

Introduction

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The family remains a controversial topic in American political life. Alarming stories of family dissolution, teenage mothers, and children abandoned by employed mothers and absentee fathers take center stage on talk shows and in glitzy promos for the eleven o'clock news. But controversy, like a magician, often misdirects our attention from the real action. In this case, the real action lies in the rise of dual-earner families and employed single mothers, not in imagined fears of the death of the family, loss of masculinity, or domination by women. The story that needs to be told involves a different kind of drama, one that centers on the development of new patterns of relationships among individuals, families, workplaces, and the larger social context.

Despite the enduring 1950s image of the happy suburban middle-class family with Dad as the breadwinner and Mom as the homemaker, not all U.S. families at the time lived in that world (Coontz 1992). As we enter the twenty-first century, family structure has become quite diverse, even for the white middle class. Not only is Mom more likely to be employed outside the home, but among married couples, dual-earner couples are now the modal family type. Families with same-sex parents have become more visible. More women are having their first child after the age of thirty. As a result, the life course is no longer standard: mothers of two-year-olds may be of different generations, live in different family structures, have different employment histories, and have conceived their children through different reproductive methods. Fathers'

lives have also become more diverse. Some fathers are involved in the nurturing care of their children, while others have minimal contact with the children they father. One out of three children born in the late 1990s had mothers who were not married at the time of the birth (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998). While the vast majority of children currently live with married parents (including stepparents), divorce and single parenthood have changed the experiences of many children, a considerable number of whom live for a period of time with only one parent. Not only are families diverse, but mothers, fathers, and children experience family life and parental employment from different vantage points.

This volume focuses primarily on the extraordinary sea change that has occurred with women's entry into the labor force. In fact, there has been a quiet but steady increase in the percentage of women entering and staying in the labor force after becoming mothers. Today 61 percent of married couples include two earners. In both working-class and middle-class couples employment has become the norm for both women and men, even when children are very young. In addition, among children living with single parents, 69 percent have an employed parent (Waite and Nielsen, chapter 1). The women in these families are not selfish careerists, as they have often been (and still are) characterized. Women seek employment for the same reasons men do: they need a paycheck, they want personal rewards, and they wish to do meaningful work.

The rise in women's employment has taken place in the context of a dramatically changing economy, which has brought new players and new rules to the workplace. This shift has raised serious issues about equity in the workplace (Pitt-Catsouphes and Googins 1999), the meshing of families and workplaces, and the involvement of nonfamily and outside institutions in the raising of the next generation.

We as editors share the growing academic consensus that "work" and "family" should not be portrayed or understood as separate worlds. Rather, we view paid work and family as interrelated expressions of the ways we ensure the continuity of and reproduce our society.¹

The objective of this volume is to better grasp the intricately interwoven fabric of work and family by shedding new light on the ways we

1. Throughout this volume "paid work" or "employment" has generally been used to refer to marketplace labor. "Home work" refers to labor that occurs within the household. Although we have used the phrase "work and family" because this is still in common usage, we have also used the term "work/family" in our introduction to indicate that we, the editors, do not view paid work and family as separate spheres.

organize our lives. To that end, the essays in this volume explore how families and workplaces are embedded in local, national, and global contexts and are stitched together by institutions, such as schools, community organizations, and government. In addition, they emphasize that families and their members are not monolithic: they occupy differing socioeconomic, cultural, regional, and other social positions. Similarly, workplaces vary along many dimensions, including size, composition, structure, and whether they are local or multinational. These are the issues that need to be addressed as families and workplaces move into the twenty-first century. We have not been able to cover every aspect of these issues in this volume. In particular, we do not adequately speak to the issues of same-sex families, nor to the experiences of those caring for aging parents or disabled family members. We wish we had been able to include more material on families of different race or ethnic backgrounds and migration histories. These topics alone would make for a second compelling volume (cf. Baca Zinn and Dill 1994; Coontz 1999; Taylor 1998).

We have organized the essays in this volume to address four key assumptions about families and workplaces. The first part of the book refutes the assumption that there is one normative model for “the family” by chronicling the major changes of the twentieth century: historical shifts in family structure, life course variations, living longer and having children later, and the changing character of men’s family work.

The second part challenges the assumption that there is one normative model for employment: a white-collar, nine-to-five career in a Fortune 500 company. Instead, the changing economy, with the increasingly diverse labor force, the pressures of globalization, the rise in contingent labor, and the growth of small businesses, requires a reconceptualization of variations in work and family in specific locations or contexts. The chapters in this section contribute to such a rethinking of workplace practices and policies.

The third part counters both the assumption that individuals, not families, are the unit of family decision-making and should be the unit of scholarly analysis and the assumption that the relation of work and family is “only a women’s issue.” The chapters in this section talk about the gendered experiences of families in different sociocultural locations in the United States. They also address the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in gendering both caring work and paid employment.

The fourth part focuses on children and the impact of parental employment on children’s lives. Children are not passive players in the

family. While the vast majority of literature on work and family has either ignored children or has examined children only as objects of parents' decision-making, this section positions the children as subjects in their own lives. The authors explore the ways children make sense of their parents' decisions and behavior.

This volume is interdisciplinary in nature, reflecting the development of the field of work and family out of concerns that any single field could provide only one perspective on a complex system. Further, scholars have recognized for over two decades that to understand the historical separation of home and work, we needed to relink intellectually what have been spatially separate spheres. As a result, over time and in a range of disciplines, scholarship has emerged that not only addresses the complex interrelationship of work and family, but also begins to examine the differences by race or ethnicity, social class, and gender in the expression and experience of these issues. Not all of the chapters in this volume do all of these things, partly because of the specific theoretical concerns and the nature of the data available to the different authors. As editors of this volume, we have selected papers that collectively illustrate the kinds of variables and concerns that need to be addressed. We hope that other researchers will note the missing pieces and develop new ways to provide a more complete picture of work and family.

This collection presents not only basic research by academics but also applied research from the private sector. We have included pieces by people who are located outside of traditional academic institutions because they have been able to bring to bear perspectives and data that academics do not always have. They also provide a more applied understanding of how research is related to practice and suggest how organizations may be changed by experts who focus on human resources and corporate cultures. There are rigorous quantitative chapters and elegant qualitative ones. We have deliberately included papers from a broad range of theoretical perspectives that do not always agree with each other. The issues raised by the various chapters should contribute to discussions in the classroom as well as in the field at large.

The beginning of this new century should witness the growth of scholarship that attempts to contend with a flourishing array of work cultures and family constellations as the United States becomes increasingly involved in the global economy.

CHANGING FAMILIES

At the beginning of the twenty-first century women have become full-time and continuous participants in the labor force. This is in contrast to the experiences of their mothers and grandmothers, who often were less educated and may have moved in and out of the labor force, depending on their social location and family circumstances. Waite and Nielsen (chapter 1) document the dramatic historical changes in women's employment, including the rise in the prevalence of dual-earner couples and the growth in women's full-time employment. The proportion of U.S. married couples with two incomes grew from 36 percent in 1963 to 68 percent in 1997; the proportion of married couples in which both work *full-time* rose from 21 percent in 1963 to 44 percent in 1997.

But to describe these changes as only about gender would obscure the multiplicity of women's experiences; specifically, gender is experienced *through* race and class (among other identities) (Gerstel and Gerson 1999). Reflecting the economic position of Black families, 51 percent of Black married couples were two-earner couples in 1965, compared to 42 percent of White married couples (Waite and Nielsen, chapter 1). By 1997, 66 percent of Black married couples were two-earner couples, with both spouses employed full-time in 49 percent of all Black married couples. And given the already high level of employment for Black women, having children does not change the rate of employment among married couples.

We also see variations in the experiences of working-class and middle-class women and men. Among working-class married couples of all races, 64 percent were dual-earners in 1997. Parenthood had little or no impact on the rates of employment for working-class couples. The same pattern holds when we consider only working-class couples with two full-time earners: 42 percent of parents and 48 percent of all married couples include two full-time earners. However, for middle-class married couples, the effects of parenthood are more dramatically evident, reflecting the greater incomes of middle-class men *and* women: almost half of all middle-class married couples include two full-time earners, yet only one in three middle-class married couples with children includes two full-time earners. But middle-class married women with children do not return to the home and breadwinner/homemaker family; rather, they reduce their hours to part-time. Finally, gender is also experienced through marital status. Single parents (most of whom are women) are more likely to be employed than are women in married couples and,

when employed, are more likely to be employed full-time. This is most evident among White families and middle-class families, but it is also true among Black families and working-class families.

Waite and Nielsen report that household income adjusted for needs is greater for dual-earner couples than for comparable single-earner households. We would add that gender inequality remains alive and well in both the workplace and the couple. In 1995, women earned 71 cents for every dollar a man earned (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998). Further, in the majority of dual-earner couples, women continue to earn less than their husbands. In 1981, 16 percent of women earned more than their husbands, and in another 2 percent of couples they earned the same (within \$1 of each other) (Bianchi and Spain 1983). By 1997, these figures had risen only slightly; just 23 percent of wives earned more than their husbands in two-earner couples (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1999) (figures were not available for 1997 couples where both partners earned the same amount). The importance of each partner's contribution to the overall household finances and this interplay with the gender dynamics in the family are discussed in several chapters in this volume.

More Equal than Others (Hertz 1986, 32) quotes a husband who, groping for words to describe his dual-career marriage, struck on what he felt was an apt metaphor: "It's two separate lives in some ways. It's like a dual carriage way, and we're both going down those carriage ways at more or less the same speed, I would say. While those carriage ways don't cross one another, if something happens on one of them, something necessarily happens on the other one."

His understanding is not simply the product of a faulty metaphor; it is also the result of being taught to think in individual terms, rather than to see his employment decisions as made within the context of a couple. The emphasis on the individual as the unit of analysis in linking work and family is critiqued by Moen and Han (chapter 2). By using the couple as the unit of analysis, the authors provide a more holistic account of work and family by considering them not parallel tracks but parts of one unified life. The links between the employment of partners are particularly evident in those couples who work tandem shifts or who coordinate their work hours to manage time with children. But all dual-earner couples make employment decisions conjointly, even though they may not be conscious of the links and accommodations each makes to the other. This construction of independent careers is no accident: the hegemonic culture of the workplace presumes the independence of each employee, rarely acknowledging either the invisible work of a spouse on

behalf of the other's career or the possibility that the individual is part of a dual-earner couple (e.g., Gerstel and Gross 1984; Lewis and Lewis 1996; Papanek 1975).

Moen and Han also document the ways in which occupational work patterns have diversified from the masculine prototype (one employer with upward advancement through positions of increasing greater responsibility, authority, and reward) to a range of paths that incorporate continuities and discontinuities in the occupational and family careers. Their use of the term "career" is generic, that is, it refers to occupational work histories or family pathways. They are among the first scholars to acknowledge how occupational paths are gendered. The gendered nature of specific paths has meant that only certain kinds of trajectories (e.g., the masculine prototype just described) have been acknowledged as appropriate ways for advancement in the workplace. The authors document the newer career paths that, we suggest, have been ignored because they are typically associated with women.

Rubin (chapter 3) points out another major demographic shift: life expectancy at birth rose from 47 years of age at the dawn of the twentieth century to nearly 80 at the century's end. This longer life span, combined with new reproductive technology and women's increased employment, has contributed to rising numbers of children born to parents at midlife. Age is no longer a predictor of life stage. This revolutionary social change has no recent historical precedent: earlier generations cannot serve as models for current midlifers with young children. As a result, individuals are left to revise their own life plans, with little support or understanding from the larger community. Rubin identifies important consequences of this upending of the usual pathways through employment and parenthood. We find Rubin's observation of the disparity between the "young" lives these parents are living and their aging bodies particularly compelling.

There have also been subtle, and not so subtle, changes in men's lives. Coltrane and Adams (chapter 4) raise questions about the definition of fatherhood and men's family work in the context of changing behavior and expectations for women and men. While many studies of the division of labor report that men are doing more in the home, Coltrane and Adams argue that men's increased time at home does not always challenge the hegemony of masculinity in the home. Men who participate in more companionate activities with their children (such as play, leisure activities, and TV watching) are no more likely to take on other household chores than less-involved fathers. It is only the men who participate

in nurturing, child-centered fathering activities (such as helping with homework or having private talks) who are more nearly full partners in family work. Men are also more likely to be involved in housework when women's occupational resources are similar to men's. In this way, gender equity in the workplace is linked to gender equity in the home.

CHANGING WORKPLACES

The U.S. economy has changed greatly since the beginning of the twentieth century. Today it is a powerful but interdependent element of an increasingly global economy. The paid labor force has diversified from predominantly white males to include a growing proportion of women and people of color. The nature of employment has also changed, with a shift from manufacturing to service industries, with the majority of new jobs created in the service sector. There has been a concomitant shift from employment in the primary sector (with standard hours and core benefits) to a two-tiered market. Many employees are in secondary labor markets with fewer benefits and/or are in contingent employment (temporary work, contract work, and part-time work). Under the old economy, unions won many benefits and improved working conditions for the (predominantly male) workforce; the new economy is much less unionized. Finally, much of our thinking about the economy and the labor force assumes that employees work in large firms. In reality, more than four out of five businesses have fewer than 20 employees.

These changes call for a new understanding of the changing workplace and of workplace-based efforts to address work/family and gender equity issues. These efforts can be seen as grounded in one or more of several perspectives on work and family. One perspective views work/family tensions as an individual issue, usually a women's issue. From this perspective, workplaces either declare that work/family tensions are not their problem or develop individualized solutions for individual women. Those solutions tend to be limited to women who have some negotiating power and/or have skills that are valued by employers (Glass and Estes 1997; Deitch and Huffman, chapter 5).

Another view, responding to women's growing presence in the labor force, maintains that work/family tensions are something that must be addressed to foster gender equity in the workplace or to allow employers to reap the benefits of women's contributions to the workplace. Workplaces that hold this perspective see the solution as the provision of family-friendly benefits that make it easier for women to function at

work in the same way that men do. However, the current interest in family-friendly benefits comes at a time when the changing economy is less conducive to expanding employee benefits.

Several key changes in the economy are examined in this volume, including the rise of contingent workers (including part-time employees), the decline in the power of unions, the growing number of small businesses, and the increasing cultural and gender diversity of the labor force. Contingent workers are less likely to receive fringe benefits. Deitch and Huffman (chapter 5) demonstrate that, paradoxically, firms that rely heavily on contingent workers tend to offer more family-friendly benefits, but not necessarily to their contingent employees. The use of contingent labor allows employers to invest more heavily in their “real” employees by financing good benefits for this core group out of the savings on contingent workers.

The increasing diversity of the labor force also has an impact on family-responsive benefits. While increasing numbers of men report work/family tensions and the need for family-friendly benefits, the realities of the workplace and the family still leave women more at risk than men for work/family tensions. It is sometimes expected that the growing numbers of women in the labor force will increase the demand for family benefits and that employers will be forced to respond to maintain their workforce. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Deitch and Huffman report that firms with few women are not likely to offer family-friendly benefits. However, for some employers it is cheaper to replace employees who quit for family reasons than to incur the anticipated costs associated with family benefits. And other employers *expect* high turnover among their low-wage, female workforce and perceive women workers as easily replaceable. These are at least partial explanations of Deitch and Huffman’s finding that employers with predominantly female employees are also less likely to offer family-friendly benefits. As Kanter (1977) argued, in these gender-imbalanced settings (too few women or too many women), women have limited power to get the family-responsive benefits they need.

Consistent with this power explanation is Galinsky’s finding (chapter 8) that when women are evident in executive positions in a company, the company is more likely to offer specific family benefits. However, this appears to be a two-tiered system. Both the Deitch and Huffman study and the Galinsky study found that employers who paid their core employees more—that is, invested in more highly skilled or educated labor—offered more family-friendly benefits. Similarly, Deitch and

Huffman report that employers with a greater investment in training their workforce offer more family-friendly benefits: the social class of the employee continues to filter the experience of gender in the workplace. In the past, unions were effective negotiators of conventional benefits, such as paid health insurance, for lower-waged employees. Galinsky found that the presence of unions continues to be associated with paid health insurance, paid maternity leave, and leave when children are mildly ill, but not with other family benefits, such as child care assistance or part-time jobs. Overall, Deitch and Huffman found that the presence of unions was associated with greater availability of conventional benefits, but not with more family-responsive benefits.

Another significant change in the economy is the rise of small businesses. In 1997, 87 percent of all business establishments in the United States had fewer than 20 employees (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1997). Smaller businesses are less likely to have separate personnel or human resources departments and are less likely to have formal personnel policies (Pitt-Catsouphe and Litchfield, chapter 6); not surprisingly, they also have fewer formal benefits. Smaller employers are less likely to offer both conventional benefits and family-friendly benefits (Deitch and Huffman, chapter 5; Galinsky, chapter 8) and are exempt from compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act. However, Pitt-Catsouphe and Litchfield found that small businesses put a greater priority on having flexible policies to respond to individual needs and on helping employees with work/family balance than did medium or large businesses. Their chapter highlights the gaps in our knowledge about the experiences of women and men working in small businesses: models and expectations built on Fortune 500 companies will not necessarily apply.

While family-friendly benefits are an important part of the response needed from the workplace, they do not challenge the hegemony of workplace culture, which is still predicated on the view of employees as individuals rather than as members of families and of communities, and on the separation of "work" and "family." Even when benefits are available, many employees do not take advantage of them because of a workplace culture that may exact costs in job security, work assignments, or promotions (Glass and Estes 1997). In addition, workplace culture is gendered: men risk being seen as not conforming to the masculine-dominant norm if they use family-friendly benefits, while women are judged not able to compete in a "man's world" if they cannot manage family responsibilities quietly (Starrels 1992). Kropf (chapter 7) documents the ways in which these workplace assumptions translate into

barriers to employees' well-being. What is needed is a significant change in our understanding of the fact that individuals are embedded in larger social groups—families, communities—and that the work that takes place in the family is as valuable to society as the work that takes place in the workplace. Incorporating this understanding would change not only the availability of family-responsive benefits, but also the dynamics within the workplace and family.

Gross (chapter 9) calls our attention to the corporate hegemony that has accompanied globalization of the economy. The social contract crafted under the old economy offered some protections to lower-waged employees and supported the development of a middle class. That social contract is no longer tenable. Transnational corporations in their thirst for profit have eliminated or destabilized paid jobs and undermined kin ties and communities. The social impact of these changes is felt around the world, most strongly in the Third World but also in the First World, particularly among minorities. Gross argues that Third World women have become “maids to the world economy,” consigned to harsh work conditions that “enable” multinational corporations to profit handsomely. The social and economic pressures of globalization serve as the new context for existing tensions between the workplace and family life and demand a new social contract that protects families and individuals from the worst excesses. That new social contract would include higher wages and job security (Glass and Estes 1997; Raabe 1990; Rayman and Bookman 1999; Gross, chapter 9).

THE VIEW WITHIN FAMILIES

The organization of paid work is predicated on the erroneous assumption that employees are individuals, supported by a homemaker/wife. Even when workplaces offer services to replace the home work traditionally assigned to wives, the basic assumption of how paid work is structured is not challenged. Put differently, families remain the “dependent variable,” shaped by the demands and constraints of the workplace. While women have made great strides in labor force participation, their presence has not altered the way organizations operate or how they structure individual jobs and careers. This is not simply a women's issue. Both men and women are participants in a workplace culture that has yet to take into account the fact that individuals are members of families and that many of these families include two wage earners. The rise in women's employment and two-earner couples has not been able to

challenge significantly the hegemony of the workplace culture. In fact, competitive pressures have led to increased hours at work for certain employees—an increase that is compounded for two-earner couples. One of the critical debates at present, as the European Union discusses reducing paid-work time, concerns the length of the workweek in the United States. We have become known as a culture of workaholics whose priorities are misplaced as work lives have become increasingly out of control.

Gerson and Jacobs (chapter 10) argue that the average time spent at paid work has not increased over the past few decades, but the *dispersion* of hours at paid work has increased—some workers are working more; other workers are working less, and less than they would like. Like Moen and Han (chapter 2), Gerson and Jacobs shift our focus to the couple and away from the individual. Here is where the most dramatic changes have occurred, with the added effects of longer workweeks for both members in dual-earner couples. Most provocative among the findings in this chapter is that both men and women would prefer to spend fewer hours at paid work and to devote more of their time to family and personal leisure than they currently do. Those who are on the job more than 40 hours a week do so not out of personal preference but because of the demands of the workplace.

Yet a focus on hours does not adequately describe the work/family conflicts that dual-earner couples experience. An equally important factor is the culture of the workplace, including flexibility in the scheduling of paid work hours, and worker autonomy on the job. For both women and men working fewer hours contributes to greater flexibility. At the opposite end of the spectrum, men who work long hours also tend to have greater flexibility and control over their work schedule. However, women working more than 40 hours a week are not in positions that offer them the compensating increase in flexibility and control that men experience. Therefore gender inequality persists in the workplace. It is not surprising, then, that the desire for flexibility and the willingness to trade other benefits or change jobs to get greater flexibility are highest among professional women with preschool children (Gerson and Jacobs, chapter 10).

Families must often choose between “heartstrings and pursestrings”—weighing the love, labor, and desires of family members against the monetary needs of the family and the demands of the workplace. Sometimes there is no choice for families, who are pulled by fears of job loss, and pursestrings must reign over heartstrings. The birth of a first child

highlights this tension and brings to the forefront the question of the workplace culture's response to the needs of families. Organizational support, supervisor support, and coworker support are all crucial to the adjustment of the working-class couples studied by Haley, Perry-Jenkins, and Armenia (chapter 11). This chapter also highlights the limitations of structural policies available to working-class employees. Haley and colleagues reveal the underbelly of supposedly family-friendly benefits, detailing the ways women patch together sick leave and vacation time to create what the women themselves refer to as "paid maternity leaves" in the absence of formal paid leaves offered by their employers. Similarly, they point out the gap between employee reports of occasional flexibility granted by their supervisors and a formal policy of flexible scheduling. In spite of these limitations, Haley and colleagues found that women whose employers offered child care benefits were less anxious, compared to women without access to child care benefits, after returning to paid employment.

Ironically, women who take longer maternity leaves report greater role overload when they return to paid employment, and men report greater depression and anxiety after their wives or partners return to paid work. The authors speculate that when women take longer maternity leaves, either the longer absence from paid employment depletes the couple's financial resources or the longer leave shifts the couple's division of labor to a more traditional one, and the transition back to employment—without a parallel shift in home division of labor—is thereby more difficult.

Lundgren, Fleischer-Cooperman, Schneider, and Fitzgerald (chapter 12) argue that gender also matters when couples in which both partners are medical doctors decide who is to reduce their paid work hours (in a field where 40 to 50 hours per week is "part-time"). Ironically, even among these couples with two high-powered careers, decisions about reduced hours reflect an acceptance of traditional external norms and constraints. While they might individually reject the traditional roles of breadwinner and homemaker, these couples nevertheless believe that the costs of reduced hours (and therefore a different career track within medicine) would be greater to men's careers than to women's (see also Potuchek 1997). The authors note that the ability to reduce work hours is predicated upon the high income that both partners enjoy. Physician couples' decisions are made against the backdrop of a field that remains the quintessential example of an unyielding work culture predicated upon the belief that individuals (that is, men) are married to careers and

families are little more than ornaments of success. Choosing to work part-time under such structural conditions does little to alter the omnipresent ideology of careerism.

Families like those described in the preceding paragraphs are not negotiating their employment and family arrangements on their own, however; other family members and child care providers are key players as well. In 1991, 52 percent of preschool children with employed mothers were cared for by relatives (including parents) during their mothers' paid work hours. Of the children in non-relative care, 37 percent were cared for by a family child care provider (Casper, Hawkins, and O'Connell 1994). These providers are often themselves negotiating paid-work and family responsibilities. Fitz Gibbon (chapter 13) argues that family child care providers are placed between the family and the traditional world of paid work, and as "outsiders within" (Collins 1990) are in a unique position to shed light on the status and power inequalities evident in families. Fitz Gibbon documents the shift in women's consciousness from a view of child-minding as an extension of their own family work to recognition that what they are doing is not only a job, it is essential work that allows other women and men to engage in paid employment. In the process, these women come to see the power imbalances and gender inequalities in their own families and in the families of the children in their care. In redefining care as not a labor of love but a job that contributes to a greater good, they also elevate their own status as comparable to that of other employed women. In this way, their traditional caring work becomes politicized and the women themselves begin to challenge the status quo, with calls for stronger child care regulations and the inclusion of funding for child care in welfare reform. They come to see themselves not as the invisible handmaidens of either their husbands or their wealthier clients, but as women staking a claim to making visible their paid work and their contributions. In this regard, this kind of home work blurs the physical boundaries between paid and unpaid work.

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

Most research on family and work starts from the vantage point of the adult, as employee or parent. Rarely does research start from the daily experiences of children or consider their perspective. Yet children's experiences reflect the same multiplicity that adults' experiences do. They also vary according to social, cultural, and historical location. The

meaning of childhood is not universal: in other times and other cultures children have been expected to contribute to productive labor and have been seen as “miniature adults” (Ariès 1962). Ariès argued that childhood is socially constructed, not biologically determined, and that it is historically changing. The passage of child labor laws and the establishment of universal schooling in the United States around the beginning of the twentieth century (Zelizer 1985) gave rise to a new construction of childhood as a period of intensive parental investment, guided by experts who argued that children have distinctive needs. Now, a hundred years later, we find ourselves again rethinking the nature of childhood, only now placing emphasis on children as agents in their own lives. This is not to say that parents are no longer influential in their children’s lives, but rather to recognize the active role that children play in making sense of the locales around them and the social worlds they face daily.

Ehrensaft (chapter 15) proposes that the new definition of childhood incorporates both aspects of the child: innocent cherub and miniature adult. She points out that the child who is expected to be independent at school or child care while parents are employed is the same child who is indulged by parents at night, out of parental guilt or a desire to provide a sense of balance in the child’s life. Interestingly, when children were asked what they would most like changed in their relationships with their parents, they identified the hurried parent who comes home from work stressed as the problem. Ehrensaft argues that while parental guilt plays a role, the genesis of the “kinderdult” is also rooted in the need of (middle-class) parents to provide their children with a résumé that guarantees them a successful future. We would further add that this reflects a growing concern with the widening social class division in the United States. That is, middle-class parents are anxious for their children to be accepted into the best schools so they can enter topflight careers. Universities and colleges, in turn, select students not simply on the basis of grades, but also on the basis of these résumés. However, the middle-class experience of childhood is only one of a multiplicity of experiences of childhood at this point in time.

Ehrensaft also argues that the myth of the self-centered, work-focused parent is as erroneous as the myth of the child as a miniature adult. She views parenthood as bifurcated, for women and men, encompassing both the nurturing caretaker and the labor force participant. In her words, “the changing definition of parenthood leaves us not with a

bunch of raving narcissists but with a whole generation of fragmented parents who cannot fathom how they will do it all."

As Garey and Arendell warn us (chapter 14), we need not repeat with children the shortsightedness of our earlier attempts at studies of women and motherhood. Learning from that experience, the authors offer critical advice, which includes placing children at the center stage of our research and taking into account the diversity of meaning children may bring to their activities. In her study of children's games, Lever (1976) provides a marvelous example of the potential pitfalls of ignoring this counsel; in her research she notes that an adult observer sees a child delivering newspapers and calls it work, while the child views it as a game of target practice.

Much of children's negative behavior has been laid at the door of feminism. Every woman who entered the labor force was cause for alarm as questions were raised about her place in her family and whether her employment would threaten her marriage and damage her children. Blaming mothers for all our cultural ills is a popular sport, used to provide explanations for problems ranging from the rising rates of hyperactive children to teenage violence and sexuality, and childhood stress and burnout. Garey and Arendell take mother-blame to task by emphasizing that while structural changes in the family may coexist with children's problems, the evidence indicates that divorce, single parenthood, maternal employment, and child care are not the cause of any difficulties children may experience.

The picture of idyllic childhoods of the past, with unstructured play time to explore nature and the greater world with other children, whether during long summers or on lazy school-day afternoons, has come to symbolize the lost childhood for the present generation. In stark contrast, structured after-school programs, lesson after lesson to attend, and camps designed to give children an edge in whatever area their parents desire have come to symbolize the experience of children today. But these two images capture only particular children in particular times and places. That is, the child who played leisurely in pastures and fields was a rural child (who might also have risen early to feed the chickens), and the "hurried child," the offspring of the baby boom generation (likely to be the topic of a cover story) lives in the suburbs where organized sports and a computer in every home are affordable "necessities." The low-income child, whether urban or rural, is less likely to have the same structures that organize afternoons and summers as the middle-class child in the suburbs. Children's experiences vary with time,

with geography, with social class, and with other differences in social location.

Thorne (chapter 18) and Romero (chapter 16) each provide a context-rich, empirical study of children's experiences of work and family. Their analyses connect particular local situations and institutions with larger cultural and structural dynamics. Thorne selects an important moment of the day—the after-school hours—as a lens through which to view children's vantage points. She is interested in the multiplicity of experiences that come out of specific locations and institutional settings. By focusing on children and the processes of care, Thorne generates insights into the juxtaposition of multiple childhoods in a diverse geographic area: there is no one model for providing care when school is out. Thorne highlights the different views of what constitutes “good” care among individuals who vary by class, immigration, and race. While there is no consensus in this diverse community (about either good care or the developmental milestones of childhood), each child is continually monitored by multiple caregivers—including parents, teachers, other school personnel, paid and unpaid child caregivers, and family members—looking for clues about the child's well-being and daily experiences.

Romero (chapter 16) recounts a woman's life that is embedded in passing across social class and race/ethnic lines. In so doing, she also tells a story from the perspective of a girl of Mexican heritage raised by a single mother while the mother is working as a maid in the United States. The daughter, Olivia, deals on a daily basis with the contradictions of trying to “pass” while retaining links to her extended family and heritage. She is also the “outsider within” (Collins 1990), with a bird's-eye view of the worlds of both the upper middle class and that of the maids, gardeners, and other domestic employees. Olivia's experiences are potentially comparable to those of other children whose mothers are employed in “private household occupations,” one of the top ten occupational categories for women in the United States. Moreover, Olivia's account illustrates how children's views of the intersection of paid work and family work may differ from the perspective of adults. Further, it illustrates the ways in which a mother may attempt to interpret the meaning of her employment to her child, but in the end the child makes her own meaning. As an adult, Olivia believes she must choose between racial authenticity and personal success.

Hochschild (chapter 17) also explores the ways in which children make meaning of the various cultures of care that their parents arrange. She focuses on the accounts of two young children: Janey King, from a

White middle-class family, and Hunter Escala, from a White working-class family. Hochschild astutely describes children's searches for clues, through eavesdropping and observation, that will help them to frame an understanding of their social world and the norms that govern the relationships in that world. Children pick up not only factual information but also the affective load attached to that information—whether parents are happy with or upset about the caregiver—and interpret parental affect in the context of what they already know about the structure of their social world.

These three empirical chapters by Thorne, Romero, and Hochschild differ from prior studies in this field, which focused on children as the *objects* of parental decision-making. Each chapter examines children's relationships to caregivers (including parents) with children as active agents in the construction and understanding of their surroundings. They provide contextualized illustrations of the multiplicity of children's experiences and are excellent examples of the kind of research that is needed if we are to fully understand the links between children and the social systems they experience.

CONCLUSION

Initial scholarship on work/family was based on a model of two separate spheres competing for limited resources and thus in conflict with each other. These two separate worlds, where all men were "workers" and all women were wives, were connected only by "border exchanges," in which men's market labor provided income for the family and families produced workers for the world of paid work. The entry of women (particularly White middle-class married women) into the paid labor force challenged prevailing mainstream definitions of the proper places of men and women and forced a reexamination of the value of home work, gender equity issues in the workplace, and division of labor and time use in families. These changes prompted scholarship focused on gender differences with an emphasis on gender inequality, which was seen as resulting from women's disadvantaged positions both at home and at work. However, this literature retained the concept of "separate spheres" of paid work and family.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the economy shifted from agriculture to industry. As we enter the twenty-first century we are on the threshold of another shift—this time to a global and technological economy. This change will reverberate through every aspect of U.S. cul-

ture and, as this introduction anticipates, will raise cutting-edge issues about how daily life becomes organized. We predict that women's experiences will once again be central to a rethinking of women's contribution to employment, to child raising and household labor, and to civic involvement and broader community participation. We suggest that to avoid the pitfalls of the dualism that places paid work and family in opposition to each other, a new model is needed that allows for more complex relationships between individuals' experiences in the workplace and in families and communities.

The chapters in this volume take a variety of approaches to this task. Some place the individual in the context of the family, viewing the couple as the locus of decision-making and thereby acknowledging the connections between the allegedly separate experiences of each partner in the workplace and the home. Other chapters build on the experiences of alternate family structures. Single parents and others embedded in extended kin or community networks challenge the old ideology that women were *either* mothers *or* paid workers; in the process, they revision work and family. When we understand women (and men) as both parents and paid workers, we are forced to weave a more complex conceptual tapestry of their accomplishment of everyday life. Still other chapters focus on the multiplicity of experiences and use this as the lens through which they formulate new understandings of work and family. In these chapters, the individual is a starting point for understanding the connections between individual experiences and broader social and political structures. Collectively as a volume, these chapters generate a new, more fluid vision of home work and paid work, and of the patterns of relationships between individuals, families, workplaces, and the larger social context.

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