Diversity and Change:  
A Profile of British Columbia Families

(BC Council for Families, #204-2590 Granville St.,  
Vancouver V6H 3H1).

By Veronica Strong-Boag  
University of British Columbia

This is a very useful report. It is divided into two sections:  
the first, “Marking a Milestone,” outlines the views of the BC  
Council for Families; the second, “BC Families: Statistical Profile,” has been  
prepared by Statistics Canada. Originating in 1977, the BC Council for  
the Family adopted its present name twenty years later, signalling a commit­  
ment to “all BC families: families of all shapes and sizes, including  
members of various ages, with children and without, and from diverse cultural  
backgrounds – families that follow familiar paths, and families forging  
ew directions” (xiii). This inclusive  
vision recognizes how economic un­  
certainty, cultural diversity, and demo­  
graphic change, together with the  
ever-present reality of gender rela­  
tions, create substantial complications  
and opportunities for individual  
women and men. In the face of mean­  
spirited governments and a confused  
public, the council urges “progressive  
policies to encourage and maintain  
healthy family development” (xxi). The  
statistical profile provides ample evi­  
dence of the complex and often trying  
situation facing British Columbians.  
Tables covering the years from the  
mid-1970s to 1996 offer a wealth of in­  
formation on “Selected Characteristics  
of the Population in British Columbia,”  
“Family Characteristics,” “Labour  
Force Characteristics of Families in  
British Columbia,” “Income and Ex­  
penditures,” “Housing and Household  
Amenities,” and “Time Devoted to  
Unpaid Work.” Recent scholarship  
has clearly informed compilers who  
correctly alert readers to such in­  
fluential factors as immigration, pro­  
portion of seniors, polarization of  
income, and the disparity between  
women’s and men’s contribution to  
productive activities. The result is a  
convenient little treasure trove for  
policy makers and educators, not to  
mention a reality check for ill­  
informed journalists and the right  
wing. It deserves wide circulation.