

BEYOND WORK-FAMILY BALANCE IN ACADEMIA:
A RECONSTRUCTIVE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE CAPSTONE
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The focus of this study is on the underlying cultural gender norms that present professional women in general and women faculty in higher education in particular with an impossible 'choice' between a successful career and motherhood. On the one hand, societal norms still assign women with responsibility for an intensive form of mothering requiring lots of time and energy that leaves little time for their careers. On the other hand, the norm of the ideal worker, which dominates the culture of many colleges and universities, dictates undivided attention to one's research and precludes taking breaks for childrearing, even if it is guaranteed by the family-friendly policies enacted on campus. The ideal worker norm prevents faculty mothers from utilizing family-friendly policies that could ease the tensions of living up to the norm of motherhood. The mere presence of family-friendly policies, no matter how generous they are, is not enough if using them goes against cultural and institutional norms. Hence, creating a work environment that is conducive to utilizing the most optimal policies for faculty parents is essential for

academia to be finally fully equitable for men and women. This will require changes in the assumptions, expectations, and behaviors that constitute the norm of the masculine ideal worker who takes no time for family obligations. An alternative model of academic career, predicated on integration of work and family life, is proposed alongside the norm of shared parenting, according to which *both* parents reduce time at work in order to fulfill childrearing and household responsibilities. In this way, masculinity is no longer linked with paid employment and femininity with childrearing.

"I want a wife" demanded Judy Brady on the pages of *Ms.* magazine in 1972. In her tongue-in-cheek feminist essay, Brady shed light on the invisible work of a mother and wife, which included, among other things, keeping the house clean, taking care of children, arranging to miss time at work when the children were sick, without losing a job, and keeping tabs on all the details of her family's life. Forty years later, women are still burdened by the lion's share of housework and childcare. While the very few mothers who manage to pursue high-pressured careers are often used as the proof of gender equality, a closer look reveals that the supermoms who managed to 'have it all' often receive substantial help with family work from their husbands and/or paid help. Rather than being symbols of progress for women, such 'supermoms' still rely on the same faulty homemaker/breadwinner system that initially subjugated women. Despite the enormous strides made by feminism to bring women into the workforce, the prevailing model of 'the ideal worker' is one that requires unlimited amounts of time for working and very little for care-giving.

Many women, having grown up "in the shadows of feminism" (Aronson 2008), are pursuing careers and professions while still subscribing to an ideal of intensive mothering, according to which childcare is the primary responsibility of mothers. When the demands of motherhood and work remain competing or opposing structures, women struggle to maintain their roles as both primary caregivers and ideal workers. The thesis of this study is that the prevailing concepts of work and family are deeply rooted in gender norms that determine the choices women can make about their careers and family. Although the feminist movement takes credit for the message to women that they 'can have it all,' this goal presents a particular problem for women in higher education because of the

incompatible demands embedded in the discourses of being 'the ideal worker' and 'the good mother.' The assumption that female college professors, who benefit from additional education and career opportunities compared to other women, can navigate their multiples roles more easily turns out to be misleading, as they remain torn by the same contradiction as women in other professions.

The work-family balance in academia cannot be achieved because the ideal worker norm prevents faculty mothers from utilizing family-friendly policies that could ease the tensions, for women faculty, of living up to the norm of motherhood. While there will always be factors enhancing work-family balance, such as a supportive partner, or the partner's job flexibility, most of the factors influencing mothers' sense of power to use the available work policies need to be addressed through culture change. The mere presence of family-friendly policies, no matter how generous they are, is not enough if using them goes against the cultural norms. Thus, creating a work environment that is conducive to enacting and utilizing the most optimal policies for faculty parents is essential for academia to be finally fully equitable for men and women, or anyone with care-giving responsibilities, to be exact. For that to happen, employees, especially those with the most agency, should purposefully include their family responsibilities in the routines of their daily workdays and replace the male clockwork of academic career with one that includes some down-time for childrearing.

The paper starts with the discussion of the two conflicting norms, the ideal worker norm and the good mother norm as they manifest themselves in our society in general. It subsequently shows the unique way in which mothers working in higher education manage the tension between these two competing ideals. The study employs a feminist

framework to discuss the choices that faculty mothers feel forced to make in an effort to ease the work-family conflict fueled by gender norms embedded in academia. The paper ends with recommendations on how to change assumptions, expectations, and behaviors that constitute the norm of the masculine ideal worker who takes no time for family obligations. The alternative model of academic career, predicated on integration of work and family life, is proposed alongside the norm of shared parenting, according to which *both* parents reduce time at work in order to fulfill childrearing and household responsibilities.

The Ideal Worker

After studying a Fortune 500 company that she called Amerco, Arlie Russel Hochschild, a professor of sociology at the University of California, concluded in *The Time Bind* (1997) that although most working parents claim that "family comes first," few of them considered reducing their long work hours in order to spend more time with their loved ones. The reason she gives is that work has become more attractive by offering a sense of belonging and self-fulfillment, while home has morphed into a dreaded place with too many hardships associated with raising children. This is how Linda, a shift supervisor at Amerco, describes her life at home:

I walk in the door and the minute I turn the key in the lock my older daughter is there. (...) The baby is still up. She should have been in bed two hours ago and that upsets me. The dishes are piled up in the sink. (...) My husband is in the other room hollering to my daughter, "Tracy, I don't *ever* get any time to talk to your mother, because you're always monopolizing her time before I even get a chance!" They all come at me at once. (p. 37)

The Time Bind (1997) shows that, for many working mothers, home is another workplace and not a place to relax. Although this surprising finding shed some light on

women's decisions to work long hours, the significance of Hochschild's work lies elsewhere. Her study is one of the first that revealed employers' expectations that the workers with families have someone at home tending to the domestic and child-raising responsibilities so that these employees could remain free to devote themselves exclusively to their jobs. Hochschild's study illustrates that the key to success is not just competence but also a flow of family work performed by a spouse, normally a wife. Bill Denton, a senior manager at Amerco, talks about his life with Emily as follows:

We made a bargain. If we were going to be successful as we both wanted, I was going to have to spend tremendous amounts of time at work. Her end of the bargain was that she wouldn't go out to work. So I was able to take the good stuff and she did the hard work—the carpools, dinner, gymnastic lessons. (p. 59)

The majority of the top managers whom Hochschild interviewed had homemaker wives who made it possible for them to work between 50 and 70 hours a week. Since these men never experienced a tug of family obligations, they continued to define a productive worker as someone who puts in the maximum amount of hours. This is how Bill Denton described the culture of his workplace:

Time has a way of sorting out people at this company. A lot of people that don't make it to the top work long hours. But all people I know who *do* make it work long hours....The members of the management Committee of this company aren't the smartest people in the company, we're the hardest working. We work like dogs. (p. 56)

When Hochschild asked one of the managers participating in her study about his opinion on family-friendly policies, he described them as "one more headache." He also said, "My policy on flextime is that there is no flextime" (p. 32). Since he is the one who is responsible for evaluating the quality of work at Amerco and implementing of family-friendly policies, it is no wonder that work-family conflict persists for mothers who attempt to combine successful careers with motherhood. Hochschild gives an example of

an assistant marketing director Denise who described the reaction of her fellow employees at her pregnancy as follows, "They *corner* you with questions ...What are you going to do when both you and Daniel have emergencies at work?" Hochschild explained, "In this atmosphere, Denise wanted absolutely nothing to do with flexible or shorter hours. With gender war on, shorter hours means surrender" (p. 107). Hochschild quotes a worker as saying, "Working part-time is like putting up the sign that says 'Do not consider me for promotions right now.'" The author also gives the example of Eileen Watson who asked her boss to reduce her hours and evaluate her only on the results. He told her, "My experience is that people who put in hours are the ones who succeed. (...) What matters is how much time you put into the job, the volume of work... That's all I know how to understand as a basis for getting ahead" (pp. 92-93). In the end, Eileen's part-time schedule helped her get fired.

In *Unbending Gender* (2000), Joan Williams, a law professor at the University of California, carries on Hochschild's mission by criticizing employers' assumptions that their employees have no obligations outside of work. She describes this assumption as the ideal worker norm and argues that it needs to be recognized as a form of sex discrimination. She defines 'the ideal worker' as someone who works full-time or even overtime, incessantly—from graduation till retirement—because a gap in employment and a reduced schedule, signify a lack of commitment to one's career. Williams believes that by requiring female workers to have access to privileges almost exclusively available to men, namely the flow of family work, employers exclude women from many good blue-collar and professional jobs. When 'the ideal worker' is obligated to work overtime, performing as 'the ideal worker' is inconsistent with being 'the good mother.' Since very few men

perform family work in order to support their wives' careers, 'ideal workers' are mostly male. Williams emphasizes the fact that if one parent works all hours of the day and night in order to fulfill the ideal worker norm, the childcare and housework inevitably fall to the other, who essentially performs as a single parent.

Williams asserts that the ideal worker norm rests on an unrealistic assumption about how families should operate. She identifies a gender role ideology at play here which she calls "domesticity"—a belief that men *naturally* belong in the market and women in the family. Williams points out that the reason why domesticity still prevails in our society is because the public sphere outside the home, where paid employment occurs, is linked to masculinity, and the unpaid work, in the private sphere of the family, is associated with femininity. Accordingly, market work is highly valued, and family work is underappreciated. Although Williams admits that the breadwinner/homemaker dyad is largely gone from the general population where two-job households are now the norm, it remains normative because it reflects our strongly held, often unconscious, conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Through her carefully structured narratives in *The Second Shift* (1989), Hochschild communicates the message that women's failure to perform as 'ideal workers' can be attributed in large part to their husbands' failure to shoulder their fair share of family work. Having completed her in-depth interviews of 50 couples from northern California over a period of several years, Hochschild has confirmed the general truth that working mothers shoulder the burden of the second shift (the time spent in child and home care that equals a second job). She points out that, in most households, the wife's paid work, no matter how successful, is considered just a job and not a career, while her husband's work is

almost certainly validated as a career. She speculates that by devaluing the wife's paid employment, the wife's primary responsibility for the second shift becomes easier to rationalize. Nevertheless, Hochschild observes that spouses are more likely to grant each other the right to work long hours than to equally share housework.

The author indicates gender pressures as the reason for what she calls the "stalled revolution," why men have still not properly adjusted to the reality of their wives' market work participation and why women continue to experience work-family conflict so strongly. Her solution is to get men more involved in the second shift. Williams (2000), on the other hand, argues that masculine norms create work pressures that make men reluctant, or even unable, to get involved in family life. She believes that men will never get sufficiently involved in family work unless the ideal worker norm, so closely intertwined with the concept of masculinity, is abolished. In her opinion, marriages will have a chance of becoming truly egalitarian and women—more likely to achieve work-family balance, only if market work is restructured in a way that honors employees' responsibilities outside of work. If employers stop feeling entitled to 'the ideal worker,' more men will stop trying to live up to this impossible norm.

Hochschild points out that both men and women enter marriage with expectations about appropriate marital roles for themselves and their mates. She calls them "gender ideologies" and believes them to be the products of both upbringing and acquired values. When spouses apply their gender ideologies to everyday situation that they face, unconsciously or not, they pursue a gender strategy. These are both the plans of action as well as emotional preparations for pursuing them. Hochschild depicts all "the fractures in gender ideology" (p. 18) in every household that she observed: a dissonance between what

spouses think they should feel and what they really feel. She also describes the emotional work that it takes to make a particular ideology fit the hard reality of daily hardships and the feelings associated with them.

Hochschild offers portraits of three couples who represent different configurations of these gender ideologies. First, she tells the story of the Delacortes, a working-class couple classified by Hochschild as "traditional," because Carmen believed in female dependence. She performed the outside employment only out of necessity, but housework was her real job. Although Frank "let his wife work", he thought that it was his responsibility to provide for the family and hers to keep home. Carmen agreed that home was her domain, but, at times, she needed help so she used a strategy of incompetence to get her husband to contribute. Carmen never asked Frank to do chores directly so that he did not feel like it was his duty. She made it look like the only reason why he had to do it was because she could not do it as well as he did. Frank did not mind doing housework as long as he continued to feel superior and Carmen made sure of that. She made herself look submissive so that Frank could feel like he was "really the boss" (p. 74). Hochschild describes it as a stroke of genius because, by responding to one calculated incompetence after another, Frank came to do nearly half of all the household chores—considerably more than other husbands in the study who claimed that it was men's duty to perform housework. Carmen admitted to Hochschild, "I don't want to be equal with Frank. I don't want to be equal in work. I want to be feminine... I take pride in Frank knowing more. Maybe that's wrong, but I take pride in it" (p. 68). Even though Frank was not superior, nor Carmen really submissive, they chose to perpetuate the myth of 'the knight in shining armor' rescuing his 'lady in distress' to keep their marriage happy.

Another couple participating in Hochschild's study, the Tanagawas, were classified as "transitional." When Nina, an MBA recipient working for a computer company, hinted to her husband Peter that she needed him to do more around the house now that their second baby had arrived and she had been promoted at work, he made it clear that he saw "the problem as a conflict between *her* career and *her* motherhood" (p. 86). Despite his self-professed emotional support for his wife's career (he "soothed her brow at night" and expressed worry about her health), he did not get involved in family work enough for Nina to experience a relief and, as a result, she got pneumonia. Hochschild concluded that Nina's illness said what Nina could not tell her husband directly: "Please help. Be a 'mother' too." Nina described her struggle at involving her husband in housework as follows, "I say to him, 'Do you want to bathe the kids tonight or do you want to clean up the kitchen?' That's the way I usually put to him, because if I don't, he'll go watch TV or read the paper" (p. 86).

Hochschild points out that Nina always made sure that she framed her requests in such a way that her "circumstances"—and not she herself—demanded help. Although Hochschild did not speculate on Nina's intentions, it seems like Nina felt reluctant to appeal to the idea of 'fairness' because that could have brought too much conflict into her otherwise happy marriage. Since Peter only participated in home life in spirit "from the safe vintage point of the active witness, the helpful advisor" (p. 93), Nina felt forced to cut her hours at a job that she absolutely loved, and for which was generously rewarded, so that she could perform her second shift, and keep her family together. The more logical solution would have been for Peter to work part-time, since he hated his job.

Despite his efforts to be an egalitarian man who supports his wife, however, his views remained fairly traditional: he wanted to be perceived as the man of the house. Hochschild describes Peter's reaction to his wife's success in the following way, "Nina's higher earnings *shamed him as a man*. He felt that friends and relatives—especially older males—would think less of him if they knew his wife earned more" (p. 87). The Tanangawas agreed not to tell anyone about Nina's superior salary because, as Peter expressed, "I'd never hear the end of it" (p. 87). What is more, Peter felt forced to refuse his wife's generous offer to pay for his education so that he could switch careers because then all their friends and relatives would know about the "miserable secret" (p. 87).and Peter wanted their good opinion about him.

Not only did Peter feel humiliated by his wife's earnings, but he also experienced anguish at her growing identity outside of home. The way he chose to deal with that was by pushing his wife into playing the role of the supermom. Peter felt that Nina should take care of home because she was more "interested" in it and "competent" (p. 98) which is reminiscent of Carmen's strategy of incompetence. Nina, on the other hand, did not actively resist it, because she felt guilty of emasculating her husband by earning more. She knew that Peter was "unusual" (p. 98) because not every man could handle his wife's career as well as him. Besides, being home with her daughters was important to her. In Hochschild's view, Peter wanted to be more involved in family life, but only if his wife were equally involved. The author comments, "Nina's sense that Peter was doing her a favor in being that 'one in a hundred' kind of guy also had a bearing on his participation in the second shift" (p. 89). Hochschild concluded from her conversations with Peter that the reason why he thought he could not possibly perform housework was because it would

have amounted to "two assaults on his manhood" (p. 90). His wife's higher salary alone was hard enough on him.

Finally, a third couple interviewed by Hochschild represents what the author called the "egalitarian" gender role. Nancy Holt described herself as "ardent feminist" who hoped to give an equal attention to parenthood and career. Her husband Evan claimed to do housework every time Nancy asked him, to which Nancy replied, "I *hate* to ask; why should I ask? It's begging" (p.40). When she tried to be proactive and made up a schedule of cooking and cleaning shifts, Evan responded that he didn't like "rigid schedules" (p.40). It seemed like Evan encouraged his wife to have a career only if she could handle the family work as well. Evan professed support for sharing the household duties, but in practice, he doggedly resisted. When it was his turn, domestic chores somehow didn't get done: he would conveniently 'forget' to clean or cook. Finally, Evan came up with his own strategy for relieving Nancy's work-family conflict: He proposed that Nancy cuts hours at work as a social worker which she absolutely adored. She responded "We've been married all this time and you still don't get it. Work is important to me. I worked hard on my MSW. Why *should* I give it up" (p. 44).

Hochschild described Nancy and Evan's life as follows, "In the years of alternating struggle and compromise, Nancy had seen only fleeting mirages of cooperation, visions that appeared when she got sick or withdrew, and disappeared when she got better or came forward" (p.44). When Nancy ran out of other modern ideas, this self-described "flaming feminist" found herself using 'the old trick' in order to get Evan to help her with housework. She said, "I vowed that I would never use sex to get my way with a man. It is not self-respecting; it's demeaning. But when Evan refused to carry his load at home, I

did, I used sex. I said, 'Look, Evan, I would not be this exhausted and asexual every night if I didn't have so much to face every morning'" (p. 45). Because of their fight over the second shift, their emotional standard of living drastically declined to such an extent that they contemplated a separation until Nancy finally surrendered when she asked herself, "Why wreck a marriage over a dirty frying pan?" (p. 45).

Although Hochschild identified a gender ideology at play in the household of each couple she interviewed, she came to the conclusion that the hard reality of marriage seldom matches spouses' gender ideology. Both spouses make adjustments to their professed values in order to keep other people's good opinions about them and save their own marriages. When faced with a choice between having a stable marriage, or an equal one, to facilitate their own success at work, spouses, mostly wives, do lots of emotional cover-up in order to suppress any conflict. Hochschild summed it up in the following way: "I began to realize that couples sometimes develop 'family myths'— version of reality that obscure a core truth in order to manage a family tension" (p. 19).

Deborah Fallows' life further illustrates how women themselves perpetuate the gender roles that have been shaping the experiences of working mothers for the last two centuries. In her book, *A Mother's Work* (1985), she describes the time before she quit her job as "just wasn't working" because every childhood illness created a family crisis of who would miss work. Fallow believes that when mothers stay at home, the whole family wins because the conflict of who does what in the household is evaded. What escapes her is the simple fact that conflicts arise only when men are asked to perform their fair share of family work but refuse on account of their jobs. Since Fallows is the one 'without a job,' her 'only responsibility' is to provide clean clothes, meals, and childcare that are necessary

to support her husband's ability to perform as 'the ideal worker.' Fallows quit her successful career in linguistics to stay at home in order to take more responsibility for raising her children. Instead, she ended up watching her husband's career as a White House correspondent thrive.

Fallows believes that, as a parent, she "should have all the time and love in the world to give" (p. 219). Despite using the gender neutral word "parent," and insisting that balance between parenthood and career should be worked out by both parents, Fallows never applies the same high standard to her husband, a famous journalist who spent little time at home. After all, her book is called *The Mother's Work* and not *The Parents' Work*. The sentiment that mothers "should have all the time in the world to give" also entails the erasure of household work. When women give up their jobs, they claim they do it to pay "rich attention" to their children—not to perform household chores—but since husbands' contributions to family work drastically decrease the moment their wives quit paid employment (Gerstel and Gallagher 2001), those wives end up with more housework that steals time away from their children.

The Good Mother

Prescriptive literature of the 19th century would have middle-class women believe that their children would not develop the skills that were necessary to gain access to middle-class lifestyle if they were raised by someone outside of their family. That is why middle-class women became reluctant to delegate child care to lower-status people who might not share their values. Thus arose the requirement that mothers must raise their own children, and the ability to attend to one's own children became a hallmark of 'the

good mother.' Even when some women decide to turn to market solutions to help them with family work, they hire childcare workers with the understanding that the housework will be fit around children's play. They reject the idea of previous eras when domestic workers fit childcare around the primary household work for which they were hired.

The notion that mothers should always be there for their children—because without their constant vigilance their children's future is in jeopardy—is deeply embedded in our national psyche. In *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (1996), sociologist Sharon Hays, explores the increasing insistence over the course of the twentieth century on intensive mothering, which leaves little room for self-care, let alone a successful career. This construction of motherhood presupposes that not only should child-rearing be done by individual mothers of their own children but also that mothers must devote "a tremendous amounts of time, energy and money" (p. x) to meet an ever-expanding list of children's needs.

Hays describes the reasoning behind women's commitment to intensive mothering. After interviewing thirty-eight mothers of children under four-years old and analyzing the best-selling child-rearing manuals, the author concluded that mothers experience their childrearing practices as a source of achievement and a measure of their love for their children. Hays quotes one mother as saying, "Kids give us this inner pleasure that [we are] unable to get from anything, anyone" (p. 110) and "nurturing a child provides a different and perhaps superior form of gratification than does nurturing one's spouse" (p. 109). Because motherly love induces women to go to great lengths on behalf of their beloved children and these mothers are exposed to a wealth of information, available on the perceived needs of children, the ideology of intensive mothering gets easily

perpetuated. Furthermore, Hays stresses that society has an interest in the perpetuation of intensive mothering because it means reproduction of the existing gender hierarchy with little compensation for the invisible work of mothers who solve the world's problems in the privacy of their family homes, without aid or assistance from the government.

Some feminists view the cultural shift toward intensive childrearing as a step backwards for women. They find it reminiscent of the 19th century 'cult of womanhood,' 'separate spheres,' and the more recent "feminine mystique" (Friedan, 1963). From feminists' point of view, the ideology of intensive mothering is an attempt to keep women busy at home and far away from the public sphere. By the glorification of 'the good mother' and the sacralization of children's needs (Hays 1996), educated women are channeled away from demanding professional jobs and hence positions of power.

Glenda Wall's (2010) study, based on the analysis of parenting advice in popular media in the 1990s and in-depth semi-structured interviews with fourteen mothers who practice intensive mothering, led her to believe that the brain development discourse is part of mothers' taken-for-granted understanding of good parenting. She asserts that intensive mothering is closely intertwined with recent developments in the field of neurology. By drawing on these new brain studies, child-rearing experts have undertaken to educate parents about the importance of spending quality time with their children in order to stimulate their offspring's brain development. Amelia, like the majority of mothers in Wall's study, welcomes the educational campaigns directed at parents: "we get this stuff, we buy into it, we see the benefits... when I look at this I say this is really great, I hope it is getting through to the people who need it" (p. 263).

Despite the fact that much of the brain development discourse is widely accepted as truth, Wall stresses the fact that brain development means different things to different people: from increasing intelligence and accomplishment in childhood to enhancing children's self-esteem and happiness. Every mother seems to adapt information on brain development to their own parenting philosophy. Wendy states, "I look at that and I modify it for my own goals and needs. Even though I think that it is geared to people making their children smarter, to me it is geared to making them happier. I just automatically translate it into my language" (p. 256).

Mothers in Wall's study felt great responsibility for controlling their children's futures. They believed that their children's failure to succeed reflects a lack of good parenting on their part. When women are constantly reminded by neurologists, psychologists, sociologists, and pediatricians that they, as mothers, have the power to optimize their children's brain potential and hence ensure their future success in life, no wonder it is difficult for them *not* to engage in incessant and selfless nurture of their children, even to the women's or children's detriment. Wall (2010) gives many examples of women who stay up late to work rather than sacrificing quality time with her children. One of them named Lyne stated, "I will leave in time to get my son, but then what I have done... is I have gone back in once my kids are in bed at 8:30 at night and work until 2:00 in the morning... If there is something that needs my attention, I won't jeopardize my kids' time, but I will definitely do it after" (p. 259).

Wall's study provides insight into some of the ways in which middle-class, educated mothers experience 'the good mother' discourse. It highlights the ways in which mothers' needs are constructed in opposition to children's needs. While not so long ago

children walked to school on their own and played freely in the street with other neighborhood children, mothers now are expected to drive their children to school and arrange frequent play dates. The norm of intensive mothering dictates that children's potential will not be fulfilled if the majority of their after-school time is not scheduled. As a result, mothers who aspire to the new norm of mothering and whose financial resources allow them to live up to this ideal, spend every afternoon driving their children from one activity to another, only to come home and feel compelled to spend 'quality time' with their children for the remaining part of the evening. This one-on-one time, set aside at the cost of women's professional life, is perceived as a requirement of good (intensive) mothering, and not so much as something that happens spontaneously, and is enjoyed by both mothers and their children. One cannot help but wonder about the toll that this increasingly intensive mothering takes on these women's wellbeing.

Walls (2010) points out that the requirement to spend unrushed quality time with one's own children first appeared in parenting advice literature at the time when more and more mothers of young children were entering and remaining in the workforce. She believes that the ideology of intensive mothering has some major implications for gender equality both in the family and in the workplace. The great amount of time required to be spent on children means less time and energy left for one's career which may contribute to women's decision to abandon their paid employment altogether while deeply believing that it was their own free choice.

Williams (2001) echoes this idea when she writes that the expansion of children's needs has been accompanied by a new insistence that children be taken care of primarily by their own mothers, instead of family work being transferred to the market. She

believes that by making mothers aware of their role in facilitating children's success, the ideology of intensive mothering gives women a semblance of gender equity when, in fact, most mothers are seriously marginalized. According to Williams (2001), the ideology of intensive mothering codes "mothers' decision to stay home without reference to the needs of male partners to command the flow of family work they need to perform as ideal workers" (p. 1450). The author asserts that this is exactly why women insist that they stay home to 'take care of children' and refuse to admit the truth that they sacrifice their success at work so that they could perform housework that is necessary for the whole family to function. Obviously, a lot of this work is menial, and not spiritual, but domesticity encodes it as 'care' and hence sends the message that any associations of family work with economic entitlements is implausible, if not repulsive.

Williams (2000) makes an interesting point when she writes that the need for parental care is closely linked with the sense that children need to gain every advantage to keep up with the present day competitive global economy. Mothers' jobs are not just to attend to their children's physical and emotional needs anymore. They are supposed to preserve and pass social capital: their lifestyle, religion, and ethnic rituals. In the words of Barbara Ehrenreich, who is famous for describing the link between gender norms and class formation, "It is one thing to have children and another to have children who will be disciplined enough to devote the first twenty or thirty years of their lives to scaling the educational obstacles to a middle-class career" (Williams 2000, p. 36). Ehrenreich believes that middle-class women feel forced to either work full-time and risk retarding their children's intellectual development, or stay at home to build up the children's IQ, but possibly jeopardizing their own careers and the family's financial well-being.

Surprisingly, this newly escalated norm of parental care is not exclusively a middle-class phenomenon. Some working-class families aspire to it as well by having split shifts, with one parent caring for children while the other is at work. Poor-quality child care would otherwise be their children's fate.

Women are socialized to believe that their primary responsibility is to take care of their children, no matter their employment status. Even when they work overtime in order to avoid being fired, because their families cannot afford to lose this income, or because they want to ensure a financially stable future for their children, female workers still feel the compulsion to frame their own lives around care-giving. Every morning when they leave their children in daycare, they have a hard time shaking the feeling that they are bad mothers because they are not raising their own children. That happens even to mothers who can afford a high-quality daycare and those who are aware of the studies suggesting that preschools develop children's social skills in ways their own mothers cannot in an isolated home setting.

In the case of the middle-class women who have sufficient financial resources to use the best daycare their money can buy, the issue is not that a particular caretaker is not qualified enough to look after their children as much as the fact that the real mother misses out on the joys that come from watching her own child grow. The guilt that some mothers feel about abandoning their children every morning is unparalleled, especially on the days when their children hit a developmental milestone and the mothers are not there to witness it. Hays (1996) quotes a mother saying "it's devastating that you didn't get to see that" (p. 145). Another mother in Hays' study believes that when children are with a paid caretaker all day, it feels like someone else is being the mother: "It's really sad that this other person

is raising your child, and it's basically like having this other person *adopting* your child. It's *awful* that we have to do that" (p. 145).

Similarly, Williams (2000) describes a young officer who gave up on being a general because she wanted to start family and did not want her children to "be raised by strangers" (p. 32). Williams points out an important difference in discourse about non-parental childcare for working mothers of pre-school children and for stay-at-home mothers of children in elementary school. Working mothers with children in daycare centers bear the stigma that they are letting 'strangers take care of their children.' When the same children enter an elementary school, where they will be joined by the children of stay-at-home moms, they are no longer described as being taught by strangers.

Fallows' own experience with daycare was good but, in *A Mother's Work* (1985), she still painted a horrifying picture of childcare centers in America: of caretakers paying hardly any attention to children, of peeling paint, inadequate supplies, and children literally tied to their chairs, waiting for long periods for their food to arrive. Portrayal like these, whether accurate or not, contribute to mothers' decision to stay at home and the perpetuation of the intense mothering ideal.

When mothers quit their paid employment because of the unavailability of the kind of quality childcare that would erase their 'motherguilt', their actions are often encoded as a personal choice to stay at home to take care of their children or/and an insufficient commitment to their careers, rather than a direct result of their spouses' refusal to help with childrearing and the government's failure to provide adequate care for future citizens. In most European countries, publicly subsidized day care centers, staffed by qualified individuals, and used by the majority of preschool children are supported as society's

necessary investment in the next generation. In America, on the other hand, using private preschools—where the turn-over of underpaid employees is high—is seen as an expression of the market, hence against family values. Here mothers pay others to take care of their children, instead of doing it themselves—freely, out the goodness of their hearts—under the norm of good mothering.

Hays' study (1996) showed that women were likely to think of themselves as good mothers if they sacrificed a lot for their children. Despite coming from very different backgrounds, the women participating in the study shared a common assumption about the significance of always putting their children's needs first.

According to Williams (2000), one of the myths perpetuated by the contemporary version of domesticity is the notion that 'the good mother' is selfless. She views domesticity as dividing women into two polar categories: those who associate themselves with the market and those whose lives revolve around their families. Since paid employment and family life are organized as opposing structures, working mothers fight gender wars every day. The sensationalized portrayal of the 'Mommy wars' in mass media only deepens this divide: Women are either classified as those who privilege motherhood over career or those who choose career over their children. Yet, in reality, most women fall somewhere in-between. Williams quotes her daughter's nursery school principal, who said, "It's not easy, is it, to combine being a mother with a full-time career?" (p. 147). The author saw the principal's words as her attempt to stand up "for traditional feminine roles and values against a woman captured by masculine norms" (p. 147). Williams explains that stay-at-home mothers believe that working mothers take on an impossible task, which they ultimately fail. Conversely, women who decide to continue their paid employment

after the birth of their children invest in the notion that they work for the sake of their children's future.

Despite the fact that the majority of working mothers shift between diverse points on the continuum at different stages of their lives, these gradations remain divisive and these differences are exaggerated in mass media. When exceptionally successful professional women exalt their careers, stay-at-home moms treat it as a personal insult. For example, Hillary Clinton made her contribution to the 'Mommy wars' when she said "I suppose I could have stayed home, baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided was to fulfill my profession" (p. 146). In Williams' opinion, homemakers failed to see Hillary as someone who inadvertently endorsed our society's devaluation of caregiving when forced to defend the choices that no man is asked to explain. As a result, stay-at-home mothers focused their rage on Hillary—instead of the whole society that punishes successful women for performing as ideal workers.

In a social system where full-time work rules out a normal family life, part-time work would seem a logical alternative. "If you can afford the cut in pay for the hours, the ideal situation would be to get home when they [your children] get home from school, 3 P.M., so you can take them to ballet and Boy Scouts" said Mary Siegel in an interview with Hochschild (1997, p. 135). Unfortunately, this option comes at a high cost, since employers feel entitled to marginalize mothers who are unable to devote the amount of time necessary to meet the norm of the ideal worker. The decision to work part-time is generally viewed as occupational death; a huge loss in income and work prestige. Working mothers are placed in a 'catch-22' situation: if they perform as 'ideal workers,'

they are condemned as bad mothers; if they observe the norm of parental care, they are condemned as bad workers.

Williams (2004) claims that in the economy of mothers and others, mothers hit "the maternal wall" long before they even come close to "the glass ceiling"—a phenomenon that nevertheless attracted more attention. Women who return from maternity leave often find themselves passed over for promotion. According to the prominent sex-discrimination attorney Judith Vladek, "Having a baby is used as an excuse not to give women opportunities. The assumption is that they made a choice, that having children ends their commitment to their career" (Williams 2000, p. 69). To new moms, it feels like a conspiracy, or an expression of their coworkers' ill will, but, in fact, most of the time, it is just a matter of workplace practice that reflects employers' entitlement to ideal workers. Williams explains that, even if mothers are held in high esteem as hard-working, competent, and generally dependable, they are passed over for attractive projects because those require the kinds of performance that does not mesh with private obligations as a mother, for example travelling, working overtime at short notice, or pulling all-nighters.

The belief that women's first responsibility is to their children can be seen in workplace discourse between male coworkers and women newly returning from maternity leaves. Nina, one of the subjects from Hochschild's study (1989), reported that her male coworkers would say, "Hi Nina, how are the kids?" (p. 97) when they passed her in the hall, rather than ask her about the projects that she was working on, as they used to. Nina was bothered by this asymmetry in greetings: Men in her company were not greeted in this way. For Nina, this shift in discourse, from her fellow employees, had the effect of

pinning a new identity on her: Being seen as a mother first made her feel like a stranger in the company.

In *Striking a Balance*, Robert W. Drago (2007), Professor of Labor Studies and Women's Studies at Penn State University, blames our inability to lead a balanced life (that he defines as a combination of paid employment, unpaid family life and leisure) on three norms: the motherhood norm, the ideal worker norm, and the individualism norm. As previously discussed, the norm of motherhood leads women to have children, be their primary caregivers, but also, according to Drago, to provide free care for sick spouses or elderly parents, to perform the lion's share of housework, and to work in poorly-rewarded mother-like professions (teachers, nurses, and secretaries). As already established, the motherhood norm is in contradiction with the ideal worker norm: an expectation that professionals are utterly devoted to their jobs 24 hours a day, seven days a week for many uninterrupted years. Drago believes that professional women who show signs of family commitments are viewed as deviating from the ideal worker norm. He gives an example of how quickly mothers can cross the dividing line "in a downward direction" (p. 10). When a man announces that a baby is on the way, he is congratulated, but when a woman makes the same announcement, congratulations are immediately followed by such questions as "how soon are you quitting?" (p. 10). The presumption made by coworkers and bosses seem to be that, by becoming mothers, women cease to function as 'ideal workers.'

Drago's unique contribution to the already rich literature on work-family balance is his identification of the third norm, of individualism, which he defines as a belief that the American government should not be in the business of helping people. The norm of

individualism is reflected in the persistent underfunding of programs designed to help poor as well as the efforts to reduce social support for publically-financed daycare centers. The hidden presence of the individualism norm is also revealed by the absence of regulations protecting part-time workers. The way that the third norm interplays with the first two can be seen when a professional woman, who has subscribed to the ideal worker norm, decides to become 'the good mother' as well. If paid family leave and high quality government-subsidized daycares existed, the ability of women to simultaneously function as 'ideal workers' and 'good mothers' would be largely enhanced. What prevents that from happening, according to Drago, is the individualism norm.

Because of this norm, childcare is framed as an individual matter. When the federal government claims it does not want to interfere in the private matters of its citizens, it absolves itself of any responsibility and, as a result, the problem of childcare becomes a matter delegated to the family. In this way, no funds need to be devoted to public early education because women, socialized by the norm of motherhood, will provide it for free, in the privacy of their home, or devote a substantial part of their earnings to pay others to do so. In either case, mothers will be held responsible for the way that their own children will turn out.

Although individuals profess that they want a balanced life, the three norms prevent us from achieving it. Because 'ideal workers' are not supposed to discuss being caretakers, the ideal worker norm and the motherhood norm persists. Drago gives an example of his friends, a couple that he calls George and Sarah, who got married after graduating from college. When a baby came, it was Sarah who quit her job and George who worked endless hours. Sarah's behavior fit the motherhood norm and George's, the

ideal worker norm. Because of the norm of individualism, neither of the parents expected their government to help them with childcare so that Sarah could continue her career.

Drago points to Sarah and George's actions as a reflection of the three norms. Since George was more patient and Sarah was more ambitious, their natural abilities dictated that the father should stay at home with the baby and the mother, continue performing as 'the ideal worker.' That, of course, did not happen because the motherhood norm prevents fathers from being the primary caregivers, and the interconnection of the ideal worker norm with masculinity does not allow women to become sole breadwinners in their families. The author concludes that these deeply imbedded norms prevented the couple from acting in a way that was most beneficial for their particular situation.

Drago believes that norms shape both our expectations of others: We assume that mothers will pick up a sick child at the daycare, fathers will work long hours, and finally that our government will not pay for our parental leave and childcare. He also blames norms for creating our expectation of ourselves: Even though most men proclaim their belief in egalitarianism, they let women perform the majority of childcare and housework and, despite their self-proclaimed love of their children, they still continue working overtime.

Drago asserts that norms put blinders on our eyes and make us behave in a way that is in disagreement with our true values, but they are by no means permanent. Norms require a lot of concerted effort to eradicate but it can be done with "thought, organization, and effort" (p. 13). He reminds us that while norms dictated that men serve as 'ideal workers' and women as 'good mothers,' the feminist movement contributed to the social

change that is reflected in the growing number of men performing household duties and spending more time with their children.

The Case For Studying Faculty Mothers

For professionals with nine-to-five jobs or hourly-workers punching their timecards, the academic profession, which provides holidays and summers off, very few scheduled hours on campus, and the ability to do the majority of work from home, sounds like a perfect fit for mothers. Unfortunately, this image differs from reality. The erosion of work-home boundaries due to technology has produced a sense of irreconcilable strain in the lives of faculty mothers. Gone are the times when research was done in the library and all teaching materials were locked in the filing cabinet, back in the office on campus. Now the vast majority of academic work is done on electronic devices that accompany faculty members everywhere. College professors who are also mothers of small children, not only spend countless hours preparing for and teaching classes, doing research, and performing institutional service, but they also work the second shift at home.

Feminist writer Susan Brown (2011) believes that the reason why faculty mothers face immense challenges in terms of work/family balance is because being a mother feels like being on-call 24/7 which creates problems when academic work is also constantly 'on' in a sense that academic work is highly individualized. Thanks to technological advances, academic job has become portable and the divide between professional and personal time and space—blurrier than ever. Although technology can be helpful by making it possible for mothers to work from home when their children are asleep or sick, it also makes every day, every hour, every minute potential work time. When internalized, professional

expectations of an academic job feel like they are demanding every second of one's life, and mothers feel an additional pressure regarding their obligations to their children.

Brown (2011) points out an interesting similarity between mothering and work as a college faculty member. Just as mothering is considered more of a selfless vocation than a job, because it is not regulated by the punch-clock or counted as part of domestic national product, an academic profession is likewise seen more as an intellectual calling than traditional waged labor, because professors' schedules are not based on nine-to-five workdays. Academic mothers cannot just clock out after eight-hour shift, leave the building, and be done for the day until nine o'clock next morning. Of course, both mothers and academics fulfill their roles in place of the standard hourly-paid employment that they would have otherwise had.

The uniqueness of faculty mothers stems from their privileged position as members of middle-class that carries increased expectations of being successful in both professional and personal lives. If professional women are not able to 'have it all,' what hope is there for the rest of women, working inflexible schedules at low-paying jobs? Less-educated women might look up to college professors as models of how to succeed in the workplace while claiming independence from 'outdated norms of femininity.' Mothers with fewer financial resources might expect academic women to have a formula for work-family balance since not only does a faculty job afford unheard of flexibility in terms of on-site hours (face time), it also allows to have most of family work outsourced. Academic mothers, after all, can afford to pay for high-quality daycares, evening nannies, cleaning services, or housekeepers to ease the burden of balancing work and home.

Also, as highly-educated women, academic mothers are expected by society to participate in the mode of intensive mothering. If not in a sense of staying at home to raise their children, at least, by facilitating their offspring's education through heavily-scheduled after-school activities. These increased expectations of them as the educated elite are why blending motherhood with the work in 'the ivory tower' continues to be a tricky balancing act.

A study of 95 mothers both in and outside academia, conducted by sociology professor Debra H. Swanson and communications professor Deidre D. Johnston, indicates that full-time employed academic mothers suffer from the tension between high job expectations and intense mothering. Swanson and Johnston (2003) concluded that the reason why the roles of professors and mothers are seen as incompatible is because many faculty mothers construct mothering expectations that are more consistent with full-time at-home mothering.

The women in the study described the threat to their identity as academics that occurred when they became mothers and the conflict created by adding intensive mothering expectations on top of already high work expectations. Academic mothers were happy about their decision to work, unlike non-academic mothers, but they still expressed themselves in a way that is reminiscent of stay-at-home moms. Unlike non-academic mothers who were satisfied with "intermittent accessibility": "I'm there if there is a problem" (p. 4), faculty mothers place more emphasis on emotional accessibility. A psychology professor named Tracy said, "I'm a good mother that tries to be really on top of all these things that are happening with my child. I try to be a guiding force" (p. 4). While non-academic mothers express a vague wish to spend more time with their children, academic mothers are more specific in voicing their regrets: They lament about not being

a part of their offspring's developmental accomplishments. Molly, another psychology professor, said, "I was missing out on the day-to-day changes, raising him the way I would raise him" (p. 5).

Even when faculty mothers do utilize daycare centers, they "continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for anticipating the needs of their children which can be psychologically and physically consuming" claim Kelly Ward and Lisa Wolf-Wendel (2012, p. 57), long-time experts on work-family balance, who based their findings on a longitudinal study of 120 faculty mothers. The women participating in the study were the ones who got the children ready in the morning, dropped them off to a daycare center and picked them up in the afternoon, fed them, and got them ready for bed. This confirmed an earlier study, conducted by Maïke Ingrid Philipsen (2008), of 46 female college professors who suffered from extreme fatigue caused by their double-shift, as well as the guilt about not being a stay-at-home mom. The faculty fulfilled the norm of intensive parenting, to use Hays' words, by first putting in "mommy time" with their children in the afternoon and then, once their children were asleep, reverting back into the academic mode. Mrs. Young-Powell explains,

For me, it's tiring. I do find myself a lot of times at eleven, twelve, one o'clock in the morning doing more planning and other administrative duties. I don't want to stay [at work] until six every night because I want to go home to be mommy... I'm spending time doing things for [work] at home... I spend a lot of time working when I'd rather be sleeping when they're in bed. (p. 32)

Another mother in Philipsen's study, Dr. McMillan, also spoke of feeling bad about not being available for her children:

I think women, more than anything else, struggle with that. Men for the most part don't see that as a big struggle for most men. Work as hard as necessary to attain that goal for my job, and struggle over how much time I give to my family...I see

that is something that women, because we are nurturers and because culturally, we see our role as being available, that we struggle with. (p. 33)

This increased expectation to be primary caregivers to their children, whether internalized or externally-imposed, is only compounded by the unique trajectory of academic career that puts the greatest amount of pressure on faculty members at the beginning of their careers when they have very young children. Although the majority of the contemporary academic workforce is now composed of part-timers with no job security (Kezar & Sam, 2010), the traditional 'ideal academic' is still one on the tenure track. If an assistant professor is denied tenure, she is expected to leave the institution. Hence, a faculty member has six years to demonstrate a certain level of distinction in the activities that are valued by this particular institution: research, teaching, or service.

The faculty mothers from Ward and Wolf-Wendel's study (2012) expressed their frustration at not knowing the precise tenure requirements (what and how much must be accomplished) which creates an enormous amount of stress. The tenure process was described by them as "an albatross around my neck" or "smoke and mirrors" (p. 56). Obviously, the stress associated with achieving tenure is not exclusive to faculty mothers. What is unique to them, though, is the worry that a break in their employment history and gaps in their dossier, caused by taking time off to have children, will negatively affect the tenure decision. Female faculty who choose to become mothers must also choose whether they want to disrupt their careers during childrearing years or perform three shifts: activities connected with an academic job, child care, and household duties. The most likely consequence of this triple workload is physical, as well as psychological, exhaustion. Faculty mothers either meet these often unrealistic academic norms, when combined with motherhood, and have legitimacy, or work part-time and lack academic

legitimacy. This creates a dilemma for a faculty mother who wants to approach her academic career in alternative ways that would allow her to live up to the ideal of 'the good mother.'

Recent studies documenting the impact of the unique trajectory of faculty work on women's family life suggest that female professors on tenure track are faced with an unacceptable choice, one that their male colleagues do not have to make, the choice between being 'the ideal worker' and 'the good mother'. Prior to having children, faculty members might have been utterly devoted to their academic jobs but that all changes with the arrival of a baby. Becoming a mother while building a career as an academic imposes priorities and creates the time crunch that impacts the ideal worker norm. The study done by long-time experts on work-family balance Mary Ann Mason, Nicholas H. Wolfinger, and Marc Goulden (2013), suggest that women who have children within five years of receiving their Ph.D. are less likely than men to become tenured professors. It seems like family responsibilities negatively affect women's career progression. This study, based on the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (160, 000 Ph.D.s) and a survey of 8, 000 tenure-track faculty at the ten-campus University of California, also showed the flip side of the work-family conflict: Women faculty are more likely to be single and have fewer children than men in similar career circumstances, even fewer than other fast track professionals, female lawyers, and doctors. The authors believe that we cannot talk about women achieving parity with men in academia as long as they do not reach the same professional *and* familial goals.

The practice of using research productivity as a criterion for tenure in research universities, separates men from women with child-caring responsibilities. If women with

young children have less time for research, and research is exactly what is necessary for achieving tenure, then this policy of determining a person's career security on the basis of quantity of publications is highly gendered. One faculty mother Janice, states: "I'm a mother with a family, I mean I didn't have the children to ignore them, and I feel that I've had less time to devote to my research" (Armenti 2000, p. 158). Another professor, Natalie, notes that a negative aspect of her career is "the fatigue, if you're trying to do two jobs basically... I think for most people with small children it's finding enough connected time, not just scraps and patches of time—to do serious research is a big problem" (Armenti 2000, p. 159). It is nearly impossible for new mothers to find a creative space necessary for research because their thoughts are constantly coming back to their babies. Original writing requires silence and big chunks of uninterrupted time, both of which are non-existent in a household with a newborn. What is more, sleep deprivation mixed with post-partum depression do not agree with academic productivity. Despite the best intentions to live up to the ideal worker norm, the norm of motherhood often wins: When spending long hours at work, women with young children tend to think of themselves as bad mothers first before they even entertain a thought of congratulating themselves on their unusual commitment to academia.

Nineteen women academics in Carmen Armenti's study (2000) expressed frustration at being expected to behave like men for the purpose of tenure, by strictly adhering to that ancient career clockwork, but also assume a traditionally feminine role of nurturer when teaching and advising students. Armenti concluded that academia encourages a gendered division of labor: research is deemed "men's work" (the public sphere) and therefore valued and rewarded, while teaching and service are considered

"women's work" (the private sphere) and therefore undervalued and not rewarded (p. 166). Female faculty spend more time on campus advising students during their office hours. In contrast, male faculty are often gone from their offices, but it is acceptable for them to do so as long as they publish. Although junior faculty believe that they must do more than others to prove themselves, this extra work is rarely recognized in the processes of tenure. Armenti's interviews with female faculty led to the conclusion that men are glorified for their publications, but not the women for their work with students and dedication to institutional service. Although teaching and service should be rewarded more, since they build universities' reputation, this is unlikely to happen because excellence in teaching and dedication in service are not as easily measurable as the number of publications, which are known across the country.

Since research is the ticket to tenure, especially in research universities, the most logical thing for female faculty to do would be concentrating on research and reducing the time spent on teaching and service. Armenti (2000) believes that this simplistic way of thinking masks "the gendered division of labor which supports the current structure of universities" as well as devalues work performed by women, which "includes childrearing (like teaching and advising), housekeeping (university service) and volunteer work (community service)" (p. 87).

Although service tends to be undervalued and underappreciated in a research university context, female faculty are often asked to be actively engaged in it. Sociology professor Joya Misra and her colleagues (2011) called this phenomenon the "ivory ceiling of service work." After studying 350 faculty members at a research-intensive university, they concluded that for countless women, the ceiling exists because most women, and

some men, engage in a broader range of activities that are less likely to increase the faculty stature at their universities. Misra and her colleagues found that

Men spent seven and a half hours more a week on their research than did women... On the other hand, women associate professors taught an hour more each week than men, mentored an additional two hours a week, and spent nearly five hours more a week on service. (p. 24)

One professor expressed difficulty balancing research, teaching, and service, "In reality, only research matters when it comes to tenure and promotion, but service and teaching require lots of time" (p. 24). To stop women from hitting "the ivory ceiling of service" and, in the process, increasing their chances of becoming full professors, Misra proposes a cultural change in academia by creating a system that recognizes and rewards faculty work as viewed more broadly. This includes, apart from institutional service, teaching excellence, mentoring, interdisciplinary training, and building the community of scholars.

Misra points to several reasons why faculty members perform service despite being aware that this behavior will lead them away from promotion. First, some faculty members enjoy being a part of a big enterprise. Second, they find service necessary for the whole institution to function properly and if they refuse it, their students will suffer. And finally, some faculty members feel guilty that someone else has to do it. Misra quotes a professor as saying, "If I set limits, I know it means [other faculty and graduate students] will do that extra work. I feel guilty if I say no" (p. 26).

That goes hand in hand with previously quoted statement by Dr. McMillan from Philipsen's study (2008) who said that culturally women are perceived as nurturers and they feel like they should always be available to others. Although Dr. McMillan spoke of

mothers' compulsion to care for their own families, under the norm of motherhood, coined by Drago (2007), society expects women to take care of those in need. Women who are mothers may feel the norm of motherhood even stronger than other women. Having grown so used to putting the needs of their babies ahead of their own, faculty mothers may extend this attitude to their coworkers and students who are in need of assistance. What is more, unlike men, who dominate the highest ranks of faculty, some academic women still feel like "outsiders in the sacred grove" (Aisenberg & Harrington 1988) and hence their need to prove themselves, even if it is through something that is not immediately or highly rewarded. One of the women participating in the study by Drago and Colbeck (2003) summarized the compulsion to prove themselves in the following way:

I think women have an issue of proving they're committed, period. [And] it's always bizarre to me that I could have gone through four years of college, five years of graduate school, nine years as a postdoctoral fellow ...and ...I'm in my sixth year here now working my butt off, and people are wondering about my commitment?... I don't think that men get that. (p. 92)

This need to prove themselves might often translate into a very diligent approach to committee work which, in turn, might attract offers to join additional committees.

Since the tenure clock coincides with their biological clocks, women are in a bind of either postponing having children till possibly the point of infertility, or having children before the award of tenure and ending up with a career that does not progress as fast as their male colleagues (Mason, Wolfinger, & Goulden 2013). Unlike men who can wait with family formation till they are established in their career, or have second families in their late fifties, women do not have that biological option. During the most optimal decade for childbearing, female faculty are forced to travel for postdocs, interview for tenure-track positions, present their research at national conferences, and strive to fulfill

ever-evasive tenure requirements. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) believe that this constant need to watch both academic and biological clocks that have the unfortunate tendency to "tick loudly, clearly, and at the same time" (p. 56) is what makes 'having it all' so difficult for women faculty.

The feminist credo 'You can have it all' got recently readjusted to 'You can have it all; you just can't have it all at once'. The assertion that "women can have it all if they just find the right sequence of family and career" is wrong, claims Anne-Marie Slaughter (2012). The old model of having children at 25 and re-starting a career at 40 when children are ready to graduate high school is not valid anymore. High-potential women tend to marry later because they have hard time finding a suitable partner while they are busy getting their graduate degrees. If women are fortunate to build a family, they must struggle with completing their education and finding a good first job with a baby in tow. These women's opportunities for career advancement are often sabotaged by the very thing that they hold dear—motherhood. A lack of financial resources while in graduate school makes matters worse because it means inability to hire the help that can be indispensable to work-family balance. This is why so many professional women today choose to have children after they have established themselves in their careers. That, of course, entails the possibility of spending a small fortune on fertility treatment, or not having biological children at all. Even if everything does work out and women have children at 40, they "worry about how long they can 'stay out' before they lose the competitive edge they worked so hard to acquire." Slaughter's conclusion is that "neither sequence is optimal, and both involve trade-offs that men do not have to make".

Feminist Perspectives on Work-Family Balance in Academia

Bensimon and Marshall (1997) wrote: "Possibly one of the most important contributions of feminist policy analysis is that of showing that men are considerably more able to fit into the academic system as presently organized whereas for women fitting in depends on their ability and willingness to become more like men" (p. 12). Fourteen years later Brown (2011) found that academia had not changed much. She believes that the way that academic institutions are structured today means that academic mothers are faced with limited number of *unacceptable* choices to have their career sidetracked by their childrearing responsibilities or mimic men and hand over their children to others (p. 76).

In order to analyze the choices women make to facilitate work-family balance and the context in which those choices take place, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) utilize two strands of feminism: liberal and post-structural. While the former is credited with opening the door to professoriate, the latter is helpful in addressing the remaining constraints that women face as "outsiders in the sacred grove" (Aisenberg & Harrington 1988). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) think that "looking at dominant academic discourses using different theoretical lenses can lead to expanded understanding and more pointed action" (p. 268).

Liberal feminism is grounded in the principle that both policies and practices should allow women to compete on an equal footing with men (Donovan 2000). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) believe that, for that to happen, women should be afforded full participation in workforce unencumbered by traditionally defined gender roles.

In recognition of the fact that children *might* have a negative effect on female faculty members' career, a series of policies have been instituted to facilitate the integration of motherhood and academia. These policies, originally addressed to mothers, but soon extended to fathers as well, were supposed to 'level the playing field' for those burdened with caregiving responsibilities. The assumption by liberal feminists was that the presence of proper policies would mean that anyone in need would use them and hence the burden of gender roles would finally be lifted. That did not happen due to the low utilization of family-friendly policies.

The previously mentioned study by Mason, Wolfinger, and Goulden (2013) showed that in 2002 and 2003 only a quarter of the eligible UC faculty even knew about all the major family-friendly policies available on their campus (p. 111). At Ohio University, only 23 out of 3,000 staff and faculty utilized a part-time option for which they were eligible (OSU 2003). A study of 500 faculty at Penn State University, who became parents between 1992 and 1999, revealed that only seven mothers took a leave (Drago, Crouter, Wardell, and Willits 2004). Also, after examining the use of flexible work-life policies by female faculty in 1996 and 2003, Earskine and Spalter-Roth (2005) concluded that policies were hardly ever used by women faculty who were junior and unpublished. These examples are illustrative of the ideal worker norm at play here. Although the majority of family-friendly policies deal with the arrival of a baby rather than with the long-term process of raising it, they do provide a temporary relief for those for whom the tenure clock is ticking.

In *Unbending Gender*, Williams (2000) is very critical of liberal feminism. She claims that by telling women to hide their family responsibilities, in an effort to avoid

workplace discrimination, liberal feminists inadvertently contributed to the cult of the one-dimensional life, and by celebrating women who fit the mold of 'the ideal worker,' they alienated those whose lives were framed around motherhood. Williams agrees with Hochschild who in *Time Bind* (1997) traced the women's difficulties in achieving work-life balance back to 1960s and 70s when women joined the workforce on male terms. Initially women were grateful for being able to work shoulder to shoulder with men. In order to enjoy privileges formerly reserved for only for men, women changed themselves to fit the male mold, no matter how out of balance it was.

Williams believes that, to get the revolution off the ground, it might have been necessary for women to behave like men by pretending to have no obligations outside of their professional jobs. Nevertheless, now that the high-ranking female professional is not an oddity anymore, it is time to admit that women do have different work patterns because of their childbearing, childrearing, and household responsibilities. Unfortunately, until this day, feminism is linked with glorification of market work and devaluation of family work because initially liberal feminists have strived to make women fit the male workplace, rather than to adjust the workplace to mothers' needs.

Williams makes an interesting point when she says that while the allocation of primary caregiving to women has been challenged by feminism, men's entitlement to paid employment—supported by unpaid family work performed by his spouse—has not been sufficiently questioned. 'Having it all' under these circumstances leads to exhausted women, resentful of feminism for giving them even more work.

The tactic used by feminists to achieve women's equality was for women to work full-time, just like men, with child care delegated to the market. Nevertheless, the dream that day-care facilities would be just as common and respected as libraries never came true. Williams points out that feminists' assumptions that mothers would feel comfortable handing over their children to the market (the same way as fathers have been) proved to be the most problematic. Feminists underestimated that some mothers would experience the maternal imperative so deeply that they cannot see themselves as having a choice between work and home at all. For them the choice is reflexive.

Despite four decades of feminism, the notion that women need to make a choice whether they want to pursue a demanding academic career or family life that includes children is still endorsed in our society. The concept of choice usually brings forth positive associations, mainly of freedom. Therefore, it is considered to be a desirable societal construct. Yet in case of working mothers, it might be simply wrong. Philipsen (2008) writes, "choice is an insidious notion here, despite its seemingly benevolent character" (p. 31). She believes that the idea of choice between children and academic career is "as perverted as a choice between shelter and food would be. People need both, food *and* shelter, not a choice between the two" (p. 31). Accordingly, women in academia should feel free to pursue both a career and a family life without emotional or physical costs.

In Williams' opinion, our society would become immobilized if "every single person protested each and every constraint handed down to us" (2000, p. 6). That is why when women face the constraints under domesticity, they speak of having made a 'choice.' By ordering market work and family work as two separate spheres, domesticity pulls men back into 'the ideal worker' role and imprisons women at home where they are cut off from

"the social roles that offer authority and responsibility" (p. 6). Williams stresses that just because women have already internalized the constraints imposed by domesticity, it does not mean that they are consistent with gender equality.

There is no gender equality in allowing women to make a 'choice' to perform as 'the ideal worker' without any privileges that support male ideal workers. Because the schedules of 'ideal workers' are not schedules of 'good mothers', women continue working part-time, or flexible, but low-paying, jobs. In order to be able to pick up their children from school while men continue to work full-time, or even overtime, to make up for their wives' lost income. This system discriminates against both women, by marginalizing them at work, as well as men, by keeping them away from their families.

Williams (2000) emphasizes the need for a change in the way we describe women's present day situation. She believes that it should not be framed as women's choice, but discrimination. For her, choice and discrimination are not mutually exclusive. Although we have been taught to believe that if it is a choice, there is no discrimination, our everyday decisions are always made within constraints imposed by the society we live in. Williams compares the dichotomy of choice and discrimination to the dyad of agency and constraint. The stress on constraint excludes agency, but agency is overestimated if no constraints are taken into account. For example, mothers' choices are framed by employers' actions. Some women simply do not even try to get certain jobs because they know that women have never been hired for these jobs before or because these particular jobs do not mesh with family responsibilities.

Williams (2000) accuses liberal feminists of attributing too much agency to women's choices while underestimating numerous constraints within which these choices are made. She also finds dominance feminism limiting because its foot-on-the-neck

model alienates not only men, but most importantly women who believe that they 'chose' to marginalize themselves for the sake of their children—not under the pressure of their supposedly oppressing husbands.

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) echo William's position when they credit liberal feminism with expanding choices for women, while pointing out that "there is no gender equality in the consequences of such choices" (p. 265). The authors warn against some possible pitfalls of using the liberal feminist perspective. They give an example of women who are convinced that they made a purposeful choice to work at a community college because they found this type of institution to be more compatible with their desire to have children than a research university. These women believe that they came to this conclusion on their own after observing how stressful the lives of their graduate school advisors really were. The supposition under liberal feminist theory is that this is a 'free and equal' choice. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) stress the implicit assumption in this kind of analysis that all institutions of higher education are gender neutral and that women and men move freely in and out of them as a matter of preference (p. 260). Suggesting that women willingly choose employment that is less prestigious implies that all career options are equally open to them. Those 'free choices' are in fact skewed by such factors as gender roles, both at home and the workplace.

While liberal feminists believe choice to be a matter of individual human agency, according to feminist post-structural perspective of choice, this operation of agency always takes place in a context. Women are systematically disadvantaged by discourses that were created by masculine norms, "shared expectations built into established patterns of behavior [that] became institutionalized as simply the way the things get done" (Ferre

& McQuillan 1998, p. 12). In other words, the way that motherhood is talked about, or not talked about, in academia informs personal choices that women make.

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) see motherhood as gendered phenomenon that leads to assumptions about what is appropriate for a mother and what is appropriate for a worker. Their conversations with faculty mothers revealed that many women paid 'motherhood penalty' for deviating from "prescribed behaviors based on their predefined gender roles" (p. 39). Such penalties as less respect, or delayed promotions, stem from the fact that behaviors associated with workplace success is out of sync with the attitudes linked to 'the good mother.' Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) point to a bind: When a faculty mother finds herself engaging in a successful workplace behavior like any 'ideal worker' would, she is not only left unrewarded but perceived as neglecting the parenting role. The opposite is also true. When a new faculty mother is needed immediately at work, her family obligation are downplayed. In *Mama, PhD* (2008), a collection of essays written mostly by faculty who felt forced to leave academia, Alissa McElreath (2008) describes how her female colleague reduced her frustrating daily struggle between professional self and mothering self by saying "keep up with [your] job by publishing and writing" and "don't get *too* caught up in that *mommy thing*" (p. 89). The assumption made here was that motherhood is something that you might want to temporarily engage in, like a hobby, but if you are a faculty member, your real life is research, and hence you should return to it without much delay.

Brown (2011) believes that motherhood is inadequately viewed as a matter of personal choice and not as an all-absorbing, transformative activity of attending to the needs of those who are physically and emotionally dependent. She stresses the fact that

motherhood is *not* something that can be done after hours, but an activity that takes over women's lives to the exclusion of many others.

The rhetoric of choice, so important for feminists, is often used to explain employment inequities in academia: If women end up in part-time and/or non-tenure-track jobs, it is because they chose to become mothers and then they chose to devote time to their children. But faculty mothers make choices based on the academic tradition that have historically excluded women. Academia, with its linear time-sensitive career model seem especially unforgiving of breaks for child-rearing. Numerous studies done by Ward and Wolf-Wendel lead them to believe that it is early gender socialization that shapes women's ideas of what they can and where they can do it. What is more, they point to research universities as additional sources of socialization that cause people to have certain expectations of academic career. One possible form of this socialization is steering away prospective female faculty from research universities because these are described as 'greedy institutions' where only 'the ideal worker' can succeed. Advisors might not even explicitly warn against working at a research university. It might be enough, as it was mentioned before, for a female student to watch her advisor's unbalanced life to know that she wants something else. This does not mean, though, that her choice was free.

In "Preparing the Next Generation of Faculty", Ann E. Austin (2002) expands on the idea of socialization in graduate school as the driving force behind faculty's choices. She describes how those who aspire to become faculty are groomed for an academic career long before they get their first jobs. Nevertheless, Austin views this socialization as a dialectical process through which newcomers construct their roles when they interact with others. Unlike Ward and Wolf-Wendel, Austin believes that individuals are not only

passively influenced by the organization that they enter, but they also influence the new place by bringing their own experiences, values, and ideas.

Since, as newcomers, PhD students have less of agency than their advisors and other senior professors, it is safe to assume that the mark that students leave on the structure of their school is negligible in comparison to the impact that teachers make on their students. These little indentations in the structure of academia will eventually add up to a major change, but for many women who find their family responsibilities derailing their careers right now, family-friendly academia is nothing but a distant dream.

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) claim that as long as literature portrays women as agents of their own fate, as liberal feminism dictates, the institutions that these women work for will continue to absolve themselves of any responsibility to create change, and women's choices will continue to be called either good or bad. For example, if a woman is denied tenure at a research university, she is the one who has made a 'bad choice' to have children while on tenure track. If she decides not to work for a research university, for fear that it is not family-friendly, but chooses a community college, where she gets tenure, she has made a 'good choice.'

Armenti (2004) describes two ways that women faculty deal with work-family conflict: they 'choose' to have a baby just before the summer break ("May babies") or they 'choose' to postpone getting pregnant until the award of tenure ("post-tenure babies"). Using these strategies presupposes that women are able to control their due dates or that their babies are born on time and without complications, all of which are obviously beyond any woman's control.

When dealing with work-family conflict, more female than male faculty employ what Robert Drago and Carol L. Colbeck (2003) coined as "bias avoidance strategies."

After surveying 4,000 faculty in Chemistry and English in 500 U.S. universities and colleges, they concluded that women minimize their family obligations to avoid being accused of a lack of commitment to their careers. Accordingly, more women than men in academia "stayed single because I did not have time for a family and a successful academic career" or had fewer children than they wanted, "following what might be called the academy's China policy" (Drago 2007, p. 66). Drago and Colbeck (2003) also observed the "post-tenure baby" syndrome. One of the women in a focus group admitted, "I could not have done it while the tenure clock was ticking... [it] would have just sent me over the edge."

In order to illustrate the bias against caregiving in academia, Drago (2007) describes the difference in the reactions to him bringing his daughter to conferences versus his female colleagues doing exactly the same. He asserts that when faculty mothers have their children present at meetings, they encounter biases against caregiving and, as a result, they are negatively sanctioned, or, at least, they fear adverse career repercussions. According to Drago, when he engages in the same behavior, his compliance with the ideal worker norm goes mostly unquestioned: he is still "seen as fitting the ideal worker norm, but with a cute hobby in the form of raising children" (p. 52). He concludes that "these behavioral differences are mainly attributable to the norms of motherhood and the ideal worker" (p. 53). It is unlikely that men run into biases against caregiving as long as they remain the facade of 'the ideal worker'. It seems like, in case of women faculty, the norm of motherhood casts a stronger spell than the ideal worker norm.

Drago (2007) calls bias avoidance "an insidious game" (p. 65): By hiding the existence of children, faculty mothers miss out on opportunities to push the boundaries of the institutional structures, and hence contribute to the change that they so desperately

need. The irony is that even asking if it is acceptable to bring children to a conference means admitting to family responsibilities which might be perceived as the evidence of less-than-perfect devotion to one's career, and hence used against the faculty mother. Obviously, in private conversations, many faculty fathers confess to grabbing time from paid work and giving it to their children, but in a public forum, they would have never admitted to "moonlighting without a pay" because that would mean undercutting their status as "disciples of the ideal worker norm" (p. 53).

It is exactly to maintain the illusion of utter professional devotion that faculty mothers utilize a bias avoidance strategy: They simply leave their children at home. Faculty women also withhold requests for the things that they really need, such as parental leave, reduced teaching load, job share, or tenure stoppage. Drago (2007) expresses hope that once women climb to the highest ranks of professorate, by utilizing bias avoidance strategies, they will turn around and use their newly-acquired power to remove the hurdles to work-life balance for future generation of academic parents.

Drago (2007) claims that not only might faculty mothers face higher standards than men in striving to meet the ideal worker norm, but they are also more likely to feel guilt when using bias avoidance behavior because the norm of motherhood compels women to have high expectations of themselves as caregivers. Since women decide to miss important events in their children lives, despite feeling guilty, it means that they hold the belief that the appearance of professional commitment is really important.

Opting out—the ultimate example of bias avoidance—is a narrative that is prevalent in the literature on work-family balance in academia. It suggests that faculty mothers, when faced with several options, make a free choice to leave academia when, in fact, there

are pull and push factors associated with this choice. Williams (2000) believes that women experience a pull to be with their children while they are simultaneously pushed out of the working environment, which is simply not family-friendly, by a combination of unrealistic workplace expectations, lack of policies that support childcare past the one year of tenure clock stop, and male partners who refuse to perform their share of household duties.

There are different ways that women opt out of academia. Some opt out of academic workforce altogether, but most opt-down. Faculty mothers forgo research-intensive institutions for teaching colleges or opt out of traditional full-time, tenure-track positions and opt into the positions that are believed to be more compatible with motherhood: part-time lecturers and adjuncts. On the surface, it seems that working as a part-time faculty, or in a less prestigious school, is a 'good choice' for women because it allows them to work in academia and have children at the same time. Nevertheless, this so-called choice places faculty mothers either on the margins of the academic workplace, by excluding them from governance of the institutions that they work for, or in a college with less opportunities for professional development. Not to mention, working part-time has long-time financial consequences.

While for some people opting out is an ultimate exercise of free will and agency, it perpetuates workplace norms that are based on traditional gender roles. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) believe that not only is opting-out a personal defeat for faculty mothers who invested so much in their education, it is also a way, for universities and colleges, of losing talented workers. But most importantly, opting out perpetuates a stereotype that female graduate students are not worth investment of time and energy because they will

quit academia the moment they become mothers. It is precisely to avoid this conclusion that the liberal feminists underplayed family work performed by female employees. They did not want to hear, "See, I told you women could never make it. Isn't that what I've been telling you all along?" (Williams 2000, p. 272).

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) point out that 'the ideal worker' discourse forces women to make certain choices in order to fit in with their coworkers. The identity of a successful academic is built on the assumption that it is unacceptable to deviate from the traditional path. Ward and Wolf-Wendel make an interesting comparison: Just like the discourse of gangs expects people to behave in a certain way if they want to be gang members, the academic discourse on tenure makes faculty members who want membership (tenure) adhere to a very strict career model. The following two statements on motherhood in academia, made by senior faculty members, illustrate how the academic discourse relating to tenure dictates faculty members' behavior. The first one, "I don't know why anyone would do it [have family] when so clearly what is required to be successful as faculty member is total dedication, especially when trying to get tenure. It's not a job that is designed so that people do other things beyond focus on the discipline" (p. 266). Another professor expressed a similar sentiment, "I recommend for faculty to get established first, to get tenure, before thinking about having a child. It's what I did, and if anyone ever asks me, that is what I tell them they should do" (p. 267). The reason why the post-structural feminist framework is so useful is because it shows how statements like these are shaped by our assumptions about proper gender roles. What is more, this type of discourse both reflects and produces the work culture that is not conducive to motherhood.

Phillipsen (2008) believes that although work-family balance policies are increasing in number, they remain largely underutilized because of "Don't ask, don't tell" attitudes that prevail in academia. During job interviews, candidates are not allowed to be asked about their families. This rule was intended to protect candidates from discrimination. Personal situation was deemed irrelevant to professional life so that candidates' family formation could not be misconstrued as liability which impedes their chances of being hired. Asking personal questions, though, could reveal that some female professors are not as unencumbered and not as supported by a devoted stay-at-home spouse, or extended family, as it might have been desired by universities and colleges. Unfortunately, this policy unintentionally prevents the hiring institution from properly assessing the candidate's home situation and providing the needed support. This omission may eventually set the faculty with children up for failure.

Ward & Wolf-Wendel (2004) believe that, although, family status is legally beyond the scope of inquiry for hiring committees, there is a way for the members of this committee to hold childrearing duties against job candidates anyway because the gaps in employment on CVs, as well as the time that elapsed after the receipt of Ph.D., are easily noticeable. These two are usually the result of taking time off for childrearing. It seems like purposefully talking about faculty members' home responsibilities opens the door for possible solutions to work-family balance that are results of cooperation between individual parents and the institution that they work for.

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) believe that the presence and utilization of family-friendly policies that could help with work-family balance also depend on power relations within each department: those with the most power in the department control the

discourse. They dictate, through the use of language or silence, what is legitimate and what is not. Since pregnant faculty members are usually new to the institutions, they may not know what they are entitled to. Being in positions of less power, faculty mothers feel that they have no right to impose their needs on others. What makes the situation worse, according to Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008), is the fact that those in the position of actual power (chairs, deans, or even senior colleagues) are usually the older employees who did not use any family-friendly policies because these policies did not exist yet, because they chose to remain childless, or because they had stay-at-home spouses taking care of their children. The end result is that new faculty mothers often have no one to guide them and hence they decide not to acknowledge their needs. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008) found that what those without power are left to infer and interpret what they believe is socially appropriate which can be misleading in the face of the two competing discourses on 'the ideal worker' and 'the good mother'.

Even the most generous policies will never erase the inequality between mothers of young children and those unencumbered with domestic duties unless we replace the dominant discourses of what an ideal academic career should look like with new ones. According to Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2008), setting up family-friendly policies on 'opt-out' basis is the first step in creating an alternative discourse that results in new practices. This new discourse will be based on the assumption that taking time off from the tenure track for family reasons is a natural part of faculty life course and, by no means, reflective of academic qualifications. Policies enhancing work-family balance should be automatic, and not discretionary ones, because the latter require pregnant faculty members to ask

their department chairs for their permission to use a certain policy and that leaves too much room for potential abuse while deciding on case-by-case basis.

To sum up, Ward and Wolf-Wendel believe that faculty mothers will successfully integrate motherhood with work only if they utilize numerous family-friendly policies which, in turn, is reliant on the prevailing discourses in academia. By making family-friendly policies automatic for parents, we have a potential to create an alternative discourse of 'the ideal worker' as someone who has responsibilities outside of work and who takes time off for family. The new discourse will, in turn, create, for future parents, a working environment that is conducive to policy-utilization and hence, by extension, to motherhood.

Williams (2000), on the other hand, is not a fan of policies that are activated with the birth of a baby. She believes that the first-generation of sex-based family-friendly policies linked flexibility with marginalization and forced women into their gender role of primary care givers and men out of family responsibilities. Williams thinks that the gender neutral tone of the present-day family-friendly policies will not help either if utilizing these policies, especially by men, is viewed as going against the grain of the ideal worker culture. She asserts that only by abolishing domesticity's assignment of women as caretakers and men as ideal workers, as well as employees' right to 'the ideal worker,' who is supported by a flow of family work, can we achieve gender equity at home and work.

Given that different strands of feminism failed in helping women find a better balance between the demands of work and the obligations of motherhood, Williams (2000) recommends a new kind of feminism. She calls it "reconstructive" feminism

because its purpose is to restructure the organization of the market work and the family work that she blames for women's subordinate position. Since Williams finds the current feminist language inefficient or divisive, she proposes a new type of feminist discourse which recognizes women's disadvantaged position at work, not as a result of men's systematic abuse of power, but rather as a type of gender hierarchy, reflected in the current structure of work that happens "without any bad actor in the picture." In other words, both men and women are "caught in force fields that suck them back toward the ideal-worker and marginalized-caregiver roles" (p. 276). Williams considers the phrase "work and family restructuring" less inflammatory than "gender equality." Besides, it erases the perception of work-life balance as a women's problem.

What makes Williams' solution to work-family balance different from many others described in literature on work and family is the fact that, as a lawyer, Williams defines the way of organizing work around men's flow of family work from women as a form of discrimination that requires a legal remedy. As a director of WorkLife Law, Williams has pioneered the research and documentation of family responsibilities discrimination, including pregnancy discrimination. Williams (2000) believes that discrimination against all women because some of them take time off for children is illegal: although some women are prevented from living up to the norm of 'the ideal worker' by their family responsibilities, those who are not, do in fact perform as good of a job as any man.

Reconstructive feminism destabilizes domesticity's gender roles by challenging the glorification of men's paid employment and the allocation of child rearing to women. Williams' solution to work-family balance does not favor ideal workers over caregivers or vice versa. Instead, reconstructive feminism replaces the traditional focus on exclusively

market work with a more balanced focus on both paid employment and family life. This has a potential of putting an end to the devaluation of family work.

Unlike many feminists, Williams refuses to see motherhood as an obstacle to paid employment and uses the norm of parental care as a wedge for transforming market work. Since the present-day system marginalizes those who devote themselves to the care of others, it needs to be replaced by one that reflects the norm of shared parenting. According to this strategy, both parents should work less (about 20 hours a week) so that they could both perform family work. Williams encourages working parents to jointly decide on how much of family work they would feel comfortable outsourcing (e.g. cleaning services or high-quality daycare) and then equally divide the rest between them. The reason why this strategy could work is because it appeals to ideal-worker women who want more time at home with their families, marginalized caregivers who often feel overwhelmed and undervalued, and to children-rights activists who agree that children's needs cannot be met if their parents are hardly at home because they try to live up to the norm of 'the ideal worker.' Instead of a mother quitting her job and father working long hours as the family's primary breadwinner, there will be two scaled back careers and a comparable amount of income.

Also, support for reconstructive feminism is likely to come from the proponents of the time movement who demand shorter working hours, not unlike the industrial workers of the 19th century. The present-day time movement, as described by Hochschild in *The Time Bind* (1997), links shorter work week with caregiving responsibilities, and not leisure as it was the case with the original time movement when the majority of factory workers were men. Hochschild thinks that the latter-day time movement should not limit

itself to encouraging companies to offer policies allowing shorter or more flexible hours because these policies serve as "fig leaves concealing long-hour work cultures" (p. 248). In her opinion, the time movement needs to challenge the premises of that work culture by changing how work is evaluated: employees should be judged on the excellence of their performance, and not on the on the number of hours present in the workplace.

Reconstructive feminism aims to achieve women's equality by restructuring market work and family entitlements so that all men, as well as women, can meet both family and work ideals. Williams believes that it can be achieved when employers' entitlement to 'the ideal worker' is abolished and part-time employees are awarded the same hourly wages and benefits that are comparable to full-time workers. In the present-day economy of contingent workers and the growing number of professionals expressing a desire to have a more 'balanced life,' the ground work for Williams' reconstructive feminism has already been laid. Now the challenge is to introduce part-time parity legislation that would effectively expand the options for part-time caretakers. According to Williams, if part-timers are guaranteed by law the same wages as full-time workers, with health insurance subsidized by the federal government, there will be no incentive for employers to hire either full- or part-timers, and the ideal worker norm will finally be abolished. Williams' assumption here is that once employers stop demanding ideal workers, men will stop living up to this ideal, start working part-time, pick up their share of household responsibilities and, in the process, enhance women's work-family balance and, more importantly, gender equality.

In *Striking a Balance*, Drago (2007) expresses his doubts about the power of part-time employment parity to abolish the ideal worker norm that stands in mothers' way of

achieving work-family balance. He claims that despite the comparable worth wage legislation being in effect in Australia since 1970s, there is no real equality between fathers and mothers. Drago admits that, since the hourly wage for part-timers in Australia is even higher than full-timers to make up for pension and vacation benefits, there are more people using the part-time option there than in the U.S. Nevertheless, "Australian version of part-time parity unintentionally fed into the norms of the ideal worker and of motherhood" (p.107) because only 5% of fathers and 50% of mothers are employed part-time. Despite comparable wages for full- and part-timers, the ideal worker norm did not cease to exist. Drago believes that mothers in Australia are faced with a similar choice as American mothers: "either strive to meet the dictates of the ideal worker norm and minimize childrearing responsibilities, or function as a good mother and find part-time employment" (p. 107). What is more, Drago speculates that the situation at home might be even more difficult for women in Australia than those living in the U.S.: Australian men might feel that they are off the hook for the second shift since their wives work only part-time.

While Hochschild (1989, 1997) calls on men to get involved in family life and ease work-family conflict for women, Williams (2000) believes that it will not happen as long as men are expected to perform as ideal workers. That is why the ideal worker norm needs to be abolished and a new discourse on what constitutes good work performance needs to be created. Williams proposes linking work-family conflict with gender inequity, and equity with organizational effectiveness. She believes that, by redefining 'the ideal worker' as someone who gets the job done rather than as someone who puts in most hours

in the office, employers will allow more women to become ideal workers and hence relieve men of the sole-provider role that so many of them find oppressive.

To illustrate this concept, Williams (2000) quotes Lotte Bailyn, head of the Sloan School of management at MIT, who writes extensively about the pressing need for a new style of management that focuses on results, not 'face time.' In her view, the supervisors who have always depended on 'face time' need to shift their attention to output. They need to be less concerned with how things get done and more with whether they get done. Those who ask "How do I know if he is working if I cannot see him?" are told by Bailyn "How do you know that he is working when you *do* see him?" (p. 95). It seems like a culture of trust needs to be created where employers allow their workers to coordinate their schedules on their own.

In *Striking a Balance*, Drago (2007) proposes the dual agenda of improving work performance and providing balance in employees' lives in order to avoid burn-out and increase productivity in the long-run. He asserts that a norm of inclusion is the answer to work-family conflict caused by the interplay of the three norms in our society, the ideal worker norm, the norm of motherhood, and the individualism norm. As previously mentioned, the ideal worker norm prevents employees from using family-friendly policies and challenging biases against caregiving. Those who decide to utilize policies enhancing work-family balance, mainly mothers, are isolated from other women and ideal workers by the norm of motherhood. Finally, the norm of individualism prevents everyone from asking the government for help in achieving a work-family balance.

Drago (2007) gives an example of an inclusive process that has been operating for several years– the flextime system, invented by the staff covering Labor Studies, Women's Studies, and African and African American Studies at Penn State University. The fixed 40 hours per week office schedule that constricted the employees' lives got replaced with a schedule that allows for these employees' commitments outside of work while keeping the office open 50 hours a week. Drago (2007) believes that in order for workgroups to facilitate work-life balance, their members need to bring to light important issues that affect their personal lives, which is counter-intuitive since we have been socialized to think that, in effort to be professional, we need to be impersonal. Drago (2007) emphasizes the fact that each workplace is different (e.g. department of English and department of Chemistry from his 2003 study) and hence, to effectively challenge the three harmful norms and achieve work-family balance, employers should ask their workers in each department separately what they need at particular times to be as productive as they can.

The main obstacle for achieving work-family balance in academia is the strictly prescribed order of academic career: the need to prove oneself worthy of institutional commitment within the first six years, while not being fully aware of what the requirements really are, can be challenging for anyone, but especially those with very young children at home. Taking a family leave or stopping the tenure clock means interrupting the prescribed order of the traditional career ladder and that calls mother's legitimacy, as a serious academic, into question. Even if there has not been a real evidence of backlash for new mothers in the last few years, just an imagined threat of a

backlash is enough for faculty member to employ a bias avoidance strategy such as forgoing a parental leave or a tenure clock stoppage.

In "A Half-Time Tenure Track Proposal," Drago and Williams (2000) describe a new way of obtaining tenure where faculty would take from ten to twelve years, instead of customary six. This system is obviously less demanding on new mothers, but it would only serve its purpose if part-time track did not mean the low pay and lack of benefits presently associated with part-time employment. Many mothers may simply not be able to afford half a salary, especially if they are single parents, or paying for their own retirement and health benefits. Drago and Williams defend their proposal by saying that this way of organizing academic career will have each spouse earning 50 percent of family income and perform 50 percent of family work, instead of one working full-time and the other (usually the wife) dropping out of paid employment. This system prevents the type of abuse of family-friendly policies that is happening right now. The authors give an example of a father who uses his parental leave to get ahead in his research while his wife stays at home to take care of their children.

The importance of Drago and Williams' proposal comes from initiating a new discourse on different ways in which academic careers can progress, without getting rid of the tenure, so indispensable to academic freedom. Williams' plan preserves the same standards of academic productivity – not lowered, due to family obligations, but also not raised because of 'the extra time on the tenure clock.' This proposal is likely to gather strong support because Drago and Williams do not concentrate exclusively on mothers of newborns, but include everyone with caretaking responsibilities—faculty members taking care of sick spouses and elderly parents as well.

Conclusion

Since academia and motherhood are framed as opposing structures, their integration is so challenging. Faced with few social or economic resources that would ease work-family interface, working mothers use a metaphor of balance to help them manage their lives. This metaphor is very appealing because it suggests a temporary character: One day faculty mothers will organize themselves better and then everything will magically fall into place, as it should. The work-family balance metaphor meshes perfectly with two other myths, 'the ideal worker' and 'the good mother,' because it allows the peaceful co-existence of both. It mistakenly suggests that faculty mothers are able to pay equal attention to both spheres of their lives without sabotaging either when, in fact, most mothers feel that there is a daily sacrifice, either on the altar of their family, or the altar of their career.

In its 2001 "Statement of Principles on Family Responsibilities and Academic Work", the American Association of University Professors called for "substantial changes in policy, and, more significant changes in academic culture to transform the academic workplace into one that supports family life" (p. 8). The funding provided by Sloan Foundation allowed for many studies of faculty parents that informed numerous policies on university and college campuses. Although the more prestigious institution of higher learning, the more generous benefits are offered to new parents, the utilization rate everywhere remains low. That is why the attention should be shifted from the actual policies to enhancing the environment where faculty parents would feel free to take advantage of those benefits, without any fear of backlash.

Since university departments are the main unit of socialization, the transformation of discourse needs to start there. Even the well-intentioned department chairs might not be sure how to navigate the situation to the best interest of both the pregnant faculty and the whole university. Faculty development as well as an expansion of support networks through mentoring programs, are only two of many ways in which faculty mothers can gain enough agency to utilize family-friendly policies without fear of penalty and, in the process, contribute to the change in the workplace culture. The automatic family-friendly policies proposed by Ward and Wolf-Wendel would create a culture of coverage where anyone with caregiving responsibilities feels free to use them. The part-time tenure track, proposed by Drago and Williams, would definitely contribute to the development of family-friendly academic culture where children are no longer treated as the impediment to reaching sought-after tenure or future promotions.

Because of the prevalent discourses around what constitutes 'the good mother' and 'the ideal scholar,' whether it is in the highest-ranking research university, or the lowest-ranking community college, most faculty mothers still refuse to be seen by their colleagues as those who are serious about their careers. That is why faculty mothers in research universities do anything in their power not to have lapses in their research productivity and those in teaching-oriented institutions, not to inconvenience their colleagues by dumping all the classes on them. The best way to pull down the 'maternal wall' in academia is to change the departmental discourses on what constitutes 'the ideal academic' and 'the ideal academic career.' Those, in turn, will change if everyone eligible to use a family-friendly policy does so. If family-friendly policies are automatically extended to faculty in various family situations (spouse's or parent's sickness), before they

get cancelled due to underutilization, rather than exclusively to mothers of newborns, a culture of work-family balance will be created. Only when using family-friendly policies is viewed as legitimate parts of an academic career trajectory rather than accommodations, or special favors, the discourse on 'the ideal worker' is going to include taking time off for family, and hence faculty mothers will have a chance to successfully blend motherhood with academic career without making serious professional or personal sacrifices.

The cultural change will be long-lasting when the powerful individuals who control the discourse in academic workplace realize the connection between family-friendly policies and retaining high-quality academics. Academia is likely to attract and retain top graduate students and consequently keep its competitive edge if it welcomes individuals with caregiving responsibilities. Creating workplace environment that addresses the needs of diverse faculty members, including mothers, will strengthen the excellence of the institutions of higher learning which supposed to be 'beacons of society.' After all, faculty members should reflect the diversity of their students.

It is hard not to be influenced by all the discourses that shape the socially acceptable norms of women's existence as workers and mothers, which, in turn, shape how women think about their own future prospects at work. This is perfectly illustrated by the conversation that Williams (2000) had with a lawyer who decided to quit her career to stay at home with her daughter. The new mom insisted "But it was my choice; I have no regrets" until Williams asked her if she would not really prefer to continue working as a lawyer, just shorter hours. Only then did the new mom realize "Of course, that's what I really want" (p. 271). If women are offered the option of keeping the jobs that they want with the schedules they need, they will stop describing marginalization as their own

choice. When women say that they made a decision to quit their jobs, they fail to comprehend that their actions are not expressions of their own priorities but rather clashes "between the way society tells women that children should be raised and the way it chooses to organize market work" (p. 271). Only when asked whether they would not really prefer to continue working in their high-powered jobs, just shorter hours, do they realize that, in fact, this is what they really want, but have never thought viable.

A cultural shift takes time but all social changes started with someone articulating a version of the future that most people found impossible to accomplish. Accordingly, if enough high-powered individuals take pride in being a parent and describe their parenting obligations in a public forum, the discourse on family life will become a commonplace occurrence and a new culture, recognizant of the full integration of work and family, will soon be created. Then, when mothers or fathers mention that they are foregoing some career opportunities in order to spend quality time with their families, this statement will finally be taken at face value and will no longer be understood as a cover for something else.

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