**Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) ‘British families in transition’**

The Rapoports carried out groundbreaking research into family life. They identified a

number of ways in which family life was diverse, in contrast to the idea that the nuclear

family was the clear norm. They identified 5 clear types of family diversity. The 5 types of

family diversity they identified were:

1) Organisational. This refers to the way a family might organise itself in terms of the roles

people perform (e.g. traditional male-dominated families and more symmetrical ones).

2) Cultural. Families differ in terms of their beliefs and values. One example of this is

between different ethnic groups, with some ethnicities placing a greater emphasis on

family than others, some preferring different gender roles, etc.

3) Social Class. Much writing about the family assumes that family life as experienced in

a middle-class family is the same for other social classes, but this is not the case.

Availability of resources, quality of housing, leisure opportunities, etc. all impact the

nature of families and family life.

4) Life course. Rapoport and Rapoport point out that we do not live in the same family

structure, family set-up or type of household for the whole of our lives. We might be born

into a traditional nuclear family. This might change later in our childhood (for example it

might become a lone parent family and then a reconstituted family). When we leave

home it might be to live on our own, or with flatmates. It might be to live with a partner

as a couple without children. A couple with or without children might live with their

parents in an extended family, or move away and form their own nuclear family.

5) Generational. There is also change over time and what is the norm, in terms of family

life, for one generation, is not for the next. As such, great grandparents and

grandparents may have had several siblings, and later generations have far fewer;

more recent generations are more likely than their parents and grandparents to divorce

or to be single parents.

Since Rapoport and Rapoport were writing family has arguably become more diverse,

e.g. same-sex parents.



How can this study be evaluated?



Answer the above Q in this box: