

**Navigating Transitions:
Work, Family, Community***

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Navigating Transitions: Work, Family, Community

ABSTRACT

Scholars writing about community in recent years have been more likely to lament its passing than to celebrate its exemplars. Researchers differ as to the causes of decline and the extent to which alternative social groups have emerged to fill the void. The resurgence of interest in community has occurred in a society much changed from the World War II era. Changing family demographics and a restructuring economy have transformed the workplace. Yet, few have theorized about the effects such changing structural contexts have had on community engagement. In this paper, we begin to redress the balance. We turn first to an overview of recent literature about community. We then set the context for shifting definitions of community by reviewing the changing structural contexts affecting work and family lives. Finally, we examine the community definitions and engagement of a purposive sample of managerial women in dual-earner marriages, a population for whom work and family issues are both immediate and salient. This analysis provides a lens through which we can profitably address recent debates about the decline or resurgence of community and civic society, as well as to further theorize community engagement. Our findings suggest that family remains central to our respondents' lives and their sense of community. Unlike their mothers, however, work also plays a key role in their sense of self and provides them with deep friendships. Our respondents found little institutionalized support for their work-family lives. Nonetheless, they remained engaged in their communities. Most of this volunteer work revolved around family and work, but women also engaged in other community volunteering as well.

Navigating Transitions: Work, Family, Community

INTRODUCTION

Community has been on everyone's mind of late. This revival of interest in community was well underway prior to September 11th, 2001—in both the scholarly and political communities—and has only intensified since then. Despite this outpouring of interest in community, there has been little useful theorizing about community engagement in the context of work and family. In this paper, we begin to redress the balance. We turn first to an overview of recent literature about community. We then set the context for shifting definitions of community by reviewing the changing structural contexts affecting our work and family lives. Finally, we examine the community definitions and engagement of a purposive sample of managerial women in dual-earner marriages, a population for whom work and family issues are both immediate and salient. This analysis provides a lens through which we can profitably address recent debates about the decline or resurgence of community and civic society, as well as to further theorize community engagement in the U.S.¹

What is Community?

What does community look like? Alice Rossi described community as “the rich array of associational affiliations that mediate between individuals and the larger society beyond the primary ties of family, co-workers, and friends—what sociologists from the earliest days of the discipline have called ‘secondary groups’” (Rossi 2001:33). In a post-September 11th opinion piece, Robert Putnam focused on acts of civic involvement to describe community: the sum total of “countless acts of concern and solidarity” (Putnam 2001). He described the solidarity of the World War II era: victory gardens, government-sponsored war bonds, and the community work of 12 million members of the Civilian Defense Corps and 7.5 million members of the Red Cross. Countless others from “the greatest generation” volunteered at over 4,000 civilian-defense offices “fixing school lunches, providing day care and organizing scrap drives.” Reinforced by a unified popular culture and a supportive government, personal sacrifice and shared communal solidarity were commonplace among ordinary Americans. Bob Greene (2002), for example, told the remarkable story of the citizens of North Platte, Nebraska and surrounding towns, where local citizens set up a canteen at the train station to welcome soldiers heading for war. During the war years, these ordinary Americans met up to 20 trains a day, brightening the days of over six million men off to uncertain futures (and supplying husbands for some local women after the war).

In our post-September 11th world, similar acts of concern and solidarity emerged, especially in the hard hit New York City metropolitan area, where our project was located. The selflessness of the firefighters, EMS, police officers, and “Ground Zero” workers is well documented. But the sense of community was and is broader than that. Putnam (2001) noted that ordinary Americans came together in large numbers to do what

¹ The larger project is described in a report to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (Hartmann, Roos, and Trigg 2002).

little they could. In a nationwide survey of civic attitudes and behaviors in late fall 2001, Putnam (2002) found evidence of community renewal. Compared with similar data collected one year earlier, he found increased percentages donating money, giving blood, and working on a community project. In addition, Americans reported greater trust in government and community, and more political consciousness.

This resurgence of community, however, occurred in a society much changed from the World War II era. Scholars writing about community in recent years have been more likely to lament its passing than celebrate its exemplars. Robert Putnam is perhaps the most prominent spokesperson for those who perceive a decline in civic engagement (Putnam 1995; 1996; 2000). Building on Alexis de Tocqueville's insights into the American character, Putnam (2000:48) lauded Americans' attachment to social groups. These include not only work-related groups, but also religious, personal, moral, and all other forms of association. Americans are more likely to join social groups than the citizens of any other country. Volunteering, giving, and joining are "mutually reinforcing and habit-forming—as Tocqueville put it, 'habits of the heart'" (Putnam 2000:122).² Robert Wuthnow's (1998:7) conception of personal "civic involvement" is perhaps most instructive:

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

Decline or Resurgence?

Putnam (2000) pointed to the 1960s as the critical turning point when civic revival degenerated into civic decline. His list of declining civic institutions/groups is long: voting; informal socializing with friends; membership in labor unions, fraternal, and veteran groups; religious participation; PTA membership; fewer family dinners, social visiting, card playing; league bowling; Girl and Boy Scouts; the Red Cross; the Jaycees; even newspaper reading (see also Wuthnow 1998:76-77). These declines are troubling, according to Putnam, because they represent foregone "social capital," in the form of social networks that have immense value as social "externalities" (p. 20). Lost to society are a "generalized reciprocity" and a trustworthiness that "lubricates social life" (p. 21). Lost to the individual are the very real benefits that can accrue from dense social networks, especially "bridging social capital" that can provide access to much-needed resources and information (p. 22).³

Putnam (2000:283) blamed civic decline on four major processes. First, he estimated that the pressures of time and money, and the growth of dual-earner families, account for

² Also concerned with "habits of the heart" are Bellah et al. (1985), who examined the intersection of American individualism and the desire for commitment and civic activism.

³ Putnam (2000:22) differentiated between "bridging" social capital, which he described as more inclusive in linking us to others unlike ourselves, and "bonding" social capital, which he saw as more exclusive and reinforcing of primary social ties. While the civil rights movement would be an example of the former, ethnic enclaves and country clubs would be examples of the latter. Putnam's conceptualization of "bridging social capital" is analogous to Granovetter's (1973) "weak ties."

about 10 percent of the decline.⁴ Another 10 percent was attributed to suburbanization, urban sprawl, and increased commuting times. Various forms of electronic entertainment, especially television, accounted for an additional 25 percent. The largest explanation was generational change: Putnam estimated that about half of the overall decline in civic involvement is attributable to less involved baby boomer and Gen X'ers replacing the more active World War II-era cohort. World War II inaugurated an immense wave of patriotism, communal solidarity, and civic volunteering, all of which continue to this day for this cohort.

Many others concede that civic involvement has declined [although see Ladd (1999) for a contrary view]. There is much debate, however, about the causes of decline and the extent to which alternative social groups have emerged to fill the void.⁵ Putnam himself noted that some social groups have shown a resurgence: professional, ethnic, service, hobby, sports, and school fraternity groups have all increased their memberships (Putnam 2000:59). Individual volunteering for charity or social service groups is also up (Wuthnow 1998:77), as are small groups (reading and literary groups), self-help and support groups (AA, Al-Anon), and virtual communities (Wuthnow 1998:Ch. 9). Reviewing one study, Wuthnow (p. 79) reported that while only 20 percent of Americans report participation in traditional civic associations, 50 percent regularly engage in some form of volunteer work. The fastest growing types of membership organizations are “tertiary” or “checkbook” organizations (Putnam 2000:50, 156)—the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), and the National Organization for Women (NOW)—that are more likely to have professional staffs with Washington D.C. lobbying arms (see also Skocpol 1999). Reich (2001:195) described this transformation as Americans joining groups as consumers as opposed to participants, thus viewing community as a marketable good.

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

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

Key to the changing nature of community are large, structural changes in American society. Associational ties now form in a social context quite different from the sorts of social arrangements that spawned craft unions, the League of Women Voters, the PTA, or the Lions Club earlier in the 20th century (see also Edwards and Foley 2001; Pollitt 1996;

⁴ These percentages are simply Putnam’s “best guesses.” They are, however, based on an extensive analyses of a variety of national data sources (e.g., General Social Survey, the Roper Social and Political Trends archive, the DDB Needham Life Style archive, time diary data, as well as a plethora of secondary sources).

⁵ Putnam’s thesis of declining community has generated some appreciative, and much critical, response. We detail some of these critiques below (Bookman forthcoming; Edwards and Foley 2001; Etzioni 2001; Ladd 1999; Norris 1996; Poarch 1997; Pollitt 1996; Reich 2001; Schudson 1996; Skocpol 1996; Valelly 1996; Wilson 2001; Wolfe 1998a; Wuthnow 1998).

Wilson 2001). Looser connections make more sense in an environment where “porous” social institutions with permeable boundaries allow people, ideas, and goods and services to flow freely (Wuthnow 1998:5). Similar to Putnam’s (2000:22) “bridging social capital,” Wuthnow’s “loose connections” allow better access to both information and resources (see also Granovetter 1973).

Finally, Skocpol challenged Putnam’s “individualist and localist” assumptions, as well as the implied zero-sum relationship between voluntarism and government (Skocpol 1996; 1997; 1999). While social conservatives might wish that a voluntaristic civil society can and should replace the role of government, Skocpol argued convincingly that government has long played a critical role in funding and supporting grass-roots volunteerism.

Like Putnam, however, Skocpol is troubled about the future of civic community, and its implications for democratic institutions. She sees organizations that are overly oligarchical, staff heavy, with little opportunity for grass-roots input. Importantly, she argues that the form volunteering has taken in recent years is “doing for” (e.g., feeding the homeless at a soup kitchen) rather than “doing with” (Skocpol 1999:7-8). This is in contrast to earlier eras when organizations recruited volunteers across class boundaries (albeit not sex boundaries; Skocpol 1999:4, online version; Wuthnow 1998:33).

Changing Structural Contexts: Navigating Work, Family, Community

In this section, we move beyond Putnam and other scholars’ analyses of community to focus on a number of social and economic changes that have altered the very definition of what constitutes civic engagement. How our respondents address work and family issues—and decide whether and how much to volunteer for their communities—depends importantly on major demographic and structural changes that have occurred in our social, familial, and economic institutions (Spain and Bianchi 1996). To describe how our respondents handle their work, family, and community lives, we use Galinsky’s (1999:223) term “navigating.” After considering several descriptions of women’s busy work and family lives (e.g., “balancing,” “juggling,” and “integrating”), Galinsky settled on “navigating,” because it “acknowledges the fluid interchanges among individual, work, family, and community, rather than treating them as separate spheres.”

A basic change affecting work and family in the postwar period has been the dramatic entry of women into the labor force, as well as the shape of their participation. In 1950, women 16 and older constituted 30 percent of the labor force; by 2000 that percentage had increased to 47 percent (Costello, Wight, and Stone 2003). Similarly, 34 percent of all women worked in 1950 compared with 60 percent in 2000 (p. 242). This increased labor force participation was especially noteworthy for mothers with children less than 18: in 1980 64 percent of women with children 6 to 17 worked, and by 2000 the comparable figure was 79 percent. Notably, even mothers with children less than three increased their participation, from 42 percent in 1980 to 61 percent in 2000 (p. 263).

Equally important, women’s age patterns of labor force participation changed. Figure 1 shows how prior to the 1949-53 cohort, women’s participation could best be described as

M-shaped: they entered the labor force prior to childbearing, dropped out to bear and rear children, and then re-entered when their children were older. Subsequent to that time, women's reversed U-shaped pattern began to approximate men's (Costello and Stone 2001:229; see also Spain and Bianchi 1996:Ch. 4). These changing patterns of women's labor force participation signaled a shift from a male breadwinner to a dual-earner household: 31 percent of married couples were dual-earners in 1970, and that number grew to 51 percent by 1990 (Jacobs and Gerson 2000), and 62 percent by 2000 (calculated from Table 1.6 in Costello et al. 2003:203).

[Figure 1 about here]

Since 1970 women have also made notable inroads into traditionally male occupations, especially time-greedy professional and managerial occupations of the kind our respondents held (Reskin and Roos 1990). U.S. Department of Labor data show dramatic increases in women's representation in the kinds of managerial occupations in which our respondents work. For example, the percent female for financial managers increased from 21 percent in 1970 to 52 percent in 2001.⁶ Similar increases occurred in other relevant managerial occupations: 24 to 68 percent of personnel and labor relations managers and 8 to 39 percent of marketing, advertising, and public relations managers (see also Jacobs 1992; Reskin and Ross 1992).

Along with these changing labor force demographics, work has also restructured such that it is more international, flexible, high tech, and service-oriented (Kalleberg 2000; Bernhardt et al. 2001; McCall 2001). Contrary to earlier times, prosperity now co-exists with rising inequalities (McCall 2001:3). Scholars of the new economy have found widening inequalities, as the "haves" diverge increasingly from the "have-nots." Firm-level restructuring has produced "high road" and "low road" strategies (Bernhardt et al. 2001:10): (1) high-performance workplaces that adopt inventive HR strategies such as job rotation and teamwork that provide desirable jobs with good mobility opportunities, high pay, and job security; or (2) "lean and mean" firms that keep a lid on costs by avoiding unions, outsourcing or externalizing work traditionally done within the company (through the use of contingent workers and subcontractors), and relying on two-tiered wage systems. Traditional notions of loyalty to one firm have declined, both on the part of the employer and worker.

Until the 1980s, the "organization man" represented the modal professional career pattern. Managers and professionals like those we interviewed typically spent their careers in one organization, with loyal employees slowly promoted up the well-established organizational hierarchy. By the mid-1980s this pattern shifted dramatically toward more dynamic "boundaryless careers" (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; see also Kalleberg 2000) that unfold in multiple, as opposed to single, organizations. Promotions occur along hierarchical networks overseen by occupational elites. Individuals take

⁶ Roos calculated percent female in detailed Census occupations from 1970 to 1990 from U.S. Census Microdata. The 2001 data are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment and Earnings, January 2001 (<http://www.bls.gov/cps>).

responsibility for their own careers, cultivating networks and mentoring younger, and being mentored by senior, colleagues.⁷

These shifting demographics, and changes in the organization of work, produced a time squeeze. Annual working hours increased by an average of one month over the past two decades, in the form of both longer weekly schedules and more weeks worked per year (Schor 1992:29). This time squeeze holds primarily for the high end of the labor force (Jacobs and Gerson 2000; 2001): reflecting an increasingly bifurcated labor market, they (2000:74) found that salaried workers with higher education and in professional and managerial jobs are indeed working longer hours, while hourly employees at the other end of the occupational spectrum work part time or as contingent labor.

Americans are working harder, and sacrificing more leisure, than the citizens of nearly every other industrialized country (Jacobs and Gerson 1998; Golden and Jorgensen 2002). It's not only how many hours employees work, but also which hours: the trend toward a 24/7 economy, and the increasing use of nonstandard work hours, has negatively affected families' health and wellbeing (Presser 1999; 2000; see also Yeandle, 1999). Hochschild (1997) also documented how much our job time has expanded into our family time. American workers are more likely to work mandatory overtime, with devastating social consequences for their families. Golden and Jorgensen (2002:1) reported that one-third of American workers work more than the standard 40-hour work week, and one-fifth work more than 50 hours. This is true for both salaried and hourly workers (data for hourly manufacturing workers show a 25 percent increase in overtime in the last decade; p. 1).⁸ More generally, Glass (2000:133) described the tendency of employers to produce either overemployment or underemployment: "the former jobs will provide the money but not the time necessary for rearing children, and the latter will provide the time (in some instances) but not the money."

One consequence of this "time-bind" is that workers are more likely to feel overworked. Using data from a 1993 study from the Families and Work Institute, Jacobs and Gerson (2000:86) found that the gap between one's ideal and actual number of hours worked is greatest among the most educated workers, and among those in professional and managerial occupations. A 2001 Families and Work Institute report supported these findings (Galinsky, Kim, and Bond 2001). The time squeeze isn't good for workers, especially for the managers and professionals hardest hit. It isn't good for employers either, with increased mistakes, anger on the job, resentments among coworkers affecting job productivity, and increased difficulty with retention (Golden and Jorgensen 2002). And, of course, as Putnam and others have suggested, increased time pressure can reduce our collective civic engagement as well.

⁷ Using a sample of dual-earner couples, Valcour and Tolbert (2003) found that women experienced more inter-organizational mobility than men, while men were still more likely than women to change jobs within organizations. In addition, both gender and family characteristics significantly affected women's and men's mobility opportunities.

⁸ The weighted number of overtime hours per week across all industries in 2000 was 11.8 hours, ranging from a low of 10.4 (in durable manufacturing) to a high of 21.8 (in forestry and fisheries; Golden and Jorgensen 2002: Table 1).

Work, Family, Community: Expectations

These demographic shifts, and changes in the organization of work, have dramatically affected community identity and involvement. Yet, few researchers have examined this link.⁹ Moen and her colleagues identify the existence of a structural lag between changing family demographics, on the one hand, and customs, norms, and organizational and workplace practices on the other (Roehling, Moen, and Batt 2003:101; Moen 2003).¹⁰ While we are unable to examine *how* community engagement changed over time,¹¹ we are able to examine the *consequences* of this structural lag for women's community, as well as work and family, lives. We analyze these consequences with qualitative data from interviews with 31 women managers in dual-earner marriages in three important sectors of the New Jersey workforce: financial services, pharmaceuticals, and information technology (IT). To organize our analyses, we examine three basic questions: First, how do these women define their communities? Second, what community structures support their ability to navigate their work, family, and community lives. Third, do they use their talents in support of their communities, and if so, how? These three questions guide our expectations, as well as our search for answers.

Defining Community. We sought to hear, in women's own voices, what "community" means to them, and to examine how these women interact with the communities they identify. We allowed the women to identify their own communities. While some obvious definitions come to mind, including such primary communities as families, friends, and local towns, others are important as well, including professional, civic, religious, and other secondary groups. Like Wuthnow (1998), we took a broad view of what constitutes community involvement, such as formal volunteering, informal local helping, organized volunteering through the workplace, or a number of other ways of donating one's time.

The women we interviewed live in a very different world from their mothers, whose lives tended to be defined by their families and local geographic communities. Work, for our respondents, is a major part of their everyday lives, where it tended not to be so for their mothers.¹² Perrow (1996) has argued that work institutions are replacing smaller,

⁹ There are several notable exceptions. Bookman (forthcoming) investigates family, work, and community in the new economy, specifically knowledge workers in the biotechnology industry. Becker and Hofmeister (1999; 2000) and Rossi (2001) also usefully address these issues.

¹⁰ Moen's (2003: 2) excellent volume presents data (on middle-class couples living in upstate New York) from the Cornell Couples and Careers Study, designed to examine the "mismatch between outdated structures and scripts and the contemporary reality experienced by dual-earner couples." Quoting Peggy Orenstein, Gornick and Meyers (2003) usefully titled this structural mismatch "a half-changed world." They discussed the very real problems that emerge when families attempt to devise private solutions to work/family dilemmas (see also Crompton 1999).

¹¹ We do, however, examine women's perceptions about how their communities differ from those of their mothers.

¹² Goldin (1995) documented the family-career choices of five cohorts of college women. For cohorts (1) and (2), born around 1890 and 1910, the choice was essentially family or career; for cohort (3), born around 1933, college women married college men, and had a career to "fall back on"; large numbers of cohort (4), born around 1950, chose careers, often delaying families or eschewing marriage and children altogether (Hewlett 2002; Hewlett and Vite-Leon 2002); cohort (5), born after 1958, appears to be embracing both

independent, and geographically-based communities in the lives of both women and men. Large organizations have absorbed much of what we call civil society: those benefits that accrue to individuals on the basis of their civic status now depend on whether they work and who hires them. The organization in which one works becomes the source of one's health care, friends, social interactions, educational opportunities, recreation, and pensions. Wuthnow (1998:205) pointed out that many see their workplaces as providing more personal connections than their neighborhoods. Similarly, Wolfe described how the workplace has supplanted local communities as the locus for some civic activity, such as building houses, reading to children, or sitting on boards of nonprofit organizations (Wolfe 1998a; Wolfe 1998b).¹³

Such arguments suggest an increasing identification with work and organizational-related communities. Even with the increasing numbers of women working outside the home, however, family remains important in women's lives. Bianchi (2000) found that the amount of time mothers invest in their children has remained relatively constant since the 1960s. Although working mothers have reduced their fertility, resulting in smaller families, they have apparently not reduced the quality, or even the absolute quantity, of time they spend with their children.¹⁴ Taken together, these findings suggest that our respondents will identify with traditional family and local communities, but unlike their mothers they will also increasingly identify with those communities that are work or work-related.

Support Structures. Central to any analysis of community engagement is the existence (or not) of support structures for dual-earner families: what kind of community-based support structures exist to help working women and men navigate their work and family lives, and volunteer in their communities? In her provocative new book, Joan Williams (2000) identified a "gender system of domesticity" embedded in our social, economic, legal, and political institutions. This system has two main characteristics: (1) market work remains organized around an "ideal-worker" norm, which assumes workers devote their lives to work, unencumbered by family responsibilities;¹⁵ and (2) those with caregiving responsibilities are marginalized because they are unable to perform successfully as ideal workers. Williams argued that our current system of organizing market work and family work "leads not only to work/family conflict, the time famine, working-class anger, and early death among successful men; it also leads to high rates of childhood poverty" (p. x). Roehling et al. (2003:101) also described the strains and conflicts that arise when women and men attempt "simultaneous management of work

work and families, with all its attendant complications. We explicitly asked our respondents to compare their definitions of community with those of their mothers.

¹³ Wolfe viewed this kind of community service as problematic, because it draws people away from their local communities. Poarch (1997), in contrast, saw opportunities for corporations to be more responsible for the welfare of the communities in which they were located.

¹⁴ The reasons for this counter-intuitive finding derive from the fact that we typically overestimate how much time nonworking mothers spend with children. Moreover, working women tend to protect their time with their children, definitions of childhood and "what children need" vary over time, and men's involvement in childrearing has also changed (Bianchi 2000:402).

¹⁵ Rosemary Crompton (1999:Ch. 10) also described the male-breadwinner model as an ideal type, albeit one that varies across societies and class (see also Folbre 1993).

and family domains in a world that treats them as separate spheres.” Hansen (2002) demonstrated how people negotiate networks of care for their children, with varying levels of success. Some relied on family members, and were able to piece together backup systems of care; others had little backup, and were more likely to encounter family crises when regular child care arrangements failed. As Lareau (2002) found, middle-class parents often exacerbate these challenges by enrolling their children in a variety of activities to develop their individual talents and skills (for example, music or sports). Coordinating the complex schedules of parents and children often exacts a high toll on parents and other caregivers (see also Lareau and Weininger 2003).

All of our respondents are engaged in dual-earner marriages, and most still have children living at home. By their own reports, they also have busy and highly stressful work lives that are satisfying and fulfilling. We examined how our respondents navigated their work and family lives in the context of a rigid gender system that still provides few supports for caregivers. Recent work-family innovations in several large New Jersey companies suggest that at least some of the institutions in which our respondents work are making efforts to provide support structures for working women and men. Overall, however, the pressure to work long hours, and the lack of institutionalized support structures, will likely mean that our respondents—like most U.S. women and their families—will depend on a patchwork of support they have pieced together from a variety of sources.

Community Involvement. Women have long engaged in community work (Daniels 1988; Kaminer 1984; Sklar 1999). Kaminer described how the nature of volunteering changed for women in the postwar period: from married women who volunteered in lieu of paid work to women who combined volunteering with full-time paid work (see also Goldin 1995). These latter women always assumed they would be independent and self-supporting, and volunteer “for the pleasure of it—because paid work is not always fulfilling and isn’t everything—and because they must—out of a sense of personal, social, or political obligation” (Kaminer 1984:163). Thus, contrary to what one might assume, working women still volunteer, even when faced with increased, work-related time pressure. Wuthnow (1998:76) reported that women who work part time are more civically engaged than women working full time. Nonetheless, women working 60 or more hours per week were the *most* likely to volunteer. Putnam (2000:196) reported time diary data to show that time spent in volunteer work actually increased for employed women between 1965 and 1985, but declined for nonemployed women (Robinson and Godbey 1997). He also noted (p. 202) that reported *declines* in club-going and community activities over time are nearly identical for affluent housewives and women in dual-career families.¹⁶

Women’s rate of volunteering is at least as large as men’s, and by some reports higher, although the types of volunteer organizations they join differ dramatically (Caiazza 2001;

¹⁶ More generally, Putnam (2000:191) noted that employed people are more likely to volunteer than those not working, and those with the greatest time pressures are actually more likely to volunteer. Using a 1998 random sample of residents in four communities in upstate New York, Becker and Hofmeister (1999:23) found that the amount of time worked and working long hours had no effect on the amount or style of community involvement.

McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982). For a sample of adults in Nebraska in 1977, McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982:900) found that the mean number of organizational memberships was nearly identical for men and women (1.69 and 1.61, respectively). Women volunteers, however, were in smaller, more peripheral and domestically oriented organizations, compared with the larger, more economically oriented volunteer organizations of men. Men's organizations were on average three times the size of women's. One would expect that women's increased labor force participation and inroads into professional and managerial jobs might well reduce such sex differences in community service. Using more recent data (1999), Caiazza (2001:1) found that women were more likely to be civically involved than men: 65 percent of the women, and 59 percent of the men, indicated they spend "time volunteering for groups or programs during the preceding year." Women were more likely than men to volunteer for programs designed for the poor, elderly, or homeless, and for groups involved in tutoring or other educational issues. Interestingly, having children 5 to 17 was a significant predictor of community involvement for both men and women, indicating greater parental stake in the community (pp. 2-3; see also Becker and Hofmeister 1999:14).¹⁷

These findings suggest that our respondents will be engaged in their communities, although perhaps not in the traditional sense that Putnam (2000) identifies. Reflecting their labor force attachment, our respondents should be engaged in work-related communities, as well as the more traditional family and local communities. As Skocpol (1999:5) pointed out, "fully employed women are often drawn into associations or civic projects through work. . . . styles of civic involvement have changed—much to the disadvantage of broad-gauged associations trying to hold regular meetings."

DATA AND METHODS

To investigate our research questions, we interviewed 31 New Jersey professional women in dual-earner marriages. Our initial criteria for inclusion in the sample were that at the time of the interview the women (1) were married and living with a husband who was also in the labor force; (2) worked in a decision-making position, with at least 10 years of management experience; and (3) worked in one of three important economic sectors in New Jersey: information technology, financial services, and pharmaceuticals.¹⁸ To ensure diversity in our sample, we included a number of African Americans and Asians. Additionally, our primary focus was on those with children (n=26), although we did interview several without children for comparison purposes (n=5).¹⁹ We targeted interviewees from both large and small firms, and from both top and middle levels of

¹⁷ Higher education was more strongly predictive of community involvement for men than for women. For women, knowing one's neighbors, higher income, and feeling safe in one's neighborhood led to greater civic involvement (Caiazza 2001:2).

¹⁸ Before fielding the survey, we conducted one pre-interview in financial services to test our methods. Because we found no glitches, and because of the richness of the pre-interview, we decided to include it in our final sample, resulting in a total of 11 interviews in financial services, 10 in information technology, and 10 in pharmaceuticals. We relaxed the "10-years in management" requirement for several younger women with fewer years experience in the workforce. In these few cases, they were nonetheless in management a significant portion of their professional career.

¹⁹ Two of the respondents we coded as not having children had stepsons who did not live with the family.

management. Finally, to begin to address the role of husbands, we interviewed a secondary sample of six husbands.

We generated a snowball sample of 31 women in the Fall of 2001, primarily through recommendations from our Advisory Board. The Board, which consisted of high-level women in each of our three sectors, served as a sounding board for our initial thoughts on the project and on our survey instruments. Most importantly, they generated a list of names of women we could interview, and often made the initial contact with potential interviewees. To ensure multiple networks, and hence the broadest possible set of interviewees, we contacted no more than three recommended women from any one advisory board member.²⁰

Three data sources provide the basis for our findings: (1) pre-interview questionnaires for 31 female respondents; (2) interviews with 31 female respondents; and (3) interviews with six husbands. We sent the pre-interview questionnaire to each female respondent prior to our scheduled interview, and retrieved it the day of the interview.²¹ This primarily short-answer questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete, and included more easily quantified questions, such as highest level of education, number and ages of children, age, race, house and child care responsibilities, work characteristics, and kinds of community volunteering. We coded this information into a SAS data base, and generated simple frequencies and crosstabulations.

Two members of the research team participated in each interview, one of three interviewers and the project's graduate assistant. Interview questions asked, for example, about the respondents' work, their perceptions of work-family balance, their definitions of community, and their community involvement.²² The interviews took approximately two hours to complete, and were typically held at the respondent's work site. All interviews were conducted between December, 2001 and August, 2002. Both the interviewer and the graduate assistant took notes during the interview, which we then translated into interview transcripts.²³ In June, 2002 through August, 2002, we

²⁰ Six board members generated our first 16 respondents. To supplement these, we identified additional respondents from a snowball sample of referrals from the respondents themselves (n=4), from some of our own or our colleagues' contacts in each sector (n=6), as well as from alumnae of a Senior Leadership Program for Professional Women (n=5) associated with the university.

²¹ The questionnaire and interview schedules are available from Roos.

²² The September 11, 2001 tragedy occurred as we were finalizing our interview material. Given our location in the New York City metropolitan area, and given the renewed focus on community in the post-9/11 period, we asked our respondents to address the 9/11 issue at the end of our interview. Specifically, we asked both the women and their husbands: "Do you think the events of September 11th have created a different sense of community? If so, do you believe it will be long-lasting?" We do not analyze these responses here.

²³ The first 11 interviews were transcribed verbatim. Lack of sufficient funds precluded our continuing this process. The final 26 interview transcripts were produced somewhat differently: the graduate assistant took detailed notes on a laptop during the meeting, and the interviewer took detailed written notes. Within a few days of the interview we reconciled the two sets of notes into an interview transcript. We feel this process produced excellent, and nearly (but not exactly) verbatim transcripts of the interviews. For the remainder of this article, we treat quotations from our respondents in the same way, regardless of which method we used to produce the transcript.

interviewed the secondary sample of six husbands. On the woman's pre-interview questionnaire we asked whether her husband would agree to be interviewed, and those responding yes (n=17) provided contact information. From these 17, we chose six husbands, two from each sector. Three had young children in their current marriage, one had teenagers in a current marriage, one had a teenager from a previous marriage, and one had no children. One husband worked in New York City, the remainder worked in New Jersey. The husband's interview schedule was shorter than the wife's (lasting approximately 75 minutes), and included selected questions from both the wife's pre-interview questionnaire and interview schedule.

Description of Respondents

Given our selection criteria, all of our sample members were married, and their husbands were also in the labor force. Additionally, each sample member worked in management in one of three New Jersey work sectors: information technology, financial services, or pharmaceuticals. We summarize some of these characteristics in Tables 1 through 3.

As befits our respondents' professional status, all had at least a bachelors degree, and 55 percent had advanced degrees: 29 percent had an M.A./M.S., 16 percent a Ph.D., and 10 percent another professional degree (e.g., MBA). Our respondents ranged in age from 30 to 52, averaging 43 years old. Most of our sample (n=22) was white; seven were black and two were Asian. More than three-quarters had children living at home. Two-thirds lived in small New Jersey towns (mostly in northern or central New Jersey).

[Table 1 about here]

Table 2 provides a listing of the job titles of our respondents, ranging from the middle levels of the corporate world (Director, Associate Director) to the highest (CEO, President, Vice President). After each interview we also estimated each respondent's "job level" as being either at the "top" of the corporate hierarchy (48 percent of our respondents) or in the "middle" (52 percent). To understand these figures, it's important to realize that job titles and job level vary across companies, as well as across sectors. Most of the IT women we interviewed worked in small firms, while most of those in financial services and pharmaceuticals worked in large firms, or smaller subsidiaries of large firms. Thus, solely because of sector differences in firm size, our IT respondents are more likely to have risen to top jobs in their companies. To investigate this issue, we crosstabulated job level by sector (see Table 3).²⁴ Consistent with our expectations, of those 15 respondents classified in the top job level (reading across the top row), 9 (or 60 percent) worked in IT, compared with 3 in financial services, and 3 in pharmaceuticals. Looked at differently (columns as opposed to rows), 9 of 10 (or 90 percent) of the IT respondents were at the top job level, compared with 3 of the 11 in financial services, and 3 of the 10 in pharmaceuticals. Moreover, all three respondents who indicated their job title as "CEO" were in IT; two of the four "Presidents" were in IT, one was in financial

²⁴ Given the small sample sizes, we refer primarily to cell, row, and column *frequencies*, rather than percentages. We also crosstabulated job title by sector (data discussed in text, but not included in tabular form).

services, and one was in pharmaceuticals. When you look at the 14 “Vice Presidents,” however, 9 were in financial services, two in IT, and three in pharmaceuticals.²⁵

[Tables 2 and 3 about here]

Over half (52 percent) of our respondents were hired into their current company as a manager, a designation that includes those entrepreneurial women who started their own companies, often with their husbands (see Table 1). Moreover, 56 percent also worked in management at their previous job. On average, they worked in their current companies for 12.3 years, 10.5 of those years in management. Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of the women reported that their jobs allowed them some flexibility, and many mentioned examples of how they used that flexibility in navigating their work, family, and community lives. Consistent with this, over three-quarters worked from home in their current job, on average about two days per month.

There is ample evidence of the time bind our respondents faced. On average, these women worked 9.9 hours per day, with a range of 7 to 12 hours. On top of their long work days, they averaged 57 minutes of commuting time to and from work, with a wide range of 0 to 165 minutes: one woman worked primarily at home, while another traveled on a regular basis within a three-state area.²⁶ Our respondents spent an average of two days, and two nights, per month away from home for business. They compensated for these busy schedules by eating out, or bringing food in, several times each week: on average our respondents ate out 2.2 times per week. While approximately 55 percent of our sample ate dinner together as a family most to every evening, another 45 percent managed to eat together only occasionally.

Like working women everywhere, our sample members are caught in a time bind, balancing the roles of wife, mother, worker, and if time permits, community citizen. With the extreme time constraints they face, they are an ideal sample to examine the consequences of changing family and work structures on community involvement.

DEFINING COMMUNITY²⁷

Expanding Definitions of Community

The women we interviewed defined community in rich, fluid, and compelling ways.²⁸ Although most of our interviewees began by describing “community” as their families,

²⁵ Although the sample sizes are small, it’s also interesting to note that the IT women were younger on average than their counterparts in financial services and pharmaceuticals (40.8 vs. 44.1 and 43.9, respectively), and have worked fewer years in their sector (15.8 years vs. 17.7 and 18.8, respectively; data calculated but not provided in tabular form).

²⁶ Our average of 57 commuting minutes seems particularly lengthy given Hofmeister’s findings for the wives in the Cornell Couples Study: for those with “set-length trips” (95 percent of the wives), their commute averaged 22.4 minutes, and their spouse’s commute averaged 22.5 minutes (Hofmeister 2003:Table5.1).

²⁷ We address this issue at greater length in a companion article (Trigg, Roos, and Hartman 2003)

they expanded their definitions (often without prompting) to include extended families, neighborhoods, towns, children's schools and sports teams, church, work, voluntary associations, and friendship networks of various kinds. Many women defined community as the broader geographic areas they traversed in their work and civic lives:

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

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

This expansion of the sense of community is likely to be especially true for our respondents, all of whom reside and work in New Jersey. On average their daily work commute is one hour, and their civic activities take them far from home. They illustrate Rossi's more general point:

Fewer of us are tightly bound to any given locale. Many people work in one city but live in another, even crossing state boundaries in commuting between home and job – for example, those who work in Manhattan and commute to homes in New Jersey or Connecticut. (Rossi 2001:32)

Religion and the church played a central role in the community definitions of a number of the women we interviewed for our study. Over half (52 percent) of our respondents indicated they had participated in a church/temple or other religious group in the past three years. One woman, for example, responded, "being that I'm religious, my community centers around the synagogue that I belong to, and the Jewish community is large in town. ... my neighborhood is also my community, because of my neighbors (008)." Another said "I define community pretty narrowly as my church community in [central New Jersey town]: the community of people I have met and interact with in my church (022)." Notably, frequency of religious service attendance is often viewed as a predictor for community involvement (Wuthnow 1994; see also Rossi 2001).

Several women described, in a matter of fact way, how their sense of community differed from that of their mothers. "My mother lives in a very small town in Maine, and there the community is the town – (it is) a very tight knit community." Her own community, in the middle of New Jersey, is less a community in the traditional sense of the term:

Although we live on five acres, I don't consider it a rural lifestyle. But it's not really a small town either. It's kind of a mix. So community becomes your circle of friends that you interact with on a regular basis. (016)

Others have sought ways to replicate the strong neighborhood ties of their childhood. Some felt successful, others not:

We're very fortunate we have strong neighborhood ties. So we have several families that we socialize with, besides the book club. Nearly twice a month or more, family get-togethers: potluck dinners or pizza

²⁸ We asked "How do you define community," prompting with different kinds of community only after the respondent's initial response.

night. That's a nice community to be in. Nice people with good values and thoughtful gestures, good friends. (007)

I define community as my local town. I grew up outside [a midwestern city] in a very small town, which is what community means to me. I live in a small town right now, but I don't have the sense of community nearly the way I did in the town that I grew up in. ... I've always been looking to replicate for my children what I had growing up, and I really can't. It's not comparable. (001)

The women we interviewed expressed little regret about these shifting definitions of community. When asked how their sense of community differed from that of their mothers, our respondents saw their own communities as broader and more expansive. They most often attributed this shift to women's changing work roles. Those women who had stay-at-home mothers noted this in their remarks about the restricted boundaries of their mothers' lives in comparison with their own.²⁹ One woman said: "My mother was a stay-at-home mom. Her community was us, the house, and then the branches that we had. That was it (000)." In thinking of her mother's generation, an IT professional described an earlier world in which the boundaries between home and work were strictly delineated:

I think my mother's generation was much more around the people that you live next to, and the town that you're in...because the men were always going off to work and the women were left at home to solve the problems. ... A community is a group of people that have something in common. My mother's generation had a lot in common with people who lived around them. They were stay-at-home mothers. ... Now my neighbor goes one place to do one thing and I'm going in another direction. ... I think my mother's generation's definition was smaller than mine. I am part of a number of different communities, whereas I think that my mother and her generation were much more limited – because they were not off joining clubs or talking to people in California. She was talking to the woman down the street. (029)

A financial services manager described her mother's definition of community as "not even close" to her own:

Community for her was friends, neighbors, groups of women that she played cards with or went to bingo with ... Beyond family it was those kinds of social things that you got from your friends and neighbors. My mother never drove, she never worked outside the home, and community to her was defined very, very differently. (009)

As a reflection of community, more than half of our sample believed that they themselves belonged to more voluntary associations than their mothers.³⁰ These comments are representative: "I belong to more and different communities" (013). Another remarked, "I belong to more – mostly because of my work. Hers were driven mainly by her community, and the women she was close to. I belong to different communities" (014). A third stated:

²⁹ Of the 31 women we interviewed, approximately 45 percent had stay-at-home mothers, and another third had employed mothers. The remaining respondents were unclear about their mothers' employment status.

³⁰ Of the 31 women interviewed, when asked "do you belong to more, or fewer, voluntary associations than your mother did?", 17 responded "more," 8 responded "fewer," and 6 either implied the same number, or were unclear.

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

Defining Work as Community

Work is not typically the first thing our interviewees described as most meaningful to them. Nevertheless, work does define and structure our respondents' lives in very important and meaningful ways. Given the number of hours they work away from the home, it's perhaps not surprising that many also found enduring friendships through their work lives.

We asked our respondents to describe their most meaningful ties and relationship and as noted their responses reinforced the primacy of family.³¹ The following responses are succinct, telling, and typical:

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

Probably home first and then work and then community but only because there's not enough time left. Home because I have two kids and so that's more important than anything. (017)

An IT executive articulately expressed the idea that home is a haven, a respite from the vagaries of the work world, a place to retreat to be oneself:

[I find my most meaningful ties in] the community and home. Because I think those two are aligned. My personality is more in concert with the demands and needs and expectations of those two. I am who I am when I'm in those two spaces. I don't have to become anybody different. At work, I can't be myself, I put on a mask. I have to become different depending on the situation. I am more guarded in the workplace. At home and in the community, I am accepted as myself. I think it's a consequence of being at the executive level but also more importantly of being a woman. It's not just being a woman in a male-dominated field (IT). It's a women's issue, rather than a sector/field issue. . . . Those guys aren't really rating me there. (020)

While home was primary in the lives of our respondents, the vast majority were also emphatic in describing the added value work brings to their lives. These women recognized that work added a vital dimension to their lives significantly beyond that available to their mothers and grandmothers:

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

³¹ The exact question was: "Where are your most meaningful ties and relationships: in the home, at work, or in your community? Can you say why?"

Home would be first. Work ties are also powerful—with men and women. Community ties are probably least meaningful. Work and personal ties are most important. (012)

Home is definitely number one: husband, sister, mother. My employees would be second. Work and community are intertwined, so I would say that they're equal. (024)

Several respondents also recognized that giving family primacy is not always consistent with the number of hours one allocates to work each day:

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

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

My most meaningful relationships are probably in the home. But I certainly get value and connection from wonderful relationships with co-workers and people in the community. People will have an average of six different career changes in their lifetime. It's interesting to see which friends from work last over those job changes. I have friends from work twenty years ago. Family is the foundation, and your base of emotional connection: it provides stability for personal growth, professional growth, and sheer enjoyment. (023)

[I find my most meaningful relationships in] the home. Those are the people who will impact your life forever. Work ties are important but not like family, who are there for good and bad. Those at work are there only for as long as you're at work—it's amazing to watch how people at work aren't there for one another when someone is downsized. You realize when you watch that, it's the family that matters. (014)

One of the important added values work brought to our respondents' lives was as a source of friendship ties. We asked our respondents where they met their friends, and not surprisingly given the length of their work days, work was one of the most common responses. Work ties expanded these women's communities well beyond the family and local communities of their mothers. Our respondents described a rich array of friendships emerging out of their work lives and/or their work-related community service.³²

Reflecting the time squeeze these women executives face, one reason they meet friends at work is that's where they spend most of their daily lives. As one financial services executive noted:

From my own experience, I don't know how you ever meet anybody besides the people you work with and the parents of your children's friends. I never had time to meet people beyond those circles. I do have some friends who have left the workforce after a number of years and our relationship is the same as it always was, but I don't know that I would have ever had opportunities to meet people, given where I focus my time, outside of those two environments. (009)

³² The question we asked was "Where do you typically meet people who become your closest friends?"

One bank executive developed a very rich set of friendships through her work:

Mainly professionals, meet through work-related activities: sometimes you just click and something develops that goes beyond the workplace. Not that we always worked together. Sometimes we meet through volunteer work. There's one group of women that I used to work with. We have a theater subscription together (and we also go out to eat before the show): five events a year. If I didn't do that I would never see them. Another group of friends whom I play golf with. We make commitments to each other for golf parties. They're all professional women, though not all of them are working now: all people I met through work. . . . Last year, six of us went to Florida and went to golf school together. . . . Another group: we all got to know one another because of one person—we call ourselves “the friends of [woman's name].” We ended up having a Tuesday lunch bunch. We get together at least four times a year and do lunch or dinner or sometimes theater. I also have some other friends just from the [an executive women's group]. Those are a little less organized though, and it's harder to see them because we're all over. (015)

Another described life-long friendships that survived the demise of the work relationship:

We have mostly couple friends. But I have one friend who is just my friend. She was my partner at work, now retired. I had the product, and she had the product management. That friendship has lasted. There is also another woman friend. . . . she was actually a previous secretary. . . . I always had secretaries who I really trusted, who could even pick up my son. My husband used to kid me. Secretaries are very key to who I am and what I can do. I am still friends with all of my previous secretaries. We have very close relationships. They even become almost part of the family. (020)

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

[My bank] sponsors an [organization for female entrepreneurs], and I have developed a network of people to call and say “what would you do if”—but this is really a work network and not about close friends. I don't know if I would consider them friends, but rather acquaintances. These are not deep friendships. They are lawyers, accountants that I develop relationships with. My sister and my husband are my close friend confidant network. And I've got my work network which fulfills that need. I don't know if I need any more friends. I have my husband and sister, don't need anyone beyond that. (024)

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

I probably work a lot more than 12 hours a day, but you know what, it's okay! There's a social component that I participate in through work and I don't look at it as work: it's life! Work happens to provide the platform and the conduit. (024)

Our data suggest that Perrow (1996) is at least partially correct: large organizations—work organizations—have (at least partly) replaced civic community, if by community we mean those smaller, independent, and geographically-based entities with which we traditionally identify. Workplaces have become the source of social interaction, recreation, and especially friendships, in addition to economic security. Our respondents describe their work as a rich source of friendships, both strong and weak (Wuthnow 1998:205). But that isn't the whole story. Our data also demonstrate that family remains central to the lives of our respondents. Consistent with what Bianchi (2000) might predict, our respondents' first response to the community question referenced family, followed by work, and then other civic groups. While the workplace has not fully replaced the home, for working mothers it has taken its place right behind the family as a critical component of professional women's identity and their definition of community.

And this is notably dissimilar from the lives of their (primarily stay-at-home) mothers. While the women occasionally searched out community relationships similar to those of their mothers, they viewed their own lives as infinitely richer and more rewarding, in large measure because of their work communities. Our findings are reminiscent of those of Bielby and Bielby (1989:786), who found that married working women gave priority to family when balancing work and family demands on their time. They also found that wives working in traditionally male jobs—like the women we interviewed—were quite similar in their identity to working husbands, reflecting the importance of experience in level of work commitment.³³

FAMILY, WORK, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Our data provide clear and compelling evidence that few institutionalized support structures exist for our respondents. Nearly all of the women we interviewed described a patchwork of support pieced together from a number of sources. Most were unsatisfied with their existing support arrangements, and described their networks as one crisis away from collapsing. They described the relentless time pressure and stress they were under. In this section we outline the support structures our interviewees *did* rely on, in the family, the workplace, and the local community. These ranged from supportive husbands and extended families to workplace support structures and community organizations.

Family as Support

Our respondents described their families—both their husbands and/or their extended families, if they lived in the area—as their primary support network, allowing them to navigate successfully among their family, work, and community lives. Some families were, like Hansen’s (2002) “successful staging” couple, able to “balance reciprocity” with their kin, who lived in the area.

The women in our sample described supportive husbands who carried an equal or larger share of family and household responsibilities, as well as husbands who expected them to direct, delegate, and carry the lion’s share of work on the home front. More traditional husbands were clearly still in evidence:

Family responsibilities are divided up between my husband and me – but not equally. Seventy percent of the responsibilities are mine now, though when our commutes were equal, I had 90 percent. I always cook. I call myself “the dispatcher”—he follows some of my directions. His commute is ten minutes. His work hours are not that long. My commute is one and a half hours. When I travel: he’s stressed, they eat fast food even though I leave food for them, the house is a wreck when I return, so I have to come back and put the house back together usually right before I leave again. (011)

When it was just the two of us, we could work until 11:00 and no one cared. But once we had the child, we struggled with this subconscious approach on his part: you take care of the baby and you keep working too. We’ve struggled with that. We’ve come a long way. He’s juggling now too. He still makes more money

³³ Similarly, husbands with substantial family responsibilities were similar in family identity to comparable wives.

than me. But our jobs are comparable, and so sharing of the family responsibilities has to be equitable. But he's still a man. (013)

Others in our sample, however, described marriages that functioned as egalitarian partnerships, and in some cases, where the woman's career was considered primary:

In the last three years, his career is really very much [taking] a back seat to keeping the family stable and happy, and supporting me in what's been a very demanding time. Even before that when we had equal demands, we've always had a very good give and take. And whether we've been fortunate that it just worked out this way, or whether we made it happen and don't even realize it, we were always able to almost instantaneously prioritize "who's got the biggest demand or commitment right now?" and the other one picks up the slack. ... So, whether it's from many years of being married or whatever, the sort of natural give and take happened pretty easily for us. (009)

When he was in hospitality, we were two ships passing in the night. And then we thought it would be nice to spend more time together. And, I was always going to everything alone. That was okay, but I knew it would be more fun if he was there, and he wanted to come. We sat down and decided that he needed a career change. So he quit at the age of 40 and went on a mission to figure out what to do next. During that period I felt really badly for him because he wouldn't tell people he wasn't working. That was not a good time period for him. He settled on studying for his [exam] and being a financial advisor. He's now doing better, but it's still a problem for him. You don't make any money in that business until you build up your business. (024)

This woman's husband described his career shift in a similar way:

It wasn't a difficult choice to make. At that time she had just been made President of [company]. Ever since she got her MBA from [college], her career just blossomed (nine years ago). It was a huge power shift. When we got together, I was making three times as much as her, then it became equal, and then she started making more money than me. I remember that year because she loved to rub it in my face. She was just taking certain steps, and I was enjoying those steps with her. And then she kept going past me in earnings and ... I was talking with a woman one evening and she said that it takes a special man who can accept and appreciate a high powered woman. And I hadn't thought about that, but then I realized, hey, maybe I'm doing something good. (H024)

This husband described his male friends as very supportive of his career change, even jealous of his ability to make the change. Another supportive husband—a trial lawyer and partner in his own law firm—also viewed his wife's success as opening up options for him:

If I had my druthers I would be with my family all the time. The joke between us is that as [my wife's] level of success continues to grow, it hastens the time that I don't have to work anymore and I can spend more time with my kids. I really like my kids...all parents love their kids...but I like my kids. (H019).

Like many of the women we interviewed, this man described wanting a life that was more balanced, that included time not just for work, but also for family time and community time. When asked whether her work and family lives were in balance, his wife echoed this same theme:

Absolutely in balance. I wouldn't have it any other way. I was changing the rules of the game with my husband when I decided to go to grad school. Having him as a partner was a very meaningful part of this. When we decided to have children, I took a very strong stand within our lives. I insisted that family would be first, but that I was going to have it all. Nobody suffers. I committed to everyone being happy. (019)

Another respondent in her mid-30's spoke about her husband's role:

I think in a nontraditional way it's balanced. My husband does a lot more than most men. He drops off and picks up the kids from school, he prepares dinner for them every night. (007)

Her husband made clear in his own interview that they had made a decision that her career would be the primary one in the family:

I think at the time before we got married, my wife's job offered more growth opportunities...[hers] . . . were far greater than mine, and her earning potential as well. There were periods when she would travel quite a bit and work long hours (when a product is about to launch). There were times I wished she was home more for [the children], but I never felt cheated or that my career was suffering. I don't know that we ever had discussions about it... it was a natural decision. Her career path was more open and clearer and still is than mine was. (H007)

In addition to supportive husbands, a critical source of family support for working mothers is their extended family. Many of those we spoke with described their extended families as a critical part of their support network. This same husband described his 80-year old mother's after-school care of their dyslexic son:

My parents live close. My son goes to my parents' house every day after school. I see them every day. My mother is very helpful with my older son's school work. I don't know what we would do without her. We would have to hire a tutor. It would be difficult for me to ask him to do homework after I get home at six. My mom gives him a snack when he gets home and then he's fresh to do school work. (H007)

His wife also described the invaluable role her mother-in-law plays in support of her son's disability: "And my mother-in-law taught him what he knows. There was nothing in the school system that prepared him for help (007)."

Other respondents described parents who lived with them or in their towns, who provided essential support with child care, food preparation, transportation needs, shopping, or other errands:

[M]y mother is a help – she moved here recently. She lives in a development close to me, so my sons can ride their bikes to her house. She helps with the boys and even picks up my dry cleaning if I need her to. (011)

I don't really take advantage of any [community support structures] because I have my mother-in-law right across town so I feel lucky for that. (007)

Yeah, when my kids were younger they went to a daycare center, but actually my parents for years took my children to school or daycare and picked them up. My father worked ten minutes from the house and he worked in the hospital, seven to three. My mom would pick the kids up and nine times out of ten she'd feed them if we worked late and have dinner waiting for us. I don't know that I could've done graduate school or even for a lot of years I traveled. So during the spring and the fall I was on a plane a lot. If not for my extended family, I wouldn't have been able to take that assignment. (004)

My mother is a tremendous cook, so we go to my mother's house for dinner on Sundays and she sends me home with food for the entire week. Sometimes too much food. (024)

Support Structures at Work

Among the work-based support structures available, flexible work arrangements were most important and the most prevalent. Reflecting their managerial positions, over 70 percent of our respondents reported having flexible schedules.³⁴ While these flexible schedules allowed them to occasionally take time to handle family demands during the day (e.g., children's school events, personal errands), our respondents also commented on the downside of flexibility. They told us repeatedly that flexible schedules still meant the job had to get done: "We have a flexible schedule, but the real responsibility of the job drives your hours" (016).

A middle-level manager in financial services described the benefits, and constraints, of flexibility:

Last week I had a bunch of stuff that was kid-related, and I worked my hours around that. So it's not as if my boss would ever say to me, "Oh, you're not here Tuesday at such and such." But I have to tell you whatever level I've gone up that has been one of the biggest advantages because you always think of a lower level person as having more flexibility. It's not true. The more power you have, it's so much easier to say, "I'm doing this, or I'm doing that." . . . But, of course, you back fill in other ways. (005)

Another financial services executive stated, "If I work long one day, I go home from work early the next. At the end of the day, I have to get the work done. It's not about the time I put in. I could get it done at three in the morning" (013). A top level executive, also in financial services, described her work hours as flexible, and stated matter-of-factly: "I don't clock in. I work ten hours a day, fifty hours/week" (014). An information technology executive responded, "Yes [I have flexible hours], but I still have to get the work done. If I have to leave early to go to my son's concert, I will stay up late tonight to get the work done" (017).

Reflecting the momentum of a 24/7 workworld, our respondents made clear that flexible work arrangements do not mean that they work fewer hours; indeed, they often work more. One study concluded that full-time workers with flexible daily schedules work, on average, more than three hours more per week than equivalent workers without flexibility (Golden 2001). What these managers noted was that it was their work performance and results that mattered, not when they actually did their work. In a lean economy, employees often feel driven to match or surpass the hours of their colleagues. The implication of these long hours is that work can have a negative impact (or, "spillover") on family life.³⁵

³⁴ In response to the question "Are your work hours flexible?", 71 percent responded "yes" (see Table 1). An even greater percentage of our subjects described flexible schedules: some of those who said "no" went on to explain that their lack of flexibility was because they had workers depending on them or they felt they needed to set an example. In other words, they had access to flexibility but chose (or felt compelled) not to take it. Nationally, only 28.8 percent of full-time wage and salary workers in the U.S. have flexible schedules, a slight increase from 27.6 percent in 1997 (Appelbaum and Golden 2002). Over three-quarters of our respondents said they sometimes worked at home, adding to that flexibility (see Table 1).

³⁵ A relatively new focus in the work-family literature examines the negative (and positive) spillover, from work to family, and from family to work. This literature finds that, for both men and women, work negatively affects family more than family affects work (Roehling et al. 2003:104; see also Keene and

Six of the respondents mentioned other on-site support services available at their worksites, including on-site child care facilities, dry cleaners, ATM, Weight Watchers program, video rental shop, convenience stores, and/or exercise center.³⁶ One interviewee enthusiastically described the complex where she worked as “like a little city: dry-cleaning, ATM, post office. It’s self-contained” (026). One respondent noted:

We have on-site daycare here at [company]. I buy my pastries here because the pastry chef is amazing. We have a fitness center, dry cleaning, store, etc. I take advantage of all of this. And this is our oldest campus. We’re starting what we call a co-lab which will allow for different disciplines to be housed in common areas so that the synergy can be tapped between them all. There are common areas that are aesthetically pleasing to help the collegiate feeling. We want to create pedestrian walkways and a sense of campus environment. In order to attract and keep researchers from academic environments, we need to develop a campus feel. (016)

Another described the extensive resources of her workplace:

The fitness center. They do have a daycare here. There are drycleaning, photo developing, videos you can rent, stamps, credit union. There’s the company store, which has t-shirts ... Then they just opened a Starbucks here and a deli that’s open until 6 p.m., so you can get food and coffee if you have to work late. (018)

These workplace resources allow their employees to attend to errands and activities at work that they normally would do in their off-work hours. On the other hand, they also often extend their workdays. Moreover, even when work organizations offered child care, the hours were often inadequate to cover the long workdays, and they are only suitable for pre-school age children. Several women with school-aged children mentioned the dilemma of providing for their children’s care in that critical time between the end of the school day and dinner time. Like Lareau’s (2002) middle-class parents, our respondents were often pressured by transportation needs—how to shuttle their children between schools and soccer fields or piano lessons, for example—and also by their own desire to support their children’s extra-curricular activities.

Community Support Structures

We found little evidence that local communities are stepping up to the plate to provide support for these dual-earner families. Most of our respondents said “no,” when asked if they were aware of community organizations that facilitate work/family balance. “Nothing that I’m aware of,” one interviewee responded (018); another stated, “I live in a pretty traditional community so when I get home at night, nothing’s open” (022). A third said, “I can’t really think of anything else, other than summer camp. I think that I do have a lot of a support system rather than relying on the community” (030). Our respondents typically pieced together a network of support, including housekeepers, personal assistants/secretaries, friends, family members, and stay-at-home moms:

Reynolds 2002). Especially relevant for our purposes, the more flexible the work, the less negative spillover for family life (p. 106).

³⁶ Employing the Cornell Couples and Career Study data, Still and Strang (2003) also found that the existence of such work-life programs were positively correlated with firm size (as well as unionization, corporate sponsorship, and industry).

Family help was all we could find. There's not much help out there! There aren't a sufficient number of organizations. I need somebody to pick up my dry cleaning, a gym in the building. It's surprising that more organizations like this don't exist. Rent-a-wife is what we need. Somebody just to help out so that you have more time to spend with the kids. (017)

Our friends, they provided childcare. I'm sometimes still in the air when the Y closes. ... I cook, myself. ... It's all family and friends who provide support, and mainly friends because we haven't really lived around family. Nothing in the community. (020)

I have a wonderful husband who participates in the home activities to a much larger percentage than many husbands do, but he works long hours. I feel a time pressure to do the home activities well...in addition to these work things...If I had someone else to help with planning for the home, that would help. We need more resources, and another person. I need a wife. (029)

A few respondents mentioned support structures in their towns, including before- and after-school care provided at their children's schools, the YMCA, or their churches, summer camps, services such as dry-cleaning, take-out food, house cleaners, and local support groups. The one local organization that was cited by a number of our subjects as facilitating work and family responsibilities was the YMCA:

The YMCA is just incredible. After school programs, summer camps...and the networking opportunities when you're there with other parents. If you need help, it will be there. (026)

These multi-tasking women cut corners where they could, learning to outsource their labor to support services accessible in their geographical communities. One IT executive stated:

I think that the only way you can fit what you have to do as a CEO, mom, wife, daughter ... is to out-source as much as you can. Landscaper, dry-cleaning, cleaning, take-out (we eat cold cereal and take-out: you get to know who delivers and who's on the route). (025)

Finally, stay-at-home moms provide another important source of local support for working families. One of our interviewees, for example, who described being the only working mother in her neighborhood, felt fortunate to have a network of stay-at-home mothers, and to be included in social activities with them:

In my particular neighborhood community it works out very well. I have a frequent network of play dates and whatnot to relieve the burden of being the sole caregiver during the day so they can get out and do some things for themselves, which is great. And I'm lucky to be able to participate in some of the social things, like the book club and weekend things. (007)

Sometimes stay-at-home mothers are helpful and even indispensable providers of support to working mothers with less flexible schedules. One woman, for example, remarked, "the community itself tends to be in an area where there's enough women that stay home ... that community of women are always helpful if I need somebody to run and pick up my daughter (003)." Another woman said, "Just having other parents to do carpool with is a help. Plenty of mothers who are home don't mind the middle of the day carpool, whereas I usually don't mind early mornings or late nights. So we kind of work it out (008)." Many of these stay-at-home mothers are, of course, women who opted to remain

home when their children are young, but plan to re-enter the labor force (see Belkin 2003b).

Despite women's dramatic entry into the post-1970 labor market, the "gender system of domesticity," as Joan Williams (2000) described it, is still very much operative in the lives of our respondents. Market work remains organized around an ideal-worker norm, and in dual-earner families women as well as men are now expected to fulfill that norm. As women increasingly make inroads into greedy occupations, navigating their work and family lives becomes increasingly difficult. Yet, many of our respondents—and their husbands—seek more balance in their work and family lives, and greater fulfillment through community engagement. Few institutional structures support those desires, even in a society where three of every five married couples is a two-earner couple (Costello et al. 2003:203).³⁷ Rather, our respondents relied on often precarious support networks of husbands, extended family, housekeepers, secretaries, and stay-at-home moms. A number of our respondents described stories of "failed staging," as Hansen (2002) put it. One of the more dramatic occurred when one of the IT executives we interviewed was stuck in a holding pattern over Newark Airport:

[M]y husband started traveling too when he took a new job. Our secretaries had to coordinate with one another. [Once] my plane was late (circling overhead) and my husband had left on a plane that afternoon—I didn't know who picked up my child. We would even exchange our son in the airport. (020)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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

Family as Community

Because more than three-quarters of our respondents still had children at home—many of them young children—they self-consciously and creatively connected their own volunteer service with the lives and activities of their children. They described the ways in which their children connected them to community through (for example) neighborhood friendships, their schools, their sports teams, and their churches or temples. Their own stake in the community, and their voluntarism, was often linked to the institutions that educate and socialize their children.

³⁷ The U.S. is somewhat of an anomaly with respect to the lack of public support structures for working families. Williams (2000:49) identified a number of European initiatives in this regard, including maternity leave with guaranteed reemployment, paid time off, and high-quality child care centers with well-paid staff members (p. 49, 236, 240). Recent work by Appelbaum et al. (2002) reviewed work-family practices in Japan, Australia, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy. For creative recommendations for public policy solutions, see also Spain and Bianchi (1996:187-91), Crompton (1999), Gornick and Meyers (2003).

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

We moved when my children were young so I felt that I really had an easy time to create a community for myself because the kids made friends. And then I formed friendships with the parents. But we may move again with my husband's employment. And I really wonder if my kids are in college when that happens, how am I ever going to know my neighbors? ... Without kids, it's hard to connect. (001)

Another mother of two, who had grown up in Queens where she "knew everybody," found it difficult to meet people in her rural community with its widely spaced homes:

If you don't have children you might not know your neighbors. ... I find that because I have children...the kids play together and they're constantly at each other's homes. ...One night I went to Back-to-School Night, a parent there came over and said, "OK, which child do you belong to?" That's really what it is. I think the kids have helped us. (004)

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

Three years ago I moved to a new town. Now I consider one of my biggest communities my daughters' schools. They're in a private school, and that is such a community. Prior to that I had kind of pockets: friends, church-related... There's a tremendous network. ... The school is a tremendous community. I've never felt so engulfed in terms of coming to something and people help you and there's outreach and you use each other as resources. (005)

Consistent with Putnam's (2000) findings, however, few of our respondents indicated involvement in the PTA: only 5 of our 31 respondents (16 percent) indicated PTA service in the past three years.³⁸ A few of the women who tried to become active in the public school system found it exceedingly difficult. One mother with teenagers noted:

I tried to be involved in the school system—esp. the PTA. But the model of it prevented me from becoming involved. [I was] greeted not with open arms. The PTA machine is so big that it does not necessarily allow for models that don't fit. I told them that I work in a demanding job—but that I would stuff envelopes or anything I could do to serve. Every group has cliques, strong, impenetrable group. But with the PTA you either have to be fully in or fully out. I was even turned away from being a class mother because of continuity—the model they used (and they claimed this is what works) involved having the same people at every event. ... I told the assistant principal that this model is too rigid—that it excludes dual-earner families and doesn't take advantage of people's skills gained through working (such as team-building skills). If there is one thing unsuccessful in my balance, it has to do with the school system. (019)

Lisa Belkin (2003a) reported on how one town—Chappaqua, N.Y.—addressed this problem. They established a community organization—the Second Shift—that helps to

³⁸ Respondents were asked: "Please check (✓) which of the following community activities or groups to which you have donated time, and indicate whether your participation occurred in the distant past or in the past three years. How frequently do you participate in these activities?" [PTA was one of the groups listed.]

link working and home-based women, looking for what they have in common as opposed to what separates them. On the night Belkin visited, leaders of the PTA—all stay-at-home mothers—were brainstorming with their working counterparts about how best to become involved in their children’s schools. As the organizer of the event remarked “here is a room full of people who are already too busy, but they’ve all come out on a school night, asking for the chance to do something else that they don’t have time for.”

In the lives of employed mothers where time is a scarce and valuable commodity, it is fulfilling—and creative—to combine parenting with voluntarism. As one woman commented: “I felt that I had to pick and choose when my kids were young. I never wanted to be away at night—so, outside activities were related to [the children’s] school. I worked hard to keep time with my children.” This senior vice president of a financial institution chose her civic involvement—particularly sitting on boards—by when they held their meetings: “I have always preferred meetings to happen at 8 a.m. rather than in the evening because this allows me to keep my nights open for family (014).” Another interviewee described organizing most of her volunteer service around the lives of her children, and found it a valuable way to stay close to them:

I’m very involved in Sunday school because that’s a way for me to give back to the community but also to stay very connected to where my children are. It’s a way to provide service ... I’m very involved in the sports communities with the kids. This provides a connection for me with the children and the community, which is hard to achieve otherwise because I work full time. ...[nearly] all of my civic engagement is definitely related to my children. (023)

This woman was not alone: 15 of the 31 women we interviewed donated time to their church or temple in the past three years; another eight did volunteer work for their children’s sports teams; still others were involved in various other local, civic, or neighborhood groups.

Life stage clearly plays a role in the choices our respondents made about community service. Some, who had purposely stepped out of community leadership roles to spend more time with their families, plan to broaden their involvement when their children are older. As one of our respondents noted:

When the children are younger, they need you on a minute-to-minute basis. When they are teenagers, they still need you, but it’s then that you can step back and say I need more. And then you can turn to community to fulfill that need. My participation will probably increase as my kids grow older. I will step back into leadership roles. (023)

A black mother of an eight-year old put her local volunteering on hold while her child was young:

I am not now as active in local groups as I’ve been in the past. Between [my son} . . . , and venturing into book writing . . . a lot of civic communities (YMCA, sponsoring minority kids to go to school, historically black colleges) . . . I’m not as active in those things, I support them financially but not physically. (026)

Another described the “loose ties” she maintained with different, changing communities:

“As your role in life changes (a student, a mom, a leader at work)...your communities change. You meet new people. Some communities go away. Some people you keep loose ties with...But communities change according to your needs and your roles.” (028)

Work as Community³⁹

As more women, and especially women with young children, entered the labor force in the post-1970 period, few had time to join the traditional women’s service organizations (e.g., PTA, League of Women Voters), whose decline Putnam (2000) lamented. This doesn’t mean, however, that women aren’t involved. In addition to active involvement in their children’s activities, much of women’s community service centers around, or evolves from, work contacts and/or activities. For example, 52 percent of our respondents indicated active service in a professional organization in the past three years. We focus on three types of work-related service: service sponsored by one’s company, work-linked community service that is often an implicit requirement of the manager’s job, and interest-based service activities that are less directly linked to the requirements of one’s job.

Work-Sponsored Service. A number of the larger New Jersey companies are engaged directly in traditional charities, such as releasing employees for “volunteer days,” encouraging employees to participate in reading programs in the local schools, or building homes through organizations like Habitat for Humanity:

[My bank is involved in a reading program, for which] we adopted a school in [major N.J. city], and [we] read to the kids every week on a regular basis. A number of us volunteered, so we don’t obviously have to do it every week, but we do it probably three or four times a year. And you go to the same class and, you know, contribute your time to read a book and then the book is then donated to the school, to a classroom. (002)

This bank executive also donated her time to building houses, in her case specifically for a single woman with kids:

[The bank] wanted to construct a house just for a woman, a single mother and they wanted the women to build the whole house. So they went to various groups to see if they could get women that would be willing to volunteer, so [they] put together a group and I volunteered to do this. This was last year, a year ago, I guess last summer, and so again this was a day, was actually a work day and took the time off – it wasn’t a problem – and put on our working duds and we went out and . . . two women [were supervisors] . . . and we worked all day. It was really wonderful. And, I mean, we were putting up walls, we were framing out walls, we were putting in windows, we were... you know, the whole, the whole thing. That was wonderful, too. Got to meet the woman whose house this was going to be. (002)

Another high-level bank manager noted:

³⁹ This section relies on responses to three questions from the interview schedule: (1) Does your work organization contribute to the development of community and encourage your voluntarism, or does it inhibit it? How? (Do you notice any differences between men’s and women’s voluntarism? Are the kinds of volunteer activities they participate in different? If so, how so?); (2) Does being in pharmaceutical (IT, financial services) affect your view of community? (3) Are there connections between your paid work and your community work? If so, what? Do you use the same expertise and skills in your community volunteering? Have networks you’ve made in your community volunteering ever helped you at work, or vice versa?

The one thing we really support is the community. [The bank's volunteer group] is a volunteer organization—we're the ones who organize various projects for employees to volunteer on. Each employee gets two paid days per year for volunteering and they can use it on whatever they want . . . We also supply grants for not-for-profit organizations—I sit on the grant making committee. We distribute about \$3 million a year, and I have an opportunity to play an integral part in that. That's very important to me. (024)

Work-Related Community Service. Many of our respondents donated their time and energy to service in nonprofit agencies in their local or larger New Jersey communities, a form of volunteering that is often an implicit requirement of managerial jobs. While one might argue that this form of service is more work than civic involvement, the reality is that this important form of community service is precisely the kind of service that has long engaged many professional men. Fraternal groups, country clubs, and chambers of congress, for example, have always provided men with an outlet for community service, as well as business opportunities. Given their new work roles, women are now engaged in just such work-related community service. Although such service may redound to the benefit of the professional and his/her firm, it also constitutes important community work. Our respondents describe this form of service:

There's a different kind of support at the executive level and above. The officers spend a lot of time on boards. In the lower ranks, the community involvement is more through connections outside of work. The corporation feels like this is part of what an officer should do. You're not begging someone to give you time to do this (like you might be at lower levels). You put board meetings on your calendar. It's very different. Executives are expected to contribute in a larger way: it's part of being seen as more of a public person. It's seen as [the company] being involved in the community (when their top officers are involved in community). (020)

Work does function as a community for me. I'm very connected. I mean, as a Senior VP [at my bank] I represent [the bank]: when I'm out in the community, I'm XXX from [my bank]. I'm focusing on getting [the bank] involved in communities. I'm taking the lead with my boss on that, working with organizations. (014)

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

There is a connection. I only have so much time to offer, and it does tend to be in areas that interest me, and business interests me. The reason I tend to be a board member rather than the line volunteer is because I have business skills. The skills I've picked up in my volunteering (government funding issues, getting a non-profit through a process) have helped with my business. (025)

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

I think the skills I gain at work are applicable in life in general: communications skills, people skills, listening skills. I tell people at work that you use these skills even with your family. What you learn to apply at work, you definitely could use elsewhere. In my professional organizations, I definitely do use connections and things I learn at work. (018)

Yes. I use the same skills: team building, knowing how to build a budget, fiscal responsibility, how you enroll people in a vision (creating a vision, a strategic plan), developing people and recruiting people to become part of the leadership. (019)

Interest-Based Service. While our respondents often engaged in community activities that were job-related, as we suggest above they also used their work connections as “blurred lines of opportunity” to support their own personal goals and interests. Respondents served, for example, on boards for local YMCAs, the Girl Scouts, and/or various other health organizations (e.g., for breast cancer, leukemia, autism), and that service often entailed financial contributions to “the cause.” Our respondents served as leaders and innovators in their jobs and communities, by bringing to their volunteer agencies not only their personal skills and expertise, but also the resources of their company. They reported, in turn, that they reaped benefits for themselves, both psychic and material. A pharmaceutical executive articulately described both the opportunities and the benefits of volunteer work:

In sales, you might be in a quasi volunteer/marketing situation, and in that, there are blurred lines of opportunity. . . . You step right out of that corporate role, even though you do bring your corporate skills with you. I definitely feel a benefit at work from my community participation. . . . At the Y I got exposure to high powered people, able to meet people with different viewpoints. You get to know a lot more about your community. It deepens you, and enriches you. You get back much much more than you give. And it gives you an opportunity to see your own growth and your abilities. It’s a very rounding good thing. It’s very far away from that traditional do-gooder. It’s very hands-on and they need people. And if you’re really not able to do things, you feel weird because everybody else is there to do something. (021)

A financial services executive concurred:

I think you have to align the bank and personal interests. Not everyone is interested in sitting on a not-for-profit board. I would rather sit on a Girl Scouts of America board than a Boy Scouts of America board. I just resigned from a Board, on which I was very active: a high profile board in the [local city] area. It was important to have visibility on that board. We got a lot of business opportunities from my participation on that board. It helps with networking. I think I’m doing good work for the organization, but I’m not going to close my eyes to business opportunities as they arise by sitting at the board table. (015)

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

Now I have often given them my criteria of what I want to be involved in. I’ve always wanted to be involved with children. (020)

And you know it’s opportunities to do things that you wish you had time to do, but also to do them in the community where you work, which is important to me. I’ve worked in [a major New Jersey city] now for a number of years, and . . . I feel an affinity for [this city] and a real obligation and many of my financial contributions actually go to organizations [in this city] rather than where I live. . . . The women in finance, here, supports to a very generous degree some women’s and children’s shelters . . . I like that about this company. (009)

I asked them for some support for a community organization for autistic children, and they ended up donating \$5000. They didn't give it automatically....I had to say how it impacts [my company]. I had to explain how many people there are at [my company] who have autistic children....and how the organization impacts the local community. (028)

A vice president in financial services reported her efforts to persuade her employer to support a private daycare facility:

The staff had such a low turnover rate, she only hired people she knew. And she never wanted to grow beyond a certain point because she felt like she couldn't touch and know each child and family individually. . . In fact, I tried to get the [company name] foundation to give them money because we did the statistics and found that 68 per cent of all the children who went there were [company] people. We didn't get it but we got them equipment and chairs and just a bunch of non-monetary things. (005)

An IT executive who develops educational programs for children said:

I do side things, like I help a pre-school in [N.J. city] that was not in the nicest of neighborhoods. Someone else who does this type of work did not even want to go to the center so I said, "I'll go see what it's all about." The center was in the middle of . . . the special needs district, but the center itself. . . she had it set up where it was a learning environment and it was an environment that I felt safe going in. And I just saw that they needed help, their teachers didn't know anything about computers. . . . I just went in, I didn't even send one of my teachers, I went in and I taught the teachers how to use the computers and I set them up and, you know, those kind of community things . . . I see more worth in it than even them paying me something for that service. . . . There's such a gamut of things because my background is so vast that I do extend a hand if somebody needs it, you know. (003)

One pharmaceutical executive's desire to engage in more nurturing volunteer work illustrates Rossi's (2001:453) point that some employed married women increase their volunteer hours if they aren't satisfied at work:

[I've done management and administration at church], but I've asked to do something different recently because I do that all day long. . .I would like to do something that is disassociated from work. I like to do social work (that's sort of what I do in the corporation)—I would like to do that on the outside, help people like I did on [a trip to South America]. . . . I want to do more nurturing stuff, more "heart-to-heart connecting stuff." I am very task-oriented, and I can sort of lose sight of the people connection, so community activities have helped me sort of open up and make more connections at work. That's not my natural way.... I don't do enough of it...and I don't incorporate enough of that in my job. I think looking for that is a more female thing than it is a male thing. (022)

Other Community Service

While most of their community service intersected with their family or work lives, a number of our respondents did volunteer for other kinds of local groups. It is sometimes hard to distinguish the interest-based service that evolves from one's work role (discussed above) and other volunteer service. One might join an autism or cancer activist group because one's child is autistic, or one survived breast cancer, and that service may lead to business donations to those organizations. Or, one might join a YMCA Board for work reasons, but remain on the Board beyond one's tenure in the organization. Similarly, it is often hard to distinguish between family and nonfamily service: is extensive service in the classrooms of one's children's school, or service as Sunday school teachers or church

elders, really family-based or other local service? We review in this section the “residual” service our respondents performed, specifically service that is neither family, nor work-based, at least to the extent we could make that distinction. A rough count suggests that 17 of our 31 respondents (55 percent) donated their time to non-family, non work-based groups.

One particularly interesting finding was a race difference in political activity: of the seven blacks in our sample, five volunteered for nonwork, nonfamily service, and all five were quite active politically (volunteering for a senatorial campaign, advocating for legislation, working on affirmative action through a women’s sorority, advocating for women’s business issues, building and advocating for schools). Among the 12 comparable whites, only five engaged in some form of political work (going on lobbying trips, writing letters to Congress, serving on a government committee, working with an autism activist group, and service on a state public policy board). Indeed, most of the whites were outspoken about their choice *not* to be involved in political causes. As one noted: “I’m not politically active either locally or nationally. I have very little tolerance for the game playing that goes on in politics. There’s right, there’s wrong, and then there’s politics. Favors traded.” (019)⁴⁰

Our respondents were engaged in a number of other groups beyond their families and work. A partial list of activities includes: literacy volunteer and various kind of tutoring; board members for various women’s and children’s support groups (e.g., for homeless, pregnant women); worker in a community food bank; activist in health-related groups (e.g., substance abuse, cancer, leukemia, autism); officer and/or activists for public service, black sorority group; activism in animal or wildlife groups; board members of a medical center or school; member of service organizations (e.g., Lion’s Club); and recruiters for their universities. The reasons for such service among our respondents are telling:

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

“To whom much is given, much is required.” Somebody helped you get where you are. Success requires help, no matter who you are (black or white). It’s important to pull somebody else up, if you are in the position to do so. (011)

In sum, despite their busy family and work lives, our respondents do donate their scarce time to organizations in their communities. They remain committed citizens in the larger

⁴⁰ Using data from the 1990 American Citizen Participation Study, Schlotzman (2000:1, online version) found that “working women are more politically active than are women who are home full time.” Schlotzman attributed this to (1) their higher income, (2) the transportability of their organizational and communication skills to political activity, and (3) their embeddedness in networks where they are asked to participate politically.

civic society. Given their life cycle stage, much of this involvement revolved around their families and local communities, including their children's schools, sports teams, churches, and other local organizations. Like their mothers, their children often tied them to their local communities. Unlike their mothers, their work lives drew them away from traditional communities into a variety of work-related service. Some of this community service evolved directly from the expectations of their jobs, some reflected their own desires and interests. Like their male colleagues, these women were now in a position to donate their expertise, and often their company's resources, to organizations of their own choosing. For this service, as well as the non-work service they perform in their communities, they joined organizations that reflect their concern with education, health, religion or other issues that have traditionally driven women to volunteer work. Finally, with the huge growth of "tertiary" or "checkbox" organizations (Putnam 2000:50), it's not surprising that our respondents also donate money: over 90 percent regularly donate money to a local or national organization, and over half have responded to a mass mailing solicitation.

DISCUSSION

Our analysis provides a useful lens with which to theorize community engagement in American life. We have demonstrated that the framing of civic engagement as an either-or proposition—civic community is declining, or not—is not a useful exercise. Examining community engagement in the context of work-family issues contributes to a more nuanced understanding. Talking to the women in our sample tells us much about how working women in dual-earner marriages creatively navigate among their family, work, and community lives. We summarize our findings and their implications here.

Our conclusions flow from interviews with managerial women who were married to husbands who also worked. These women, most of whom still had children at home, have been significantly affected by the stresses and strains associated with shifts in work and family in the post-1970 period. We cannot generalize beyond the elite women we interviewed. Nonetheless, we believe these women are an ideal sample for investigating community, because they are caught in the middle of the structural mismatch between changed family demographics and unchanged (or partially changed) customs, norms, and organizational practices.

As they married and had children, moved up their workplace career ladders, accommodated work and family demands, and balanced their desire for community service against family demands on their time, our respondents developed a set of workable strategies to navigate the transitions in their own lives. They accomplished this in a world that had changed dramatically from that in which their mothers came of age. Many more of their contemporaries work outside the home, even those with young children, and many more have moved into high-stress, time-greedy jobs. The workplace they entered has changed as well, growing ever more international, flexible, high tech, and service oriented. Workplace loyalty appears a quaint relic of the past.

Our findings demonstrate that family remained central to our respondents' lives and their sense of community, just as it had for their mothers. Almost without exception, these

women referenced family first, a strategy they viewed as wise in light of the instability afforded by most jobs in today's restructuring economy. Unlike most of their mothers, however, work also played a key role in their sense of self. Work provided them an especially rewarding identity, as well as deep friendships.

Our respondents found little institutionalized support for their increasingly complex work-family lives. As Gornick and Meyers (2003) described it, our respondents live in a "half-changed world." Having a supportive husband and extended family seemed key to "having it all." Some N.J. workplaces have instituted child-care centers and on-site support services, and a few women had access to community child care through organizations like the YMCA. These services, however, were insufficient for the need. The key workplace "support structure" our respondents relied on was flexibility: given their powerful positions in their organizations, nearly all of our respondents had job flexibility, and used it often to balance job and family demands, as well as community service. Even flexibility, however, has its drawbacks, often extending the work day into the work night.

Our respondents remained engaged in community service, albeit in quite different ways from their mothers. They found creative and nontraditional ways (for women) to engage in community service, even as they navigated their busy family and work lives. Like Putnam (2000), we encountered few respondents who maintained commitments to membership organizations like the PTA. Instead, their civic commitments were related to family, most notably volunteering for schools, churches/temples, and children's sports teams. Consistent with Skocpol (1999:5), these women were also drawn into community volunteering through their work. Like their male counterparts, our respondents donated time to various professional organizations, often blurring their own civic interests with those of their employer. And, over half of our respondents were also engaged in other community work, in particular work for women's and children's support groups.

Robert Putnam might well view our findings as further evidence of declining community. And, to a certain extent he would be correct. Although our respondents are civically engaged, their community service has often narrowed to a significant extent to "primary groups" such as family, extended family, or community groups with which their families intersect. In addition, work-related communities have replaced the traditional PTA and women's leagues. Our respondents' civic attachments are often at the expense of broader civic communities, the "secondary groups" to which our respondents' mothers traditionally donated their time.

In another sense, however, Putnam's critics are correct: our respondents spend a lot of their scarce time in service to their communities, just different forms of service than their mothers. Community, indeed multiple communities, seem alive and well for our sample of highly educated, managerial women. Like Wuthnow (1998:5, 8), we found women who preferred "loose connections" formed for specific purposes. These are women who do what they can with the time they have available, giving of themselves for causes with which they agree. At this time in their lives, they focus their energies on family and work-related communities, and they don't apologize for it. They spend time in their

children's classrooms, with their sports teams, in Sunday school classrooms, on their temple's governing boards, and so forth. They see plenty of time for service to other, secondary groups, once their children are older. Consistent with Skocpol (1999:5), these women were also drawn into community volunteering through their work. Like their male counterparts, they donate time to various professional organizations, often blurring their own civic interests with those of their employer. Along the way, they often change the organizations for which they volunteer, bringing their own interests and ideas to the organizations' agendas.

If changing family demographics and a restructured economy have significantly reduced the traditional volunteer workforce—nonworking women—then society needs to confront a larger question: who should do society's work? If doing volunteer work for secondary groups is socially valued, for providing social capital, generating trust, and “lubricating social life” (Putnam 2000:21), then society needs to ensure that its members have time to devote to such work. From an individual point of view, one way to address this issue is to recognize that civic engagement will vary by life cycle stage. While those with children still at home can focus on family-related civic work, those older and younger can cast a broader volunteer net.

Moreover, from a societal point of view, we need a broader social dialogue to undo the “unbending gender system” Williams (2000) describes in our social, economic, legal, and political institutions. Our data demonstrate how managerial women, like their male counterparts, bump up against this unbending gender system in a variety of ways. Being an “ideal worker” is difficult to reconcile with the ethic of care that our respondents espouse. It is especially difficult when, like many in today's workforce, they live in families with two ideal workers, and no ready solution for the level of care they want to provide for their children. If this ethic of care extends to society writ large, then we need to broaden the web of support families use beyond their own individual efforts. The workplace, government, and community all have a role in this important social project. The dialogue has begun, we just need to further it.

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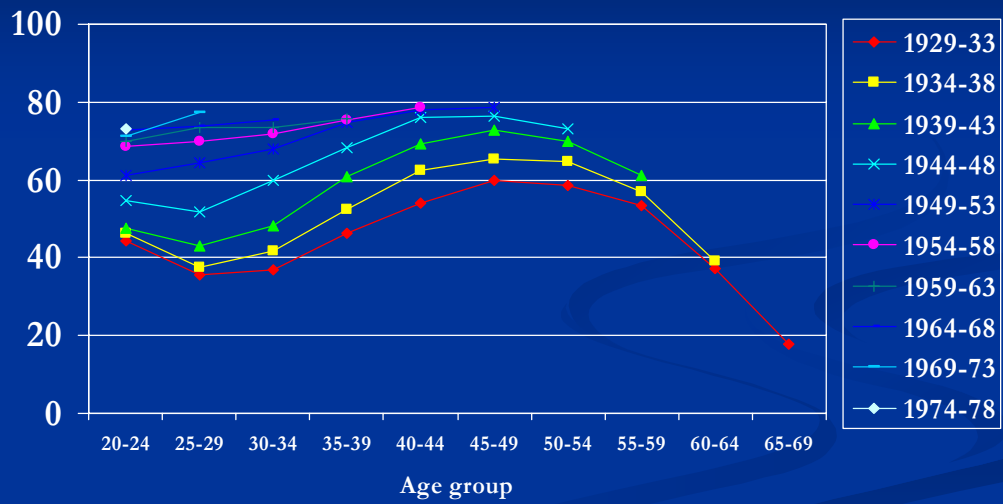
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Changing structural context

Labor Force Participation by Birth Cohort, 1998



Source: Costello and Stone, 2001, *The American Woman 2001-2002*

Figure 1: Women's Labor Force Participation by Birth Cohort, 1998

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of Sample Members

Personal characteristics

100% married (selection criteria)
100% husbands in labor force (selection criteria)
22 white, 7 blacks, 2 Asians
Mean age: 43 years; range 30 to 52
55% advanced education beyond BA/BS
77% kids still at home
67% small town
Mean times per week family eats out: 2.2 times; range 0 to 5

Work-related characteristics

11 financial services, 10 IT, 10 pharmaceutical (selection criteria)
100% in managerial job (selection criteria)
52% hired as manager in current job
48% top level of organization, 52% middle
71% flexible hours
77% worked at home in current job
Mean hours/day worked: 9.9 hours; range 7 to 12
Mean minutes/day commute (roundtrip): 57 minutes (range 0 to 165)
Mean nights/months away on business: 2 nights; range 0 to 10
61% continuous labor force attachment

Table 2. Job Titles of Sample Members

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Number</u>
CEO	3
President	3
Worldwide President	1
Executive Vice President	2
Senior Vice President	3
Vice President	3
Vice President-Finance	1
Vice President Research & Developmeng	1
Vice President-Client Development	1
Vice President-Communications	1
Vice President-Human Resources	1
Vice President-Diversity	1
Partner	1
Senior Operations	1
Mobility Solutions Officer	<u>1</u>
Technical Manager	1
Managing Director	1
Regional Director-Small Business Services	1
Director	2
Director, Engineering and Business Operations	1
Director, Reporting & Communications Control Planning	1
Director, Clinical Development	1
Director, Support Services	1
Director, Packaging	1
Retail Bank Director	1
Associate Director	1
Associate Director-Quality	1
Department Leader	1
Total number ¹	38

¹Seven women had two job titles. We include both titles in list.

Table 3 Crosstabulation of Job Level by Sector (Frequencies)

<u>Job level</u>	<u>Information technology</u>	<u>Financial services</u>	<u>Pharmaceuticals</u>	<u>Row totals</u>
Top level	9	3	3	15
Middle level	1	8	7	16
Column totals	10	11	10	31