INTERSECTIONALITY AND WORK–FAMILY BALANCE: A STUDY OF BLACK, WHITE, AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – *Utilizing the intersectionality framework, this study examines how a racially diverse group of adults aim to balance work–family life.*

Methodology/approach – *This chapter uses qualitative data from the Intersections of Family, Work, and Health Study consisting of 132 black, white, and Mexican-American adults.*

Findings – *We find that more socioeconomic status and marriage provide social and economic capital to more easily fulfill role obligations. Individuals with more capital have more choices and are offered a chess board and a variety of pieces to facilitate the goal of creating work–family harmony. Individuals with less capital end up with less job flexibility and play checkers through rigid concrete roles because work decisions are in the hands of their employers instead of their own.*

Social implications – *This chapter sheds light on the influence of high socioeconomic status and marriage, and the ability for individuals who*

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have to maximize both job flexibility and autonomy to manage work–family life better than others. As we show here, married middle-class whites are able to manage work–family life better than professional black single mothers and working class Mexican Americans by having the ability to choose to play checkers or chess.

Originality/value of chapter – *We argue that the concept of "balancing" does little to express the ways individuals negotiate the constraints of work and family. By using an intersectionality perspective, we show that conceptualizing work–family life as "checkers or chess" games allow for the cognitive process of decision making (in terms of, for example, time pressures and perceived role demands) to be assessed more efficiently across work–family domains.*

Keywords: Family functioning; work; intersectionality; race; gender; social class

The study of the family initially garnered the attention of sociologists when Thomas and Znaniecki (1918–1920) presented their extensive work entitled *The Polish Peasant*. Since that time there has been a relative dearth of qualitative research in scientific journals on families (see Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995; LaRossa & Wolf, 1985 for a discussion of this issue) and even less on ethnic minority families coupled with social class and gender considerations (see Landry, 2000; Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990 for exceptions). A select group of scholars challenge the field to embrace the complexity of family life that might integrate a variety of niches of inequality as they pertain to the family (see Allen, 2000; Murry, Smith, & Hill, 2001), while others call for a broader intellectual acknowledgment of the actual diversity that exists across and within families (Allen, 2000; Perry-Jenkins, Pierce, Haley, & Goldberg, 1999).

In this chapter, we adopt the intersectionality paradigm to view the articulation of family from the vantage point of multiple axes of status difference (Schulz & Mullings, 2006; Weber & Parra-Medina, 2003). An extrapolation of intersectionality theory is that race, gender, and social class intertwine to create unique but perhaps contentious identities (Jackson & Cummings, 2011; Ray, 2008), attached to which are resources that facilitate the ability to negotiate the worlds of work and family (Aumann, Galinksy, & Matos, 2008; Gerson, 2010; Hochschild & Machung, 1989). We argue that adaptational responses to work and family life that are racialized, gendered,

and driven by social class location – all at the same time. We insist that the current view of work and family life (as a balance) among American families is too simplistic in its visual imagery and does not capture the myriad of ways in which adults (even those within the same family) attempt to combine work and family across the life course. In this study, we ask, how do a diverse group of adults describe their efforts to achieve balance in work and family life?

To examine these issues, we present responses to a subset of items taken from a larger study entitled "The Intersections of Family, Work, and Health Study" (see Jackson, 2004). The data used in this study answers the call for more inclusive research across racial/ethnic groups as well as the need to move family research beyond the dual-earner or nuclear family model (Collins, 2000). We do not attempt to reach universal conclusions with this approach, but we hope to demonstrate that family behavior is "grounded in socialization and power relations" regardless of how work and family roles are managed (Henderson, 1994). By considering patterns of family life across groups as well as providing a platform for the voices of multiple family members to be heard (thus capturing some level of within-group variation), we articulate the similarities and differences in how adults pursue work–family balance.

WORK–FAMILY DOMAIN: A PRESSING REALITY FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The work–family interface is a pressing reality for most Americans. First, there are twice as many dual-earner couples as there are traditional male breadwinner/female homemaker families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Dual-earner is also the prevalent household type among couples with children in the home (at 64%) and couples with children under the age of 6 (57%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). More strikingly, about 75% of married mothers with school-aged children were in the paid labor force in 2005 (Cohany & Sok, 2007).

Second, single mothers joined the workforce in large numbers in the middle 1990s (Blank, 2002). In fact, the labor force participation rate among single mothers grew from 57% in 1994 to 75% in 2000 (Meyer & Rosenbaum, 2000; Mishel, Bernstein, & Boushey, 2003). Eighty-five percent of all single-parent households are maintained by women; of these households, 65% of the mothers are employed full-time. Although a smaller

percentage of households are single-father households, 73% of these fathers are in the paid labor force (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Third, racial differences in household type mark the American landscape. Ninety-two percent of black women, compared to 82% of white women, with school-aged children are in the labor force (Landry, 2000). About 85% of African-American middle-class wives, 25–44 years old, with young children were employed by the mid-1990s. This figure is in marked contrast to the 68% of comparable white women during this time period. The United States has also witnessed an increase in the proportion of Mexican immigrant women who participate in the paid labor force. While there are clear patterns of occupational segregation among Mexican Americans (Catanzarite, 2000, 2002), the feminization of the migration stream indicates that work–family issues are equally salient across this context.

Regardless of race/ethnicity, research suggests that few married-couple families could maintain their current standards of living without two incomes (Heckert, Nowak, & Snyder, 1998; Gerson, 2010). Furthermore, the notable second shift (where working wives often come home to contend with housework and childcare responsibilities) is most prevalent among dual-earner families with children under the age of 6 (Sayer, England, Bittman, & Bianchi, 2009) and dual-earner couples experience more work–family strain than their single-earner counterparts (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994). At the same time, dual-earner couples often have access to a wider range of resources that may help ameliorate work–family balance issues than single parents (Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba, & Lyness, 2006). Given the diversity in household types and the notable changes in family structure over the past few decades, the challenges facing working parents remain important topics of study.

WORK–FAMILY DOMAIN: GENDER–RACE–CLASS AS SOURCES OF COMPLEXITY

Despite the reality of the interface between work and family obligations, there remains little effort to embrace the complex picture that emerges from the broader sociological literature when we consider the divergent work–family experiences across gender, race, and social class divides. As noted by other scholars, if families somehow manage to combine work and family responsibilities, we assume that they have successfully "balanced" these roles (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). This view of work and family is void

of the depth embedded in these important social roles. Furthermore, when we only apply a quantitative numerical value to "balance" we lose the opportunity to discover the creative ways people manage the tensions and pressures of daily activities (see Dillaway & Broman, 2001 for a similar stance). Our work provides a platform to illuminate how adults from a variety of backgrounds strategize to achieve some acceptable degree of equilibrium between work and family.

Work–family balance often refers to "a global assessment that work and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains" (Voydanoff, 2005, p. 825). According to a recent national survey (Taylor, Funk, & Clark, 2007), there has been a marked shift in preferences for full-time work among working mothers: in 1997, 32% of working mothers said the ideal situation for them is to work full-time compared to just 21% in 2007. In 2007, a higher percentage (60%) of working mothers said they prefer to be working part-time compared to those in 1997 (48%). Mothers who work full-time give themselves lower ratings as parents than their peers who are working part-time or who are not in the paid labor force. Likewise, in a study of 1,000 fathers who work in white-collar occupations, Harrington and colleagues (2011) find that almost 60% report an inability to get housework and care giving duties accomplished because of their work responsibilities. Not surprisingly then, a substantial percentage of fathers (60%) and mothers (50%) in dual-earner households continue to have difficulty managing family and work life (Aumann et al., 2008).

The ability to balance work and family obligations is typically viewed from a gender role perspective. Here, perceptions of work–family-fit typically fall along traditional gender lines where men's work role takes precedence over family roles and women are expected to give priority to family roles even if they are working outside of the home (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). In a national survey, 72% of fathers say the ideal situation for them is to be in a full-time job (Taylor et al., 2007). Simon (1995) finds in her sample of 40 white, employed, married parents that most women view their work and family roles as independent life domains, whereas men view being a good father as contingent on providing economic support to their families. In other words, part of the cognitive schema of a father includes provider, perhaps making it easier for men to perceive role balance if they are employed (see Ray, 2008).

Many minority women have not been privileged to embrace the middle-class gendered division of labor often as a result of various structural constraints (Coontz, 1992; Collins, 2004). The tenuousness of employment

opportunities for black and immigrant men, for example, leads to some women feeling compelled to work for pay. This has been the case throughout history for African-American women. Thus, an alternative view of work–family balance suggests that gender roles are socially constructed entities that vary across contexts.

We argue that intersectionality provides a useful frame by which we can come to appreciate the ways adults manage work–family issues. As suggested by the range of studies cited above, there is reason to believe that race, gender, and social class combine in very interesting ways to exacerbate (or minimize) group differences in the experience of work and family; therefore, we seek to provide insight into how adults describe the way they "do" family when faced with the question of work–family balance.

CHECKERS OR CHESS

While some adults may feel that they are juggling their work and family responsibilities on a daily basis, we find that more appropriate "gaming" language would be "checkers" or "chess." There are certain aspects of these games that we wish to highlight as they capture much of the narratives provided by our families when asked about balancing work and family. Of course, some aspects of these popular games are irrelevant. For example, both games are two-player games, but we do not mean to insinuate that work–family issues must be understood in the context of a two-parent household. Work and family are patterns of social relations that can change across the individual life course. Below we describe the important components of these board games that map onto some of the lived experiences of our study respondents.

Checkers is a board game that involves a series of diagonal moves of uniform pieces (all are the same) with the goal of reaching the opponent's last row on the board while taking all of her/his pieces. There are several notable rules to the American version of this game with the most dominant being the inability to make a move into an occupied square. The only time a player can move a piece across multiple squares along a diagonal is if they reach their opponents end and are "crowned" king status. Now, they can make moves forward or backward but only into unoccupied spaces. A king can also make successive jumps across multiple spaces on the board as long as the purpose is to acquire the opponent's pieces. The person who has no remaining pieces or cannot move their remaining pieces is designated the loser of the game.

In the figurative sense of family roles, checkers are played via rigid concrete roles for men and women. Checkers mostly aligns with gender role patterns before the 1970s where men served as providers and women served as house workers and caregivers. When partners play checkers, family role expectations are often very clear. One person moves to work, while the other person moves to cook, clean, and care. Each piece carries equal weight and can only move one space. In this regard, checkers can be seen as the traditional model.

Chess is a board game where different types of pieces move along the board differently. In fact, each player begins with a king. Each piece in the chess game has its own set of characteristics that allow it to engage the opposition through threat (moving forward) or retreat (moving backward) without penalty. You can capture an opponent's piece by moving them out of an occupied space on the board. In chess, there are three conclusions: win, lose, or draw.

Chess, in the context of family, is played via fluid, constantly renegotiated social roles. Unlike checkers, all of the chess pieces have different duties and movements. The action of the other player dictates which piece will move and when. Many families operate in this way. Each week, and sometimes daily, partners decide how the next several days will go. Who will take the kids to ball or band practice? Who will go to the grocery store? Who will take off from work to take one of the children to the doctor? These are questions that couples ask and answer regularly. While men and women may have some distinct roles, such as grocery shopping or mowing the grass, much of the duties centered on housework and care giving are an ever-changing chess game to get each piece of family and work into a position that makes life manageable.

INTERSECTIONALITY: VITAL FOR RESEARCH ON FAMILY FUNCTIONING

The intersectionality framework (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Collins, 2004; Crenshaw, 1991) becomes useful for examining how gender, race, and class simultaneously influence the ability of individuals to even play checkers or chess. "The purpose of intersectionality theory within the family literature is to provide a much needed lens to construct a space for the multiplicity of social identities and categories that provide context-specific scripts for marginalized groups" (Ray, 2008, p. 327). Although useful, the gender role perspective of work–family balance upholds a traditional model that gives

scant attention to the specific experiences of minority groups and cultures. A social constructionist view is much more reflective of the particular historical patterns noted throughout the family literature (especially those that account for opportunity structures), but we believe that this perspective does not provide a parsimonious explanation for similarities found across groups in regards to family experiences. Intersectionality, on the other hand, draws attention to points on the axis where we would find both similarities and differences in experiences within the family.

For example, the marriage patterns of African Americans are different from whites, which inhibits their ability to even play checkers or chess with a partner. Black women are less likely to marry and more likely to work full-time and have children than white women (Banks, 2011). Although black women report more familial support for childcare, they are less likely than white women to have "the help" in the form of nannies and maids. Black men's struggle with stable employment change how African-American families function. In this sense, black women have always performed a second shift as many were working outside of the home for pay long before their white counterparts (Billingsley, 1992; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). As a result, a majority of single mothers, such as those concentrated among African-American women, may actually be forced to play chess in a different way.

Mexican Americans also face unique experiences. While there is a growing group of second and third generation Mexican Americans, a large percentage still comes to the United States as immigrants. This means that many Mexican Americans are leaving behind their family members in Mexico. In turn, their priorities for providing may be different from mainstream America. Mexican-American men are more likely to have manual labor occupations, while Mexican-American women are more likely to be in domestic and service jobs. Mexican Americans are also more likely to hold more traditional attitudes about family roles (Ray, 2008). These dynamics may lead to Mexican-American families playing checkers more than chess.

Despite chess being a model that privileges a middle-class lifestyle, some upper middle-class families with high levels of income may actually choose to play checkers, especially when children are young. Although there are a growing number of stay-at-home dads, mothers staying at home with the children while fathers work is still the more prominent norm if a parent does not work. This is a choice and privilege not afforded to single mothers and most working-class families.

Taken together, we know little about how couples "do family" and actually manage family and work life on a daily basis. We know even less about the differences among family types (e.g., middle- and working-class families, families with high levels of income, single mothers) and how the intersection of race and gender structures these differences. Below we detail our sample and methods and then present findings related to how different families play checkers or chess to make their family and work lives more manageable.

METHOD

Participants

Forty-five percent of the total sample self-identified as African American ($N=60$), 31% as white ($N=41$), and 24% as Mexican American ($N=31$). Sixty-six percent of the sample were women, half were married, and the average age was 38 (18–80). In terms of social class, the average level of education was 15 years, the median household income was $45,000, and 73% were employed. Participants reported an average of slightly less than two children.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for each racial/ethnic and gender group. Some of the differences are consistent with national patterns while others probably reflect within-family influences. Education is highest among whites, followed by African Americans, and then Mexican Americans. However, there are small educational disparities within each racial group. The largest disparity by work status can be found among Mexican Americans, while African-American men and women have similar rates of employment. African-American women are least likely to be married. Finally, nearly 50% of the Mexican-American sample is immigrants with a substantially higher percentage of men (67%) self-identifying as non-U.S. born than women (35%).

Measures

All respondents were asked the following questions: (1) Have the things you wanted to do with your family ever interfered with your job responsibilities or has your job ever gotten in the way of the things you want to do with

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Race and Gender (Standard Deviations in Parenthesis).

	African Americans		Mexican Americans		Whites	
	Men $N=21$	Women $N=39$	Men $N=11$	Women $N=20$	Men $N=13$	Women $N=28$
Marital status (1 = Married)	0.52	0.26	0.45	0.65	0.62	0.57
Work status (1 = Employed)	0.76	0.77	1.00	0.55	0.85	0.64
Religion (1 = Moderately/Very religious)	0.90	0.79	0.09	0.60	0.31	0.68
Immigrant status (1 = Immigrant)	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.35	0.00	0.00
Number of children	1.67 (2.06)	1.72 (1.58)	2.00 (1.95)	2.35 (1.87)	1.61 (1.56)	1.50 (1.32)
Age	36.05 (13.43)	36.00 (13.51)	33.00 (8.46)	36.25 (11.64)	43.92 (14.28)	44.00 (17.19)
Education in years	15.19 (2.56)	14.95 (2.19)	12.09 (1.58)	12.10 (2.25)	16.62 (2.50)	15.86 (3.25)
Median household income	$60,000	$31,000	$28,500	$28,500	$60,000	$50,000

your family? (1a) If yes, in what way? Can you give some examples?; and (1b) If no, how are you able to keep your family life and your work life separate, either now or in the past? (2) Do you feel that your parents' job affected your life in any way?

Procedure

Sample Selection

We use the Intersections of Family, Work, and Health Study (IFWH) conducted in a Midwestern city (Jackson, 2004). Primary respondents for the IFWH were 46 adults who responded to an advertisement to participate in a study on the family (primary respondents). Ads were placed in public areas throughout the city. Flyers were also placed in mailboxes in a wide variety of neighborhoods in the city. The adults were instructed to call the research office where a staff member would determine if they were eligible for the study. At the time of phone contact, potential respondents were asked if they were confident that family members living anywhere in the United States (secondary respondents) would be interested in participating in the study and if they preferred to be interviewed in English or Spanish. After the research team established phone contact with secondary respondents, 86 agreed to be interviewed, yielding a total sample of 132 adults. A Spanish translation of all instruments was prepared and used in cases where the respondent noted that preference.

In-Depth Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 46 primary respondents. These interviews were completed by the authors and several graduate student research assistants (in pairs) in the respondents' homes (65%), work places (22%), or a public setting such as fast-food restaurants (13%). All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Trained interviewers were matched by race/ethnicity and/or gender of the primary respondent. A bilingual graduate student conducted interviews in Spanish. This in-person interview ranged from one to three hours in length with an average of 89 minutes. Participants received $20 compensation for participating in the face-to-face component of the interview and a 120-minute phone card for completing a self-administered questionnaire.

We contracted with the Schuessler Institute for Survey Research at Indiana University to administer the telephone survey to the 86 secondary

respondents who were mailed a 120-minute phone card for their participation. The average amount of time to complete the telephone interview was 62 minutes. The telephone interview included approximately 75% of the items from the in-person interview and the identical set of items from the self-administered questionnaire. All participants are assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Analytic Strategy

Quotations relating to work–family balance were coded by categorizing respondents based on race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (i.e., occupation, income, education). We searched for words including conflict, balance, manage, juggle, fight, agreement, debate, discussion/discuss, communicate, stress, and negotiate in each transcript. We initially used an inductive approach to identify patterns from the transcripts. After establishing patterns in the coding, we searched the interviews again looking for examples that confirmed and contradicted emerging patterns. The use of negative cases is imperative to any qualitative research endeavor. The emerging propositions were refined or eliminated to explain negative cases (Rizzo, Corsaro, & Bates, 1992).

RESULTS

Who's Playing Games?

Our findings show four classifications that capture particular segments of work–family routines. While what we find is consistent with existing bodies of literature, we also take note of the plaguing reminder that marriage is an understated resource. Social class position, in particular, is one axis of difference that seems to dictate how adults negotiate the worlds of work and family. Some workers have less job flexibility, autonomy, and power at work. The most extreme variants within this configuration are those who occupy low status jobs (or who play checkers) without much choice in the matter: the working class (mostly dual-earners). At the other extreme are high status workers (who play chess) with much flexibility and resources at their disposal: middle- to upper-middle-class workers (mostly dual-earners). For some, the more interesting cases may very well be adults who are forced to play on a high-status field even though they may not have the social and economic capital (or chess pieces) to do so: single, professional mothers who

find themselves with a dwindling share of resources (flex-time) as they attempt to raise children and work full-time jobs. And then there are those who elect to remain at the level of checkers and share traditional role obligations: working and middle class (mostly male breadwinner/female homemaker combinations). We provide qualitative responses to illustrate these themes.

Checkers: Forced to Play the Game

In most service and manufacturing occupations, individuals frequently have their work–family lives sorted for them vis-à-vis their employer and work schedules. As a result, they have fewer choices for managing work–family life. A few responses from those who answered the question, "Has your work life ever interfered with your family life?" highlight this theme.

Tommy is a 35-year-old black man who is a married father of two children. His youngest child is 15 months old and the oldest is 3 years old. He is a college graduate who estimates his yearly household income to be around $55,000 working as a fireman. His wife works part-time.

> Have the things I wanted to do with family got in the way of a job? No. Have the job got in the way of the family? Yes, because with our rotating schedule, we miss out on holidays or even just being home with the kids at night. I'm not home with the kids when I'm on duty so, I miss out on that.

Curtis, his father, who completed some college, says:

> Yes ... well, being in the military or farming, uh, you had a job and you had to do it and family gatherings and stuff, you couldn't just go when you wanted to. And farming was a seven day a week, uh, 365 day a year job cause I raised hogs ... and stuff. In the Army you go when they tell you where they tell ya.

Similarly, Tommy's mother Sheila (a high school graduate) says:

> Uhm. (laugh) Oh. Heck yes! (laugh) ... Well there's times when I rather would not have worked weekends, uh ... cause I'd rather, there were some family things that I wanted to do ... I'd rather not have worked at all. But uh it was financially necessary although I have enjoyed my work.

Jessica, a 41-year-old black woman who is a married mother of two, responds in a similar fashion. She says:

> Uhhmmm, yeah, I mean of course, just the common things as far as you know wishing you could go on vacation, but you can't because you have a job ... but as far as my family with my job, I mean yeah, when I was taking care of my dad for the three years, I

> mean there was times when I just had to take off work, and you know, eat up vacation time and things like that to care for him.

Unlike families that describe the work–family interface as nonnegotiable distinct roles, another group of adults describe the ways they consciously try to negotiate this boundary, mostly through enacting traditional roles. Maria is a 29-year-old Mexican-American woman with a high school degree. She is married with three small children ages 3, 5, and 9. Her husband, who also has a high school degree, works as a cook and they have a household income of $48,000 a year. Maria is not currently working for pay outside of the home, although she has opinions about whether she should be paid for work as a primary caregiver and homemaker. When asked has her family ever interfered with her work responsibilities, Maria responded:

> Well, you see, I haven't been working for a while, but I do like to work. I like to work for my children. I want them to go to college and I want them to have money to spend. But I want to be in the house to help them, to raise them well, to have good health and to make sure they go down the right track.

Even when Maria was in the labor market, she also pulled a second shift and did most of the care giving and housework. When asked how she was able to keep her work and family life separate, she said:

> Well it was really difficult because sometimes I would come home without the energy or will to do anything. I would do things like make the food a day in advance so that it would already be ready. So I would make it early, arrive home, and we'd eat, and then I'd have to make the next couple of days food. I still say that even though I stay at home I work harder than my husband (laughter). Like while I'm watching the kids playing outside I'm also ironing (laughter). I work. I should receive a salary right? But women who work at home don't get a salary right?

Maria's husband [Jonathan] provides a more direct example of complications between work and family. When asked, "Have the things you wanted to do with your family ever interfered with your job responsibilities or has your job ever gotten in the way of the things you want to do with your family?," he says "yes." When prompted for an example, he simply says:

> Doctor's appointment for my son and my wife, I have to ask permission.

Like Jonathan, many respondents complained about inflexible work schedules that do not consider the reality of the need for multiple medical visits for his children. Collectively, parents who embrace playing checkers compared to those feeling forced have a different outlook on their roles and personal identity. This is most evident among the upper-middle-class families described below.

Checkers: I Choose to Play this Game

Susie is a white, 23-year-old medical school student. She described how her father's job as a physician afforded their family enough income for her mother to stay at home and serve as the primary caregiver and house worker. What separates high-income families with a traditional family arrangement from working-class families is the breadwinner's ability to have a sizable income to support necessities and leisure activities, while still being available for quality time and family events. Susie's sister and mother made similar statements to what she says below:

> He's a doctor, for one, so that probably influenced a lot about why I'm a med student. And plus he's always been there to listen for anybody, which I really like. And he's always, no matter what, he's trying to do stuff for us. Even in Canada when he was really busy, cause just the medicine and the situation at the time, he still had time to make swing sets for us or make playhouses ... So probably, a lot of my family looked up to my dad because he spent so much time with us.

Dorothy is a 63-year-old white woman with a household income over $100,000. Her father had a professional job that required a lot of travel when she was young. Her mother did not work until she went to high school. And, at that point, her mother was close by working as an attendant for the school registrar at her high school. Dorothy said:

> My father traveled for most of the time I was growing up. He was out of town from Monday morning until Friday evening. So we were home alone with mom. So in many ways, it's allowed mom to be mostly involved with me. But, it's not like dad had left us. If there were something important at school or something, he tried to arrange it so that he could be home for school programs or something like that. He didn't neglect me. I've never felt that we were neglected. He was a father.

Although Dorothy's father was gone most days, he was available for important events. Reflecting back on her childhood, most of the daily activities that form an imprint on Dorothy's memory included her mother as well as her father. In this case, Dorothy's father was seen as a provider for his family. In other words, his role responsibilities were amplified even though they were quite limited in scope. These findings align with those noted by Ray (2008) about some men's ability to garner a professional allowance that gives them more visibility when they spend quality time with family. Another important component to upper-middle-class families and their choice to play checkers is that they have the economic capital to manufacture memories through trips and extracurricular and school activities that are inaccessible to working-class families (Powell & Steelman, 1995).

Chess: The Queens Do it All

Most middle-class parents play chess because they gain purchase on their economic and social capital to have job flexibility, autonomy, and power to choose when to move what pieces on the board (or how to manage and what to manage). Chris and Becky provide a useful lens to view how middle-class parents actually play chess. Chris is a 37-year-old white man with an MBA. His wife, Becky, is a 31-year-old white woman who also has an MBA. They have two children ages 1 and 3 and a household income of $90,000. Chris responded about managing family and work life. When asked, "Have things you wanted to do with your family ever interfered with your job responsibilities? Or has your job got in the way with things you wanted to do with your family?," Chris responds:

> I think for me ... yes probably on both counts, but not tragically ... My wife and I both have an understanding that to maintain our lifestyle, which is not high end at all (laughs) but to maintain our lifestyle we both need to work, and ... to maintain uhh ... to be able to spend time with the kids, to be able to be a parent, to be able to enjoy them, uhh, we've realized, we've sacrificed other things; umm, hardly ever get a chance to go golfing anymore, (laughs) going to baseball games ... There were times when I was asked to pull extra late nights or pull weekends and I did a little bit of that and that affected us a little bit. Then I decided that I wasn't going to do that anymore. It wasn't worth it.

Becky discusses the sacrifices Chris makes for the family.

> He ended up with a job, but it doesn't really seem like what he really wants to do. It's difficult to do that and I'm sure that has to do with him taking the money and what he has over everything else just because of family obligations.

However, Becky makes her own professional sacrifices for the family. She says:

> There have been times where you turn down a greater responsibility just because you don't wanna have the added workload. A lot of people you know who want you to take on a directorship or something like that and you just have to turn it down cause you have too many things going on.

Chris and Becky make conscious choices about how to manage their lives. Clearly, family is most important. They both make work sacrifices to be more available for their children. They go on to describe how they communicate and constantly renegotiate their roles. Becky says:

> It's hard to juggle both working full-time and having two toddlers. It happens where you wanna be with your kids, wanna spend more time with them, and you don't cause you feel like you have to be at work. It's just a week to week occurrence. You know you're

> always making decisions week to week. Of course there's been times, especially when the kids are sick or something, you feel like you have to take them to the babysitter anyway.

Discussing the same issue, Chris says:

> The biggest [thing] that me and my wife have had is trying to figure out who will burn a day off. And there are times when she just can't and I would do it, you know. It's something you gotta do. When I have to burn days at least then my boss was pretty cool about it.

He goes on to say:

> It's difficult. You have to make a conscious effort. I went in one day when my child was sick. I was in there [at] like six [am] so that I could leave early to take the kid. Got my child, took my child to the doctor, and then my wife got the child at two [pm] and I went back to work until like seven [pm]. Just got to, you just juggle! I mean we talked earlier about in order to maintain you go in every different direction. Well to maintain the over balance, I was up at 4 o'clock [am], didn't get home until 7:30 [pm] that time.

What Chris described above is what parents do on a daily basis. Since he and Becky both have professional occupations, they have the job flexibility and autonomy to act as "queens" and move around the chess board with more ease than others. Most professional jobs are based on performance goals and less on the time to accomplish those goals. Working class jobs, on the other hand, are often based on time as individuals are compensated an hourly wage. Salary gives people more freedom to, in some cases, work when they want and where they want as long as performance goals are accomplished. In the case of Chris and Becky, Chris can go to work at 6 am, or even 4 am, before his company officially opens for business, leave in the middle of the day to take his child to the doctor, have his wife (who can also leave in the middle of the day) provide childcare, and then return to his job to finish his work. This is the essence of chess. Chris and Becky see their family and work life as merged entities instead of separate. Individuals with professional occupations have the ability to merge their family and work worlds and gain more leverage to manage life on their own terms.

Chess: Forced to Sacrifice the Queen

The chess game described above is quite different for single, professional mothers. We highlight Kelsie as an example. Kelsie, who is a 27-year-old single mother of a 2-year-old and newborn baby, holds a bachelor's degree and makes $27,000 a year. Currently working at a university, she describes her life as a student.

> When I had him I was in my last semester of college. So, I was trying to complete my degree and working full-time and trying to take care of a newborn. So, I was really overwhelmed in trying to finish housework, homework, and then having to do work at my job.

When asked, "Has family life interfered with job responsibilities?," Kelsie says:

> Well I know there's a conflict in scheduling as far as like taking my kids to the doctor at times, cause I have two kids and my doctor's office they don't put both of the children on for the same day and I hate that. You have to take them on different days so you're missing two days of hours.

Kelsie has the type of job where she has to be physically at work to be paid. This poses a problem when she needs time off to care for her children or take them somewhere during normal office hours. While Kelsie may have some social support, her mother has not worked in several years so she cannot rely upon her for financial support. These are some of the challenges facing single, working mothers: they have to do everything, and in turn, sacrifice their health (and the queen on the board). As a result, their lived experience of managing family and work is much different than two-parent households who are middle or working class. Their realities also differ from upper-middle-class mothers who may have the luxury to not work full-time or hire someone to complete their house work and/or care giving duties.

DISCUSSION

A growing contingent of scholars suggests that family research needs to move toward an intersectional approach (e.g., see Dillaway & Broman, 2001). This study takes a step in this direction by considering the ways that a diverse group of adults describe how they negotiate work and family domains. We also build on prior research by considering the views held by family members that go beyond the standard couple dyad (or one parent–one child). We find that the analogy of balancing work and family roles does little to express the creative ways in which people negotiate the constraints of these two often competing role domains. The intersectionality framework challenges work on the family to consider how race, gender, and social class operate in tandem to create cleavages (or axes) that do not coincide with normative patterns of family life.

One important axis can be found at the intersection of social class and marital status. We find that a higher social class position and marriage

provide resources to more easily fulfill the wide range of role obligations. Economic and social capital provides the foundation onto which work and family roles are successfully negotiated. Individuals with more capital have more choices for managing family and work life. They are offered a chess board and a variety of pieces to work with that facilitate the goal of achieving some level of satisfaction about making moves to create work–family harmony. Individuals with less capital end up with less job flexibility, autonomy, and control. These adults end up playing checkers through rigid concrete roles because their time, money, and autonomy are in the hands of their employers instead of their own.

We find that middle class, married adults have the job flexibility, autonomy, and income to manage their family and work life in different ways than most working class parents. As a result, middle-class parents, regardless of gender or race/ethnicity, can normally choose to be available for sickness and accidents, school activities, scheduled or impromptu "family time," and normal housework and care giving duties. We see this most clearly in the case of Chris and Becky who communicate role expectations to one another (e.g., how much to work and when to take off from work), understand that sacrifices must be made on both ends, and facilitate the goal of successful role fulfillment. Working class parents, on the other hand, are more likely to be in rigid roles that compromise the time they spend at home. Consequently, mothers are more likely to pull a second shift by working for pay and being responsible for a majority of the care giving and housework.

Interestingly though, some single mothers play chess. Who do single mothers play chess with? They mainly play by themselves frequently having to sacrifice important chess pieces on their board: a vacation day for a sick child takes away from the time most professionals use for family vacations or to recover from a stressful work season. Single parents may also have to ask family members or close acquaintances to join them on the chess board. If a child is sick, the mother may rely on a female family member to assist (normally her mother or grandmother). Because single mothers are forced to utilize more chess pieces (or pieces of capital) than dual-earner couples, they remain at a disadvantage in the world of work (e.g., less likely to be promoted) and family (e.g., more work–family strain). They face a set of pressures that two-parent households are, for the most part, able to resist. Because marital status brings with it the type of resources necessary to offset some work–family problems, we believe that this social status position should be equally heralded as an axis of power within the intersectionality framework. By using an intersectionality perspective, this study especially provides insights into the high-status worlds of upper-middle-class families

and those of single mothers, all of whom are "doing" family in successful but quite different ways.

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