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INTRODUCTION

NO PROBLEM IS MORE INTERESTING and vital to us than that of the family. The child is born into a family and sees the world through its eyes. His introduction to civilization is through the family. At first he is only a child in a system of social relations consisting of a unity of husband and wife, parent and child. Later he learns that there are relatives (grandmothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) who are closer to him than other people. In time he acquires the idea of friends, and then of strangers. Then he learns that he secures his status through his family. He is an American, an Englishman, a Chinese because he is born into a parental unit that belongs to those nationalities. His parents belong to a certain community and so does he, and they are subject to its rules and privileges. He can and must go to the schools of his community.

As the child grows up, he founds a family of his own where the roles are reversed; instead of remaining a child, he becomes a husband (wife), parent, leader, breadwinner, responsible person, disciplinarian, and status conferrer. In the course of a lifetime, most people play changing roles within the organization known as the family. A broad and philosophical knowledge of the meaning of this to the individual and to society is one of the first requisites of understanding the society of which he is part.

In recent years there has been considerable discussion of the family. Among serious subjects, none are given as much attention as family, government, and religion. No one of these three topics can be discussed without the other. No government or religion is without decided views on the family, and no family can get along without day-by-day contact with the rules, regulations, and ideas of the contemporary government and religion concerning what is proper, correct, and justifiable family behavior.

This recent discussion has been concerned with “family problems,” “the decline of familism,” the “evolution of the family,” the “origin of the family,” and the “changing functions” and “future of the family.” It is said that a new type of family has now arisen—the conjugal family. This is supposed to be a family type in which a married pair abstain from having children, or at least give most of their time and attention to their marriage and little or none to the parent-child relationship.

However, this has not always been so. In other times and places familism has had different connotations from those set forth today. Consequently, we have many books on the family that set forth its history, its origins, its functions in different societies, and its present state. This literature, running into thousands of volumes and written in every language in which the study of social science has been attempted, offers many explanations, interpretations, histories, pseudo-histories, and arguments, but little or no agreement concerning the family.

Family Problems in Other Societies

This disagreement over the family is not new. On the contrary, it is one of the oldest arguments of history, as a few examples will show. At the height of the old Roman Empire in Western Europe, from the first to the third centuries of our era, the family relationship was a free one like ours; there were many conjugal marriages such as have recently become popular and are now highly recommended in many circles. At that time under Roman law, divorces were easy and frequent. People did not have

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many children. The armies were recruited from the barbarians on the edge of the empire. The government offered rewards to people for having children and tried to penalize those who did not by higher taxes, withdrawal of privileges, and so on. There were forces in public life that favored familism and forces that did not. A marriage was at most only a civil contract that had many elements of private contract about it; the latter depended on the kind of marriage chosen. A man who wanted a binding civil contract chose the *dignitas* type of marriage. If he wanted a looser relationship which meant that the children, if any, remained with the mother's family and never received rights from the father, he chose the more flexible form called *concubinatus*. A woman who married according to *dignitas* was supposed to become a mother, and the family consisted of husband-wife, parents-children, and inner versus outer relatives. In the *dignitas* marriage, the woman left her own home more completely and "cleaved to her husband." However, she brought with her a dower or marriage portion, and her family retained an interest in it; consequently the family was always to some extent tied up with both paternal and maternal relatives. The child of such a marriage came under the *potestas*, or power, of the father, was given his name, and became his legitimate heir.

The *concubinatus* marriage, although a much looser relationship, was still a real marriage, subject to legal regulation and social consequences. However, these regulations were not so broad, and the social consequences were not so great, as in the *dignitas* marriage. The child remained with the mother and inherited from her; in the later period, by means of special legal forms the child could be adopted by his blood father and given the standing of one born of a *dignitas* marriage.

And so the difference of opinion continued through the latter days of the Roman Empire. The conservative forces of the state favored marriages of *dignitas* which would produce children to replenish the number of citizens born of Roman parents. Some of the people preferred marriages of *dignitas*, with or without children, and some marriages of the *concubinatus* type, with or without children.

Toward the last days of the Roman Empire a new force entered into this argument, the Christian church. This religious organization called

the mores of the Roman family “decadent” and demanded reform after reform. The church recognized marriages of one kind only, *dignitas*. It insisted on the reform of the Roman *dignitas* marriage to make it a sacred and lasting union. It was opposed to divorce and every other form of “demoralization” throughout the Roman Empire. At first the Christians were severely prosecuted for “impiety” toward the Roman gods; every time a calamity occurred, it was the fashion to blame the difficulty on the Christians and to persecute some of them rigorously. But later, some of the emperors were converted and Christianity became a legal as well as a moral force. Then came a period when disciplinary legislation regarding the family was forced upon the people by the Christian emperors.

Romanism decayed, however, and many smaller regional governments replaced the central government that had ruled over most of civilization. A new force came into power—the emperors chosen by and descended from the barbarians of northern Europe, who were migrating to the districts of the old Roman Empire. Into these small states came a new type of family, the barbarian, an organization with an outlook entirely different from that of the Roman *dignitas* and *concupinatus* families. Marriage, to the barbarians, was not a private or a civil contract. To them it was a unity of family, a blood relationship, involving rights and duties far transcending anything Roman civilization had known for almost a thousand years. Marriage among the barbarians meant that the members of a family agreed to protect their relatives in case they committed crimes, to aid them when someone did an injury to them, to help financially if they had to pay a composition or *wergild* (a type of fine), and to receive part of the *wergild* or composition in case they fined and accepted payment from another family for the actions of its members. The Roman law family came into contact with the Beowulfian type of family and society.

By this time the Roman *concupinatus* family had disappeared under the censure of the Christian church, so that three types of family were struggling for domination. One was the Roman civil law type of family, the *dignitas*, favored by the people used to Roman ways; a second was the unbreakable Christian marriage, the purified *dignitas*, favored by the bishops of the church; and the third was the barbarian trustee type, in

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which the household or small family came immediately under the larger family of outer relatives and clients and thus was an agent of the larger group. These types and their adherents—the Romans, the Christians, and the barbarians—struggled with each other.

The next serious change came between the tenth and twelfth centuries of our era when the governments gave way to the church. This was due partly to failures in the ability of governments to rule, and partly to a series of severe economic catastrophes that swept over Western society in the ninth and tenth centuries, bringing governments into disrepute. In large measure, however, this was undoubtedly due to the constant education carried on by the church, which insisted that only one type of family was capable of measuring up to the law of God as set forth by the church fathers from St. Augustine to Pierre Lombard and St. Thomas Aquinas.

For two or three centuries after this the only conception of the family in Western society, at least officially, was that of a family united under the aegis of the church, an unbreakable unit subject to all the rules and regulations of canon law. In most districts, however, the trustee barbarian family, shorn of most of its legal power, continued to rule much of the actual family life. Furthermore, within the church there were several heretical groups, Manicheans in particular, who wished to consider the family more in the Roman civil light as a secular and semiprivate institution than as a sacramental union of the church family or one subject to the clannish rules and regulations of the trustee barbarian family.

This general situation lasted for several centuries, during most of which time people gradually came to accept the Christian type of family outlined by canon law as *the* family. But underneath all this there was still a strong feeling of localism or “home rule,” a spirit carried over from the trustee family type outlined by barbarian law for all northern Europe when the church first came into contact with the northern infidels. Finally, beginning with the Bohemian revolution which followed the death of John Huss in 1415, and the Lutheran movement about a century later, three conceptions of the family emerged again. One was the home-rule idea, a revival of local and familistic custom, more or less of the trustee type; another was the secular conception, which held that the family was

an agent of the state, a civil contract, in which divorce by law should be considered; and the third was the original Christian family specifically set forth by canon law after long analysis of the spirit and conceptions of the Gospels by the church councils and canon-law doctors.

The Rise of the Private Contract Conception of the Family

These conflicting ideals of the family were at loggerheads with one another for several centuries. The rising national states were able to capitalize for themselves both on the home-rule conceptions in the remnants of the trustee family and on the spirit of secularism, which considered the family as a civil contract, although a serious and very holy arrangement. The church seriously discussed these proposed changes in the family at the Council of Trent, a long series of conferences following 1530. It stood by its original interpretation of the Christian family as one founded upon an unbreakable sacrament of marriage, entered into under the surveillance of the church, and with the free consent of the married partners. The Protestant Revolution and its doctrine, insofar as it concerned the family, offered one of the most serious challenges to the original Christian church. From that time until the French Revolution following 1789, the family was considered a holy arrangement created under God's influence, but not one of His original sacraments.

In the meantime, however, a number of "thinkers," the eighteenth-century rationalists, began to set forth from the standpoint of pure secular speculation a new conception of the family, one of private contract, with only limited civil consequences at the most. This group of men wrote mostly in French, but it also included a number of Germans and certain prominent Englishmen like Locke and Hume. Their idea, varying according to the thinker, held chiefly that the family was a private agreement between a man and woman, restricted by the state for public reasons, but having only limited civil functions. John Locke thought these functions were procreation, education, and inheritance after execution of which the marriage could, and should if wished, be dissolved at will. This was an idea

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distinctly different from the previous medieval conception of the family as an act designed by God, or by the all-powerful secular state, or by the all-embracing group of related persons, the clannish trustee family.

These ideas of the family as a private contract remained more or less pure speculations until the French Revolution, particularly during the period from 1793 to 1798. During this time an attempt was actually made, largely in law and completely in fact, to make marriage and the family such an agreement. This purely private conception of the family was followed, during the next century or so, by other experiments which attempted to do the same thing with parts of the Western family. One of these was a series of reforms in nineteenth-century America that endeavored to make divorce a pure reaction of the will of the local judge and to release women from legal responsibility in the family. Examples of the thinking of this period are the omnibus divorce clauses and the *feme sole* conception of married women. The *feme sole* idea looked upon the married woman as a single woman and, when carried to its full meaning, released her from the *manus* or common union with her husband. It resulted, in fact, in a form of social organization almost identical with that light sort of family popular under the early days of the Roman Empire, the *concubinatus*. A third experiment with the private family occurred during the Russian Revolution, following 1917, when the will of the parties concerned became, for a number of years, the dominant factor in the family. For a time a divorce action did not even require the consent of the other party, so that any marriage arrangement was merely an agreement which could be canceled at will by the unilateral wishes of either party. This practice was prevalent in France between 1794 and 1799, but never was so widespread as in the demoralization of Russian life during the 1920s.

A fourth experiment in the private contractual conception of the family is being carried on today, chiefly in America. Here it is more or less understood by all concerned that unless one party in the marriage disagrees, or appears before the judge and fights the case, all the old legal family safeguards are discarded. It used to be understood that the public would refuse a divorce to a married couple if one of them had condoned the act (permitted conjugal relations after the act was known

to be committed), recriminated the act (done the same thing or similarly violated the marriage bond), or colluded the act (agreed to permit the violation in order to make a divorce possible). Those safeguards have now disappeared and the public has left the family restrictions largely to the enforcement of judges far away from the actual jurisdiction of the couple. Unless the parties themselves bring the evidence into court, a judge in Arkansas, Nevada, or several other states grants divorces almost automatically to persons who may reside as far away as Maine, Alaska, or South Carolina. The private contractual marriage and family have become established in the United States, although winked at by public opinion and the law. With only the partner's consent or his inability or unwillingness to make a public scandal, and particularly in the absence of children, anyone can get a divorce at will in America now, after a few weeks' temporary residence under a false jurisdiction. Of course, if the lawyers learn that the client can afford to pay more, the divorce will be more expensive.

The Rise of Family Sociology

In the midst of this conception of the family as a private institution, as opposed to a group regulated by the church, the clan, or the state, there arose a school of sociology that has devoted itself to studying the family. The first great writers in the school were a Swiss jurist, J. J. Bachofen, who about 1861 published a book called the *Mother-Law* or *Das Mutterrecht*; an English jurist, Henry Sumner Maine, who in the same year published *Ancient Law*; and an English sociologist, Herbert Spencer, who in his treatises on sociology paid considerable attention to the place and role of the family in his evolutionary schemes for interpreting the whole history and destiny of mankind. There had been one or two earlier works, such as that by Unger in Germany about 1850; but after this time there was a deluge of books devoted either wholly or partly to history, law, and ethnology, which gave an entirely new interpretation of the family. The new ideas gained headway and spread, so that practically all writers on

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the social sciences “found” the conclusions true for their studies. Some examples of this are the reaffirmations by many historians that most of the fantastic tales reported by Herodotus (b. 484 B.C.)—stories of Amazonian women and of the purchase and sale of marriage partners—were true of early Greece and other areas of the Mediterranean he had not seen.

The chief ideas developed by this new school of family sociology may be listed and criticized as follows:

These principles emphasized the fact that the family had a definite beginning, an original type, that could be determined. In contrast to the Platonic conception that origins could hardly be calculated or, if approximated, were to be discovered in a systematic examination of historical processes, the new school launched into an immature conception of the rise and destiny of the family. In doing this, they postulated straight-line evolutionary theories of the family, extending from its theoretical origin until the present and on into the future. Instead of developing a conception of numerous families to fit numerous conditions, as Plato in *The Laws* (III) suggested several forms of government to fit the changes in the state, they postulated an onward sweep of man with an ever-changing, never-repeating system of family types.

To find this origin, these family sociologists had to imagine a primitive man. The hundreds of studies, then available, of isolated and disappearing primitive groups in faraway islands of the Pacific gave them the idea that here was original man in his pristine archaic social organization. From him they could learn the origin of the family. From nineteenth-century Europe they could learn its progress. By taking a sight between these two observations, they could plot and predict the development of the family for centuries to come. Consequently, the smaller isolated peoples became the main observational stage for understanding the family of highly cultured and civilized man. The “unknowns” in this series of evolutionary observations were the far past and the future; the “known” was the nineteenth-century family. Hence, the deciding issue was what had happened to the family, or what was imagined to have happened in the past, in far-off places, among peoples different in nature, in nurture, and in total psychosocial experience from the fairly recent north European barbarians and Romanized peoples who constituted Western civilization.

Neglect of History

In developing this scheme, they got into a quandary. What of history? What about the Council of Trent, the Lateran Council? What about Pierre Lombard, St. Thomas Aquinas, barbarian law, the Corpus Juris Civilis of the Roman Empire, St. Augustine, Manicheanism, early Roman codes, the Roman Twelve Tables, the early Roman *gens* organization and rule, the Greek family of Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Xenophon, the law cases of the late Greek orators, the family in Pericles' time, the family as seen by Thucydides and Herodotus, the family of Hesiod and his brother Persus, or, most important, the families of the Homeric period? What about the origin and development of canon law in the Latin church; the experience of canon law in the Greek Orthodox, Slavic, and Byzantian churches? How about the Slavic barbarian family; the family brought into Europe by the Mongol invasions; the family of the heroic legends of all European peoples, whether Beowulfian England or the other great folk creations of northern Europe? How about the Vedic hymns, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the history and legends of China? How about the different types of families in the old Hebrew works?

These are a few of the many highlights in the family that belong to the actual history of our people, five and ten thousand years ago. How could these family sociologists handle these data in their sweeping, one-way, linear schemes of development and change in our family system? What about these facts that we *know* are part of our lives?

To these questions the family sociologists until this date have largely had three, and only three, answers—"skip it," "mix it up with something else, misinterpret it, and call it the same thing," or "forget it."

Neglect of Logical, Meaningful, and Causal Analysis

Finally, these family sociologists have in most cases abstained from a careful logical and causal analysis of the factors involved in the family. Aristotle's dictum that if children did not love their parents and family

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members, they would love no one but themselves would have caused them to stop and realize that, in the absence of strong external forces, no human society could long exist. If they had observed this fact carefully, that the attachments basic to human society all arise and take their orientation from the human family, they could have found the key to an understanding of family types. In the absence of strong central governments, a condition in which most of human society has existed off and on for centuries, familism as a key to the internal strength of social groups must have played a much greater role in social order than in other periods. Such a logical analysis would have enabled them to see at once that the family was differentiated fundamentally from time to time as to its sovereignty. What differentiating roles does the family have to play in social order in societies which have many or in those which have few other agencies interested in social order—in livable human conditions?

With this logical thought in mind, they could have seen that periods like that of nineteenth-century Western society, with its strong governments, its abundant codes of laws, and its multiple agencies for the control of human beings, were relatively minute times in history, minor segments compared with the longer centuries in which strong national governments and statute laws were unimportant in the day-by-day life of peoples. This thought would have led them to examine more closely the forms of rule and order in the “common law” periods of societies. They would have picked the period in Greece when statute law and strong states ruled, contrasted it with similar periods in Rome immediately preceding and during the empire period, and with the modern period after the Protestant movement when the secular state rose to power again.

If this had been done by the family sociologists, they would have found a meaningful relation between the type of family and strong central governments and abundance of statute law agencies for social control. They also would have found meaningful relations between the conditions in periods—such as our own Dark Age, from the fifth to the tenth or twelfth centuries, the early or Homeric period in Greece and the Roman period prior to the first law code, the Twelve Tables—in which all these strong governments and statute law social-control agencies did not exist, and the strength, sovereignty, and role of the family

in those periods. In other words, they would have found in each society that there were periods in which the trusteeship for social control and order, and the very existence of society, were held in family hands—the trustee family times. They would have discovered “in between” periods when, throughout the developments of several centuries, the trustee periods were giving way but the strong modern governments had not yet completely established themselves. Logically, they would have compared similar periods in several societies, such as the Greek from the ninth to the fifth centuries B.C., the Roman from the Twelve Tables code to the formation of the empire, and modern society from the first stirrings of the Protestant Revolution and the embryonic start of “sovereign” states. These periods extended from the first revolts against localism until the times when law and order became completely a state function. They would have discovered in these periods a mixed family type, partly one and partly another. They would have discovered the domestic family periods, as these will be called hereafter in this work.

Finally, these family sociologists would have seen that the abundance of law and order agencies and the multiplicity of external bonds holding societies together during the periods of statute law and strongly developed central governments made the internal cohesion of family groups less and less necessary as a unified social force. These would then naturally become periods of the emergence of the individual, the social “atom,” the atomistic family periods.

Then if the family sociologists had gone a little further, they would have concluded that the facts of sociology are *acts with meaning* attached to them. A sum of money paid to a wife for the weekly budget is the same act as money paid another woman for other purposes, but sociologically these have entirely different meanings. In the one case, the payment means a home, loyalty, privilege, responsibility, status, children, obligations to rear these children according to fixed rules and regulations, and oftentimes, when we become as attached to them as if they were part of our own bodies, giving them to die for their country, because we also gave them status as citizens by giving them our names, our status, our rights, privileges, and responsibilities. In the other case, the act has a transient meaning, one that is ephemeral and of no possible comparable significance.

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Reversing the situation, the family sociologists, with their broad and sweeping generalizations about society, would have seen that they had based most of these theories upon the classification together of acts without their attached meanings, and which in their essence had the most violently opposed and differing meanings. The family sociologists have assumed that these widely separated acts had the same significance and meaning because they “appeared alike.” Such is the type of thinking in the wife-purchase theory, one that is attributed to certain types of societies in the alleged evolution from wife-stealing to wife-purchase and finally to romantic love marriage. They would have realized that all that was involved in the “proof” of this theory was the fact that in some societies men give economic goods to their wives’ families before taking a wife from that family. This could mean either the purchase of a woman or an economic condition antecedent to the consummation of a marriage union between two families, not unlike an engagement ring, a settlement upon a wife, a dowry, or any other specific form of exchange of gifts within and between families and marriage partners upon the entering of those close social relations that marriage and familism entail.

The neglect of logic and meaning was a symptom of, and also a condition antecedent to, the fact that these family sociologists have not given us a thorough causal analysis of the changes in the human family. We do not have today any comprehensive analysis of familism in terms of cause and law, two basic reasons for the existence of a science of sociology. Cause and law, two factors sometimes related and sometimes not, are the primary differences between a record of social events concerning the family and the existence of a science of sociology. If logic and meaning be neglected, we cannot have an analysis in terms of cause and law.

In the field of the family there are numerous haphazard generalizations about the breaking-up of the family and its influence upon human behavior. Yet we have no significant causal analysis of why the alleged break-up of the family occurs. Most sociologists attribute it loosely to the industrial system, which they claim does not require family unity any longer; yet they do not find the industrial system opposed to the family. But on the other hand, the human characteristics which they allege are being destroyed by the break-up of the family evidently need familism, if

this causal analysis is true. Thus we have, on the one hand, an institution which is breaking up because it is not needed and, on the other, a great many juveniles who are breaking up because they do not have the proper family backgrounds. The family is, therefore, both needed and not needed. The two brief analyses of cause, one entirely separate from the other, cite two types of needs, one human and the other industrial, one unimportant (industrial) and the other important (human), as reasons for antithetical attitudes about the family and the distinct behavior of the family.

This argument will not be continued further here. It is evident that logical, meaningful, and causal analysis of the family has not been carried far by the modern family sociologists. Nowhere has it been suggested that the family might be a changing element in social change—a result at one time, a cause at another.

The Purpose and Plan of This Work

To fill in these discrepancies, to bring history, logic, meaning, and causal analysis into family sociology—these are the purposes of this work. History must be brought into family sociology, not as isolated and meaningless events, but as integrated interpretations of the why and wherefore of family behavior.

The aim is to discuss the family in its relation to civilization, with four standards or ideals as to what constitutes a perfect sociological analysis. First comes *criticism*. Are the previous theories of the family valid, once they have been dragged out and examined in the cold light of day? Second, what has been the previous *history* of the “civilized” family? Is it a derivative of people and family systems of the Homeric and Beowulfian types, or is it related more to the Trobriand Islanders cited by Malinowski and Folsom or the hundreds of small primitive isolated groups brought into the analyses of Westermarck, Spencer, and others? Third, there is *thoughtful* analysis. Can the family be examined from the same analytical point of view applied to social problems by the great fathers of thought, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle? When they took up a problem for discussion,

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they always examined the relations between the matters discussed in all their possible implications. No idea could have any definitive meaning for them until it had been searchingly criticized from all points of view. Fourth is *causal* examination. Is the family a cause of development and change in civilization, or is civilization a cause of variations in the family? Or do both influences work? If so, when and how?

These four points of view—criticism, history, thoughtful analysis, and causal examination applied to the family—form the basis, the point of view, and the *raison d'être* of this work.

The family as a social institution is part of the life of everyone. We are here as the result of the family, we are the products of families, most of us create families of our own, and when we die those families bury us and mourn our passing. If we have done good while here, this is remembered and worshipped. If we have not done good, this is excused and forgotten. If one is in trouble, the family is the first to help and the last to condemn. If one does not create a family of his own, he or she lives in a world where family law and family mores sharply define the most important phases of conduct.

Most of the sentiment and emotion of the world is centered about the family or is of a family nature. God is the Father, and His chief representative in this world is the Son. The work of the Father and the Son is called “divine.” Father-love and mother-love and “Honor thy father and mother” are three subjects that are always taken seriously. Homer’s Greeks made their gods a quarrelsome trustee family. Our ancestors in Beowulf’s time made their devils (Grendel and his mother) a feuding trustee family, just like some of those in our own Southern highlands today.

Yet when one starts to write about the sociology of the family, he finds that the elementary concepts of the subject have been the objects of diverse interpretation and bitter controversy. What is the family? What influence does or should it have upon human character? What is its future? What attitude should the intellectual class have toward it? Does it merit condemnation or praise? All these questions and many more have been the subjects of violent debate.

On one side are the persons who wish to consider the family as a group which must continually justify itself by overt acts. To them the

family is a contractual group. If it fails in any particular time or situation, then it is outmoded and will or must pass away. On the other side are the pro-family people who consider the family as an institution not to be questioned any more than life itself. To them the family is a natural group like the swarm of bees or colony of ants. Every age has its sophists and its Socratics. This is mentioned here because Socrates was accused of impiety and leading Athenian youth astray by being a sophist. In defending his teacher and describing the relation between Socrates and his son, Xenophon, in *Memorabilia*, wrote one of the most, if not the most, human parental documents in existence.

These two groups which take sides about the family may be called the family negationists, on the one hand, and the familists, on the other. Both are idealists, but both cannot be right. The family negationists are opposed to any concept of a dominant-submissive family inculcating order, security, and organization in society. [J. K.] Folsom calls one group democratic and implies that the other is not. However, Folsom misses the whole point, since the problem is not one of democracy. This same type of argument is as old as human history, whereas democracy, in the sense of a very limited domination of collectivity over the individual, is a new thing, a form of social organization that requires much more familism than Folsom's negationism.

Certain words are given good or bad meanings at various times. One can hardly express meaning without arousing undue emotion. Up until and after Andrew Jackson's time, the word *democracy* produced a disagreeable effect in the United States. Two unpopular words now are *dominant* and *submissive*. As used here they have the following nonemotional significance. A group is a power organization. A family, a community, or a state has social power. This power may be limited, or it may, as in the totalitarian state, be great. The power of the modern family, contrasted with what it has been at other times, is not great. The power of the present family is limited largely to domestic functions and an attempt to keep harmony among the children until they know better and can do this for themselves. Nevertheless, family power today is much greater than that of other organizations, excluding the state and its all-embracing political agencies. Each power organization tends to polarize

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itself into dominant and submissive agencies or persons or transpersonalized figures such as parent and child, leader and led. This does not imply autocracy or oppression, because those terms are descriptive of how power is *used* and not of what is *possessed*. In the family, for most purposes, any member can become the dominator and the others the submitters. A vigorous baby or an adolescent can dominate a family in wholesale fashion. Sometimes the roles change from day to day and from function to function. Some phases of the family become transpersonalized in that the state or the community calls upon the parent to do things and holds him responsible. In this case the parent, and most often the wife, but oftentimes the child, represents the transpersonalized family power in carrying out family missions.

This discussion between the family negationists and the familists has a bearing on sociology in that a nomographic or law-seeking science attempts to get at the facts with meaning. It seeks to evaluate and explain the family as an integral part of society, not to criticize or to blame it. The purpose is neither to defend nor to attack the family. If the family is a necessary and natural institution, little that is said here can bring it into disrepute. If the family, as the negationists claim, is a private contractual form of human relationship, the result of a particular and passing type of social organization, the most spirited intellectual defense could not long delay its end.

Family Sociology and the Idea of Progress

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while family sociology was developing as a separate social discipline, certain characteristic ideas dominated social thinking. Some of these were theories of continuous evolution in one direction; ideas that social groups are contractual, man-made, incidental, and nominalist in nature; the conception that a social science has as its main duty to unfold the social process, to look back upon its past and into its future; and finally, that the active social scientist was to help in the negation of all social forms or institutions that

were out of place, were obstructions, or were not on the right track. Social science was to eliminate archaic anachronisms, to battle against cultural lag, and to guide the social process toward a newer and better society.

Beneath all this, of course, was the attitude that social science was “scientific” and looked only for the facts. But who could deny the obvious progressive one-way evolution which everyone saw about him and believed in as an article of faith? The idea of progress toward an ultimate good was adopted as the sole field of the devotees of continuous movement in one direction, nominalism in social relations, and negation of the older family types. As Plato sought the ultimate good in social relations, so did these family sociologists; but, unlike Plato, they never gave the “good” a sound logical and historical analysis. The family sociologists were unwilling to give any credit to a theory of the good or desirable, to anyone who would have suggested limits to the constant movement towards nominalism, contractualism, and negation in family bonds.

During this period, and up until the present confusion, the main integrative theories of family sociology were centered around the evolutionary, or continuous-movement-in-one-direction, school of thought. Since continuous movement in one direction involved the shucking off or negation of familistic bonds, the dominant sociological family theories were of this nature. Some held that we must find the perfect happiness or ultimate good in easy divorce; a second group, that we must free the family from patriarchy; a third, in eliminating the burdens of child-rearing; a fourth, in securing the proper sex adaptation between partners; a fifth, in increasing individual happiness by the proper mating selection and practices; and many others in various eliminations and reforms. All of these ideas have as their fountainhead the evolutionary school of thought, which has stolen good intentions and scientific analysis, mixed them with progress, and claimed them as the sole property of the school of continuous change in one direction, as regards the family.

This movement in the field of the family is not new or unique to this last century. In some respects, it has been under way ever since, or even before, the twelfth or thirteenth centuries and has had some manifestation in every century since that time. It had a firm beginning with the rise of nationalism and the Protestant conception that the family bond was holy

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but not a sacrament. It led through the philosophical conception of the eighteenth century that the family was a union based upon private contract with only incidental, but necessary, civil implications. The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century schools of family sociology, with their consistently negative attitudes toward the binding and displeasing aspects of the family unit, were but the wholesale development of centuries of previous thought which in a smaller way had the same attitude toward familism.

Thus modern thinking about the family, other than the scholasticism of the Christian church, has been largely a product of the Reformation and has attributed to the family all those elements of nominalism and contractualism so prevalent in institutional thinking since that period. Just as John Locke, J. J. Rousseau, Thomas Paine, and a number of the Founding Fathers of our own nation could hold that the social compact—government—if it became unsatisfactory to the body of the people could be abolished for a new form, so the developing school of family negationists could hold that unsatisfactory family types had been, are being, and will continue to be abolished. This does not deny the existence of a strong minority who have held to absolutism in both social and family compacts; but the prevailing schools of thought have been, as far as the family is concerned, negationists and evolutionists.

Negation and evolution in the theory of family sociology have held that progress, or the constant linear or stair-step movement toward human betterment, consisted in the dropping of family bonds and the perpetual creation of new types of families. This has been extended in family philosophy to include a *world theory* and a *world history* of the family, extending the doctrines back into the dawn of life and forward to new conditions as yet only in the offing. The great works in family sociology by Maine, Bachofen, Lubbock, Spencer, Starcke, Westermarck, McLennan, Engels, Bebel, Howard, and many others present, support, and operate upon the hypotheses of linear negation of the family. Such is also the case, with some variation and with negligible exceptions, down to the active or implied statements in all current works.

However, as we shall show in this work, disintegration of the family into contractual and noninstitutional forms is so devastating to high cultural society that these atypical forms can last only a short while and

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will in time have to be corrected. The family reappears by counterrevolutions. All of these facts strike directly at most of the family sociology which seeks to hold that the “unrestrained individual” is the end of society and the family his private agent.