THE LIVES OF SILK WORKERS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY LYON:
A LIFE COURSE EXAMINATION

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences

Spring 2023

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of many talented, creative, and helpful people. I would like to first acknowledge and thank Dr. Tamara K. Hareven, who collected this data from the silk workers of Lyon, and who generously bequeathed the contents of her office to the University so that her work may one day see completion. It is my sincerest hope that this work, although simply a master’s thesis, does some justice to the work that she herself could not complete, and that she is smiling from the Great Beyond. Dr. Andrejs Plakans, her executor, was also generous in granting me permission to use this data. Dr. Loren Marks has also been a wealth of information regarding his time as Dr. Hareven’s Ph.D. student, and his insights into Dr. Hareven’s research methods and process. I must also thank the interviewees who participated in this project; I may not have met you, but I hope to do justice to your stories.

My gratitude knows no bounds for the mentorship of my committee. Dr. Barbara Settles, in addition to being compassionate about the “real-life stuff”, has always been available for encouragement and helpful suggestions. Dr. Lynn Worden, in addition to knowing Dr. Hareven personally and providing helpful insights, has been incredibly helpful in helping me hone my writing skills and my methods. Dr. Sara Goldstein has shown impeccable skill at patching the holes that have come up throughout this project, as well as in providing many helpful suggestions for expanding upon the materials I have and demonstrating continuity and change over time, which is a critical component of social history. My time with Dr. Laura Wallace
has always been valuable in honing my qualitative research skills, whether we are examining virtual home visiting or life in the Lyonnaise silk industry. Thank you all very much for all that you have done and continue to do.

University of Delaware Librarians Maria Barefoot, Valerie Stenner, and Rebecca Melvin have always been very helpful, whether it has been to answer questions about my literature search, finding the correct file, making photocopies, or helping me interpret data off floppy disks. Dr. Owen White, who specializes in French history, was exceptionally helpful in directing me in the proper direction for relevant literature. This project would also not have been possible without the support of my department’s magnificent chair, Dr. Bahira Trask, who encouraged me to attempt this program in the first place, and without whom I would not have dared to dream this big. Many thanks are also owed to various other resources and colleagues who have given me support within the College of Education and Human Development.

My beloved husband Eric Wroten, Sr., continues to be my rock. My children, while at times my worst distraction, are also my favorite motivators. Our parish family at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church have kept us afloat many a time, and I will forever be grateful for the great kindnesses, laughter, and peace that we have shared with you all. There are many friends who deserve their own thanks for their support, but this section of my thesis, much like the thesis itself, is already too long to list them individually; my gratitude remains unchanged. Last, but certainly not least, I wholeheartedly believe that this project would never have occurred without the divine guidance and at times the intervention of the Almighty God, who directs my way. 2 Maccabees 15:38-39.
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ABSTRACT

At the time of her death in October 2002, Dr. Tamara Hareven was in the process of completing a large cross-cultural examination of the global declines in the silk and textile industries. A small sample of her interview data transcripts from canuts in Lyon have, 20 years after her death, been translated into English and coded for themes. Six themes emerged from the participants’ data. Participants sensed that the industry was disappearing, that the industry was something that was looked at as a historical artifact to be studied rather than a profession, and that there was not enough being done to encourage young people to enter the industry. Gender disparities within the industry continued to a lesser extent than before the 20th century began, but still seemed profound, especially as girls who were recruited for apprenticeships were often minors when they were moved away from their families. The apprenticeship conditions continued to be less than desirable well into the 20th century. Economically, the silk industry is often poorly paid and vulnerable to economic crises as fashion and world economics change. Large social changes often had impacts on the family life of the silk worker families. Finally, just as economics tended to ebb and flow for the silk industry, so did the labor conditions.
Chapter 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: TAMARA K. HAREVEN

The foundation for this thesis was constructed at least thirty years ago. In 2002, the University of Delaware lost a phenomenal person, professor, and scholar. Dr. Tamara K. Hareven, who was a professor in the Individual and Family Studies Department at the University of Delaware, passed away on October 18, 2002, at the age of 65. At least nine years before her death, Hareven began an ethnographic study involving qualitative interviews of people in Lyon, France, who worked in the silk industry in various capacities. Previously Hareven had done similar work in New England and Japan; these works were published during her lifespan or posthumously respectively. She contextualized the lives of people in the textile industry within the life course theory, which she had been instrumental in developing. Her papers, including those pertaining to unfinished projects, are housed at the University of Delaware Morris Library and have been recently uncovered and explored extensively.

At the time of Dr. Hareven’s death, her curriculum vitae notes that she had several appointments at the University: she was the Unidel Professor of Family Studies and History, a Policy Fellow at the Center for Community Development and Family Policy, and held a secondary appointment at the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. She received many prestigious grants from institutions such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Institute on Aging, and the Social Science Research Council. Additionally, she was a visiting professor at institutions across the globe and had been
given many awards. At the time of her death, she had recently completed her magnum opus, *The Silk Weavers of Kyoto: Family and Work in a Changing Traditional Society*, which explored the oral histories of textile workers in Japan. This was published the month after her death.

Dr. Loren D. Marks was one of Dr. Hareven’s final doctoral students and is now a professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University, as well as the graduate coordinator for current students in the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences. He reflected in 2021 on Dr. Hareven's life course, work, and mentorship. Not only did her work span multiple contexts and countries including the New England area of the United States, China, France, and Japan, but was considerate of culture, historical timing, context, and challenges for families in each of these contexts (Marks, 2021). Marks recounts, “Hareven’s rare ability to listen to and then reconvey the life stories and histories of others was recognized both in academic circles and in the popular press… The ‘new social history’ Hareven championed offered voice to the overlooked and the marginalized. One colleague referred to her as a ‘champion of the underdog’” (Ibid.). Marks (Ibid.) emphasizes Hareven’s influence in the way he approaches his own work focusing on religious and racial minorities, the way he views qualitative studies: “When she wrote, Tamara allowed ‘her people’ to speak, literally, in their own language, in their own voices, and in their own idiom.”

One particularly salient quote from Marks regarding Hareven’s work is the following: “For the genealogist or family historian who delights not only in the ‘tombstone information’ of birth and death dates, but in the narratives behind the dash between
those dates, Hareven was your kind of family historian” (Marks, 2021). Marks continues,

A vital intangible a great interviewer and qualitative researcher must have is a countenance and a presence that infuses the interviewee with a desire to tell the unvarnished truth. Having known her well, I have reflected on why so many trusted Hareven enough to allow her to step onto their sacred, personal ground… Perhaps Hareven received so much truth, honesty, and depth because she had deeply pondered the questions she wanted answered and then pursued those salient queries relentlessly and with tenacity (Marks, 2021).

Marks (2021) describes Hareven as a creative and innovative theorist, who “found expression in conceptualization and theorizing. This led to her development (with sociologist Glen Elder) of the life course perspective… a conceptual and theoretical lens that has since been employed not only in history, but in sociology, psychology, family studies, economics, and other disciplines and fields.” She paid close attention to the interrelationship between individual time, family time, and historical time, which presented the family as an active agent interacting with historical and cultural forces, not as the recipient of unidirectional consequences of historical or cultural change (Marks, 2021). Families may creatively navigate challenges using resources they have available and cooperate with one another, or may fail miserably to adapt to change, when external opportunities and constraints such as wars, economic booms, economic recessions, and other occasions arise (Marks, 2021). The concept of linked lives is a critically “explicit acknowledgement that in spite of
the American foci of independence and individual rights, we are inextricably connected by blood, obligation, and expectation to others—and by care, compassion, and empathy” (Marks, 2021). The decisions each member of a family makes may influence others in liberating and imitating ways, and these impacts are most clearly apparent in family and life course transitions including deaths, births, marriages, graduations, and migrations of families (Marks, 2021).

On a personal level, Marks entered the University of Delaware as a 27-year-old graduate student, and Hareven began having conversations with him that “began with an abrupt query with no warm-up” (Marks, 2021). Marks describes Hareven as “part scolder, part mother, and part mentor” (Marks, 2021). He later served as her graduate research assistant, which was a job that no graduate student wanted, as her standards were high, and she usually demanded thirty work hours a week when assistantships were only paid for 20 (Ibid.). Additionally,

Her staggering native intelligence, her stature in the field, and her productivity, coupled with her bluntness and heavily guarded (even prickly) style of social interaction combined to form a figure that terrified most of the graduate students—and seemed to strain her relations with many colleagues (Marks, 2021).

However, Marks was determined to “learn to love this woman that many feared” (Marks, 2021).

Marks (2021) recalled that, although Dr. Hareven did not discuss these matters with anyone else, she discussed religious matters with him; he described her as “a
person of quiet yet profound faith” who would ask him to pray for her. She drew parallels between her relationship with Marks and the main character of Chaim Potok’s *The Book of Lights*, in which a Jewish academic leaves university study to serve as a military chaplain in Korea, with a quiet Mormon boy from Salt Lake City serving him. When the Marks’ second child, Logan, was suffering from lung problems and pneumonia at the age of nine months old, Hareven called daily and prayed for his son (Marks, 2021). Marks wrote, “It has been said that there is at least one inherent blessing in experiencing pain. That blessing is that, if we are human in the best sense of the word, it is our pain that enables us to truly feel for others during their times of sorrow. Tamara was no stranger to pain, yet she did not allow the pain she had experienced to embitter her. Instead, she cultivated her pain into a compassion that one can feel in her treatment of persons struggling with life’s challenges in much of her work” (Marks, 2021).

Towards the completion of Marks’ doctoral degree, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, took place; Dr. Hareven had a very difficult time with this event, and shortly thereafter asked Marks to take her to the airport for what he believed was “her last international journey of this life” (Marks, 2021). Upon arrival, and upon seeing the additional security measures that had been put in place after the attacks, Hareven asked him to accompany her into the airport. Marks (2021) recalls: “As we stepped inside the terminal with me steadying her, I saw that the post-terrorist attack protocols for security included a heavy array of military personnel in fatigues, many carrying assault rifles. Tamara suddenly grabbed and clung to me in a manner
reminiscent of my little daughter’s desperate death cling to me during swimming lessons when she was still terrified of the water.” After two drinks, she said to him, “I am sorry for this LAH-ren. You see, when I saw all the men with the rifles, it reminded me of when I was a little girl in the concentration camp’. I have rarely felt the earth shake under me, but it did then. In my years of combined servitude and friendship with Tamara, I had not known that she had been in a Nazi concentration camp as a child” (Marks, 2021). At the time, Marks’ oldest daughter was four years old, and “the thought of her experiencing the emotional, physical, and spiritual pain Tamara did, was almost too much for me to contemplate… With my newly broken heart, I discovered that I had finally come to love Tamara Hareven” (Marks, 2021). In summer 2002, the Marks family left, as Marks had been given a research professorship position at Louisiana State University, and went to say goodbye to Dr. Hareven, who gave him counsel on “how to weather my first job in academia, a job she had been instrumental in helping me land” (Marks, 2021). Marks (2021) concludes, “As I neared my car, I heard a loud cry, ‘LAH-ren!!’ I looked back in surprise to see that Tamara had descended from her apartment and was hurrying desperately towards me with great effort. For the first and only time, she embraced me. She would leave this life three months later.”

Excerpts from memorials written by her friends and colleagues revealed that Dr. Hareven led an incredibly colorful life and endured much adversity in her youth. She was born in 1937, and as a Romanian Jew, endured the Holocaust at an early age (Marks, 2021). This left her with many fears, including of elevators, enclosed spaces,
physicians, and tunnels. She also feared driving, bridges, large crowds, and airplanes. Despite these various fears, Marks (2021) continued, “I was begrudgingly impressed that despite the palpable fear that Tamara manifested, she was repeatedly willing to brave her various terrors for the opportunity to either learn or to teach.” Her family escaped from Eastern Europe to Israel, where she completed her high school education, served in the Israeli armed forces, and earned her bachelor’s degree before coming to America to study at Ohio State University – in fact, Dr. Barbara Settles and Dr. Tamara Hareven were both studying their doctoral programs at this institution at the same time, with Dr. Settles finishing hers in 1964 and Dr. Hareven finishing hers in 1965. Their paths did not cross during that time, but they later connected over this information, according to Dr. Settles’ remarks delivered the month after her death. Dr. Hareven arrived at the University of Delaware in 1988, where she taught family studies as well as history. Sprinkled throughout her career as an instructor were various visiting professor appointments at institutions across the world, such as Boston University; Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, where she received tenure; Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan; l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales á Paris, France; the University of Paris, Sorbonne; as well as many other distinguished appointments at many other institutions, including several in the Ivy League.

Dr. Hareven’s personality was also remarkable. Dr. Anne Boylan (2002, personal communication) described her as follows: “a woman of many contradictions and paradoxes. She traveled the world, but never learned to drive, and indeed was afraid of flying. She wrote or edited 20 books, and co-edited two journals for over
thirty years; her research often involved complicated computer programs and data analysis, yet she never mastered the personal computer or email. The telephone and the fax machine were the technologies that suited her. She was a careful and meticulous researcher, checking things three and four times to make sure they were right. But her handbag was always a mess.”

As an educator, Dr. Settles (2002) reported, “She could tell a good story in her speeches and reach the educated person or student regardless of their background or training. She wrote clearly and maintained some consistent themes across most of her writings.”. In her own research, Settles continued:

She often noted that there was an attribution to past times of whatever the current ideas of better family functioning were according to politicians and community leaders. Mostly these sort of nostalgic ideas included co-resident large families, women’s lives largely devoted to childrearing, greater family stability and filial responsibility for elders. She saw that it was not enough to present these ideas only in the academy and spoke frequently to lay audiences and presented testimony to Congress on myths about families in history (Settles, 2002).

Clearly, Hareven was an incredible person and researcher, and an example for any Human Development and Family Sciences student to emulate. At the time of her death, Dr. Hareven had several book projects underway, one of which was to be a comparative study of life and work among the textile workers of the United States, France, Japan, and Austria. Boylan continued, “As we mourn Tamara, we also mourn
the untimely end of those projects. We wish that she had lived to complete them.”

These projects ended with Dr. Hareven’s life. Although she bequeathed the contents of her office to the University of Delaware upon her passing, her materials remained untouched for 20 years. These materials were catalogued and filed in the Special Collections section of the Morris Library.

In February 2022, in what was formerly known as the Individual and Family Studies department but was now the Human Development and Family Sciences department at the University of Delaware, I had just entered my second semester of graduate study. My advisor, Dr. Settles, informed her about Dr. Hareven’s collection and I decided to investigate it as an independent study. I discovered not only the life and friendships of Dr. Tamara Hareven, but multiple projects that had been left unfinished. The raw data for these projects had been collected, catalogued, and organized. The uncoded, unanalyzed interview transcripts from Lyon, France, piqued my interest, so I had them photocopied. After multiple failed attempts at securing funding for a translator, I began rigorously learning French myself so that my work with this data would be fruitful. I sought the help of historians, librarians, and several talented others who could help her contextualize the data, understand Hareven’s vision, and interpret it successfully. I wrote to the executor of Dr. Hareven’s estate to ask for permission to conduct research using these materials, and not only did he approve, but he also sent me additional material from the time data was collected in Lyon in the 1990s. This exploration is culminating in this thesis, a pilot study with plenty of options for exploration in the future.
Chapter 2

THE LIFE COURSE

Hareven’s Perspective: A Foundational Understanding of the Life Course

Tamara Hareven was, in addition to being a historian, a pioneering life course theorist. According to Hareven (2000, p. 3), historical research near the end of the twentieth century had begun to revive myths and generalizations about family life and the impact of social change on society. Such research established, particularly in the United States, that not only were people subjects in the processes of social change, but also active participants in shaping the patterns of their own lives. As a result, contemporary research began to explore “previously neglected dimensions of human experience such as growing up, courting, getting married, bearing and rearing children, living in families, becoming old, and dying, from the perspective of those involved” (Hareven, 2000). Scholars began to seek understanding of the family in various changing contexts. Hareven (2000, p. 3-4) described these as “an effort to understand the interrelationship between ‘individual time’, ‘family time’, and ‘historical time.’” Before this book’s publication, “various social-science disciplines had generated their own myths and grand theories about continuities and changes in family behavior in the past” (Hareven, 2000, p. 4). The myth of industrialization destroying familial harmony and community affiliation, largely posited by sociologists, was popular. However, “historical research on the family has provided a perspective on change over time as well as on family behavior within specific social and cultural contexts in discrete time periods” (Hareven, 2000, p. 4). This has led to
the rejection of these previous myths as well as inspired questioning of the role of industrialization “as a major watershed for American and European history” (Hareven, 2000, p. 4).

At the time of this work’s publication, family history had been in existence for only three decades, but had shifted from the limited view of families as static units to an examination of the family as a process over the entire lives of its members; from a study of discrete domestic structures to the investigation of the nuclear family’s relations with the wider kinship group; and from a study of the nuclear family as a separate domestic unit to an examination of the family’s interaction with the worlds of religion, work, education, correctional and welfare institutions and with processes such as migration, industrialization, and urbanization (Hareven, 2000, p. 4).

Research had begun to explore decision-making processes in families, which sparked investigation of strategies and choices on the individual level as well. Additionally, researchers began investigating other chronological periods such as ancient Greece and ancient Rome, as well as other geographic locations, such as Northern and Eastern Europe, Southern Italy, the Mediterranean, and China (Hareven, 2000). Family history first emerged from Phillippe Ariès’s argument that conceptualizations of childhood as it is known today emerged as a product of the early modern period and were linked to the emergence of the conjugal family, in which parents’ relationships with their children and vice versa became more important than preserving a family line or name (Hareven, 2000, p. 5). In premodern France and
England, families were actively involved with their communities and households were open to nonrelatives engaged in familial activities, and even housing units served purposes mainly ordered toward sociability, not privacy. However, as modern families emerged, sociability retreated. This inspired “a whole new generation of scholars”, such as John Demos, Edward Shorter, and Lawrence Stone (Hareven, 2000, p. 5).

While Ariès was foundational in family history, his research “was rooted in several disciplines, such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, and most notably historical demography, which preceded it” (Hareven, 2000, p. 6). However, French demographers Louis Henry and Pierre Goubert developed a family reconstitution technique in the 1950s that allowed historians to assemble all information about the events in a family using genealogies, marriage, baptismal, and death records from parish registers, and thereby reconstruct “aggregate patterns of fertility, nuptiality, and mortality for vast numbers of people and, in some instances, over several generations” (Hareven, 2000, p. 6). These demographic analyses in France and England “revealed that in the preindustrial period, age at marriage was later than had been generally assumed, couples practiced some form of family limitation and child spacing as early as the seventeenth century, households were predominantly nuclear rather than extended, and preindustrial populations experienced considerable geographic mobility” (Hareven, 2000, p. 7). Hareven wrote,

From today’s perspective, it is difficult to recover the excitement of being able to re-create such patterns from the past. The evidence about the practice of family limitation in particular demonstrated the control that couples exercised
over their own lives and the implicit choices… that they followed in relation to changing social and economic conditions” (Hareven, 2000, p. 7).

Late marriage also explained the timing of household and family formation, as it was a method of family limitation, and was related to the expectation that newlywed couples establish separate households. Marriage and family life, then, was highly dependent on a couple’s ability to collect and use resources effectively to live independently and contribute to their families of origin as well as the family they may then have created through having children (Hareven, 2000, p. 7). While this would have been easily achievable for people in their early- to mid-twenties in previous generations, it is becoming less achievable for people even into their late twenties and early thirties.

The nuclear family structure was not only found in France and England, but also in other places (Hareven, 2000, p. 8). However, these discoveries and the generalizations of their findings led to the formation of new stereotypes of the Western nuclear family as having relatively late childbearing ages, relatively narrow age gaps between husbands and wives, high proportions of wives older than their husbands, and “the presence in the household of ‘life-cycle servants,’ unrelated to the family with which they were residing”, while South European and Mediterranean families were characterized as having complex household structures, early marriage, and the trend of households being formed by “the breakup of extended ones rather than through marriage” (Hareven, 2000, p. 9). However, scholars such as Berkner and Medick have refuted these generalizations as lacking solid bases, and “questioned the initial
preoccupation with household structure and size and have seen the need to investigate 
internal family dynamics” (Hareven, 2000, p. 9).

Hareven continued to note that in family and community analyses, 
demographic patterns are paramount, especially when they are interpreted in the 
context of economic and social institutions (Hareven, 2000, p. 10). One analysis of 
demographic patterns and household and family structures of Andover, Massachusetts, 
spanning the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries revealed power relations between 
fathers and sons as well as the influences of these power differentials on age at 
maintenance, landholding, and inheritance. Another examined the stark differences in 
household structure despite the nuclear shape of Puritan families in Plymouth; 
households often included non-relative servants, apprentices, and lodgers occupying 
the same living space as the nuclear family (Hareven, 2000). Hareven continues, “Age 
configurations were also considerably different. In some families, the oldest child in 
the household would be an adult while the youngest was still at the breast” (Hareven, 
2000, p. 10-11). Early household structure studies such as these were criticized for 
“their reliance on ‘snapshots’ in the census household schedules” (Hareven, 2000, p. 
11).

From the lens of the family life cycle, the brief life expectancies often caused 
phases of the cycle to be short in duration, as the death of the heads of the family 
would terminate them (Hareven, 2000, p. 11). Additionally, Hareven (2000, p. 12) 
continues, “The case of the life-cycle servants, as well as the presence of other 
unrelated individuals in the household, proves the remarkable flexibility of households
in the past. Many households “expanded and contracted in accordance with the family’s needs” (Hareven, 2000, p. 12). In nineteenth-century America, boarders and lodgers comprised not only a sizable portion of household members, but also of a family’s income; rent could contribute to the payment of a mortgage and allow women to refrain from labor force participation. Historians, then, were applying the family cycle approach, but discovered that while household patterns appeared constant, they truly varied significantly over time (Hareven, 2000, p. 13). The family cycle was valuable in assessing the patterns of economic hardship in families, but its shortcomings became apparent quickly, as the stages “were derived from contemporary American middle-class families, and they were not always appropriate for the study of families in the past” (Hareven, 2000). This meant that the typical—perhaps stereotypical—model of the upper-middle-class, white, heterosexual families living in their own home with two children, such as in the 1950s, was incorrectly being applied to understanding family functions in previous centuries, producing misunderstanding of historical family function and shape.

According to Hareven (2000, p. 13), “Dissatisfaction with the family-cycle approach led me in 1976 to invite Elder, who had developed the life-course approach, to collaborate with a group of historians on its application to historical analysis.” Using Federal Census Manuscript data for Essex, Massachusetts, they found “a significant difference between the pacing of early life transitions and the later ones” (Hareven, 2000, p. 13). Transitions from childhood and youth roles to adult roles were occurring quickly, while transitions into later life were very gradual, and may not have
occurred until the end of the lifespan (Hareven, 2000). However, all transitions across the life span were integrated with collective family goals, requirements, and ideas which dictated the timing of the transitions (Hareven, 2000, p. 13-14). The timing of marriage and leaving home brought forth a series of inquiries including those regarding individuals’ and couples’ negotiation of conflicting loyalties and goals between their families of origin and procreation, and the influence of economic insecurity on the transition from family of origin to family of procreation (Hareven, 2000, p. 14). Hareven (2000, p. 14) continues, “The life-course approach has introduced a dynamic dimension into the historical study of the family, and it has moved analysis and interpretation from a simplistic examination of stages by the family life cycle to an analysis of individuals’ and families’ timing of life transitions in relation to historical time.”

Pace and timing patterns are determined by the individual’s social and cultural context, and the synchronization of individual goals with family ones impacts timing. While such decisions as starting work, leaving home, and getting married are often seen as individual goals in the contemporary age, these were collectively defined within family timing goals in the past. Therefore, individual transitions to careers, separate homes, marriage, and even parenthood would have been dictated partially by whether the family as a unit was ready for that individual to be launched from the home. Even so, this may easily be dictated also by economic factors. For example, families of low socioeconomic status who rely on children to also bring in income to stabilize the family may not be prepared for these children to leave home or to pursue
other careers because doing so would economically destabilize or even jeopardize the entire family.

Additionally, the life course perspective:

also illuminates the links between behavior and perception. Although the actual timing of life transitions can be reconstructed from demographic records, its meaning to the individual and family members undergoing these transitions hinges on the examination of qualitative, subjective sources (Hareven, 2000, p. 14).

Previous researchers, such as Modell, have concluded that especially after World War II, the life course became individualized “to the point that a young person’s decision to marry is contingent on finding a suitable partner at a suitable age rather than on the requirements and constraints imposed by the family of orientation” (Hareven, 2000, p. 14-15). The life course perspective has also directed attention to “the changing configuration of kin with whom individuals travel together over their lives. Such configurations are formed and reformed; they change in their composition, their relationship to the individual and the nuclear family, and to each other over the life course” (Hareven, 2000, p. 15).

Despite the increased individualism that appears to accompany industrialization, kinship networks seem to also remain important in different contexts. In earlier work focused on the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century textile workers in Manchester, New Hampshire, Hareven found that for immigrant workers starting employment in new industrial conditions, kinship networks were crucial not
only in the adjustment to these changes, but also in navigating interactions with employers (Hareven, 2000, p. 16). These workers not only taught young people and immigrants how to work, but provided protection within the factory, socialized workers to working-class behaviors, and taught them “how to resist speedups in production through the setting of quotas on piecework and through the slowdown of machinery” (Hareven, 2000). Rather than disrupting kinship ties, migration often strengthened kinships and allowed for new functions “in response to changing economic conditions and pressures in the workplace” (Hareven, 2000, p. 16-17). Most effective, however, were the kinship networks in mediating interactions with local institutions, responding to crises such as strikes, and retaining mutual assistance networks with relatives in the community of origin, who also provided backup assistance (Hareven, 2000, p. 17). However, Hareven (2000) cautioned that pursuing questions of kinship requires a careful operationalization of “kinship”:

We need to distinguish between perceptual categories and definitions of kinship developed within a given society and the analytical categories used by social scientists… Reconstruction of kinship categories from within is extremely difficult, given the limitations of traditional historical sources, but essential (Hareven, 2000, p. 17).

According to Hareven (2000, p. 77), “The historical study of the family has provided important linkages between individual lives and larger social and economic processes such as industrialization, technological change, urbanization, and business cycles.” Historical studies of the family reversed previous economic and sociological
views of families as passive agents and called attention to family strategies, the “explicit or implicit choices families make for the present, for the immediate future, or for long-term needs” (Hareven, 2000, p. 77-78). These cover a wide range of topics to do with family life such as inheritance, migration patterns, family limitation, childrearing, labor force participation, income, and expenditure patterns (Hareven, 2000, p. 78). Not only do family strategies involve individual or family decision, but also the timing, especially as a response to needs or opportunities; many times, strategies involved trade-offs and calculating opportunity costs of various employment situations, buying a home, children’s marriages, financial security, and preparing for illness, age, and death. Hareven asserted that social scientists and historians can reconstruct the ways in which family decisions were made by examining family strategies, but central to this perspective is “an emphasis on family action as a dynamic process” (2000).

Hareven viewed oral history and ethnographic methods as crucial in allowing historians to “reconstruct conscious strategies for the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in areas such as family work strategies, kin assistance, intergenerational supports, and prudential planning for the future, some examples being education, savings, and insurance” (Hareven, 2000, p. 81). It is also critical to note that “The use of the term ‘strategies’ presupposes that individuals and families make choices and exercise priorities when responding to external constraints or opportunities, at times generating new opportunities” (Hareven, 2000, p. 81). Individuals and families of past generations did not always economically respond to changes in economic conditions;
in terms of women’s and children’s labor force participation, “even economically marginal families did not always make the most ‘prudent’ choices from a strictly economic point of view, if such choice was inconsistent with their family history and their own cultural value” (Hareven, 2000, p. 81-82). Hareven (2000, p. 101) juxtaposed the preindustrial and postindustrial family. Preindustrial families’ homes served as workshops, churches, reformatories, schools, and asylums, where postindustrial families were mainly a unit of consumption. Preindustrial family members, then, served as foremen, teachers, religious educators, disciplinarians, and caregivers, as well as producing the resources needed to sustain the family.

Now, rather than being units of production—in which the home is the center of social life and much of the products, services, and resources a family needs to function are produced within the home or very near in the community—families in postindustrial societies often have various other places from which they secure these things. For example, rather than educating children and teaching them a trade at home, most American families now send their children to receive educations from public schools, and very few families farm their own food. This juxtaposition is very clear in describing the impact of the shift from the familial mode of production to the market mode of production, in which families as an economic unit shifted from being a resource to “mainly a unit of consumption”, on families (Hareven, 2000).

Regarding individual time, family time, and historical time, at the time of this book’s publication, historians had long been “aware of the importance of time as a major frame for social change, but they have discovered only recently the importance
of time as a *phenomenon* or product of social change*” (Hareven, 2000, p. 151). There are multiple types of “time”, which Hareven explains: “An understanding of social change hinges to a large extent on the interaction between individual time and social-structural (historical) time. In this interaction, the family acts as an important mediator between individuals and the larger social processes” (Hareven, 2000, p. 152). Tensions can arise when individual timing and collective family timing conflict, especially in transitions, but this tension has varied over time. Additionally, timing, timeliness, and sequencing are culturally and historically dependent; what is an on-time transition in one culture may be too early or late for another, and may also depend on historical context (Hareven, 2000). This leads to various determinations of whether individuals or families are early, late, or on time. In Japan, the term *tekirei* “designates set norms of timing—the ages ‘fit’ for accomplishing various life transitions… [such as] marriage, work careers, and other roles in relation to the set norms of timing” (Hareven, 2000, p. 153). The *tekirei* also dictates the sequencing of these transition points. In the United States, after World War II, the transitions that were formerly related to family needs were more strongly adherent to age norms.

There are three characteristics of timing across the life course that are integral to understanding the life course. The first is that of individual timing: “In the individual life trajectory, the crucial question is how people time and organize their entry into and exit from various roles over their life course” (Hareven, 2000, p. 154). The second is synchronization of individual with collective family timing: “the juggling of family and work roles over the life course… Along with [changes in
familial configurations], people time their transitions into and out of various roles differently” (Hareven, 2000, p. 154). The third is the cumulative impact of earlier events on subsequent ones over the entire life course: “Early or late timing of certain transitions affects the pace of subsequent ones” (Hareven, 2000, p. 154-155).

Historical forces such as war, disease, economic trouble, famine, and other factors impact the life course across multiple generations; in addition to immediate impacts of a historical event, the overall life course may be shaped by changes in marriage, fertility, and mortality patterns that result from historical impacts (Hareven, 2000, p. 155). She emphasized the role in economic, institutional, and legislative changes altering life courses in terms of work and economic opportunities; these include child-labor laws, compulsory education policies, and mandatory retirement shape work-life transitions (Hareven, 2000).

Hareven (2000, p. 156) defines transitions as “processes of individual change within socially constructed timetables, which members of different cohorts undergo. Many of the transitions that individuals experience over their work and family lives are normative; others are critical or, at times, even traumatic.” Transitions are considered normative if the majority of the population experiences them and if they are expected under social norms (Hareven, 2000). Turning points, by contrast, “are perceptual road marks along the life course. They represent the individuals’ subjective assessments of continuities and discontinuities over their life course, especially the impact of special life events on their subsequent life course” (Hareven, 2000, p. 156).
Even normative transitions may be perceived as turning points in some circumstances. Hareven clarifies,

Individuals or families may experience turning points under the impact of internal family crises, such as the premature death of a close family member, illness or physical handicap, loss or damage of property, or loss of a job. Other turning points may be externally induced by historical circumstances or events, such as depressions or wars (Hareven, 2000, p. 156).

Normative transitions may become turning points when they coincide with crises, follow crises, are accompanied by family conflict due to asynchrony between individual and family goals, when they are “off time” meaning that they occur at a time that is not typical of the social norms, when it is followed by negative consequences that were unforeseen when the transition occurred, or when they require unusual social adjustments (Hareven, 2000, p. 157).

Applications of Life Course Theory in Hareven’s Time:

While Hareven provides a foundation for life course theory, other scholars have found various applications for the life course theory. Price, McKenry, and Murphy (2000, p. 2) note that contemporary family scholars, as well as those who have ever attended family reunions, witnessed firsthand how families change over time; individuals grow older, relationships change or end, children are born, and family members die. Each of these changes produces changes in the size, structure, and roles each individual plays within families and extended family networks (Price et
al., 2000). The study of these changes over time at the time of this chapter’s publication had been the focus of much research in the twentieth century and dubbed the family life cycle; this had been the focus of inquiry across several disciplines, including human development, home economics, and developmental psychology (Price et al., 2000). The term family life cycle was discounted to describe these changes because it implies that family life is a repeated sequence of events when true family changes over time do not constitute a cycle; once a stage is surpassed, the family must continue to move on, and cannot return to the way it previously used to be. Price and colleagues (2000, p. 2) give several examples: “For example, a couple who has children will never again be a ‘childless couple’, and a couple who decide to divorce cannot return to the status of ‘never married.’ Also, families, even if they experience the same stagewise program in development, will experience generational variation.”

The authors continue to say that the term life span was considered inappropriate because historically it was applied exclusively to intrapsychic phenomena and emphasized turning points in individual lives based on the age of that individual (Price et al., 2000, p. 3). To resolve the terminological problems, some applied the concept of family career as a term for family development and focused on the subsystems in families such as dyads between spouses, parent-child interactions, and sibling relationships; the stress in the family career concept lay in the need to focus not only on the family system but also subsystems, individuals, and changes in society as a whole (Price et al., 2000). However, the term life course was being used in
a broader context, and encompassed changes in individuals as well as families and other social entities over historical time. The authors write, “Family development has been subsumed under the life course approach… or has been viewed as part of life course analysis” (Price et al., 2000, p. 3). The life course perspective provided the most complete insights about change over time in families as a group, a series of interrelated individuals, and a social unit, and involved both microsocial and macrosocial levels of analysis (Price et al., 2000).

The life course perspective posits three types of time: individual time, generational time, and historical time (Price et al., 2000, p. 3). Individual time is also referred to as ontogenetic time or “seasons of life”, but refer to the same concept, which is roughly chronological age (Price et al., 2000). The basic focuses of ontogenetic time are the time periods of one’s life, and how people are channeled into roles based on their ages. For example, children often learn to drive when they are 16 years old, and achieve the right to vote at age 18, but are also expected to start earning a living or furthering their education. Related to ontogenetic time is cohort time, which refers to the age categories – cohorts – into which people are grouped based on when they were born; people born between 1946 and 1964 constitute the Baby Boomer generation, for example (Price et al., 2000). The authors elaborate that members of a particular cohort experience and are influenced by life events that occur approximately at the same time in their life span (Price et al., 2000). Historical time refers to societal, macrosocial changes over time that shape the lives of many individuals and families at once, such as the Great Depression, World War II, and various other military conflicts.
since (Price et al., 2000). The idea of cohort experiences and historical time can be closely linked. For example, American Baby Boomers who were born in 1946 may very well remember doing Duck and Cover bomb drills in elementary school due to the Cold War, but Baby Boomers born in 1964 may not have even had to do them. Last, the authors define generational time as “the rank order of positions that individuals hold in families (grandparent, parent, child) as well as the roles, expectations, and identities associated with these positions” (Price et al., 2000, p. 4). Although it is assumed that movement into these positions is related to ontogenetic time, this may not necessarily always be true; for example, a woman can become a grandmother at 62, but may also become a grandmother at 26 (Price et al., 2000).

According to Price and colleagues (2000, p. 4), the earliest record of a scholarly investigation utilizing a precursor the life course perspective was Rowntree’s 1901 stage description of the “persistence of poverty”. He concluded that families suffered economic hardship when their children were young and therefore economic liabilities, enhanced their families’ economic well-being when they became old enough to enter the paid labor force, and subsequently caused their families to suffer economic hardship again when they left home (Price et al., 2000). Similar patterns emerged later from research in the twentieth century, but despite Rowntree’s work, the four-stage family life cycle that was a precursor to the life course perspective was not constructed until the 1930s (Price et al., 2000). The four stages of this life cycle were “married with children”, “family with one or more children”, “family with one or more self-supporting children”, and “couples growing older” (Price et al., 2000). This
family life cycle was entirely dependent on the age and growth of children, but over approximately the next two decades family scholars nonetheless contributed to further development of this concept and analyzed the changes in families over time through this lens (Price et al., 2000). In 1947, Paul Glick published the first of multiple studies using census data that focused on changes in families throughout their life spans (Price et al., 2000). Subsequently in 1948, sociologists identified four stages of family life: “early stages”, “crowded stages”, “peak years”, and “later years” (Price et al., 2000).

1948 was a critical year for family science, as Evelyn Duvall and Reuben Hill chaired a committee on the dynamics of family interaction, as part of the National Conference on Family Life convened by President Harry S. Truman (Price et al., 2000, p. 4). This committee was charged with the task of describing the natural history of families from formation to dissolution. The authors (Price et al., 2000) elaborate, “This was a pivotal period in the development of the life span approach because the work of this group was integrated with the works of such scholars as George Herbert Mead, Earnest Burgess, and Willard Waller, who viewed families internally as interacting systems.” This caused a shift in focus from structural changes in families over time to an inclusion in focus from structural changes in families over time to an inclusion of focus of the role of familial interactions in these structural changes (Price et al., 2000, p. 5). Additionally, this time period brought about increased acceptance of “the idea that families are not closed systems but rather semi-closed and characterized not only by internal interaction between members but also by interaction with other societal systems,” as well as changes in these interactions over time (Price et al.,
Families were gaining increasing acknowledgement as social groups that do not exist in a vacuum but are susceptible to change based on interactions with various different groups and with each other.

Price and colleagues (2000, p. 5) state that families’ developmental histories revolve around shifts from periods of change to periods of stability and vice versa. The periods of stability are called *stages*; families vary in the duration of time they spend in a stage, and not all families experience all stages in similar manners or sequence (Price et al., 2000). The periods of change are called *transitions*, are often stressful to family members, and involve developmental tasks to accomplish as individuals and as a family (Price et al., 2000). Depending on family stage of development, families vary in their structures, compositions, intra-family interactions, and interactions with institutions outside the family (Price et al., 2000). Families in the same stages of development tend to have much in common with one another (Price et al., 2000). The authors describe: “Families with school-age children often have family members about the same age and engage in many of the same activities”, such as sports and after-school activities (Price et al., 2000, p. 5).

The stage approach to understanding changes in families over time has a strong basis on the recognition that “families experience successive patterns in the addition, growth, and loss of family members” (Price et al., 2000, p. 5). Additionally, the stage approach suggests that there is predictability in the life courses of families and provides families and others with information about what to expect at each stage of development (Price et al., 2000). However, a major limitation of the stage approach is
“that it has historically focused on once-married couples with children” (Price, 2000). Modern families are composed of various forms, relationships between members, and systems, but Price and colleagues (2000, p. 6) refute this limitation with the claim that families maintain similar functions and goals regardless of configuration. Therefore, despite the argument that stage approaches emphasize traditional family forms, the staged life course approach is nonetheless valuable for both traditional and nontraditional families (Price et al., 2000). Increases in life expectancy present different challenges for the various generations of the same family; for example, young adults may be members of the sandwich generation as their parents confront the challenges of their age – they may well be raising dependent children and caring for dependent, aging parents simultaneously (Price et al., 2000).

Multiple models of families over time were developed based on developmental milestones beginning at marriage and ending with the death of both spouses (Price et al., 2000, p. 6-7). This is the source of more criticism: “The idea that families should accomplish tasks, however, has been criticized as too value laden, because what is viewed as appropriate tasks at specified stages may change over historical time” (Price et al., 2000, p. 7). Nevertheless, the accomplishment of these developmental tasks is crucial to a family’s success. Families who do not complete these tasks often find themselves marginalized in society and experience increased conflict (Price et al., 2000). General tasks required of families regardless of generation include physical maintenance of family members, socialization of members for roles both in and outside of familial contexts, maintenance of social control, maintenance of members’
motivation to fill their roles, and addition, parenting, and launching of new family members into their adult roles when the time comes (Price et al., 2000).

In addition to the models that focus on the creation and expansion of families through singular marriage and childbearing and subsequent pruning and dissolution through childrearing and death, several alternative models recognizing diverse family trajectories have emerged (Price et al., 2000, p. 10). For example, divorced, remarried, LGBTQ+, and various cultural contexts may carry some features of traditional families, endure multiple developmental stages at once, parent alone unexpectedly, or carry different expectations for adult children (Price et al., 2000). Aldous, for instance, formulated both a traditional life course model and a model for divorced and never-married parents based on her understanding of how dyads operate during each stage of a divorce. The stages of her theory include the divorce and establishment of a single-parent family; career negotiations by the parents; families with primary-age children; families with adolescents; families with young adults leaving home; parents in the middle years; and parents’ retirement (Price et al., 2000). For never-married people, the divorce component of the first stage is omitted in favor of establishment of the single-parent family (Price et al., 2000).

By contrast, the McGoldrick and Carter model for divorced and remarried families begins with the decision to divorce, then moves from the post-divorce family to, possibly, remarriage (Price et al., 2000, p. 10). Some associated developmental tasks include accepting one’s role in the failure of the marriage, cooperatively navigating finances, coparenting with the other spouse, mourning the loss of the
previous two-parent family formation, and navigating extended family relationships; if these are not completed successfully, former spouses may “take a residue of anger with them” across the remainder of the life course (Price et al., 2000, p. 10-11).

Remarried families are often expected to ignore prior family ties and behave like two-parent, first-time-married nuclear families, but in reality must accomplish various other tasks such as restructuring boundaries and accommodating all parents/stepparents and extended family networks (Price et al., 2000, p. 11).

Families facing poverty also face unique developmental challenges; there is usually less time to complete developmental tasks, and other additional stressors changes families’ life course (Price et al., 2000, p. 12). For example, children and adolescents living in poverty often find themselves burdened by adult responsibilities at early ages, torn away from their families rather than launched on their own time, and poorly equipped to find suitable employment (Price et al., 2000, p. 12-13). In women of low socioeconomic status, the “family with children” stage begins when an unmarried teenage or young adult girl finds herself pregnant, but those who are married may experience conflict due to not having the opportunity to complete developmental tasks of coming of age (Price et al., 2000, p. 13). In later life, these families do not have the luxury of experiencing a reprieve from daily responsibilities or retirement; older adults often must keep working regardless of their health status and may never experience an empty nest due to caregiving needs of grandchildren and great-grandchildren (Price et al., 2000). Poverty and economic downturns, such as
those experienced repeatedly by the workers in the Lyonnaise silk industry, can render the completion of the aforementioned tasks for families difficult.

Where Price, McKenry and Murphy provided an overview of the history, development, and modern adaptations of life course theory, Bowen, Richman, and Bowen (2000, p. 117) focused on the life course as it pertains to the position of families within their communities. All families are “embedded in a sociohistorical and cultural context that influences the structure of families, the timing and sequencing of life events, and the demands on time and energy of family members” (Bowen et al., 2000, p. 117). Life course theorists notoriously conceptualize family boundaries as permeable to outside influences, particularly social norms, but at the time of this chapter’s publication, the relationship between families and the broader societies in which they exist had remained largely neglected (Bowen et al., 2000). Therefore, Bowen and colleagues (2000) sought to discuss the social properties that influenced family functioning patterns over time, while paying close attention to the concepts of family-environment fit and social capacities of communities. Bowen and colleagues (2000) advise that communities can be viewed in two ways. Geographical communities are defined by geographical boundaries, and functional communities which are formed around common interests or activities (Bowen et al., 2000). However, both geographic and functional communities can be discussed in terms of the extent to which community members come together to develop connections, gain resources, provide for individual and collective needs, offer opportunities for meaningful participation, provide instrumental and expressive support to one another,
solve problems, establish and enforce social norms, respond to threats, and maintain order (Bowen et al., 2000).

Bowen and colleagues (2000, p. 118) find the concept of family-environment fit to be useful in considering the relationship between families in communities. There are two types of family-environment fit, the first of which concerns “how well communities meet families’ needs” (Bowen et al., 2000). Some needs are universal, while others are specific to the developmental stages and characteristics of the community members (Bowen et al., 2000). Bowen and colleagues (2000) note that this type of family-environment fit is high when needs such as “shelter, safety, social support, transportation, educational facilities, and social and recreational facilities for individuals of different ages” are met. The second type of fit concerns whether families meet the demands of the community, and the extent to which they do so well – this is purely a question of families’ competency in areas such as social skills, parenting, and problem-solving, as well as families’ responsiveness to their communities (Bowen et al., 2000). Bowen and colleagues (2000) emphasize that these two types of fit are interconnected. The authors describe: “Communities that place too little demand on families may actually lower their capacities to meet the families’ needs in the future. In addition, families are considered better able to achieve higher levels of maturity and competence in environments that challenge them” (Bowen et al., 2000).

Family adaptation and family resiliency are also critical concepts in the discussion of family functioning within family-environment fit (Bowen et al., 2000, p.
According to the authors, “Family adaptation reflects the outcome of the interplay between families and their environments at any one point in time” (Bowen et al., 2000). In other words, it is “the outcome of efforts by families to effect changes in themselves or their environments so as to meet their needs and to confront life demands successfully” (Bowen et al., 2000). This is highly collectivistic, as families attempt to accomplish their own goals primarily as families but also secondarily as individuals so that everyone’s needs are met (Bowen et al., 2000). Family resiliency, by contrast, refers to the changes in families’ adaptations over time as stressors and crises arise (Bowen et al., 2000). Resilient families, according to Bowen and colleagues (2000), “are able to establish, maintain, or regain an expected or satisfactory range of adaptation in the context of developmental transitions, positive challenges, or life adversities.” Bowen and colleagues (2000) note that there is heavy intersection here with risk and resiliency theory, as communities may be sources of risk and protective factors, and therefore play a role in how families adapt. Families will adapt their functioning to maximize their fit in their communities and seek “a context that is more supportive of their needs and goals” (Bowen et al., 2000). When they cannot find this context, they “may actively disengage from their community of residence to protect the family and its interests… [or] work to arrive at a new consensus about their presenting situation” (Bowen et al., 2000). The authors (Bowen et al., 2000) cite denial as a commonly-used strategy to collectively manage situations of poor fit: “It is likely that families will be more prone to distort their interpretations
of fit when they are overwhelmed by demands or when they perceive low levels of control over their presenting situation.”

Bowen and colleagues (2000, p. 119) describe social capacity in communities as the de facto social structure that provides social care and enforces social norms within a community. Further, “It is the extent to which community members are able to generate psychological, social, and material resources and opportunities; enforce prosocial norms; and maintain order and safety” (Bowen et al., 2000). As a result, the social capacity of a community directly influences families and the way they manage transitions (Bowen et al., 2000). Communities vary in the levels of social capacity they possess, and therefore also vary in their abilities to meet their families’ needs (Bowen et al., 2000). Social capacity is “reflected in both informal and formal relationships among individual family members and between individuals and institutions” (Bowen et al., 2000). Three key features of communities that demonstrate their social capacity and that reflect relationships within communities include social capital, collective efficacy, and value consensus (Bowen et al., 2000).

Social capital, conceptualized in the late 1980s, refers to the quality and support in family relationships (Bowen et al., 2000, p. 119). There are three forms of social capital that are emphasized by the authors: obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms (Bowen et al., 2000, p. 120). Obligations and expectations refer to the concept of “reciprocal patterns of exchange among residents [that] create a sense of indebtedness that is regulated by norms of trust and cooperation” (Bowen et al., 2000). This is strongly interconnected with social
exchange theory, as community members can incur informal social credit by assisting others (Bowen et al., 2000). Information channels may provide families with the means to achieve goals they otherwise would not without the necessary information (Bowen et al., 2000). Finally, social norms facilitate appropriate behavior and sanction inappropriate behavior in a community (Bowen et al., 2000). Collective efficacy, evolved from the work of Albert Bandura, refers to social capital as well as the beneficent willingness of members of a community to promote the common good (Bowen et al., 2000, p. 121). In developmentally difficult times, collective efficacy may promote family adaptation (Bowen et al., 2000). The authors (Bowen et al., 2000) provide the examples of “residents cleaning up a vacant lot for establishing a playground; supporting a police crackdown on neighborhood traffic related to [antisocial behaviors]; and… mentoring programs for youth.” Finally, common values “encourage and affirm supportive interaction patterns within and between families and the enforcement of prosocial norms” (Bowen et al., 2000). The authors (Bowen et al., 2000) assert that when these patterns are positive, they can inform specific community goals, ambitions, and aspirations, and thereby increase social capital.

These concepts are critical to understanding the various challenges faced by individuals and families in the Lyonnaise silk industry. The workers of this industry tend to work very hard for low wages, and not only lack privilege in the larger society for these reasons, but because of the nature of the industry. They also lack social capital, which would be essential in maintaining families. Truquin, whose life is explored in depth later in this essay, lacks many of the resources described by these
theorists as crucial to family functioning, particularly social capital. Friends were rarely mentioned in his memoir, and he had no consistent support from extended family. Most of the time, this seems to be circumstantial rather than deliberate action or inaction on Truquin’s part. Economic downturns were frequent in the silk industry in the nineteenth century and appeared to remain frequent in the twentieth century, therefore wielding the power to transform transitions into turning points at which families found themselves extremely stressed and disadvantaged.
Chapter 3

THE FRENCH SILK INDUSTRY: A HISTORY

The Memoir of Norbert Truquin: A Firsthand Account

In a volume entitled *The French Worker*, Mark Traugott translated and included the autobiography of Norbert Truquin, who was a silk weaver in Lyon throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. This autobiography is not only a portrait of Truquin’s life, but also of the typical blue-collar worker in Lyon during the nineteenth century, and various disadvantages that silk weavers found themselves afforded by their industry and the influence of the bourgeoisie over many aspects of their lives. Truquin was born in the Somme department of the Rozières region in northern France on June 7, 1833, the youngest child and only son of an entrepreneur who was desperate for a son after having had three daughters (Truquin, 1993, p. 251). When Truquin was five years old, his father went bankrupt, and “We sold everything in our home and in the workshop, including the grandfather clock. All that remained were the four walls of the house, which belonged to my mother” (Truquin, 1993). After the bankruptcy, Truquin’s father became the manager of a factory he also partly owned in Amiens, and brought the young Truquin with him (Truquin, 1993, p. 251-252). According to Truquin (1993, p. 252), “I stayed there for a year, but his salary was not sufficient to maintain eight people, including five young children and their maid, as boarders in a private residence. That was when my mother fell ill, never again to leave her sickbed. My father returned to the village and sold a parcel of forested land that belonged to him, along with all the odds and ends that he could turn to
account. He had not given up hope of striking it rich, claiming that he possessed a secret for the manufacture of the flexible steel needles used to knit machine-made sweaters and stockings.”

Truquin’s father brought him to Reims, where his father became partners with a man named Triboulet, in 1840 (Truquin, 1993, p. 252). While boarding in a private residence,

I had just turned seven when I got it in my head to tell the woman who owned the place where we were staying that my father would not be paying her for our room and board. At first this woman seemed to be disconcerted by this curious revelation… she summoned my father to her room after dinner and, in my presence, repeated what I had said. My father feigned surprise, but I understood from the embarrassed look on his face that I had committed a blunder, though it was too late to take it back” (Truquin, 1993, p. 252).

Truquin continues,

“A week later, my father led me to the home of a wool comber. He turned me over to him with the following words: ‘I’ve brought you this rogue and I’m leaving him with you. He’s yours. If he fails you, be sure to let him have it, for you’ll be doing him a service. Don’t forget to have him say his four prayers every day. He may be good for nothing else, but I insisted that he at least become a good Christian’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 252).

Auguste, the wool comber, “was a sixty-five-year-old Belgian who was very neat in his personal appearance and had a big white beard. He had served as a
quartermaster in the Indies for fifteen years under both the Republic and the Empire, but he had spent part of this time as a prisoner on the English prison ships” (Truquin, 1993). Traugott notes in the margins of this autobiography that Truquin’s master was a prisoner of war while serving in the French Army, as Belgians may have been of French citizenship, and during the time he had been on prison ships France and England were at war. (Truquin, 1993).

Truquin at first did not believe that his father had abandoned him, but thought he was joking (Truquin, 1993, p. 253). The next morning, his new master taught Truquin to bargain for food by taking him to the local middle-class neighborhoods to buy some scraps of souring meat from the butchers and vegetables for soup; he threatened to beat Truquin if he did not drive a hard bargain with the vendors (Truquin, 1993). His master would instruct Truquin to buy sheeps’ heads, which would sometimes have worms in them, to make broth, and “I would tell my master of the disgust I felt. He simply replied in a rude tone that it was of no great concern, and that all I had to do was throw the worms out. He told me that I might one day be reduced to eating the leather soles of my shoes” (Truquin, 1993, p. 253). Shopping for food required Truquin to travel more than three kilometers, and while he passed in front of the cathedral, he would bless himself with holy water and recite the Credo. However, As I could not enter with my basket, I would leave it by the door. One day it was taken by some kids, and I was forced to return without my basket and without having completed my errand… My master, after having me tell my story, had me kneel down and gave me thirty blows with a doubled-over strap,
putting all his strength into it. I did not utter a single cry (Truquin, 1993, p. 253).

Auguste threatened to "break you just as I’ve broken others”, and this unfortunate circumstance cost Truquin the privilege of his bed; from then on, he slept in the coal cellar under the staircase (Truquin, 1993).

The wool combing process was incredibly demanding at the artisanal level. In large scale manufacture, there was one furnace for every four combers to warm the combs, but Auguste was not a large-scale manufacturer; he fashioned his furnace out of clay (Truquin, 1993, p. 254). Once combs are heated, they are attached to a clamp, and then the wool and “nearly red-hot” comb are oiled (Truquin, 1993, p. 254). Then, “[The comber] spreads this oil over the wool and greases the nearly red-hot comb. The result is a nauseating odor that hangs in the air from four in the morning until ten at night. Add to that the coal fumes that the furnace gives off throughout the day” (Truquin, 1993, p. 254). After the wool is greased, the comber would take a second comb that had been waiting in the furnace, comb the wool until the fibers were straight and silky, and replace the comb in the furnace (Truquin, 1993). Then the comber would take the tapered end of the wool from his comb, draw out a centimeter at a time until it was three to four feet long, and hand it to his assistant, who would remove the impurities of the wool with his teeth (Truquin, 1993). Truquin continued,

He must not spit out these impurities. He has to make them run, like a string of rosary beads, out of the two sides of his mouth. It is not hard to imagine how unhealthy this work is for the child. Nacteurs, as these unfortunate children are
called… use their teeth to extract the impurities because the wool has to be held taut so as not to risk tearing the strands apart, and their two hands cannot be spared from this task (Truquin, 1993, p. 254).

Truquin would do this from four in the morning until ten at night; extreme sleep deprivation led to more serious abuse when Truquin would fall asleep standing up (Truquin, 1993, p. 254-255). Truquin writes, “Every time I succumbed to fatigue, standing next to him, he would strike me… The quantity of blood that this man made me spill was incredible. Though I would bite my hands or hit my head against the wall in an effort to resist the desire to sleep, nothing helped” (Truquin, 1993, p. 255). He would often be forced by his master to undress and be beaten with a belt, and harsh punishments would be especially incurred for attempts at play (Truquin, 1993).

Six months after he had started this work, “an economic downturn occurred. It lasted two months and allowed me to sleep as much as I wanted” (Truquin, 1993, p. 255). According to Truquin (1993),

The wool that my master had been combing for the six months that I had been with him brought him two francs and forty centimes per kilo. An ordinary worker can prepare a kilo of it per day, thus earning two francs and forty centimes… Overall, deducting the cost of coal and oil, by working part of Sunday the worker and his assistant earn about eight francs a week, or from thirty-two to thirty-four francs a month (Truquin, 1993, p. 255)

When work picked up again, Truquin and his master were given inferior wool to comb that only generated one franc 50 centimes per kilo, but the costs of production
remained the same (Truquin, 1993, p. 256). Two months later, they were given fine merino wool from Spain, which generated two francs sixty centimes per kilo; this was the most Truquin’s master had ever earned (Truquin, 1993). On Saturday evenings the master would go to the cabaret and get drunk, force Truquin to get drunk, and perform various humiliating acts while beating him in front of the crowd for their entertainment (Truquin, 1993). School children would often bully Truquin, whose clothes had worn out and had been replaced by bits of clothing that had formerly belonged to his master (Truquin, 1993). In 1841 Truquin’s father finally came to visit and brought fine clothes for his child that he would come back and retrieve the very next day to pawn to pay a gambling debt (Truquin, 1993, p. 256-257).

His master became “stricken with a white tumor on his knee which made it absolutely impossible for him to go out” (Truquin, 1993, p. 257). This provided a bit of relief from the abuse, because Truquin would have the freedom to spend time in the cathedral for hours, and although he would still be beaten, his master could not run after him (Truquin, 1993). However, Truquin had to also serve his master as a nurse, replacing bandages and washing them (Truquin, 1993). Eventually his master got worse and had to stop working (Truquin, 1993). As a result, his master would send Truquin to pawn his belongings to buy food, medicine, and other essentials; the only food they had left to eat was boiled potatoes (Truquin, 1993). Truquin saw that his master was getting worse and had suggested he go to the hospital: “That was the last time he hit me. ‘What would become of you if I went to the hospital?’ he shouted. In reality, I had only made the suggestion in the hope of changing my circumstances,
which could not have been worse” (Truquin, 1993, p. 258). His master died on December 19, 1843, and as soon as the body was taken away, Truquin was evicted (Truquin, 1993). Truquin acquainted himself with several boys his age who engaged in petty theft to survive, but he could not bring himself to emulate them (Truquin, 1993, 258-259). Truquin was subsequently taken in by a prostitute in his building and her 25-year-old partner named Orblain, who cut his hair, gave him a bath, gave him new clothes, fed him, and gave him work cleaning the house and shopping (Truquin, 1993, 259-260). Despite his illiteracy, Orblain made money by falsifying passports, especially for convicts and others who sought to escape France (Truquin, 1993, p. 260).

Sadly, the prostitutes who hosted Truquin were arrested, and he was put out once again (Truquin, 1993, p. 261). He was put up again by an elderly peddler named Drouet, who led him to “a farm where he usually was offered hospitality. He suggested that I say I was his son. We were well received. They dried our worn clothes in front of the fire, cooked us eggs, and then took us to the barn, where we slept on straw” (Truquin, 1993, p. 261-262). Begging was forbidden and illegal, and Truquin was nearly arrested for begging for bread from the mayor (Truquin, 1993, p. 262). After these threats, Drouet shouted at the mayor:

‘Why don’t you, who are rich… teach him a better [trade]? Here you sit in the comfort of your suite of rooms. Without your ever having done anything for anyone, you were made a judge. As for me, for twenty-five years I fought for
France. My body is riddled with wounds. And after all that service, your shameful masters didn’t even give me any assistance!’ (Truquin, 1993, p. 262).

They later spent time in the hospital for two weeks while suffering from scabies, but this provided a stable source for food (Truquin, 1993, p. 263). Truquin and Drouet then traveled to Sompy, where Drouet’s former comrade who had fought at Waterloo, Mr. Duval, had a home (Truquin, 1993, p. 264). Drouet stayed with Duval for three days and then left Truquin with him; they never heard from him again (Truquin, 1993). Duval treated Truquin like a son, and Truquin became a picker with Duval until Truquin became ill, and Duval tried his best to take Truquin to Reims, where there was a hospital (Truquin, 1993, p. 264-265). Duval and Truquin were separated, and Truquin never saw Duval again (Truquin, 1993). Truquin confided to someone in a bed next to him in the hospital that he was homeless and did not know where he was supposed to go when he left the hospital, and this person advised him to go to one of the villages along the canal being built from Strasbourg to Reims, where he would be able to get a job as a dishwasher in an inn (Truquin, 1993, p. 265). Truquin instead got a job as a navvy, or terrassier, which is a worker who moved quantities of soil, rock, and debris on construction projects (Truquin, 1993).

Truquin was still weak from his illness and could not lift the tamping tool, so he was sent to his new master’s house, where his wife used him for household tasks (Truquin, 1993, p. 266). These terrassiers would have to pay 40 centimes for a serving of soup with a tiny piece of meat, and a stew made from beans or potatoes for dinner (Truquin, 1993). Truquin notes, “On average, they ate three pounds of bread a day and
they were charged twenty centimes for a place to sleep. In the morning, they usually
drank two sous’ worth of spirits. Their daily expenses came to one franc seventy
centimes without counting clothing. In the winter, they were not always able to earn
their keep, because of the time lost on account of rain or frost” (Truquin, 1993). These
terrassiers were employees who had subcontracted with entrepreneurs for a set amount
of work, usually one to two thousand cubic meters, but were usually not paid until the
job was done, and sometimes these entrepreneurs would disappear with the money,
which was then never paid as wage (Truquin, 1993). Truquin continued,

The workers who had thus been robbed first tried to sue those who owed them,
but these poor devils knew nothing of the quirks of the law. Moreover, they
lacked the necessary resources, and lawyers have a sovereign disdain for those
whose pockets they sense to be poorly lined, even though the comforts they
enjoy all come from the sweat of workers (Truquin, 1993, p. 266).

Additionally, few terrassiers lived past age 50; most died of pneumonia
between the ages of 35 and 45; this enraged Truquin (Truquin, 1993, p. 266-267). He
wrote, “And to think that so many unfortunates, who have worked the earth for so
many years, are reduced to utter poverty, even though they have earned the right to a
retirement in their old age!” (Truquin, 1993, p. 267).

In March, after winter ended, Truquin was sent on an errand to Reims, where
he found out from an acquaintance that his father had allegedly returned to Rozières
and remarried (Truquin, 1993, p. 267). Truquin wanted to go see his father and
informed his employer’s wife he would be leaving (Truquin, 1993). According to
Truquin (1993, p. 267), “His wife took the news very badly, complaining that now that I had regained my strength and they needed me… I did not know how to respond, but I was determined to leave all the same. This employer did not pay me any wages.” He made his way to his grandfather’s house, where “My arrival was a major event for my family. First they heated water to clean me up. My clothing, which was infested with vermin, was thrown in the stove. The next day, which was a Sunday, most of the villagers came to visit me. They were amazed to hear me speaking proper French” (Truquin, 1993, p. 269). He went to see his father, “who was sick and poor. My stepmother, whom I called Madame, which very much displeased her, did not even offer me lunch. Then I visited with my uncles and aunts, for I had a large family. I had become the spoiled child once again. Everyone wanted me to stay with them” (Truquin, 1993). When during a family dinner Truquin failed to properly recite a prayer, his aunt preached a sermon about gratitude to God for the kindnesses He heaped upon them, and Truquin answered, “‘God put man on earth, but if man doesn’t work, he won’t eat. So it’s work and not God that gives us food’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 269-270). His relatives became cold towards him and at the time Truquin could not understand why, but he left nonetheless (Truquin, 1993, p. 270).

After several different jobs, emigration to Algeria, and other unfortunate events, Truquin returned to France and settled in Lyon in the summer of 1855 (Truquin, 1993, p. 290). Approximately a year and a half later, after several illnesses and further disillusionment with the earthworks industry, Truquin began to weave velvet, and quickly became adept (Truquin, 1993, p. 292). After a brief return to the
earthworks industry, he then returned to the weaving industry, working in a workshop specializing in novel satin in Rue Sainte-Catherine, in the Croix-Rousse district (Truquin, 1993, p. 294). His workshop consisted mainly of young women, who would weave satin from 3:30 in the morning until sundown; in the winter, they weaved from five o’clock in the morning until eleven at night (Truquin, 1993). Truquin gave a shocking description of the conditions under which women began working in the silk industry: “I asked my boss, with whom I had become friendly, why these young women had such yellow complexions and such tired faces. He confessed that nearly all of those who left that shop were on their way to the cemetery” (Truquin, 1993). The girls, who were often aged 15 years old, who were recruited from faraway regions and their religious parishes to work in the Lyon silk weaving workshops, of which there were approximately 7000 at the time, under false pretenses – girls would often agree to a four-year apprenticeship although “four months would be sufficient to learn how to make satin or taffeta” (Truquin, 1993, p. 294-295).

Truquin continues to recount the words of his boss, who described that for the first six months of their apprenticeships, girls exclusively performed housework and wound spools (Truquin, 1993, p. 295). Girls would be taken to six o’clock Mass on Sunday mornings, and then returned promptly to the workshop,

“because they might otherwise meet someone and get married, which wouldn’t serve the boss’s interests. He uses every means at his disposal to keep them for a long time and to extract from them the greatest possible profit. Because they work seventeen hours a day, often in unhealthy workshops where
the beneficial rays of the sun never enter, half these young women become consumptive before their apprenticeship is completed” (Truquin, 1993, p. 295).

Girls who complained were socially sanctioned, and the boss incentivized harder work from the girls by complimenting the most skillful (Truquin, 1993). When they were no longer able to work,

“‘they are told that they have perhaps committed indiscretions. Those whose relatives live in the countryside are sent home to their families to recover, but it’s often too late. The boss’s greed has kept them from getting care too long. As for those who have no relatives or who are too poor, they’re sent to the hospital. They rarely leave there alive or, if they do escape, they’re likely to be sick for the rest of their lives’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 295).

Girls’ living conditions were often infested with vermin, and hazardous chemicals such as mercury, arsenic, and mercury chloride were often used to make the silk glossier and more appealing to the consumers; the boss attributed these girls’ change in color and development of consumption to breathing the fumes of these chemicals at all hours every day (Truquin, 1993). When Truquin asked why doctors, who would see these patients in the hospitals, had not enacted some kind of public health measure to save more of these girls’ lives, “my employer did not know how to respond. ‘How can it be,’ I asked myself, ‘that the appointed guardians of public health are not addressing indignant reports to the administration? These young women are not dying of natural causes; they are the victims of premeditated murder!’”
Truquin continued, “On reflection, I understood that medicine was their livelihood and that, to bring in a good income and maintain their families in affluence, they had to turn a blind eye to these horrors so as not to harm their own interests” (Truquin, 1993, p. 296).

Truquin categorizes the Lyon weavers into two political-socioeconomic categories: “Those who make plain, solid-colored material are generally bigots, but so as not to expose themselves to too much ridicule, they call themselves conservative republicans. Those who weave fancy novelty goods are more likely to be progressive republicans. There is a very definite hierarchy among them” (Truquin, 1993, p. 296). Those who owned two or three looms were considered to be “ordinary employers”, and those who had four or more “constitute the aristocracy of the trade” (Truquin, 1993, p. 296). According to Truquin, the latter group “have their own separate cafés where they gather and hold their assemblies. Their wives are incredibly arrogant and are careful not to say hello to the wife of a man who owns only two looms” (Truquin, 1993, p. 296). Truquin contrasts these bourgeois starkly with the clearly-proletariat workers they employ:

An analogous hierarchy exists among the workers employed by these small-time workshop owners. In all the vast number of workers who swarm through the streets of Lyon, there can hardly be twelve to fifteen hundred who earn enough to be properly dressed. There are the ones who carry a cane and wear high hats… But since it is rare for the novelty-goods sector to go more than eighteen months without a wave of unemployment, during every slack season
they are forced to take their fancy clothes to the pawn shop, usually to never see them again (Truquin, 1993, p. 296).

Near the end of 1859, Truquin found work with someone “who taught the theory of silk manufacture” (Truquin, 1993, p. 297). Three months after he was hired, the instructor assigned him a loom in the room next to where he taught his classes; he would visit Truquin to examine his designs or take a break from his lessons multiple times a day (Truquin, 1993). This instructor also taught Truquin history in addition to weaving (Truquin, 1993). 1860 was a tumultuous year for this enterprise; Truquin recalls that he had been working there for a year when “an unemployment crisis occurred, depriving the shop’s employees of work. I was practically the only one who was not laid off” (Truquin, 1993, p. 297). Upon bringing this up to his instructor, he mentioned that the Lyonnaise silk industry had a “‘slack season’” about every 18 months, and attributed this to “‘some selfish design on the part of the manufacturers’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 297). His employer responded,

“‘The manufacturers are more to be pitied than the workers. Their honor is at stake. They have to see to their sons’ education. They have to think about their daughters’ dowries. The workers don’t have these worries’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 297).

This sparked a hot debate between Truquin and his instructor, in which Truquin informed his employer that he was not particularly knowledgeable or empathetic to the working class: “‘And what about the poor mother who has no bread to give to her children… Don’t you think the proletarian has to worry about the landlord’s agent,
who is sure to come claim the quarterly rent and who has the right to seize all the household belongings?’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 298). The employer eventually retorted, “‘They’re not much to be pitied. There are some who earn four francs a day… They might be more polite and not spend so much time in the *cabarets*’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 299). Truquin retorted that workers could not do without their outings to the cabaret and cited himself as an example; at this time, he was living on the eighth floor of a building that had a single dormer window for light that was freezing in the winter and baking in the summer (Truquin, 1993). His employer responded that he was not dismissing Truquin as his stereotype of the lazy, self-indulgent, drunken worker, and that politics are not the workers’ business (Truquin, 1993). Truquin pointed out that all workers are housed in similar ways to his own living conditions, and the workers needed social interaction, distraction, and coping mechanisms (Truquin, 1993, p. 299-300).

At this time Truquin’s autobiography takes a significantly happier turn; he met his wife, who was also a weaver, at the home of a friend he had known during his time assisting his father as a colonial settler in Africa (Truquin, 1993). There were some sexist undertones underlying the two categories of female silk weavers and the rules of social engagement between the male and female members of the working class (Truquin, 1993). Truquin describes: “There are two categories of female silk workers: those who are given housing by their employers and those who live on their own. The former are considered more respectable. I was given approval, as custom required, to
court my fiancée” (Truquin, 1993, p. 300). Marriage was expected to fill a socioreligious as well as economic purpose; he continues,

My express intention was for my marriage to be a civil ceremony. I had so informed the fellow workers who were supposed to serve as my witnesses, but I had to struggle against their objections. They argued that I should overcome my personal distaste for religion so as not to offend the relatives and friends of my fiancée. They were unanimous in portraying a civil ceremony as a poor way to start off married life (Truquin, 1993, p. 300).

Truquin continues to say that he was persuaded to have a religious marriage (Truquin, 1993). However, two months after their marriage, an economic downturn left both Truquin and his wife without work; for months, they lived on boiled potatoes and wine, and had opened lines of credit with their baker and their grocer (Truquin, 1993, p. 301). When the economy started back up, the main goods that were sought after were novelty silk materials that used elaborate designs (Truquin, 1993). Truquin was able to extend a line of credit so that he could set up his loom to make such goods, and was assigned to weave a cloth that was 50 meters long, for which he would be paid one franc 50 centimes per meter (Truquin, 1993). Truquin continues,

It was the manufacturer’s prerogative to write on our order books: expenses not guaranteed. That way, if the manufacturer ordered just a single piece, then after having obliged us to spend a hundred francs to set it up… he did not have to pay the jobber any compensation for these costs (Truquin, 1993, p. 301).
If Truquin had made a claim, the manufacturer would have cut him off from supplies, and he would have been in “the most abject poverty. That is why the worker remains silent. As a result, these manufacturers make colossal fortunes in a few years. Their arrogance is extreme” (Truquin, 1993, p. 301). Truquin’s wife had also found work, and both worked night and day to pay off creditors (Truquin, 1993).

Truquin and his wife were expecting their first child when they received their third round of bills, and Truquin’s landlord told Madame Truquin:

‘Madame, when one is so poor, one either doesn’t get married or else goes to the hospital. Myself, I had two wives, and they both went to the hospital to give birth.’ My wife could not hold back her indignation and replied: ‘If you weren’t such a miserable wretch, you wouldn’t have needlessly sent them to the hospital. That’s why they’re dead, and you’ll die there too, in misery.’ This prediction did in fact come to pass a few years later (Truquin, 1993, p. 302).

The landlord in turn removed the doors and brickwork, which forced Madame Truquin to have their first child at the hospital; they were then unable to either feed their baby or pay the monthly fees charged by wet nurses (Truquin, 1993). Truquin stalked a manufacturer for help as this was now a dire state of financial distress for his family, and he received 50 francs to keep himself and his family alive (Truquin, 1993). According to Truquin, “He did not hold a grudge for what I had done, and I worked for his company for some time after that… There were thousands of workers like me in Lyon… that causes factories to be set up in every rural area where there are poor devils to exploit” (Truquin, 1993, p. 303). He continues,
There is no one more timid than the pauper, who trembles when the rent falls due, who is afraid of seeing the landlord’s agent and the process servers appear, and of having his belongings sold at auction on his front doorsteps…

This system is essentially destructive of the family, but what does that matter to speculators? All they care about is that their business prosper. The government has served their interests rather well (Truquin, 1993).

In a later comment, Truquin noted that children were not able to play unless they were fortunate enough to move into a home that was, like the next home of the Truquin family, near a park: “Nothing is sadder than the life that the children of wavers lead in those vast barracks that are sometimes seven stories high. They cannot play, for their movement might break a thread or upset the weaver” (Truquin, 1993, p. 304). Truquin continued,

Workers in the luxury trades are slaves from the moment they are born. They go right from school to the workshop and then remain shut up inside until they die. It would be better if they were never born or if the luxury items they make did not exist (Truquin, 1993, p. 304).

At this time, Truquin worked for the Schulz firm, “which was the biggest manufacturer of novelty items in Lyon and perhaps in all Europe” and supplied articles of clothing such as dresses that were fourteen meters long, destined for members of royal courts in Austria, but which he was not paid well for (Truquin, 1993, p. 304). Truquin was paid for the 14-meter dresses, but not for the incredible number of samples he had to prepare to be carried to the store and sent to the broker, after which
substantial orders were expected (Truquin, 1993). However, this labor eventually became a source of conflict between Truquin and his employer:

For an entire winter, I therefore prepared samples three meters long in the hopes of a big order. In the end, I asked for compensation for all these samples.

The first assistant appeared to be completely surprised and said: ‘But you’ve already been paid!’ (Truquin, 1993, p. 305).

Truquin’s employer offered to pay for the samples at double the usual rate, but which Truquin rightfully found absurd (Truquin, 1993). He demanded he be compensated five francs a day for the samples, and when his employer balked at this figure, he said, “‘You didn’t warn me that you would keep me busy making samples the whole winter. You go about it very shrewdly. First you ask for a sample ten centimeters long, then twenty, then fifty, and the weeks go by without any other work’” (Truquin, 1993). Truquin’s employer countered with an offer of 125 francs in compensation for work that was worth 1500 francs at a rate of 5 francs a day for each loom (Truquin, 1993). Truquin’s employer issued a thinly veiled threat, saying “‘You’d better think over what you’re doing… You have three of the company’s looms. Think it over carefully and come back tomorrow. If I were you, I’d sleep on it’” (Truquin, 1993, p. 305). While Truquin admits he should have stated his conditions from the beginning and would not have won the case if he had started one against his owner, he accepted the 125 francs, but his employer retaliated: “Just to punish me for having dared to make these demands, he took away my looms” (Truquin, 1993, p. 305-306).
At this time, this company had plunged not only Truquin but many others into poverty, and

The rumor making the rounds in Lyon was that after having workers from Lyon prepare samples for nothing, this merchant was sending the orders to other factories that he owned in Prussia. It was now 1867. Poverty was spreading its ravages over Lyon… When the shawl workers tried to organize a strike, they were severely punished. Some of them were sentenced to five years in prison (Truquin, 1993, p. 306).

The silk weavers of Lyon organized and demanded an increase in pay; Truquin was one of 11 delegates for ready-made goods (Truquin, 1993). He met by evening with the delegates every evening in a café, and Truquin made a motion “to seek the raise demanded by the workers, which involved an increase of 20 percent over the average of the going rates for various items” (Truquin, 1993). However, of 11 delegates, only three were in favor of the raise and nothing could be decided (Truquin, 1993, p. 307). Truquin argued that silk was a luxury item, and luxury goods could stand an increase in price perfectly well; raw silk at the time sometimes rose 20 or 30 percent, but sales remained constant (Truquin, 1993). Additionally, Truquin argued that silk goods at the time were selling at the same prices that were charged before the Revolution of 1848, but the costs of rent and food had doubled in the nearly-20 years since, which made the raise an urgent need for this community that the manufacturers could easily absorb (Truquin, 1993).

According to Truquin,
The fear of offending the manufacturers (for it had at times cost dearly) caused several delegates not to reappear at the meetings. There were only five of us left. From that point on, we were unanimously in favor of the 20 percent raise. There was one among us who never spoke up but who was reporting all our discussions to the manufacturers (Truquin, 1993, p. 307).

These delegates went to the trade council to discuss their wage rates with the merchants, who “got on their hobbyhorses about foreign trade” and argued that if they accepted the raise, they would have to sell inferior goods as a result (Truquin, 1993, p. 307). According to Truquin, they could not come to terms at this meeting, and he feared that his colleagues were about to give in; at the next meeting Truquin asked to speak to defend their general interests (Truquin, 1993). He argued,

‘Workers in the factories in Zurich are paid more than jobbers are paid here. It’s the same in England. Manufacturers in those two countries have to bear production and tooling costs that don’t even apply in the case of our manufacturers in Lyon, and workers in those two countries work fewer hours than we do… The superior quality of goods made in Lyon is much vaunted, but if wages are not increased, we run considerable risk of losing this superiority. The jobber who just barely manages to feed his family even now will soon be unable to take on any apprentices because he lacks the means. Moreover, any man who’s poorly nourished loses his mental ability, and mental ability is more necessary than ever to maintain our preeminence (Truquin, 1993, p. 307-308).
Truquin concluded his argument by proposing a solution that was far less palatable to the merchants:

‘There’s another way of standing up to foreign competition. Let the manufacturers, who own buildings and coal mines, bring down the cost of rents and coal, and let all taxes on food be abolished. We would much prefer that. All the necessities of life have doubled in price over the past twenty years. Wages must therefore be doubled to restore that balance. So you see, gentlemen, our proposal for a raise is very moderate’ (Truquin, 1993, p. 308).

The raise was accepted by the majority of manufacturers, although Truquin did face some retaliation from a manufacturer who, upon learning his name, stopped giving him work after his speech (Truquin, 1993). However, Truquin concludes, “This raise produced a great deal of good in Lyon. It benefited everyone who belonged to the trade. It permitted the weavers to buy new equipment which greatly eased the strain on their day’s work. Working women dressed more neatly, and general health improved” (Truquin, 1993, p. 308).

A Modern Historical Analysis:

Sheridan (1979, p. 107) described the most striking feature of industrialization in France, particularly in comparison to the industrial revolution of Britain, as the very slow pace. The explanations for the slow pace of industrialization in France generally, at the time of this publication, focused on entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors, government policy, social organization, and external economic factors such as product
markets, raw material supply, transport networks, and availability of capital and labor (Sheridan, 1979). Sheridan (1979, p. 107) continues to say that the attitudes and behaviors of artisans in traditional industries and the labor markets in which they entered as employers did not explain the slow pace, except where labor guilds are concerned, but “The presence of large numbers of self-employed artisans in French industry throughout most of the nineteenth century suggests, however, that their role in retarding the onset of industrial revolution in France may have been more important than this”. Sheridan (1979) notes that artisan behavior was significant in delaying industrialization for at least one major industry: the silk industry in Lyon. Sheridan (1979) elaborates, “Master silk weavers of Lyons resisted mechanization and the concentration of weaving in factories by changing the social structure of their household shops. Their resistance was also a struggle for the preservation of their urban craft.” Mechanization and the shift to factory production took place almost entirely in the countryside surrounding Lyons, where silk weaving spread throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Since this dissemination of weaving included putting-out to rural cottages as well as the establishment of mechanized factories, the master weavers’ defense of their urban trade was at the same time resistance against rural industrialization, in the more traditional sense, and resistance against ‘industrial revolution,’ in the modern sense (Sheridan, 1979, p. 107-108).

The resistance of master weavers abated neither the advance of power weaving or the growth of the rural cottage industry, but it did slow down the pace of these
advances and preserved urban handloom weaving for many decades despite the progress of rural industry (Sheridan, 1979, p. 108). The power loom had been introduced in the silk industry before 1850, but the number of power looms in the total urban and rural Lyon region was still around 10,000 out of 100,000-120,000 looms in 1877-1878, and only about 30,000 out of 86,000 looms in 1900 (Sheridan, 1979). After over 50 years of experience with power-weaving, hand-weaving was still the predominant practice in the silk industry, and the city of Lyon retained a sizeable share of the industry that utilized handloom weaving despite the growth of the rural cottage industry (Sheridan, 1979). Sheridan notes,

Lyons’s urban handloom trade apparently had a resilience which enabled it to defy, with some success, the advance of modern industry, even during the heyday of modern industrial growth elsewhere in Europe. This resilience was especially notable in the 1860s. During that decade the urban fabrique faced the longest and deepest economic crisis of the century to date, threatening the very existence of urban handloom weaving (Sheridan, 1979, p. 108).

The weavers emerged from the crisis with most looms still active and did not begin to seriously decline until after 1880, demonstrating the strength of this industry’s resistance to industrialization (Sheridan, 1979).

According to Sheridan (1979, p. 108), “The industrial revolution in silk weaving was a rather complex process involving both the ‘industrial revolution’ proper, as we normally think of it… and what has been described more recently as ‘protoindustry’ – the putting-out of silk cloths to cottages in the countryside.”
Handloom weaving concurrently proliferated with power weaving, as the manufacture of silk became a decentralized industry within the Lyon region (Sheridan, 1979, p. 109). Sheridan continues to describe the proliferation of the silk industry as particularly rapid under the Second Empire, years 1852-1870, when “the productive capacity of rural weaving, as measured by the number of looms, permanently surpassed that of urban weaving” (Sheridan, 1979). This proliferation of rural weaving became so advanced that by the 1860s, urban weavers had trouble finding work and receiving fair piece rates even though silk sales and demand were increasing in the international silk market (Sheridan, 1979). This constituted a severe crisis for Lyonnaise urban weavers (Sheridan, 1979). According to Sheridan, “This crisis was initially the result of a change in the markets for silk cloths, favoring the weaving of the simpler, nonbrocaded plain silks (étoffes unies) over the weaving of brocaded fancy silks (étoffes façonnées)” (Sheridan, 1979, p. 109). This was due to the influence of British designer Gaston Worth, who favored plain silks as they gave designers “greater freedom of cut and fold than the brocaded fancy fabrics”, as well as the fashion favoring crinoline dresses and bustles, which were less expensive to cover with the étoffes unies (Sheridan, 1979).

In addition to fashion changes, cost was an important consideration, considering the middle-class buyers who were flooding the silk market with various style and novelty preferences were price conscious, competition from the wool and mixed-cloth industries, and the growth of silk industries abroad (Sheridan, 1979, p. 109-110). The United States Civil War essentially eliminated the American demand for
fancy silks, which underscored these various problems (Sheridan, 1979, p. 110). This only seemed to continue encouraging the rural weavers, as rural weaving offered cheaper labor costs, and rural weavers accepted lower piece rates than the Lyon weavers, presumably because the costs of living were lower in the rural areas (Sheridan, 1979). Sheridan (1979) found no difference in capability between the weavers in rural areas and the Lyon artisans; “the latter commanded no skill advantage over the former in the manufacture of these cloths.” The silk industry was further complicated by disease among the silkworms, which destroyed at least one variety of silkworms and eliminated nearly the entire native Mediterranean crop of raw silk (Sheridan, 1979). Sheridan (1979, p. 110) continues, “The crop was restored by importing Japanese eggs, and Pasteur discovered a true a cure for the disease after 1870. But in the meantime, shortages of cocoons due to poor harvests and to adjustment to Asiatic sources kept prices of raw silk and silk thread high throughout most of the Second Empire.” High raw material costs caused the need for production cost reduction to be focused on the labor component, which supplemented the favoring of rural weaving over urban weaving (Sheridan, 1979).

The master silk weavers responded to this crisis by “transforming their household economies – the number and type of their looms, and the number and social character of their household residents. Such transformation enabled them to resist the decline of their urban craft with some success” (Sheridan, 1979, p. 111). Major changes in samples of silk weavers’ households in census data from 1847 and 1866 revealed a number of major changes including a shift from fancy- to plain-cloth
weaving in most households, a reduction in the number of looms and household residents, a reduction in the proportion of residents in the household who were related neither to the head of household or his spouse, decreases in the proportion of nonresidents needed to work the looms, and decreases in the proportion of males living in the same household regardless of kinship status (Sheridan, 1979). They hired women as resident workers, providing bed, board, and modest monthly pay in return for weaving and domestic services (Sheridan, 1979). According to Sheridan,

This feminization and entrepreneurship suggests that women played an especially important role in preserving the traditional household economy.”

Women used to traditionally have the task of dévidage, or rolling the warp, and were referred to as dévideuses – these women were given special attention by publicists and politicians in the 1860s, which serves as a testament to their large numbers and significance in the industry, but a limitation of the census data is that these women cannot be counted (Sheridan, 1979, p. 113).

Women also enabled the urban household shop to survive on lower incomes and compete more effectively with the rural industry; additionally, they worked for lower wages than men, and women in various positions within the silk industry performed wider ranges of demanding and demeaning tasks than the men in their households, who only worked at their specialty (Sheridan, 1979). This was not “simply because they were more docile or cooperative but because they were more willing to be hired as resident workers, and were more readily accepted by the masters as such” (Sheridan, 1979, p. 114). While women served the traditional household
economy, male workers other than the master usually sought better employment outside the household: “In March 1868 the police agent reported that ‘if a worker is able to do other work and manages to find work for himself in this occupation, he will leave the loom without regret’” (Sheridan, 1979, p. 115). In 1869, another report indicated that master weavers were even having their own children learn any other trades besides weaving (Sheridan, 1979). In 1870, more than 7000 master weavers and journeymen weavers organized their own strike association and carried out their threats to strike even after master weaver enthusiasm waned (Ibid.). In a way, the weavers were able to resist industrialization through exploitative means, especially as far as female laborers were concerned (Sheridan, 1979, p. 115).

The silk weavers of Lyon formed cooperatives and resistance societies to halt the migration of their industry to the countryside and to restore to the urban craft its traditional preeminence in determining piece rates and condition of works. The producers’ cooperative, the Association of Weavers, sought to take over urban weaving by putting out silk thread and cloth orders directly to the weavers, its members, without the intervention of the merchant-manufacturers (Sheridan, 1979, p. 116-117).

In December 1869, the resistance movement was “entering a stage of mass organization under the leadership of the plain-cloth category” (Sheridan, 1979, p. 117). These weavers halt the export of fabric out of Lyon, in the hopes of eliminating “the worst consequences of rural competition. In particular, they expected their
organization to force all piece rates up to a level determined by the collective strength of the urban weavers instead of allowing urban rates to all to a level determined by the dispersion, lower living costs, and poverty of rural labor” (Sheridan, 1979). Sheridan (1979) notes that this would allow the city to again dominate the entire labor market for silk weaving and no longer be competing with the countryside labor market, but this hope was ill-founded.

Sheridan (1979, p. 117-118) reiterates a source of labor supply as “‘exploitable’ subordinate labor, especially female labor. Women worked readily as household residents, for lower wages than men, because alternative work, with better pay and conditions that domestic silk weaving, was hard to find, and because there were so many of them in Lyons at the time.” Masters often preferred keeping female relatives to work on their looms but found nonrelative women to serve as resident dévideuses and journeywomen weavers, which carried a lower standard of living (Sheridan, 1979, p. 118). Women came to Lyon to seek work in the 1850s and 1860s in one of two ways: they migrated to Lyons either in families or alone seeking work they could not find in rural areas, or were motivated by a surplus of female laborers in the countryside and insufficient number of jobs (Sheridan, 1979). Men who wove in the rural areas often reserved weaving for themselves and their wives as opposed to delegating weaving to their wives and daughters, as had been done in the past; this left their young single daughters in need of work, so they migrated to Lyon to find work, and many masters would hire them on the basis of their sex (Sheridan, 1979). According to Sheridan,
The increase in the number of women seeking work in Lyons favored the household economy of silk weaving, in particular, because of the poor conditions prevailing in other women’s trades in the city. The main alternatives to working in the master weaver’s household were work as dévideuses in specialized shops of dévidage, work as throwers in the larger, factory-like shops of moulinage, and work as seamstresses in the ready-made clothing industry (Sheridan, 1979, p. 118-119).

While these sectors were growing, most jobs in them were considered “sweat work” (Sheridan, 1979, p. 119). Women working in dévidage or moulinage shops would earn as little as a franc per day in 1866, which was lower than minimum wage for the lowest-paying plain-cloth categories of silk weaving (Sheridan, 1979). Additionally, living conditions were terrible, food was inadequate, hours were excessively long, and masters were abusive (Sheridan, 1979). These young women would work 14-hour days, and it was common for them to die before the age of 25 (Sheridan, 1979). Sheridan (1979, p. 119) draws a parallel between the role of women in the silk industry in France during this time and the cotton weaving industry in Britain just two decades prior, wherein relatively cheap female and child labor was available to the growing modern sector of the mechanized factory. This availability was one source of the ruinous competition of the power loom against the handloom and therefore a cause of the destruction of the traditional handloom sector within a few
decades. Women and children thus abetted the decline of cottage industry and improved their own earnings and status thereby (Sheridan, 1979, p. 119).

These historical accounts of the Lyonnaise silk industry yield several imperative themes. Despite a tumultuous economic climate across Europe, which at times rendered many workers in this industry unable to feed themselves or their families, the Lyonnaise silk industry was formidable in its resistance to industrialization. Despite these transitions in employment, which could easily have become turning points for workers who were barely surviving when there was much work, measures were not taken to produce silk more quickly and efficiently by power loom. Additionally, the workers themselves were able to impact their own economic destinies by protesting and demanding fair pay for their work, at a time when labor laws and other safeguards of the modern industrialized world were not yet implemented.

Also important is the highly gendered, exploitative nature of the silk industry. The United States Department of Homeland Security (2023) defines human trafficking as “the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act”, but notes that traffickers may use violence, manipulation, and false promises of well-paying jobs to lure victims. Those who are facing economic hardships and “lack of a social safety net” are particularly vulnerable (United States Department of Homeland Security, 2023). Although the concept of human trafficking is particularly modern, based upon these historical accounts, the term applies to this industry. Young women from the countryside – many of whom would legally be considered children
due to not having achieved the age of the majority – were trafficked into this industry, overworked, and isolated from their families or any potential friends while exposed to horrific occupational hazards that often had the potential to kill. Yet even in the absence of trafficking, among daughters of weaver parents, sons seem to have been prioritized in terms of education and training in any other job than weaving.
Chapter 4

TRUQUIN CONTEXTUALIZED WITHIN THE LIFE COURSE

In contextualizing the life of Norbert Truquin within the life course perspective, what is particularly remarkable is that for the majority of Truquin’s life, even normative transitions were not mere transitions but turning points due to the coincidence of these transitions with major crises. Truquin, when he was born, seemed to be born into wealth; his family threw a feast for his baptism, and Truquin admits, “Until the age of five, my upbringing was truly that of a spoiled child. My sisters and the servants had to endure my every whim” (Truquin, 1993, p. 251). When Truquin was five years old, despite being the highly favored and spoiled child in his family, his father went bankrupt and his mother became terminally ill, which complicated his early childhood years (Truquin, 1993, p. 251-252).

Based upon the historical context and the fact that Truquin was born into privilege, Truquin should have been receiving an education, but was instead abandoned into the care of a wool comber who taught him a trade (Truquin, 1993, p. 252). While taking up an apprenticeship seems to have been the fate of many other boys as they grew, Truquin was abandoned by his father into it, further complicating his individual development. Truquin did not believe this at first, thinking his father was joking and would come back (Truquin, 1993, p. 253). Not only did his father abandon him, but he also abandoned his son into a life of poverty. One poor, but developmentally typical, decision Truquin made in childhood was enough for his father to take from him his social capital, his somewhat privileged status in society,
any wealth he may have stood to benefit from, and an entirely different, possibly more positive, developmental cascade. Not only was this a change in geographical location, but Truquin’s his father did not fulfill his role as a father to raise him and left him without the support of a community or other family members. This betrays the Truquin family’s total inability to adapt successfully to the changes of the death of Truquin’s mother, and the financial woes that had come upon them. The idea of having less time to complete developmental tasks rings true in Truquin’s case – he immediately began working and would never financially recover. The persistence of poverty would become very obvious later in his life span when he was unable to care for his pregnant wife and later his child.

Truquin was severely abused and neglected, and things that were basic needs were treated as rewards and punishments – for example, his bed was taken away when food was stolen while he was in church (Truquin, 1993, p. 253). He would be punished for succumbing to fatigue while working from four in the morning to ten at night, and was forbidden from making any attempt at play, which is developmentally essential for children (Truquin, 1993, p. 254-255). He would also be bullied by richer children who were able to go to school (Truquin, 1993, p. 256). All of his time as a child was industrial time, with no time spent with family. If he was awake, it was to work. His abuser’s death constituted another turning point, as Truquin was evicted again and nearly resorted to a life of crime (Truquin, 1993, p. 257-258). He was taken in by prostitutes who were subsequently arrested, followed by an older gentleman who later died (Truquin, 1993, p. 258-262). Repeated homelessness is yet another turning
point in Truquin’s life span. Truquin became seriously ill, which was yet another turning point, but subsequently changed careers and gained some economic stability (Truquin, 1993, p. 266-267). This is likely the most normative transition in Truquin’s life, even though he left that particular employer on bad terms for another major life transition.

Another, perhaps more major, turning point for Truquin was reconnecting with his family in what appears to be the time that would now be known as adolescence or emerging adulthood (Truquin, 1993, p. 267). While he was initially warmly welcomed by his extended family, his nuclear family was not welcoming at all. Truquin expressed religious differences from his family, which caused them to grow colder, and this sparked another transition as he subsequently had to leave them (Truquin, 1993, p. 269-270). However, it seems he was in a much better place when he left, as he was able to go to Algeria before returning to work in Lyon in 1855 (Truquin, 1993, p. 290). This was a significant transition, especially as he saw the exploitation of young girls that took place in the silk industry and explored his own beliefs regarding work and social classes (Truquin, 1993, p. 294-300).

A life transition that went relatively smoothly for Truquin is the transition to married life. Although he had to seek approval to court his wife, and although he personally disagreed with religion, these conflicts were easily solved, and Truquin was married (Truquin, 1993, p. 300). However, almost immediately after this transition came another turning point, which left him and his wife in debt, without work, and malnourished (Truquin, 1993, p. 301). Fashion had changed, so Truquin began making
novelty silks that were in high demand, but the equipment required put Truquin deeper into debt (Truquin, 1993). There were multiple work conflicts that could not be resolved, otherwise Truquin would have risked further financial trouble (Truquin, 1993). However, another major transition became a turning point yet again when Madame Truquin was expecting their first child – the landlord removed their doors and brickwork, which forced Madame Truquin to have their child in the hospital, which was considered to be a dangerous place (Truquin, 1993, p. 302). Sadly, they were unable to feed their child or pay the monthly fees charged by wet nurses (Truquin, 1993). Despite Truquin committing a crime in stalking his manufacturer, the manufacturer did give him 50 francs to keep himself and his family alive and did not hold a grudge against him for it (Truquin, 1993, p. 302-303). Particularly salient is the impact these events had on Truquin’s view of work and the family. He wrote, “This system is essentially destructive of the family, but what does that matter to speculators? All they care about is that their business prosper. The government has served their interests rather well” (Truquin, 1993, p. 303).

The final major turning point in Truquin’s autobiography occurs when he rises up against his employer’s unfair practices; he was not paid for samples of silk he prepared in the hopes of securing orders for the then-fashionable 14-meter dresses (Truquin, 1993, p. 304-305). As punishment for demanding fair wages, his employer took away his looms and therefore his livelihood (Truquin, 1993, p. 305-306). Truquin was not the first that this happened to, and many weavers in Lyon in 1867 lived in poverty, which is of course a detriment to the individual and the family in the life
course (Truquin, 1993, p. 306). The silk weavers of Lyon organized, and Truquin was one of 11 delegates for ready-made goods (Truquin, 1993). He was successfully able to argue that while silk goods were still selling at the same price they were in 1848, the costs of rent and food had doubled, and that even working all possible hours was not enough for the typical weaver (Truquin, 1993). Despite facing retaliation, Truquin was able to enact change in the silk industry – due to his arguments, most of the manufacturers accepted the proposal for a raise, which “produced a good deal of good in Lyon. It benefitted everyone who belonged to the trade. It permitted the weavers to buy new equipment which greatly eased the strain on their day’s work. Working women dressed more neatly, and general health improved” (Truquin, 1993, p. 308). Truquin’s autobiography thus ends on a relatively positive note, and he seems quite proud of this massive, positive turning point he brought about within the industry, which he no doubt also benefited from aside from one manufacturer refusing to give him work after he made his speech to the manufacturers asking for a raise. Nonetheless, despite a very tumultuous life course up until this point, with very few happy moments, the end of this autobiography suggests a very positive change in Truquin’s life course, in which he and his wife were more easily able to provide for their family. Nevertheless, Truquin’s life course is a superb example of what life may have continued to be like for silk workers in Lyon in the 20th century if things had not changed.
Chapter 5

EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODS

In terms of research paradigms, this author has always been inclined to approach inquiries from a place of constructivism, or what Durdella (2019, p. 91) refers to as constructivist-interpretivism. Durdella (2019, p. 91-92) clearly defines the various major interpretive paradigms in qualitative research as positivist-postpositivist, constructivist-interpretivist, critical, or feminist-structural. Positivists “see the world as being understood in an objective reality and seek validity – both internal and external – to deductively generalize from a sample to a population through experimental design in clinical or natural settings”, and postpositivists “recognize that an objective reality exists but can be challenged because we truly cannot know everything about reality with complete certainty” (Durdella, 2019, p. 91). Constructivist-interpretivists, by contrast, “understand the world as socially constructed through interaction where there are multiple realities and meaning is agreed upon in natural settings. As a researcher in social settings… you explore phenomena in the field and inductively arrive at an understanding of what is going on” (Durdella, 2019). Hareven is likely to have positioned this project within this paradigm, but may have used another, such as the critical paradigm. In the critical paradigm, the researcher sees the world in relation to social strata, such as race, class, or gender, and examines the structures that differentiate groups of people in society, which support emancipatory goals for participants and for the researcher themselves (Durdella, 2019, p. 92). Another possibility would be the feminist-structural paradigm, through which researchers work
to uncover stories of groups who have been historically marginalized in society because of their lived experiences not being reflected accurately in society (Durdella, 2019).

Within these interpretive paradigms, there are numerous approaches to inquiry that direct how the researcher gathers and analyzes information (Durdella, 2019, p. 93). Durdella (2019) refers to these as “research traditions” and names five of them: ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and case study. Dr. Hareven was studying from a perspective of ethnography. Ethnography, one of the most widely used qualitative research traditions, focuses on “exploring people as cultural groups and experiences of individuals in their everyday lives, ethnographers learn from people in the context of their daily lives” (Durdella, 2019, p. 96).

Hareven’s methods align well with ethnography as she did extensive fieldwork in Lyon, France, in textile worker communities; Durdella (2019) asserts that fieldwork is at the heart of ethnography, as researchers must foster relationships with the members of the community they are trying to study, to the point that by the time their work is concluded they can speak about a group as a member of the group. Dr. Marks stated that in typical recruitment, “[Hareven] would go nest herself in the community and discern their social acumen” (Marks, 2023, personal communication). She was also careful to ensure that in her writing, she let the people she researched speak (Marks, 2023, personal communication).

Marks (2023, personal communication) also noted that Hareven was among the few who “believed the blue-collar worker had a story to tell, that the elites are not the
only stories.” She was also very sensitive to women, and the demands of balancing work and family life (Marks, 2023, personal communication). In terms of pacing, Hareven “was one of the most prolific social scientists in terms of publications… In spite of her phenomenally prolific record, those of us who worked with her found her pace slow, careful, and sensitive” (Marks, 2023, personal communication). These insights are all heavily reflective of ethnographic research, but Hareven also left behind what Durdella calls “jottings, which transition to descriptive and reflective field notes” (Durdella, 2019). However, a key part of ethnography is the “translation” of field notes (Durdella, 2019, p. 100). As the few jottings that exist from this work are illegible, they are not considered in this research.

The data for the current thesis research consists of a total of six qualitative interview transcripts from various workers or previous workers in the Lyonnaise silk industry that are the product of Hareven’s ethnographic research. There is no mechanism at this time to discern whether the interviewees were still working, retired, or in another situation at the time of the interview. These interviews were sorted by the sex of the interviewee. The interview transcripts of participant men were grouped together, the interview transcripts of participant women were grouped together, and the interview transcripts in which the sex of the interviewee could not be determined were grouped together. Three transcripts were randomly selected from the group of transcripts of male interviewees, and three transcripts were randomly selected from the group of transcripts of female interviewees. The transcripts that were selected were translated from French to English by this investigator, and subsequently coded. The
division by sex was deliberate based on Truquin’s and Sheridan’s historical accounts of gendered exploitation within the silk industry; gendered differences in experiences of canuts will be discussed in the “Results and Discussion” section of this thesis, as these differences in experiences between sexes seem to span the two centuries.

According to the dates on one of the selected interviews and the informal interview with Dr. Marks (2023, personal communication), Dr. Hareven collected these data in France between 1993 and 1999. Marks (2023, personal communication) noted that she did travel to Lyon at least once during his time as a doctoral student at the University of Delaware, which spanned 1998-2002. Unfortunately, there are no records of the recruitment process. From interview information given, most of the interviewees appear to have been older adults; one participant recounts her experiences when she was young and discusses not only grandchildren but the employment troubles of her middle-aged daughter. However, one interview consisted of the participant and her daughter; therefore, one participant may have been middle-aged, and the age of her daughter is unknown. One common theme in the data was the inclusion of comparisons in the silk industry before both World War I and World War II, implying that these participants may have had memories of that time, or their parents did and passed on this information to their children. Therefore, it is likely that these interviewees are all either deceased or very old.

Coding was based in inductive thematic analysis. These interviews were clearly unstructured, as none of the same questions were asked in these six interviews. Therefore, concept coding is appropriate. According to Saldaña (2021, p. 152),...
concept coding, also known as “analytic coding”, assigns meso or macro levels of meaning to data or data analytic work in progress; a “concept” is a word or short phrase that symbolically represents a meaning that is broader than a single item or action. This type of coding helps researchers to see “a ‘bigger picture’ beyond the tangible and apparent… [for example], one can see and touch a church building, but not the concepts of spirituality or religion. Other concept examples include romance, economy, and technology” (Saldaña, 2021, p. 152). According to Saldaña (2021, p. 153), this type of coding is appropriate for all types of data, studies with multiple participants and sites, and studies with a wide variety of data forms. In giving examples of which types of data this type of coding would work for, Saldaña (2021) specifically mentions interview transcripts. The analyst employs a highly interpretive or creative stance and there is no one right way to assign a specific meaning to an extended passage of data, but the codes must extend beyond the tangible and observable to the conceptual (Saldaña, 2021, p. 155). This type of coding would be the appropriate one for this project, as Hareven was not only examining the lives of the canuts but also their position in history and relation to the broader society, and because it helps a researcher who is rather far removed from the ethnographic research to conceptualize what things were like for these participants despite lacking a proper knowledge of the nuances of the society.
Chapter 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On October 19, 2022, the institutional review board declared this project exempt from human subjects review, with the stipulation that the participants’ identities remain protected. Therefore, in citing participants’ translated words, they will only be listed in this analysis as Monsieur, Madame, or Mademoiselle, followed by one of their initials. Madame and Mademoiselle D. were not divided or considered separate participants because Mademoiselle D. did not contribute to at least half of the total interview time, and was interviewed with her mother in her presence rather than alone. However, her words are still valuable and were therefore included in this analysis. The participants are listed in the table below:

Table 1:

Relevant Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Participant Approximate Age at Time of Interview</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monsieur B.</td>
<td>Older adult.</td>
<td>Hand shuttle maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monsieur C.</td>
<td>Older adult.</td>
<td>Trade fitter boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madame and Mademoiselle D.</td>
<td>Madame D. is an older adult. The age of Mademoiselle D. is unknown, but she is not a child, as she was working with her mother from the time her father passed away in her youth.</td>
<td>Madame D. is a folder. Mademoiselle D. has occupied many roles in the silk industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mademoiselle M.</td>
<td>Older adult.</td>
<td>Hand warper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madame S.</td>
<td>Madame S. was 73 at the time of her interview in 1993.</td>
<td>Gimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monsieur V.</td>
<td>Older adult.</td>
<td>Mechanical weaver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the interview data from these participants, six themes, explained and defined succinctly in Table 2, emerged. The descriptive statistics are in Table 3. The first code, “Disappearing Industry”, was so named because the participants in this sample seemed very keenly aware that something was happening to the industry that would signify a lack of workers in coming generations, but used various different words to describe it, such as “dying” or “disappearing”. Some, instead of using terms to describe the industry, positioned themselves within the industry as the “last” artisan able to do their particular job, with no one in the future to take their place. Therefore, “Disappearing Industry” was an appropriate name for this code because it encapsulated all of the ways the participant discussed the industry potentially not lasting into the future.

The “Gender Disparities” and “Apprenticeship” codes may appear at first glance to be very much the same, but they are not. While the apprenticeship process in Truquin’s time was primarily aimed at girls and young women, both male and female participants of this sample remarked on their own apprenticeship experiences, suggesting that apprenticeships were not only for girls and young women but rather young people of all genders. However, some practices persisted that specifically put female workers in the silk industry at a disadvantage and were not exclusive to the apprenticeship process. Therefore, the code for “Gender Disparities” was applied to any mention of female workers being put at a disadvantage at any point before, during, or after working in the silk industry because of their gender by any societal or historical force, such as the prioritization of male children’s education by their parents.
when they were growing up, but also included any implication that the apprenticeship process put girls at a disadvantage. “Apprenticeship”, then, was a code that applied to any reference to the conditions of apprenticeships that were universal, and which existed for all apprentices regardless of gender.

The code “Economics” was applied to any reference to the wages paid to the workers or the large-scale economic changes that took place that impacted the silk industry and the workers in this sample. The “Family Transitions” code was named based on the interaction between historical time, industrial time, and family time, and this code was applied to any reference to the impact of working in the silk industry on the timing, sequence, or even possibility of normative family transitions such as marriage and childbearing. Finally, the code “Labor” applied to any reference to the labor conditions of the silk industry after apprenticeships were completed, including hierarchies in the industry, changes in labor laws, or changes in government that may have influenced the silk industry in any capacity.
Table 2:

*Codebook, Definitions, and Examples:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description of Code</th>
<th>Example Participant Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Disappearing Industry | Includes any reference to the number of workers diminishing, the members of the industry disappearing or dying, or the industry itself disappearing. | • “But there is no one left. I am definitely the last.” (Mademoiselle M.)  
• “The canuts are disappearing… They will disappear; many other things have disappeared.” (Monsieur B.) |
| Gender Disparities   | Includes any reference to disparities between men and women in the twentieth century, including favoring male children, disparities in pay between male and female workers, and any similarities to the exploitative nature of 19th century practices. | • “The parents made the boys learn a trade but not the girls … so that they could see something else” (Madame S.)  
• “[Many apprentices were recruited] from the countryside…. There were quite a few young girls from Italy” (Mademoiselle M.) |
| Apprenticeship      | Encapsulates the conditions, pay, and other relevant details of the 20th century apprenticeship process. | • “They ate badly, huh… they were badly housed, and badly fed, we can say that.” (Mademoiselle M.) |
| Economics           | Encapsulates the wages paid to the workers, as well as the various large-scale economic changes that have impacted the silk industry and the workers in it. | • “There has always been a lot of crises in the silk industry, they bore the consequences!” (Monsieur B.)  
• “The wages were low, at that time, for everyone, for all the silk trade… a chicken was a hundred sous, but if it took two days to earn it, then…” (Mademoiselle M.) |
| Family Transitions  | References any impact of working in the silk industry on family transitions such as the transition to marriage and parenthood, or social changes enacting large changes on both the silk workers and their families. | • “We worked to be a family. And then afterwards, well, life changes, and we get married, and life is different, so afterwards it’s another life.” (Madame S.)  
• “The hospital, well, it was free… Now that has completely changed.” (Madame S.) |
| Labor               | Describes any reference to the working conditions and hierarchies within the textile | • “It’s for the bosses, it’s not for the worker, yes, it’s a shame!” (Madame D.) |
industry, changes in labor laws, or changes in the government that have caused changes in the silk industry or how it operates.

• “If there are not several of you, you might as well close.” (Madame D.)

Disappearing Industry:

The first theme in the data, and perhaps the most striking, is the theme entitled “Disappearing Industry”, which refers to the various references the participants made to the industry disappearing, dying, or otherwise not existing due to various changes in the market, lack of interest in the industry, or various other factors. Monsieur B. elaborated: “The canuts are disappearing… They will disappear; many other things have disappeared, as good as that!” (Monsieur B., n.d.). He continued to say that the industry will disappear as silk is no longer worn, and handweaving was a disappearing art form due to the adoption of the power loom (Monsieur B., n.d.). Although four of the six participants remarked on this sense of the industry disappearing, Monsieur B. is the only male participant who remarked on it; it is not unreasonable to speculate that this may have been more keenly felt for the women who worked in the silk industry, many of whom may have been apprenticed according to the gendered standard and laboring at the looms for many decades at the time of the interview. Monsieur B., as a hand shuttle maker, was often responsible for making and selling a very necessary piece of equipment for handlooms. This may also be a reason he is more observant of this industry disappearing, as the fewer handloom weavers there became, the less he would make and sell.
Before the beginning of the First World War in 1914, Madame D. noted that there were many folders in the Croix-Rousse, the center of the French silk industry (Madame D., n.d.). She also lamented that there is no encouragement for young people to enter the silk trade, and what few organizations existed at that time were not doing enough, according to Madame and Mademoiselle D. (n.d.). Particularly poignant was one quote from Mademoiselle D (n.d.): “They make it look like a curiosity.” This refers to the idea that the silk industry is something to study in contemporary times rather than to work in. Madame S. (1993) expressed a similar idea: “It’s not interesting anymore, it’s over, see, it’s over.” She continued to describe the silk industry disappearing across the world: “My daughter, for the moment she’s unemployed. She was making lingerie, and it’s all gone to Malaysia, they’ve closed everything there, there aren’t any more… Nothing is done here anymore, all the factories here, God knows there were also lingerie factories here. Well, it’s all closed!” (Madame S., 1993). Later in the interview Madame S. stated that she and her husband discouraged her from entering the trade because “We felt it coming, we said ‘This is not the future’, there was unemployment… We have finished. The parents finish, but they don’t want their children to continue, it’s not worth it” (Madame S., 1993).

Mademoiselle M. (n.d.) remarked that as for hand warping, “There is no one left. I am definitely the last.”
Gender Disparities:

The next theme that emerged from this data was the gender disparities within the silk industry. Any reference to disparities between men and women in the twentieth century, including favoring male children, disparities in pay between male and female workers, and any similarities to the exploitative nature of 19th century practices were coded as “Gender Disparities”. While the industry was not as clearly a source of problems for women as it was during Truquin’s life span, there were still very clear patterns of gendered differences between men and women in the silk industry in the 20th century. Only one of the three male participants reported anything remotely related to the gendered differences in the silk industry, whereas two of the three interview transcripts with women reported gendered differences. Madame S. (1993) noted that in terms of labor division, men tended to go outside the home, while women usually worked from home. It was traditional for women in the silk industry to stop working after marriage, while they had young children at home – Madame S. (1993) remarked that she stopped working for seven or eight years after getting married and beginning to have her children. The most striking similarity to gendered differences in the silk trade during Truquin’s life, however, was that according to Madame S. (1993), “The parents made the boys learn a trade, but not the girls… It was rare [for sons to learn the silk trade], they had the boys educated above all, they were educated so that they could see something else, because that was difficult all the same. Difficult to live.” Monsieur B. echoed this sentiment, stating that although it was
common for fathers to pass workshops to their sons, they often did not want their sons as apprentices or to learn the silk trade at all (Monsieur B., n.d.).

Madame S.’s daughter learned the silk trade and not only had problems finding work at the time of the interview due to global changes in the industry, but also because of her age, which at the time was over 50 (Madame S., 1993). Madame S. remarked that in caring for the elderly, the ideal is for daughters of aging parents to take on caregiving burdens, as well (Madame S., 1993). Her own parents forced her to leave school as soon as she could to continue the silk trade. “When I got the school certificate, I was thirteen years old… At the time there was no high school, what we had here was La Martiniere (inaudible) you may not know… It’s a superior school. They told me no, they told me no!” (Madame S., 1993).

Mademoiselle M. remarked that the apprenticeship process was highly gendered and somewhat retentive of the practices of Truquin’s time. Most of these female apprentices were recruited from the countryside or from Italy (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). She continued: “In general [workshops were led by] young girls who had grown old in the trade, who were no longer young girls, and then who succeeded their boss, they remained two, they were partners, they took on staff in turn” (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). She remarked that most warpers “weren’t even married… They were single. When they married, in general, they left the profession” (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). Life was difficult for these female apprentices; while they were housed and fed, they began apprenticing at 13 or 14 years old, were malnourished, and generally had poor living conditions as well (Mademoiselle M., n.d.).
These apprenticeships also tended to be unpaid (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). Monsieur V., the only male participant who remarked on any kind of gendered differences, remarked that although handloom weavers were predominantly female, in the mechanical weaving industry, workers were predominantly male, and while these workers were paid worse than handloom weavers, they were paid by the piece, which still gave them an advantage in pay over handloom weavers, as they could produce more pieces in the time that it would take a handloom weaver to produce just one (Monsieur V., n.d.). Much of the data pertaining to gendered differences in the silk industry, apprenticeship experiences, and wages encompass all three of these themes, and this will be explored later on.

**Apprenticeship:**

Interestingly, while only three of six participants mentioned gender disparities, which seem closely tied to the apprenticeship experience, four of six participants explicitly discussed the apprenticeship experience, two of whom were male and two of whom were female. The “Apprenticeship” code included the conditions, pay, and other relevant details of the apprenticeship experience in the 20th century. Monsieur V. was the only male participant who remarked on the gender disparities in pay, but also remarked on his apprenticeship that began in 1925: “I can say, I didn’t know weaving at all, and I was told: ‘Here, if you want, you can learn weaving.’ So at that time… weaving is as good as any other trade, so…” (Monsieur V., n.d.). He continued, “We were registered with the Chambre des Prêts… [which] gave the first six months, if I
remember correctly, 150 Frans per month. And gradually decreased until the end of the third year since the third year was the end of the apprenticeship. But then at that time, when we started to work, we were paid for part of the footage” (Monsieur V., n.d., personal communication). However, the salary he earned as an apprentice was inconsistent (Monsieur V., n.d.). When he entered the industry as a mechanical weaver, though, Monsieur V. earned about four times the salary of a handloom weaver (Monsieur V., n.d.).

Monsieur V. was a mechanical weaver, but Monsieur C., the other male participant who remarked on the apprenticeships, said that apprenticeships were given about equally to boys as to girls, but there was no contract, and they did not have housing unless they were from faraway places despite being fed (Monsieur C.). Monsieur C.’s view on these issues is particularly interesting considering that as a trade fitter, he is higher in the hierarchy than the silk workers and probably a member of the bourgeois class. Mademoiselle M. (n.d.) contradicted his assertion that there was no accommodations, and also that apprenticeships were equally given to boys and girls. Specifically, Mademoiselle M. (n.d.). said that all apprentices were housed and fed by their employers, who were usually female, but usually “They were badly housed and badly fed, what, we can say that.” However, she did reiterate that not only was there no contract, but the apprenticeship years were unpaid, and weavers who had just finished apprenticeships made about as much as farm hands (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). Holidays were not necessarily celebrated, and gifts were not given to the girls in the workshops (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). The apprentices that would partake of these
opportunities were mostly “from peasant families and they could barely read and write, in many cases” (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). Madame S. (1993) remarked that rather than apprentices, she formerly had the capacity to take up to six “students”, due to the size of her workshop being small. The nuance of this word choice of “students” rather than “apprentices” did not reveal itself in the rest of her interview.

Economics:

Each participant in the analysis of this sample of data had something to say about the wages and economic changes that have impacted the silk industry in various ways over time. The silk industry is one that has continued, based on this data, to be paid very poorly and incredibly subject to changes based on economic changes, demand for silk and the fashion industry as a whole. Economic downturns also meant death from starvation and poverty. According to Monsieur B. (n.d.), “There has always been a lot of crises in the silk industry, [the workers] bore the consequences!” Later in the interview he mentioned that there were too many deaths from economic crises, and “Because the boss held up sometimes better than [the workers], they believed that they weren’t being paid enough” (Monsieur B., n.d.). Monsieur C., the trade fitter, remarked that “Some canuts were paid very little while others earned a good living… You had weavers who earned how much, 2 or 3 Francs a day” (Monsieur C., n.d.). Madame D. (n.d.) remarked that there was often unemployment, and she elaborated, “You understand, a dress, it made life for old people. So we really
needed the bourgeois class who made orders and… There have been deaths in all these professions.”

Mademoiselle M. remarked that once apprentices became workers, they earned only 20 francs per month (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). However, she takes great care to say “The wages were low… for everyone, for all the silk trade… A chicken was a hundred sous, but if it took two days of work to earn it, then!” (Mademoiselle M., n.d.). Mademoiselle M continued to describe that many female warpers turned to mechanical warping simply to survive, and others remained in the hand warping business for the same reason:

There are some of the younger ones… who learned mechanical warping at the beginning of mechanical warping. The others stayed in the business… To get along, yes. Because many were struggling! There was… what killed the profession, too, there was a lot of unemployment, there were very serious crises, and then there were unscrupulous manufacturers (Mademoiselle M., n.d.).

Much of the wages these workers earned depended on the ethics of the manufacturers who employed them, and often dictated whether they would be paid on time or at all. Monsieur V., the mechanical weaver, reported that he made almost four times the amount of hand weavers at the beginning of his mechanical weaving career, “But I was earning a woman’s salary. At that time, it was about 100F per week” (Monsieur V., n.d.).
These low wages often had a direct impact on working hours and conditions. Madame S. (1993, personal communication), who elaborated quite a bit on the economic factors influencing the silk industry, remarked that, “We still had to get organized to earn a better living by having more production. That was the system of the homeworker, he had to arrange himself… if he worked little at the end of the month, he had very little. If he worked on Sunday, if he wanted, it was not forbidden, he had more.” COPTIS, which Madame S. mentions frequently, and which appears to be a silk weavers’ union, often withheld 3% from member salaries as well (Madame S., 1993). According to Madame S., everyone joined COPTIS to get paid, but workers still had to find their jobs on their own (Madame S., 1993). In Madame S.’s case, her family would divide wages evenly between the two parents and her, as she was working as well when she was young, but not yet paid (Madame S., 1993). Work often fluctuated so much that “When there was work there was work for everyone. When there was none…” (Madame S., 1993). Sadly, Madame S. also reported that the Croix-Rousse, which was the area many silk weavers lived in even in the late 20th century, was getting to be expensive in terms of cost of living (Madame S., 1993).

**Family Transitions:**

Two female participants remarked on changes in their individual circumstances that impacted or could impact their family as a collectivistic unit. These changes were coded as “Family Transitions”. Mademoiselle D. was pursuing a career in physical education and completing internships when her father became seriously sick and could
no longer help his wife continue to produce silk (Madame and Mademoiselle D., n.d.). As such, her mother brought her home, and taught her the trade when her father died so she would not have to close her shop (Madame D., n.d.). In terms of the life course perspective, the death of a parent is a normative life event, but in this case, it occurred off-time, making this a turning point for this family rather than a transition. However, there is no evidence from this interview of maladaptation by Madame and Mademoiselle D. When the interviewer asked if she regrets the way things went with her career, Mademoiselle D. (n.d.) responded, “Why have regrets?”

Madame S. (1993) was very concerned with the changes that were taking place in family relationships for those who work in the silk industry. She said, “To begin with, the respect between the parents which existed before, now it is much less. And the love of family… The children are demanding, in our time we were not demanding. It was everyone the same thing, it was not a person, we were all the same” (Madame S., 1993, personal communication). Here she is clearly describing some kind of shift from prioritization of collectivistic family goals to prioritization of individualistic goals for each member of the family, such as Hareven (2000, p. 77-78) described. She also continued to say that elder care was becoming a problem:

The new generation, the daughters-in-law… the young girls don’t want to live together with the mothers-in-law because it’s difficult… Well, you know old people huh, it’s a problem. I think they put them in homes when they have the means… because to look after an elderly person which is dependent, well it is very expensive (Madame S., 1993).
She then expressed that it is better for daughters to have responsibility over aging parents, because the wives of sons may not have the same ideas (Madame S., 1993, personal communication). The main point Madame S. makes is that caregiving is a gendered task and girls are better at it, especially if girls are the elderly person’s own daughter (Madame S., 1993).

In addition to Madame S.’s perspective on changes in the family and in the care of aging parents, she positions herself well within the history of the world. She implies that contemporary children are demanding while she and the other members of her cohort did not have the luxury to be, because:

You know, during the war years, we weren’t demanding, eh… I’ve always said that the war ate up my youth, because between 18 and 25, that’s the age when you most need to develop. I never learned to dance because it was wartime. And that’s one thing I still miss, see. Whereas now the young… (Madame S., 1993, personal communication).

She then continues, “For my personal case [after the war] it was too late, because I had children and I had something else to do than go dancing! So it ended like this” (Madame S., 1993, personal communication). This is a particularly salient because, though it would be approximately eight years after the time of this interview that Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2007, p. 69) would propose the idea of emerging adulthood as the age of identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibility, it was very clearly articulated by Madame S. Arnett (2007) would position...
The developmental stage known as emerging adulthood within the life course as the first stage in adulthood, as

Theorists have emphasized how in recent decades the life course in industrialized societies has become increasingly characterized by *individualization*, meaning that institutional constraints and supports have become less powerful and important and people are increasingly left to their own resources in making their way from one part of the life course to the next, for better or for worse (Arnett, 2007, p. 69).

**Labor:**

The final code that emerged in the data was one that five of the six participants spoke about in their interviews. The code “Labor” was used to describe any reference to working conditions, hierarchies, labor laws, or government changes that caused changes in the silk industry. Five out of six participants provided data that was coded under this code. All three female participants provided data that was coded under this code. The only male participant who did not speak about any topic pertaining to labor was Monsieur C., the trade fitter; as he seems to have been higher in the labor hierarchy than most of the other participants in this sample by the virtue of his position of relative authority, this makes sense.

From the male participants, some valuable information was gleaned. Monsieur B. noted that most of the silk workers operated out of workshops that doubled as the homes of the workers and their families (Monsieur B., n.d.). Monsieur V. noted that if
a weaver wanted to make a decent living, he would have to work for 9 hours a day, totaling at least 45 hours per work week (Monsieur V., n.d.). Monsieur V. (n.d.) worked essentially two shifts, one from 6 AM to 2 PM and one from 4 PM to 8 PM on different looms. He said, “That made me about 12 hours a day… and all that to earn 100 F a week in 1932!” (Monsieur V., n.d.). However, he later acknowledged that his salary was better than that of the hand weavers:

They had decided that, a damask, for example, which was paid 30 F at the hand loom, was therefore paid 15 F at the mechanical loom. Half. But we managed to do more than half more in the mechanical trade! So we arrived at a salary even higher than at the loom” (Monsieur V., n.d.).

As for the female participants of this sample, Madame D. noted that there was no formal administration for any kind of education pertaining to the silk trade, and believed that the state should be training and encouraging workers to enter the silk trade (Madame D., n.d.). She also noted that many of the people who want to study the silk trade or learn it do not actually want to weave, but want to be the head of the department or manufacturers, which are higher-level positions than weavers (Madame D., n.d.). She lamented, “[The interest is] for the bosses, it’s not for the worker, yes, it’s a shame!” (Madame D., n.d.). Madame D. also mentioned that the work was largely dependent on fashion trends, and each workshop was required to have at least two people to work all of the equipment and produce the silk goods (Madame D., n.d.). This is why, when her husband died, she relied on her daughter to help her keep her shop (Madame D., n.d.). Mademoiselle M. (n.d.) suggested that some of the
systems in place still favored the silk merchants and manufacturers, who often paid the workers’ rent on a monthly basis.

Madame S. (1993) noted that in the past, workers would have to work ten hours minimum per day to make some semblance of a living, but often had to work more and at odd times to earn more money by having more production. Additionally, all branches of the silk industry were connected to COPTIS, the previously mentioned organization: “The weavers were all wrapped up in the same corporation. There were the weavers, the winders, the braiders, the gimps, it was all the same union… we were working for COPTIS” (Madame S., 1993). When Madame S. was working for her parents, she said, “Before the social laws it wasn’t obligatory to pay [youth for labor]… When I was very young, you know at the time the children did not have a salary” (Madame S., 1993). She continued, “I worked for nothing for a long time because I felt that… I wasn’t the only one, we were all like that. We worked to be a family. And then afterwards, well, life changes, and we get married, and life is different, so afterwards it’s another life” (Madame S., 1993). She stressed the importance of finding manufacturers who were good employers: “It’s risky, that’s why it’s important to find traders who pay you regularly… It was the manufacturer. And when he didn’t want to pay, he didn’t pay, you had to be careful… They paid the weavers three months late” (Madame S., 1993).
Table 3:

*Descriptive Statistics by Code:*

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<th>Code</th>
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<td></td>
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**Connections to Kyoto:**

Based upon Hareven’s final work, *The Silk Weavers of Kyoto*, the Lyonnaise silk weavers have a few things in common with silk weavers in other parts of the world. Much like the Nishijin craftspeople in Japan that Hareven (2002, p. 85) investigated in her final published work, the workers in this study seem to view their main identity in weaving, and this is “reinforced by the continuity of their craft… [and] rests on their sense of competence and skill, on their commitment to making a special textile famous for its unique quality and design, and on their membership in a community in which all aspects of life are deeply interwoven with the production of this textile”. This is especially reflected in the comments of the Lyonnaise silk
workers who feel that their industry is disappearing – if their industry disappears, so does their identity. Much like the Nishijin weavers’ feelings of betrayal and exploitation by the manufacturers, the weavers of Lyon have felt that they must be careful in order to ensure they are being paid fairly (Hareven, 2002, p. 98-99). One participant among the Nishijin weavers recounted the persistence of poverty among families – his father was from a poor family, and as the oldest son, he continued in the industry as a manufacturer (Hareven, 2002, p. 111). Additionally, just as it is in Lyon, the Japanese silk market was prone to drastic, unpredictable change. The same participant remarked, “Ups and downs are sort of the characteristic way of life here” (Hareven, 2002, p. 116).

Another similarity between the Lyonnaise silk weavers and the Nishijin silk weavers lies in the gender dynamics. While in Lyon, girls seem to be either forced or pushed into the silk industry, with their brothers’ education and apprenticeships in other industries prioritized above all else, no one at the time of these interviews was encouraging anyone to enter the silk industry. Just as in the Lyonnaise silk worker families, the Nishijin families would prefer their children not enter the silk industry (Hareven, 2002, p. 178). Not only did these participants report that demand for silk is declining, but one mother even said, “The most important thing is to get our kids out of the Nishijin ‘village’. We want our kids to leave. It is true. If you look just at the starting salaries, the outlook is really good in Nishijin. But we know from experience that once you have a family and you grow old, your income drops suddenly. Therefore I really want my children to get out. My son did not show any interest in being a
"weaver" (Hareven, 2002). However, recruitment of young girls as apprentices from the countryside was still a practice for Nishijin and Lyon at this time, as well (Hareven, 2002, p. 196). These apprenticeships were employed for low wage, costs of room and board were deducted from pay, and they were not allowed to return home even during holidays (Hareven, 2002, p. 198). Future inquiry may focus on more extensive analyses of the similarities and differences of the silk industry at this time in Japan and France.

**Connections to the Life Course:**

Several of the Lyon participants of this research had their developmental trajectories shaped by a series of historical and external forces that may have impeded whatever individual goals they may have had in mind. The best example of these workers’ lives being shaped specifically by the family came from Mademoiselle D., whose father’s death required her to give up her educational pursuits to join her mother in her workshop so that they could continue to survive. However, there were some other responses from participants that rather thoroughly explained how their development as individuals was shaped by historical and other forces. Madame S. was paid by her parents for her assistance in their business, but there was no formal child labor law to prevent her from working when she was a child; therefore, the fact that their earnings were split evenly between them was mere generosity on the part of her parents, and those with less generous parents were likely to withhold these wages from their children to use for the collective interests of the family. Mademoiselle M. also
described the societal forces within the silk industry possibly preventing girls from marrying and starting families well into the 20th century.

Several of these participants also specifically named certain historical forces that impacted their individual trajectory or those of their families. World Wars I and II were critical turning points mentioned by several participants, with an implication that in some ways the silk industry was drastically different after each war from the way it was during the war, and drastically different during each war from the way it was before the wars. Several of these participants positioned their own lives in this context; Madame S. especially remarked on the impact of the wars on her development as a young adult. She claims that the wars “ate up [her] youth”, and that she did not have the time for dancing and other recreational activities that were common for people between the ages of 18-25 in this time, but rather young children she had to care for.

Ironically, despite the major negative historical forces, no matter how small or large the scale, neither Mademoiselle D. nor Madame S. regretted their choices. Madame S.’s remark about not having time is not a wish that she would not have had her family, but rather suggests that she additionally wished to occasionally have fun the same way others her age could.

One critical trend that has continued across generations for the workers in the Lyonnaise silk industry is the maintenance of collectivistic goals being prioritized over individualized ones. This could be a justification for the paradox that exists in which the workers in the Lyonnaise silk industry, despite being extremely proud of their careers and their identities as members of the weaving community, do not encourage
their children to enter the same industry—they may know that they work very hard to earn a low wage, and it would be in the best interests of their children to pursue something else. This is of course a hypothesis that may be acceptable or not in subsequent work with the entire translated data set.

**Connections to Recent United States History:**

While this thesis is only a small glimpse of the dynamics between employers and employees, many of the trends seen in the French silk industry can be easily seen in various industries in the modern United States. As in the silk industry across history, people in positions of power within these industries may take the means of earning a living from those who speak out against unfair practices. Many unions and other professional networks have organized strikes and negotiated with employers for better working conditions. In academia, Temple University recently exemplified this concept—and encountered significant controversy—after attempting to punish graduate student union members who participated in a strike.

According to Bowman (2023), members of the Temple University Graduate Student Association (TUGSA) began what would become a six-week strike on January 31, 2023 after over a year of stalled contract negotiations for better pay, better benefits for themselves and their families, and the expansion of parental leave beyond the five days allotted. According to the graduate students, family health care “can cost up to 86% of their salaries” (Bowman, 2023). The University’s response was to send emails to graduate students on involved in the strike “that their tuition had been
revoked for the spring semester, ‘as a result of your participation in the…strike.’”

Bowman writes,

Temple said in a statement on Thursday [February 2, 2023] that students were warned that taking part in the strike and not showing up to work would cause them to lose their full compensation package, which includes tuition assistance and free health care insurance (Bowman, 2023).

Bowman (2023) continues to state that the Temple University graduate students are not the only ones striking for better pay and working conditions; Harvard University and the University of California (UC) graduate students have also gone on strike for better working conditions. Bowman continues, “Critics are calling the move a brazen tactic meant to dismantle union efforts” (Bowman, 2023). University of Delaware’s Dean of the Graduate College and Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education, Dr. Lou Rossi, responded to the activity in an email sent on February 19, 2023 to all University of Delaware graduate students:

I am disappointed with what I am seeing at Temple University and earlier in the year in the University of California system because it is adversarial and disruptive to graduate education and research. In discussions about it at the Council of Graduate Schools annual meeting last December when the UC system strike was still active, many remarks made in private were that students do not understand how budgets work. I disagreed with them… The bottom line is that the lines of communication between campus leadership and the students
are not good at those institutions, and open communication is the foundation of trust in any relationship (Rossi, 2023, personal communication).

Rossi continued to state that he would like to see University of Delaware graduate students “having better combined salaries, benefits and working conditions”, and he believed that the University of Delaware Graduate College and graduate students should “continue to work together constructively, nimbly, and creatively” (Rossi, 2023, personal communication). He then invited all graduate students to an upcoming town hall meeting (Rossi, 2023, personal communication).

Ironically, on March 13, 2023, the day of the oral defense for this thesis, Dr. Jason Wingard posted an announcement entitled “Temple University and TUGSA Reach Agreement” to Temple University’s news website. Wingard writes,

I am pleased that Temple University and the Temple University Graduate Students’ Association (TUGSA) reached an agreement acknowledging the union’s priorities and reflecting the university’s respect for our graduate students and their impactful work. Over the past six weeks, Temple demonstrated remarkable resilience. Perseverance conquers, and today’s agreement is evidence of our collective willingness to unite and advance…

With a new contract in place, we must now re-prioritize expanding access, increasing educational value, growing Temple’s thought leadership, driving even greater community engagement, and elevating Temple’s global reputation. Thank you, again, for your commitment to Temple and contributing
your talent to our world-class classrooms, laboratories, and libraries (Wingard, 2023).

Only time will tell if this new contract is sufficient to improve working conditions for graduate students at Temple University. By the time of the submission of this thesis, this author could find no word regarding whether revoked benefits and tuition remission have been restored to graduate students who participated in the strike.

In addition to graduate students across the country, nurses serving two of New York City’s largest hospitals went on strike for several days in early January 2023 (Seitz, 2023). The members of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) went on a three-day strike prior to the article’s publication, but Seitz remarked that Problems are mounting at hospitals across the nation as they try to deal with widespread staffing shortages, overworked nurses beaten down by the pandemic and a busted pipeline of new nurses. That’s led to nurses juggling dangerously high caseloads (Seitz, 2023).

Through negotiation, union leaders attained some relief for chronic short staffing and a 19 percent pay increase over three years for nurses at Mount Sinai Hospital and Montefiore Medical Center (Seitz, 2023). In 2022, six unions representing 32,000 nurses went on strikes, which “represented about a quarter of all the major strikes in the U.S. last year, an increase from the year before” (Seitz, 2023). At the time of this news article, California nurse unions were predicted to strike later this year when contracts expire, primarily due to unsafe caseloads (Seitz, 2023).
Widespread faculty shortages at nursing colleges have led to a lack of new nurses to replace nurses in the United States, over half of whom were over the age of 50 years old, and in 2021 over 90,000 qualified nursing school applicants were denied spots in programs (Seitz, 2023). Additionally, COVID-19, which is a significant historical force, has caused significant trouble for nurses, as many of them are leaving the bedside for clinic and telehealth positions in which 12-hour shifts, weekends, and overnight work in conditions that render these nurses unable to take breaks are not required (Seitz, 2023). Some nurses began suffering burnout due to COVID-19, but others are burning out due to the nature of hospital settings (Seitz, 2023). While academia and nursing are not the only industries that have seen massive changes and unions taking action for better working conditions, but they do provide excellent examples of why the historical changes and continuities of the silk industry in France remain relevant, and matter in broader contexts.

**Potential Future Inquiry:**

As this is not an analysis of the complete data set, there are plenty of avenues for future inquiry. Chiefly, more extensive analysis of the similarities and differences in the silk industry between Lyon, Nishijin, Austria, and New England may be possible. Some themes solely from the Lyonnaise data that were not remarked on as much by the participants in this sample may be remarked on at great length in others, perhaps those who occupy different roles. One which seems to stand out in the data but was not mentioned here partially for privacy reasons is the involvement of the
clergy – namely, Catholic priests and nuns – in the Lyonnaise silk industry, for which the current data has offered no explanation. Additionally, more inquiry is needed to see how young these apprentices were at the time they began their apprenticeships, whether the families were aware of the working conditions, and whether they were more trafficked than apprenticed. Another potential theme to look for in the rest of the data pertains to the resistance of industrialization, resistance of the power loom, and whether this resistance was still occurring in Lyon in the late 20th century. The gender disparities and apprenticeship experiences appear to be closely linked, and this link also warrants further inquiry. Hopefully this data set will also yield more in the way of describing family transitions across the life span in the silk industry. Lastly, as more than 20 years has passed since the beginning of data collection for this project, several questions surrounding whether the silk industry still exists and operates with hand weavers, and whether labor conditions and wages have become fairer and more stable could be very relevant in future endeavors.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

IRB EXEMPTION

DATE: October 19, 2022
TO: Elizabeth W rotten, BS
FROM: University of Delaware IRB
STUDY TITLE: [1964317-1] The Lives of Silk Weavers in Lyon, France, in the Late 1990s
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 19, 2022
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 4(ii)

Thank you for your New Project submission to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). According to the pertinent regulations, the UD IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT from most federal policy requirements for the protection of human subjects. The privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of participants must be safeguarded as prescribed in the reviewed protocol form.

This exempt determination is valid for the research study as described by the documents in this submission. Proposed revisions to previously approved procedures and documents that may affect this exempt determination must be reviewed and approved by this office prior to initiation. The UD amendment form must be used to request the review of changes that may substantially change the study design or data collected.

Unanticipated problems and serious adverse events involving risk to participants must be reported to this office in a timely fashion according to the UD requirements for reportable events.

A copy of this correspondence will be kept on file by our office. If you have any questions, please contact the UD IRB Office at (302) 831-2137 or via email at herb-research@udel.edu. Please include the study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.