
PERSPECTIVES ON CANADIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CLASS, STAPLES, GENDER, AND ELITES

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disturbed by exceptional mortality or rebellion. The collapse of immigration in 1838 and 1839 resulted in complaints of labour shortage in those years.

41. E.g., M.L. Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (Cambridge, Mass. 1940), pp. 65-7; H.A. Innis, 'Industrialism and Settlement in Western Canada,' in his *Problems of Staple Production in Canada* (Toronto 1933).
42. John McTaggart, *Three Years in Canada ...* (2 vols., London 1829), II, pp. 243-8.
43. P.A.C.: P.S.O., C.W., 1851, no. 284, Petition of the Inhabitants of Hamilton, 12 February 1851; P.S.O., C.W., 1852, no. 364, Mills to Provincial Secretary, 24 February 1852; P.S.O., C.W., 1853, no. 1050, Court of General Quarters Sessions of Middlesex and Elgin to Provincial Secretary, 7 July 1853, and enclosure; P.S.O., C.W., 1854, no. 99, Mayor of London to Provincial Secretary, 12 January 1854, and enclosure.
44. U.C. Sundries (P.A.C.), Tunney to Hillier, 24 October 1827.
45. *Ibid.*, Mackenzie to Rowan, 7 May 1834, and enclosure.
46. K.H. Connell, *The Population of Ireland, 1750-1845* (Oxford 1950); C.M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (New York 1937); C.M. Arensberg and S.T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (Cambridge, Mass. 1940).
47. Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonization*, p. 175. Wakefield's other classes of slaves were negroes, convicts, and indentured servants.
48. Ships were scarce in 1854, and the number actually brought was probably about 2,000 (with families). Toronto *Daily Leader*, 30 March and 26 May 1854; Helps, *Life and Labours of Mr Brassey*, 239; A.W. Currie, *The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada* (Toronto 1957), p. 29. The Great Western and, later, the Canadian Pacific, also arranged large-scale migrations of skilled labour.
49. As in the first strike of Great Western railway shopmen at Hamilton and London, 1856. Hamilton *Herald*, 5 July 1902.
50. R.T. Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1850* (Cambridge, Mass. 1953); Brinley Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth* (Cambridge 1954), p. 138.

MARJORIE COHEN

CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND WOMEN'S WORK

Economic Development

Economics is fundamentally a discipline concerned with market behaviour. Its major objective is to discover how decisions are made about what is to be produced for the market and who will get these things. Since women's labour for the most part has been directed toward non-market activities, their labour has been removed from consideration in traditional economic theory.' In some respects this has been an odd development because the origin of the word 'economics,' as each new student of economics is told, is a Greek word pertaining to management of a household and the ordering of private affairs. That women were at the centre of this activity is obvious and is clearly reflected in the first English use of the term, which refers to 'woman' who 'doth employ her Oeconomick Art ... her Household to preserve."

Recently some economists, albeit a small minority, have become interested in women's work, particularly as women have become a larger proportion of the paid labour force. In addition, there have been attempts to apply economic theory to the economics of the household.' But the results have not substantially changed the focus and analysis of the discipline, which is still overwhelmingly preoccupied with market activity, even when the market does not govern the bulk of productive activity and does not involve the labour of most people.

This focus on market activity presents problems for the study of an economy, such as that of pre-industrial Ontario, which was primarily oriented toward subsistence production. The theoretical approaches that focus on market activity have created methodological tools based on this type of activity; there has been a tendency not to develop adequate ways of looking at non-market activity, except as an adjunct to market activity. Karl Polanyi made the important point that the motivation for economic behaviour changed slowly and painfully during the rise of the market economy, and that the regulation of society by gain

and profit from exchange is a relatively recent development: no society organized production like this before the nineteenth century.' Yet almost the entire focus of our economic history is based on market developments, to the extent that the most characteristic mode of production remains obscure.

Probably the most significant contribution of Canadian economists to economic theory has been the staple theory of development. This theory has had a significant impact on both the understanding of the mechanism of growth in an economy involved in the production of export staples and development of dependency theory. Essentially, the staple theory explains how the technology and geographical circumstances associated with specific staple commodities affected the patterns of development and how the character of the staple determined the social and political organizations of the region.

In recent years the staple approach has been criticized for the absence of people in its analysis. The criticism is that its focus on external factors as explanations for growth and change neglects the significance of labour and class issues as formative aspects of Canadian development. However, even the studies that have attempted to redress this imbalance tend to treat the issues of labour and class narrowly. They focus only on productive relations associated with paid labour. The real nature of capital accumulation and the most prevalent productive relations in the economy continue to be obscured.

For example, H. Clare Pentland was among the first to attempt to bring labour and class issues to the fore of development issues in Canada. His particular interest was to show how the organization of production in society follows from labour conditions. At the beginning of his most important work he states the problem: 'A fundamental problem of any society is the organization of its labour force for production. If the society is to survive as an entity, ways must be evolved or devised to maintain or increase the labour force, to determine the nature and extent of the division of its labour force (the techniques to be used), and to establish and enforce the system of incentives. The solutions of these problems fasten their appropriate behaviour patterns upon the various members of each society.'⁵

Pentland's first concern was the evolution of a capitalistic labour market in Canada, with the transition from what he called paternalistic labour relations to capitalistic labour relations. Paternalistic, or personal, labour relations were those associated with employers and employees in the period before a genuine labour market existed. His point was that the productive relations were less governed by incentives of the market than by personal relations.

This analysis was an important advance in bringing labour and class to the centre of development issues. But the analysis really only per-

tains to a small fraction of the total relations of production at any period of the great staple exports. It is not surprising, given the prevailing focus of economists generally on the market (and in Canada on the export staple), that an analysis that finally considered the significance of labour relations was considered at all. What now must be considered is the fact that the most significant sector in the pre-industrial period (in terms of the number working and the level of production) was not the staple-exporting sector, but the agricultural sector, and that in this sector waged labour was considerably less important to the production process than was the non-wage labour of family members. It is these productive relations of the family unit that have been ignored. Most economists would acknowledge that the family as a labour unit is crucial to agricultural production, but generally family labour is treated as undifferentiated labour. The members of a family unit are treated as a 'collectivity' of labour whose economic objectives are compatible and whose contributions and rewards are symmetrical.

The particular oversight by scholars trying to understand the nature of capitalist development in Canada has been their failure to investigate the extent to which household labour has contributed to capital accumulation. This failure, of course, leaves the productive relations of this form of capital accumulation obscure. The staple theory follows from a general perception that capitalist development is an economic force whose impetus came from outside the family or household. So while the impact of economic development or industrialization on the family has been of some interest, the formative nature of household activity in shaping the economy has not.

The staple approach has also received criticism from economic historians for its single-mindedness in focusing on exports as the engine of growth. In recent examinations of the early periods of Ontario's wheat-exporting economy, for example, it has been noted that growth continued even when wheat exports were in serious trouble. The two main questions asked are: how could this occur if wheat exports caused growth; and what was it that caused wheat output to increase in the first place? The attempts to answer these questions stress that other forms of market activity must have been significant. That is, internal markets must have been more important in the export staple economy than had been previously believed. This is undoubtedly true and it is an important corrective to recognize that local markets existed. However, what is denied is the idea that farmers could withdraw from the market periodically and rely on subsistence production. This idea is discounted because it is well known that all the things necessary to sustain production simply could not be provided by the household itself, that is, that the entirely self-sufficient farm was a myth. Indeed, it is a very rare economic unit that exists in self-sufficient isolation. Yet, in fixing on the

market for explanations of the farming community's ability to cope during periods of declining export-staples, economists have neglected the true significance of the subsistence sector in the process of capital accumulation. And it is here that the productive relations of the family can be critical to understanding what occurred.

If we begin with the most characteristic form of labour, rather than with markets, our analysis of growth might be different. This is not easy to do when we look at labour within the family unit because the concept of the family implies an indivisibility of income and a community of effort that does not readily lend itself to the type of class analysis possible when the object of study is waged labour. Yet the issue of ownership and control of labour is as significant in the family economy as it is in more identifiably capitalist relationships.

In the family economy, ownership of the means of production both in law and in practice was in the hands of the male head of the household. The productive relations in this type of labour unit are frequently referred to by feminist anthropologists and sociologists as patriarchal productive relations. This is apt. If we look at the tremendous control ownership exerts over the product of labour, we can understand the extent to which female labour was 'expropriated' for the process of capital accumulation. To understand the forces of accumulation in the pre-industrial economy, the division of labour within the family unit should be the starting-point. Obviously this division of labour was not determined without reference to general economic conditions and demographic and cultural factors of the time. But by starting with the family, rather than the market, we may learn about the various strategies families adopted in order to survive in the face of extremely unstable market conditions. In fact, a dual economy existed: subsistence production, which provided the most basic needs of the household, and the market-oriented production, which provided income. Women's labour in this scheme was critical to capital accumulation. To the extent that women's productive efforts sustained the family in its basic consumption needs, male labour was free to engage in production for exchange on the market (through either commodity production or waged labour); to the extent that the total income from market production need not be expended on consumption, accumulation of capital in the family productive unit could occur.

While it is certain that an understanding of the economics of the family would not get far without reference to the market, it is equally clear that an understanding of the market is not possible without reference to the basic unit of production—the family. So far, the dynamics of the family as a productive unit are relatively unknown. In particular, we need to examine how the accumulation of capital affects the relative position of the various labourers within the family unit and how this, in turn, relates to economic change.

Women's Labour and the Transition to Industrial Capitalism

There have been, to date, few attempts to analyse long-term changes in women's labour and the relationship between industrialization and women's work in Canada. Most analyses which discuss women's labour assume that the transformation to an industrial economy in Canada had the same effect on women's work as it did in other countries. However, while there are important similarities among countries that experience industrial development, attempts to find common patterns in the impact of change on women's work have blurred some significant differences resulting from unique historical, economic, and cultural circumstances.

The colonial nature of Canada, which underwent a transition from a resource-exporting and agricultural economy to an industrial one, presents a distinct type of economic development, one that affected women's work in specific ways. I shall demonstrate this for Ontario during the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. This period covers early staple development, the transformation to an industrially based economy, and the increase of waged work for women. After the First World War the labour experience of women in Canada more and more resembled that of other industrialized nations.

Because Ontario had a more integrated and complete industrial transformation than any other province, it is ideally suited to a discussion of how the process of change from subsistence and export-staple production to industrial production affected women's work. However, as the labour experiences of women in other parts of the country at comparable stages of development were often similar, they will be used for corroboration and comparison.

Early Perspectives on Industrialization

Over time, the understanding of the effect of industrialization on women's work, based primarily on the British experience, has undergone considerable change. It has shifted from a perspective which saw the process as one that would bring women's work from the margins to the centre of productive activity, to one which sees industrialization as essentially restricting the nature of women's work.

The striking feature of industrialization's impact on women's paid labour throughout the nineteenth century was the increased concentration of women in one area of employment which clearly was expanding for them—domestic service.⁶ Early studies of women's labour during industrialization tended to ignore the effect of the development process on this type of work, assuming either that it remained relatively unchanged until late in the nineteenth century or that the rise of factory labour for women meant that single women became less dependent on domestic service for employment. Recently there has been much more attention paid to the rise of domestic service as a typical pattern, cross-

culturally, for female employment during the industrializing process. In Britain this type of work absorbed an increasing proportion of the total labour force in the second half of the nineteenth century, rising from 13 per cent of the total labour force in 1851 to 16 per cent by 1891, while at the same time it became both more feminized and more characterized as temporary employment.⁸ Women tended increasingly to find work in domestic employment as the demand for this type of work expanded while opportunities in other areas of employment were decreasing.⁹

In addition to domestic service, other types of work that continued to be significant for women were the more marginal types of employment associated with intermittent, casual jobs. These tended to be the kinds of work that demanded less rigid and specific time commitments than did factory labour, jobs which married women could more easily harmonize with their domestic responsibilities to their families. Much of this work had been typical of women's work in the past, including home work in the slop and sweated trades and the more casual paid domestic work performed as washerwomen, boarding-house keepers, charrs, and day maids.¹⁰ While the extent of this labour is not known, primarily because its more marginal nature meant that it escaped the rigid job classifications of the census, information about the period up to the mid-nineteenth century indicates that in some areas this labour was an important source of income for married women.

The separation of the home from the workplace clearly had significant implications for the increased rigidity in the division of labour by gender. But as significant as its effect on reducing occupational diversity for women was its effect on reducing women's overall ability to participate directly in how the family earned its income. That is, not only were the types of income-earning jobs women could perform being restricted, but so too was the number of income-earning opportunities, relative to the size of the female population.

The participation of women in the income-earning areas of economic activity is now widely accepted as having reached its peak in the pre-industrial period, and as having declined during the initial phases of industrialization only to recover the previous high degree of participation over the very long run. In fact, it is now posited that there has been, historically, a high correlation between the household mode of production and female work-force participation, a correlation further evidenced by the analysis of women's labour experience in Third World countries today as capitalist industry transforms certain sectors of the economy.¹² In Britain, women's participation experience is described as a U-shaped curve, with the low point in activity occurring in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.³ The recovery to pre-industrial levels is seen as occurring only in the second half of the twentieth century, when married women's participation in wage-earning occupations increased rapidly.

This general paradigm of social development and its effect on female

labour through the capitalist industrialization process can be summarized as positing three major changes. First, industrialization separated the home and the workplace. In the pre-industrial period the household was the productive unit, with the family working together in the production process. As industry moved out of the household, the home was no longer a place of production and the family's function as a production unit disappeared. Second, this process brought about an increased differentiation in the division of labour by gender. As the physical location of production separated male and female labour, occupational and industrial segregation by gender became more pronounced. The rise of waged labour meant that males became increasingly responsible for securing the family income. At the same time, the division of labour in the family, in which women had always been more responsible for child care and housework than males, became more pronounced as women's opportunities to combine income-earning labour with household activities decreased. Married women's labour in the home became characterized by maintenance activities for the family: reproduction, child-care activities, and housework became their primary work roles. While unmarried women's work was likely to be associated with market activity, it was occupationally and industrially segregated from the work of males and for the most part was temporary. The third major change associated with capitalist industrialization—a change integral to the separation of the household from income-producing activities, married women's retreat into the home, and the restricted nature of women's paid work—was the progressive polarization of the public and private spheres of life, with men increasingly associated with public life and women relegated to the private sphere.¹⁴ In the pre-industrial household, work was integrated with other types of household activities, so the distinction between the public and private functions of specific individuals within the household was largely insignificant. But, as income-earning activities were withdrawn from the household, a sharper distinction was made between the private sphere of the home and the public sphere of economic life. As women were confined to the household, their world and work became increasingly privatized and isolated, and the new ideology that women's rightful place was in the home gained currency.¹⁵

A Universal Model?

It is important to note that while it is frequently assumed that capitalist industrialization affects women's labour in broadly similar ways wherever it occurs, this assumption is not valid.¹⁶ Rather, the paradigm of the effect of the capitalist industrial transformation on women's labour, as explained above, is based on a specific type of pre-industrial economy. The extent of women's participation in the income-producing activities of the pre-industrial economy was related to a variety of

factors which were historically based, including the specific mode of production, the demographic circumstances of the society, and the complex interaction of all the factors affecting the nature of the division of labour by gender within the patriarchal household.

In this respect, the paradigm of the effect of capitalist development and industrialization, based on the English experience, does not fit the pattern of development in Ontario, where the historical circumstances of development were very different from those in England. In England the transition to industrial capitalism occurred in an economy where internal markets had long been developed." The small geographical area and the relatively large population meant that there was considerable interdependence among household units. In the eighteenth century, English rural households were involved in both agricultural production for the market and cottage industrial production. In fact, one distinctive feature of this transformation process was the pre-industrial phase (sometimes characterized as a stage of 'protoindustrialization,' or 'industrialization before the factory system,' or the 'protean stage of development'), which was characterized by the 'emergence, expansion and final decline' of rural industries.'s In villages, towns, and cities, crafts and shops as well as manufacturing industries were organized around the household unit. In this pre-industrial economy women contributed to the material wealth of the household in significant ways. They provided domestic work and production for home consumption; they produced goods for sales; they worked for wages; and they assisted men in their crafts and trades. In the household-based economy their market-oriented activities were considerable, so that the shift in market activities away from the household resulted in a general reduction in women's market-oriented labour.

Among feminist scholars there recently has been more emphasis placed on the complexity of the industrializing process for women as a result of the variability and unevenness of capitalist development. There is a recognition that industrialization in England did not affect women in a uniform way. Rather, different conditions in different sectors of the economy meant women's wage-earnings patterns and family relations changed in ways that were not as linear as was once believed.¹⁹ The point is that the variations on the impact of industrialization and economic change are not important only within a specific economy but also are considerable over space and time.

The Canadian Experience

The colonial, export-oriented market economy of pre-industrial Ontario relied on a distinct form of production within the family and a method of organizing labour that placed different emphasis on the division of labour by gender from that in pre-industrial Britain. The underdeveloped nature of the economy, the limited supply of labour, and the

primary orientation of market activity toward the export market tended to produce a much sharper division of labour in the household economy between production for the market and that for household consumption. In the early stages of development, female labour was centred on production for the household while male labour was focused on production for the market. In this respect one cannot point to a *withdrawal* of females from market production as the economy was transformed to industrial capitalism. Rather, economic growth brought women's production efforts increasingly into the market's sphere, both through production for the market within the household and through waged labour. Similarly, it is not possible to see the transformation in Ontario as resulting in a major split in the public and private spheres of life, and a sharper differentiation in the division of labour by gender. The private nature of production, the isolation of female labour, and a rigid division of labour by gender were common features of the pre-industrial period.

The changes in women's labour which occurred as local markets developed and the economy industrialized were complex and uneven. Even by the end of the period under consideration most female labour was not directed toward the market. But ultimately there was neither an overall decline in the proportion of women active in production for the market nor a restriction in the number of occupations available to women. Specifically, the pattern of women's market-oriented activity did not assume the U-shape of the English experience. It may be more appropriately characterized as a pattern of slow and steady increase in participation, but one which affected women in different sectors in different ways.

It is important to note that when I refer to an increase in women's participation I am referring to their labour associated with the market (i.e., the type of labour discussed when the U-shaped pattern of women's work is described in Britain). This change associated with economic development and industrialization relates to the overall level of women's participation in income-earning activities in general, including production within the household and wage-earning activities. Frequently there is confusion about exactly what aspects of women's labour are affected because of the rather vague reference to a decline in women's 'productive' labour. Sometimes this seems to refer specifically to the contribution women make to the family production of goods and services for exchange, but in other instances the term is used more generally to refer to production for use by the family as well. When used in the latter sense, 'productive' activity is seen in a very conventional way, that is, what is produced either for the market or what is produced for the family, but is tangible, and is later provided through the market. This perspective sees women's labour as being 'productive' when it produces clothing for the family, but not when it produces the family meals. All women's indirect contributions toward how the family earns

its living, then, are not included as 'productive' labour. As women increasingly spend a greater proportion of their labour time on child care and housework, their labour tends to be described as being less productive and they are seen as being economically inactive. This division of women's labour into productive and unproductive spheres is not particularly helpful in trying to determine the extent of change in women's labour, and it leads to confusion about whether the decline in women's economic participation refers mainly to changes in the nature of women's labour in providing directly for the family through work in the household, or whether it refers to their direct participation in how the family earns an income.

Recent examinations of housework stress that women's unpaid labour in the home has economic significance, even if this activity is solely confined to reproductive activities centred on the household and the care of children. In fact, the very nature of capitalism is seen to be dependent on the existence of this form of labour, and to perpetuate it.²⁰ Also, cross-cultural and cross-generational studies of housework indicate that there are not marked differences in the total labour time women spend on housework. That is, even though the nature of the labour performed within the home may change, women generally do not greatly reduce the amount of time they work in the home." The main point to be made, then, is that shifts in the production of tangible goods to intangible services do not amount to a reduction in productivity *per se*.

For the most part those discussing the effect of industrial capitalism on women's labour in Canada tend to be cautious in providing an analysis of long-term changes. No doubt this has been because the history of women's labour has been a seriously underdeveloped subject, and, until recently, relatively little has been known about the relationship of women's work to the economy. In the past ten years there have been several good accounts of changes in women's labour in the twentieth century and some useful studies of women's work in specific occupations or areas of the country for earlier periods. But generally those studies which address the larger issues of change from one century to another adopt the latent assumption that it followed the pattern established in Europe.

Capitalist Production

The relationship between subsistence production and capitalist production varied dependent on the dominant staple, but a broad pattern is distinguishable. Since staple production and the capital development related to it were often seasonal or temporary, there was not a high demand for a permanent labour force in this sector. Generally, there was a core of labour hired on a permanent basis, but for the most part labour was employed intermittently." From the perspective of employers

in the capitalized sector, the ideal labour force was readily available, but when necessary was capable of finding alternative support during slack seasons or years. In this way the responsibility for maintaining the labour force would not have to be borne totally by the employer. To this end the sexual division of labour, the underdeveloped domestic economy, and the need for domestic units to have money to pay for imported goods were factors that contributed to meeting the labour needs of capital.

The division of labour between males and females in pre-industrial Canada was rigid and distinct. Undoubtedly it was predicated on the notion that the basic responsibility of women was to feed, clothe, and care for family members and to supplement male labour in the male spheres of production when necessary. This perspective on the proper work for women was basically unchanged from that of European societies.²³ While labour shortages in Canada might have led to some different forms of the division of labour between the sexes²⁴ the reinforcement of traditional customs as a result of successive waves of immigration, and the logic of peasant production which favoured high birth rates, kept women tied to the subsistence non-market activities associated with the household.

In recent years the significance of female labour in the subsistence sector has been recognized as being crucial to capital accumulation. This recognition follows from a more general analysis which has tried to explain the importance of domestic labour to capitalist industrial development.²⁵ In Ontario the significance of female non-waged labour in the pre-industrial period can be examined in relation to capital accumulation in both the capitalized areas of the economy and the commodity production of the family economy.

Carmen Deere and James Sacouman have argued that in economies where labourers' families have access to subsistence production, employers need not concern themselves with providing a wage that would maintain the worker and his family.²⁶ The fact that wages paid to labourers can be reduced by having a portion of the family's needs provided by non-wage labour means that a greater part of the labour time of the worker can be appropriated by the employers.²⁷ In an economy where the nature of market-oriented activity meant that temporary employment was more characteristic than permanent waged labour, such as in pre-industrial Ontario, the subsistence agricultural labour of families was particularly important.²⁸ Women's labour, then, in subsistence production served the process of capital accumulation in the capitalist sector in critical ways. By providing unpaid labour on the land, women 'freed' men for varying periods of time for waged labour. Yet because a certain level of subsistence was provided by female agricultural labour, the capitalist sector could avoid paying wages equal to the cost of maintaining the worker and his family. This permitted accumulation in

the capitalist sector to proceed at a rate higher than would have occurred had the price of labour power been greater.

The rationale for the division of labour within the family between market and non-market activities reflected the structure of the economy and was a strategy to cope with the imperatives of the dominant market activity. While this division of labour in agriculture was not simply a response to the desire to maintain low wages on the part of the capitalist sector, it nevertheless reflects the strategy necessitated by the specific conditions of staple production.

The most notable condition was the unstable nature of the economy, a factor which shaped the parameters of economic activity for the family. Because of the uncertainty of income obtainable from market activity (as either wage labourers or direct producers), families were forced to pursue strategies which would both permit them access to the market and protect them to some degree from the uncertainty of market behaviour. Subsistence agricultural production gave a measure of security by providing a substantial portion of the family's needs. That this has historically been significant in Canadian economic development was pointed out in the Rowell-Sirois Commission report: 'However prices might fall and cash income from other sources might melt away, the farm household always produced enough to prevent abject poverty ... the sharp and frequent trade fluctuations of the [pre-Confederation] period did not cause profound dislocations.'²⁹ As Greer points out, the safety-first imperative of the rural economy required that dependence on the market be avoided.³⁰

However, agricultural pursuits alone frequently were inadequate to meet a family's income needs, particularly in the early pioneering periods of any region in pre-industrial Ontario when markets were seriously underdeveloped. While agricultural units tended to operate on a subsistence basis, they were not entirely self-sufficient. Vernon Fowke has argued that the perception of pre-industrial agriculturalists as self-sufficient, a view which has become an integral part of Canadian folklore, is essentially wrong. He shows how the pioneer economy of the nineteenth century forced farmers 'initially and continuously into reliance on an exchange and monetary economy.'³¹ Even from the beginnings of settlement, when fur was the dominant export staple, substantial amounts of goods were consumed which could not be produced on individual farm units or within the colony. Food, clothing³² and implements were provided in varying degrees by foreign markets. Although trading within the community, often by means of barter, direct labour exchanges, or various forms of payment in kind, provided many items which could not be produced by the household itself, the limited nature of colonial manufacturing meant that substantial amounts of goods for consumption and production could not be obtained except through foreign markets. For these transactions, cash was

needed, and to the extent that agricultural markets would not provide the necessary income, some members of the family might be forced to engage in work for wages. Pointing out that the pre-industrial family economy was not entirely self-sufficient does not negate the essentially subsistence character of the economy. Although trade and waged work existed to some extent, production for the market did not dominate economic activity.³³

Independent Commodity Production

The significance of subsistence activity with regard to capitalist production in a staple-exporting economy is clear: its function is to provide a cheap labour force for the dominant sector. However, the significance of subsistence production becomes somewhat more complex when it is understood that the semi-proletarianization of labour was not the only dimension of labour in staple production. In some forms of staple production, waged labour was insignificant, with the work being carried on by individual producers who owned the means of production. This method of production is frequently referred to as independent or petty commodity production. While there are some difficulties with using these terms, primarily because of the inappropriateness of the term 'commodity production' when capitalist relations of production are not present, they are generally accepted as terms for market-oriented production carried on by individual household units where waged labour is not the primary source of labour power.³⁴ In the sense that the term 'commodity production' implies expropriation of the fruits of labour for purposes of accumulation by the owner of the means of production, it will be an appropriate term here.

Generally, labour involved in independent commodity production is seen as undifferentiated labour; the members of a family unit are treated as a 'collectivity' of labour whose economic objectives are compatible and whose contributions and rewards are symmetrical. A.V. Chayanov's study of peasant economy was path-breaking because it showed that the objectives of this type of family economy were identical with those of an economy where wage labour was common.³⁵ However, in his study, because wages were not paid in the family economy, he treated family labour as essentially undifferentiated. This treatment is not untypical and is used even in studies concerned specifically with women. Generally the family is seen as a unit rewarded collectively for its work. For example, Ann Oakley, in a discussion of pre-industrial family industry, says its two basic characteristics were 'the unity of capital and labour: the family both owned the stock and tools and contributed the labour (receiving the monetary return for labour as a "family" wage).'³⁶

The stress is usually on the interdependence between the labour of men and women, with the implication that the interdependence is

reciprocal. In this sense a certain equality of labour is taken for granted. I take issue with this view of the family economy in the next section, where the nature of productive relations in the family will be discussed. But here it is necessary to point out that in the sense that ownership of the means of production was distinctly in the hands of the male head of the family, women's subsistence production served essentially the same function for the accumulation of capital in the family unit that engaged in commodity production as it did in the capitalist sector. That is, to the extent that women's productive efforts were able to feed and clothe the family, male labour was free to engage in production for exchange on the market; to the extent that the total income from market production need not be expended on consumption, accumulation of capital in the family productive unit could occur.

This is not to imply that female labour was confined solely to subsistence production. In some forms of commodity production women's labour at specific periods was crucial to the market-oriented production process. This was particularly evident in the work of Indian women in the fur trade and women's labour in shore work in the fishing industry. However, my point is that the non-market-oriented activity was critical to the accumulation of capital and that this work was more central to women's economic activity than was their market-oriented activity.

Patriarchal Relations of Production

Paternalism

Labour relations in an economy dominated by staple production, when they are discussed at all, are usually accepted as developing from those characterized as 'personal' or 'paternalistic' to those commonly recognized as the 'classical (abundant) labour market of industrial capitalism.'³⁷ Paternalistic labour relations refer specifically to relations between employers and employees, controlled less by market exchange than by personal relationships and bonds of mutual obligation. Because of the shortage of labour on the one hand and the unavailability of alternative forms of paid employment on the other, both the worker and the employer were obliged to respond to incentives other than those that would dominate a true labour market. The central obligation on the part of the paternalistic employer was to provide the 'fixed costs' of subsistence and reproduction in exchange for a reliable supply of labour.³⁸

The issue is not whether paternalistic relations of production existed, but the extent to which these were the most prevalent forms of labour organization in the economy. For the permanent labour force of the fur trade and very early industrial enterprises, which Pentland focuses on, the description is probably fairly accurate.³⁹ But for the labour force employed on an intermittent basis (which Pentland acknowledges was typical of pre-industrial societies) in the fur trade and other forms of

staple production there was considerably less obligation on the part of the employer to supply the worker with his annual overhead, particularly if that cost included the worker's family as well.

In the period of the great staple exports, the concept of paternalistic labour relations pertains to only a small fraction of the total relations of production. The greatest proportion of production involving the largest number of working people was centred on the family: the productive relations of this unit, although certainly related to paternalism, were distinct. Paternalism clearly involved unequal power arising from the relationship to the means of production and the conditions affecting the supply of labour. The paternalistic employer acted toward dependants as a father does to his wife, his children and his servants.¹⁴⁶ It was a case of transferring traditional forms of control and organization to market relations. But the more fundamental relations of production, the patriarchal relations of production within the household, were distinct because of the added dimensions of family ties and sexual subordination.

Patriarchal productive relations can be defined as the organization of labour in which males, as husbands, fathers, and even sons and brothers, have power over the productive activities of their children, wives, and sometimes their sisters and mothers. This power was not confined simply to non-waged labour in the home but, since family labour was the most prevalent form of labour in the pre-industrial period, it will be the focus of my discussion of patriarchal productive relations.

Patriarchy

In the agricultural sector, the non-waged labour of family members was the most important source of labour power. The significance of family labour to agricultural production is well known, but the social relations of this type of production are rarely considered.⁴¹ The concept of a family economy implies an indivisibility of income and a community of effort that does not easily lend itself to the type of class analysis possible when the object of study is waged labour. Yet the issue of ownership and control of labour is as significant in the family economy as it is in more identifiably capitalist relationships.

In most analyses of productive relations the issue of ownership is understood to be critical to establishing power and control. The very principles of organization of labour within a society are based on who does and who does not own the means of production: ownership implies not simply possession but all the social institutions developed to recognize property rights. How property relations are recognized by society is most directly evident in the laws which protect property relations. But the issue of ownership extends beyond the strictly legal aspects of control, for all the social standards, customs, and the entire complex of human relations are influenced by this fundamental relationship. The

significance of who owns property at any stage in the development process has been summed up by Oscar Lange: 'It is the ownership of the means of production which decides the ways in which they are used and which thereby determines the forms taken by co-operation and the division of labour. Moreover the ownership of the means of production determines the issue of who owns the products, and hence decides how they are distributed.'⁴²

The usual analysis of class relations deals with those clearly identified through market activity. That is, class interests are evident when owners are employers and workers receive wages. When there is no waged labour present, such as in simple or independent commodity production, the ownership is usually treated as being vested in the group which performs the labour—the family. When ownership by the family is understood to be communal, the issue of systematic domination and exploitation in the production process cannot be admitted as a possibility. Whatever accumulation of capital occurs is not seen as an expropriation of anyone's surplus labour if it is assumed that the group shares in ownership.

However, the family in nineteenth-century Ontario was not an egalitarian unit and neither custom nor law considered that the family *per se* owned the means of production. Only under exceptional circumstances did women own the means of production. For the most part property was owned by the male head of the family. Wives and children were the proletariat of the family farm, the workers whose labour was rewarded according to the good fortune or goodwill of the owner. The significance of male control over female labour has been obscured because of the conjugal relationship, their mutual dependence, and their shared standard of living, yet female labour was not in a position of equality with male labour in the family economy where the ownership and control of property were in the hands of the male alone.

The important point to be made here is that the question of power through property relations in general is not unique to capitalist relations, but is crucial to understanding productive relations within the family economy as well.⁴³ Male control over labour was established through the power of ownership. In the family economy the issue of power was complicated by the personal relationships of the family and the fact that the male head of the family was clearly part of the labouring unit. But his position was distinct from the others; all surplus produced by the non-waged workers who did not share in ownership was, in effect, expropriated by the owner.⁴⁴ Whatever accumulation of capital occurred was legally his. Non-waged family workers had certain rights with respect to their membership in the family: children and wives could claim support from their fathers or husbands, but the general understanding was that this support was their right, less by virtue of

their contribution than by virtue of their economic helplessness. They had no legal rights to what they produced through their labour even though the contribution of family members was critical to the success or failure of the economy of the family unit.

The implications of patriarchal productive relations were distinct for different forms of labour within the family unit. While male and female children and wives were all labourers subject to the authority of the male owner of the means of production, there were significant differences in the duration and extent of patriarchal dominance. Until the father died or gave his property away he exerted considerable control over his children's labour. But male and female children were treated differently, particularly with regard to their ultimate relationship to property. For women, both as children and as wives, patriarchal control took a different form than it did for men in that it did not cease with the passing of time, but was likely to continue throughout their lifetimes.

Notes

- 1 For a critique of the economists' approach to women's labour see Martha MacDonald, 'Economics and Feminism: The Dismal Science?' *Studies in Political Economy* 15 (Fall 1984), 151-78; Isabel V. Sawhill, 'Economic Perspectives on the Family,' in *The Economics of Women and Work*, ed. Alice Amsden (New York: Penguin, 1980), 125-39; Francine D. Blau and Carol L. Jusenius, 'Economists' Approaches to Sex Segregation in the Labour Market: An Appraisal,' in *Women and the Workplace*, ed. Martha Blaxall and Barbara Reagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 181-99; Marjorie Cohen, 'The Problem of Studying "Economic Man" ,' in *Feminism in Canada*, ed. Angela Miles and Geraldine Finn (Montreal: Black Rose, 1982), 89-101.
- 2 *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 831.
- 3 See, for example, Gary S. Becker, 'A Theory of Marriage: Part I,' *Journal of Political Economy* 81 (July/Aug. 1973) 813-46; Gary Becker, 'A Theory of the Allocation of Time,' *The Economic Journal* 80 (200) (Sept. 1965), 493-517; Theodore Schultz, *Economics of the Family: Marriage, Children and Human Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Jacob Mincer and Solomon Polachek, 'Family Investments in Human Capital: Earnings of Women,' *Journal of Political Economy* 82 (2) (Mar./Apr. 1974), s76-s108.
- 4 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [1944]).
- 5 H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada 1540-1860* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1981), xlv.
- 6 Theresa M. McBride, *The Domestic Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), passim; Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work, & Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978), 68-9; John Burnett, *Useful Toil:*

- Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1930s* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), 137.
7. Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Virago, 1981 [1910]), 4; B.L.Hutchins, *Women in Modern Industry* (East Ardsley: EP Publishing, 1978 [1915]), 73.
 8. McBride, *The Domestic Revolution*, Table 2.2. The author says the pattern is similar in Europe, the United States, and Latin American countries.
 9. For an example of the perspective that considers expanding work for servants as a function of the increased leisure of women in the home see Burnett, *Useful Toil*, 144. He maintains that 'domestic help was necessary to the Victorian middle and upper classes partly because wives and daughters had become virtually functionless . . .' and because people accumulated more things.
 10. Sally Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London,' in *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: Penguin, 1976), 110; Patricia Hollis, 'Working Women,' *History* 62 (Oct. 1977), 443; Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work & Family*, 124-5.
 11. For information on the impact of demographic changes, especially the effect of a surplus female population on labour opportunities, see Richards, 'Women in the British Economy,' 349; Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, & Family*, Ch. 5; Louise A. Tilly, Joan W. Scott, and Miriam Cohen, 'Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* VI (Winter 1976), 447-76.
 12. Eric Richards, 'Women in the British Economy,' *History*, 59 (1974), 337; Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), passim; Barbara Rogers, *The Domestication of Women* (London: Tavistock, 1980) passim.
 13. Richards, 'Women in the British Economy,' 337; Ann Oakley, *Woman's Work* (New York: Vintage, 1976), 34ff.; Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, & Family*, 229; Scott and Tilly, 'Woman's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe,' in *The Family in History*, ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 147; Thompson, 'Women and Nineteenth-Century Radical Politics,' 115; Sheila Lewenhak, *Women and Work* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1980), 172.
 14. Melissa Clark, 'The Status of Women in Relation to Transitions in the Mode of Production,' in *Occasional Papers of the McMaster University Sociology of Women Programme I* (Spring 1977), 152; Catherine Hall, 'The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestickmaker: The Shop and the Family in the Industrial Revolution,' in *The Changing Experience of Women*, ed. Whitelegg et al., 15; Wally Secombe, 'Domestic Labour and the Working Class Household,' in *Hidden in the Household*, ed. Bonnie Fox (London: Women's Press, 1980), 80-1; Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, 286; Oakley, *Woman's Work*, 59.
 15. Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh, 'The "Family Wage" 'in *The Changing Experience of Women*, ed., E. Whitelegg et al. (Oxford: Martin Robin-
- son, 1982), 74; Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, 312-13; Oakley, *Woman and Work*, 43-56.
 16. For examples of those who think there is a universal pattern to the capitalist process of industrialization, see Oakley, *Women's Work*, X, 13; Viola Klein, *Britain's Married Women Workers* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 19; Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic, 1975), 14; Patricia Branca, *Women in Europe since 1750* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 217; McBride, *The Domestic Revolution*, 14.
 17. This transformation in England occurred over a long period so there is some disagreement about whether the major changes for women occurred with the early rise of market capitalism (i.e., Clark, Hamilton) or occurred primarily as a result of the rise of the factory system (i.e., Pinchbeck, Oakley). But regardless of the time period seen as most significant, women in the pre-industrial capitalist economy were seen as active participants in the income-earning activities of the family, and it was this activity which was restricted as the economy developed.
 18. Hans Medick, 'The Proto-Industrial Family Economy,' *Social History* 3 (Oct. 1976), 293.
 19. Sonya O. Rose, "Gender at Work': Sex, Class and Industrial Capitalism,' *History Workshop Journal* 21 (Spring 1986), 113-31.
 20. Canadian scholars have made important contributions to this analysis. See especially Margaret Benston, 'The Political Economy of Women's Liberation,' *Monthly Review* 21 (Sept. 1969), 13-27; Meg Luxton, *More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1980); and the contributors to *Hidden in the Household*, ed. Fox.
 21. Alexander Szalai, 'Women's Time,' *Futures*, 7, 5 (Oct. 1975), 385-99; Luxton, *More Than a Labour of Love*; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic, 1983); Monique Proulx, *Five Million Women: A Study of the Canadian Housewife* (Ottawa: Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1978); Joann Vanek, 'Time Spent in Housework,' in *The Economics of Women and Work*, ed. Alice H. Amsden (New York: Penguin, 1980), 82-90; Oakley, *Woman's Work*.
 22. This was true in all forms of staple development where wage labour occurred. See, for example, Fernand Ouellet, 'Dualite economique et changement technologique au Quebec (1760-1790),' *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 257; A.R.M. Lower and Harold Innis, *Settlement and the Forest and Mining Frontiers* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936), 32; R. James Sacouman, 'Semi-Proletarianization and Rural Under-development in the Maritimes,' *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17 (1980); H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada 1650-1860* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1981), 29; Allan Greer, 'Fur-Trade Labour and Lower Canadian Agrarian Structures,' Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers* (1981), 197-214.

23. In *Women, Work, & Family*, for example, Louise Tilly and Joan Scott explain the basic division of labour between men and women in the family economy. While there was considerable diversity of roles and frequent overlapping of tasks, women's work centred on the household (Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, & Family*, especially Ch. 3).
24. Naomi Griffiths points out that while certain industries in Canada encouraged a division of labour strictly according to age and gender, such as lumbering and fishing, in small settlements 'the personality of the individual and the immediate challenge of the day were more important than social conventions about gender-roles' (Naomi Griffiths, *Penelope's Web* [Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976], 134-5).
25. There is an extensive literature on this subject which is now known as 'the domestic labour debate.' An excellent overview of the literature is provided by Eve Kaluzynska, 'Wiping the Floor with Theory: A Survey of Writings on Housework,' *Feminist Review* 6 (1980).
26. Carmen D. Deere, 'Rural Women's Subsistence Production in the Capitalist Periphery,' in *Peasants and Proletarians*, ed. Robin Cohen, Peter C.W. Gutkind, and Phylis Brazier (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 133-48. R. James Sacouman, in his work on the Maritimes, discusses how subsistence farming has been an integral part of capitalist accumulation in the staple trades of that region: 'Subsistence farming has provided and still provides the principal base for the "superexploitation" . . . of the petty in-shore fishermen and woodlot cutter. The money value of fish and of logs can be lowered below the value of labour power replacement since subsistence production does, even in its most truncated form, provide material sustenance directly, without the intermediary of cash' (R. James Sacouman, 'Semi-Proletarianization and Rural Underdevelopment in the Maritimes,' 235-7).
27. This analysis follows a Marxian explanation of capital accumulation where surplus value is extracted from labour when labour is not paid a wage equal to the total value it produces, but is paid a wage which reflects the socially necessary labour time expended in production. Deere argues that since the value of labour reflects socially necessary labour, it is possible to reduce the value of labour when some of the goods and services required to maintain and reproduce labour are produced by non-waged labour (Deere, 'Rural Women,' 137-8).
28. Generally the prevalence of female subsistence agricultural labour is most directly associated with underdeveloped Third World countries. See, for example, Esther Boserup, *Economic Development* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1970), 77-8. While there are important similarities in the function of female pre-industrial labour in Canada and that of women in Third World countries today, there are also significant differences. The critical distinction between conditions in Third World economies with large resource-exporting sectors and Canada's early staple development is that Third World countries typically have an abundant labour supply whereas Canada experienced labour shortages. Also, in Third World countries there

- often existed well-developed agricultural and market traditions which continued to have an impact after colonial domination. In Canada agricultural and market development did not precede resource development.
29. *Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations*, Book 1, 27, cited in Vernon Fowke, 'The Myth of the Self-Sufficient Pioneer,' *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 56 (1962), 26.
30. Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 205.
31. Vernon Fowke, 'The Myth of the Self-Sufficient Pioneer,' *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 56 (1962), 26. For a recent evaluation of Fowke's thesis see Leo A. Johnson, 'New Thoughts on an Old Problem: Self-Sufficient Agriculture in Ontario,' paper presented to Canadian Historical Association, June 1984.
32. Marr and Paterson, *Canada*, 80; Vernon C. Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978 [1946]), 45, 48; Robert Leslie Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ontario 1613-1880* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 307.
33. For an excellent discussion of the misconceived dichotomy between subsistence and market activity, see Greer, *Peasant, Lord and Merchant*, 202-5.
34. It is used frequently in this sense in Canada. Particularly important are the following: Max Hedley, 'Domestic Commodity Production: Small Farms in Alberta,' in *Challenging Anthropology*, ed. David H. Turner and Gavin A. Smith (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979), 280-98; Max Hedley, 'Independent Commodity Production,' *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 13 (1976), 413-21; Leo Johnson, 'Independent Commodity Production: Mode of Production or Capitalist Class Formation?' *Studies in Political Economy* 6 (1981), 93-112; Sacouman, 'Semi-Proletarianization and Rural Underdevelopment in the Maritimes.' For a discussion of the necessity of a capitalist labour market for the term 'commodity production' to be appropriate, see Michael Merrill, 'Cash Is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States,' *Radical History Review* (Winter 1977), 42-71.
35. A.V. Chayanov, *The Theory of the Peasant Economy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966).
36. Oakley, *Woman's Work*, 16.
37. Pentland, *Labour and Capital*, 24.
38. Paul Phillips, 'Introduction,' in Pentland, *Labour and Capital*, xxvi.
39. Pentland, *Labour and Capital*, Ch. 2.
40. D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), cited in Judy Lowen, 'Not So Much a Factory, More a Form of Patriarchy: Gender and Class during Industrialization,' in *Gender, Class & Work*, ed. Gamarnikow et al.
41. In the major study on labour in Canadian agriculture there is a brief refer-

ence to the labour of unpaid family workers, but for the most part the author chooses to see farm units which did not hire labour as being 'owner-operated,' and refers only to the labour performed by the male owner (George Haythorne, *Labour in Canadian Agriculture* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960]).

42. Oscar Lange, *Political Economy*, I, trans. A.H. Walker (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963), 16-17.
43. James A. Henretta, 'Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America,' *William and Mary Quarterly* 35 (Jan. 1978), 21.
44. Max Hedley, in his studies of family farms in twentieth-century western Canada, points to the inequalities in productive relations which are concealed by the term 'family farm.' He says: 'we need to recognize that while there is private ownership of the means of production by an individual who applies his own labour to the productive process, there is also a considerable amount of labour by non-owners of the means of production. The commodities produced by this labour do not belong to the actual producer but to the owners of the means of production; therefore, any surplus labour embodied in them is in effect expropriated' (Max Hedley, 'Relations of Production of the 'Family Farm': Canadian Prairies,' *Journal of Peasant Studies* 9 [1981], 74).

BONNIE FOX

WOMEN'S ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT

While the fur trade is usually portrayed as a man's world, it is clear that native women were central to it. Sylvia Van Kirk (1980) and Jennifer Brown (1980) have shown that although the European traders relied largely on native men for trapping, they depended on native women for cementing ties with the trappers, keeping them alive in the bush, and providing the emotional connection that made their isolated lives endurable.

Because women occupied a powerful position in native culture (Leacock 1981; Anderson 1985; 1987), 'in order to secure good trade relations it was necessary to cultivate the women' (Van Kirk 1980: 71). Marriage to native women was, then, an effective way for Europeans to establish liaison with the natives-and such 'country marriages' were common (Van Kirk 1980). In turn, the inland journeys required by the fur trade depended on women to make and 'man' the canoes, and to act as guides and translators. In the words of a Chipewyan guide in 1772, 'there is no such thing as traveling any considerable distance, for any length of time, in this country, without their [women's] assistance' (quoted in Van Kirk 1980: 63). Finally, their 'tender ties' with native wives kept the Europeans alive not only emotionally but also literally: the women provided food (pemmican) and clothing (moccasins, snowshoes), and taught the men the skills necessary for living in the bush, about which the Hudson's Bay Company initially knew little.

Just as gender relations were at the heart of the fur trade, the partnership of a man and a woman-simultaneously the union of ownership and labour-has constituted the primary relationship governing the in-shore fishery in Newfoundland and the Maritimes, and family farming across the continent: in both types of production the family has been the principal unit of production.

Recently, feminist researchers in the Atlantic region have been developing a political economy of the fishing industry that shows the importance of gender relations and the family household. As Marilyn