Thesis

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Socio-cultural contexts of fertility among the yakurr of south-eastern Nigeria

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SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF FERTILITY AMONG THE YAKURR OF SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

A survey of 1,351 women and men aged 15-50+ years among the double unilineal Yakurr establishes fertility as inseparable from the sociocultural contexts in which it occurs. Employing field methods from anthropology and demography, the study argues that fertility transcends the boundaries of either discipline and its comprehensive study entails the collaboration of both. Its objectives encompassed (1) the relationship between double unilineal descent and fertility; (2) the religious and political role of matriclan priests; (3) contraceptive knowledge, attitudes and practices; (4) the interrelationships among pronatalism, marriage and fertility; and (5) the relationship between the proximate determinants of Yakurr fertility and specified sociocultural factors. Data were collected by the triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, unobtrusive observation and the questionnaire. The conceptual framework synthesized general functionalism with Bongaarts' proximate determinants in order to activate the background factors ordinarily held constant by the traditional model. The qualitative data were analyzed using ethnographic summaries and a manual content analysis to enhance the explanatory clarity of the findings. The quantitative data were analyzed through a process proceeding from univariate frequency distributions and crosstabulation of variables to multivariate analysis, utilising ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regressions to elucidate the relationships among the multiple factors affecting fertility. The combined results indicate that fertility is a product of complex cultural interactions that are decomposable into a set of interacting predictors encompassing personal, marital,

kinship and ideational factors. Specific findings include that (1) men are more pronatalist than women and have a higher fertility at younger (15-24 years) and older ages (45+ years); (2) double unilineal descent exerts pressure on women to bear many children through the implications of exogamy, matrilineal descent and post-marital patrilocal residence; (3) pronatalism forms the basis of the society's theocratic governance; (4) there is a definite trend toward reduction of polygyny that is associated with changing patterns of fertility; (5) there is a strong inverse relationship ($r = -0.86645$) between educational level and pronatalism, and a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.892$) between adherence to traditional values and preferred family size among Ugep women; (6) there is a high level of contraceptive awareness and low level of use; and (7) age at marriage, periodic abstinence, breastfeeding, and contraception are the principal proximate determinants of Yakurr fertility. The nature of these and other findings indicates quite forcefully that the search for an alternative model for explaining sub-Saharan African fertility is a quest for a holistic view. The findings also point to the impingement of patriarchy and pronatalism on the political economy. By incorporating ethnographic insights and themes into demographic analysis, the study contributes to the methodological and theoretical growth of demography and the macro-micro linkages that have become its consistent concern since the early 1980s.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of

My father, Mr. Martin Obono, who went gently into the night this year

and

Professor Bassey Andah, whose sun set at noon like yesterday

and

In deep appreciation of

My wife, Koblowe, who kept courage going
As we watched these vital events

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Oka Obono
April, 2000

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by **OBONO, OKA MARTIN** for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Demography and Population Studies)** in the Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan.

Signature:..... Date:... 26/4/2000

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GLOSSARY

Ajimo: See *lejimo*.

Akomma (sing. *lekomma*). Dwelling place of the Yakurr at the minimal level.

Aniebe: Efik for "Who just passed?" Pomade used prominently in traditional courtship practices.

Ase: See *yose*.

Asunaja: Nko fertility deity.

B'ina: See *ina*.

Eblabu: "Ghost- Dog" Society, a cult deployed for ward level administration.

Ebon: Ceremony of feasting and merry-making to commemorate end of *Kukpol*, it was a rite of passage marking bride's entry into full adult status.

Edet (pl. *ndet*). A deity.

Edet Etoutou: Prominent *emanamanadet* in Ugep.

Edet Lopon: Town deity in custody of the *Okpebri*.

Eko: "Age Grade". In this context, a part of the bridewealth meant for the bride's age mates.

Ekpe Edet: Leading deity in Ugep.

Emanamanadet (pl. *Mmanamanadet*). Fertility deity.

Eponnamma: "Penis tract of the patriclan". The patrilineage.

Epundet (pl. *Yepundet*): Deity associated with a particular patrilineage.

Etenteni: "Flax". A part of the bridewealth, supposedly meant to help in the purchase of flax for tying yams in the barn.

Ina (pl. *B'ina*): Priest of a fertility or other spirit, member of the *Yabol*.

Keblo: "Farming". Part of the bridewealth, given in lieu of physical assistance on the farm.

Kebong: "Disinterest". A symbol used by a girl to indicate rejection of a suitor's marriage proposal.

Kedei: "Love". Also an inscription used to signify acceptance by a girl of a suitor's marriage proposal. The normative and spiritual oneness of a couple in the Yakurr conception is portrayed in the inscription. See also *Kebong*.

Keji: "Palm Nut". Part of the bridewealth, meant for the bride's mother to assist her in purchasing palm fruits for cooking oil.

Kekpatu (pl. *Yekpatu*). Ward or main division of a Yakurr settlement.

Kekpopam: "Circumcision Ceremony of the Refuse Dump". One of two types of *Kukpol*, reserved for brides who were not pregnant.

Kepun (pl. *Yepun*): The patrilineage.

Ketu-kpoli: "Shaven Head". Period of tutelage for new bride.

Kofonno Kodur Efa: "Unity is Strength". Name of age grade association I joined. Its name elevates pronatalism (*lesou leta otoba*) to level where progress depends upon unity rather than mere numbers.

Kokurr: A day in the Yakurr week.

Kotona: "Talking". Part of the bridewealth.

Kukpol: Ceremony of female circumcision. See also *Kekpopam* and *Likpokol*.

Leboku: Annual Festival of New Yams.

Lejimo (pl. *Ajimo*). The matrilineage.

Lema(pl. *ama*): Meeting hall of the wards.

Lesou leta otoba: A war cliché translated "It is a large number of people that is greater than a machete". It is an instantly recognizable summary of the pronatalist worldview of the Yakurr people.

Libeman: "Marriage Money". The principal part of the bridewealth.

Likpokol: "Female Circumcision Ceremony of the Bush". One of two types of *Kukpol*, which is reserved for pregnant brides. This was the culturally expected pattern.

Liponi: Raffia leaves presented to girl by her suitor during courtship.

Lokurr (also Lokö). The language of the Yakurr people.

Ndet: See *edet.*

Ngbeke: A late nineteenth-century Yakurr attempt at confederation that was foiled by the British Punitive Expedition of 1898.

Nkpo: Yam barns.

Nsa: Checkers.

Obaghor: Sculpture of *Opalapala* and *Ebun Egborgbor*, his wife, at Ikapakapit Square, Ugep.

Obam: War dance.

Obansin: Priest of *Edet Etoutou.*

Obol Kekpatu: Head of ward or main division of Yakurr settlement.

Obol Lopon (pl. *Yabol Lopon*). Town Head of a Yakurr settlement.

Obol Yabono: Head of herbalists.

Obongka (pl. *Yabongaka*). Head of age grade association.

Ogbolia: Head of age grade leaders.

Ojonen: Sculpture of a man and a woman, presumably his wife at Bikobiko Square, Ugep.

Okpata (pl. *Yakpata*): Carved or wooden idol.

Omenka: Traditional tooth-chipper of the *yabol* who features prominently at coronation or induction ceremonies.

Opalapala (also *Ebinyang*): An *Obol*

Wofai: Peace.

Yabol Lopon: See *Obol Lopon.*

Yabongka. See *Obongka.*

Yakpilike: One of two alternating generic names by which age grade are identified.

Yakurr (also Yakö). A double-unilineal people of the lower Cross River in South-eastern Nigeria.

Yekpatu. See *Kekpatu.*

Yepun: See *Kepun.*

Yibo: A sacred stream in Ugep.

Yose (pl. *Ase*). Fertility deity worshipped by associated Yakurr matriclans for peace, prosperity and fertility.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Recent developments in social demography suggest that fertility is principally a cultural event and should be studied within the sociocultural contexts in which it occurs. Trends in the literature indicate that to abstract or dislocate fertility from those contexts is to present "an incomplete picture of social reality" (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994a: 238) and to create the misleading impression that the event depended entirely on the individual choice and rationality of sexual partners. It would mean that the holism in which couples live their lives and prosecute their reproductive affairs is fragmented, and that the intimate contact among transdisciplinary factors which impact fertility is lost.

Proponents of a transdisciplinary perspective argue that a "decontextualised" analysis of fertility disregards the fact that "all demographic processes take place within an influencing social context" (Ford and DeJong, 1970: 9), or that the demographic characteristics of a society are themselves social phenomena (Marshall, 1994: 485). They contend that fertility behaviour is rooted in persistent cultural determinants that are germane to a comprehensive analysis (See Chapter 2.1.3 for details of this argument). For such scholars, the point is unequivocal that "Childbirth is influenced profoundly by the social setting in which it takes place" (Wall, 1998: 341). Accordingly, since the study of fertility is located at the interface between anthropology and demography, it becomes the forte of anthropological demography.

The growing awareness of a need for a cultural perspective to fertility studies has been accompanied by repeated calls for interdisciplinary collaboration between demographers and anthropologists (Hammel, 1990). Although the explanation of fertility behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa is a major reason why collaboration between demographers and anthropologists is imperative, not enough work is being undertaken within the framework of anthropological demography at this crucial stage when evidence of a nascent fertility decline has begun to emerge. Only scanty evidence exists of the type of co-operation that is necessary between both disciplines for comprehensive studies, with demonstrably desultory results for their separate development. Even while the cultures of most sub-Saharan African societies are understood to be disappearing, not much is being done to document their influence on fertility before it is no longer possible to do so.

Contrary to what is required, the relationship between African demographers and anthropologists appears to reflect the situation among their European counterparts, where their terse relationship is characterised by "reciprocal disdain" (Kertzer and Fricke, 1997: 2). It is alleged, for example, that "the association of demography with quantification and manipulation of numbers" is a major disincentive to anthropologists for a convergence with that discipline (Greenhalgh, 1990: 100). Furthermore, the ability of demography to accommodate gender viewpoints is doubtful because gender "is rarely a part of demographic research, even when that research is focussed on women" (Riley, 1997: 116). For this reason, "Gender issues have only recently begun to influence

theories and research on fertility" (Egerö and Larsson, 1999: 1). The remarkable delay in this development may be due in part to the fact that:

> Attention to gender requires attention to the social and cultural context of fertility and other demographic behaviours. This context is not easily captured in large-scale surveys like the World Fertility Survey (WFS), the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) or even national surveys (Caldwell, 1985); without that context, the meaning of fertility or the reasons for fertility change are difficult to discern (Riley, 1997: 116).

Within demography, opinion is sharply divided over what is, or ought to be, the proper emphasis of research into population processes. In one strain of the argument, the Caldwells have adopted an avant-garde position in the effort to incorporate more anthropological insights into the study of fertility levels, trends, determinants, sustenants and consequences (Caldwell, Caldwell, and Caldwell, 1987). In particular, John Caldwell has championed an open and critical rejection of fertility studies that rely exclusively on quantified data, or that are not explicitly grounded in sociocultural reality (Caldwell, 1982: 4). He has argued that like other forms of social behaviour, fertility is regulated and conditioned by group co-existence and the cultural implications that arise from that fact, and hence such exclusive dependence on quantified data is a "distortive" approach to the study of social reality. The position is summarised in an editorial he co-authored with Gigi Santow for the influential *Health Transition Review*, as follows:

> [although] there has been a growing acceptance of quantified social data as providing a representation of a society at any given time, ... it might be argued that such crude measures not only fail to represent society as a whole but also distort even the characteristics they address (Caldwell and Santow, 1989: xiv).

Against this background, the demographic research scene is denoted by "a recurring dispute over the primacy of 'economic' versus 'cultural' factors, with each side presenting necessarily inconclusive evidence and counter-evidence of measurements to support their respective cases" (Szreter, 1993: 686). Whether as a result of this "recurring dispute", or in spite of it, the view prevails in some quarters that "it is legitimate... to locate fertility within the fluxive context of cultural reality" (Obono, 1995a: 29). The epistemological competence of demographic surveys to present a holistic view of the setting of human fertility is at best questionable (Caldwell and Hill, 1988). Fertility is conceptually and empirically inseparable from the cultural systems that give rise to it. Hence, a comprehensive account of fertility is not possible without transdisciplinary collaboration, or interfacing anthropological and demographic methods.

The present study combines ethnographic and demographic methods to examine the impingement of Yakurr[1] sociocultural variables on fertility. A total of 1,351 partly pre-coded questionnaires were administered to generate quantitative data for the study. Focus group discussions and in-depth personal interviews were held with matriclan priests and other knowledgeable persons to promote a robust understanding of the *milieu* of fertility. Sculptures and other art forms found extensively in Yakurr country were examined with a view to eliciting the phenomenological meanings that the inhabitants attach to recurrent motifs (Chapter 4.3).

[1]The word "Yakurr" is the more contemporary rendition of the word "Yakö", found in Daryll Forde's *Yakö Studies* (1964) and other publications by that author. Although "Yakö" may be more familiar to many anthropologists, "Yakurr" is the preferred use in the present study as it is in this form that the contemporary Local Government Area (LGA) and the people are widely known.

The study provides empirical evidence that the search for an alternative model for explaining fertility dynamics in Ugep is linked to the quest for a holistic view. It concludes on the observation that an insular disciplinary approach to sub-Saharan African fertility studies is likely to yield only fragmented information because the event is embedded in norms, beliefs, practices, and other contexts of social life that may lie outside the purview of orthodox demography.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The inadequacy of the quantitative approach to yield in-depth understanding of the sociocultural contexts of fertility has been the subject of much writing in social demography for nearly two decades. The contention is that the problem of culture has been neglected in fertility research, with the result that fertility surveys provide only fragmented and decontextualised representations of social and demographic reality. The nature of conventional fertility data has deprived researchers and policy-makers of a comprehensive grasp of the settings in which sub-Saharan African fertility occurs.

Despite the growing awareness of a need for a cultural perspective in fertility studies, however, not enough work is being done at the interface between demography and anthropology, where the main factors influencing fertility converge. As one author observed, "insufficient consideration has been given to the full range of alternative social science methodologies that are available for the study of fertility change" (Szreter, 1993: 903). As such, not much is known of the complex interactions between a community's

sociocultural environment and the fertility of its members, or how these are formulated at the ideological level and formalised at the institutional. Existing attempts are restricted by considerable theoretical, epistemological and methodological questions about which there is much debate but little consensus. The "reciprocal disdain" between anthropologists and demographers expresses more the difficulty associated with breaking from a dysfunctional paradigm than that associated with convergence *per se*.

This existing state of disciplinary affairs invites a careful study of the sociocultural contexts of fertility among a typical pronatalist pre-transitional people, of whom the Ugep clan of the Yakurr ethnic group in Cross River State, Nigeria, present an excellent example. No significant anthropological or demographic research has been conducted among this people since the 1930s when Daryll Forde carried out his epic *Yakö Studies*. Although his work drew early scholarly attention to several unique aspects of Yakurr culture, their implications for the people's fertility behaviour were not fully worked out. By examining these relationships, the present study provides important information on the sociocultural contexts of Yakurr fertility and, in this way, contributes to the intellectual growth of anthropological demography.

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of this study is to develop a classificatory model for investigating the sociocultural contexts of fertility in terms of a set of interacting personal, kinship, marital, and ideational factors. The specific objectives are:

1. To describe the relationship between the double-unilineal descent system and the fertility of the Ugep people.

2. To describe the religious and political role of Yakurr matriclan priests and its influence on fertility.

3. To establish the relationship between pronatalism and the marriage system toward identifying its influence on fertility.

4. To document the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the Ugep people with regard to contraception.

5. To identify the principal proximate determinants of fertility operating in Ugep society and how they are influenced by sociocultural factors.

1.4 Research Questions

Among recent methodological writings on the subject, Punch (1998: 39ff) has discussed the unsuitability of formulating hypotheses in heuristic studies whose theoretical underpinnings have not been clearly established or adopted by scientific consensus, particularly when a transdisciplinary commitment shapes the entire framework of such research. In the present study, it was not advisable to derive hypothetical statements *ab initio* from a background of theoretical statements of ascending levels of abstraction (Chapter 2.2). Because of the weak state of theoretical development in the discipline, the predictive power of hypotheses generated for the present study would be weak. We thus substituted hypotheses with focussed research questions as suitable guides, on the understanding that "there is no logical difference

between research questions and research hypotheses, when it comes to their implications for design, data collection and data analysis" (Punch, 1998: 40).

An examination of these questions shows that nothing was lost with respect to detail, specificity or focus, but that a lot was gained by ensuring that the research field was treated as a "virgin field" and protected from the straitjacket of prior research assumptions (cf. Smith and Morrow, 1991: 202ff). The nature and scope of the findings (Chapters 4 and 5) based on this approach promote the subsequent formulation of hypotheses in related areas of fertility studies. Indeed, the next two chapters (Sections 2.2 and 3.5.1) demonstrate the role of the research questions shown below in the development of conceptual frameworks and instrument design, respectively.

1. What are the implications of the double-unilineal descent system of the Yakurr people for their fertility? Since the event of fertility ultimately gives rise to descent systems, how do we clarify the relationship between kinship structures and fertility?

2. Do sociocultural factors impinge on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the Ugep people with regard to contraception and, if so, how?

3. What are the religious and political roles of the Yakurr matriclan priests, and to what extent do these influence fertility?

4. What are the social and historical contexts of Yakurr pronatalism? How is pronatalism linked to polygyny? How is it related to fertility?

5. What are the cultural contexts of the proximate determinants of Yakurr fertility?

1.5 Significance of Study

The present study contributes to the development of anthropological demography, a collaborative approach to the study of fertility, which holds that a decontextualised analysis of fertility in demographic studies can only present an imperfect picture of this important event (Section 1.2). The objectives (Section 1.3) and research questions (Section 1.4) are consistent with the transdisciplinary orientation of anthropological demography. The methodology (Chapter 3) validates the status of research designs that combine anthropological and demographic methods for fertility investigations and the comprehensive character of the findings (Chapters 4 and 5) demonstrates the epistemological significance of the adopted sequence of methods.

With respect to Nigerian population studies, the demography of the southeastern states, notably Cross River State, has not received much attention. The present study enhances the development of a more national perspective in fertility studies by providing information on the sociocultural contexts of fertility among a pronatalist ethnic group in this minority state. This information indicates quite forcefully that the contemporary quest by African demographers for an alternative paradigm for interpreting fertility dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa is intrinsically and fundamentally linked to the quest for a holistic view. This position is relevant to the development of the theoretical status of demography (Chapter 2.2) as well as our qualitative and quantitative understanding of Yakurr fertility in terms of the macro-micro linkages that have become a consistent concern in social demography since the early 1980s.

1.6 The Study Area

1.6.1 The Location and Descent System of the Yakurr

The present settlement of the double-unilineal Yakurr people lies in a territory that is located between latitude 05^0 40' and 06^0 10' North and longitude 08^0 and 08^0 50' East in the geographical centre of the Cross River State, Nigeria. The people inhabit primarily five compact towns (Ugep, Ekori, Nko, Mkpani, and Idomi), situated 140 kilometres northwest of Calabar in the Yakurr local government area (Figure 1). They are generally related by strong linguistic, affinal and other historical ties established by a tradition of common origin and reinforced by frequent intermarriages and "a continual interchange of visitors and permanent migrants" (Forde, 1964: 3).

Double-unilineal (or duolineal) descent is an anthropological rarity. Although a form of this descent system may be argued to exist among groups of Australian Aborigines and the negroes of Dutch Guiana, the most definitive examples are to be found in Africa. Within this region, double-unilineal descent has been reported among the Ashanti Ntoro, Gã, and Fanti of Ghana (Herskovits, 1937), the Nyaro and Tullishi societies in the Nuba Hills of Sudan, and tentatively among the Kunama of western Eritrea, a Negro enclave among the Hamitic Beni Amer (Nadel, 1950). The best-known examples of double-unilineal descent systems worldwide, however, are the Yakurr of Southeastern Nigeria and the Herero of Southwest Africa/Namibia and Botswana (Schapera, 1945).

Daryll Forde was the first anthropologist to describe and analyse the double descent system of the Yakurr. His contributions to our understanding of Yakurr social structure and organisation took the form of several academic papers that were finally published in the *Yakö Studies* (1964). Articles such as "Kinship in Umor" (1939), "Government in Umor" (1939) and "Double Descent among the Yakö" (1950) "placed the double descent system firmly in the anthropological literature and made the Yakurr and the middle Cross River basin so well known for the unique features of social structure" (Uchendu, 1997: 1). Among the Yakurr, the system is *inter alia* noteworthy because it organises religion and government around principles of kinship (See Chapter 4.4 for a fuller discussion of double unilineal descent).

Ugep (also, Umor) the study area, is the largest of the Yakurr settlements and is located at the southern end of the LGA, about 11.2 kilometres East of the Cross River, between latitude 05^0 50' North of the Equator and longitude 08^0 05' East (Figure 2), in southeastern Nigeria. The town is a sprawling semi-urban settlement that is composed of five major geopolitical divisions (Bikobiko, Ijiman, Ijom, Ikpakapit, and Ketabebe). The governance of these divisions characterises the town as a theocratic confederacy of five semi-autonomous villages, details of which are supplied in Chapter 4. It enjoys drainage from the Cross River that criss-crosses the land in the form of streams and forms an important part of its ritual belief system as discussed in Chapter 4.2. By 1935, Ugep occupied a territory of 54.5 square kilometres of which 5.8 kilometres were continuous virgin forest on the eastern borders and 1.16 square kilometres were uncultivated

swampland in the north-west. The remaining 46.4 square kilometres of land were penetrated by a web of farming paths which gave rise to "periodically cultivated tracts of land on either side as well as affording routes to neighbouring villages" (Forde, 1964: 5).

In the 5-6 decades since the Forde studies, the population of all Yakurr towns has increased dramatically, from "about 20,000 persons" in 1935 (Forde, 1950: 286) to a projected estimate of nearly 300,000 in the early 1980s (Ubi, 1981: 16; Iwara, 1991: 169). There has been a remarkable extension of its boundaries that in some instances has been arbitrary, leading to hotly contested claims to land between the town and other settlements. The projected estimate for the local government area (LGA) in 1979 was 294,893. It is at variance with the 213,574 published by the National Population Commission's for the comparable area in 1991 (Nigeria, 1992: 12).

The result identifies a fluctuation in the Yakurr population, with a precipitous 27.5 per cent decline in the thirteen years between 1979 and 1992, and a steep ascent immediately after. The supposed fluctuation is difficult to absorb from the viewpoint of the known population trends in the area, as subsequent ethnographic information will suggest. As early as the 1930s, population pressure on the residential areas was relieved "by building hamlets (*Liwu*, sing. *Kowu*) on the nearest tract of farming land belonging to the group" (Forde, 1950: 287-8).

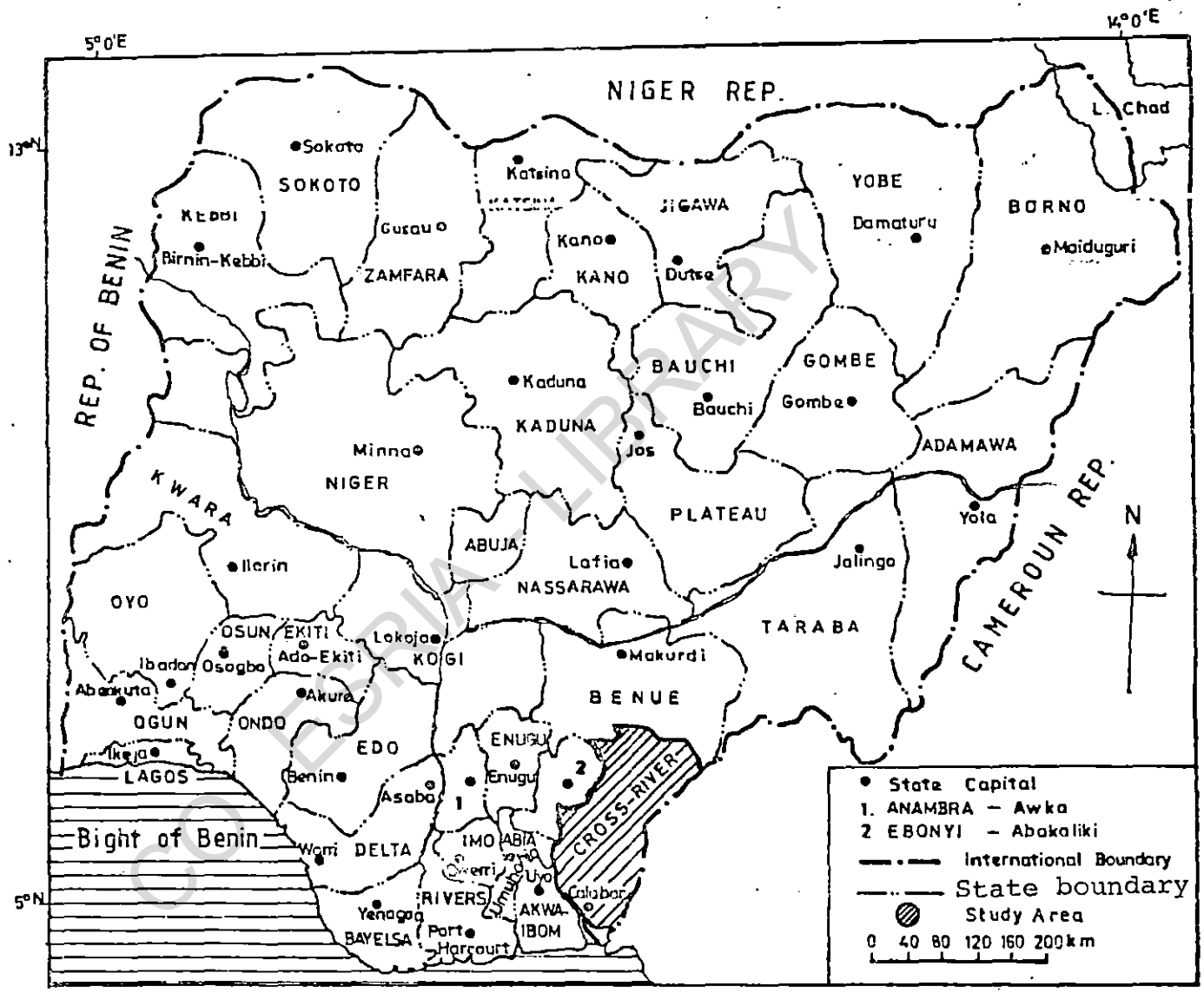

Fig. 1: MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING STUDY AREA (CROSS RIVER STATE)

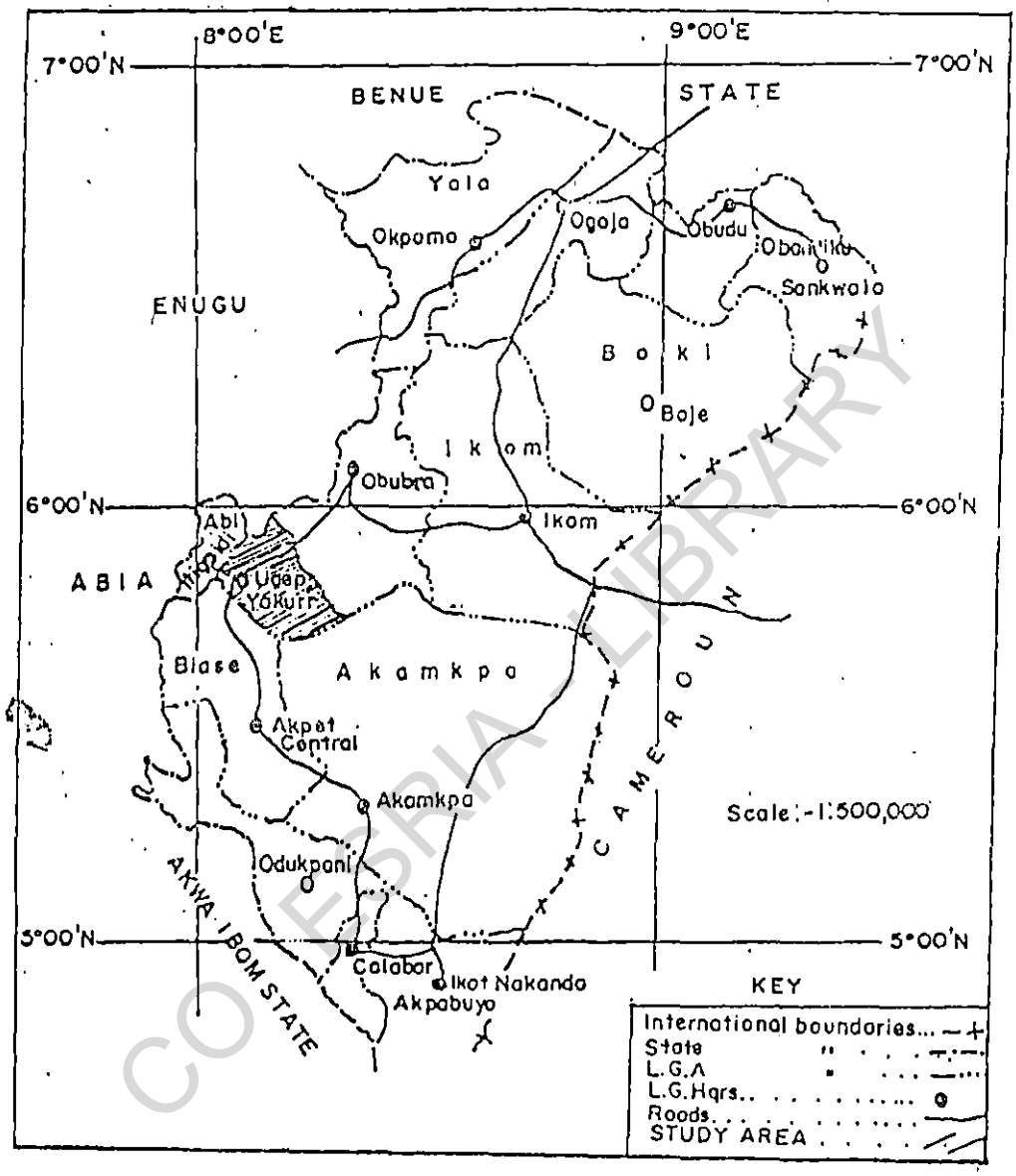

Figure 2: Map of Cross River State Showing Study Area

It is difficult to establish the current population size of the Yakurr people beyond projections based on the 1963 figures, despite the known shortcomings of this census. Four-fifths, that is four out of the five Yakurr settlements, namely, Ugep, Nko, Mkpani and Idomi, were completely omitted from the *Final Results of the 1991 Census* (Nigeria, 1998). This omission occurred despite the fact that the Yakurr population has been described as "an extraordinary concentration of people scarcely found anywhere else in the State" (Iwara, 1991: 169). More specifically, "They are by far the largest ethnic group situated between the Efiks (Calabar) at the Atlantic coast board and the 'Ogojas' at the Northern limits of the Cross River State of Nigeria" (Ubi, 1981: 16). Although this may by no means be considered scientific, a recent account describes Ugep as "the most densely populated settlement in West Africa" (*The Post Express*, 27th September, 1999: 6). It is thus unexpected that only Epenti Beach, a minor part of Ekori, was listed in the document with a population of 134,772, and it was this figure that was then computed for the entire LGA (Nigeria, 1998). This figure also represents a grave example of internal inconsistency and contradiction because although the provisional results in *Census News* provides a figure of 140,956 for the Yakurr population (Nigeria, 1992: 12), the *Final Results* provide that of 134,772 (Nigeria, 1998: N.p.). It was a regrettable error that suggests that the published total figure for the nation at large is incorrect by at least one Local Government Area.

1.6.2 The Yakurr People and their History

The Lokurr-speaking Yakurr people of the Middle Cross River have a common non-autochthonous tradition that they migrated from the hilly country to the south of the river, in the regions of Lekanakpakpa (or the Etara hills), found in what is now known as Ikom LGA. According to both oral and documented sources, the Yakurr originally settled at a place called Umoen in Lekanakpakpa, next to the people of Okuni, a settlement some 58 kilometres from present day Yakurr country, up the Cross River (Forde, 1964: 1). Umoen was a composite settlement that was also the ancestral home of the Nsofang, Mkpot, Agbotai, Nkome, Olulumo, Netim, Obung and Etara peoples. In the language of these Ejagham-speaking peoples, Umoen was referred to as Onughi and Okimaya (Onor, 1994: 40).

The Yakurr were, however, not a river people and migrated overland and hinterland in several parties in the course of many years. A distinction is usually made between those Yakurr towns in which the original migrants settled and those that were formed a generation or two later by local migrations, following dissensions, from Ugep. The first category comprises three towns, namely Idomi (where a section of the main group, which founded Ugep, remained), Ugep itself, and the separately settled community of Nko. The second group is made up of Ekori and Mkpani. Assiga, Inyima, Agoi Ibami and Agoi Ekpo are neighbouring villages that speak Lokurr as a second language (Iwara, 1991: 169), but their unity with the Yakurr people followed a progressive course of cultural diffusion. The inhabitants of these villages are not Yakurr

people from an ethnographic point of view, and they are not mentioned in the waves of migration that brought the Yakurr to the present settlement. Thus, in writing about the foundation of Yakurr settlements, Forde did not refer to these communities at all. The nature of cultural diffusion and the path it followed are related to trade on the Cross River that developed in the later part of the 19th century, in which the Yakurr played a prominent part. The Agoi people acquired the Lokurr language through trade interaction and have retained it as a second language since.

According to Forde therefore,

> The tradition with regard to the wards [in Ugep] was that two settlement areas, Idjiman and Mkpani, were established when Yakö first settled in Umor. Separate wards were subsequently established by groups separating from Idjiman to form Idjum and Ukpakapi, and two generations ago a new ward, Biko-Biko, was established mainly by migrants from Ukpakapi. Meanwhile early in the history of Umor growing friction between Nkpani and another ward flared up into serious fighting, which ended by the migration of Nkpani to found a separate village of that name (Forde, 1964: 169).

The following table shows probable dates of Yakurr settlement based on a compilation of royal genealogies by the historian Ubi in an effort to reconstruct pre-colonial Yakurr history (Table 1). His data sources were consistent with established practice because, in generating chronologies, "the age grade organisation, genealogies and generations, and the principles of succession, ... form essential parts of the social structure and social processes, ... on which the social historian concerned with dates can build his calculations" (Otite, 1982: 3).

Table 1: Table Showing Probable Dates of Settlement of Four Yakurr Towns[a]

Town	Regnal Mean	Probable Date of Being
Ugep	25 Years	c. 1660
Ekori	25 Years	c. 1694
Idomi	25 Years	c. 1690
Nko	25 Years	c. 1698

[a]*Reproduced from Ubi (1981: 10)*

While there can be no doubt that Ubi's effort is an important seminal contribution to the reconstruction of pre-colonial Yakurr history, his underlying methodological assumptions led his study to several arbitrary results. The methodology raises enormous complications and leads to the adoption of conflicting dates at different parts of the report, such that the earliest Yakurr settlement could be traced back to any one of the following periods:

(1) c. 1660, "[which] shows the application of the result of the extrapolation to the traditions relating to the coming into being of four Yakurr settlements after migration" (p.10);

(2) c. 1647 to 1677, "[which is derived from a] Tentative chronology based on a generation mean of 30 years obtained in Yakurr" (p. 15);

(3) about 1550 to 1650, "[which is] obtained from the tentative chronology proposed for this study" (p. 17);

(4) "the period from the last decade of the 16th century to the fourth decade of the 17th century (c. 1597 – c. 1647)" (p. 36);

(5) c. 1710, because "c. 1710-1810 [are the one hundred years] immediately following the foundation of the five Yakurr settlements in their new homeland" (p. 156); or

(6) c. 1650-1680, "[when] the second wave moved westward to found the villages of Idomi and Ugep" (p.190).

These inconsistencies in periodisation are among the most serious problems facing Ubi's otherwise readable report, and they do betray several fundamental flaws in its research design. Using a combination of genealogies and kinglists, Ubi arrived at a regnal mean of 25 years and a generational mean of 30 years. It is difficult to absorb these averages in the light of empirical demographic and ethnographic information that is available on the study area. How tenable is the assumption that each and every pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial *Obol Lopon* ruled for 25 years, if no indications are provided as to the standard deviations from that mean? What would be the effect of differential life expectancies on the computations, if the differing mortality conditions at the various periods were taken into account? Could the earliest Yakurr settlement in its present site possibly be as old as 450 years, as these regnal-based computations imply?

The ethnographic evidence and demographic trends do not seem to support these deductions. As will be shown in subsequent sections, the Yakurr people were at inception a deeply pronatalist people. Their beliefs about fertility have been carefully worked into their sculptural artforms (Chapter 4.3). If the settlement were indeed nearly 450 years old, what factors held its population growth in check to just 26,900 for the first four hundred years leading to 1935, according to Forde's estimates (Forde, 1964: 3)? Why did population then increase rapidly after those centuries, that is from the 1930s when Forde conducted his count, to 294,893 in the 45 years leading to 1980, according to state projections (Cross River State, 1985)? Is it probable that all *Yabol Lopon* in the five Yakurr settlements that this historian described have lived and died for nearly

exactly the same number of years, since "The person chosen [from the matrilineage] is not usually one of the elders but a man early in middle life" (Forde, 1964: 175)?

The conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that research into establishing the arrival of the Yakurr in their present settlement has not progressed much beyond Forde's suggestion that "the present settlements of the Yakurr came into being about 1800" (qtd. in Ubi, 1981: 12). It is difficult to open inquiry into the chronology of Yakurr beliefs as result of the weak available historical base. It is similarly difficult to match their cosmological systems with specific events in their history in the manner suggested by Vansina. This author had recommended that oral tradition should be "linked with the chronological indications of genealogies and age-set cycles, of documented contacts with literate peoples, of dated natural phenomena, such as famines and eclipses, and of archaeological finds" (Vansina, 1965: 7-8). The latter part of this suggestion is preliminarily worked into Chapter 4.3, which more or less conceives of ancient art-forms and sculptures as types of "archaeological finds" under the curatorship of the people themselves. What follows therefore is an unperiodised account of Yakurr traditions of origin, which while not rigorous from the viewpoint of chronology is nonetheless faithful to the interpretive canons of oral tradition.

Accounts of Yakurr history during their sojourn in the composite settlement of Umoen are skeletal and misty. The nature and composition of the settlement and the dynamics of its dispersal are shrouded in obscurity. Not much is known about the system of social control and political organisation at this point in time. Even less is

documented on the scenarios within which the migrations took place. In spite of these discontinuities, the Yakurr established close ritual and political ties with the Akpa (Nsofang) people, with whom they enjoyed an extensive range of reciprocal relationships including the mutual exchange of their dead for burial.

This rare anthropological practice was instituted "as a means of ensuring mutual co-existence amongst these disparate groups" (Onor, 1994: 74), an indication that it existed on a fairly wide scale. One account suggests that "it was the habit for the Yakurr to bury any human corpse from Nsofang village when the cause of death was unnatural" (Ubi, 1981: 36). An in-depth interview with the *Okpebri* of Ugep, *Obol* Cornelius Ikpi Edet, however, suggests that the exchange was more or less reciprocal, and extended beyond the burial of only those who had died of unnatural causes. As Village Spokesman, Prayer Leader of the *Yabol* in collective rituals, and Custodian of the revered *Edet Lopon*, the *Okpebri* wields tremendous moral, ritual and political authority. With his personal antecedent as a former classroom teacher gifted with an extraordinary ability for historical narrative, Chief Edet was a suitable interviewee for this aspect of Yakurr history. According to him,

> We [the Yakurr and Akpa people] were one people before. We lived together in adjacent settlements, and we co-operated very well with one another. The *Yakpa* people would hand over their corpses to us for burial, and we would hand over ours to them. We lived as one people. But, concerning your question [about categories of corpses exchanged for burial], I really do not know if the practice affected all kinds of people or involved every form of death. The general practice was to exchange corpses; that is what I know. We were as one people before. I imagine we buried everybody (Chief Edet, 18/11/97: Pers. Comm.).

The exchange of the dead evidently had its explanation in aspects of social structure, such as the nascent forms of a duolineal descent system, bilateral inheritance patterns, and eschatology. An elaborate genealogical and ancestral tree within the communities specified parallel ritual, lineal and political interrelationships between them and the networks of exchanging families in the two places. According to the *Omenka* of Yakurr, *Obol* Lekam Omenka, these networks conferred other reciprocal benefits, such as rights in the inheritance of non-movable property or preferential marriages or, on the other hand, posited taboos for members of the exchanging units (Omenka, 17/11/97: Pers. Comm.). If this were the case, then the contemporary double-unilineal descent system must have undergone earlier important changes in the centuries since the Yakurr-Akpa war, acquiring new functions, creating corresponding roles, and rendering itself more ritually and politically complete and autonomous than had hitherto been the case.

What led to the dispersal of the primordial composite settlement at Umoen? The gaps associated with oral tradition as a source of historical information, already noted above, create room for competing anecdotal stories regarding the *casus belli*. Despite these, there is a measure of agreement that on one occasion the Yakurr were discovered to be in serious breach of the funerary obligations already referred to. One source records that the Yakurr had used the dead son of Mma Ogar, an Nsofang woman of Nkome extraction, in rituals possibly associated with the war cult of *Ojilikportor* (Ubi, 1981: 40). It was this breach that served as reason for the conflict that finally dispersed the Yakurr to their present settlement. But why was the entire settlement dispersed,

near the foot of the ladder" (p. 170), has vigorously challenged these views. Arguing that "Tense in [Lokurr] is a rather complex matter" (p. 170), he pointed out that:

> systematic morphological contrast may well be a sound method to define tense in English and similar languages, but it can hardly be supposed to be the only way of treating the subject in all languages, especially in tone languages where phonological features may perform grammatical functions, including tense opposition (Iwara, 1991: 171).

Commenting on the elaborate noun class and concord systems of Lokurr, Iwara has suggested that "the language bears some resemblance to Crabb's Ekoid Bantu languages, all of which must have had a common proto-language before the famous dispersal began" (Iwara, 1991: 169). This "famous dispersal" refers to the break up of the Upper Cross segment of the Benue-Congo complex about two thousand years ago. The theory is that "the proto-group spoke a common language but with the split, its members went into various regions where they today speak dialects of the proto-language" (Ubi, 1981: 18). The dispersal is as such quite different from the secondary migration of the Yakurr people from their ancestral homeland in the late 16th and early 17th centuries (Ubi, 1981: 15), or between 1600 and 1750 (Onor, 1994: 76). In contemporary times, the Lokurr language shows a flexibility to assimilate new words from other languages (notably English) that is a common feature of many indigenous Nigerian languages. Class membership is ironically indicated by the in/ability to speak an undiluted Lokurr, with the result that the language may well be a dying language if present linguistic trends persist. Language contains a signal of the speaker's political and economic identity. In the linguistically complex future, will Lokurr survive?

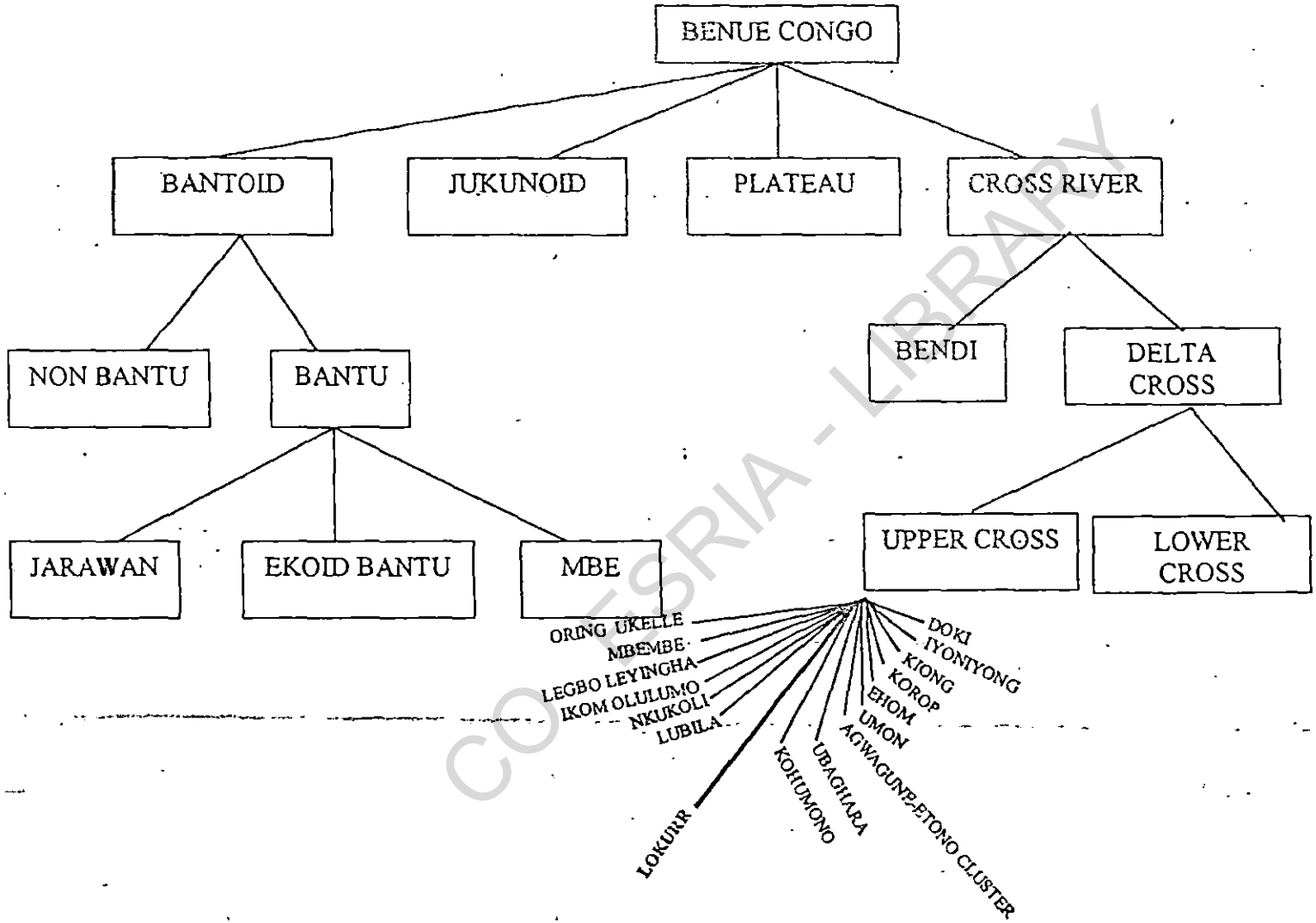

Fig. 3: LIGUISTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOKURR AND THE BENUE CONGO LAGUAGE FAMILY (Adapted from Williamson, 1973)

1.7 Overview of Study

The present report of our investigation into the sociocultural contexts of fertility among the Yakurr of southeastern Nigeria is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the entire work by preliminarily examining the issues leading to the subject matter of our research. In it, the general background to the study is provided in terms of the historical and intellectual setting of the research questions (Section 1.1). Section 1.2 defines the research problem while Sections 1.3 and 1.4, respectively, list the study objectives and research questions that are the main guides for the study. In Section 1.5, the first chapter describes the significance of the study against the background of prevailing ideas in social demography. In Section 1.6, the chapter introduces the study area as a means of providing early insights the historical, behavioural, ideational, and institutional contexts of Yakurr fertility.

Chapter Two reviews related literature on the subject (Chapter 2.1), and traces the development of the debate from early philosophical sources that orientated demography toward a positivist frame of reference. The empirical problems posed by the demographic transition theory are identified as one of the significant factors underlying the current focus in social demography on sociocultural factors. The review pays special attention to studies that have attempted to use this engaging perspective in studies of fertility in sub-Saharan Africa with varying degrees of success, and points out the reasons why such a treatment of the subject among the Yakurr people is pertinent.

As a follow-up to the literature review, Chapter 2.2 proposes a conceptual model for investigating the sociocultural contexts of fertility. This model is a synthesis of the structural-functional school of thought (or general functionalism) and John Bongaarts' proximate determinants framework. It conceptualises fertility as an intimate expression of culture at the individual level, and argues that fertility may be considered the primary nexus between the individual and society once the "background variables" are specified.

Chapter Three deals with the epistemological and methodological issues arising from the attempt to promote a convergence between anthropology and demography in the study of fertility behaviour among a sub-Saharan African people.. The principal purpose of this convergence is to generate more robust and comprehensive information on fertility and the institutional settings in which it occurs. Accordingly, the chapter discusses the research design adopted for the study (Chapter 3.2) and presents an argument for prioritising fieldwork in a sequence in which qualitative instruments precede the construction of the survey instrument (See also Chapter 4.1). In this way, a greater phenomenological sensitivity is built into the questionnaire. Chapter 3.5 presents the anatomy of the research instruments. These instruments include the survey questionnaire, focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, and unobtrusive/part-participant observation. The first two are included as appendices to this report. Sampling methods used to collect the data are also examined in this chapter, as well as the methods used to analyse them (Chapter 3.6).

Chapter Four is one of the two chapters in which the data collected during fieldwork are presented. In this chapter, the ethnographic data collected are reviewed. Specific cultural factors that influence fertility are presented in a descriptive manner that highlights the macro-micro linkages that are of basic concern to the present study. Prominent among these are: (1) the ethnohistory of the Yakurr people, (2) their religio-political belief and marriage systems, (3) the relevance of their sculptural creations to understanding their pronatalist worldview, and (4) their contemporary social life and social structure. The first two objectives formulated for this study (Chapter 1.3) are of an ethnographic character, and are as such discussed mainly in this chapter.

Chapter Five provides data on the last three (quantitative) objectives (Chapter 1.3), and presents sociodemographic characteristics of the sample respondents through graphical and tabular modes of presentation. The charts and tables show frequency distributions that are important to the discussions that follow. The chapter contains cross-tabulations of the principal independent and dependent variables, and discusses results obtained from multivariate lineal and logistic regression analyses, with respect to the study objectives.

Chapter Six summarises and concludes the report and examines the implications of the research findings for policy development. It concludes by returning to the original idea of integrating the demographic and anthropological findings into one holistic scheme of presentation with a view to proposing a more systematic approach to fertility studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Introduction

An internal controversy accompanied the rise of contemporary demography to intellectual and institutional prominence towards the end of the twentieth century. A central feature of the debate concerned the need for contextualised analyses of fertility and other vital events, in other words the necessity to "ground" fertility within the cultural *milieux* that determine its occurrence. It was argued that human fertility is a joint product of the interaction between cultural factors and a few biological precursors, and it is therefore unscientific to examine its occurrence outside those contexts. Until recently, however, most population research have tended to do just that. They stressed the role of socio-economic factors in the determinants, patterns, sustenants, and consequences of high fertility in sub-Saharan Africa.

This emphasis is traceable to the fact that the emergence of population as an issue coincided with a mounting global interest in the crisis of "Third-World" underdevelopment, a matter that was made urgent by developments on the global political landscape at the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). This interest in "Third World" affairs was a by-product of mutual fears and anxieties in the first two Worlds over the prospective spread and global influence of a particular economic theory

of development and its corresponding ideology. The body of anthropological knowledge that existed at the time retained its colonising outlook, and failed to steer population research in the direction of cultural context and strategic behaviour as an approach to explaining population processes. The polarities between anthropology and demography were simply too severe to dissolve before the transdisciplinary *Weltanschauung* had taken root in the scientific community.

As calls for interdisciplinary collaboration became more stringent, and institutional changes and funding reactions accompanied them, attention was drawn to many areas of prospective collaboration between these two disciplines, a development that fostered the rise of anthropological demography as a credible perspective in fertility studies. The present review examines the background to this development and the substantial issues that are likely to sustain its influence in the twenty-first century.

2.1.2 Background to the Rise of Positivist Demography

From the outset, demography had a policy-oriented, quantitative orientation that identified it as a "state science". Paul Demeny (1988) and Hammel and Friou (1997) have noted the origination of the discipline in two separate but interrelated traditions. These were (1) the "political arithmetic" of Sir William Petty (1623-1687) and the theoretical concerns of the Scottish moral philosophers and (2) the increasingly sophisticated mathematics of Gaunt, Halley, Lotka and others. More remote roots of demography, however, lie in certain currents in English and Continental philosophy.

Thus, demography owes its influential "rational actor model" to 17th century Cartesian rationalism and its exaggerated confidence in the power of human reason [see Pollak and Watkins (1993: 490) for a critique of this model].

The quantitative character of demography was also influenced by 18th century British empiricism (*à la* Locke), and its avowal that all non-trivial knowledge is derived from sense (or empirical) experience. But it was the allure of 19th century utilitarian doctrine that disposed demography to the propositions of the Vienna Circle under the leadership of German Moritz Schlick (1882-1936) in the early 20th century. The Circle later metamorphosed into the Logical Positivists, relocating from Vienna and transferring the tremendous influence of its "verification principle" to the whole of the European continent and, *ipso facto*, the intellectual world.

In the middle part of the 20th century, Euro-American social science came under increasing pressure from the State Departments of the Western segments of the erstwhile Allied forces, notably in America. The need to redevelop the ravaged economies of Eastern Europe led to a state commitment to socio-economic models of development in terms of which was formulated the European Recovery Program, otherwise known as the Marshall Plan (1947). Some commentators believe that the Plan was a means of forestalling the threatened advance of communism in countries like Czechoslovakia and that the intellectual resources of the state were mobilised with a view to entrenching a view of development that was essentially quantifiable.

In this way, demography's initial orientation to quantitative method found further validation in state policy, which encouraged the discipline to generate indices for calculating the pace of development in specified regions of the world. The best known of these was the Gross National Product (GNP), already favoured by economic planners and academics. It was within this early post-war period that the stage for inversely correlating socio-economic development with national fertility was set. The quantitative techniques that were developed owe much to this scenario and, as this review will show in Section 2.1.4, it took four decades from the end of the Second World War for the theoretical and empirical foundations of that approach to be successfully challenged.

2.1.3 Recent Developments

Since the early 1980s, influential articles have appeared that emphasise the implications of the socio-cultural context for fertility studies (Kay, 1982; Kreager, 1982; Entwisle and Mason, 1985; Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987; Boingaoli, 1988; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988; Entwisle *et al.*, 1989; Hammel, 1990; Gellis, 1991; Jordan, 1993; Park and Cho, 1995; Axinn and Fricke, 1996; Das Gupta, 1997; Wall, 1998). This perspective is clearly derived from current trends in mainstream sociology (Robertson, 1988: 3) and has been responsible for the reconceptualisation of health in terms of the social, cultural and behavioural factors that constitute it into a process (Caldwell and Santow, 1989; Khanna, 1994; Adeokun *et. al.*, 1995; Orubuloye *et al.*, 1995; Visaria *et al.*, 1995). Its influence in demography has, however, not been so strongly felt, although articles like

Das Gupta's "Kinship Systems and Demographic Regimes" (1997) have demonstrated how "more intensive use of anthropological insights can enlarge the contextual understanding of population processes as a social subsystem" (Kertzer and Fricke, 1997: 20). Although Das Gupta's view was anticipated half a century ago by the distinguished American demographer Frank Lorimer (e.g. Lorimer, 1945, 1954), recent observations on the subject remain *apropos* to the effect that "this renewed emphasis in fertility theory on 'cultural factors' and cultural context of high fertility has not as yet had a great impact on fertility research" (Smith, 1989: 172).

The result has been that not much is known of what Robertson (1988: 4) provisionally described as "the metacultural links between culture and social structure and between culture and individual and collective action". Even less is known of variation in the manner in which individuals, groups, and sub-groups, are constrained by "deep metacultural codes" into conformity with the fertility expectations which society has of them; in other words, how their individual fertility aspirations are informed by those "expectations". In a similar way, substantial research on the implications of fertility behaviour for group cohesion has as yet not been conducted. Neither has enough work on the role of fertility as an instrument of social control been carried out. Among the Yakurr, as is evident from the foregoing review, no significant investigation on the sociocultural contexts of fertility has ever been carried and it is suspected that a similar gap exists with respect to the entire southeastern part of Nigeria.

The dearth of studies in this field has created a large gap in theoretical development. The characterisation of fertility theory by McNicoll (1980: 441) remains pertinent because "we [still] do not have ... a coherent body of analysis linking a characterisation of society and economy, aggregate or local, to individual fertility decisions and outcomes, able to withstand scrutiny against the empirical record". Modern demographic research is frequently conducted in an atmosphere of tension and alienation between demographers who are disagreed over the primacy of "economic" versus "cultural" factors (Szreter, 1993:686). Van De Walle and Meekers (1992) argue that empirical work has mostly concentrated on the relationship between individual socio-economic characteristics and the proximate determinants of fertility.

The "theoretical" model favoured by the former group of demographers is the Demographic Transition Theory, with its overbearing emphasis on the measurement of socio-economic thresholds of fertility change. It is this historical emphasis that is currently making the transition to a more flexible, anthropological, qualitative and sociocultural analysis of fertility difficult for researchers. For the demographers who have made the transition, there still exist considerable difficulties over how to prioritise these approaches. There are few field guides that show how to triangulate or conduct interdisciplinary studies when the two disciplines to be so employed are coming from traditionally opposite directions and there exist far too few models in the field to clarify any remaining confusion.

2.1.4 The Transition of the Transition Model

In an interesting publication titled *Reproductive Change in Developing Countries: Insights from the World Fertility Survey*, Cleland and Hobcraft (1985) observe that an evaluation of WFS data reveals the hitherto neglected importance of factors, other than socio-economic ones, in the determination of fertility. It is argued that "the fact that parental education and cultural factors, denoted by language, ethnicity, or region, emerge as major determinants of the onset of decline is more consistent with ideational than structural theories" (Cleland, 1985: 171). Other scholars were later to observe that "one striking finding that emerged from the European fertility transition was the importance of linguistic and cultural boundaries in determining the regional pattern of fertility change" (Francine Van de Walle and Omideyi, 1988: 2.2.35).

These and similar observations ushered in an era of close empirical scrutiny of the evidence upon which the central formulations of the Demographic Transition Theory had been based, and a less than total reliance on socioeconomic models of fertility. Thus, it was the surfeit or empirical data from the WFS that began to challenge the structural socio-economic perspectives of the traditional transition theory (à la Thompson, 1929; Notestein, 1953), and to modify its elaborations (à la Coale, 1973; Teitelbaum, 1975). In this way, it opened the way for more systematic studies of the socio-cultural contexts of fertility behaviour.

Recent survey data from Europe, described by Stolnitz (1964: 38) as "the heartland of the transition process", indicate that fertility decline began under remarkably

diverse socio-economic and demographic conditions - which illustrates the primacy of cultural factors in the transition process. The following examples serve to demonstrate this point. While family limitation indeed began in England only after industrialisation and urbanisation were well under way, the same was not true of Hungary where fertility began to decline at about the same time as in England but whose economy was basically an agrarian one. The French and Belgian economies were just as agrarian in 1800 and a century later, respectively, when the process commenced in those countries, but the most fascinating evidence comes from two ethnic communities of Belgium. The French speaking Walloon areas had an earlier and faster fertility decline that the Flemish areas regardless of close similarity of their socio-economic characteristics.

Reviewing these patterns, Etienne van de Walle and Knodel (1980: 34) point out that in England, by contrast "a close communication network, combined with cultural homogeneity, made for almost simultaneous acceptance of family limitation through the country despite widely varying levels of urbanisation and economic development". Summarising their opinions, these authors state that "we believe that the remarkably grouped timing of the adopting of family limitation in the West can be explained by the cultural setting of countries ... by cultural rather than socio-economic factors" (ibid.).

Such compelling evidence has given rise to many studies of the sociocultural factors influencing fertility although, owing to what Smith (1989: 172) describes as "the general failure" of fertility theory to link macro-level determinants with individual level behaviour, not many of these studies are properly conceptualised. Thus the literature is

replete with examples of studies whose titles announce an intention to investigate "the sociocultural contexts or determinants" of one demographic variable or the other, but whose theoretical and methodological orientations fail to live up to that billing. The 1985 study by the Population Research Centre of Baroda titled "The Socio-cultural Determinants of Fertility" is one such case in point. Despite the emphasis on the "sociocultural" that is found in the title, this investigation ended up placing a direct stress on economic factors. This form of "general failure" results from the belatedness with which population researchers are attempting to "problematise" cultural phenomena, which had customarily been approached in the discipline as givens.

Two important considerations militate against integrating ethnographic information with demographic data. Both in the final analysis are predicated on bias. First, classical anthropologists produced an impressive body of information on the institutional settings within which fertility took place but this was at a time before the demographic gap was created, and before population emerged as a leading social problem. The second constraint concerns the orientation of demographers towards a decontextualized analysis of fertility. Hence, while the former group of scholars tended to treat population as an inherently functional social resource, the latter elevated it to an abstract numerical plane. They conducted fertility research as though this event were "hanging in the air" and not at all related to people and the complex contexts in which they lived their lives.

Although many anthropologists of the colonial period did collect considerable demographic information on the societies they studied, their basic reliance on the Spencerian organic model made it difficult for them to utilise the demographic information being collected for purposes of projection. Daryll Forde, in particular, is distinguished for the demographic information that his studies provide on the Yakurr (e.g. Forde and Charles, 1938). His interest in environmental issues led him to a concern with the demographic profile of Ugep and it has been said of him that the population statistics that he generated in this village (Forde, 1964) are more accurate than are provided by government censuses (Kertzer and Fricke, 1997: 26). Nevertheless, the evolutionary model of change that he adopted, as did most British structural-functional anthropologists, emphasised stasis as the norm of simple societies. He did not foresee the eventual rise of population growth rates as a leading cause of global concern.

The carry-over effect of this disciplinary perspective may be felt among a class of anthropologists who do not seem to have received much motivation or demand to pay specific attention to the population crises in the less industrialised countries. For this group, there is very little that demography can offer us through its quantitative approaches on the strength of the argument that certain sensitive aspects of human cultural behaviour cannot be "correlated". On the other hand, there have emerged on the contemporary scene a number of anthropologists who have been conducting in-depth investigations into the social and cultural contexts of fertility behaviour. Within this category are Ulla Larsen and Marida Hollos, who have done considerable work on the

Pare and other societies of Tanzania (e.g. Larsen and Hollos, 1998) and Elisha Renne who has done extensive surveys among the Ado Ekiti and other communities of Nigeria (e.g. Renne, 1998). The contributions of other anthropologists who are doing important work towards a synthesis can be found in publications like *Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis* (1997), edited by Kertzer and Fricke and *Situating Fertility: Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry* (1995), edited by Greenhalgh.

Among a cynical species of demographers, the use of anthropological material involves little more than the painful elaboration of the obvious. Such disciplinary prejudice can certainly not advance the interests of science. It has nonetheless prevailed and degenerated into a state of "reciprocal disdain" between both anthropologists and demographers with very little positive benefit to either group of scholars (Kertzer and Fricke, 1997: 2). In the words of one commentator, "anthropologists and demographers have had a chequered and misunderstood form of interdisciplinary convergence which in most cases, has expressed a frustration in trying to explain the one discipline to the other" (Yengoyan, 1989: 345). The present study is a contribution to scholarly efforts aimed at changing this regrettable state of affairs.

Recent efforts at bringing this synthesis of anthropological and demographic methods to bear on fertility research have been confronted by difficulties arising from the novelty of the perspective. In an engaging article titled "A Theory of Culture for Demography", Hammel (1990) indicates, by his choice of title, that a theoretical lacuna

exists in demographic studies as a result of which few insights have been generated by past studies. Even heterodox studies, which have attempted an interdisciplinary approach, have been characterised by one or the other epistemological weakness. On the one hand, such studies may posit the *a priori* existence of "a decontextualized universal rationality". This type of "rationality" is difficult to uphold as an adequate explanation of fertility behaviour. Conversely, studies attempting a disciplinary convergence may find themselves adopting a *ceteris paribus* framework whose contextualized perspective serves to produce "only particularistic empirical summaries" (Hammel, 1990: 455). In this case, the explanation is further obfuscated, from the viewpoint of theoretical development, rather than clarified.

Noting that "demographic behaviour is part of a larger, more complex system of behavioural patterns, learned as part of the general repertoire of behaviour in a social group", Hammel (1990: 499) invokes a powerful Tyloresque argument against demographic investigations that are not explicitly grounded in a theory of culture. In line with this reasoning, Kreager (1982: 237) has noted that "if models of demographic behaviour are to be made more accurate, they will need to follow more closely the cultural conventions and categories that order people's own understanding and use of these institutions". These "cultural conventions and categories" are akin to what Robertson (1988: 4) provisionally described as the "deep metacultural codes" that connect individual action with the moral moorings by which social cohesion and group control are both anchored and guaranteed. The necessity to delineate disciplinary

boundaries, where unconscionable, is dangerous if, in the process, social reality is fragmented or distorted, or if little scientific or epistemological good is served by that "necessity".

Reflecting on the arbitrariness that might result from this "compartmentalisation" Kreager (1982: 237) argues that:

> In the circumstance, it is natural that demography should look to anthropology for assistance. Here, after all, is a discipline that has for long specialised in the interpretation of local, structural relations among precisely those institutions of interest to fertility studies: marriage, family, household, divorce, inheritance, dowry, and so on.

The above comment underscores the need to deliberately set out to uncover salient features of demographic experience which demographers, acting alone, or in terms of their own frameworks, cannot hope to do. It invites a re-examination existing epistemologies whose greatest weakness lies in the unconvincing ontological portrait they paint of human demographic experience. Collaboration between demography and anthropology would therefore indicate the extent to which coitus, protected or not, depends entirely on the rational choice of individuals; and the extent to which coitus is a micro rite of intensification, unique because it is performed at the dyadic level. In other words, such an approach automatically transfers sexual behaviour from a realm where it is a purely mundane affair into one where it is metaphysical. It would help us to appreciate what has been designated as "the sacred character of procreation" (Simons, 1980: 135). This is a problem of orientation that is dealt with in greater detail in Section 2.2.2 dealing with conceptual clarifications.

In recent times, there has been a growing number of studies in the sub-Saharan region which are beginning to provide outlines for future research. In "The Cultural Context of High Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa", Caldwell and Caldwell (1987) concluded that the persistence of high fertility in the sub-region, despite so many years of programme intervention and socio-economic development, could not be explained solely by lack of development, or the ineffectiveness of family planning programmes. For these authors, "the explanation lies largely in a religious belief system and an accompanying social structure that have accorded both spiritual and economic rewards to high marital fertility" (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987: 567). A decade later, it was noted that "cultural factors have [a] strong propensity to affect, modify, resist or even promote fertility" (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1997: 4).

In his "Socio-cultural Determination of Fertility: A Case Study of Rural Eastern Nigeria", Ukaegbu (1979) argued that in Nigeria, "numerous children are popularly seen as the fulfillment of God's will as well as a sign of a harmonious relationship with the gods". The *Ewu-Ukwu* (literally, goat-for-the-waist) ceremony of the Mbaise Igbo testifies to the immense cultural importance attached to high marital fertility. Corroborating evidence is found in "The Socio-cultural Context of High Fertility among Igbo Women" by Isiugo-Abanihe (1994a), to be reviewed presently. The latter article described this practice as "the parity-ten custom", and specified that the *Ewu-Ukwu* is "a ceremony of great jubilation" that honours women who have borne at least 10 children. The ceremony culminates in the induction of these women into the *Ize-Chuyere*, a club

whose august membership enjoys social privileges accruing to their achievement (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994a: 244). The *Ikwu-Ukwu* is certainly declining in importance (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994a: 224), but it does provide a strong indication of the deep roots of fertility in cultural norms and institutions.

In an essay titled "Religio-Cultural Issues in Population Growth in Nigeria", Ejizu (1990) averred that "human life and fertility are the most primary values around which other values pivot". This author reasoned that:

> indigenous cosmological values clearly facilitate and reinforce the high rate of human fertility ... [and that] universal and early marriage ... among the different Nigerian groups is rooted in people's belief in high marital fertility and is reinforced by certain religious forms (Ejizu, 1990: 6-8).

In the article already referred to, Isiugo-Abanihe (1994a: 237) argued that "individual fertility behaviour takes place within the context of complex social organisation and under the influence of multiple social, cultural and ideological realities". He presented compelling demographic evidence for attributing "the persistence of high fertility, or the relative lack of change in fertility behaviour, [to] the cultural context in which childbearing decisions are made or procreation takes place". In what is an important contribution to the growing body of research on socio-cultural factors, he focused on four main contextual factors, *viz.* the parity-ten custom, patriarchal relations, patrilinearity and son preference.

Contributing to the Ife Conference (*The Cultural Roots of African Fertility Regimes*), Eric Udjo (1987) presented a paper on "A Determinant of Fertility and Its

Cultural Context". Noting that Kanuri fertility is low, in contrast to most of sub-Saharan Africa, he attempted "to establish the main determinant of low fertility and also to highlight the cultural context of this main proximate determinant, sterility" (Udjo, 1987: 277). He provided much useful information on Kanuri sterility and fertility, and skilfully employed Boongaarts' Proximate Determinants Framework to elucidate his discussion, but it was his attempt to specify a sequence for conducting demographic-cum-anthropological research that presents both methodological and epistemological problems.

As in numerous other investigations of "the sociocultural contexts" of fertility, research activity in this case seemed to have been designed as a discrete series of dichotomous procedures that are then integrated somehow in the reporting stage. Udjo's (1987) paper lacked a conscious commitment to the requirements of a transdisciplinary approach. Hence, as the author reported on page 288, "having established that sterility is the main determining factor of the low fertility of the Kanuri, the rest of this paper attempts to describe the cultural context of Kanuri infertility". No doubt, this was a Freudian slip, a *faux pas* that suggests clearly that the business of analysis was concluded *before* the cultural context of that conclusion had been fully considered. In fact, in his introduction, he had outlined his methodological approach, indicating that "*lastly*, [my emphasis, as an indication of sequence], the paper highlights the cultural context of fertility among the Kanuri" (ibid: 277).

Udjo's (1987) presents a good example of how not to integrate demographic and ethnographic studies. The issue of "cultural context" comes across as an appendage. Sterility among the Kanuri is treated initially as an extra-cultural phenomenon, for which a "cultural context" is only afterwards provided. It is this form of conceptualization that led to his honest admission in the end that "this study could not conclusively demonstrate the cultural mechanism through which the Kanuri have a high level of sterility" (Udjo, 1987: 291). The demonstration is possible only through synthesis.

This treatment of the cultural context as an analytical appendage is promoted by the absence of consensus among researchers over how to triangulate anthropological and demographic methods. There are few guidelines on how to ask the questions that will give rise to those methods, and how to recognise what was sought for once it has been attained. The absence of standardisation of this kind leaves the research frontier open to idiosyncratic experimentation. Field progress in this interdisciplinary perspective thus depends largely on the extent to which the individual researcher feels motivated to adopt an anthropological demographic perspective that recognises the epistemological equivalence and value of the different bodies of data used in carrying out fertility research. A fuller examination of this form of sequence and the relative priority assigned to quantitative and qualitative instruments of data collection may be found in Chapter 3.

It is useful to note that both Udjo's (1987) and Isiugo-Abanihe's (1994a) articles are two essays that demonstrate the centrality of cultural context to the study of sub-Saharan African fertility, whether high or low. The principal difference lies in the

subordination of ethnographic approaches in the Kanuri study and the attempt to integrate this in the article on Igbo fertility. Although Isiugo-Abanihe's (1994a) paper is significant in many ways to the development of an anthropological demography agenda in fertility studies, its concentration on structural features of the society undermines a more comprehensive treatment of the implications which neo-colonial deconstructionist forces hold for his analysis. It invites the sceptical post-modernist criticism that systems are reified once analysis ossifies them, as though they were immutable structures, when their description captures no more than their transient character in a moment in time.

Be this as it may, the two papers do represent a rough polarity by which trends in the research field may be classified. The features represented by either are by no means peculiar to Nigeria, but extend to numerous other sub-Saharan African countries. In the Congo, for instance, the study by Boingaoli (1988) on "The Socio-cultural Determinants of Low Fertility Among the Uele of Zaire" attributes the incidence of low fertility in the region to marital status, marital instability, and sexual promiscuity, but he neglects to clarify whether these categories are sociocultural determinants themselves, or just the effects of some more fundamental factors. At a methodological level, the study's heavy reliance on data from surveys and legal records from native courts makes it subject to all the limitations inherent in these sets of data, and invites the following questions. Are most Uele marriages terminated in divorce courts? If not, how reliable are Boingaoli's estimates for the calculation of instability or dissolution rates? In a fundamental context, what role does the Uele cosmological system play in reproductive motivation?

The Uele study does not contend with the ideational contexts of Uele fertility, even though it is well known that the belief system is an important component of any people's culture (q.v. Fortes, 1978: 122; Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987; etc.). How does this people's worldview affect their view of the institution within which fertility takes place? How does the study address the view of culture as "a way of summarising the ways in which groups distinguish themselves from other groups" (Wallerstein, 1990: 31-32). In this regard, culture may be seen as comprised of traits, which transcend the universal and the idiosyncratic (ibid: 31), and is not always held static in documents since, even as an abstract construct, culture is essentially fluxional.

Among the Yakurr, the ideational sphere is interlaced with political organisation and may influence the mood in which elders may receive requests for divorce (See Chapter 4). There could be an aversion to divorce owing to the essentially pronatalist values upon which political authority is founded, and overlooking the ideational contexts of fertility among a sub-Saharan people may provide only a superficial analysis of the sociocultural contexts of fertility. Because culture harmonises the individual's interests with the prevailing dominant value and interest system, it constitutes a unique synthesis of both. Thus, culture unites the individual with society, and sutures him/her into the structures of collective life.

This socialisation process is behind the acquisition, development, and use of human consciousness and makes it possible to conceive of culture as "the synthesized expression of man's internal harmony with his external world" (Obono, 1995a: 29). In

order to apprehend it, one must adopt a phenomenological approach without which it is impossible to portray it correctly. Among such a people, therefore, a study of the ideo-political contexts of fertility would draw attention to the pronatalist values upon which much individual-level fertility behaviour might be predicated. It is in this sense that Williams (Williams, 1981:196), in the book *Culture*, defines the term as "the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced and explored".

These perspectives help illuminate the unique intersection between pronatalism, patriarchy and religio-political culture among the Yakurr. They are corroborated by the view, based on research in two Nepali communities, that "cultural context gives meaning and motivation to the actions of individuals and allows us to predict the consequences of variations in the lives of individuals" (Axinn and Fricke, 1996: 269). The study by these authors provides fresh empirical evidence for the position that "multiple levels of context may simultaneously direct individual-level strategies" (ibid.: 269). Recognising the need for multi-level studies, they recommend that "future work on a broader range of cultural contexts is needed in order to determine the role of cultural context in shaping both individual-level relationships and the consequences of community-level differences" (ibid: 269).

The present study is an attempt in that direction. What implications do these comments hold for a study of the sociocultural contexts of fertility among the Yakurr? To what extent are the people free moral agents in a situation where the old sexual code

4. The "partial picture" of social reality that many demographic studies provide is a function of their alienation from anthropological insights.

5. There is a strong current in social demography toward the integration of anthropological and demographic perspectives that is being reflected in studies in the past few years, but the recent nature of this movement has made the standardisation of approaches somewhat premature for now.

This is the background against which the present study was conducted. The challenge of the current work is to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in social demography by using a combination of demographic and anthropological methods to examine the sociocultural contexts of fertility among the Yakurr of southeastern Nigeria.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Introduction

Theory is indispensable to good research, although demography seems not to have a surfeit of it. As Moore (1959: 845) once put it, "if a standard complaint about sociology is that it has 'too much' theory, a standard complaint about demography is that it has 'too little'". This "standard complaint", made forty years ago, is as relevant today as though it had been made only yesterday. This is because, despite important theoretical developments within mainstream sociology since the 1950s, there still does not exist any single frame of reference with integrated sets of deductive and empirical propositions linking social and demographic variables in a form that can be properly described as demographic theory (Ford and De Jong, 1970: 19). It is this state of affairs that has been declaimed as the "surprising deficiency in theory" in demographic research (Caldwell and Hill (1988: 1).

The situation is however not "surprising", when one takes cognisance of the commitment of most demographers to an exclusively quantitative approach to fertility studies. Can theory about human fertility originate from purely quantitative studies? How tenable are the assumptions that axiomatic statements about the event can be made outside the context of cultural encounters, broadened to embrace the individual at one level, the dyad at another, and progressively on to the infinite configurations and networks of human relationships by which cultural imperatives are spelt out? Can

numbers alone capture the dense complexity of these relationships and their extraordinarily variable character?

Scientific observation and plain common sense indicate that it is impossible to theorise about human fertility solely from statistical evidence and then hope to achieve a measure of comprehensiveness that way. The greatest promise for theoretical development within demography lies in the systematic integration of quantitative methods with anthropological insights, with a bias for participant observation utilised as part of a range of methods designed to provide those insights. Through this type of synthesis, a degree of the ever-evolving human fertility metanarrative will be captured by demographic studies, and these could be so community-oriented that they possess greater prospects of clarity and policy-relevant results that would be implemented. Not just any type of social science is of critical policy relevance, but those that woo the community into a prospective partnership of implementation by including their systems of beliefs, values, norms, mores, political organisation, and other institutional arrangements in the comprehensive study of their population processes.

It is clear that a theory of fertility for sub-Saharan Africa cannot readily emerge, if say the variations among societies are not integrated into one system of conception. The relevance of Merton's middle range theory in this regard lies in the possibility that each properly conducted fertility study would give rise to a *theorie locale*, that is a theory that is directly founded upon the unique or peculiar material "discovered" or "uncovered" in the field. Usually, the claims of the theory can be investigated by further

empirical studies and, through some form of eclectic progression, become developed into a more general theory of the phenomenon under study. Such a general theory or framework for analysis must obligatorily specify its concrete variables, examine the typologies of the phenomenon, construct conceptual categories (which must stand in some clear relationship with the typologies), and facilitate comparative analysis. It requires a commitment on the part of demographers to a cumulative perspective in the development of fertility theories that is equal to the commitment they have shown in developing demographic techniques. It is this form of commitment that will bring the traditionally separate categories of "anthropological" and "demographic" into a unified frame of reference. The absence of reports utilising such a unified frame is a major factor militating against theoretical progress within demography. Accordingly, the present study develops a heuristic guide for conducting investigations of this nature that integrates the canons of established perspectives in the separate disciplines, and investigates fertility as an outcome of a set of interacting predictors encompassing personal (i.e. sociodemographic), marital, ideational and kinship factors.

As we shall elaborate presently, the "structural-functional" approach in sociology offers one of the most promising frameworks for this kind of research, in that it explicitly integrates demographic variables with general sociological theorising. A synthesis of structural-functionalism and John Bongaarts' proximate determinants framework is of particular benefit for this study for several reasons. First, it enables us to highlight the "background" variables (decomposed into the four contexts listed above), that the latter

framework normally holds constant, and to derive explicit theoretical propositions from them. As a related reason, the proximate determinants can then serve to indicate the media and processes through which these factors pass to influence fertility, in compensation for the inability of normal functionalism to do so. In proposing such a conceptual synthesis, the present study adopts a theoretical position that is at once consistent with practical activity in the research field and the critique of positivist epistemologies that has been gaining currency and acceptance in social demography since the early 1980s.

2.2.2 Conceptual Clarifications: Toward a Theory of Culture for Demography

Eugene Hammel (1990) has commented on the epistemological significance of utilising "a theory of culture for demography" for the analysis of cultural events. For him, demography cannot penetrate the multiple layers of existential interactions, of which fertility is just one product, if it neglected to consider its sociocultural determinants. In a previous section (Section 2.1.4), we noted that the collaboration between demography and anthropology would necessitate a reappraisal of the way in which fertility is presently conceptualised in the latter discipline. That reconceptualisation as adopted here considers that the individual and the society share common attributes that imply similar consequences for both of them.

This axiomatic premise is important for apprehending the theoretical propositions that follow. The statement is self-evident and true because the individual and the society

presuppose each other. Without one, the other cannot exist in its current form because individual human consciousness cannot exist outside of human society and the idea of society devoid of its constitutive human elements is sociologically uninspiring.

At the individual level, self-preservation and self-perpetuation are related instincts that are very powerful, and hold both personal and collective consequences for individual social behaviour. At the societal level, the corresponding need acquires a form of what Talcott Parsons once described as the most fundamental of all "functional prerequisites", namely the recruitment of new members. Without reproducing new human beings, both biologically (in terms of creating a normative context for human sexual and procreative activity) and ideologically (through the socialisation process), society would atrophy and die.

Human reproduction thus possesses a dual character, and the mutual agreement of the individual and the collectivity of which s/he is a part of these social priorities is instrumental to achieving desired social goals by either party. People must be reproduced for the society to survive, but so must the ideology or set of values that makes them functional social entities. The latter requirement disrupts individual freedom and canalises fecundity into the sanctioned mode of its expression, in other words in accordance with extant mores. The elusive nexus between the individual and society is therefore located in their mutual dependence on regulated reproduction for the advancement of their mutual welfare. The foregoing observations are central to the theoretical issues that will be examined shortly, but they also re-open old epistemological

debates in sociology, namely the difficulty of discussing "society" as though it possessed a comparable or equivalent moral status to that of the individual.

It is a notoriously difficult problem as it invites an assessment of the ability of both entities to parley on norms when an individual in that context is not able to create them and the society, being an abstract entity, cannot "personally" give expression to it. It is a paradox. For the latter to be equipped for that function would entail a scholarly commitment to an inherent fallacy whereby that abstract entity is personified, reified, and elevated to a suitable plane of discourse where the distinction between it and the abstraction of "social persons" is effectively obliterated and made indistinguishable. The problem is sometimes resolved by the insistence that the said elevation is merely metaphorical and adopted for conceptual convenience, but the explanation fails to satisfy the contradiction that occurs when, even for theoretical purposes, one tries to assert "societal" conventions in the absence of their human enforcers.

The epistemological problems that are raised in this regard emanate from the passage of philosophical thought from cosmology to anthropology, and form part of an extensive discussion by Guverich (1989: 8ff) in his *Man and Culture*. They are also relevant for a moral debate because the conventions of human society are always arbitrary. Their value systems signify a disguise that protects the interests of the powerful. Human values thus correspond to and express the conflict inherent in social relations and the ideology that is a spin-off of the interaction entered into to secure exclusive access to scarce resources. The term "society" in this sense then carries with it

the power of the powerful, and in its name the vital interests of that group are protected. When the mechanism for protecting those interests are sanctified by norms and values, the enforcement of the values in question is usually crucial to the more powerful group. We attempt a preliminary resolution of the individual/society puzzle by suggesting that the construct of "society" is dissoluble into an array of interests groups that range from a continuum of weak to strong. When "society" is dissolved into its constitutive parts for the purpose of a value dialogue, the strong elements in each case will form the collective personification of society in terms of the particular value being appraised.

The means by which the society recruits new members is through a "natural" cultural mechanism that codifies norms. Through the "enactment of norms", "society" regulates human fertility by interrupting individual freewill in contexts that may be either prescriptive or proscriptive with regard to the approval granted to reproduce. An elementary example of this form of enactment is found in the proscription against the *osu* caste from cohabiting or procreating with the caste of the freeborn in traditional Igbo society in Nigeria. A comparable system of enactment is found in Hindi India, where sexual procreative activity between *Harijan* and castes like the *Brahmin*, *Kishtriyas*, *Vaisyas*, and *Sundra* was taboo.

The hallmark of human civilisation in this respect is that individual rationality is a social property with a socialisable framework for its exercise, cognition, and recognition. This gives rise to the first postulate in our conceptual scheme: Rational behaviour would avoid circumstances that could ostracise the behaving individual.

Hence, "rationality" is one of the internal mechanisms by which the society regulates or undermines the Freudian ego. It corresponds to what Durkheim had identified as the self-policing consequence of effective socialisation, in other words the ability of the individual to carry within himself the policing demons of an all-powerful leviathan.

Accordingly, individual rationality is not necessarily the exclusive property of the individual exercising it. It is part of a cultural legacy that enables the majority of social actors to maintain some basic neo-Hobbesian state of equilibrium, described by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) as an effect of a social contract in *Leviathan* (Hobbes, 1958, first pub. 1651). The regulation of fertility through individual rationality that responds and corresponds to dominant social pressures and expectations is the crucial interface between that individual and the society of which s/he is a part. When what constitutes rational fertility behaviour corresponds with functional prerequisites and is sanctified and sanctioned accordingly, that interface becomes the definitive nexus that whorls into an intricate network of moral relationships that sustain society from both practical and theoretical points of view. Seen in this way, fertility becomes society's functional prerequisite *par excellence.*

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) anticipated this tendency for society to produce an attribute (that is rationality) that served its interests without tension but he never gave a name to his inner policeman. Instead, he described broader level forces that operated to ensure that fertility was kept in harmony with some mystical balance that society has of maintaining itself. He designated these forces as positive and preventive

checks. In Malthusian terms, there appear to a centrifugal tendency in the construct of "society" that compels it to constrain individual action. The most remarkable part of the intersection between the individual and society is the interest of both parties in the reproductive motivation of each other. The numerous rules by which human sexuality is regulated bind the individual to the society each time s/he reproduces in accordance with its dictates. Rebellion then is impossible. This is what transforms what is primarily a biological activity (sexual behaviour) into a virtually collective affair and ensures that society's control over fertility will be perpetuated through time.

This conceptualisation of fertility suggests coitus to be a micro-level *rite of intensification*, which is unique because it is performed at the dyadic level where, for the moment, the collective sentiments of the entire group are condensed, re-appraised, and finally endorsed. It is for this reason that fertility may be seen as the most intimate expression of culture at the individual level, or "the 'final outcome' of the complex interaction between physiological and environmental factors" (Obono, 1995b: 118). It is thus the theoretical nexus or cultural link by which we may fuse the interests of an abstract "society" with those of living and, sometimes, dead individuals. In line with this position, culture becomes the "the synthesised expression of a people's internal harmony [or conflict] with their external world" (Obono, 1995a: 29).

To develop this view leads to the synthesis of functionalism and Bongaarts' Proximate Determinants in the next sections. It is hoped that further thought will lead to

the elaboration of the micro-meso-macro linkages that constitute fertility into the effective nexus between the individual and the society in natural fertility regimes.

2.2.3 Structural-Functionalism

The anthropologies of Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) and Bronislau Kaspar Malinowski (1884-1942) in particular have contributed to the development of structural-functionalism by their extensive use of "functional analysis". It was the Polish anthropologist, Malinowski, who explicitly used the term "functionalism" to describe his own approach to "the problem of order". Before him, Auguste Comte (1795-1857) pioneered functionalist thought. He saw it as closely bound up with his overall view of sociology, which, for him, was the "queen of the sciences". Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) also regarded functional analysis as a key part of his contribution to sociological theorising and research. Durkheim exerted tremendous influence on Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) whose name became almost synonymous with the theory in post-war America.

According to the functionalist viewpoint, society is very much like an organism composed of "parts", or institutions that cohere to give it continuity over time. Thus both the Polish anthropologist Malinowski and his British nemesis Radcliffe-Brown agree that "we must study a society or a culture as a whole if we are to understand its major institutions and explain why its members behave as they do" (Giddens, 1989: 696). According to Durkheim, people adhere to core social values and thereby

contribute to social cohesion without which group life is impossible. In this way, they make themselves good candidates for social rewards, and the behaviour they exhibit toward this end may be deemed rational.

As representative of a long tradition of functionalist thought, this helps explain why functionalism attributes to social systems the characteristics of commitment, cohesion, solidarity, order, consensus, reciprocity, co-operation, stability, persistence, balance and equilibrium. Functionalism is counterposed in these respects by the conflict school, which assigns to social systems the attributes of apathy, coercion, division, hostility, anarchy, dissensus, conflict, malintegration and change. The first emphasises the significance of norms and legitimacy while the second emphasises those of interests and power.

The distinguishing feature of structural-functionalism is perhaps its assumption that social systems possess several indispensable and fundamental requirements. For Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), these requirements included the need to ensure the discharge of three vital functions, namely regulation, distribution and sustenance - functions which are broadly similar to the Parsonian "functional prerequisites" (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Pattern Maintenance). All human action is orientated toward the preservation of order and, for Durkheim, this constitutes society into a "moral entity". All processes serve an identifiable "function" which, in the Mertonian revision, can be either "manifest" or "latent". Central to the theoretical state of equilibrium, therefore, are the processes of "socialisation" and "social control". Role

players are "socialised" into the expectations attached to their role and positive sanctioning (reward) or negative sanctioning (punishment), which could be either concrete or diffuse, backs up this process.

The micro-meso-macro linkages that are of such paramount concern to this study are the focal issues in variants of functionalism such as Parsons' "Voluntaristic Action Frame of Reference" which emphasises human actions as responses to a surrounding set of stimuli that are occasionally elevated to the plane of norms. From the beginning, Parsons sought to develop an integrated, totalizing theory that could assimilate the diverse range of earlier sociological insights into a unified theory. Thus we find an attempt to integrate Durkheim's holism with Weber's individualism. The product of that synthesis became his voluntaristic theory of action, which for the present study is quite useful because Parsons had conceived human beings as making choices in a physical and social environment that limited them. A key feature of this environment is the norms, values, and ideas by which these choices and human conduct are regulated.

The Durkheimian distinction between "functional" and "historical explanations" nevertheless is essential for understanding the broad sweep of functionalist theorising. The former accounts for the existence of an event or process in terms of its consequences while the latter deals with the chronological development of the same event or process through time. In the present study, we propose to utilise both types of "explanations" firstly because of the fluxive character of sociocultural reality and, secondly, because such a fusion can promote the use of the dialectic.

The need for an approach that promotes the use of the dialectic is more apparent when one takes cognisance of the stringent criticism against functionalism for its lax treatment of the question of change and its suspected inability to explain the occurrence of structural contradictions and conflict in societies. Its reliance on stability and the Spencerian organic model was seen as a sign of scientific weakness, ideological conservatism and intellectual insipidity. By the late 1960s, functionalism had fallen into substantial disrepute, as a result of its inability to explain the obvious existential and social crises that surrounded human social existence during that period.

Criticisms of this order are in certain respects overstated. There is considerable leeway for developing functionalist theorising along such lines as will account for these processes. For example, Murphy (1971: 163) shows in *The Dialectics of Social Life: Alarms and Excursions in Anthropological Theory* that ideas of opposition and contradiction are not alien or anathema to functionalism. Durkheim (1961) was able to combine functionalist explanations with a radical form of guild socialism. The group experience in his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* generates basic categories and ideational concepts out of social order. The distinguishing fact of social life for Durkheim is that it is moral and this is what has been referred to as "Durkheim's dialectic" (Murphy, 1971: 166). In other words, people go beyond themselves through group life, thus transforming society by transcending sentiments. In Durkheim's words, "society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal. This creation is ... the act by which it is periodically remade" (p. 470). The fact

that society is capable of attaining higher levels of synthesis in its continuous interaction with its created symbols of the past and the new relationships they give rise to is important for explaining group level contradiction in ordinary dialectical terms.

In *Les Structures Elementaires de la Parente*, the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1949) integrated the theme of asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage (preferred union with the Mother's Brother's Daughter or the Father's Sister's Daughter) into a general theory of marriage and of the dialectics of exchange as the basis of social life. Seeking to clarify the opposition between culture and nature, he found his central problem to be the paradox posed by the individual's simultaneous existence as animal and anti-animal, how the individual carried out his/her nature while denying it. Marriage regulation acquires coherence "only insofar as it is incorporated in a certain system of antithetical relationships, the role of which is to establish inclusions by means of exclusions, and vice versa" (Levi-Strauss, 1949: 114). In other words, exchange and ties bind as well as divide people.

In *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, Leach (1965) demonstrated that real structures were held together by their inconsistencies. With regard to the possibility of imbuing functionalism with the dialectic, however, it is Talcott Parsons' dualism that holds out so much future promise. Parsonian dualism took the form of binary differentiation. This was a process by which entities are produced in structured relationships to one another in situations of evolving complexity. They rapidly change from their new status to an old one and back again, such that the ever-emerging entities

never lose organic contact with those that preceded them. The binary units split again and again, leaving Parsons' evolutionary theory apprehending historical development in terms of systemic and sub-systemic themes of differentiation and reintegration which, however, fall short of the dialectic perhaps only insofar as perpetual equilibrium is its pre-established goal.

The most systematic African attempt at showing common grounds between functionalism and the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic is Pierre L. van den Berghe's (1967) theoretical synthesis of both. A South African sociologist, Van den Berghe was confronted with something of the Comtean dilemma in his effort at reconciling change in South Africa and the survival of traits of what had undergone change. It was the familiar sociologicalproblem of continuity and change, or "social stasis" and "social dynamics". Comte's encounter with this problem was one of the moving forces behind the creation of sociology for he had sought answers to the anomie that followed the success of the French Bourgeois Revolution of 1789, which overthrew the *ancien régime* but found the establishment of a republic more difficult.

In a similar way, Van den Berghe contemplated the relationship between continuity and change as it became evident that South African apartheid would be dismantled but a blueprint for reconstituting the society along racially equitable lines had not received the consensus of contesting parties. Within this dilemma, he reasoned that while societies do indeed display a tendency toward stability, equilibrium, and consensus, they simultaneously generated within themselves the exact opposites of these.

Elaborating on their complementarity, he noted four major areas of convergence between functionalism and the dialectic, as follows:

1. Both approaches are holistic.
2. Both assign a dual role to conflict and consensus.
3. Both share an evolutionary notion of change.
4. Both are fundamentally based on an equilibrium model.

He concluded that, taken independently, each body of theory presented difficulties that could be resolved either by abandoning some untenable postulates, or by introducing concepts borrowed from the other approach. Van den Berghe's synthesis has been lauded for its contribution to the theoretical development of the discipline, and for showing how functionalism stripped of its normative commitments, can be valuable in other types of synthesis. Nevertheless, van den Berghe came under severe fire from Smart (1976: 55), who described his synthesis as "misguided". Smart argued that van den Berghe's efforts showed "not only an apparent lack of knowledge of the controversy surrounding the concept of the dialectic but also a far from satisfactory concept of what it is to do sociological work" (ibid.). For scholars such as Smart, the dialectic and functionalism are so mutually exclusive that they cannot successfully be brought under a synthesis, and neither can the attempt promote good research. Current field experience and the transdisciplinary orientation of many recent writings in the social sciences do not seem to support Smart in his assessment.

The most telling critique of functionalism occurs at epistemological and ontological levels. Epistemologically, a functionalist explanation may be regarded as not an explanation at all because it does not identify causal mechanisms and processes. It is instead assumed that social institutions are adequately explained in terms of their putative effects (Marshall, 1994). Ontologically, the question can be raised as to whether the equilibrium model best describes the true nature of being, social or non-social. In the viewpoint of Giddens (1990: 102), "the concept of 'function' has no place in the social sciences and it is best to jettison it altogether. Moreover, I do not believe that there is any such animal as 'functional explanation' ".

While, indeed, there may be no such "animal", the fact that behaviour is ostensibly repetitive and patterned cannot be dismissed so lightly. There is ample evidence of the "functionality of persistent acts" in social-psychological experiments such as B.F. Skinner's Box experiments, Ivan Pavlov's dogs, and a variety of operant conditioning studies. The utility of structural-functionalism in the present work lies in the need to describe those sociocultural factors that exert influence on fertility among the Yakurr people. By "sociocultural context" in this study is meant the inter-related complex whole of religious, political, economic and other institutional, ideational and social factors which form a system unique unto itself. Structural-functionalism encourages the description and elaboration of background factors, which represent the sociocultural contexts in which fertility takes place. Its principal limitation, for our purposes, lies in the fact that it does not specify the direct or immediate factors

influencing fertility. It is because of this limitation that a synthesis is both possible and desirable. It is on account of it that our conceptual model integrates general functionalism with Bongaarts' Proximate Determinants Framework.

2.2.4 Bongaarts' Proximate Determinants

John Bongaarts (1987: 133) has pointed out that the common view that the transition from high to low fertility is preceded by contraception may be deeply flawed since "in pre-transitional societies the prevalence of contraception (and induced abortion) is typically negligible, so that fertility can be considered natural". The idea of "natural fertility", traceable to Louis Henry (1976: 90), provides distinct theoretical prospects for a synthesis between functionalist analysis and the proximate determinants framework. For Bongaarts (1987: 135), it is clear that "contraceptive prevalence is not the only proximate determinant of fertility rates". What could these other proximate determinants be, and what are proximate determinants in the first place?

Proximate determinants are defined as "the biological and behavioural factors through which socio-economic, cultural and environmental variables affect fertility" (Bongaarts, 1987: 105). In other words, they are the media through which ultimate behavioural referents influence fertility (Bongaarts, 1978; Bongaarts and Potter, 1983). They are derived from the analytical framework of Kingsley Davis and Judith Blake (1956), called the Davis-Blake Intermediate Variables Framework, which is categorised according to intercourse, conception, and gestation variables, and sub-divided into 11

intermediate variables. The entire intermediate variables interact to produce fertility differentials, often as an unintended consequence of cultural patterns that may have no explicit connection to fertility (Freedman, 1975: 14-15). John Bongaarts (1987) collapsed the 11 intermediate variables into eight factors, grouped into three broad categories shown below:

A. Exposure Factors
   i. Proportion married

B. Deliberate Marital Fertility Control Factors
   i. Contraception
   ii. Induced Abortion

C. Natural Marital Fertility Factors
   i. Lactational Infecundability
   ii. Frequency of Intercourse
   iii. Sterility
   iv. Spontaneous Intrauterine Mortality
   v. Duration of the Fertile Period.

The distinguishing feature of a proximate determinant is its direct influence on fertility. For example, if a proximate determinant (such as contraceptive prevalence) changes, fertility is most likely to change. Thus, "one of the most important advantages of studying the proximate fertility variables is that it improves understanding of the operation of the socioeconomic determinants" (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1996: 8).

According to Bongaarts (1978: 108), "demographers have long recognised marriage as one of the principal proximate determinants of fertility", another example of "variable-overlap" between functionalism and Bongaarts' framework. Research indicates that while the principal proximate determinant of fertility in post-transitional

societies is contraception (Bongaarts *et al.*, 1990), those of natural fertility are the culturally prescribed marriage pattern and the duration and intensity of breast-feeding (Bongaarts and Potter, 1983). However, not only is natural fertility not the same in all populations, it can also vary over time within the same society if marriage or breast-feeding behaviour changes (Bongaarts, 1987: 135), and the entire context for these variations is socio-cultural.

The basic model is:

$$TFR = Cm * Ci * Ca * Cp * Cc * TF$$

where *Cm* is the index of proportion married, *Ci* is the index of lactational infecundability, *Ca* is the index of abortion, *Cp* is the index of pathological sterility, *Cc* is the index of contraception, and *TF* is total fecundity. Although this aggregate version of the model is the most widely used, an age-specific version is also used that calculates the effects separately for each quinquennial cohort from 15-49 to 45-49 (Bongaarts and Kirmeyer, 1982; Bongaarts and Stover, 1986). But for this model to be applicable under regimes of natural fertility, each index must have the background characteristic(s) defining it factored into it, and then the interactions among these separate indices and the sum of those characteristics must shown. With regard to Nigeria, the model has made it possible to identify the principal proximate determinants of fertility as being lactational amenorrhoea due to prolonged breastfeeding, postpartum sexual abstinence, age at first marriage or the proportion remaining single, coital frequency and the use of birth control (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1977; Bongaarts, 1981; Orubuloye, 1981; Santow and Brancher,

1981; Akinkunmi, 1989; Okojie, 1990; Jolly and Gribble, 1993; Odimegwu, 1993; Makinwa-Adebusoye and Feyisetan, 1994; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994b; 1994c; etc.).

Several important comments have been made on Bongaarts' proximate determinants framework in the twenty-two years since its formulation. Two of the most important of these criticisms are those by Ocholla-Ayayo, a Kenyan anthropologist, and John Stover of the Futures Group International. Stover (1998) has reviewed new data and past experiences and suggested modifications to the framework that would take advantage of this experience. According to him, the major modifications to Bongaarts' framework are (1) the use of sexual activity rather than marriage to indicate exposure to pregnancy; (2) a revision of the sterility index to measure infecundity from all causes; (3) a revised index of contraception that accounts for the fact that users of sterilisation may become infecund before age 49; and (4) a revised definition and estimate of total fecundity.

These comments are significant from the viewpoint of current empirical demographic reality. Nevertheless, the adoption of the age at first sex as the appropriate exposure index rather than the proportion married would entail a departure from the demographic convention that holds women's reproductive period to range from 15-49 years. In Ugep, where girls are becoming sexually active at earlier years, as low as 10 in some cases, the excessively low lower limit of the range would render comparative analysis difficult. Moreover, where the majority of births are concentrated within marriage; and extramarital sexual networking is high and accompanied by higher levels

of contraception, the age at first intercourse may yield distortive indications of total fecundity, if the surrounding cultural scenario is not built into the new model.

The most important limitation presented by the Proximate Determinants Framework for this study is the impossibility to generate theoretical propositions from it. The framework is not amenable to the specification of conditions under which particular fertility outcomes are to be expected. Neither does it offer an explicit description of the nature of interrelationships existing among the three sets of factors identified by it. These difficulties can be overcome if commensurate emphasis is placed on the "socioeconomic, cultural and environmental variables", which Onigu Otite, in a comment on an early draft of this report (Otite, 04/06/97: Pers. Comm.), referred to as "ultimate determinants".

The Kenyan anthropologist A.B.C. Ocholla-Ayayo of the University of Nairobi, who has written extensively on theoretical issues in demography and anthropology, shares this opinion. In informal discussions I held with him in the course of developing the conceptual model for this study, he asserted that the use of proximate analyses as the sole conceptual approach to sociocultural studies of fertility could not be adequate. In order to promote integration between proximate and "ultimate" determinants, Ocholla-Ayayo and his associates (1990) developed a model that deliberately brought the background (demographic, socio-economic, and environmental) factors into closer relationship with the proximate determinants. With its basic inability to provide an explicit description of the nature of interrelationships that exist among the three sets of

ultimate factors identified by it thus taken care of, the proximate determinants become a crucial framework for analysing the sociocultural contexts of fertility (See Figure 4).

An integration had to be sought that would account not only for the media through which background factors operated to influence fertility, but for the background factors themselves. For scholars like Otite and Ocholla-Ayayo, these background factors are the crucial variables, if only because they are less mutable, and are the expressions of *culture-as-such* among the communities studied. According to Ocholla-Ayayo (1996: 6), "proximate determinants can only be examined both theoretically and empirically by accepting background data on social, cultural, economic and environmental factors".

The empirical examination of the proximate determinants is of interest to the multivariate analysis (Chapter 5.9). However, since the proximate determinants do not operate in isolation of cultural variables, a synthesis of these determinants with functionalism yields good results because it highlights the background variables and shows them to be cultural in content. The next section describes the synthesis in terms of Figure 4, as shown on the next page.

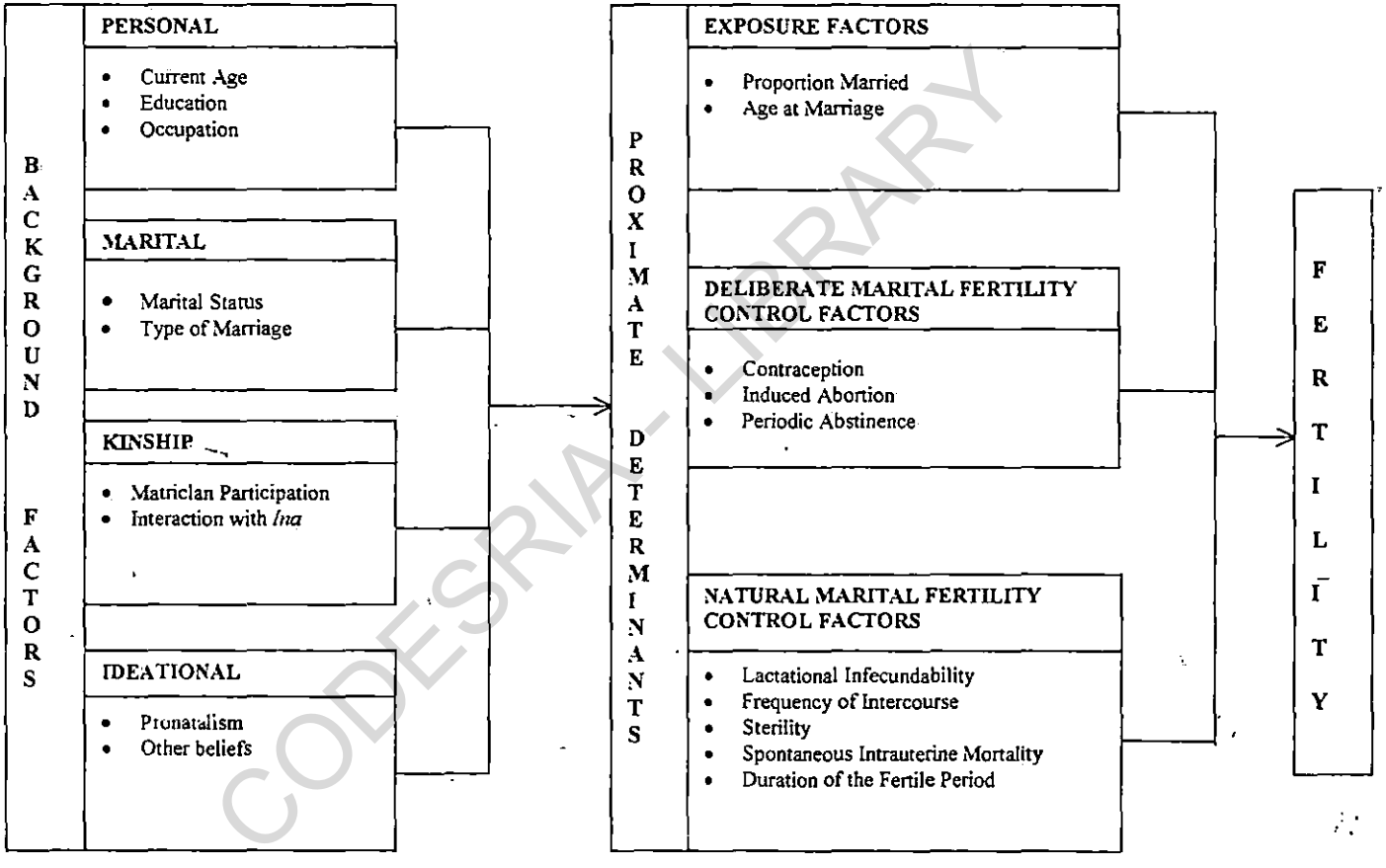

Figure 4: Relationship between the Background Factors and the Proximate Determinants

2.2.5 Conceptual Synthesis

As Figure 4 shows, the background factors are crucial ultimate determinants of which proximate determinants will operate where, when, and among which sub-populations. In other words, from a theoretical point of view, the proximate determinants themselves are influenced by cultural determinants, conditions under which they will operate. As noted, this point is shown in the multivariate analysis of the proximate determinants using a regression equation having independent variables selected from the four contextual factors (Chapter 5.9). The decomposition of these factors is essential to eliciting the interlinkages between the proximate determinants and sundry cultural variables that the conceptual synthesis recognises to exist.

In Figure 4, a background (socioeconomic) variable like modernisation may vary for different societies and have correspondingly different implications for fertility through the operation of different proximate determinants. In the United States, to use a hypothetical case, a couple may live separately (that is practise a duolocal post-marital system of residence), as part of their response to the demands that their occupations make on their conjugal relationship. They may live in different states. Their duolocal residence, a function of industrial development, would imply reduced relative coital frequency, which is one of the natural marital fertility control factors among the proximate determinants of fertility. Their low coital frequency will *ceteris paribus* lead to reduced fertility than would be the case for an agrarian couple in a pronatalist society,

living patrilocally and having a relatively high coital frequency, an obverse situation that is examined in Chapter 4.4.

The conceptual scheme is not just theoretically useful, but it is consistent with our methodological preferences. The synthesis shown in Figure 4 facilitates the analysis of behavioural patterns that influence fertility. It is an outgrowth of the interdisciplinary perspective that is underscored by this study and it characterises our methodology in the next chapter. The rise or fall in fertility in the near future among the Yakurr will depend upon the balance of fertility-enhancing and fertility-reducing trends in the proximate determinants as well as their relationship with changes in the "background" factors. The synthesis also helps in the elaboration of the "background" factors which Bongaarts' framework held constant, while the specific demographic factors which structural-functionalism dissolves in the milieus are brought into sharp focus.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology adopted for this investigation comprised the questionnaire, focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). Ancillary instruments included case histories, document analysis and unobtrusive observation. This combination of several (qualitative and quantitative) methods of data collection, known as triangulation, was expected to provide data on both the demographic event of fertility and the sociocultural contexts in which it occurs. It was informed by the need to integrate anthropological and demographic approaches.

In addition, contemporary thinking in social research considers social reality to be so complex and multidimensional that a single instrument or perspective would prove incapable of traversing all of it. It is argued that triangulation enhances our ability to understand phenomena under investigation more holistically, or from a comprehensive point of view. The process underlies much research activities in the modern period and is hinged on the position that the use of multiple methods would compensate for the individual weaknesses inherent in each one of them. As Chapter 2.2 above showed, this orientation in research is not limited to the eclectic choice of instruments alone, but has implications for the development of theoretical or conceptual schemes for the purpose of explaining social and demographic processes.

3.2 Research Design

The study is conducted primarily through the survey method, complemented with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, part-participant and unobtrusive observation, and a generally strong anthropological orientation. This triangulation was essential for at least three reasons. Firstly, it conduced with an emerging transdisciplinary social science research perspective. Secondly, the study is heuristic, as shown in Chapter 2.1, which reviewed extant literature on the subject. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research strategies, and their prioritisation in that sequence, was suitable from the viewpoint of data collection on the structure and process of fertility behaviour among the Yakurr.

The third reason for complementing the survey design with qualitative methods lies in the heavy anthropological content of the material. The elaborate descriptions of social processes that characterise good ethnographic work are difficult to replicate if the primary objective is to quantify variables. Moreover, the first two study objectives (Chapter 1.3) are ethnographic in character. The simultaneous membership of all members of Yakurr society to two complementary kinship corporations defies the disaggregation of the population in terms of a membership criterion, and defies also the quantification of results. A similar constraint affects the religious and political role of matriclan priests as it influences fertility. The variables to be dealt with for objectives such as these can only be described, within an interpretive paradigm or *emic* context that is strongly associated with anthropology.

The principal survey instrument (the interview schedule) was used to generate data that measure the distribution of certain characteristics in the population with a view to offering an explanation for their occurrence. In this regard, the survey design adopted for this study is "set up specifically to explore associations between particular variables" (Oppenheim, 1992: 21). Such "particular variables" may include "social class and religious behaviour, ethnicity and mental health, family size and educational attainment or age and voting behaviour" (Haralambos, 1980: 516). In the present study, clusters of independent variables are formed around the following factors: (1) the double-unilineal descent system, (2) the religious and political roles of Yakurr matriclan priests among the Yakurr, (3) contraceptive knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices, (4) cultural ideology (pronatalism) and marriage systems, (5) the proximate determinants of fertility and their cultural background, and (6) intergenerational trends in Yakurr fertility.

In addition, the study provides information on intergenerational trends in fertility with significant implications for the preferred methodology. A separate but complementary sample of ever-married men and women aged 50 years and over was drawn with a view to comparing the fertility of this class of respondents with the fertility of their same sex parents. It was a purposive sample that was expected to control for further fertility by including only menopausal women and men who may not be as fecund as before.

Owing to the complexity of the research objectives reiterated above, an extensive use was made of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Ordinarily, the structured

interview helps to generate standardised information from a representative sample of a given population. It may be used exclusively when the investigation is not heuristic or when there is no need to relate findings to the general sociocultural environment. In contrast to quantitative methods, however, qualitative research methods are flexible, fluid, lively, in-depth, rapid assessment methods for exploratory or pilot research into an unfamiliar, uncharted research terrain (Khasiani, 1991; Nigeria, 1991). They are used to enhance the quality of findings supplied by the survey instrument, and to imbue them with greater explanatory significance.

Qualitative methods are more-or-less free from what has been described as "the strait-jacket of prior design decisions" (Smith and Morrow, 1991: 203). They are so flexible that they can be applied even when these design decisions are severely challenged in the open field. They facilitate the need to follow new research leads, reconnoitre previously unanticipated developments, and integrate the outcomes with the original design. More fundamentally, our choice of triangulation is consistent not only with the special character of the present investigation, but is in firm agreement with emerging ideas among sociologists of what should constitute good sociological work. In this context, "many researchers have started questioning the adequacy of an exclusively quantitative approach in explaining changes in the social and demographic situation" (Khan, *et al.*, 1991: 145).

The present investigation reflects and emphasises this point of view. While it adopts the analytic survey design, extensive use is made of qualitative and

anthropological methods. The research methods were deployed according to a predetermined methodological sequence selected from three main possibilities identified by Randall (1988) for integrating ethnographic knowledge with demographic data collection. The third "main possibility" that we chose consists in "the use of ethnological knowledge to inform in the design and collection of survey data, to improve both the quality of the data collected and the possibilities for interpreting the results" (Randall, 1988: 1.2.1). Such a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has made it possible for us to provide demographic data and ethnographic information that are capable of being interpreted in terms of the four contexts elaborated earlier.

3.3 Study Population

This cross-sectional survey targets women aged 15 - 49 and men aged 15 - 60 years for study. The age disparity between respondents takes cognisance of the differential lengths of the reproductive period for both sexes. Questionnaires were administered to 794 women and 557 men, selected through a multi-phase sampling process to be described shortly. As mentioned above, an older sample was purposively selected following an independent multiphase process that yielded data on intergenerational trends in Yakurr fertility.

In-depth interviews were held with prominent matriclan priests and other "knowledgeable" individuals in the communities. A focus group discussion was also held with the council of matriclan priests. These sources of information supplied rich

insights into the phenomenon under study. The FGD in particular indicated the processes and media by which the authority of matriclan priests is channelled into the contexts of childbearing (Appendix 1).

Although Ugep was adopted as the case study for the demographic survey, the ethnographic aspects of the research involved visits to other Yakurr settlements. In Nko, an extensive personal interview was held with the *Obol Lopon*, as was the case in Ugep. At Mkpani, an in-depth interview with the octogenarian sculptor of the *Obaghor* in Ikpakapit (Ugep) threw light on the symbolism of that sculpture. Photographs were taken of various art forms, which were then subjected to the interpretations of "knowledgeable" people in the course of personal interviews. The explanations of the symbols on these art forms portray the Yakurr as a highly pronatalist and patriarchal people. These visits helped locate Ugep as a suitable linguistic and cultural representation of the Yakurr ethnic group for a survey of the sociocultural contexts of fertility among them.

3.4 Sample Design

The non-existence of a sampling frame made it necessary to adopt a multistage sampling approach. The situation is complicated by the omission of figures for the Yakurr LGA from the Final Report of the 1991 census. To facilitate the use of a multistage sampling process under these conditions, a complete list of enumeration areas

(EAs) in Ugep, demarcated in 1991 for the census of that year, had first to be secured. An EA is a compact area carved out of a locality, or group of small localities, with well defined and identifiable boundaries (and a population size of between 400 and 500).

The National Population Commission demarcated 149 EAs in Ugep with an estimated average of 122 households per EA and an estimated number of 4.8 persons per household. This gives an estimate of 585.6 persons per EA in each of the five sites from which the sample was drawn. Seventeen of these EAs (or 11.4 per cent) were selected by first distributing the 149 EAs according to the five geo-political divisions into which they fall and selecting an average of 10 per cent of the EAs within each cluster. A sampling frame of ever-married women (15-49) and men (15-60) did not exist and so it was not possible to select a random sample of respondents at this stage. We obtained provisional information on households at the National Population Commission (NPC) office at Calabar and further information from the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the Family Planning Programme (from which I recruited two research assistants). From the available information, we prepared a frame of households.

We then undertook a systematic selection of households to be included within each of the selected 17 EAs. Within each selected household, an ever-married woman was interviewed although a small sample of never married persons (30.1 per cent) was included for reasons of control. Where more than one ever-married woman was present in the selected household (as in a polygynous household), a simple random procedure was used to select which of the women was to be interviewed. The procedure described

above was that followed for the main survey. A similar but independent multiphase process was followed for the selection of the older sample in order to supply information on intergenerational trends of fertility within the region.

3.5 Research Instruments

3.5.1 The Questionnaire

The principal survey instrument was the questionnaire. This instrument was administered as a structured interview schedule (SIS). It was designed on the basis of insights gained from initial focus group discussions (FGDs) that were held as part of a pilot component of the investigation. Other methods that were used during the pilot included unstructured interviews, informal discussions, and unobtrusive observation.

This sequence conforms to the pattern identified by Sara Randall (supra), for integrating ethnological knowledge and demographic research. We were persuaded that for a heuristic study that must adopt triangulation, the methodological sequence in which the research methods are deployed is of immense importance. In logical terms, it is more suitable to precede the survey, possibly during the pilot stage, with qualitative approaches since their reputation as exploratory methods is better established. They "map out" the field better. Moreover, quantitative survey instruments (e.g. questionnaires or interview schedules) that do not enjoy the benefit of the insights to be gained from the pilot or exploratory phase sometimes end up imposing the very reality they were supposedly designed to reveal.

The effective administration of the questionnaire required the prior training of research assistants (interviewers and supervisors) over a period of two days. The third day of training was reserved for pre-testing the instrument. Changes to the SIS arising from the pre-test were minor possibly due to the procedure used in designing and constructing it. The SIS consisted of four modules of a 30-item series of open-ended and pre-coded fixed choice (close-ended) questions (see Appendix 2). The modules were (1) Personal Data, (2) Marriage/Marital Fertility Factors, (3) Kinship Factors, and (4) Ideational Factors.

The type of question sequence used was based on the "funnel approach". In this approach, each module may be started off by questions of a general sort, which are progressively narrowed to specific points often of a more sensitive nature. Filter questions were introduced to exclude some respondents from questions that were not applicable to them, on the strength of previously recorded information. The questions asked in the SIS were organised centrally around the main study objectives (Chapter 1.3) with specific focus on the research questions (Chapter 1.4), reiterated in Section 3.2 above. The procedure involves separately listing out each specific study objective and generating research questions that are expected to fulfil the requirements of that objective. The separate treatment of each objective in this way will invariably lead to repetitions at subsequent levels. Such repeated questions were cancelled in order to provide an overall list of mutually exclusive questions, which taken as a whole, will satisfy the study objectives. The questions so produced were then disaggregated, posed

in "askable form", and arranged logically into the respective modules. The result of this procedure in instrument design is that the survey instrument was made capable of eliciting data that correspond to the requirements of the study objectives. This procedure highlights the utility of research questions as a bridge between the stated problem and the methodology.

The SIS supplied quantitative information on the personal and socio-demographic attributes of respondents. It also provided data on the characteristics of respondents who exhibit high or low fertility in Yakurr society, as well as gender and patriarchal issues that influence their reproductive motivation. Open-ended questions were designed to promote the use of this instrument for qualitative purposes. Respondents were required to clarify preceding responses in an open-ended manner for which adequate space was provided in the instrument. Even for the fixed-choice questions, the "Other" category was accompanied by the polite request for the respondents to "Please specify", thereby transforming the SIS into a qualitatively sensitive instrument. The instrument for the parallel survey was not complex at all. It merely sought information on respondents' CEB and total number of respondents' siblings by the parent of the same sex.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions are in-depth exchanges in which groups of participants talk about topics relevant to a particular set of research objectives. The size of a focus group varies with both practical and substantive considerations. The size may range

from 4-12 (Morgan, 1988), 6-10 (Nigeria, 1991: 10), or 8-12 (Khan *et al.*, 1991: 145). Focus groups are useful in survey research because they may be used to construct questionnaires (Rossi *et al.*, 1983; Converse and Presser 1985; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1996). As Morgan (1988: 33) has pointed out, however, "in the case of social science surveys the absence of explicit descriptions of how to triangulate focus groups and surveys is probably a result of the relative rarity of this combination".

Exploratory focus group discussions were particularly useful for generating in-depth insights into the sociocultural contexts of fertility among the Yakurr people, and for facilitating the design and development of the questionnaire, which was the main survey instrument. Focus groups have been classified into three types, *viz.* exploratory, clinical and phenomenological focus groups (Calder, 1977). According to Calder, "the rationale of exploratory focus group is that considering a problem in terms of everyday explanation will somehow facilitate a subsequent scientific approach." Hence, FGDs can be used to provide insights into the reasons why a certain event seems to be happening, or people's understanding of it. Talking to a group of people, in a free-flowing way, about their experiences or what they are doing in response to a situation, can often start some very important thinking in the mind of the researcher. Used in this way, "exploratory focus group can be a starting point for a large-scale research, especially of the quantitative nature" (Isiugo-Abanihe and Obono, 2000).

The phenomenological nature of the focus groups in this investigation was informed by the necessity to understand why Ugep people behave as they do in relation

to fertility. In addition, it was important to probe the emotional reactions of the Yakurr people to specific social developments such as the introduction of artificial contraception into their communities. We found that phenomenological focus groups were quite suitable for these purposes (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981), especially since they facilitated the presentation and representation of knowledge as conscious *lived experience*. The focus groups mixed well with conventional ethnographic methods such as unobtrusive or participant observational techniques because the latter methods are predicated on varying degrees of involvement of the researcher in the daily life of the subjects. By facilitating interaction with the people, phenomenological FGDs provided a sense of involvement that left both the discussants and me with a better understanding of how the communities' were adjusting to the prospects of an antinatalist worldview that is bound to conflict with their traditional lifeways and beliefs. The focus group discussions helped unveil the complex emotional scaffolding within which fertility is constructed among the Yakurr. They thus enabled me enter the lives of the respondents and relive with them all of the satisfactions, dissatisfactions, rewards, frustrations of the particular situation (McDaniel, 1979). It emerged from these FGDs that a precipitate fertility transition that is instigated by a sudden change in technology might also involve an overhaul of the basic cognitive categories by which a pre-transitional people had hitherto ordered and re-ordered their world/s.

In addition to generating such insights, the focus group discussions effectively complemented the quantitative data supplied by the survey instrument. They offered an

explanation of numerical data when the data interpretation was not apparent and a rationale for behaviour or attitude that might otherwise pass unexplained (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981).

Triangulating the methodology in this manner was of enormous benefit for the present study. Three FGDs were conducted during the exploratory phases of the research and thirteen (including the one with matriclan priests) after the survey was underway. The latter group of FGDs was held with age grade leaders because the age grade system is a central feature of socio-political organisation among the Yakurr. For the purpose of conducting the twelve FGDs (i.e. excluding the priests' FGD), the groups were divided into three broad cohorts (20-29, 30-39, 40-49) that were sub-divided into female and male groups, and further categorised into "educated" and "less educated" groups, yielding twelve groups in all.

The FGD with the *B'ina* (priests of matriclan fertility spirits) was among the most notable. This and other FGDs threw light on the attitudes, beliefs, ideas, and feelings that the Yakurr people have concerning fertility in relation to their traditional lifeways. During exploratory phases of fieldwork, the discussions provided clues into the language and concepts with which respondents were most familiar. It was these clues that aided in the construction and design of the survey instrument, and also facilitated entry into the sociocultural and mental worlds of Yakurr people. In serving as a follow-up data collection method during the main fieldwork, the FGDs helped clarify issues emerging from responses to the survey instrument.

The analysis of the focus groups took the form of a manual content analysis and the use of ethnographic summaries. According to Morgan (1988), these are the two basic approaches to analysing focus group data (i.e. qualitative or ethnographic summary and systematic coding or tallying via content analysis). In his words, "The principal difference is that the ethnographic approach relies more on direct quotation of the group discussions, while the content analysis typically produces numerical descriptions of the data" (Morgan, 1988: 64), but not necessarily in a quantitative or statistical manner. We have combined these two approaches in the present study, utilising the manual content analysis to elicit emphases, patterns and direction of the discussions. This was achieved by identifying who said what, when (that is, in what sequence), why (was it is in response to someone, or was the discussant muttering under his/her breath?), how, and how frequently? Tallying the conversations in this way produced fascinating insights into the orientation of the discussants, threw light on the focus in the focus group discussions. The two approaches are complementary modes of analysis. Morgan (1988: 24) observes that "a large ethnographic approach may benefit from a systematic tallying of one or two key topics, while a basically quantitative summary of the data is improved immensely by including quotes that demonstrate the points being made". The quotations that we included, especially in Chapter 4 depended on their relevance to the issue at hand. The content analysis of focus groups involved locating sets of items that could be systematically counted, and tallying the number of times a specific term or idea was mentioned within the broad, analytic code categories of the ethnographic approach.

3.5.3 In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews may be distinguished from structured interviews by the fact that they are unstructured. As a result of their unstructured nature, they are immensely flexible and can permit open probes of responses. They are friendly to the respondent because, within the bounds of a general research design, in-depth interviews are oriented toward the interviewee's knowledge, feelings, recollections and experiences. To a large extent, the direction of probes are ruled by the assent placed by the respondent on certain issues, rather than the investigator's own preconceived ideas, notions or intentions.

As the term itself connotes, in-depth interviews are "quasi-anthropological/ethnological intensive studies aimed at understanding in toto phenomena, particularly of a social, cultural, and attitudinal nature" (Kamuzora, 1989: 17). In the words of the same author, "the in-depth survey is a relatively new type of data collection procedure in population studies" although its utility has grown more imperative since "the disclaimer of the famous theory of demographic transition by research findings that the theory sparked in Europe". In our investigation, the method deepened comprehension of phenomena that appeared vague and ambiguous when apprehended through other methods, for the simple reason that a degree of time-consuming introspection and meditation was sometimes necessary for the respondent to articulate his/her responses, and for his/her meanings to become clear. The management of silence is essential to the art and science of probing.

The interviews generated in-depth information from "knowledgeable" members of Yakurr society (e.g. matriclan priests and heads of corporate patrilineages) on the sociocultural contexts in which individual fertility behaviour occurs and the extent to which it conduces with societal norms. In-depth interviews were also conducted with older (mostly menopausal), women for insights into intergenerational trends in fertility. They promoted the interdisciplinary convergence of demography and anthropology that we sought at a methodological level.

3.5.4 Unobtrusive Observation

The conduct of this study required the observation of certain rites and rituals, for which reason I negotiated access to many of the fertility shrines, as shown in the plates in the next chapter. Membership of *Kofono Kodurr Efa*, an age grade association whose name means "Unity is Strength", facilitated my integration into the local life of the people. During the period of application for membership and the time it took to satisfy all requisite payments, important friendships were formed that were invaluable for the quality of insights they supplied. Membership to this association also afforded me the opportunity of observing the role of age grade associations in nuptial ceremonies, birth and death rites, and the decision making process in general. It enhanced my understanding of the executive workings of contemporary Ugep society, within a framework of traditional executive institutional arrangements.

The observations were carefully recorded in a logbook that I consulted from time to time, updating it as the need arose. My association with top ranking *Yabol* like the *Obol Lopon* and the *Okpebili* made it possible for me to keep a calendar of main festivals. My close interaction with the *Yabol* made it possible for me to be present at the palace on the day that a decision was reached over when the *Obol Lopon* would sacrifice to the premier fertility deity (*Odjokobi*). Such was the extent of my integration and friendship with the priests that the calculations leading to this decision were made in my presence. I interviewed the *Obol* on several occasions on the ceremonies and it was with his kind assistance that a focus group discussion was arranged with other priests of the fertility spirits concerning about which mention has already been made.

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative information for this study was generated using the qualitative methods described above in this chapter. Unlike the quantitative data, the qualitative data were of such a variety that they could not be analysed by any single computer software. The translation/transliteration of texts into English is a necessary condition for the use of the available software. I suspected that substantial meaning may be lost in the process, and the flavour of the discussions distorted if certain notions could not be conveyed in a foreign language. I could not disregard the fact that language is an integral part of the cultural reality it conveys. Neither could overlook the fact that the research was dealing with culture-specific and therefore culture-bound concepts. What if

the Yakurr use repetition not as a means of emphasis, but in conformity to the rules of stanza maintained by a folkloric tradition? What if a priest's prayer is rendered within this cultural context as part of the ethos to which he owes obligation and from which he derives benefit, but the assignation of frequencies to particular repeated words is then misinterpreted as connoting emphasis? Isiugo-Abanihe and Obono (2000) have examined this and other substantive issues surrounding the use of computer software in qualitative analysis, if the language of data collection is not the same as the language of analysis.

The alternative to this difficulty presented us with a methodological paradox that is perhaps rivalled only by the first. Is there a standard way, an established format, for conducting qualitative analysis? How do two different ethnographers analyse their separate unobtrusive observations of the same phenomenon? Would the implications of results obtained by participant observation not depend to a great extent on the status of one's key informant, his/her private interests in the matter? These difficulties and "variety in techniques" leading to "irreconcilable [analytical] couples" have been the subject of much recent writing in the past decade (Tesch, 1990; Khan *et al*, 1991; Silverman, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Feldman, 1995; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; etc.). The frustration associated with comparing the procedures followed by different authors is reflected in the description of qualitative analysis as "an attractive nuisance" in an article appearing the decade before that (Miles, 1979).

Against the existing plethora of procedures, we developed an approach that subordinated our procedures to the research questions. What did we set out to collect, and how did we collect them? What is the most logical way to inspect, collate, compile, and interpret the collected data? Our thinking was that the same set of objectives and research questions that had guided data collection should also determine how best to analyse the data. The examination of sculptures for example does not lend itself to the same sort of analysis, as does an FGD. Eclecticism characterised our procedures. Insights from personal observation recorded in a logbook as close to the time of observation as possible were frequently re-examined in the light of perspectives gained from methods such as the in-depth interviews. In the case of the sculptures, a separate round of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were needed to help explain their hidden but communally recognised folk meanings.

In sum, the qualitative data were manually analysed using ethnographic summaries (Morgan, 1988: 64) and a manual content analysis (Khan *et al.*, 1991: 147; Dawson *et al.*, 1994: 30-37) such that a "feel for the data" would enhance the explanatory clarity of our findings. The manual analysis of the focus groups followed the usual process of transcribing them, coding and thematizing responses, and clarifying underlying unifying ideas on the particular issue under discussion. This identification of the "thread" of discussion made it possible to dovetail into other sections of the same discussion, because the total discussion had been conceived of in a holistic sense.

Since the FGD is an artificial attempt to simulate a "natural conversation", there was a constant need to relate the discussion, even as it was taking place, to the surrounding cultural reality that gave it life. In other words, the group discussion is a methodological contrivance that takes a momentary picture of the debate of culture, through a facilitator who is expected to possess knowledge of the culture that is being so reassessed. At least the preliminary part of its analysis must be contemporaneous with the discussion itself. A holistic view of discussions as a fluxional discourse holding "out there" in the real world discourages exclusively *etic* analysis.

This perspective holds implications for the rigorous conduct of analysis, and facilitates a readiness to relate different parts of the discussion through the "unifying thread" to all other parts, in the understanding that ideas may be generated by slight nuances in the moment that subtly invite particular responses. The analysis of our focus groups was made sensitive to this phenomenon. One question that I kept in mind during the post-discussion phases of the analysis was self-directed: "How does the present consensus re-echo an earlier consensus on a completely different subject matter, perhaps among a completely different group?" This attitude helped keep the discussions on a centripetal course that provided a body of insights that without doubt elevated the quality of the quantitative findings beyond their customary staid level.

The analysis of the quantitative data, on the other hand, followed a more straightforward course. These data were generated from partly pre-coded open-ended and fixed-choice questions on the interview schedule and were entered using EPI-INFO

computer software and analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 6 (SPSS 6.0). A descriptive analysis of data was carried out through univariate frequency distributions and crosstabulation of relevant variables. The specific sociodemographic variables that were selected for descriptive univariate analysis included age, sex, educational, occupational factors, and other sociodemographic factors such as the number of children ever born (CEB), contraceptive prevalence, ideal size, and the association of these individual fertility. The bivariate distributions underlined the patterned manner in which dependent and independent variables correlate, for which interrelationships we used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) to show both the strength and direction of the relationships. The inferential analysis utilised ordinary least squares in examining fertility differentials among different sub-groups of the study population. These differentials are explained as a function of a set of predictors encompassing personal, marital, kinship, and ideational factors.

Multivariate analysis, as used in this study, involved the use of dummy variable regression in order to insert nominal-scale variables into the regression equation. Regression analysis involves the estimation of the linear relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables or covariates. The dummy variables were created by treating each category of a nominal variable as a separate variable and assigning arbitrary scores for all the cases depending upon their *presence* or *absence* in each of the categories. Since the dummy variables were assigned arbitrary metric values of 0 and 1, they could be treated as interval variables and inserted into the

regression equation. In this way, the quantitative analysis throws illuminates the quantitative aspects of the relationship between Yakurr fertility and a set of interacting sociocultural factors conceptualised as decomposable background variables (Chapter 2.2.4). The numbers assigned to nominal-scale categories are not continuous and, as such, could not be treated as "scores" as they would in conventional regression analysis. The use of dummy variables was therefore expedient for making it possible to integrate these two types of variables in one mode of analysis. They permitted us to do *t*-tests, and one-way and two-way analysis of variance using regression techniques. The following clusters of factors were used in the multivariate analysis to analyse the number of children ever born (CEB).

A. Kinship Factors
   1. Participation in matriclan affairs
   2. Interaction with *ina*

B. Ideational Factors
   1. Personal belief in the power of *ase*
   2. Subscription to the pronatalist aphorism (*Lesou Leta Otoba*)
   3. Ideal number of children
   4. Religious affiliation

C. Marital Factors
   1. Marital status
   2. Age at first marriage
   3. Type of marriage (monogamous or polygynous)

D. Personal Factors
   1. Sex
   2. Age
   3. Educational status
   4. Occupation
   5. The proximate determinants

E. Residual Factors

The set of factors impinging on all dependent variables, but not accounted for by the regression analysis.

It is clear that the four contexts identified for the analysis are not always mutually exclusive, as it is possible to classify some of the variables into more than one cluster of factors. This situation is unavoidable considering the fluxional nature of cultural reality. The principal benefit of the model is to suggest directions for subsequent research in social demography by decomposing the background factors into "contexts" of analysis that have a crucial bearing on either the number of children ever born, or on such other dependent variables as the analysis may require. The danger of multicollinearity that the situation could have posed was taken care of using collinearity diagnostics that are described presently.

Since the study focussed on the sociocultural contexts of fertility, the number of children ever born (CEB) was by default the most consistent dependent variable in the regression analysis as can be seen in Chapter 5.9. However, it was important to bear in mind that contexts had to be found for these contexts themselves. In other words, a comprehensive account of the sociocultural contexts of fertility must involve a secondary examination of multiple factors that affect the operation of the principal proximate determinants of fertility. Great care has been taken in this regard to reduce the effects of multicollinearity, which is the undesirable situation where an independent variable in the regression analysis is a function of other independent variables. Estimates of regression

coefficients become unstable as collinearity increases, and this adversely affects the quality of findings.

We reduced these effects by following remove and stepwise regression techniques for eliminating variables that had no significant influence on the dependent variables. Independent variables with weak tolerances were held constant as a means of mitigating multicollinearity effects once detected. The tolerance of a variable is the proportion of its variance, or dispersion around the mean, that is not accounted for by other independent variables in the regression equation. A variable with very low tolerance contributes little to the explanatory model and can create severe computational problems. To avert this and other problems of multicollinearity, the usual discriminant and canonical procedures were followed. If the independent variables were continuous, a canonical correlation analysis was produced. Conversely, if the independent variables were categorical, a canonical discriminant analysis was produced. The processes are facilitated rapidly as noted above by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 6 (SPSS 6.0) used for this analysis.

The logistic regression supplies information on the odds of having a large family size (more than four children) in the study area by dichotmising the dependent variable CEB into 1-4 children (0), and greater than or equal to 5 children (1). In other words, the logistic regression spells out the probability of a dichotomous outcome variable being predicted from a set of independent variables. The model is:

$$Pr(event)=1/(1+\exp(-(B0 + B1*X1 + B2*X2 +...+ Bk*Xk)))$$

Several proximate determinants were also subjected to logistic regression analysis following the usual procedures.

The objective of these eclectic procedures is to develop a frame of reference for unifying the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the sociocultural contexts of Yakurr fertility and for interpreting them in terms of a set of predictors encompassing kinship, ideational, marital, and personal factors. A fifth residual category was created to account for future factors that may not fit into the present model.

3.7 Limitations of Study

The absence of field guidelines for triangulating anthropological and demographic methods in fertility studies made the conceptualisation and implementation of research difficult. Until studies are conducted within the paradigm employed, the epistemological status of some of the assumptions made about the influence of culture on fertility cannot easily be established. Also, numerous landmarks identified by the NPC in its demarcation of EAs for the 1991 census had changed. Buildings described in the EA maps as uncompleted had since been completed or blown away by the wind. It is feasible that on a few occasions, sampling may have extended to adjacent EAs without the intention of doing so. The synthesis of contextual factors in this study with the proximate determinants is novel. The absence of guidelines regarding these procedures render our findings tentative until, and perhaps unless, further studies are carried out in this area, utilising a specifically anthropological demographic frame of reference.

Limitations such as these underscore the need for greater collaboration between demographers and anthropologists in the conduct of fertility studies, especially in regimes such as those of sub-Saharan Africa, where the factors leading to fertility change have not yet been fully understood. It is particularly important to renew this emphasis because, as the present study shows, it is not very clear what the epistemological sequence should be among of the various methods used in a synthesis like this. It is also not clear if the problem ought to be posed in those terms. This sort of difficulty necessarily has implications for the results obtained by the present study.

Further work has to be done with regard to the definition and use of the concept of "household" in the conduct of anthropological demographic investigations. Field experience reveals emergent complexities that do not appear to be addressed by the survey approach. If people "eat from the same pot", does that render the social unit that does so significant from practically every point of view? What about the new diversities that are being recorded in culinary arrangements and feeding and sleeping patterns? What is the nature of interrelations among people who share similar feeding arrangements in the context of contemporary developments? In my view, the continued application of the concept of "household" in its limited form might have proved constrictive for the present study. The use of "households" in the survey might have been influenced by an *etic* social science orientation, which might have failed to capture dramatic changes that have occurred in human social arrangements in the past few decades.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING OF YAKURR FERTILITY

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter discusses material obtained from primary oral traditional, archival, sculptural and documentary sources during ethnographic fieldwork, which was carried out in two main parts. The first phase consisted of an exploratory assay that dealt with the heuristic parameters of the demographic survey. It preceded this sample survey in order to generate insights into indigenous knowledge and ideas for it, and to supply it with complementary qualitative information that will enhance the explanatory significance of its results. The procedure exposed a number of conceptual and practical problems associated with earlier research assumptions and enabled us refine understanding of terms, query research designs, clarify goals, reformulate research questions and, without prejudice to Chapter 1.4, generate new hypotheses about the relationship between culture and fertility among the Yakurr people. Peter Marshall (1997: 27) has outlined possible sources of hypotheses in a research context like ours.

Such "qualitative hypotheses" were generated in line with meanings embedded in textual statements derived from the cultural setting, chance or serendipitous occurrences, constant comparison of data, as new common factors are discovered, and a general attitude that perennially sought connections among all things. The second phase of ethnographic fieldwork examined in critical and qualitative detail the central issues that emerged from the survey, particularly during the preliminary analysis of the survey data.

In the course of ethnographic fieldwork, I lived and interacted with the Yakurr people on a virtually permanent basis for a period of seven months initially and intermittently for two years in the phases that followed. From my research base in Ugep, where fieldwork was most intensive and followed the lead of Daryll Forde, I observed events during these periods in partly participant and non-participant (unobtrusive) ways. As far as was possible, I consolidated my integration into the community and its lifeways by participating in the activities of as many associations as would accommodate me. Towards this end, I sought and obtained membership to *Kofonno Kodurr Efa*, about which there is more information in Section 4.5. This ethnographic strategy proved the most viable means by which aspects of Yakurr social structure and their impingement on fertility could become accessible to the investigation.

The results are arranged under five broad sections: (1) The Cosmological Setting of Yakurr Society, (2) Art, Values and Ideology among the Yakurr, (3) Matriclan Priests and Political Authority in Ugep, (4) The Marriage Process in Ugep, and (5) Social Structure and Social Life in Contemporary Ugep Society. The arrangement of the ethnographic material provides a cultural frame of reference within which subsequent quantitative data on Yakurr fertility (Chapter 5) may be understood.

4.2 The Cosmological Setting of Yakurr Society

Belief in ancestral spirits that regulate fertility is a prominent feature of cosmological systems of sub-Saharan African societies. The influence of such beliefs on reproductive motivation and social structure is quite extensive within these societies, and

manifests in "the cultural and social contexts of the intangible entities which could so often be shown to be the more ultimate referents of belief" (Forde, 1964: 258). The pervasive nature of these fertility beliefs accounts for the view that the delay in fertility transition within this region has been the result of "reasons which are cultural and have much to do with a religious belief system that operates to sustain high fertility" (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987: 409). In other words, the explanation for high fertility in sub-Saharan Africa is said to lie in "a religious belief system and an accompanying social structure that have accorded both spiritual and material rewards to high marital fertility" (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987: 567).

Among the Yakurr, this "religious belief system" is central to an understanding of the full range of human attitudes and responses to what is perceived as the expectations of a cosmically charged environment. It helps explain the peculiar character of social control, the intricate connections between rites of passage and rites of intensification, the special nature of the system of mores and their intimate connection with kinship idioms and filial piety. The relationship between human fertility and political economy are thus comprehensive, intricate and inseparable. The cosmological, ideational, socio-demographic and institutional elements of Yakurr social life exist on a convoluting balance that unifies the social and spiritual worlds in the overlapping contexts of social structure. The demonstration of this point is a central aim of the present section, but its elaboration in political economy is found in Section 4.5 of this chapter.

The cosmology of Yakurr society is intimately bound up with its secular affairs. The differentiation of the priestly class is based on a bifurcation of all spiritual entities into two broad categories, the *ase* (Plates 1 and 2) and the *ndet* (Plate 3), concerning which there is an extensive discussion below. The *Obase* (Plate 4) is a special kind of *edet*, usually associated with a patriclan. Among the supernatural beings are also lineage ancestors and departed heroes who more or less circulate among the clan's pantheon of gods. They seem to occupy the position of emissaries from the *ndet* to morally upright members of the lineage, although they also occasionally appear to act in their own capacity, to visit firm divine punishment on those who deviate from crucial norms and practices. In this way, ancestor worship is important to the maintenance of societal norms and the system of governance upon which they are founded. The religion also induces loyalty to the lineage, and thereby functions as the supernatural nucleus of an elaborate socio-political structure. At the core of this structure is a network of independent gods and *ndet* that the priests pay obeisance to, praying them to increase the number of births in the respective lineages, and in this way, maintain the political legitimacy of the priests. At the theoretical apex of this structure is *Obase Woden*, who is presumed to be the Almighty God on whose behalf the lower beneficent entities function, but around whom no elaborate ceremonies revolve.

Plate 1: *Yose Odjokobi*, Premier Fertility Deity in Ugep

Plate 2: Shrine of *Atewa Wayakangkang*

Plate 3: ***Epundet***

Plate 4: ***Obase***

4.2.1 ***Ase***

The *yose* (pl. *ase*), the fertility spirit associated with a particular matriclan, is at the core of the cultural organization of fertility among the Ugep. It is embodied in "a miscellaneous set of cult objects, including decorated skulls, figurines, helices and penannular rings of brass and copper and various pots, which are kept in a miniature house in the compound of the priest and arranged on an adjacent open-air altar at public rituals" (Forde 1950: 314). It consists of " a varied collection of objects: clay mounds sometimes sculpted and painted to represent a human head, bronze manillas and helices, pottery flasks and bowls, and a flat slab on which a white chalk paste was prepared for smearing on the face or breast of the participants to convey the blessings of the fetish" (Forde, 1964: 262).

The manner in which these blessings are conveyed was observed during the November, 1997 public rituals of *Yose Odjokobi* when I also observed two members of *Kekon*, an association of barren women, present themselves for the blessings of the deity (Plate 6). Members of *Kekon* (known as *Yakonakona*) act, for the public's benefit, as though they were children, a mode of existence that was said to enable them adjust to the cruelty of living without children. This is an evident sign of a strong communal social psychological disposition to mitigate the stigma that is usually associated with sterility. On an occasion such as the invocation of *Odjokobi*, the entire community, sterile and otherwise, celebrates its belief in fertility and reaffirms its faith in its future course. The *Yakonaokona* are more or less obliged to entertain the crowd of gathered worshippers.

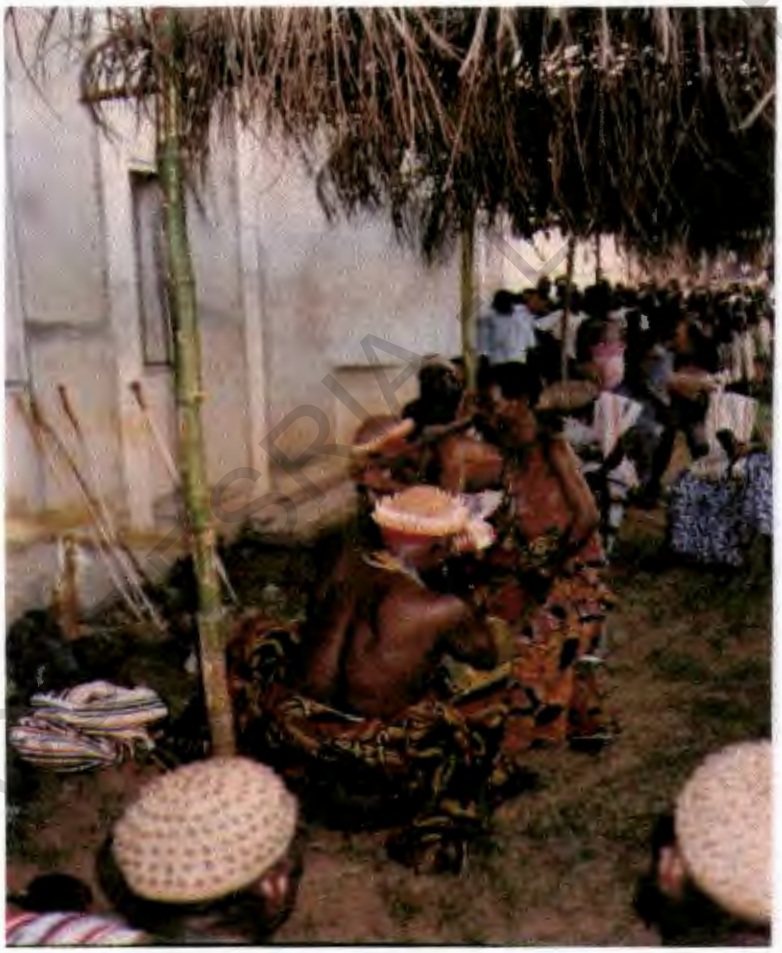

Plate 5: "...Conveying the Blessings of the Fetish"

Plate 6: ***Kekon***

In this way, the community reasserts the fundamental unity of its parts, and transcends the limitations posed by the existence of people whose inability to bear children contradicts the formal ethos of the community.

In the context of invocation (Plate 7), it is clear that:

> the *ase* were regarded as sentient and sympathetic beings, capable of conferring benefits not only on members of the associated matriclans, but on the people of the village as a whole and associated within it. The nature of these benefits, was also explicit, namely, material well-being through the fertility of crops, protection against outbreaks of fire, the continuity and growth of the people through the birth of children, internal social harmony by disposing people to peaceful conduct, the destruction of anti-social persons especially those practising witchcraft or sorcery, and particularly the frustration of such attempts by visiting strangers (Forde, 1964: 264)

The *ina* (i.e. priest) of *Odjokobi* (the premier fertility spirit) is automatically leader of the *Yabol* and, as such, *Obol Lopon* (Town Leader). The *yose* of which he is the priest is, unlike the rest, not monopolised by his own matriclan but is seen as the common *yose* of the entire town. *Yose Odjokobi* is the paramount fertility spirit in Ugep. It is said to be "the first shrine that the Yakurr possessed" (Ubi, 1981: 117), and to have been brought by them from *'Akpa*. Concerning its origin, the *Ina Odjokobi* (*Obol Lopon* of Ugep), HRH *Obol* Ubi Ujong Inah, observed that:

> We attribute our population growth to the beneficence of Mma Esekpa. I will say she is *Mmuka Womon*. We feel her [presence] very much around us! She performed wonders when she was alive. Our prayers are directed to her and to *Obase* [God] (Primary Data: Personal Interview with *Obol Lopon*, 22/11/97: Pers. Comm.).

Plate 7: Invocation by the *Okpebri* before *Yose Odjokobi*

The personal interview with the *Obol Lopon* of Ugep was very revealing with respect to the pronatalist values of the Yakurr people.

Question:

> *Obol*, how did the Ugep people come by *Odjokobi*? Where did Odjokobi come from?

Answer:

> On where did *Odjokobi* come from, it happened long ago, very long ago. Once families were established in those old pagan days...like in the biblical days.... As soon as they were in place, we put these things together as gods. *Odjokobi* itself was found by the wife of a former *Obol Lopon* who went to the stream to pray to the water spirits for the peace, prosperity and fertility of her matriclan. *Odjokobi* was what came out of the stream in answer to her prayers (Primary Data: Personal Interview with *Obol Lopon*, 22/11/97" Pers. Comm.).

Mma Eseкpa is a mythical ancestress to whom much good is attributed. It is difficult to establish if she had a physical existence or not, but the *Yabol* insist that she appears in the town from time to time and speaks to them and other people in dreams, especially in times of danger or war. She is held to have been the first *Obol Lopon* of Ugep, but had disappeared after invoking powerful pronatalist blessings. On the occasion in question, she is said to have been offering sacrifice bending down, not realising that she was exposed from the rear. When one of the male *Yabol* pointed this out to her, she covered herself properly, concluded her invocation, and was never seen physically again. In the words of the *Ina Atewa* suggested that "she made sacrifices in an earthen pot and prayed for increased childbirth, after which she disappeared" (*Ina Atewa*, 8/04/98: Pers. Comm.).

While Mma Esekpa is credited with having "performed wonders", it is implicit in the account that women are by nature unsuitable for high office involving offering public sacrifice. Gender prejudice thus inheres in Yakurr mythology and manifests in the fact that the *Yabol* is constituted as an all-male council with never a thought to the participation of women. On the other hand, the pre-eminent status of *Odjokobi* and its *ina* is derived from the belief that this *yose* confers comprehensive and diverse fertility benefits not only on the female members of the associated matriclans but on the whole town. Access to its shrine is restricted. This august idol is kept under lock and key except on the single day each year when it is brought out for public view and admiration. The permission to enter its shrine and photograph it among other items in the shrine was a special privilege that was partly borne out of an entire year spent establishing rapport with the *Obol Lopon*, gaining his confidence, and negotiating access to the shrine.

It is interesting to note that the image of *Yose Odjokobi* that is shown in this report (Plate 1) differs markedly from the one found in Forde's *Yako Studies* (1964: 208). While the latter *Odjokobi* was made of carved wood, the one I saw and photographed is made of porcelain. The *Obol Lopon* explained that before he ascended the throne, foreign art traders had stolen the original *Odjokobi*. He pointed out, however, that what matters is the fact that the spirit embodied in the former image is still resident in the present one. By implication, the theft of the original sculpture that embodied this fertility spirit has not diminished its beneficence to the community.

In addition to *Odjokobi*, there are ten other *ase* distributed among 19 other matriclans as shown in Table 2. The *ase* are said to generally specialise in the conferment of peace to couples and the members of the village at large. This function is interlinked with their role as fertility spirits. A focus group discussion with matriclan priests (Plate 8) signified a high incidence of pathological sterility and infant and child mortality in the early days of settlement. The discussants placed their belief in the *ase* on the strength of the difference in fertility trends before and after the *ase* were discovered. According to the priests,

> The truth is that in the days gone by, our mothers had bad wombs. No matter how hard the men tried, the women could not conceive. If they became pregnant at all, it would result in a stillbirth or the child would die in infancy. Our fathers were very wise in those days.... They went into the forests and searched in both neighbouring and far communities to see if they could find something for their women. Sometimes they brought back *yakpata* [idols made of carved wood] which they had bought from other villages. At other times, the things that would be used to prepare the *yose* would be revealed to them in dreams (*B'ina*, 12/02/98: FGD).

There is some validation of this claim in Forde's sample of the marital histories of women in Ugep in the 1930s. According to this report:

> A sample of the marital histories of women in Umor [Ugep] confirmed the high incidence of sterility, miscarriage, and neo-natal death. At the same time, the respect accorded to a woman both as a wife and as a member of her matrilineage, and the prestige of a man within his patrilineage and clan, depended so greatly on their having children, that deep and frequent anxiety concerning the hazards of pregnancy and childbirth existed among the Yakö (Forde, 1964: 274).

Plate 8: Focus Group Discussion with Matriclan Priests of Ugep Society

Perhaps the oft-cited Durkheimian thesis that the Divine is no more than "society transfigured and thought out symbolically" (Durkheim, 1953: 75) is useful to explaining this finding. Our view is that this "deep and frequent anxiety" constituted the psychic base of the Yakurr pantheon of fertility gods. It seems probable that a long history of sterility and infant mortality in an agrarian society with rudimentary technological development would foist on the inhabitants a view of unimpeded fertility of both land and womb as the outcome of beneficent influences that were to be courted and, where necessary, worshipped. Table 2 below shows the 22 matriclans and 11 *ase* in Ugep society.

Table 2: Table Showing Matriclans (*Ajimo*) and *Ase* of Ugep[a]

S/N	Matriclan	*Ase*
1.	Yabol	Odjokobi
2.	Yakunkunebol	Odjokobi
3.	Yakpolo	Odjokobi
4.	Yabaye	Otalikumo
5.	Yabono	Otalikumo
6.	Yanali	Otalikumo
7.	Yakamafe	Ntanakotan
8.	Yayali	Atewa
9.	Yatiyomo	Atewa
10.	Yakangkang	Atewa
11.	Yaboletete	Esukpa
12.	Yatebo	Esukpa
13.	Yasenibol	Okalefon
14.	Yakoibol	Kukpatu
15.	Yakpambol	Obol Ene
16.	Yawambol	Obol Ene
17.	Yajeni	Obol Ene
18.	Yapuni	Otabelusana
19.	Yajokpolo	Otabelusana
20.	Yabong	Osenawekakong
21.	Yakumiko	Osenawekakong
22.	Yanyor	Obete Edet

[a] Primary Data: Focus Group Discussion with Matriclan Priests of Ugep, 12th February, 1998.

It is not surprising that the number of matriclans recorded by Forde (i.e. 23) differs from what we found (i.e. 22). The number of matriclans and *ase* in Ugep change over time with political or ritual developments. It has been noted elsewhere (Obono, 1999) that fission and accretion are fundamental features of Yakurr social structure. Hence the number of matriclans Forde documented has reduced through accretion, and not necessarily through obsolescence or extinction for that were ethnographically impossible within the context of prevailing kinship structures. Accordingly, it was documented of the 1930s that:

> Nine matriclans have an exclusive right to elect priests; 2 have rights in alternation; 12 provide no priests; 1 is in the process of fission; 8 (7 and a section of an 8th) have transferred their allegiance and 5 of these have created new *ase*. Part of Yabot 1 is claiming to be a separate *lejimo* known as *Yakunkunebot* (Forde, 1964: 105).

In the sixty years since Forde's investigation, the "*Yakunkunebot*" have successfully established themselves as a distinct matrilineal entity, but with allegiance still to *Odjokobi*, as Table 2 shows, because it is through that priesthood that they may produce an *Obol Lopon*.

Notably, the propitiation of all holders of prominent ritual and political office in Yakurr society constitutes little more than entreaties to various gods and fertility spirits for high fertility among the womenfolk. Nevertheless, the prayer for peace is intrinsically linked to the desire for many children. In the focus group discussion held with the

matriclan priests, the view emerged very strongly that peace and fertility were either coterminous or had a circular relationship:

> We seek many children so that our enemies will not overwhelm us, so that *wofai* [peace] will come. Peace is what we want. We seek peace in order to have numerous children, because without peace, children will not be borne to you. It is so (*B'ina*, 12/02/98: FGD).

The preoccupation with peace and fertility was just as strong in the other Yakurr settlements, notably Nko. In this town, the *Obol Lopon* of Nko, HRH *Obol* Efefiom Ayomobi (Plate 9) described *Asunaja*, the premier fertility spirit, as "the emblem of royal authority and we believe that it is the *edet* that gives us peace and fertility" (*Obol* Ayomobi, Efefiom Ayomobi, 02/04/98: Pers. Comm.). I was conducted to the shrine of this fearful looking deity, cemented securely to a hole that was pre-dug to ensure it was never stolen again. The interior of the shrine was in a sombre shade provided by a thatch roof. I was not allowed to take any photographs. The idea prevailed here, as in the other Yakurr settlements, that the *ase* are the "kind gods" of the Yakurr people who preserve them from harm. They are capable of inflicting punishment but do so only by withholding their blessings and protection. The next category of spiritual entities (the *ndet*) complements the *ase* in this regard.

Plate 9: In-depth Interview with the *Obol Lopon* of Nko

4.2.2 *Ndet*

The *ndet* (sing. *edet*) are not fertility gods *per se*, but are described as "a collection of objects, again mostly pottery vessels, but sometimes including curiously shaped stones or carved wooden figures (*yapata*, sing. *okpata*), often placed in a miniature house" (Forde, 1964: 270). The most celebrated of these is *Edet Etoutou* who is the leading deity among a class of supernatural beings known as *mmanamanadet* (sing. *emanamanadet*). These are *ndet* which in addition to other functions are associated with fertility. The head of *Edet Etoutou* is known as the *Oblansin* and sacrifices to this dreaded deity are conducted only when an *Oblansin* dies and another is selected. It is believed that whenever *Edet Etoutou* is sacrificed to, young girls become pregnant in unprecedented numbers. Its rites are connected with *Yibo*, a stream said to belong to Mma Esekpa.

According to a group of male age grade leaders age 50 –55 in a focus group (Plate 10), the last time that sacrifices were offered to this deity was 1995. These age grade leaders explained that the function of *Edet Etoutou* is to confer peace and this may have implications on fertility. In their words,

> Even the old people believe that peace between a couple will promote pregnancy. We think so too, but what is there is that if there is peace, couples will have more sex and that will increase their fertility (*Yabongka*, 08/04/98: FGD).

The *epundet* (pl. *yepundet*) is a "low mound of small boulders surmounted by some chalk stained pots, usually set in the shade of a tree" (Forde, 1964: 51). It is the symbol of the *kepun*'s ritual unity. *Yepundet* are consulted regularly for the expiation of

Plate 10: Focus Group Discussion with Age Grade Leaders in Ugep

ritual offences such as murder, incest, or abortion that would otherwise injure the prosperity or fertility of the *kepun* (pl. *yepun*), that is the patrilineage. More frequently, they are approached for pregnancy-related rites, such as *Kukpol* (see Section 4.5).

Other prominent *ndet* in Ugep are *Ekpe Edet* and *Edet Lopon*. Unlike the *yepundet*, these and other *ndet* may have only a tangential interest in fertility, or promote it by conferring peace. They specialise in a wide range of functions, which cover all of life's basic exigencies. They have the capacity to cure diseases like cholera and smallpox, protect crops in the field, detect crime, expose sorcery and witchcraft, and inflict offenders with madness and epilepsy. It is noteworthy, however, that these *ndet* seem to have an existence that is unified with the political economy, and that hardly ever survives the structural circumstances that gave birth to them. Thus those conceived to meet very specific needs cease to exist once the structures for those needs and fears disappeared. For example, the farm-paths used to be the forest zone of numerous *ndet* because it was essential to dissuade yam thefts in the barns (*nkpo*), found on the outskirts of the towns. With the end of the *nkpo* system, the guard deities have ceased to exist.

Despite the multiplicity of these deities in Yakurr society, it is interesting to note that there is little systematic development of any interrelationships among them. The gods do not interrelate. There is no evidence of defined complementarity in the functions of these deities. While several deities may perform the same functions, there is hardly ever any sense of continuity in these functions from one to the other. There is no

relationship of opposition in the pantheon, and no god appears to have a natural adversary.

Against this background, within what framework can the cosmological, and hence intellectual, setting of Yakurr society be classified? How do we explain the absence of a bifurcation of spiritual reality along diametrically opposed lines that lead to sharp and unambiguous Darkness-and-Light, Good-and-Evil, *Ying*-and-*Yang* dichotomies, as are familiar in the developed monotheistic and mystical religions of the world? Does the absence of this organic unity among Yakurr spiritual entities point to the truncation of that society's historical experience? Do not religious ideas evolve with the status of the collective minds that conceive them? In other words, could the cultural intrusion of Europe into the society have arrested the growth and development of religious and philosophical thought in Yakurr society, with the result that the synthesis that denotes theological maturation is absent? Could the disparity and diverseness, or the "loose centre" of Yakurr religious thought be partial evidence of the destabilising influence of the twin perils of slavery and colonialism, as the most prominent stimuli for the forced incorporation of Yakurr society into the modern world? These questions bear further social investigation, and that possibly within the framework generated by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) in his classical Law of Three Stages.

Comte was the French philosopher who founded the school of philosophy known as Positivism, originated the word "sociology", and sought to analyse the relation between the evolution of society and the stages of science in his Law of Three Stages.

The essential features of the Yakurr belief system no doubt correspond to the Comtean theological stage of evolution. According to the "Law", events in the theological stage are attributed to supernatural forces and other spiritual entities (in the Yakurr case, *ndet* or *ase*). All explanations for events and prominent phenomena are sought in terms of these forces. There is little rationality and therefore little science, in a eurocentric construction that characterises Europe as the epitome of development by dint of the acquisition of literacy. But is it possible to construct a monolithic framework in which it can be demonstrated that all members of a society are intellectually similar, apart from the limitations imposed by their state of technological development and the varied interpretations they may assign to these?

The orientation of Comte's Law is flawed for being somewhat static. It neglects the multifarious dimensions along which a society's evolution may progress. It overlooks the tendency for social strata to differentiate themselves within one society along ideational lines, depending on the constitution of these strata. His "Law" disregards the fact that pluralism may in itself infuse a society with a crosscutting combination of ideologies such that the theological, metaphysical and positive stages may fuse and co-exist simultaneously in a kind of spatiotemporal vortex. In other words, there may not be only one mode of explanation, but a plurality of norm-sets according to which members of an urbanising society like Ugep interpret events in their lives. The priests of fertility spirits in Ugep may not necessarily hold a monopoly on the interpretation of reality. To the contrary, the society progresses along multiple

metaphysical trajectories that do not presuppose mutual contradiction or degenerative conflict. The dominant trajectory is no doubt the definitive one, but the Comtean classification system must be careful not to create the impression that there were no complementary or competing paradigms with it.

4.3 Art and Ideology among the Yakurr

The entire Yakurr enclave is filled with impressive works of art, the recurrence of whose motifs led to the suspicion that they may contain messages and meanings that are obvious to members of the community, and which in general terms serve the purpose of culture preservation in a non-literate society. For this reason, I re-asked the question posed by the anthropologist Leach (1964) in "Art in Cultural Context", *viz.*: "What does it [art] mean to the people for whom it is made?" (p. 344).

The question held enormous methodological implications. Primarily, it indicated a need to conduct rapid assessment assays in all Yakurr towns for several reasons: (1) to establish the ideological roots of sculptural motifs found in Yakurr territory, (2) to determine the frequency of these motifs throughout the settlements, (3) to cast the recurrent themes and patterns within interpretive contexts, and (4) to attempt an association between these sculptural patterns and themes with communal attitudes and behaviour. The engagement led to a sequence of in-depth interviews with the *Yabol Lopon* (sing. *Obol Lopon*) of Nko, Mkpani and Ekori, arranged according to the two main phases in which ethnographic research proceeded. These interviews provided me

with deep personal insights into the variations that exist in religious beliefs and practices among the entire Yakurr with the exception of Idomi, where post-war animosity was still high at the time of study.

The most important Yakurr sculptures are unequivocal statements of a pronatalist worldview. Plates 11-16 are sculptures from Ugep, Ekori and Nko. Social order is portrayed in many art forms as comprising a clear segregation of the sexes, into a hierarchy. In these sculptures, the imagery is nearly identical in that an erect man in the role of warrior, hunter or ruler is carved *above* a *seated* woman nursing a baby. In the *Obagbor* (Plates 11 and 15) of Ikpakapit ward of Ugep, although the man is depicted as a warrior, an interview with the *Ina Atewa* indicated that he was in actual fact an *Opalapala*, a traditional leader who is one of the *Yabol*. The association between men and rulership is more clearly shown in the sculpture from Nko (Plate 16). In the *Ojonen* of Bikobiko, the man is depicted as 2-3 times the size of his wife.

Such artistic nuances convey the pre-feminist character of Yakurr society, as well as the gender roles that are defined by it. To elicit local meanings attached to the sculptures, I held focus group discussions and in-depth interviews during which I held up photographs of these artworks for discussants and interviewees to see, and then sought their views on what was communicated by the works. The consensus was that the seated posture of the woman represented her social quiescence. To juxtapose the man and the woman is to commit sculptural heresy, art would not be imitating life. It seemed

apparent to the culture-bearers that the artefacts represented social order. Thus, in the words of a prominent youth leader, Eteng "Dopar",

> You can see that women are not supposed to be walking up and down, going wherever they want. That is not correct. They are supposed to stay in one place, either in their father's house before they marry, or in their husband's house after they marry. That is why you see that they are made to sit down in the *Obagbor*. It will be wrong for the woman to be on top of the man's head and that is why she is sitting below ("Dopar", 12/11/97: Pers. Comm.).

Interviewing the elderly Eka Adiaha (70+ years), it became evident that the sculptures portrayed a pristine social order that was believed to be disappearing. The question was: "Why is the woman in *Obagbor* sitting down while the man is standing?" in reply, Eka Adiaha said:

> I hope you know that *Obagbor* is an *edet*. In our days, everybody knew what was expected of him or her and did it without fuss. We women went to farm and our husbands helped us. We took care of the children. When they were sick, we were the ones who went out to look for who will cure them. We did not always sit down in one place. We were very busy going to the market, the farm, collecting firewood. That is how it was in the old days. What *Obagbor* [the sculpture] shows is that the woman is beneath the man and she is not to move ahead of him. She is to take care of the children. (Eka Adiaha, 24/06/98: Pers. Comm.).

The woman was usually nursing a baby. If the objects in the hands of the figures convey gender messages. Women were reproductive vessels. Men were identified with motion and authority (erect posture), culture and technology (the rifle), and danger and achievement (the surrounding human skulls). In the *Ojonen*, although the man is as naked as his wife is, the hat on his head indicates rulership. These pre-feminist sculptures thus affirm the patriarchal maxim *"Tota mulier in utero"* ("Woman is womb").

Plate 11: Lower Segment of the *Obagbor* in Ikpakapit Square, Ugep
(Notice the probable age of child from mother-child artistic proportions)

Plate 12: Sculpture of Mother and Child in Ekori

Plate 13: Sculpture of Mother and Child in Nko

Plate 14: The *Ojonen* in Bikobiko Square, Ugep
(Notice the use of size and anteriority to depict strength and social priority)

Plate 15: Full Side View of *Obagbor* in Ikpakapit, Ugep

Plate 16: Full View of Sculpture of Mother and child in Nko
(Notice the expression of male dominance through the anterior position of the man)

I also interviewed the grey-haired octogenarian sculptor of the *Obagbor* in Ikpakapit, who I found in Mkpani (Plate 17). I sought his interpretation of what he had carved. Popularly known as Ubi "Artist", Mr Ubi Obono Ikpi informed me that:

> I did not carve what I felt like carving. I was told what to do. The *Yabol* secluded me for weeks while I worked. The late Ofem Eno of Egbizum used his axe to work with me. We were told what to include in the *Obagbor*. It is possible that *Opalapala* was the one who founded Ikpakapit. I cannot say, I was told to carve it as it stands. The woman as you can see in other [Yakurr] towns is a mother. That is what women are supposed to do, take care of the children and have more when they are grown. I have not seen it for many years now since [1970] when I carved it (Ikpi, 02/04/98: Pers. Comm.).

The sculptures reveal traditionally lengthy periods of breastfeeding. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews confirm what is portrayed in the sculptures. As one elderly female respondent (65+) put it, "The age of the child in the *Obagbor* does not surprise me. I can remember carrying my own stool to sit next to my mother in order to suck her breast" (Primary Data: Personal Interview, 14th August, 1997). Traditionally, children were breastfed up to 4-5 years. This practice evidently had strong contraceptive value and, in association with the relevant cultural taboos regarding weaning practices and post-partum sexual intercourse, marital fertility was always kept lower than would have been the case without these controls. Traditionally, the Yakurr required nursing mothers to stay in their natal homes until weaning was concluded. This restricted their exposure to the risk of both intercourse and pregnancy and reduced the fertility rate.

Plate 17: Author at Mkpani with "Ubi Artist", Sculptor of the Ikpakapit *Obagbor*

The rare and extraordinary character of double unilineal descent has previously been broached (Chapter 1.6.1), but it is important to describe the respects in which it impinges on the fertility of the Yakurr people. Thus far, we have indicated that the cosmology of the people is rooted in religious beliefs about fertility (Section 4.2). From this observation follows the position that the pantheon of fertility spirits and their consolidated status in Yakurr theology must be derived from historical pathological sterility for which this study provides empirical evidence (Section 4.2). It is then germane at this juncture to describe the social pathways by which this ideational forces impact human fertility through the agency of double unilineal descent.

The double unilineal descent principle entails that all individuals are members of two complementary kin corporations, the matrilineage (*lejimo*) and the patrilineage *(kepun*), and obligates them to conform to the moral imperatives implied by such membership. For this reason, societal membership cannot be disaggregated in Yakurr society any more than it can among unilineal societies like the patrilineal Itshekiri, or the matrilineal Lamba, without comparative ethnographic case studies utilising a quasi-experimental research design. In the context of the present study, therefore, quantification of this influence is clearly impossible, but it is amenable to detailed description, hence its treatment in this chapter.

The double unilineal principle of descent organises social structure around two coextensive kinship groupings, the dispersed *lejimo* (matrilineage) and the corporate *kepun* (patrilineage), both of which exert tremendous influence on the reproductive

career of their members. In answer to the question "Which exerts a stronger influence on people's desire to have children?" 44.1% of ever-married women thought the *kepun* was more influential in this regard while for 54.9% of this category of women, it was the *lejimo*. The mechanism through which this influence operates is not difficult to apprehend. Ugep constitutes a gerontocratic kind of theocracy. Elders rule. They perform rituals that are believed to enhance the population size of the *lejimo* or *kepun* as the case may be. Meetings of *yepun* and *ajimo* are organised on a regular weekly basis, and the elders and peers of any one so concerned could subtly hint at a member's sub-standard fertility performance.

Men who have many children are accorded much respect in the patrilineage because they are seen as potentially wealthy and powerful persons. As it is said "a man's children can make him appear as a king though he be nothing himself". The patrilineage holds the land in trust for future generations. It apportions land to its male members and their wives, but reserves the largest portions for men with very large families. Since in the traditional society, land was considered a prime form of wealth, numerous children were seen by 76.7% of our male sample as a means of acquiring both it and political power and social prestige. As one chief in one of the Yakurr communities explained it, "Although some of my children are useless, they have no heads, I am still a proud man in this town because I have very many children. People do not talk to me anyhow".

The traditional religious life of the people is also corporation-based. Every *kepun* owns an *epundet*, "a low mound of small boulders surmounted by some chalk-stained

pots, usually set in the shade of a tree" (Forde, 1964: 51). The *epundet* symbolises the ritual and corporate unity of the patrilineage. It may be invoked to make an infertile woman fertile. Our investigation shows that in addition to this are numerous *ndet* which are also regularly propitiated for reasons of fertility, prominent among which are the matrilineal *ase*. Nevertheless, married women must frequently depend on the *ndet* in, or in the vicinity of, their husband's compound for protection and help in childbearing. The combination of the rules of exogamy, matrilineal descent principles, and a patrilocal post-marital residence makes this inevitable.

The rule of exogamy in a double unilineal context defines categories of affines and other kin who may not marry one another. In specific terms, the rule requires that a Yakurr man would ordinarily select a wife from among the supply of women who are not his patrikin. It is given a wider interpretation to debar such close kin from having sexual relations with one another and is thence formulated as the incest taboo. Given exogamy therefore, the coexistence of a dispersed matrilineage and a corporate patrilineage has implications for post-marital residential status and therefore fertility. It entails that post-marital residence is more frequently patrilocal or virilocal. Thus, in our survey, patrilocal residence accounts for 65.2 per cent of all post-marital residence for females, while virilocality accounts for 17.4 per cent. Other significant forms are duolocal residence (9.7 per cent), neolocal residence (5.7 per cent), and a variety of insignificant idiosyncratic post-marital residential patterns that collectively make up 2 per cent.

The structural stability of marriage is such that in 88.3 per cent of all cases (i.e. patrilocality + virilocality + neolocality), husbands and wives reside together. This finding is important from the viewpoint of the operation of the proximate determinants of fertility, as shown earlier in Figure 4. A sharp contrast may be drawn between the average patrilocal-virilocal Yakurr couple and the hypothetical duolocal American couple of Chapter 2.2.4. In the Yakurr case, patrilocal residence in particular exposes the woman to subtle and not so subtle pressure from her husband's people with regard to the need to bear children. The rate of patrilocality and virilocality is a suitable comment on the sex hierarchy, but is also significant for indicating that the residential status of marriages are ordinarily composed by the patrilineage because in patrilocal residence, the married couple reside among the husband's people. In the virilocal case, the couple reside in a house either built by the man, or rented by him. The latter option is rare, and post-marital virilocal residence normally takes the form of residence in a house built by the husband *on* land allotted him by his patrilineage. In such a case, the patrilineage still retains its say in his fertility.

Homogeneity in spousal occupation and residence promotes higher levels of coital frequency, and in the absence of contraception, this leads to high fertility. The routine lives of couples are either similar or complementary in an agrarian economy. Thus, farming couples may be absent from home at about the same times, and present at about the same times. This correspondence in spousal social rhythms is important for

understanding the operation of this particular proximate determinant (that is coital frequency).

From the survey sample, 38.2 per cent of the women reported themselves as having had marital intercourse in the week immediately preceding the survey. With greater division of labour in the society although not necessarily duolocal post-marital residence, couples' social rhythms could be affected enough to reduce coital frequency, and hence precipitate fertility decline through changes to this proximate determinant. It is in this regard that the compensating effects of the proximate determinants become even more crucial to the discussion, because other determinants having the effect of intervening variables are taken into account because the background factors associated with their operation have been made explicit.

From the foregoing, it is evident that a combination of environmental and cultural factors can merge and have a significant impact on human fertility. The double unilineal descent system constitutes the institutional summary of folkloric and other historical traditions, and organises them into a veritable means of social organisation. When placed within the context of a pronatalist divine economy, the mechanisms by which it influences fertility can be traced. This influence would be misleading if we did not enter an ethnographic *caveat*. The discussion would then be guilty of a familiar ethnographic fallacy, by which it would seem that social order were undergoing no change, and in this specific instance, competing forms and norms of heterogeneous association had not

emerged. While the basic double unilineal system regulates indigenous life and activities, it is informative to throw light on the contemporary of the system.

Life in contemporary Ugep society is an interesting social mosaic of continuity and change, a combination of the pristine past and adjuncts of modernisation. The symbolism is vividly captured by the architecture of the community, which is a broad mix between modern cement buildings and thatch huts coated over with reddish clay. In many instances, mud buildings are lightly coated over with cement. Economic activities are evolving from totally subsistent modes of production to modern market participation.

The forces of commercial capitalism that set these trends in motion in the early part of the last century began to dislocate farming practices from purely subsistence strategies to an orientation in which surplus is sold in the open market. The harmony between agricultural institutions and practices on the one hand and the economic, political and social environment on the other has been altered by the alignment of subsistence peasant agriculture with the free market economy. The obligation to pay school fees has attended the transition form ascribed to achieved forms of social status.

Infrastructural development is retarded and ordinary social services are difficult to obtain. There are nine primary schools and six secondary schools, some of which are privately owned and with run-down facilities. A general hospital and one government owned maternity centre provide medical attention to the town's teeming population. Other sources of medical treatment include two private medical clinics and numerous chemists and dispensaries. The Mercantile bank of Nigeria Plc and the Ugep

Community Bank until recently operated in the community before they both ran into insurmountable liquidity problems and became distressed.

Most of the roads are in extremely poor conditions and are not motorable during severe rains. The civil bureaucracy is characterised by widespread opportunism, institutionalised inefficiency, internal strife, intrigue and massive corruption. Leisure activities consist mainly of informal gatherings of youths and elders for the purpose of playing *Nsa* (Checkers). The usual venues for this activity include town meeting halls (*ama*; sing. *lema*), the shade of huge trees and the homes of prominent players. These centres could occasionally rise to great local prominence and receive attract the status of what is referred to as a "High School". These schools" serve as an important distraction from ennui and boredom in the periods between planting seasons. They are also a notable medium for information sharing and the unstructured transmission of town history and local and national (if distorted) news.

The pronatalist import of the traditional religion has in the modern period been ameliorated somewhat by the missionary influence in the area. The Christian influence in the area is expressed through a number of churches, the most prominent of which are the Roman Catholic Church (Holy Cross Mission and Saint Mary's) and the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. Saint Peter's Church emerged three years ago when severe internal crisis rocked the unity of the Presbyterian Church. There is also a mass proliferation of evangelical and pentecostal churches with the result that the religious values of many

Ugep people are found to be at variance with the traditional emphasis on high fertility as well as on practices such as polygyny.

The advent of this category of pro-millenarian religious movements has finalised the dissociation between the traditional family system and community religious experience. These evangelical and pentecostal movements initially expressed a rising middle class disillusionment with the conservative religious modes and ideals of society in the late post-independence period, but did not make their way to Ugep until well after the Civil War (1967-1970). Their emergence was later facilitated by concern at the materialism that characterised the affluent oil economy in the 1970s. As such, they appeared first as urban-based phenomena equipped with a strong protest ideology that provided a space for religious expression in terms quite different from that formerly safeguarded by the conventional systems. In this way, they intensified the dislocations that had been introduced earlier on in the century by the missionaries and facilitated new departures from traditional modes of worship of their own. By and large, they denigrated the priority that was hitherto assigned the African extended family in the social organisation and control of the religious sentiment, and correspondingly ruptured the dependency of its members on it for both material and spiritual consolation.

In modern Ugep society, the combination of these foreign religious influences on the social and institutional structures of the religious sentiment has been phenomenal. They have replaced the extended notion of family with a version of family that is universal, otherworldly, couple-oriented and individualistic at one and the same time.

They regularly undermine polygyny as an acceptable social practice and to varying degrees insist on the total separation of the new convert from "the present system of things". In this way, they weaken the individual's dependence on the extended family for material, emotional or spiritual consolation at that level. The ideological conflict that this scenario depicts represents the comprehensive loss of the family of its ancient multidimensional relevance to human spiritual experience.

In spite of these tendencies, however, the interrelationships among patriarchy, pronatalism, and political culture among the Ugep people are palpable. Much of fertility behaviour among them is entrenched in strong cultural determinants. The incidence of fertility is high and better explained by the persistence of cultural norms and institutions at the macro level and the gratification of strong moral and ideational impulses at the micro level. As disaggregated data in the next chapter shows, the pronatalist impulse is quite extensive in Yakurr society, but shows minor variations across different social and economic groups, possibly because residence were held constant by the survey.

Yakurr pronatalism originates from the religious belief system, but it nonetheless transcends it. It exists as a basic moral impulse, an archetypal response to what has been summed up direcly or indirectly by the individual as the external environment. For this reason, the "rational actor model" proves an inappropriate conceptual device for explaining fertility behaviour in conditions of natural fertility, where the emphasis on conformity is historically strong, and the recognition of spousal independence of thought and decision making relatively new.

4.5 Matriclan Priests and Political Authority

Despite their linguistic and historical ties, the Yakurr people had no traditional centralised political system. They existed instead as more or less autonomous political and ritual settlements until the local government reforms in the 1970s brought them under a common modern political dispensation. Before then, the *Ngbeke* experiment of 1897, which was possibly "a Yakurr attempt at a confederation" (Ubi, 1981: 171), failed because it coincided with the British Cross-River "Punitive" Expedition of 1898.

The beginning of the 20th century unleashed powerful economic disincentives to central political organisation, as indigenous compradors from the various settlements began to benefit from the oil trade along the Cross River. These merchants (*yasu*; sing. *osu*) were the fore-runners of the Yakurr *petit bourgeoisie* and, whether by design or default, promoted an agenda of independent political and economic development for the different Yakurr territories. By the 1970s, when compradorial monopoly over trade and political affairs under colonial rule was broken, the political will necessary for centralisation had disappeared. In the present section, we provide an account of religious and socio-political organisation among the Yakurr by examining the religious and political role of the Yakurr matriclan priests and its influence on fertility.

Traditional social and political organisation among the Yakurr follows a segmentary democratic principle that emphasises the dialogue of concentric spheres of power rather than vertical control. As noted in the preceding section, the double unilineal system of descent places authority in overlapping spheres that throw up internal checks to absolutism (Obono, 1995a: 29). For example, a matriclan leader may find

himself subject to the authority of a patrikin in their patriclan, and in this way town-level control is achieved in the interests of peace.

Traditional political authority progresses in ascending order from the corporate patrilineage (*eponamma*; pl. *yeponamma*), the patriclan (*kepun*; pl. *yepun*) and matriclan (*lejimo*; pl. *ajimo*), the ward (*kekpatu*; pl. *yekpatu*), to the town (*lopon*). Under this structure (Figure 5), the individual belongs to units and collectivities that are in turn parts of larger configurations, each of which extracts obligations and a level of loyalty commensurate to its size and complexity of ties. The distinct competencies of these configurations interpenetrate one another through either common descent or membership to common executive organisations such as age grades or secret cults. Within the patrilineage, "political loyalty was spoken of in the idiom of kinship and the political composition of the family was explained by reference to descent - matrilineal or patrilineal" (Ubi, 1981: 158).

The *Obol Kepun* is the head of the patriclan. He plays an important role in his *kepun* by attending to the *epundet*, which symbolises the corporate and spiritual unity of the *kepun*. The *yekpatu* make up the *lopon*, and are composed of adjacent dwelling areas (*akomma*, sing. *lekomma*) of a dozen or more patriclans. The leaders of the *akomma* are "a self-recruited and self-perpetuating body of notables, including holders of prominent ritual offices" (Forde, 1964: 170). They ensure the security of life and property within their respective domains and refer internal disputes involving members of different *yepun* to the *Ogbolia*, who is their head, and could enlist the support of the *Eblabu* (Ghost-dog) society in administration.

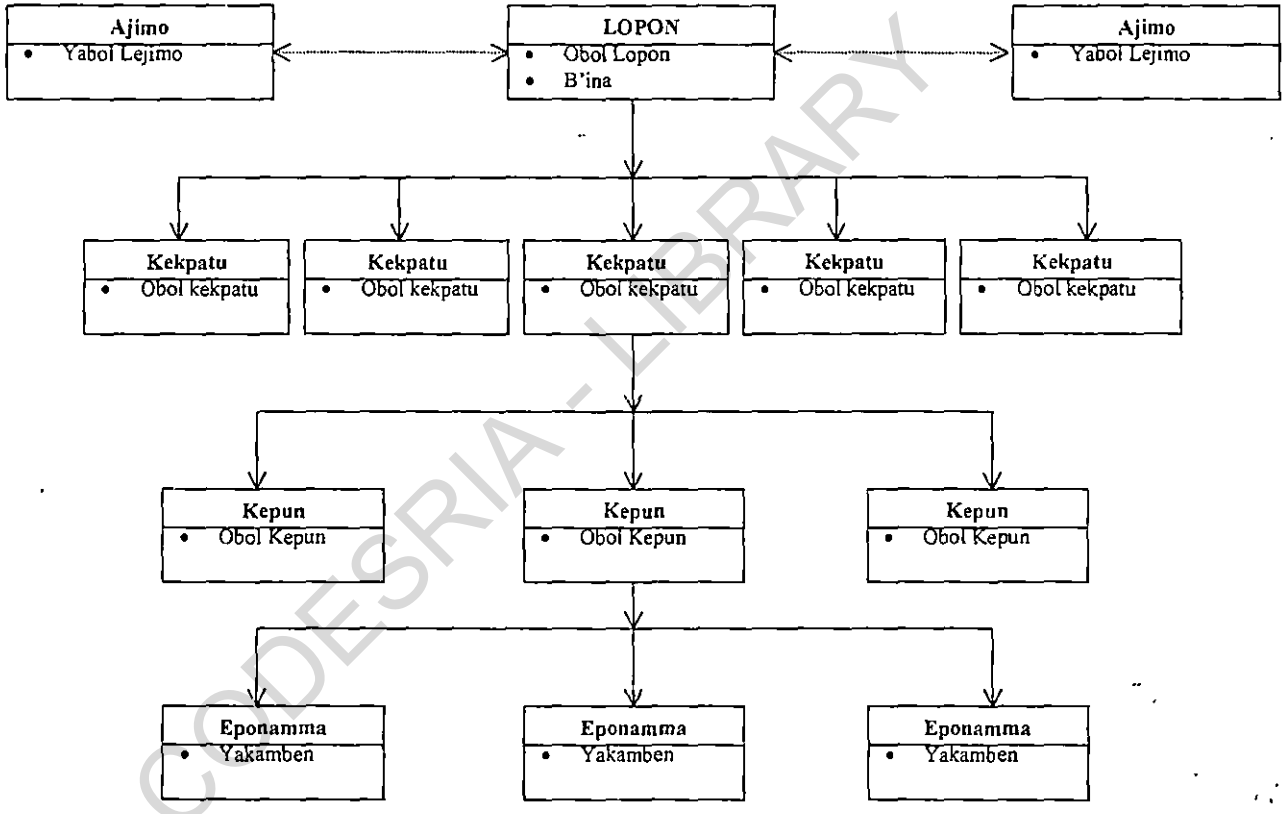

Figure 5: Socio-political Structure of Yakurr Settlements

At every point in the political spiral, the dual role of the leaders in both secular and sacred affairs is evident. An august council of matriclan priests presides over the entire range of the people's economic, social, political and other cultural affairs. It is in their capacity as priests of fertility spirits (*B'ina*) and political leaders of the people (*Yabol*) that they unite the sacred and secular worlds of the Yakurr people, and thus confer a theocratic status on Yakurr governance. The power of the *ase* is the ritual sanction of authority in *lopon*-wide social control. The priests (*B'ina*; sing. *ina*) of the *ase* are known as *Yabol* (sing. *Obol*), that is "the Leaders", and are proposed by the elders of their respective matriclans. Once in office, they have jurisdiction only over the matriclans associated with the *yose* in their care. Each new priest must be approved by the *Yabol* as a whole and will also be instructed by them in his ritual offices. Although the council of *Yabol* is not composed exclusively of these priests, authority is strongly concentrated around their persons (Plates 18 and 19). Other members of the council include the *Okpebri* (Town Spokesman and Prayer-Leader in collective rituals), the *Ovar Okenka* (Leader of the Okenka cult), the *Obol Yabono* (Leader of Town herbalists and magicians), and the *Omenka* (Tooth Chipper of the *Yabol*).

This finding that the political power of male rulers is derived directly from ritual sources indicates the preliminary connections among patriarchy, pronatalism and political culture. It also validates the view that culture is associated with fertility not just at the individual level, but at the institutional (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1997: 4). In other words, a purely rational actor model of reproductive behaviour and contraceptive prevalence, seen as an individualist construct, cannot comprehensively explain fertility among the Ugep people.

Plate 18: Author with Mkpani Priests

Plate 19: Author with *B'ina* of Ugep

The social environment in which their fertility occurs is impregnated with powerful beliefs about the cosmos (see preceding sections), and this in turn influences the contexts in which rational fertility behaviour is conceived, defined, expressed, and rewarded among them. This, as we have noted finds expression in the political structure of the society. As among all Yakurr settlements, the Ugep socio-political system emphasises age as a criterion for the devolution of responsibility. It is organised around a well-developed executive age grade system. The post-adolescent segment of the population is a broad spectrum of hierarchical arrangements which integrate willing members of society, rank them by age intervals of 3-5 years and obligate them to conform to rules which are autonomously established at weekly meetings of the age grades. All age groups are classified alternately as *Yakpilike* or *Yabiagban*, in addition to the special name(s) members may choose. The reason for this practice is to forestall the emergence of powerful charismatic personalities who may "overshadow their age mates by having the association [formerly] named after them" (*Obongka* of Day and Night Age Grade", 24/12/98: Pers. Comm.).

The heads of these associations are known as *Yabongka* (sing. *obongka*) and membership is to a large extent obligatory. For example, the legitimacy of a marriage ceremony depends in part on the extent to which one's age mates are involved in the proceedings (Chapter 4.6). It is an indication of the centrality of the age grade system to social organisation that it became obvious that my integration in Yakurr society would be inadequate for the purposes of this research if I did not secure membership to it. My

application and subsequent membership to *Kofonnono Kodurr Efa* ("Unity is Strength") Age Grade Association provides an indication of the extent of integration sought and attained. This association is one of numerous age groups that form a central aspect of social organisation. In the words of the *Obol Kekpatu* (Ward Leader) of Bikobiko, "they [the age grades] are the units through which local administration is in any wise possible. Without them, traditional rule is impossible because through them everybody is enlisted for community development" (*Obol Kekpatu* of Bikobiko, 23/12/98: Pers. Comm.).

These statements suggest that Yakurr social structure is an elaboration of the basic construct of fertility. The construction of age into a basis for social organisation gives rise not only to a gerontocratic mode of governance but also to a reaffirmation of the pronatalism that is the *raison d'être* of its theocracy. It elaborates the first social implication of perennial pronatalism, namely an age graded society, into the structure of political governance. This scenario suggests that existing information on the political processes of pre-industrial agrarian societies appears to have dissociated these processes from the possibly more fundamental pronatalist forces at play. In the event, research may have inadvertently overlooked the existence of ancestral meta-narratives that are regularly invoked for the purpose of validating specified systems of political governance. The overarching patriarchal ideology defends this political system and entrenches a deep pronatalist philosophy, or a corresponding cultural ideology that rewards high marital fertility and supports the theocratic political system upon which it is founded.

This is the concern that underlines all ritual sacrifices and is so fundamental to social solidarity that it finds expression at the maximal level of social control where a sacerdotal council presides over the ritual, economic, and political affairs of the *lopon*. These priests, known collectively as *B'ina* (sing. *ina*), combine the regulation of the religious sentiment at the matriclan level with the ultimate governance of the *lopon*. They are the custodians of the *ase* (sing. *yose*), the spiritual patrons of the respective matriclans whose primary function is to ensure the peace, progress and fertility of their individual members and the matriclan as a whole.

The survey data provide interesting reflections on the role of these ubiquitous matriclan priests. While 82.9 per cent of all ever-married respondents know the names of their matrilineage, only 33.4 per cent know the name of the particular *yose* associated with it. Among sampled men, 52.8 per cent personally believe that the *ase* could help infertilie women have children, relative to 47.2 per cent of the women. The survey results signify current age to be an important variable for explaining this trend, with the probability of knowing the name of one's matrilineage and the *yose* associated with it increasing with age. The fact that only 48.1 per cent know the name of their *ina* may reflect either a decline in the importance of matriclan meetings or the growth of specialised agencies which parallel the traditional functions of the matrilineage, including the stabilisation of religious sentiments. It is however mostly a function of marital status as a comparison of responses of never married and ever married respondents to this question demonstrates. Only 48.2 per cent of the sample saw

themselves as "regular participants in matriclan affairs" while (49.6 per cent) personally believe in the powers of the *yose*. These patterns were also associated with age and marital status.

The priests are expected to visit members of their matrilineages as occasion allows, but only 27.4 per cent of all respondents interact with him on a regular basis. Among women, 28.4 interact with the *ina* of their matrilineage often, relative to 26.0 per cent of the male respondents to this question. At first glance, these low rates may suggest the declining importance of the role of these matriclan priests, but such conclusion may be misleading. The territory currently occupied by Ugep is considerably larger than it was in the period when the matriclan priests began to acquire ritual and political prominence. Net contact among matrikin is expectedly lower than for patrikin because, as noted earlier, the matrilineage is a dispersed kin corporation. It is the patrilineage that has a corporate identity.

The low rates of frequent interaction between the respondents and the *B'ina* may reflect more the consequences of territorial expansion for the matrilineal interactions in general, rather than the specific decrease in the importance of its priests. They are accorded great respect in public gathering, and they remain pre-eminent in al functions. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that the traditional culture of the Yakurr, in as much as it devolves around the *ase* and *ndet*, is shaped at the human level by these priests. Hence, for as long as the Yakurr believe in the *ase* for inducing fertility and well-being in crops, livestock, and women, the *B'ina* will remain powerful.

4.6 The Marriage Process in Ugep Society

The marriage institution is of complementary significance for both anthropology and demography. Anthropologists studied this institution primarily because it was the nucleus of kin-based social organisation in pre-industrial societies. The demographic interest in that institution, however, arises out of the concentration of childbirth within it. It is this latter fact that so readily constitutes the age at marriage and the proportions marrying into important proximate determinants of fertility in societies where the use of artificial contraception is negligible. In this section, we provide an account of the institutional setting within which Ugep fertility occurs.

Among the Ugep people, marriage was an elaborate exogamous affair. The marriage age was reported as being traditionally low (16 - 17 for girls and upwards of 25 for boys). By 1995, however, average age at first marriage for Ugep women had increased to 19.3 (Obono, 1995b). Premarital sex was discouraged and an illegitimate child was considered a thing of great shame.

Courtship began when a suitor presented the girl with *Iiponi* (raffia leaves) and could last for upwards of two years. It was expected that at the time of the *Leboku* (the annual Festival of New Yams), all prospective suitors would make presents of pears to the girl whose hand they sought in marriage. Each such girl would reciprocate the gesture with a basin of groundnuts to the suitor. The groundnuts would have been harvested from a farm-bed given to the girl by her mother for just this purpose. The girl would thereafter indicate which among the several suitors she would marry by leaving

both groundnuts and basin at his house. In addition, each basin of groundnuts would contain a clean-shorn coconut with an inscription indicating her acceptance or rejection of the marriage proposal. Figures 5 and 6 are the symbols used by the girl to communicate her acceptance or rejection of the proposal, respectively. They provide indications of a society that was historically painstaking in its intention at ensuring the genuine emotions of a suitor were not treated with levity. The symbols *Kedei* (Love) and *Kebong* (Rejection) were implicitly understood to contain the final word on the proposal and further courtship behaviour was not expected to be exhibited by the suitor after the latter had been received. The symbol "*Kedei*" signified the total unity of spouses.

The suitor whose proposal had been accepted was expected to show appreciation by "returning her plate". He was expected to buy his would-be wife a basin that was similar in size to the basin that had contained the coconut with the favourable message. In this new basin, he would place one bar of "Key Soap" and a certain pomade, which was considered so fragrant that it was popularly referred to in the Efik as "*Aniebe*?" ("Who just passed?"). At this stage, the girl's parents would regard the suitor's intentions as genuine. From this point on, the suitor was under a direct obligation to assist his prospective father-in-law on his farm and to supply him with a gourd-full of palmwine every *Kokor*, a day in the six-day Yakurr week. The bridewealth was divided into six components.

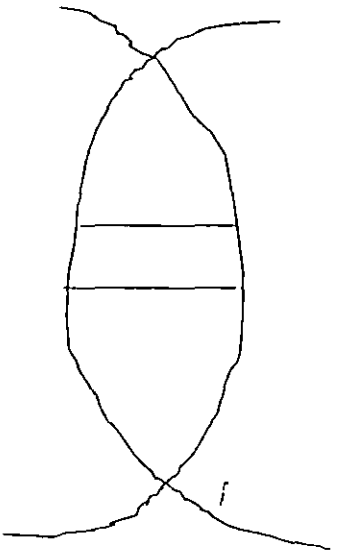

Fig. 6: Symbol of *Kedei* ("Love", Used to Signify Acceptance of Marriage Proposal)

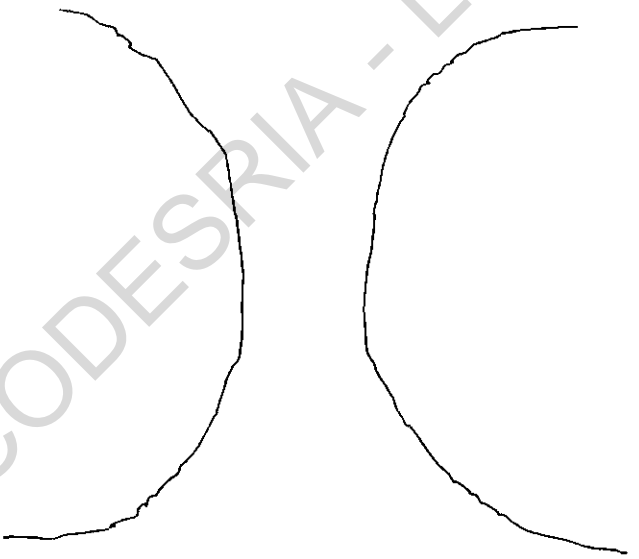

Fig. 7: Symbol of *Kebong* ("Disniterest", Used to Signify Rejection of Marriage Proposal)

These were:

1. *Kotona* (Wooing);

2. *Keblo* (Farming);

3. *Etenteni* (Flax for tying yams);

4. *Libeman* (Marriage money);

5. *Keji* (Palmnuts for mother-in-law); and

6. *Eko* (Money and gifts for the girl's age mates).

Payment of the bridewealth secured the curtailment of paternal authority over the girl and placed her under an obligation to provide some exclusive services for her husband and his lineage. Sexual relations did not take place unless and until all payments had been concluded. Usually, initial sexual relations took place in the girl's mother's house. The bride did not move to the groom's house - marital residence was virilocal or patrilocal - until she was pregnant. It was usually during pregnancy that the marriage ceremony was held.

Rites of female genital mutilation (circumcision) precede the ceremony and were of two kinds depending on whether the bride was pregnant or not. Generally called *Kukpol*, the rites were motivated by a strong desire to ensure that the bride proves fertile. The *Likpokol* (*Kukpol* of the Bush) was reserved for pregnant brides while the *Kekpol-pam* (Kukpol of the refuse dump) was reserved for brides who were still not pregnant after a couple of years in marriage. In both cases, genital mutilation took place. In the

latter type of the *Kukpol* (i.e. *Kekpol-pam*), special prayers and sacrifices are offered to chase away the wife's presumed infecundity.

Incorporation of the wife into the husband's lineage was celebrated after the *Kukpol* in the ceremony of *Lekou-kegoni* (Navel Registration). These are rites that involve the presentation of the bride to the husband's *epundet* as a means of introducing her as a new member of the lineage to his people, their ancestors, and gods. Intensive tutelage followed under an old woman these rites during a period called *Ketu-Kpoli* (Shaven Head). The young bride had her hair shaved completely and was not encouraged to speak to anybody during the period as it was believed that she might inadvertently speak with an infertile person and thereby attract a pregnancy-related misfortune to herself.

At the end of *Ketu-Kpoli*, the bride went back to her father's house, and stays among her own *kepun* until the baby is delivered. After childbirth, she would then begin the process of moving her belongings to her husband's house. This process would probably not be completed until the child was about upwards of three years old. It is not clear whether this practice originated in the weaning taboo and other beliefs that sustained post-partum sexual abstinence. Nevertheless, the demographic implications of the practice are unmistakable.

In combination with traditionally long breastfeeding periods and the two taboos mentioned above, this practice had the effect of extending the interval between first and second parity to at least two years. This advantage may however have been lost from the

third pregnancy, as all subsequent pregnancies occurred in the husband's house. The *Ebon* ceremony marked the end of *Kukpol* and a girl's attainment of adult social status. It is noteworthy that the attainment of female adult status was a function of fertility. *Kukpol* was therefore a patriarchal rite of passage that reinforced the role of women as reproductive vessels and thereby promoted the rapid increase of Ugep population growth rates.

A pattern of longer intervals between first and second parity appears to have been the norm in old Ugep society. Possibly because men tended to continue taking much younger wives even into old age, this practice had important implications for social structure and the original context of polygyny. Many men aged 55 years and above recall that elder male half-siblings had acted *in loco parentis*, bringing them up as though they were their own sons because their elderly father had died when the respondent was still quite young. It thus appears as though old Ugep social structure had been characterised by situations in which paters were frequently half-siblings of their wards. Inheritance however followed the regular rules, especially the junior half-sibling would in due course also bring up the child (actually his cousin) of his own half-sibling who had brought him up. In this way, social order was perpetuated, until the practice of polygyny began to decline and important changes occurred in the average age at which men began to take wives.

4.7 . Conclusion

Ugep fertility is high and is the identified result of persistent sociocultural values favouring large family size, the low and subordinate socio-economic status of women, and a contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) that is as low as 7.3% (Obono, 1995b). Liberal sexual norms, accentuated by the ease of entry into consensual unions, are chief contributors to the rapid increase in Ugep population. There are observable trends towards both greater coital frequency and pre-adolescent and extramarital sexual networking, as well as a relative stability in the incidence of polygyny. Sexual liaisons are easily contracted, and just as easily broken, with an increased communal risk of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the agent responsible for the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Records monitored at the Ugep General Hospital reveal that in the first six months of 1998 alone, 10 AIDS cases had been reported or admitted at the hospital. The same records, examined barely four months later, showed that the number of reported cases had more than doubled to twenty-five.

According to the *Obol Lopon* of Ugep, HRH *Obol* Ubi Ujong, ancestral life-ways seem to be posing a definite threat to further progress. In his words,

> My people are populous and proud of it. They believe in having plenty children. They say *"Lesou leta otoba"* and, so, proceed to have as many children as they possibly can without bothering about how they will take care of them. Today, the old cultural value for children - which I still think is good - has been transformed into the basis for casual and senseless sex, with the result that you now have so many babies roaming the streets of Ugep looking for who will want them (*Obol* Ujong, 12/06/97: Pers. Comm.).

These remarks draw attention to an important interface between traditional cultural value systems and their modern reproductive health implications. It also shows that the cultural issues that have been examined in the present chapter are useful for the investigation of several other social phenomena that could be influenced by the way people think, or act and feel about their themselves. In light of this, this chapter has provided the next with a setting for the structure of fertility that is reported by it. Their combination forms the realisation of our attempt at promoting the convergence between anthropology and demography in the explanation of human fertility in a typical pre-transitional modernising sub-Saharan African society such as the Ugep represents.

Chapter 4 has provided a suitable ethnographic context in terms of which the quantitative survey data that follow may be more comprehensively understood. The insights generated by the ethnographic component of our investigation are critical to the contextualisation of all subsequent survey information. The research design and procedures as described in both Chapter 3.2 and Section 4.1 had not stipulated any methodological precedence or priority of one or the other approach, but rather posited their complementarity. The organised use of ethnographic and demographic approaches to yield information on sub-Saharan African fertility transforms both categories into necessary poles of a dialectical process.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF SURVEY DATA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter utilises representative data from Ugep town to examine the sociocultural contexts of fertility among the Yakurr people. The data are displayed through appropriate tabular and graphical presentation techniques. Frequency distributions of means and crosstabulations of key dependent and independent variables in various tables and the discussion of their implications facilitate descriptive analysis of the data. The inferential analysis employs ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in evaluating differentials in fertility among different sub-groups of the study population. These differentials are explained as a function of a set of predictors encompassing personal, marital, kinship and ideational factors. To enhance the comprehensive character of the data, reference is occasionally made to the qualitative results contained in the preceding chapter.

The stated research problem (Chapter 2.1) and the need to incorporate trends from both anthropology and demography in the study informed the inclusion of men in the survey sample. This approach forms a significant departure from the norm in orthodox demography, which ordinarily excludes men from the purview of fertility studies. Quite to the contrary, the norm in conventional demographic research constitutes women into the preferred targets of demographic research and intervention while the opposite is true of anthropology. In the words of Watkins and her associates,

"In contrast to demographers' concern with women, anthropologists have focussed primarily on men.... virtually all the [demographic] data have described women, whereas men are seen as shadowy figures" (Watkins *et al.*, 1997: 215).

This methodological point of divergence between both disciplines has denied them an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural contexts in which fertility occurs. It is self-evident that human fertility is a bisexual cultural activity that is strongly influenced by dyadic dynamics (Kritz, 1999), which have their orientation in macro-level institutional arrangements and the ideologies that arise from them (Adewuyi, 1999). There can thus be little doubt that the social reality that is conveyed by an exclusive sampling of one sex or the other would necessarily be partial. For this reason, an attempt at interdisciplinary convergence between demography and anthropology must strive to deal simultaneously with the usual subjects of both. Recent work in this area recommends a strong need to conduct comparative analysis of male and female sub-Saharan Africa fertility, as a means partly of engendering the discourse and of clarifying the nascent declines being observed within the sub-region (Adetunji and Moore, 1999). That attempt is made systematically in the following sections of this chapter, in the expectation that both the thinking guiding fertility research and the collection, presentation and analysis of findings ought to reflect this fundamental cultural and biological reality.

5.2 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Sample

The research sample comprised 1,351 respondents with an age range of 15-50+ years. Men and women constituted 41.2 per cent and 58.8 per cent of the sample, respectively, as shown in Table 3. The table also shows aggregate-level occupational, educational, marital and religious distribution of the respondents, with the exception of number of children ever born (CEB), shown for only female respondents. The mean age of the male respondents was 35.4 years relative to 33.1 years for women in the sample. The age structure of the sample has implications for the fertility of respondents, which may have just commenced rather than being completed for the men especially.

The gradient in the mean age of the respondents by sex is expected and indicates the probability to find older men in the reproductive years by virtue of men's tendency to marry women who are younger than themselves. The Ugep population, from which the survey sample was drawn, is a youthful population. The religious representation that is predominantly Christian (81.9 per cent) although respondents in this category might have included nominal Christians, or what one focus group discussant described as "both practising and non-practising Christians". Polygyny for all respondents is at a level of 41.6 per cent, with 35 per cent of men in polygynous unions relative to 46.2 per cent of women. The difference in sex proportions found in polygynous marriages is a function of the excess supply of women for marriage at the various ages. The marriage situation is fairly stable with 72.4 per cent of the respondents in first marriage and 92.9 per cent in either a first or second marriage.

Table 3: Selected Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	No.	Per cent	Variables	No.	Per cent
Sex	**N=1,351**	**100%**	**Number of Marriages**	**N=940**	**100%**
Male	557	41.2	1st Marriage	681	72.4
Female	794	58.8	2nd Marriage	193	20.5
			3rd Marriage	52	5.5
Current Age	**N=1,351**	**100%**	4th and above	14	1.5
15-19	119	8.8			
20-24	245	18.1			
25-29	225	16.7	**Education**	**N=1,351**	**100%**
30-34	177	13.1	No Schooling	312	23.1
35-39	122	9.0	Primary	341	25.2
40-44	164	12.1	Secondary	590	43.7
45-49	131	9.7	Higher	108	8.0
50-54	167	12.4			
55+	1	0.1	**Occupation**	**N=1,351**	**100%**
			Farming	551	40.8
Religion	**N=1,351**	**100%**	Trading	312	23.1
Christianity	1107	81.9	Civil Servant	145	10.7
Traditional	64	4.7	Others	252	18.7
Others	63	4.7	Unemployed	91	6.7
None	117	8.7			
Mar. Status	**N=1,351**	**100%**	**CEB (Women)**	**N=577**	**100%**
Never Married	411	30.4	1-2	165	28.7
Married	773	57.2	3-4	145	25.1
Widowed	89	6.6	5-6	127	22.0
Divorced	40	3.0	7-8	88	15.2
Separated	38	2.8	9-10	43	7.4
			11+	9	1.6
Type of Marriage	**N=856**	**100%**	Mean CEB= 4.5		
Monogamy	502	58.6	**CEB (Men)**	**N=372**	**100%**
Polygyny	354	41.6	1-2	97	26.1
			3-4	93	25.0
			5-6	74	19.9
			7-8	59	15.9
			9-10	15	4.0
			11+	34	9.1
			Mean CEB= 5.2		

The table indicates that 69.6 per cent of the respondents have ever married, distributed between the sexes as 65.3 per cent of the men and 73.2 of the women (Not shown in table). The difference in proportions ever-married is expected and indicates the tendency for women to enter marriage at comparatively lower ages than men. Hence at comparable levels of analysis, the proportion of women found in marriage is expected to be greater than the proportion of men, first at the lower ages because of their earlier entry into the state, and later because of the incidence of polygyny. It is also significant in this regard to observe that the proportions single are expectedly higher at lower ages, with the proportion of men never-married constituting 34.7 per cent relative to 26.8 per cent of women. These figures are indications of the influence of age factors in the cultural organisation of fertility. In most age-graded societies, responsibility is distributed according to age, and status is acquired in that manner. The implications of the political economy for fertility are therefore shown by differences in the proportions single and ever-married between the sexes, as further indications of the impingement of culture in the determination of fertility.

While polygyny may not alter the proportion of men who have ever-married, it has that effect for women. In other words, a man married to as many as four wives will not alter the proportion of men married, even if he married additional two wives, whereas every such additional wife influences the proportion of women who have ever married. Subsequent analyses will show how fertility is via the mediation of cultural

mechanisms such as the marriage institution, with polygyny exerting a depressant effect on the fertility of women while achieving the opposite result for men.

5.3 Education and Occupation among Survey Respondents

The occupational distribution of respondents shows that less than half of the respondents (40.8 per cent) are farmers as indicated in Table 3. This figure could be misleading because, occupation is a notoriously difficult subject to study. Part of the reason lies in the differences that might exist between an investigator's perception and expectations of occupational distribution on the one hand, and a respondent's own self-identification on the other. A respondent may not classify himself/herself as a farmer for the reason that s/he does not consider himself/herself to be one *per se*. For him/her, farming may be less a separate economic activity than an entire way of life that is not primarily regulated by the modern market system and its price mechanisms.

This is especially true of women who bear the greater responsibility of farm practices in many Nigerian rural areas. A particular woman interviewed observed that the farms exist for her as a device for escaping the daily emotional and psychological trauma that her polygynous marriage imposed on her. Other women may subordinate their role as farmers to their position of housewives because it is in respect of the latter role that the farmland was made available to them in the first place, and it is in service of that same role that they are farmers. Contextual variations such as these may lead to under-reporting of that occupational group relative others.

A second reason for the seemingly low composition of farmers in the study area rests in the fact that although 33.8 per cent of the sample regarded themselves as either civil servants or traders, a combination of both with agriculture is the empirical norm. It is fairly common to observe that many people who classify themselves as falling into these occupational groups in reality own farms that they attend to about as regularly as the people who described themselves as farmers. Ugep is a largely agricultural community. Focus groups indicate that in this town, farming and trading are usually complementary activities.

Ninety-one respondents described themselves as unemployed during the survey, giving an unexpectedly low unemployment rate of 6.7 per cent, as noted earlier in Table 3. Results from the focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and unobtrusive observational techniques cast doubt on this figure. In the words of focus group of female traders (age 40 –50 years), "most of our young people are jobless, they have nothing to do. That is how you will see them, *ya lelei* [i.e. malingering], doing nothing in particular". Because these traders are found at home very often, their account of high unemployment and underemployment among the populace is believable and conduces with our own observation. These qualitative results rather indicate that the perennial recourse to conflict among the Yakurr is in part a function of high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth. Some respondents may therefore have classified themselves as farmers for reasons that could range from courtesy bias to an unwillingness to disclose the seasonal character of their farm practice, particularly where

such respondents earn a daily wage during the planting seasons by working on other people's farms. In the dry seasons, they are more redundant.

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents by sex and occupational status. Among currently employed respondents, 68.5 per cent are either farmers or traders, with nearly half (43.7 per cent) in the agricultural sector. The table shows wide gender disparities in the occupational distribution of respondents. More men than women are engaged in occupations that require some education and are located in the formal sector, from where social mobility and social status are expectedly higher. These disparities draw attention to the dominance of men in the public sphere in Yakurr society as in most other societies in sub-Saharan Africa, where male decision making influences the orientation of family level domestic policy.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Sex and Occupation

Sex	Occupation								Total	
	Farming		Trading/ Business		Civil Servants		Others			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Male	186	37.1	95	18.9	102	20.3	119	23.7	502	100
Female	365	48.2	217	28.6	43	5.7	133	17.5	758	100
Total	551	43.7	312	24.8	145	11.5	252	20.0	1260	100

Among sampled women (N=758), 48.2 per cent are farmers in contrast to 37.1 per cent of men. The female figure compares favourably with results from an earlier survey of ever-married Ugep women conducted in 1994, which showed that out of the 275 women interviewed, 50.9 per cent were farmers (Obono, 1995b: 88). If the quality

of both bodies of data were adequate, the implication of these figures would be that women's participation in farming has decreased slightly in the intervening 5 years. Land fission in the face of accelerated population increase could have led to this decrease in agricultural labour participation by women, along with increased opportunities for women through the formation of co-operative societies.

The higher percentage in the earlier survey might also be attributable to the fact that only *ever-married* women were sampled. Married women are indeed more likely to have farm plots than other categories of women in Ugep society. A degree of the integration between marriage and agriculture has been suggested (Obono, 1999: 71). The present investigation confirms that farm allocations are effected just before each planting season in a manner that ensures that each married woman obtains an equitable share of the farmlands of her husband's extended family. These cyclical patterns of farming practice then translate into a cyclical pattern of divorce in Ugep society. According to several indepth interviewees, women generally time the dissolution of their marriages to coincide with the period in the year when they are most likely to remarry in time to benefit from farm allocations. Otherwise, a mistimed divorce may lead to tremendous subsistence difficulties on the part of such women for at least a year. That is why the divorce pattern tends to follow the communal rhythm of land allocation.

This scenario implies a link between the availability of/access to farmlands and marital stability, a relationship that would thus have implications for marital fertility. If corroborative empirical evidence shows this pattern to be widespread among

demographically pre-transitional peoples, this evidence could provide means of an alternative strategy for classifying the entry of sub-Saharan African societies into their unique transition experience. It would then be probable that, as population growth rates increase and the amount of available farmlands becomes more limited, the economic capacity of women will be weakened, forcing them to seek alternative economic strategies that could adversely affect the stability of marriage and therefore the rate of marital fertility.

Table 4 further shows that there are more men (70.3 per cent) than women (29.6 per cent) to be in the civil service, even when residential factors are held constant. Among men in our sample population (N=502), more than one-fifth (20.3 per cent) are in the civil service while the comparable figure for women (N=758) is 5.7 per cent. As the table shows, occupations that are associated with fewer societal rewards and recognition tend also to be the occupational domain of women. Earlier, Blood and Hamblin (1968) reported that the entry of women into paid employment had had little effect on their traditional roles. The table thus lends fresh empirical credence to this assertion by indicating that the proportion of women (69.6 per cent) engaged in trading is greater than the proportion of men (30.4 per cent), in what may be conceived of as a continuation of women's culinary roles.

When women are found in paid employment at all, they tend to enter a specifically female sector of the labour market, from where they perform roles that are extensions or corporate equivalents of their domestic duties. Viola Klein had found no

evidence that paid employment produced demands for liberation from traditional roles (Klein, 1965). Rather, as Blackburn and Stewart (1977) have observed, "the fact that more women are going to work has not in itself aided sexual equality, but served to reinforce their inferior status". For this reason, the distinction between "men's jobs" and "women's jobs" in the modern market economy reinforces pre-colonial patterns of economic inequality with the result that the form of trading that Ugep women engage in is characterised by the sale of small articles, marginal profit and low propensity to save. Trade articles are predominantly farm produce. This signifies a linkage between trading and the general agrarian outlook of Ugep economy. Non-agricultural products are purchased locally and credit purchases are common without a corresponding frequency of debt liquidation, in a situation that locks traders and farmers in forms of labour that only marginally promote occupational mobility. *Petit* trading in Ugep society is an extension of women's traditional role and not a means of their liberation from it.

Table 5 shows the proportions in each sex that had ever attended school among the sampled respondents. Among men in Ugep society there is 87.3 per cent chance of attending school (N=545), relative to 71.2 per cent for women (N=779). This finding is consistent with sociodemographic expectations. With the establishment of the first primary schools by Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries in 1912 and 1939, respectively, the proportion that had ever attended school was much higher for men than it was for women. Women were socialised into the "proper roles" of wives and mothers, in the general interests of patriarchal social order.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to School Attendance by Sex and Current Age

Sex	School Attendance by Current Age								Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+	%
Male	5.7	18.1	20.6	15.5	7.8	9.5	8.8	14.1	87.3
Female	14.6	25.3	18.8	12.3	10.8	9.2	6.1	2.9	71.2

An examination of Table 5 indicates that the proportion of women attending school shows an overall increase in the proportion of women ever attending school. Relative to men, the proportions of younger women who have never attended school (not shown in table) have been decreasing steadily, while the comparable proportions for men show no such consistent patterns. The male data with respect to the proportions never attending school by age are very inconsistent and show wide fluctuations.

Table 6 below examines the relationship between sex and education in terms of the proportions receiving primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as those not receiving any education at all. The sex differences reveal underlying discriminative gender disparities with regard to educational attainment. In association with the cultural ideological complex described in the previous chapter, women's low educational attainment as shown in the table reduces their ability to exercise control over their childbearing activities. The liberating effect of a formal education is available to women only in a minimal way. They must seek in cultural values both collective and personal contexts for social relevance and later security.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Sex and Education

Sex	No Schooling		Primary		Secondary		Higher		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	75	13.5	146	26.2	270	48.5	66	11.8	557	100.0
Female	237	29.8	195	24.6	320	40.3	42	5.3	794	100.0
Total	**312**	**23.1**	**341**	**25.2**	**590**	**43.7**	**108**	**8.0**	**1,351**	**100.0**

Table 6 confirms that as many as 23.1 per cent of Ugep people have never attended school, as shown earlier in Table 3. More women (29.8 per cent) than men (13.5 per cent) have never attended school. The table indicates that of the 1,039 respondents who have ever been to school, more men have received higher education than women have. Among sampled men who have ever been to school (N=482), 13.7 per cent have more than a secondary education, in contrast to 7.5 per cent of the women in the sample (N=557).

Women tend to terminate their educational careers at lower levels than men do. Thirty-five per cent of Ugep women do not proceed beyond a primary education in contrast to 30.2 per cent of the men. The variation is marginal but the figures do suggest a fairly low overall level of educational attainment in Ugep society. In addition, these figures identify the gender context of social stratification in Ugep society that the marginal variation tends to understate. The point has been made that "male assertiveness in family decision making and its consequences on actual reproductive performance are normative and sustained in the course of social differentiation particularly in the African

culture because of the deep-rooted conservative tradition which conferred power and privilege on men folk" (Adewuyi, 1999: 4).

For such reasons, women tend also to terminate their educational careers at the secondary level (57.5 per cent) relative to 56.1 per cent of men are, with nearly twice as many men (13.7 per cent) as women (7.5 per cent) going on to receive a higher education. This pattern is again consistent with demographic expectations in a typical patriarchal agrarian society, in which the bulk of responsibility for farm and household maintenance is borne by women. Although women constitute more than half of the respondents to the relevant question in the survey instrument (53.6 per cent), only 38.9 per cent of those receiving a higher education are women, with men making up 61.1 per cent of this sub-sample. The gender implications of these results are obvious, but are uncovered in this study through its prior commitment to a research perspective that reveals the ethnographic factors that are partly responsible for assigning certain roles to the respective sexes, while consigning each to a particular social status.

The implications of education for the fertility of the Yakurr people are particularly strong when they are analysed in relation to the prevailing cultural values that promote and reward high marital fertility. It is a widely held view that formal Western education pits its possessor in ideological conflict with traditional values. Where such conflict impinges on fertility behaviour, it is instructive to examine the data for patterns that could identify the interrelationships between formal education, contraceptive prevalence, the degree to which respondents subscribe to the pronatalist

ethos of their community, and fertility. This aspect of the work will be undertaken in subsequent regression analysis in this chapter. It is for this reason that it is necessary to foreground the ethnographic contexts that will serve to illuminate the analysis.

5.4 Number of Children Ever Born (CEB)

The survey data reveal the number of children ever born (CEB) in Ugep ranges from 25 for men, and 15 for women. The data also reveal a mean CEB for the entire sample of 4.8, on a level of 5.2 for men and 4.5 for women, relative to an earlier reported completed fertility of 6.4 for women (Obono, 1995b). This earlier figure contrasts with a current completed fertility of 5.8, representing a marginal decline of 9.4 per cent in completed fertility in 5 years, or an annual rate of decrease of 1.8 per cent. Does this decrease suggest that female fertility has dropped or is dropping in Ugep society? Is this town following the lead of other sub-Saharan case studies where a nascent decline is recorded? These are pertinent questions that lie beyond the immediate scope of the present investigation, but necessarily invite further rounds of intensive data collection and an even closer examination of the evidence because evidence of fertility decline may not be coterminous with evidence of a fertility transition. Among ever-married women in Ugep, the mean number of children ever born is 4.5, relative to 5.2 for men.

The observed difference in the figures between the two surveys is explained by the larger sample of ever-married women in the present survey (N=626). Ordinarily, this should make for a higher figure. The explanation lies in the age composition of the two samples. While the earlier study was comprised older women who have had more years

of exposure to childbearing, the present sample comprises younger women and, in addition, includes never-married women whose inclusion lowers total CEB. With respect to the male and female fertility data in the present study, Table 7 below shows the sex differences in fertility in Ugep society. Wherever possible, male and female fertility data will be compared in order for the underlying gender contexts of fertility, and their overarching power structures, to be shown.

Table 7 displays male fertility to be consistently higher than female fertility, except when fertility is low. In other words, the table shows that women are generally more likely to have fewer children than men are. As the number of children increases, it becomes apparent in Table 4 that men are the important motivators of Ugep fertility. As many as 75.8 per cent of the sampled women have 6 children or less compared to 71.0 per cent of men. In other words, 29 per cent of the sampled men have *more* than six children compared to 24.2 per cent for women. The difference may be attributable to differences in the age at marriage and first birth for both sexes, it does signify a higher reproductive motivation among men, especially when the data are disaggregated by age as shall be shown presently. These contrasts are accentuated when the figures for 11 children or more are computed for both sexes. The procedure reveals that nearly a tenth of sampled men in Ugep society (9.1 per cent) have more than ten children relative to just 1.5 per cent of women. These figures suggest that the bulk of excess fertility in the study area is contributed by men's reproductive motivation that finds cultural outlets in numerous double standards by which the demographic transition is made so difficult.

Table 7: Sex Differences in Fertility of Respondents

CEB	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1-2	97	26.1	165	28.7	263	27.7
3-4	93	25.0	145	25.1	238	25.0
5-6	74	19.9	127	22.0	201	21.1
7-8	59	15.9	88	15.2	147	15.5
9-10	15	4.0	43	7.4	58	6.1
11+	34	9.1	9	1.6	43	46
Mean	**5.2**	**39.2**	**4.5**	**60.8**	**4.8**	**100**
Total	**372**	**100.0**	**577**	**100.0**	**950**	**100.0**

The institutional mechanism by which these differentials are achieved is most likely polygyny. Although there is oral historical, ethnographic and documented evidence that the incidence of polygyny has declined in the modern period, it remains high at a nationally comparable figure of 46.2 per cent for ever-married women in the Ugep sample. The incidence of polygyny accounts for the disparity between male and female marital fertility at higher parity, and provides fresh indication that the antinatalist policy of Nigeria had addressed the wrong sexual group in an effort to reduce the population growth rate. This point will be taken up subsequently in the next chapter, in the examination of the policy implications of findings like this.

Meanwhile, earlier studies had shown women's reproductive performance to usually be a reflection of men's reproductive motivation (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994b). But, in addition to polygyny, two other factors help clarify the higher incidence of male fertility, relative to women. These are persistent serial monogamy and a cultural value system that encourages male sexual promiscuity while sanctioning that privilege among women. The latter explanation invites theoretical query on the basis of new writings on

the relationship between culture and agency which repudiate prefeminist demographies that portray women as "passive victims of patriarchal institutions who have little choice but to surround themselves with many children" (Greenhalgh, 1995: 25).

Prior to his self-conversion to anthropological demographic modes of inquiry, Caldwell (1978) had reflected this tendency, as had Cain *et al.* (1979). Indeed, to a fairly large extent, the present work is subject also to Greenhalgh's criticism. In its attempt to elaborate the concept of the "reproductive trap" earlier on in this chapter, it perpetuates a passive concept of agency in which people are seen as "adhering to conventions or following rules" (Carter, 1995: 55). But it does bear mentioning that the rigid ideological codes by which women's reproductive lives are ruled in a typical pre-transitional society like Ugep makes it immensely difficult to overlook them in the examination of the contexts in which women manage or mismanage their reproductive affairs. This may not always mean the same thing as stripping them of agency and the capacity to negotiate meaning and action. The methodology that eschews this ideological programme ought not to be seen *a priori* as misspecifying women as passive. It rather locates them as scientifically as possible within the ethos they find themselves and that without a prior sense of personal obligation to challenge them out of it.

Figure 8 shows the comparison of male and female fertility in the study area. There is an expected general trend for a greater proportion of women to have fewer children relative to men. By second and third birth, male and female proportions are similar, with fluctuating differences appearing thereafter until both proportions their

fertility are again roughly comparable at 7-8 births. The trend toward greater male proportions occurs at much higher levels of fertility, commencing at eleventh birth, where men's fertility consistently outstrips women's to the end of the fertility range. The figure shows that the fertility trend is reversed as the number of children increases, with the proportions of women having fewer children greater than those of men at comparable levels of fertility.

Among the female cohort of our sample, only 0.2 per cent have up to 15 children, compared to about 2.7 per cent of the men. The implication is that polygyny and culturally permissive norms on male sexuality, which permit men to freely have sexual partners before and outside marriage, provide a context for this disparity. The proportion of women having an excess of ten children is negligible, especially when compared to the proportion of men. Men are the principal motivators of fertility in Ugep society, in consonance with their roles as not only comptrollers of fertility at the domestic level, but its key custodians at the societal. Fertility is here indicated to be the nexus that connects the individual with social structure, and that "the individual and the society share common attributes that imply similar consequences for both of them" (Chapter 2.1). The locus of power is context for appraising the higher motivation for fertility where that event is central to understanding societal equilibrium and the political process. This viewpoint is important for an appreciation of the data shown in this figure and in Figure 8 below. It emanates from our conceptual position that fertility is the product of multiple interactions between culture and human behaviour.

The perceived excess in fertility is reasoned to result from the fact that "female fertility is remotely controlled from once neglected powerful source external to it " (Adewuyi, 1999: 3). This "powerful source" operates also through the agency of polygyny, as noted (Adetunji and Moore, 1999), and other patriarchal structures. The situation suggests strong preliminary theoretical connections among patriarchy, pronatalism, and political culture, although their precise epistemological sequence is not at the moment clear. There is some consensus that pronatalist pre-industrial cultures often display an intersection between their spiritual, demographic and political worlds, but the exact nature of this relationship is for the most part uncertain. While indigenous values and belief systems that sustain high fertility are acknowledged to also maintain a political structure that is in fact founded on them, few attempts have been made to elaborate this influence. Thus, although it remains clear that the descent system is a crucial factor for socio-political organisation, little is known of the political contexts of fertility beliefs, how they penetrate the secular sphere, and why they prove so resilient despite so many years of policy intervention. How is gender linked to descent ideology and the nature of power, and how do their intersection influence fertility behaviour? If indeed fertility is the final outcome of a complex set of interactions between physiological and cultural factors, how can we locate it in the context of the relationships among patriarchy, pronatalism and political economy? Do these variables reveal easy linkages, and can they be prioritised in that way?

The implication of this scenario has been that the existing information on the political processes of pre-industrial agrarian societies appears to have dissociated these processes from the possibly more fundamental pronatalist forces at play. Do such forces invariably give rise to ancestral narratives for validating particular kinds of political systems or activities through which they find expression? It is questions such as these that identify deep gaps in the theoretical development of demography for which an anthropological demographic perspective is essential. Towards the development of the relevant framework, there is need to identify the criteria or measures by which societies can be ranked or grouped on a pronatalist continuum, or how the result can be related to the prevailing male supremacist complex and the political culture it gives rise to.

There is a need to provide answers to critical questions concerning how the mode of political governance in pre-industrial communities conforms to fertility aspirations or motivation at the individual level. In other words, how does individual reproductive motivation receive validation in the institutional cultural arrangements set up to facilitate local political governance? How do such institutional arrangements shape individual motivation? Do the reproductive interests of the individual and the functional prerequisites of her community coincide or merge within the contexts of political fertility? How sustainable is a view of fertility as a politicised event that is regulated by norms that are themselves powerful political instruments?

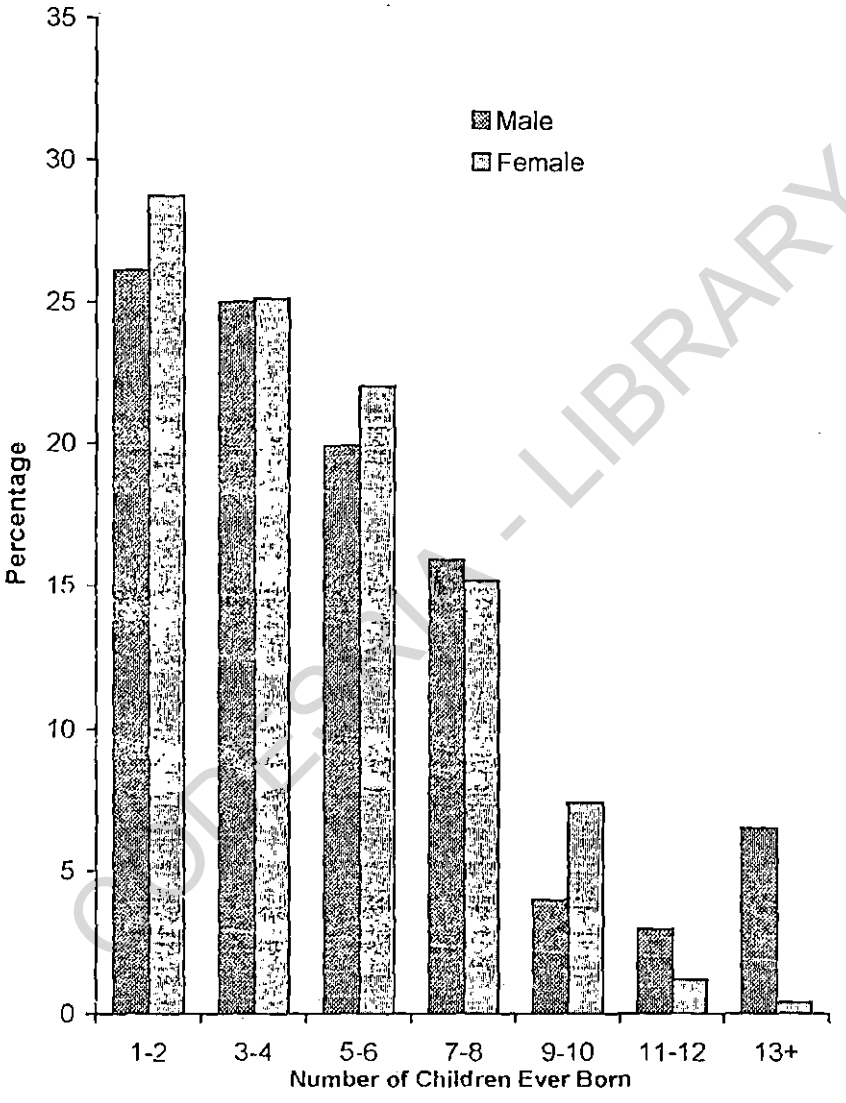

Fig. 8: Bar Chart Showing Sex Differences in Fertility of Respondents

A distribution of the number of children ever born (CEB) to sampled women and men by age is provided below by Figure 9. The figure shows that men have a higher fertility on the average than women in the early ages. In other words, between 15 and 24 years, men have more children relative to women. This trend is indicative of the rise in consensual unions, coupled with permissive male sexual mores and the early age at which sex is initiated in Ugep society. Qualitative techniques suggest that the higher male fertility is attributable to premarital births coupled with teenage subfecundity and traditionally high levels of pathological sterility. As an elderly in-depth interviewee explained it, "I have one particularly wonderful son. His main work in life is to impregnate careless small girls". The focus group discussion with young men age 15-19 is very frank and revealing.

Moderator:

> The feeling is that young boys aged around 15-19 years in this town have more children than girls of the same age, what do you...

Discussant 3:

> That one is true. You know that although girls are having sex indiscriminately in this town, we boys are still on top.

Moderator:

> Is that to say that sex is some kind of competition then? [General Laughter]. Or do you mean to say it is something more serious?

Discussant 3:

> I don't know what they think of it but to me, it is not [a laughing matter]. What I mean is that we men are able to have more girls than they can freely have boyfriends, so we generally have more children sometimes. Not that we wish to, but sometimes it just happens.

An interesting feature of Figure 9 concerns the diverse patterns revealed for both male and female fertility among the sampled respondents. As noted, female fertility shows a consistent upward trend up to the last cohort, when fertility suddenly drops. Contrarily, the fertility experience of the male cohorts depicts an undulating curve with an upper modal tail that is significant from the viewpoint of the culture and political economy of Yakurr fertility. The sex differences in the patterns originate in gender disparities in sexual-behavioural and childbearing norms in Yakurr society. Hence the consistency of women's fertility profile signifies their special vulnerability to the dictates of the male supremacist complex at an ideological level.

There can be little doubt that the marriage gradient is implicated in the different patterns of fertility shown by the bar chart. In addition, however, the significance of differential primary socialisation and adult sexual expectations cannot be overemphasised. While girls biologically mature at an earlier age than boys, the revealed pattern demonstrates the autonomy of culture for the reason that the fertility outcomes at the early ages do not indicate the primacy of those biological factors. Rather, the fertility of the average girl is held in check by constrictive sexual prescriptions and proscriptions that appear to be enforced more rigidly where women are concerned. The middle slough in male fertility is the result of the special influence of the marriage gradient and the excess supply of women who are eligible for marriage at the various ages.

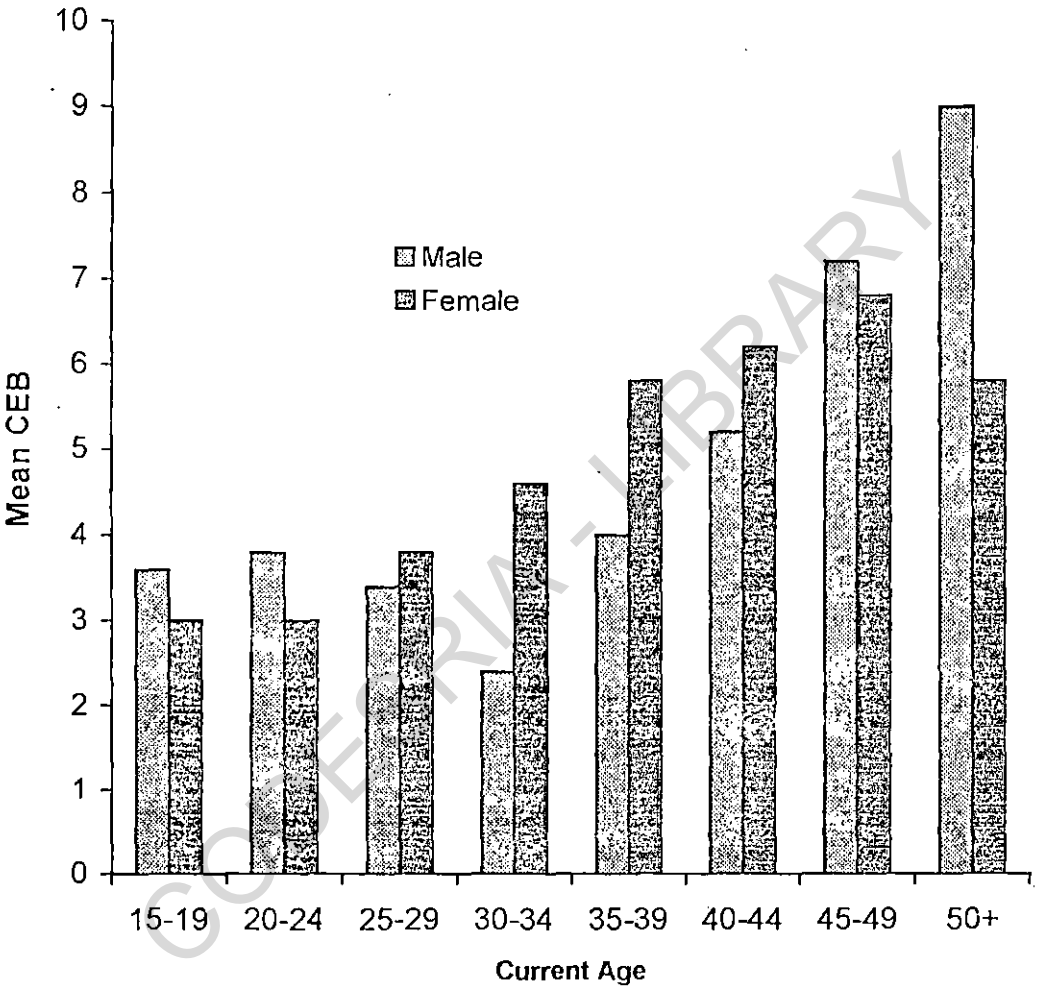

Fig. 9: Bar Chart Showing Sex Differences in Fertility by Age of Respondents

The slough is so clearly identifiable because it is analysed in contrast to female data at comparable ages. In other words, men's fertility is compared with women's fertility in light of the fact that women generally enter marriage much earlier than men do, and as such are comparatively exposed for longer periods to the risk of pregnancy and childbirth at the respective cohorts. The modal horn in the male pattern is the effect of polygyny, which indeed has a depressant effect on female fertility but the exact opposite consequence for male fertility.

By age 24, few men in modern Ugep society have acquired sufficient social status and capital to enter marriage. The higher male fertility at this age is therefore the result of maintaining multiple sexual partners in the premarital state. Within the context, the marriage gradient is paradoxically responsible for the consistently higher female fertility between age 25 and 44 years, with a gap that increases and widens steadily within that range. By age 25, a greater proportion of women than men have entered marriage, which as noted is an institution that provides an environment that is conducive for childbearing. Female fertility increases in correspondence with women's prime reproductive years, and begins to stabilise from age 40, rather in anticipation of the onset of menopause a few years later and the implications of certain cultural provisions which debar women from having children once their daughters have commenced childbearing. As the figure shows, although female fertility continues to increase, it does so at a slower pace from 34-39 years than the sharp increase recorded earlier. The difference in female

fertility between 40-44 years and 45-49 years is much less than in the immediately preceding years, and points to the effect of menopause on female fertility in Ugep.

The downward turn in female fertility at 45-49 in relation to male fertility and the narrowing of the gap between male and female fertility at age 40-44 years, suggest the joint influence of polygyny and menopause. While female fertility increases at a decelerated rate from 35-49 years onwards before the definite decline from 50+ years, men's fertility increases quite steadily and sharply within the same cohorts. This is because men generally enter marriage at a later age than women do, and correspondingly enter polygyny at older ages. The differential is explained by the excess supply of women at the marriageable ages, which portrays the age structure of the two sexes in the form of a marriage gradient. From 45 years on, men have on the average a higher fertility than the comparable female cohorts do.

The data also show that fertility increases with age, except for the fluctuation in the male data between 15–34 years, which could be due to a combination of misreporting and the incidence of premarital sex. The female data in this respect are more straightforward, rising steadily and consistently to taper at the upper cohorts, when the average fertility for women aged 50 years and over falls. This fall could be the result of typically high levels of pathological sterility for that cohort of women as they began their childbearing careers, whose effects on fertility were accentuated by notably high infant and child mortality levels. The combination of both factors could promote recall lapse on the part of this female cohort and create the fertility picture shown in Figure 9.

With specific reference to the female data, Table 8 below shows the age specific rates for female fertility. The table shows a strong positive correlation between age and the fertility of Ugep women. Each increase in age is accompanied by an expected corresponding increase in fertility, with a range of 2.41 (age 15-19 years) and 6.52 (age 45-49 years). The mode is found also in the latter cohort, prior to a precipitate decline in the CEB among women age 50 years and above that conforms to the expected demographic pattern. This drop is explained by a host of factors including historical pathological sterility accentuated by high infant, child and maternal mortality levels (in the period when medical technology was not very highly developed or advanced). Other factors include the onset of menopause and the possibility that women in this cohort are likely to under-report the incidence of infant and child mortality a the recollection might invite them to relive an agony they have probably developed psychic means of overcoming. In this regard, it may not be totally correct to account for this drop by reference to "recall lapse" as the qualitative data gathered during field work seems to suggest that no matter how many children or infants a woman loses, she is not likely to "forget" any of them. If she does forget, it is possibly because it is more convenient for her to do so. As one grief-stricken elderly woman (age 60+ years) noted in a particularly difficult in-depth interview,

> My youngest son should be about your age. I had fourteen of them, boys and girls. None is alive. I do not forget such things.... Don't ask me such things any more. I am now no different from a barren *paw-paw* tree.... Why should I forget them? If you have finished with me, go in peace....

Table 8: Mean Number of Children Ever Born to Women by Age

Age	Women			Mean CEB
	No.	%	Cum. %	
15-19	22	3.8	3.8	2.41
20-24	68	11.8	15.6	2.50
25-29	83	14.4	30.0	3.23
30-34	86	14.9	44.9	3.92
35-39	78	13.5	58.4	5.18
40-44	97	16.8	75.2	5.85
45+	143	24.8	100.0	5.81
Total	**577**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**4.5**

Table 8 shows that the number of children ever born (CEB) to Ugep women conforms to the expected demographic pattern in that CEB increases significantly with women's age, with an arithmetic mean of 4.5 and a completed fertility of 5.8. Much of the fertility clusters in the peak reproductive years of women, suggesting the influence of marriage on fertility already discussed in Section 5.3. Nevertheless, the paired comparison of daughters' and mothers' fertility over at least two generations shows very definite trends towards fertility increase. Table 9 below compares these figures for ever-married living daughters and mothers with a view to complementing data in previous tables.

For this information, we conducted a parallel survey targeting women and men aged 50 and above and, as shown in Table 9 below, we found that current fertility levels were marginally higher than they were about four decades ago. The procedure in this complementary survey consisted in asking purposively selected male and female respondents (aged 50 and above) to provide information relating to the number of siblings they have ever had and the number of children *they* (that is, the respondents

themselves) have ever had. This was the approach followed where the pair of respondent daughter/son and mother/father, as the case may be, was not available by reason of death, migration or comparable circumstances. This special sample was independently drawn through a multistage process that began with the independent selection of enumeration areas (EAs) and culminated in the purposive selection of the respondents as described above. It comprised 231 men and 411 women. The results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Intergenerational Trends in Fertility

EA	MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN							
	Male Respondents		Male Respondents' Fathers		Female Respondents		Female Respondents' Mothers	
	No.	CEB	No.	CEB	No.	CEB	No.	CEB
EA 399	-	-	-	-	74	9.6	74	5.2
EA 402	43	10.0	43	9	-	-	-	-
EA 422	50	8.9	50	8	85	5.1	85	3.5
EA 426	39	8.4	39	6.6	90	5.4	90	4.4
EA 439	51	7.6	51	9.8	83	6.3	83	6.5
EA 459	48	14.9	48	8.4	79	7.9	79	4.0
TOTAL	**231**	**9.4**	**231**	**8.2**	**411**	**6.2**	**411**	**4.5**

The respondents' siblings provided a crude but easily computed measure of parental fertility that could yield useful indications of intergenerational trends in the fertility of Yakurr people. The respondent himself or herself is added to the self-reported number of siblings ever had (i.e. x+1) to generate a crude measure of same sex parental fertility. Almost consistently for all paired comparisons, parental fertility was lower than it was for the respondents. In other words, nearly all respondents reported that they had fewer siblings (i.e. in terms of siblings ever born) than their own children currently have.

For men, mean CEB rose from 8.2 children for fathers to 9.4 for sons in the sample, while the corresponding figures for mothers and daughters are 4.5 and 6.2, respectively. The latter figure confirms the earlier finding of 6.4 children for ever-married women in Ugep (Obono, 1995b). Such a scenario holds implications for prevailing assumptions about traditional fertility and the view that it was higher than current levels and only began to fall when modernisation was well under way.

The high levels of fertility for both sexes shown in Table 9 are expected because the sample was drawn from respondents in older ages, with some of the women having completed their fertility. What is not certain is whether the respondents have not merely recalled the surviving children of their parents. Would they be able to report siblings who had died before even they (the respondents) were born, when quite often, considerable under-reporting of live-births by mothers can occur if children died very early in life? Retrospective reporting is prone to omissions of this sort. There is a cultural tendency to avoid counting early deaths as livebirths, or mentioning even the names of children who died young. But because age-specific fertility records are not available, it is not possible to compare current fertility of respondents (in terms of age at last parity) with parental fertility at a comparable age, using a more refined instrument. Since the follow-up survey emanated from focus group results that suggested fertility to be increasing across intergenerational cohorts, it may be important to turn attention more closely in this direction.

5.5 Marriage Factors, Pronatalism and Fertility among the Yakurr

The age and marital status distributions of respondents earlier in Table 3 depict the cross-sectional nature of the survey and its deliberate emphasis on women and men in their reproductive years. They reiterate the view that age is not only an important demographic variable, but also a social factor that facilitates the discussion of human social behaviour in terms of the social structure and social order. The relationship between age and marital status is therefore significant for identifying present patterns and future trends in fertility in the study area.

Table 3 had indicated that a fairly stable marriage situation in Ugep, with 72.4 per cent of the respondents still in their first marriage and 92.9 per cent in either a first or second marriage. A distribution of the data by sex provides the same indication of stability, partly because in an agrarian cultural setting that discourages divorce, women tend to time their divorce to coincide with the cyclical patterns of land allocation (See Section 5.3 for a fuller discussion). Because marriage is universal and its stability encouraged by a strong web-work of reward systems, a significant proportion of second marriages arises not from divorce but the death of husbands. The marriage gradient, by which men tend to marry women who are younger and located lower on the social ladder than men themselves, produces a tendency for wives to survive their husbands and at ages when it is still feasible for them to remarry.

This same marriage gradient promotes a strong polygynous culture among the Yakurr, with a rate of 42.6 per cent polygynously ever-married women, relative to a

national figure of 40.9 per cent (Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 1990). Previous surveys have shown that this situation conduces with high fertility rates owing to the enabling environment for fertility that the marriage institution provides (Cox, 1976: 24; Nam and Gustavus, 1976: 112; Corsa and Oakley, 1979: 87; Downing and Yaukey, 1979: 537; Kpedekpo, 1982, etc). A report of nuptiality patterns in developing countries based on the World Fertility Survey (WFS) firmly establishes that, almost universally, marriage is incontrovertibly "the socially sanctioned context for childbearing" (Durch, 1980: 5).

Nevertheless, the stability of marriage may be linked to the degree of division of labour in a society and the extent of gender discrimination against women. It is a factor to be considered in the explanation of high completed marital fertility among the Ugep people, previously recorded as 6.4 (Obono, 1995b). Women's dependence on men in Ugep society fosters a need for them to remain in marriage as regularly as possible because of what has been described as "the reproductive trap" (Obono, 1995b: 100; Isiugo-Abanihe and Obono, 1999b: 255). This phrase describes a condition in which women are not free to pursue non-familial economic and political activities. Defined as "the tendency for women of low educational attainment to see in repeated childbirth prospects of peer approval and an investment in future security" (Obono, 1995b: 100), it involves a discontinuation of their educational pursuits and a distortion of their chances of economic independence later on in life.

Within this scenario, women are unable to compete favourably in the labour market with their male counterparts. As such,

> Without a paid job, women remain virtually dependent on their husbands for their upkeep and may, therefore, find it impolitic to assert their rights over their own reproductive performance. They surrender these rights to their husbands. Childbearing becomes the pivot around which their lives turn until menopause, when it is too late to contemplate a career outside the family (Obono, 1995b: 100).

Such gender inequity propels less-educated Ugep women into marriage before adequate alternative skills have been acquired. Multiple pressures on them to have more children then reinforce their dependency on male leadership, especially within the rivalrous atmosphere that polygyny imposes on co-wives. This fact is borne out by the survey data, which also show a strong correlation between age and polygyny. The next section examines fertility in Ugep fertility in terms of its relationship with a number of sociodemographic factors identified by the survey questionnaire. The number of children ever born (CEB) is measured as a continuous covariate of these factors, and is presented in grouped form according to the nature of the distribution and discussion for which the presentation is made.

The relationship between pronatalism and prevailing marriage systems in Ugep is examined with a view to identifying the influence of this relationship on fertility. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews revealed that the aphorism "*lesou leta otoba*" (a large population is what is greater than a machete), was an instantly recognisable summary of the Yakurr pronatalist philosophy. An in-depth interview with the *Obol*

Lopon of Ugep clarifies this point for us. According to this priest and monarch, "That phrase [*lokurr jima*] is a way our forefathers had of communicating their deeply-felt belief in the supremacy of human numbers. For our people, nothing is greater than that". In the focus group discussion with matriclan priests, further clarification was sought on this pronatalist worldview, as shown below:

Moderator:

> Thank you for your comments, my fathers, but I would still like you to throw more light on the saying *lesou leta otoba*. Is the saying still as relevant today as it was when it first came into use?

Discussant 4:

> Yes, we thank you also. It is even today, more than at any other time, that the saying *lesou leta otoba* is relevant to us. This goes to show the wisdom of our forefathers. They could see very far. Look at how government finds it difficult to neglect us, unlike all those little communities you pass on your way to this town. It is because we are so many. A rich man's compound is always teeming with people all the time, but it is a poor and wicked man's house that is always looking deserted even during festivals. *Obase ka deya*! [An expletive that may be translated "God forbid!"].

Discussant 3:

> Our forefathers sought to increase how many we were in the town by worshipping these traditional deities. Now that we have overcome our infertility, we have to worship them the more...

Discussants 4 and 5:

> [Interjecting]... so that we do not experience the bad wombs they had.

Discussant 8:

> To add to that, despite our poverty, our children are our wealth. They bring us joy and happiness. There is nothing better than children...

Discussant 7:

> [Interjects] That is if the children have heads.

Discussant 8:

[Continues] Yes, that is if they have heads, but a man who has no child will still prefer to have many children no matter what, rather than have none at all.

Discussant 3:

I believe what the young man wants to know is whether the number of people [*lesou*] is greater than a machete [*otoba*] and why we believe that to be so. Please correct me if I am wrong.

Moderator:

[Motioning for him to speak on]. That is correct.

Discussant 5:

Okay. By common observation, will you agree that one masquerade with a machete can be overpowered by many people? Argument aside, will you agree? [Apparently, this was a merely rhetorical question, so I did not respond one way or the other but encouraged him to speak on]. You can see this all the time when *Obam* [a war dance] comes out to play. After the sacrificial goat is slaughtered, the masquerade that slaughtered it loses control and no longer knows what he is doing or where he is. It requires several men to dispossess him of the cutlass; otherwise he would injure someone. This shows you that it is the number of people in a town that can defeat any enemy. No matter how sharp the cutlass is, it cannot kill everybody if the people are many. They will eventually overpower you.

Discussant 1 [Priest of *Edet Odjokobi* and *Obol Lopon* of Ugep]*:*

What these fathers here are all saying is that, for our people, the phrase *lesou leta otoba* is very meaningful and captures the essence of our way of life. That is why we have so many *ndet*. We pray to them. Why would we have so many *mmanamanadet* [fertility deities] if we did not believe in the superior benefit of human numbers? Our religion is based on the need to bear children, for our wives to be fertile and have many children. That is our role.

These excerpts from the FGD with matriclan priests of Ugep society and the in-depth interview with the *Obol Lopon* provide evidence of the centrality of the phrase to the ideology of the people. *Lesou leta Otoba* is a war cliché that probably dates to a time when inter-communal conflicts regularly decimated a population already kept in check

by pestilence and pathological sterility. The aphorism nevertheless still exerts a powerful influence over the reproductive and political attitudes of many Yakurr people in the modern period. Several other proverbs are used by the people to denote their pronatalism. Among these is *Eninong yana jang edol edoli*, meaning "a single finger cannot remove a louse". This statement is regularly used in Ugep society, and the matriclan priests quoted it up to seven times in the FGD session. Only 0.6 per cent of all respondents in the survey have never heard the saying *Lesou Leta Otoba*.

The survey that followed the focus groups and in-depth interviews was based on their results (Chapter 4.1). We required respondents to indicate whether they subscribed to this position or not. In designing this aspect of the survey, we sought to stratify the respondents into sub-samples of pronatalists and non-pronatalists (but not necessarily antinatalists) for the purpose of correlating their ideological point of view with a number of socio-demographic variables. For the purpose of this analysis, therefore, respondents who responded in the affirmative to the question "Do you agree with the saying '*Lesou leta otoba*'?" (Question 220) in the survey instrument were considered to subscribe to a pronatalist worldview, while those who did not were not. The mass of responses to the follow-up Question 203 ("Please explain your answer to 220 above") in the survey instrument indicated the accuracy with which communal level pronatalism could be summarised in that dictum and the convergence of that summary with the qualitative results. This distribution is shown below in Table 10.

The table distributes the respondents according to the relationship between pronatalism and a number of sociodemographic variables. Women are less likely (74.1 per cent) than men (80.0 per cent) to subscribe to the dominant pronatalist ethos of the

community, an indication that the institution sustaining high fertility at an ideological level is essentially male-based. The obverse pattern reveals, more women (25.9 per cent) as men (20.0 per cent) disagree with the aphorism in question (not shown in table).

Table 10: Relationship between Pronatalism and Selected Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sociodemographic Characteristics	Categories	Pronatalist Respondents
Sex	Male	80.0
	Female	74.1
Age Last Birthday	15-19	62.1
	20-24	61.4
	25-29	76.7
	30-34	84.2
	35-39	80.5
	40-44	80.4
	45-49	82.5
	50+	88.8
Marital Status	Never Married	69.0
	Married	81.1
	Widowed	70.6
	Divorced	69.4
	Separated	83.3
Educational Attainment	No Schooling	74.9
	Primary	81.7
	Secondary	74.0
	Higher	61.8
Occupation	Farming	79.1
	Trading	72.1
	Civil Service	71.1
	Others	76.6
Contraceptive Use	Ever Used	81.1
	Never Used	70.3

Apart from these sex differences in the extent of pronatalism, the above table does not reveal any clear distinctions in terms of the other sociodemographic characteristics listed. Only a positive but weak relationship (r= 0.18969) exists between current age and pronatalism, suggesting that as age increases the subscription to

pronatalism tends to increase likewise, but very marginally. The weak correlation coefficient is explained by the suffusion of the community in an ethos of pronatalism, so fully that it is doubtful if most respondents had formed personal opinions on the issue *prior* to the present survey.

A strong inverse relationship (r = -0.86645) exists between level of education attained and pronatalism. As noted earlier (Section 5.2.4), education has the effect of dislodging its possessor from the *norm*-al prescriptions of his/her cultural milieu. The inverse correlation is as such expected. The higher percentage found among those who have only primary education reflects the pervasiveness of pronatalism. Expectedly, farmers show a higher tendency (79.1 per cent) to be pronatalist than other occupational groups, an indication that this particular occupation is more intimately interwoven with the fabric of social and communal life than the other occupations are. Farming is embodied more closely defined by the spirit of communal life. As suggested in Chapter 4 previously, the non-mechanised pre-modern system of agricultural that is still commonplace in the study area leaves most practitioners subject to a dependence on supernatural entities for favourable yields. Since these deities double as fertility spirits, the connection between that occupation and pronatalism is more readily discernible.

The conclusion that widespread pronatalism obfuscates the distinctions among sub-segments of the population is indicated by the last panel of Table 9. Ordinarily, the expectation would have been that those respondents who had never used contraception would be more likely than those who had used to hold pronatalist opinions, but the table

does not bear out this expectation. In fact, the exact reverse of the expectation is displayed, with as many as 81.1 per cent of those who had ever used contraception subscribing to the aphorism while only 70.3 of those who had never used did so.

There are at least two possible explanations for this pattern. First, as noted, pronatalism is so pervasive that it is not readily sensitive to disaggregation in this manner. Second and more specifically, contraceptive prevalence may not correspond with pronatalism or antinatalism *per se*, but may indicate use for prophylactic reasons rather than contraceptive ones. In other words, the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS and the activities of several reproductive health non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the area led to increased condom use at the time of study, but this was not because of a perceived need to decrease fertility as such. It was to stem the transmission of the virus. The overall trend of the data suggests a high degree of pronatalism. Other sociodemographic variables are cross-tabulated with selected proxy measures of pronatalism, such as the number of children ever born (CEB) to women and family size preferences. This approach conducts the analysis in the realm of preferred and actual reproductive performance, disaggregated by sex, rather than of mere ideology (Table 11).

Table 11: Percentage Differences in the Relationship between Pronatalism and Preferred Number of Children by Sex

Preferred Number of Children	Percentage of Respondents Who Subscribe to Pronatalism (%)	
	Male	Female
1-2 Children	60.0	54.5
3 Children	73.5	70.4
4 Children	89.5	71.7
5 Children	76.6	72.3
6 Children	72.2	74.1
7 Children	62.5	81.3
8 Children	71.4	87.5
9+ Children	83.3	89.1

The survey data show a strong correlation between subscription to the pronatalist aphorism and preferred family size among Ugep women (r = 0.892). Respondents who worship *ase* are probably not as likely as other categories of respondents to practise contraception, with the result that the have higher fertility outcomes. It has been reported that "stated fertility intentions provides fairly accurate forecasts of fertility behaviour in the subsequent period" (Tan and Tey, 1994: 222). Table 11 shows that the male fertility figures are consistently higher until the hiatus from fifth to ninth birth, after which the initial pattern reasserts itself. This again points to the location of fertility within a male supremacist complex that survives as long as the agricultural economy is not diversified, or undergoing other forms of radical transformation.

Table 12, on the other hand, displays sex differences in the relationship between pronatalism and mean number of children ever born (CEB).

Table 12: Percentage Differences in the Relationship between Pronatalism and Number of Children Ever Born (CEB) by Sex of Respondents

Number of Children Ever Born	Percentage of Respondents Who Subscribe to Pronatalism	
	Male	Female
1 Child	75.7	65.4
2 Children	78.3	71.8
3 Children	85.1	75.4
4 Children	77.3	64.4
5 Children	86.4	75.0
6 Children	82.1	85.5
7 Children	92.1	79.6
8 Children	90.5	83.3
9 Children	87.5	92.3
10+ Children	95.0	93.8

Table 12 shows a strong association between subscription to pronatalism and the number of children ever born, especially in the male data. The footnote to the table indicates that men's fertility outstrips women's by ten children. We had earlier signified this to be a function of polygyny at older ages (Figure 9), but the overall implication of the data is that a pronatalist worldview is positively associated with the respondents' preference for many children as well as the actual number of children they do have. Could this result from a relationship between pronatalism (operationalised by the *Iesou* aphorism) and specific union types, such as polygyny, by which we can draw inferences concerning its influence on fertility? Table 13 below shows this relationship by sex and reveals that men find themselves in multiple marriages more often than women, an obvious effect of polygyny. The highest mean number of marriages that women have

ever had is 5 while the comparable figure for men is 7. A further possibility is that as women age beyond a given threshold, their eligibility for marriage diminishes, while *ceteris paribus*, the opposite is true of men: their eligibility is positively associated with age.

Table 13: Relationship between Pronatalism and Number of Marriages among Pronatalist and Non-Pronatalist Respondents

Number of Marriages	Pronatalist Respondents		Non-Pronatalist Respondents	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
1	62.2	78.0	71.4	73.6
2	23.1	18.0	25.0	18.6
3	7.7	3.4	3.6	6.2
4+	4.0	.5	-	1.6

Table 13 shows that pronatalism is so widespread that it exerts no significant influence on the number of marriages in Ugep, although the male data could be misleading due to the influence of polygyny. The proportions of respondents who subscribed to the pronatalist ideology for both sexes do not differ much in terms of the number of marriages they have ever had. It thus seems that the stability of marriage is not directly tied to formal pronatalism, but is a desideratum that emerges from the general social order. The implications of pronatalism for marriage stability are therefore not easily categorised and the effect of this particular variable on marital fertility is therefore obtuse.

For both sexes of the "pronatalist" and "non-pronatalist" respondents, the proportions in first or second marriage are high and comparable. Indeed, greater

percentages of male respondents who did not formally subscribe to the statement (71.4 per cent and 25.0 per cent) were found in first and second unions, respectively, in contrast to their "pronatalist" counterparts (62.2 per cent and 23.1). However, the latter group of men is likely to have more than two wives. A reversal of the percentages therefore occurs in the male data from the third marriage where a greater percentage (7.7) is found in contrast to .5 per cent of the "non-pronatalist" male respondents. It is interesting to observe further that the male respondents who subscribed to the ideology also went on to have fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh marriages, while the other group did not, suggesting the effects of age and other sociodemographic factors. The nature of the data suggests moreover that the connections between pronatalism and polygyny are more palpable than those than between pronatalism and the stability of marriage *per se*.

Table 14 below distributes the survey respondents by sex and type of union. The table shows that monogamous marriages are more common among younger male respondents than their older counterparts, from 91.7 per cent of all males age 15-19 years to 37.5 per cent among men age 50 years and over. This finding is expected, and consistent with recent evidence that polygyny has declined among younger cohorts (Isiugo-Abanihe and Obono, 1999). A similar trend is found for female respondents in the table, among whom monogamy ranges from 94.7 per cent for women age 15-19 years to 9.3 per cent for those 50 years and over. The increasing acceptance of monogamy may coincide with the future course of fertility as this could affect demand side factors in relation to the supply of women available for marriage.

Table 14: Sex Distribution of Respondents by Marriage Type and Current Age

Current Age	Type of Marriage				Total	
	Monogamy		Polygyny			
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
15-19	91.7	94.7	8.3	5.3	100	100
20-24	83.3	79.3	16.7	20.7	100	100
25-29	78.8	74.6	21.2	25.4	100	100
30-34	87.1	79.3	12.9	20.7	100	100
35-39	78.9	58.1	21.1	41.9	100	100
40-44	62.1	38.9	37.9	61.1	100	100
45-49	52.0	11.3	48.0	88.7	100	100
50+	37.5	9.3	62.5	90.7	100	100

The data for polygyny in Table 14 suggests an increase in the incidence of monogamy at younger ages. The portrait of polygyny for both sexes is the exact obverse of the monogamy data. Although the incidence of polygyny is 41.4 per cent for all respondents, there is a definite trend towards reduction that is certain to have implications for the operations of the proximate determinants in due course, especially with regard to exposure factors like proportion married. If the thesis that polygyny helps absorb excess marriageable women at respective cohorts is correct, then its declining incidence will affect the proportion of women entering marriage at different ages and consequently precipitate fertility change if the proportion married had been a principal proximate determinant of fertility in the community. The evidence of of this would have been stronger if adequate data on marriage duration were compared with the information from marriage type and age at first marriage.

Table 15 below shows the relationship between age at first marriage and the incidence of polygyny in Ugep. The table indicates that the age at marriage shows no

consistent patterns between monogamously and polygynously married women. While polygynous women are more likely to have entered marriage at 15-19 years, the proportion of monogamous women exceeds that of polygynous women at all subsequent ages, prior to 35 years. In other words, monogamously married women dominate the present sample. The incidence of polygyny at younger ages may have declined partly as a result of the educational profile of Yakurr women (Section 5.4), which increases female age at marriage and reduces the proportion of marriageable women at lower ages.

Table 15: Sex Distribution of Respondents by Age at Marriage and Union Type

Age at Marriage	Type of Marriage				Total	
	Monogamy		Polygyny			
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
15-19	71.4	49.8	28.6	50.2	100	100
20-24	61.5	59.8	38.5	40.2	100	100
25-29	68.0	55.8	32.0	44.2	100	100
30-34	58.3	71.4	41.7	28.6	100	100
35+	44.4	0	55.6	100[a]	100	100

[a] 4 women.

A reduction in the proportion of women in polygynous unions at lower ages has the prospect of reducing male fertility among the Yakurr with the implication of fertility change in due course. It is a signal that a major cultural factor that had hitherto promoted male fertility is giving way. There is further possibility that this course of events, if sustained, could impact on several other fertility-reducing factors in the region and thereby alter the demographic situation of the Yakurr people within the first few decades of the present century.

5.6 The Cultural Context of the Proximate Determinants

The prevailing status of the proximate determinants of fertility in Nigeria has been discussed in Chapter 2.2.4 of this report. In the present section, we highlight survey data collected on the proximate determinants influencing Yakurr fertility, and present a case for understanding them in terms of their acceptability to the people from a cultural point of view. The relationship between the proximate determinants and these contextual factors is described by percentages in order to elaborate the influence of these factors and in view of the nature of the data collected. The survey results indicate that the prevalence of any one proximate determinant over another is never arbitrary, but is a function of the interaction between that proximate determinant and the cultural context in which it operates.

The survey identified age at marriage, periodic abstinence, breastfeeding, and contraception as the principal proximate determinants of Yakurr fertility, using Ugep as case study, and prioritised them in that way. The correlation of coital frequency and CEB was not significant, although it seems evident that marital coital frequency is very high, in view of observable trends in premarital and extramarital sexual networking. These data are not presented or used in the analysis because there is no assurance of quality control in the responses. Similarly, the abortion data are not of reassuring quality, as field editors suspected that the responses were not a true reflection of the incidence. The view was that the event was under-reported. The survey data showed

that cultural values against abortion are strong, on account of reasons ranging from its being "abominable" and "inhuman" to being "wicked" and "disgraceful".

Focus group discussions with men aged 40-50 years revealed a much higher rate of incidence than what the survey data showed. According to these discussants, "Nowadays, some girls make it a point of duty to commit abortion ...[seeing it as] a thing of pride, or a common thing". This assertion holds important clues to the abortion rate recorded from the survey instrument. The discussants had noted that "some *girls* make it a point of duty..." and thereby suggested the implication of age and marital status factors in the prevalence of abortion.

The sampling procedures may have affected the true rate of abortion. The 19.1 per cent recorded by the interview schedule may therefore have resulted from our sampling frame, which sought mostly ever-married women and just a few adolescents. It is noteworthy that the proportion of never-married women represented in the sub-sample of women was just 26.9 per cent, a fact that might have reduced the abortion rate as ever-married women are probably not as likely as single girls to have an abortion. On the other hand, the overt cultural disapproval of abortion in the community may make a denial more likely among ever-married women. While the data indicate that, among sampled women, the pathways of fertility are interconnected with other values that render social life cohesive, the index is excluded from the regression analysis because of the difficulties associated with examining this proximate determinant in many sub-Saharan African research settings.

Marriage was found to be a fairly stable institution among the Yakurr and is initiated early. Our suspicion that this stability may be one of the institutional forms by which pronatalism expresses itself does not find supportive or conclusive evidence from the survey data alone, and may require further intensive investigations for the connections to be specified. The ethnographic evidence, however, does provide indications of the centrality of the institution to social organisation as well as its foundation in the desire to biologically recruit new members into Ugep society within a setting that will socialise them to its norms. The mean female age at first marriage is 23.3 years, relative to 25.6 for men. Female age at marriage has a weak negative correlation with fertility (r = -.0588), probably because of a rising trend in female age at marriage and the correspondence of that trend with female formal education.

Among ever-married women, nearly half (48.7 per cent) have ever used periodic abstinence, although logically speaking nearly all ever-married women should be expected to have used it. This contrasts with 64.8 per cent of the comparable male sample, a difference that may be accounted for by incidence of polygyny. The survey data show also that while married women are more likely to practice periodic abstinence than never married women (38.2 per cent), the latter category is nearly twice as likely as the former to have ever used modern contraception. Breastfeeding is so commonplace that "there is no decision to be made about it: you simply breastfeed your child", according to one elderly respondent. For her, "I do not understand what you mean by 'deciding to breastfeed' one's child. Breastmilk is what God designed for children".

Among ever-married female respondents, 78.2% were of the opinion that "a mother should wait until she has completely stopped breastfeeding before she can resume sexual relations", but there does not seem to be a conscious association of breastfeeding with contraception *per se*. Rather, it is believed that premature resumption of relations can be detrimental to the child's health. Principally, the reason for not introducing food supplements earlier is economic ("where is the money?"). One particularly expressive woman was of the view that "If you give your children cow milk in infancy, will they not grow up to resemble cows? Can't you see the children of all these big people, how dull they are, and how they behave like cows sometimes? *Ta-a-ah!* [an expletive] I will feed my own children with my own milk".

The effects of breastfeeding practices are reinforced by abstinence in Ugep. Though abstinence could last for upwards of three years in the traditional society, it has been shortened to almost zero due to the decline in the incidence of polygyny and the suspected reduction in available sexual partners owing to the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the study area. Birth intervals of four years used to be common, as there was absolutely no intercourse while breastfeeding lasted. The nursing mother was required to nurse her child in and from her mother's house, a practice that could have extended the birth interval while reinforcing abstinence.

Lengthy breastfeeding periods in traditional society were an effective guarantee that a child would be old enough to take care of an alternate younger sibling. As an elderly discussant (wife of the priest of the dreaded cult of *Atewa Wayakangkang*)

recollected, "In those days, we walked about more or less naked, you must have seen our picture in that white man's book [Here the reference is self-evidently to Forde's *Yakurr Studies*]. But we still held our bodies [i.e. practised abstinence]. These days, upon all the clothes you wear claiming it is modernity, your generation behaves like dogs". This woman and others I interviewed observed that the change in breastfeeding practices was a major cause of the rapid increase in Ugep fertility, which began about 25 years ago. Table 16 below indicates trends and patterns in contraceptive use among ever-married women in Ugep.

TABLE 16: Contraceptive Knowledge and Practice by Sex of Respondents

Method	Contraceptive Use			
	Ever Heard		Ever Used	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Pill	80.4	81.2	8.3	19.9
IUD	59.1	72.3	.7	4.8
Injection	72.7	78.8	6.8	11.7
Foaming tablets	59.6	57.4	.5	3.3
Condom	82.2	74.6	45.4	12.5
Female Sterilisation	66.8	70.4	.2	.8
Male Sterilisation	56.6	49.2	.4	.6
Periodic Abstinence	73.2	71.3	64.8	48.7
Withdrawal	74.2	66.6	32.3	16.9

Male use rates of more than 10 per cent are recorded for only condom, periodic abstinence and withdrawal. The comparable female rates are for oral contraceptives, injectables, condom, periodic abstinence and withdrawal. The overall picture is expected, and shows that women use more methods at significant levels than men do.

None of the methods used by men involves biochemical implications for them, an indication that the burden for artificial contraception among the Yakurr is still largely borne by women. An interesting feature of Table 15 is its suggestion that contraceptive use levels are associated with the familiarity of the method, and not necessarily its efficacy. Thus, breastfeeding is not associated with lactational infecundability, although abstinence is expected during that period, especially prior to weaning when the weaning taboo operates to either reduce coital frequency, or eliminate it altogether. In this respect, Gigi Santow (1996) has documented *coitus interruptus* as the oldest of the contraceptive methods known to people. Its comparatively high level of use (32.3% among men) indicates not only its economic cheapness, but also its rootedness in traditional practice.

Periodic abstinence also has a high level of use (64.8 per cent among men and 48.7 per cent among women). It would be interesting to periodise periodic abstinence and find out for which periods the two sexes are most likely to abstain from sexual relations. Are women and men more likely to abstain from intercourse during the menstrual period than during ovulation, for instance? Focus group discussions attribute this prevalence level to prevailing post-partum lactational taboos. In-depth interviews with older women in Ugep indicate that the breastfeeding period was traditionally long, and could last for upwards of six years. A septuagenarian woman recalled that *she* was breastfed for so long that she could actually still remember herself being breastfed,

saying that "I would carry my little stool from within the house and sit next to my mother and suck her breast" (Madam Ojekou, 14/09/99: Pers. Comm.).

The intensive family planning and reproductive health campaigns that were taking place even during the survey period, which coincided with the free mass distribution of condoms, help explain high condom use in Ugep. The "Other" methods identified in the table include herbs, salt and water, white quinine, local gin (*Ogogoro*, a.k.a. *Otuporpor*), rhythm, granulated tobacco (*utabi*), marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*), "local things and sugar", salt and water, and beaded waist bands (*Ijigija*) that are believed to supernaturally ward off pregnancy. The efficacy of these beads was a subject of mild controversy during a focus group session with women aged 30-40 years. According to one of the discussants, "those beads do not work; they are just there for fancy. It is the same girls who wear *Ijigija* who are always pregnant and looking for ways to abort the pregnancy". A focus group discussion with community women leaders reveals that the waist beads were worn in days gone by for aesthetic reasons. "They made the hips grow rounder", they said. "The men also loved them like that". This signifies that the beads were a subtle part of courtship behaviour. The next section analyses the survey data from a multivariate perspective that integrates the sociocultural contexts of Yakurr fertility with the proximate determinants operating in Yakurr society.

5.7 Multivariate Analysis

The multivariate analyses of the number of children ever born (CEB) provide a richer, more complex and empirically reliable picture of the linkages among current age, education, occupation, marital status, type of marriage and proximate determinants, while also providing evidence of the influence of other factors. The regression analyses utilise ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regressions with dummy variables. To create the dummy variables, we treated each category of a nominal variable as a separate variable and assigned arbitrary metric scores for all the cases depending upon their *presence* or *absence* in each of the categories, thus enabling us to insert them as interval variables in the regression equation. Details of this and other statistical assumptions and procedures have been discussed in Chapter 3.6 and are illustrated in Table 17 below.

Twenty-one dummy variables were created for the regression analysis, and their influence on the independent variable, CEB, is shown in Table 18. The dummy variables specify the clusters of factors that had been outlined in Chapter 3.6 and are the means by which the multivariate analyses connect the proximate determinants with the surrounding sociocultural contexts of fertility. Table 18 contains a regression equation of all the independent variables identified for the study, as a preliminary step to stepwise and removal regression analysis. The results show that only four variables are significantly related to CEB, implying that several of the variables ought not to be inserted into the equation. Their systematic removal occurs in subsequent analyses.

Table 17: Specification of Dummy Variables

Contextual Factors	Independent Variable	Description	Dummy Variable	Reference Category
Personal	Current Age	Age Last Birthday	-	Continuous
	Education	Primary Education	HED1	No Schooling
		Secondary Education	HED2	
		Higher Education	HED3	
	Occupation	Farming	Occup1	Trading
		Civil Service	Occup3	
		Others	Occup4	
		Unemployed	Occup5	
	Proximate Determinants	Age at First Marriage	-	Continuous
		Breastfeeding (6-12 months)	BRESTREG	Breastfeeding (<6 Months)
		Contraception (Ever Used)	CONT1	Never Used
		Abortion	EVER	Never Aborted
		Periodic Abstinence	ABSTIREG	Never Used
Marital	Marital Status	Married	MARRIED	Divorced/ Separated
		Widowed	WIDOWED	
	Type of Marriage	Monogamy	MONOGAMY	Polygyny
Kinship	Matriclan Participation	Regular Participation	PART1	Irregular Participation
	Interaction with *Ina*	Regular Interaction	INTER1	No Interaction
		Irregular Interaction	INTER2	
Ideational	Religion	African Traditional Religion	Rel1	Christianity
		Other Religions	Rel2	
	Subscription to Pronatalism	Subscribe to *Leson Leta Otoba*	LES1	Do not Subscribe
		Believe in power of *Yose*	YOSE1	Do not believe
		Ideal Family Size	-	Continuous

Table 17 provides a link between the conceptual scheme of the work and its statistical procedures. The table identifies the independent variables that correspond with relevant contextual factors for the purpose of the ordinary least squares (OLS) analysis that follows. The reference categories were selected under the usual assumptions and the regression analysis appears satisfactory from that point of view. Table 18 below displays the results of the OLS analysis.

Table 18: Relationship between Number of Children Ever Born and Selected Predictors

Independent Variable	Description	B	Beta	Sig T
Age	Current Age	.083482	.345383	.0007***
Education	None[a]	-	-	-
	Primary	.228604	.041873	.6122
	Secondary	-1.277256	-.237784	.0166*
	Higher	-.763645	-.0714520	.4880
Occupation	Farming	.119879	.024018	.7902
	Trading[a]	-	-	-
	Civil Service	-.118968	-.014580	.8799
	Others	-.639227	-.053873	.4555
	Unemployed	-1.442791	-.096995	.1856
Proximate Determinant	Age at Marriage	-.045113	-.084567	.2853
	Breastfeeding	-.058519	-.010077	.8963
	Abstinence	-.367473	-.073859	.3030
	Contraception	-.254959	-.021487	.7583
Marital Status	Married	-.343063	-.025190	.7155
	Divorced[a]	-	-	-
Type of Marriage	Monogamy	.600408	.120676	.1429
	Polygyny[a]	-	-	-
Matriclan Participation	Regular	1.263177	.247349	.0033**
	Irregular[a]	-	-	-
Interaction With *Ina*[1]	Regular	-.413162	-.071715	.4496
	Irregular	.058639	.010917	.8980
	None[a]	-	-	-
Religion	Christianity[a]	-	-	-
	African Trad.	-1.107646	-.139015	.0434*
	Other Religions	.251788	.023582	.7372
Pronatalism	*Leson Leta...*	-.120418	-.018542	.8007
	Don't Subscribe[a]	-	-	-
	Belief in *Yose*	.474659	.093874	.2394
	Do not believe[a]	-	-	-
	Ideal Family Size	-.030348	-.023916	.7510
Constant	-	2.715294	-	.0979

Note: [a]Indicates the reference group in each category
* Significant at p=.01 ** Significant at p=.001 *** Significant at p=.0001

The two tables (i.e. Tables 17 and 18) unify the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study into a single frame of reference. The sociocultural contexts of fertility, originally held constant by Bongaarts' model, are expressed as a unique set of interacting factors encompassing the set of predictors shown in the first column of Table 17, and decomposed into the corresponding independent variables in Table 18. The nature of the differences among the contextual factors had hitherto been effectively obviated by Bongaarts' framework in a conceptual *papier-mâché* of "background factors" that the present scheme seeks to elucidate.

Table 18 shows that current age is positively and significantly related with the number of children ever born to women in Ugep, along with regular participation in matriclan affairs. The relationship between CEB and adherence to the traditional religious belief system is negative, as is its relationship with secondary education. These findings are expected and, upon closer examination, form a pattern by which three out of the four contextual factors delineated for study are implicated in fertility behaviour of Ugep women. A stepwise regression model (Table 19) identifies these four independent variables as the most important influences on the fertility of Ugep women. The significance of their relationships is almost uniformly strong, with secondary education having a pronounced negative influence on fertility. Stepwise regression procedures were used to confirm the relationships among these variables. In a subsequent analysis, we combined the "Secondary" and "Higher" Education categories and obtained even more interesting results to be shown soon.

In the next table (Table19), however, the analysis utilises the manual remove command to exclude variables with exceedingly low significance that may in fact have confounded the relationships that exist between some independent variables in the equation, such as age at first marriage, and fertility. An examination of the results is illuminating, in contrast to the Table 18.

Table 19: Regression Analysis on CEB with Manual Removal Procedure

Variable	Description	B	Beta	Sig T
Age	Current Age	.137568	.463548	.0000***
Education	Pry Education	.818853	.120106	.0001***
	Sec Education+	-.973796	.081639	.0085**
Proximate Determinant	Age at Marriage	-.109840	-.174491	.0000***
Type of Marriage	Monogamy	-.828051	-.127658	.0002***
Matriclan Participation	Regular Participation	.548179	.084660	.0091**
Interaction With *Ina*	Regular Interaction	.981740	.131540	.0000***
Pronatalism	*Lesou Leta Otoba*	.490264	.058498	.0614*
	Ideal Family Size	.217816	.136644	.0000***
Constant	-	.336150	-	.5538

* Significant at p=.01 ** Significant at p=.001 *** Significant at p=.0001

The analysis provides a general confirmation of the preceding stepwise analysis, and indicates further that the variables acting on fertility are more extensive than the previous four. Table 20 shows that there is greater interaction of the independent variables in the regression equation with the dependent variable, CEB. The effects of current age, matriclan participation and education are established under these circumstances, although it is important to advance reasons for the behaviour of certain

variables in the equation. Primary education and secondary/higher education (combined) are found to have positive and negative relationships respectively with CEB. The positive relation between CEB and current age, and its inverse relationship with age at marriage is also expected and suggests that some members of society could indeed marry early in order to realise their fertility aspirations.

Table 20 below confirms these relationships by examining the odds of an ever-married Ugep woman having a large family size. The logistic regression computes this likelihood where 1-4 children are designated 0 and 5 children or more are designated 1. The table distributes these odds according to the independent variables representing the clusters of factors, which denote the background variables. The table shows that age, regular participation in matriclan affairs, regular interaction with the matriclan priest, and a high ideal family size are positively related with the odds of having a large family size. Primary education and subscription to the aphorism *Lesou Leta Otoba* are associated with the likelihood of having a large family size, although these relationships are not significant. Secondary education, monogamy and age at first marriage, on the other hand, are significantly related with the probability of having small family size. In other words, for ever-married Ugep women in the sample, fertility is sensitive to these independent variables in the manner presented here.

Table 20: Unstandardised Regression Coefficients and Odds Ratio for High Fertility by Selected Independent Variables

Variable	B	Sig	Odds Ratio
Current Age	.0897	.0000***	1.0938
Primary Education	.1982	.3681	1.2192
Secondary Education+	-.6471	.0055**	.5236
Monogamy	-.4282	.0319*	.6517
Age at First Marriage	-.0689	.0010**	.9334
Regular Participation	.5334	.0066**	1.7047
Regular Interaction	.4842	.0349*	1.6230
Lesou Leta Otoba	.2864	.2484	1.3316
Ideal Family Size	.1162	.0360*	1.1233
Constant	-2.6228	.0000	-

* Significant at p=.01 ** Significant at p=.001 *** Significant at p=.0001

Table 20 shows that age, regular participation in matriclan affairs, regular interaction with the matriclan priest, and a high ideal family size are positively related with the odds of having a large family size. Primary education and subscription to the aphorism *Lesou Leta Otoba* are associated with the likelihood of having a large family size, although these relationships are not significant. Monogamy is found to have varying effects on fertility by different researchers. The expectation is that the fertility of monogamously married women would reflect "their higher fertility coital frequency than women who share one husband in a polygynous setting" (Isiugo-Abanihe, Ebigbola and Adewuyi, 1993: 495). The strong negative relation between CEB and monogamy in the present study buttresses the argument for contrasting male and female demographic profiles. While, indeed, polygyny may have a depressive effect on women's exposure to the risk of marital pregnancy, it promotes the fertility of male polygynists who sought additional wives as "a family building strategy" (Adetunji and Moore, 1999).

Conversely, a monogamously married man can be expected to have fewer children than his polygynously married counterpart, although by comparison monogamous women may have higher fertility, as indicated, than their polygynous counterparts.

Nevertheless, the negative association found in the present study is not at all surprising in the face of the declining incidence of polygyny, presented earlier in Table 14. As mentioned, there is an increasing acceptance of monogamy at younger ages, accompanied by a greater likelihood to practice contraception. Monogamous men are also less likely according to the Adetunji-Moore thesis to have a high reproductive motivation, in respect of which their wives' reproductive performance will be low (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994d). Taken together, the Yakurr finding is not surprising because of the high presence of monogamously married women in the sample. As indicated earlier in this chapter, if this trend continues (that is the acceptance of monogamy), there could be further decreases in the fertility of Ugep women.

Regular participation in matriclan affairs by ever-married Yakurr women brings them closer to the pronatalist ethos of their society. The matrilineage is in functional terms, a fertility promoting corporation. Its most fundamental practices deal with the necessity to bear numerous children. The association between participation in its affairs by ever-married women and their fertility is therefore not surprising. The same is true of the level of an ever-married woman's interaction with the priest of her matriclan fertility spirit, which evinces a similarly strong relation with women's fertility. Table 21 displays the same analysis without the proximate determinants.

Table 21: Influence of Selected Independent Variables on CEB with the Proximate Determinants held Constant

Independent Variable	Description	B	Beta	Sig T
Age	Current Age	.101553	.341708	.0000***
Education	Primary Education	.602762	.088483	.0308*
	Sec Education	-.405683	-.059169	.2108
	Higher Education	.683452	.058983	.1662
Occupation	Farming	.189182	.029581	.5174
	Civil Service	-.183039	-.020713	.6280
	Others	.421944	.041058	.2817
	Unemployed	-.101802	-.006112	.8616
Marital Status[a]	Widowed	-.064244	-.003533	.9137
Type of Marriage	Monogamy	-.941593	-.145247	.0001***
Matriclan Participation	Regular Participation	.277368	.042222	.2891
Interaction with *Ina*	Regular Interaction	1.148514	.152622	.0003***
	Irregular Interaction	.731701	.108809	.0059**
Pronatalism	*Lesou Leta Otoba*	.669621	.077031	.0230*
	Belief in *Yose*	-.071574	-.011028	.7700
	Ideal Family Size	.210580	.134700	.0001***
Constant	-	-.839460	-	.1881

[a]The "Married" category was excluded from the analysis because it calculates of the proportion married.
* Significant at p=.01 ** Significant at p=.001 *** Significant at p=.0001

The table reveals the interesting result that without the proximate determinants of fertility, certain independent variables may lose their significance in the equation. Notably, the higher educational categories cease to be significant along with occupation, marital status, matriclan participation, and the belief in *yose*. Nevertheless, age, primary education, interaction with *ina*, subscription to the pronatalist aphorism, and ideal family size retain their positive relationships with CEB, while monogamy is associated with a tendency for decreased fertility in women. The indication is that the proximate determinants not only serve as the media through which background, and in this case sociocultural, factors pass to influence fertility, they are the veritable means by which

sub-samples may be disaggregated and analysed accordingly. Moreover, the regression analysis, ablative of the proximate determinants, show that the influence of sundry independent variables are activated by the presence of the proximate determinants, and suppressed by their absence. This leads to the conclusion that the proximate determinants are more than just analytical appendages, but are quite fundamental to the interpretation of the influences on fertility in a typical sub-Saharan African community where the role of culture is rife and its influence on human fertility very strong.

What would be the case if this procedure were reversed, and the independent variables shown in Table 21 were held constant such that an analysis of the *exclusive* influence of the proximate determinants of fertility were conducted on that basis? Table 22 below shows the outcome of such an analysis.

Table 22: Regression Analysis of the Influence of Proximate Determinants on CEB

Proximate Determinants	B	Beta	Sig T
Age at Marriage	-7.99978	-.001410	.9788
Breastfeeding	.257576	.037192	.4842
Contraception	-.263463	-.022722	.6733
Periodic Abstinence	.126424	.022035	.6822
Constant	4.609051	-	.0000

Although the previous analysis indicated quite forcefully that the proximate determinants were crucial to an examination of the role of background factors in explaining Yakurr fertility, Table 22 indicates just as firmly that the obverse is similarly true. None of the proximate determinants studied shows an independently significant

relationship with fertility, not even age first at marriage, contraceptive use or periodic abstinence. Again, the conclusion to be derived from this is fairly simple. It is necessary for demographers and anthropologists to refrain from isolating independent variables in their analyses since in reality these variables are usually intertwined with a host of fundamental factors that grant expression, meaning, relevance and significance to the proximate determinants. Table 22 suggests the inevitability of a minor paradigm-shift to accommodate trends in the field, which are increasingly integrating ultimate and proximate factors in an attempt to present an ontologically faithful portrait of demographic reality.

In the next table (Table 23), we replaced CEB with the proximate determinants as the dependent variable, in order to show that contexts too may be contextualized and the proximate determinants themselves are subject to the determination of a host of other factors. They are not prime causes. The results of this procedure (Table 23) provide some interesting reflections on the role of background variables in determining which proximate determinants will predominate in specified environments.

It is significant that current age is found to be associated at high levels of significance ($p<.05$) with all four proximate determinants analysed as dependent variables in Table 22. Age is not merely a physiological variable but is also one that exerts tremendous influence on numerous other sociodemographic events. In this case, the table shows that the likelihood of contracepting, practising periodic abstinence, and breastfeeding for longer periods increases with age.

Table 23: Regression Coefficients for Selected Proximate Determinants

Independent Variables	Proximate Determinants			
	Age at Marriage	Breastfeeding	Contraception	Abstinence
Current Age	.270971**	.004004**	.008771**	.007746**
Primary Education	.854847**	-.062874	.022250	-.046407
Secondary Education	2.286002**	-.014349	.186986**	.103415
Monogamy	2.118274**	-.005798	.086488**	.110984*
Regular Participation...	.213927	-.040610	.023260	.013651
Regular Interaction...	.530467	-.006703	-.001976	-.163358**
Subscription to *Lesou..*	.315350	.059157	.059474	-.086611
Ideal Family Size	-.128633	-.004177	.013948	.003434

*Variable significant at 0.1 level ** Significant at p=.05

The table indicates that ever-married women with secondary education or higher are more likely to practise contraception. This too is consistent with demographic expectations. Monogamous women are more likely than polygynous women to delay marriage and contracept, possibly owing to the rivalrous relations among co-wives in a typical polygynous household. The locus of the competition is often the number of children each wife has, and this may dissuade such women from practising contraception. Monogamous women may be more highly educated and have higher incentives for taking steps to control their fertility.

Regular interaction with the *ina* is associated with abstinence (Table 24). This suggests that tradition-oriented people are more likely to adopt practices that are culturally familiar. It certainly does not imply that frequent interaction with the matriclan priests produces antinatalism. It rather suggests that such "frequenters" are more likely to adopt strategies that are not as effective as others, and that may be less indicative of a desire to control fertility *per se* than it is a sign of conformity to prevailing

post-partum norms. It is interesting to note that none of the three clusters of central cultural factors show significant interaction with the proximate determinants, a pattern that is indicative of the high pronatalist profile of Yakurr communities. The clusters of variables that are significantly associated with the proximate determinants are either basic (such as current age) or they are direct negations of the Yakurr cultural ethos. In other words, the departures from the norm hold the greater promise of antinatalist behaviour and therefore emphasise the degree of pronatalism in the community.

5.8 Conclusion

The present chapter has presented data from a survey that was conducted April to June 1998. The chapter was organised around the four distinctly quantitative study objectives, and the analyses have been arranged around them. This approach helped enhance the cohesion of the work from the viewpoint of targets set early in the investigation.

The presentation has proceeded from univariate to multivariate analysis, utilising ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regressions to elucidate the relationships among four contextual factors and the fertility of the Yakurr people. The univariate analysis took the form of frequency distributions, percentages, and several measures of central tendency, notably the mean, that helped show the distribution of sample characteristics at a glance, and set the stage for subsequent analyses. The mean was utilised as a point in the respective distributions about which the sum of the squared

deviations were at a minimum, and thereby lent itself to the estimation of variance and the subsequent conduct of least squares analyses.

The incorporation of men in the survey sample conduced with the nature of the research and the idea that a convergence of anthropology and demography would not be adequate without a conscious attempt to deal simultaneously with the usual subjects of both. The comparisons and contrasts between the sexes were intended to also indicate means by which gender perspectives could be incorporated into demographic studies. The overriding concern in this approach had to do with the need to develop a general classificatory framework within which the sociocultural contexts of fertility may be studied in terms of a set of interacting predictors encompassing personal, kinship, ideational and marital factors. These four contextual factors were decomposed into corresponding independent variables by which the required relationships were expressed.

The bivariate analyses marked the beginning of multivariate analyses and also formed an important bridge between the levels of analysis, utilising crosstabulations, regression and correlation to establish the relationships among these independent variables and the number of children ever born (CEB). The multivariate analysis employed dummy variables as a means of unifying continuous and non-continuous variables within a scheme that serves to show the unique linkages between proximate determinants and fertility, on the one hand, and the interaction on these with fertility on the other.

Through the creation of dummy variables, the conceptual scheme described in Chapter 2 was made relevant to the statistical analysis. Indeed, the analysis took its bearing from the manner in which the various variables had been specified in that scheme. In this way, the chapter has indicated quite forcefully that the comprehensive study of fertility in typical sub-Saharan African contexts is not feasible without a deliberate emphasis of the role of sociocultural factors. The multivariate analyses served to demonstrate this by establishing the statistical interconnections among age, education, type of marriage, participation in matriclan affairs, ideational variables and the proximate determinants on the one hand, and their impingement on fertility on the other.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The present study was predicated on the argument that fertility is principally a cultural event and should be studied within the sociocultural contexts in which it occurs. The study recognised that while fertility had been the undeniable forte of demographic studies, the contexts in which it takes place had been the historical preserve of anthropology. Concern over disciplinary boundaries led to mutual mistrust between anthropologists and demographers.

The second half of the twentieth century, and especially its tail end, witnessed a massive shift of the social sciences away from the insularity that had characterised them earlier on in the century. Under fierce criticisms and relentless intellectual attacks, the fortresses of the old disciplinary castles began to cave in, as an increasing number of scholars began to look outwards to their colleagues in other disciplines for in-depth answers to questions in their own fields. The transdisciplinary movement and its vigorous emphasis on collaboration and multilevel analysis provided the contexts for varying degrees of paradigm-shifts, some of them at purely personal levels.

Within demography, the failure of the transition model to explain European fertility decline in the nineteenth century from an empirical point of view was a catalyst for changing perspectives on issues of collaboration. This unexpected failure paved the way for the "transition of the transition idea" and ushered in an era of energetic quests

for alternative paradigms for explaining fertility decline in Europe and, inevitably, the decline in Asian, Latin American and sub-Saharan African countries. While these quests were a great sign of disciplinary development, they did signify the continued fixation of demographers with the transition idea. It was easily palpable that a central assumption of demographers had become the fact that the shift from high to low fertility, wherever it occurred, was the most interesting and important object of demographic inquiry. The ferment within the disciplinary that reached an institutional peak in the 1990s, with the formation of an IUSSP Committee on Anthropological Demography, and the establishment of chairs in that name in several universities, intensified the changes which were underway.

The changing position of eminent members of that fraternity also provided impetus for the idea of collaboration. In this regard, one of the most notable features of this transformation is that the unanticipated ferment in demography originated not from outside, but from within the disciplinary. Scholars began to call into question the adequacy of exclusively quantitative approaches to fertility studies, especially in regimes such as those of sub-Saharan Africa. One of the best known examples of this process was the celebrated self-conversion of Jack Caldwell to anthropological demographic modes of inquiry a little under three decades ago.

The process was accompanied by stringent calls for interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropologists and demographers. Although this appeared to be the proper way forward, there did not seem to be any uniform agreement as to what that

collaboration entailed, and what its practical field implications could be. Difficult epistemological questions were raised. There were uncoordinated efforts to provide answers. In retrospect, the problem probably lay more in difficulties associated with the ceremonial procedures for burying old hatchets of mutual intellectual animosity, than in any real or honest uncertainty over how to collaborate *per se*.

As is apparent from the present study, the situation has meant very few established sub-Saharan guidelines exist for conducting studies at the interface of anthropology and demography, or how to investigate fertility within the interpretive contexts of political economy. It is these existing lacunae that explain the eclecticism that is so evident in this study. They also served as a challenge to me personally because, since the early 1930s, when Daryll Forde conducted his epic *Yakö Studies*, no serious work has been undertaken among this people, either in anthropology, demography, or anthropological demography. The ostensible gaps in our demographic knowledge of this people, in the face of severe theoretical crisis in demography led to a need to develop a classificatory framework for investigating fertility as a function of a set of interacting predictors encompassing personal, kinship, ideational and marital factors.

Specific objectives formulated around this central goal included to provide information on the implications of the double-unilineal descent system on the fertility of the Yakurr people and on the religious and political influence of the matriclan priests on the same event. These two objectives were seen as ethnographic in scope and content,

and were investigated as such. The remaining four objectives were quantitative and included the need to know the relationships among pronatalism, marriage and fertility, and to document the contraceptive knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the Ugep people. We sought also to identify the proximate determinants of fertility in Ugep and described intergenerational trends in the fertility of the Yakurr people.

The conceptual framework of the study synthesised general functionalism with Bongaarts' proximate determinants as a means of penetrating the basic equilibrium underlying the "given" background factors in Bongaarts' model. Our synthesis activated and problematised these factors and made a discussion of the sociocultural contexts of fertility possible in terms of them. The methodology was the field translation of this conceptual synthesis and followed the format of triangulation, with the methods arranged in a sequence that will ensure that the heuristic parameters of the study were accessed through qualitative methods. The qualitative information generated in this way provided rich insights for survey instrument development and a complementary body of data by which the explanatory significance of the survey data was enhanced. The next section presents a summary of the main findings of the work, organised centrally around the six study objectives.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The main findings of the research are summarised under corresponding objectives. Prefatorily, the study found that:

1. Men have a higher fertility on the average than women in the early ages. In other words, between 15 and 24 years, men have more children relative to women.

2. Men have a higher fertility than women do at older ages as a result of polygyny.

3. There is a strong positive correlation between age and the number of children ever born (CEB) to Ugep women, with an arithmetic mean of 4.5 and a completed fertility of 5.8, relative to a mean number CEB of 5.2 for men. Each increase in age is accompanied by an expected corresponding increase in fertility, with a range of 2.41 (age 15-19 years) and 6.52 (age 45-49 years).

4. Much of the fertility clusters in the peak reproductive years of women, suggesting the influence of marriage.

5. Women tend to terminate their educational careers at lower levels than men do, but the proportion of women attending school has been increasing steadily over the years.

6. More men than women are engaged in occupations that require some education and are located in the formal sector, from where social mobility and social status are expectedly higher

7. The paired comparison of daughters' and mothers' fertility over at least two generations shows very definite trends towards fertility increase.

8. Almost consistently for all paired comparisons, parental fertility was lower than it was for the respondents. For men, mean CEB rose from 8.2 children for fathers to 9.4 for sons in the sample, while the corresponding figures for mothers and daughters are 4.5 and 6.2, respectively.

6.2.1 On the Relationship between Double Unilineal Descent and Fertility

The study found the following.

1. That the double unilineal principle of descent organises social structure around two coextensive kinship corporations, the *lejimo* (matrilineage) and the *kepun* (patrilineage), both of which exert tremendous influence on the reproductive career of their members. The principle of double unilineal descent entails that all individuals are members of these complementary corporations.

2. The combination of exogamy, matrilineal descent and post-marital patrilocal residence was found to reinforce the tendency for wives to bear children according to the expectation of their in-laws.

3. The basis of traditional religion in these two kin-based corporation and its association with fertility deities leads to control at the ideational sphere by lineage elders who simultaneously wield some political power.

6.2.2 On Matriclan Priests and Fertility

The study found the following.

1. That the matriclan priests of Yakurr society form an august and impressive council on whom the ritual and political affairs of traditional governance devolve.

2. These priests pray ceaselessly to numerous spirits for the fertility of their members, paying occasional visits to ensure that the numerical strength of their matrilineage is not depleted in their time.

3. While 82.9% of the respondents know the names of their matrilineage, only 33.4% know the name of the particular *yose* associated with it.

4. Only 48.1% know the name of their *ina* reflecting a decline in the importance of matriclan meetings or the growth of specialised agencies, which parallel the traditional functions of the matrilineage, including the stabilisation of religious sentiments.

5. Only 48.2% of the respondents identified themselves as "regular participants in matriclan affairs" while 49.6% personally believe in the *yose*.

6.2.3 On Pronatalism, Marriage and Fertility

The study found the following.

1. A fairly stable marriage situation in Ugep, with 72.4 per cent of the respondents still in their first marriage and 92.9 per cent in either a first or second marriage.

2. The mean female age at first marriage is 23.3 years, relative to 25.6 years for men.

3. Female age at marriage has a weak negative correlation with fertility (r = -0588), probably because of a rising trend in female age at marriage and the correspondence of that trend with female formal education.

4. The marriage gradient promotes a strong polygynous culture among the Yakurr, with a rate of 42.6 per cent polygynously ever-married women.

5. The stability of marriage may be linked to the degree of division of labour in Yakurr society and the extent of gender discrimination against women.

6. Pronatalism is so widespread that it exerts no significant influence on the number of marriages in Ugep.

7. Monogamous marriages are more common among younger male respondents than their older counterparts, from 91.7 per cent of all males age 15-19 years to 37.5 per cent among men age 50 years and over.

8. Monogamy is more common among younger female respondents, among it ranges from 94.7 per cent for women age 15-19 years to 9.3 per cent for those 50 years and over.

9. A definite overall trend towards reduction in the incidence of polygyny.

10. Women are less likely (74.1 per cent) than men (80.0 per cent) to subscribe to the dominant pronatalist ethos of the community, a strong indication that the institution sustaining high fertility at an ideological level is essentially male-based.

11. A weak positive relationship (r= 0.18969) between current age and pronatalism, suggesting that as age increases the subscription to pronatalism tends to increase likewise, but very marginally.

12. A fairly strong inverse relationship (r = -0.86645) between level of education attained and pronatalism.

13. Farmers show a higher tendency (79.1 per cent) to be pronatalist than other occupational groups, an indication that farming is more intimately interwoven with the fabric of social and communal life than the other occupations are.

14. A strong positive correlation between subscription to the pronatalist aphorism and preferred family size among Ugep women (r = 0.892).

6.2.4 On Contraceptive Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice

The study found the following:

1. A generally high level of contraceptive knowledge probably due to the activities of several reproductive health non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the study community.

2. Contraceptive use is generally low in Ugep society. Male contraceptive use rates of more than 10 per cent exist for only condom, periodic abstinence and withdrawal. The comparable female rates are for oral contraceptives, injectables, periodic abstinence and withdrawal.

3. Women bear the greater burden (responsibility and risk) of contraceptive practice.

4. The high level of use (32.3% among men) of withdrawal indicates its economic cheapness and its rootedness in traditional practice.

5. Periodic abstinence has a high level of use (64.8 per cent among men and 48.7 per cent among women).

6.2.5 On the Proximate Determinants of Yakurr Fertility

The study found the following.

1. Age at marriage, periodic abstinence, breastfeeding, and contraception are the principal proximate determinants of Yakurr fertility, using Ugep as case study.

2. The correlation of coital frequency and CEB was not significant, although it seems evident that marital coital frequency is very high, in view of observable trends in premarital and extramarital sexual networking.

3. Age is significantly and positively related to contraception, breastfeeding and periodic abstinence.

4. While married women are more likely to practice periodic abstinence than never married women (38.2 per cent), the latter category is nearly twice as likely as the former to have ever used modern contraception

5. Ever-married women with secondary education or higher are more likely to contraception than other categories of women.

6. Monogamous women are more likely than polygynous women to use contraception, possibly owing to the rivalrous relations among co-wives in a typical polygynous household.

7. Although there is some evidence that the incidence of abortion is high, cultural values against it are strong, generally because "it is abominable, inhuman, wicked, and disgraceful".

6.3 Conclusion

This study has provided new evidence of the implications of the sociocultural context for fertility studies by identifying interconnections among specific norms and practices and Yakurr fertility. It interrelated these specific norms and practices with Bongaarts' proximate determinants to render a robust and comprehensive account that lends fresh credence to the necessity for interdisciplinary collaboration. The use of

ethnographic methods in generating micro-level insights for the demographic survey facilitates the conclusion that fertility is the end result of complex interactions among personal, ideational, marital and kinship factors.

The realm of belief, where spiritual entities regulate fertility, is crucial to explaining Yakurr fertility. The analysis of fertility among this people is imperfect without due regard to their belief system and the political systems it gives rise to. Among these people, the ideational contexts of fertility form the core of the cultural process, and find expression at the realm of social and political organisation. The study attempted to trace an outline for investigating fertility in sub-Saharan Africa through a sociocultural approach that examines fertility as a regulated resource in the society. The immediate context for this examination was the interrelationships among patriarchy, pronatalism, and political culture. The intricate interconnections among these forces invite a deeper study of the issues within the framework of the cultural organisation or management of fertility.

The central argument has been that pre-industrial society must naturally take considerable interest in the fertility of its members and, to do this, may exact a high level of conformity to norms. There are considerable constraints to the independence with which individuals can act, particularly as it concerns what may, in Parsonian terms, be described as the society's ultimate "functional prerequisite". The agrarian set-up makes this inevitable. It institutionalises the social capacity to control others, and locates it within the precincts of sacrosanct gerontocratic, kinship, and theocratic structures.

The conclusion to be drawn from our study is that the search for an alternative model for explaining fertility, following the failure of the classic transition theory, is a quest for a holistic view. Such holism negates the constitution of fertility decline into the most important object of demographic study. The cultural framework within which the decline takes place, or is resisted, is just as important a field of investigation as other aspects of conventional demography. The interrelationships between the salient facets of cultural life must be investigated and analysed in terms of their implications for fertility. Since a huge amount of anthropological information already exists on sub-Saharan Africa, it is possible to integrate that database with demographic science.

The distance between anthropologists and demographers should be bridged some more. Collaboration between both groups holds great promise for the theoretical, methodological, and epistemological development of the two disciplines. The Yakurr case study indicates that fertility, in a typical sub-Saharan setting, may be more like a *response* to shared values and sentiments than the single product of independent decisions. Those shared values undergo change. There is a need to develop our knowledge base by conducting descriptive and interpretive studies of fertility within the sociocultural contexts in which it occurs. Neglecting to constitute this into a research imperative is to benignly watch cultural identity slide into limbo under the watchful eyes of scientists who might have done more to understand its passage. A research agenda on this issue will guarantee more information of the kind provided in this study that will be even more valuable for researchers and policy makers in the 21st century.

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Discussion Guide

A. INSTRUCTIONS TO MODERATOR

1. Liase with suitable contact for selection of discussion group. Ensure that group members are as homogenous as possible.

2. Select a conducive tension-free environment, possibly under the shade of a culturally acceptable tree, or otherwise familiar place such as the town meeting hall.

3. Arrange to have a circular or semicircular seating arrangement, to ensure that all discussants are visible to one another. Avoid the high table effect.

4. Moderator and Note-taker should sit across from each other and maintain careful eye contact and non-verbal communication throughout the discussion session.

5. The Note-taker should number the participants in the circular or semicircular order in which they are seated. The Note-taker should ensure that about half the participants sit one side of him or her and the other half sits on the other side.

6. Greet participants warmly. Introduce yourself and the team. Explain the purpose of the investigation and the need for the FGD.

7. Clarify for them the expectations of an FGD and how frank discussions would facilitate the study objectives. Seek their consent to use a tape recorder. Follow the discussion topic guide carefully and faithfully knowing that there is need for comparability and common sequence in multiple discussions, especially at the analysis stages.

8. Resist the temptation to promise what cannot be delivered, even when prompted to do so. At the end of the discussion, thank discussants for finding time to make the discussion possible.

B. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Briefly describe the tendency of every society to organise itself around a set of specified principles. Ask what the origins of the double-unilineal descent system are. Ask what its benefits are. What else, what again? Ask until participants stop.
2. Ask what the benefits of worshipping *ase* are. What are the historical contexts of *ase*? What are the benefits of worshipping them? What else, what again? Ask until participants stop.
3. What are roles of the matriclan priests? What is their most important function? What else, what again? Continue probing until participants stop. Find out how the *B'ina* are selected and how they are instructed in their duties. By whom?
4. Ask for information on the prevalence of contraception in the society. Find out what the sex patterns of use are. Who is more likely to contracept? What do people feel about abortion? What else, what again? Continue probing until participants stop. How prevalent is the incidence of abortion? Under what conditions or circumstances are people likely to have an abortion? What else, what again? Continue probimg until participants stop.
5. What are the dominant marriage systems in Ugep? Find out what patterns opf polygyny are in the society. Are there any important changes? What are the relationship between the type of marriage and fertility? What are the implications of changing marriage patterns on fertility? What else, what again? Probe until participants stop.

6. Explain in simple terms what the proximate determinants of fertility are. Probe for the key proximate determinants operating in the society. Probe for breastfeeding, periodic abstinence, coital frequency, sge at marriage, etc. Probe until participants.
7. Find out what the role of the group regarding the issue of over population. Is the town overpopulation in their view? Why do they feel that way? What are the signs of overpopulation or optimal population? What is the way forward?
8. Ask participants to describe observed patterns of child bearing in Ugep. Is the number of children ever born increasing or decreasing? How does the fertility of the present childbearing cohorts differ from the fertility of their parents? This issue is very important. The Moderator should spend time to probe responses to this question, while the Note-taker should take care to record the consensus and disagreements following from the discussions.
9. What does the saying *lesou leta otoba* mean to the Ugep people? What is its present relevance what are implications of this worldview? The Moderator should ask what other sayings might express or capture this pronatalist philosophy. Once the discussion is over, thank the participants, go through the sunnary of the discussions with them and prepare to depart.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF FERTILITY AMONG THE YAKURR OF SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA.

QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

(Greetings). In the past one year, Mr. Oka Obono of the University of Ibadan has been engaged in an intensive round of investigations pursuant to the award of a Ph.D. at that University. My name is _____. I work at _____ as a _____ but am currently assisting Mr. Obono to collect more information on the sociocultural contexts of fertility in Ugep. We very sincerely request your cooperation in completing this questionnaire accurately. Your answers will be confidential and no information that can be traced to you will be used in publishing the results.

IDENTIFICATION

Date:_____ Time:_____
Ward:_____ House/Compound No:_____
Household No:_____ Name of Head of Household:_____
Respondent's ID:_____
Address or Description of House_____

INTERVIEWER VISITS

	1	2	3	FINAL VISIT
DATE				MONTH YEAR ☐☐ ☐☐
INTERVIEWER'S NAME				☐☐
RESULT**				☐☐
NEXT VISIT: DATE TIME				TOTAL NUMBER

**RESULT CODES
1. COMPLETED
2. HOUSEHOLD PRESENT BUT NO COMPETENT RESP. AT HOME
3. HOUSEHOLD ABSENT NIGHT BEFORE INTERVIEW
4. POSTPONED
5. REFUSED
6. DWELLING VACANT OR ADDRESS NOT A DWELLING
7. DWELLING DESTROYED
8. DWELLING NOT FOUND
9. OTHER _____ (SPECIFY)

TOTAL IN HOUSEHOLD ☐☐

TOTAL ELIGIBLE WOMEN ☐☐

	FIELD EDITED BY	OFFICE EDITED BY	KEYED BY	KEYED BY
NAME				☐☐
DATE				

***Respondent's ID:*_____**

SECTION 1: RESPONDENT'S PROFILE

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
101.	Respondent's Sex	Male..... 1 Female 2	
102.	Marital Status	Single ..... 1 Currently Married ..... 2 Widowed ..... 3 Divorced 4	
103.	How many marriages have you been in (including present one)?	☐☐	
104.	What was your age at first marriage?	☐☐	
105.	Age last birthday	☐☐ Age in completed years	
106.	Have you ever attended school?	Yes.....1 No.....2	→ 110
107.	What was the highest level of School you attended?	Primary..... 1 Secondary ..... 2 Higher 3	
108.	What was the highest class completed at that level?	Class ..... ☐☐	
109.	Check 107 Secondary Primary ☐ or Higher ☐	→	111
110.	Can you read a letter or newspaper easily, with difficulty, or at all?	Easily ..... 1 With Difficulty ..... 2 Not at all 3	
112.	Do you belong to any Association (Cultural, Political, social, Economic etc)	Yes .....1 No 2	→114
113	What is your religion?	.....	
114.	What kind of work are you engaged in (circle one, the most important).	Farming ..... 1 Trading/Business ..... 2 Artisan ..... 3 Civil Servant (JR) ..... 4 Civil Servant (JR) ..... 5 Other (specify) 6	

115.	Matriclan's name	*"Yose"*	Name of "Ina"	Have you ever or been visited by him Yes ..... 1 No 2

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
119.	What do you suppose is the most important function of the "yose"?	....	
120.	Do you personally believe that "yose" (call its name) can promote fertility	Yes .... 1 No 2	
121.	Would you describe yourself as a regular participant in matriclan affairs?	Yes .... 1 No 2	
122.	Between the "*Kepun*" and the "*lejimo*" which commands your greater allegiance?	Yes .... 1 No 2	
123.	Which exerts more influence over your reproductive motivation?	Kepun.. .... 1 Lejimo 2	
124.	How would you describe the distance between your marital home and the "*Ina*'s"?	Very close. ..... 1 Close..... 2 Fat..... 3 Very far..... 4	
125.	Do you interact with him often?	Yes, often..... 1 Yes, but not often..... 2 No 3	

***Respondent's ID:*_____**

SECTION 2: FERTILITY HISTORY

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
201.	Now I would like to ask about all the births you have had during your life. Have you ever given births?	Yes..... ..... 1 No..... 2	→ 206
202.	Do you have any sons or daughters you have given birth to who are now living with you?	Yes..... ..... 1 No..... 2	→ 204
203.	How many sons live with you? And how many daughters live with you? IF NONE ENTER '00'	Sons at home..... Daughters at home..... ⊞	
204.	Do you have any sons or daughters you have given birth to who are alive but do not live with you?	Yes .... 1 No 2	→ 208
205.	How many sons are alive but do not live with you? And how many daughters are alive but do no live with you? IF NONE ENTER '00'	Sons elsewhere..... Daughters at home..... ⊞	
206.	Have you ever given birth to a boy or a girl who was born alive but later died? If NO, Probe: Any (other) boy or girl who cried or showed any sign of life but only survived a few hours or days?	Yes .... 1 No 2	
207.	How many boys have died? And how many girls have died? IF NONE ENTER '00'	Boys dead..... Girls dead..... ⊞	
208.	Sum answers to 203, 205 and 207 and Enter Total. IF NONE ENTER '00'	Total ..... ⊞	
209.	Check 208. Just to make sure that I have this right you have had in TOTAL____ Live births during your life is that correct?		
210.	Check 208 One or more Birth ☐ ↓	No births ☐	→ 218

(Kindly fill in the following table, listing children according to birth order). Indicate "0" for Ugep residence and "02" for out of Ugep residence in Q217

211 Name of Child	212 Sex	213 Living (Tick)	214 Resp. Age at birth	215 Other Type of marriage	216 Principal Motivator	217 Residence	21 Codes
							01- Self 02- Spouse 03- *Kepun* 04- *Lejimo* 05- Peers 06- Unplanned 07- Others

Total births ☐☐

NO.	QUESTION AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP
218	If you were to start childbearing all over again (or if you could determine things) how many children would you have?	☐☐	
219.	How many children do you think, ideally couples should have?	☐☐	
220.	Do you agree with the saying "*leson leta otoba*"?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2	
221.	Please explain your answer to 220 above	....	
222.	Which exerts a stronger influence on people's reproductive motivation: the "*Kepun*" or *lejimo*"	*Kepun*..... 1 *lejimo*..... 2	
223.	Why do you think so?	.....	
224.	Do you consider the Ugep population to be too large?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2	
225.	Please explain further	....	
226.	Can the "yose" help infertile couples to have children?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2	
227.	Please explain further	....	

***Respondent's ID:*_____**

SECTION 3: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR AND PRACTICE: PRACTICE: FERTILITY AND CONTRACEPTION

301 Now I would like to talk about a topic. There are various ways or methods that a couple can use to delay or avoid a pregnancy. Which of these ways or methods have you heard about? CIRCLE CODE 1 IN 302 FOR EACH METHOID MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY. THEN PROCEED DOWN THE COLUMN, READING THE NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF EACH METHOD NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY, CICLE CODE 2 IF METHOD IS RECOGNIZED, AND CODE 3 IF NOT RECOGNIZED, THEN FOR EACH METHOD WITH CODE 1 OR 2 CIRCLED IN 302, ASK 303 – 305 BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE NEXT METHOD

	302 Have you ever heard of (METHOD)?" READ DESCRIPTION	303 Have you ever used (METHOD)? (CODES BELOW)	304 Where would you go to obtain (METHOD) if you wanted to use it? Using (METHOD)? (CODES BELOW)?	305 in your opinion, which is the main o problem, if any, with
01 PILL: Woman can take a pill every day.	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes .....1 No 2	☐☐	☐☐ Other:.....
02 IUD: Woman can have a loop of coil placed inside them by a doctor or a nurse	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No 2	☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....
03 INJECTION: Women can have an injection insideside them by a doctor or nurse which stops them from becoming pregnant for several months	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No 2	☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....
04 DIAPHRAM/FOAM /JELLY: Women can place sponge supposaitory, diaphragm, jelly or cream inside them before intercourse	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No 2	☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....
05 CONDOM: Men can use a rubber sheath during sexual interrcourse.	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No 2	☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....
06 FEMALE STERILIZATION: Women can have an operation to avoid having any more children.	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No 2	☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....
07 MALE STERILIZATION: Men can have an operation to avoid having any more children.	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No 2	☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....

	302 Have you ever heard of (METHOD)?" READ DESCRIPTION	303 Have you ever used (METHOD)? (CODES BELOW)	304 Where would you go to obtain (METHOD) if you wanted to use it? Using (METHOD)? (CODES BELOW)?	305 in your opinion, which is the main o problem, if any, which
08 PERIODIC ABSTINENCE: Couples can avoid having sexual intercourse on certain days of the month when the woman is more likely to become pregnant.	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes .....1 No 2	Where would you go to obtain advice on periodic abstinence ☐☐ Other:.....	☐☐ Other:.....
ANY OTHER METHODS: Be careful and pull out before climax. 1_____ (specify) 2_____ (specify) 3_____ (specify)	YES/SPONT.....1 YES/PROBED.....2 NO 3	Yes... .....1 No .....2 Yes... .....1 No .....2 Yes... .....1 No 2	**CODES FOR 304**** 01 Govt. hospital 02 Govt. health clinic 03 Family planning clinic 04 Mobile clinic 05 Field worker 06 Private doctor 07 Private Hosp or clinic 08 Pharmacy 09 Shop 10 Church 11 Friends/Relatives 12 Other (specify) 13 Nowhere 14 Danex 95 DK	CODES FOR 305*** 02 Not effective 03 Husband disapproved 04 health concerns 05 Access/availability 06 Costs too much 07 Inconvenient to use 09 Method permanent 11 Other (specify) 12 None 13 Danex 98 DK
306 Check 303:	Not a Single "yes" (Never Used) ☐ ↓	At least one "Yes" (Ever used) ☐ →		

*Where Norplant field trials is underway, this method may be included in the list.

**Coding categories to be developed locally and revised based on the pretest

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
307	*Have you ever used anything or tried in any form to delay or avoid getting pregnant?* Mark the appropriate response	Yes... .....1 No 2	→ 316
309	Check 303: Ever used" Period abstinence ☐ ↓	Never used Period abstinence ☐ → 311	
310.	The last time you used periodic abstinence, how did you determine on which days you had to abstain.	Based on Calendar.....1 Based on body temperature .....2 Based on Cervical mucus Billing methods.....3 Based on body temperature & mucus...4 Other .....5 Number of children 6	
312.	Not pregnant or unsure ☐ ↓	Pregnant ☐ → 316	
313.	Are you currently using something or using any method to avoid getting pregnant	Yes... .....1 No 2	
314.	Which method are you using?	Pill..... 1 IUD ..... 2 Injections ..... 3 Diaphragm/Foam/Jelly ..... 4 Condom ..... 5 Female sterilization ..... 6 Male sterilization ..... 7 Periodic abstinence .....8 Withdrawal ..... 9 Other ..... .10	
315 315A 315B	Where did you obtain (METHOD) the last time? Where did the sterilization took place Where did you obtain instruction for this method?	Govt. hospital ..... 01 Govt. health centre ..... 02 Family planning clinic ..... 03 Mobile clinic ..... 04 Field worker ..... 05 Private doctor .....07 Pharmacy ..... 08 Shop ..... 09 Church ..... 10 Friends/Relatives ..... 11 Other (specify 12	} 319
316.	Do you intend to use a method to avoid pregnacny at any time in the future?	Yes... .....1 No .....2 DK 3	→ 319
317.	Breastfeeding	Less than 6 months ..... Over 6 months	
318.	How long did you breastfeed your last child?		
319.	Is it acceptable or mnot acceptable to you for family planning information to be provided on radio or television?	Acceptable ..... 1 Not acceptable .....2 DK 3	
320.	How widespread is the use of ethnomedical contraception?	Widespread ..... 1 Not widespread 2	

321(a)	Have you ever used ethnomedical methods?	Yes... .....1 No 2	
321(b)	If Yes, which method?	.....	
322.	Before the advent of modern contraception, what did Ugep people use to prevent pregnancy?	....	
323.	How do Ugep people view abortion (comment freely)	....	
324.	Have you ever had an abortion before?	Yes... .....1 No 2	
325.	When during her monthly cycle do you think a woman has the greatest chance of becoming pregnant? Probe: What are the days during the month when a woman has to be careful to avoid becoming pregnant?	During her period ..... 1 Right after her period ..... 2 Has ended .....3 In the middle of the cycle .....4 Just before her period begins .....5 Other (specify) 6	
326.	Are you pregnant now? Now I have some questions about the future Not Pregnant Or Unsure ☐ Would you like to have a (another) chilkd or would you prefer not to have any more children? Pregnant ☐ After the child you are expecting, would you like to have another child or would you prefer not to have any (more) child?	Have another ..... 1 No more ..... 2 Says she can't get pregnant ..... 3 Undecided DK 4	} 328
327.	How long would you like to waiut for now before the birth of a (another) child?	Month..... 1 Year ..... 2 DK 998	⊞ →
328.	For how long should a couple wait before starting sexual intercourse after the birth of a baby?	Month..... 1 Year ..... 2 DK 996	⊞
329.	Should a mother wait until she has completely stopped breastfeeding before starting to have sexual relations again, or doesn't matter?	Wait ..... 1 Doesn't matter 2	
330.	Do you think that your partner approves or disapproves of couples using a method to avoid pregnancy?	Approves ..... 1 Disapproves ..... 2 DK 8	
331.	How often have you talked to your poartner about this subject in the past year?	Never ..... 1 Once or twice .....2 More often 3	
332.	In general, do you approve or disapprove of couple using a method to avoid pregnancy?	Approves ..... 1 Disapproves 2	

333.	No. living Children ☐ If you could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many would that be? Has living Children ☐ If you could go back to the time you did not have any children to have in your whole life, how many could that be? Record single number or other answer.	Number Other answer_____ (specify)	
334.	If there is a cultural reason for not using contraception, what is the reason?	.....	
336.	Who is more likely to contracept?	Husband..... 1 Wife 2	
337.	In your marriage, which of you is using contraception?	Husband..... 1 Wife ..... 2 →	Check 302 and 313

SECTION: WOMAN'S NATAL KIN TIES AND FERTILITY (FOR WOMEN ONLY)

No	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
401.	Would describe your relationship with your natal kin as stronger or weaker since you got married?	Stronger ..... 1 Weaker ..... 2 Other 3	
402.	Please explain further	.....	
403.	Do you still attend your patriclan meetings with the same regularity as before?	Yes ..... 1 No ..... 2 Never used to attend 3	
404a	Do you attend you husband's kepun meeting?	Yes ..... 1 No 2	
404b	Is it permissible for a woman to attend her husband's kepun meeting?	Yes ..... 1 No 2	
405.	Are there some obligations you still owe your matriclan or patriclan?	Yes ..... 1 No 2	
406.	What are these?	Patriclan | Matriclan 1 | 1 2 | 2 3 | 3 4 | 4	
407.	Type of marriage	Monogamy..... 1 Polygyny 2	
408.	Marital Residemnce	Patrilocal..... 1 Virilocal ..... 2 Avunculocal ..... 3 Duolocal ..... 4 Neolocal ..... 5 Other 6	

Thank you very much