The Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community

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INTRODUCTION

This essay examines the role of kinship in the process of migration and the adjustment of immigrant workers to industrial conditions. It focuses on three interrelated areas of kin activities: first, the recruitment of immigrant workers to the textile industry through the services of kin—a process which joins migratory origin and destination into one social system; second, the role of kin within the factory, particularly in hiring, job placement, and the control of work processes; and third, overlapping both processes, the general function of kin in critical life situations, most notably during periods of unemployment and insecurity. These three areas are explored empirically in a case study of French-Canadian immigrants in an American industrial community, Manchester, New Hampshire, from 1880 to 1930, a period encompassing both the peak of Manchester’s industrial development and its subsequent decline. The essay interprets these empirical findings in the context of sociological theories of kinship. In doing so, it points to those areas of research where sociological theories have influenced historical analyses of kinship; and conversely, it suggests the extent to which historical findings can reorient...

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current thinking about the role of kin and modify historical and sociological generalizations about family change.

Historians have only recently begun to view the role of kin as an important aspect of family behavior in the past. The recent literature on the history of the family has focused primarily on household structure, rather than on the organization and functions of kin. Historians' concentration on the household has led to a restricted definition of the functions of "family" to the household, thereby overlooking functions of extended family members who did not reside with the nuclear family. This concentration of the nuclear family was also partly a result of the recent historical effort to document the persistence of nuclear household structures in Western society over the past three centuries.²

This emphasis has reinforced the confusion of household with family and, except for preindustrial society, has confined most analysis of family structure to the household unit. Historical scholarship has thus contributed inadvertently to the myth of the "isolated nuclear family" in modern urban society, a myth reinforced by sociological theories. The theory of social breakdown pointed to the erosion of primary group relationships under the stress of the urban, industrial system, while its counterpart in modernization theory has emphasized the "fit" between the isolated nuclear family and the modern industrial system (Parsons 1943, pp. 22–23).³

Revisionist sociological studies by Litwak, Sussman, and others have documented the pervasiveness of informal kin relationships outside the confines of nuclear households in contemporary American society. Sussman has focused on patterns of mutual assistance to their aging parents from married children, and Litwak, one of the major challengers of the stereotype of the "isolated nuclear family" in modern American society, has viewed extended kin structures as a series of interconnected nuclear families. The focus of most of these studies is limited, however, to the relationships between extended kin members and the nuclear family. Kin interaction with larger social institutions, especially their role as intermediaries between individuals and nuclear families and the industrial system, has received less attention (Sussman 1959; Sussman and Burchinal 1962; Litwak 1960). Nor have changing functions and adaptations of kin been examined historically in relation to the process of industrialization. Smelser's contribution was significant in analyzing the role of the family in the early process of industrialization in England. His documentation of the recruitment of entire families as work units in the early

² For an overview of the field, see Hareven (1971, 1974), Demos (1970), and Greven (1970). The emphasis on the nuclearity of families over time is most striking in Laslett and Wall (1972) and Sennett (1971).
³ One challenge to this point of view is provided by Goode (1963).
factory system in England has challenged prevailing theories of family breakdown under the impact of industrialization. However, Smelser's claims that the phenomenon was limited to the first phase of the industrial revolution, that by the early 1830s, under the impact of advanced technology, family work had become differentiated, and that the family was dissolved as a work unit in the factory have been challenged recently by Anderson (1972). Anderson's study of family structure and the functions of kin in 19th-century Lancashire has documented the survival of vital kin functions among industrial workers in Preston, especially the continuation of family involvement with textile factories in the period 1830–50. Anderson also provides significant documentation for the vital role of kin in the process of migration and in adaptation to industrial conditions. His analysis is limited primarily to kin assistance in crisis situations, rather than to their continuing active role in the workplace. No comparable historical analysis of kinship in industrial communities has been attempted so far for the United States.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: MANCHESTER, N.H.

This study examines the role of kin among French-Canadian immigrant textile workers during the period 1880–1936. French Canadians comprised at least one-third of the labor force in the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in Manchester, New Hampshire, at the peak of the corporation's industrial development during the first two decades of the 20th century and during its subsequent decline. The Amoskeag Company provides an important setting for this study, because it enables us to document the interaction between the family and industrial work in the context of corporate paternalism at the turn of the century. Manchester, a city of 55,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 20th century, was the site of the world's largest textile mill, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, which employed an average of 14,000 workers each year.4

Originally developed by the Amoskeag Company as a planned textile community, Manchester, unlike the sister communities of Lawrence and Lowell on which it was modeled, continued to be dominated by the corporation that originally founded it in the 1830s. Following the example of the textile manufacturing towns on which Manchester was patterned, the Amoskeag Company recruited its early labor force from among rural New Englanders. From the 1850s on, immigrants from England, Scotland, and Ireland began to replace native American workers. In the

4 See Brown (1951), a company history, and Cremer and Coulter (1939). On classic, planned New England textile towns, see Ware (1942), Armstrong (1968), and Shlakman (1935).
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1870s, following the textile industry's discovery of French Canadians as a most "industrious" and "docile" labor force, the corporation embarked on the systematic recruitment of laborers from Quebec. By 1900, French Canadians constituted about 40% of the labor force in the mill and more than one-third of the city's population. While their migration continued through the first two decades of the 20th century, the corporation also absorbed small numbers of Germans and Swedes, followed by increasing numbers of Polish and Greek immigrants in the second decade of the 20th century.\(^5\)

As a planned industrial town, Manchester did not experience the classic problem of social disorganization generally attributed to urban living. The carefully designed and maintained corporation space, encompassing the mill yard and housing for a large segment of the work force, enclosed the workers in a total environment. The industrial environment was augmented by cohesive neighborhoods organized along kinship and ethnic lines which, from the late 19th century on, developed in a fan shape, radiating east, south, and west of the mill yard.

As will be detailed later, the social environment of the city, and particularly the changing history of the Amoskeag Company, significantly affected roles and relationships of kin. The period 1890–1919 represented the peak in the corporation's development as the world's largest textile factory under one roof. With the exception of a temporary slump during the recession of 1907, the Amoskeag Company reached its peak of production in 1911. During World War I, the corporation made its largest profits. Following the war, however, a curtailment of production set in, and from that point on the corporation went into a gradual decline resulting from its inability to confront Southern competition because of antiquated machinery, inefficiency, and relatively higher wages.

During the pre–World War I period, the Amoskeag Company introduced a series of efficiency measures and launched a new company welfare program which was grafted onto the continuing tradition of 19th-century paternalism. Following the war, the corporation was forced to curtail different aspects of production and gradually to taper its labor force. During this period, the workers began to experience an increasing breakdown in job security and a general deterioration in working conditions. The strike of 1922, the first major one in the company's history, lasted for nine months and marked a point of no return in the corporation's history. It virtually paralyzed the city. Following the strike, which failed completely from the perspective of both management and workers, the corporation never recovered full production. The labor force gradually dwindled, and

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\(^5\) These figures were computed from the nationality charts which the Amoskeag Company assembled for each year, from 1911 to 1929, found in the Amoskeag Records, Baker Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
most of the welfare programs were abandoned. Manchester began to experience serious unemployment from about 1926 on, and by 1933 the Amoskeag's labor force was reduced until it reached a mere 400 in 1936, the year of its shutdown (Creamer and Coulter 1939).

The role of kin in relation to the corporation is best understood in the context of industrial paternalism. Initially there was a close fit between corporation policy and the function of kin as intermediaries, paternalism in the factory system closely matching the hierarchical organization of the workers' families. As long as the corporation followed a policy of family employment, the balance between corporation policy and kin-group interest continued. After World War I, when a conflict of interest emerged, the balance was gradually shaken, and workers pitted their own interests against those of the corporation (Hareven 1975, pp. 365–89).

These historical changes in the corporation are particularly significant for our understanding of its interaction with the workers' families. The first half of the period studied here was marked by labor shortages, while the later half was marked by labor surplus and resulting unemployment, and therefore a weakening of the influence of kin on the corporation system. Preceded by a prolonged decade of decline, the sudden shutdown of the mills in 1936, which left two-thirds of the city's working population unemployed, placed a heavy burden on kin. It is possible, therefore, to examine the role of kin in periods of relative stability as well as in times of crisis.6

The dynamics of kin, particularly modes of adaptability, emerge more clearly when viewed over time than when examined at one point in time. Within the relatively short time period between 1880 and 1936, successive changes in the functions and effectiveness of kin can be examined in relation to the changing organization of production and labor policies within the corporation. This study utilizes longitudinal data files which have been reconstructed from individual employee files in corporation records and which have been subsequently linked with vital records and insurance records. It is thus possible to reconstruct, to some extent, the life and work histories of a sample of workers employed by the Amoskeag Company between 1910 and 1936. The individual employee files kept by the Amoskeag Company were particularly valuable for this study because they recorded all fluctuations in each worker's career within the mill, including stated reasons for leaving or dismissal. Beyond the reconstruction of individual careers, the project reconstructed family and kinship

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6 The United Textile Workers Union made its first inroads into the Amoskeag in 1918 during the World War I boom. A number of grievances heard before the union's grievance committee revolved around the protest of workers who were laid off or not rehired in the order of seniority, and who were replaced by relatives of other workers or of the overseer (Amoskeag company papers, Labor Records: Adjustment Files, Baker Library, Harvard University).
clusters of individual workers by linking the employee files with the city
directory, vital records, and fraternal insurance records (see Appendix).
In addition to these quantitative data, the study utilizes corporation
records and oral history interviews. While the quantitative analysis pro-
vides structural evidence for organization and behavior of kin, the oral
history interviews offer insight into the quality of relationships and into
their significance to the participants. The empirical analysis reported
here—while attempting to weld both types of evidence—actually presents
two different levels of historical reality, each derived from a distinct type
of data. While these two different types of evidence are mutually rein-
forcing, they also often reflect divergent experiences. For example, both
the quantitative and the qualitative data provide documentation for the ef-
ectiveness of kin in initiating workers into the factory system, but only
the qualitative data provide insight into the internal conflicts between
siblings or between children and parents resulting from the pressures of
joint work situations.7

THE FUNCTIONS OF KIN: RECRUITMENT AND MIGRATION

From approximately the beginning of the century through World War I,
workers fulfilled the corporation's expectations that they would bring
their relatives to the factory, assist in their placement, and socialize
them into industrial work. In their interaction with the corporation, kin
served as an informal recruitment and hiring agency. As the Amoskeag
Company began to recruit French Canadians systematically, manage-
ment again relied primarily on the workers' efforts to bring their relatives
to Manchester and to introduce them to work in their departments. The
corporation thus utilized the workers' own informal patterns by encour-
aging those already living in Manchester to attract their Canadian kin
and to provide the necessary support for newly arriving relatives. The
corporation could thus restrict its own efforts to organizing transporta-

7 The oral histories in the project consist of 300 two-to-four-hour interviews of
all surviving former workers in the Amoskeag Mills who are still living in Man-
chester and whom we were able to locate and interview. The edited interviews will
history has only recently been introduced as a source for historical research. Its validity
depends on the methods followed in gathering the interviews. In this instance, indi-
viduals were interviewed only after their family and work histories were reconstructed,
and narratives were checked carefully against the demographic and employment data.
Oral histories were utilized here as evidence of the manner in which historians have
traditionally employed other subjective sources, such as diaries or family letters. By
comparison to such sources, oral history suffers from being narrated many years after
the event and therefore possibly being weakened by faulty memory. On the other hand,
it has several advantages over literary documents. First, the interviewee recounts past
events with the perspective of hindsight, and second, the interviewer can address ques-
tions about the specific topics which are vital to the subject under investigation.
French-Canadian migration to Manchester was part of the general process of recruitment of French Canadians to New England textile towns which had begun shortly after the Civil War. By 1882 there were approximately 9,000 French Canadians in Manchester; according to the 1890 census, they constituted 28% of the city's population; and by 1910 they comprised one-third of the labor force in the Amoskeag Company. Informal recruitment through relatives continued throughout the first two decades of the 20th century. Workers who went to visit Canada on their vacation or to dispose of farmland back in their village encouraged others to migrate and often brought relatives back with them. The Amoskeag Company embarked on a formal recruitment campaign in Quebec, through *Le Canado-Americain*, the newspaper published by the Association Canado-Americaine in Manchester: "More than 15,000 persons work in these mills... It is true that the large company to which they sell their labor treats them as its own children." Kin recruitment and assistance in migration and placement meant, in effect, that the trainloads of workers from Quebec were not crowds of helpless people, moving in a disorganized fashion into completely unknown territory. They had already received some firsthand descriptions of the place to which they were going and most likely had someone awaiting them upon arrival. They also had many relatives who were still left behind in Canada. If things failed in Manchester, there was still a place to which they could return.

Chain migration formed the basic pattern. First came the young, unmarried sons and daughters of working age or young married couples without their children. After they found work and housing, they sent for other relatives. The S. family provides a classic example of chain migration: Eugene S. and his wife first migrated to Lisbon Springs, Maine, in the 1880s and worked in the textile mills there. Their first three children were born in Maine, and the S. family subsequently returned to Canada where the remaining four children were born. After the mother's death, the oldest son migrated to Manchester in 1908 and started working as a weaver; he then brought his father and all his younger brothers. The father entered the same weaving room that the son was working in; subsequently, each child entered the mills upon reaching age 14 or 16.  

8 No corporation records exist explicitly indicating an official recruitment policy based on kin, but this practice was generally followed until the 1920s, when the agent began to instruct overseers to refrain from hiring members of the same family or same ethnic group in one workroom.

9 *Le Canado-Americain* (November 10, 1913). This newspaper was published in Manchester by the Association Canado-Americaine, a fraternal insurance company founded by Theophile Byron, the French-Canadian overseer in the Amoskeag Company, and the only one for a long time to come. The Amoskeag utilized this paper for advertisement.

10 The history of the Simoneau family has been reconstructed from corporation records, vital records, and oral history interviews (see Appendix for methodology).
In families where most of the children had passed school age, first the oldest son went to Manchester, and the other children followed in age sequence. Once they were established, they encouraged their children and other relatives in Quebec to come to work in Manchester. Chain migration also ran through New Hampshire and Maine towns. While the major migration route led from Quebec to Manchester, there was also a good deal of circular and back-and-forth migration. One former worker articulated the migratory character of kin most strikingly and succinctly: 

“Our family was five minutes in Canada, and five minutes here. . . . One child was born here, one in Canada” (oral interview with Jean Dione).

Chain migration thus joined families in Manchester and Quebec into one social system. Kin assistance continuously flowed back and forth between Manchester and Quebec. Those who went to the United States spearheaded the migration for those left behind and prepared the housing and jobs, while those who remained in Quebec took care of the property and family responsibilities. In order to migrate, individuals needed not only assistance upon arrival but also psychological and economic support to be able to leave. In most cases, French-Canadian immigrants to New England industrial towns during the early part of the century did not consider their migration final. It was necessary, therefore, to have the informal approval of relatives, so the migration would not sever family ties, and to assure that the relatives remaining behind would help take care of the property or tend to the farm (often still functioning) while the owners migrated on a provisional basis.

While historians have already recognized the importance of kin in facilitating migration to the new country, they have paid less attention to the role of those relatives remaining behind. In this case, some of those left behind in Canada provided the security of someone to fall back on if the migrating family members failed in Manchester. The prospect of finding assistance, either upon a return to Canada during slack periods in Manchester or upon a return to settle permanently, was an essential aspect of the decision to migrate. Kin as backup were particularly instrumental for the first generation of immigrants, which was normally drawn to Manchester before the establishment of cohesive immigrant neighborhoods. The interaction between kin in Manchester and in Quebec was conditioned on exchanges in a variety of services.11

While the young or middle-aged people who were fit to work in the mills constituted the bulk of immigrants to Manchester, older parents, aunts, and uncles remaining in Quebec were cared for by those relatives who had stayed behind. Parents also tended to leave their young children with relatives until they were able to find jobs and housing in Manchester.

11 Based on oral history interviews of 25 French-Canadian immigrants who reconstructed their migration routes.
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Some parents did not send for their children until they reached the legal work age, or at least could pass for the legal work age, and then brought them down to start working in the mills. The birth of additional children led some to forget the older children who were left behind. Relatives remaining in Canada also performed important services in case of family breakdown. Young orphans were often sent back from Manchester to Quebec. Parents also sent back their sick children if they felt that the industrial environment was the cause of their illness (particularly in cases of eye, skin, or lung disease). Old people in Manchester also depended on their kin in Quebec. After having worked until their later years of life, some returned to their villages of origin to spend their last days with their own relatives and “to die at home.”12

Quebec also served as a refuge for pregnant but unmarried daughters for whom life in Manchester became unbearable because of shame and social pressure. Such women were sent to convents where they were kept until they bore their children. The unwanted children were given up for adoption or were taken to be raised by relatives, and the mothers either stayed in Canada or returned to work in Manchester.

The backup system provided by kin in Quebec proved particularly valuable during periods of unemployment during the strike of 1922 and during the shutdown in 1936, when entire families returned to Quebec following the curtailment of production and layoffs. Men who had left small towns of Quebec and Canada to search for quick advancement in industrial Manchester returned shamefaced during the strike of 1922 to seek assistance and employment.

The interaction between immigrants in Manchester and their kin in Quebec contributes to our understanding of the territoriality of kin. Most recent historical studies documenting the survival of kinship ties in the industrial environment have utilized geographic proximity as the chief measure of kin interaction. Bott has provided an important model of urban networks which has been subsequently applied to a variety of neighborhood and community studies in England and in the United States, most notably Peter Young and Michael Willmott’s study of East London and Herbert Gans’s study of Boston’s West End. While the Manchester data offer important examples of the interconnectedness of kin with neighborhood, which is central to Bott’s model, they also extend to the examination of kin as mobile units transcending the specific boundaries of one neighborhood community (Bott 1964; Young and Willmott 1957; Gans 1962).

The French-Canadian textile workers of Manchester studied here held

12 This recurring pattern has emerged from the oral history interviews. Because of the unavailability of systematic immigration data, the project has not reconstructed immigration routes quantitatively.
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many of the characteristics which Bott lists as generally conducive to forming strong kinship networks: geographic proximity, similarity in work (particularly where one local industry dominates the employment market) and in occupational status, similarity in migration patterns, and little opportunity for social mobility. Despite these common characteristics, the French-Canadian workers in Manchester differed considerably from Bott's London East Enders in their geographic mobility. While in Bott's community kinship networks gained their strength from the neighborhood, the Manchester study reveals that geographic mobility and kin dispersion over a wider region can be conducive, in their own way, to strong kinship networks.

In Manchester, as in mid-19th-century Preston and 20th-century East London, kinship networks were embedded in the industrial town. But the social space of French-Canadian kin extended from Quebec to Manchester and spread over other New England industrial towns. The local networks in Manchester and Quebec were obviously more intensive and provided help locally on a daily basis. Continuing ties with kin between the different communities fulfilled important functions, different in character from those of neighboring kin. Relatives back in Quebec or in Berlin, New Hampshire, Sacco and Brunswick, Maine, or Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts, provided some insurance in case of industrial disasters, layoffs, and shutdowns or when personal problems necessitated migration. The networks of relatives, besides serving as important backup systems, also enabled workers to experiment with different employment opportunities, to send their sons to scout out better jobs, or to marry off their daughters.

French-Canadian kinship behavior in Manchester thus demonstrates the importance of intensive networks in both one's immediate neighborhood and one's workplace, as well as the persistence of long-distance kinship ties laced through larger communities. Long-distance kin performed significant functions for migrant populations and were particularly effective for temporary migrants, at least at the initial stages of their migration. Geographic distance did not disrupt basic modes of kin cooperation, but rather revised and diversified priorities and modes of interaction. Under certain conditions, migration strengthened kinship ties and imposed new functions upon them, as changing conditions dictated. Kin affiliations in the new setting not only facilitated migration to and settlement in Manchester but also served as reminders and reinforcers of obligations and ties to premigration communities.

Appalachian mountain migrants to the North in the post–World War II period followed similar patterns. In their study of migration from Appalachia to Ohio, Schwarzweller and his colleagues concluded that "the kinship structure . . . provides a highly persuasive line of communication between kinsfolk in the home and in the urban communities. It channels informa-
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tion about available job opportunities and living standards directly, and therefore, it tends to orient migrants to those areas where kin groups are already established.” In this context, their definition of a “Migration System” is particularly pertinent to this study: “Two subsystems together form the interactional system in which we wish to consider the adjustment of a given group of migrants, individually and collectively. We have then, one migration system to consider, namely, the Beech Creek-Ohio migration” (Schwarzweller, Brown, and Mangalam 1971, pp. 94–95).

HIRING, PLACEMENT, AND JOB CONTROL

Kin fulfilled a major role in labor recruitment and in the placement of workers in Manchester. Routine functions in this area started with simple assistance in finding employment for newly arrived immigrants or young relatives coming of age and later developed into the more complex service of specifically placing relatives in preferred jobs and departments. Workers utilized the good offices of their relatives who were already working in the mill and were able to exploit their good relations with the overseers to place their kin, especially the young ones, in rooms where the “bosses” were known to be safe and paternal and where parents did not fear their daughters’ exposure to bad habits. As will be detailed later, these informal patterns of placement eventually influenced the composition of workrooms and the work process within them. Workers continued to influence these informal patterns of recruitment, through the overseers, even after the introduction of a formal employment office by the Amoskeag in 1911.

Under the centralized employment system, an overseer still retained the privilege of requesting a specific worker through the employment office. If a worker did not immediately find an appropriate place, relatives were watching, and when an opening appeared in a suitable workroom they arranged for a transfer. The size of the corporation, with its many departments and the existence of several workrooms for each operation, made such transfers possible. The presence of a relative in a desirable workroom facilitated matters, particularly if he or she interceded with the overseer to request a particular worker from the employment office. The clerk who ran the employment office from its establishment in 1911 until 1929 articulated the degree of family control of the employment process. Having been appointed to introduce a centralized and depersonalized hiring system, he proceeded to hire his own relatives, one after another: “First I came, then I brought my father, then my brother and my sister and then my wife. That’s how you do it. Don’t misunderstand

13 On the establishment of the employment office of the Amoskeag Company, see “Notices to Superintendents and Overseers,” 1910 (Amoskeag Company papers).
me. You can't make a job... but if there is a job, family comes first.¹⁴ His statement in itself contradicts his *raison d'être*. Overseers supported recruitment through kin because they were thus assured of having a position filled by someone they trusted. They could also rely on workers to teach their jobs to newly arrived relatives and to hold some responsibility for the new workers. As a result of this informal recruitment process, clustering along kinship and ethnic lines in the mill became common practice.

Analysis of the kinship networks of the French-Canadian workers in the different workrooms reveals patterns of kin clustering: out of 717 French-Canadian workers in the original sample of the individual employee file, 75.6% had relatives working in the mill at any time, without necessarily overlapping (table 1). These findings are conservative, since the reconstruction of kinship work clusters is limited to those retrieved through the linkage of employee files with vital records (see Appendix) and thus does not include all kin working in the mill but only those whom we were able to identify. Even so 75.6% of the entire sample of French Canadians had one or more relatives working in the mill.

These figures reveal the tendency of members of the same family to work in the Amoskeag mills. Of 121 clusters for whom kin relationships were established, 20.7% included both husband and wife working in the mill, 23.1% had couples and their parents working in the mills, and 24.1% had extended kin as well as members of the nuclear family working in the mills (table 2).

The most frequent correlation, which involved two members of the same kin group working in the same department, was repeated 93 times and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relatives Ever in the Mill</th>
<th>Percentage (N = 717)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 and more</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean N relatives ever working in the mill</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.—I am grateful to Merle Sprinzen for advice in the presentation of these tables.

¹⁴ Interview of a former employment office clerk in the Amoskeag, Joseph Debski.
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TABLE 2
KINSHIP CLUSTERS WORKING IN THE MILL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Adjusted Percentage*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original informant only</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife only</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and/or wife and their parents</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife and their children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear and other members</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total number of kinship clusters working in the mill for which exact relationships of all members are known. The reconstruction of the kinship clusters is explained in the Appendix.
† The small percentage of children working with their own parents is a result of the linkage and trace process: Since marriage and employment records were used predominantly for the trace, it was impossible to retrieve larger numbers of sons and daughters who were still unmarried, living at home.

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF TIMES MEMBERS OF KINSHIP CLUSTERS WORKED IN THE SAME DEPARTMENT AT ANY TIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin in a Department</th>
<th>Times This Occurred</th>
<th>Percentage of Times This Occurred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

constituted 61.6% of all coincidences of kin (table 3). These figures represent kin working in the same department, but not necessarily at the same time. They demonstrate, however, the tendency of members of the same family to hold certain occupations in the same departments. Once a family member was established in a particular department, it was only natural for other relatives to follow, even if the original family member was not working there anymore.

Even more significant for socialization and mutual assistance was the tendency of relatives to coincide in the mills at the same time. This tendency is evident in table 4. Of 103 instances of overlap of kin, there were 65 instances (63.1%) involving two or more members at the same time and 21 instances (20.4%) involving three members. Of the 105 clusters working in the mill, 59% had two or more members working at the same time (table 5). Members of two generations in the same kin group coincided or overlapped frequently; of the kinship clusters with known relationships, 65.7% had two generations of the same family work in the mills at the same time (table 6).

The frequency of these overlaps in different workrooms is also significant. Out of 151 instances of departmental overlap, the highest incidence
occurred in the weave room and the spinning room. Thirty-one percent of all overlaps occurred in the weave departments and 34% in the spinning departments. This high frequency reflects the character of these two departments: They had the highest concentration of semiskilled workers, were the two most populated departments, and attracted French Canadians in large numbers. These were also the departments to which sons and daughters were typically sent for their apprenticeship. The dress room, the card room, and the spool room also accounted for 7.6%, 5.3%, and 8%, respectively, of all instances of overlapping. Kin also overlapped in the boiler room (6%), in the yard (2.6%), and in the bleach room (6%). The tendency of relatives to drift to certain workrooms was common to most of the family clusters analyzed.

In assessing the significance of these patterns, it is important to keep in mind that the large number of French Canadians in the mills is in itself merely the natural outcome of the high concentration of French Canadians in the city and the dependence of a major part of the working population on the Amoskeag. The critical fact, though, is that so much clustering occurring in the same workrooms suggests a conscious tendency of kin to work in related occupations and in the same place. There were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TIMES MEMBERS OF KINSHIP CLUSTERS WORKED IN THE SAME DEPARTMENT AT THE SAME TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kin in a Department</td>
<td>Percentage of Times This Occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Occurred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 103)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ..................</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ..................</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ..................</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more ...........</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RELATIVES COINCIDING IN KINSHIP CLUSTERS WITH MEMBERS WORKING IN THE SAME DEPARTMENT AT THE SAME TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members Coinciding</td>
<td>Clusters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ..................</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ..................</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ..................</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ..................</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6</th>
<th>GENERATIONS IN EACH CLUSTER WORKING IN THE MILL AT THE SAME TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generations Working in the Mill at the Same Time</td>
<td>Clusters (N = 105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None ...........</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ..................</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ..................</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ..................</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dynamics of Kin

in fact family-specific workrooms: rooms to which members of the same family tended to return again and again, while members of another family turned to a different workroom.

The advantages of kin clustering for the development of individual careers have not yet been systematically analyzed for this project. All other factors remaining constant, were workers with kin present in the workrooms or with strong kin connections more likely to advance than others? Preliminary findings on this project have begun to suggest that those whose parents or other relatives had developed stable work lives in the mill were more likely to find better jobs, to have more options, and to advance occupationally. Kin were particularly important in the beginning of one's career, when their presence in the same workroom not only might have made the difference between finding or not finding a job but also offered the guidance and support needed on first entry into the factory by their young relatives. The presence of kin helped initiate the new worker into the techniques and social regulations involved in the job. But the development of a successful career in the mill depended on more than the mere presence of kin. It was related to how well connected these kin were, to their reputation, and to their status in the mill.

Given the nature of textile work and the size and structure of the mill, kin assistance cushioned the first encounter of young men and women with their job. Generally, young men and women started their first job at 14 or 16; they were typically brought to the employment office or to a workroom by a relative, at first for temporary work during school vacations and subsequently for full-time employment. They learned their first jobs from their own relatives in a specific workroom; this saved time for the corporation and made special training and apprenticeship programs superfluous. Workers were able to continue their own work while teaching their relatives, at least in the period preceding the piece-rate system. The significance of this practice is clear, especially in the context of what is generally considered an impersonal industrial system, where each worker presumably represents only one link in the production system and where the factory environment is considered alienating and threatening. In reality the workers created their own world within the factory, a world in which kinship ties and family status were used to manipulate the system. Parents, older brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and cousins invested in the training of their progeny or young kin because the work was essential to the household economy, because they wanted their relative to succeed in the factory, and because they wanted to transmit their own work ethic to the younger generation and to newly arrived immigrants.

A worker who already had relatives in the mill did not walk into a social vacuum when starting to work. Relatives were present to help, to instruct, to facilitate, and to prod. Beyond the immediate assistance ex-
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tended by present kin, kinship ties also carried with them a specific frame of reference. Workers entering the factory bore the label of their kin. An individual was identified and often judged by the family to which he or she belonged or by association with other known relatives in a department. Incoming workers partly inherited the status of relatives already present in the mill. A young girl would be labeled immediately as Joe DuBois's daughter or Anna Gagnon's niece. The sins of the fathers were not necessarily being visited upon the sons, but neither was a worker uniformly treated as an independent agent. The reception accorded a worker depended largely on the standing and interpersonal relations of his or her relatives. In this respect, kinship ties bestowed advantages as well as disadvantages.

Some workers preferred, therefore, to enter as free agents rather than to carry the assets or bear the stigma of their kinship ties. Several young men mentioned unwillingness to work with their father as a reason for leaving their jobs. Children or close relatives of overseers preferred not to be in the same workroom as their overseer father in order to allay any suspicion that they were being treated more favorably than the other workers—a suspicion which might provoke a conflict situation or cause them to be discriminated against.15

The continuity between family ties and work relationships in the factory was pervasive even though the workplace was separated from the home. In contrast with modern society, where taking a job generally involves an individual's separation from the family of orientation and the assumption of at least a partially independent career, young Amoskeag workers carried their family affiliations into the factory system. Family ties in the workplace, along with continued residence of unmarried daughters and sons at home and their contribution of most of their wages to the family, show how little individual autonomy was actually achieved with the commencement of a first job.

Learning jobs from relatives and carrying out the first few weeks of work under their supervision had the tremendous advantage of obtaining tips on shortcuts and "tricks" along with established work procedures. Particularly important were the nonverbal techniques which workers could transmit to each other, primarily through observation, and which had a personalized style. By imitating such techniques or by adapting them to one's own tempo, it was possible to control the pace of work and even secure some leisure time between rounds. Older relatives in the mill also provided comfort, reassurance, and a sense of belonging. The unspoken but clearly conveyed code of behavior in the workrooms, and the presence of more experienced workers from one's family group, made new workers

15 The reluctance to work with fathers, husbands, wives, or siblings was mentioned in five instances of oral interviews.
—particularly young women—less vulnerable to the liabilities in the system. Parents took this into consideration when trying to decide which room to send their children to.

Relatives were also instrumental in making arrangements in work loads or conditions which could not be achieved through regular channels. Marie Landry, for example, wanted to be assigned a set of window looms because she had problems with her eyesight. The "boss" told her that she would have to wait her turn till such a set became available. One day she asked permission to switch with her son, who had window looms, and the next morning the son gave notice. The overseer knew that the timing of the switch was premeditated, but there was little he could do about it.

Relatives present in the same workroom provided some protection from accusations by second hands or from misunderstandings and conflicts, particularly where filing a formal grievance was involved, because they were able to support each other and corroborate each other's statements. Susan Gagne was dismissed by the "boss" because she had missed one day without notifying him that she was sick. When she reported for work the next day the second hand asked her to leave. She was ready to leave when her sister, who spoke English, interceded on her behalf and filed a grievance with the Adjustment Board. Susan was reinstated (Grievance Files, Amoskeag Company 1920, 1922). When workers lost their tempers with one another or with the "bosses," relatives frequently interceded on their behalf to smooth things out, to apologize, or to bring about a compromise. Having the relatives or close friends present was also particularly important where different aspects of the work process were structurally interconnected and where the speed of one worker depended on that of his fellow workers.

Relatives took turns running machinery and taking breaks, and substituted for each other during illness, childbirth, or trips to Canada. They helped their slower kin to complete their piece-work quota, and, most important, out of consideration for each other they rarely exceeded what they had established as the generally accepted limit. This type of family work pattern was particularly important insofar as older workers were concerned. It gave them the opportunity to trade their know-how and skill for assistance from younger relatives in more speedy and taxing jobs. Where a family group was together, as in the case of the Scottish dyehouse workers, it was possible for them to keep Old Spence or Old Joe on the job, as long as younger relatives were carrying out the more physically taxing tasks. Old Spence traded skill and know-how for physical assistance (interview with Tom Smith, former overseer of the dye house). Relatives thus provided mutual support in facing supervisors and in handling the work pace. The presence of relatives in the same workroom, especially if they were well respected or in supervisory positions, sheltered
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workers from being laid off, protected them against fines, and provided support in case of mistreatment by management or conflict with other workers.

Family manipulation of the work process could provide a partial explanation for the absence of unions from the Amoskeag until World War I. As long as the corporation's paternalism was in harmony with the workers' familistic orientation, and as long as the flexibility in the system enabled the workers to exercise controls informally, they showed little enthusiasm for union membership. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the union recruited its first large membership and was in fact successful in calling a strike during a period when family control of the work process was on the decline.

LIMITATIONS OF KIN ASSISTANCE

So far, we have discussed the role of kin as intermediaries in providing important support mechanisms for the workers. In the ensuing pages, we will examine the areas in which kin manipulation of the system and the strong family character of the work process carried built-in weaknesses.

The integration of kin into the work process occasionally posed serious challenges. In a setting where relatives were considered responsible for each other's performance and where new workers were hired on a relative's recommendation, how did one deal with a relative who was incompetent or who abused the system by lack of discipline or violating basic rules of behavior? How far did loyalty to kin go? Workers were not held responsible for the misbehavior of a relative, but if that particular relative was hired on their recommendation, this diminished their chances of having other relatives hired in the future. Another problem was competition with one's own kin. Did one hide the fact of being a better worker? Did one slow down in order to protect a slower relative, or give up one's lunch break to fix the warps for young relatives (as many fathers, mothers, aunts, and uncles actually did), or forfeit a share of the piece rate?

The introduction of piece work and the increase of speed of production imposed additional pressures on relatives. While once they had been willing to teach skills to their younger relatives, they now had to be more jealous of their time. One woman recalled that when she started working as a learner in the spinning room, her sisters warned her specifically not to alert the employment office to their presence in the mill, because they did not want to be saddled with teaching her the job. She started work, therefore, in another room, and only after she had learned how to spin did she ask to be transferred to work with her sisters. A number of grievances reflect the workers' anxiety over being pressured by the boss to teach a skill to other workers without the proper adjustments for loss of piece-
rate time. In all the grievances on this issue, management upheld the worker’s rights not to be forced to engage in such teaching without being compensated on an hourly rate (Grievance Files, Amoskeag Company, 1919–21).

Under a system where most of the working members of a kin group worked for the same employer, the efficacy of kin depended greatly on the factory system itself. Kin functioned best under the conditions of labor shortage and a more loosely organized hiring system which prevailed prior to World War I. During periods of labor surplus, which became increasingly common after World War I, kinship ties were still extremely useful in finding a job, particularly as daily and nightly lines in the employment office became at once endless and hopeless. At the same time, having an entire family group work in the same place made all members vulnerable to changing economic conditions in the factory. The strike of 1922, the subsequent decline of the mill, and particularly its final shutdown in 1936 revealed the family’s liabilities to the insecurities of the industrial system. Even prior to the strike, some of the workers interviewed had tried to prevent such situations by having certain relatives work in shoe factories. This type of foresight was rare, however.16

During tense periods, the Amoskeag’s workers gradually discovered the built-in liabilities in the dependence of a family group on one employer. It meant that they were unable to assist each other, because they found themselves unemployed at the same time. During the strike and the shutdown, families were unable to share their resources, because, having continuously functioned on a narrow margin of subsistence, they had very few or no resources left to transfer. The strike also pitted relatives against each other. The issue of whether to strike or be a scab divided many families and caused conflicts which took years to overcome, long after the strike. Certain relatives, in fact, have not been on speaking terms since 1922.17

As external conditions rendered local kin assistance ineffectual, long-distance kin proved extremely valuable. Workers in Lowell and Lawrence, and in certain cases in Rhode Island, found jobs for unemployed Manchester relatives and shared housing with them while they had to commute. Some families migrated to Lowell and Lawrence, never returning to Manchester or returning only in the early forties, when small individual textile mills opened up in the empty structures of the giant mill complex. Others returned to Canada temporarily and worked in the textile mills in Trois Rivières. For the commuters, the presence of relatives in other New England industrial towns was critical. Women with a mother

16 The increase in intermittent employment has been documented (see Creamer and Coulter 1939, pp. 271–80).
17 This was a recurring theme in the interviews of 20 workers who had experienced or witnessed the strike.
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or an aunt nearby were able to work in those towns during the week while their children were being cared for by relatives. In many instances, husband and wife went to Lawrence and an older female relative kept the children for the entire week. During such periods of failure in the factory system, the effectiveness of kin as migrant agents continued. In this instance, the route of migration was reversed. Earlier, workers brought their kin into the factory in Manchester; now other kin enabled them to find temporary or more permanent work in other towns or to migrate back to Canada. The existence of fluid kinship networks throughout New England ensured that the needs of unemployed workers for temporary jobs and housing would continue to be met.18

**INSTRUMENTALITY OF KIN**

In his study of 19th-century Lancashire, Anderson uses exchange theory as an explanation for mutual assistance among kin. Anderson’s emphasis on instrumental relationships is particularly relevant for Manchester, New Hampshire. Although the time period is different, Manchester shares several characteristics with Preston. In a low-resource working-class community, consisting of a high proportion of immigrants, kin provided a crucial economic and social resource. The Manchester experience also points to the areas in which economic exchange theory could be revised in relation to a different social and historical setting. The oral history interviews of former workers in Manchester—which, of course, were not available for Preston in 1850—provide vital information on their own perceptions of instrumental relationships (Anderson 1972).

What did instrumental relationships mean in the context of Manchester? Basically, they fell into two categories: short-term routine exchanges in services and assistance in critical life situations, and long-term investments in exchanges along the life course. Short-term assistance involved sharing in housing, food, babysitting, tools, and supplies; assistance during illness or death; short-term loans; and assistance in the construction of a house. In an urban setting, exchanges in skills, goods, and services were routine, rather than being limited strictly to crisis situations. For example, mill workers supplied their relatives with cheap cloth and received farm products in exchange. Plumbers, masons, etc., traded services with each other, and storekeepers exchanged merchandise for medical or legal assistance from relatives.

18 Over the decade 1920–30, Manchester lost 10,580 individuals, or 13.5% of the city’s population, to out-migration (Creamer and Coulter 1939, p. 290). Part of this migration was temporary, however. The oral history interviews provide ample evidence for the circular migration which these individuals experienced. What appear, therefore, as final separations were actually only temporary absences.
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Long-range investments were more demanding and less certain in their future returns. The classic exchange along the life course is that between parents and children, based on parents' expectations of old-age support in return for their investment in child rearing. The choice of godparents also represented long-term exchanges. In return for the honor of the position, godparents assumed obligations of future assistance to their godchild. Well-to-do relatives were, therefore, preferred as godparents. Under conditions of high migration, exchanges across different stages of the life course also took place between aunts and uncles and their nieces and nephews. The former frequently acted as surrogate parents for their newly arrived young relatives in Manchester (oral history of Anna Champagne and Simone St. Laurent).

Such exchanges were horizontal as well as vertical. Horizontally, aunts and uncles were fulfilling obligations to brothers or sisters by taking care of nieces and nephews; vertically, they were entering into exchange relationships with their nieces and nephews who might assist them later in life. In large families, given the wide age discrepancy between siblings in the same family, exchanges along the life course also took place between older and younger siblings, particularly in one-parent families where an older brother or sister acted as a surrogate parent for the younger siblings. While the benefits in short-term exchanges are more clearly understandable, it would be difficult to conceive of long-range exchanges as resting exclusively on a calculative basis. For example, many men and women sacrificed their opportunity for marriage because of the need to support their parents. Many couples interviewed in Manchester carried on 20-year-long courtships, and some did not marry until they reached their late thirties or forties, because they had to support their parents while their sisters were getting married. With these economic constraints and insecurities, personal preferences clearly had to give way to collective family strategies. Members of the nuclear family took priority over more distant kin, even if a more distant relative might have been potentially a better contributor to the exchange bargain. The young women who postponed their marriage or never married did so out of a sense of responsibility and affection for their parents or siblings. In particular, those women who acted as surrogate-parents did so because preservation of family autonomy was essential for their self-respect and standing in the neighborhood and ethnic community (oral history of Joanna Duchesne).

Self-reliance was one of the most deeply ingrained values, but in this case it meant familial autonomy rather than individualism. When asked where they turned for help in case of need, very few of the interviewees mentioned the church or ethnic mutual aid associations. (The latter provided social activity and fraternal insurance). For assistance, one turned
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to the family. Very few workers actually turned to strangers for help. Most of the workers were too proud to accept help from the city welfare office or the union store during the strike. The first large-scale acceptance of public welfare occurred in the 1930s when, after enduring unemployment and the subsequent shutdown of the mills, workers turned to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Works Progress Administration as they opened up in Manchester.

Family considerations, needs, and ties guided or controlled most individual decisions. Migration to Manchester, the finding of jobs and housing, leaving the mill, or returning to Canada were all enmeshed in collective family strategies, rather than individual moves. Families, as seen by participants in this study, might be described as units consisting of multiple interchangeable molecules which could be switched around as the need arose. Each unit could be relied upon and utilized when appropriate. Families followed internal schedules of timing as to when to migrate, whom to leave behind, when to return, when to bring those who were left behind to rejoin the family in Manchester, whom to send to boarding school with the nuns, whom to send back to the farm, whom to encourage to explore working conditions in other New England industrial towns, whom to allow to marry, and whom to pressure to stay home and at what point in time.

Collective family needs were not always congruent with individual preferences. Nor did subordination of individual needs to family decisions take place without conflict. Many of the interviewees who had sacrificed personal preferences for familial needs expressed long-repressed anger and pain during the interview. The family was the matrix within which career as well as economic choices were made. But internal family decisions were closely connected to the changing fortunes and organization of the work place. Work careers did not spring from individual choices, and work itself was not an isolated undertaking. The family offered its members the main incentives, but it also presented them with the major obstacles. Even the metaphor by which other organizations and aspects of life were perceived and judged was based on the family. Good working relations in the mill were perceived like good family relations: “We were all like a family.”19 It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the workers perceived the shutdown of the mill not only as a personal catastrophe but also as the breakdown of the mill family.

While such historical studies of kinship as Anderson’s reveal the strength of kin in providing support during critical life situations, the Manchester study also points to areas of real or potential conflict resulting from the pressures imposed on individuals to subordinate their own needs to family

19 The statement “We were all like a family” was repeated by most former workers interviewed.
strategies. Anna Champagne, for example, later resented the fact that she had to start working at age 14 and to postpone her own marriage because she was left as the last child of working age who could support her parents, while her older sisters all decided to get married. Being the youngest child in her case meant having to leave school and to start work earlier and subsequently to continue to support her mother. Her mother made up for this, however: While the other daughters had to assemble their own dowry chests and buy their own wedding gowns, Anna received from her mother a dowry chest with a complete set of household equipment and eventually also the family’s sewing machine. Having sacrificed her youth, she felt that she should have at least inherited the parental home. But the older sister who came back into the picture shortly before her mother’s death was the one to receive the home because she cared for the mother in the last years of her life. Having grown up in a large family and having had first-hand experience of the pressures imposed by kin, Anna drew the lines with her husband’s family immediately after marriage: She refused to pay her mother-in-law’s credit charges and made it very clear to her husband and her mother-in-law that: “I put my foot down the first year that I got married and we got along swell. When they used to come and visit and ask to borrow money, I said: ‘Listen, I don’t go down to your house to bother you. I’m happy with my husband and get the hell out. Don’t come here and try and borrow anything from him or from me’ ” (interview of Anna Champagne). Interestingly, despite her resentment of large families and her own bitterness toward her siblings, it is Anna Champagne who keeps the most complete family albums and who follows the traditional Quebec custom of maintaining a family genealogy. Her personal resentment of the intrusions of kin into her own privacy was divorced from her ideological commitment to keeping a complete family record for posterity.

Louise Duchesne and her fiancé postponed marriage until their mid-30s because he had to support a widowed mother and an old-maid sister. After the mother finally died, they decided to get married. The old-maid sister went to live in an apartment, but Louise always instructed her housekeeper “to give her a hot meal when she’d come by” (interview of Louise Duchesne). Laura DuBois, the youngest of six sisters, all of whom worked in the mills, has become isolated from her sisters ever since they accused her of cashing in their father’s insurance money after his death and of using it for her own needs. Since she was the last remaining daughter at home, and took care of her father until his death, she felt that she was entitled to the money. Marie Duvall resents even now the fact that she was sent to work in the mill at age 14, while her two brothers were sent to the Priests’ Seminary. At age 60, she is now finally graduating from high school and is expressing this repressed resentment to her 85-
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year-old mother and to her brother (interview of Laura DuBois and Marie Duvall).

CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF KIN AND THE MODERNIZATION PROCESS

Recent historical evidence has tended to reverse sociological stereotypes of family breakdown under the impact of migration. There is the danger, however, that an oversimplified revisionism may generate new stereotypes. The notion of premigration networks transferred intact into a new setting represents one such stereotype. Some out-of-context misunderstandings of the concept of “urban villagers” have led to a filiopietistic interpretation, which views immigrants in modern American cities as “old-country” peasants. A systematic differentiation among intact transfers, modifications of traditional patterns, and new adaptations will considerably advance our understanding of the role of kin in the process of modernization. The Manchester experience suggests that what has been considered a survival of premodern patterns may actually represent modern responses to new conditions. French-Canadian immigrants initially carried over kinship ties and traditional practices of kin assistance into Manchester. They subsequently adapted their kin organization to the new industrial system, developing new modes of interaction and adopting new functions.20

Although the basic kinship structures had been imported from rural Quebec, their functions were responsive to the demands of industrial production. Such functions were considerably different from those customarily performed by kin in rural society. They required familiarity with bureaucratic structures and organizations, adherence to modern work schedules, planning in relation to the rhythms of industrial employment, specialization in tasks, and technological skill. The roles assumed by kin in organizing the work process, hiring young relatives, and negotiating the pace of production and the quality of materials all entailed a mastery of advanced, “modern” activities. So did the handling of industrial schedules and piece rates, as well as the understanding of interrelated industrial processes and the relative significance of different factors in turning out high quality products at a rapid pace. All this required a level of expertise and sophistication that would be expected of overseers and management. The role of kin in all these areas, as well as in handling the Manchester housing market, required an understanding of the complexity and diversity inherent in an urban, industrial system. The use of kinship ties by the workers of Manchester represented, therefore, an important step in the direction of

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20 This study has not yet analyzed comparatively kinship patterns in the Quebec communities of origin. The current discussion relies, therefore, on Horace Miner's analysis of rural kinship in the parish of St. Denis (Miner 1939) and for urban kinship patterns on Philippe Garigue (1956).
modernization, but it also represented an important carry-over from the past.

Modernization theory has frequently cited individuals' integration with kin as an obstacle to modernization. The Manchester data suggest that, rather than "holding down individuals" and delaying their mobility, kin conveyed individuals and families from preindustrial to industrial settings. Kin also served as agents of adaptation and modernization by providing examples and role models, as well as by offering direct assistance. The historical process was not "either/or." Under the insecurities of the factory system, the selective use of kinship ties was part of survival strategy and, under certain circumstances, was essential for mobility (Moore 1965, p. 77).\textsuperscript{21} The functions of kin varied considerably with the industrial conditions and at different points in the life course. Continuing research on this project will hopefully distill those conditions under which kin served to facilitate matters from those where they added burdens.

The model which has been employed most frequently to explain historical changes in the family is that of differentiation. According to this model, the transfer of functions previously held by the family to other social institutions was generally followed by a weakening in the formal functions of kin.\textsuperscript{22} The consummation of this process is the takeover by the welfare state of the reciprocity and mutual assistance functions previously held by kin, particularly child welfare and old-age support. This model considerably oversimplified the process of historical change, particularly insofar as working-class life is concerned. In the United States, the social security system has partly eliminated the elderly's economic dependency on kin for subsistence. Beyond that, however, the welfare system has not replaced most of the other functions of kin discussed above. One particular area in which kin still retain a viable role is in sociability and psychological support. The segregation between age groups and their isolation from each other which has characterized middle-class family life has not yet fully penetrated working-class life. Most of the former workers interviewed in Manchester still interact frequently with their relatives and are dependent upon them not only for sociability but also for various services which are unavailable or considered undesirable if obtained through state or city programs. This is particularly true for the cohort now in its eighties, which survived the shutdown and the Great Depression without turning to city welfare and to relief.

The increase in the value of privacy and individualism, particularly as

\textsuperscript{21} For a critique of modernization theory in relation to history of the family, see Hareven (1976).

\textsuperscript{22} Smelser (1959) is the most detailed explanation of the process of differentiation as it applies to the history of the family. Anderson (1972) uses differentiation theory as an explanation for the transfer of welfare functions from kin to public welfare institutions.
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enshrined in the ideology of the modern nuclear family, has further tended to enforce the stereotype of the structural and functional isolation of the nuclear family in modern society. But a number of sociological studies since the fifties have begun to disprove this isolation and to document the continuing interaction between middle-aged and older parents and their adult children as well as among other relatives (e.g., Litwak 1960). In American society in general, and in the working class in particular, kin has continued to function as an important resource. The nature and uses of kin vary considerably among the different ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes and along different stages of the life course. These variations are subject to continuing and future exploration.

CONCLUSION

This study obviously represents only the first stage of a more comprehensive analysis of kinship patterns in industrial communities. It still leaves a series of questions for further exploration: How did degrees of intensity in kin interaction correlate with different degrees of affinity? What was the difference, for example, between interaction with kin on the mother's side and kin on the father's side? What were the relative roles of men and women in developing and maintaining kinship networks and in shaping different modes of interaction? To what extent did kinship ties hinder or advance social and occupational mobility outside the mill? The extent to which kin also facilitated the movement of individuals into urban white-collar or mercantile occupations also remains an open question.

Another major area which is still subject to exploration is the relative role of several overlapping but not completely identical networks. Most of the individuals studied here were involved in kinship networks, workroom networks, ethnic networks, and neighborhood networks, all of which were enmeshed with each other. Further analysis will have to differentiate, however, among these networks and to identify the functional boundaries and sources of potential conflict between them.

Serious questions must be raised also about the degree of typicality of this study. The textile industry has been particularly alluring to students of the family because of its practice of family employment. This study shares, therefore, the limitations of Smelser's and Anderson's studies, namely, its lack of comparability with other industries involving a role segregation between men and women, such as mining or metal industries. Hopefully future historical research will examine such communities as well.

Despite these limitations, these findings, although incomplete, begin to

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23 On privatism in middle-class family life, see Ariès (1962) and Sennett (1971).
24 See Bott (1964) and Gans (1962). Both document the difference between kin interaction on the wife's and husband's sides, respectively.
Dynamics of Kin

suggest some direction for a reconsideration of theories of kin and family behavior. First, the Manchester study documents the survival of premigration kinship networks in an urban, industrial setting. Second, and more important, it shows that the function of kin in modern industrial communities represented not merely an archaic carry-over from rural society but rather the development of new responses to needs dictated by modern industrial conditions. Third, this study suggests some direction for a reassessment of the territoriality of kin. The Manchester study offers a dual model of kin organization: One views kinship ties as embedded within the territorial boundaries of the community and is most effective in studying interaction with local institutions; the other views kinship networks strung over several communities. The strength of the former lies in its stability; the latter's utility is drawn from its fluidity and continuous reorganization. Under certain historical or life-course conditions, neighborhood networks are more valuable. Under other conditions, intercommunity kinship networks are more instrumental. Kinship is a process; kinship ties can be latent at one point in time and can be revived at some other point, depending on circumstances. Fourth, the functions of kin can be examined more effectively by looking from the nuclear family outward—not only as it relates to extended kin, but also in its relationship to larger social institutions. The brokerage model of kin interaction examined in this study can be extended from the factory to other bureaucratic institutions.

Finally, this study raises some questions about the relationship between social change and family behavior. Recent scholarship has generally accepted a model of change over time which sees the history of the family as one of retreat from interaction with the community into an isolated nuclear family. The Manchester data point to the value of examining those areas in which the family has taken on new functions in response to the complexity of modern society.

APPENDIX: THE DATA BASE

Most of the analysis of family patterns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is based on cross-sectional data, utilizing census manuscript schedules at one point in time or at several points in time. This study was based on longitudinal data which have been reconstructed from employee files in corporation records and which have been subsequently linked with vital records and insurance records. First, it reconstructed individual work histories of textile workers between 1880 and 1936. Then it linked individuals to family groups, reconstituting kinship clusters. The data utilized here differ from census data, not only in their longitudinal character, but also in the detailed information they provide on both work
patterns (by contrast to the simple occupational listings in the census) and kinship linkages (as opposed to mere snapshots of household structure).

Sampling

The original sample of individual work histories, from which the kinship clusters have been constructed, consists of 2.5% of individual employee files which were kept by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company for each worker for the period 1910–36 (when the mill shut down.) The 1816 original individual files represent every fortieth file out of a total of 73,640 in the corporation's employee files. These files listed each hiring and termination of a worker on an individual slip. In addition to the type of job, department, and name of overseer at each hiring, the files also recorded age, marital status, number of dependent children, and number of dependents at each termination. Particularly important were the corporation's listing of the reason for and nature of each termination (voluntary, dismissal, or transfer), information on ethnic background, and address at each termination.

The first stage of the project involved the reconstruction of work histories for each individual in the original sample and the coding of each for the computer. The second stage was a directory trace. Each individual from the employee sample was traced in the Manchester city directory, starting from the year in which the individual was first found in the employee file. The trace followed the individual every two years, backward to the earliest listing and forward to the last listing found in the directory during or after employment. This trace enabled us to reconstruct the careers of those individuals who worked in other occupations prior and/or subsequent to their employment by the Amoskeag or after the shutdown of the mill in 1936. The trace also revealed the workers' occupations in the city during gaps in their work history at the Amoskeag Company, or whenever they were working simultaneously in the mill and outside it. The directory listed all males older than 18, and after 1916 it also included women, married as well as single. Prior to 1916 it listed only widows. In addition to occupational career, the directory also provided information on home ownership, boarding or renting, and address changes during the period when the individual was not working in the mills.

Reconstruction of Kinship Networks

The kinship networks were reconstituted only for the French Canadians in the sample. These constituted 39.7% of the employees sampled whose
ethnicity was known (ethnicity was unknown for only nine individuals in the file). The individual work histories reconstructed from the employee file and the directory were used as the basis for the construction of kinship networks.

*Step 1.*—After locating the individual from the original sample in the city directory, we culled all those of the same last name as the original individual listed in the city directory at the same address. We then traced those individuals listed in the directory to the vital records at City Hall. We utilized the alphabetical index file, and whenever we identified individuals from the original employee file and those from the city directory in the marriage and birth records, we added them to the kinship file. On the basis of age, birth date, name of parents, and address, we were able to verify kin relationships. Those whose relationships were confirmed were then traced back to the employee files and, if found there, their life and work histories were reconstructed in a similar way.

*Step 2: Parish records.*—All doubtful kin relationships were cross-checked in the parish records of St. Marie Parish in Manchester to check inaccuracies and omissions in the city records or misspelling and anglicizing of French-Canadian names. The parish records also revealed additional members of the kin cluster who were traced back to the original employee file.

*Step 3: Insurance records.*—The Association Canado-Americaine was a French-Canadian fraternal insurance organization for practicing Catholics of French, French-Canadian, or Franco-American descent. Every employee form was checked in the master file and traced to the insurance record, if the individual held insurance. The listing of beneficiaries in the insurance record provided an additional check on kin relations and also revealed relatives not retrieved in the previous search.

*Step 4: Finding new relatives.*—The last accessible census for the analysis of manuscript household schedules is that for 1900. Accordingly, we traced all individuals in the sample who were alive in 1900 or later to the census through the Soundex System.25 Whenever an individual was found in the census (linkage only through males), we added the particular household data for that individual in 1900 to the file.

From the 717 French Canadians in the original sample, we have been able to identify 136 kinship clusters. Of these 136 clusters, 15 had kin whose exact relationship to the original individual was uncertain. Therefore they were eliminated. This left us with a total of 121 kinship clusters. For 31, or 22.8%, we had only the name of the original individual

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25 The Soundex is a combination letter and number system, and was prepared for the federal censuses of 1880, 1900, and 1920. The 1880 index only includes those families which had a member aged 10 or younger, but the 1900 and 1920 indexes include the entire family.
working in the mill, for whom the information was complete, but could not be sure that we had retrieved every member of that group actually working in the mill at that time. Two major obstacles limited us in reconstructing more extensive networks. The first was the fact that female kin in the employee files were obscured through maiden names. This problem was only partially overcome through linkage with marriage records. Second, since the employee files did not start until 1910, we lacked the sources for the identification of kin whose work career in the mill had terminated before then.

Oral Histories

The quantitative data linkage provided the major base for this reconstruction. Whenever possible, however, we also verified the linkages through oral histories of surviving members of the original sample or their relatives in Manchester. Whenever there was a conflict between our findings from the records and the oral information, we checked the records and made the necessary adjustments.

Limitations

The process of retrieval of relatives and the reconstruction of kinship networks was conservative. We included only those for whom relationships were confirmed through two or more sources. We excluded all cases where there was a potential ambiguity in names. Since the employee files and the vital records were the major sources for the identification of relatives, the resulting clusters are weighted toward nuclear units, parents and children, or adult siblings with their families. The reconstruction of more extended kinship ties, such as are depicted in the chart of the Simoneau Family (fig. 1) were less prevalent in the majority of the sample.

REFERENCES


