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Analyzing data from a qualitative study of 95 dual-earner couples, this article seeks to understand the critical factors that explain couples' choice of day care arrangements. The different approaches couples implement to care for their children while they earn income are (a) the "mothering" approach, (b) the parenting approach, and (c) the market approach. Changing sentiments about mothering and its centrality to decisions about how couples organize and integrate family and work lives are discussed within each approach. Finally, the article raises issues about attempts (and nonattempts) to alter work arrangements for parents to care for children.

A Typology of Approaches to Child Care

The Centerpiece of Organizing Family Life For Dual-Earner Couples

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Child rearing tends to be regarded as an individualistic concern for parents in the United States. Society may purport to be so-called profamily but, judging by the small number of policies and programs that pertain to child care, society largely ignores how young children spend their days despite widespread recognition that women's labor force participation has increased dramatically over the past several decades.[1] Indeed, it has become quite popular for political contenders to voice support for family values but to sidestep the sticky questions about how children are being cared for when mothers (and fathers) must work for pay outside the home.

With the exception of Head Start programs, when compared with other industrialized nations, the United States has little government-sponsored or subsidized day care (Benin & Chong, 1993; Kamerman & Kahn, 1991; Zigler, 1990). We lack the extensive system of day care that exists in other industrialized countries (Ferber & O'Farrell, 1991; Moen, 1989) because

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of ideological conflicts over the government's involvement in family life (Hartmann & Spalter-Roth, 1994).[2] The invocation of family values to indicate a belief in the strength of families to organize independently their lives to maximize the care and nurturance of the young (and elderly) rings hollow when studies find that affordable good quality day care arrangements would reduce both economic hardships and distress couples face in trying to balance the simultaneous child care and workplace demands (Bird, 1995). The lack of affordable child care in the United States is a serious problem for all social classes (Bianchi & Spain, 1986); but its consequences for low-income families are perhaps the greatest of all (Ferber & O'Farrell, 1991, pp. 74-84).[3]

Child care should be a leading social issue addressed at workplaces, in communities and at the state and federal levels of government. But without an array of good solutions to preschool child care (e.g., quality, affordability, certification, etc.), couples attempt to resolve this work/family dilemma through individual solutions. This article explores in a systematic way the different approaches dual-earner couples implement to care for their children. It also seeks to understand in context the critical factors that explain couples' choice of day care arrangements. The data presented suggest that a combination of a priori beliefs and economic resources explains the choice of child care practice. Only in rare instances do beliefs or resources alone play the determining role in selecting child care practices. However, there is no clear-cut relationship between beliefs and economic resources. In the absence of strong evidence regarding the relationship between beliefs and economic resources, I propose a typology of approaches to child care that reflects the interaction of ideology and economic factors. From a sample of dual-earner couples, I suggest that there are three general approaches to child care: (a) the "mothering" approach, (b) the parenting approach, and (c) the market approach. In addition to exploring diverse views of child rearing that exist in the United States, I will analyze how sentiments about mothering influence the ways couples organize and integrate family and work lives.

THE STUDY AND THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE

This article is part of an in-depth study of 95 dual-earner couples, with the majority (88 couples) having at least one child still living in the home in eastern Massachusetts. Each husband and wife was individually interviewed; the majority of couples were also interviewed simultaneously (Hertz, 1995).[4] Husbands and wives were told that we were interested in studying how couples make decisions about child care, finances, and work. The interviews lasted a minimum of 2 hours, with a smaller number of interviews lasting up to 4 hours. There are two parts to the interview: a longer in-depth open-ended guide with extensive probes and then a shorter division of labor survey adapted from Huber and Spitzer (1983).

Because the primary focus of the study was looking at how women's labor force participation has altered family life—particularly authority surrounding decision making in the home—I decided to use a stratified quota sample. Different strategies were used to find different segments of the study's population. In general, access to individual couples was obtained either through other professionals who identified couples fitting the study's parameters or through mailings to day care parents in several communities.

I used a combination of factors to decide who belongs in each social class stratum; these included the income of both spouses combined. Families in the upper middle class had a combined income of at least $100,000 annually and professional or managerial occupations; middle-class couples had a combined income of between $40,000 and $100,000, and most were in white-collar jobs in service professions or middle-management occupations; and working-class couples had incomes that overlapped those earned by the middle class, but these couples were distinguished by their occupations. I tried to locate couples for this segment employed in traditional working-class occupations or trades, such as painter, policeman, nurse, waitress, factory worker.

A total of 36% of the couples are working class; the other three fifths are middle and upper middle class. Within the working class, 30 couples are White and 4 couples are of other races. Within the middle and upper middle class, 35 couples are White and 21 couples are of other races. An additional 5 couples do not share the same race as their spouse; they are all middle- to upper middle-class couples. There are no "cross-class" couples (husbands and wives who differ in occupational prestige). For purposes of this article, social class is only mentioned. Racial differences in the three approaches to mothering appear not to be as important for this article as social class. For instance, upper middle-class African American families were as likely to have a professional approach to child rearing as their White counterparts. Racial differences are relevant when it comes to deciding between types of non-kin care and selecting between settings, which I have discussed in another article (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996). Therefore, I have not used race as a way of identifying respondents; I have instead used occupations as a signifier of the social class of each respondent.

At the time of the interview, each spouse within a couple had a minimum of one job. This does not mean, however, that at the time of having young children (preschool or elementary age) there were two full-time jobs. In most cases, women did not leave the labor force for more than 1 year; but in a small number of cases, women were not employed in the labor force when their children were preschool age or younger. More likely among this small group of couples, women worked outside the home for fewer hours than a full-time job. The decision to stay home longer than a year is not related to social class. That is, regardless of social class, it is possible to organize family life around a mothering approach (discussed below) provided that there are enough economic resources to live on one salary for a period of time. It is questionable whether younger couples can afford to do this today except perhaps among the upper middle and upper classes. At the time of the interviews, just over 60% of the couples were between their late 30s and middle 40s.[5] But there is great variation within this group as to the age when they had their first children. For those couples who had children in early decades, having children may have led to greater economic ability for the wife to stay at home. There were also fewer day care services available then; the growth of day care in the United States has mushroomed in the last 10 years. For those couples who have had children in the last 5 years, most remain in the paid labor force, with wives typically taking only brief maternity leaves.[6]

Independent of what age couples are now, I am interested in the relationship between child care beliefs and practices and social class at the time each couple had young children. At the time of the interview, 63 couples (66%) had at least one child age 5 or younger. An additional 25 couples (26%) had children living at home older than age 5. I indicate age of the respondents and their children's ages as part of the lead-ins to quotes so the reader can assess the historical factors (labor force and day care options) that inform each couple's story. I have deliberately selected quotes and respondents in each type who presently have young children as well as those whose children are older to give the reader information about couples presently undergoing child care decision making and couples who are reflecting back to this period in their family lives.

The focal points of this article are based on an analysis of responses to one open-ended question: "Tell me a history of your child care arrangements." Probes included likes and dislikes about child care arrangements but not anything about motherhood. Other topics emerge from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. Demographic facts and information are also used to analyze the responses to this question. Because I am particularly interested in the women's and men's views, I have relied heavily on their words and descriptions of family life to demonstrate the diverse beliefs about caring for young children in the United States today.

THE MOTHERING APPROACH

The mothering approach assumes that the person who is best suited to raise the couple's children is the wife, who should be with them at home. According to this approach, only the family can give its children the right values and moral upbringing. These couples uniformly believe that what will create successful adults is a childhood steeped in love, caring, and nurturing properly provided only by the insular world of the family. In this regard, the child's future is tied to a certain kind of early mothering practice.[7]

To maximize wives' abilities to devote themselves to the upbringing of the children, husbands work either overtime or they supplement a primary job with a second one, sacrificing their own leisure and time with children and spouses. But even the additional work hours were insufficient to pay the bills and keep wives out of the paid labor force. For the few lucky families who 15 years ago could get by financially on his earnings, as men reached their late 30s and early 40s, "burn-out" and being physically forced to slow down commonly occurred. Some worked less overtime; others found less strenuous work with less income. Even these men's wives eventually went back to paid work to take the pressure off him and to make their family's life less of an economic struggle to pay bills on time and to perhaps put a little money aside for a vacation. In 53% of working-class couples at the time of the interview, at least one spouse, typically the husband, worked overtime or held a second part-time job, totaling at minimum 60 hours a week.

This ideological belief about child rearing rarely exists for long in practice. Few couples could economically afford to have wives at home and out of the paid labor force. Yet, this central family belief in mother as the best person to raise children fuels how they arrange their work schedules and jobs to attempt not to compromise their children's upbringing. Child rearing—and keeping children within the family circle—is the priority, and work schedules of wives are critical to meeting this approach. Most of these women were employed even when their children were infants and toddlers, but talk about that only emerges once the conversation shifts to paid employment.

Beyond the early childhood years, even mothers who stayed out of the paid workforce, returned to paid employment at least part-time when the youngest entered kindergarten. In other families, however, wives re-

mained in the paid workforce but changed to working shifts (Presser & Cain, 1983; Presser, 1988). To be available to young children, women worked nights giving the appearance of stay-at-home traditional moms to make highly visible their identities as mothers (Garey, 1995). Wives adjusted their work schedules, changing shifts as their children aged, placing their ability to care for children over spending time with husbands (Hertz & Charlton, 1989). Scheduling of work hours for both spouses to maximize mother care is more important than the wife's job mobility or workplace loyalty.

To permit a continued belief in a division of labor in which wives raise children, couples redefine their circumstances. That is, it is not the husband's fault that he does not earn enough. The economy is to blame. Placing blame on an external force does not damage their views of masculinity as tied to being a good provider. Economic explanations also become more congruent with couples' expectations that wives are picking up overtime because of cutbacks or due to erosion of wages so that families can avoid a decline in their standard of living (Ferber & O'Farrell, 1991). Put differently, locating blame external to the couple exempts husbands from feeling they are not good providers and wives from resenting their husbands for having jobs that do not pay enough, forcing them to seek paid employment.

It is interesting that these couples have yet to adjust their ideal view of family life to the reality they are living. But there is reason for this nested in a set of beliefs about family primacy. Even though these couples speak a language of traditional gender roles whereby spouses share the belief that child rearing is the wife's primary responsibility, their practices contradict these beliefs. For the most part, husbands strongly favor their wives' paid employment. It not only relieves the men of economic pressure but also means that the family is not living as tightly. They continue to live paycheck to paycheck but without worrying—especially for wives who typically pay the bills—about meeting monthly payments. But the ideological emphasis for them is not on gender equality as a larger value; instead, family is the critical variable. As a result of wives' paid employment, couples discuss parenting while emphasizing mothering. In this regard, there has been a shift by White working-class couples with traditional values of exclusive mothering to now resemble more the mother practices of earlier generations of minority working-class couples in this study[8]; now family values are about the family doing for itself in terms of raising its children, and whatever couples can do for themselves (without external supports, including everything from day care to welfare) is achieving family values.

CONSTRUCTING FAMILY LIFE TO MAXIMIZE THE MOTHER AT HOME

Despite hardship at times, keeping the mother/child dyad together is an organizing principal belief of these families. Sometimes, respondents phrased this belief as the mother's need to be with her child; other times, the belief appears as part of what is essential to so-called good mothering in addition to the glue that keeps the family unit strong. Put differently, the wife's status as mother becomes the pivotal point around which all other statuses (e.g., employee) revolve. Because the work of caring for family members is ignored (DeVault, 1991) or regarded as part of what might be called the invisible work (Daniels, 1988) of family life that women do, women's visible presence elevates mothering and other aspects of household work.

This wife, who once managed an office, thought when she was pregnant that she would return to work full-time. But becoming a mother is different than fantasizing about what it might feel like. Now 42 years old and the mother of two children, ages 1 and 10, she reflects back to how dramatically her beliefs changed about the kind of mother she wanted to be:

> I can remember, I always laugh with a girl friend who had a baby a year before me, and she'd say to me, "Are you still going back [to work]?" I go, "Oh ya, I'm gonna go back. No offense Ann, I really don't mean any offense, I really don't know what you do all day." And then once I had my baby, and was home for a couple of weeks with her, I never went back. (Interviewer: Really?) All of a sudden this thing took over me and it was there was no one in this world that could possibly raise this child like I was going to.

Other couples talked quite candidly about this division of labor as a taken-for-granted aspect of their marriage. Another husband, a policeman, age 44 with three children between the ages of 10 and 17, gave a typical response to why it was essential for mothers to be home:

> She's never worked full-time since we had our children. That's a decision we made. She took a maternity leave and decided not to go back to her job. Raising our children was too important. . . . We had had a firm commitment to my children's being raised by my wife. Because we're firm believers in a strong foundation for children. I mean first through age 6. To me, it's like a building. If the foundation isn't strong, you're asking for trouble later, as you build.

His wife, age 42, who presently works part-time as a secretary and cares for a relative's child in her home 2 days a week, told us that it was an implicit part of their marriage that she stay home when the children were born.

(Interviewer: Why did you make the decision to stay home?)
Oh God. I guess because that was just the way it was. I guess I figured when I had children, I'd stay home with them. I had a great job. And I actually probably made more money than my husband did at the time, but it wasn't a question.
(Was it something the two of you talked about at all?)
Not really, it was just I would stay home. . . .
(Were there any family members who could have watched the children?)
My husband's mother never worked, so she probably could have, if I had decided to ever do that, but I really enjoy being here. I really didn't—I wanted to be with them.

In another family, with children ages 10 and 18, the husband, age 37, has been a factory worker since he was 19 years old. High school sweethearts, he and his 36-year-old wife (presently a medical transcriber who has had a series of different jobs) have both always had to work to make ends meet. He explains the couple's philosophy about raising children even though these beliefs were at times thwarted, as is often the case among working-class couples when the inability to pay bills forces the wife back to work—even part-time—and someone else watches the child, which is less of a concern when older siblings or relatives help out:

It's very important to both of us that one, mainly that she should be—you know, because I was the primary breadwinner, I had the steady job—that she be home with our son [the second child], especially. With our daughter, it was hard because when she was born, I was making a lot less money. . . . We always tried to put both our kids first. But when my daughter was a baby we had someone watching her—we've always both felt very strongly that if we're going to have children, that we should be with them, it's as simple as that. Not shuffling him off—it was never a "you have to go here [day care] every single day when you get home from school." . . . My daughter sometimes gets him [the son] in the afternoon, she helps a lot or his grandfather who lives down the street or we try to always have someone home for him in the afternoons.

In a fourth example, this mother, age 37, with three children between the ages of 10 and 16, returned to work waitressing after a 3-month maternity leave. Below, she explains why she shifted from working day hours to night hours:

I really didn't want to leave my kids with someone else. You know . . . I did try to go to work during the day when Eric was about 3 months old. When I decided I want—needed to go back to work for the money. And an old job was available that I had had, and they really wanted me to come back. It was waitressing again. I worked 4 days and couldn't do it. I cried and it was just too much. I just couldn't be away from him during the day. Didn't bother me to go in the evening when I knew he was with Mark [his father], sleeping most of the time and that was fine. Actually I've always liked working, but um . . . no, it wasn't for me. And it was tough when I just went to work a few years ago during the day. You know, because I wasn't here in the morning to get them off to school and it was difficult for my youngest. They've done great.

Night work did not compete with being a good mother in ways that being a day-working mom did (Garey, 1995). To meet the ideology of the stay-at-home mom, women are employed outside the home during hours that do not count: when children are in school and asleep. This allows these families to meet this kind of mothering expectation without challenging women's primary identities. Further, child care decisions (and the choice to limit paid child care services) define the boundaries of what is necessary for them to retain their sense of being good mothers as well as an important part of their families' lives (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996).

Her husband, age 36, a factory worker who leaves home at 6:00 a.m. and returns at 3:30 in the afternoon, during periods when there is no overtime also works as a custodian for a restaurant before his factory job on Thursdays and Fridays. He simplified all his wife's job arrangements to make his point about their shared beliefs regarding child raising as a family-centered activity. Note that his identity is not tied to fathering but his talk is about what is critical to children's upbringing:

She got a job at night, I worked during the day. The key to good parenting is one parent being with the child at ALL times. That's what we always thought. . . . Cause kids like to see their parents when they get home. I mean, cause they run through the door and they got so many things to tell you. They just, they don't have anybody to blab it out to.

As their family grew, neighbors watched the children in the transition from mom's leaving to work and dad's returning home from work. Neighbors continue to be a source of help during transition points in the day. At the time of the interview, her oldest children were teenagers and she went back to working the dayshift. Below, she describes why she shifted back:

Because I always hated . . . I hated when I worked nights and weekends. Um, because it was the weekends. I mean I went to work when everybody else was home, basically. And especially when all of the kids were in school, they would come home, even though it was only a couple nights a week, Thursday and Friday.

She felt like an invisible part of the family. Even though much of the evening and weekend time is devoted to team sports that her husband coaches and that she admits to not really enjoying, it was important to her to be a spectator and cheer the family on rather than work during this time.

Being visible represents good mothering. Similarly, the woman above who does secretarial work part-time, in addition to caring for a niece 2 days a week, had just filled out an application to work during the day at a store part-time at the time of the interview. Worried about how they will pay the tuition so their oldest daughter can commute to college to study nursing, she explains why she is applying for this particular job:

> So, I recently put in an application at a candy shop. See if I could sort of have two part-time jobs. I really still want to be home when my youngest gets out of school [elementary]. I FIRMLY believe that somebody needs to be home. As a matter of fact, even as they get older I really want to be around. I'm there for my older two [in high school].

The medical transcriber, who has a skill in high demand, requested hours to complement her children's school schedule. Flexibility in work scheduling allows women to assert the salience of their identity as mothers who place a priority on a particular kind of child rearing. Below, she explains the work arrangement she negotiated:

> Now I work days. But once summer vacation comes, I may end up working second shift again. Once again, I don't want to put him in a day care home. . . . I stressed with my boss that I needed flexibility. [She told her boss,] "Yes, I will go full-time, but school vacations, summer vacations, I may have to completely change my schedule and you'll have to go along with that." And that was fine with him.

Even though couples articulate the importance of the wife's being the central care provider, all the women quoted above worked some hours each week from the birth of the first child. But what they did was leave well-paying jobs, often earning more than husbands, to find work with better hours, meaning hours that allowed their husbands (or if possible another relative) to watch the children for at least part of her shift while she went to her job. Neighbors or acquaintances, often members in the same church, cared for children during transition times as part of the patchwork of child care coverage. These "custodial" caregivers did not compete with the mother as the central nurturer (Uttal, 1996). The woman above, who was once an office manager, never really stayed home. This couple needed her income to qualify for a mortgage, so she took a night job as a tax auditor briefly and since then has worked steadily as a phone service operator during weekend evenings and some week nights. He said,

> I'd get out of work at 3:30. Then she'd leave for work. I think she worked 4 to midnight. We might pass in the driveway or my mother-in-law would take care of the baby until I got home at night.

When their mortgage was approved, he was laid off. Finally, finding work as a truck driver, she needed weekend work hours because he was gone during the week. She took her present job as an answering service operator because she needed both a flexible schedule and some time out of the house. Below, she tells about this and her perfect job hours:

> It's probably the lowest paying job I've ever had and the most abusive in that people who call want to get whomever they want to get, not you. But it's the only thing that fits into my schedule. But my ideal is that I'd like to work for 5 nights a week—Sunday to Thursday night—and I'd like to work 6-11. You know, if I could. That's what I'd like to do.

Work histories for more than one third of the women in this group included several years as child care providers. Economically, couples noted this was a way not to have to place several children in the care of others and, equally important, it continued to position women in the world of the home, not the external labor force (Fitz Gibbon, 1993; Nelson, 1994). Some were licensed as family providers; others, such as the secretary quoted earlier, were paid to care for relatives' or friends' children (and for a brief period, even the medical transcriber watched children). Between shifting from a night schedule to a day one, the waitress above also worked out of her home, a culturally desirable place for her to be, to approximate a full-time homemaker mom caring for her children:

> When my youngest was born, I did day care myself. I did day care for two years. . . . I said to my girlfriend, "I don't know what I'm gonna DO, I don't really want to go back to work with three kids and leaving them. It's just too much." And she said, "Well, you know, I was thinking about getting back into day care and doing it up here. Why don't you get licensed?" So I ended up in day care and ah. It was okay. It served the purpose, you know, with Ann a baby and Eric only 2, being able to be home. But, um, I got burnt out really fast. Really fast, cause I had so many babies. . . . And actually when I gave it up and decided that I wanted to work outside the home, I did keep one little girl and my niece. I kept them and still babysat during the day time and waitressed a couple nights a week. . . . Four years that I babysat. It was the hardest work I ever did.

But it is not simply mothers who do all the nurturing. Fathers are active participants in these households, particularly when it comes to scheduling their work so wives can earn as well. The police officer mentioned earlier followed up his comment about his wife's staying at home with the following comment:

> I work nights now. I've worked days. If she has something to go to, we work it out so one of us is around. I mean, we had babysitters, but there's never been a time when both of us worked that we needed day care.

The waitress described her husband's involvement with the children:

> Mark actually does more of the after-school activities than I do. He is the one who takes them to all their meets and practices and spends afternoons hearing about their day. Since I wasn't home during dinner, he gave them supper but now I do it.

According to the medical transcriber's detailed account, her husband is now doing the thinking work of running their household, instead of simply serving the meals she prepared when she worked nights and her first child was young. When she was asked to commit to full-time hours by her employer, they had a long conversation about how the division of labor between them would change:

> But we did talk about it a lot and he was very well aware of the added responsibility that he would have, not just with my son but with the household things. Because when I was working evenings, I would do everything in the house during the day. . . . I was always the one responsible for the housework, cooking, laundry. And now, especially now that I'm working full-time, my husband does just as much, maybe more sometimes, than I do. . . . In fact, my husband did all the laundry last night. He left it for me to fold and put away, but it was clean and dry. . . . Normally, I work 10:30 to 7:00 at night. He gets home at 3:30 or 4:00. So my husband does the majority of the cooking during the week. . . . But if I'm going to be late, then he'll eat. And him and my daughter play cribbage or yahtze to see who does the dishes. And on the weekends, if the house is a real pit, it's like "let's get up Saturday morning and clean the house." We just all chip in.

Finally, the good mother is juxtaposed to leaving children with strangers. Below, the trucker driver husband explains a common reason why the mother is preferred:

> We feel that we see the difference in the children that are being raised by their parents and children that are being raised by, you know, an outside entity. (Interviewer: In what ways?) Mostly, I think the way they do it is to let their kids do everything and anything. And ah, my wife is, I have to say, she's home with the children more and she does the disciplinary measures 90% of the time. Only because she's there when it's needed and I have very well-behaved children I am told. I feel they are. I'm not ashamed to take my children anywhere . . . my nephew is in day care and they can't go out to dinner unless there are special provisions because he can't sit in a restaurant. . . . (You think that's because he's in day care?) They, they're not spending, he's not getting the quality motherhood. I don't feel he is, ya. And I don't feel it's the day care people's job to, to instill these things in them. She's being paid to watch this child. She'd gonna do what she has to do to get through her day in a sane manner. She'd not going to be a disciplinarian, or she shouldn't be there to, ah, to teach everything . . . my wife places our children in the playpen for several hours each day so she can get things done and the children learn to play by themselves. Other children who are in day care come here to play and they don't know how to entertain themselves.

Beliefs about motherhood remain entrenched in an essentialist argument that the only person qualified to care for young children is either the biological or adoptive mother (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996). Not only are strangers problematic as nurturers but they are less likely, these couples believe, to instill a strong foundation of values they share and believe to be necessary for adulthood. Even though fathers are essential to providing round-the-clock home care for children, it is the mother's visible presence that continues to be at the core of this construction of family life.

THE PARENTING APPROACH

The parenting approach is exemplified in the belief that the family ought to be organized around caring for the children with the critical distinction that both parents are full participants. Couples who adopt the parenting approach create new ways of combining family and work by seeking less demanding jobs or by negotiating more flexible arrangements with present employers (at least during the early years of their children's lives.) Some couples, particularly those who have middle-class occupations, are choosing to push employment in new directions. But for others, particularly those with working-class occupations, underemployment becomes a catalyst for rethinking traditional gender-based divisions of labor. These couples are crafting strategic responses to a shrinking labor market.

Regardless of how they came to share parenting, at the time of the interviews, these couples did not essentialize the mother as the only parent capable of nurturing children. For couples who chose to modify rigid work structures out of a belief that the responsibility for child rearing must be shared between mother and father, they talk about parenting with expectations that both parents are essential as nurturers and providers, though parents are not androgynous. Even among those couples wherein the men have lost full-time jobs and are presently doing less challenging work or working part-time, they also come to admit that men can care for children, throwing into question prior ideological beliefs about the dichotomy that conflates manhood and fatherhood with economic provision and womanhood and motherhood with nurturing activities. (Even though new practices of work/family divisions emerge, it does not necessarily follow that

underemployed men view caring for their children as a substitute for their present employment situations.)

Emphasizing the sharing of child rearing between parents limits the need to use external child care providers. When it is used, they attempt to control the kind of child care that supplements their own involvement with children prior to their children's entry into the public schools. Some use only a few hours a week of day care or babysitters; others find cooperative exchanges between families with young children.

RESTRUCTURING EMPLOYMENT TO MAXIMIZE PARENTING

This group of parents shares a belief about parental superiority in raising children. They believe that men and women should work outside and inside the home and also share responsibility for child rearing. Individuals attempt to modify their jobs and employment commitments to regulate on their own terms the demands that paid work makes and thus restore some semblance of control, even if it means loss of income (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996).

Couples emphasize that men have historically been short-changed as nurturers, and they are seeking parity with wives in their desire to experience fatherhood (cf. Coltrane, 1989). Men explained their efforts to modify their work schedules to be actively involved in child care. One man, age 37, employed in a social service agency, explains why he decided to reorganize his work schedule to have 1 day a week at home when his first child was born. He was able to reorganize which 40 hours he worked to not cut back on his pay, to have 1 day a week at home and occasionally to hold staff meetings in his home with his infant daughter present:

> Why did I do it? I think I was a new father, I wanted to spend time with my child, first year of life. I also sort of figured I might not have this opportunity again. I thought this was unique. I knew I wasn't going to forever stay at this job and I just had immense flexibility. I still was working very hard, but I had immense flexibility and control because I was the director, so I could really set the policy, and I did. But it was just important to me to spend some time and not have either a professional caregiver or have it so my wife had some time.
>
> It also worked in terms of our hours. Partly there was some pragmatism here in terms of—we wanted to minimize the day care she was in, maximize our time with her, certainly in that first year.

Another unusual arrangement that highlights the prioritizing of family togetherness over full-time work is a middle-class couple who both work part-time day hours: she as a social worker and he as a patient advocate.

The wife, age 33, explains that initially she thought she would remain at home, but they each negotiated part-time work hours in their respective jobs to share child rearing. Understanding her husband's desire to be with their child, she reported that they figured out the following solution:

> I had negotiated, at my job, to go back part-time after my maternity leave, but I thought in my heart that I might not go back at all. Then when Andy went back to work, he missed Sam so much that he felt like he really wanted to be home more. And what we were able to figure out was that if I went back part-time and he cut back his hours—so he decided he'd work 30 hours and I'd work 20 hours. And we could always be home with him. So that was what we did, and that's what we've done . . . . He worked 3 mornings and 2 afternoons and I worked 3 afternoons and 2 mornings. He worked 6 hours a day and I worked 4 hours a day.

Below, she explains why parental child rearing and part-time jobs better matched their desires:

> I don't have criticisms of people who use day care. I just couldn't bear the thought. But it just felt, for me, that I really wanted to be with Sam and I wanted Andy to be with Sam and I feel like I got the absolute best of all possible worlds. Because I think it would have been really hard for me to be home full-time and have Andy work full-time. And working part-time is just the perfect balance. So to be able to work, and to have Sam home with Andy, we just couldn't ask for more. . . . I thought it was better for him to be with one of his parents.

The husband, age 39, explains the price he has paid and the confusion this arrangement has caused at the agency where he is employed:

> I felt really stressed out initially. When I started working part-time, it was incredibly difficult because the expectations of myself were that I could do what I used to do just in less time. . . . I think more than anybody else at my office, I have had to scale back my expectations of myself. And I feel like people have been very supportive . . . . But it was frustrating. I'd post my schedule for everybody and give them a list. We'd try to set up a staff meeting and if we're going to do it on a Tuesday, do we do it in the morning or the afternoon? . . . And initially I'd have to scratch my own head and wonder when I was going to be in.

Some middle-class couples find a way to implement even more atypical arrangements, such as mutual exchanges, whereby families swap child care and keep track of hours. Administering part-time two different social services, the couple quoted below, ages 47 and 42, are making ends meet, placing themselves at the economic fringes of the middle class and conscious of their own downward mobility relative to their own parents. They know they could earn more money but as she put it,

> We want to maximize as much as possible these first 5 years of being with him. So I would say the first thing is values about the amount of day care. It is also more expensive and it makes you work more. . . . I would say the driving factor was about values. We didn't want him to be in a lot of day care. I figured the longer he had more intimate settings, the better.

Their present arrangements are described below:

> Now what we do is on Mondays I take care of a little girl in the morning and then her mom takes care of Mark in the afternoon. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I bring Mark to a friend's house and that little girl's dad takes care of Mark and walks him to preschool with his little daughter and then picks them up and takes care of him. Then on Wednesdays, I take care of both little girls: the little girl whose mom takes care of Mark on Monday and the little girl whose dad takes care of Mark on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Then on Fridays, I take care of the little girl whose dad walked Mark to preschool. I take care of her on Friday mornings. So that evens out that because we get 2 afternoons and we give a day in the mornings. And then Friday afternoon, I pay the little girl's mother $20 to take care of him.

It is more common in this study sample for women to be the part-time worker or ask for special arrangements for them to combine motherhood and work, trading a solid middle-class standard of living for a more modest one. One woman, age 36, found a job working part-time as a lawyer. Below, she explains why:

> I've seen the way other people's lives had been crazy and I wanted to have a good time with my kids. I just kept hearing from people all the time: "These are the most precious years, don't give them up, hold onto them." . . . there's some truth to that and I really wanted to cherish the time I had with them. . . . I wanted to go back to work because I needed the intellectual stimulation and the respect.

But in many ways, the couples quoted above are labor force elites: They can shift the number of hours they work or change jobs without facing permanent career penalties. Eventually, the men and some of the women in these families shifted back to full-time work when their children entered preschool or grade school. But at least during the early years, they restructured the gender system to make fathering and mothering essential to childhood socialization.

UNDEREMPLOYMENT AS A ROUTE TO SHARED PARENTING

For others, the downward economy and downsizing by corporations beginning in the 1980s (Hodson & Sullivan, 1990) led couples to piece together new work arrangements with active fathering a by-product. These

latter couples did not make conscious choices to work less (and earn less) to do more for their children directly. They worry about spiraling downward even further. One father, age 39, with two children and presently working part-time as a home health aid, explains how his employment history has devolved:

> No. I think like MANY of the long-term unemployed, people like me who don't show up in the statistics, life goes on. So you do other things, you work part-time, either delivering pizza, which I did for 3 years, or bundling mail for the post office, whatever. But life goes on, so you have to adjust yourself because first of all, no one's gonna hire you. Once you're over 30, no one's gonna hire you for any real job. So what's the sense? . . . Your buddy who mows lawns for a living is offering you $10 an hour. So you do what you have to do. And you just fall into a whole other world that you forget exists when you worked for a large company, working 9-5 for 6 years.

The wife, age 35, a nurse who typically works the 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. night shift, worries that if she loses her overtime she will have to find a second nursing job. She added to her husband's comments her thoughts on how underemployment has affected her husband's sense of masculinity: "And of course his ego was all shot to hell. He's not the family provider he wants to be and he's not doing exactly what he wanted, what he set in his mind. All his goals are rearranged."

Couples in which the wife was working full-time and the husband part-time often wished that the wife could opt to work fewer hours. Whereas middle-class White women continue to think about their lives as having the option of staying at home or working full-time, ideological and structural barriers prevent men from having similar choices (Gerson, 1993). Another mother, age 40, an office manager with two children ages 5 and 9, assumed that there would be two full-time paychecks. She now carries the economic burden and wishes she could have a more flexible work schedule.

> When I decided I would have children, I knew I would always be working, but I thought there would be more flexibility in my work schedule that would allow me to take extended vacations with my children, sometimes come home, be available after school to go to a school function with my son, sometimes be able to go to a soccer practice in the afternoon on a Thursday, be able to go to my daughter's ballet classes with her, that kind of thing. I don't feel like I have that kind of flexibility in my life. . . . In the nicer part of the year, I'll arrive home at 6:30 and they've just come from a baseball practice and they're rosy cheeked and they're laughing about what happened, and I'm not a part of that. So I guess over a period of time you do build up a little resentment. It goes away. But that's what I'm missing.

Another man, age 37, who presently works part-time as a postal worker, was laid off from a factory job after a dozen years at his company. His inability to find a full-time job for the past several years made it necessary for his wife to remain employed full-time. Because she is the carrier of the medical benefits, they feel unable to reduce her work to part-time because they would lose these benefits. Despite his positive experiences caring for his 3-year-old son since he was an infant, this father describes the deep ambivalence he feels about contributing in atypical ways to family life:

> I was sort of thrust into the role. Thrust into it by job circumstances. . . . Sometimes it does bother me [not to be the main breadwinner]. . . . I just don't feel like I'm with the crowd. Not that I have to be with the crowd. . . . I realize that most men my age are probably established in careers now and I'm not. . . . But, I just have that vague sense that, ah . . . like the world is going on out there and I'm here.
>
> I know it's more accepted now in society, but still I feel like I'm in the vast minority when it comes to my role. . . . I've more or less settled into the routine of taking care of my son. At first, it was quite an adjustment. . . . It's been kind of a metamorphosis for me. I've gone from being scared to death of it, to, ah, being actually quite comfortable now. Maybe that's why I stopped looking for full-time work, I don't know.

His wife, age 31, explains how her fantasies of the kind of family life she thought about have not materialized:

> It's funny because I guess we all have an idea of what's going to happen when you get married and all this. All my friends had it easy, you know, [got] married and then they did have the kids and then they stayed home. So I [thought] that would just happen to me, too. But it was tough. The first year that I was at work it was hard. I think we had a lot of arguments. And I didn't think he could do anything right. When we were both with him it was like, "What are we DOING now?" There was no set of instructions or anything that come with a baby. I always felt I was better with him. As an infant, he felt very awkward with him. And actually, he's done very well with him. I can't, you know, knock him now. But you know, at that time I was very resentful. VERY resentful. And the thing is I had a job I didn't like and I had a manager I didn't like, he was terrible to me, very demanding, and he was very chauvinistic about women.

Even though mothering is a kind of craft or practice (Ruddick, 1980), the ideology that only mothers are really capable of maternal thinking is powerful and, as a result, many women do not necessarily want to share the work of mothering. The last woman quoted admits that mothering does not come naturally and it is only through practice that we learn how to do it. She concedes that her husband has mastered maternal practice; that is, he is engaged in sharing the work of parental love, a kind of work he never imagined himself doing. It is ironic that the couples who are on the cutting edge of transforming maternal thinking are doing so not because of an ideological belief as much as structural constraints of a shrinking labor force that catapult men into learning the work of child rearing. In the process, couples rethink family life, particularly caring for children, as they cobble together identities that are no longer unidimensional. Underemployed couples continue to wish their home and work time could be more evenly divided but not because they wish wives would become full-time mothers.

THE RISE OF FATHERING

Fathering emerges but without a separate language from mothering, although the practice of it is markedly different from the White middle-class breadwinning fathers of a past generation (Bernard, 1981; Goode, 1982). Regardless of the route to sharing child care, the practice of fathering transformed these men into more nurturing and sensitive caregivers who are teaching their young children how to navigate the world (Coltrane, 1989). These men report wanting to be different than their own fathers. The husband of the couple who swap child care put it this way: "I didn't want to be the same kind of father my father had been. I wanted to be a more involved father. So, it seemed to me the way to do that was that I would work less and spend more time with [my child]."

The patient advocate quoted earlier talked about what he feels he has gained by taking care of his child:

> When James was born, I was smitten, I was blown away by the strong feelings I had toward him. It was kind of like falling in love with a lover for me. I was really—I was shocked by that feeling, by how strong my feelings are and were. . . . But I also feel that I really—it's been a window for me, it's been watching him learn about the world and how much of an influence I have over that. I feel a tremendous amount of responsibility and I feel really eager to help him explore the world. I want him to do it on his own, but I know that I also have a lot of say in how things get set up, presentations that are made. But it's exciting to be part of that and I really love his discovery of things.

Even though the home health worker quoted above wishes he could return to full-time work to take some of the work pressure off his wife, he also was very eloquent about what it meant to be a father. The detailed response about infants he gives was once reserved for mothers only:

> Let's see. I don't think it's that different than being a mother. It's very stressful, very, at the same time it's very rewarding. And . . . but I think to

have a lot of your father's influence is a good experience for a lot of children. Because I would take her places that my wife normally wouldn't take her. Like down to the auto parts store . . . . It got a lot harder when my second was born. It's twice as hard, ya. Especially right now, he is cutting teeth. He can't walk and he can't talk and so he can't TELL you anything. And he's at that time when he's trying to rearrange his clock to sleep at night so he's up, like last night he was up at midnight. So I brought him to bed with me. And I put him back to bed around 2 and he was up at 4, so like 3 or 4 times a night. And lack of sleep more than anything else gets you. Then the older one wakes up. Sometimes ARGGGGHHHH. I feel like a lioness with cubs crawling all around. . . . Fatherhood, it's a lot of hard work but it can also be alot of fun too. . . . As they get older, you can play more and you can put them in a car and go for a ride and it's a lot easier once they're older.

The father, who presently works part-time as a postal worker, explains that what he feels is most important is making a difference in his child's life:

Mr. Mom? Um . . . it's frus . . . it's rewarding, but it's also very frustrating. It's, it's ah . . . it seems like after a day of being with my son all day, it's fun and all that, but sometimes, some days it just wears thin, and I need some adult interaction if you know what I mean? . . . But I feel like I'm in the role of teacher and ah . . . which is I think the most fun part. And just watching him develop and learn new things . . . to see the difference that I can sort of shape and mold my son's life it gives me some personal satisfaction. Nobody told me that.

In sum, the members of this group are testing and contesting the limits of their work environments. Whereas there are certainly career costs and unwanted underemployment, these couples are altering the landscape of traditional ways that couples have attempted to integrate work and family and, in the process, altering the gender system that locates women according to a primary identity as mother and men as economic providers. Men's caring work undermines the belief that mothering comes naturally to women. Further, caring for children elevates the status of parenting as a source of primary identity for both mothers and fathers; it even takes priority over workplace goals and job advancement. In short, changing labor force patterns and creating flexible jobs forced new family practices and in the process altered beliefs about child care and nurturing.

THE MARKET APPROACH

The market approach to caring for children involves hiring other people to care for one's own children. Both wife and husband are career oriented

and they emphasize professional caregivers who replace mothers. Unlike the two approaches discussed in preceding sections, wherein the use of non-kin child care is minimized, among these couples children spend their days with adult caregivers who are not family members.[9] Often, couples have a combination of care providers[10] and commonly they shift from one type of arrangement to another, ostensibly in response to the child's developmental needs. As I and my coauthor, Faith Ferguson, have argued (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996), regardless of whether children are placed in center-based care or in family day care or a woman is hired to provide individual care, in using day care the mother has hired someone to replace herself at least part of the time and her essential contribution to the family has become *deskilled* (Braverman, 1974). But the new middle-class model for women continues to emphasize the achievements of the individual (i.e., the mother); women achieve this by deskilling motherhood, breaking apart a once presumed holistic pattern of practices.[11] In this study, it is typical for couples in which both are professionals working full-time with more than one child to have multiple child care arrangements. Below is a striking example of deskilling the mother role into several components: the woman who is loving and good with infants and drives the children and the woman who provides developmental stimulation and reads to her children:

But once the kids were 2 or something, when they like to be read to, that sort of thing, I have sent them to a play group, which is a family day care, really down the street from me. They've each gone there 2 days a week. . . . The reason for this is that my babysitter, as lovely and caring a person as she is, is functionally illiterate, which is the downside of what I have. . . . By the time I figured out that she could barely manage to write a phone message, it was clear that she was so good with my infant that it really didn't matter at that point.

Now, she is driving my daughter to . . . Brownies, ballet, that sort of thing. . . . And we don't have family in the area, so she's sort of a surrogate mother to them in that sense. She has a large family of her own, and my kids know all of the members of her family. . . . I think I have been incredibly lucky. The kids love her and she loves them.

The woman above, pregnant with her third child at age 36 and a doctor with a doctor husband, is quite typical of this group whose caregiving role is tied to finding surrogates. Because the mother remains responsible for patching together child care arrangements, she uses different criteria to select different women to replace herself. The love of one's child becomes the major criteria for how couples select providers, particularly nannies, but also family-based day care settings. These kinds of providers are a

substitute for mother love (Hertz, 1986; Hertz & Ferguson, 1996; Wrigley, 1995). Yet, often conflicts emerge around dissimilar values between the provider and the couple because couples tend to hire women of different social class and racial backgrounds to care for their children (Hertz, 1986; Wrigley, 1995). Center-based day care providers (or preschool or nursery school programs) are termed *teachers* and they are expected to expose the child to a first learning environment. This enrichment experience is supposed to supplement parental teaching, though often it is also a substitute for early education the mother once provided. Credentials and professionalism are ways couples assess whether a program shares their views on learning (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996).[12] After-school programs are now the new neighborhoods. These institutional settings provide adult supervision, replacing the mom with milk and cookies but also replacing no-longer-safe neighborhoods where children once freely rode bikes and played pick-up games.

Whereas initially women believe that continuity of care is the best replacement for not being at home themselves, they eventually abandon this idea. In this study and in my prior work (Hertz, 1986), not one family kept the same child care arrangements for the first 5 years of a child's life. Dissatisfaction materializes on either side of the provider/couple relationship: Sometimes the child care provider quits, but other times the reason for a change is couched in a language of child development and the need for a new kind of arrangement, as predicted by the child care professional mother of the woman quoted below:

> At 2 years old, it was clear there was way too much TV. I didn't care about it as an infant, I didn't care about it at 1 year old because they watch some of it but they run around. They are too interested in their own motor stuff. And my mom had told me when she saw Janie [the provider]—a lot of my education about child care has come from my mom [a nursery school director]—I said, "Isn't it great because Janie promised me she'll take care of the kid until she is in kindergarten if I want." And there were kids there until 4 years old. So, I kept thinking that would be continuity I wasn't providing my child by working. And my mom said, "You're not going to want her at Janie's after 2 [years old]." And I didn't know at that time, but how right she was.

Couples speak a new language of quasi-psychology that emphasizes developmentally appropriate educational experiences for preschoolers who are introduced to the rudiments of a structured day, develop positive peer group experiences, and begin to develop a positive relationship to learning. Professionals are looked toward to provide these enrichment experiences. In sum, former child care providers are discarded and new child care workers rationalized on the changing developmental stages of the child.

Women do feel guilty for not being with their child and they worry about the cost to their children. The woman below, age 37, when she had her first child 9 years ago, describes the kind of work hours she was expected to keep.

> I had two people coming in, 6-hour shifts. And then when Kyle was 6 months old, I just sat down with my husband and I just felt like this was really hurting Kyle. So, I decided that my career was interfering with my family. And I actually quit my internship. I came home distraught and I just said, "That's it." At that point I was working 100 hours a week, I would leave at 6:00 one morning and come home at 10:00 the next night if I was on call. I was on call every third to fourth night. It was very hard with a newborn, although I had my husband who was here taking care of the baby at night and other family members. I said to myself, "What are you doing? Is it worth it?"

This woman was lucky because a sister volunteered to come and care for her infant son, which lessened her guilt about not caring for her own child. But when she became pregnant with a second child, the sister said two children was one too many to watch and this couple eventually found non-relative live-in help.

But guilt was not shared by husbands who had similar occupations or male colleagues, as a woman doctor, age 31, reported:

> But you know, I've been a mother for 9 years so I've worked on the guilt a lot. . . . And I used to ask all these men I worked with, I said, "You know, when you go out the door in the morning, do you feel guilty when you say goodbye to your children?" And they would look at me as if to say, "What a dumb question that is." But every time I would go out it would tear me apart. So I've tried to lessen the guilt as the years go by.

Men did not mention feeling guilty about working full-time, which underscores the cultural asymmetry in the emphasis placed on the unique role of the mother/child dyad. The husbands of these women did mention the guilt their wives felt by not being available to their children. A professor with more flexible work hours, married to the doctor quoted above, began his discussion on day care with the following:

> My wife was essentially gone [the first year of the child's life]. I used to take the baby into the hospital in the middle of the night to see her mother. It was a rough year. I had a very free year—on sabbatical—which helped enormously and we had my in-laws close by. But my wife still feels that was a desertion, that she essentially deserted her baby 2 weeks after it was born.

The mothers who exemplify this approach are not the only ones in this study who feel guilty. Women in all three approaches feel guilty when they are unable to match their conception of motherhood and family life: Some try to alter shift scheduling; others try cutting back hours or find another type of work. But the ideal work load is rarely attained. I note the guilt in this section because the most career-oriented women have the least options because their work environments remain entrenched in a male trajectory despite recent claims of organizations' becoming more so-called family friendly (Gilbert, 1985; Hertz, 1986; Hochschild, 1971; Slater & Glazer, 1987). These women report that short of quitting professions in which they have invested heavily through years of school and training, hiring surrogates to replace themselves or deskilling motherhood are the only rational solutions.[13] Most mentioned wishing they could become part-time employees at least for a few years (the added income from their full-time employment was not essential to these families) but few employers agreed to experiment with such work arrangements. Some feel trapped as successful professionals wishing for more leisure time for themselves and time with their children.

Couples who select a market approach to child care also have a division of labor between themselves in which the wife does the work of finding the care, making the arrangements, and thinking through the various possibilities (Hertz, 1986; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Nock & Kington, 1988). Husbands become sounding boards and only marginal participants in arranging the schedules of children. In this regard, women replace themselves and, in the process, the deskilling of tasks leaves mothers with changed relationships to their children, popularly dubbed "quality time" motherhood. Men's lives remain unaltered in these cases. Of the three approaches to child care, the men in this group are the least involved in child care. Masculinity remains tied to economic achievements and career goals. The mother/child dyad is altered by the insertion of another woman or professional day care setting. However, unlike the mothering approach, women's identities remain split between family and career. Gender relations between spouses are only altered because women buy out family commitments, not because men assume more responsibility (Hertz, 1986). Further, both mothers and fathers become primarily economic providers within their children's lives. During the week, it is others who love, nurture, and care for the children, and on weekends they become a family in which the mother might resume the craft of mothering while the men continue to devote themselves to career advancement.

CONCLUSION

Mothering does not mean that wives stop working for pay completely (i.e., they do not necessarily devote 100% of their time to caring for their children). It does mean, however, that a wife's status as mother becomes the pivotal point around which all other statuses (e.g., employee) revolve. Indeed, for many couples the arrival of children creates a paradox: One paid worker leaves the labor force at a time when the family's expenses increase dramatically. To maintain a (pre-child) standard of living, adjustments have to be made: Either (a) the husband increases the number of hours he works (which reduces his ability to share parenting) or (b) the wife continues to work but adjusts her job or hours to accommodate the children. In both instances, the basic parameters of work and family go unchallenged: (a) couples adjust their activities to sustain a pre-child standard of living; (b) they make little claim against employers or ask them to adjust in response to family needs; (c) they invoke mothering as either cause or a correlate of their actions.

The detailed exploration of couples who embrace the mothering approach suggests that the organization of gender conflates motherhood and womanhood. Not only does motherhood supersede all other dimensions of identity it also allows women to claim a special place in the gender system. Just as couples ignore the wife's permanent labor force employment, they minimize the husband's involvement as co-participant in caring for children. Whereas child care work may be conceptualized as the wife's turf, and therefore the language of mothering dominates these interviews, fathers are not absent from the home nor solely economic providers. The emphasis is on an ideological presentation of family life that masks the present practices and a new division of labor between spouses.

Couples who adopt the parenting approach come to reorganize their work in response to placing family first. They are challenging and restructuring the workplace even if it is only temporary: (a) These couples attempt to restructure work to accommodate their family needs by making demands on employers; (b) both women and men are restructuring their work to be active parents at the expense of job mobility, career success, and economic sacrifice; (c) in the process, they are altering the organization of gender in ways that challenge mothering as the exclusive territory of women. In short, they are crafting new ways of parental thinking about child rearing. These couples personify family values as they attempt to

push workplaces to care about families as much as they care about organizational goals.

A smaller group of couples back into the parental approach—forced into this reorganization of family and two jobs due to economic constraints. Decreasing jobs will lead more men to rethink their contributions to family life and to adapt to a shrinking economy by staying home or sharing child care, or both. Although the circumstances of their fathering may not be based on their own choice, these men are potential models for a future in which job uncertainty is likely to increase. On one hand, structural workforce constraints for men may alter motherhood ideals, giving rise to equally compelling arguments for men's greater involvement in sharing the work of child care. On the other hand, these data suggest that gender ideology is a powerful countervailing force to a shrinking labor market. Husbands and wives are not willing to agree that parenting is a substitute for men's paychecks. These couples craft shared parenting models but hope that this is a temporary family/work arrangement.

The market approach in many ways resembles the mothering approach in that couples resolve work/family dilemmas by parceling out the job of mothering. They rationalize this (with ambivalence) by placing a premium on professional child care knowledge over old-fashioned folk wisdom; these couples do not make claims against employers who continue to adhere to a masculine prototype of career trajectories, creating, at best, "mommy tracks"—as the major response to family needs. In this respect, husbands and wives may have more equal marriages but do little to alter the organization of gender between men and women. In fact, they only further inequalities between women whom they hire and themselves (Hertz, 1986; Rollins, 1985).

In addition to giving substance to a typology of alternative approaches to child care, the interviews conducted in this study provide valuable insights into the process through which choices among those alternatives are made. That is, as has been noted repeatedly in recent research on changing gender ideologies and child care (e.g., Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Uttal, 1996), it is vital to better understand the meaning women give to child care practices and the division of labor between spouses. By focusing on meaning (both supportive and contradictory), we are in a better position to assess how durable an approach might be or, if it creates conflicts (e.g., between traditional and nontraditional family gender ideologies), who will have to bend to resolve the conflict. A focus on child care choices helps us see what conflicts arise, how they are given meaning, and how they are resolved.

However, recent research in this area (including Garey, 1995; McMahon, 1995; Uttal, 1996) has overlooked the fact that these choices are rarely made by women alone. Whereas this new research is conceptually interesting, by focusing on the changing meaning of motherhood without considering the possibility of similar changes for the partners of these women, we learn little about the position of the partner as a participant or facilitator for social change in the family or workplace. As I have shown in this article, husbands often play an important role in the decision process. Yet, because most prior studies have tended to neglect husbands (e.g., by not interviewing them), they cannot realistically tell us a great deal about men's involvement in child care choices at either the levels of ideology or practice or about how couples may jointly decide or be forced to alter ideology or practice.

Thus, when we look back at the three different approaches to child care described in this article, it is not surprising that in many respects the parenting approach appears the most novel. Unlike mothering and market approaches, husbands play a visible and different role in child care choice. Their involvement is visible and different because they consciously challenge a traditional familial division of labor and a traditional definition of job and career. Neither the mothering nor the market approaches challenge tradition: The former reinforces tradition and the latter merely integrates another service into the family menu of consumption.

NOTES

1. In 1993, fully 60% of all women with children under 6 were in the paid labor force. For those with children aged 6 to 17 years, 75% of all women were employed, representing a marked increase from 1966 when 44% of women with children this age were employed (Hayghe & Bianchi, 1994). For women between 15 and 44 who have had a child for the year 1994, 53% were in the labor force (Bachu, 1995).

2. Day care is regulated by individual states, which vary in licensing regulations and in enforcement (Benin & Chong, 1993). In Massachusetts, lists exist by town, giving the names of all licensed providers. We have no good information on how many family day care providers are illegal. But this assumes that a family would know enough to request a list from the town or know enough to realize that not all providers are licensed.

The vast majority of U.S. workplaces do not have child care provisions. Those that do have huge wait lists and most employees must go elsewhere for day care. Families in eastern Massachusetts who use center-based care put their children into either for-profit commercial day care and nonprofit centers housed within religious sites or universities and private nonprofit centers. In this area, after kin, family day care is the most often used type of care (Marshall et al., 1988).

3. Day care is also the second largest cost all couples have in this study after mortgages or rents. In 1995, for a preschooler in full-day center-based care in the great Boston area, couples could expect to pay $12,000 per year for one child. Infant and toddler center-based care is even more costly.

4. See Hertz (1995) for a lengthy discussion of making sense of separate interviews and the rationale for this method.

5. The majority of couples in this study have been married to their present spouses at least 10 years. For the vast majority of individuals, these are first marriages. I note that I did not select couples on length of present marriage. I did, however, deliberately seek couples who still had children at home, when possible, so that child care and labor force decisions would not be distant memories.

6. With the exception of the upper middle-class professional women in this study, few women could afford to take a 12-week unpaid leave, which Massachusetts has had for quite some years. Most women did take a leave, but they were able to afford this by using their paid vacation time and sick days. In this study, few couples had enough money to cover the paychecks of a maternity leave. No man in this study took a formal paternity leave, though some men (the parental approach) did work out various arrangements with employers.

7. Because this is a study of dual-earner couples, there are no full time stay-at-home moms at the time of the interview who clearly favor this approach to early childhood care. There are a few women in the middle class who were home for a number of years until their youngest child entered elementary school. It is also possible for professional women to decide to leave the labor force permanently and stay home. I feature, in this section, women in working-class or lower middle-class jobs because they are more likely in this study to advance that approach.

8. White working-class mothers of both husbands and wives were typically in and out of the labor force. Mothers of minority spouses were overwhelmingly always in the labor force. Historically, women of color are more likely to work outside the home (Goldin, 1990, p. 18). In this study, working-class mothers of respondents are essential to the household. In addition to the importance of income contribution to the household for middle-class mothers of respondents, using talents and degrees to advance their race was also essential (Perkins, in press).

9. Children are collectively raised by professionally trained women in kibbutzim, which today resemble full-time center-based U.S. child care. Whereas economic necessity was the catalyst for the creation of the children's collective raising, the historical belief in professional knowledge as the best route to child rearing persists. My point here is two-fold: (a) The professional approach is not always tied to two-earner families, even though in the United States case, the emergence of (and rapidly growing) family and center-based day care is tied to the inability of most families to live on one wage as the family wage eroded; and (b) mothers are not essentialized in the kibbutz as the best caregivers of their own children. Professionally trained women are seen as more knowledgeable and suitable and, until recently, expertise superceded parents' wishes. Categorically, however, women rather than men do this work, gendering the job within the kibbutz and within the U.S. context.

10. Two national surveys indicate that approximately two fifths of preschool children with mothers in the paid labor force had multiple child care arrangements (Folk & Beller, 1993; Hofferth, Brayfield, Diech, & Holcomb, 1991).

11. Hertz and Ferguson (1996) argue that for Black couples in this study, deskilling of motherhood does not promote the same kind of crisis that it does for their White professional counterparts because historically Black women have always been employed outside the home and have had to work out arrangements for the care of children that did not permit nonexclusive mothering practices (Collins, 1990). However, even in this study Black women felt at times like they were the titular wives and mothers (Hertz & Ferguson, 1996). The woman who solved her child care problems and returned to her internship when her sister volunteered to help was a Black woman whose mother had worked her entire life. The solutions to child care for the first child often included kin for women of color, which was less likely to occur among White women whose mothers (or other immediate relatives) were not willing to leave their own lives if they did not live locally. Even among White women whose mothers lived locally, it was less often in this study that they became the primary child care providers.

12. Regardless of race, the majority of families had multiple arrangements; however, there are differences between White women and women of color in how they found child care providers and how race factors into the selection of a particular arrangement (see Hertz & Ferguson, 1996, for a full discussion).

13. See especially Uttal (1996), who is interested in the meaning mothers assign to caregivers. The women who restructure the dominant cultural ideology of the mother as primary provider conceptualize the child care provider as either a surrogate or they define the child care provider as co-mothering in a coordinated effort that the mother orchestrates between herself and the provider.

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