

Sociology 265H1F

## **Gender and Society**

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Office Hours:

Tuesday, 3:00-4:00, 725 Spadina, Room 382

### **Week 8: Gender Inequality in Families: Divisions of Work & Responsibility Between Women & Men that Entail Inequality (plus Racial Divs.)**

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- I. Thinking of Gender “Structurally” (or as Systemic): Families are organized around Divisions of Work and Responsibility between Women and Men (if they aren’t same-sex couples)**
- II. Why Study Parenthood? A Chief Cause of Divisions of Work based on Gender, with resulting Inequalities, in Families**
  - A. Common Effect of Parenthood: Increase in the division of work, and more conventional gender relations & roles, in families involving heterosexual couples**

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Michael Ornstein and Glen Stalker on  
Canadian parents' (of kids under 6 yrs.)  
"household strategies" wrt. work (2006):

- 40% -- men employed full time & women not employed or employed <15 hrs./wk. (part time) & women doing more childcare;
- 10.5% -- men employed f.t., women employed 15-34 hrs./wk. & women doing more childcare;
- 19.6% -- both employed full time & sharing the childcare 'about equally';
- 10.9% -- men employed f.t. & women not employed or working part time & the couples sharing the childcare 'about equally'.

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Conclusion: a majority of Cdn. couples with young children have a conventional allocation of the work (or a division based on gender) – men as providers, women as caregivers -- which is inherently unequal.

**B. Women often adjust their employment, and get lower hourly wages/salaries (a "motherhood penalty"); no adjustment for men, who get a bonus for being fathers.**

**C. Transformed identity, gendered identity**

Martha McMahon, *Engendering Motherhood*: women's personal transformation (change in identity) with motherhood: feeling more

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nurturing, caring, etc. (traits associated with being a woman, so renewed “claim” to fem.)

**D. “Intensive mothering” – over time, increased responsibility for mothers**

- (1) prioritizing the child 24/7
- (2) attending to brain development

**III. The Causes of Conventional Arrangements When Couples Become Parents**

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**A. Cultural causes: a gender ideology and one promoting “intensive mothering”**

- (1) an ideology that women ‘naturally’ suited to care for their baby (plus the myths about “mother-infant bonding” and a “maternal instinct”)
- (2) gender difference itself: lesbian mothers tend to share mothering and all else
- (3) advice to mothers on what is best for baby: full-time mothering, done intensively (24/7 prioritizing of baby)

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B. Social-organizational (or structural) causes – involving the way society and its institutions are organized – that involve “paths of least resistance”

- (1) What seems to make “economic sense”:  
is men -- given their better position in the labour force -- prioritizing income-earning
- (2) Nuclear families (just 2 adults) mean time pressures to divide the work in a way that seemed efficient

C. Dynamics in the couple relationship

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- (1) Right after the baby’s birth, pressure on women to learn to do infant care, with resulting gender differences in skills
- (2) Women’s feeling they are dependent on their husband.
  - (a) women’s reaction involving “protecting” the man
  - (b) women’s reaction involving catering to the man

#### **IV. Why Conventional Patterns Matter**

A. The problems women experience being home full time with an infant

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- B. Gender inequalities in couples' relationships (in addition to the "motherhood penalty" in LF)
- C. Declines in the quality of the couple relationship (their satisfaction) – especially for conventional couples

**V. Are Men Sharing the Household Work, Now That Women are Sharing the Income Earning?**

- A. Changes in women's and men's hours of paid and unpaid work:

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Table 1: Work Hours per Week (Paid, Unpaid, and Total), Parents with Children Under 18 Years of Age

<b>Paid Work</b>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>2000</i>
<i>Married mothers</i>	6.0	15.2	19.7	23.8
<i>Married fathers</i>	47.8	47.2	42.5	42.5
<i>Single mothers</i>	28.4	18.9	24.5	28.9
<b>Unpaid Work</b>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>2000</i>
<i>Married mothers</i>	52.7	39.9	39.7	41.1
<i>Married fathers</i>	12.3	12.0	18.9	21.5
<i>Single mothers</i>	30.8	31.9	25.8	36.7

<b>Total Work</b>	1965	1975	1985	2000
<i>Married mothers</i>	58.8	55.0	59.4	64.9
<i>Married fathers</i>	60.1	59.2	61.4	64.0
<i>Single mothers</i>	59.2	50.8	50.3	65.6

Source: S. Bianchi, J. Robinson, M. Milkie, 2006, *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life*.

- B. Dual-earner couples' total hours of work per week: women do an average of 71 hours, men do an average of 64 hours, which is sizeable (U.S.- Bianchi, Robinson, Milkie)
- C. Canada: Statistics Canada, 2006: women do more unpaid work and men do more paid work;

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2010 study: in 'dual-earner' couples, when women work full time, they do almost 8.5 hours of household work per week more than men do.

- D. Veronica Tichenor, *Earning More and Getting Less*: women making more money than their partners do not enjoy equally-shared housework

Housework as gendered work; women's lower sense of entitlement; men's need to achieve masculinity.

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## **VI. Who else is doing the Housework and Child Care? Shifting the Work to the Shoulders of Racialized Women**

- A. Domestic Worker Program, 1950s – indentured workers, from the Caribbean
- B. The beginnings of temporary work permits for nannies (1973-1981); indentured work and no right to stay
- C. Foreign Domestic Movement, 1981 – live-in requirement, for 2 years, but option of applying for

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landed status (but til then, temporary visitor status, without the rights of citizenship)

- D. Live-In Caregiver Program, 1992 – continuation of temporary status and live-in requirement
- E. Vulnerability of the worker, especially due to lack of citizenship rights and live-in status

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