Gender, Family and Society

Also by Faith Robertson Elliot

THE FAMILY: Change or Continuity?

Gender, Family and Society

Faith Robertson Elliot

Consultant Editor: Jo Campling

Macmillan Education

ISBN 978-0-333-52430-5 ISBN 978-1-349-24385-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-24385-3

GENDER, FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Copyright © 1996 by Faith Robertson Elliot

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1996

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced
in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the
case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

For information, address:

St. Martin's Press, Scholarly and Reference Division,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

First published in the United States of America in 1996

ISBN 978-0-312-12990-3 (cloth)

ISBN 978-0-312-12991-0 (pbk)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Elliot, Faith Robertson.

Gender, family, and society / Faith Robertson Elliot.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-312-12990-3 (cloth). — ISBN 978-0-312-12991-0 (pbk.)

1. Family. 2. Family—Great Britain. 3. Sex role. 4. Sex role—
—Great Britain. I. Title.

HQ518.E433 1996

306.85—dc20

95-36939

CIP

For my students

Contents

<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 The relationship revolution	5
The mid-twentieth century Western family	6
The birth of permissiveness	9
Contemporary change in family patterns	12
How much change?	34
2 Ethnic Differentiation, Gender and Family Life	40
2.1 The evolution of Afro-Caribbean and Asian gender and family structures in Britain	40
Afro-Caribbean gender and family structures	42
Asian gender and family structures	48
Summary	57
2.2 The discourses of 'race' and ethnicity	58
'Racist' and 'nationalist' discourses	58
'Black' radical and anti-racist perspectives	62
'Black' feminist perspectives	65
Ethnicity perspectives	68
Marxist and marxist-feminist approaches	70
Summary	73
3 Economic Restructuring and Unemployment: a Crisis for Masculinity?	75
3.1 Unemployment trends and patterns	76
3.2 Unemployment and family life	81
Married men, unemployment and family life	83
Women, unemployment and family life	92
Coming of age unemployed	96
3.3 The underclass debate	103

4	Population Ageing and the 'Problem' of Care	110
4.1	The construction of 'old age' as a social problem	111
	The demographic ageing of populations	111
	Images of ageing	116
	The relationship of older people to the economy	119
4.2	Family life and eldercare	122
	The caring task	125
	The normative context of caring	127
	Patterns of care	131
	The caring experience	137
	The challenge to ageism	141
	Summary	142
5	Violence and Sexual Abuse in Family Life	144
5.1	Conceptualising 'violence' in family life	144
	Summary	148
5.2	Levels of violence	149
	Parental violence	152
	The sexual abuse of children	156
	Violence and sexual coercion in sexual partnerships	161
	Summary	166
5.3	Perspectives on familial violence/sexual abuse	167
	Psychopathological perspectives	167
	Non-feminist sociological perspectives	172
	Feminist perspectives	177
	In conclusion	182
6	AIDS: Battleground of Competing Moralities	184
6.1	Epidemiological considerations	184
6.2	The sexual politics of AIDS	189
	The conflict between the 'old' and 'new' moralities	190
	Representations of AIDS in the discourses of moral conservatism	192
	Representations of AIDS in gay discourses	195
	Representations of AIDS in feminist discourses	197
6.3	The end of the sexual revolution?	199
	Methodological problems	199

AIDS and change in gay lifestyles	201
Heterosexual relations in the shadow of AIDS	207
Summary	212
7 Epilogue	214
<i>Bibliography</i>	221
<i>Author Index</i>	250
<i>Subject Index</i>	256

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

1.1	Cohabitation in northwest Europe, Britain and the USA	15
1.2	Proportion ever married and mean age at first marriage for women in selected northwest European countries, 1988	15
1.3	Cohabitation patterns among women aged 18–49 in Britain	16
1.4	Attitudes to unmarried cohabitation in selected Western countries	17
1.5	Conceptions by marital status and outcome, England and Wales, 1971 and 1991	24
1.6	Proportion of families with children under 18, headed by a lone parent, in selected northwest European countries, 1989, and in the USA, 1990	25
1.7	Women aged 16–59 in employment by age of youngest child, Great Britain, 1973–92	30
1.8	Attitudes towards women with dependent children working	31
2.1	Marital status by ethnic group, Great Britain, 1986–8	45
2.2	One-parent families with dependent children, as a proportion of all families' by ethnic group, Great Britain, 1987–9	46
2.3	Labour force participation rates of women, aged 16–59, by ethnic group, Great Britain, 1988–90	48
3.1	Unemployment rates in selected industrial countries, 1976–92	78
3.2	Unemployment rates by socio-economic group and sex, Great Britain, 1992	79
3.3	Unemployment rates by sex and age, United Kingdom, 1993	81
3.4	Duration of unemployment by sex and age, United Kingdom, 1993	82
4.1	Life expectancy in the United Kingdom, 1901–91	112
4.2	Numbers and proportions of older people in the United Kingdom, 1901–90	112

4.3	Marital status of women and men over 65 in Great Britain, 1992	113
4.4	Life expectancies and proportions of the population aged 65 and over in selected industrial societies, 1991	114
4.5	Disability level of older women and men by age, Great Britain, 1985	115
4.6	Poverty rates among people over 65 in selected industrial countries	116
5.1	Parent-to-child violence in 1975 and 1985 in the USA	153
5.2	Experiences of sexually-abused children, British data	157
5.3	Experience of sexual abuse in childhood, San Francisco data	158
5.4	Marital violence in the USA, 1975 and 1985	163
5.5	Prevalence of domestic violence among north London women	163
5.6	Prevalence of rape/attempted rape by relationship between victim and assailant	166
6.1	AIDS cases in the USA by exposure category as at June 1993	188
6.2	AIDS cases by sex and exposure category in the United Kingdom to 30 June 1992	189
6.3	Median number of male sexual partnerships of gay men over various time periods	203
6.4	Gay relationship types and durations	204

Figures

1.1	Live births outside marriage as a percentage of all births: international comparisons, 1960 and 1991	23
1.2	Real weekly earnings by sex, Great Britain, 1971–93	31
3.1	Unemployment by ethnicity, Great Britain, 1991	80
4.1	Average hours of informal care provided by (a) co-resident carers and (b) carers in a separate household by relationship between carer and cared for and by gender of carer	134
6.1	AIDS throughout the world, mid-1993	186
6.2	AIDS prevalence rates in the countries of the European Union, March 1992	190

6.3	Proportion of homosexual men engaging in anal intercourse with men, 1987–91	205
-----	---	-----

Acknowledgements

Pat Allatt, Sara Arber, Ken Blakemore, Jacqui Halson, Kathleen Kiernan and Jeffrey Weeks read early drafts of particular chapters of this book, while David Morgan and Nick Tilley read the penultimate draft of the whole. I am grateful to them all for their constructive and insightful comments, for their time and for their encouragement. I would also like to thank the staff of the Lanchester Library, Coventry University, and in particular Barbara Heaton and Geoffrey Stratford, for their exceptional helpfulness in my search for source materials for this book. Finally, I would like to thank Parbinder and Jaspreet Johal for all their assistance in obtaining books from, and returning books to, the Library on my behalf.

FAITH ROBERTSON ELLIOT

The author and publishers wish to thank those who have kindly given permission for the use of copyright material in charts and tables as follows: Cambridge University Press: Table 4.6; The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office: Tables 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.3 and 6.3 and Figures 1.1, 1.2 3.1, 6.2 and 6.3; Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd: Tables 1.4 and 1.8; Guardian Newspapers Ltd: Figure 6.1; Indiana University Press: Table 5.6; Macmillan Press Ltd: Table 4.5; Middlesex University: Table 5.5; The National Council on Family Relations Minneapolis, MN 5421, USA: Tables 5.1 and 5.4; One Plus One: Table 1.1; The Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: Table 4.4; Elsevier Science Ltd: Table 5.2; The Policy Studies Institute: Table 2.3; Sage Publications: Figure 4.1; Taylor and Francis and the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office: Table 6.4