, before I examine political discourses of the family, I begin with an empirical exploration of contemporary family patterns. Since Dan Qauyle's speech addressed national family trends and was directed at those individuals involved in the Los Angeles riots, chapter two examines national family trends and Los Angeles household and family patterns. I also situate Los Angeles family patterns within a specific social, economic and political context.

CHAPTER TWO

LOS ANGELES FAMILIES IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

For many Americans the nuclear family unit represents the "ideal" family model. However, recent changes in the composition of American households reveals that this family model is losing its status as the typical family model. Today, the family is diversifying and being reshaped by a variety of social forces. Sohomi states: "The American family today ranges from the conventional Ozzie and Harriet type to the single parent, working couple, lesbian or gay, blended household" (p.55). These family patterns are themselves the product of greater societal forces which have been influenced by economic, political and demographic changes (Baca-Zinn, 1987).

It is the intent of this chapter is to examine family arrangements in Los Angeles in order to determine to what extent families and households in this area conform to Dan Quayle's notion of a typical family or traditional family model. In this chapter family and household characteristics are presented and situated within the context of recent social and economic shifts. This chapter will begin with an examination of contemporary family patterns through a review of demographic data at national and regional levels. This chapter will then discuss the Los Angeles economy in order

to situate contemporary family patterns within a specific socio-historical context.

The U.S. Census definition of family is used in this chapter for the purpose of discussing household and family changes. According to the census definition of household, there are two categories of households; either a "family" household or a "non-family" household. A family household is defined as a household with two or more people who are related through marriage, birth or adoption. This household type includes both married-couple and single-headed households with or without children. A non-family household is defined as being a single person household or a household whose members are not related. This category includes a variety of household types such as roommates and non-married couples.

2.1 NATIONAL FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Today, American families and households exist in a variety of configurations. Recent demographic trends such as the decline in the proportion of households composed of married couple families, the increase in the number of "non-family" households and increase in single-parent households have significantly changed the structure of most families. In addition to the these developments, the average household and family size is also shrinking. These developments

reflect the economic and social changes that have been underway over the past three decades (see figure 1).

2.1.1 Family Households

The "family" household includes both married couples and single parent families and is the most common among American households. In 1990, about 55 percent of all U.S. households were composed of married couples compared to 1970 when 71 percent of all households were composed of married-couples. This particular type of household will continue to represent the largest household group in the country (Demographics, 1993). Recent census figures, however, indicate that this household type is undergoing significant changes. Demographic research on the family reports a downward trend in households composed of married-couples families with children and report a growth of married-couple households without children.

In "family" households headed by a single parent (female or male), 1990 census figures show that this household type is increasing at a steady rate (see figure 1). For instance, today 17 percent of family households are headed by single-parents compared to 15 percent in 1980, and 11 percent in 1970 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1990).

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Today, the growth of family households headed by single parents continues to increase; however, not as dramatically as reported in 1970. Also in the single-parent household, single mothers represent the highest proportion within with 85 percent of all single parent households.

2.1.2 Non-family households

"Non-family" households include all household types whose members are non-related. According to population reports, this household type has experienced the greatest change. The census reports that in 1990 three of every ten households are non-family households (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990). In this household category approximately 84 percent are composed of people who live alone and 57 percent of non-family households are females living alone. "Other" households are also included in this household category. Approximately, five percent of the total households are classified as "other". These households consist of roommates or non-married couples. The rate of this particular household has remained relatively stable since the 1970s (US Bureau of Census, 1990).

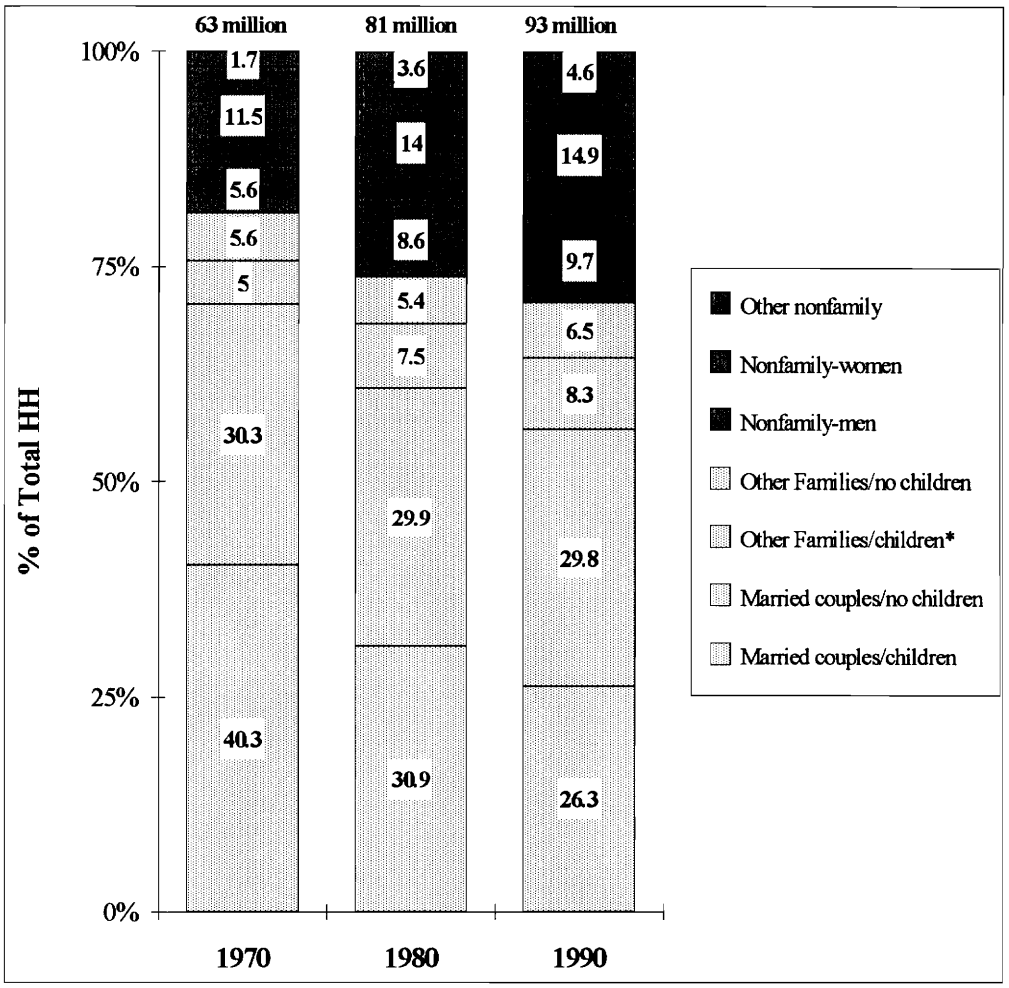


Figure 1. Family and Household Composition from 1970 to 1990

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 447, Household and Family Characteristics: March 1990-1989.

As argued earlier, families and households do not stand apart or outside of societal relations. Family arrangements and family meanings are in large part the products of their interactions with the social, economic and political environment (Anderson, 1993; Baca-Zinn, 1987; Coontz, 1992). In order to identify and demonstrate the differential impact that recent economic and social developments can have on family life and the household, the social and economic character of the Los Angeles area is examined.

2.2 LOS ANGELES: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

A Los Angeles Times report on Los Angeles's economy cites that there is an increasing gap developing between the "rich and poor" (Clifford, 1992). A critical development identified in this report is the increasing concentration of poverty among children, single mothers and specific racial-ethnic groups. In order to understand the family and household characteristics of Los Angeles, it is necessary to consider regional and city wide economic shifts currently in effect.

2.2.1 Economic Overview

Like many major U.S. cities Los Angeles has experienced some dramatic economic changes over the past three decades.

These changes are linked to the present global and local restructuring of the U.S. economy. Davis (1992), Soja (1989), and Oliver et al. (1992), discussions of the Los Angeles economy provide a comprehensive analysis of the social and economic processes currently underway in Los Angeles and address some of the social consequences of these developments.

In Los Angeles, this process is marked by the shift from an industrial and manufacturing based economy to a service and high technology economy (Soja, 1983). Recent developments include a decline in employment opportunities in the areas of industrial and heavy manufacturing. Also, while the traditional industrial base of the region is relocating out of Los Angeles County, nearby counties are experiencing growth in the area of high technology manufacturing (Soja, 1993). It is a process that is unevenly played out in the social and urban landscapes. As is the case in South-Central, Los Angeles, which was the traditional base of heavy manufacturing industry in Los Angeles. Today, employment in this area is being eliminated or replaced with low-wage unskilled employment opportunities as a result of the recent growth of the "service sector economy" (Oliver, Johnson, and Ferrell, 120, 1992).

Soja et al. (1983) addresses the social and spatial implications of recent structural developments in the Los Angeles area. His economic and geographic assessment of Los Angeles calls attention to the distinctive character of this economy. He states:

> [Los Angeles] has shifted from being a highly specialized industrial center . . . to a more diversified and decentralized industrial/financial metropolis. This shift has been the product of a combination and complex linking together of several different patterns of [economic] restructuring. . . (Soja et al., 1983; 211).

According to Soja, Los Angeles is presently responding to a new period of economic restructuring. This new period of capital restructuring characterized as "flexible capitalism" is restructuring both the labor force and the urban environment. The current trend involves both processes of "deindustrialization" and "industrialization" producing what is described as a decline of "the core" and expansion of "the periphery" (Soja, 1983; 211). This process is best observed in South Central Los Angeles, where an increasing polarization of the labor force is occurring (Soja, 1989). The closings of major industries in these communities are resulting in a "physical metamorphosis" of the social and urban landscape (Davis, 1992). Many communities are facing low-wage employment, low housing supplies, limited access to public services and limited

political power by which to address these social conditions (Davis, 1992).

2.2.2 Political Overview

In California, public policy at the local and federal level is guided by a conservative political system that has produced dramatic cuts in education, healthcare, and welfare programs (Davis, 1993). Given recent social and economic developments such as the growth of poverty among women and children, these budget cuts have serious implications for the stability of many families in Los Angeles. Mike Davis's (1993) discussion of urban and domestic policy issues in Los Angeles and California addresses the emergence of a conservative political system and its impact on social programs. He observes that while national urban programs for inner-cities such as subsidized housing, economic development and job training programs are being cut, federal programs are offering incentives and tax breaks to industries relocating away from traditional manufacturing bases. Davis (1993) argues today's cities are facing a number of obstacles; (1) a fiscal crises that has halted urban policy, (2) the emergence of a congressional conservative coalition and (3) state level welfare and

traditional education programs are experiencing dramatic cuts.

The issue of welfare reform is receiving a significant amount of attention in the public policy arena. An attack on California's welfare system has been prompted by a conservative initiative trying to address the "welfare dependency problem" of California (Oakland Tribune, 1992). In 1991, after experiencing a growth of 51 percent in welfare rolls, California cut welfare benefits to 800,000 residents in California (Stern, 1992). These reductions in welfare are being presented as one way to deal with the recent growth in welfare rolls. The issue of welfare reform continues to be very popular in California. For instance, proposals for welfare reform in California call for even deeper welfare reductions (Tobar, 1992). More recently, a 25 percent cut in welfare programs was proposed by the governor of California to offset the increase in welfare recipients. The interest in welfare reform is one of the most current attacks directed at families in California. More importantly, it is targeted specifically at women and children which poses a serious threat to the stability of families headed by single women.

2.2.3 Demographic Overview

In addition to the above economic and political factors, Los Angeles is also experiencing a dramatic shift in its demographic composition. Past and present immigration patterns are also responsible for reshaping the social and spatial urban landscape, including households and family arrangements. One of the products of U.S. immigration trends in this region is observed in the level ethnic diversity that exist in this region. Two of the most visible ethnic communities in Los Angeles are the Mexican and the African-American communities.

The Mexican-American population has a long history in Los Angeles, some of whom have been in this region since this Mexican territory was incorporated into the U.S. There is also an increasing number of Mexican nationals currently migrating to the Los Angeles area which is producing a diverse community within a community. Afro-American population growth occurred between the 1940s and 1960s as a result of the large migrations from the south at the time of the postwar economic expansion. Today, both of these population groups are undergoing a process of demographic transition. For example, census reports reveal a trend of out-migration among the Black population.

For instance, 1990 census figures for South-Central, Los Angeles reports a 17 percent decline in the Black population (Newman, 1992). Documentation of the patterns of demographic transition in Los Angeles reveal that new Latino immigrants are moving into what were once predominantly Black neighborhoods, and the Black population is relocating to neighborhoods nearby like Inglewood, California. This city has changed from being a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood to a predominantly Black neighborhood (Barringer, 1992).

More recent immigration patterns are also altering the racial-ethnic composition of this area. For instance, in the 1980s the United States admitted 8.6 million immigrants. This is a figure that has not been matched since 1910 (Miles, 1992). More importantly, one-fourth of these immigrants selected Los Angeles as their residence. According to 1990 U.S. Census data, one in three residents of Los Angeles are foreign born and more that 50 percent of the population over the age of five speaks a language other than English (Comeaux, 1992). The most dramatic changes involve Latino populations in the Los Angeles area. Today, 40 percent of Los Angeles are from a Latino background (Miles, 1992). The demographic character of Los Angeles reflects the recent influx of Latin immigrants primarily Mexico and Central Americans.

2.3 LOS ANGELES COUNTY: A PROFILE OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

When examining family trends at national and local levels some important differences can be identified in composition of families and households. The most apparent distinctions that occur between national and local figures are in household composition, household income, and the race and ethnic composition (see table 1). For example, in Los Angeles there are fewer married couples, more non-family households and more one-parent families. Also, the family and household size in Los Angeles is also smaller than national figures as a whole. The Los Angeles area has one of the highest concentration of Latino populations in the country. Table 1 identifies the variations that exist in the ethnic and racial composition at the local and national level.

The city of Los Angeles reports that approximately 60 percent of total households are family households (married couple and single headed households). The rate of family households in Los Angeles is slightly lower than the national figure of 70 percent. This figure includes both married-couple families and male or female headed households with and without children.

Table 1. Socio-Economic Characteristics for Families and Households at National and Regional Levels

Socio-Economic Characteristics	***U.S.A***	***California***	***Los Angeles***	***Los Angeles City***
Total Households	91,947,410	10,399,700	2,944,343	1,217,415
Family Household				
Married couple	55%	53%	50%	43%
Single-Parent	15%	15%	18%	19%
Non-Family	30%	31%	32%	37%
Median HH Income	$30,056	$35,798	$34,965	$30,925
Families below poverty	10%	9.30%	11.60%	14.90%
Persons per HH	2.63	2.79	2.91	2.8
Race/Ethnic Origin				
White	80%	69%	57%	53%
Black	12%	7%	11%	14%
*Hispanic**	9%	26%	38%	40%
Amer. Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	.8%	.8%	.5%	.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	10%	11%	10%
Other Race	4%	13%	21%	23%

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A & 1993 County and City Extra: Annual Metro, City and County Data Book.

In California, the rate of married-couple family households is also significantly less then the national average. Approximately 40 percent of total households are married-couple family households while the national figure is at 55 percent.

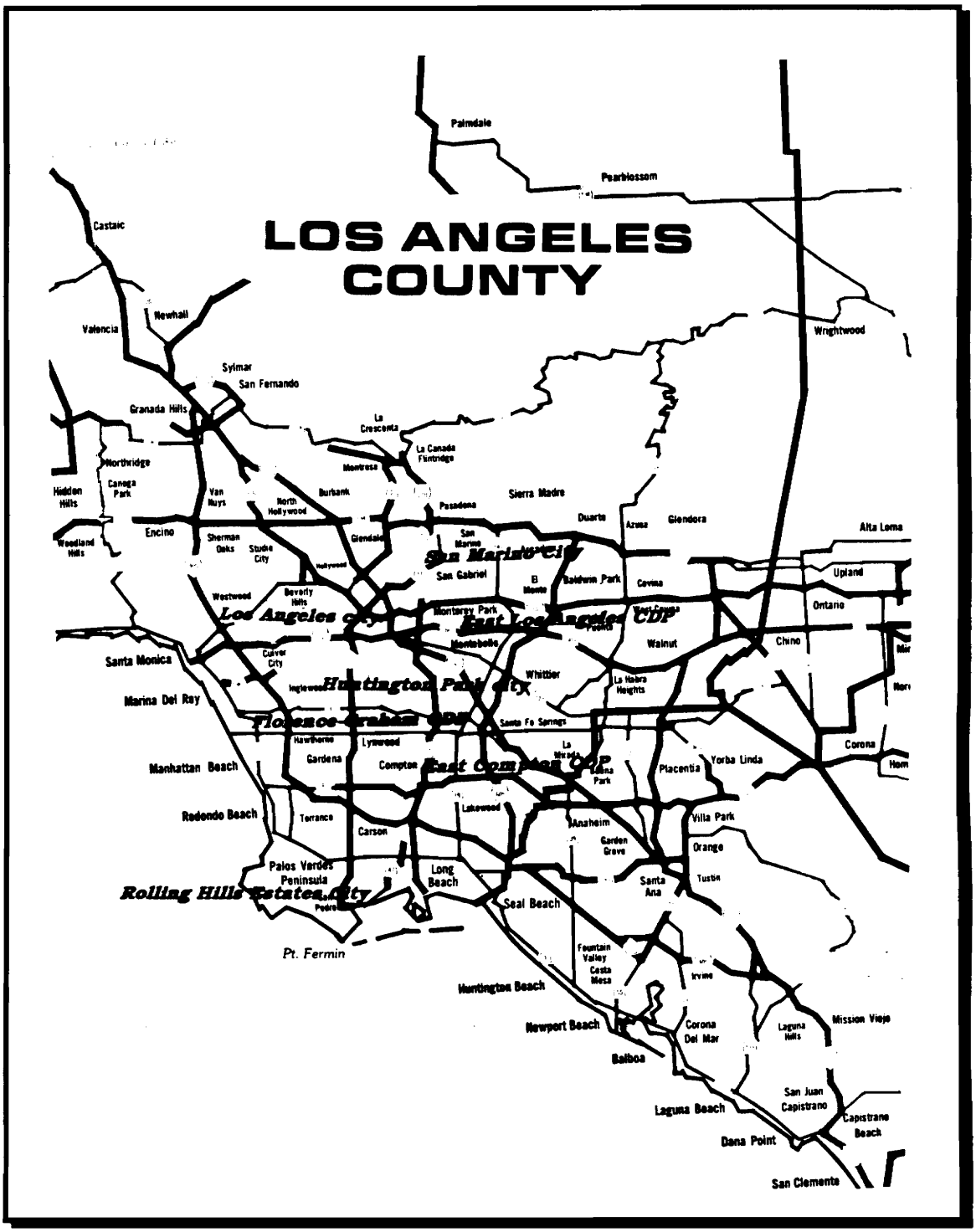
In the category of single-parent households, Los Angeles County and Los Angeles city both have higher rates than what the nation is reporting. In the city of Los Angeles, 19 percent of total households are headed by single-parents compared with the nation at 15 percent. In the "non-family" household category, Los Angeles city is also higher than national figures. Approximately 37 percent of total households in Los Angeles city are non-family households compared to 30 percent reported for the nation (see table 1).

There are a variety of factors that can have an impact on the household composition. Economic, political and demographic factors can be related to the individual characteristics of the family and household as well as the geographic variations of family and household composition. The section that follows examines more directly household and family composition and patterns in Los Angeles County.

2.3.1 Los Angeles County: Sample Household Characteristics

To give the reader an idea of the level of diversity that exists in Los Angeles, household patterns from seven areas ranging from areas with the highest median household income to the areas well below the median household income are presented (some of which were involved in the riots). They are: Florence-Graham CDP, East Los Angeles, East Compton, Huntington Park City, Los Angeles city, Rolling Hills Estates city and San Marino city. These sites have been selected in order to compare household patterns of neighborhoods with varying income thresholds.

The data for this analysis is gathered from 1990 Census of Population and Housing, the 1993 County and City Extra: Annual Metro, City and County Data Book and US Department of Commerce Current Population Reports. Table 2 orders the study cites by household income, the size of the household, the poverty status, unemployment status and the racial and ethnic composition (White, Black and Hispanic populations).



Map 1. Los Angeles County Study Area

SOURCE: Southern California Counties, Los Angeles Times Marketing Research, 1980

Table 2. Population and Household Characteristics for Los Angeles County Study Area

Los Angeles County	*HH Median Income*	*Persons per family*	*Families below poverty*	*% Un-employed*	*Hispanic*	*Black*	*White*
Florence-Graham CDP	18,901	4.74	32.3%	16.4	46%	26%	26%
East Los Angeles CDP	22,937	4.46	21.8%	11.5	53%	46%	01%
East Compton CDP	22,967	4.65	24.8%	13.8	36%	41%	21%
Huntington Park city	23,595	4.29	21.7%	12.8	55%	.1%	44%
Los Angeles city	30,925	3.48	14.9%	8.4	19%	10%	69%
Rolling Hills Estates	86,304	3.01	.9%	3.1	1%	.3%	98%
San Marino city	100,077	3.23	2.1%	2.8	2%	.2%	97%

Source: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD Rom File STF3

Data on household characteristics of the study area shows that the married-couple household is the dominant household type. For instance, figure 2 provides a breakdown of total households in study area by the census designated household categories of "family households" (married couple and single-parent) and the "non-family" household (non-related members). At least 80 percent of the total households are "family" households. This figure includes both the single parent and married couple households with or without children under 18. The proportion of non-family households is at the most 20 percent with the exception of Rolling Hills Estates. In the case of Rolling Hills Estates the census data reports that there are no family households with children. A factor that can be responsible for producing household variations is the age of the householder.

The data shown in figure 2 illustrates how the differences in family composition, household income and race and ethnic composition across the eight communities overshadow the similarities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are a variety of economic, political and demographic factors that can have an impact on family and household composition and responsible for the individual characteristics of these communities.

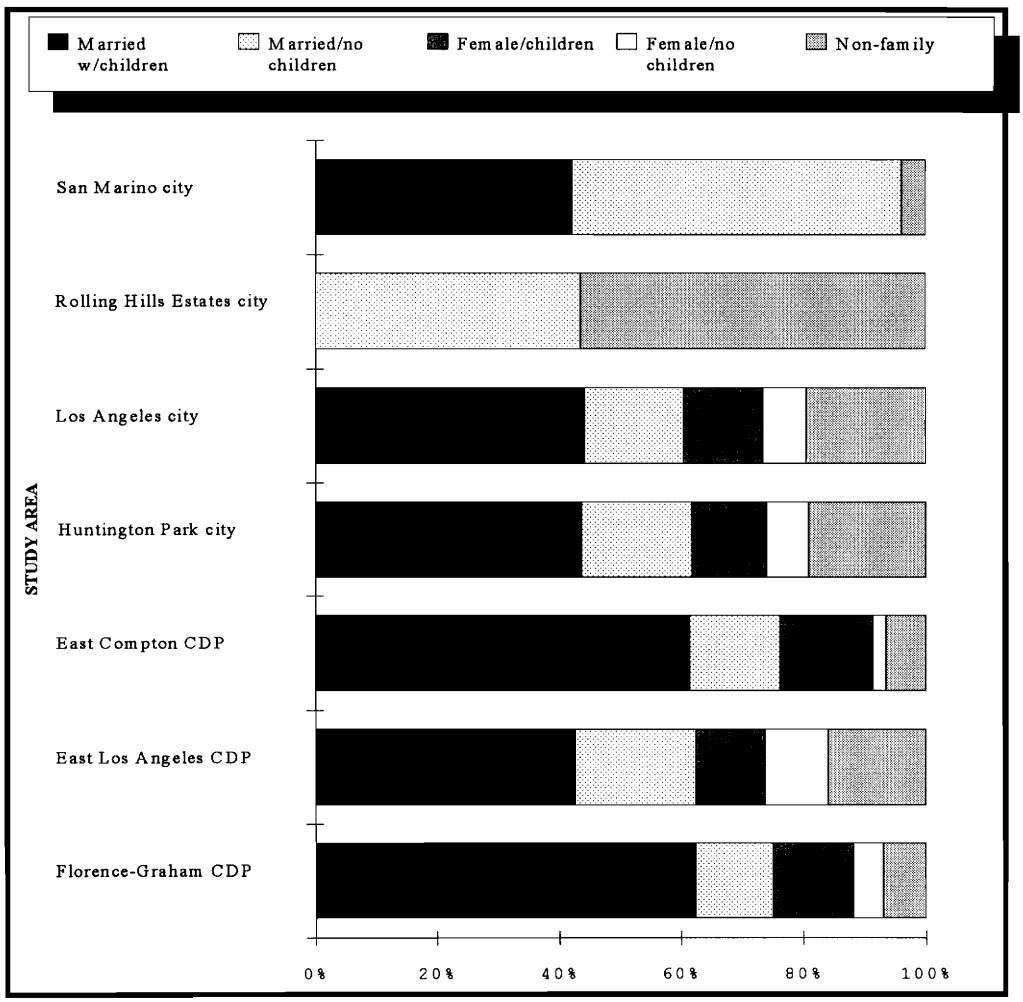


Figure 2. Household Composition of Study Area by Household Type

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A

2.3.2 Family households

Although the family household (married-couple and single headed household) is dominant in the study area, the level of variation within this category is what is important. For instance, at least 40 percent of all households are married-couple households with the exception of San Marino city. This figure is above the national figure which is approximately 25 percent. However, when households and the presence of children are considered the census figures illustrates some differences across the study area. For instance, there is a high concentration of married couple families with no children living at home in the areas where median family incomes are well above the average they include San Marino city and Rolling Hills Estates city. On the other hand, in the communities with median family incomes below average there were more married-couple families with children.

In family households maintained by single-parent households similar patterns can be observed. There is also a higher concentration of single-parent households in the areas where household incomes are well below the median family income. There are more households with children in the areas below the median family income and a lower rate of households without children in the areas well above the median income.

Although, the 1990 census data on family household characteristics of the study area identifies some distinctions associated with median family income, household type and the presence of children. In large part the married-couple household with children is the dominant household type across the study area regardless on socio-economic status. An important finding is the link between household composition and family income level.

2.3.3 Non-family households

A non-family household contains members who are not related to the householder. In Los Angeles county 32 percent of total households are non-family households and in Los Angeles city 37 percent are non-family households. This rate is significantly higher than the national figure of non-family households. However, in the study area less than 20 percent of the total households are non-family households with the exception of Rolling Hills Estates city where more than more than 50 percent are non-family households. The rate of non-family households in most of the study area is dramatically less than the national and regional figures. However, when this household category is examined across the study area there is significant level of diversity within this household type and there are no patterns observed.

2.3.3 Household composition by race and ethnicity

Table 3 presents Los Angeles County household and family characteristics by race and ethnicity. This data compares the household composition of Black, Hispanic and White households and provides some indication of the variation among households across race and ethnicity. Some family patterns emerge when the census data is organized according to race and ethnic group in terms of household composition of these populations. Hispanic households represent the greatest proportion of household composed of married with children. At least 40 percent of Hispanic households in the study area are married couples with children compared to 12 percent of Black households, and 19 percent of white households.

Table 3. Household Composition of Los Angeles County Study area, by Race and Hispanic Origin.

Household Type	*White*	*Black*	*Hispanic*
Total Households	778142	204295	369503
Married HH with children	19%	12%	39%
Married without	25%	16%	14%
Male HH with children	1%	2%	5%
Male HH without	3%	3%	6%
Female HH with children	4%	16%	11%
Female HH without	4%	13%	6%
Non-Family HH	42%	39%	16%

SOURCE: Data from 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A

In the category of family households without children, White family households represent the highest proportion of married couples without children under the age of eighteen with 25 percent. In Black households 16 percent are composed of married couple households without children and 14 percent of Hispanic family households are composed of married couple households without children. In "non-family" households, Hispanics represent the lowest percentage of non-family households. Approximately 15 percent of Hispanic households are non-family. White and Black households have similar rates of non-family households at approximately 40 percent.

The racial and ethnic composition is extremely varied across the study area. As table 2 illustrates, three of the seven cites are predominately White and there is a high proportion of Hispanics in four of the communities. When the census figures on household composition are examined by race and ethnic populations household characteristics, there are some similarities in household patterns that can be identified. For instance, The data reveals a relationship between family composition and economic status (see figures 3 through 6).

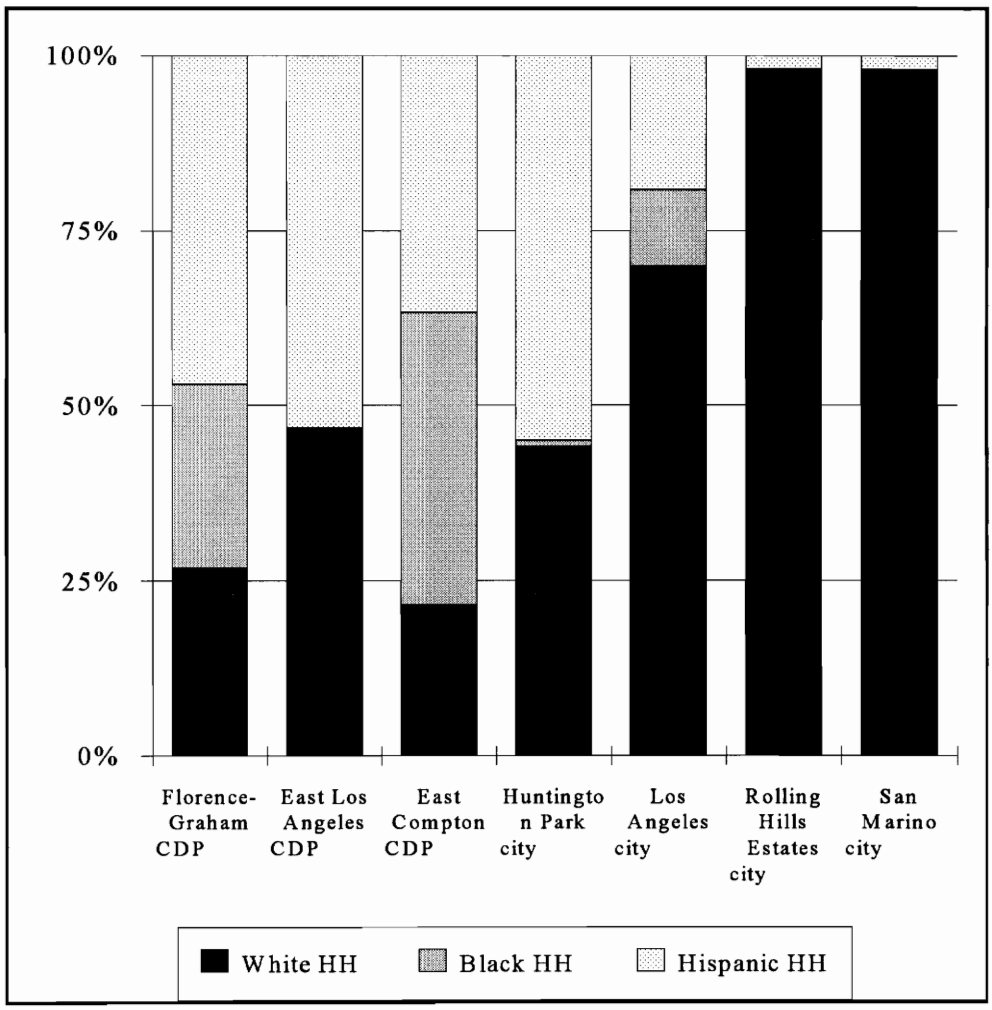


Figure 3. Household Composition of Study Area by Race and Hispanic Origin

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A

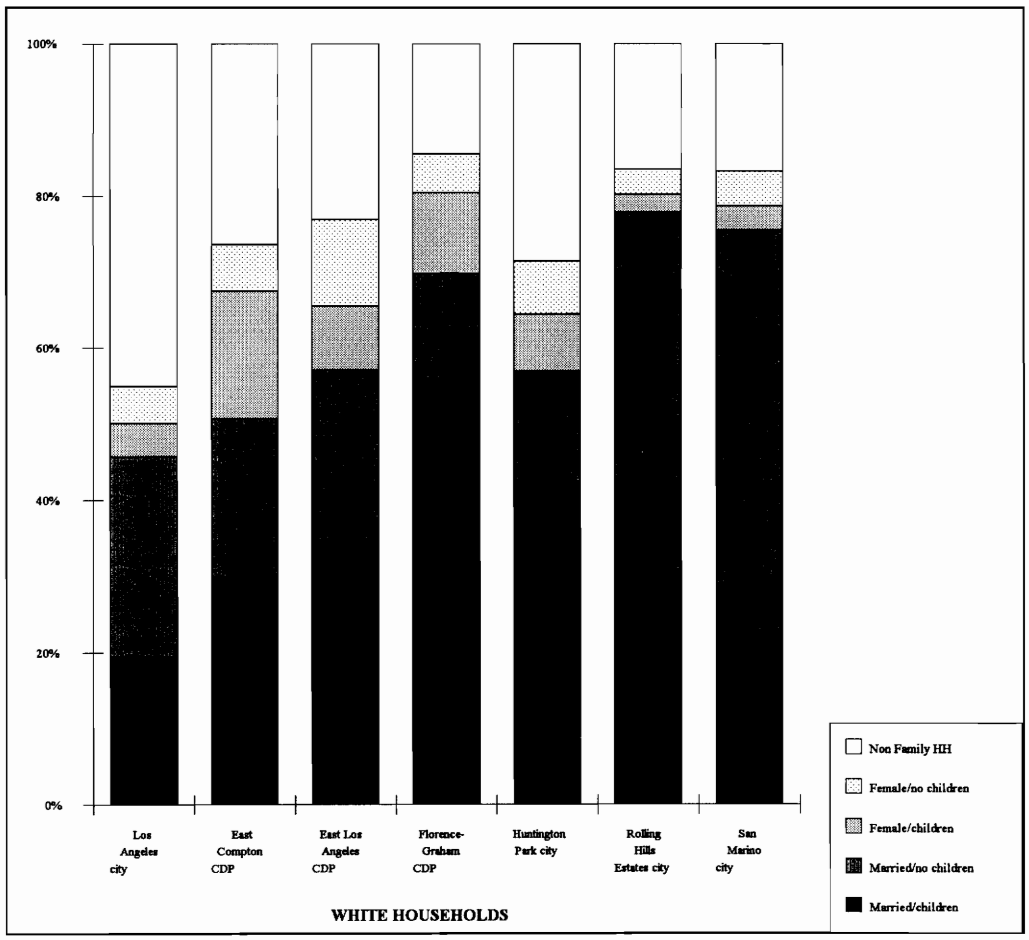


Figure 4. Household Composition of White Households

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A

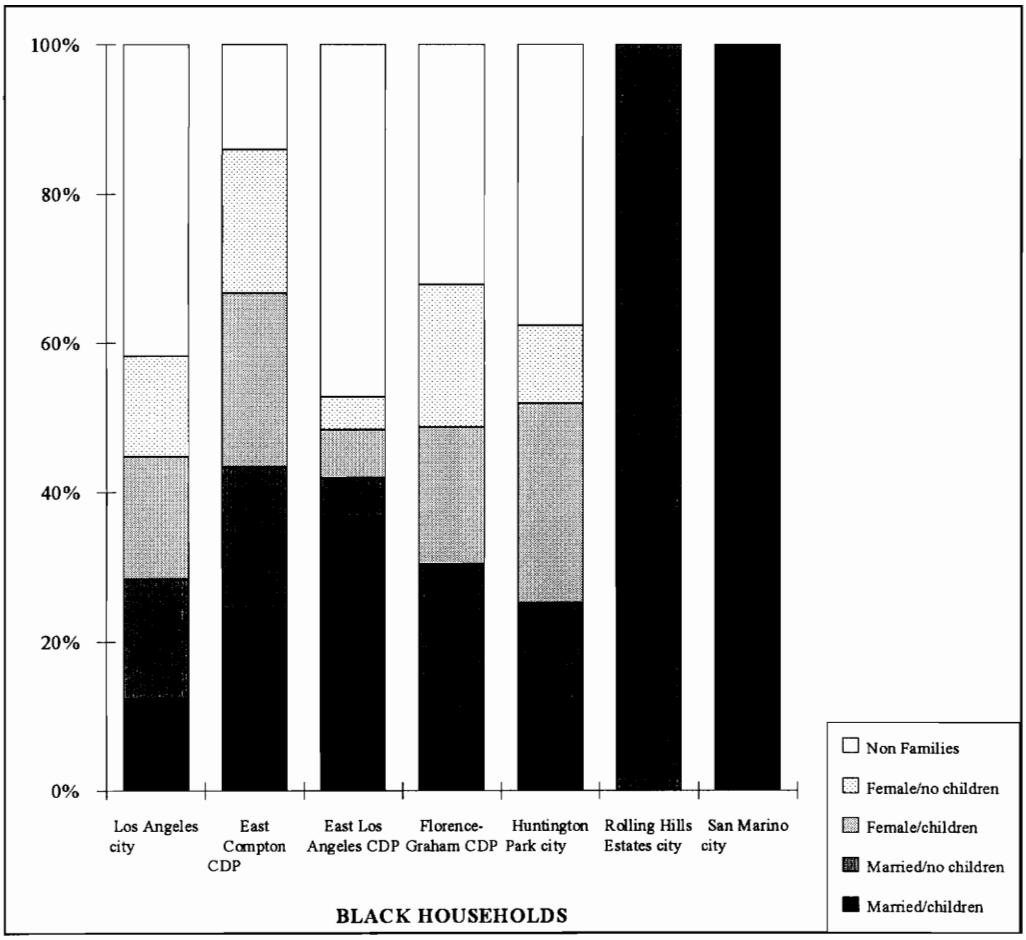


Figure 5. Household Composition of Black Households

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A

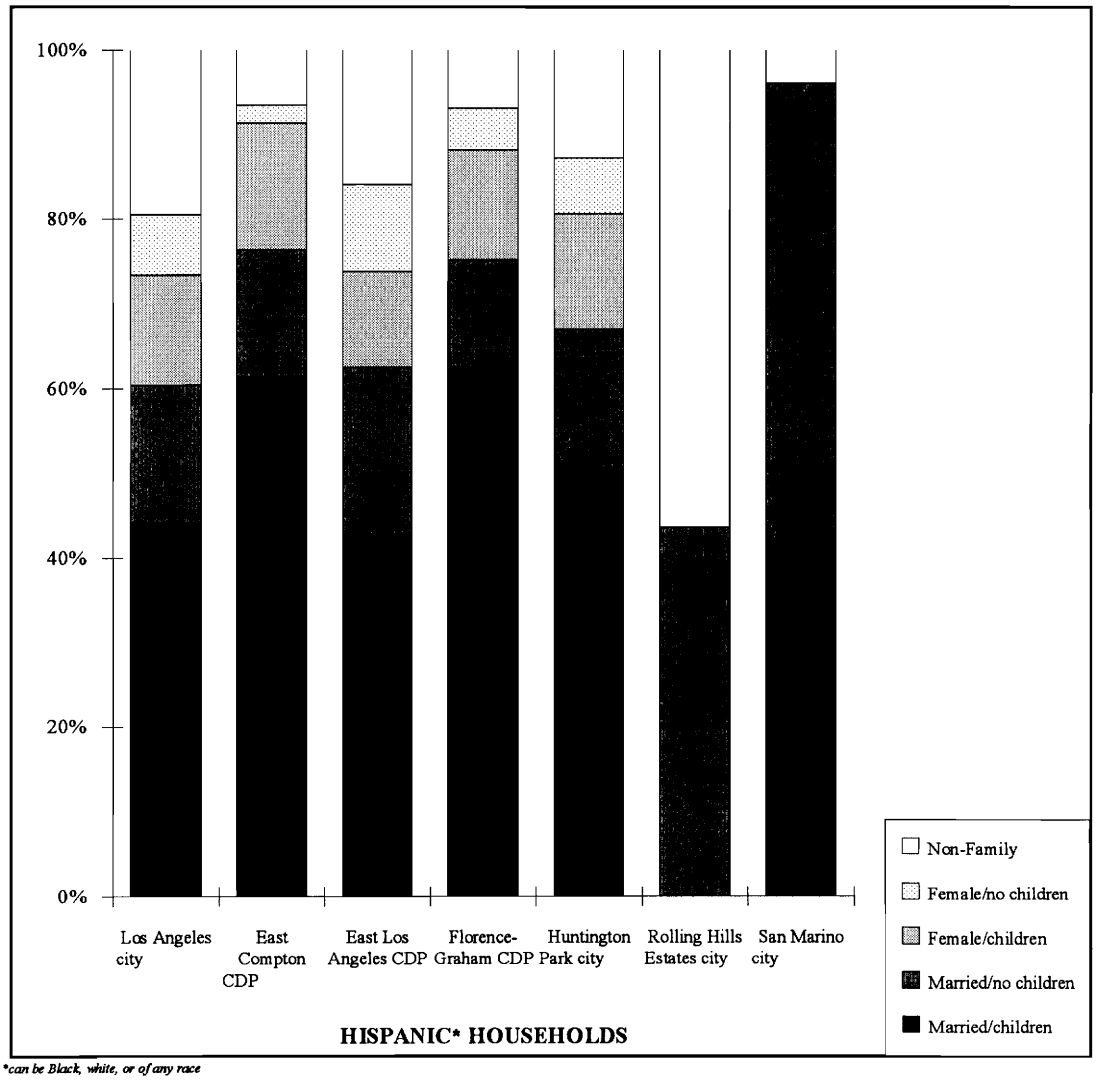


Figure 6. Household Composition of Hispanic Households

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary CD ROM File STF3A.

In this chapter I present and discuss Los Angeles county family and household composition in the context of broader social and economic conditions. Examining census data on household composition demonstrates to a limited degree how family composition in Los Angeles County varies by race and ethnicity as well as by household income level. The following chapter addresses the Bush-Quayle administration's family discourse and the social construction of "the family" in relation to contemporary family trends and recent economic and social developments presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

"FAMILY VALUES" AND THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS:
Representations of space, race and gender

The issue of "family values" was introduced to the 1992 presidential campaign when former vice-president Dan Quayle presented the "breakdown of the family" as a primary source of the nation's inner-city social problems, including the 1992 Los Angeles riots. In a speech delivered 19 May 1992 to the conservative Republican base in California, the Commonwealth Club of California, Quayle announced that "lawless social anarchy . . . is directly related to the breakdown of family structure" (Quayle, 1992; 518).

The speech, "Restoring Basic Values", was a response and reaction to the 1992 Los Angeles civil disturbances and protests that came after the 29 April 1992 announcement that four police officers were acquitted of charges in the beating of motorist, Rodney King. It was one of a number of campaign speeches delivered by the Republican party calling for the restoration and preservation of the traditional family (Eaton, 1992; Beifuss, 1992; Irving, 1992). In this case, the speech connected the Los Angeles riots to the issues of personal "moral responsibility" and "traditional" family values. Quayle has since gone on to speak before a number of groups expanding on his family values issue and

moral agenda. The term "family values" has come to represent a code word that incorporates far more complex and divisive social themes (i.e. poverty, "the family", welfare reform and crime). In Republican party campaign rhetoric the "riot" and "rioters" are coded as anarchistic, unlawful and immoral through discourses of the "problem" of "the family". Further, the family values discourse establishes the definitional boundaries for what is and is not the ideal American family arrangement.

This chapter examines the Bush-Quayle administration's family discourse and addresses associated representations of space, race and class. Dan Quayle's speech is presented through an examination of the social meanings, ideals and assumptions about "the family" that are articulated in the speech. Further, I draw attention to the relations of power that are structuring social differences based on the "traditional family" model. I set out to establish that Dan Quayle's reading represents only one of a number of possibilities for reading this particular event. Methodologically, the theories and concepts associated with the works of poststructuralist and feminist theory guide this discussion. Following the arguments of feminist theorists which is that identities are in part constituted through images and representations, I address "the family" as a representational object. By subjecting language and

text to a critical analysis one can begin to identify how our social categories and identities are constructed through political discourse.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section discusses the Los Angeles rebellion and outlines some of the events that transpired following the announcement of the not-guilty verdict. I also present academic and media assessments of the riots. In the second section, I present the Bush-Quayle administration's political ideology and discuss some of the philosophical views and policy positions of the Conservative movement within the context of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. In this section the family discourse of the Bush-Quayle administration is the focus of discussion. The final section is devoted to an analysis of Dan Quayle's "family values" speech through an examination of associated representations of the family, race and space.

3.1 THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION

3.1.1 The Event

On 29 April 1992, four police officers were acquitted of charges in the beating of motorist Rodney King. When the not-guilty verdicts were announced the reactions of some Los Angeles residents was shock and anger. Reports documenting the event describe that the initial response was in the form

of non-violent public demonstrations and protests (City in Crisis, 1992). The atmosphere quickly escalated into a violent and destructive display of protest approximately four hours after the verdict was announced. The first incident of looting occurred at the corner of Florence and Normandie and by nine o'clock in the evening there was one reported death and the first incident of arson. After the second day of disturbances, Governor Wilson declared a state of emergency and the National Guard was called out to restore "social order". Approximately 6000 National Guard members were patrolling the streets of Los Angeles by the second day of rioting and a total of 10,000 were deployed by the end of the disturbances. Six days later the violence, looting and arson had subsided. By 8 May 1992, at least 52 deaths were reported as well as 2300 injuries and 16,000 persons were arrested (City in Crisis, 1992).

The violence and destruction spread to many areas in Los Angeles; however, some communities suffered more damages than others. Parts of South Los Angeles, South-Central Los Angeles and Koreatown reported the most damages. In these communities more than 50 percent of the buildings were damaged or destroyed and more than 21,000 people were left without public services for well beyond the six days of rioting (City in Crisis, 1992,). More than 700 businesses burned and property damages are estimated at nearly $1

billion (City in Crisis, 1992). In addition to the property destruction, there was an organized assault against gun shops, sporting goods stores and pawnshops. In these particular incidents more than 4300 firearms were reported stolen (City in Crisis, 1992).

The riots initially involved Afro-Americans responding to the verdict, but it quickly expanded across race and ethnic boundaries. People of all ages and both sexes were involved in the looting. Press reports on arrests by ethnic composition cite that approximately 37 percent of those arrested were Latino, 30 percent were Black, 7 percent white and 26 percent unknown (Postril, 1992). Although there were reports of gang activity, the violence was not directed by any particular group. The rumor that the "riots" were led by Los Angeles gangs have been dismissed given the number of people involved and the level at which the destruction occurred (City in Crisis, 1992).

3.1.2 Explaining the Riot

The violence that followed the acquittal of the Los Angeles police officers was initially a response to what many residents feel are unequal standards in the U.S. justice system (Peterson, 1992). The civil disturbances are also reported to be a reaction to the social and economic

inequalities that exist in Los Angeles (Davis, 1993). In media and academic assessments of the source and consequences of this event, the issues receiving the most attention include; Los Angeles Police Department activities, (LAPD), police "minority" community relations and national and local economic and social public policies (Applebome, 1992; Bizjak, 1992; Davis, 1993; Oliver et al., 1993). Reports documenting police relations in Los Angeles and South-Central Los Angeles provide some understanding of the tensions that exist between the LAPD and the "minority" community. Oliver et al. (1993) argue that the Rodney King police brutality case was "the most recent in a series of cases . . . perceived in the black community to be grossly unjust" (p. 93-110). City in Crisis, a report published on police policy initiated by the Board of Police Commissioner's Office addresses some of these issues. This report investigates police responses during the rebellion and was initiated to assess LAPD deployment of police protection during the riots. In addition to the issue of police response, the report addresses police community relations and documents the history of LAPD community relations policies. Some of the more controversial cases involving LAPD activities and other incidents of police brutality are discussed in this report.

Los Angeles police activities, gang relations and social injustice are also central to Mike Davis's (1993) assessment of the sources of the Los Angeles riots. His work focuses on the issue of Los Angeles police and minority community relations and directs attention to the long-standing tension between the LAPD and the Afro-American and Latino community. Police racism, states Davis, is a major source behind the tension and conflict. He states that "the systematic harassment and repression . . . has criminalized black youth regardless of socioeconomic group or gang membership" (Davis, 1993; 26). The tension and hostility that Davis refers to stems from the fact that Black and Latino youth in Los Angeles are perceived as being the sole source of today's "inner-city" problems (i.e. drugs, poverty, and now the "riots". They have come to represent and are constructed in political rhetoric as "urban terrorists".

3.2 THE BUSH-QUAYLE NARRATIVE, THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT AND "FAMILY VALUES"

The Bush-Quayle administration's response to the rebellion is in part conveyed through the "family values"

speech delivered by former vice-president Dan Quayle. He states:

> I believe the lawless social anarchy which we saw is directly related to the breakdown of family structure, personal responsibility and social order. . . Right now the failure of our families is hurting America deeply . . . (Quayle, 1992; 518).

In the above passage the "failure of families" is presented as the primary source of the civil unrest. This narrative is representative of conservative Republican party family discourse (Wallace and Abbott 1992). Moreover, the narrative directs attention the value structure of the Bush-Quayle administration and Dan Quayle's conservative political position. Dan Quayle, whose political career began when he was elected in 1976 into the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms, is against "big government" and committed to preserving the "traditional" patriarchal nuclear family unit. He held a seat in the Senate for two terms and the House for two terms prior to his vice-presidential nomination in 1988. Broder and Woodward (1989) describe Quayle's politics as one that reflects his close ties to national leaders of the conservative movement. His Chief of staff, William Kristol, is primarily responsible for developing Quayle's political agenda, including the "family values" issue.

3.2.1 Conservatism

The political ideology of Conservatism is based on the attitudes that government presents a threat to the "natural" economy. The economic and social policy agenda of the Conservative movement is founded on the notion that government intervention should be limited. This political ideology promotes liberal economic policies, limited government intervention and the patriarchal family unit (Abbott and Wallace, 1992).

In a comprehensive analysis of the ascendancy of the conservative movement, Edsall and Edsall (1992) present the economic and social factors that are at the foundation of contemporary conservative politics. The authors write that the economic and social trends of the 1960s are critical to the rise of today's conservative movement. Further, they contend conservative pressures emerged during the 1970s and were directed at the liberal reform efforts of the 1960s. The rise in personal taxes, inflation and increasing crime rates were also contributing to growth of anti-liberal sentiments. However, more recent social trends such as the growth of single parent families, the growth of non-family households, the decline in fertility rates and women's increased participation in the labor force are being interpreted as a threat to society by conservatives.

According to Eisenstein, the conservative movement represents a group of political, religious and anti-feminist groups whose politics are centered around a concern for what they believe is a "crisis in liberalism" or the idea that government is being threatened by a "liberal takeover". Conservatives, states Eisenstein, are critical of and reject the "Great Society" model of the welfare state and promote a conservative welfare state (Eisenstein, 1982; 83). According to Eisenstein (1982) some of today's leading Conservatives include Daniel Bell, Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Nathan Glaser, Edward Banfield, James W. Wilson and Daniel Moynihan.

The Conservative movement has held a dominant position in the nation's political system since the 1970s (Edsall and Edsall, 1992). For all but one period between 1972 and 1976, conservatives have been the dominant force shaping the political culture in the U.S. The philosophical views of today's movement are in part a product of the 1960s movement; however, their views were not realized until the 1980s with the election of a conservative presidency and Congress. The 1980s election of Ronald Reagan marked the beginning of a strong conservative movement that combined liberal economic policies with New Right attitudes about moral values (Abbott and Wallace, 1992).

3.2.2 Conservatives and "the family"

The political views of Conservatives are based on the notion that society needs "firm laws, institutions and strict moral codes" to maintain a stable society (Zimmerman, 1992; 45). The conservative movement further adheres to the belief that the patriarchal nuclear family and associated gender roles are at the foundation of a ordered and productive society (Abbott and Wallace, 1992). Men are viewed as the economic providers and women are the economically and socially dependent members society. Women are also believed to naturally desire motherhood (Abbott and Wallace, 1992). Moreover, conservatives consider those individuals whose family lifestyles do not conform to their social standards to be disruptive and a social threat.

Conservatives consist of a wide range of interest groups who share a common concern, which is to curtail government intervention and the welfare state. Their position is supported by the view that government and liberal welfare programs are undermining the stability of American families. They also promote a conservative welfare state that will preserve the "American values of self-reliance and individual liberty" (Eisenstein, 83; 1982). In other words, Conservatives support the view that individuals should expect less from government because government

"cannot and will never be able to satisfy the demands for equality" (Eisenstein, 82; 1992).

3.3 THE BUSH-QUAYLE READING OF THE RIOTS: "THE FAMILY", RACE, AND SPACE.

Dan Quayle's speech, "Restoring Basic Values", is framed within a vocabulary of terror and fear that conveys the message that the "social anarchy" witnessed in the Los Angeles rebellion is the result of the "breakdown" of the "traditional family". Urban social problems such as gangs, welfare dependency, and the culture of the "underclass" are presented as the contributing factors and the cause of the civil disturbances. The speech further draws on images of "vicious gangs" and "lawlessness" in the city and associates violence and crime to a particular "family" model, the welfare-dependent household headed by women. Essentially, this narrative sets up an oppositional and hierarchical relationship between the "family values" of the audience and "rioters".

The Bush-Quayle narrative is organized around several dichotomies; rioters/non-rioters, normal family/deviant family, moral/immoral social body, inner-cities/suburbs. After these oppositions are established, they provide the main resource for legitimating the value structure of the

Bush-Quayle administration. The speech further associates the problem of "the family" with a spatially and socially specific domain, the "inner-city" and the culture of the "underclass". The social identity of the "underclass" in this context is constructed around issues of family structure, family values, race and poverty. For example, the rioter's social identity is connected to Black-American males and to single welfare-mothers living in the "inner-city". These social and spatial identities are constituted in the Bush-Quayle political rhetoric through representations of family, space and gender.

3.3.1 "Family Values": The social construction of "the family"

The Bush-Quayle administration's response draws on the family imagery and norms of the Republican party conservatives. The narrative conveys an idealized image of the American family which is based on certain assumptions about the family's place in society and gender roles within family.

In the speech Quayle states:

> [L]awless social anarchy . . . is directly related to the breakdown of family structure...For the poor the situation is compounded by a welfare ethos that impedes individual efforts to move ahead in society . . . (518).

The Bush-Quayle reading of the riots establishes a relationship between family values and "riots" by emphasizing the importance of the family as defined by the Bush-Quayle administration. For instance, the above passage directs attention to the issues of the "breakdown of family structure" and a particular "welfare ethos". These factors are then portrayed in the text as the underlying source of riots. The Bush-Quayle reading of the riots the family lifestyles of the "rioters", the "lawless" and the "poor" are measured against the family lifestyles promoted by Quayle. In this event, the Bush-Quayle administration's family definition, the patriarchal nuclear family model represents the social norm. This particular reading of the riots provides the rationale or justification for blaming those families who do not meet the family standards of the Bush-Quayle administration for the riots.

Quayle states:

> The responsibility of having families has helped many recover traditional values. Children need love and discipline. They need mothers and fathers. A welfare check is not a husband. The state is not a father . . . for those concerned about children growing up in poverty, we should know this: marriage is probably the best anti-poverty program of all. . . Ultimately, however, marriage is a moral issue that requires cultural consensus . . .(518-519).

Social identity boundaries for the family are constituted in the above passage and throughout the speech. They are that women should be married to men, that women are dependent on men and children should not be born out of wedlock. Family trends, like the growth of single-parent families and the culture of the underclass are used as evidence in this text to support the view that a "poverty of values" is what is breaking down the "traditional" family.

In addition to establishing the definitional boundaries for the family, the Bush-Quayle family discourse also articulates an idealized image of the place of women in society. It is an image of women as the "stay-at-home mother", preferably married with a husband that can financially provide for their one or more children. The strongest attack is made against women when a fictional television character (Murphy Brown), a single professional women, is criticized for "mocking the importance of fathers

by bearing a child alone and calling it just another "lifestyle choice".

It is on these discursively constructed normal and deviant family identities that the family ideology of the Bush-Quayle administration is conveyed, which is that the traditional patriarchal family unit is the preferred family arrangement. Further, that "having families has helped many recover traditional values". Finally, that the welfare state is at the root of family "breakdown" since it "subsidizes broken families"(Quayle, 1992; 518). This rhetoric serves as a means of reinforcing the policy agenda of the Republican party, which involves preserving the traditional family, reasserting a traditional gender based division of labor and limiting the expansion of the welfare state.

The Bush-Quayle reading of the riots is not sensitive to the socio-historical reality of contemporary family arrangements because it relies on an ahistorical image of family-household formations. The Bush-Quayle administration's family ideology as articulated in Dan Quayle's speech fails to distinguish between ideals and the realities of many families in the Los Angeles area, especially the riot victims. Therefore, it is important that the question of whose value structures are being

promoted in this reading of the riots is raised when assessing the sources of the civil disturbances. For example, when one considers household and family demographics presented in chapter two, the claim that "non-traditional" family arrangements are restricted to the "underclass" or even the "inner-city" can be contested. The census figures from Los Angeles county demonstrate how families across race, ethnicity and socio-economic categories have all undergone dramatic changes over the past three decades. Moreover, the family and household composition in Los Angeles presented in this survey illustrates that there are more incidents of "non-traditional" households among the populations and areas that were well above the poverty level (see Chapter two, Table 3). The Bush-Quayle reading eliminates from the political discourse social and economic factors as they relate to race, ethnicity, and gender based family differences. By constructing the family around the notion of "family values" and "traditional" and "non-traditional" family models, the economic and geographic context specific to this event are not addressed.

Critics of the Bush-Quayle narrative are challenging Quayle's reading of the riots and his family definition. They argue that attempts to reinstate patriarchal family relations and traditional gender roles as the social

standard are economically and socially oppressive to women. Cohen and Katzenstein (1992) state that conservative family definitions contribute to the maintenance of a patriarchal ordering of society by adhering to the view that there is only "one acceptable family form" and set of family relations (p.30). Moreover, they assert the "traditional family" is not a "natural" or "biological" arrangement. Family scholars calling attention to the differences that exist concerning the interpretation of contemporary family arrangements and family meanings are challenging normative family definitions and working to acknowledge that families are experienced differently across race, class and space. This research demonstrates how recent economic and cultural developments have altered gender roles as well as how these events are responsible for producing a variety of family configurations.

3.3.2 Place, space and "family values"

The Bush-Quayle narrative also establishes a spatial identity through the discourse of family values. Two urban identities are constructed. First, the text portrays the "inner-city" as a place of "lawlessness", "gang controlled" and the "underclass". This image exists in opposition to the identity boundaries of the "suburbs", as a place of

order and traditional family values. The "riots" are assigned a spatial identity in the urban environment separate and distinct from the concept of the urban "suburbs". Quayle states:

> It has become clear that the riots were fueled by the vicious gangs that terrorize the inner cities . . . The anarchy and lack of structure in our inner cities are testament to how quickly civilization falls apart when the family foundation cracks . . . (519).

The above text situates the "rioters" and the riot area "outside society". Moreover, this representation constructs the "inner-city" as a space which is out of "control". In the Bush-Quayle reading, the riot areas are positioned in the discourse as places that are "deviant" and "alien" from the safe places of the Los Angeles suburbs. Urban identity boundaries are also constituted in the Bush-Quayle text through representations and images of the "underclass" and their moral character.

Keith and Rogers (1991) write that there is no "essential definition of the inner city . . .it is a term that is linked not to one social problem but to a host of economic, social and political issues" (p.6). The Bush-Quayle narrative's representation of the "riots" as an "inner-city" phenomena produces an uncritical representation of the economic and social processes driving the civil disturbances. This reading of the riots as an "inner-city"

problem of "disorder and hopelessness" does not address the social and economic context in which the civil disturbances occurred. For instance, South-Central Los Angeles received a significant among of attention by the media, primarily because there were more reported incidents of looting, violence and property damages in this neighborhood. There were; however, a number of issues that were ignored in political rhetoric and characterization of the communities involved in the riots. For one, the civil disturbances extended well beyond the South-Central area or what many consider "inner-city" Los Angeles. Geographically, the areas involved in the 1992 rebellion spread out beyond this area. Secondly, the Bush-Quayle family values and underclass discourse does address the social and economic processes driving these conditions. For example, 1990 census figures on South-Central Los Angeles demonstrate that this area is well below city and county averages in the categories of income, poverty status, employment and level of education (Hubler, 1992). More than 50 percent of persons 16 and over are unemployed or have dropped out of the labor force. The poverty rate of families in South Los Angeles is twice the rate for the city and three times the national rate. Also, the number of households on public assistance increased between 1980 and 1990 from 19 percent to 25 percent (Hubler, 1992). Poverty in this area is

higher today than 1960 census reports and the time of the 1965 Watt's riots (Hubler, 1992).

By focusing on the threats of social "disorder", "anarchy" and "lawlessness", economic and social issues are dismissed from the political discourse and the political agenda of the Republican party. Moreover, the Bush-Quayle reading rhetorically provides the rationale and justification for the administration's urban agenda.

> [G]overnment's first obligation is to maintain order. We are a nation of laws, not looting . . . Program's of economic restructuring will not work so long as gangs control the streets. Our policies must be premised on, and must reinforce, values such as: family, hard work, integrity and personal responsibility (518).

The concept of urban space as places of "social order" and "disorder" cited in the above passage are addressed throughout the Bush-Quayle narrative. The Bush-Quayle reading of the riots outlines the administration's urban policy plans for restoring "order" in the nation's "inner-cities", including the riot area. This rhetorical response is in line with the traditional conservative policy agenda. Programs that provide job training, developing enterprise zones and reforming welfare are provided as a means of solving the social problems of the urban inner-cities (Quayle, 1992, 518). This particular plan for restoring "social order"; however, represents just one possible

reading. The questions of who is defining social order, and in what context social order is being interpreted are critical when addressing issues like social justice and economic equalities. The 1992 Los Angeles civil disturbances interpreted from a position other than the Bush-Quayle administration demonstrates that the concepts urban social order and disorder are under contest.

The Rodney King incident, for example, represents one of a number of police brutality cases involving Afro-American and Latino communities. In addition to the issue of social inequalities in the justice system, federal and state spending practices are resulting in cuts in social services and the elimination of employment opportunities in many of these communities. Therefore, the issues of police brutality, neighborhood economic and social deterioration, and the lack of public and private investment need to be addressed in representations of the urban environment as a place social order and disorder (Oliver et al., 1993). Davis (1993) cites dramatic cuts in education, social services and healthcare as being critical to understanding the cause and consequences of the social unrest and disorder that exists in Los Angeles. In his assessment of the social and political environment of Los Angeles, he argues that economic and institutional forms of "violence" in the way of

budget cuts are far more socially destructive than the destruction that occurred with the civil disturbances.

3.3.3 Race, ethnicity and "family values"

In the Bush-Quayle narrative experiences of economic and social inequalities connected to the U.S. history of racism are acknowledged but treated uncritically. Quayle states:

> There is no question that this country has had a terrible problem with race and racism. The evil of slavery has left a long legacy. But we have faced racism squarely, and we have made progress in the past quarter century. The landmark civil rights bills of the 1960's removed legal barriers to allow full participation by blacks in the economic, social and political life of the nation (518).

This passage draws on the history of U.S. racial conflicts. The race-based nature of the speech becomes apparent at the moment African-Americans and the experiences of slavery and the civil rights movement are incorporated into the speech. The speech is framed within a racial ideology that fails to address contemporary racial politics (Omi and Winant, 1992).

The key term in the Bush-Quayle narrative is the "underclass" and their social identity. A racial identity is given to the "rioters" and the "underclass" through representations of stereotypical images of "Black

Americans". For instance, African-American unemployed males and youth gang members are established as inherent criminals and single welfare-dependent mothers are identified as lacking in "moral values" and "personal responsibility" (Quayle, 1992).

In the dominant narrative the social identity of the "rioter" has been reduced to the ideology "underclass" that situates African-Americans within normative family definitions and gender roles.

> [The] underclass seems to be a new phenomenon. It is a group whose members are dependent on welfare for very long stretches, and whose men are often drawn into lives of crime. There is far too little upward mobility, because the underclass is disconnected from the rules of American society . . . these problems have . . . been particularly acute for Black Americans (518).

The above text overlooks contemporary race relations and the racial character of Los Angeles. The Bush-Quayle narrative disregards the fact that the "rioting" was a multi-ethnic demonstration and not simply a case of "black vs. white" racial conflict. Demographic statistics on the rebellion demonstrate that it was not a "race riot" because it was not confined to any particular race or ethnic group. Blacks, Latinos, Asian and non-Hispanics of white backgrounds were among the individuals involved in the disturbances. In fact, reports on the racial and ethnic character of the people arrested in the Los Angeles riots identifies that 37

percent were Latino, 30 percent were black and 7 percent were white of non-hispanic origin (City in Crisis, 1992). Even among Latino "rioters" there are significant distinctions. For instance, a majority of the participants were recent immigrants mostly from Central America and Mexico. Also, approximately one third of the riot related arrests were Latinos living in South-Central Los Angles, one-third of reported deaths were Latino and 30 percent of businesses destroyed were Latino owned (Newman, 1992).

The Bush-Quayle narrative and family ideology of the Republican party also positions African-American and Latino family arrangements in a way that collapses differences of race and ethnicity. Although, the Bush-Quayle reading of families in poverty references social and economic pressures through the discourse of the underclass, the family is constructed in generalizing terms and so is the social identity of the "underclass". The underclass is represented as the segment of society whose family lifestyles are lacking in "family values". As addressed in the previous chapter, Los Angeles's economy has undergone significant changes that are restructuring the spatial and social environment. Many residents are facing unemployment or low-skilled, low-wage employment opportunities.

For example South-Central Los Angeles, one of the highest poverty areas in Los Angeles, is undergoing significant changes economically and demographically. In 1965, the census reported that this neighborhood was 81 percent Black. Today, the neighborhood is almost half Latino (45 percent) and only 55 percent of the residents of this neighborhood are Black (Bizjak, 1992). Although the ethnic composition of this area has dramatically changed, the problems of joblessness, poverty and crime still persist. Recent census reports indicate that poverty rates in South-Central are increasing. The Bush-Quayle narrative neglects the issue of recent economic structural changes and their potential social consequences.

The Bush-Quayle reading overlooks the above mentioned issues and their role in maintaining the "underclass" status of most minority populations. Moreover, this particular reading of the uprising assigns urban social problems of poverty and violence to a certain segment of the American population, the Black population, despite the fact that in Los Angeles and California the social problems of poor urban neighborhoods involve far more complex social and economic issues.

Discourses of family values and the underclass in the Bush-Quayle administration are central to the political

responses to the riots in that they were strategically manipulated to reinvent conservative Republican party definitions of the ideal family. Moreover, the Bush-Quayle reading of the riots rejects race and class based diverse family arrangements. Dan Quayle's "family values" speech communicated a strong message to Americans as to who and what type of families present a treat to the social stability of the country. Even though the Bush-Quayle narrative identified some of the urban social problems contributing to civil unrest, it directed attention away from the specific social and spatial factors that associated with recent economic developments and focused on the "problem" of the family. Moreover, this particular reading of the riots produces an over simplification of contemporary racial political issues specific to Los Angeles.

In the chapter that follows, I focus on the contested nature of the Bush-Quayle administration's definition of family and reading of the riots. The concept of discourses of resistance is introduced in order to investigate responses to the Bush-Quayle reading of the riots.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCOURSES OF RESISTANCE:

Contesting the Family Values Speech

At the center of the "family values" controversy lies the question of whether contemporary family arrangements fit the family model promoted in the Bush-Quayle administration's political rhetoric. Up to now this thesis has primarily focused on the way racial-ethnic family life functions as a site around which a variety of discourses about the danger of the erosion of family values are being constructed. In any discursive event, however, there exist multiple readings. Thompson (1992) writes: "Discourses are multiple and offer competing, often contradictory ways of making sense of oneself, the world, and one's relations to the world" (p. 13). Feminist investigating the relationship between relations of power and discourse assert that discursive events consist of both authoritative "transmitters" and the audience (Alcoff and Gray, 1993). A discursive event establishes relations of power between the speaker and the listener. This social positioning is critical for constituting social meanings and identities (Alcoff and Grey, 1993).

In this chapter I introduce the concept of discourses of resistance to investigate responses to the Bush-Quayle

reading of the riots. I focus on discursive responses to acknowledge the existence of competing interpretations of "the family" and also to expose competing interpretations of the civil disturbances. My objective is to present and analyze the "family values" narrative from a position other than that conveyed by the Bush-Quayle administration. By examining the narratives generated in response to Quayle's discourse of family values, I aim to expand on the family definitional boundaries established in the Bush-Quayle narrative and provide a more inclusive discussion of the representations of race, space and gender as they relate to the status of contemporary families.

My analysis involves comparing and contrasting national and local readings of the event with the Bush-Quayle reading of the event. For analytical purposes I have identified two levels of discourses. *National discourses* which are taken from the editorial text of U.S. national publications. These editorials are obtained from leading U.S. newspaper publications which I consider to be a reflection of national and more popular attitudes and perspectives. The publications examined include *The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post and The New York Times.* I characterize the second level of discourse as *local discourses.* Local discourses consist of locally based and produced responses to Quayle's "family values" speech. Local level discourses

are obtained mainly from editorial commentaries that appeared in newspaper publications identified emphasizing a local or community based response. In many cases these editorials address such social issues as ethnicity and race, gender and the "inner-city" urban area. The publications examined for this level of discourse were obtained from a publications data bank, *Ethnic Newswatch.* They include: *The Los Angeles Sentinel, The Call and Post, The Sun Reporter, and La Opinion.*

In the sections that follow I address the ways in which society reacted through editorial commentaries to the Bush-Quayle reading of the Los Angeles rebellion. I explore some of the discursive responses to the discourse of "family values" and the representations of race, space and gender.

4.1 CONTESTING THE SPEECH

4.1.1 Editorial representations of the family

Both local and national level editorial responses to the Bush-Quayle narrative are directed at the administration's rigid definition of a family. Many of the narratives responding to the dominant narrative challenge Bush-Quayle's family definition on the basis that it assumes a universal family experience. For Quayle, there is only one acceptable family model and it is the patriarchal

nuclear family. The definition of the "ideal" family gets even more specific after Quayle factors out the family values of the "underclass" and "inner-city" populations.

National level narratives, for example contest the family ideology articulated in Bush-Quayle narrative on the basis that the family model promoted in this narrative represents a highly idealized view of American family life. Moreover, some of the responses cite that Quayle's narrative fails to distinguish between ideal and real family experiences. As Snortland explains, the "'Father Knows Best' view of family relations is not a real reflection of contemporary family life . . . Divorce happens in half of U.S. marriages . . . [and] nearly 60 percent of married women with children under age six work" (Snortland, 5/21/92; B7).

Both national and local editorial texts address contemporary family experiences by situating American families within a specific economic and social context opposed to the ahistorical family image conveyed in the Bush-Quayle narrative.

> Marriage is a great institution . . . why not tell the truth about it? One thing that's rough on marriage these days is how hard a couple, must work to maintain the standard of living that 40 hours a week used to pay for back in Ozzie and Harriet days (New York Times, Op-Ed, 6 June 1992; E19)

The above passage stresses the significance of recent economic, social and cultural developments and their impact on family life. Recent published demographic reports on U.S. Census data providing some indication of the social and economic character of U.S. families demonstrate that the nuclear family model is becoming less and less of a "norm" and also reveals that there is an increasing rate of "non-traditional" households. For families and households headed by women, the social and economic changes are even more significant as more mothers single and married are entering the labor force at increasing rates. These trends are linked to greater economic developments and are not indicative of a flaw in the moral character of society as Quayle's narrative suggests.

The dominant narrative neglects recent family trends when identifying the sources of "inner-city" tension and the sources of inter-ethnic and racial conflict. It ignores the fact that Los Angeles is suffering from high rates of unemployment and experiencing loss of "inner-city" employment due to recent industrial relocations (Davis, 1992). It also neglects the fact that Los Angeles is suffering from federal and state level cuts in government spending. These issues are obscured in Quayle's narrative because it explains poverty as not a product of economic and political factors, but a product of the behavioral and

cultural traits of the individuals involved in the disturbances.

The Bush-Quayle portrait of ethnic-racial family life outside a specific social and economic context is another way of ignoring family diversity in the U.S. The speech uses the Los Angeles rebellion to reinforce and perpetuate stereotypical images of the "underclass" and the "inner-city". Many of the editorial narratives (national and local) trying to explain the gaps between the material conditions and the "ideal" are looking at family trends in specific social and historical settings. For example, in the following national editorial text Bates actively challenges Quayle narrative and representation of African-American family life:

> If you've been listening to the babble from the Bush Administration, you would think that the notion of personal responsibility is something foreign or new to most of the African-American community. It has become a code phrase for 'what's wrong with these people' (Bates, LA Times, 23 June 1992; B7).

The above narrative identifies some of factors that are responsible for the tension that exists between individual family realities of the African-American community and the socially constructed definitions of family life. Bates's (1992) narrative on "family values" challenges definitional boundaries of family by describing extended family

experiences in the African-American community. According to Bates, extended family relations are a critical survival strategy for the African-American community:

> Caring for kin has endured every human hardship, even slavery. .In an ideal world, teenage children do not become parents, but this is the real world and all too many do. The grandmother I saw was doing her part, on a restricted income, to make sure her granddaughter's education would not be neglected because of the unplanned birth of a child. She was taking personal responsibility for her descendants' futures. Whites who cast the "responsibility" slur should look to their own house" (Bates, LA Times, 23 June 1992; B7).

In the following national narrative African-American experiences with slavery are revisited to illustrate the interrelationship of past family experiences with contemporary family experiences. Bates further explains:

> Slavery, for instance, did not usually recognize the validity of black family ties . . . Mothers who want to work to support their children find the task of obtaining inexpensive, safe day care onerous. Fathers are considered burdens, not benefits and welfare benefits stop if they stay under the same roof with their families (Bates, LA Times, 23 June 1992; B7)

The local editorial discourses also question Quayle's standards of morality and definition of a family. These narratives are critical of the generalizing tendencies of conveyed in Quayle's reading and contest popular representations of African-Americans by questioning the legitimacy of the White middle-class value structure.

> His speech sent a message that he had not a clue about the situation of the African American Community's culture, history, or family (Belle, Sun Reporter, 10 June 1992; 2)
>
> [H]ow can some Americans label all African-Americans as being on welfare, lacking in morals and desperately in need of a family unit. Although there are more Whites on welfare than Black, this is a story that is rarely exposed in the mass media. . . It's time for African-Americans to stop shucking and jiving and get down to the business of protecting ourselves and leaving a legacy for our children (Wiggins, Washington Informer, 3 June 1992; 14)

The above passages re-present an image of family life that goes beyond the representations and experiences portrayed in political rhetoric of the Republican party. The editorials stress issues such as the adaptations many families have had to make as they respond to social and economic pressures. The editorials also emphasize how government practices have contributed to the disruption of the family. By challenging the norms and standards of the Republican party conservatives, these narratives allow for a greater understanding of contemporary family meanings opposed to the dominant narrative representations of family life were men are the still primary source of income and a women's position in society is in the home where her responsibility is to raise a family and maintain a nurturing home environment. These editorial texts offer a perspective that expands on the cultural-deviant models of race and

ethnic families constructed in the Bush-Quayles reading of the riots.

The Bush-Quayle reading of "family value" limits the possibility of addressing the economic constraints the editorial texts are addressing by portraying an image of family life without a social and economic context. As discussed earlier in the chapter two, many families are responding to recent economic developments in many different ways. In addition to economic pressures, families are responding to cuts at the federal and local levels. The Bush-Quayle reading of the riots and contemporary family relations also fails to acknowledge how interrelations of time and space and the differences of race, class and gender when constructing their family definitions.

4.1.2 Editorial representations of "family values", race and gender

Both national and editorial texts call attention to the dominant narrative's representations of feminine and racial-ethnic identities. Snortland writes: "[O]ur country's government is not pro-motherhood or even pro-parenthood. It's anti-choice, pro-married and in favor of 'traditional' motherhood . . .(Snortland, 1992;B2). Some of the editorial identify some of the contradictions in the administration's

social policies for addressing single mother and their children. Criticisms are directed at Quayle's definitions of "the family" and representations of "race" and gender. The editorials produce family images that challenge the Bush-Quayle's reading by presenting women and their family experiences in more positive terms.

> Quayle and his ilk are stuck in the whitest part of the 1950s and miss the days when all of the nonwhite males know their places; African-Americans know where to sit and women of all colors know that their men were more important then they were (Snortland, L.A. Times, 22 May 1992; B2).

National editorial narratives responding to this discursive event argue that the Bush-Quayle reading reproduces a patriarchal structuring of social relations. Moreover, they contend the family ideology of this administration seeks to confine women to traditional roles within the family (Snortland, 1992). Local based editorials emphasize the racial nature of the speech in additional to the family definition. These texts are both contesting the Bush administration's family policy agenda and the family values issue on the basis that the dominant narrative does not consider race, class and sex based family differences. For example, Buckles writes:

> The debate is not whether Murphy is a positive role model for the American family or whether hers is a realistic portrayal of working women in America. It is about women making choices and controlling their own destiny (Buckles, Washington Post, 30 May 1992; A19).
>
> When they speak of the family unit and family values, I am hard pressed to see how this affects only African-Americans (Wiggins, 3 June 1992; p.14)

The editorial narratives also address some of the inconsistencies within the administration's boundaries of acceptable and non-acceptable family arrangements by identifying how the administration's theory for restoring social order and protecting the family relies on a highly elusive idea of family that distinguishes and privileges certain types of single-parent families. For instance, Goodman's (1992) editorial commentary is critical of the pro-choice and pro-family policy debates. She discusses some of the constraints placed on women when confronted with parenthood. The following editorial identifies how Quayle's standard of morality conflicts with the choices available to pregnant single women:

> What's a pregnant women to do with an administration that's hostile to a single-mother and opposed to abortion? Stay pregnant? . . . In those wonderful yesteryears that the vice president brings back to moisten our eyes with nostalgia, unwed mothers were judged on a single standard of morality. . . Today, if an independent single women becomes pregnant, her co-workers are likely to hold their tongues and hold a baby shower. If a woman on welfare has a third child by a third husband everyone has something to say - and it isn't pleasant (Goodman, Washington Post, 23 May 1992; A31).

Quindlen (1992) and Lopez (1992) editorial texts challenge the definitions and boundaries of femininity and family constituted in this specific discursive event by presenting their "reality" and describing the experience of single-motherhood in more positive terms. The text explains that persons who are working to support their family are should be treated as "role models" and an advancement for women.

> Murphy's character represents a lot of real women who are struggling, hard-working single parents by choice or through unforeseen circumstances . . . They have one thing in common - they love their children and are their sole support (Letter to the Times, Lopez, LA Times 27 May 1992; B6).

> A women who is struggling to raise a daughter alone doesn't need a lecture on family values. She knows what they are (Quindlen, NY Times Op-Ed, Sun 14 June 1992; E9).

The above national narratives illustrate that the issue is not that women are "mocking the importance of men" as Quayle suggests. The issue in part stems from the fact that

there is a history of government policies that are hostile towards women, in particular poor single mothers. The Bush-Quayle administration public policy positions follows these patterns. They reflect conservative political philosophies that perceives recent family changes as threat to the nation's social fabric, a social fabric conceptualized and governed by privileged white men.

> Quayle's indictment does not stem from any person knowledge of the plight of these children, or from any demonstrated personal compassion. It is merely the attempt by a politician who has known nothing but privilege (Call and Post, 4 June 1992, 4A)

Axinn and Hirsch (1992) provide an analysis of recent developments in welfare policies that expands on these editorial critiques of government policies and the welfare system. Their research addresses the recent debates over welfare reform proposals and discusses the particular significance for women. Further, they assert that recent state and federal legislation is driven by a victim blaming perspective whose only concern is reforming women. These policies are about the reform of "undesirable" behavior of low income women and their children. According to Axinn and Hirsch (1993), recent legislative efforts are directed at controlling welfare recipients' behaviors. They include cutting benefits to: (1) families whose children who do not attend school, (2) families who do not immunize their

children and (3) families who cannot pay rent. Axinn and Hirsch question these reforms because they target women not men.

4.1.3 Editorials contesting the concept of the "inner-city"

The Bush-Quayle political rhetoric on urban decline differentiates between the family values of the inner-city and the suburbs. Local editorial commentaries describe the Bush-Quayle narrative as a classic example of the political strategy of playing the "race card". These editorials express the tension that exists within the African-American community and are critical of the use of stereotypical images of "inner-city" social problems in political rhetoric. Wiggins' (1992) narrative, for instance, contests the view that declining family values are unique to the African-American community.

> The break-up of the family unit, morals, family values, welfare and babies have all been used in strategic places to replace African-Americans. . . When they speak of the family unit and family values, I am hard pressed to see how this affects only African-Americans (Wiggins, Washington Informer, 3 June 1992; p.14)

> Quayle's indictment does not stem from any personal knowledge of the plight of these children, or from any demonstrated personal compassion. . .Republican leaders are attempting to use the riots as a "wedge" issue to further frighten and anger white voters. . . They are wrong-headed, because they fail to address the myriad of issues which have worked together to create the despair and anger in our nation's inner cities (Call and Post, Cleveland, 4 June 1992; 4A).

The Bush-Quayle reading of the Los Angeles rebellion is characteristic of "divisive" political strategies. Davis's (1993) discussion of contemporary urban policy further explores this political strategy in his urban analysis of Los Angeles public policy issues. The "decline" of urban America, states Davis, is in part related to the lack of commitment in solving urban inner city problems. According, to Davis the city is now "color coded". Further, the political system in power, the conservative Republican party has "done far more damage to Los Angeles' poor neighborhoods than the fires of last spring" (Davis, 1993, 44). Both federal and local level government policymakers are neglecting the "inner-city" in their efforts to serve their constituents who are now primarily located in the suburbs. According to Davis, this is one of the "great strategic projects of modern conservative politics" (Davis, 1993a, 4).

Frohnmayer's (1992) narrative, illustrates the contradictory nature of the family values issue by raising the question of whose moral standards should American

families be measured against. This narrative also addresses conservative government policies and the conflict over the issue of government intervention.

> Actually, Quayle is right in attacking a poverty of values in the nation. His key error is in fixating on the erosion of moral values in the inner city as if morality has remained constant elsewhere (Los Angeles Times, 21 May 1992; B6).
>
> It's time for dialogue, not ideology. Family values is "code." It means one set of values (often hate, prejudice and exclusion) to be imposed by the Government and by those who "know" the moral truth. . . It's paradoxical that conservatives, who want government out of their face, ardently press for governmentally enforced morality (Frohnmayer, The New York Times Op-ed, 14 June 1992; E19).

Quindlen's narrative interprets the family values issue as a highly idealistic portrayal of family life which is extremely oppressive to minorities and women. In this case, it is oppressive to families associated with the culture of the "underclass" who are located in the "inner-city". Her narrative reconstructs the family ideal by integrating the socio-historical context associated with the family model Quayle promotes. Quindlen states:

> His standards. His values. His ideas of right and wrong. . . have nothing to do with individuals. . . It is the sort of thinking that, 50 years ago would doubtless include the rightness of segregation . . .the subjugation of women, and justified both in the name of clear objective standards of right and wrong, commonly held values and morals (Quindlen, NY Times Op-ed, 14 June 1992; E19).

Both national and local editorial narratives responding to Quayle's conceptualization of urban spaces are challenging the dominant narrative's manipulation of images of "poverty", "disorder" and the "family values" as a way of constructing the cultural-deviant family and "inner-city". Some of the editorial responses see the Republican party's use of riots as a case of divisive politics and attempt to split American voters along the lines of family values. These editorials responses problematize Quayle's narrative by describing how the text "perpetuates the divisiveness" that exists within American political culture.

In this chapter I focused on the discursive responses to this particular reading in order to demonstrate how many writers actively resisted the definitions and social identity boundaries constituted in the dominant reading of the Los Angeles rebellion.

CONCLUSION

The topic of this thesis is the political construction of the family. This project examines the way dominant definitions of the family are produced and contested in political discourse and how they are integrated into academic and political rhetoric. By focusing on the political rhetoric surrounding the Los Angeles riots and the family, I illustrate how the values, attitudes and norms conveyed in the Bush-Quayle political rhetoric are contributing to the current public debate over defining the family. However, the controversy associated with defining the family, is not confined to the Bush-Quayle administration's family ideology. The family has long been a field of conflict that has polarized Americans who hold different opinions concerning the role and the nature of the family (Hunter, 1991). It is important that one recognize that fundamental social constructs like home and family are experienced differently among and within categories of race, gender and class. Recognizing that individuals and families exist in a variety of ways helps to explain some of the uncertainties that are associated with defining family life.

Three prescriptions can be derived from this study in terms of understanding and recognizing the current

controversy over the conceptualization of the family. First, it is important that scholars and policy makers recognize that the family is in part an ideological construct that cannot be presented and interpreted as a universal experience. By challenging dominant definitions of the family one can begin to identify and understand that families vary and are changing in different ways. Second, by recognizing the contested nature of the family, one can begin to identify how family ideologies function as another form of social constraint. Factors like gender role differences and value structure differences are among some of the issues that are important when trying to understand how and why not all American families have developed in the same pattern. Finally, because differences occur at the level of race, gender and class and experienced differently across time and space, it is critical that family theorists focus on how family discourses maintain and reproduce dominant ideological views about family life.

I conclude by stating that Dan Quayle's "Restoring Basic Values Speech" and the Bush-Quayle administration's reading of the riots was ageographical. It is ageographical in the sense that the speech presents a highly idealized image of contemporary urban social and spatial relations. The speech ignores such factors as the interdependence of time

and place, and how social differences of race, class and gender shape and contribute to diverse social identities.

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