41. For example, the accounts of Colin Robertson in E.E. Rich (ed.), *Colin Robertson's Letters, 1817–1822* (Toronto: Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 52, 220.
42. See Coues, *New Light*, vol. 2, 599, for Alexander Henry the Younger's description of Longmoor. On James Halcro, see Alice M. Johnson (ed.), *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence 1795–1802* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1967), xlvii, n; 189. On William Pink, see E.E. Rich, *History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670–1870* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), vol. 2, 17, 19, 22, 32.
43. E.E. Rich and A.M. Johnson (eds.), *Moose Fort Journals, 1783–1785* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1954), 370; St. Gabriel Street Church registers.
44. The court case of William Connolly and that of his colleague, Alexander Fraser, are discussed in some detail in Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 90–95.
45. For examples, see letters of John McDonald le Borgne and Donald McIntosh quoted in *ibid.*, 180–82.
46. *Ibid.*, 190–92.
47. Peterson, "Prelude to Red River," 41–42.
48. Sylvia Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," *The Beaver* (Winter, 1972), 11–21.
49. Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 181.
50. *Ibid.*, 218–19.
51. John S. Long, *Treaty No. 9: The Half-Breed Question, 1902–1910* (Cobalt, Ont.: Highway Book Shop, 1978), 7–8.

WAGE LABOUR, INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN FAMILY

Chad Gaffield

Canada's industrial revolution had a dramatic impact on the character and structure of the family. Urbanization and the replacement of handicraft production by machine production in factories altered considerably the family's position in society. In the preindustrial setting, the Canadian economy was in many ways the sum of family economies in which men, women, and children all played productive roles. With industrialization, Canada's economy became increasingly a collection of factories and agricultural businesses staffed by men whose wives were at home and whose children were at school. This development represented a profound reorganization of society affecting both private experience and public policy. The industrial revolution contributed to new ide-

From *The Family: Changing Trends in Canada*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1984), 21–33. Reprinted by permission.

als, new legislation, and new institutions, all of which related to the place of the family in society.

This chapter examines the relationship between industrialization and the history of the family, especially during the nineteenth century. The basis of this examination is recent research which has substantially revised many accepted views about the extent to which modern families differ from those of the preindustrial period. For example, contemporary discussion often assumes that families have traditionally been stable units, pillars in a society otherwise undergoing constant transformation. In this view, the family has been until recently an important element of continuity within larger social changes. Similarly, observers usually juxtapose the wide variety of contemporary family patterns with an historical image of a single family form. Current diversity in marriage forms, child-bearing decisions, and living arrangements is judged with reference to an imagined time of conformity and standard behaviour. In both myths contemporary families are seen as radically different from those of former times, and critics often interpret this difference as evidence of unprecedented crisis.

Such assumptions about the history of the family are accurate to a certain degree. However, recent research indicates that images of stability and conformity cannot be fully applied to Canadian families of the past, especially during the period of industrialization. This research has shown that current instability and diversity in family patterns are not simply modern phenomena and that the suggestion of crisis in the family has a long tradition which was particularly important in the nineteenth century. Similarly, families have historically been nuclear, fragmented, or single parent in various times and places. The implications of these findings extend to the major themes of Canada's social, economic, and intellectual history, and they suggest quite different ways of assessing the family patterns of contemporary society (Anderson, 1980; Soliday, 1980; Light and Strong-Boag, 1980; Parr, 1982; Larose, 1977 to present).

The following discussion begins with a description of the ways in which changes in modes of production affected the economic position of men, women, and children. The changing productive roles of family members provide the key to examination of the structural alterations and new ideals for the family which characterized the late nineteenth century. In turn, the new ideals and structure of the family were related to a social reorganization most dramatically represented by the expansion of formal education. Taken together, these developments are central themes in the history of the modern family.

From Domestic to Factory Production

The process of industrialization is often described as a revolution, since an urban industrial society differs so markedly from a rural preindustrial community. However, the term revolution implies a sudden event and, in this sense, it is misleading, since industrialization occurred over many decades and in-

volved several transitional stages. In the same way, the impact of industrialization on the family cannot be understood in "before and after" terms; rather, family alterations paralleled each stage of the transition to urban industrial society. An appreciation of the complexity of these developments is the first step toward understanding the origins of the modern family.

In the *preindustrial economy*, which predominated in Canada until the nineteenth century, almost all productive activity took place in individual households. Homes were both places of residence and places of work. Production was very small scale and exceedingly labour intensive. The vast majority of the population lived on farms and engaged in some-combination of agriculture, fishing, lumbering, and the fur trade, according to the seasons of the year and the region in which they lived. In addition, these settlers had to produce their own clothing, and thus, most households included a spinning wheel and a loom. Cities such as Montreal and Quebec were primarily commercial and administrative centres, although they did include craftsmen such as blacksmiths and coopers. These craftsmen set up shops in their own households and worked by hand with very basic tools to produce their goods. The preindustrial economy was, therefore, relatively small scale, labour intensive, and domestically focused (Dechêne, 1974).

The first stage of industrialization is termed the *manufactory stage*, in which handicraft production still predominated but manufactories increasingly brought together various craftsmen into one operation. Carriage-makers joined wheelwrights, blacksmiths, carpenters, and other skilled workers. At the same time, these new establishments also increased the trend toward specialization. Shoemaking, for example, now involved cutters, fitters, and other more specialized occupations (Kealey, 1980). In certain economic sectors, this division of labour also involved *proto-industrialization*, in which traditional domestic work patterns combined with new forms of labour in manufactories. In the proto-industrial system, domestic activity was responsible for part rather than all of the production process. In the case of textiles, for example, households began producing cloth for sale to dressmakers and yarn for sale to weavers. As a result, households became less self-reliant and more integrated into an emerging cash economy. The overall scale of production increased, although the manufactories were still small operations. This system thus reflected the past and anticipated the future of the production process. Domestic activity continued to be important but production outside the home was increasingly significant (Medick, 1976).

The emergence of manufactories and proto-industrial activity affected only a minority of the Canadian population for most of the nineteenth century. A large export market and the availability of land, especially in the territory which became Ontario, encouraged settlers to concentrate on agriculture and lumbering. Gristmills and sawmills were established on waterways throughout the countryside, especially during the 1830s and 1840s. One crucial change, however, was the spread of wage labour which accompanied the expansion of wheat and lumber production. Shantymen and millhands worked in the lumber

industry, agricultural labourers toiled for established landowners, and navvies built the canals and railroads which facilitated commercial activity. These workers were often young men who hoped to accumulate enough capital to settle on a farm of their own. However, restrictive land policies, the activity of speculators, and the irregular nature of employment worked against fulfillment of this aspiration. As time passed, wage labour became a way of life for an increasing proportion of the population. The shift from farmers and craftsmen in the preindustrial economy to propertyless wage labourers in the emerging industrial economy is termed *proletarianization*. This process combined with the spread of manufactories and, to a lesser extent, with proto-industrialization to provide the context for rapid urban and industrial growth (Gagan, 1981).

The proliferation of machines and steam engines during the 1850s and 1860s heralded the beginning of a full *industrial economy* in Canada. The introduction of sewing machines in the early 1850s transformed the shoe industry, while hydraulic presses allowed the Canadian tobacco industry to prosper during the Civil War in the United States. Such industrial growth was certainly not reflected in all types of production, but the trend toward mechanization is evident in the rapid growth of large factories. In Hamilton, Ontario, for example, in 1851, only 24 percent of the labour force worked in establishments employing ten or more individuals. Just twenty years later, a full 83 percent of all employees in Hamilton worked in such establishments.

Moreover, just over one-half of workers in manufacturing held positions in firms with fifty or more employees. Hamilton's industrial development at this time was unusual for Canadian cities, but the pattern was certainly not unique. In Toronto, slightly more than two-thirds of the city's factory workers in 1871 were employed in establishments with thirty or more workers (Katz, 1975; Kealey, 1980).

Mechanization and the centralization of production affected various economic sectors at different times and in different ways. The general transition from production at home to workshops and factories was uneven, with some industries continuing to rely on household activity even as machines were proliferating. In the clothing trade, for example, work in factories and work at home expanded together during the nineteenth century, with each activity representing a different phase of the production process. Factory machines made and cut cloth from which women and older daughters then made garments in their own households as employees of the clothier. This example illustrates that the impact of industrialization on the production process was not always abrupt or complete but rather took place gradually over many decades (Bradbury, 1979).

The transition from preindustrial to industrial modes of production redefined the economic role of the family. In the preindustrial economy, families operated as economic units in which individual members performed tasks associated with age and gender. Women and children were active producers within family economies, and material security could only be achieved through collective

labour. The contributions of all able-bodied family members were necessary in the labour-intensive rural economy of the time. As a result, the European traditions of apprenticeship for boys and work as domestic servants for girls were not fully maintained in Canada, where economic opportunity meant that children could often be most useful to parents by working at home. From an early age, children would be integrated into productive activity by learning to help with land clearing, seeding, and domestic work such as spinning. Similarly, women were responsible for cooking, making clothes, and farm work such as vegetable gardening. The preindustrial setting was composed, therefore, of *family economies* in which family members laboured in the context of household production (Gaffield, 1979; Gagan, 1981).

The manufactory stage signalled the beginning of the separation of production from the household. The growth of manufactories, an increased division of labour, and the trend toward centralized production made household production an increasingly supplementary aspect of the economy. Moreover, these developments encouraged the spread of wage labour, which was already occurring during the 1830s and 1840s in activities such as lumbering and canal building. Employment outside the home redefined the extent to which productive activity characterized family life, and consequently, this alteration transformed family economies into *family wage economies*. Centralized production and wage labour meant that certain families began pooling the wages rather than the actual labour of various family members. The key to material security for families in this new situation involved employment outside the home for as many family members as possible, especially older children. A single wage was rarely sufficient to provide for a family, and the general irregularity of employment maintained the traditional interdependency of family members. Therefore, families continued to be economic units, although the appearance of the family wage economy represented an important departure from the traditional character of family activity and organization (Tilly and Scott, 1978).

The replacement of collective household labour by individual wage earning did not always have a simple or immediate effect on the family. In the early phases of industrialization, there was a considerable number of job opportunities for youth, especially teenage boys, and in certain cases family members continued to work together through collective employment in mills and factories. In fact, some employers advertised to attract families, recognizing both the profitability of cheap child labour and the value of having parents to supervise young workers. Employers would sometimes provide dwellings for families working at their establishments. The quality of such accommodation was generally very poor, but the provision of dwellings did reflect the fact that the family could still function as an economic unit despite the new modes of production (Bradbury, 1979; Katz, Doucet, and Stern, 1982; Gaffield, 1982).

Recent studies have also found that while many families needed more than one income, they also wanted to maintain contact among family members. The

employment of children was consistent with the tradition of families working together, and thus parents did not hesitate to seek work for their children. Established workers pressured employers to hire younger family members, sometimes by threatening to quit if additional employment was not provided. Of course, such threats were only effective in times of severe labour shortages, but the attempt of family members to work together shows that the traditional concept of collective family labour still operated during the process of industrialization (Kealey, 1973; Harvey, 1979).

The emergence of a wage-labour economy and the growth of manufactories are often described as the beginning of the separation of home and work. However, this description implies significant narrowing of the definition of work to mean wage labour only. In earlier times the contributions of all family members were considered work, and cooking and cleaning were recognized to be an important part of the family economy. However, the wage-labour economy expropriated the concept of work for paid employment. Thus the "separation of home and work" must be understood to mean the "separation of home and place of wage labour."

While early industrial expansion included employment for women and older children, the number of job opportunities for these family members did not match the number of available workers, and, in fact, these opportunities decreased rapidly over time. In Toronto, for example, the 1880s were a decisive decade in the dislocation of young teenagers from the labour force. Industrialization in the boot and shoe, printing, and tobacco sectors encouraged a sharp decline in the proportion of workers who were under the age of sixteen; this proportion fell from 11 percent in 1881 to 5 percent in 1891 (Kealey, 1980). Economic change especially transformed the position of young women, for whom there were fewer and fewer employment opportunities in cities and no jobs which paid a wage sufficient for material independence. Women continued to gain positions as factory workers or elementary school teachers in the nineteenth century and as nurses and secretaries in later decades. But married women were often excluded from these jobs, and their wages were substantially less than those offered to their male counterparts. In the late nineteenth century, a female teacher received about one-half of the average salary of a male teacher (Acton, Goldsmith, and Shepard, 1974; Danylewycz, Light, and Prentice, 1983). In this context, the economic role of women within families became increasingly confined to domestic chores that were not considered "productive" in the new sense of the word. This new definition of work trivialized both implicitly and explicitly the important activity which continued in the home and which made possible employment outside the home. Moreover, the value judgments which distinguished between home and work must be recognized as contributing factors in the development of contemporary attitudes toward domestic activity.

In stylized terms, the separation of productive activity from the home and the economic dislocation of women and children changed the family from a unit

of production to a unit of consumption. In the new *family consumer economy*, family life involved decisions and activity related to the purchase and use of goods produced in specialized workplaces. The roles of various family members became much more sharply differentiated, with men as producers, women as homemakers, and children as dependents. This differentiation became increasingly evident among Canadian families as higher wages in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made single-income families a viable possibility. In this way, the family consumer economy became characteristic of urban, industrial society in Canada. The implications of this development extended beyond economic changes to include important changes in the size and structure of families. An examination of these changes provides the next link in understanding the historical development of the modern family.

Family Structure and Kinship

Recent studies have re-examined the ways in which the changing economic role of the family altered the size and structure of households. The traditional version of the transition describes a radical shift during the period of industrialization from large extended households to small nuclear units. This shift is said to involve not only a decline in fertility but also a decrease in kinship attachment beyond parents and children. However, research in different settings suggests that this traditional interpretation of the impact of industrialization needs to be reconsidered, both with respect to structural changes in the family and the importance of kinship.

Throughout Canada the size of families steadily declined after the mid-nineteenth century. Until this time a marriage was soon followed by the birth of the first child, and children continued to be born every two or three years, with the gap between each birth increasing as the parents aged. By the mid-1800s, however, this natural fertility began to be inhibited by the attempt to limit further pregnancies after a certain family size was achieved. The trend continued to grow in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before reaching a plateau at the modern average of about two children per family (Henripin, 1968; McLaren, 1971; Gagan, 1981; Katz, Doucet, and Stern, 1982). Many factors contributed to this development, including the production of better contraceptives and, more significantly, the gradual redefinition of children as consumers rather than producers. This redefinition first became apparent in more privileged families who were not dependent on their children's labour. Their fertility rates decreased more quickly than did those of rural and urban working-class families. Over time, however, the increasing dislocation of children from productive activity, both in agricultural settings and in the urban working class, encouraged these parents to similarly limit family size in order to minimize expenses. A study of the 1931 census showed that the families of wage-earners had, in fact, become on average considerably smaller than those of employers or those who were self-employed. The authors of this study sug-

gested that "limitation in family size for many people is the only alternative to poverty and misery" (Pelletier, Thompson, and Rochon, 1938:19). Thus, the dominant trend has been toward smaller and smaller families throughout the social structure.

Declining family size did not mean, however, that families became isolated nuclear units. Families continued to function within kinship networks throughout the transition from the family economy to the family wage economy and to the family consumer economy. The continuing importance of kinship is related to the fact that the stability of families has never been absolute at any point in the past. While contemporary instability due to the high incidence of separation and divorce is unprecedented, families have always faced uncertainty, especially with respect to health and material welfare. In the past, traditionally high rates of mortality meant that the disruption of marriage by the death of a spouse was not uncommon. Partial evidence from France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggests that about one-third of all children younger than age fourteen had lost one or both of their parents. One study in England indicates that one out of every five children was an orphan during these centuries (Tilly and Scott, 1978:28–29). While mortality rates declined in the New World as a result of better nutrition and lower population density, the stability of family units was constantly undermined by warfare and natural disasters. The important productive roles of both men and women made remarriage both common and necessary in preindustrial Canadian society, but new unions could only follow an inevitable period of family disruption. Thus, the history of orphans and single-parent families in Canada begins at the time of first settlement and not in recent years (Dechêne, 1974:107–09; Charbonneau, 1975:183–88).

Wage labour and industrialization ensured that families would face even more serious challenges to their stability, and they relied on kin to help in the search for employment and housing and to support them in times of need. Kin could be instrumental in securing employment for relatives at the same mill or factory where a family member already worked. Relatives could facilitate the migration of a family to a new area by providing temporary accommodation or information about available dwellings. The insecurity of employment and the need of many families for more than one income meant that kinship networks also represented a welfare system in which the hardships of certain families might be somewhat balanced by the relative well-being of others. This type of support was especially crucial in industrializing cities, where there was little formal assistance in the struggle to survive (Hareven and Langenbach, 1978).

The growing cities developed major sanitary problems, urban housing was very inadequate, and the new workplaces had inadequate ventilation and dangerous machinery. Illness, accidents, irregular employment, and low wages placed families in precarious positions if kin were unable to lend support. Even two-parent families were sometimes unable to care for their children. In nineteenth century Montreal, for example, some working-class parents dealt with family crises by temporarily placing their children in orphanages, where they could at least have

some food and shelter. When and if the situation of the parents improved, the children would be brought home again, perhaps to contribute to the family's survival by seeking employment themselves (Bradbury, 1982; Snell, 1983).

In the modern industrial economy, the responsibility of the family for the material welfare of its members declined with the professionalization of health care and the slow emergence of state aid for those in need. The traditional pattern of home births, home remedies, and informal kinship support systems has been replaced to a great extent by hospitals, clinics, and publicly funded welfare offices. The general direction of the twentieth century has been toward the building of public institutions to support individual existence (Strong-Boag, 1979; Struthers, 1983). Nonetheless, these institutions do not fully respond to individual needs, and families have maintained an important support role for family members as well as for kin. The process of industrialization may have encouraged some sense of individualism, but family and kin still provide an important framework for personal welfare.

The increased instability of the family during the urban growth and industrial development of the mid-nineteenth century caused considerable concern among politicians and other public leaders, who feared that widespread social disorder would result from the rapid pace of social change. These leaders believed that the family was in peril as a social institution, and so they promoted new ideals for family members, especially for women and children, who were most affected by the new modes of production. The major development for children was the establishment of schooling as a dominant experience in growing up. For women, the result was a definition of their responsibilities which limited them to the home and to the roles of wives and mothers.

The Establishment of Compulsory Schooling

The redefinition of the family as a unit of consumption rather than one of production paralleled the development of formal education as a major social institution. Over time, childhood and youth became an extended period of dependency when schooling was a characteristic experience. From the time of early settlement, schoolhouses appeared throughout Canada, but the need for children within family economies meant that formal education was limited to certain periods of the year, to certain age groups, and, generally, to a small elite. In the preindustrial economy, families were the dominant institutions for education, transmitting habits and values as well as vocational training. Childhood involved productive activity rather than reading and writing, and children learned practical skills from parents, older siblings, and relatives. In this context, age groups intermingled in both work and play. The children of the elite were an exception to this pattern, and among them both boys and girls received some training by religious orders. However, most children learned at home within the framework of the family unit (Gaffield, 1981; Moogk, 1982).

The pattern of learning at home continued during the early nineteenth century, when schooling was still limited to children from families with both the interest and the affluence to arrange privately for individual or small group instruction. However, attitudes toward formal education changed rapidly, especially during the 1840s and 1850s, when public concern mounted about the present and future behaviour of unoccupied children. The increasing removal of productive activity from the home left many children without time-consuming responsibilities within the family. Public leaders believed that the phenomenon of "idle youth" boded ill for the maintenance of social order in the major cities. This belief encouraged them to promote the building of schools where children could not only be supervised but also taught the values and habits considered essential in the new social context (Houston, 1972; Prentice, 1977).

The promotion of schooling by educators and politicians was facilitated by the construction of better roads and the growing population density, both of which made attendance much easier than in the scattered rural settlements of earlier times. Similarly, many parents came to see formal education as a necessary condition for successful participation in the new technological era. Literacy and arithmetical skills, for example, seemed to be high priorities in an increasingly complex society. As a result, general support for schooling emerged rapidly during the mid-nineteenth century, and within several decades all the Canadian provinces had comprehensive education systems (Katz, 1972).

The pattern of increased school attendance occurred throughout the social structure, although it was less pronounced among materially disadvantaged social groups, where youth remained associated with the search for productive opportunities. The continued need for some families to rely on child labour was actually reflected in the Ontario compulsory school attendance legislation of the early twentieth century, which stipulated that the officially accepted age of school leaving could be reduced by two years to age twelve if parents were able to demonstrate a need for income from their children. The 1911 census showed that children in Hamilton, for example, did in fact contribute substantially to the survival of working-class families. Employed children from the families of general labourers contributed just over 44 percent of total family income. This proportion varied among different working-class families, but the trend was consistent (Synge, 1979). The ideal of children as students was simply inappropriate for materially insecure families. Overall, however, children have spent a greater number of years in school and have been dependent on their parents for longer periods since the mid-nineteenth century.

The New Ideal of Womanhood

The redefinition of children as students was part of a new ideal for families which included a considerable narrowing of the female role in society. Separation of production from the home encouraged what historians have called the *cult of*

true womanhood, which defined women primarily as reproducers and creators of havens from the hustle and bustle of the productive world. The ideal woman was pure, pious, and submissive but also capable of effective nurturing and efficient household management. Despite the transformation of the family's economic role in society, the woman's place was still in the home. New attitudes to cleanliness, child rearing, and marriage led to a complex array of prescribed female duties to replace women's traditional participation in a family economy. The goal of these duties was to counterbalance the negative aspects of urban industrial development, which had moral and spiritual flaws since it was created by men, who were believed to be naturally less sensitive to the nonmaterial aspects of life. The role of women was to raise children and support husbands in ways which would offset the heartless nature of the marketplace. By the late nineteenth century the ways to create a proper family environment were specified in an extensive prescriptive literature which included books, pamphlets, and magazines describing the path to "true womanhood." This view was also institutionalized in the development of domestic science as part of the public school curriculum and as the accepted course of advanced study for women (Welter, 1966; Rowles, 1966; Morrison, 1976; Cook and Mitchinson, 1976; Stamp, 1977).

The most vigorous challenge to the exclusive definition of women as mothers and wives came from certain middle-class women who decided that the new ideal of womanhood could be effectively extended beyond the family and into the larger society. These women agreed with the basic concept of natural female virtue but argued that these "feminine" qualities had to be exercised not only in private but also in public spheres. And so middle-class women formed groups to speak out on temperance, child welfare, sanitation, and similar social issues which attracted concern in the late nineteenth century. The same beliefs motivated the "maternal feminism" of the suffrage movement which helped women gain the vote at most levels of government by the 1920s. By modern standards these early challenges to the cult of true womanhood may not seem very radical, since they operated within a framework of accepted gender distinctions. However, the activities of these reform groups demonstrate that women continued to be active agents in the historical process, despite their image of passivity and their restriction to the home.

Conclusion

The extent to which the economic changes associated with the emergence of modern society altered the family varied with social class. In general, the alterations were less extensive for working-class families than for middle-class families during the formative decades of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite the ideal family pattern of husbands as sole breadwinners, wives as mothers, and children as students, the concept of a family wage economy remained important as a result of insecure employment and low wages. The

economic growth of Canadian society from the late nineteenth century made the ideal of single breadwinners increasingly realistic, but many families still had to rely on supplementary income. The strong stigma against married women in the paid labour force placed a large economic burden on other family members, even young teenagers. In comparison to the general trend, a large proportion of working-class children continued to pursue job opportunities, and many of them did not attend school on a regular basis. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of working-class children in Hamilton, Ontario, for example, were already wage-earners by the age of fourteen. Some children from single-parent families worked full-time in local mills and factories (Synge, 1979; Brandt, 1981; Coulter, 1982).

Similarly, the concept of women as domestic nurturers has never been applied equally by all social groups at all times. In the twentieth century married women became a reserve labour force to be called upon when the supply of male workers did not match the number of job opportunities. During both world wars, married women worked in munitions factories, textile mills, and other establishments considered vital to the war effort. In these years the prejudice against employed wives was suppressed out of concern about the war effort (Pierson, 1977).

The role of women as a reserve labour force was extended after World War II to include employment to supplement family income during periods of high expenses, such as when older children were in university. More recently, our society has accepted in principle the idea that women should share equally with men in opportunities for vocational training and financial independence. However, many aspects of the nineteenth century ideals of womanhood continue to characterize the reality of contemporary family life. Employed women are still paid less than their male counterparts, and they remain fully responsible for most duties within the home (Luxton, 1980). The current position of women must therefore be evaluated with an understanding of the past, which reminds us that social ideals and social realities have only converged at particular points in time and among specific groups in society.

The evidence examined in this chapter emphasizes that an historical perspective should inform discussion of the current state of the family and of its future. The history of the family reveals the ways in which the development of a wage-labour economy and the process of industrialization affected the roles of men, women, and children, and thereby transformed social organization. The factors of age, gender, and social class have contributed to a diverse range of individual experience during this transformation. Within the general trends, family patterns have included elements of both change and continuity, stability and instability, cohesiveness and fragmentation.

It is not obvious that the historical trends describe either a prelude to the final crisis of the family or proof that the family is a truly resilient and permanent social institution. Serious research on the history of the family has

only been undertaken during the past two decades, and many basic questions have yet to be explored (Shorter, 1975; Stone, 1977; Lasch, 1977; Flandrin, 1979; Anderson, 1980; Parr, 1980; Rooke and Schnell, 1983). Moreover, the variety and amount of evidence available for research is limited, since all societies view routine family experience as unexceptional and thus not worthy of documentation. One inescapable conclusion, however, is that the family must be analysed within a larger social and economic context. The character and structure of families relate directly to the pressures and possibilities of the external material environment. In this sense, questions about the future of the family actually represent questions about the future of modern society.

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