

## QUICK READ SYNOPSIS

Mommies and Daddies on the  
Fast Track: Success of Parents  
in Demanding Professions

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## SECTION ONE: OVERVIEWS

The Long Road to the Fast Track:  
Career and Family

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*Background*

College women graduates across the past century fall into one of five distinct cohorts (by college graduation year) related to work and family.

- 1900-19: Given the constraints they faced, these women chose either family or career.
  - More than 50 percent of the entire cohort did not have children, the highest by far of any cohort.
  - Similarly, a relatively high proportion (more than 30 percent) did not marry.
  - At age forty-five, only 20 percent of those who married were working.
- 1920-45: They were more likely to enter the labor force and later start a family.
  - About 25 percent of those currently married were in the labor force at age thirty.
  - About 80 percent had married by age fifty.
- 1946-65: These women had families first and then went to work.
  - About 90 percent married, about 90 percent of them having children.
  - Only 17 percent of the entire cohort was childless.
  - Half married by age twenty-three (a historically young pattern), probably to someone they met at college.

- About 75 percent were working at age forty-five (much more than the previous cohort).
- But they became increasingly discontented with jobs available to women.
- 1966-79: They aspired to have a career first; family would follow.
  - Median age at first marriage increased to more than twenty-five.
  - Although many deferred marriage somewhat, 88 percent had married by their midforties. But about 19 percent of these women were childless at age forty, as was 28 percent of the entire cohort.
  - About 65 percent of those currently married were working at age thirty-five and about 80 percent at age forty-five, much higher than previous cohorts.
  - The dominant employment shifted from teaching to a variety of professions, and from 13 to 18 percent attained family and career.
- 1980-90: These women wanted to have a career and family at the same time.
  - They deferred marriage as did cohort four.
  - Eighty percent of the young and married worked.
  - Higher proportions than any preceding cohort—between 21 and 28 percent—had both career and family by age forty.

The achievements of each cohort build on both the accomplishments and frustrations of the previous one.

*Reasons for the Changes*

The main factors that led college graduate women to pursue career and family were

- increasing opportunities to work in fulfilling careers with the growth of white collar jobs,
- the rise of more varied educational experiences for women,
- contraceptive technologies that helped women control their fertility and better plan for career and family, and
- labor market changes that served to loosen social constraints and lowered barriers in various fields of endeavor.

## Family-Friendly Workplace Reform: Prospects for Change

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*Background*

A number of people have called for workplaces that are more welcoming to employees with family responsibilities. Such proposals include some combination of

- shorter, more predictable, and more flexible work hours;
- new part-time and work-sharing options;
- time off for emergencies and child care;
- guaranteed leave with job security for childbearing and child rearing;
- child care subsidies and tax breaks; and
- on-site day care options.

NOTE: In addition, proponents of reform advocate deep-seated structural changes in compensation and benefit practices and relations of power and responsibility within the workplace. They push for the abolition of the so-called mommy track that relegates second-class status and diminished oppor-

*Pathways to  
Change*

tunities to those workers who adopt patterns of work more amenable to family life.

Two principal approaches can be used to achieve reform:

- One stresses the importance of action from within organizations, with emphasis on private, internal, local initiatives to alter workplace norms, conventions, and practices.
- The other calls for government-mandated interventions designed to facilitate proper care for children with less sacrifice of parents' job opportunities, advancement, or compensation.

*Neoclassical  
Economic  
Explanations  
and  
Prescriptions*

Neoclassical economic theory provides both an explanation for why family-friendly reforms have failed to proliferate and normative arguments for why they *should* not.

- Proposed reforms, these theories argue, are not economically feasible, viable, fair, or efficient and thus do not increase net social welfare.
- They may actually disadvantage the groups whom reforms are intended to help as employers feel compelled to hire fewer workers from protected categories (e.g., women or mothers), to lower wages of the benefited group, or to shunt benefited workers into segregated job categories. Of course, these actions can be offset by laws regarding equal pay and discrimination if both are effectively enforced, but the "if" is problematic.
- These theories question whether family-friendly reforms are compatible with a diversity of patterns of work, especially when mandated changes tend to legislate uniform practices of one track for all.
- Furthermore, regulatory measures generally impose out-of-pocket costs or losses on firms. Firms that fail to offset these costs (by, e.g., passing them along to consumers) may lose in the competition with other firms.
- Unfortunately, there is no reliable way to determine in advance if the benefits to family-friendly practices will exceed their costs or whether benefits can be generated in ways that can be used to compensate those who bear the burden of those costs.

*Game Theory*

Game-theoretic approaches challenge the assumptions of neoclassical economics and suggest that many existing work practices are actually dysfunctional, suboptimal, and not as efficient as believed. Game theories offer alternative explanations for why organizations tend not to adopt family-friendly work practices. They also proffer more optimistic analyses of the conditions under which reforms are possible, if difficult to sustain.

- Game theories incorporate more realistic dynamics into their models.
  - Workers and managers do not work in isolation but rather interact over periods of time. Moreover, workers can agree to cooperate or compete with each other.
  - Individuals often feel compelled to work very long hours to avoid being placed at a competitive disadvantage relative to peers in hierarchical organizations that rank performance relative to one's peers.
  - "Face time," making sure you are always seen at work, increases an employee's hours on the job and may be encouraged by employers who limit part-time and flexible options while rewarding workers who "win the race."
  - Because of the need to evaluate, and the difficulty of evaluating, worker performance, firms tend to favor reward structures that create incentives for workers jockeying for advantage vis-à-vis coworkers.

- Game theories explain resistance to adopting family-friendly practices, in the face of evidence that many employees in prestigious law firms and other professions want them, via several mechanisms:
  - Employers want to see gains in return for their costs, yet eliminating current incentive structures will introduce disruption and uncertainty and likely introduce large initial costs that are difficult to offset.
    - Nonmonetary benefits will have to be revalued.
    - Legal obstacles will have to be overcome.
    - Handling employees' reluctance to change can be difficult.
    - Employers will be tempted to assign the costs of change to those who take advantage of the family-friendly features.
    - A self-serving bias can lead workers to underestimate the value they place on family-friendly reforms.
    - A lack of reliable information can lead to mistrust and second-guessing.
  - Workers themselves may resist reform from the fear that they will be undercompensated in the long run.
    - Workers will want assurances of opportunities for advancement and other nonmonetary benefits, which may not be possible in some cases.
    - They may balk at reduced pay associated with shorter hours.
    - Employers may hold back too much compensation to pay for reforms.
    - Even those who really want family-friendly features may see the cost as undesirable.

*Prisoner's  
Dilemma Game  
Theories*

This variation of game-theoretic models demonstrates how certain payoffs to working in a rat race versus a family-friendly environment tend to drive players in such games toward a rat-race dynamic. Although these models tend to ignore the role of a "third party," employers will tend to favor the rat-race paradigm as well except under conditions that are hard to realize (although important to recognize).

*"Stag Hunt" or  
Coordination  
Game Theories*

These models provide another framework for understanding modern workplace dynamics. Unlike the prisoner's dilemma, they are structured such that individually optimal strategies are also the most efficient overall strategy. Under these conditions, work dynamics tend to reach a steady state of either rat-race or family-friendly dynamics, but these models also show that a small number of individuals who violate these norms can tip the equilibrium to the opposite pattern. Moreover, it is easier to tip the equilibrium toward the rat race than toward family-friendly practices. Family-friendly conditions are best achieved when organizations consist of like-minded employees who share and openly communicate these values with each other (and who are successful in recruiting birds of the same feather in the long run). Enforcing these norms can be difficult, and they create conditions that are ripe for freeloaders, who tend to destabilize the norm.

*A Realistic  
Optimism*

Many economists and legal scholars have criticized proposed and existing legislated mandates, such as family leave and job protection for parents, as inefficient and counterproductive. Much of this criticism, however, rests on a foundation of neoclassical economic theory that employs unrealistic assumptions and fails to explain important workplace practices. Game-theoretical approaches employ more realistic assumptions about workplace dynamics. Although they too demonstrate how difficult it is to achieve and sustain family-friendly practices, they offer a portrait of how such practices can actually be more efficient than current ones and the conditions under which family-friendly practices are most likely to take hold. Given that much of the criticism

of these reforms centers on an argument concerning the inefficiencies that they breed, there is value in demonstrating the conditions under which they may actually create more efficient outcomes.

## Fast-Track Women and the “Choice” to Stay Home

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### *Background*

The phenomenon of women who leave professional careers to become stay-at-home moms has been little studied.

- When these women quit work, it may signal to supervisors and colleagues that women are not committed to work, and this may lead to discrimination against women workers in general.
- The portrayal of women’s decisions about work and family has been described as part of a broad backlash against feminism and gender egalitarianism.
- Women with professional degrees are out of the labor force at a rate about three times that of their male counterparts, and they overwhelmingly cite family responsibilities as the reason.
- To get at the actual reasons, we need an understanding of their actions and the complex decision making leading up to them.

### *Research*

The findings by Stone and Lovejoy contradict the view that women’s decisions are an expression of their unfettered preferences for home over career.

- Women have a high degree of ambivalence about leaving their jobs to be at home.
- They found it hard to leave their jobs because they took pride in their professional accomplishments and derived intrinsic pleasure from their work.
- Only 16 percent of those studied made an unrestrained choice to be stay-at-home mothers.
  - They had always planned to be full-time mothers.
  - They and their husbands place high value on at-home mothering.
  - They do not see child care as an acceptable option.

### *Work-Related Factors*

Work-related factors were the most frequently mentioned reason for quitting, cited by 86 percent of the women.

- The women in the study often had sixty-hour workweeks and 24/7 responsibility.
- When becoming mothers, about half wanted to cut back work hours and/or increase their schedule flexibility—with inflexibility being a major decision factor to quit.
- Those who chose to work part-time or in shared jobs found themselves “mommy tracked,” a career derailment that played a role in their decision to quit.
  - Promotions cease.
  - They were given uninteresting jobs.
- When companies reorganize, merge, or go through rapid expansion, working mothers felt the company’s culture became less supportive of women.

They also saw increased pressures and hours, which further added to their decision to quit.

- They saw their lives transformed by dictates of new bosses.
- Old bosses had often been mentors—they missed that support.

*Child-Related Factors*

Seventy-two percent of the women studied spoke of the pull of children as a decision factor to leave the workforce.

- Child care was not a good substitute for mothering.
- Women wanted the time and pleasure of being with their children
- Older, school-aged children as well as infants and toddlers exerted a pull.

*Husband-Related Factors*

Roughly two-thirds of the women discussed their husbands as one of the key influences in their decision to leave the labor force.

- Husbands often were not able to assist in child care due to their job demands.
- Women did not see their husband as having a responsibility to cut back or leave his career—they saw their careers as more dispensable.
- About one-quarter of husbands expressed the desire for the wife to stay home.

*Future Work*

Women were asked about their plans to return to work in the future.

- Two-thirds had a desire to reenter the workforce.
- Most wanted to return on a part-time basis.
- They would want workplace flexibility in any future job.

*Study Conclusions*

Although women cite personal choice, the study shows women are not freely choosing family over work. The study shows the following:

- A choice based not on traditional gender roles but rather on their experience of gendered realities at work.
  - Workplaces that assume the male model of work.
  - Lack of flexible hours for mothers.
- Women face great pressure to be successful at work and at the same time to be good mothers.
- They have a weaker position in the labor market than their husbands and see their jobs as secondary—true even among women with higher-powered jobs.

*Policy Implications*

The study suggests several recommendations that would presumably enhance the labor force attachment and improve the work and family lives of those who remain at work.

- The creation of meaningful part-time opportunities without penalties to workers who choose them.
- The creation of a professionalized child care workforce to give mothers a higher degree of comfort with using child care.
- The implementation of work-family policies as gender neutral.

NOTE: Employers must move beyond existing programmatic, human resources-based approaches to reduce the hours of work and enhance flexibility through work redesign.

## SECTION TWO: WITHIN THE PROFESSIONS

## Marriage and Baby Blues: Redefining Gender Equity in the Academy

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### *Background*

The results of the study discussed in this article indicate that gender equity in terms of familial gains is as elusive as gender equity in terms of professional employment, raising the issue of what gender equity means in a university setting or in any fast-track employment setting.

- Programs and policies designed to promote gender equity in academia must take into account family outcomes as a measure of gender equity.
- Although women have progressed in the area of educational achievement, a discouraging picture emerges in the employment rates of men and women at the professor level.
  - In 1999, women were just 29 percent of tenured faculty.

### *Workplace Structure Rigidity*

One proposed explanation for why women fail to progress in the upper ranks of academia is the rigid structure of the American workplace.

- The structure is configured for the typical male of the nineteenth century who was the sole breadwinner in the household.
- Such rigidity forces women to choose between work and family.
- Rather than blatant discrimination against women, it is long work hours and required travel that force child-rearing women to leave fast-track professions.
- There is a direct conflict between the resources needed to meet professional responsibilities and those for home duties.
- Female professors spend much more time on domestic chores than male counterparts.

### *Tenure for Women*

Male tenure is much higher in the sciences and social sciences compared to women with children younger than six years of age.

- Women with young children were pushed into, or chose, second-tier, nontenured jobs in academia because of their family situation.
- Even women who had babies later in their career had less tenure than men with early career babies.

### *Effects of Gender and Family*

There is a clear understanding of the effects of gender and family on the pipeline to tenure for women and men in academics.

- Women with children younger than age six were the least likely of all groups to secure a ladder-rank faculty position.
- Married men with children younger than six were the most likely of all groups to secure a tenure-track position.
- Single women without children younger than six were a little more likely than single men without children younger than six to enter ladder ranks.
- Women faculty worry about the impact of family formation, particularly children, on their careers, and they may forgo or delay childbirth or have babies in the summer to avoid negative career consequences—men and women in academia have very different family formation patterns.

NOTE: Gender-family interactions are associated with the greater likelihood of women leaking out at the Ph.D. receipt to tenure-track entry stage. It was concluded that babies and marriage account for why women Ph.D.s disproportionately leak out of the pipeline.

*Family Formation Patterns*

Analyses confirm that ladder-rank faculty women are different than ladder-rank men and second-tier women in their post-Ph.D. family formation patterns.

- Women appointed as ladder-rank faculty within three years of receiving their Ph.D.s have a 50 percent lower probability of being married than do men and a 52 percent lower probability than women appointed to second-tier positions.
- These same ladder-rank faculty women also have a 61 percent lower probability of having a child younger than age six than do ladder-rank men and a 65 percent lower probability than second-tier women.
- Ladder-rank women have a 144 percent greater probability of being divorced than the men and a 75 percent greater probability than second-tier women.

NOTE: The data show that women Ph.D.s in professional, nonfaculty positions also experience lower rates of marriage and fertility and higher rates of divorce than do ladder-rank men, men in other jobs, and second-tier women.

*Timing and Rate of Births*

University of California (UC) faculty women may have made a conscious decision to delay childbirth until their mid- to late thirties for career reasons.

- The consequences are that ladder-rank women are less likely than men to have children within twelve years of hire.
- UC faculty women are also more likely than men to indicate that they had fewer children than they wanted to have.

*Work-Family Conflict*

Faculty mothers face a time bind.

- Among UC faculty aged thirty to fifty, women with children report an average total of 101 hours per week engaged in family and work duties.
- Men report an average of eighty-eight hours.
- Women report more tension and stress than men and experience greater conflict in balancing professional and parenting demands.

*Family Formation Differences*

Women who successfully pursue ladder-rank faculty careers are quite different in family formation patterns from men and also from women who drop out of the pipeline to tenure.

- They are less likely to marry and have children and more likely to divorce.
- They make conscious decisions to forgo or delay family formation to better their careers.
- They may drop out of the pipeline to marry, have children, or avoid divorce.
- Women who are dissatisfied with their rates of academic progress may be more likely to marry, have children, or stay married.

*Conclusion*

The life-course approach suggests that gender equity in terms of familial gains and losses is as unbalanced as gender equity is in terms of professional gains, raising the issue of what gender equity means in a male-dominated profession.

- Equality is more an aspiration than a reality.
- The gap between family outcomes of men and women, as measured by marriage, children, and divorce, is as wide as the gap in employment.

## Overworked Faculty: Job Stresses and Family Demands

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*Background* Analyzing a 1998 survey, the authors examined the teaching and publishing workweek in relation to professors dissatisfied with their workload.

- Dissatisfaction increases among those with the longest hours.
- However, very long hours contribute to research productivity and an increase in published articles.

NOTE: The conclusion is that there is a need for a set of expectations for academic employment that are compatible with responsible parenting in dual-career couples.

*Women in Professions* In recent years, the progress many women have made in entering the professions has begun to stall.

- The gender gap in earnings is not closing—most apparent at the highest levels of corporations.
- There is concern about the ability of working mothers to balance job and family due to
  - demands of work;
  - demands of home; and
  - cultural expectations—the ideals of successful parenting and successful careers.
- The levels of work-family conflict have been increasing for parents.
  - Exacerbating the increased expectations on the job are increased expectations at home.

NOTE: The goal should be to have family-friendly institutional arrangements in our society that also promote equal opportunities for men and women. How can we maintain and enhance women's access to the best jobs while making it possible for successful workers to be responsible and caring parents?

*Work-Family in Academia* The authors look at the work demands of faculty in colleges and universities.

- The average workweek exceeds fifty hours for all levels of faculty.
- The timing of tenure decisions collides with that of family formation for many assistant professors in their late thirties and forties—thus, waiting for tenure before having a family is not a good option.
- Dual-earner careers are prevalent among academic families.
- Professors may self-impose their heavy workloads to feel they perform at an acceptable level and because they are dedicated to their profession.
- On the other hand, professors are caught in a set of expectations for tenure and success.
  - They face research demands and publishing demands.
  - They must juggle many time-consuming meetings and reviews.

There are four main sources of growing time pressures on faculty:

- a greater emphasis on teaching time by the general public;
- rising expectations for research productivity;
- technological changes that increase productivity, but at the cost of time; and
- the rise of part-time employment that increases the pressures on full-time faculty because part-time teachers work for much lower salaries.

An analysis of the available data was done to look at workload's effect on job satisfaction.

- In general, professors are quite satisfied with their jobs.
- One common area of dissatisfaction is workload.
  - Although professors choose to work more hours, the more time they spend on the job, the more dissatisfied they become.
  - Interestingly, parents report lower dissatisfaction levels than childless professors—probably because married mothers and fathers work four hours less per week than others.
- Those with the highest level of degrees feel more workload dissatisfaction than those with fewer credentials—expectations for these professors may be higher.
- Assistant professors do not have the highest dissatisfaction levels—associate professors have the most complaints.
- Department chairs report the highest levels of workload dissatisfaction.

NOTE: The more satisfying the work, the fewer complaints about the workload.

Work and family are compatible when expectations of work are not excessive.

- The demands of academic life are becoming excessive and are making it difficult for individuals to succeed at work while having time to be caring and responsible parents.
- Efforts to promote a better balance between work and family should go beyond parental leave policies and try to establish limits on the apparently limitless demands of academic jobs.

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## The Mommy Track and Partnership: Temporary Delay or Dead End?

Mary C. Noonan, University of Iowa;  
and Mary E. Corcoran, University of Michigan

The study described in this article shows that men are less likely than women to leave private law practice and more likely to become partners.

- Among partners, men earn significantly more than women.
- Lawyers who take time out of the labor force for family responsibilities are less likely to be partners and earn less if they do become a partner.
- Women are disproportionately selected out and discouraged at each step on the way to partnership.
- Women are far less likely than men to become partners.
- Women often do not remain in the firm long enough to be considered for partner—attrition perpetuates the “glass ceiling” as fewer women are avail-

*Reasons  
Women Leave  
the Law Field*

able for promotion and, as a result, more men are making the partnership decisions.

- Previous studies have reported that both men and women identify sex discrimination as one of the main reasons for women leaving firms.
- The primary personal factor constraining women's partnership chances is their cutback of hours, family leave, and balancing the demands of motherhood and practicing law.

Common reasons women report for leaving the field of law are the lack of flexibility offered by firms, long hours, child care commitments, and the stressful nature of the work.

- A woman associate may opt to work part-time and thus reduce her chances of making partner.
  - Choosing to work part-time ("mommy tracking") can stigmatize women as not serious.
  - The stigma may fall over to childless women as well—sex matters.
- The choice may be all the firm offers.
- The choice itself may be strongly conditioned by the expectations of others—family, colleagues, the larger culture—things that do not constrain men.

*Sex*

Sex affects promotion rates for lawyers who remain for at least four years.

- Women, regardless of having children, are less likely to be promoted to partner.
- Marriage, however, is a positive for partnership compared to remaining single.
- Part-time work significantly decreases the chance for partnership for women, but not for men.
- Having a lawyer as a spouse increases women's chances, but not men's, of becoming a partner.
- Men are less likely to leave or work part-time for family reasons and more likely to make partner, at a rate twice that of women.
- Lawyers with a high grade point average (GPA), a mentor, and more work experience are more likely to become a partner.
- Men partners' average earnings are 32 percent higher than those of women.
- Women partners are less likely to be married and more likely to be childless compared to their male counterparts.
- Women partners, on average, have worked part-time for one year and spent 1.7 months out of the labor force.

NOTE: Previous studies have posited that direct discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as a wide array of institutional practices, marginalize women in law firms.

*Women's  
Disadvantages*

Women experience several disadvantages in law firms.

- Although firms offer part-time work, it may not count for partnership time, and it may preclude returning to the partnership path.
- Part-timers get assigned less important cases.
- Part-timers are labeled as less motivated after having worked part-time.
- Previous studies have claimed that high rainmaking demands (generating new clients), a lack of mentoring, sex discrimination, disproportionate shares of pro bono work, and mixed messages about personal style may all reduce women's chances at making partner.

*Changes Needed*

Some changes could make law firms more family-friendly.

- Reducing billable hours requirements and using factors other than hours as performance criteria.
- Officially counting part-time work toward partnership.
- Developing a work climate in which part-time work and family leave do not stigmatize.
- Part-time partnerships.
- Employer-assisted emergency day care.
- Mixed compensation composed of a combination of time off and money.

*Mobility*

Some things can change institutional barriers to women's mobility.

- Pursuit of legal avenues on sexual discrimination and harassment.
- Programs to improve the mentoring for women.
- Broadened criteria for partnership.
- Reduced extent that women's personal styles are viewed as less effective in a legal setting.

NOTE: These changes require shifts in law firm culture.

*General Changes*

Women cannot reach true equality within firms since large numbers of women are considered atypical because they fail to conform to the male-based definition of the ideal worker.

- Firms need to see that the benefits of changing culture are great; high billable hours and constant availability are inefficient.
- High hour demands for all lawyers need to be addressed as a health issue and reduced so lawyers can have time for community service, pro bono work, scholarship, and education for professional development.
- Expectations of performance need to be less rigid to reduce attrition for men and women.

NOTE: Programs that change law firms' cultures to be open to a wider range of work and personal styles have the potential to reduce disaffection, raise morale, enhance professional development, increase efficiency, and improve productivity—powerful change incentives.

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## Mothers in Finance: Surviving and Thriving

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*Background*

Work-family balance is a salient issue for professionals and managers in financial services.

- Managers and professionals in financial services organizations have seen work hours increased, and they are expected to demonstrate commitment by making work the central focus of their lives.
- They work in a fast-changing and demanding environment.
- The increase in working mothers and the rise in dual-earner couples adds to the time squeeze for families.

*Well-Being*

The article analyzes two aspects of well-being: salary and work-family conflict.

- Studies suggest that these two aspects of well-being are somewhat incompatible because employees pursuing work-family balance are penalized with slower career advancement and lower salaries.
- Some employees perceive the use of corporate work-family policies to have career penalties attached.
- In a previous analysis, mothers who took advantage of work-family policies were penalized with reduced earnings.

NOTE: This article also analyzes those factors that reduce or enhance the well-being of professional women who are mothers.

*Earnings*

Research shows that marriage and children are associated with higher incomes for men and lower incomes for women.

- Women with children younger than age sixteen do not suffer an earnings penalty *compared to other women*.
- Mothers with children younger than six and mothers who have sole or shared responsibility for child care earn more than other women in the study.
- Fathers of school-aged children earn more than other men.
- Men with a homemaking wife enjoy a marginal wage premium.
- Parents who use corporate policies for family care earn less.

NOTE: The preferred elite worker is unencumbered by family responsibilities, while men manifesting too much devotion to family may be penalized.

*Gender Gap*

The difference between men's and women's average earnings is \$31,614.

- About one-fourth of the gender earnings gap can be attributed to human capital and job status variables.
- There is also evidence of an earnings penalty for caregiving—men without a homemaking wife have lower incomes.
- Mothers did not suffer a wage penalty compared to nonmothers.
- Mothers of young children and those most involved in child rearing seem to enjoy a wage premium relative to other females.
- Overall, about one-third of the earnings gap is due to gender differences in family status variables.

*Work-Family Conflict*

Employed women generally take on more responsibility for family caregiving and domestic work than men.

- One thing that helps ease the conflict is flexible work hours.
- The company in this study provides a generous array of helpful policies, but employees avoid using them for fear of penalties that they believe are placed on employees who use these benefits.
  - Higher-earning fathers and mothers are less likely to use these policies, but mothers do use flexible hours policies without negatively affecting their income.
  - Managers and professionals are extremely unlikely to use policies such as dependent care leave that may be very visible to others, more intrusive to work flow, and thereby more risky to their careers.
- Women who maintain full-time careers after bearing children are likely to be highly successful and dedicated to their work and at the same time take on much of the responsibility for child rearing.

- Job Characteristics* Several job characteristics are related to work-family conflict.
- On average, parents who work longer hours are more likely to say they experience work-family conflict.
  - Parents who use scheduling flexibility tend to have less work-family conflict.
  - Married parents report higher levels of work-family conflict than unmarrieds.
  - Mothers count similar amounts of time away from family and children as more troubling than fathers.
- NOTE: Reducing one's work hours for family care reduces work-family conflict but can also reduce earnings. Moreover, compared to fathers, mothers earn lower incomes and endure greater levels of work-family conflict.
- Mothers and Career* The research shows that mothers maintaining full-time careers as finance professionals are corporate treasures.
- They work long hours and show high levels of achievement despite responsibilities at home.
  - Finance firms would do well to support the careers of these women.
  - Flexibility can help these women without affecting productivity.
  - Financial services firms need to address the earnings gender gap.
  - These firms should address the importance of some of their family-friendly policies.
  - They should also be concerned with the earnings penalty associated with involved caregiving by men—if firms penalize fathers, then career-oriented mothers will have to take on more responsibility at home and find it harder to stay on the fast track.

## The Evolution of Gender and Motherhood in Contemporary Medicine

Ann Boulis, University of Pennsylvania

- Background* Successfully combining work and family for female physicians remains elusive, but compared with working women in general, it has been favorable.
- Women physicians are more likely to marry and less likely to divorce, and the gap in childbearing has narrowed.
  - Among employed physicians, gender differences in earnings and work hours are narrowing slightly.
  - However, there is a growing gap between female physicians with children and childless female physicians.
  - A small but growing percentage of young physician mothers are not working.
- NOTE: Reconciling work and family remains a major challenge, and young physician mothers still suffer significant professional sacrifice.
- Gender Disparity* In spite of profound changes in the past few decades, significant gender disparities remain among physicians.
- Women are underrepresented in the upper echelons of medical academia and medical administration.
  - Women are concentrated in the lower-paid and lower-prestige specialties—primary care positions.

*Gender Research*

- Women are more likely to work as employees rather than partners in a medical practice and work fewer hours—given this, they have significantly lower earnings.
- Some studies suggest women doctors pursue lower-paying careers to enable them to have the time to assume the bulk of domestic and child-rearing responsibilities, and other studies emphasize discrimination is at play.
- There is a dramatic difference in marriage, divorce, and fertility for male and female physicians, such that women are less likely to marry, more likely to divorce, and less likely to have children.

Much of the research on gender differences in physicians' incomes highlights the role of marriage and family.

- Women reduce their total work time after marriage and children.
- Women may also be more interested in providing care than in income or status.
- Medicine is a clear case of an occupation being designed for a full-time male with a stay-at-home wife.
  - Women physicians rarely have stay-at-home husbands.
  - Women in medical academics note differences in the accessibility of key resources, such as mentorship.
  - Most feel gender discrimination.

*U.S. Health Care System*

The evolving structure of the U.S. health care system may be affecting the family formation, work, and gender differences among physicians.

- As medicine has become more corporate, opportunities for controlled work schedules may have increased in the lower-paid, primary care specialties so attractive to women.
- It is possible the changes have influenced the type of people who decide to pursue medical careers and seek balanced work schedules over income.

*Analyses*

The author's analyses look at how gender relates to family formation and earnings.

- Marriage rates:
  - Women physicians were less likely to be married than they were twenty years earlier, and males more likely than females in all the years studied.
  - However, the decline in marriage among women in the general population was sharper than for female physicians.
- Divorce rates:
  - More women physicians divorce than men.
  - Women physicians are now markedly less likely to be divorced than women in the general population.
- Children:
  - Women physicians are only slightly more likely to have children than before.
  - It is easier for men physicians to start families.
  - The fertility gap between women physicians and women in general has narrowed.

*Gender and Earnings*

Gender and the earnings of physicians:

- Between 1990 and 2000, female physicians experienced marked increases in real mean income.
- Males still have substantially higher earnings.
- The specialties women choose and their desire to work fewer hours have an effect on the lower income levels.

*Gender and Work-Family Concerns*

- The gap between physician mothers and other female physicians is growing.
- For men, married physicians, especially fathers, tend to earn the most.
  - The earnings gap in general is improving between all male and female physicians.
  - The disadvantage suffered by female parent physicians relative to male parent physicians remains significantly larger than the corresponding disadvantages suffered by married and unmarried childless women.

*Parenting and Hours*

- The work effort of female physicians is coming to resemble the men who share their household composition.
- Youngest mothers show reduced hours—they have the youngest and most dependent children.
  - Physician mothers show significantly lower average workweeks than childless females or males.
  - There is increasing inequality in work effort between physician mothers and other female physicians.
  - Part-time employment (thirty-five or fewer hours) remains very much the exception for physicians younger than age fifty, with women more likely to be part-time.
  - Women physicians appear to be faced with a decision between parenting with reduced hours and earnings and childlessness with hours and earnings more closely aligned with males.
  - Although the work effort of employed males and females is becoming equal, the trend is slowly drifting in the opposite direction.

*Conclusions*

- This article suggests that the significant influx of women into medicine has been accompanied by a modest but notable decline in the gender gap among physicians in a variety of areas.
- However, an inequality is growing between top echelon physicians and those at the lowest earnings levels.
  - Physician mothers trail their male counterparts by a large amount and increasingly are falling behind other women physicians.
    - The gender gap shows narrowing partly because young mothers may leave the workforce, and those working have opted to remain childless and work the same hours as males.
  - The profession has taken few steps to better accommodate women.
    - Part-time employment remains limited.
    - The hours are not flexible enough for women with families.
  - The large unexplained gaps for men and women in the same marital and parental status is consistent with discrimination.
  - Women are not on equal terms either in terms of earnings prospects or the chances to become married and have a family.
    - They experience delayed marriage and childbearing, have small families, and face significant chances of divorce.

## SECTION THREE: COMMENTS AND OTHER CONTEXTS

Mommies and Daddies on the  
Fast Track in Other Wealthy Nations

Gwen Moore, State University of New York at Albany

*Background*

Social and cultural contexts, as well as public policies, shape the experiences of women and men in demanding occupations.

- In wealthy nations, women's employment in influential positions in the public and private sectors varies from country to country.
- Most top business and political leaders face the dilemma of combining a demanding career and family life.
  - They rarely cut back on working time.
  - Few women and almost no men had worked part-time or interrupted their careers.
  - Most can pay for child care, yet often women did some of the care themselves, and this burden fell disproportionately on women.
- Marriage and, even more, parenthood impinge on women's careers to a far larger extent than on men's.
- Men more often have wives not in a demanding career and who are thus more available for child care, housework, and building his career.

*Nordic Model*

The Nordic countries stand out as models of women- and family-friendly societies.

- Gender equality norms are widespread.
- Government policies support women's equal participation in public life.
- Women's rates of paid employment are high.
- The Nordic countries have replaced the male breadwinner model with the dual-earner model.
- There are fewer gender differences in family status and duties than seen elsewhere.
- Public child care is widely available.
- Nordic men leaders were more involved in household labor.

NOTE: Despite men's greater participation in family care in the Nordic countries, women leaders do even more than the men.

*Work-Family Conflicts*

Career pathways and occupational settings also affect work-family conflicts.

- Careers in management and science require an early and steady commitment, often beginning in high school.
- Dropping in and out or beginning a career later in life is hardly an option in the above fields.
- Some careers are more flexible and more easily entered at an older age such as elected politicians—women can more easily enter politics after child rearing.

NOTE: Compared to the United States, the Nordic countries appear more successful in lessening work-family conflicts, even for men and women in top positions.

## Elite Careers and Family Commitment: It's (Still) about Gender

Scott Coltrane, University of California, Riverside

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### *Background*

Men and women in high-status professional careers are likely to share breadwinning, but the sharing of family concerns is limited by nostalgic family ideals and gender stereotypes.

- The basic assumption that family caregiving is the responsibility of women remains.
- Women in professions face difficult choices and are more likely than men to delay or forgo marriage or childbirth.
- It is now easier to achieve work-family balance in middle- and working-class occupations than in the professions.
- The elite professions have been slow to change or to embrace fully the concept that family caregiving demands should allow a person to work part-time at various stages of the life course.
- The ideal professional worker is still a man with a stay-at-home wife who is expected to devote huge amounts of time and energy to his career.

### *Men's Advantages*

The work-family juggling act is easier for men.

- When men become husbands and fathers, they are perceived as more serious and more deserving of career advancement than their single or childless counterparts.
- There is a career advancement double standard for men and women in the same profession.
  - Family men are seen as partner material and are assumed to possess the mature leadership qualities that qualify one to be a manager or CEO.
  - Conversely, when women marry, they are seen as moving from the fast track to the mommy track and become "less qualified" for advancement.
- Even recent federal efforts at welfare reform put the monetary onus on men and encourage women to marry.

### *Separate Spheres*

Previous studies have shown how separate spheres ideology shapes personal and institutional expectations about women being more kind, caring, and nurturing.

- Women are expected to do "intensive mothering," but they find they must spend time and effort developing parenting skills.
- Men are expected to be the breadwinners.
- Men accept work and family obligations, but their breadwinning counts symbolically as a family contribution, whereas women continue to provide most of the homemaking and child care even if they also work.
- Wives schedule and manage family life, and husbands typically remain as helpers, which reinforces the separation of work and family life for the husband.
- The problem is continued acceptance of separate spheres ideology and the failure of our social institutions to accept gender equality in the home and workplace.

Changes in the division of family labor have been relatively slow, and few couples report equal sharing.

*Division of  
Family Labor*

- There is an increase in time fathers spend with children, but it is still not equally shared.
- Women still do about twice the routine housework.
- The allocation of household tasks is associated with variation in the employment hours of both men and women, their relative earnings, their beliefs about gender and family, and their living arrangements.
  - Family size, age, life stage, ethnicity, pressure, and contribution of children and a host of other factors also affect allocation of labor.
  - When men participate in nurturing, they are more likely to share in child and home maintenance activities.
- Employers still feel that women will specialize in family work and cut back work hours after marrying or having children.
- When women in elite professions hire working-class and immigrant women, they reduce their household hours but do little to challenge the privileged positions of husbands and often contribute to perpetuating race, class, and gender hierarchies in the larger labor market.

NOTE: To counter inequities, we should stop assuming that women should provide domestic services and emotional support and stop assuming that men are incapable of nurturing and housework.