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Jodi R. Case

The University of Montana

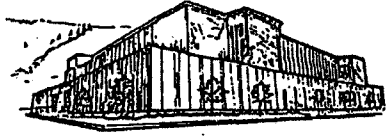
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OPTING-OUT: A FEMINIST EXPLORATION OF STAY-AT-HOME
MOTHERHOOD AMONG MISSOULA'S
PINK-COLLAR PROFESSIONALS

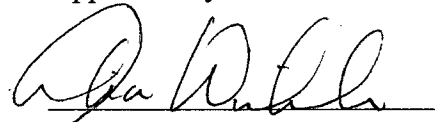
by

Jodi R. Case

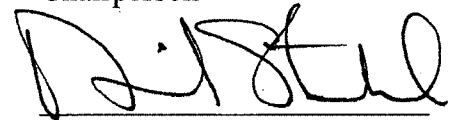
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Dean, Graduate School

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Opting-Out: A Feminist Exploration of Stay At Home Motherhood Among Missoula's Pink-Collar Professionals

Chairperson: Celia Winkler, *CW*

Stay-at-home motherhood is on the rise in the U.S. for the first time in generations, particularly among educated, professional women. This so-called opting-out trend is explored in this thesis through the experiences of pink-collar professionals in Missoula, Montana. While they fit the general demographics of the trend, they provide unique experiences based on the low wage and status of their occupations.

I explore the decision to opt-out and the multiple factors considered based on eleven in-depth interviews and a grounded theory research approach. The factors that consistently proved most influential were occupational constraints, occupational identity, the importance of being present, and the importance of making good choices.

My findings suggest that pink-collar professionals similarly experience the incompatibility of work and family commitments experienced by higher status women in male-dominated occupations. The women in this sample seem to be less committed to the behaviors associated with intensive mothering ideology (such as "over parenting") than their higher status counterparts. However, the idea that there is a window of time when mothers need to make their children a priority over their careers was a consistent theme, suggesting that employment/family balance is widely perceived as possible but only after crucial bonding time has been accomplished. The women involved in this study also differ from higher status professionals in that the majority of them had single, working mothers, which greatly impacted their concepts of good mothering and reactions to available choices.

I use Nancy Fraser's Universal Caregiver Model to analyze possible solutions to the unrelenting tension between employment and family as presented by the participants. Her model rests on the redistribution of both public and private care work. Because of this, the pink-collar paradox presents a challenge to professional caregivers and could encourage even further marginalization of caregivers in our society.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must acknowledge the interview participants. This project would not have been possible without the participation of the thirteen women who lent me their stories, experiences, time and emotion.

I would also like to thank my committee for their guidance and support throughout this project. Celia Winkler has been a mentor and friend in addition to an advisor. I would like to thank her for her unrelenting confidence in my abilities and instincts. I would also like to thank Kathy Kuipers and Sarah Hayden for their interest, insights and critiques. This project would have been very different without these inspirational women on my team.

Finally, I must thank my family. The financial, mental, emotional, and sometimes physical support of my mother, father, best friend and son have allowed me to complete this research. Thank you isn't enough to express my appreciation for the work they have put into my academic pursuits.

This thesis is dedicated to the work (paid and unpaid) of all mothers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

No choice has a more profound impact on a woman's life than her decision whether or not to become a mother. Despite a decline in fertility rates in recent decades, most American women still chose to become mothers and assume an inefaceable moral identity tied to care giving obligations. Because the family does not exist in isolation from other social systems, decisions about motherhood and child rearing necessarily have implications for women's extra-domestic aspirations as well. An economy built on a prototypical employee who is exempt from care-giving obligations and a cultural fidelity to the supremacy of maternal care have created an environment where a mother's earning power and career achievement suffer and her personal success is ultimately tied to her care of others.

I entered graduate school with an already formed fascination with motherhood studies and a belief that motherhood choices are possibly the most emotionally gripping and socially pivotal decisions of modern times. I was intrigued by a number of articles that documented a recent trend among successful professional women leaving high status careers to stay home with their children. These symbols of success for the modern Women's Movement seemed to be dissatisfied with their ability to have it all: this made me wonder what their opting-out may mean for the rest of us. I wanted to know how these women made this decision, what their decision reveals about the structure of the workplace and the structure of the family in the new millennium. In academia the dilemma has resulted in discussions about how to construct more equitable organizations and families in order to break down the employment/family contradiction. Feminist

researchers and theorists have tried to encourage movement from either/or positioning to more fluid employment and family constructs. This project is an extension of that effort.

In this thesis I analyze how eleven middle-class professionals in Missoula, Montana have experienced their employment/family choices and how they ultimately came to choose full-time, at home motherhood. Through their stories, I explore some of the major concepts central to the employment/family dilemma within the unique context of lower-status professionals. The career-work stories illustrate the perseverance of the ideal worker concept that structures our economy and constrains workers' ability to make choices that benefit their families and careers simultaneously. The mother-work stories illustrate the concept of the ideal parent and how intensive mothering ideology has become vital to the construct of the good mother. The ideal worker and the ideal parent are oppositional and dependent upon one another. Together they sustain traditional family organization and the division of labor within the economy. Both sets of stories also uncover how the concept of the ideal citizen is gendered in the assumption that economic production rather than social reproduction is the path to ideal citizenship and based on a typical male life pattern.

In addition to exploring these central concepts, I present a pink-collar paradox to each set of stories. The participants in this study were employed in professions dominated by women and therefore are labeled "pink-collar" professionals. They offer a unique and sometimes-alternative experience from the more affluent professionals previously studied. Moreover, the majority of participants in this study also worked in professions where their job descriptions centered on the mental, physical, emotional or educational care of others. I refer to them as the "caring professionals". Their employment/family

decisions are even further complicated by the attachment that they have to care work regardless of whether or not it is done for pay. They offer an important contribution to the study of workplace family policy as well as to care work ideology.

In the following chapters, I briefly review the literature on the so-called opting-out trend. After an overview of the literature, I discuss my methodological approach, the process of data collection and analysis and introduce the participants. They are the central component of this research, as I am not trying to generalize their experiences to any larger population. Their stories however, can contribute to further research and to greater understanding of employment/motherhood decisions for professional women in general and for pink-collar professionals in particular.

I tell and discuss the career-work and the mother-work stories separately to represent the dichotomy of public and private work in our culture as well as in the minds of these participants. The same questions were answered differently if asked within the context of an employment discussion or a family discussion. Most of these women have not resolved their employment/family conflicts even though they have come to a decision on how to temporarily deal with them. I present a pink-collar paradox as the discussion section to each set of stories. This is the unique perspective of these participants coming from pink-collar professions, how they differ from their higher-status counterparts and what they add to the understanding of employment/family dilemmas. Finally, I outline some possible strategies for integrating the stories and alleviating the paradox for pink-collar professionals. Nancy Fraser's Universal Caregiver Model is specifically analyzed as a possible solution to the unrelenting conflict and then critiqued from the perspective of the pink-collar paradox.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OPTING-OUT LITERATURE

Opting-out refers to the recent trend in professional women leaving their occupations and rejecting the male structure of the workplace. Some leave seeking new definitions of occupational success through innovations such as home-based employment, while others leave seeking traditional definitions of family success based on maternal presence. The term was coined by Lisa Belkin in her 2003 article *The Opt-out Revolution* in which she claimed that women are not making further advancements economically or politically because “maybe they don’t want to” (3). The lack of flexibility in corporate jobs and the shift in values that occurs with the birth of a child has created a need for women to redefine success and happiness in spite of the generations of social change that have opened occupational doors for them. Her small and selective sample of elite professionals and her tone of support for traditional family definitions was the center of some controversy surrounding the publication. Gilbert (2005) rejects Belkin’s account of a revolution and instead points to the increased number of women in high status positions that necessarily increase the numbers of those who opt-out. He claims that the media celebrates any small movement towards traditional motherhood because of shrinking fertility rates and the affinity for imposing traditional values upon all women. Furthermore, Gilbert points out that a revolution signifies fundamental change in people’s values, “a new awakening that is compelling women to substitute one type of life for another” (2005: 2). He attempts to dismiss this claim.

Even critics of Belkin’s revolution cannot ignore the census data that suggest some movement from the professional world of work to stay-at-home motherhood. Labor

force participation of mothers with children under the age of one dropped from 59% in 1998 to 55% in 2002 (Armour 2004). This is an arguably small drop and limited to women with very young children. However, this is the first decline in maternal employment among any demographic group since the census began collecting such data and the decrease is occurring only among college educated, white, married women over 30 years old. In addition, other studies have shown that there has been a 15% increase in the number of stay-at-home moms in less than 10 years (CBS news 2004). So, while the numbers may be small, they are not insignificant when one considers the demographics of those opting-out and the environment in which they are making decisions. The largest concentration of women opting-out is among those who have advanced degrees and work in high status professions. Most of these women have succeeded in male-dominated occupations and serve as role models for future generations of career women. Their refutation of the formal and informal constraints of the workplace on family life is an important social trend. Even if it is not a revolution, the opting-out trend has come to signify the rejection of a 40-year full-speed-ahead career path.

Popular media have given the opting-out trend quite a bit of attention over the past few years. *Time*, *Newsweek*, *60 Minutes*, and *The New York Times* have all run stories about elite professionals or Ivy League graduates who are choosing to stay home with their children. One of the focal points of these exposés is on what the trend means to and reveals about the American corporation. The loss of female talent in the workplace is typically overshadowed in these reports by the loss of motivation to pursue a career path that does not allow a woman to also be a mother. Although this may be a contemporary trend, feminist researchers have been critiquing the male model of the workplace for

decades. Following the dramatic changes in the labor force during the 1970s and 1980s, many researchers became interested in how employed women managed their public work and private family lives. The findings from many inquiries have resulted in an awareness of the multiple constraints on mothers in the workforce. One of the most notable constraints stems from the fact that as women moved into paid employment they did not relinquish significant amounts of unpaid care work in the home (Mantilla 2004). Hochschild (1989) was among the first to identify this in *The Second Shift*. The second shift refers to the care work that a mother (as well as other women) do in the home after the paid workday is done. This is socially necessary unpaid labor that is not acknowledged by the workplace but is crucial to its smooth operation. Because women do this reproductive labor (caring for children, making dinner, doing laundry) they are unable to fulfill the expectations of a workplace that demands full attention and devotion. Time off for childbearing and child rearing (such as school plays and dentist appointments) set women on a separate and unequal track within their occupations, limiting chances for promotions and raises. The second shift lays the foundation for other constraints such as the glass ceiling, the mommy track, and pink-collar ghetto because it is the unpaid reproductive labor of women that make married men more competitive in the workplace and further divide women and men in the economy as well as in the family.

Recent employment/family research has expanded its focus to include both workplace constraints on decisions and personal beliefs about good mothering. These studies contribute greatly to our understanding of the complexity of choices mothers face and reveal how vital motherhood ideologies are to employment/family decisions. Blair-

Loy (2003) studied financial executives, both currently employed and those who have opted-out, and found that career devotion and family devotion are both morally and emotionally salient cultural schemas. The capitalist firm and the nuclear family are structured around these oppositional schemas while perpetuating them through the intense devotion that each requires. Mothers are profoundly affected by competing devotions because their social and individual identities are called into question. The good mother is not a corporate executive and the good executive is not a mother. Finding a way to balance the competing devotions and create meaningful lives within this dichotomy is “to grapple with social and individual identity” (Blair-Loy 2003: 4).

Employment/family decisions often come down to availability of resources but even when it is deemed an economic necessity, employment/family decisions usually entail more than a simple cost/benefit analysis. Hattery (2001) identified a combination of occupational opportunity, human capital, and motherhood ideologies as most common for women when making labor force decisions. Beyond structural constraints or opportunities of employment, she suggests that motherhood ideologies affect both the range of possible solutions perceived for balancing employment and family as well as the actual mechanisms that women choose in solving the conflict. For those who choose to opt-out, either employment is not considered a significant financial benefit or there is a strong adherence to the notion that mothers provide superior care in comparison to other possible caregivers. The central concept of intensive mothering ideology is the belief that maternal care is superior to any other possible care option for children.

Popular media and academic researchers have focused their attention on high status professionals in response to the opting-out trend. This is understandable due to

their success in positions previously occupied only by men but it does not reflect the totality of the trend. The census data show that the decline in labor force participation and the rise in stay-at-home motherhood has occurred among college educated, white, married women over 30. While the greatest concentration may be among higher status professionals, there are many professional, college-educated women who are not financial executives, editors of major publications, or corporate lawyers. Maternal labor force research also tends to focus on mothers who are currently employed. In fact Bosco (2002) found that nearly 80% of employment/family research explores the conflict from the perspective of professional or managerial employed mothers. Housewives, part-time and lower status workers are rarely taken into the analysis. For these reasons, the pink-collar professionals who have opted-out provide an alternate experience of the multiple factors involved in employment/family decisions. This project expands the focus of recent efforts to evaluate structural constraints in-combination with pervasive ideologies in maternal labor force decisions by providing the insights of pink-collar, lower economic status women who fit the general demographics of the opting-out trend.

Missoula, Montana provides an interesting location for this research because of its limited high-status options, relatively low earning potential and small population. Missoula is a small metropolitan area with an official county population of just over 80,000 according to the 2000 Census. The median income for Missoula county is \$37,500 and the Missoula metro area ranks 319th in the nation for personal income. These statistics suggest that Missoula, while growing in median income and population, continues to lack the high-income potential that larger cities provide. Instead, most migrants and natives live in Missoula for its natural beauty, small town feel, and

recreational opportunities. Some newcomers appreciate the comparatively low cost of housing with the median home price being \$99,000 for the state. Business growth in Missoula County has been concentrated in the areas of accommodations and food service and retail while opportunities for executive level professionals continue to be sparse. This economic and cultural climate provides an alternate location for opting-out research since most of the popular media have focused on major metropolitan areas and elite professionals. Even the academic research has not adequately explored opting-out among professionals who do not have high income or high status as linked to their professions. Hattery and Warner both interviewed lower income women and suburban middle-class women but neither sample looked exclusively at lower income professionals. Furthermore, the vast majority of opting-out and employment/family research is located in urban areas where the potential for high earnings is greater than it is in Missoula, Montana.

CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Before I selected a thesis topic, I knew that I wanted to begin my research from women's experiences and knowledge of their own lives. I also knew that I wanted to step outside of the traditional methods of research and accept that all knowledge is socially located. When I decided to study the opting-out trend among middle-class mothers, a feminist perspective, focusing on examination of women's oppressive situations, became epistemologically challenging. At first glance, these women are privileged with available choices and resources. They overwhelmingly feel "blessed" or "lucky" to be able to make autonomous choices concerning employment and family. Because I wanted their experiences to be the center of this project, I did not want to force categorical subordination on their choices.

Standpoint theories opened my eyes to an epistemological approach to feminist research where I could construct effective knowledge from the insights of women's experiences without necessarily sharing their perspectives. According to Dorothy Smith "The sociologist as actual person in an actual concrete setting, the sociological knower, has been 'canceled' from the act of knowing by a procedure that objectifies and separates him from his knowledge" (1987: 85). Perspective is always value laden and the researcher is always a subject in the research process; the separation is impossible and the researcher must be part of the research procedure.

This insight allowed me to situate myself in the research process, explore institutional and personal relations simultaneously and abandon the "theory to test" approach to research. The most controversial aspect of standpoint theory, however,

required even more epistemological tweaking. Feminist standpoint theorists assert that oppositional knowledge actually provides a better view of reality than knowledge produced by the dominant groups in society (Harding 1991, Harstock 1993, Hill-Collins 1990). Location within an oppressed group provides one with the ability to see multiple perspectives and multiple versions of reality. Because the opting-out trend that I had decided to research was primarily occurring among upper middle-class, white women, it was difficult to identify demographics that would produce an oppositional knowledge.

I began to get referrals for interview participants that were not upper middle-class but were working class professionals. They were mainly pink-collar women who fit the demographics of the trend in all ways except for income. I decided that they might provide the oppositional knowledge that I had hoped to find. Because the trend has been primarily studied among elite or upper middle-class women, the pink-collar women involved in this project contribute an important and unique vision of motherhood reality.

Data Collection and Analysis

I conducted a series of in-depth interviews as the method of data collection for this project. In addition to the eleven interviews used in the analysis, I conducted two pilot interviews that helped me refine my interview guide as well as hone my interview and note taking skills. I used a semi-standardized interview structure with just a few open ended questions followed by a number of probes that allowed me to address the main areas of my investigation while giving the participants the freedom to respond in ways they felt were important. Because this project was participant-driven, some of the interviews were considerably longer than others with the average time being about 90

minutes. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed within 48 hours of the interview. All transcriptions were done using pseudonyms and some changes were made in other identifying characteristics in order to honor our agreement to protect confidentiality.

The qualitative analysis was an ongoing process beginning in the data collection stage. As appropriate with a grounded theory approach, I did initial open coding when each transcribed interview was completed and informed subsequent interviews with previous analyses and ongoing literature reviews. I employed the assistance of NVIVO software to organize cases and categorize themes. However, the categories and emergent themes changed and grew throughout the process and hand coding allowed me to feel more connected to the data. The analysis was influenced by the evolution of theoretical frameworks discovered during the process as well. It was important to me throughout this process to avoid fitting participants' words into a theoretical framework that may have represented their meanings out of context. The feminist challenge in research is to abandon the categorical thinking that has dominated scholastic training. This was one especially challenging aspect of the project due to the amount of literature that seemed pertinent at various stages of data collection and analysis. Because I was interested in the interaction of multiple factors involved in the decision to stay home, I decided that a brief analysis using various theoretical approaches was best suited for this project.

I used a snowball sampling method to locate interview participants. The sample was obtained through referrals from a number of unacquainted contacts. I put up signs at about ten different locations and got three referrals from those signs. Personal friends and colleagues provided me with two referrals and I obtained referrals from a number of my

participants as well. I needed to make sure that I was not interviewing too many people who knew each other or were associated with each other. I purposely sought women of different religious, political and geographical backgrounds in order to obtain as much variation as possible. I did this by following up on only one referral from each participant and no more than two in the line of acquaintances. Because of the sampling method I chose, my findings are not intended to be generalizable to any population outside of the research participants themselves.

Interviews were almost exclusively conducted in the participants' homes. I set aside time before we turned on the tape recorder to get to know each other and settle into a conversational tone. One interview was done at a coffee shop. I was nervous about the noise level for recording and about how being surrounded by strangers would affect our ability for open and honest conversation. It worked out great and the woman I interviewed was so excited about getting out at night for coffee, pie and conversation that she fell into a girl talk mode immediately.

The Participants

The participants ranged in age from 26 to 48 and had children from 6 months to 22 years old at the time of the interview. All of the women interviewed had at least one college degree; two had Master's degrees, two had more than one Bachelor's degree, and two had additional certifications beyond their four-year degree. They were all highly committed to their education and/or careers before making the decision to stay home. The criteria I used for selecting participants was originally just having at least a four year degree. I was hoping to find women who articulated a certain level of commitment to a

particular line of work rather than moving through many careers before becoming a full time parent. This was difficult to access before interviewing them, but referrals helped me target women who seemed to be committed to their careers before opting-out. This was assessed by asking how long they had worked in their professions and if they had gone to school for that particular career. In the process of interviewing and receiving referrals, I realized that all of the respondents could be classified as pink-collar professionals. This became an additional criterion for selecting interview participants.

The women I interviewed have similar educational attainment and occupational status. Three teachers, three nurses, two social workers, two small business owners, and a legal secretary make up the sample. The time spent in their careers before opting-out ranged from four years to nearly twenty years. All of them reported being Caucasian and all were married except for one who was widowed after deciding to opt-out. Furthermore, the women interviewed for this project expressed a variety of philosophical and religious beliefs. Two identified themselves to me as feminists, two said that they were conservative Christians, one was a Catholic, one a non-denominational Christian, one practices Buddhism, two stated that they were politically liberal, one that she was politically conservative, and one told me that she was a socialist. All of them expressed a sense of satisfaction with their decision to opt-out and with the choices available to them personally.

Participant information Chart

Name	Age	Degree	Occupation	# of Kids	Kids' Ages	Years Msla	Worked after a child	Raised by single mother	Career Goal
Olivia	32	MSW	Social worker	2	13, 2	2	No	Yes	Start own nonprofit
Margret	46	BSN	RN	5	20, 14, 8, 7, 5	Most of life	Yes	Yes	Neonatal nurse
Mariah	32	BS	Business owner	2	3, 6mo	4	No	Yes	Home based business
Rene	28	BA	Self employed	1	2	2	No	Yes	Open alternative school
Nancy	48	BSN	RN	3	12,9,6	27	Yes	No	Diabetes nurse
Sarah	26	BA	Leagal Secretary	2	7, 2	8	No	Yes	Wedding planner
Ann	34	MA	Teacher	3	6,4, 18 mo	1	Yes	No	Elementary school principal
Tasha	39	BS	RN	2	11,8	9	Yes	Yes	Hospital administrati on
Wynonna	30	BA	Social Worker	1	2	12	Yes	Yes	Writer
Carrie	33	BA	Teacher	2	4, 10 mo	14	Yes	Yes	Teacher
Erin	29	BA	Teacher	2	3, 15 mo	29	Yes	No	PhD in Special Education

Reflections on the Research Process

Harding (1991) calls for critical examination of the researcher's social location in order to address objectivity, not to achieve it. I realized before I began this project that my own standpoint was relevant to the research and my own experiences and biases must be acknowledged. I am a mother and am close in age and educational attainment to most of the participants. I hoped that these factors would help me build rapport and reduce the possibility of power inequalities. I am also a single mother who has chosen (and needed) to work outside the home, and these differences need special attention. I am certain that my child rearing choices being different from theirs had an impact on the honesty and openness of some of my participants. I tried to share my questions about my own decision and show them respect for the decisions they have made in order to make them more comfortable in opening up to me. I tried to spend at least fifteen minutes talking to each participant before turning on the tape recorder. Many of them had questions about my own motherhood experiences and many had questions about how I came to be interested in this project. My goal was to increase their comfort level and give them a chance to see my motivation for talking with them was really to learn from them, not to get support for an already determined outcome. I believe that this approach worked for the most part and most participants enjoyed talking about themselves and having someone truly interested for a couple of hours.

Limitations of this Research

The interview participants guided this project and the insights derived from this report are generated directly from their experiences. Their unique perspective as pink-collar professionals is a great contribution to the literature and I recommend that future research more thoroughly explore this population. One of the limitations of this project is the uncertainty surrounding the impact I had on the participants' honesty and openness. The participants may have chosen to express themselves differently if the researcher was not a single, working mother. I feel that I underestimated how this difference would affect the relationship between my participants and myself. I estimate that about half of the participants were affected in some way by my motherhood and employment choices. I cannot say that they were dishonest but it would benefit this line of inquiry to have a larger sample and possibly multiple interviews over time in order to build rapport and trust. The analysis was difficult due to the amount of data and the various literatures that this data could contribute to. I decided to briefly explore multiple factors in the decision to opt-out rather than focus in and do a thorough investigation of just one or two factors. Future research would benefit from an intensive analysis of motherhood ideologies among caring professionals for example. It was important to me to uncover multiple factors and how they interact but each factor needs more exploration within this particular population.

Personal Note

This research project was academically challenging as a thesis should be but it also challenged me personally as a mother and became very emotional for me at times.

Initially I kept a research journal to remind myself of changes that I needed to make or hints for future research, but the journal quickly turned to a more typical “Dear Diary”. As I left my son in day care during my summer break or had a family member bring him to his TaeKwonDo lessons, I talked to other mothers about the centrality of their children in their choices. The women I interviewed are loving, considerate and dedicated mothers. They truly put their children first in their everyday lives as well as in their goals for the future. I found myself questioning my own decisions about how to balance time and energy between work and family. Intellectually, I could defend my choices and I felt strongly about the path I was on but I hadn’t reconciled the emotions involved in this balance until well into the project. Ann, one of the participants, told me that when she was working as a teacher she could justify all of her decisions and she believed them intellectually, but there came a point when it just didn’t make “emotional sense” to her anymore. This project and these women helped me make emotional sense out of my own motherhood choices. They have my abiding gratitude and respect.

CHAPTER 4

CAREER-WORK STORIES

Why would a woman who loves her career, who has worked her way through college and the ranks of her profession opt-out in order to do the “least valued job in the

world” (Crittenden 2000)? This question has been approached by some researchers through examination of the structure of the workplace and the constraints placed on women who have care giving responsibilities and desires (Crittenden 2000, Williams and Cohen Cooper 2004). Occupational constraints are defined here as policies or expectations of the workplace that impact the employee’s ability to be successful in career and family life simultaneously. In addition to the external constraints presented by the occupations, occupational identity is often an internal constraint on employment/family decisions. Career devotion becomes an important part of a woman’s identity and it comes into conflict with other aspects of her identity when she becomes a mother (Blair-Loy 2003). In order to preserve occupational identity, some women avoid becoming mothers but most women resolve the conflict by submitting to one aspect of her identity and abandoning or delaying the other.

The participants in this study express occupational constraints through discussing their re-entrance strategies more than through their pre-opting-out courses of action. Similarly, the impact of opting-out on occupational identity was not realized until after the decision was made. Once the participants had opted-out, they reflected upon certain aspects of their identity that are tied to employment and not to unpaid mothering. Nine of the eleven women interviewed continued to be employed after the birth of at least one child, which positions them to fully experience constraints and consequences of balancing employment and family. Of course, for these participants one consequence of the balancing act was opting-out.

In this chapter, I tell the career-work stories in two sections reflecting the two major themes that emerged from the data. Occupational constraints refer to the limited

opportunities to combine employment with family life provided by the employer. The three most common constraints for these professionals were the lack of part-time options, short and inflexible maternity leave, and the high cost of childcare. Occupational identity refers to aspects of self-concept tied to or acquired through employment that are not generated through their work as a mother. The three most commonly expressed aspects of occupational identity were reputation, independence and collaboration. After telling these stories, I present the pink-collar paradox. The paradox is the unique perspective offered by these participants and how they differ from and add to previous research. The discussion of their stories illustrates the prevalence of the ideal worker and the contradictions that these women faced in negotiating their personal identities through the process of opting-out.

Occupational Constraints

Williams and Cohen Cooper (2004) identified the major constraints on mothers in the workforce to be long work hours, lack of paid leave, private benefits tied to full-time employment and the lack of quality affordable child care. “These factors tend to fuel what we have in the United States today: neo-traditional gender patterns, with men in ideal-worker jobs, and mothers remaining marginalized whether they are employed or not”(852). The most common constraints identified by the participants of this study were limited part-time professional options, lack of flexible or extended maternity leave and high childcare costs. Unlike the findings from other research, these women did not express a need for paid maternity leave or higher quality childcare in order to lessen the employment/family dilemma. They are overwhelmingly willing to accept the financial

burden of unemployment if re-entrance into their chosen field is possible after taking sufficient time to devote themselves to their children.

Part-time Options

So I had three months off with the first one and I stretched it as much as I could by going back part-time at first but I had to go back to full-time to keep my benefits and so on. It was a little easier with the second child, I mean to leave him, but in a way it was also harder because I was leaving two of them. Then, I was doing the diabetes nursing and education too, which is so powerful and I love it so much that it made it a bit easier. I had it really easy because I was so in love with my job and they were so wonderful to me and it was still the hardest time of my life.

Nancy is a registered nurse and certified diabetes counselor who now stays home and home-schools her three children. She was one of only three women who had the option to go part-time and she is the only one to have taken that opportunity. As she noted, the part-time option limited her benefit package and was not a long-term solution for her. For some of those who did not have a part-time option, it was suggested as a possible factor that could have impacted their decision. However, the attractiveness of a part-time schedule is not necessarily something that would have kept them from opting-out but would allow them to opt back in sooner.

The desire for part-time professional work is common among American women. A poll of Williams College undergraduates found that the majority of women expected to work part-time while their children were under five and most did not want to work a 40-hour week until their children were eighteen (Crittenden 2001: 238). Like the participants in this study, the survey respondents did not anticipate having to give up their careers in order to fulfill this desire. Olivia worked for a local non-profit that hires very few

permanent employees and felt privileged and accomplished in her position. She explained her contemplation of going part-time.

I suppose I could have gotten more creative at that point instead of just accepting that (going back to my previous position) wasn't going to work. Part of it was that they had already adjusted so much for me to be out as long as I was and I couldn't see what they could do to adjust for me to be part-time. I didn't really want to be there at that point anyway. I just needed more time.

Maternity Leave

While Olivia suggests that a part-time option may have made a difference in her decision, she also articulates another important occupational constraint. Olivia was taking unpaid maternity leave for about three months. She was expected to return to her previous forty-hour a week schedule at the end of her leave. She explains how she came to decide not to return to her job as a social worker:

I didn't have it all worked out until that moment when she said the words and out of my mouth came, 'I don't know if I can do it'. I almost kicked myself as I said it because I knew that I wouldn't find another job like that.... But at that time, I just couldn't imagine being away from him for more than a couple of hours a day. If I thought I could take maybe six months or just play it by ear even. But I couldn't commit to anything at that point.

Carey, a teacher and mother of two, had a similar experience. After returning to her teaching job just two months after her second child was born, Carey decided she couldn't continue to be away from her infant daughter. It was difficult for many of these participants to know how much time off they were going to need and some of them were surprised when they did not want to go back when the time came.

I'm a teacher, it's not like I can work part-time if I need to. I mean it's a great schedule for kids in so many ways, but on a daily basis it doesn't help knowing that I'll have three months off in the summer. I needed to

take the whole school year off but it was too late for that. I just didn't realize that I wouldn't be able to go back.

Extended maternity leave was also talked about in terms of the window of time when it is necessary for a mother to be with her child. This was not put in terms of a suggestion for employer provided benefits but instead as justification for opting-out on a temporary basis. Renee identifies what the window is:

There's a time when the one on one bonding is really important. Then after that window, like after the age of two, they become more social beings and it's not as essential to have mommy present full time.... So I feel that I'll be able to accomplish my goals as long as I am able to instill them at a young age, that's why I stay home in the first place. But after that window has passed, I'll still be able to accomplish the long-term goals regardless of where or when I work.

The window was referred to by eight of the eleven women interviewed. It was done in different ways; from stating what the window is like Renee did, to defining "the first year is the most essential for a mother to be with her child" as Mariah did. The concept of the window signifies how these women do not see opting-out as a permanent rejection of their careers but they do realize that taking that window of time means putting their long-term career goals in jeopardy. They articulate in various ways the adverse effects of childrearing on their future qualifications. Economists articulate it this way: "As a woman does not work during certain periods, less working experience is accumulated. Moreover during periods of non-participation, the human capital stock suffers from additional depreciation due to a lack of maintenance. This effect is known as atrophy" (Crittendon 2001: 4). The atrophy affect places the responsibility on the mother for not keeping her skills and experience up to date. These participants are aware of this

affect even though some of them believe it is more about red tape and policies that encourage employees to stay in the workforce than about loss of skill during time off.

The majority of participants plan to return to the paid workforce when their children are older. Three said that they plan to re-enter the labor force when all children are over two years old, three said that they will wait until the kids are all in school, and one said that she does not want to go back to work until all of her children are out of high school. The timeline for re-entering the work force is pretty flexible and many responded first with “I’m not sure when” or “It will probably be”. However, their concepts of the window of time needed to be influential in their children’s development are not congruent with the demands of their particular professions. The problem with opting-out for many of these women is that they permanently relinquish their positions and to re-enter the workforce is to start at the bottom again or to pursue an entirely new career path. Nine out of the eleven women interviewed said that they would definitely return to paid employment and of those nine, six said that they would consider home-based or self-employment.

So, I rule this roost. I’m the queen bitch of my own house and there’s a lot of freedom in that. It is a standard workday but it’s like being an independent contractor. If I decide that I can’t do work that day, I need to be with my kid, I can do it. The freedom of my schedule and knowing that during the day I’m investing in my own house and the return I’m getting is my own. Those are the things that I want to keep when I’m working outside the home. So the work would have to be either emotionally or politically fulfilling to warrant giving that up.

Renee articulates the importance of flexibility and control over daily schedules that other women suggested as reasons for self-employment. For some who see self-

employment as an option, it is more of a concession to the belief that their professions are too demanding of time and energy to appropriately balance with family obligations.

For the three women who definitely want to get back into their previous professions, retraining or advanced education is seen as necessary in order to be more marketable. For two of these women, age is a consideration as well. Both Nancy and Margaret (the two participants over 40) expressed concern about returning to nursing as older women and both want to get advanced degrees before applying for jobs. Another consistent concern is in the area of outdated knowledge. For those who want to return to the same field, they see education as a way to update their knowledge and reconnect with other professionals. Four participants used the word “excited” to express how they felt about returning to employment. Five expressed concern about finding an opportunity that was exciting or being able to balance employment and family better than they did before. Two participants specifically stated that they know their decision to opt-out will hurt their careers in the long run and there was general agreement that part-time work in their field would allow them to opt back in sooner and without as many reservations.

Childcare

Childcare, for these participants, was a factor in their decision due to the high cost compared to their wages, not due to a perceived lack of quality or availability. The two participants that had moved to Missoula within the past two years did note that finding quality childcare was a concern for them, but for the women who had lived in the area for longer periods, childcare concerns were primarily discussed in terms of financial costs.

Unlike higher status professionals, these participants had careers that did not provide much economic stability after childcare costs were considered. Over half of them earned less than twenty-four thousand per year. The structural constraints involved in the decision were exacerbated by the fact that their economic contribution to the household was not significant and in some cases, employment was considered a cost rather than a benefit to the family's finances. Margaret is the only participant with more than three children, which made her childcare considerations even more pertinent.

Before I originally decided to stay home, I was pregnant with my number five child. It was actually twins but one of them died. We knew it was going to be a big challenge because my children are kind of stair stepped. At the time I had a 14 year old, an eight year old, a four, two and two on the way. So we said OK, it's time to reconsider. If I stopped working or worked part time it would put us in a lower tax bracket. I wouldn't have to pay union dues, no uniforms; I didn't have to pay a sitter. When I worked full time, I brought home thirty-six dollars a week after paying everything out. So going to work for thirty-six dollars just isn't worth it. We actually came out ahead monetarily with me not working.

The three participants with only one child all said that the family lived on less income in order to make staying home possible. Two of the women with two children said that the family made financial sacrifices in order for them to stay home but six of the participants, including Margaret, actually saw staying home as saving money on child care and other work related expenses. Gina told me, "People think we're well off because I stay home, but really, I can't afford to work". Ann continues this line of thought and also adds the importance of moving to Montana in allowing her to stay home.

But then came the idea of moving to Montana, for my husbands family, but also we knew we may be able to afford the private school here. We knew we could pay cash for a house, which would really help our finances. And it just came together when we decided on the move. For me

to work for the district here wouldn't leave me any paycheck after paying child care for three. The pay sucks here. I can't believe it. But on the other hand it made the decision really easy.

Pink-collar Paradox

Jacobs and Gerson (2004) found that flexibility and autonomy in the workplace are the keys to alleviating employment/family conflict. Because of these keys, organizational policies have a strong role in reducing the conflict and equalizing the labor force. The pink-collar professionals in this study, however, did not have either flexibility or autonomy due to the way their occupations have been organized. Their stories illustrate the persistence of the ideal worker that dominates American occupational culture. "This ideal worker norm is not ungendered: instead, it is framed around the life patterns typical of men", assuming that the worker has a wife at home to care for house and children (Bornstien 2000: 14). This norm is so prevalent in our society that even those occupations dominated by women are structured around it. The ideal worker devotes his/her time, energy and attention to the workplace over other responsibilities. This assumes that someone besides the breadwinner is doing the unpaid reproductive labor of the family. For the participants who did try to balance employment and family, they could not live up to this norm and most of them came to a point where they did not want to.

The ideal worker norm restricts the options for re-entering their careers by demanding an either/or decision. Although popular media have highlighted the innovations some mothers undertake to combine employment and family, "when mothers are offered a choice between a cat and a butterfly, most will not respond by requesting a key lime pie" (Williams and Cohen Cooper 2004: 852). These participants, like most

mothers, responded to available options rather than creating new ones because they love their professions and do not necessarily want to reinvent their careers. Most of these women cannot choose their careers over their family obligations until they feel their children are old enough to be cared for by others. In addition to this well-established dilemma, the eight women who worked in caring professions experience incompatibility between employment and family as a result of paying someone to provide care for their children while they taught, healed, birthed, counseled or otherwise cared for others. They had a hard time justifying this in their own minds and in explaining it to me. This is how Wynnona expressed it:

I got to combine the education and the nursing, which is where my heart is. I really found my niche and I loved it even though it was difficult with the kids. It was difficult to have someone else care for and teach my children when I spent my time taking care of other kids.

The family devotion schema, as defined by Blair-Loy (2003), helps to orient priorities among family-committed women, despite their track records as dedicated and successful professionals. The women whom she categorized as family devoted tended to believe that the gendered division of labor in the family is rooted in biological sex differences and that female care giving is naturally superior to male care giving. Furthermore, a good mother is defined by these women as vital and creative as well as willing to relinquish independence and personal goals for the good of the children. The caring professionals in this study also use their devotion to family to orient their priorities but they define the work they did for pay in terms of intimate connections and giving of themselves, similar to the way they define their work as mothers. For the financial executives in Blair-Loy's study, opting-out provides an escape from the guilt and identity

strain caused by having someone else establish the intimate connections with their children. For the caring professionals in this study, guilt and strain are further complicated by the fact that they are providing for others the same emotional service that others are providing for their children. This is a unique factor experienced by the caring professionals. While the ideal-worker norm restricts their ability to sufficiently commit to their career, ultimately it is the cultural ideal of the stay-at-home mom that prevails over their personal commitment to paid care-work.

Occupational Identity

Blair-Loy (2003) found that career-committed women obtained a number of non-monetary rewards from employment that helped them justify their absence from the family. The non-monetary rewards she identified were independence, status, challenge and excitement and collegiality. The pink-collar professionals in this study expressed similar rewards obtained through employment and contributing to their positive social and personal identity. With the loss of employment, most of these participants also feel that they have lost the connection to the positive attributes associated with their occupational identities. The three most commonly expressed occupational identity factors were reputation, independence and sense of community or collaboration.

Occupational identity is important to the decision to opt-out and to the analysis of employment/family contradictions because it illustrates the attributes assigned solely to public work that cannot be obtained in the private sphere. Because women primarily do private sphere work, the varying valuation assigned to public and private work maintains gender inequalities and continues to be problematic for full realization of citizenship.

Reputation

Reputation was talked about mainly in terms of reputation within the workplace but two participants also referred to their reputation in the community. Erin, a special education teacher and mother of two, expresses how a good reputation takes time to build up.

...but I also wasn't sure if I was ready to give up my job, give up my, not just friends but also the reputation I had built for myself. I would have parents come up to me and say, oh I'm so glad that Johnny has you, I've heard great things about you. I've had parents say that they sent their kid to that school just for me to teach them. That takes a while to achieve and I wasn't sure if I was ready to give up that part of my life.

While a couple of participants believe that they can stay connected to their occupational identities while not actually employed, most of the women feel like Erin does, that opting-out means giving up a certain part of themselves. That part, the reputation and respect from the community are not seen as extending to the work they do as mothers. Mariah owned her own retail store and felt very successful. She expressed how she felt more respected when she sold beauty products than she does as a mother.

I mean we meet people and they say, what do you do, and I say I'm a stay at home mom and I notice that all of a sudden people really need their drink filled. You know I don't want to get stuck talking to the stay at home mom. Of course when I was working and running my own business people thought that I had a lot more to talk about. They assumed that I had opinions about other things, not just beauty supplies, but really I'm probably more informed now about what is going on in the world. And beauty supplies aren't that interesting anyway but people think that someone who runs a business is just more worth talking to than someone who stays home with kids.

All participants are proud of their role as mother and two expressed to me that they know they are doing socially valuable work. However, when asked if they feel appreciated, all of them said that they do not feel sufficiently appreciated by society as a whole.

Independence

There were two different aspects of independence expressed by the participants: financial independence and control over their own schedule. The children and husbands' schedules dictate most of the daily activities of these women. Many of them miss having their own schedule take precedence in their daily activities. At the same time, they are also grateful for not having to plan everyone else's activities around their own busy lives.

Margaret explains the contradiction.

I get to be here for them and that's important but it gets really hard to keep up with what everyone else needs. When I was working full time, it was like, I just can't do it. And I wanted to but there was no point in asking mom to do it because they all knew that I just couldn't. Now, everyone knows that I can and they don't think that maybe everyone else needs me too.

Hectic schedules and insufficient time with family are well-established motivations for opting-out. However, being constantly available to others' needs made some of these participants lose their sense of adulthood. Wynonna expresses this by saying, "I feel like a teenager asking to use the car sometimes. It's like I have to feel it out, see if everyone is in a good place before I ask for something for myself".

Five participants talked about financial independence as an aspect of employment that they miss. None of them said that they had considered not having personal income as a problem before opting-out, but now that they do not have money of their own, they miss it. Olivia explains:

I miss having a paycheck with my name on it. I do. I mean my checks have Mr. and Mrs. in the corner. I do have a savings account but I don't even have my own checking account anymore. It's just a strange feeling after being so independent for so long.

Olivia unintentionally suggests the underlying importance of financial independence to one's identity. "The subtle balance of power in a marriage is tilted in favor of the spouse who contributes the money" (Crittenden 2001: 112). In other words, women who are financially dependent are in a weaker position to bargain with their husbands over anything else as well.

Sarah is one of two women who expressed that providing financially is the husband's role in the family, but she also feels a loss of her independence without personal income.

To be honest, I would say that the thing I miss is having more money. My husband has a sales job that is very up and down and so I don't mean that I need more money, I just mean that having that regular paycheck. You always know how much it is going to be. Knowing that I contribute to the basic necessities and that anything over that is what we can have fun with. That stability is what I miss.

Collaboration

The third aspect of occupational identity that was expressed through the career-work stories was collaboration. The participants in this study consistently convey a loss of community and a sense of isolation since opting-out. The isolation is not just physical

but is manifested in a sense of not being a part of any collaborative efforts and not having support for their daily work. All of the women said that their husbands are very supportive but are also very busy and don't have time to help in the daily managing of the family. Carrie explains how her fellow teachers offered more than occupational collaboration.

And I do miss the other teachers that I worked with. I am now the sole employee of this household. A lot of people think that teachers work pretty independently but there's a lot of support between teachers. Most of us had kids and went through the same emotional stuff. We help each other with potty training advise or getting those stupid breast pumps to work. At one time we had three of us pumping at the same time. You should have seen the fridge, it was hilarious.

Like their higher status counterparts, the women involved in this project have found other ways to connect with women. Four of these women have joined mother's groups to help build a sense of community and support. However, the mother's groups tend to focus their conversation and activities on the children. Two participants were part of the same group: one felt very connected and expressed how important the group was to her emotional health, the other did not express much more than having a good time and a peer group for her children. Renee said that the group she belongs to doesn't feel like her community and she finds support more through magazines geared toward women "like her". In fact five participants said that parenting magazines helped them with advice, support and feeling connected to other mothers. These magazines ranged from the very conservative *Focus on the Family* to the radical *Hip Momma*. Sarah conveys what she gets from *Focus on the Family*:

It's encouragement. I'm doing what's right and it is hard. It's not easy, I don't think this is the easy choice, but for me, it is the way. Sometimes I think that home-schooling in particular, is just too hard. I think there are

probably easy ways to go about this. And it's not just Dr. Dobson or letters from other mothers, it's looking into my heart and knowing that it's the right thing for me and it's for the right reasons. Sometimes I just need that reminder that it is all worth it and that it is for the right reasons.

Pink-Collar Paradox

Despite the low pay, most of these women felt a deep connectedness to their employment. This was especially true for the eight women who worked in the caring professions. For them, the work they did for pay was similar to their unpaid care work in that it combined the mental, manual and emotional aspects of labor. "The unity of mental and manual labor and the directly sensuous nature of much of women's work leads to a more profound unity of mental and manual labor, social and natural worlds, than is experienced by the male worker in capitalism" (Harstock 1981, 301). Margaret explains how the commitment of her nursing career is similar to the commitment of her mothering:

Right now my kids need all of me, because in nursing, it's not just putting in hours. It's about giving each patient and their family members a piece of yourself. They need that and they deserve that. You can't just go through the motions and be good at what you do in nursing and I love that about it. I don't want to do something that doesn't make my spirit a necessary piece of the work.

In this way, their professions are perceived as an extension of their feminine identities. They define occupational purpose in similar terms as parental purpose. Ann explains how choosing her profession and choosing motherhood came from similar aspects of her sense of self.

Well, I love being a teacher. I miss it but not in the sense that I'm not still part of it. I feel that I am still a part of it; I feel that it's still a part of me. Being a teacher is a part of who I am. It's something that the feeling is still part of my daily work as a parent. I mean that's an easy comparison to

make. But it's what my capabilities are and what my passions are and being a teacher is not just what I do, or did. The same with being a mom, it's not something that I just do either.

The positive attributes associated with employment are also underlying values with which we define citizenship. The ideal citizen is one who contributes to the state through participation in the market (Pateman 1992). The fight for citizenship equality has centered on equality with men, that is, to extend the rights of men to women and therefore give women access to citizenship through market participation. This principle has opened the doors to previously closed professions and has allowed women to experience employment as a source of fulfillment. It has become evident that women's identity cannot be reduced to a single dimension (mother) and that identity is tied to occupations and market participation as well (Dietz in Pateman 1992). The ideal worker as constructed on a male model hinders the market participation of women but extends the characteristics associated with a citizen to any ideal worker regardless of gender.

The values associated with responsible citizenship, such as status and independence, are aligned with traditionally male/ public sphere characteristics while values such as nurture and education are aligned with traditionally female/private sphere characteristics. For pink-collar and caring professionals the spheres are blurred due to the nature of their work, the low compensation for their work and the justification necessary to contribute their labor to caring for others rather than caring for their own. However similar the nature of their work, they still get their sense of social contribution, respect and collegiality through market participation and not through their unpaid care work.

CHAPTER 5

MOTHER-WORK STORIES

According to recent research, intensive mothering ideology has become the dominant form of ideology concerning motherhood in the U.S. (Douglas et. al 2004, Hattery 2001 , Hays 1996). This ideology is more than simply adhering to traditional gender roles- it is the primacy of children's needs over work obligations, spouse, housework, and personal needs (Hays 1996). This is a relatively new ideological approach to parenting that began to emerge among the upper class in the 1930s. The economic stability and rise of the middle class in the 1950s and the 1960s provided a landscape of more child-centered parenting and was supported by an increasing number of childrearing experts. Hattery (2001) argues that by the 1970s intensive mothering had become the hegemonic form of mothering ideology in the U.S. Furthermore, it is suggested that more women adhere to this ideology now than in previous generations partly because this generation of women has been raised with the tensions of balancing work and family and have come to embrace the notion that children suffer from their mothers' balancing acts (Gross 1998). The sense of accomplishment in other spheres of women's lives is often undermined by unrelenting questions surrounding the morality of their choice and adequacy of their mothering.

The motherhood ideologies expressed by these participants are similar to those of their higher-status counterparts in many ways. They put their children at the center of their decisions and experience guilt and strain when they feel they are not giving their children what they deserve. In this chapter, I present the mother-work stories about the importance of being a good mother, what that means to these women and how they came to define good mothering the way they do. These stories are about what they believe to be

right and true as well as about what they believe to be possible. The stories and how the concept of good mothering impacted the decision to opt-out illustrate the ideal parent norm of the stay at home mom. Two categories of mother-work presented themselves as most influential in the decision to opt-out: the importance of being present and the importance of making good choices. Being present was the most important factor in opting-out for most of these women. For them, this means having quantity time in order to create quality time, teaching and memory making and fulfilling their personal desires for motherhood. Making good choices means taking advantage of their privileged situations, justifying aspects of motherhood that are dissatisfactory, and viewing motherhood decisions as personal and individualistic. Again I present the pink-collar paradox after each set of stories to discuss the unique perspective of these participants.

Being Present

Maternal presence in the 21st Century has been defined as devoting your entire physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual being to your children, twenty-four/seven (Douglas and Micheals 2004). This is the standard that mothers are judged by while fathers are still primarily judged on their ability to provide financially for their children. Leibowitz's research (cited in Crittenden 2001) found that as women's educational and economic horizons widened, they actually spent more time providing primary care (such as feeding, bathing, ect.) for their children. Other researchers have confirmed that the numbers of hours that married, white women spend caring for their own children doubled between 1920 and 1980. However, Warner (2005) concluded that the concept of good mothering in the new millennium centers on being present which

means “not just the amount of time you spend with him or her but .. the amount of time you spend *doing for* him or her” (116). In other words, intensive mothering ideology has created a definition of maternal presence that puts the child at the center of every activity. For the women in this study, being present was defined as having quantity time in order to create quality, teaching and creating memories with their children, and being present in order to fulfill their personal goals.

Quantity and Quality Time

The importance of having quantity time in order to create quality time came largely from the fact that most of these women did try to balance employment and family before opting-out. They found that the lack of time in their day left them feeling rushed and stressed when they did spend time with their children. Their inability to create quality time with limited quantity created guilt and contributed to the sense of not being able to balance career and family the way they had expected to. Nancy expresses this tension:

I’m so much less rushed now. I would always try to make our time together not feel hurried. We would sing songs in the car on our way to the babysitter and laugh about their day on the way home. I didn’t want them to see how hurried I felt and I made a conscience effort to have them not experience that. I did feel that I was running a lot. And they are three years apart so their needs were so different and I wanted to give them the individual attention that they deserve but I only had so much time to do it in. It’s like I would have one in a car seat and the other one had to go potty or one would want to get his boots on by himself and the other one is sleeping so the time to put him in the car was ripe but I had to wait for his brother to get dressed himself. So I just had to be as organized as possible so that I didn’t get in that stressed out hurried state. I think that because I was so conscience of it, I was able to see that my work schedule could end up being detrimental to my family.

Hays (1996) found that the higher a mother's education level, the more time she spends doing learning related activities with her children such as reading to them and helping with homework. College educated mothers often define learning activities as good uses of quality time. However, the women in this study, focused on their ability to concentrate and relax when they were with their children as the defining characteristic of quality time. Margaret expresses this when she tells a story about gardening:

Not only could I have the advantage of the produce but also I could have the experience and not feel like I just have to do it in this short time. I could really take my time and share the process with my girls. Show them the actions and the love that I have for it. It's not just a chore and before it seemed like that sometimes. When you're pushed to your limit, everything is a chore, even being a mom. Some things that you do, you do them just because they put you at peace and I want my kids to know that those things, that *they* are important to me.

Teaching and Memory Making

The participants in this study supported previous research in their value of learning activities. It is important to them to be the primary providers of learning experiences and fond memories for their children. This tenant of intensive mothering, or what Douglas and Micheals (2004) call "the new momism" suggests "you, and only you, Mom, can provide your child with a learning environment uniquely designed with him in mind. And that is because you have succeeded in adopting his worldview, which momism insists is the only one that matters" (307). Because intensive mothering urges mothers to inhabit their children's' inner subject positions and cater to them, they tend to reinforce the notion that the children are the center of the universe. The participants in

this study suggest that creating the sense of being the center of mother's universe is part of creating security for their children.

Experiencing daily life with their children instead of hearing about it from other people is very important to these women. The idea of being a good mother necessarily has to do with providing the attention and affection that other possible caregivers cannot provide. This idea persisted despite very different influences and personal experiences. The participants claim that various people fulfilled the nurturer role in their own lives including a babysitter, an older sister, a grandmother, and a neighbor. Renee, for example, was cared for and nurtured by a babysitter in her childhood. Despite the importance of this surrogate in her own upbringing, she expresses how she can provide a learning experience for her child in a way that other care providers would not be able to:

That's really rewarding to me, to see the difference in him from day to day in his ability to learn, in his ability to have relationships with other kids or with dogs or other people. That's cool. But I spend eight hours a day so if I didn't see some improvements I would be really depressed. It's like knowing that the job that you're doing is worthwhile and it reinforces for me that idea that I have made the right decisions. Spending all day with this kid is worthwhile and it is better for him to be with me as opposed to being in day care.

The participants in this study view their personal involvement in the children's daily activities as contributing to the life long memories and those memories as being important in the development of secure, happy individuals. Ultimately, they believe that their involvement in their children's learning experience is one predictor of future success that they can provide.

Being Present as Personal Fulfillment

Being present is not just about giving the children the time, teaching and memories that they deserve; the best possible care from the best possible caregiver. Being present is important to these women as an experience that they do not want to miss. It has been found that mothers' sense of accomplishment in other spheres of their lives, such as work outside the home, is often undermined by the perceived adequacy of their mothering (Gross 1998). The guilt and disappointment associated with combining employment and mothering is coupled with what de Marneffe (cited in Wallis et al. 2004) describes as "the basic urge that most mothers feel to spend meaningful time with their children" (3). Every mother-work story is a story about the mothers' needs and desires as much as it is about the children's. There is a real sense of joy and gratitude surrounding being able to be there for their children's big moments and small accomplishments. It is these moments that you cannot duplicate or experience in any other aspect of life. Gina explains:

Just seeing my kids grow, succeed. It's wonderful when you see what I call their "a-ha moments". Suddenly they learn something or they discover something and they just go "a-ha", that makes sense. It's an experience you can't find anywhere else in life. Being the one to hug them when they fall or to give them a high five when they accomplish something, there is nothing else that compares to it.

The participants in this study did not take part in the excessive parenting often found with their higher status counterparts. The women who remained employed after becoming a mother actually expressed less excessive parenting behavior after opting-out. The majority said that opting-out has allowed them to care for themselves and enjoy many aspects of their life in addition to being a better mother. Furthermore, most of these

participants continued to engage in their hobbies, exercise routines, and community involvement after the birth of a child. They also demonstrated few characteristics of excessive mothering as defined by Warner (2005) such as over-scheduling child activities, extreme amounts of time spent in the schools, or domination of child activities in their social life. Instead of excessive parenting, these women suggest that being present is about enjoying the process of parenting and truly engaging in the experience. For them, this is a personal goal that would be unrealized if they could not be present in the way that they find important.

Pink-Collar Paradox

The definitions of good mothering presented by these participants and their perceptions of possible ways to achieve it are central to their decisions to opt-out. They demonstrate a need to fill the ideal mother norm. “A societal presumption of greater maternal skill and knowledge has created a self-perpetuating cycle of maternal responsibility. Good mothering is still defined by maternal presence” (Bornstien 2000: 15). Despite the importance placed on maternal presence, the majority of participants articulate how being physically present is not enough. Being present is about demeanor and ability to enjoy mother/child bonding. This aspect of maternal presence is what they found problematic when they were employed.

Daily activities and goals for the future are centered on their perceptions of what is best for their children but they are also important to fulfilling their personal goals and definitions of success. So while the child centered ideology of intensive mothering is present, it is important to see that filling those obligations is essential in feeling

successful as individuals not just in producing successful children. These participants are unique in their experience of intensive mothering because they do not exhibit the excessive parenting demonstrated by higher status mothers who have opted-out (Warner 2005). One of the central components of excessive parenting is competitive behavior or “keeping up with the Joneses”. It is possible that the lower socio-economic status and the relatively few stay-at-home moms identified in their peer groups, has lessened the impact of this factor.

Making Good Choices

Critics of feminist pursuits for employment and family equality often present the reasoning that perusing two callings in life means making “trade-offs” (Gilbert 2005). Many of this project’s participants would agree with that sentiment. Being a good mother means making trade-offs and trade-off are part of making good choices. Most of these participants were raised in the post Roe v. Wade environment of choice and personal responsibility. Their basis for making employment/family decisions is build from this environment and reflects a common psychological approach to choice among the post Roe v. Wade generation. “It not only reinforced our tendency to treat all our problems as private concerns, it focalized all the issues about empowerment and identity that swirled in the background during our coming-of-age years onto the issues of control of the body” (Warner 2005: 181). The individualistic approach to childbearing choices extends to childrearing choices as well. For these women, that means taking advantage of their privileged situations, justifying aspects of parenting that are dissatisfactory and taking personal responsibility for parenting. Making good choices was discussed in a number of

ways and not always put in terms of analyzing situations and coming up with the best possible plan. For many of these women, making good choices means following your heart, your faith or an instinct about parenting and the appropriate role of a mother.

Privileged Situations

The importance of being present in the lives of their children comes, in part from their own childhood experiences. Single mothers raised nine of these eleven women. Seven of those nine mothers worked outside the home and the other two were disabled. Both of the women who had married mothers (one was actually a grandmother) believed their mothers worked too hard; one had two jobs and one on the family farm. The fact that the majority of these women were raised by single, poor, employed mothers created a sense of privilege in their own situations as married, college educated and financially stable. Because of their privileged situations, they felt they were in a place to make better choices, more child-centered choices, than their own mothers had been.

Ten of the eleven interview participants said that their own mothers taught them what not to do as a parent. The negative views of their own mothers' parenting was put in terms of her situation more than in terms of bad parenting. They did not identify their own mothers' parenting choices as bad, but some did suggest that other lifestyle choices, such as divorce or choice of career, were not made with the care or responsibility that they could have been. Mariah explains how her parenting is different from her mothers:

I think that I'm more focused on my kids than she was. She had to be focused on the things that my husband takes care of in my house. Not that I'm not interested in or involved in our finances and stuff like that, but I don't have to be concerned with what I'm going to do with my kids so I can make it to work tonight or how I can get a quick, cheap meal for three kids in ten minutes. I don't have to deal with that. And another thing that

my mother would do is overcompensating with the time she did have with us. Not really with buying us things but with trying to have big fun in the short amount of time she had available. She would have a half an hour before work and it was like this is the time to have big fun. I get to take opportunities for fun or learning as they come up in the day. It's a lot more natural and I think it's a lot different.

Their mothers have also affected the demeanor of these women. A number of them said that their mothers yelled too much out of stress. Nancy told me how she avoids yelling because of her upbringing. She is one of the two participants whose parents were married throughout her childhood. Her mother and father both worked the family farm along with all ten of their children. She talked about the lessons she learned from her very busy mother:

As one of ten kids, you want attention, you do anything to get it and I did a lot to get that. That alone had a big affect on me and not wanting my kids to have to try so hard for me to notice them. My mother, bless her heart, she is an angry person and she yells a lot. With my kids, I do my best not to raise my voice ever. When I do need to discipline them, they get a spanking, then they get a hug, and then we sit down and talk about what happened. When I was a kid, we never talked about anything. It was just, you get mad, you yell, or stop talking to that person for a few days, and then it's over and never dealt with. Nothing was ever worked out. So that is something that I've really learned from. I didn't want to be seen as angry because I yelled all the time. My mother is a wonderful lady in many ways. She was a teacher by trade but she gave that up when she got married. She was just expected to quit when she got married. And she needed to help my dad with the farm but she always wanted to teach but she followed my dad around on the farm instead. And she thought that she would go back to it someday when the kids were grown but she never did. My dad passed away a few years ago and she still works that farm.

Nancy's story portrays her mother as a woman without the array of choices that Nancy herself has. She makes it clear that she is fortunate to have more options in her approach to childrearing as well as in her employment/family decisions.

Justification for Undesirable Aspects of Parenting

The fact that their own mothers had more difficult circumstances and that they feel their own situations are one's of privilege, serve as justification for their opting-out decision when certain negative aspects of full-time parenting arise. For instance, most of the interview participants used terms such as "lucky", "fortunate", or "blessed" to describe their situations. When the mother-work stories turned slightly negative, two of the participants directly referred to their own mothers and how they can't complain about feeling lonely or bored. Sarah provides a good example of this:

(The most challenging part of my day is) giving them both the attention that they need at the same time. Keeping up with Jessica and teaching Josh and it just gets out of hand sometimes. It's so hard to stay out of the deep end. But my mom, she also stayed home. She was a single, stay at home mom on welfare. She had migraines and we were little brats. We were horrible and she really did the best she could. So, I can always say 'wait 'till dad gets home'. I'm so lucky to have that.

A 2001 survey by Catalyst (cited in Wallis et al. 2004) found that Generation X women "didn't want to have to make the kind of trade-offs the previous generation made" (3). The participants in this study overwhelmingly feel that they have not had to make as difficult of trade-offs and therefore, do not feel that they should complain about the less than perfect aspects of at home mothering. They know from friends, family, and history that many women have factors similar to their own mothers' to consider. Part of feeling privileged comes from the belief that they are in the minority as financially stable decision makers.

Personal Responsibility in Parenting

The majority of participants made some comment concerning the belief that their choice would not work for everyone. It is important to remember here that they were talking to a working mother at the time. So, while they feel that they are in a position of privilege, they did not express that staying home is for everyone. Gina explains:

God gave you these children as your responsibility and you need to do what is best for them. For me, it's to be home with them and some people can't do that. I know that everyone should not be at home with their kids. Some people, kids make them nuts and some people, their kids actually benefit from other adults. I know that but if you can(stay home) then do. What's important is that you do what is best for the kids.

The focus is on making the best possible choices for your own children rather than proscribing universal care giving requirements. The participants mostly viewed child well being as their personal responsibility and few of them mentioned the husband's role as being anything besides providing financially and having "Daddy time" in the evening. Douglas and Michaels (2004) suggest that this internalization of motherhood responsibility is linked to a conservative subculture intent on re-domesticating American women through restricting family friendly policies and spreading idealized images through the media and political rhetoric. Two participants seemed to support this critical approach to personal responsibility by identifying mothers' choices as limited in general and offering their wish for all women to be able to make decisions based on their personal and family needs rather than solely on financial necessity. Despite this sentiment, there was still a general belief that hard choices need to be made, sacrifices are necessary, and long term parenting goals need to take precedence over long term career goals.

Pink-Collar Paradox

What makes these participants, and other stay at home moms of the twenty first century, unique in a historical perspective is the idea that women now have choices, autonomy, and control over their own lives. However, as Douglas and Micheals (2004) point out, the only truly enlightened choice continues to be the pursuit of perfect mothering. Perfect mothering may be dominated by patriarchal discourse as Douglas and Micheals suggest but there is considerable variation based on ones place in society (Bornstien 2000). These women are in a unique place as professional, middle class women who are living a life of higher status than the ones in which they were raised. Despite their adherence to many tenants of intensive mothering ideology, they continue to display alternate ideologies as well. Hill-Collins (1994) found that poor and ethnic minority women (the majority of whom traditionally work outside the home) tend to believe that maternal employment is beneficial to children and that non-maternal childcare can also be good for children. Even though the women in this study are not currently poor and none of them are ethic minorities, most of them were raised poor and with the influence of a working mother. They did not want to be in a similar situation as their own mothers were but they also understand that many women are and express respect for those women. Their motherhood ideologies are complicated by multiple contradistinctions from personal experiences, public discourse and expert opinions (Hattery 2001). They don't discredit childcare quality or its impact on children in general. So while they suggest that being at home full time is important for them personally, they do not universalize that claim. Only one participant said that women (who can afford it) should stay home with their kids.

The expectations of intensive mothering are unrealistic for most women because they require extraordinary time, emotion, and financial resources. The participants in this study suggest that their motherhood ideologies require sacrifice of themselves for the good of children and family but other mothers should not be expected to make the same trade-offs. Consistent with choice rhetoric, these participants generally neglect the need for policy and family shifts that would allow all mothers the employment/family choices they feel privileged to have made. Only two participants commented on the need to equalize employment/family options across various social locations.

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING THE STORIES

I intended to convey the conceptual separation of public and private spheres of work in our society by telling the career-work and mother-work stories separately. It is difficult to speak of the two merging without discussing widespread social change. However, if gender equality is to be the goal, then widespread social change may be the necessary course of action. There have been two main approaches to gender equality proposed by feminists interested in the employment/family dilemma. The first approach stems from the economic equality efforts of the 1970s and now seeks to create a workplace where men and women can truly compete as equals. The second approach attempts to gain economic and value equality for women as caregivers without necessarily moving their labor into the market. After reviewing these strategies, I will present another option that attempts to integrate strategies through redistribution of both paid and unpaid care work. Again, I use the pink-collar paradox to discuss this integration strategy.

The Universal Breadwinner model has been the model traditionally used in pursuing gender equality in the U.S. workforce, but it has been shown to be ineffective for many reasons. Its aim is to create the assumption that all adults are breadwinners in order to open the workplace for equal participation by men and women. This means that care work must be shifted to the market or to the state in order to free up women for employment. While this model has been successful in creating gender-neutral policies and making gender discrimination illegal, it has done little to reduce inequality in the family or to address the formal and informal constraints of the workplace. Strategies for reconceptualizing the ideal worker call for broad policy changes in government and

private business including mandatory one year paid parental leave, shortened work weeks, universal free preschool and increased child care benefits (Crittenden 2001, Williams and Cooper 2004). While such policy changes would further free up women to participate in employment, women would remain the primary caregivers, both in the family and in the market, maintaining the gendered division of labor and the undervalued nature of care work.

Recently feminists have advocated for adding a Caregiver Parity to the Universal Breadwinner model. The Caregiver Parity sets up a two-track approach where care-work is distinct from wage labor and is supported by the government through a family allowance. This would put an increase in care work value as the aim of gender equality and the route to equal citizenship. The assertion is that compensating caregivers, both in home and professionals, will increase their social value and income equality. Some claims have been made that increased pay is not enough but that care work needs to be awarded the same social benefits and insurance as paid work and household labor should be added to the GDP as a symbol of its productive value for society (Warring 1988). This effort combines income equality with a route to citizenship based on gender difference and the acknowledgment of care work as a social investment. While this model provides increased income equality for those who do both paid and unpaid care work, it does not address labor force inequalities and ultimately reinforces the gendered division of labor. Fraser argues that both the Universal Breadwinner and the Caregiver Parity models cannot successfully combat gender inequality because they fail to change the gender division of labor within care work itself.

Integrating the career-work and mother-work stories necessarily means integrating strategies for achieving gender equality. Nancy Fraser (1997) offers an ambitious attempt with her Universal Caregiver model. Although Fraser's aim is to restructure welfare policy to ensure that care work will be equitably distributed, her goals are easily discussed outside of the welfare reform debate. Her five objectives for refashioning the welfare state represent the need for fundamental value and principal shifts as a culture in order to achieve gender equality. Her model is based on the ideals of anti-poverty, anti-exploitation, equality, anti-marginalization, and anti-androcentrism. All of these ideals are necessary in reconceptualizing the ideal worker, citizen and parent. This approach is based on enticing men to become more equal caregivers and to concentrate gender equality efforts on encouraging men to be more like women rather than the traditional approach of enticing women to be more like men. All jobs then would assume that each worker is also a caregiver regardless of gender. If that worker is not, in fact, a related caregiver, informal care networks and civic engagement would be encouraged. "The trick is to imagine a social world in which the lives of citizens integrate wage-earning and care giving with community activism, political participation, and involvement in the associational life and civil society- while also leaving time for some fun." (Fraser 2006:9).

The Pink-Collar Paradox

Building a world where workers are also caregivers and engaged citizens would redefine care work as a social investment and create work environments with more equal expectations and opportunities. However, conceiving of care work as a civic duty maintains the definition of care giving as unskilled and unspecialized labor. This presents a professional conundrum for the caring professionals. While the majority of care work that would shift to civil society is lower paid and lower status work than done by these participants, it is important to see this effort from the point of view of the care work professional. Integration efforts must recognize that women do the majority of paid care work and the majority of women are mothers. Moving this work to civil society reinforces the notion that care giving is not work and anyone can do a sufficient job. Such an assumption could ultimately contribute to even less value placed on the work and add to the constraints experienced by these participants.

The Universal Caregiver model is the most comprehensive model for gender equality currently recommended but it still gives insufficient attention to the norm of the ideal-parent. Fraser's recommendations do attempt to change this norm but do not provide enough attention to the ideologies that would restrict efforts for change. The participants in this study largely believe that they are filling a natural role and doing so is important to their self-concept. Ideological change in the ideal-parent as the stay-at-home mom means de-naturalizing care as a feminine characteristic. This is a considerably more difficult task than changing governmental or organizational policies. However, the stories presented here suggest that real social change must be a coupling of structural adjustments and ideological shifts. The ideal-worker, ideal-parent, and the ideal-citizen

concepts need to be sufficiently reconceptualized in a comprehensive effort to create real employment/family choices. At the same time care work must be recognized as specialized and socially valuable labor.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

There have been many advances made through the efforts of modern feminism. The opting-out trend could not be occurring if it were not for the opening of male dominated professions to women and the efforts of economic equality activists. However, the assertion that we are in an era of post-feminism denies the inequalities that still exist in both the public domain of employment as well as in the private domain of the family. Genuine occupational and career equality must be won through the availability of real choices for women and for men. This effort, I assert, is the final frontier of feminism.

The pink-collar paradoxes presented in the previous chapters suggest specific actions that need to be taken in the equality endeavor as well as suggest more abstract but essential processes that should be defined by feminist scholars. The pink-collar paradox to the career-work stories reveal the indelible presence of the ideal-worker norm and how it uniquely restricts the choices of women in female dominated professions. The lack of part time options and extended maternity leave and the high costs of child care for low wageworkers constrain the options for these women and complicate their re-entrance strategies. The stories told by these participants suggest that pink-collar professions suffer the impact of less forty-year career path personnel. This could be an important factor in the low wage and status associated with pink-collar professions in general and the caring professions in particular. Caring professionals demonstrate a particularly strong attachment to their career-work and a deep sense of loss when redirecting their career goals away from the caring profession mostly out of perceived necessity.

Occupational identity is an important aspect of self-concept and public identity. For the women in this study, employment is where they find their sense of social

contribution and valuation even when the actual work is similar to that of mothering. Due to higher placement of social value on market participation than private care work, full recognition of citizenship is lost with opting-out. The participants articulated this when they express the loss of reputation, independence, and collaboration with the loss of employment. Higher status professionals experience similar losses but do not have the added complexity of doing similar care work for pay as they do in the home. This is a unique and important insight because it takes the nature of the work out of the equation to a certain extent. The caring professionals exemplify the ideal of the worker-citizen because it is only market participation that awards them the positive attributes of a respectable, independent and participatory member of the community.

The pink-collar paradoxes of the mother-work stories illustrate how the ideal parent continues to be the stay at home mom even among a generation of women who have been raised by employed mothers. Intensive mothering ideology contributes to our understanding of the expectations of modern motherhood but is complicated for the women who were raised by mothers with very different situations from their own. Being present means more than physical proximity, it means providing the type and amount of care that their own mothers were not able to provide. Because of their own childhoods, they feel a sense of privilege in their current situations and have a hard time suggesting dissatisfaction with at home motherhood. Presenting an upbeat demeanor is one way that they show their gratitude for their privilege.

Their individualistic approach to childrearing is complicated by the combination of their belief in personal choice and their acknowledgement of varying situations. They simultaneously recognize the need for different decisions based on situation and uphold

the notion that intensive mothering is superior to alternate ideologies. Despite its superiority, intensive mothering has not completely eliminated the alternate ideologies established from their experiences as children of employed mothers. This unique sample of women suggests that the belief in personal choice and their natural role as a mother does not inhibit their perception of autonomy. They believe that they have made a free and rational choice and do not see the ideal-parent norm as problematic.

The Universal Caregiver model attempts to address gender inequalities through recognition of the constraints on women's choices proscribed by the ideal-worker and the ideal-parent norms. This model has many contributions to lend to public policy and family ideologies including the notion that the ideal citizen should be considered both a worker and a caregiver. Through this concept, gender inequalities are lessened because men and women have the same formal opportunities and informal expectations. What we need to add to this model is the perspective of the caring professional. It is the position of feminist scholarship that social change should start from the perspective of the most vulnerable. If care work is further de-professionalized and de-valued as civic engagement, the caring professionals will suffer from even greater loss of respect and compensation. Enticing men to take part in paid care work is essential in preventing further marginalization of caregivers. Increased pay is the obvious first step to enticing men into paid care work but we must also expect of them and concede to them more unpaid care work. Conceding the role of nurturer is a great challenge to women who gain an important aspect of their personal and social identity from that role, however it is the only way to de-naturalize the work traditionally done by women in our society.

Many people do not see the ideal worker as constructed on a typical male and the ideal parent as constructed on a typical female as problematic. It is rational and it has worked for a couple of centuries. However, as feminists, we must convey the importance of these two opposing concepts to the citizenship debate. What does it mean to participate fully in the modicum of social opportunities and who gets to enjoy the rights that are afforded to a citizen? The ideal-worker and the ideal-parent uphold the division of labor, which supports gender inequality and constrains choices for men and women within each gendered ideal. Patemen (1992) suggests an alternate route to citizenship based on care and separate from the male routes of market or military participation. I suggest that the Universal Caregiver Model requires an overlap, alternate and transposing of the paths for all of those who fill the ideal of citizenship. It is not enough for women to have a separate path especially when the separate path serves as justification for experiencing less citizenship rights. In the final frontier of feminism we must identify the separation of citizenship paths based on gendered choices as one of our generations greatest challenges.

APPENDIX A INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE WORK OF FULL-TIME MOTHERHOOD

Let's start with you giving me a tour of a typical day for you as a *stay at home mom*.
Begin in the morning and end in the evening.

Q1: *What do you do in the course of your day?*

P1: What is the most challenging part of your day?

P2: What is the most rewarding part of your day?

P3: Do you do anything on a daily basis that is just for you?

_What? Or Why not?

P4: What do you do for/with your kids that you couldn't do if you worked outside?

Q2: *How does your typical day compare to a typical day when you were working outside the home?*

P: What are the most significant differences?

P2: Are there ways that they are similar?

P3: What were the most challenging and most rewarding parts of your day then?

CAREER BACKGROUND

Q3: *Can you tell me about your previous job and how you felt about it?*

P1: Were you satisfied?

P2: Did you feel that there were opportunities for promotions? Personal growth?

P3: Is there anything that you miss about that particular job? What?

P4: Are there things that you miss about working outside the home in general?

P5: Are there things that you do NOT miss about it? What?

P6: Did the company you worked for have "family friendly" policies such as paid maternity leave, sick leave; flex time or on-site child care?

FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO STAY HOME

Let's talk about the choice to be a *full time, stay at home mom*.

Q4: *How did you go about making the decision to be at home full time?*

P1: When did you decided?

P2: What were the most important considerations for you? (Childcare, career advancement, personal fulfillment, finances, ect.)

P3: Did you consider part-time or home-based employment?

P4: Did your husband play a role in the decision? How?

P5: Did you discuss having your husband stay home at any point?

P6: Did living in (or moving to) Missoula impact your choice? How?

P7: Did you think you could achieve your goals as a parent if you were employed?

Q5: *How do you feel about the choice you made, to stay home full time?*

P1: Do you consider it a compromise? A blessing? A necessity?

P2: Do you feel that you are appreciated for the work you do? (by husband, peers, society in general) Why? Why not?

P3: How is full time motherhood different than you expected?

P4: In what ways is it just as you expected?

P5: Are you satisfied with your decision? Why? Why not?

P6: Do you think staying home has allowed you to be the kind of mom you wanted to be?

Q6: *Tell me about some of the things you are interested in?*

P1: Do you have any hobbies? What?

P2: Do you belong to any clubs, volunteer organizations, teams?

P3: What do you do for fun as a family? And without the kids?

P4: Did any of these interests play a role in choosing to stay home?

MOTHERHOOD IDEOLOGIES

Now lets talk about parenting.

Q6: *Can you describe what you thought motherhood would be like before you had kids?*

P1: Did you always want to be a *stay at home mom*? Why? Or Why not?

P2: Did you think you would work outside the home as well?

P3: When did motherhood become a priority in your plans?

P4: What were your goals for parenting before you had children? Have they changed?

Q7: *How would you describe your parenting style?*

P1: What roles do you play (educator, manager, psychologist, accountant)?

P2: Do you use any of the skills you used in your profession? How? Or Why not?

P3: What do you do well and what do you need help with?

Q8: *How would you describe your own mother (or dominant maternal influence)?*

P1: Did you want to be like her? In what ways? Or Why not?

P2: Are there similarities between you as a mother and your own mother? What?

P3: In what ways are you different?

Q9: *Can you describe other influences on your ideas about parenting?*

P1: Are there any child rearing experts that have influenced you?

P2: Have other family members, besides your mother, influenced you?

P3: Do your friends share many of your ideas about parenting?

P4: Do you read any parenting magazines?

P5: Are there television mothers that you identify with or model?

P6: Is there a TV or famous mother that you always wanted to be like?

Who? Why?

Before we wrap up, let's talk about the future.

Q10: *Do you think you will return to the professional workforce? When? Why not?*

P1: Do you have any concerns about re-entering the workforce? What?

P2: Do you think that the decision to stay home will affect a future career? How?

P3: Are there any changes that could be made in the work place that would cause you to consider working outside the home with small children?

Q11: *Can you tell me about the goal you most hope to achieve in your life?*

Is there anything you would like to add to the conversation that we didn't cover?

Is there anything you would like to ask of me before we end?

Please take just a minute to fill out the demographic questionnaire.

APPENDIX B
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1: How old are you today? _____

2: Please list all of the Degrees you have earned and the Discipline(s) they are in.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3: What was your previous occupation? _____

4: What type of business/organization did you last work for? _____

5: What was your annual income the last year that you worked outside the home?

Under \$12,000	\$40,000 to \$54,999
\$12,000 to \$24,000	\$55,000 to \$70,000
\$25,000 to \$39,000	\$Over \$70,000

6: How do you describe your race/ethnicity? _____

7: What is your marital status? _____

8: What is your husband's current occupation? _____

9: What is your current household annual income?

Under \$12,000	\$40,000 to \$54,999
\$12,000 to \$24,000	\$55,000 to \$70,000
\$25,000 to \$39,000	\$Over \$70,000

10: How old is (are) your child(ren) today? _____

11: How long have you lived in Missoula? _____

12: Where did you live before moving to Missoula? (if applicable) _____

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