CHRISTINE OPPONG
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

The outstanding factor in the decline of population growth in a number of countries over the past eighty or more years has been what Banks has termed the "retreat from parenthood", the fact that many people no longer wish to have the numbers of children that their grandparents had (1954: 4). The earliest signs of these changes in attitude and behaviour have been noted to take place among the upper middle classes and professionals, followed by civil servants, clerks, teachers and so on (Banks 1954: 5). This shift in attitudes and behaviour has already begun to be documented in Ghana. As Caldwell's study showed, with material collected, just ten years ago, socio-economic and urban-rural residence fertility differentials, though small, already appeared to have come into existence. Changes in the ways of life were seen to be making large families more burdensome for the urban middle class (Caldwell 1968: 187). In the sample he surveyed at that time the women were noted increasingly to regard four children as being the right number and men six. Ampofo's recent study of women teachers has confirmed these aspirations (1971: 106). It is this apparent retreat from parenthood, at least in its traditional proportions, which we wish to explore briefly in this report, among a set of people already singled out as being in the forefront of such changes by their type of occupations and place of residence.

The Data and the Design

The data discussed have been taken from a study primarily focused on married junior civil servants. Here we are concerned with the unmarried sec-

* An earlier expanded version of this report was read at the third interdisciplinary Family Research Seminar held at the Institute of African Studies, Legon in March 1973, and will be appearing in Legon Family Research Papers No. 3. The study from which these data have been extracted was financed by a generous research grant from the Ghana National Family Planning Programme. Special thanks are due to Mr. S. Kwafo of the G.N.F.P.P. for his patient help and advice, during the course of the survey.
tion of the sample who were found to be without spouse or child. Our aim is to examine their attitudes concerning family size and family planning.

In research design this project partly resembles that of Caldwell's study of the urban elite (1968) as we are looking at two parallel samples, one of men and one of women. Though both samples are admittedly small, they are quite independent and so we may be able to use the results of one survey to support those of the other. The samples are analytical in nature, not representative, selected specifically for the exploration of variables correlated with differences in attitudes concerning family size and planning. One sample comprised 78 nurses, the other 80 clerical officers. It was precisely because Civil Servants and clerks have elsewhere been frequently noted to be in the forefront of the family size change process along with professionals, teachers and others that we chose them. In particular we were interested in finding out within this category those who were retreating or intending to retreat most rapidly from parenthood.

The data was collected through self-administered questionnaires. Almost all the men and women in the samples were between twenty and thirty years of age the average age of both samples being twenty five. The majority had attended secondary schools and all had been trained locally for their jobs. In both samples about a third were Ga, a third Akan and one sixth or fewer Ewe. Several came from the Northern and Upper Regions.

Over half of the women had fathers in clerical and professional type employment compared to two fifths of the men. Thus in both spatial and socio-economic terms a large proportion of these two populations is mobile, the Ga members forming the indigenous population.

Family Size: desired/ideal

We found, as have those before us, that the desired family size for the majority was 4, as was the ideal family size (Caldwell 1968; Ampofo, 1971). The number of children wanted ranged between 2 and 6 among the women, and from 2 to 15 among the men, with a greater proportion of the men wanting five or more children (36% as compared with 17%). Ideas as to how many children would be too many or too few were similar, both samples considering an average of 8 children too many and 2 not enough (1.6. was the mean in the case of the nurses).

Nine out of ten nurses and three out of four clerks said that educated people in Ghana want smaller families now than they did twenty five years ago.

---

1 For a discussion of the value of the analytical sample in small scale research see Oppenheimer (1966: 9).
2 One set of respondents comprised clerical officers in nine ministerial departments in Accra. The overall response rate in this enquiry was 78%. The other set of respondents comprised nurses from eight hospital departments and clinics in Accra. In this survey the response rate was 85%. Many thanks are owed to the kind ministry and hospital staff who so graciously helped in the process of data collection. In this report only those nurses and clerical officers have been included who reported that they had never been married and had no children.