

*Men and Women: The Next Frontiers**

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY with
RHONA and ROBERT RAPOPORT

I—THE PAPER'S POINT OF DEPARTURE

THIS paper originates from the group of studies by the authors, sponsored from 1966 by PEP and the Leverhulme Trust, on *Sex Career and Family*, and from a series of continuing studies by them on the family, the interweaving of family life, work, and leisure, and the waste of potential among the middle-aged.† We summarise the point of departure of these studies as follows.

(i) *Commitment*

The PEP series was from the start policy-oriented. It was asked for by the Leverhulme Trust out of concern from both the educational and the employer's side with opportunity for women in professional and managerial jobs. We ourselves have, like other social scientists, a commitment to advancing the state of the art. We have, however, also an explicit commitment to facilitating the search for a better society. Our own contribution in *Sex Career and Family* sets out from recognition of the contradiction between the ideal, in Marxist as well as Liberal terms, of a society in which "The free development of each (is) the condition of the free development of all", and the actual position of women in contemporary society; the alienation of women and the consequent alienation of men. One of

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†References at the end of the paper.

its explicit aims was "to facilitate the attempts being made by people—educational, governmental, industrial and individual—to evolve better ways of managing the situation out of which this unsatisfactory state has arisen".

(ii) *Social Process: Individual and Social Action and the Learning Curve Approach*

Individuals and groups tend to approach new problems in a characteristic pattern, that of the learning curve; becoming oriented to them, analysing and unfreezing their pre-conceptions, reaching a point of decision and implementation, and finally relaxing the tensions which have built up and incubating the next move. This can be linked also to the classic Marxist analysis of the way in which new forces build up within a society until the husk of an existing situation bursts and a new situation emerges, in turn permitting the growth of a new set of social forces and a new explosion of change. The concept of "crisis" as used in medicine is also relevant. Whatever frame of analysis is used, social change tends to proceed, like individual learning, in a series of steps following a predictable sequence, and building up to the final solution of a problem over a predictable time. In the case of major changes the unit of time is a generation, and the total time required may be of the order of four generations. There can be steps back as well as forward, for the learning process is not always successful. The interim solutions reached at successive points along the way will, in any case, necessarily be imperfect when judged in terms of the ultimate goal. The practical problem is to identify the opportunities which are actually open in the current and coming stages, and the forms of action appropriate to the stage of the learning process at which we now stand.

Among the types of problem for which this model is relevant is that of re-defining sex roles. In the movement to re-define sex roles the present and coming generation has specific opportunities which can be seen as steps in the task of re-definition, each something less than the whole of it; but each, potentially a contribution towards satisfactory new integration. The problem is to establish not only long-term targets but what, concretely, the next set of opportunities is.

As regards the process by which society is moved along the learning curve, we do not accept any automatic priority between collective and individual action or between changing or motivating individuals and changing social structures. It is by transforming society, whether by persuasion and education or, as is often necessary, by power, and whether through collective action or through the multiple initiatives of individuals, that people transform themselves. Equally, however, it is by transforming people as individuals and by the action—individual or collective—which follows from this that the transformation of society is pushed onward.

Individuals play out their lives in social networks and institutional structures, and the creation of new structures and new power relationships may be a pre-requisite for individual expression through the roles which the structures offer. But though there are limits to what can be achieved through individual competence

or self-help, there are also limits to what can be expected from any system unless it is driven by the initiative of purposeful individuals; the existence of structures does not guarantee any particular level or quality of functioning. In today's society social structures and attitudes are created rather than historically set and determined, and we set out from the view that effective policies to create the structures and attitudes needed for the next stage of change in sex roles will need transformation and action at both the individual and the social level.

(iii) *New Patterns of Family Living: the Target*

We see the longer-term target towards which social policy needs to move, so far as sex roles are concerned, as defined in three ways.

(a) *Men's as well as Women's Roles: not Modifying the System of Sex Roles but Radically Changing it*

Not surprisingly, the move to re-define sex roles began as a drive to break the barriers which prevented women from entering certain fields, particularly in work, or from sharing equally in rights such as the vote or authority in the family. This task has still to be completed, but those barriers which have not already broken are breaking now. The traditional barriers are linked into a system, and breaches at one point in the system lead to revisions all along the line. The central issue now, as we said in *Sex Career and Family*, is no longer about admitting women to existing male structures, but about adapting these structures, and the men who occupy them, to women's presence in them.

Implied in the debate in the past about removing restraints on women's admission to previously male-dominated roles in work or politics there tended to be an assumption that these roles themselves, and their consequences for men's roles in marriage and the family, would not be essentially changed in the process. Women might have new careers, but men's careers, the pattern of working hours and work organisation, and the relation so far as men were concerned between work, family, and leisure would go on much as in the past. Now, however, as the barriers break the accent of the problem is seen to shift. It is in any case becoming more acceptable, in the light of general changes in work and in society as a whole, to think in terms of new and more flexible structures of work for men as well as women. In addition, as women come to share more equally in work roles, and men—sometimes under duress, sometimes as a free option—in domestic obligations, it is becoming essential to think in terms of basically new inter-relationships for men as well as women between work, leisure, and family life, and of sharply revised male roles in each of these areas.

(b) *Symmetricality*

The re-definition of sex roles takes on in this context a less one-sided and more positive look. As the separate worlds of men and women break down and women

create for themselves a more equal power relationship with men, one result is likely to be increased symmetry not only in men's and women's activities but in their use of each other as reference groups. This is one of the most sensitive tests of the degree of equality actually achieved between men and women, and re-analysis of the data of *Sex Career and Family* shows how wide the asymmetry of reference groups still is. Even in the most educated and egalitarian section of the population, women tend still to be perceived by men (and therefore also by women) as less gifted academically and less motivated for achievement than in fact they are. As, however, task and power relationships change it will become increasingly natural for men to take women as a reference group; to note features of women's patterns of interest and activity which might be of advantage to themselves, and the advantage which they too might get from re-thinking their own roles in work, leisure, and the family as women have done with theirs.

It does not follow that men's and women's actual activities and interests need or will become entirely symmetrical. It may indeed be that in the new situation female modes—whatever they may be—will become more salient. It does, however, follow that the re-definition of sex roles is likely to become increasingly a joint enterprise for mutual benefit within what both sides perceive as benefit within a common range of opportunities. The new situation will not, any more than the old, exclude power and confrontation. In inter-sex relations as in other fields participation grows out of the barrel of negotiation. But the context will have less the character of a zero sum game in which one side makes claims while the other stands on fixed positions or retreats from them only to the extent that it is forced to do so.

(c) *Individuality and Multi-Dimensionality*

No single or simple stereotype is likely to replace the "traditional" pattern of sex roles and family living. Indeed, if this were to happen it would run contrary to the whole current trend of development in work and social life. There was necessarily a stage in social policy when the accent was on ensuring to all a basic and standard minimum provision. Though this task has still to be completed, the accent in recent years has shifted increasingly towards variety, choice, and the quality of life and work. Family life and its relation to leisure and work are no exception. The prospect for the future is of a wide variety of patterns, from "traditional" through the currently conventional three-phase pattern and a variety of other multi-dimensional mixes to the pattern of families with full dual careers; and from an increased accent on celibacy at one end of the scale to communes at the other.

The problem today is not to select some particular pattern as socially preferable but to understand what social structures and what development of personal capacities will best enable people to select for themselves the pattern which fits their particular capacities, interests, and social obligations. The problem for society

is not to dictate this choice but to develop the enabling processes needed to facilitate it. What is emerging is not an anarchic blurring of institutions but a clearer and more viable relationship between a re-defined set of social institutions and the actual current range of people's needs and aspirations.

(iv) *The Class Factor*

The *Sex Career and Family* series is concerned with an elite group, graduates and others working or with the potential to work at professional and managerial level. In this paper we have drawn also on our more recent work, which has been concerned with people of all social classes, but a large part of the findings on which the paper rests is still about people who are not merely in the middle class but towards the top of it. Do we then accept Young and Willmott's Principle of Stratified Diffusion; roughly, that in so far as our findings do not apply to working class people today, they will tend by a process of downward diffusion to do so tomorrow?

We answer this question with caution. On the one hand, many of the changes which have steered people towards new patterns in sex roles and family living, for example changes in women's opportunities for work, in family planning and family size, or in domestic equipment, apply to different social classes either similarly or in such a way as to narrow class differences. Some affect all classes in the same direction, but in such a way that the differences between working and middle class people tend to narrow as incomes rise and social development proceeds. In other cases the impact of a factor on working and middle class families runs in opposite directions, and tends in this way to bring the two closer together; for example the tendency over past decades for better domestic equipment to replace hired servants in middle class homes, but the mother's own work in the homes of the working class.

On the other hand, there are a number of areas where we expect wide class-related differences relevant to sex roles and family living to continue for as far ahead as it is useful for policy to foresee. So, for example, there are important differences between classes in work commitment and motivation or in the extent and quality of commitments in leisure and social life, and these lead to differences from class to class in the problems met and choices made under a number of the headings used in this paper: for instance as regards the likelihood of choosing a traditional, dual-career, or three-phase career pattern or of rejecting any of these in favour of celibacy; or the risk respectively of overload and of under-utilisation of potential as an outcome of a family's whole pattern of work, family, and leisure activities.

We do not want to claim less for the *Sex Career and Family* findings than is due to them. They do have validity outside the class with which the *Sex Career and Family* series was concerned. But we are also cautious about generalising from them until they have been checked further against research focused on working class patterns.

2—PRESENT PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The Learning Curve Approach

If the idea that the discussion and reformulation of sex roles is following a learning curve pattern is valid, where precisely do we stand on this curve now, and what sort of problems have to be solved in the current and coming phase?

Social and economic developments in the early stages of industrialisation in Britain built up to a watershed at the end of the third and the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The generations since then form a new sequence which in turn is likely to be completed around the end of the present century. The development of sex roles and the debate on them have followed the same pattern. Out of early industrialisation there developed what we now think of as the "traditional" pattern of family living, with a sharp division between men's work outside the home and women's in it, backed by provisions such as the special treatment of women under the Factory Acts. This pattern may well have been enlightened in its time, and enabled a fuller development of life for many people, especially women and children, than would have been possible otherwise. It must in any case be judged by the social and economic opportunities of that time rather than of the present. But times and circumstances change, and on this side of the watershed of the 1880s three further steps, each about a generation long, and each beginning with a period of quiescence and reorientation and building up to a break-through, have brought the debate on sex roles to the point at which it now stands.

Developments in the two generations which ended around 1950 cracked the "traditional" pattern of sex roles, though without as yet putting any coherent new picture in its place. Partly this was a matter of formal changes, such as formally equal political rights for women. What was much more important was the practical underlying change in such things as equality and partnership in the family, women's opportunities to work, family planning and housing standards and domestic equipment. None of these changes was by the end of the 'forties anywhere near universal or fully developed, but all had gone far enough to show that a fundamental change in sex roles was on the way. The principle of a new basis for them was becoming tacitly accepted.

What is now happening, through the two generations up to the end of the century, is the consolidation of this change both through its development in practical forms and through its expression in a clearer and more coherent ideology. The generation which began in the usual quiet way about 1950 is now, in the 'seventies, reaching the point at which its particular wave breaks. We are likely to end this decade with legislation on the statute book on equal pay and anti-discrimination; with major advances in women's actual opportunity in work and training, in family law, and in community care for children; with a new awareness of the need not merely to modify men's roles but to re-think them fundamentally; and with wider acceptance of a population policy based on zero population growth, small average family size, continuing careers for women, and universal and free

provision for family planning. The patriarchal family has sunk almost out of sight—consider for example Damian Hannan's frustrated efforts to find some area where it still prevails even in rural Ireland—and a new set of socially accepted patterns of family living has begun to take root.

These changes, however, are still uneven and far from universally accepted. They are still best thought of as "new models", subject to the familiar lags before either theoretical understanding of them or their practical application is fully generalised. A further generation is likely to be needed before the process of consolidation and generalisation of new sex role patterns is complete, following the usual pattern of the learning curve. The decade of the 'eighties may well be a quiet time, a time of digestion and reassessment, compared to the breaking wave situation of the 'seventies. It is towards the end of the century that we would expect the new ideology and structure of sex roles of which new models are now taking shape to appear in their finished and most general form. What we do *not* expect, from now to the end of the century, in the light both of the general theory of social change as applied to large populations and of the actual development of sex roles to date, is another fundamental change of direction in that development such as the one which got under way towards the end of the nineteenth century. A change of direction of that sort may come later, but our prediction is that the present line of development will run its full course first.

The Future Variety of Family Patterns

We see no reason to revise our forecast of several years ago of the proportions in which people are likely to adopt the new patterns of sex roles and family living which are now consolidating. This forecast applies to all social classes, though with some difference of emphasis from one class to another.

The range of patterns is as we have said likely to be wide, and will include among others the "traditional" pattern, though as one among many, no longer as the dominant form. A number of the reasons which led to the prevalence of this pattern in the early stages of industrialisation have disappeared. The Pilgrim Trust's report on *Men without Work* commented nearly forty years ago on the contrast which incidentally emerged in the course of home visits between the standards of home management in areas such as Crook and the Rhondda where married women were unlikely to be in employment and in Blackburn where there was a tradition that man and wife both work.

It is significant that in Blackburn, where many of the housewives are also workers, the proportion of homes in which household management was recorded as indifferent or bad was decidedly high, an unexpected result in view of the Lancashire reputation for good management; while in the Rhondda and Crook we were impressed, not only by the excellent management of the homes, but by the high cultural level of the family.—(Pilgrim Trust, *Men Without Work*, Cambridge 1938, page 233.)

The advantage in home management to the Rhondda and Crook families was

not in the team's view bought at the expense of the status of the housewife. In Blackburn:

There is the gain of independence . . . a gain which is perhaps not so great as is sometimes thought, if we compare it with the position of authority enjoyed by the Rhondda housewife. . . . The women held a significant place, not only in the family, but also in the political and social life of that community.

This finding, which might be compared with those of the Institute of Family Studies in Bethnal Green, relates to a situation as regards working hours and conditions, domestic equipment, availability of commercial and public services, and family planning (or rather the lack of it) which has now altered radically. What remains is the two factors of personal choice and family size. Our studies of elites, and the broader studies of the Survey Unit of the Social Science Research Council, show that only a minority of British women remain committed to the "traditional" pattern as a matter of personal choice; but there are still some with this type of commitment even among the graduates we studied, the category whose options are widest. What is more important for the long run is that, even at times when the net reproduction rate has approached replacement level, the majority of children have continued to come from that minority of families which have three children or more, and around 40 per cent from those which have four or more. For British marriages of 1955-9 the prospect in 1972 was that 39 per cent of all eventual children would be in families of 4 or more and 64 per cent in families of 3 or more: but the latter would constitute only 19 per cent and the former 39 per cent of all completed families. The census of 1971 shows, in line with findings from other countries, that in families of three or more children it is much more likely than in smaller families for the wife to concentrate on a housewife role through the greater part if not all of the middle and later years of her working life. While this may change as community provision for child care improves and men's roles are re-defined to include more direct responsibility for tasks inside the home, we see no reason to think that this relationship between family size and traditional family structure will disappear altogether, and certainly not in the near future.

This expectation is confirmed by findings from Eastern Europe. We noted in *Sex Career and Family* the comment of a Czech study on the discovery that maintenance of the population requires that a proportion of families should have three or more children, and that in these families there may be a particularly strong case for the mother to be legitimated in the housewife role:

This discovery gives the women acting as housewives a different social position: due to their merit in upholding the level of reproduction, they become much more useful for society than believed until now.—*Czechoslovak Population Problems*, 1967, page 29.

There is always a danger that people's tendency to take up a role which is known

and convenient can be used as a device to avoid more fundamental social change. We do not wish to challenge the general truth of the idea that work outside the home is important if women are to have equal status with men. But we do insist, picking up the point made by the Pilgrim Trust, that there is no *necessary* connection between the two. We quoted in *Sex Career and Family* findings by Kloskowska for Poland and Junker for West Germany which show, in very different social contexts, that the collapse of patriarchal concepts and emergence of equality between husband and wife can be compatible with maintaining a traditional division of labour where husband and wife so choose. We suspect that Hannan's findings for Ireland will show the same.

A pattern which may be represented more strongly in future than in the past is *celibacy*, which is not of necessity to be confused with chastity. We found in our samples a minority, especially at present of men, who are so strongly committed to the priority of work over family life as to make it unlikely that they will be satisfactory partners in a marital or parent-child relationship. Bailyn has shown that it is in this group that marital happiness is least likely to be high. Marriage for this group may have the character of ritualistic compliance rather than a freely chosen option for self-realisation. The heavily committed, indeed over-committed, managing directors described in Young and Willmott's *The Symmetrical Family* are a recognisable type. They may indeed have a workable family life if, like many in Young and Willmott's sample or among the managers in the Pahl's *Managers and Their Wives*, they find wives of a highly "traditional" outlook who are prepared to make a full time job of carrying their partner's as well as their own share of responsibility for family living. It is just in this social group, however, that the educational and professional qualifications and work motivation of potential wives are rising particularly fast and the "traditional" outlook is dying out fastest. More of those in it are likely to come under strain in future and to confront new dilemmas over their family life.

One of us comes from an Irish Catholic background where celibacy has always been an available and socially respected choice. It does not of course have always to be for life. Much of the early success of the Young Christian Workers was due to the efforts of men and women who either formally or informally accepted a celibate life for a period of years while they were active as YCW organisers. The effects of celibacy on men, as Jessie Bernard points out, have not always been happy in terms of physical or mental health or motivation. This can be confirmed from our own studies or from studies on mental health in Ireland. For women, on the other hand, the results have tended to be happier. As Dr Bernard points out, the process of mate selection operates in such a way that the men who remain unselected are from the bottom of the heap but the women from the top. She shows from a variety of indices that these women have in many ways a more satisfying and effective life than those who marry.

For the cases where celibacy is voluntarily chosen there is an interesting finding from Ann Steinmann's MAFERR studies on the effects of training as a nun on what has been traditionally defined as masculine and feminine characteristics. Nuns

in training show at the start a sharp increase in traditional "feminine" characteristics, but then a steady build-up on the "masculine" scale to a level well above what would be expected in the case of women who have chosen other paths. However the choice may be made, we agree with Dr Bernard that temporary or permanent celibacy may well become a more significant pattern in future, though the place of chastity in this pattern is likely to alter with increased secularisation.

Celibacy and a traditional—though voluntary—division of labour in the family are ways of side-stepping the main current debate on sex roles and family living; how *both* to live in families *and* to provide "symmetrical" opportunities for both partners. The major pattern, statistically, is for the moment the "*new conventional*" family in which the wife accepts periods of immersion in domestic roles but rejects this set of constraints as applying throughout her life-time. She may work following marriage, then withdraw for a period of domesticity and child-bearing, then return to work at some later point when the children are in school or self-sufficient. This is the familiar three-phase pattern advocated by Myrdal and Klein. There is, however, also a probably increasing proportion of *dual worker* families, in which both husband and wife work continuously. Certainly a larger proportion of the family life cycle, for more couples, is being spent in that pattern than previously. The wife, in this pattern, intends to continue working even when her children are very young. Where the jobs held are career jobs, requiring high personal commitment and with a progressive system of advancement, we have called this the dual career pattern. In terms of work orientation, our count of preferences among young British women graduates at the end of the 'sixties was as shown in Table 1.

A dual worker or dual career pattern, as was shown particularly in *Dual Career Families*, can be managed with satisfaction for both partners and with advantage rather than disadvantage to the children by those who have the capacity and resources for it. We would expect some movement over time in the direction of this pattern, but, for reasons which emerge in the *Sex Career and Family* series (particularly *Dual Career Families*) and in Young and Willmott's *The Symmetrical Family*, only on a limited scale. Some people, one might conclude from the fantastically wide pattern of activities in work, leisure, and family life of the higher professionals and managers in Young and Willmott's study, do indeed have the capacity to do everything at once, and to do it well. But this capacity does not belong to everyone. As one moves along the line, in Young and Willmott's formulation, from one job for the man and one for the wife to one for the man and two for the wife and eventually to two for both, there are real problems of overload. The proportion of cases in which their respondents feel that work, leisure activities and family activities are interfering with each other rises steadily as one moves up the scale of intensity and variety of activities, which corresponds also to the social class gradient from the unskilled to the managing director. We quoted in *Sex Career and Family* evidence on how the same phenomenon shows itself in Eastern Europe.

People's hesitancy in moving towards dual careers is not of course only due to

TABLE I

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<i>Non-work oriented:</i>										
<i>Conventional:</i> not committed to the principle of women's careers, nor herself getting major satisfaction from paid work, nor intending to work as long as her youngest child is under three										15
<i>Conflicted:</i> committed to the principle of women's careers, but otherwise as "conventional"										7
										22
<i>Oriented to discontinuous work:</i>										
<i>New-conventional:</i> expects to return to work after a break, but not committed to the principle of women's careers nor herself getting major satisfaction from paid work										22
<i>Transitional:</i> committed to the principle of women's careers, but otherwise as "new-conventional"										15
<i>Interrupted career:</i> intends to work discontinuously, but is committed to the principle of women's careers and gets major satisfaction from paid work ...										6
										43
<i>Continuous-work oriented:</i>										
<i>Conflicted worker:</i> intends to work even while her youngest child is under three, but does not get major satisfaction from paid work, whether or not she is committed to the principle of women's careers										18
<i>Non-career worker:</i> though not committed to the principle of careers for women, intends to work even while her youngest child is under three, and gets major satisfaction from paid work										5
<i>Career worker:</i> committed to the idea of women's careers, gets major satisfaction from her work and intends to work even while her youngest child is under three										11
										34

Michael P. Fogarty with Rhona and Robert Rapoport, *Women and Top Jobs: The Next Move*. PEP Broadsheet 535, March 1972, page 26.

overload or the fear of it. But this is not only an important factor but a growing one. The threat of physical and psycho-social overload may be expected to become even stronger and more widespread in working as well as middle class families as and when the present tendency for both work and leisure opportunities for people in routine grades of work to be limited is corrected, and the range and intensity of these people's activity comes close to that of professionals and managers. Further, this factor is not confined to the capitalist economies of the West. We documented in *Sex Career and Family* the growing awareness in Eastern Europe of the problem of "time for free time" and of the danger of squeezing the family, under the pressure of other activities, to the point where it can no longer adequately fill its role in personal relationships and in the socialisation and self-expression of individuals; together with the practical measures which

have followed from this. We agree with Young and Willmott's warning against accepting too uncritically the progression from two to four jobs for each married couple, and have been correspondingly cautious in our forecasts of how far full dual-job or dual-career patterns are likely to become accepted.

One partial solution to the problem of overload will certainly be the extension of community child care. But here again we are cautious in the light both of our own findings and of evidence from Eastern Europe. Our women graduate respondents in *Sex Career and Family*, even though they belong to the social group with the strongest commitment to careers, were very clear that up to the age of $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 years children are likely to be best cared for in their parents' home, and readily accepted responsibility for doing so. From the point of view of public policy, another crucial point is the difference in the cost of systems of day care before nursery school age and at or after it. The cost per place of creches is a multiple of that of day care for older children, and even in countries where public policy strongly favours them this has been a major brake on their provision.

Another way out might be to adopt still another pattern of family living, that of a *commune* or *kibbutz*. Certainly we expect this to be one of the patterns of the future, quite possibly commoner than at present. Our guess, however, is that for as far ahead as can be foreseen this is unlikely to be the chosen pattern for more than a small minority. It can be applied with full effect in a group with a firm long-term commitment to stability in one place, as in a *kibbutz*. It is significant, however, that even in Israel the *kibbutz* pattern has never been that of a majority even of the rural population, and has failed entirely to establish itself in the towns. The constraints which accompany its advantages are more than the majority of people are willing to accept. A more flexible type of *commune* in which individuals, couples, and their children move in and out can avoid some of these constraints, but also loses the long-term advantages of security and stability. We do not yet have any convincing evidence that this sort of pattern can be made to work effectively enough to be commonly viable, and we find this impression confirmed by Philip Abrams' and Andrew McCulloch's more recent paper on British experience, *Men, Women, and Communes*.

We expect therefore that for many, perhaps most, families the traditional pattern of $1+0$ jobs outside the home will continue to be replaced, not with $1+1$, but with some combination of fractions such that the total adds to, say, $1\frac{1}{2}$ or $1\frac{3}{4}$. This, however, does not of course necessarily, or even desirably, mean 1 for the husband and $\frac{1}{2}$ for the wife. The alternative is for both partners to limit their outside commitments, at least while they have young children, giving a combination of, say, $\frac{3}{4}+\frac{3}{4}$; at any rate until the probably (in all the economic and social circumstances) still distant day when hours of work are so limited that $1+1$ amounts to no more than $\frac{3}{4}+\frac{3}{4}$ does today. If a radical re-structuring of men's and women's roles is to be completed through the coming generation, a central problem is to design a package of measures which will make this type of combination acceptable and enforceable, through either informal or formal social controls, for men as well as for women.

3—PRACTICAL POLICY ISSUES

As regards issues of practical policy for the next phase we attempt no general review, but make five specific points which seem to us to need particular attention for the next stage.

1. *Patterns Acceptable to Both Men and Women*

The theory of sex bargaining, as it has been presented by many writers concerned primarily with the women's side of the case, reminds us of C. S. Forester's description in *The General* of the generals of World War I. They were, he says, like people trying to extract a screw from a board with a claw-hammer, and finding they had too little power to do it. When their troops were slaughtered in futile attacks at Passchendaele or on the Somme they concluded that what they lacked was enough power relative to the enemy; more guns, more troops, and more shells were the answer. They were too slow to appreciate that with a different strategy and a different use of the resources available to them they might find that they had plenty of power already. Bargaining between men and women is, as we have said, not a zero sum game, but it is too often treated as if it were. Our first point is that more thought needs to be given to strategies which will carry men as well as women with them.

It is perfectly true to say both that men have been slower than women to adapt their ideas and practice to meet the changing situation of women, and that, without a change of strategy, women may find that they have too little power to push them much further. The literature on the male backlash suggests that the "new conventional" pattern represents for all but a minority of men the limit of what can easily be conceded under present circumstances. The disapproval of at least a minority of husbands remains one of the main constraints on women's activities outside the home, and the majority even of these men, in all classes, who have moved beyond this point have done so only within a definite limit. The heavy work of domestic cleaning and maintenance and the time-consuming and brain-possessing vigilance needed for the care of young children remain overwhelmingly women's tasks. Men can of course be pushed, but beyond a certain point at the risk at least during the coming years of adjustment, of a disruption of family relationship and possibly a breakdown of the marital relationship itself. An increase in breakdowns may, as Robert Chester has argued in relation to the middle-aged, be a necessary price for a desirable readjustment of sex roles. It is still one which the majority of women as well as men are unlikely to wish to pay.

It is, however, possible and justifiable to present the case for a new pattern of behaviour by men in terms of opportunities rather than compulsions; of using the screwdriver rather than the claw-hammer.

First, a new pattern which calls on men to limit their work commitments during part if not all of their married life, including, as at present for women, a particularly sharp limitation during the time when there are young children to care for, will evidently be more attractive to men in career jobs if it does not put them at the

disadvantage which they at present experience if they drop off a career ladder or fail to mount it at the right pace. This is a problem already faced by women, and we refer below, under the heading of work, family, and leisure, to some of the practical measures by which it can be dealt with.

Secondly, a point applying to men in all classes, a limit to men's work activity will be all the more acceptable if it does not add to the financial strain at present experienced by families at the stage of the life-cycle at which there are young children, or several older children, and one or both partners have to limit their outside earning; typically, at the moment, the single-earner family which has to depend on the man's earnings alone. The single-parent family is another problem again; we are thinking here of the two-parent family at a stage when the two have only one income between them, however the task of earning that income may be divided. A family of man, wife, and three children, with the husband on average industrial earnings and the wife not earning, needs around three times the income of a single person to reach the same standard of living, and gets, after all taxes and social benefits, around $1\frac{1}{2}$ times. The problem of the single-earner family is one of the main gaps in present tax and social security legislation, and to close it would remove much of the existing pressure on family men for overtime and their resistance to measures which might rebuke their earnings flow.

Thirdly, and again a point applying to men of all classes, a limit to men's work activity will be more acceptable if it is clear-cut and socially recognised and approved. We draw attention on this to the statement by a group of professional women brought together in Pat Williams' *Working Wonders*. This is a group who have a firm commitment to work at an expert and responsible level, but deliberately limit their work-time commitment in the interest of what the statement calls a multi-faceted life.

The women in this survey . . . want a multi-faceted life, and make the point over again that each different activity feeds them with a stimulus and interest . . . from the comments of their husbands it turns out that what is possible is a working activity, both domestic and professional, of such wide and energetic proportions that few men would dream of undertaking the equivalent. . . . The picture built up in the questionnaire is of extremely busy, often humorous, adaptable women, fast on their feet, somehow dovetailing the many different demands on them, and happy with their way of life.—Pat Williams, *Working Wonders*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1969, p. 18.

This is a package which many men, as fathers, husbands, and participants in leisure activities and public life, could well find highly attractive once it was institutionalised and clearly recognised as reputable. There is already a good deal of experience of how to institutionalise, through collective bargaining or the law, limits on overtime and arrangements for time off for public or military service, or for part or whole time training and study leave. What is needed now is to build on this experience with reference also to family needs, as they apply to men as well as to women.

Fourthly, we suspect as a matter of general knowledge rather than of research that much of the back-lash by men against deeper involvement in the home comes from a fear of being shut into a narrow and unstimulating environment; which is after all what women who criticise their own role in current patterns of family living have been saying all along. So far as current patterns of family living are concerned both women's criticisms and men's fears are too often justified. What is needed now is to open many families' horizons. The family as a closed, rather greedy, world demanding one's energies and imposing obligations and constraints, is one thing, the family as a base for a wide-ranging network of activities is another.

The mere fact of the wife as well as the husband working outside the home does something to open the family's doors. What is also needed, however, is to widen the range of leisure activities and of political, social, and cultural participation ranging outwards from the home, particularly for people in routine working grades. Under-used potential for activities away from work can be found among professionals and managers as well, but it is among people in the less skilled occupations that its incidence is greatest; it is among professionals and managers, as Young and Willmott show, that a sizable proportion of people turn out to face the opposite problem of overload in their activities away from work as well as in it. Activities for which the family itself is the relevant unit have of course a special interest here. The Sports Council expect a major area of growth in the activities for which it is responsible to be of a kind which in one way or another involves all a family's members. But increased participation in other activities on an individual basis may also be expected to add to the interest of home and family as a base from which to operate, and to contribute new vitality to relationships within the family itself.

2. *Work, Leisure and the Family: the Need for Unified Policies*

In *Sex Career and Family* and elsewhere we have discussed the changes in training, recruitment and re-recruitment, hours and other conditions of work, promotion, and retirement needed to take account of the fact that women's working life-cycle, even when they are fully committed to a life-time of work outside the home, differs because of their family commitments from that once typical of men. But for men, too, traditional career patterns are collapsing, and will do so still more if the changes just suggested in the family living are achieved. There is already increasing mobility between employers and sometimes occupations for men in middle life, even in employments which traditionally offered a lifetime career. Mobility among managers, for example, appears to have doubled over the last generation. Some of this increased mobility is forced by re-organisations and market changes, but there is also a voluntary element in it, and there could and should probably be more. The evidence collected in *How We Waste the Middle-Aged* shows for manual workers not only that mobility can be very high in suitable market conditions but that perhaps 35 per cent to 40 per cent of men in middle age have a real motivation, of which society should take account,

to break away into a different second career. Obsolete skills and the tendency at all occupational levels to remain too long in a rut after age forty can in part be dealt with by measures within people's existing employment. But this is not always so, and in any case it is likely that the offer of new opportunity or simply of the chance to re-think a man's career while there are still 20 or 25 years of it to go will lead many to think again about employment of other kinds. One of us has shown, in a study of the experience of managers on courses at the Administrative Staff College, Henley, that precisely this does happen once the opportunity is given.

The measures needed to provide for the more variegated pattern of careers which is now beginning to emerge for men as well as women are easy to list. One is the continuous availability throughout a woman's or a man's working life of opportunities to re-train in paid time, at the worker's, not only the management's discretion, on a module basis which allows qualifications to be built up in limited steps more convenient for adults than long continuous courses. Retraining needs to be backed with mid-career clinics or other opportunities for both men and women to reassess their career direction in mid-life, and a resettlement service, perhaps on the lines of the Forces Resettlement Service, to help and motivate them to find the right new niche.

Another need is for planned provision for both women and men of work at reduced hours during the periods when, for any of a variety of good reasons, they need or wish to limit their work commitments; not simply fill-in jobs but work which uses people's professional capacities in full and lets them progress in a normal way. Another is flexible time, flexible leave arrangements, and generally reduced hours to allow work to be accommodated more effectively to the needs of family life and other non-work activities. For women of course there is the special problem of guaranteeing continuity of employment rights and a living wage during pregnancy and maternity.

Changes are also needed in promotion and recruitment. Greater readiness on the part of workers to move needs to be matched by a change in practice as regard recruitment in middle life, particularly in professions and employments with organised career patterns in which at the moment the tendency is to promote from within and minimise recruitment from outside. Changes in promotion practice are needed to meet the case where workers, whether women or men, enter or re-enter an occupation in mid-life, have necessarily to start at a relatively low level, but have also the capacity to accelerate back towards the level which they might have reached in a continuing career.

At the end of a career there arises the question of flexible retirement, in the double sense that some workers may wish to retire altogether at an early age for reasons connected either with their work or with their family or other interests, and that the majority are likely to prefer to ease themselves into retirement gradually rather than work full-time up to a cut-off point and then not at all. Traditionally, both these latter points apply particularly to women, but here again are increasingly applicable also to men.

Measures like these are difficult and complex enough in themselves, and for that reason we see a danger that they may continue to be considered too much in, so to speak, their own right, without enough regard to the simultaneous changes in leisure and family living with which they need to be co-ordinated. The drive for better and more varied career patterns, and generally for improving the quality of working life, has come too exclusively from within the work situation itself, and practical measures to implement it have been considered too exclusively in terms of what is needed at the place of work. Work, leisure, and family living interact in many ways, forming a kind of "triple helix" through the life-cycle. It is time to move on from solving the problems of each of these areas within its own limits to considering all three areas in relation to each other.

The quality of working life affects people's potential for action away from work, and working efficiency in turn is influenced by the degree of physical and associated mental fitness achieved outside work. The risk of overload among people with active non-work interests depends among other things on what happens to working hours and to their distribution over the week, year, and career. The development of non-work activities is highly relevant to the question how far it is economically and socially worthwhile to shorten working hours, increase leave allowances, or bring in part-time. These issues take on a very different complexion if it can be assumed that the time released, or at least a substantial part of it, will be used in non-work activities which add to the quality of personal, family, or community life, even if not to the national income as conventionally calculated. Each side of the equation influences the other. Full use of non-work opportunities is likely for a growing number of people to call for a limit to their commitment in work. Equally, however, the case for limiting work commitments depends among other things on the effectiveness with which non-working time is used.

Social implications certainly enter into unions' and employers' discussion of working hours and their distribution, or for that matter of questions about job enrichment and the quality of working life, but they enter with less than full force. On the management side the effect of changes in hours or the quality of jobs on costs, productivity, prices, or human relations in the workplace itself are visible and relevant. Their effect in securing a more satisfying mix of work and non-work activities, or in allowing non-work activities to make a larger contribution to the (more widely defined) national income, do not appear in the accounts. On the union side considerations of family and social life are certainly present, but with less weight than if they were represented by organisations specifically and primarily concerned with the non-work area.

This is one of the cases where there is a clear divergence between social costs and benefits and the costs or benefits immediately obvious to the parties to a negotiation. Questions about the quality of working life and the balance between working and non-working time are too important to be left to employers and unions alone. They need to be discussed not only in the industrial relations context but in wider contexts, including politics, where all the elements in the discussion and their inter-relationship can be given their full weight.

3. *Facilitating Choice*

The complexity and inter-relationship of choices need to be looked at in terms not only of the wider inter-relationships of work, family, and leisure but of the more or less satisfactory outcome of these relationships for individuals and families, in all their varying circumstances. The action needed to carry the revision of sex roles through to its conclusion will as we have said continue to involve changing both social structures and individuals and their motivation, and promoting both individual initiatives and collective action. If any of these kinds of action is to take place, people need to be equipped to choose for themselves, as individuals and as family members, the patterns of action which best suit their personal and family circumstances and through which they can best make their contribution to society.

These patterns are likely to be immensely varied even as regards family living, let alone its inter-relation with work or leisure. Whether in the debate on sex roles or otherwise, it is clear that we have left behind the situation in which people could rely on standard patterns of career lines, family living, and social activity to which society will in any case expect them to conform. The problem from now on will increasingly be to select from among a bewildering variety of choices. In making their selection people will have to act both as individuals and as members of families. Family bonds in future will depend for their strength less on the sanctions of religion, kin group pressure, or even community approval, and more on the internal bonds that family members are able to create through the relationships they evolve. To build these bonds successfully requires a double adjustment on the part of both men and women; adjustment to new understanding of each other's needs and roles, and a mutual effort to develop each other's capacity to manage both their relationships within the family and their relations with outside groups and organisations; the two together leading, hopefully, to improved capacity for choice and change.

If people are to make successfully this double adjustment and the choices to which it leads, they are likely to need help to precipitate their choice and guidance in making it. The easiest choice is often to make no choice at all and to let things drift, whether from sheer reluctance to make the effort or because of resistances which might have to be overcome, including the resistance of a wife or husband. What is often required is pressure to choose rather than simply advice. From the developments needed to promote this we pick out three.

One is a new orientation of marriage guidance, the service most directly concerned with sex roles and normal family living. We suspect that the marriage guidance councils have been too exclusively concerned, once the early stages of marriage are past, with disaster cases rather than with helping people to choose in a normal way between the patterns of family living open to them; and with helping couples to adjust within the institutions of marriage and the family as they exist rather than with promoting institutional changes. There is a certain age bias. The National Marriage Guidance Council's statistics show that, though it reaches people in their thirties and early forties, it is less effective in reaching the

mature middle-aged, who as we suggest below are a key group for the redefinition of patterns of family living. We know also that the total impact of the marriage guidance councils is fractional in relation to need. Here is a first area for development, in collaboration with other agencies of further education.

Another possible line of development is in the marriage contract itself. An idea which has gained some ground is that of a marriage contract which sets out explicitly, in current terms, the role which each partner is to play within the marriage and the support which each is to give the other. The contract is normally drawn at the beginning of a marriage, but can of course also be agreed later, and in any case needs revision at successive stages of the family cycle. Such contracts, unlike traditional marriage contracts, do not have to be legal, though they may contain legal elements. Like legal contracts, however, they serve the important purpose of crystallising a decision and mediating subsequent disagreements.

Thirdly, there is the idea of a career clinic. Career or personal advice should of course be available in many forms at any time in a life time, against the background of permanent education. The idea of a career clinic, and notably of a mid-career clinic or of a procedure such as is used by the Forces Resettlement Service, is, however, not simply to help choice but to force it, and to do so with reference not only to work but to the next stage of the life-cycle as a whole. We would like to see it become a universal and socially approved and assisted practice for both men and women to take paid time out of their current way of life at major turning points in their life-cycle—at marriage, the birth of children, major work transitions, the transition to the post-parental stage, before retirement—for help in re-assessing the course their life is to follow in its next decades. There are useful points of departure for this in careers guidance work, the work of the Employment Service, a wide range of counselling activities in the voluntary and statutory social services, and above all in the case of the Forces. The problem now is to generalise these types of service in the sense not only of making them available on a bigger scale but, above all, of ensuring that people find themselves at key points of their lives offered, and pressed to use, not a patchwork of services, but opportunities from whatever source to re-think their future comprehensively.

We would like to see regular arrangements made to monitor the over-all effectiveness of the choices between ways of living which people make, whether as individuals, as families, or as contributors to society at large, and of the aids available to them for making them. The point is not to determine whether they have chosen this or that socially preferred pattern of family living, or work, or leisure activities. The variety of patterns which it may be right and reasonable for people to choose in the light of their particular circumstances is infinite. The point is rather to see whether they have been put in a position to make the choice which meets their particular and specific circumstances and needs, and have in fact done so and have acted on their choice. We have a broad knowledge of the factors which might contribute to this. We do not yet, however, know enough in detail about the best practical ways to proceed: the ways in which people's motivation can be developed, the social networks through which they can be

reached, and the advisory and support services which need to be provided. Broad surveys will not provide this knowledge. What is needed is a great increase in detailed studies at the level of micro-sociology and the psychology of individuals and their memberships and reference groups.

4. *A New Point of Leverage: Middle Age*

In discussing points of leverage from which to bring about the shift in behaviour and attitudes needed to underpin, whether in work or in other areas of life, the changes in sex roles which are now required, it is natural to think first about influencing younger people. Without in any way challenging the need to do this, we would like to suggest that an equally important but neglected point of leverage is to be found in middle age, at the time when families move from the launching to the post-parental stage of their life-cycle. At the point of transition this is often experienced as a non-event. People expect to and do move on from concern as parents to concern as grandparents, uncles, and aunts within the extended family. The three-generation family thrusts itself on their attention as a reality. In other respects, however, disappointingly little happens. Here is a time when husband and wife are thrown back on each other, when they have more time on their hands and more free money to spend than while they had dependent children, and when accordingly they have the opportunity to strike out into a new range of interests and a new way of life. On the data available this rather rarely happens. Their interests tend to continue as before, perhaps with somewhat more work by the wife and a somewhat different range of activities by both partners as the activities which directly involve the children become redundant or as physical capacity changes. But of new starts or second careers there is little sign. This state of affairs often works to the disadvantage of the extended family itself. In present demographic conditions there are rather few children and grandchildren to focus each pair of young grandparents' attention, and in turn it is usually on one or two middle-aged children and their spouses alone that the responsibility for looking after the aged of the grandparent generation falls.

A drive to widen the involvement of the young grandparent generation not only in leisure activities in the recreational sense of the word but in public and other community activities directed to the benefit both of the younger and of the still older generation could achieve a double purpose. It could relax the strain which follows from a too concentrated focus on relations within the extended family, and it could open the windows of what at present is often the too quiet and semi-retired world of the mature middle-aged. The change in current images of family life to which this could lead could be expected to reflect both down the age scale and upwards. To younger people, and not least to men, it would offer a more open and attractive picture of the family and greater encouragement to limit work commitment for the sake of family or family-based activities. As regards the aged, we have Anne Guillemand's devastating demonstration of the way in which what she calls "social death", the "withdrawn" pattern of retirement, originates in the under-use of potential in the last decades of working life. The more active patterns

of retirement for which a high level of activities and full use of potential in the preceding decade prepares the way are not only more satisfying to retired people themselves but, once again, can reflect back to younger people a more favourable and encouraging image of the sort of life that can be lived once work commitments are limited.

5. *Research and Policy on the Family*

Finally, we make the simple point that if the family, in one or other of the forms we have discussed, is likely to remain a key institution in the future structure of society—as we believe it will—it is time for it to receive a corresponding degree of direct attention both from social research workers and from those responsible for social policy. This point could have been made strongly in relation to the past, and can be made even more strongly in relation to the future. There is widespread agreement among future-oriented family specialists that the family not only will survive but will flourish in a new profusion of forms to which there corresponds a similar profusion of problems. The new families will put more onus on their members to arrive at agreed divisions of labour and responsibility, to share fairly in planning and decision-making, and to reach a fair distribution of the constraints of family life as well as its opportunities. There will be new problems over re-thinking the relationship between family living and work and leisure activities. The family's importance as an independent variable in social welfare will continue, and can be measured by the consequences of its malfunctioning or absence not only for individual personality but for the functioning of a wide range of social institutions.

*Centre for Studies in Social Policy,
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