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CHANGING FAMILIES/CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Work, family and community in transition[1]

Scholars writing about community in recent years have been more likely to lament its passing than celebrate its exemplars. What's missing in this recent revival of interest in community is a systematic link with work—family issues and, in particular, an explicit recognition that women's and men's work—family lives have changed dramatically in the post-World War II era. We investigate the consequences of structural shifts in our family and work lives for a sample of elite, managerial women in dual-earner marriages, a population for whom work and family concerns are both immediate and salient. Understanding changing definitions of, and trends in, family and work can provide a useful lens through which we can profitably address recent debates about the decline or resurgence of community and civic society. Our findings suggest that, although conceived differently than in previous decades, family remains central to our respondents' sense of community and structures their civic engagement. In contrast with previous generations of women, however, work is also important, for defining women's sense of self and community and for offering an alternative venue for community service.

Keywords   work-family; community; civic engagement; civic society

Les chercheurs sur la communauté dans les années récentes ont été plus disposés à lamenter sa fuite plutôt que de fêter ses réussites. L'élément manquant dans cette renaissance d'intérêt en la communauté est une étude systématique de l'évolution des relations travail-famille et, en particulier, une reconnaissance explicite que les vies «travail-famille» des femmes et des hommes ont changé radicalement depuis 1945. Nous examinons les conséquences des changements structuraux dans la vie familiale et professionnelle d'un échantillon de femmes élites, provenant de ménages où les deux adultes travaillent, une population particulièrement concernée par les questions de travail et de famille. Une bonne compréhension de l'évolution des définitions et des tendances dans la vie familiale et professionnelle peut fournir une perspective utile par laquelle on peut mieux s'adresser aux débats récents sur le déclin et la réapparition d'une communauté et d'une société civile. Nos conclusions suggèrent que, bien que conçue différemment dans les années récentes, la famille reste au centre de notre idée de la communauté et joue un rôle important dans les relations que les individus enquêtés ont avec leurs communautés. En contraste avec les femmes des générations précédentes, par contre, le travail est important dans la définition du sens du soi et de la communauté pour les femmes. En plus, le travail crée un endroit alternatif pour les femmes pour participer au travail d'intérêt général.

Mots-cléfs   travail-famille; la communauté; l'engagement civique; la société civile

Introduction

Community has been on everyone's mind of late. This revival of interest in community was well underway prior to September 11, 2001 — in both the scholarly and political communities — and has only intensified since then. These recent discussions about community are the latest in a long and rich history on the topic (e.g., Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). What struck us about this latest revival of interest in community is what's missing: a systematic link with work–family issues and, more specifically, an explicit recognition that women's and men's work–family lives have changed dramatically in the post-World War II era. This paper begins to redress the balance. We first provide an overview of recent literature about community. We then briefly review how our changing family and work lives have shifted the structural context in which we make decisions regarding community. Finally, with recent qualitative data, we flesh out the consequences of these structural shifts by examining the community definitions and engagements of a sample of elite, managerial women in dual-earner marriages, a population for whom work and family issues are both immediate and salient. This analysis provides a lens through which we can profitably address recent debates about the decline or resurgence of community and civic society.[2]

What is community?

What does community look like? Alice Rossi described community as 'the rich array of associational affiliations that mediate between individuals and the larger society beyond the primary ties of family, co-workers and friends — what sociologists from the earliest days of the discipline called 'secondary groups'' (Rossi, 2001, p. 33). Robert Putnam (2001) focused on acts of civic involvement. And Robert Wuthnow described personal 'civic involvement' as:

> . . . [participating] in social activities that either mediate between citizens and government or provide ways for citizens to pursue common objectives with or without the help of government. These activities are purposive. . . Some of these activities may be performed alone. . . But most require people to work together, and even those that are ostensibly solitary (like voting) are generally the result of organized efforts.
>
> (Wuthnow, 1998, p. 7)

Our definitions of community also vary historically. In Putnam's (2001) view, the World War II generation set the standard for what community identity and service ought to be. He described the solidarity of the World War II era: victory gardens, government-sponsored war bonds, and the community work of 12 million members of the Civilian Defense Corps and 7.5 million members of the Red Cross. Countless others from 'the greatest generation' volunteered at over 4,000 civilian-defence offices

'fixing school lunches, providing day care and organizing scrap drives'. Reinforced by a unified popular culture and a supportive government, personal sacrifice and shared communal solidarity were commonplace among ordinary Americans.

In our post-September 11, 2001 world, similar acts of concern and solidarity emerged, especially in the hard hit New York City metropolitan area in which our project was located. The selflessness of the firefighters, emergency medical service, police officers and 'Ground Zero' workers is well documented. But the sense of community was and is broader than that. Putnam (2001) noted that ordinary Americans came together in large numbers to do what little they could. In a nationwide survey of civic attitudes and behaviours in late fall 2001, he found evidence of community renewal (Putnam, 2002): increased percentages donating money, giving blood and working on community projects. In addition, Americans reported greater trust in government and community, and more political consciousness.

Like de Tocqueville before him, Putnam (2000) lauded Americans' attachment to social groups, among which he included religious, personal, moral and work-related groups. Putnam argued that Americans are more likely to join social groups than the citizens of any other country, although recent cross-national studies of civic engagement have countered this claim (Curtis, Baer, & Grabb, 2001; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). Volunteering, giving and joining are 'mutually reinforcing and habit-forming — as Alexis de Tocqueville put it, 'habits of the heart'' (Putnam, 2000, p. 122).

Decline or resurgence?

Scholars writing about community in recent years have been more likely to lament its passing than celebrate its exemplars, and Robert Putnam is the most prominent spokesperson for this argument (Putnam, 1995, 1996, 2000). Putnam (2000) pointed to the 1960s as the critical turning point when civic revival degenerated into civic decline. His list of declining civic institutions is long: voting; informal socializing with friends; membership in labour unions, fraternal and veteran groups; religious participation; PTA membership; fewer family dinners, social visiting, card playing; league bowling; Girl and Boy Scouts; the Red Cross; even newspaper reading (see also Wuthnow, 1998). These declines are troubling, Putnam argued, because they represent foregone 'social capital', in the form of social networks that have immense value as social 'externalities'. Lost to society are a 'generalized reciprocity' and a trustworthiness that 'lubricates social life'. Lost to the individual are the very real benefits that can accrue from dense social networks, especially 'bridging social capital' that can provide access to much-needed resources and information (Putnam, 2000, pp. 20−22).

Putnam's explanation for these declines in civic engagement rests on generational change in how we allocate our time. Using available national data sources (e.g., General Social Survey, time diary data), he estimated that the pressures of time, and the growth of dual-earner families, account for about 10% of the decline. He attributed another 10% to suburbanization, urban sprawl and increased commuting times and 25% to people allocating more time to electronic entertainment. His major explanation, however, was that less civically involved baby boomers and Gen Xers replaced those in the more active World War II generation (Putnam, 2000). Those in

the World War II generation, as Sherif (1958) would describe it, shared 'superordinate goals' that helped to inaugurate an immense wave of patriotism, communal solidarity and civic volunteering, all of which continue to this day for this cohort.

Much ink has been spilled over whether this decline really exists (see for example, Bookman, 2004; Ladd, 1999; Pollitt, 1996; Reich, 2001; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004; Schudson, 1996; Skocpol, 1996; Wolfe, 1998a; Wuthnow, 1998). Putnam (2000) himself noted that some social groups have shown a resurgence: professional, ethnic, service, hobby, sports and school fraternity groups have all increased their memberships. Individual volunteering for charity or social service groups is also up, as are small groups (reading and literary groups), self-help and support groups (AA, Al-Anon) and virtual communities (Wuthnow, 1998). Wuthnow reported that although only 20% of Americans report participation in traditional civic associations, 50% regularly engage in some form of volunteer work. The fastest growing types of membership organizations are 'tertiary' or 'checkbook' organizations (Putnam, 2000) — the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and the National Organization for Women (NOW) — that are likely to have professional staffs with Washington DC lobbying arms (see also Skocpol, 1999). As Reich (2001) argued, community becomes a marketable good as Americans join civic groups as consumers as opposed to participants.

Wuthnow (1998) argued instead that Americans have replaced traditional forms of membership with new associational ties. In place of more durable organizational ties (e.g., the PTA, Elks), Americans are turning to:

> . . . looser, more sporadic, ad hoc connections. . . busy men and women do the best they can, giving a little of their time, seeking to be responsible citizens in small ways, and being creative in the ways they relate to their neighbors and the nation. . . . Instead of cultivating lifelong ties with their neighbors, or joining organizations that reward faithful long-term service, people come together around specific needs and to work on projects that have definite objectives.
>
> (Wuthnow, 1998, pp. 5, 8)

Sirianni and Friedland (2001, p. 234) also examined several examples of civic renewal in contemporary America, focusing on four sites of 'social learning' and participatory democracy: community organizing and development, public journalism, civic environmentalism and healthy communities.

We argue that the key to understanding changing communities is to recognize how our family and work lives have changed since the early 20th century. Associational ties now form in a social context quite different from the sorts of social arrangements that spawned craft unions, the League of Women Voters, the PTA, or the Lions Club earlier in the 20th century. 'Looser connections' make more sense in an environment where 'porous' social institutions with permeable boundaries allow people, ideas and goods and services to flow freely (Wuthnow, 1998, p. 5). Loose connections allow better access to both information and resources (Granovetter, 1973).

Changing structural contexts: Work and family

Rossi (2001) set her analysis of U.S. civil society and social responsibility in the context of recent social change in family structure, work and the demography of the life course. Moen and her colleagues described these changes as producing a 'structural mismatch' between changed family demographics and unchanged (or partially changed) customs, norms and organizational practices (Moen, 2003; Roehling, Moen, & Batt, 2003; Moen & Roehling, 2005). In this section we review recent structural changes in work and family lives. Like Voydanoff (2001), we view these structural shifts as macro-level factors that shape the linked work, family and community contexts in which we operate. We then address the implications of these macro-level changes for our respondents' definitions of community and their allocation decisions regarding volunteer service.

A major change affecting work and family in the post-war period has been the dramatic entry of women into the labour force, as well as the shape of their participation. In 1950, women 16 years and older constituted 30% of the labour force; by 2000 that percentage had increased to 47% (Costello, Wight, & Stone, 2003). Similarly, 34% of all women worked in 1950, increasing to 60% by 2000. This increased labour force participation was especially noteworthy for mothers with children younger than 18 years. Equally important, women's age patterns of labour force participation changed to approximate those of men, signalling a shift from a male breadwinner to a dual-earner household: Thirty-one percent of married couples were dual-earners in 1970, compared with 51% by 1990 (Jacobs & Gerson, 2000), and 62% by 2000 (calculated from data in Costello et al., 2003). This shift to dual-earner households reflects in part the economic reality faced by most American families in the post-1970 period: Women's rising earnings helped to offset the stagnating median earnings of full-time male workers (Ellwood, 2000).

Since 1970 women have also made notable inroads into traditionally male occupations, especially time-greedy professional and managerial occupations (Reskin & Roos, 1990). Work has also restructured such that it is more international, flexible, high tech and service-oriented, and prosperity now coexists with rising inequalities (Bernhardt, Morris, Handcock, & Scott, 2001; Kalleberg, 2000; McCall, 2001). Firm-level restructuring has produced 'high road' and 'low road' strategies (Bernhardt et al., 2001, p. 10): (1) high-performance workplaces that adopt inventive HR strategies such as job rotation and teamwork that provide desirable jobs with good mobility opportunities, high pay and job security; or (2) 'lean and mean' firms that keep a lid on costs by avoiding unions, outsourcing or externalizing work traditionally done within the company (through the use of contingent workers and subcontractors) and relying on two-tiered wage systems. Traditional notions of loyalty to one firm have declined, on the part of both the employer and worker.

The 'organization man' is now a relic of the past. Managers and professionals often spent their careers in one organization, with loyal employees slowly promoted up the well-established organizational hierarchy. By the mid-1980s this pattern shifted dramatically toward more dynamic 'boundaryless careers' (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; see also Kalleberg, 2000) that unfold in multiple, as opposed to single, organizations. Promotions occur along hierarchical networks overseen by occupational elites, and

individuals take responsibility for their own careers, cultivating networks and mentoring younger, and being mentored by senior, colleagues.

The resulting time squeeze holds primarily for the high end of the labour force: Jacobs and Gerson (2000, p. 74; 2001) found that salaried workers with higher education and in professional and managerial jobs work longer hours, while hourly employees at the other end of the occupational spectrum work part time or as contingent labour. The trend toward a 24/7 economy, and the increasing use of non-standard work hours, has negatively affected families' health and well-being (Presser, 1999, 2003; Yeandle, 1999). Hochschild (1997, p. 46) described the emergence of 'Taylorized' homes, places where the quest for efficiency produced speedups with deleterious consequences for working families. With both women and men now in the labour force, the 'time bind' workers face means that home lives are now becoming as harried and as hurried as work lives, 'succumbing to a cult of efficiency previously associated with the workplace'. Mattingly and Bianchi (2003, p. 1022) demonstrated an important consequence of our sped-up culture: Women have less free time than men, they are more likely than men to share that time with their children, and their free time is not as effective in minimizing 'feeling rushed'. The time squeeze isn't good for employers either, with increased mistakes, anger and resentments affecting job productivity, and increased difficulty with retention (Golden & Jorgensen, 2002). And, of course, as these authors and others have suggested, increased time pressure can also reduce our collective civic engagement.

Implications for community definitions and civic engagement

We argue that conversations about community engagement have not kept pace with the rapid changes in our work and family lives. Our definitions of community are caught in a structural lag and are sorely in need of updating. What is missing in the recent discourse on declining communities is an explicit link with work−family issues and, in particular, an explicit recognition that women's and men's work−family lives have dramatically altered in the post-World War II era. We need a sustained discussion of the implications of these social and economic changes on our definitions of community and decisions about community service, a task to which we now turn.

The work−family and community literatures have developed along parallel tracks, intersecting on occasion but not in any systematic way. Both literatures are conceptualized around issues of time allocation. Nonetheless, they are for the most part written by different scholars, published in different journals and oriented toward different audiences. Viewing community in the context of work−family issues, and women's and men's changed work−family lives, can effectively move us beyond a simplistic either/or framing — volunteering is either declining or not — to a more nuanced and useful understanding of community and how it has changed. Fortunately, a few scholars have begun to specifically address the work/family−community link (Bookman, 2004; Rossi, 2001; Rotolo, 2000; Voydanoff, 2001), and our work is in that tradition.

Because our data are cross-sectional, we are unable to examine how community engagement changed over time. Nonetheless, we are able to examine the consequences of this structural lag for women's *definitions of community*, and for *how*

they allocate their time to their communities. We analyse these consequences with qualitative data from interviews with elite women managers in dual-earner marriages in three important sectors of the New Jersey workforce.

Defining community.   As Rossi (2001, p. 31) noted, 'community' is a nebulous concept, referring most commonly to one's geographical locale, but broadened in recent years to 'a social group that shares some common characteristics and whose members are conscious of belonging to that group, with no necessary assumption that [it] is limited to a particular locality...' (e.g., the women's community, or the virtual community). In our interviews, we sought to hear, in women's own voices, what 'community' means to them, and to examine how these women interact with the communities they identify. We allowed our respondents to identify their own communities. While some obvious definitions come to mind, including such primary communities as nuclear and extended families, friends and local towns, others are important as well, including professional, civic, religious and other secondary groups. Like Wuthnow (1998) and Bookman (2004), we took a broad view of what constitutes community, including formal volunteering, informal local helping, informal social ties, organized volunteering through the workplace or a number of other ways of donating one's time.

The women we interviewed live in a very different world from their mothers, whose lives (according to their daughters) were defined by their families and local geographic communities. Work, for our respondents, is a major part of their everyday lives, where it tended not to be so for their mothers (Carr, 2002, 2004; Goldin, 1997). As Perrow (1996) argued, work institutions are replacing smaller, independent and geographically based communities in the lives of both women and men. Large organizations have absorbed much of what we call civil society, and the benefits that accrue to individuals on the basis of their civic status now depend on whether they work and who hires them. The organization in which one works becomes the source of one's health care, friends, social interactions, educational opportunities, recreation and pensions. Wuthnow (1998) also pointed out that many see their workplaces as providing more personal connections than their neighbourhoods, replicating Hochschild's (1997) important finding that work is becoming home (although see Kiecolt, 2003). Wolfe (1998a, 1998b) similarly described how the workplace has supplanted local communities as the locus for some civic activity, such as building houses, reading to children or sitting on boards of non-profit organizations. We argue that an increasing identification with work and organizational-related communities will promote more group-based volunteerism among women. Eckstein (2001, p. 829) defined 'collectivistic-rooted' volunteerism as 'acts of generosity that *groups* (rather than individuals) initiate, inspire and oversee; individuals participate because of their group ties'.

Family will, however, remain central in women's lives. Bianchi (2000) found that the amount of time mothers invest in their children has remained relatively constant since the 1960s: Working mothers have apparently not reduced the quality, or even the absolute quantity, of time they spend with their children. Blair-Loy (2003) described how women's work−family choices are shaped by a powerful culture that

fosters deeply moral and emotional responses. Women are torn between a 'devotion to work' and a 'devotion to family'.

Community engagement.   Using time diary data, Tiehen (2000) found that the voluntary participation rate of working-age married women (18−64 years) declined from 16.4% to 9.3% between 1965 and 1993. She linked this decline in volunteering primarily to increased labour force participation (the negative effects of increasing employment more than offset the positive effects of women's increasing education). Part-time women are more civically engaged than those who work full time, but those working long hours are the *most* likely to volunteer (Tiehen, 2000; Wuthnow, 1998). Professionals and managers are more likely to volunteer, both because their work often expects it and because they belong to various associations that promote it (Carlin, 2001; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004). Putnam (2000) reported time diary data to show that employed women actually increased time spent in volunteer work between 1965 and 1985, while non-employed women decreased time spent (Robinson & Godbey, 1997). Rotolo and Wilson (2004) found that married people are more likely than single people to volunteer, as are parents (although pre-school-age children reduce their mother's volunteer efforts). In an intriguing test of Putnam's generational argument, these authors compared two cohorts of women ages 37 to 48 in 1974 and 1991. They found — contrary to Putnam — that once one controls for sociodemographic differences (e.g., education, work hours, parental status), there are no significant differences in the number of hours volunteered per week, nor the number of weeks worked per year.

We argue that our respondents will be engaged in their communities, although perhaps not in the traditional sense that Putnam (2000) identified. Reflecting their labour force attachment, our respondents should be engaged in more collectivist, work-related, as well as the more traditional family and local, communities. Consistent with Skocpol (1999, p. 5), 'fully employed women are often drawn into associations or civic projects through work.... styles of civic involvement have changed — much to the disadvantage of broad-gauged associations trying to hold regular meetings'.

Data and methods

We interviewed New Jersey professional women in dual-earner marriages. We generated a snowball sample of 31 women in the Fall of 2001, primarily through recommendations from our Advisory Board. Our initial criteria for inclusion in the sample were that women (1) were married and living with a husband also in the labour force; (2) working in a decision-making position, with at least 10 years of management experience; and (3) working in one of three important economic sectors in New Jersey: information technology, financial services and pharmaceuticals. To ensure diversity, we included a number of African Americans and Asians. Our primary focus was on those with children, although we did interview several without children for comparison purposes. We targeted interviewees from both large and small firms, and from both top and middle levels of management. Finally, we interviewed a secondary sample of six husbands (not reported on here).

Two data sources provide the basis for our findings: (1) pre-interview questionnaires for 31 female respondents, and (2) interviews with 31 female respondents. Two members of the research team participated in each interview. We asked, for example, about the respondents' work, their perceptions of work−family balance, their definitions of community and their community involvement. The interviews took approximately two hours to complete and were typically held at the respondent's work site. All interviews were conducted between December, 2001 and August, 2002. (For detailed information on methods, see Hartman, Roos, and Trigg, 2002.)

Description of respondents

Our respondents are members of a professional and social elite — they are highly educated, live in intact families and work in relatively high prestige jobs. It is important to bear in mind the class status of our respondents as we describe our findings. As befits our respondents' professional status, all had at least a bachelors degree, and 55% had advanced degrees: Twenty-nine percent had an MA/MS, 16% a PhD, and 10% another professional degree (e.g., MBA). Our respondents ranged in age from 30 to 52, averaging 43 years old. Most of our sample (n = 22) was white; seven were African American and two were Asian. More than three-quarters had children living at home. Two-thirds lived in small New Jersey towns (mostly in northern or central New Jersey). Our respondents' job titles ranged from the middle levels of the corporate world (Director, Associate Director) to the highest (CEO, President, Vice President). After each interview we also estimated each respondent's 'job level' as being either at the 'top' of the corporate hierarchy (48% of our respondents) or in the 'middle' (52%). Most of the IT women worked in small firms, while most of those in financial services and pharmaceuticals worked in large firms, or smaller subsidiaries of large firms. Thus, solely because of sector differences in firm size, our IT respondents are more likely to have risen to top jobs in their companies.

On average, the women worked in their current companies for 12.3 years, 10.5 of those in management. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the women reported that their jobs allowed them some flexibility, and many mentioned examples of how they used that flexibility to navigate their work, family and community lives. Consistent with this, over three-quarters worked from home in their current job, on average about two days per month.

There is ample evidence of the time bind our respondents faced. On average, these women worked 9.9 hours per day, with a range of 7 to 12 hours. On top of their long work days, they averaged 57 minutes of commuting time to and from work, with a wide range of 0 to 165 minutes: One woman worked primarily at home, while another travelled on a regular basis within a three-state area. Our respondents spent an average of two days and two nights per month away from home for business. They compensated for these busy schedules by eating out, or bringing food in, several times each week. While approximately 55% of our sample ate dinner together as a family most to every evening, another 45% managed to eat together only occasionally.

Defining community[3]

Expanding definitions of community

In this section, we strive to personalize our sample by drawing from our rich interviews to illustrate our findings. The interviews demonstrate how our respondents defined community in fluid and compelling ways. We asked 'How do you define community', prompting with different kinds of communities only after the respondent's initial reply. Although most of our interviewees began by describing 'community' as their immediate families, they expanded their definitions (often without prompting) to include extended families, neighbourhoods, towns, children's schools and sports teams, church, work, voluntary associations and friendship networks of various kinds. Many women defined community as the broader geographic areas they traversed in their work and civic lives:

> *[I define community] in a multitude of ways. The biggest definition: the environment you live in and not necessarily where your house is. I live in [town], I work in [small city], part of my business is in Europe and I have commitments in all of these places.*
>
> (019)

> *Family is first (and that includes my extended family); my town; my daughter's school; my neighbourhood; the black community; the women's community; and professional communities.*
>
> (012)

Like Rotolo and Wilson (2004) see also Bookman, 2004; Rotolo, 2000), we found that religion plays a central role in the community definitions of many of our respondents. Over half (52%) indicated they had participated in a church/temple or other religious group in the past three years. One woman, for example, responded, 'being that I'm religious, my community centers around the synagogue that I belong to, and the Jewish community is large in town' (008). Another said 'I define community pretty narrowly as my church community in [central New Jersey town]: the community of people I have met and interact with in my church' (022).

Several women described, in a matter of fact way, how their sense of community differed from that of their mothers: 'My mother lives in a very small town in Maine, and there the community is the town — (it is) a very tight knit community' (016). She considered her own central New Jersey town as less a community, in the traditional sense of the term. Others sought ways to replicate the strong neighbourhood ties of their childhood, and some were successful:

> *We're very fortunate we have strong neighborhood ties. So we have several families that we socialize with, besides the book club. Nearly twice a month or more, family get-togethers: potluck dinners or pizza night. That's a nice community to be in. Nice people with good values and thoughtful gestures, good friends.*
>
> (007)

Our respondents expressed little regret about shifting definitions of community. When asked how their sense of community differed from that of their mothers, they saw their own communities as broader and more expansive, usually because of shifts in women's changing work roles. Those women who had stay-at-home mothers (approximately 45%) noted this in their remarks about the restricted boundaries of their mothers' lives in comparison with their own. As an IT professional described it:

> My mother's generation had a lot in common with people who lived around them. They were stay-at-home mothers. . . . Now my neighbor goes one place to do one thing and I'm going in another direction. . . . I think my mother's generation's definition was smaller than mine. I am part of a number of different communities, whereas I think that my mother and her generation were much more limited — because they were not off joining clubs or talking to people in California. She was talking to the woman down the street.
>
> (029)

More than half of our sample belonged to more voluntary associations than their mothers:

> My mom used to get involved in neighborhood things: PTA, church, coaching a baseball team. I come into contact with different issues that I'm motivated to do something about because I'm working, traveling, interacting with the state government'.
>
> (015)

Defining work as community

Although work is not typically the first thing our interviewees described as most meaningful to them, it does define and structure their lives in very important and meaningful ways. Given the elite nature of their jobs, this is not too surprising. Many also found enduring friendships through their work, reflecting the number of hours they work away from the home. We asked our respondents to describe their most meaningful ties and relationships and our respondents quite self-consciously identified their families as their most important community:

> Family and then friends. Work is farther down on the list, though some of my friendships have arisen out of work. But in terms of work itself, that would be third-tier.
>
> (015)

While we found much evidence of Hochschild's (1997) time bind, we found little evidence that our respondents viewed home as a place from which they wished to escape. Like Kiecolt (2003), we found that our respondents described home as a haven, a respite from the vagaries of the work world, a place to retreat to be oneself. This definition of family seems qualitatively different from that espoused by the generation of philanthropists Daniels (1988) interviewed, women for whom unpaid philanthropy was their 'work'. Daniels's respondents were apt to describe caring for husbands and children as their primary job, with community service undertaken 'for their families and, secondarily, their community' (1988, p. xxvi). Our respondents

were instead carving out an updated definition of family as their primary community: Home or family is a place of enduring relationships, relatively more safe and long term than relationships that can wither away with the demise of the work role. As one IT executive put it:

> [I find my most meaningful ties in] the community and home.... My personality is more in concert with the demands and needs and expectations of those two. I am who I am when I'm in those two spaces. I don't have to become anybody different. At work, I can't be myself, I put on a mask.... I am more guarded in the workplace.
>
> (020)

The vast majority of our respondents were emphatic in describing the added value work brings to their lives, a vital dimension missing from their mothers' and grandmothers' lives:

> First in my home. I feel that these are the lasting relationships. I expect to be with my husband and kids through it all — the rest will change. My family will be the constant. We'll be leading different lives and in different communities, but I will still be with my husband and children. Second, at work. I'm fortunate that I have some very strong relationships at work. I have a real sense of affection for the company that I work for. I've been there ten years. It was a start-up when I started and they've made themselves into a real company. It's like my child that has grown up. And I have a lot of connections through my company that are very important to me (my best friend I met through work). My other communities are less important, a very distant third.
>
> (029)

Giving family primacy is not always consistent with the number of hours they allocate to work:

> [Most meaningful for me are] home, my family, the people that are close to me by far. I've made too many choices where I'll pick work . . . but it's not the answer. No meeting is as important as a birthday. The second place would be the temple. Work would be the last. But if you asked me where I spent my time, it might be in the reverse.
>
> (027)

Our respondents were perceptive in recognizing the vagaries of the current market place — downsizing, unemployment, workplace restructuring and widening inequalities — all good reasons to maintain the primacy of a stable home life:

> My most meaningful relationships are probably in the home. But I certainly get value and connection from wonderful relationships with co-workers and people in the community. People will have an average of six different career changes in their lifetime. It's interesting to see which friends from work last over those job changes.
>
> (023)

> [Family] will impact your life forever. Work ties are important but not like family, who are there for good and bad. Those at work are there only for as long as you're at work — it's

amazing to watch how people at work aren't there for one another when someone is downsized. You realize when you watch that, it's the family that matters.

(014)

One of the important added values work brought to our respondents' lives was as a source of friendships. We asked our respondents where they met their closest friends and, given the length of their work days, it was often work. Work ties expand these women's communities well beyond the family and local communities of their mothers. Our respondents described a rich array of friendships emerging out of their work lives and/or their work-related community service. A bank executive described her rich set of work friendships:

[I meet friends] through work-related activities: sometimes you just click and something develops that goes beyond the workplace. Not that we always worked together. Sometimes we meet through volunteer work. There's one group of women that I used to work with. We have a theater subscription together (and we also go out to eat before the show): five events a year. If I didn't do that I would never see them.... Another group: we all got to know one another because of one person — we call ourselves 'the friends of [woman's name].' We ended up having a Tuesday lunch bunch. We get together at least four times a year and do lunch or dinner or sometimes theater. I also have some other friends just from the [an executive women's group].

(015)

While some of these work relationships develop into close, personal relationships, others are probably best described as 'work networks':

[My bank] sponsors an [organization for female entrepreneurs], and I have developed a network of people to call and say 'what would you do if' — but this is really a work network and not about close friends. I don't know if I would consider them friends, but rather acquaintances. These are not deep friendships.... I have my husband and sister, don't need anyone beyond that.

(024)

This bank executive, who had no children, went on to say:

I probably work a lot more than 12 hours a day, but you know what, it's okay! There's a social component that I participate in through work and I don't look at it as work: it's life! Work happens to provide the platform and the conduit.

(024)

Our data suggest that Perrow (1996) is correct: Large organizations — work organizations — have (at least partly) replaced civic community, if by community we mean those smaller, independent and geographically based entities with which we traditionally identify. Work has become a source of social interaction, recreation and especially friendships, in addition to economic security. Our respondents describe their work as a rich source of friendships, both strong and weak. But that isn't the whole story. Our data also demonstrate that family — or, more accurately, an

updated definition of home/family — remains central to the lives of our respondents. Their first reply to the community question referenced family, followed by work and other civic groups. While the workplace has not replaced the home, for working mothers it has taken its place alongside the family as a critical component of professional women's identity and their definition of community. And this is notably dissimilar from the lives of their (primarily stay-at-home) mothers. While the women occasionally sought community relationships similar to those of their mothers, they viewed their own lives as infinitely richer and more rewarding, in large measure because of their work communities. These findings are reminiscent of Bielby and Bielby's (1989), who found that married working women gave priority to family when balancing work and family demands on their time. They are also consistent with Orrange's (2003, p. 473): A majority of the advanced MBA and law students he interviewed described 'family' as the 'primary source of long-term meaning in life'.

Community engagement

Despite their all-consuming work lives, our respondents were active in their communities in a number of important ways. They found different, and for them more fulfilling, ways to support their communities. The two main vehicles for their community service involved family and work, although a number also volunteered for other kinds of community organizations. We discuss each in turn.

Family as community

Because more than three-quarters of our respondents still had children at home — many of them young children — they self-consciously and creatively connected their own volunteer service with the lives and activities of their children. Their families indeed became a primary community. Our respondents described the ways in which their children connect them to community through (for example) neighbourhood friendships, their schools, their sports teams and their churches or temples. Their own stake in the community, and their voluntarism, was often linked to the institutions that educate and socialize their children. This volunteerism constitutes a different form of community engagement, reflecting a new work–family reality: Rather than choose *between* family or work, women have increasingly chosen family *and* work.

Because they were at work an average of 10 hours a day, these working mothers needed their children's assistance to establish and solidify bonds in the neighbourhood and towns where their children spent most of their days. One bank vice president remarked:

> *We moved when my children were young so I felt that I really had an easy time to create a community for myself because the kids made friends. And then I formed friendships with the parents. But we may move again with my husband's employment. And I really wonder if*

my kids are in college when that happens, how am I ever going to know my neighbors? . . . Without kids, it's hard to connect.

(001)

The children's schools became an important site of community building and civic engagement. Well over half (58%) of the women we interviewed had donated time to their children's schools in the past three years. One mother of two daughters, ages 10 and 14, described her children's schools as one of her most important communities:

Now I consider one of my biggest communities my daughters' schools. They're in a private school, and that is such a community. Prior to that I had kind of pockets: friends, church-related.

(005)

Consistent with Putnam (2000), however, few of our respondents indicated involvement in the PTA: Only 5 of our 31 respondents indicated PTA service in the past three years. A few of the women who tried to become active in the public school system found it exceedingly difficult. One mother with teenagers noted:

I tried to be involved in the school system — esp. the PTA. But the model of it prevented me from becoming involved. . .. The PTA machine is so big that it does not necessarily allow for models that don't fit. I told them that I work in a demanding job — but that I would stuff envelopes or anything I could do to serve. Every group has cliques, strong, impenetrable group. But with the PTA you either have to be fully in or fully out. . .. I told the assistant principal that this model is too rigid — that it excludes dual-earner families and doesn't take advantage of people's skills gained through working (such as team-building skills).

(019)

In the lives of employed mothers, where time is a scarce and valuable commodity, it is fulfilling — and creative — to combine parenting with voluntarism. Such volunteering becomes both community engagement and parenting. As one woman commented:

I felt that I had to pick and choose when my kids were young. I never wanted to be away at night — so, outside activities were related to [the children's] school. I worked hard to keep time with my children.

(014)

This senior vice president of a financial institution chose her civic involvement — particularly sitting on boards — by when they held their meetings. Another interviewee described organizing most of her volunteer service around the lives of her children, and found it a valuable way to stay close to them:

I'm very involved in Sunday school because that's a way for me to give back to the community but also to stay very connected to where my children are. . . . I'm very involved

in the sports communities with the kids. This provides a connection for me with the children and the community.

(023)

This woman was not alone: 15 of the 31 women we interviewed donated time to their church or temple in the past three years; another eight did volunteer work for their children's sports teams; still others were involved in various other local, civic, or neighbourhood groups. Such findings are consistent with Rotolo (2000, p. 1148), who found that the presence of elementary school-aged children significantly increased women's joining of both church-related and youth group organizations.

Life stage clearly plays a role in the choices our respondents made about community service, replicating Knoke and Thomson's (1977) important findings on variation in voluntary association membership by family life cycle stage (see also Rotolo, 2000). Some, who had purposely stepped out of community leadership roles to spend more time with their families, plan to broaden their involvement when their children were older. One described the 'loose ties' she maintained with different, changing communities:

As your role in life changes (a student, a mom, a leader at work) . . . your communities change. You meet new people. Some communities go away. Some people you keep loose ties with . . . But communities change according to your needs and your roles.

(028)

Work as community

As more women, and especially women with young children, entered the labour force in the post-1970 period, few had time to join the traditional women's service organizations (e.g., PTA, League of Women Voters), whose decline Putnam (2000) lamented. This doesn't mean, however, that women aren't involved. In addition to active involvement in their children's activities, much of women's community service centres around, or evolves from, work contacts and/or activities (52% of our respondents, for example, indicated active service in a professional organization in the past three years). Rotolo (2000, p. 1148) found that working full time significantly increased women's joining of job-related voluntary organizations, and our respondents are no exception. Here, we focus on three types of work-related service: service sponsored by one's company, work-linked community service that is often an implicit requirement of one's job and interest-based service activities.

Work-sponsored service.   A number of large New Jersey companies are engaged directly in traditional charities, such as releasing employees for 'volunteer days', encouraging employees to participate in reading programmes in the local schools, or building homes through organizations like Habitat for Humanity. One bank executive donated her time to building houses:

[The bank] wanted to construct a house just for a woman, a single mother, and they wanted women to build the whole house.. . . [they] put together a group and I volunteered

to do this.... [we] put on our working duds and we went out... and we worked all day. It was really wonderful. And, I mean, we were putting up walls, we were framing out walls, we were putting in windows, we were ... you know, the whole thing.... Got to meet the woman whose house this was going to be.

(002)

Another high-level bank manager noted:

The one thing we really support is the community.... Each employee gets two paid days per year for volunteering and they can use it on whatever they want... We also supply grants for not-for-profit organizations — I sit on the grant making committee. We distribute about $3 million a year, and I have an opportunity to play an integral part in that. That's very important to me.

(024)

Work-related community service.   Many of our respondents donated their time and energy to service in non-profit agencies in their local community, or the New Jersey community in which they worked, a form of volunteering that is often an implicit requirement of managerial jobs. While one might argue that this form of service is more 'work' than 'civic' involvement, the reality is that this important form of community service is precisely the kind of service in which many professional men have long engaged. Fraternal groups, country clubs and chambers of congress, for example, have always provided men with an outlet for community service, as well as business opportunities (not to mention the pursuit of self-interest and the desire to segregate themselves from different 'others'; see Kaufman, 2002). Given their new work roles, women now use work as a vehicle through which they engage in just such work-related community service. Although such service may redound to the benefit of the professional and his/her firm, it also constitutes important support for communities:

There's a different kind of support at the executive level and above. The officers spend a lot of time on boards.... Executives are expected to contribute in a larger way: it's part of being seen as more of a public person. It's seen as [the company] being involved in the community.

(020)

Often these community positions allow business executives to bring executive skills to non-profit agencies that are otherwise unable to afford high-priced talent. They also permit companies to make direct monetary contributions to causes they deem worthwhile. One financial services executive, for example, was on the Board of Trustees for a local university and, as a function of that service, ensured direct financial contributions to the university. In most of the non-profit work in which they engaged, these women used the same skills they had honed in their 'day jobs'. As one IT executive noted:

I only have so much time to offer, and it does tend to be in areas that interest me, and business interests me. The reason I tend to be a board member rather than the line volunteer

is because I have business skills. The skills I've picked up in my volunteering (government funding issues, getting a non-profit through a process) have helped with my business.

(025)

Other managers brought more than their financial skills to their volunteer work, transferring many of their work skills to their community service:

I use the same skills: team building, knowing how to build a budget, fiscal responsibility, how you enroll people in a vision (creating a vision, a strategic plan), developing people and recruiting people to become part of the leadership.

(019)

Interest-based service.   While our respondents often engaged in community activities that were job-related, they also used their work connections as 'blurred lines of opportunity' to support their own personal goals and interests. Like early women philanthropists a generation earlier (Daniels, 1988), our respondents served on boards for local YMCAs, the Girl Scouts and/or various other health organizations or 'diseases' (e.g., for breast cancer, leukemia, autism), and that service often entailed financial contributions to 'the cause'. They served as leaders and innovators in their jobs and communities, by bringing to their volunteer agencies not only their personal skills and expertise, but also their company's resources. They reported, in turn, that they reaped benefits for themselves, both psychic and material. A financial services executive commented:

I think you have to align the bank and personal interests. Not everyone is interested in sitting on a not-for-profit board. I would rather sit on a Girl Scouts of America board than a Boy Scouts of America board. I just resigned from a board, on which I was very active: a high profile board in the [local city] area. It was important to have visibility on that board. We got a lot of business opportunities from my participation on that board. It helps with networking. I think I'm doing good work for the organization, but I'm not going to close my eyes to business opportunities as they arise by sitting at the board table.

(015)

A number of the women we interviewed chose volunteer activities that expressed their interest in women's, family's, education, race/ethnic or community health issues more broadly:

And you know it's opportunities to do things that you wish you had time to do, but also to do them in the community where you work, which is important to me. I've worked in [a major New Jersey city] now for a number of years, and. . . I feel an affinity for [this city] and a real obligation and many of my financial contributions actually go to organizations [in this city] rather than where I live. . . . The women in finance, here, support to a very generous degree some women's and children's shelters. . . I like that about this company.

(009)

I asked them for some support for a community organization for autistic children, and they ended up donating $5,000. They didn't give it automatically . . . I had to say how it impacts [my company]. I had to explain how many people there are at [my company] who have autistic children . . . and how the organization impacts the local community.

(028)

An IT executive who develops educational programmes for children said:

I do side things, like I help a pre-school in [NJ city] that was not in the nicest of neighborhoods. . . . The center was in the middle of. . . the special needs district. . . I went in and I taught the teachers how to use the computers and I set them up and, you know, those kind of community things. . . I see more worth in it than even them paying me something for that service.

(003)

Other community service

While most of their community service intersected with their family or work lives, a number of our respondents did volunteer for other local groups, a form of service that most closely approximates Putnam's traditional definition of community engagement. It is sometimes hard to distinguish the interest-based service that evolves from one's work role (discussed above) and other volunteer service. One might join an autism or cancer activist group because one's child is autistic, or one survived breast cancer, and that service may lead to business connections. Or, one might join a YMCA Board for work reasons, but remain on the Board beyond one's tenure in the organization. Similarly, it is often hard to distinguish between family and non-family service: Is extensive service in the classrooms of one's children's school, or service as Sunday school teachers or church elders, really family-based or other local service? We review in this section the 'residual' service our respondents performed, specifically service that is neither family, nor work-based, at least to the extent we could make that distinction. A rough count suggests that 17 of our 31 respondents also donated their time to non-family, non-work groups.

One particularly interesting finding was a race difference in political activity: Of the seven African Americans in our sample, five volunteered for non-work, non-family service, and all five were quite active politically (volunteering for a senatorial campaign, advocating for legislation, working on affirmative action through a women's sorority, advocating for women's business issues, building and advocating for schools). Among the 12 comparable whites, five engaged in some form of political work (going on lobbying trips, writing letters to Congress, serving on a government committee, working with an autism activist group and service on a state public policy board). Some of the whites were outspoken about their choice *not* to be involved in political causes. As one noted:

'I'm not politically active either locally or nationally. I have very little tolerance for the game playing that goes on in politics. There's right, there's wrong, and then there's politics. Favors traded'.

(019)

Other examples include many of the same kinds of volunteer groups women have long been associated with (Daniels, 1988; Kendall, 2002): literacy volunteer and various kinds of tutoring; board members for various women's and children's support groups (e.g., for homeless, pregnant women); worker in a community food bank; activist in health-related groups (e.g., substance abuse, cancer, leukemia, autism); officer and/or activists for public service, African American sorority groups; activism in animal or wildlife groups; board members of a medical centre or school; member of service organizations (e.g., Lion's Club); and university recruiters. The reasons for such service are telling:

> *It's almost like, it's the time in your life. My kids are now older. It's a way for you to take your skills and actually do something with them.... I go to the community food bank — the woman who runs it is unbelievable. She could be running a Fortune 500 company. She's everything a leader should be. And I think to myself, everything she does that day affects another person's life. And then I think, 'what did I do today?'... So I try to give back because I feel like, 'OK, I've gotten a lot of different things in my life, advantages or whatever. Now this is a way for you to use some of your things outside of work.'... It's helping your community.*
>
> (005)

Despite their busy family and work lives, our respondents thus remained committed citizens in the larger civic society. Given their life cycle stage, much of this involvement revolved around their families and local communities, including their children's schools, sports teams, churches and other local organizations. Indeed, our respondents demonstrate how elite, working women redefine community to include their families. One described it well:

> *People pulse in and pulse out of community... for many years, women were providing very talented and unpaid support to a number of organizations. Women's unpaid voluntarism has ended. Is there a loss in that infrastructure? Yes! But now women are getting paid for all of the hours they put in. But they didn't step out of the community. They are just participating in a different way. Before I had kids, I was in leadership positions in the community: crisis hotlines, Special Olympics, Center for Retarded Citizens. Now I'm out of those volunteer positions because I have children: and my voluntarism is more in a pulsing style where I'll come in when I can and do a lot of work (go in and go out).*
>
> (023)

Like their mothers, our respondents' children often tied them to their local, geographic communities. Unlike their mothers, their volunteer efforts also had more collective roots: Their work lives drew them away from traditional communities into a variety of work-related service. Some of this community service evolved directly from the expectations of their jobs, some reflected their own desires and interests. Like their male colleagues, these women were now in a position to donate their expertise, and often their company's resources, to organizations of their own choosing. For this service, as well as the non-work service they perform in their communities, they joined organizations that reflect their concern with education, health, religion or other issues that have traditionally driven women to volunteer

work (Daniels, 1988; Kendall, 2002). Finally, with the huge growth of 'tertiary' or 'checkbook' organizations (Putnam, 2000), it's not surprising that our respondents also donate money: Over 90% regularly donated money to a local or national organization.

Discussion

Our analysis provides a useful lens with which to examine changing definitions of community and family, and decisions regarding community service, for a group of professional and social elites. We have demonstrated that a discourse that frames civic engagement as an either-or proposition — civic community is declining, or not — is limited at best for this subpopulation of American women and their families. We examine community in the context of structural shifts in our work and family lives, and move beyond reliance on associational ties in secondary groups to take account of the (sometimes more invisible) family and/or work-based volunteering in which our respondents engaged (Rossi, 2001). Like other forms of volunteer service, these forms of engagement build and sustain communities in new and important ways (Bookman, 2004).

Our conclusions flow from interviews with managerial women who are married to husbands who also work. By design, our respondents have thus successfully negotiated their work−family lives, at least to the extent they remain married *and* in the labour force. Nonetheless, these women clearly feel the brunt of shifts in work and family in the post-1970 period. While we cannot easily generalize beyond these women, we believe they are an ideal sample for investigating shifting definitions of community, caught as they are in a structural mismatch between changed family demographics and unchanged (or partially changed) customs, norms and organizational practices.

As they marry and have children, move up their career ladders, accommodate work and family demands, and balance their desire for community service against family demands on their time, our respondents develop a set of home-grown, *individualized* strategies to address their own time binds. They accomplish this in a world that has changed dramatically from that in which their mothers came of age, a world not particularly sympathetic to the stresses and strains associated with dual-earner parenting/working. Many more of their contemporaries work outside the home, even those with young children, and many more have moved into high-stress, time-greedy jobs. The workplaces they enter have changed dramatically, growing ever more international, flexible, high tech and service oriented.

Some things change slowly, or not at all: Much as Kasarda and Janowitz (1974, p. 329) argued 30 years ago, community is still in part a geographically based 'complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal association ties rooted in family life and on-going socialization processes'. Similar to their mothers, our respondents affirm the centrality of family in their lives. When asked which of their communities were most meaningful, almost without exception they reference family first. Indeed, they readily define family as community. From one perspective,

these findings are not much different from what Daniels (1988) found for women philanthropists of the 1970s, or what Bielby and Bielby (1989) found for married women in the late 1970s: Family comes first. Yet our respondents are carving out a new definition of family as community, one that describes family and home as a safe place where one can retreat to be oneself, a respite from the vagaries and uncertainties of the work world, a place where one can count on enduring relationships. Referencing family first appears to be a wise strategy, given the instability of jobs in today's restructuring economy.

Change, nonetheless, is constant. It's important not to overstate the similarities between today's married women and their counterparts a generation ago. Our respondents make clear that paid work also plays a key role in their sense of self, and in their definitions of community. Work provides them with an important identity separate from family, an identity they find especially salient and rewarding (see also Bielby & Bielby, 1989). For our respondents (in high-powered jobs), work–family choices are not 'either-or'. Theirs is a new work–family reality, one that involves both work *and* family. Consistent with Garey (1999, p. 192), our respondents 'weave' together their work and family lives, recognizing that 'motherhood and employment are not incompatible activities in a zero-sum game'. Comparing our findings to Stone's is instructive: Ninety per cent of the formerly 'fast-track' mothers she interviewed expressed a 'moderate to high degree of ambivalence' about their choice to remain home (Stone & Lovejoy, 2004). In contrast to our respondents, these women were clearly unable to bridge the structural mismatch between family and work. Only 16% of Stone's respondents described their decision to exit the workforce as a 'relatively unconstrained choice or preference to become full-time, stay-at-home mothers' (Stone & Lovejoy, 2004, p. 66).

Changing family demographics, and the restructuring workplace, have also transformed the activities for which our respondents volunteer. Women have long innovated in the labour market to accommodate their work and family lives, by setting up their own businesses, or working from home or part time. In an analogous way, they find creative and non-traditional ways to engage in community service, even as they remain strapped for time in their busy family and work lives. Like Putnam (2000), we encountered few respondents who maintain commitments to traditional membership organizations like the PTA. Instead, their civic commitments are related to family and local community, most notably volunteering for schools, churches/temples and children's sports teams (Rotolo, 2000). And, the kinds of volunteer activities our respondents engage in are often the same as those of earlier women philanthropists: women's and children's welfare, education, health and 'the diseases'.

As Eckstein (2001) argued, volunteerism is rooted not only in such individualistic service, but also through their participation in work-related groups. Men, of course, have a long history of engagement in work-related service (e.g., Kaufman, 2002). Like their male counterparts, our respondents take on volunteer service through their work, blurring their own civic interests with those of their employers. They are now in a position to donate their time and expertise, as well as their company's resources, to organizations with which they identify. Over half of our respondents also engage in other forms of community work, in particular

work for women's and children's support groups, much like their philanthropic forebears.

Clearly, our ability to generalize beyond our sample is limited, at best. We need additional research on non-elite women, including single mothers and/or women in 'jobs' not 'careers'. These women too are caught in the same structural mismatch as our respondents, and face changing workplace structures amidst unchanging norms, policies and attitudes. They too are more likely than their mothers to live in dual-earner families, and to be both mothers *and* workers. Without the substantial resources of our upper middle-class respondents, however, their day-to-day lives are likely to be even more harried and hurried than our respondents. Because they likely face even greater uncertainty in their work lives, they too would likely 'put family first'. Those working in jobs (as opposed to elite careers) might well engage in less work-related service. Nonetheless, we believe these women would still claim a work identity, albeit different in form and content from that of our elite respondents. They should also enjoy work friendships, distinct from their families, and also different and more expansive than those of their mothers. The full answers to such questions, however, await further research.

Revisiting the declining community debate, Robert Putnam might well view our findings as further evidence of his thesis of decline and, to a certain extent, he would be right. Although our respondents are civically engaged, their community service has often narrowed to a significant extent, and quite self-consciously, to 'primary groups' such as family, extended family, or community groups with which their families intersect. In addition, work-related communities have replaced the traditional PTA and women's leagues. Our respondents' civic attachments are often at the expense of broader civic communities, the 'secondary groups' (Rossi, 2001) to which earlier generations of women devoted their time. Some among our respondents question whether this is 'real' community service. We believe it is.

In another sense, therefore, we argue that Putnam is wrong, his definitions of community both too narrow and too dated. Our respondents do spend a lot of their scarce time in service to their communities, just different forms of service. Community, indeed multiple communities, seem alive and well for our sample of highly educated, managerial women. Like Wuthnow (1998), we found women who prefer 'loose connections' formed for specific purposes. These are women who creatively do what they can with the time they have available, giving of themselves for causes with which they agree. At this time in their lives, they focus their energies on family and work-related communities, and they don't apologize for it. They spend time in their children's classrooms, with their sports teams, in Sunday school classrooms, on their temple's or church's governing boards and so forth. They anticipate spending time for service to other secondary groups once their children are older. These women are also drawn into community volunteering through their work. They donate time to various professional organizations, often blurring their own civic interests with those of their employers. Along the way, they often change the organizations for which they volunteer, bringing their own interests and ideas to the organizations' agendas. As Bookman (2004, p. 19) found for her biotech workers and their families, our respondents are forging alternative communities with 'new forms of social capital' and new ways of 'building and sustaining community'. Bookman's long-term vision — one we share — is a nationwide civic association

connecting a plethora of family-based civic groups, fighting for the needs of working families (see also Skocpol, 2000). Our respondents' hectic and stressful lives illustrate just how long-term this vision is.

If changing family demographics and a restructuring economy have significantly reduced the traditional volunteer workforce — non-working women — then society needs to confront a larger question: Who will do society's work? If volunteer work for secondary groups is socially valued — for providing social capital, generating trust and 'lubricating social life' (Putnam, 2000, p. 21) — then society needs to ensure that its members have time to devote to such work. From an individual point of view, one way to address this issue is to recognize that civic engagement will vary by life cycle stage. While those with children still at home might focus on family-related civic work (and there is evidence they do, Knoke & Thomson, 1977; Rotolo, 2000), those older and younger can cast a broader volunteer net. From a collective point of view, however, we also need to bring other social groups into the caring nexus and broaden the social dialogue to undo the 'unbending gender systems' in our social, economic, legal and political institutions (Williams, 2000). Our data demonstrate how managerial women, like their male counterparts, bump up against these unbending gender systems in numerous ways. Being an 'ideal worker' is difficult to reconcile with the ethic of care that our respondents espouse. It is especially difficult when, like many in today's workforce, they live in families with two ideal workers, and no ready solution for the level of care they want to provide for their children. Working families confront unfriendly employer policies, few community resources and little government support. If this ethic of care extends to society writ large, then we need to broaden the web of support for working families and create 'a social infrastructure that connects families, workplaces, and communities in a mutually beneficial system of support' (Bookman, 2004, p. 107). Workplace organizations, the government and community groups all have a role to play in this important social project. The dialogue has begun; we need to act upon it.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1   An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation conference on Work, Family, and Gender Equality, Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meetings, March, 2003, Philadelphia, PA.
2   The larger project is described in a report to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (Hartman et al., 2002).

3   We address this issue at greater length in a companion article (Trigg, Roos, & Hartman, 2005).

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