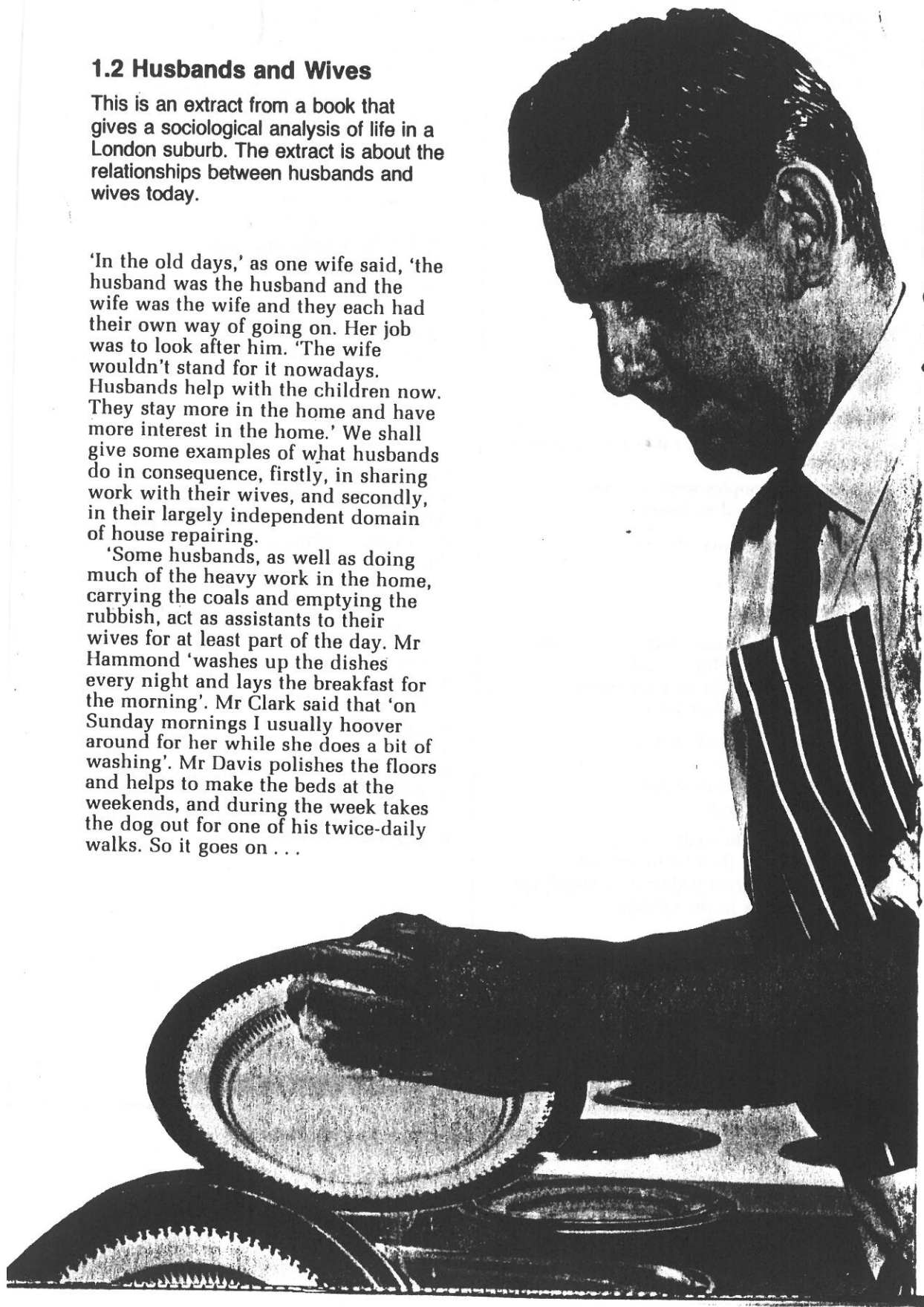


## 1.2 Husbands and Wives

This is an extract from a book that gives a sociological analysis of life in a London suburb. The extract is about the relationships between husbands and wives today.

'In the old days,' as one wife said, 'the husband was the husband and the wife was the wife and they each had their own way of going on. Her job was to look after him. The wife wouldn't stand for it nowadays. Husbands help with the children now. They stay more in the home and have more interest in the home.' We shall give some examples of what husbands do in consequence, firstly, in sharing work with their wives, and secondly, in their largely independent domain of house repairing.

'Some husbands, as well as doing much of the heavy work in the home, carrying the coals and emptying the rubbish, act as assistants to their wives for at least part of the day. Mr Hammond 'washes up the dishes every night and lays the breakfast for the morning'. Mr Clark said that 'on Sunday mornings I usually Hoover around for her while she does a bit of washing'. Mr Davis polishes the floors and helps to make the beds at the weekends, and during the week takes the dog out for one of his twice-daily walks. So it goes on ...



### Notes

*suburb*—outer area of a city

*domain*—area, sphere

*carrying the coals*—i.e. bringing in the coal for the fire

### Exercise 1

Give a brief explanation for each of the following phrases from the passage:

- 1 their own way of going on
- 2 to look after him
- 3 wouldn't stand for it
- 4 house repairing
- 5 lays the breakfast
- 6 twice-daily walks

### Exercise 2

Choose the correct answers a, b or c to complete the following sentences.

- 1 'In the old days' means
  - a in the winter
  - b in the past
  - c when you are old
- 2 'The husband was the husband' means
  - a there was a clear division of roles in the family
  - b most couples were married
  - c men stayed at home
- 3 'in consequence' means
  - a job by job
  - b as a rule
  - c as a result
- 4 'act as assistants to their wives' means
  - a they read plays aloud
  - b they are paid by their wives
  - c they help their wives
- 5 'hoover around' means
  - a hang about
  - b use a vacuum cleaner
  - c look around
- 6 'to make the beds' means
  - a to make the bedclothes tidy
  - b to construct beds out of wood, etc.
  - c to work in the garden

### Exercise 3

Read through the list of everyday tasks given below and put an 'M' against those you think are for men, a 'W' against those you think are for women and a 'U' for 'Unisex' against those you think are for both sexes.

- driving the car
- ironing the clothes
- painting the outside of the house
- doing the washing up
- cooking the Sunday lunch
- changing an electric light bulb
- carving a chicken
- digging the garden
- cleaning the car
- doing the weekly shopping
- pouring out drinks for guests
- taking the children to school
- sewing on buttons
- paying the bills
- looking after sick children

Now try to give reasons for each 'M' or 'W' you have put.

### Exercise 4

Imagine you are living in a country where being a husband or a wife is a job like any other job. Try to write a 'job specification' giving all the information about each of these jobs, or, if you feel they are the same, giving one description for both jobs. Your job specification should include:

- 1 hours of work
- 2 holidays
- 3 duties
- 4 responsibilities
- 5 pay
- 6 'perks' (other benefits from the job)
- 7 period of notice (how long a warning you must give before leaving the job)
- 8 qualifications needed