CHAPTER 18

Gender and Family Relations

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1. INTRODUCTION

Among the institutional transformations witnessed by industrial societies over the past century, one of the most profound is the emergence of the private, nuclear family. According to historians, the nuclear family has been around since the seventeenth century (see Cherlin, 1983), but the existence of the *private* nuclear family, organized around the husband as breadwinner and wife as homemaker, was not ascendant until the 1920s. With industrialization, production moved out of the household, the family became the primary locus for emotional satisfaction, and the private nuclear form took on normative expectations that were institutionalized and idealized by the 1950s as the "traditional" family. Families "are the places of sexuality, eating, sleeping, and of the thick and close forms of relatedness imaged by biological ('blood') ties of kinship" (Thorne, 1992, p. 10), although the social arrangements that constitute them are both numerous and variable. However, as feminists and others have observed for more than a decade, the monolithic notion of the traditional, nuclear family is difficult to dispel because it seems to be the most natural and biological, the most timeless and unchanging of all social institutions.

Although the family is a central, enduring, and taken-for-granted social institution, it is also one of the most variable, contested, debated, and analyzed by scholars, policymakers, special interest groups, and family members alike. Feminist scholars argue that the family is an ideological concept as much as it is an institution, and that even its

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boundedness as a private institution unto itself that can be wholly separated from the public sphere needs reconsideration (Ferree, 1990; Osmond, 1987). Embodied in cultural assumptions and gender relations are the practical, material, and ideological notions that construct the family. According to Coontz and Parson (1997, p. 446), the emerging notion of the private nuclear family was "an emotional and ethical substitute for more political and social ways of conceptualizing interpersonal and intergenerational obligations. The new ideology also reframed socioeconomic and racial inequalities as differences in family organization and maternal roles, paving the way for today's debate over 'family values.' " It is within this context of variation, transformation, and debate that I review theory and research on gender and family relations, and in particular, the ways in which their intersection constitutes what is defined as "family." While the focus of this chapter is to examine gender and family relations, I also address gender *in* family relations as a pivotal issue.

Neo-institutional theory is used to organize my analysis of gender and family relations. According to the neo-institutionalist perspective, "institutions do not merely reflect the preferences and power of the units constituting them; the institutions themselves shape those preferences" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 7). Institutionalization itself is seen as a process by which certain social relationships and actions gradually come to be taken for granted. In addition, institutions such as the family are built upon shared cognitions that define "what has meaning and what actions are possible" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 9). Thus, the notion of the private, nuclear family has become entrenched as "monolithic," and is itself a resource that can be appropriated by politicians and others concerned with delineating the moral boundaries of society.

Institutional theory tends to deemphasize actors' deliberate construction of social arrangements to achieve desired outcomes. However, individuals do act purposively, demonstrating agency based upon understandings, shared or otherwise, of their social context as the basis for action (Sewell, 1992). Thus, individual agency, manifested as choices and preferences, must be considered in cultural and historical contexts. Choices and preferences themselves are not universal and unchanging, although once a set of social practices are "institutionalized" they become self sustaining. This occurs because "institutions do not just constrain options: they establish the very criteria by which people discover their preferences" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 11). Thus, people choose actions because they offer socially constructed and legitimate paths for solving certain social and individual needs. For example, same-sex couples might participate in a "commitment ceremony" to demonstrate their dedication to a relationship that is not legally sanctioned by the state. By doing so, they are drawing upon and transforming institutionalized scripts about marriage and family. Institutionalization constrains choices, but the sources of constraint come from unspoken understandings shared among actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 12).

Institutional analysis draws attention to the ideological and symbolic significance of gendered social arrangements within the family as they relate to the organization and enactment of familial relationships themselves. Members' social scripts and cognitive schemas are guides to action within family relationships. Consequently, attributions (such as assumptions about fathers as providers), habit (such as division of labor in household tasks or in caretaking of kin), and practical action (such as who organizes family dinners or holiday events) are central to ongoing participation within the family and inform this analysis.

In this chapter, I first address gender and emotion work, focusing on how emotion labor genders the social scripts of caring relations within the family. Then I review re-

search on parenting, attending to variability in the gendered enactment of mothering and fathering. The summary of research on kinship focuses on intergenerational caregiving and women's pivotal role in the allocation of care to others. I then go on to address how gender interacts with waged labor to affect power in domestic relationships. I conclude with a discussion of conceptualizations of the family and the gendered nature of the range of practices that can be subsumed under the concept of family.

2. GENDER AND EMOTION WORK

Theories and research on family structure that were influential in the 1950s and 1960s have been reevaluated by feminist scholars who have emphasized the genderedness of family relations (see, e.g., Beneria & Stimpson, 1987; Thorne & Yalom, 1992). Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1987) provided a comprehensive discussion of the paradigm shift that occurred within family sociology in the 1980s, including the inadequacies of then-pre-vailing structural–functionalist, exchange, and interactionist theoretical approaches, and the then-emerging "feminist rethinking" about family life. Glenn gave special emphasis to three emerging issues of central importance to a gendered understanding of the family: motherhood and mothering, power and inequality, and households and the political economy. In particular, Glenn's analysis deconstructed the family, addressed the impor-tance of separating mothering from motherhood as a social construction, explained how exposing hierarchical divisions within the family illuminates conflicting interests among family members, and invited a more adequate understanding of the family's complex relationship to the economy and the state, including how that relationship varies by race and class.

The social constructs of masculinity and femininity are integral to every aspect of the social organization of biological sex, and the symbolic display of gender in domestic settings is one of the most deep-seated of cultural expectations (Goffman, 1977). In a study of households comprised of married couples, Brines (1993) found that economi-cally dependent husbands contribute less to household labor than do husbands with better labor market prospects. She reasoned that economic insecurity causes men to become more concerned with their roles as "providers," which would be threatened by taking on a greater share of household responsibilities. Thus, gender does more than organize the labor associated with sleeping, child-raising, eating, and other basic human activities. The enactment of gender, both symbolically and practically, also defines the extent to which individuals are considered to be fulfilling their sex- and gender-linked rights, responsibilities, duties, and obligations within the family (see also Kane, 1994).

Emotion work occurs in both work and household settings. In each, women are expected to assume the tasks of attending carefully to how a setting affects others in it, creating comfortable ambiance through expressions of gaiety, warmth, and sympathy; conveying cheerful, affectionate concern for and interest in others; and attending to the behavior of group members so that no one is left out or ill at ease (Hochschild, 1983; Luxton, 1980). Women are the primary providers of emotional support in families, just as they are of the physical activities of running a household, but that emotional labor is largely unrecognized. As Erickson notes, "The invisibility of emotion work persists de-spite clear indications that providing emotional support is as much embedded within women's daily family routine as is the performance of housework and childcare duties" (1993, p. 890). Emotion work is invisible in two ways. First, it is unacknowledged and

undervalued, as are many of the skills and contributions women bring to paid work. Second, it is literally invisible; others are not even aware of the effort, time, and energy that goes into such activities, and women themselves often see this work as "natural" and simply part of getting things done (see also Daniels, 1987). Thus, the family division of labor in emotion work and its management is another manifestation of the symbolic significance of the most basic activities that take place in the household. In sum, gender defines the normative expectations for and of those who comprise the domestic unit and the activities within it, and emotion labor, including its type, degree, and management, are central to the gendered social construction and enactment of the family.

2.1. Emotion Work and the Gendered Division of Labor

Wharton and Erickson's (1993) analysis of emotion management at home and on the job identified three categories of emotions that are particularly relevant to family: those that integrate, such as love, loyalty, and pride, which bind groups together; ones that differentiate, such as fear, anger, and contempt, causing groups to splinter; and those that mask affect, which encompass displays of neutrality and restraint. Although each of these categories has received attention by scholars, feminist research has tended to focus upon the integrative ones, such as nurturance and caregiving, because they entail the gendered labor that binds members together along culturally prescribed notions of what a "family" ought to be. Wharton and Erickson (1993) observed that the effort associated with this labor involves not only creating the substance or content of emotions, but also their management, including their allocation and coordination. "Family roles are thus characterized by an 'emotional division of labor,' whereby women and men are expected to perform different kinds and amounts of emotion management" (1993, p. 471).

The emotion work that is done in family contexts has a unique relationship to responsibility and obligation. Heimer (1996) observed that this connection is especially strong when responsibilities are "fates," such as responsibilities for children or relatives, where there is little to no opportunity to undo the relationship, rather than "opportunities," such as workplace assignments or educational decisions, where an individual's decision to "take responsibility" involves more personal choice. Conformity to normative expectations that obligate women to become invested in the familial realm leads to further gender specialization. Over time, "the gender differences in distributions of caring work encumber women with responsibilities that are far less easily shifted to others, leaving men freer to invest in responsibilities that are both more likely to lead to rewards and easier to escape should they become burdensome" (Heimer, 1996, p. 243).

Not only is caring work less easily shifted to others, as England and Kilbourne (1990) noted, but it also requires one to invest in developing skills that are not easily transferred to other intimate relationships. Examples they provide include forming attachments with in-laws, learning a partner's sexual preferences, or learning how to resolve disagreements with a partner. Thus, not only is emotion work typically an obligation rather than a choice, but upon dissolution of a relationship the partner who has specialized in such tasks has made investments that have little value in a new relationship. In contrast, the payoff for skills that have value in the paid labor market is unchanged by dissolution of a relationship. Thus, as England and Kilbourne pointed out, a traditional household division of labor doubly disadvantages women. First, compared to their partners, they have less invested in skills that are valued in the market for paid

labor. Second, while their partner's labor market skills retain their value regardless of whether the intimate relationship is dissolved, the woman's investment in the unique, relationship-specific skills required to manage the emotional requirements of a relationship are of little or no value in a new relationship. The consequences of this asymmetry for power in relationships are discussed in the following paragraphs.

In Western culture, dyadic love relationships between adults create the basis for family units. In such relationships, the provision of care and caregiving is a central component of intimacy and commitment (Cancian, 1987). Caregiving is the activity of attending and responding to another's suffering, desires, and needs, and of striving to prevent harm and protect and promote another's welfare (Thompson, 1993). Gilligan's (1982) study of gender differences in relationships found that the nonhierarchical ordering that tends to characterize women's relationships with others, regardless of status or position, fosters a belief in the ethic of care and caregiving. This ethic defines the self and other as interdependent, thus forming the basis for the "ideal of responsibility" and "equality of rights" in intimate relationships (1982, pp. 74, 149, 166). These gendered differences are, in turn, associated with differences in how men and women conduct themselves within domestic relationships. For example, women, on average, are more likely than men to define the anticipation of another's needs as care (Dressel & Clark, 1990).

The impact of gender and gender ideology on the domestic distribution and enactment of emotion work is not limited to the study of heterosexual couples. Burgeoning research on gay and lesbian partners shows how same-sex couples are also affected by the normative ideologies of both gender and the family. Blumstein and Schwartz's pioneering 1983 study of the domestic practices of same-sex and heterosexual couples found that household responsibilities, including emotion work, are more equally shared among gays and lesbians, regardless of employment status. However, compared to lesbians, gays tend to have a more traditional division of labor in the household (McWhirter & Mattison, 1984; Peplau & Cochran, 1990). In a study of lesbian coparents, Sullivan (1996) found that in many couples, partners allocated their paid work and family responsibilities so that neither parent assumed an unequal share of the labor, and so that neither partner was economically dependent on the other. However, achieving such equity required a conscious and deliberate effort to countervene social scripts that otherwise prescribe role relationships.

2.2. Parenting, Mothering, and Fathering

With the emergence of the private, nuclear family, family relations shifted from those marked by patriarchal authority, distance, and deference to ones fostering individual autonomy, more intense affective bonds, and the pursuit of personal happiness (Laslett, 1973; Stone, 1977). Chodorow's (1978) analysis of the reproduction of mothering captures the consequences of this shift for parenting in the private, nuclear family. In particular, her work reveals the unique way in which mothering is reproduced by heterosexual couples who engage in a traditional division of household labor, and how that reproduction assures that women remain primarily responsible for the affective aspects of parenting, especially caretaking and nurturance. Chodorow's psychoanalytic analysis also uncovers how parental roles become affectively charged. As a result of the relatively diffuse boundaries of women's identity, itself the product of both a woman's mothering and a daughter's resolution of her own psychosocial development within the nuclear

family, women are predisposed to mothering practices that reproduce this pattern. As Chodorow describes, "Women's mothering, then, produces psychological self-definition and capacities appropriate to mothering in women, and curtails and inhibits these capacities and this self-definition in men" (1978, p. 208). In addition, a gender ideology that obligates women to maternal roles reinforces and sustains the identity processes described by Chodorow (Glenn, 1987).

Men are not subject to comparable cultural scripts or identity processes regarding parenthood (Belsky & Volling, 1987; Cowan & Cowan, 1987, 1988; Cowan et al., 1985). While the concept of "paternity" defines a father's position relative to child and mother, it does not prescribe the activities that constitute "fathering." Fathering as caretaking and caregiving is far less scripted than mothering as ideology or action (Amato, 1989; Phares, 1993, 1996; Ruddick, 1989; Silverstein, 1996). In a relatively early study of men's self-definitions of the fathering role, Heath (1976) found that both men and women report being invested in expressive involvement (e.g., demonstrating love, affection, and enjoyment of one's children, and spending time with them), but fewer men than women feel the need to fulfill their responsibility to their children's socialization in this way. Similarly, fathers and mothers have different involvements in activities that facilitate children's growth; fathers are less inclined to see sharing in child-rearing decisions and activities, possessing knowledge of children and child-rearing techniques, or developing specific character traits in their children as essential for competent fathering (see also Simons & Beaman, 1996). Other research finds that the strength of this role specialization is stronger among married men who are more ideologically traditional; men who believe that their primary role in the family is one of provider define their subjective distribution of commitments to work and family accordingly (Bielby & Bielby, 1989, 1992). While gender ideology shapes men's orientation toward parenting, even egalitarian couples who self-consciously share the parenting role still divide involvements with childcare along fairly traditional lines (Coltrane, 1996).

If belief in the provider role prescribes how married men contribute to parenting, divorce has little effect in expanding their notions of fathering (Furstenberg & Nord, 1985). Although it is presumed that children of divorced parents are less likely to experience emotional and behavioral problems when nonresidential fathers remain involved in their children's upbringing, research by psychologists who measured child adjustment following marital disruption found limited support for this hypothesis (Amato, 1993). Instead, rather than seeing expanded possibilities as caregivers, divorced fathers tended to define their responsibilities around notions of entertainment and play, interacting with their children as if they were adult friends or relatives (Arendell, 1986; Furstenberg & Nord, 1985). In contrast, some research suggests that men who remarry and form blended families tend to assume greater responsibility for household labor, including stereotypical "feminine" chores. It is uncertain how remarriage affects men's contributions to fathering, but the challenges posed by blended families may broaden both expectations and practices. As Coltrane (1996, pp. 171–172) observed, blended families "lack normative prescriptions for role performance, institutionalized procedures to handle problems, and easily accessible social support." Thus, remarriage has the potential to liberate men and women from traditional expectations about household roles, allowing more opportunities for experimentation and change in gendered familial responsibilities.

Scholarship on gender ideology, and parenting has been criticized for its portrayals of homogeneous cultural prescriptions and uniform parenting practices (Baber & Allen, 1992; Joseph & Lewis, 1981; Lorber, 1981; Thorne & Yalom, 1992). For example, the

analysis of working class Chicana/o parenting by Segura and Pierce (1993) demonstrates how the identity processes described by Chodorow take on a very different form in a community with strong norms about familism and collective responsibility for the task of mothering. However, while practices such as multiple female caretakers demonstrate the stability of alternatives to the "traditional" nuclear family in different social contexts, the research by Segura and Pierce also shows how those alternatives are similarly shaped and gender inequality is sustained by patriarchal institutions.

In an analysis of African American mothering, Hill Collins (1992) showed that parenting accomplished through women's reliance upon networks of female kith and kin provides a physical and psychic base for their children and creates strong and devoted, although less demonstratively affectionate, mother–daughter bonds. A daughter's "growing up means developing a better understanding that even though she may desire more affection and greater freedom, her mother's physical care and protection are acts of maternal love" (Hill Collins, 1992, p. 228). Hill Collins suggests that daughters' eventual recognition of the differences between traditional, popular notions of maternal love and acceptance of the reasons for stern female disciplinarians in their lives was essential to the development of their own identity as women and their capacity to mother. In a community where mothers are both providers and caregivers, and patriarchal norms are secondary, daughters ultimately understand that mothering brings rewards, but at a high personal cost. This complexity makes mothering a contradictory institution for some African-American women, one that overtly includes ambivalence in its reproduction.

Research on parenting by gays and lesbians also provides an important comparative context for studying the intersection of gender ideology and practice (Patterson, 1995). For example, recent research explored whether deliberate efforts to avoid patriarchically based gender inequality in lesbian households makes a difference in the instrumental and affective division of labor in lesbian co-parenting practices. Sullivan (1996) found that when partners explicitly and self-consciously commit to gender-equitable parenting, neither parent assumed a disproportionate share of household tasks relative to the primary wage earner of the couple. However, when lesbian couples decided to adhere to a traditionally gendered breadwinner/primary caregiver arrangement, the stay-at-home partner was rendered economically vulnerable by foregoing ties to paid employment. In particular, this arrangement resulted in a noticeable decline in the stay-at-home partner's capacity to influence family decisions and negotiate for her own needs associated with childcare and other domestic practices. The intrusion of economic dependency reaffirms, once again, the importance of gender and income for power and other aspects of family relations.

3. KINSHIP AND THE FAMILY UNIT

Family units are organized around marital unions or other partnering arrangements, sibling relationships, and intergenerational bonds, all of which exist on the basis of blood, legal, or fictive ties. These ties can extend beyond the immediate household to encompass the community and beyond as kith. Taking anthropological evidence of the family's variability across cultures and social groups as a point of departure (e.g., Morgan, 1870; Stack, 1974; Weston, 1991), some of the earliest work by sociologists focused on the boundaries of the family, particularly along intergenerational lines (Bengtson & Black, 1973; Hagestad, 1981; Shanas, Townsend, Wedderburn, Friis, Milhoj, & Stehouwer, 1968), for example, by exploring the extendedness of the middle class nuclear family (Litwak,

1960). Research on the normative and affective bases of family solidarity (Aldous & Hill, 1965; Atkinson, Kivett, & Campbell, 1986; Cicirelli, 1983; Di Leonardo, 1992; Roberts, Richards, & Bengtson, 1991) clarified the unique role of women in the kin matrix. Rossi and Rossi's comprehensive *Of Human Bonding* (1990) emphasized how the mother-daughter relationship contributed "to the structure of the ties that hold families together in a socially embedded way" (Rossi, 1995, p. 275).

Women play a distinctive role across a range of kinship ties (Waite & Harrison, 1992), with much of the research focusing on intergenerational relations. Declining mortality and fertility increase the length of time individuals spend in multigenerational kinship networks (Farkas & Hogan, 1995). In an analysis of cross-national data collected in Australia, West Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and the United States in the late 1980s, Farkas and Hogan affirm earlier work (Shanas et al., 1968) showing that residents of the United States have more frequent contact with kin after controlling for proximity. They also find that in *all* of the countries studied, women contact kin more frequently than men. This tendency persists after statistically controlling for availability of adult kin, lineage position, generational structure, and age. Farkas and Hogan also found that women expect to solicit help from kin more frequently than do men, regardless of marital status and generational composition, and that Americans expect to rely on kin assistance less frequently than do their counterparts in other countries.

Families are the primary providers of caregiving to elderly parents, and the responsibility is gendered in its provision, type, and management (Abel, 1991). Controlling for the composition of the family network, sons and daughters are not interchangeable resources for parent care (Coward & Dwyer, 1990; Spitze & Logan, 1990), and it is daughters, particularly unmarried daughters, who have a substantially higher probability of fulfilling the primary caregiver role (Abel, 1991; Dwyer & Coward, 1991; Soldo, Wolf, & Agree, 1990; Wolfe, Freedman, & Soldo, 1997). Analysis of data from a 1982 government survey reveals that women represent more than 70% of all caregivers to the elderly and over three quarters of all adult children providing care (Stone, Cafferata, & Sangl, 1987). Moreover, adult daughters constitute almost one-third of caregivers to frail elderly, the most demanding type of responsibility for care to older persons because of its intensively emotional and physical labor (Stone et al., 1987). According to research cited by Abel (1991, p. 5; also see Pavalko & Artis, 1997), the strategies for incorporating caregiving for elders into other work and family responsibilities is gendered (that is, daughters relinquish paid employment, rearrange their schedules, and take time off without pay, while sons reduced the number of hours devoted to parental care), and daughters who provide support to elders receive less assistance themselves from other family members than sons who assist elderly parents. Because of increased life expectancy, contemporary women can expect to spend more years caring for elderly parents than they do rearing children (Watkins, Menken, & Bongaarts, 1987).

Family assistance norms and their implementation vary depending on the type of family ethos organizing kin networks. Pyke and Bengtson (1996) place family belief systems on a continuum ranging from individualistic to collectivistic. "Individualistic" families view caregiving as burdensome labor, and are more likely to rely on formal institutional supports. "Collectivistic" families are more likely to view caregiving as a joint familial responsibility and avoid formal sources of assistance. Although not voluminous, some studies address the degree to which caregiving strategies are gendered and the extent to which they differ by race, ethnicity, and social class. For example, a small

body of research on support resources in African-American families shows that adult daughters, in particular, are most often selected as an informal helper to older parents (see e.g., Chatters & Jayakody, 1995; Chatters, Taylor, & Jackson, 1986), but little is known about how these practices are affected by socioeconomic status, or the occupational mobility of African-American daughters (Wharton & Thorne, 1997). The often-assumed dysfunctionality of embedded family ties that characterize Hispanic families has been challenged by Tienda, who has shown how the presence of extended kin encourages creative income strategies to cope with economic hardship. In particular, extended kin facilitate the labor force participation of women by assuming caregiving responsibilities and relieving other domestic burdens (Tienda & Angel, 1982; Tienda & Glass, 1985; see also Hurtado, 1995). The norm of patrilineally organized filial piety underlying families of Asian origin and descent is well documented (Sung, 1990), but there is evidence that daughters are the preferred caregivers, even in the face of strong patrilineal family ideals (Rindfuss, Liao, & Tsuya, 1994).

These findings affirm Rossi's claim that as child-rearers, caregivers, and kin keepers, "women are the unsung heroines of social integration" (Rossi, 1995, p. 275). They also illustrate the bind in which women find themselves as, on the one hand, they perform the duties and obligations that provide for, protect, and maintain the dignity of vulnerable family members, while on the other hand, they encumber themselves in ways many find stressful (Brody, 1981) or oppressive (Aronson, 1992). The matter of care for family elders is just one component of an emerging feminist debate about the sharing of rights and responsibility of care between men and women (see Aronson, 1992).

4. GENDER, POWER, AND FAMILY RELATIONS

In any domestic relationship, an unequal division of labor in household and paid work shapes the relative power each partner has to pursue her or his interests. Social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), applied to couples' decision-making (Blood & Wolfe, 1960) and marital conflict (Scanzoni, 1970), reveals how financial resources provide leverage in bargaining between spouses; the partner with the greater earning capacity is consistently better able to pursue his or her self-interest (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Duncan & Duncan, 1978).

Exchange theory is gender neutral in its treatment of power in domestic relationships. Gender differences in the distribution of resources and in alternative opportunities are exogenous; whichever partner happens to have greater resources and better alternatives brings more power to the relationship. Research motivated by feminist concerns shows how gender ideology and gendered institutions shape exchange within domestic relationships (Pyke, 1996). For example, as noted previously, England suggested that women are more likely to invest in relationship-specific skills, placing them at a disadvantage relative to partners whose skills and resources are unaffected by the dissolution of an intimate relationship (England & Kilbourne, 1990). England also emphasized the effects of a cultural ideology that devalues traditionally female work and encourages women to altruistically pursue joint familial interests rather than personal self-interest [what Heimer (1996) refers to more appropriately as a normatively prescribed *obligation* rather than altruism].

Similarly, Bielby and Bielby (1992) showed that gender ideology introduces asym-

metry in husbands' and wives' decisions about relocating for a better job. That research tested the neoclassical economic model of family migration decisions among dual-earner couples (Mincer, 1978). The neoclassical model is also gender neutral: both husbands and wives should be unwilling to relocate if doing so disrupts a spouse's career and fails to improve the economic well-being of the family. Accordingly, the model predicts that all else constant, one's willingness to move for a better job will be negatively related to the spouse's current income. In fact, contrary to the predictions of the neoclassical model, willingness to relocate for a better job was highly contingent on both gender and gender-role beliefs. Women behaved as predicted by the model: the higher their husband's earnings, the less willing they were to relocate for a better job for themselves. In contrast, traditional males—those who believed in the primacy of a husband's role as provider and who disapproved of employed mothers—were not influenced at all by their wives' earnings. Instead, they gave primacy to their own careers or overall family well-being. However, not all placed their own career interests ahead of those of other family members. Men who rejected traditional gender-role ideology were deterred from relocating if their spouses were in well-paid jobs, although even these men were less sensitive to disruption of their spouses' careers than were employed wives under comparable circumstances. These findings suggest the extent to which the household division of labor is negotiated around symbols of masculinity and femininity (see Brines, 1993; Goffman, 1977) and is contingent on the degree to which spouses hold themselves accountable to cultural definitions of gender (see also Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Bolak, 1997; Pyke & Coltrane, 1996; Thompson, 1991).

One promising way of disentangling the effect of gendered institutions and, specifically, notions of masculinity, upon family relations is to compare decision-making and power among heterosexual, lesbian, and gay couples (Kurdek, 1993). Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) find that the relationship between earnings capacity and power was greatest among gay couples and lowest among lesbians, suggesting that culturally defined notions of masculinity shape power dynamics. Sullivan (1996) finds some circumstances under which lesbian couples have a seemingly traditional division of labor, but she claims these arrangements are truly the result of rational calculations, uncontaminated by gender ideology or cultural notions of provider roles. While the findings of these different studies are not fully consistent with one another, they offer insights about gendered institutions not found in studies limited to heterosexual relationships.

Gender, relative power, and perceived inequity are central to the duration of marriage and other domestic partnerships. In an analysis of heterosexual marriage, England and Farkas (1986) conceptualize marriage as an implicit contract. Exogenous social, cultural, and economic factors, including gender role socialization and labor market discrimination, create a domestic division of labor in which men have greater bargaining power relative to women. Specifically, men's tendency to avoid relationship-specific investments not only frees them to accumulate resources, primarily in the form of earning power, that they may transfer to another partner, it also buys them greater bargaining power regarding their own interests within the relationship itself. Women's dependent ties on men explain their greater acceptance of gender inequality, especially in the home. Men's gendered interests, and privilege, and the relative power that assures them dominance, encourages them to accept domestic inequality.

However, the power imbalance within marriage has changed for two reasons. First, men's bargaining advantage decreases with women's earnings capacity outside the home.

Second, if the emphasis on love and emotion in marriage is increasing, then women's bargaining power is enhanced precisely because women are seen as uniquely qualified to bring those qualities to a marriage (England & Farkas, 1986). If the balance of power within marriage is becoming less unequal, then women should be becoming better positioned both to leave relationships that are not fully satisfying and to voice their concerns about inequities within marital relationships. In short, the dynamics of family life have been altered by women's increased standing in the labor force, creating options for women that have always existed for men: "exit" (i.e., divorce), and "voice" (i.e., bargaining or demands for change in the marital relationship), in addition to "loyalty" to traditional domestic arrangements (England & Kilbourne, 1990).

The relationship between women's labor force participation, earnings, and marital dissolution is well documented (Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Recent research also suggests that women's increased power within marriage has indeed contributed to a greater tendency to voice concerns about inequities within relationships. For example, research shows that perceived equity in the division of household labor and childcare, particularly among dual-earner couples, is an important determinant of marital satisfaction (White, 1983; Yogev & Brett, 1985), and disagreements on these issues lead to dissatisfaction and marital instability (Booth, Johnson, White, & Edwards, 1984). In addition, the more housework the husband does, the lower the chances are that the wife has considered divorce (Huber & Spitze, 1983). Goldscheider and Waite (1991) found that husbands use their earnings to "buy" out of sharing household tasks, while wives use their earnings to "buy" increased participation by their husbands.[1] Gender-linked solutions such as these are so deep seated that when domestic confrontations occur over inequities, spouses even disagree on the extent of their disagreements (Benis & Agostinelli, 1988). Criticism of perceived gender inequality at home and at work is higher, on average, among women than among men, but at the same time, consistent with England's analysis, married women are less critical than single women of men's propensity not to share more equally in household responsibilities (Kane & Sanchez, 1994; see also Kane, 1994). Thus, from an institutionalist perspective, cultural scripts about marriage appear to be in a state of flux (Barich & Bielby, 1996), and both discourse and practice are shaping new understandings about marriage and domestic relationships.

5. AGENCY, GENDER IDEOLOGY, AND FAMILY RELATIONS

To this point, my analysis of gender and family relations has emphasized the ways in which practices within the social institution of the family are shaped by gender norms and ideologies. I observed how those practices, centered on the provision of care and caregiving, are affected by prevailing beliefs about masculinity and femininity and by other exogenous factors such as waged labor, and how they vary by differences in cultural contexts. An institutionalist lens has allowed consideration of how both prevailing social scripts that prescribe family life, and symbolic displays and enactments of gender, socially construct the family (Barich & Bielby, 1996).

In particular, institutionalist analysis focuses attention on the taken-for-granted na-

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[1] Goldscheider and Waite (1991, p. 277) clarify that absolute levels of earnings, as well as education, have a greater effect on the division of household labor than do relative earnings.

ture of gender as an organizing feature of family relations. Taken-for-grantedness is the practical knowledge comprising shared understandings of social reality (Zucker, 1991), and taken-for-granted notions of action within the family fundamentally organize the gendered enactment of roles, behaviors, and expectations of household members. The practical knowledge that systematizes individuals' shared understandings of men's and women's place within the family also organizes expectations of what constitutes the family and how it is accomplished. One of the most fundamental notions of domestic arrangements is that they must be gendered to be enacted; many analyses go no further than considering how they are gendered.

Institutionalist analysis also recognizes the reality of members' agency. Causality does not operate in just one direction; practices and institutions are reciprocally related. Family members' practices modify the institutionalized scripts of gendered domestic life, sometimes by default, when there are no "legitimate" scripts for unconventional lifestyle choices. However, scholars are just beginning to appreciate the importance of developing theory and research to examine how agency operates as a causal force in institutional change. From its inception, feminist scholarship on the family has made note of the reality of multiple discourses and varied practices, but has lacked a conceptual framework for specifying how this diversity modifies family as an institution and ideology (see Glenn, 1987). We know that although constrained by dominant institutions and ideologies, family members experiment with and invent new strategies for dealing with the everyday challenges of domestic life. In doing so, they open up a space for new discourse about what constitutes legitimate practice within families, and even what constitutes a family. One recent treatment of this issue includes Weston's (1991) study of how lesbian and gay domestic arrangements redefine kinship networks. This work challenges the "opposite gender model" of parenthood and kinship relations, which views kinship relations as determined solely on the basis of blood (consanguinity) or marriage (affinity).

Another is Gubrium and Holstein's (1990, 1993; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) analysis of the family that responds to scholars who decry the "disappearance" of the family (Popenoe, 1993; Smelser, 1980). In conceptualizing "family," they shift emphasis away from defining it as a specific set of social relationships that take place only within households. They argue that it should also include relationships that take place in settings where family activity routinely extends, such as nursing homes, daycare centers, and residential treatment facilities.[2] On the one hand, Gubrium and Holstein acknowledge the power of the notion of "family" as it relates to the sentiments associated with the private space of house and home. On the other hand, they place in the foreground members' sentiments, in particular feelings, values, and commitments, as well as their activities and the meanings those actions create (Gubrium & Holstein, 1990). The enactment of family *relations* as a set of practices becomes the primary focus.

While this expanded conceptualization allows a more diverse range of practices to be subsumed under the concepts of "family" and "family relations," it is important to recognize that gender is still enacted, even in domestic arrangements that depart from the traditional heterosexual nuclear family. Gender ideologies still legitimate relations of power and the division of emotional and physical labor, however differently those relations are configured.

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[2] Going a step further, Hochschild (1997) has suggested that family-like relationships and bonds extend into the workplace and may indeed supplant those that take place in domestic units.

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