

The Life Course of 20th-Century Lyon Silk Workers. A Pilot Study

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The Life Course of 20th-Century Lyon Silk Workers

A Pilot Study

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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, more than 20 years after her death, been translated into English and coded for themes as a pilot study of a larger data set. 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.

Keywords: Labor, Soierie française, 20th Century

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1 INTRODUCTION AND STUDY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The foundation of this study was constructed at least 30 years ago, in the 1990s. In 2002, Dr. Tamara K. Hareven, who was a professor in the Individual and Family Studies department at the University of Delaware, died on October 18, 2002, at the age of 65. At the time of her death, she had completed ethnographic fieldwork with silk workers in Lyon, France. The French silk industry is one that has been historically a blue-collar industry prone to economic crisis and social change. The interview transcripts that resulted from this fieldwork remained in the University of Delaware Morris Library until 2022, when they were uncovered. This paper gives a broad overview of the study background, the history of the 19th- and 20th-century Lyonnaise silk industry, followed by a discussion of the analytic methods employed to contextualize this data and of the results of the study. The article concludes with a discussion of continuities and changes that occurred within the silk industry through the end of the 20th century based on the participants' interviews, therefore contributing to the small body of literature on the Lyonnaise silk industry during this time period and connects to previous work that Hareven completed before her death. This article overall contributes to knowledge of life courses amongst working-class people throughout history.

1.2 STUDY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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. Historically, this group has been marginalized and placed in various precarious economic situations due to the nature of producing a luxury good (Sheridan, 1979; Truquin, 1993). Dr. Loren D. Marks, one of Dr. Hareven's final doctoral students who is now a professor at Brigham Young University, described Hareven's research activities as follows: "[Her] 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" (Marks, 2021, p. 1). Dr. Barbara Settles, a colleague at University of Delaware who happened to attain her doctoral degree at the same time as Hareven, remarked on Hareven's classroom teaching style: "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" (Settles, 2003, 1st par.). At the time of her death, Dr. Hareven had several book projects underway, one of which was to be a comparative cross-cultural ethnographic study of life and work among the textile workers of the United States, France, Japan, and Austria; these projects ended with her life. Her final book, *The Silk Weavers of Kyoto: Family and Work in a Changing Traditional Industry*, was one piece of this comparative work that focused on the ethnographic fieldwork Hareven conducted with silk workers in the Nishijin region of Japan. In February 2022, the first author of the current manuscript discovered raw interview transcript data from various silk industry workers in these countries throughout the 1990s. These data had been collected, catalogued, organized, and housed in the University of Delaware Library, including the uncoded, unanalyzed interview transcripts from Lyon, France. This pilot study is the result of this exploration.

1.3 THEORETICAL BASE: HAREVEN'S CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE LIFE COURSE

According to Hareven (2000), historical research near the end of the 20th century had begun to revive myths and generalizations about family life and the impact of social change on society. Conceptualizations of the nuclear family 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 dissolution rather than marriages (Hareven, 2000, p. 9). The family life cycle was proving inadequate, which led Hareven to invite Glen Elder and a group of historians to collaborate on the application of the life course approach to historical analysis, which illuminated links between individual behavior and family members' perceptions of behaviors, as well as the economic factors that may influence individual family members' timing of transitions.

Regarding individual time, family time, and historical time, at the time of Hareven's penultimate publication, historians had long considered time points as a frame for social movements and change, but were not as keenly aware of the importance of time as a product of social change. Hareven then conceptualized multiple types of "time", which Hareven (2000, p. 152) 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". Tensions can arise when individual timing and collective family timing conflict, especially in transitions, but this tension has varied throughout history. 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. This leads to various determinations of whether individuals or families are early, late, or on time. In the United States, after World War II, this meant that 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 as people occupy various roles within a family throughout their life span (Elder, 1979; Hareven, 2000). The first is that of individual timing — or how people time and organize this movement between roles. The second is synchronization of individual with collective family timing, and the third is the cumulative impact of earlier events on subsequent ones over the entire life course — earliness, punctuality, or lateness of transitions can affect the speed at which subsequent transitions occur. 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) emphasized the role of macro-level economic, institutional, and legislative changes altering individual life courses and family time in terms of work and economic opportunities; these include child-labor laws, compulsory education policies, and mandatory retirement shape work-life transitions. Some transitions may be normative for the majority of the population, particularly if they are socially expected, but may also be traumatic. Turning points occur when an individual is able to assess continuities and discontinuities that are marked by the transition.

Any transition can become a turning point, but not all transitions are turning points. 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 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. For example, while the transition to parenthood is one that is seen as a normative transition, the transition to parenthood can instead become a turning point if, for example, an unexpectedly difficult delivery of a newborn results in postpartum depression in one of the parents, permanent disability of the child, or neonate death.

1.4 LA SOIERIE LYONNAISE AU DIX-NEUVIÈME SIÈCLE

The first step in understanding the life course of the people who participated in Hareven's study of work and family in Lyon is understanding the history of the workers and their families in the 19th century. The tragic life of Norbert Truquin (1993) provides a striking description of the average living and working conditions of 19th-century silk workers in his autobiography. After a turbulent, abusive childhood, Truquin made his way into the silk industry in the 1850s, where he learned to weave silk and satin. His workshop consisted mainly of young women who would weave satin from half past three in the morning until sundown, or five o'clock in the morning until eleven at night in the winter. These girls were often 15 years old and had been recruited from faraway regions and religious parishes to work in one of Lyon's 7,000 silk workshops, under false pretenses — girls would often agree to four-year apprenticeships, although learning to make satin or taffeta would only take three or four months. Apprentices would spend the first six months of these apprenticeships doing housework or winding spools and would be taken to Mass at six o'clock in the morning on Sundays so that they did not meet potential partners. Additionally, they worked 17 hours per day, lived in quarters infested with vermin, and were constantly exposed to hazardous chemicals such as mercury, arsenic, and mercury chloride, which was used to make the silk glossier and more appealing to consumers. Most of these girls would develop consumption and die, in many cases before their 25th birthday. However, these experiences were typical for those who worked in the silk industry. Many weavers lived in deplorable conditions, worked in deplorable conditions, were prone to diseases, were poorly paid, and either could not afford to live, or were only able to afford rent and could not afford to feed themselves.

Truquin married another weaver, but after two months of their marriage, an economic downturn left him and his pregnant wife without work. Despite unfair pay for elaborate silks when he was able to begin working again, if he asked for reimbursement from his manufacturer, he would have been cut off from supplies. Despite work resuming after the economic downturn subsided, the economic troubles continued. 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 14 meters long, destined for members of royal courts in Austria, but which he was not paid well for (Truquin, 1993, p. 304). He had weaved 3-meter samples of the fabrics for the 14-meter dresses but was not compensated for them; when Truquin demanded compensation for these, the manufacturer retaliated by taking away the looms Truquin had, which were company property. By this time in Lyon, not only was the Schultz company causing problems for Truquin, but many other workers were experiencing similar problems due to exploitation by manufacturers and unfair wage payments. Merchants were seeking to send orders to overseas colonies to cut labor costs, which plunged many Lyonnaise weaver families into poverty; workers who organized a strike were subsequently imprisoned. It was at this time that the silk weavers of Lyon organized and demanded a pay increase. Truquin became a delegate who argued to manufacturers 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%, but sales remained constant. 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. After some argument, Truquin suggested that either the merchants should offer a raise, or should double the wages of the workers, lower rent, and coal costs, and abolish food taxes to reflect the inflation that had been occurring since the War of 1848. The raise was then accepted, and Truquin (1993, p. 308) concluded, "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's autobiographical account of the silk industry is consistent with the findings of later historical accounts of the 18th-century industry. The most striking feature of industrialization in France, particularly in comparison to the industrial revolution of Britain, was the very slow pace. The explanations for the slow pace of industrialization in France 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. Artisan behavior was significant in delaying industrialization for at least one major industry: the silk industry in Lyon, where master weavers resisted the mechanization of weaving and the move to the factories in the interest of preserving silk as an urban artisanal craft (Sheridan, 1979). The Lyonnaise silk industry had disseminated to the surrounding countryside, where manufacturers were establishing factories and putting out to rural cottages. As such, this resistance and defense of urban craft was significant because not only did master weavers resist the Industrial Revolution overall, but also rural industrialization of the silk trade in France (Cayez, 1981; Sheridan, 1979).

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. 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. 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. In the aftermath of the worst economic crisis of the 19th century in the urban fabrique in the 1860s, most of the weavers were able to remain active, and the industry did not decline until after 1880. Handloom weaving concurrently proliferated with power weaving, as the manufacture of silk became a decentralized industry within the Lyon region (Cayez, 1981; Sheridan, 1979). However, the 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, which constituted a severe crisis for Lyonnaise urban weavers (Pariset, 2018).

According to Sheridan (1979, p. 109), "This crisis was initially the result of a change in the markets for silk cloths, favoring the weaving of the simpler, nonbrocaded plain silks (*étouffes unies*) over the weaving of brocaded fancy silks (*étouffes façonnées*)". This was due to the influence of British designer

Gaston Worth, who favored plain silks as they gave designers more creative freedom in the cut and fold of the fabric, as well as the fashion favoring crinoline dresses and bustles, which were less expensive to cover with the *étoffes unies*. Other complications for the French silk industry during this time include a significant outbreak of disease among silkworms and the United States Civil War (Sheridan, 1979). According to Cashin (2015), antebellum United States white women's fashion served as a status symbol, and the transatlantic influence of French fashion made silk dresses sought-after status symbols. However, after the secession of the southern United States into the Confederacy in 1860, women abandoned silk attire as part of the cultural norm of sacrificing luxuries to demonstrate their sympathies and further the war effort — silk was used for a wide variety of reasons by soldiers, including smuggling goods, hiding rebels, concealing valuables, serving as bandages, and others. Additionally, many luxury fashion pieces were stolen by women escaping enslavement as a final message to their mistress, including silk dresses. The war also eventually cut off the supply chains that would have allowed French silk to continue being supplied in the Union and the Confederacy (Cashin, 2015).

The role of women in the response to these various crises in Lyon enabled the urban household shop to survive on lower incomes and compete more effectively with the rural industry; 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). 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'" (cited in Sheridan, 1979, p. 115). In 1869, another report indicated that master weavers were even having their own children learn any other trades besides weaving. In 1870, more than 7,000 master weavers and journeymen weavers organized their own strike association and carried out their threats to strike even after master weaver enthusiasm waned (Sheridan, 1979).

In a way, the weavers were able to resist industrialization through exploitative means, especially as far as female laborers were concerned. Women worked readily as household residents, for lower wages than men, because alternative work, with better pay and conditions than 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 journeymen weavers, which carried a lower standard of living. Women came to Lyon to seek work in the 1850s and 1860s in one of two ways: they migrated to Lyon 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. 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. Women had limited alternatives to working in the silk trade: they could work as *dévideuses*, throwers in the larger, factory *moulinage* workers, or seamstresses in ready-made clothing. 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. Additionally, living conditions were terrible, food was inadequate, hours were excessively long, and masters were abusive. These young women would work 14-hour days, and it was common for them to die before the age of 25 (Sheridan, 1979).

The silk weavers of Lyon successfully organized to resist the migration from the city to the countryside, which culminated in the Association of Weavers, which "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. 121). In December 1869, the resistance organized en masse, and halted the export of fabric out of Lyon, in the hopes of eliminating rural competition and forcing prices to raise to a level that would allow weavers to earn a living wage (Sheridan, 1979). This would allow the city to again dominate the entire labor market for silk weaving and no longer be competing with rural labor market, but this hope was ill-founded.

1.5 LA SOIERIE LYONNAISE AU VINGTIÈME SIÈCLE

Limited material exists regarding the Lyonnaise silk industry in the 20th century, but according to Mann (2010), much of the same features of the 19th-century silk industry remained: merchant capitalists overseeing the industry, reliance on female labor, and predatory apprenticeship practices beginning

in the early teens. However, several differences also emerged, one of the most notable being that the industry began to downsize, in part due to changes in women's fashions, in part due to economic challenges, and in part due to industrialization. Women's fashion in the early 20th century favored mixed cloths rather than pure silk, and colors over intricate patterns, therefore drawing business away from the silk industry and causing the price of products that were in demand on the market to decrease. The practice of hand-dyeing silks began to fall out of favor, and large factories began to take over the dyeing, but weaving remained a domestic artisanal practice. Several bourgeois manufacturers began introducing third-party subcontractors called *contremaîtres*, who then dispersed work orders across rural weavers — however, these subcontractors would take a portion of the pay weavers received for their work for themselves. By the end of the 19th century, Asian silk — which was sturdier and more cost-effective — became more commonly available to the Lyonnaise weavers, which contributed to the mechanization of handloom weaving. Handloom weaving was previously preferred because silk was so delicate that mechanical looms would snap threads too often to justify the practice (Mann, 2010).

One of the most striking differences between the 19th and 20th century, however, is that because of the rapid decline in the traditional silk industry, canuts and their children had to accept the reality that weaving was not a profession that would be available for future generations. Before World War I, there were various options for the sons of canuts to move upward by pursuing education or training in other careers, and most manual workers' sons born in the 1870s were able to achieve upward mobility and "escape the proletarian condition" (Mann, 2010, p. 87). Also prior to 1914, the silk industry had achieved some economic stability despite changes, but as soon as war was declared, the silk industry suffered greatly — with women weavers sustaining the industry through 1917 in the Croix-Rousse. In the postwar period, the labor force became even more feminized, and women often held leadership positions in textile trade unions before the 1929 stock market crash.

Working conditions remained hazardous — chemicals remained widely and commonly used, causing continued lung damage, discoloration of skin, deformities, eye injuries and blindness. Apprenticeships continued to last years despite learning the industry only taking a matter of months, with low pay until the apprentices turned 18 and completed their apprenticeships. While professional instruction shifted to professional schools such as l'École de la Salle and l'École de la Martinière, these programs were geared more towards future manufacturers, directors, and foremen of the bourgeois class rather than to proletariat apprentice weavers — and were often not available to women. Apprentices who attempted to take part in strikes or other collective action to regain worker control over the industry in any way were dismissed. However, in 1903, workers in the weaving industry did strike, as large industrial units and their directors often employed mostly unskilled workers, leaving master weavers without work; this strike resulted in the creation of a union (Mann, 2010).

1.6 BROAD HISTORICAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE LYONNAISE SILK INDUSTRY

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 a social safety net are particularly vulnerable. Although the concept of human trafficking is particularly modern, based upon these historical accounts, the term applies to this industry. Young women and girls from the countryside 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 — and often did kill. Yet even in the absence of trafficking, among daughters of weaver parents, sons seem to have been prioritized in terms of education, upward mobility, and training in any other job than weaving.

2 THE CURRENT STUDY

2.1 EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODS

Based on Hareven's extensive ethnographic field work in Lyon that produced 20 qualitative transcripts, the overall undertones of previous work, and her focus on those who have been marginalized in society, it is likely that Hareven was conducting this research within a feminist-structural paradigm, which Durdella (2019) describes as researchers seeking to uncover stories of groups who have been historically marginalized in society because of their lived experiences not being accurately reflected in society. This is reflected in the choice of ethnographic methods. She also held strong beliefs in oral history, which focused on individual place, knowledge, and experience with social and historical changes (Tracy, 2020) as a utile method for understanding and legitimizing the life course perspective.

The qualitative interview transcripts used in this study were the result of extensive field work in Lyon throughout the 1990s, in which she fostered relationships with the members of the Lyon silk community, to the point that by the time her work was finished she would have been able to speak about the community as a member of the group; such is the goal of ethnographic field work (Durdella, 2019; Kirkland, 2018). In conversation with the principal investigator, Marks stated that in typical recruitment, "She would go nest herself in the community and discern their social acumen" (Marks, personal communication, 2023). She believed in sharing the stories of blue-collar workers, and was also very sensitive to women shouldering the burdens of balancing domestic tasks and paid labor. While qualitative research and ethnographic methods have often been the crux of paradigm wars, Kirkland (2018) describes ethnography as "among the most comprehensive and rigorous approaches in the constellation of possibilities in the research galaxy." The ethnographic process often involves vigorous notetaking, time-intensive immersion in fieldwork, skill at navigating interpersonal interactions, and the ability to see the unseen (Kirkland, 2018). Hareven also left behind only a few pages of field notes. What few field notes remain from this research are illegible; thus, they were not considered in analysis for the purposes of this study.

The data for this pilot consists of a total of six qualitative interview transcripts from various workers or previous workers in the Lyonnaise silk industry, likely from the Croix-Rousse region, that are the product of the ethnographic research conducted in Lyon. It is unknown whether the interviewees were still working, retired, or in another situation at the time of the interviews. Interviews from the entire data set consisting of over 20 interviews were sorted by the sex of the interviewee, which was determined from the use of "Monsieur", "Madame", or "Mademoiselle" followed by the participants' last names at the top of the transcripts. 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 ($n = 6$). The transcripts that were selected were read in French as well as translated from French to English by the first author to ensure understanding. According to Eisenhardt (2018), analyzing ethnographic data involves sense-making of participant perspectives and actions and juxtaposing results of ethnographic research obtained from other people in other contexts. Such juxtaposition between the silk weavers of Lyon and the weavers of Kyoto in Hareven's final publication occurs later in this paper. Transcripts were subsequently coded using a cycle of concept coding, which allowed for the ability to see the "bigger picture" (Saldaña, 2021). The division by sex was a deliberate choice based on Truquin's, Sheridan's, and Mann's historical accounts of gendered exploitation within the silk industry.

According to the dates on one of the selected interviews and the informal interview with Dr. Marks (personal communication, 2023), Dr. Hareven collected these data in France between 1993 and 1999. 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. In the data, several participants made comparisons in the silk industry before both World War I and World War II versus the latter half of the 20th century, 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 currently deceased or very old. Participant information is summarized in Table 1.

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. 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 is appropriate for all types of data, studies with multiple participants and sites, and studies with a wide variety of data forms. The analyst must employ 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). This coding method was appropriate 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 this method allows the principal investigator, who is 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. Information about participants can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1 *Relevant participant information*

Participant name	Participant approximate age at time of interview	Role
Monsieur B.	Older adult.	Hand shuttle maker
Monsieur C.	Older adult.	Trade fitter boss
Madame and Mademoiselle D.	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.	Madame D. is a folder. Mademoiselle D. has occupied many roles in the silk industry.
Mademoiselle M.	Older adult.	Hand warper
Madame S.	Madame S. was 73 at the time of her interview in 1993.	Gimp
Monsieur V.	Older adult.	Mechanical weaver

2.2 RESULTS

From the interview data from these participants, six themes, explained and defined succinctly in Table 2, emerged. The descriptive statistics are in Table 2. 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. Although 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. The qualitative codebook with exemplars can be found in Table 2.

Table 2 *Codebook, definitions, and examples*

Code	Description of Code	Exemplar
Disappearing industry	Includes any reference to the number of workers diminishing, the members of the industry disappearing or dying, or the industry itself disappearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "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 20th century, including favoring male children, disparities in pay between male and female workers, and any similarities to the exploitative nature of 19th- and 20th-century practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "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 industry, changes in labor laws, or changes in the government that have caused changes in the silk industry or how it operates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It's for the bosses, it's not for the worker, yes, it's a shame!" (Madame D.) • "If there are not several of you, you might as well close." (Madame D.).

2.3 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!" 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. 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 World War I in 1914, Madame D. noted that there were many folders in the Croix-Rousse, the center of the French silk industry. 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. Particularly poignant was one quote from Mademoiselle 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 — the few girls that Madame and Mademoiselle D. were teaching at the time of the interview were either a few apprentices from Italy or history students studying the silk industry. Madame S. 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!" 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." Mademoiselle M. remarked that as for hand warping, "There is no one left. I am definitely the last."

2.4 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 20th century, including favoring male children, disparities in pay between male and female workers, and any similarities to the exploitative nature of 19th- and 20th-century practices were coded as "Gender disparities". Although 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. 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. 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., "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.

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. She remarked that in caring for the elderly, the ideal is for daughters of aging parents to take on caregiving burdens, as well. Her own parents forced her to leave school as soon as she could and to forego opportunities to rise within the industry to continue weaving: "When I got the school

certificate, I was 13 years old....At the time there was no high school, what we had here was La Martiniere, you may not know....It's a superior school. They told me no, they told me no!"

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. 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." She remarked that most warpers "weren't even married....They were single. When they married, in general, they left the profession." Life was difficult for these female apprentices; while they were housed and fed, they began apprenticing at 13 or 14 years old, were malnourished, were often unpaid, and generally had poor living conditions as well. 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.).

2.5 APPRENTICESHIPS

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 for all apprentices regardless of gender, 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." He continued:

We were registered with the *Chambre des Prets* ... [which] gave the first six months, if I remember correctly, 150 francs 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.

However, the salary he earned as an apprentice was inconsistent. When he entered the industry as a mechanical weaver, though, Monsieur V. earned about four times the salary of a handloom weaver.

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.'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. contradicted his assertion that there was no accommodations, and also that apprenticeships were equally given to boys and girls. Specifically, Mademoiselle M. 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. Holidays were not necessarily celebrated, and gifts were not given to the girls in the workshops. The apprentices that would partake of these opportunities were mostly "from peasant families and they could barely read and write, in many cases." Madame S. 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.

2.6 ECONOMICS

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 itself. Economic downturns also meant death from starvation and poverty. According to Monsieur B., "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 C., the trade fitter, reported 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." Madame 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 100 sous, but if it took two days of work to earn it, then!" 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.

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 100 francs per week."

These low wages often had a direct impact on working hours and conditions. Madame S., 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 homemaker, 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. According to Madame S., everyone joined COPTIS to get paid, but workers still had to find their jobs on their own. In her 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. Work often fluctuated so much that "When there was work there was work for everyone. When there was none ... " 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.

2.7 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. 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. 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. 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." She was greatly concerned with the generational and sociocultural shifts from prioritization of collectivistic family goals to prioritization of individualistic goals for each member of the family, such as Hareven 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.

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. The main point Madame S. makes is that caregiving is a gendered task, and that girls are better at it, especially if girls are the elderly person's own daughter.

In addition to Madame S.'s perspective on changes in the family and in the care of aging parents, she positioned 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 ...

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." 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. in her interview. Less than a decade later, 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).

2.8 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 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. essentially worked 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 francs a week in 1932!" 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 francs at the hand loom, was therefore paid 15 francs 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.

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. She also noted that many of the people who want to study the silk trade or learn it do not actually want to weave silk, but want to be the head of the department or manufacturers, which are higher-level positions than weavers. She lamented, "[The interest is] for the bosses, it's not for the worker, yes, it's a shame!" 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 the equipment and produce the silk goods. This is why, when her husband died, she relied on her daughter to help her keep her shop. Mademoiselle M. 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. This is very consistent with historical accounts of 19th- and 20th-century silk conditions.

Madame S. noted that in the past, workers would have to work 10 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." 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." 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." 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!" Manufacturers, while perhaps not wielding as much power over the individual lives of silk weavers as they did in the 19th century, still had the power to exploit workers and to impact their lives at every level.

3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This pilot examined the role of the life course in shaping the lives of Lyonnaise silk workers in the 20th century. Before this time, the silk industry had been a fascinating exception to the rule of European industrialization in the 19th century and had effectively resisted industrialization for as long as possible. However, women who worked in this industry at that time were often put at a great disadvantage across developmental domains — in addition to being paid poorly and working highly inappropriate hours, they would also be denied the right to an education and subject to serious hazards to their health. Twentieth century data revealed that several of the Lyon participants of this research had their life courses 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 data set.

3.1 CONNECTIONS TO PREVIOUS WORK

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 to ensure they are being paid fairly (Hareven, 2002). 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). 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).

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). 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. 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. Future inquiry may focus on more extensive analyses of the similarities and differences of the silk industry at this time in Japan and France, with possible addition of other sites and connections to other previous work as well.

3.2 STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE INQUIRY

One of the strengths of this study is that while she was living, Hareven was an expert, talented ethnographer. It was very clear from these interview transcripts that the silk workers of Lyon were comfortable sharing potentially sensitive information with her about their pay, their private family situations, and their experiences working in the silk industry. In an industry where retaliation by manufacturers can not only be catastrophic to the life course of an individual but to their entire family, these participants clearly trusted their interviewer despite the clear risk in divulging information. Additionally, women have been repeatedly marginalized within these contexts, which makes this work important to the understanding of gender dynamics in the workplace throughout history within a feminist framework.

There are various limitations to this research. Foremost, the current author was not involved with data collection or any other aspect of project development. As such, the current author lacks certain fundamental knowledge about the research project; for example, no information exists regarding the recruitment of these participants. As this is not an analysis of the complete data set from Lyon, nor is it an analysis of Hareven's entire cross-cultural dataset, but rather a sample from Lyon, 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 determine exactly 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 trafficked rather 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. As more than 20 years have passed since the beginning of data collection for this project, several questions surrounding whether the silk industry still even exists and operates with hand weavers at all. Regardless of the industrialization status of the silk industry, several other questions arise regarding the labor conditions and wages and whether they have become more stable. More recent ethnographic fieldwork with workers in the Lyonnaise silk industry could yield important details about the historical forces, transitions, and turning points that shape the life courses of weavers after the turn of the millennium, including the Great Recession and COVID-19.

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