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THE BALANCING ACT: Aspirations and Accommodations involving Work and Family Life

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THE BALANCING ACT: Aspirations and Accommodations involving Work and Family Life

Lindsey E. Sawicki

University of Portland

Abstract

Traditional families believe that the father should work full-time outside of the home, while the mother's full-time job is to stay at home and take care of family needs; however both men and women have begun to reject traditional gender roles as they reconsider what constitutes a family and how families operate (Mosser & Hanson, 2012). Many men and women have expressed their desire to develop new skills, face new challenges, and overcome obstacles outside of the traditional gendered domains of work and family. Several recent studies showed that more women desire greater responsibility in the workforce, and more men aspire to play an increasingly active role in parenting their children (Aumann, Bond, Galinsky, 2011, Deusen, Harrington, & Humberd, 2011). Shifting from traditional to modern gender roles has created more tension and conflict within families as parents question their conflicting roles and identities in the home and workplace.

The Balancing Act: Aspirations and Accommodations involving Work and Family Life

Introduction

Traditional & Modern Families

Traditional American families developed and reinforced strict gender roles, where the father financially provided for the family, made big-picture decisions, and set household rules, while the mother focused on the day-to-day tasks of maintaining the home, cooking, and caring for the children. Traditional families are different from nuclear families, which consist of two parents raising children, and gender roles are not specified (Mosser & Hanson, 2012). Non-traditional or modern families are categorized as those who reject the traditional male "breadwinner" and female "caregiver" roles (Mosser & Hanson, 2012). Modern families operate in a variety of fashions; some examples include gay, lesbian, and transgender couples, single parents, separated or divorced couples, and couples who adopt children or who opt out of marriage and childbearing all-together; other modern families include mothers with full-time careers, stay-at-home dads, or more common today, families where both parents work full-time (Mosser & Hanson, 2012).

Traditional families believe that the father should work full-time outside of the home, while the mother's full-time job is to stay at home and take care of family needs; however both men and women have begun to reject traditional gender roles as they reconsider what constitutes a "family" and how families operate (Mosser & Hanson, 2012). Many men and women have expressed their desire to develop new skills, face challenges, and overcome obstacles outside of traditional gendered domains. Several recent studies showed that more women desire greater responsibility in the workforce, and more men aspire to play an increasingly active role in

parenting their children (Aumann, Bond, & Galinsky, 2011, Deusen, Harrington, & Humberd, 2011).

Given the shifts in family life over the past thirty years, exploration of attitudes toward work-family balance is warranted. The reviewed literature defines the "can-do discourse" that is projected to the coming-of-age generation. It reviews the main problems this discourse presents, which include women not holding their partners equally responsible for caring for the home and children; the discrepancy between women's expectations for the future and current employer discrimination against women in masculine work environments; and finally, the lack of up-to-date policies regarding women, flexible hours, and maternity leaves (Wood, 2010). Next, the literature examines work-family conflict as experienced in traditional and modern families. It also identifies the unique personal and social issues that arise for adults during this transition, such as role strain and increased family conflict. Lastly, the literature details institutional factors that make work-family balance more challenging for modern dual-income families.

Literature Review

Women's Future Goals and Problems with the "Can-Do" Discourse

The media today presents a "Can-Do" discourse to coming-of-age women, which encourages them to dream of having successful careers in powerful positions as well as functional, happy family lives (Wood, 2010). Many young women idealize the future with the notion of having both fulfilling careers and family lives. According to Wood (2010), there are two major problems in sending this message to young women. One problem is that the discourse implies that women will not rely on their partners for help with childcare and household labor (Wood, 2010). This suggests that women will have to stretch themselves thin in order to have both career and family, and men will not be responsible for helping pick up the slack. The "Can-

Do" discourse excludes the notion that have-it-all woman must constantly deal with a double-edged sword, as success in one area depends on a sacrifice in another.

A second problem involves the discrepancy between women's expectations for the future and current employer discrimination against women in masculine work environments and the lack of up-to-date policies regarding women, flexible hours, and maternity leaves (Wood, 2010). In planning for the future, it becomes especially important for young women to look at the experiences of older women, who are currently balancing full-time careers and motherhood, to see the benefits they receive, the sacrifices they make, and how satisfied they seem with their decisions. Many women, who grew up in the baby-boomer generation during the second wave of feminism, were not able to learn from the experiences of mothers in the workplace because women were still primarily caregivers, and they were less invested in having careers (Ferree, 1990).

This study aims to identify if the coming-of-age generation is internalizing the can-do discourse; therefore the following research question was proposed.

RQ1: What ideals do the coming-of-age generation have in terms of work and family, and do these ideals align with the can-do discourse?

Work-Family Conflict & Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory suggests that people meet personal and relational needs by acting out their various roles with partners, and when acting out various roles creates too many competing demands, "roles are strained and people can become dissatisfied" (Perrone & Worthington, 2001, p. 4). In the past ten years, social and technological changes have reshaped how individuals experience work and family, and today most American families fit into the category of dual-income households, which has increased adults' experiences of role strain and work-family

conflict (Bochantin, 2008). Work-family conflict is defined as "the result of one not being able to manage shifting priorities between work-life and family-life," and this conflict "can result in added stress, absenteeism from work, lower productivity, turnover intensions, lower organizational commitment, and less job and life satisfaction" (Bochantin, 2008, p. 5).

Women experience role strain and work-family conflict as they are encouraged to have both fulfilling family and work lives, but they are often pushed by their partners, families, and society to have a more distinctive role than men in the domestic realm (Buzzanell, 2000). In terms of life satisfaction, employed-only women reported significantly lower satisfaction levels than have it all or traditional women, suggesting that having children may be a crucial aspect of life if women want to feel satisfied (Hoffnung & Williams, 2013). As women desire meaningful family lives, they are often forced to negotiate their work roles by switching to part-time status or becoming stay-at-home parents (Perrone & Worthington, 2001).

While maintaining their role as the primary caregivers, women are also currently earning the majority of bachelors and advanced degrees (Aumann, Bond, & Galinsky, 2011), and they are integrating further into management positions and full-time careers (Carli, 2010). Social Role Theory applies because as more women desire meaningful work lives, their work roles interfere with family roles causing conflict and stress.

As many women feel the constant need to justify working, men may feel the same need to justify staying at home to raise children (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005). Statistics show that husbands are more likely to be involved in the domestic realm, and more men aspire for egalitarian values (Aumann, Bond, & Galinsky, 2011). Men and women's experience with role strain and balancing work and family shows how shifting from traditional to modern gender roles can create more tension and conflict within families as parents question and try to justify their

conflicting roles and identities in the home and workplace (Deusen, Harrington, & Humberd, 2011). This also indicates the importance of developing role clarity with one's partner early and often in the relationship to minimize the stress associated with role strain.

It then becomes important to explore adults levels of satisfaction in both domestic and work environments and how competent adults feel in balancing work and family, so the coming-of-age generation can align their goals for the future with the experiences of adults who indicate the greatest levels of satisfaction. Members of the coming-of-age generation, who aspire for dual-career families, can alter their future goals if they find that adults are more satisfied in one environment than another, or if they find that adults feel incompetent in balancing work and family.

This study aims to identify how adults balance work and family, if they feel competent in doing so, and if they are satisfied with work and family environments and the decisions they have made involving work and family. Thereore the following research questions were proposed.

RQ2: How do adults manage their time and prioritize as they balance work and family?

RQ3: Do adults feel that they are competent in balancing work and family?

RQ4: Do adults feel satisfied with both their work and family environments?

Public & Private Spheres

The critical feminist perspective explores the relationship between the public and private spheres, how this relationship is articulated, and how the resulting discourses function to produce power relations or forms of resistance or transformation (Buzzanell, 2000). Buzzanell (2000) says, "By viewing the public sphere as a contested discursive space that is itself subject constantly to refinement and change, we are less likely to reify it in a way that limits possibilities for participatory forms of democracy" (p. 7). If both men and women viewed work environments

as public spheres shaped by contested discourses and always subject to change, it would be more

likely that gender roles would neutralize, increasing opportunities for women and decreasing

male privileges because organizations themselves would be gender neutral, rather than primarily

masculine.

In their private lives, women generally value their identity changes as they enter

motherhood, while rejecting the corporate constructions of women as weak, incompetent, and

uncommitted (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005). Women and colleagues often embrace the image of the

pregnant woman or the new mother, while employers associate negative signifiers, such as

"unreliable," "weak," or "incompetent" to pregnant women and new mothers (Meina &

Buzzanell, 2004, Buzzanell & Lui, 2005, p. 15). The discrepancy between pregnant women's

more positive self-image and employers' more negative image of pregnant workers makes it

more challenging for women to adapt and adhere to the standards upheld by masculine work

environments, and it highlights the need for transforming the discourses the public and private

spheres.

Lack of Family Friendly Policies & Inflexible Terms for Maternity Leaves

A large part of the problem for women in balancing work and family stems from the fact

that work environments are generally masculine, meaning that they often do not accommodate

the needs of women and children, and family friendly policies are not standard in many corporate

environments. Corporate constructions of ideal employees are hegemonic, and they reject

women by labeling them "unreliable" or "uncommitted," while privileging men for

compartmentalizing their lives (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005). It is common for employers to deny

women's requests for accommodations due to medical reasons, and women often lose

opportunities for promotions due to maternity leaves, because pregnancy signals "unreliability

and differences from ideal workers" (Meina & Buzzanell, 2004, p. 344). Also, pregnant women

often view the workforce environment as highly masculine, making it increasingly difficult to

negotiate the terms of maternity leaves (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005).

Strict, inflexible corporate policies involving maternity leaves reinforce traditional gender

roles, making it even more difficult for men and women to balance work and family. There is a

plethora of different ways women manage being pregnant workers, but maternity leaves

generally follow standard routine policies and procedures (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005). Recovery

time after childbirth can vary, depending on the physical and emotional needs of the mother and

child, so while maternity leaves should provide general guidelines and time frames, employers

should work with new mothers to assure both the mother and child are healthy before returning

to work.

Many working mothers indicate that they wished they could have take longer maternity

leaves to fully recover and bond with their children, but they returned to work mostly due to fear

of losing their positions or chances for upward mobility (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005). When women

decided to take a hiatus from work to raise children, most of them (70%) returned to work, and

half of those women were out of work for less than one year (Cabrera, 2007). Women are

basically forced to return to work shortly after having children because they risk losing their jobs

otherwise. This can exacerbate work family conflict because mothers feel responsible for the

domestic realm and raising their children, but also want to maintain their role in providing for the

family economically.

Masculine Work Environments

Employers judge employees commitment to their careers by how much time they spend

at work (Cabrera, 2007). Therefore, if two employees accomplish the same task and produce the

same quality product, but one finishes an hour early and leaves work, while the other spends the

last hour of work finishing the task, the employee who completed the task more efficiently is

considered less committed. Organizations benefit from such standardized policies because they

do not have to compensate for extended leaves to maintain unpredictable, less committed

employees (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005).

Clearly this deepens the struggle for pregnant workers or those with children at home

because longer work hours mean less family time. Since women "are relational and prefer to

integrate work and family," and they "do not compartmentalize their worlds" (Cabrera, 2007, p.

224), mothers are considered less committed employees. As mothers attempt to arrange their

schedules to accommodate family needs, fathers arrange their schedules to accommodate work

needs (Almer, Cohen, & Single, 2004). This parallel reinforces work as a masculine

environment, where men are ideal workers, and women as less committed, subordinate workers

(Cabrera, 2007).

Finally, Tretheway (2001) claims that women often leave the corporate environment

because they eventually grow "sick and tired of all the political hassles," and some women feel

that they "do not need to succeed according to a masculine model" (p. 196). While removing

themselves from the masculine model of success can be empowering for many women, there is a

downside. As women leave the work environment, they eliminate the potential for young women

entering the workforce to have mentors and a support system comprised of working women who

would be able to provide advice and guide young women to develop change and transformation

from within.

Conclusion

As men and women strive for more egalitarian roles, they navigate a variety of new challenges. The reviewed literature detailed several social problems individuals experience as they attempt to transition from traditional to modern gender roles and to reconstitute the notion of a family. These problems include: the can-do discourse, role-strain associated with strict gender roles, increased work-life balance, employer discrimination, and the lack of up-to-date policies and inflexible standards maintained by masculine work environments.

In this study, the researcher explored young men and women's aspirations for the future in terms of work and family to affirm that families are in fact transitioning from traditional to modern, as the majority of the coming-of-age generation indicated that they wanted to work full-time as well as get married and have children. The researcher also investigated 30-45 year olds' experience balancing work and family to gain a better understanding of: how satisfied men and women feel with the decisions they have made involving work-family balance, what sacrifices they have had to make in managing their time, and how competent they feel about their abilities to balance work and family.

Method

Participants

Information for this study was collected from two different populations with two different surveys. The Aspirations for the Future survey requested male and female respondents age 21-27 (n=13). The researcher chose this age range because most 21-27 year olds are actively considering their plans for the future and they are making decisions about marriage and relationships, childrearing, and college attendance and programs, and they are setting career goals or starting entry level careers. The Balancing Work and Family survey requested male and

female respondents age 30-45 (n=10), as men and women within this age range are generally

actively working to set routines in order to create work-family balance.

Procedure

        Approval was obtained from the University of Portland's Institutional Review Board

(IRB) for this study. Both surveys, Aspirations for the Future and Balancing Work and Family,

were posted to Facebook, requesting respondents and shares, to attract as many respondents as

possible online. Posting a survey to Facebook was considered the most effective method in

reaching respondents because individuals within the age range of 21-27 are digital natives;

therefore they are likely to check their social media accounts routinely, and they are generally

comfortable using technology and navigating the web (Prensky, 2001). While social media use is

less common for individuals within the age range of 30-45, the number of digital immigrants is

increasing, and Facebook provides an easy, convenient medium for a variety of people to

respond to the surveys and share them with their networks (Prensky, 2001). Four of the

researcher's Facebook friends shared the surveys, which extended their reach to four different

networks.

        The survey remained open for responses for two weeks. The link posted to social media

was accompanied by Steve Jobs' image and quote, as well as original content requesting shares

to snowball the survey to extended networks. While Jobs' image and quote could have swayed

some social media users to pass over the survey, research shows that links with images have

been visited more often than links without images (Kaplan, 2010). The iconic image was

included to make the post stand out on users' newsfeeds and to increase the likelihood of users

clicking the link to the survey. The quote provided users with some insight to the researchers'

general goals, which was to generate information about aspirations involving work and family

and to create a reflection of what participants wanted for the future. For both surveys,

respondents' identities remained anonymous throughout data collection, as names were not

included with responses.

Measures

The surveys were structured through Qualtrics (see Appendix A). Both surveys initially

presented six questions: one dichotomous, one multiple choice, and four fill-in-the-blank

questions, which made up the initial portion of the survey consisting of demographic

information. These questions included: sex, marital status, age, number of children, number of

years married, and current job title.

Aspirations for the Future

The next portion of the Aspirations for the Future survey consisted of seventeen statements

that were measured on a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. If

respondents were uncertain of how they felt about a statement or if they considered the material

to be too sensitive, this scale provided respondents with the option to indicate neutrality. These

statements measured: ideals, where respondents see themselves in the future (for example,

having children, working full-time, or being stay-at-home parents), time management, role

clarity between partners, self-improvement, and satisfaction (Brett & Stroh, 2003, Perrone &

Worthington, 200, Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981).

Based on the literature, the researcher created the Ideals Scale and the Where Respondents

See Themselves in the Future Scale. The Ideals Scale indicated modest reliability (Chronbach's

Alpha=.551), and the Where Respondents See Themselves in the Future Scale was initially not

reliable (alpha=.460), but the researcher eliminated two items to establish reliability

(alpha=.785). The researcher modified the Role Clarity Between Partners Scale (Brett & Stroh,

2003) by eliminating three statements, which resulted in unreliablility, therefore it was eliminated from the study. The Self-Improvement and Satisfaction Scales were used in previous research, and they both indicated modest reliability: Self-Improvement Scale (alpha=.535) and Satisfaction (alpha=.562) (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981, Perrone & Worthington, 2001). Balancing Work, Family, and Relationships

The next portion of the Balancing Work, Family, and Relationships survey presented seventeen statements that were measured on a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. These statements measured ideals, competence in balancing work and family, time management, role clarity between partners, and self-improvement (Brett & Stroh, 2003). Although not initially reliable (.402), the researcher eliminated one item from the Competence in Balancing Work and Family Scale, reliability rose to .844. Finally, the Time Management and Self-Improvement were used in previous research, and they both indicated modest reliability: Time Management (.567) and Self-Improvement (.584).

The Satisfaction Scale (Perrone & Worthington, 2001, Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981) consisted of eight elements, such as "I am _____ with my work environment," "I am _____ with my home environment," and "I am _____ with my work hours." These were measure on a Likert-scale ranging from Dissatisfied to Satisfied. These statements measured respondents' levels of satisfaction, and the Satisfaction Scale indicated reliability (Chronbach's alpha=.677) (Perrone & Worthington, 2001, Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981). Finally, the survey provided six statements that were measured on a Likert scale ranging from Never to All of the Time, and these statements also measured competence in balancing work and family, time management, support in the work environment, and role clarity between partners (Brett & Stroh, 2003).

Results

Aspirations for the Future

Of the 13 respondents, only two were males, and most of the respondents were childless, except for one respondent who indicated that he or she is raising a step-child, and two respondents who indicated that they each have one child. None of the respondents were married, but most of them indicated that they were currently in a relationship (77%).

To answer RQ1: What ideals do the coming-of-age generation have in terms of work and family, and do these ideals align with the can-do discourse?, the researcher looked at the percentages of 21-27 year olds that indiciated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they will: get married in the future, have a child/children in the future, work full-time or part-time, or stay at home while their partners work full-time. 69.2% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they will get married in the future, and 76.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they will have a child or children and work full-time. 38.4% of respondents said that they agree or strongly agree that they will work part-time, and none of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they will stay at home while their partners work full-time. This indicates that the majority of respondents planned to get married, have children, and work full-time, which shows that respondents' plans for the future do align with the can-do discourse.

To provide more insight about RQ1, the researcher looked at the percentages of 21-27 year olds who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements: "For me, having a career and having a partner with a career is my ideal lifestyle," "Married professionals have the best of two worlds: professional employment with a full family life," "I am confident that if I want to, I will be able to spend an equal amount of time at work and with my family," and "I am confident that I can have a family and work full-time." Results indicated that 69.2% of respondents agreed

or strongly agreed that having a career and having a partner with a career is their ideal lifestyle. 46.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that married professionals have the best of two worlds: professional employment with a full family life. 84.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are confident that they will be able to spend an equal amount of time at work and with their families, and 76.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident that they can have famililes and work full-time. This affirms that the majority of respondents believed in the can-do discourse and they felt that their future selves would be relatively competent in balancing work and family.

Balancing Work and Family

Of the 10 respondents, only one was male, and all of the respondents were married, except one who indicated that he or she was currently in a relationship. Only one respondent was childless, and the number of children for the rest of respondents ranged from 1-4. Respondents were employed with various careers in marketing, the service industry, healthcare, and education. Two of the respondents were homemakers, and one of the homemakers indicated that he or she was currently taking online courses for an associate's degree.

To explore RQ2, How do adults manage their time and prioritize as they balance work and family?, the researcher looked at the percentages of adults who indicated agreement or strong agreement with statements on the Time Management Scale. 80% of respondents strongly agreed that family is more important than work. 40% agreed and 50% strongly agreed that if a child were ill and needed to remain home from school, they would be more likely to stay at home with him/her than their spouses. This showed that adults generally prioritize the demands of the family over work demands, and they manage their time by putting family first.

To explore RQ3, Do adults feel that they are competent in balancing work and family?, the

researcher looked at the percentages of adults who agreed or strongly agreed with statements from the Competence Scale. 60% of respondents indicated that they become upset, angry, or irritable because of work-family conflict. 70% of respondents said they get discouraged trying to make work-family compromises, and 70% of respondents indicated that they felt tension about balancing all of their responsibilities often or all of the time. This showed that the majority of respondents experienced anger, irritability, discouragement, and tension in balancing work and family, which suggests that they did not feel very competent in balancing work and family.

To explore RQ4, Do adults feel satisfied with both their work and family environments?, the researcher looked at the percentages of respondents who indicated that they were Somewhat Satisfied or Satisfied according to statements from the Satisfaction Scale (Perrone & Worthington, 2001, Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981). 40% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the decisions they have made involving their families, and 50% indicated that they were somewhat satisfied. 60% of respondents said they were satisfied with their home environments and when they communicate their job titles to others. 40% indicated they were satisfied with their work hours their work environments, and the decisions they have made involving their careers. 50% of respondents said they were satisfied with the lengths of time they were provided for maternity/paternity leaves. This suggested that respondents were more satisfied with their home environments and their decision-making processes in the domestic realm than in the corporate realm.

Discussion

This study addressed the coming-of-age generation's ideal visions for the future in terms of work and family, as well as how adults currently balance work and family, and how likely it is that, in the future, the coming-of-age generation will be able to create their ideal visions for their

lives in terms of work and family. Some insight was provided to the proposed research questions (RQ1-5); however, further research on the subject is required.

Most of the 21-27 year olds surveyed indicated that they were confident that they would be able to have a family and work full-time. This confirms Wood's (2010) claim that the coming-of-age generation wants to have it all and believes in the "Can-Do" discourse; however, results from RQ3 indicated that respondents generally put the demands of the family above work demands. Since the majority of respondents to the Balancing Work and Family survey were women (90%), this suggests affirmation of Buzzanell's (2000) claim that women often have a more distinctive role than men in the domestic realm, as well as Perrone & Worthington's (2001) claim that women are more likely than men to negotiate their work roles by switching to part-time status or becoming stay-at-home parents. To affirm these claims substantially, this study would require more respondents, especially more male respondents to more fully represent the male perspective.

The can-do discourse suggests that balancing work and family is simple if one is motivated and dedicated in both work and family environments (Wood, 2010). It was interesting that a higher percentage (69.2%) of respondents to the Aspirations for the Future survey agreed or strongly agreed that having a career and haing a partner with a career is their ideal lifestyle, while a lower percentage (46.3%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that married professionals have the best of two worlds: professional employment with a full family life. This could indicate that the respondents may be aware of the challenges and difficulties of balancing work and family, but most plan to take this path anyway.

One of the problems with the can-do discourse involved employer discrimination against women in masculine work environments and the lack of family friendly policies as well as

inflexible maternity leaves (Wood, 2010). This could explain the slightly lower levels of

satisfaction that adults indicated as they ranked satisfaction in their work environments and

around the decisions they have made involving their careers. Also, the majority of respondents

expressed experiences of anger, irritability, discouragement, and tension in balancing work and

family, which suggests that they did not feel very competent in balancing work and family. Some

of these negative experiences could be rooted in the problems outline in the literature involving

women in masculine work environments.

Limitations

Both surveys received a very low level of respondents (total n=23), which was a major

limitation to this study. Future researchers should use a variety of methods to ensure a higher

response rate, such as emailing or handing out paper surveys or getting in touch with

organizations that will distribute the survey to members, volunteers, or employees. Of the small

number of respondents, only 3 resondents were males, which underrepresented the male

perspective and experience in both the coming-of-age generation's aspirations for the future as

well as adults' experience balancing work and family. Gaining access to more respondents would

increase the amount of male respondents, creating a more heterogenous sample. A more

heterogenous sample would allow the researcher to make more detailed claims about the data, as

it would be possible to measure the differences between male and female perceptions and

experiences.

Some of the measures developed or adopted for this study were not reliable. This was

another limitation to the study because it decreased the amount and depth of the claims the

researcher was able to make when analyzing the results. Future researchers should test the

reliability of their scales as early as possible in order to refine their surveys before distributing to their desired population.

Many men and women have expressed their desire to develop new skills, face new challenges, and overcome obstacles outside of the traditional gendered domains of work and family. Individuals currently struggle to transition from traditional to modern gender roles, which is made increasingly difficult by masculine work environments and inflexible policies and procedures (Buzzanell & Lui, 2005). As the "Can-Do" discourse is repeated to the coming-of-age generation, it also becomes increasingly difficult not to idealize the notion of having it all (Wood, 2010). This is why it is so important for young men and women to look at the experiences of full-time employees who currently balance work and family to see what the future may hold, and what changes are necessary to break free of traditional gender roles.

Appendix A

Survey 1: Aspirations for the Future (AFF)

Your assistance with this research project is greatly appreciated. I hope you will enjoy the opportunity to reflect on your current situation at work, with family, and in relationships as well as reflect on your aspirations and goals for the future.

Respondents will remain completely anonymous, as names will not appear anywhere on the survey. Surveys will be identified by number only and the results will be aggregated for statistical analysis.

The survey will take 20-25 minutes. The survey is completely voluntary and you can exit at any time. If you do not wish to participate, simply exit the survey now and do not complete the questions. Completing and returning the survey constitutes your consent to participate. If you return the survey and then decide that you no longer want your survey included in the results, please contact me as soon as possible, requesting that your survey be discarded.

If you have any questions regarding the research, contact either me or my advisor, Elayne Shapiro:

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Elayne Shapiro
shapiro@up.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research respondent, please contact the Institutional Review Board office at the University of Portland at irb@up.edu. Thank you again for your help.

Sex

      ○ Male

      ○ Female

Marital Status

      ○ Single

      ○ In a relationship

○ Married

Age (in years)

[   ]

Number of children

[   ]

Number of years married

[   ]

Current job title

[   ]

Please rate the following statements on the Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will get married in the future.					
I will have a child/children in the future.					
I will work full-time.					
I will work part-time.					
I will stay at home while my partner works full-time.					
For me, having a career and having a partner with a career is my ideal lifestyle.					

I currently take care of the majority of household labor.

Family is more important to me than work.

I will only pursue a career that allows for a good work-life balance.

I would consider taking maternity/paternity leave.

I plan to share the roles of breadwinning and caregiving equally with my partner.

I am confident that if I want to, I will be able to spend an equal amount of time at work and with my family.

Given the structure of our society, it is important that the woman assume primary responsibility for childcare.

I am satisfied when I communicate my job title to others.

I am confident that I can have a family and work full-time.

Married professionals
have the best of two
worlds: professional
employment
combined with a full
family life.

If you are currently in a relationship or married, please rate the following statement on the Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. If you are not currently in a relationship or married, please disregard this item.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

My partner and I share
the same ideas about
work and family balance.

Survey 2: Balancing Work and Family (BWF)

Your assistance with this research project is greatly appreciated. I hope you will enjoy the opportunity to reflect on your current situation at work, with family, and in relationships as well as reflect on your aspirations and goals for the future.

Respondents will remain completely anonymous, as names will not appear anywhere on the survey. Surveys will be identified by number only and the results will be aggregated for statistical analysis.

The survey will take 20-25 minutes. The survey is completely voluntary and you can exit at any time. If you do not wish to participate, simply exit the survey now and do not complete the questions. Completing and returning the survey constitutes your consent to participate. If you return the survey and then decide that you no longer want your survey included in the results, please contact me as soon as possible, requesting that your survey be discarded.

If you have any questions regarding the research, contact either me or my advisor, Elayne Shapiro:

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If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research respondent, please contact the Institutional Review Board office at the University of Portland, at irb@up.edu. Thank you again for your help.

Sex

○   Male

○   Female

Marital Status

○   Single

○   In a relationship

○   Married

Age (in years)

[_____]

Number of children

[_____]

Number of years married

[_____]

Current job title

[_____]

Please rate the following statements on the Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
For me, having a career and having a partner with a career is my ideal lifestyle.					

I am comfortable
negotiating flexible work
hours with my supervisor.

If I decided to transition
from full-time to part-time
employment, my superiors
would support this decision
and accommodate my needs.

Family is more important to
me than work.

My partner and I share the
same ideas about work and
family balance.

My partner seems
unreasonablein what s/he
expects around the house.

I become upset, angry, or
irritable because of
work-family conflict.

Married professionals have
the best of two worlds:
professional employment
combined with a full family life.

Given the structure of our
society, it is important that
the woman assume primary
responsibility for child care.

My home life interferes with
my responsibilities at work
such as getting to work on time,
accomplishing daily tasks,
and working overtime.

If a child were ill and needed
to remain home from school,
I would be more likely to stay
home with him/her than
my spouse.

I consider my spouse to be
the main breadwinner in the
family.

My career has made me a
better partner than I would
 have been otherwise.

My career has made me a
better parent (mother or father)
than I otherwise would have been.

I feel competent and fully
able to handle my marriage
and work.

I get discouraged trying to
make my work and family
compromises.

My partner is supportive
of my career.

Please rate the following statements on the Likert scale, ranging from Dissatisfied to Satisfied.

	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied

I am satisfied with
the decisions I have
made involving my family.

I am satisfied with the time
I am able to spend outside
of work.

I am satisfied with
my home environment.

I am satisfied when I
communicate my job title
to others.

I am satisfied with the
decisions I have made
involving my career.

I am satisfied with
my work hours.

I am satisfied with
my work environment.

I am satisfied with the
length of time I was
provided for my
maternity/paternity leave(s).

Please rate the following statements on the Likert scale, ranging from Never to All of the Time.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the Time

I sacrifice work events to
spend time with my family.

My partner's career has
taken precedence over mine.

Personal commitments
interfere with my job.

I sacrifice family time
for work.

I feel tension about
balancing all of my
responsibilities.

I feel that I should change
something about my work
in order to balance all
of my responsibilities.

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