

Patterns of Paid and Unpaid Work: The Influence of Power, Social Context, and Family Background

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RÉSUMÉ

Au cours des dernières décennies, il y a eu des changements dans la manière dont les tâches rémunérées et non rémunérées sont réparties entre les hommes et les femmes; le taux de participation des femmes au marché de l'emploi a augmenté, tout comme la participation des hommes aux travaux ménagers. Bien que de nombreuses recherches aient abordé ces changements en analysant des données relatives aux couples et aux individus, peu d'entre elles ont étudié ces éléments dans le contexte des familles multigénérationnelles. Au moyen d'une étude de cas portant sur une famille comportant trois générations, ce document démontre que le sexe, la classe, le contexte social et le vécu familial influencent la manière dont les tâches rémunérées et non rémunérées sont réparties au sein des familles. L'étude de cas révèle que le contexte social d'une période historique donnée conditionne les options dont disposent les femmes et les hommes pour négocier l'équilibre entre le travail et les responsabilités familiales. Cependant, dans ce contexte, le vécu familial est également important. Les expériences négatives vécues pendant leur enfance incitent les enfants devenus adultes à négocier des structures de tâches rémunérées et non rémunérées qui sont différentes de celles de leurs parents.

ABSTRACT

Over the last several decades there have been changes in how paid and unpaid labour is divided between men and women: The rate of women's participation in the labour force women has increased as has men's participation in household labour. Although a plethora of research has addressed these changes by analysing couple and individual data, few have examined them within the context of multi-generational families. Using a case study analysis of a three-generation family, this paper shows that gender, class, social context, and family background influence how paid and unpaid work is divided within families. The case study shows that the social context of a given time conditions the options women and men have available to them in negotiating the balance of work and family responsibilities. Yet within this context, family background also matters. Negative childhood experiences were an impetus for adult children negotiating patterns of paid and unpaid labour that were different from those of their parents.

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Introduction

Over the last few decades there have been significant changes in the relative amount of paid and unpaid labour that men and women do. Compared to their

older counterparts, married women are now more likely to engage in continuous full-time paid work, and younger married men seem to do more housework and child care (Beaujot, 2000; Sullivan, 2000). Although

a plethora of research has addressed these changes by analysing couple or individual data, little research explicitly examines the division of paid and unpaid labour in multi-generational families. Instead, most research focuses on individual determinants of how much time men and women spend doing housework and child care. While important, this research neglects how family background might influence the processes and negotiations that couples undertake in attempting to manage their paid and unpaid labour responsibilities. This paper examines this issue by exploring continuity and change in the patterns of paid and unpaid work in a three-generation family.

Research on the factors that influence the division of domestic labour may be categorized into three groups that correspond with the conceptual issues that are central in each approach. First, *differential power studies* focus on how power influences the relative time that partners spend doing domestic labour (Davies & Carrier, 1999; John & Shelton, 1997; Kamo, 1988; Ross, 1987). This body of research typically measures power as relative resources and assumes that because men have higher incomes or occupational status than their wives, they have the power to choose not to do their equal share of household labour. Indeed, research shows that among men, those with higher relative resources tend to do less housework than those who have equal or lower levels of resources relative to their partner (Gazso-Windle & McMullin, 2003). These studies are, however, open to criticism because resource differences do not fully address how the social organization of power influences the division of paid and unpaid labour through social class and gender relations.

Second, *contextual studies*, as they are referred to by Cunningham (2001, p. 184), focus on household factors and family life-course transitions in explaining the division of paid and unpaid labour. Contextual research shows that transitions to parenthood and marriage increase the amount of time that women spend doing household labour (South & Spitze, 1994), whereas these same transitions decrease the amount of time that men spend doing household labour (Gupta, 1999).

Third, *socialization studies* look to childhood experiences and parental influences to demonstrate how these factors shape the division of labour among couples in adulthood. The premise of these studies is that children learn from and mimic their parents' gendered behaviour in adulthood, particularly after they make marital and parental transitions (Cunningham). Although a recent study is convincing in its finding that socialization affects the division of labour among sons but not daughters (Cunningham),

other studies have not supported socialization explanations of the gendered division of household labour (see, for example, Hochschild & Machung, 1989).

Studies on the gendered division of domestic labour are usually framed within one of the above perspectives and are often presented as critical responses to the shortcomings of research using other approaches (Cunningham, 2001). Yet all of these perspectives potentially enhance our understanding of the division of paid and unpaid labour. What is required, then, is a conceptual framework that is able to combine these approaches and to capture the complex dynamics involved in the negotiation of paid and unpaid labour within families.

The life-course perspective is a conceptual framework that is well suited for examining issues relating to context and socialization. According to Elder (1995, p. 104), the theoretical significance of the life-course perspective is that it has "made time, context, and process more salient dimensions of theory and analysis." Key to the issue of context are meaningful age-related transitions, such as marriage and parenthood. As well, the life-course principle of linked or interdependent lives is central to socialization. Yet issues of structural power tend not to be well theorized within the life-course perspective except to note that for some individuals their lives are constrained by limited choice (Elder, 1995; Elder & O'Rand, 1995). What is needed, then, is a conceptual framework that takes into account the life-course approach and also emphasizes structured sets of power relations.

Conceptual Framework

Elsewhere I have developed a conceptual framework on social inequality that integrates life-course issues and power relations (McMullin, 2004, p. 125). With minor adaptations based on the literature review presented above, this framework is well-suited to study patterns of paid and unpaid labour. This adaptation is presented here in Figure 1. The substantive birth cohort concept at the far left of the figure is an umbrella term that refers to the structural position into which one is born. It captures Elder's (1995) "lives in time and place" principle, as well as the gender and class positions we occupy at birth. According to Elder, the lives in time and place principle refers to the effects of historical events on individual lives. The idea here is that the effect of a particular historical event is not uniform, but that it varies according to individuals' life stages when they experience it, their gender, class, and place in which they live. For example, the events of September 11, 2001, likely affected those living in New York City in a

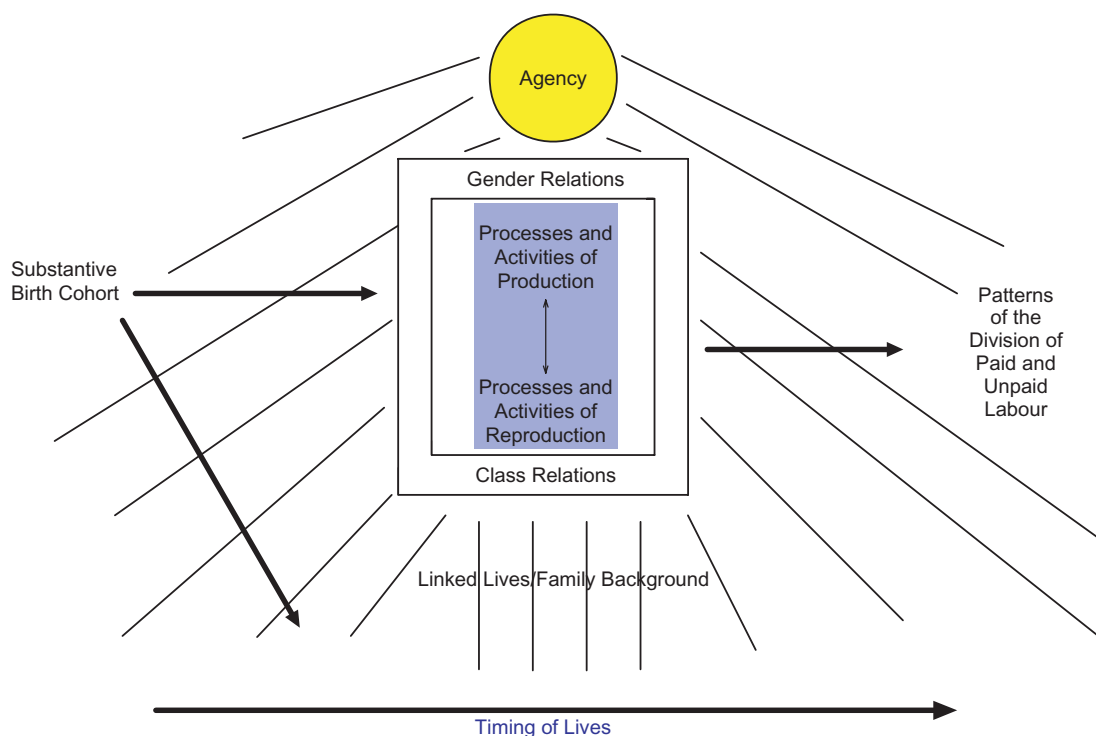


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

way very different from the way they did for those living in Gander, NL; their impact was likely different for children and young adults, and for people who lived through the bombing of Pearl Harbour.

Along the bottom of Figure 1 runs an arrow that refers to the “timing of lives” life-course principle (Elder, 1995). The timing of lives principle essentially refers to the social timing of transitions across the life course. Social timing refers to the idea that life-course transitions tend to be patterned along age lines. For example, people can be married at “young” ages or have children when they are quite “old”. The precise chronological ages that correspond with young or old in these examples are socially constructed and vary historically and culturally. Transitions to marriage and parenthood are among the many life-course transitions that have been studied. These two transitions are of particular interest in this paper in light of the contextual research noted above that found that these transitions lead to more unpaid work for women and less for men.

In the centre of the diagram are the interrelated processes and activities of production and reproduction – two activities that are necessary for survival of the individual and the species. *Processes and activities of production* refer to the methods through which people transform raw materials into useful and valuable objects or services and the activities that they perform

in the process. *Processes and activities of reproduction* are the things needed to be done to maintain human life both daily and intergenerationally and the ways in which these things get done (Laslett & Brenner, 1987). Hence, in modern capitalism, processes and activities of production and reproduction are the processes and activities involved in paid and unpaid labour.

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows that the processes and activities of production and reproduction are framed by gender and class relations. This is meant to show that gender and class relations socially structure who does what for whom within families. Class and gender relations are sets of social relations that are characterized by power and are organizing features of social life. People of different classes and genders do not freely choose to do what paid and unpaid work they do or how they do it. Rather, class and gender are “deep” structures that influence individual choices. Embedded in class and gender relations are assumptions that guide individual behaviour and help to determine who does what for whom within families (McMullin, 2004, pp. 128–129; 2002). These sets of social relations influence the processes and activities of production and reproduction, which lead to varying patterns of paid and unpaid labour in families.

Class and gender relations do not solely determine individual behaviour. As such, at the top of Figure 1

and filtering through the social structures is the concept of agency. Agency encompasses decisions to act or not to act and recognizes that there are both intended and unintended consequences of action (Giddens, 1979). It refers to the capability of individuals to make choices and exert some control over social structures (Sewell, 1992). For instance, in the division of paid and unpaid labour, gender relations structure patterns of who does what for whom. Yet within these patterns, individuals and couples make decisions about how they do their paid and unpaid labour. A couple may decide that a mother should stay at home to raise their children and do the housework while the father takes responsibility for paid labour. Another couple may decide that the mother and father should equally share paid and unpaid labour. Yet another couple may decide that the father should stay home to care for his children and his house while the mother is responsible for paid work. All choices are available, yet the dominant gender structure in Canada makes the first option more likely than the latter two and creates ambivalent situations for many (Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

Linked lives/family background is the last concept in the conceptual framework, and its location in the diagram suggests that it connects structures and individuals. The "linked lives" principle in life-course research refers to the embeddedness of an individual in social relationships across the life span. It recognizes that the actions of individuals influence both themselves and others (Elder, 1995) and that families are a central domain in which persons from different substantive cohorts interact and influence one another (Elder & O'Rand, 1995).

Within families, children learn from the way their parents negotiate paid and unpaid labour within the home. They may see that their mothers are primarily responsible for domestic labour and that their fathers are primarily responsible for paid work. They may also see that household tasks are gendered: mothers clean toilets and fathers take out the garbage. The assumption in the socialization studies discussed above is that children learn from their parents' behaviour and do as they did, thereby reproducing social structures across the generations. But as we know, children either within or across families do not necessarily lead lives that mimic those of their parents or each other. Children sometimes resist imitating their parent's behaviour in an effort to do things differently from the way their parents did them (Kruger, 1998, Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997). Hence, for the purpose of this paper, the concept of socialization is avoided, and family background is employed instead.

In summary, children's lives are linked to those of their parents and they are likely influenced by their parents' behaviour, but the nature of this influence is more complex than the concept of socialization captures. Rather, as shown in the framework, the power that characterizes class and gender relations influences the division of paid and unpaid labour, as do key life-course transitions such as marriage and parenthood, and the social historical context in which individuals are born.

The overriding research question that this paper addresses is whether and how power, context, and family background, as they are delineated in the conceptual framework discussed above, frame the negotiation of paid and unpaid labour within families. This question is addressed using qualitative data from a single three-generation family. Before turning to the specifics of these data, the next section provides a brief description of the study from which the data are drawn.

The Multi-generational Family Study

Data for this paper are from a study of multi-generation families conducted in a mid-sized Canadian city of 330,000, between 1998 and 2001. Initial contacts were participants from an earlier community study of persons aged 55 years and over, conducted between 1990 and 1992, who agreed to be contacted again for future studies. We targeted people who were part of a three-generation family at the time of the earlier study. Potential participants were sent letters in which we described the study, noted that we would be asking them for the addresses of family members, and requested their participation. After about a week, we followed up with a telephone call in which the contact was asked whether she or he was part of a three-generation family, and if so, was willing to participate in the study.

The study involves 10 families in which participating members of the youngest generation are usually at least 25 years old. We sent out 141 letters to potential respondents; 53 either refused to take part or were excluded for reasons such as ill health. Eighty-six individuals, ranging in age from 23 to 90 years, took part in the two phases of the study, and 2 others filled in the questionnaire and then did not participate in the interview. For each family involved in the study, the aim was to include one parent (if widowed) or both (whether together or apart) in the oldest generation and their siblings; all children of the target parents and their partners and former partners; and all grandchildren aged 25 and over. The 86 participants aged 23 to 90 represent 10 three-generation families in which the number of participants per family ranges

from 4 to 12, with a modal number of 10. This is quite unlike other studies on family relations, in which there is typically reliance on the reports of one and, occasionally, two family members to represent an entire constellation of family ties.

After potential informants agreed to participate in the study, they were sent a self-administered questionnaire that was used to collect background information on their demographic characteristics, family ties, family composition, living arrangements, health, and paid and unpaid work history. At the end of this questionnaire, respondents were asked for the names, addresses, and phone numbers of their parents, children, and siblings. When the questionnaire was returned to us, we set up either a face-to-face or a telephone interview with the respondent, depending on distance, and contacted other family members by phone, requesting their participation in the study. Additional individuals were approached as contact information became available from participating family members. We did not identify the initial contact to their family members unless we were specifically asked about how we got their name.

The study was designed to examine experiences of continuity and change in paid and unpaid labour and in various aspects of family ties (e.g., relationships among siblings, parents, and children, and so on) within and across three-generation families. Having the information from the questionnaire in hand allowed the interviewer to become familiar with the subject's life prior to meeting, and permitted personally tailoring the interview to the subject's situation. It also enhanced the ability of the interviewer to establish rapport, and of the subject to focus on telling his or her story. Interviews were conversational, lasting an average of 100 minutes, with a range in length from 40 to 240 minutes. They were tape-recorded and then transcribed.

Methodology

To address whether and how power, context, and family background influence paid and unpaid labour, this paper uses case-study methodology in which an extended, three-generation family represents a case. In previous research on the division of labour within families, individuals or couples have been the typical units of analysis. Although these units of analysis shed light on issues of power and context, the influence of family background on the division of labour is arguably better studied through multiple accounts of family life. This "totalizing or holistic understanding of a situation" (Marshall, 1999, p. 380) is a central characteristic of the case-study approach, and one that makes it well-suited for the present analysis.

A case may be defined as an example or an instance of something and as such could be an individual, a firm, a state, or a historical event (Marshall, 1999; Ragin & Becker, 1992). For the purpose of the present analysis, a case is an extended family that includes grandparents and their siblings, all children and their partners, and all grandchildren. After close examination of division of paid and unpaid labour from the multiple perspectives of many members of a three-generation family, theoretical insight is gained on the processes through which such arrangements are made.

The family analysed here was chosen because it was the largest ($n=12$) of the families that participated in the study, thus allowing for more variation in the theoretical issues that are of interest. It was also chosen because the division of labour among members of this family in each generation tends to be typical of the larger sample. To demonstrate this point, descriptive data about all participants in the study are also used to supplement the qualitative analysis. Although this is a qualitative analysis that is not meant to be representative of any larger population, a form of generalization may be possible, because the family being "analysed is an instance of some broader set of similar or like cases" (Marshall, 1999, p. 380).

I began the "housekeeping" stage of the analysis (see Lofland & Lofland, 1995) by reading all of the transcripts in their entirety and coding the text into the two general themes of paid work and domestic labour. On the basis of this analysis I was able to construct the family tree (see Figure 2) and tell the story of how paid and unpaid labour was divided within and across the generations of this family. The blocks of text that were coded under the broad themes of paid and unpaid labour were then cut and pasted into a new document. In the second, "analytical" stage of the analysis (see Lofland & Lofland), the data were coded mostly according to predetermined themes, but I had also planned to code themes as they emerged from the data. The predetermined themes were gender relations, class relations, age relations, negotiation of paid labour, negotiation of unpaid labour, parental influence, and influence on children. No data corresponded with the age relations theme, but data were coded for the other predetermined themes. The theme of deep structure, which refers to the assumptions about the division of paid and unpaid labour, was the only theme that emerged from the data.

The Moore Family

In the Moore family there are 12 study participants, and Figure 1 shows the Moore family tree. The two surviving members of the oldest generation – a brother and sister – both took part.

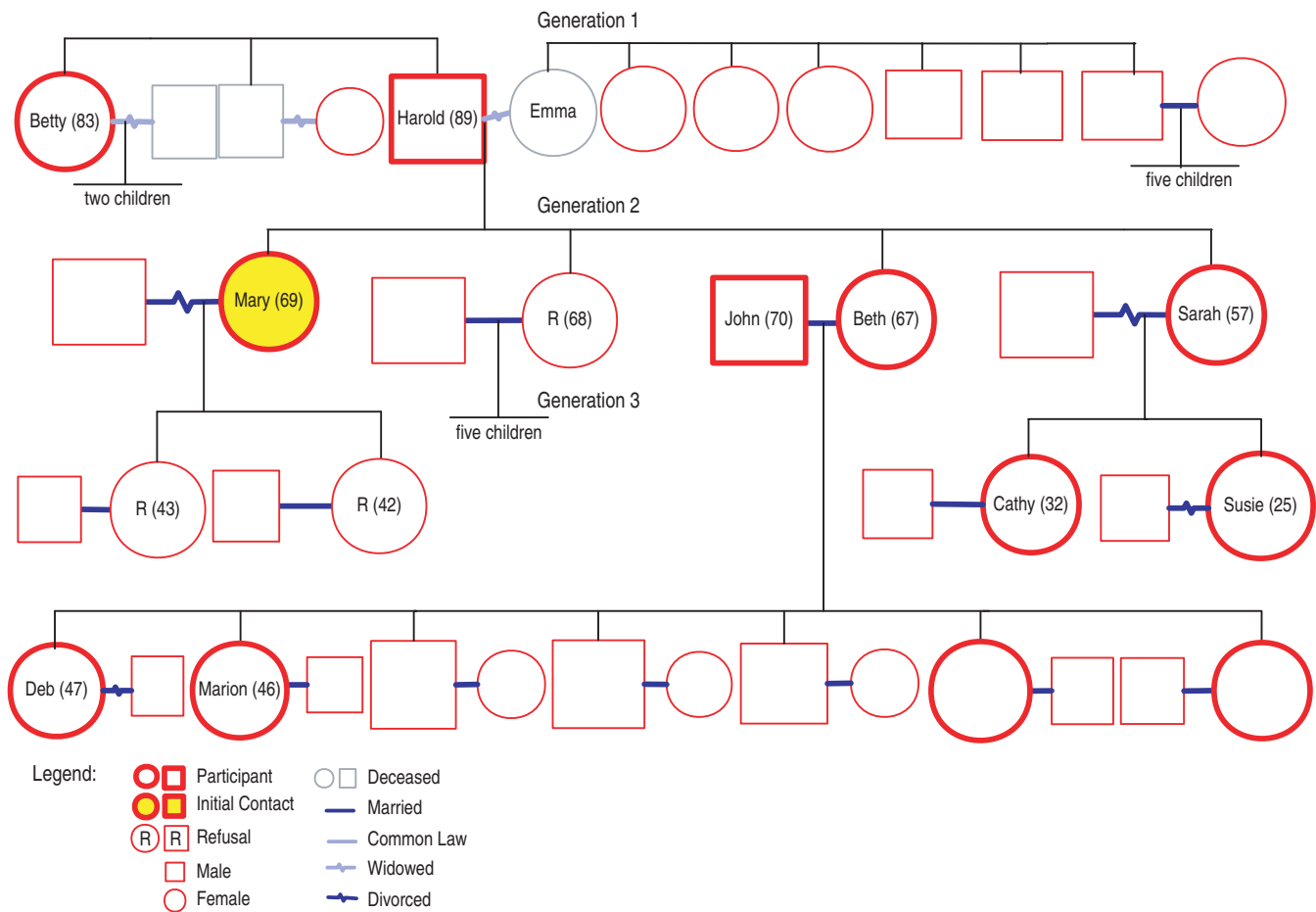


Figure 2: Moore family tree

Our original contact was 69-year-old Mary, in Generation 1. Mary cares for her 89-year-old, widowed father, Harold, who lives with her. Harold's one living sister, Betty, is in the study. Two of Mary's three sisters, Beth and Sara, also took part. One of Mary's daughters did not participate in our study at all, while the other returned the questionnaire and declined an interview. Beth's husband, John, and her daughters, Deb, Nancy, Marion, and Sandy, all participated. Her sons did not. Both of Sara's daughters, Cathy and Susie, are also Generation 3 participants.

Division of Labour in Generation 1

Figure 3 shows the paid and unpaid work arrangements among the women in Family 1 about whom we have information. In Generation 1, we know about Harold's wife, Emma, from the accounts of Harold and the three of his daughters who were study participants. We also know about Betty, Harold's sister, from her own account. Both Emma and Betty raised their children during the 1930s and

1940s – decades that saw economic hardship and recovery and World War II. When these women came of age, they were among the first cohorts of women able to vote at the federal level.

In the larger study, the typical pattern of paid and unpaid work in the first generation of the families tended to be defined by a father who was the primary breadwinner, and a mother who looked after the daily tasks of domestic labour and had a discontinuous work history. This was true for all but three of the respondents from the first generation. Similarly, for Emma, Betty, and their husbands, paid and unpaid labour was organized in this way, as it was for their parents before them. When asked how she felt about her parents' division of labour, Betty replied, "I don't think I felt anything. That was just the way life was." Although trained as a nurse, Betty was a lifelong homemaker, and her husband was a lifelong breadwinner. As Betty recollected, "Well, see, I came from a time when there were women's jobs and there were men's jobs, which of course was ingrained in me."

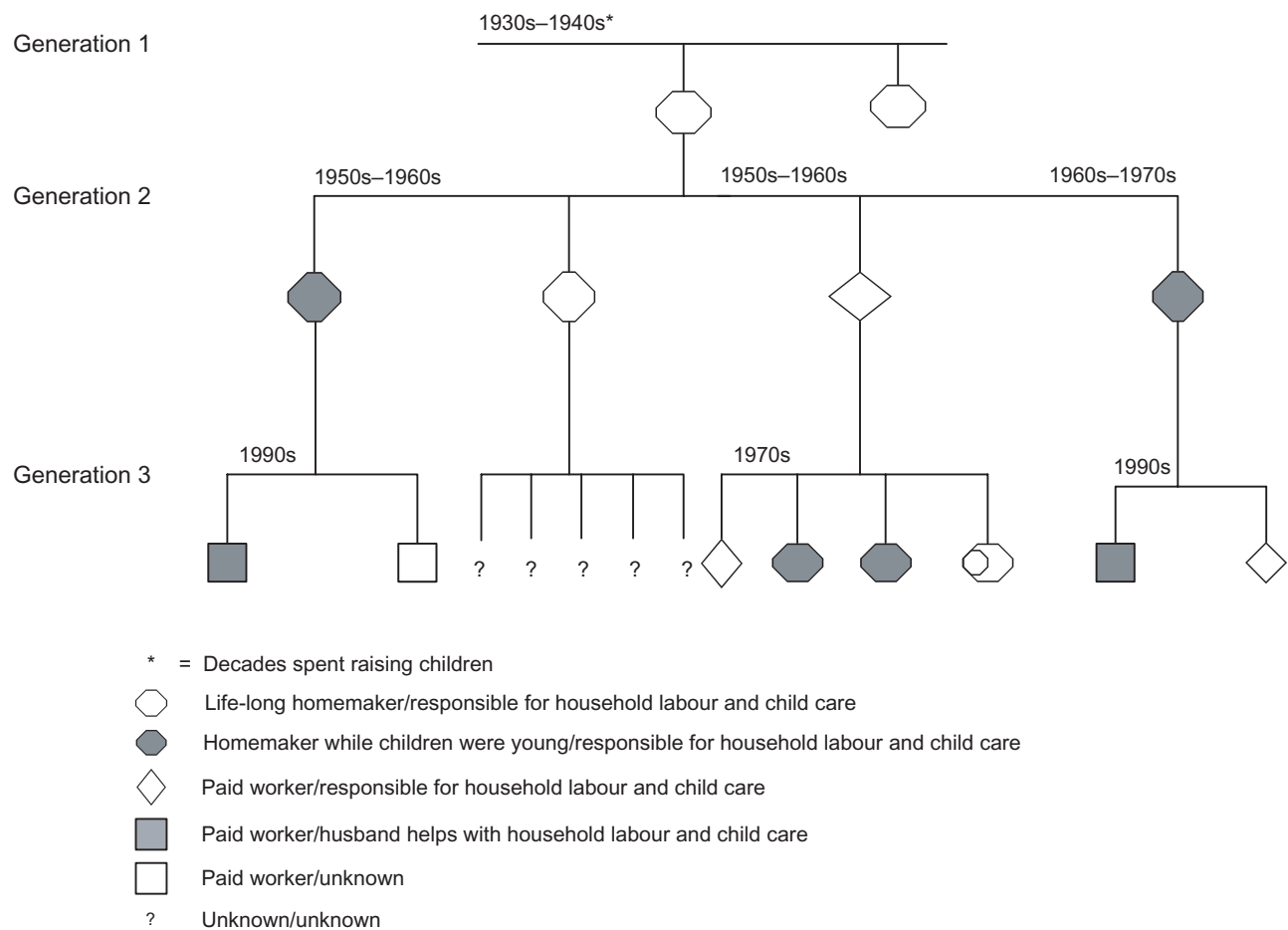


Figure 3: Paid and unpaid work arrangements among women in the Moore family

Because Mary was our original contact, our focus is not on Betty’s side of the family, but rather on the descendants of Emma and Harold Moore. Emma and Harold came of age during the Depression and were married in the early 1930s when they were in their late teens. They had three daughters in the three years after they were married and then a fourth, 10 years later. Emma and Harold maintained a division of labour in their home in which Emma was a lifelong homemaker and Harold was a successful bank manager.

Reflecting on this arrangement, Harold believed that it was typical of the era in which he and Emma were establishing their home and raising their children. When asked if he thought there should be differences in the things that men and women do today, he replied, “I probably do, but nobody pays any attention to what I think anyway. I’m not involved.” He commented on how things have changed: “Men were supposed to be the breadwinners, but nowadays they have a hard time making ends meet. It’s pretty strange, you know. With all of the improvements

to society, you’d think that things would be a lot better for them.”

Harold was aware that economic circumstances and other social changes made it difficult for most people to maintain a household in which men were breadwinners and women were full-time, lifelong homemakers. Yet according to Mary (Harold’s eldest daughter and the one with whom he lives), her father “still thinks that’s the way things should be”, and that is sometimes a source of conflict between them. Mary went on to say, “It’s hard for me, because I’ve been used to doing it all on my own for quite a few years now [since her divorce]. It’s OK [with her father] if I vacuum the floor, but, you know, none of doing the lawn or sawing a board, or anything. He said, ‘We better take the saw over to the neighbour to cut a board.’ I can cut my own board!”

Mary went on to describe the way her parents balanced work and family: “Well, my dad was quite successful. My mother, of course, didn’t work outside of the home; she didn’t have a job. She wasn’t trained. He did the outside work, although she did some of

the gardening. She did all the inside stuff. Part of it, she wanted to do it, part of it, he wouldn't."

When asked how she felt about the way her mother and father organized their paid and unpaid labour, Mary said, "I never thought anything about it. That's the way everybody was." Similarly, Mary's sister Sara said, "You know, it was sort of the standard for the day. We didn't really think about it. At least, I didn't."

Division of Labour in Generation 2

In the larger study, there was evidence of more partners equally sharing domestic labour or of male partners taking primary responsibility for it. Nonetheless, the overall pattern remained one of continuity rather than change with all but 6 (15%) of the respondents from Generation 2 being in a partnership in which the woman was primarily responsible for the domestic labour, regardless of her employment status.

As in the overall pattern in the larger study, in the Moore family the division of paid and unpaid work was, for the most part, replicated among the second-generation daughters. They actively contributed to the reproduction of a gendered structure, which assumed that women were better suited than men to do housework and child care. In fact, the Moore daughters in Generation 2 acknowledged that their parents' preference was for them to establish families in which they stayed at home to care for the children and maintain the home while their husbands worked for pay. According to Mary, "I think [my parents] really thought that we would end up like they did: a husband who worked, and a wife who stayed home. In fact that's what I did for a while, until I didn't have a husband any longer [laughter]."

As Figure 3 shows, two of the four daughters in Generation 2 had discontinuous paid work histories. The daughter who did not take part in our study was reported by her sisters to have never worked for pay. Mary, the eldest, worked as a teacher for a few years after she got married in her early 20s and before she had children. After her second child started school, she worked part-time for 7 years before being divorced in 1971 (her daughters were aged 14 and 15). After her divorce she worked full-time. Throughout her marriage, Mary had full responsibility for all daily household tasks and care of her children. Similarly, the youngest daughter in Generation 2, Sara, worked full-time until she married and had her first child in the late 1960s. She worked a very limited part-time schedule until the birth of her second child in the mid-1970s, at which time she quit paid employment. As soon as the youngest child was in school, she

resumed working part-time. Then, after both children had left home, Sara began working full-time for pay.

Unlike her sisters, Beth, the third-eldest daughter in Generation 2, quit school and began working full-time when she was 16. Married when she was 17, she had seven children in the next 11 years. She worked full-time throughout and had full responsibility for all daily household tasks and child care. Indeed, Beth did shift work so that she could care for her children full-time as well as work full-time – a solution to the balance of work and family that resulted in her getting only a few hours of sleep each night.

Hence, three of the four daughters in the second generation – Mary, June, and Sara – maintained a division of paid and unpaid labour that was very like what their parents displayed to them when they were young. However, two of them had a higher degree of labour force attachment than their mother did, because they began working part-time after their children were in school.

But what of the fourth daughter, Beth? What social processes and events led her to have a continuous work history of full-time paid work while having seven children? Many factors influenced the life-path that Beth took. She had found her parents overbearing, restrictive, and somewhat unloving, and she resented her mother's encouragement to continue with her education. Beth met an older man, John, when she was a teenager, and they married without the consent of her parents.

By all accounts, Beth's father, Harold, did well financially and would be considered part of the upper-middle class. John, on the other hand, was a factory worker and an alcoholic. Although that was not her preference, Beth's husband insisted that she work for pay. To manage her family responsibilities in combination with her paid work, Beth worked the night shift from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. She would get home from work, get her school-aged children ready for school, and spend the rest of the day caring for the younger ones. Beth was responsible for all of the household labour and most of the child care. She would get the children to bed between 7:00 and 8:00 and then catch a few hours of sleep before she had to go to work again at 11:00 p.m. When asked whether there was any conflict between her and her husband about who did what around the home, Beth replied, "I didn't have time to fight. I had neither time nor energy to fight. I didn't have time to think about it. These were things that had to be done."

John worked days, went to the pub after work, came home quite late and quite drunk, usually after the

children were in bed. He would be responsible for the children while his wife went to work the night shift. In reflecting on the situation now, Beth feels quite inadequate as a mother. She feels terrible that she often lost her temper with her children and that she disciplined her children with physical abuse. She feels that she did the best she could under the circumstances and blames her lack of patience as a mother on the fact that she had to work for pay. Beth worked for pay because she had little choice and feels that things would have been different had she not had to. When asked if she would have done anything in her life differently, Beth replied simply, "I wouldn't get married at 16."

For John's part, he feels that he missed out on raising and getting to know his children. "I would have liked to have been able to spend more time, do more things with, show them a bit more of what I am. See, my wife and my daughters grew up together. I didn't grow up with my sons, and I feel left out." Yet John also feels that "woman's work is woman's work and men's work is men's work."

Division of Labour in Generation 3

All family members in the third generation discussed how their parents managed the household division of labour. Just as the second generation took the household division of labour in the first generation for granted, most of the third generation took their parents' division of household labour for granted as well. The fact that women were responsible for most household tasks was "just the way things were." Beth's youngest daughter, Sandy, had this to say about how her parents divided the paid and unpaid labour: "[My mother] worked at night, she lived on very little sleep. I honestly don't know how my mother ever survived what she went through with seven kids... I know Mom saw us off to school and then she'd lay down sometime during the afternoon, make supper, and then we'd come home from school and have supper, and then she'd lay down after supper. My mother cooked and cleaned."

Similarly, Sara's eldest daughter, Cathy, described the division of household labour in her parent's home: "I think my mother did everything. Like she did all the cooking and all the cleaning and all the shopping, and my dad mowed the lawn. That was it. And he looked after the car."

Yet the children of the third generation experienced their mothers' working for pay in a way that the children of the second generation did not. This, in combination with historical changes in the status of women, rising labour force participation of women, and economic fluctuations influenced the way the

balance between paid and unpaid work was handled in their homes.

In the larger study, 14 of 18 respondents in Generation 3 reported that the woman in their partnership had primary responsibility for domestic labour, regardless of the woman's employment status. Similarly, Mary's accounts of her daughters' lives suggested that they both had always had full-time jobs and that both were primarily responsible for the household labour. Her daughters were born in the late 1950s, had continuous work histories, and got married. One had a child, and the other's partner had a child who lived with them. Mary recalled that she encouraged her daughters to pursue careers, to be economically self-sufficient, and not to be dependent upon a man for support. And both of her daughters seemed to pay heed to these suggestions by pursuing careers and delaying marriage and childbirth.

Sara's daughters are younger than Mary's by about 10 years. Cathy and Suzie both worked for pay since they finished school. Both were married in the 1990s, and Cathy, the elder, had a baby in 1997. Suzie was divorced shortly after she married. While she was married, Suzie was responsible for all of the daily household tasks, whereas Cathy's husband helped some with child care and with household labour.

All of Beth's daughters participated in the study. Three of Beth's daughters were homemakers while their children were young, and the fourth worked for her husband in his business and did all of the child care and domestic labour. All daughters were responsible for all the household labour when they were not working for pay, although the husbands "helped out more" after their wives became more attached to the labour force.

In summary, if we look at Figure 3, the family portrait of paid and unpaid labour may seem uninteresting at first glance. Things are basically as we might expect. In light of the historical circumstances in which the members of this family were raised and their gendered experiences within the family, the women in this three-generation family were primarily responsible for domestic labour and not as attached to the labour market as their partners were. Generally, the labour force attachment of these women became stronger in successive generations, even though most of them remained solely responsible for domestic labour. However, when we examine the third generation we see that of the eight granddaughters about whom we have information, three were in relationships in which the mother did not work for pay and were homemakers, at least while their children were young. What is surprising is that

the daughters of the second-generation homemakers are the ones who engaged in full-time paid work, and three of Beth's four daughters (the only daughter of the second generation who worked continuously and full-time) were homemakers while their children were young.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1, substantive birth cohorts are thought to influence indirectly the division of labour, as individuals negotiate patterns of paid and unpaid work within families. The economic conditions of a particular time and the influence of feminist movements are salient features of substantive birth cohorts, especially in relation to the organization of paid and unpaid labour (Coontz, 1992). These features of substantive birth cohorts shape the gender and class relations of a particular epoch, yielding advantages and power for some and disadvantages and little power for others. For the first generation of the Moore family, substantive birth cohorts, and gender and class relations are conspicuous in their influence on the patterns of paid and unpaid labour.

The first generation of the Moore family came of age during the 1930s. In Canada, the 1930s represented years of economic strife and were also the years after the influence of the first wave of feminism (defined generally in relation to the suffragists' movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s). During this time, women were primarily responsible for the unpaid labour in homes. Although the dominant gender and middle-class ideologies of the time discouraged women's paid employment, many men who came of age during the 1930s were unable to support their families through a single wage, and hence their wives contributed to the economic well-being of families through paid work, usually in poorly paid, undesirable jobs. As such, "Many women who began their families in the 1940s and 1950s associated their mothers' employment during the 1930s with economic hardship and family failure. They looked forward to establishing a different pattern in their own marriages" (Coontz, 1992, p. 159).

Harold, Emma, and Betty did not freely choose how to organize their paid and unpaid labour but were constrained by the gender and class ideologies that characterized the substantive birth cohorts in which they were born and grew up. Deep structures reflecting middle-class gender relations shaped the processes of production and reproduction within this family (see the middle of Figure 1). These schema reflect the assumptions about the division of paid and unpaid labour and are evident by the very

fact that the respondents did not think about or question how things were done in their childhood homes. Mary's use of the phrase "of course" in describing how her mother did not work outside of the home, illustrates these assumptions. Notably, the first generation of the Moore family may have been somewhat atypical in being able to live as the dominant ideology suggested one should. In the larger study, for instance, only 1 of the 13 women born before 1930 was a lifelong, full-time homemaker.

Members of different generations of the Moore family were also members of different substantive birth cohorts; they came of age and raised their children in different historical times. As such, each generation in the Moore family corresponded with social and economic changes that influenced how men and women divided paid and unpaid work. The economic conditions in Canada during the 1950s and 1960s were better than they were in the 1930s, so that many people were able to conform to the middle-class family ideals – a family in which there was a full-time homemaker and a full-time breadwinner. By the mid- to late 1960s, the second wave of the feminist movement was beginning to take hold, and by the early 1970s an economic downturn made it necessary for many families to have more than one breadwinner. Such macro-level changes to the economy and to gender ideologies do not, however, occur in isolation from lived experiences within families, or from the agency of individuals. Thus, according to the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1, agency and family background/linked lives interact with structures of class and gender in their influence on the division of paid and unpaid labour.

For the second generation of the Moore family, three of the four daughters organized their paid and unpaid labour in the same way as their parents did. Two of the three did so during the 1950s – a time at which such arrangements were typical. Yet the youngest daughter came of age during the 1960s and 1970s and engaged in behaviour that was the same as that of her sisters who had come of age in the 1950s and 1960s. This similarity suggests that family background/linked lives may have influenced her decision about whether to work for pay, irrespective of macro social and economic change. Nonetheless, the structural importance of social class and gender cannot be overstated.

By virtue of their sex, the husbands of the women in the second generation of the Moores could choose not to be responsible for household labour, but the women, as their mothers in the generation before

them, did not. For the three daughters discussed above, their husbands' middle class status meant that they did not have to work for pay. But such was not the case for Beth – Harold and Emma's third daughter. In Beth's case, a combination of factors made it necessary for her to work full-time, care for her children, and take responsibility for all the domestic labour, even though she would have preferred to be a full-time homemaker. If Beth had not married and had children at a very young age (see timing-of-lives concept in Figure 1) and instead pursued her education, the organization of her paid and unpaid work might have been different. Indeed, the combination of the timing of Beth's transitions to marriage and parenthood and the fact that she married into the working class left Beth with few options but to work very hard and around the clock.

In the third generation of the Moore family, the substantive birth cohort influences of second-wave feminism and the decline in real wages that began in the early 1970s likely influenced the paid and unpaid work patterns of the daughters who came of age during the 1980s and 1990s. These were the daughters of Mary and Sara who, in this three-generation family, had the strongest attachment to the labour force and were most likely to have shared unpaid work arrangements. In theory, similar substantive birth cohort influences should have been in place for the third generation of Moore daughters who came of age during the 1970s as well. Yet these daughters – Beth's children – were, for the most part, full-time homemakers. The question, then, is why.

One explanation might be that these daughters were partnered with men who earned more money than the partners of Mary and Sara's children, thereby eliminating the "necessity" for them to work. Although this was true of one of Beth's daughters, whose husband was a successful businessman, it was not true of the others. Another explanation has to do with the impact of negative childhood experiences on behaviour in adulthood. In *The Second Shift*, for instance, Hochschild & Machung (1989, p. 217) find that men who share the household labour do not have fathers who shared, but rather had fathers whom they did not want to be like. These men actively attempted to disaffiliate themselves from a "detached, absent, or overbearing father". They did as their fathers did not do. Similarly, Annette Lareau (2003, p. 59) demonstrates that individuals learn from the negative experiences of their childhood and attempt "to spare their children" from similar experiences. For instance, in one of the families in Lareau's study, the parents consciously did not discuss the concerns they had over money with their children because of the turmoil the mother felt as a child when money was tight

(Lareau, p. 59). The same kind of family background influence seems to be happening in Beth's branch of the Moore family. In that family, alcoholism, abuse, and a general perception that had it not been necessary for their mother to work, life would have been better, was the impetus for a change in the pattern of paid and unpaid labour from one generation to the next.

In conclusion, analysis of qualitative data from the Moore family suggests that patterns of paid and unpaid labour are influenced by factors that are both external and internal to families. The social and historical context of the substantive birth cohort in which one is born and comes of age, influences the paid and unpaid choices that are available and desirable. Yet the meaning that family members attach to patterns of paid and unpaid labour through their linked lives and in combination with substantive birth cohort issues, and gender and class power structures, influence their actions in negotiating the division of paid and unpaid labour within the home.

Although the social and economic changes that are captured by the term *substantive birth cohort* may promote change in the patterns of paid work and family obligations, family background may lead some individuals to act (see Agency in Figure 1) against such change. As Elder and O'Rand (1995, p. 468) put it, "Diverse life histories become the interweave of family ties, softening the edges of cohort uniqueness." Members of the Moore family acted with agency in the context of substantive birth cohorts, gender, and class, which sometimes led to unexpected patterns of behaviour. This finding suggests that family researchers must be aware of the potential for considerable familial change in the midst of very little social change, or vice versa.

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