

The Third Shift: Paid Work, Care Work and Education

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Abstract

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This paper explores how women's current status in the workplace and the often unequal distribution of household labor are interrelated. Specifically, focus is placed on how women's paid and unpaid labor is influenced by gendered expectations and economic factors. It is found that women who work for pay are impacted financially by wage penalties and parental discrimination. At the same time, the tendency for women to do more unpaid labor than men further detracts from paid work, especially for women who serve as primary caregivers. While changes in policy and law present a practical and effective solution to these problems, such action is still very much needed. Therefore, increasing access to education for working mothers is urgent. It is argued that education can limit wage penalties and decrease work-family conflict brought on by unpaid labor. Consequently, this paper includes a content analysis of the promotional material of 10 universities to assess the availability of resources designed for student parents and to measure the extent to which these universities represent the student parent identity. This exploration provides the foundation necessary for understanding which resources are lacking and which resources universities can establish to provide greater access to education.

Introduction

When women's work is discussed, conversations typically fall into two separate but related categories: the unpaid work women do inside of the home and work that is performed for pay. These topics have been explored in a variety of ways. When it comes to working for pay, scholars (Bardasi and Gornick, 2008; Budig and Hodges, 2010; Garey, 1999) have widely discussed how there is a gender wage gap that accounts for women earning, on average, 20 to 23 percent less than men (National Women's Law Center, 2015). However, women's disadvantage in the workplace goes much further when they become mothers. For example, Correll et al (2004) and Cuddy (2004) uncovered several ways in which working mothers experience workplace discrimination due to parental status. Additionally, Budig and England (2001) have quantified parental discrimination, wage penalties and the price of being a caregiver by highlighting the existence of a motherhood wage penalty.

Similarly, the unpaid work women do has been explored at length. Most literature (Szalai, 1972; Reskin and Padavic, 2002; Goldin, 1990) centers on what Arlie Hochschild (1989) calls "The Stalled Revolution." This term refers to the fact that men's participation in caring for the home and children has not correlated to the rise in women's labor force participation. As a result, women face a "second shift," or the daily challenge of working in the labor force and returning home to perform the majority of reproductive labor that families require- work that is unpaid. This translates to women performing a larger portion of unpaid labor and facing greater work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict related to the unequitable distribution of household labor has also been well-documented. For example, researchers have found that mothers who work and provide

the majority of unpaid labor within the home pay a price for the work they do. For example, Hochschild (1989) found that women with demanding work and family commitments are more likely to be sick, depressed and consider divorce. In addition, Garey (1999) found that work and family demands lead to the denormalization of sleep, meaning some working women sacrifice sleep in order to meet the demands of being a caregiver. Garey (1999) also found that work and family conflict decreases the ability to provide quality care for children.

One commonality between paid and unpaid labor is the fact that women are disadvantaged economically when performing both kinds of work; women who work for pay experience wage penalties and discrimination in the workplace, while unpaid work often detracts from paid work. Budig and England (2001) perhaps sum up the effects of paid and unpaid labor best: “We think there is a serious equity problem when we all free ride on the benefits of mothers’ labor, while mothers bear much of the costs of rearing children” (p. 221). What Budig and England (2001) and other existing research on this topic presents in the way of a solution to women’s economic disadvantage and the unequal distribution of household labor is to call on the need for policy-level changes. Since political progress toward making the workplace more equitable is much-needed, yet still lacking, this research aims to present a different solution: increasing working mothers’ earnings through improved access to college education. Since there is limited existing research (Duquaine-Watson, 2007; Haleman, 2004; Springer et al, 2009; Van Stone et al, 1994) related to women’s access to higher education, there is a great need for exploring this topic further. The question then must be asked, have academic institutions embraced the identity and needs of students that are both workers and caregivers to make college accessible?

To more fully understand the barriers that women face in completing a college degree and how a college education can improve women's experience with paid and unpaid labor, I use a mixed method approach. I begin by discussing women's status in the workplace and exploring trends in the division of household labor over time. Together, these two issues reveal the variety of ways paid and unpaid labor affects women's economic status and necessitates the opportunity for receiving increased wages through higher education. After fully investigating these topics, I present a variety of data that shows how a college education can improve women's economic status, influence the division of household labor and reduce work-family conflict. This discussion is followed by a summary of the results of a content analysis of the promotional and informational material of 10 universities to see what resources are available to student parents. Lastly, I combine my own experience as a student parent with interviews conducted with current student parents to uncover what barriers are the hardest to overcome in completing an education and what resources are the most valuable. To connect the lived experiences of women with existing research, I conclude by exploring how these women manage the time commitments of work, family and school. Specifically, I focus on how each woman's "second shift" affects the ease at which she completes a college degree and whether or not the added time commitment to school presents a "third shift."

Women in the Workplace: Wage Penalties and Discrimination

Before beginning a discussion on access to education, it's necessary to first break down the complex and often intersectional issues that affect all working women's economic stability, and specifically working women who are parents. This examination builds the foundation

necessary to fully understand why women are uniquely disadvantaged in the workplace and highlights the urgency behind finding a solution to raise women's economic stability. One economic disadvantage that affects women regardless of parental status is the gender wage gap, which results in many women earning on average, between 77 and 80 cents for every dollar earned by men (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2010). Goldin (1990) found that the gender wage gap exists at all levels of the labor market except for low-wage jobs where employees are paid minimum wage. The gender wage gap has resulted in the median annual earnings for full-time male workers being just over 47,000 dollars, while comparable female workers earn just over 36,000 dollars annually (Budig and Hodges 2010).

In addition to the gender wage gap, researchers have also attempted to quantify the loss of earnings women experience as a result of becoming mothers. Using a variety of controls, such as years of job experience, marital status and number of children, Budig and England (2001) found that a motherhood wage penalty affects the earning potential of virtually all mothers. The authors found that women experience a 7 percent wage penalty for being mothers of one child, and that subsequent children increase the motherhood wage penalty by as much as an additional 7 percent, depending on their human capital (Budig and England, 2001).

One-third of the motherhood wage penalty encompasses things like having to take time away from the workforce before and after the birth of a child due to medical or personal reasons, underemployment to balance work and family commitments, and lost wages from taking time from work to care for sick children. However, some of the factors that create the motherhood wage penalty cannot be directly identified. For example, Budig and England (2001) asked the following question: "What explains the approximately two-thirds of the 7-percent-per-child penalty not explained by the reduction motherhood makes in women's job experience, if little of

it is from working less demanding or mother-friendly jobs? The remaining motherhood penalty of about 4 percent per child may arise from effects of motherhood on productivity and/or from employer discrimination” (p. 219). Whatever the causes are of the motherhood wage penalty, one thing is clear: it reflects the literal price women pay for being mothers. However, Correll (2004) found that parental status affects men much differently. In her study, as a result of men being perceived as the financial providers for families, fathers were awarded, on average, an extra \$4,000 per year in wages. On the other hand, women face a gender wage gap and a motherhood wage penalty.

Aside from penalties based on gender, the perception of working women affects their economic stability. Research conducted by Cuddy et al (2004) shows that mothers face discrimination in the workplace due to their parental status. In this study, job candidates were described to hiring personnel. The results showed that candidates known to be parents were less likely to be hired (Cuddy et al, 2004). In fact, when hiring personnel was informed that the female applicants had children, they viewed them as warm rather than cold, but less competent and less committed to paid work. For example, Cuddy et al (2004) found: “When working women become mothers, they unwittingly make a trade: perceived warmth for perceived competence. This trade unjustly costs them professional credibility and hinders their odds of being hired, promoted, and generally supported in the workplace” (p. 715). However, men who were known to be parents faced no discrimination when applying for the same positions with the same qualifications. Specifically, Cuddy et al (2004) found that “men are not fated to lose perceived competence when they gain a child, and becoming fathers does not diminish their professional opportunities” (p. 715).

In a similar study that evaluated the response of hiring personnel to applicants with children, Correll et al (2007) found that “fathers were advantaged over childless men in several ways, being seen as more committed to paid work and being offered higher starting salaries. The fact that evaluators offered higher salaries to fathers suggests that cultural beliefs about gendered labor markets and a family wage still shape the allocation of organized rewards” (p. 1332). This research upholds the American cultural value of nuclear families comprised of women as homemakers and fathers as breadwinners even though this is no longer how the majority of households operate (Cuddy et al, 2007). Ultimately, just under 6 percent of all mothers are stay at home mothers; census data indicates that a large majority of these women are married (United States Census Bureau, 2012).

The view of women in the workplace as less committed and the resulting impact on women's wages can be explained by statistical discrimination. Since it's expensive for an employer to rate the productivity of a worker before they are hired, the employer pays a group an average of their expected average productivity. For example, the research of Cuddy et al (2004) and Correll et al (2007) shows evidence to support the fact that women are perceived as less competent and less committed to the workplace when they have family commitments. If employers perceive working mothers to be less productive than male workers or childless women, statistical discrimination explains why working mothers face workplace discrimination.

While it is impossible to know exactly how many women experience workplace discrimination for being mothers, one statistic is telling. The rate that family responsibility lawsuits involving workplace discrimination were filed increased by 400 percent from 1998 to 2008 (*Harvard Business Review*, 2012). However, U.S. law does not actually prohibit discriminatory hiring practices due to parental status. In fact, businesses are protected under a

law of disparate impact. This means that a business can hire, or not hire, whoever they want if it is a "business necessity." This is defined as anything that results in more productive workers or reduces business costs (Budig and England 2001).

In conclusion, being a woman *and* a parent in the workplace negatively affects the earnings of many women. The reasons why women are considered less committed to paid work and the factors behind the motherhood wage penalty are largely shaped by conventional gender norms and gendered expectations. Many women take on the majority of childcare by choice or out of necessity (Garey, 1999), and of course, must take at least a minimal amount of time away from the workplace to give birth to children. For example, one recent study of a large sample of U.S. women found that the average length of maternity leave is 10 weeks (Shepherd-Banigan and Bell, 2014). The study also showed that only 41 percent of women received paid maternity leave and that the average length of paid maternity leave is just 3.3 weeks (Shepherd-Banigan and Bell, 2014). The bottom line is many women are penalized rather than supported when it comes to their work as caregivers. Unfortunately, workplace discrimination and wage penalties are often compounded by the gendered dynamics of the home. It is here that cultural expectations about the gendered division of unpaid labor places an additional burden on women in a variety of ways.

Men and Women at Work

In essence, the previous section explored the effects of gender and parental status in the workplace. The following section will further investigate several of the causes of women's economic disadvantage and the reasons why women are considered less committed to the

workplace. This requires separating women's paid and unpaid labor to understand how both are related to economic disadvantage. Two major themes emerge from an analysis of existing research on this topic: both economic and cultural factors play a significant role in the division of household labor.

When it comes to who does the unpaid work of caregiving, women face cultural pressure to serve as the primary caregiver (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). The persistent cultural ideology that care work and housework is women's work is strongly tied to the construction of gender. As Lyonette (2014) stated, "The prevailing sexual division of domestic and caring work reflects the construction of masculinities and femininities and that domesticity is a central element in 'doing gender'" (p. 24). This statement explains what is referred to as symbolic interaction perspective, or the process of performing gender through daily activities, and shows how gender can influence the division of household labor.

Arlie Hochschild's (1989) work on this topic provides additional support for the argument that gender plays a prominent role in the division of household labor. Hochschild conducted a study of 50 married couples for her book, "The Second Shift," to investigate how gender affects the division of household labor. Her findings showed that husbands who earned more money than their wives contributed 21 percent to household labor. Husbands who made about the same as their wives contributed 30 percent to household labor. Shockingly, men who earned less than their wives or who did not contribute to household finances at all contributed nothing to household labor. Hochschild's findings support the idea that women continue to do the bulk of the housework because, despite men's earnings, housework continues to be so strongly tied to gender roles.

The research of Reskin and Padavic (2002) also shows similar cultural trends. The authors found that men who are financially dependent on their wives are actually less likely to do housework than men who make more money than their wives. Altogether, these findings indicate that when men are not the primary financial providers in their family – a role that is strongly tied to masculinity – they avoid assuming roles associated with femininity. In this way, men “make up” for not filling a masculine role by distancing themselves from tasks such as housework and childcare.

However, there is another field of research that suggests that human capital and financial contribution to the family, regardless of gender, are the primary determinants of the division of household labor. For example, economic theory can be used to explain trends in the division of household labor involving exchange and bargaining power. This theory views the family through the lens of economic analysis and is based on the assumption that no one wants to reduce personal financial gain by doing unpaid labor, so spouses use their personal income to bargain over who is responsible for the majority of unpaid work. Exchange and bargaining power theoretically leads to both partners sharing the collective work of paid and unpaid labor equitably. Economic contribution only determines how much of each type of labor each partner performs.

Exchange and bargaining power is somewhat similar to Gary Becker’s (1981) theory on the specialization of labor within the family. Becker’s theory assumes that each family member will maximize their utility by specializing in either working within the home *or* through market labor. With Becker’s theory, the partner that earns the most money through market labor specializes in working outside of the home to maximize the function and well-being of the family. The spouse who earns less money performs most of the household labor.

While both economic theories do not consider gender to be a determinant of who does the majority of unpaid labor, women are at a distinct disadvantage for earning more money than their spouses. This means women lose exchange and bargaining power, and by earning less in the workplace because of wage penalties, specialize in unpaid labor. While informative, economic theory cannot always translate to lived experience. Therefore, it is important to look at time use studies to capture exactly how many hours men and women spend working.

A recent Pew Research Center time use study found that women work 45.2 hours compared to men who spend 45.6 hours working (Pew Research Center, 2013). At first glance, this study seems to show that the working lives of men and women are virtually equal. However, the Pew study involved participants quantifying the amount of time spent on paid work *and* unpaid labor, such as childcare and housework. To uncover the story in these numbers, it's important to look at the average distribution of household labor and the amount of hours women work in the labor force compared to men.

In a ground-breaking study, Szalai (1972) interviewed working men and women living in 44 cities across the U.S. to reveal trends in the division of household labor. He found that, on average, women spent three hours a day on housework, while men spent only 17 minutes on the same task each day (Szalai, 1972). Further, Szalai's research revealed the average time spent exclusively on childcare (that is, providing care for children without multitasking) was 50 minutes per day for women and 12 minutes for men (Szalai, 1972). Not surprising, it was found that the men who participated in this study slept 30 minutes longer and enjoyed an hour more of time spent on "leisure activities" – such as watching television – than the women in the study (Szalai, 1972).

Szalai's work not only showed a general trend in the division of household labor among a large sample of working men and women, it also resulted in the author giving a name to the extra time women spend caring for children and the home: women's "double day." Later research backs up Szalai's findings. In her book, "The Second Shift," Arlie Hochschild (1989) conducted a quantitative analysis of the major research dedicated to the subject of the division of household labor from the 1960s and 1970s. Based in the results of these studies, she found that the time women dedicate to housework and childcare totals an extra month of work each year when compared to men.

When Szalai and Hochschild's research was conducted, women were entering the workforce in ever increasing numbers, yet there were still many workplace restraints placed on women. In 1965, when Szalai's study first began, women worked for pay an average of 15 hours per week, while men worked for pay an average of 46 hours per week (Pew Research Center, 2013). By 2011, those numbers had changed for both women and men. That year, women worked an average of 25 hours per week, and men worked an average 35 hours per week (Pew Research Center, 2013). With women now working an average of 10 hours more per week and men working 11 hours less per week, one might assume the hours men and women dedicate to childcare and housework had also undergone similar changes. However, research suggests this is simply not a reality.

Women now spend on average just under 4.5 hours per day on housework and childcare combined (Pew Research, 2011). This is an increase of just under an hour compared to Szalai's research. For men, the amount of time spent on childcare and housework is just under 2.5 hours, up from 29 minutes (Pew Research, 2011). These findings support the idea that the time men and women dedicate to unpaid labor has increased, yet women continue to be responsible for the

majority of household and childcare labor despite an increase in working hours. As a result, men have gained two additional hours of leisure time compared to women since Szalai's study was conducted.

Ultimately, gender roles continue to shape perceptions of the appropriate division of household labor. Although perceptions of gender roles requires a shift in personal beliefs and ideology, more can be done to increase women's exchange and bargaining power. A college education must be accessible for working women who are parents because increased earnings through higher education has the potential to limit the effects of wage penalties and decrease the amount of unpaid labor assigned to women. Further evidence for this argument will be discussed in later sections. This discussion must first be prefaced by talking about the obstacles women face in managing work and family commitments. By exploring the lives of women who work and parent, the benefits of education and economic advancement can be realize.

Balancing Working and Parenting

The previous sections explored the economic impacts of women's status in the workplace and the division of household labor. A discussion on these topics is not complete without also examining how women manage the roles of worker and unpaid laborer within the home. In assuming a "second shift" by being primary caregivers, women face a unique set of challenges resulting from work-family conflict. Rather than adjusting either work commitments or family commitments, many women have to make adjustments to both spheres. This analysis is the final component necessary for entering into a discussion about how higher education specifically benefits women.

Research (Hochschild, 1989; Garey, 1999) shows that women who have demanding work and family commitments have three available avenues: making sacrifices when it comes to time-consuming commitments, gaining power over time commitments through paid employment (using exchange and bargaining power or finding a flexible work schedule) and changing the way labor is divided within the home. As was the case with the division of household labor, women's management of paid and unpaid labor involves developing a balance strategy that is largely shaped by gender roles and economic factors.

In "Weaving Work and Motherhood," Anita Garey (1999) explored the subject of balance strategies by interviewing a large sample of workers with diverse work schedules and family structure. She outlined several "resource constellations" that determine which balance strategies are viable options for women. These resources include income, wealth and class background, education, occupational field, job security and seniority, marital or relationship status and security, support from others, racial privilege, and family size. The participants in Garey's study all made work choices to "fit" their roles as unpaid workers, and used their available resources to gain a measure of control over their "second shift."

For example, many of the night shift workers interviewed by Garey chose those working hours in order to be present when their children were awake. In addition, night work allowed the women to avoid outsourcing childcare for personal or financial reasons. While the night shift workers reported the greatest degree of work-family balance compared to the full-time, day shift workers, the women in the study who worked at night reported sacrificing the most sleep to meet the demands of being a mother and worker. Several of the women reported an average of just four hours of sleep per night, something Garey called "the denormalization of sleep."

Another group of workers interviewed, those that worked part-time, also had more work and family balance than workers employed full-time. This balance strategy appears to be common among women trying to achieve work-family balance. For example, Budig and England (2001) conducted research that shows mothers of children under age 5 are more likely to accept jobs if they are “mother-friendly” by providing flexible work hours and other non-pecuniary benefits. Often, it is part-time work that provides these benefits. However, working fewer hours negatively impacts women financially. Although part-time work helps women balance work and their jobs as caregivers, it also tends to be concentrated in occupations where wages are 8 to 15 percent less than comparable full-time jobs (Bardasi and Gornick 2002). In addition, only women with the right "resource constellations" can choose this option.

Similarly, Jurik (1998) explored how some women try to balance paid and unpaid labor by working from home. Jurik’s case study found that 40 percent of women who work from home are childcare providers in order to earn money while caring for their own children. However, compared to women in other work-from-home occupations, caregivers often earn far less money. Additionally, Budig and England (2001) found that all mothers who work from home, regardless of occupation, experience a 22 to 30 percent wage penalty for doing so compared to men. This could be the result of childcare demands during work hours, or it might be explained by the gender wage gap. Garey’s (1999) and Jurik's (1998) research indicates two things. First, women’s working lives are shaped by the resources available and the ability to “fit” motherhood into their lives as workers. Second, the women used their paid job as a means of gaining control over time and commitments, but often at the price of sleep deprivation or a reduction in financial security.

Inside of the home, there are a few different balance strategies women can employ to manage the division of household labor. Hochschild (1989) termed these the direct approach, the indirect approach and “supermoming.” The direct approach is just that- a direct confrontation about how unpaid labor is divided in the home, such as threatening divorce in an attempt to change a spouse’s approach to housework and childcare. Indirect approaches vary, but could involve feigning stupidity to avoid an unpaid task. Hochschild’s study concluded that women found these two approaches to be largely unsuccessful.

The third strategy, “supermoming,” occurs in women who quite literally do it all. Instead of approaching spouses for help, these women shoulder the burden of all or most of the childcare and housework while making significant contributions to the family financially. Many of the women interviewed by Hochschild who used this strategy were influenced by cultural expectations that mothers should somehow find the time to have a great career, be a great mom and also be a great (house) wife. Alternately, some women may voluntarily take on a significant amount of household labor to “make up” for taking on the role of financial provider – a role society largely continues to identify as a male role. No matter which strategy the women in Hochschild study chose, or was forced to use, all women had one thing in common: they were tired and the unequal division of household labor caused a great deal of personal stress and strained the women’s marriages.

For a variety of reasons, household labor is divided inequitably, and women are negatively impacted by this. One salient aspect of the previous discussions is that economic power, or lack thereof, has a huge impact on multiple aspects of women’s lives. Women receive lower pay and fewer job opportunities from workplace discrimination and wage penalties. This affects women’s economic stability and also plays a role in how household labor is divided. In

turn, being responsible for the majority of household labor further limits women economically. For example, several of the balance strategies discussed involve making sacrifices to paid work in order to manage family commitments. Further, the time use studies showed that women work for pay less than men as an apparent result of performing more unpaid labor. All of these factors highlight the need for increasing women's earnings.

Exploring the Solution of Higher Education

One way to address the economic costs of being a woman in the workforce is to consider how a college degree can increase wages and decrease wage penalties. In addition, there is evidence to support the argument that a college degree presents women with more options to balance work and family commitments through workplace flexibility. I begin this discussion by first looking at data on how a college degree impacts the earnings and unemployment rate of workers. Next, I examine how gaining skills through education reduces wage penalties. Moving away from strictly economic discussions, I examine border theory to highlight the importance of a flexible work schedule when faced with demanding work and family commitments. I conclude by looking at several surveys and a study on how higher-status jobs attained through higher education provide more opportunities for women.

The value of a college education in offsetting the effects of the gender wage gap is evident when looking at how income increases with each college degree that is earned. For example, in 2014, the average weekly pay for someone with only a high school diploma was \$668 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). For those with an associate's degree, pay averaged \$792, while those with a bachelor degree earned an average of \$1,101 weekly (Bureau of Labor

Statistics, 2014). For advanced degrees, the same trend is reflected. Workers with a master's degree earn an average of \$1,326 per week, while those with a doctorate degree earn \$1,591 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Another related economic benefit of higher education is a lower unemployment rate. In 2014, the unemployment rate for workers with only a high school education was 6 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). For those with an associate degree, unemployment dropped to 4.5 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Workers with a bachelor degree had an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent, and for those with a master's degree, the rate was 2.8 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). At the doctoral level, the unemployment rate was just 2.1 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Along the same lines, there is research to support an argument that a college education not only limits the effects of the gender wage gap, but it also offsets the extent to which women experience a motherhood wage penalty. Anderson et al (2003) and Budig and England (2001) both found that high school graduates experience a higher motherhood wage penalty when compared to college graduates. In both studies, the reduction in the motherhood wage penalty was significant, but varied according to the age and number of children a woman has.

The important point about women's earnings is that women have consistently made less than men over time. While the wage penalty has decreased slowly in past decades, it remains a constant. The only solution, aside from changes at the policy level, is to raise women's human capital by increasing education levels. However, improving the pay women receive is only one part of the problem. Reducing work-family conflict through job flexibility presents a solution to women faced with a "second shift" of household labor, and alleviates many of the difficulties that accompany being a worker and mother.

It is difficult to understand the conflict that can arise as people navigate between the roles of parent and worker. Border theory (Clark, 2000) attempts to capture this, and is based on the fact that working parents must constantly negotiate two separate spheres: the workplace and the home. “Crossing a border” from home to work or work to home requires making adjustments to the physical setting and demands of each sphere, and also the accompanying psychological changes necessary to shift between the roles of being a worker and being a parent.

According to Clark (2000), one of the key factors in creating less-conflicting borders between work and home is flexibility, “or the extent to which the border may contract or expand, depending on the demands of one domain or the other” (p. 12). Therefore, crossing the border between the workplace and the home with a minimal amount of conflict requires flexibility above all else. Since the needs of children are virtually always either fixed or unpredictable, the best place to create flexibility is in the workplace.

Because of the added domestic work women do, flexibility in the workplace continues to be a necessary. Surveys such as Forbes “Top Ten Most Flexible Jobs for Women” highlight the gendered norms that women face, and illuminate the importance that women place on workplace flexibility. In fact, in this survey, women rank flexibility over job security and compensation. The best jobs listed in the article, however, are those that offer a combination of a good wage, job security and flexibility, and those are the ones that require a college degree. Looking at another Forbes survey, “The Top Ten Most Flexible High-Paying Jobs,” the need for higher education is just as apparent. Each of the jobs that made this list were rated high for pay and job flexibility. Each of the jobs also requires a college degree.

A more comprehensive report compiled by the Families and Work Institute reflects how job flexibility and benefits required by primary caregivers increase as income level rises. The

report found that 37 percent of low-wage employees and 45 percent of high-wage employees were able to occasionally choose when work hours began and ended (Families and Work Institute, 2006). 12 percent of low-wage workers had daily control over the start and end times of their workday compared to 26 percent for high-wage workers. Only 24 percent of low-wage employees were allowed enough days off to care for sick children, compared to 54 percent of high-wage employees (Families and Work Institute, 2006). Additionally, only 17 percent of low-wage workers received sufficient paid time to care for sick children, while 49 percent of high-wage workers had enough paid time for childcare duties (Families and Work Institute, 2006). This report suggests that someone making a higher wage has a better chance of finding work with more flexible hours, and more paid time available to meet the demands of being a primary caregiver.

The bottom line is, women benefit from flexible work environments, and those environments are more likely to exist for high-wage workers. The point of this section is to reinforce the argument that earning a college degree can and often does result in higher wages. Additionally, jobs in several high-paying industries that require a college degree provide a higher degree of flexibility than others. In general, higher paying jobs also tend to provide more benefits to parents of children, such as paid vacation and sick days, than low-wage and part-time work. As a result, a job available to college graduates has the potential to offset the effects of the gender wage gap and motherhood wage penalty. A high-paying, flexible job has the ability to offset the causes and effects of unpaid labor.

Method

According to Klein and Newell (1997), “Interdisciplinary research is the process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with by a single discipline...and draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective” (p. 11). An interdisciplinary research method was used for this research for several reasons. First, the aim of this research is to explore a topic relevant to the field of women’s studies, a multidisciplinary field. An interdisciplinary method also allowed me to explore and synthesize existing research from all relevant disciplines. While the majority of academic research discussed in the previous sections comes from the women’s studies field, some research from the economics and sociology disciplines was chosen to explore the topic at hand in-depth. Third, this research method was best suited for answering the broad research question: Do mothers who work and attend college experience a “third shift”?

Without being limited to one discipline, I was able to select the most insightful literature relevant to my research question. Doing so allowed for discussions about the current status of women in the workplace, the often unequal distribution of unpaid labor, and how gendered inequalities related to paid and unpaid labor affect women’s economic stability and advancement. Together, these discussions revealed how these factors are interrelated and are the primary reasons women’s “second shift” exists. These discussions, built from an interdisciplinary research method, provide the foundation necessary for exploring the lives of women workers who are also college students and assessing the degree to which college campuses facilitate the needs of student parents.

Additionally, a mixed method approach was used to explore this complex issue. First, interviews were conducted with current college students who identify as both workers and mothers to gain insight into the challenges this part of the student body faces. Second, autoethnography was used to add my personal experience being a worker, mother and college student. This particular research method also allowed me to reveal some of the less visible resources available to some student parents. Finally, a content analysis of 10 Washington State universities was conducted to explore the resource that are available to student parents to assess whether or not the student parent identity is visible and actively acknowledged in college promotional material.

Research Method - Interviews

Setting

Student parents currently enrolled at the University of Washington Tacoma campus were targeted for conducting the one-on-one interviews. This campus was chosen as the research setting primarily for two reasons. First, being a student of this campus, I was able to use my own experience to construct campus-specific interview questions. Second, this campus in several ways caters to and attracts “non-traditional” students, including students who have families and established careers. This increased the odds of finding participants and also facilitated a discussion about the effectiveness of existing on-campus student services designed specifically for student parents.

The University of Washington Tacoma campus offers a variety of undergraduate degree programs open to freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior-level students. Several graduate and professional certification programs have also been established at this campus. However, the majority of students are undergraduate students, and over 80 percent of students transfer from community college, making the enrollment rates of juniors and seniors markedly higher than other grade levels (University of Washington, 2014). According to student body demographic information listed on the University of Washington Tacoma website, as of fall 2014, a total of 4,501 students were enrolled at the Tacoma campus; of these students, 46 percent are male and 54 percent are female (University of Washington, 2014). Unfortunately, no information could be found about the number of student parents enrolled at this campus.

Participants

Since this research involves a relatively small amount of participants and includes students from only one campus, every effort was made to attract a diverse group of participants. The basic inclusion criteria required to participate in the interviews necessitated that participants must be currently enrolled at the Tacoma campus, employed either part-time or full-time for pay, and be the mother of at least one child under the age of 18. Due to Human Subject Division requirements, participants were required to be at least 21 years of age or older. Students were contacted directly and indirectly via informational flyers distributed during the 2014 Summer and Fall quarters. Flyers were distributed by myself and one other faculty member, and in one case, a student contacted me after seeing a flyer posted on a campus message board.

Interviews were open to students without regard to class status, race, employment field, degree program or grade level. In addition, marital status was not selected as exclusion criteria. In opening interviews to women who were either married, single or partnered, the goal was to have the interviews reflect the experiences of women as a whole. That is, the experience of single parents could be compared and contrasted with the experience of married or partnered women.

Interview Method and Analysis

To move from a discussion about women workers to women workers attending college, I chose the qualitative method of one-on-one interviews. A combination of structured and semi-structured interview questions was used. For example, structured interview questions were used in instances where the participant was asked to specify estimates regarding the time they dedicate to different roles (mother, worker, student). On the other hand, semi-structured interview questions were employed when participants were asked questions that elicited responses based on individual experience, opinions or beliefs. As Galleta (2013) states, “A key benefit to the semi-structured interview is its attention to lived experience while also addressing theoretically driven variables of interest” (p. 22). The semi-structured interview questions often resulted in participants discussing related topics without being prompted to do so, which gave their answers more depth. In addition, semi-structured interview questions facilitated a comparison between theoretical research about working women and the actual lived experience of college students.

To ensure confidentiality, participants are referred to only by numbers (participant 1, participant 2, etc.). However, general, non-identifying information about participants, such as

occupation and degree program, is used to provide an overview of the life of each participant. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants, which resulted in the location of interviews changing to fit the needs of each participant. For example, one participant was only able to meet on campus immediately after a class and another was only able to meet at a coffee shop close to her workplace during her lunch break.

Interviews were not conducted until Human Subjects Division approval was gained, and all participants signed and received a copy of a consent form outlining the nature of the interview questions. Due to the somewhat personal nature of some of the interview questions, participants were also informed that they were able to refuse to answer any questions. However, all participants freely answered all questions. Audio of each interview was recorded, during which time the participant's name was not mentioned to protect her identity.

Since several of the interview questions dealt with the distribution of household labor, the interview questions were altered slightly to fit each participant's circumstances. For example, questions regarding the division of household labor were not posed to single mothers who did not currently have a partner or spouse. Instead, single participants were asked a few questions regarding any support systems available to them that alleviated some of the burden of unpaid labor.

Participant responses were compared with the research gathered for this paper. Data related to the time each participant spends in a given role was compared with existing studies to get an idea of if participants – and consequently, other working women attending college – do in fact face a “third shift.” That is, the responses were analyzed to see if participants took time away from other roles, for example, by cutting back on paid labor to make up for the time demands of attending college, or added additional hours to their day compared to working

women not enrolled in college. Further, the participants' responses were related to a content analysis of the resources available to student parents at the college campuses chosen for analysis.

Research Method - Content Analysis

Conducting a content analysis of university websites and promotional material was chosen as a research method to provide contrast against the two other research methods chosen, interviews and autoethnography, that reflect personal experiences and are by nature influenced to some degree by emotion and opinion. As Krippendorff (1989) states of content analysis, “Whereas most social research techniques are concerned with observing stimuli and responses...content analysis goes outside the immediately observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents, correlates, or consequences of communication, thus rendering the (unobservable) context of data analyzable” (p. 1). Therefore, when reviewing the content available on university websites, the information was analyzed by considering how available resources and any mention of student parents relates to the presence – or lack of presence – of the student parent identity on college campuses. This information was also viewed as indicative of how colleges advertise their services and which students are the focus of such efforts. Further, the information gathered during the content analysis was viewed as symbolic of each university's understanding of the needs of student parents.

To select a diverse but localized group of college campuses for review, 10 colleges located in Washington State were selected; five colleges are private institutions, and the other five are public institutions. The five public universities selected are: The University of

Washington Tacoma, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Washington State University and Western Washington University. The private institutions include Gonzaga University, Pacific Lutheran University, Seattle Pacific University, University of Puget Sound and St. Martin's University.

During the content analysis of all 10 universities, two methods were used to gather relevant information: a general web search using specific keywords, and a search of each university's website looking for certain information. Specifically, information related to general student parent resources were gathered using a web search and the search terms "student parent resources," along with each university's name. Additionally, the words "childcare" and "family housing" were combined with each university's name to gather any information available about those kinds of resources. Each university's mission statement and student demographic/census data was also located on university websites to assess the presence of the student parent identity at each university.

Limitations

Research methods involving autoethnography and one-on-one interviews both have the limitation of being reliant on self-reported data and run the risk of reflecting an experience that may not be shared by the larger population being discussed. Additionally, only three participants were interviewed due to a lack of response from various attempts to locate study participants. Therefore, the small sample of interviews represents an exploration into the lived experience of student parents rather than a comprehensive overview of this population's opinions and a reflection of an experience shared by a majority of student parents. The content analysis method

also comes with a separate set of limitations. Primarily, there is the limitation of not knowing whether or not information that was searched for actually exists and simply couldn't be located using the chosen search words. Along the same lines, university websites are frequently edited and altered to add or retract certain information, so it is always possible that the information will become available at a later date or was available prior to the search.

Finding the Student Parent Identity at 10 Universities

We know that college-educated mothers benefit from the flexibility and increased wages afforded by high-wage employment. In the next section of this paper, I investigate whether colleges are acknowledging a woman's parental status in their promotional material. To do so, I sampled 10 university webpages for analysis and combined web searches with a careful review of each school's census data and mission statements. My research suggest that the material *not* found is as telling as the data that was found, and I discuss mission statements, childcare resources and the availability of family housing in relation to how each university has conceived of and represented students' parental status.

To explore how many resources are available to student parents within a limited but effective scope, 10 universities located in Washington State were selected for analysis; five public and five private universities were chosen. Each institution provides a variety of undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. The five public universities selected are: The University of Washington, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Washington State University and Western Washington University. The Private institutions

include Gonzaga University, Pacific Lutheran University, Seattle Pacific University, University of Puget Sound and St. Martin's University.

The following information was gathered by completing web searches using each university's name and specific key words. Additionally, the mission statements and census data pages on each university's webpage were visited to locate certain relevant information. The information that was *not found* is not indicative that it does not exist. Rather, the information available to prospective students was viewed through the lens of advertisement. That is, each university publishes certain information to inform and attract students, and in a general sense, advertise the educational institution. It is then argued that any available resources for student parents should be readily available and easily found, much in the same way things like housing and a list of degree programs should be available. Therefore, the following results summarize what can be found with a thorough and targeted web search.

Mission Statements

Working off the assumption that colleges use their mission statements to guide their policies and procedures, the mission statements of all 10 colleges were analyzed. Specifically, statements regarding students' access to each specific university were sought. Mission statements universally center, rightfully so, on a commitment to providing quality education and preparing students for using their education in communities locally, nationally and internationally. However, none of the private colleges mention the word "access" anywhere in their mission statements. One public institution, Western Washington University, did include a statement regarding a commitment to "expand student access to rigorous and engaging baccalaureate and

graduate education” (Western Washington University, n.d.). The mission statement did not specify how access is provided. Similarly, Eastern Washington University’s mission statement includes the brief statement: “We expand access to opportunity and success for students” (Eastern Washington University, n.d.). Again, how access is provided is not elaborated on. Lastly, the University of Washington Tacoma’s mission statement alludes to providing access by mentioning that the university “seeks out and supports individuals who may experience barriers in gaining access to college” (University of Washington Tacoma, n.d.).

Census Data

Another tool available to universities that allows them to provide their student body with access to education is an understanding of the specific needs of each demographic of students. To analyze what information is publically available on each university’s website, a search for any census data that reflects how many student parents are enrolled at each campus was sought. No such information appeared from searches, but of course, that does not mean each university does not have a record of this information. However, there remains doubt whether that information is considered at all.

The type of information available electronically to potential students varied by institution and ranged from extensive to inadequate. In fact, when listing student body census data, one private university only lists the total student enrollment number and students’ religious affiliation, while some universities fail to list the gender of the student body. Though it is beyond the scope of this discussion, very few universities even provide a breakdown of race and ethnicity demographics. Several institutions fail to list this information at all, while three

universities simply refer to a percentage of “students of color” and others provide the vague title of “ethnic diversity.” Regardless of which student is considering a university, they should see things such as the percentage of students with their race, ethnicity, gender and parental status reflected in the promotional material. Notably, the only statement targeting a specific demographic listed in census data is aimed at LGBT students. Washington State University includes the following statement on its census data webpage: “(Washington State University is) among the top 50 universities nationally for policies supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students” (Washington State University, n.d.).

Childcare Resources

Next, the available resources for student parents was looked at. This was first accomplished by conducting a web search using each university’s name and the words “student parent resources.” The number of results was astounding. However, it was quickly apparent that the seemingly endless resources available are directed at the *parents* of college students, not students who are parents. Two childcare resources did result from this search. One was a link to a webpage that no longer exists for the Family Resource Center at Central Washington University. The other result was an informational webpage providing childcare resources, but only for staff and faculty of the University of Washington Seattle campus.

On the other hand, resources available to student parents was far less accessible. With a lack of readily available and plainly advertised resources, I conducted two more searches looking specifically at the availability of family housing – that is, on-campus housing for students who

are parents – and childcare options available to students. Again, each school name and the words “childcare” and “family housing” were used to locate available resources.

All five public universities have some form of childcare resources available to students and faculty. The University of Washington Tacoma search did not yield results about an on-campus childcare center, but it did show information about a childcare grant available to students to help pay for childcare expenses during class time¹. Eastern Washington University,² Washington State University³ and Western Washington University⁴ all provide on-campus childcare and grant assistance or subsidize the cost of childcare. Central Washington University⁵ also provides on-campus childcare, but no financial assistance is available to students paying childcare costs.

Far different results were found when looking at the private universities. One result for childcare resources at Pacific Lutheran University did appear, but the resources are offered only to staff and faculty. Additionally, an article written in the *Gonzaga Bulletin* was found that discusses the need for an on-campus childcare center and the fact that there is a lack of resources offered to student parents. Survey results published in the article reflect support for such resources: “92 percent of staff and faculty would support (an on-campus childcare center)” (*The Gonzaga Bulletin*, 2012). Additionally, 32 percent of students and faculty surveyed said they had

¹ The University of Washington Tacoma grant funds childcare costs for children from birth to 11 years. The grant is available to income-eligible students and is awarded in the amounts of \$600 to full-time students and \$400 for part-time students on a quarterly basis. However, funding is not available during summer quarter.

² Eastern Washington University advertised an on-campus childcare center for students, staff and faculty for children ages 6 weeks to 10 years. Of the children enrolled at the center, around 85 percent are children of students. The center is funded in part by Service and Activities fees.

³ Washington State University has an on-campus childcare center for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years available to students, staff and faculty. A grant funded through the Department of Education is available to fund childcare for income-eligible students. The grant can be used for on-campus childcare or through another licensed childcare center.

⁴ At Western Washington University, there is a childcare center available to students and “working professionals” of the university. Childcare costs are based on income and subsidized through the Associated Students Organization.

⁵ A search for childcare resources available to students at Central Washington University showed that there is a childcare center available to students, staff and faculty, but no information on grant or financial assistance was found. Children aged 4 weeks to 4 years are eligible, and there is afterschool childcare available for children ages 5 to 8.

considered quitting their job or dropping out of school because of the lack of child care. Aside from these results, it appears that no childcare resources are offered at the private universities.

The results of the analysis of childcare resources available at the selected universities shows mixed results. All but one of the public universities provides students with on-campus childcare. The fact that none of the private universities provide support to student parents in the form of childcare resources is troubling. Students without a strong support system of friends and family members must rely on formal childcare centers to attend college. However, providing on-campus childcare centers is only part of providing access to college to student parents. Childcare resources must be financially feasible for potential student parents, especially for women who may already be struggling with any number of wage penalties experienced in the workplace. The four public universities that provide financial support to students for childcare effectively remove one of the major barriers to education for student parents; the other six universities that do not provide this kind of support create a barrier.

Housing

Another essential resource for certain student parents is affordable, on-campus housing. Of the public universities, only two could be identified as offering family housing. Central Washington University appears to provide a variety of housing options for student parents and even holds family-friendly events for the students in family housing, such as holiday events and child safety programs. Washington State University also has available housing options for student parents. The University of Washington Tacoma offers housing only for single students

and arranges shared housing for same-sex students only. Western Washington University and Eastern Washington University also do not appear to offer housing for student parents.

Only one of the private universities, Seattle Pacific University, offers family housing. However, two of the other private universities that do not provide family housing require students to live on campus for at least some of the time they are enrolled as a student. St. Martin's University requires all single students – regardless of parental status - under the age of 21 to live on campus until they have completed 60 semester hours of credit. Similarly, on a housing webpage for Gonzaga University, it states, “The Department of Housing and Residence Life is a comprehensive unit within the Division of Student Development focusing resources and efforts on helping all students with their housing needs both on and off campus.” However, all unmarried students under the age of 21 are required to live on campus for the first two years they are enrolled, effectively voiding the seemingly-inclusive statement above. These two universities present large barriers by not offering housing to student parents *and* requiring some students to live on campus.

When it came to housing options in general, there were impressive results. Some campuses offer themed residence halls based on students' interests and lifestyles, nationality, age, degree program and gender. In fact, Western Washington University provides options for students wishing not to have a gender-based room assignment and has two residence halls with “gender-inclusive” areas. The fact that far fewer accommodations are offered to student parents signals that some universities are failing to address the rising amount of student parents present on college campuses. By focusing more on “traditional students” (younger, unmarried, non-parents), there is a missed opportunity to both attract and support “non-traditional” students wishing to pursue a college education.

In general, the content analysis shows that the public universities provide more resources for student parents than the private universities. Childcare resources and financial assistance to pay for it are more accessible at public institutions, yet not all public universities provide this kind of support to student parents. At the private universities, family housing and on-campus childcare are virtually nonexistent. Beyond simply looking at missing and available resources, the fact that universities cater to the parents of college students overwhelmingly more than student parents is the core of the problem. Without representing and supporting the 4.8 million students who are mothers, some universities are failing to fully provide access to education for a population that can benefit from it in several important ways.

Finding Formal and Informal Resources as a Student Parent

Combining the search results with my personal experience attending the University of Washington Tacoma campus (UWT), one thing is clear: many of the resources available to student parents are invisible. Specifically, there are many resources I did not and could not have known about until I was already enrolled as a student (parent). For student parents seeing multiple barriers to education and few resources, this is a profound problem.

The only formal resources available at UWT are a childcare grant to offset the cost of daycare while student parents attend class, and there are plans to open an on-campus childcare center sometime in the future. The university website offers little else for student parents, and it is the informal resources that have actually helped me balance childcare and education. For example, I have had numerous teachers allow me to bring my child to meetings, and some faculty members have toys available in their offices to occupy the children of students. Some

faculty members also allow children in class, particularly if there are no lectures planned. These resources all made the process of completing a college degree as a student parent easier.

However, these resources are not visible to potential students. With sufficient formal resources lacking at many universities, it is important to make every resource that supports student parents visible.

I have also used class schedules and alternative learning options to my advantage in order to balance education and childcare. I have taken advantage of many independent study options that are available at UWT to further my learning yet reduce the amount of time I have to spend commuting to campus and being in a classroom. Along the same lines, I have taken several online classes when possible to meet the same goal. While my graduate program core classes were available only in the evening on set days, I completed my undergraduate degree by having a large class offering and could more often than not find a required class available in a variety of times.

Just as a flexible work schedule helps reduce the conflict between paid and unpaid work, a flexible class schedule has the potential to help student parents balance their role as a student with the responsibilities of being a parent and worker. From experience, I have found that the two largest barriers to finishing my education are finding childcare while I am in class and adjusting my work schedule so I can attend class. Several of the schools discussed in the content analysis section seem to offer affordable childcare options to students, while others do not. As far as flexible class schedules, each campus has a variety of options designed to fit the needs of certain demographics, but each schedule is not completely fixed and is subject to change. In general, many colleges have begun to offer online and flexible class schedules to meet the needs of working students.

Combining more resources for student parents would go a long way toward removing many of the barriers preventing working student parents from enrolling in college and completing degree programs. Assessing the needs of student parents is essential for providing new resources that support this part of the student body. At the same time, existing resources, both formal and informal, are only helpful if students know about them. The problem is then caused by two inefficiencies: there is a need for more resources in general and there is also a lack in making existing resources explicit to prospective students. Making the student parent identity more visible in promotional and informational material is the first step in making existing policies and resource more visible.

The University of Washington provides one example of a strategy for creating effective and adequate resources for student parents. During the writing of this paper, I received an email from a University of Washington organization called the Graduate and Professional Student Senate. The email explained a new university campaign, “The Whole You and Your Kids Too.” The email included an invitation for student parents to bring their children to campus and the opportunity to complete a survey. The following statement summarizes the nature and aim of the email: “If you are a parent, “the whole you” means your kids too, and the GPSS would like to encourage you to bring your children to campus....to help foster the Husky family culture that we hope to create for all students” (Graduate and Professional Student Senate, personal communication, April 20, 2015).

The survey included open-ended questions like “how has being a parent affected your experience at UW” and “do you have any comments or concerns about childcare or being a student parent at UW.” Other information, such as parental status, number of children, whether or not additional children are expected during enrollment and the type of resources rated most

important were gathered. This survey provides the university with important information about the needs of student parents. If suggested resources are created and made visible in promotional material, this institution will effectively reduce an array of barriers student parents face and provide greater access to education for this part of the student body.

The Third Shift

So far, a variety of data has been presented to show how paid and unpaid work affects women's economic status. Additional research was discussed to show the benefits of a college education in relation to women's economic disadvantage and the conflicts that come with a "second shift." The research presented is a mix of theoretic research and research that is derived from interviews and observations about the lived experience of women. While I presented my own experience as a working mother attending college, I wanted to further explore this topic by recording the observations of others also working, attending college and caring for children. To add the voice of student parents to existing literature on this subject, I gained Human Subjects Division approval to interview three current UWT students to get a better idea of how unpaid work affects both, paid work and education. I also looked at some of the issues reflected in academic literature - such as wage penalties and parental discrimination - to see if they translate to the lived experience of a very small group of student parents. Finally, I asked the students to assess the effectiveness of UWT's resources for students, both at the policy level, and also those resources that are invisible.

All three participants were attending school full-time as senior-level students at the time of the interviews. None of the participants have a partner or spouse living with them; two

participants are separated from their spouses and the other is a single mother. The working lives of the women also varied. Two participants work full-time, while the other works part-time. Participant one is the mother to two children, participant two has four children and participant three has one child.

Hours Spent on Work, School and Childcare

I began interviews by asking about how each woman balances time commitments relating to work, family and school. My ultimate goal was to uncover whether or not working mothers attending college experience a “third shift.” To accomplish this, I compared the result of the Pew Research Center time use study to the participants’ answers to time use questions. Combining all of the reported times dedicated to these three roles, it appears that these women barely have time to sleep. For example, participant one and two both reported a total time commitment average of up to 20 hours per day, while participant three reported up to 14 hours per day in time commitments.

According to the participants in the Pew Research Center time use study, women spend 45.2 hours on paid and unpaid work combined. Averaging the amount of time the participants reported spending on the same tasks, I found the average time dedicated to paid and unpaid work to be 57.5 hours per week for a standard five-day workweek⁶. The reason why the interview participants reported a higher amount of time spent on paid and unpaid work can possibly be explained by the fact that none of the women have a spouse or partner to contribute to household

⁶ Participant one reported an average daily commitment to work and family of 15 hours per day. Participant two reported a time commitment of 11 hours per day, and participant three reported an average time commitment of 8.5 hours per day.

labor or finances. Adding in the time each woman reported dedicating to school⁷ in a five-day workweek, the times varied from 17.5 hours to 40 hours. These reported times represent an additional time commitment that is separate from the time spent on paid and unpaid labor. The results show that this significant time commitment can rightly be called a “third shift.”

To balance all three roles, the women use formal childcare, such as daycare centers or afterschool care to meet the time commitments of work and school. Participant two also stated that at one point in her life, she worked at a daycare center specifically to earn income and offset the costs of childcare. I also inquired about other childcare resources, such as help from family members. Participant one stated she receives no informal childcare help. Participant two stated her parents have recently started providing some childcare for her children on the weekends. Participant three stated she has a strong support group of family and friends that all help her with childcare. Participant one and two stated that the spouses they are separated from both live out of state and do not provide any childcare. Participant three did not mention receiving any help with childcare from her child’s father.

Expectations Regarding the Division of Household Labor

After discussing how each participant divides up their time to balance work, family and school, I wanted to learn about their experience with the division of household labor to see how they are affected by a “second shift.” Since none of the participants were living with a partner or spouse at the time of the interviews, I focused on questions about how they expected household labor to be divided prior to marriage and how labor was actually divided during their marriages.

⁷ Participants were asked to include commute time, class time, and time spent studying and completing homework when calculating time spent in school.

Participant one stated that, prior to being married, she believed that “The woman does it (housework and childcare).” At one point, she was a stay at home mom and did all of the housework and childcare. “At the beginning...I did the whole thing, where I stayed at home, I worked with the kids, I fed the kids, I prepared his lunches, I had dinner on the table when he got home, but I wasn’t working.” However, when she transitioned to working outside of the home and her husband was unemployed, she states, “he expected me to come home and do the (unpaid) work.”

When asked about her expectations about how childcare and housework would be divided between her and her spouse before she was married, participant two stated that, “I grew up in an evenly distributed household of work and housework...so I kind of thought it would be relatively even.” Although household labor was distributed equitably during her marriage, she states that her husband was sometimes unemployed and that she made more money than him. At times, she worked three jobs while going to school to provide for household financial needs while sharing the second shift with her husband.

The striking thing about both participants’ experience with unpaid work is that the division of household labor changed when the women worked and their husbands were unemployed. During these times, both spouses did not contribute to the family financially and expected the women to contribute significantly to the household labor. This reaffirms Hochschild’s (1989) and Reskin and Padavic’s (2002) findings that some men do none of the household labor when their spouse or partner is the primary financial provider for the family. In both cases, the men seemed to have distanced themselves from unpaid tasks associated with femininity when not performing the role of financial provider.

Wage Penalties and Workplace Discrimination

After exploring each participant's experience with unpaid labor, I moved on to questions regarding their experience in the workplace. Specifically, I asked whether or not they have experienced workplace discrimination because of parental status, or wage penalties due to gender. Reflecting on her experience working as a case manager in the social work field, participant one stated, "I think there has been discrimination because I do notice that most of the people in the administration department are men. And in the higher-up departments, there are a few women...there's one that's a secretary....and there's another one that works for payroll, but in general, it's a men's type of deal." She further states that she has no desire to work in administration, so the perceived or real discrimination doesn't affect her personally. She also feels that her skill level and proficiency in her position has resulted in her earning higher wages than other women in the same position.

When it comes to parental discrimination, she says that she has not had trouble finding a job due to parental status. However, part of her job is to help clients find jobs and she has noticed parental discrimination being a problem for them. She states that the clients look predominantly for low-wage jobs, whereas she looked for a professional job. In essence, she believes that parental discrimination diminishes as pay and job status increases, indicating the previously-discussed research on the benefits of higher-status jobs may translate to the lived experience of some women. She specifically cites her education and work experience as helping her secure a professional job and avoid losing her job because of childcare responsibilities.

Participant two had a different experience in the workplace. She stated emphatically, "I know I made less." In one of her previous positions, she was informed of other employees' pay,

which resulted in her knowing she made less than others. She states, “I always made less because I was young. I felt like I made less because they knew I needed the job.” She attributes her lower pay primarily to being a woman and only secondarily to being a parent.

When asked if she has had difficulty finding work because she is a parent, her answer is telling: “No, not yet.” She continued, “But I was in one of the same jobs for 10 years, with the same company, and they really liked what I did, so I don’t think that that mattered (being a parent). And I very, very rarely ever...took days off for myself. If I had to take a day off, it was for the children.” Both participant one and two cite their work performance as a tool for keeping their jobs in the face of wage penalties and parental discrimination.

Participant three has had a much better experience in the workplace. When asked about experiencing wage penalties or parental discrimination, she answered, “Not where I work.” She continued, “Where I work, we’re all women, miraculously, and we’re all mothers, so we’re all lenient...before my current situation, I don’t know. My current situation has been a blessing since I’ve gone back to school.” She further states that her work schedule is very flexible and that this helps her accommodate her school schedule.

The interview responses, while limited to only three individual experiences, reaffirm the existence of wage penalties and workplace discrimination against women and mothers. The one participant who did not experience any discrimination worked in a female-dominated workplace, where there appeared to be an understanding of the conflict between work and family commitments, since this is a situation all employees had in common. Notably, two participants reported using their skill level as a method for either limiting wage penalties or offsetting discrimination; one participant reported that her education has been valuable in offsetting wage

penalties. If skills and qualifications help reduce some of the negative experiences women face in the workplace, a college degree can only help.

The Hardest Part of Being a Working Student Parent

Moving away from paid and unpaid work, I asked what the most difficult aspect of being a worker, parent and student is. The answers fell into two categories: the effect of these roles on the participants' children and the effect these roles have on the women themselves. For example, participant one answered that the most difficult part is "time conflicts and children not understanding that I cannot take time to do certain things with them...(my son) doesn't understand this is an assignment I have to get done, I'm paying for this class and that if I don't do this assignment I can fail the class...and then I have to take it over and then I have to add more time being away from them." Similarly, participant three stated, "I see myself going to work and having this time (commitment) and then going to school and then picking my son up and he wants to go play, go outside, or do something, but I'm thinking, 'I need to do homework.'"

Personally, the conflict that comes with work, school and childcare is felt by all three women. Participant one reported, "There's no time for myself. I feel like I'm chaotic and always grasping at straws and always trying to, you know, tread water, and I keep drowning. It's really frustrating." She states that she feels so overwhelmed, her grades have started to suffer. "That's really hard for me. That causes a lot of stress for me. I start beating myself up (about it)." She also perceives that younger students get better grades and indicates this may be a result of parental status.

In a similar way, participant three stated her schoolwork suffers because of her three roles. She also has realized that people without children and people with adult children seem to be able to get better grades because they presumably have less unpaid work to do. For both women, their academic performance seemed to simultaneously cause stress and impact how they perceived their own ability. Participant two had a different but very real issue. She stated, “I would say honestly finding time to sleep seems to be the biggest challenge.”

Balance Strategies

When asked to describe balance strategies used to manage the roles of worker, parent and student, the answers touched on a number of important issues. Participant one answered, “One of my strategies is we’ve been getting a lot of takeout food, unfortunately. It helps with time and it helps with convenience. People say ‘it’s healthier to eat at home,’ and believe me, I know that. It’s really not something I’m able to take care of, except on days where I don’t have school.” Another balance strategy she uses is her flexible work schedule, which helps her plan things with her kids and accommodate her school schedule. Of the ability to create flexible boundaries between work, school and home, she states “I’m very thankful for having the job that I do have.” One balance strategy that is not currently available to her that she indicates would help, is the ability to make more money so she could work part-time. In that event, she believes, “the stress factor goes down.”

Working part-time is a possibility for participant two, and she does that specifically to balance all of her roles. She states that her work schedule is also flexible, which is valuable in helping her manage her commitments and time. She achieved a flexible work schedule to help

balance paid and unpaid labor only because she had worked in the same position for several years and limited the time she took away from paid work. “With few absences...when I did have to (leave work unscheduled), they knew that I had to.” She further elaborated on the importance of offsetting one negative stereotype about parents: “I am rigidly scheduled, rigidly early...I’m usually ten minutes early for everything. I mean, that’s huge because if you’re fifteen minutes early for everything, you’re never going to not be on time. And that’s huge when you’re a parent and a woman....the biggest thing against parents is that they’re never on time. I’m always on time.”

She also stresses that she relies heavily on a planner and schedules things in a very structured way. “I’ve told everybody that asks me how I do it, is it’s the schedule.” In using the word schedule, she seems to mean both, creating boundaries between spheres and in the literal sense, scheduling everything she needs to do in a very structured way. Her reasoning is simple: “I’m doing it all by myself...it’s 100 percent me.” With no one to share the unpaid labor with, she schedules her life to meet all of the demands of school, work and parenting.

Participant two also touched on an important consequence of having so many conflicting roles and time commitments. She states that she had trouble separating her roles (student, mother worker) and even sought the advice of a counselor who told her, “When you’re at work, be (mentally) at work. When you’re at school, be (mentally) at school.” She strongly believes in setting up firm boundaries for each sphere, and schedules her life accordingly. Participant three also schedules her life in a very structured way, even scheduling her day down to each hour. In addition, she uses her strong support system and a reliable childcare provider to balance each of her roles. She also states that her work schedule is flexible, which allows her to attend classes on her days off, reducing work-school conflict.

Each woman uses different tools as balance strategies. However, they all have one thing in common: they are using the balance strategy of “supermomming.” In their cases though, this strategy is involuntary. There is no spouse or partner available to bargain or negotiate with to divide household labor. Out of necessity, they must literally do it all. Also of note is the fact that each woman described having a flexible work schedule and cited this as a factor in allowing them to complete their degree programs. Two participants also reported working part-time as a balance strategy, but at the cost of a reduction in finances.

What Policies Can Help Student Parents the Most?

When asked what policies could be created by UWT to support student parents, the answers were mixed and involved both formal policies and informal policies. For example, participant three cited formal policies that would be of benefit to student parents. Of the planned on-campus childcare center, she stated, “My assumption is that it won’t cost as much. . . . maybe even be free or low-cost.” She also mentions using Working Connections, a state program that pays some or all of the childcare costs for low-income workers. She states the program does not cover childcare for the time she attends class. However, she does use the grant offered through UWT, but states the fact that there is no grant money available during summer quarter is problematic and places a financial burden on her. In all, she believes the grant helps her attend school during quarters it is available, but offering the grant during summer quarter would be beneficial.

Less visible, informal policies that vary from instructor to instructor were also brought up as existing policies that are beneficial. The same participant states that she has seen other

students bring their children to class and that instructors seem, for the most part, understanding about the situation, although she has not personally done so. She also states that in her program, one required class was only offered later in the evening, and several students had conflicts arise from this schedule because of their childcare responsibilities. However, she explains, “Enough of us voiced our opinions and they switched it to offering two classes earlier.”

Similarly, participant two states several instances where instructors were understanding about times when she had to leave class because one of her children was sick or she had a custody-related issue that prevented her from turning in an assignment on time. In these cases, she was not penalized in any way. She also brings up an important point about the student body at UWT and how this may shape the formal and informal policies available to student parents. “As far as universities are considered, (UWT is) such a non-traditional university that it really does mold around people like me and you (working student parents).” She is referencing the fact that this campus has a high rate of “non-traditional” students that work and are completing their education later in life. She concludes by noting the lack of online classes available in her program, and cites that as a resource that would be valuable to her and other student parents.

It is interesting that both participant two and three acknowledge and understand that this particular campus has a significant percentage of “nontraditional students,” yet mention of student parents in census data is lacking, and there is no family housing and on-campus childcare available. If student parents can recognize that they make up a significant part of the student body, enough to influence a change in course offerings, then why aren’t student parents being supported through more formal policies? While the informal policies discussed by the participants are very valuable to student parents, students have no way of knowing about them prior to being enrolled.

“Making Up” for the Third Shift

I revisited Anita Garey’s statement that “people are ‘doing motherhood’ in the same way that West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that people are ‘doing gender’” to find out how all of the time spent at work and school affects the women I interviewed. I asked specifically whether or not they feel a need to “make up” for spending so much time away from their children. When asked this question, participant one stated, “I do. I also feel that I’m not just trying to make up for that (being gone for work and school), I’m trying to make up for the fact that I’m a single parent.” She further elaborates that she recently took her children on an expensive trip to make up for being a single parent. She did so, as she states, because “that comes from me trying to make up.”

Similarly, participant two responded, “Absolutely. This summer, two of my classes are online specifically so I can be with the kids, which is fine, it just means I don’t sleep as much.” She later stated, “I tend to feel guilt, absolutely. I tell my kids ‘mom’s got a deadline...it’s in like five hours and I need these five hours.’” But part of the guilt also comes from being a single parent. “You’ve got to do it. It’s not an option. I still make it to every function they have. I’m still on the PTO board at school.” In saying this, she is working toward offsetting the effects and possibly the stigma associated with being a single parent. In this way, she is making up for two things: not having a spouse or partner and being away from her kids for work and school.

Participant three’s answer shows the depths of the effect “doing motherhood” can have. “I have a lot of emotional imbalance....my son’s really young, and so I tell myself, ‘oh this is for his future,’ but then I regret sometimes because I don’t get that quality time. Because normally,

if I just had a job and I got off of work, I hopefully won't bring my work home with me, so I'll have that time with my child." Participant two feels similarly about knowing the costs outweigh the benefits, especially for her children. "They already see the benefits of me with this role, so...they're old enough to understand the benefits of it."

Do You Experience a Third Shift?

Borrowing from Hochschild's term "second shift," I decided to use the term "third shift" to reference how women who work, parent and attend school are faced with not two, but three roles, and subsequently have a greater need for resources and suffer more consequences. After explaining the term and relevant background information, I asked each participant if that term accurately reflects their current situation. Participant one answered, "Yes and I think as a single parent you either have a choice of giving yourself a third shift...or to keep living life the way you are and not giving your family more. You can wait until your children are older and go back to school, but then, really, your children don't benefit from that. Your children benefit from seeing you go to school, they benefit from more income."

Participant three answered simply, "Yes, it makes sense." Lastly, participant two answered, "Yes, my day doesn't really end. I sleep about six hours a day. That's about what I can fit in." But she ends her interview with some encouraging words by stating, "Women like us can do it." In fact, her statement appears to be true. Each of us were in the final year of our programs and moving forward toward graduation when the interviews took place.

Conclusion

All three participants' lives – and no doubt the lives of countless women – are shaped by the resources available to them and the effects of social and economic forces. Based on these interviews and the research previously discussed, in a very general sense, women have two options when it comes to earning money and caregiving. First, women can make sacrifices economically to reduce work-family conflict. This method of balancing work and family commitments may account for why nearly one-quarter of working women work part-time (Department of labor, 2013). However, research clearly shows that most part-time jobs are concentrated in low-wage industries and lack benefits such as medical insurance and paid time off (Bardasi and Gornick 2002). For women without the resources to work less and commit more time to family demands, working two full shifts – one at work and one at home – is a necessity if household labor is not equitably shared or there is no partner to share it with.

Returning to the discussion of the value and potential benefits of a college degree, it is evident how women have more available options with increased education. First, average earnings increase with increased education. This provides some women who lack other options with the necessary resources to work less for pay to balance unpaid work while being able to make a livable wage. Second, jobs that require a college degree tend to provide more benefits, such as paid time off and a flexible work schedule, that are important to reducing work-family conflict than low-wage and entry-level jobs. One obvious but very important benefit of a college education that has not been discussed previously is that it reduces poverty- something that disproportionately affects women. The gender wage gap and the motherhood wage penalty largely encompass the economic impacts women experience because of their gender and parental

status. Discussing these wage penalties in terms of something that is experienced only during the time women participate in the workforce is not sufficient; in actuality, these wage penalties can affect women – and consequently children –throughout their lifespan.

There is a good reason why each interview participant discussed the benefits of a college education in terms of how it can improve the lives of their children. According to the National Women’s Law Center, one in seven – or nearly 18 million women – live in poverty. Around every four out of 10 mothers lived in poverty in 2013 (National Women’s Law Center, 2013). The high percentage of mothers living in poverty translates to around one in every five children – or 22 percent of all children - living in poverty (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2013). Nearly 60 percent of children living in poverty live in a single mother household (National Women’s Law Center, 2014). It’s important to note that these figure represent the amount of women and children living below the poverty line, which was \$11,090 for a single person and \$15,510 for a family of two in 2013 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, 2013). Arguably, there are many people living in poverty that do not meet these official income guidelines. Applying the word poverty to include people who cannot make enough to meet all of their basic needs would undoubtedly significantly increase these numbers.

In general terms, these figures show that a child has a 20 percent chance of living in poverty- a chance that is largely dependent on whether or not his or her household is headed by a woman. Upon adulthood, working women actually experience a smaller gender wage gap when first entering the workforce. Women ages 15-24 working full-time experience a gender wage gap of 91.1 percent (National Women’s Law Center, 2015). As noted earlier, this is primarily due to young, inexperienced workers initially working at minimum wage jobs where men and women earn equally low wages. However, the gender wage gap increases significantly with age. Women

ages 45 to 64 experience a gender wage gap of 73.6 percent (National Women's Law Center, 2015).

The effects of the gender wage gap do not end when a woman retires. The average woman who works full-time for 40 years loses \$435,049 to the gender wage gap (National Women's Law Center, 2015). The average woman would have to work an additional 11 years to make up for the loss of earnings over time (National Women's Law Center, 2015). Not surprisingly, social security benefits are also affected by the gender wage gap. The average social security benefit for women over 65 is \$13,466 per year compared to \$17,598 for men (National Women's Law Center, 2015).

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, if the gender wage gap continues to progress at the same rate it has over the past five decades, men's and women's pay will not be equal until 2058. Presumably, the poverty rate for women and children will decrease at the same slow rate. Although this means the gender wage gap is expected to affect women for over four more decades, earning a college degree is something that can be done now to combat wage penalties by providing working women with livable wages. Although the gender wage gap exists in all industries, increasing women's earnings through education will reduce poverty even if women continue to be paid less than men. In addition, higher education may play an important role in evening the gender wage gap. Women have been outpacing men in recent years when it comes to completing college degrees (Pew Research Center, 2014), which has allowed women to secure an increased share of well-paying jobs.

A Pew Social and Demographics Trends study further reflects the impact of a college education on poverty rates. High school graduates, on average, have a poverty rate of 12.2 percent (Pew Research Center, 2014). Those with a two-year degree or some college education

have a poverty rate of 8.1 percent (Pew Research Center, 2014). For people with a bachelor degree or higher, the poverty rate drops to just 3.8 percent (Pew Research Center, 2014).

As the interview participants discussed, earning a college degree is not easy, especially if you are a worker and parent. A review of literature and the reported experience of each participant reveals that barriers to completing a college degree largely center on time demands. Each participant unequivocally stated that attending college would not be a possibility without a flexible work schedule. Participant one was fortunate in the sense that her job was full-time, yet flexible enough to accommodate a school schedule. Participants one and two were able to work part-time to accommodate a school schedule, but they undoubtedly experienced a loss of wages in order to do so.

Although time demands present a real and significant barrier to education for many working mothers, it is impractical to look to educational institutions to reduce this particular conflict. Many college campuses already offer distance education and hybrid classes to cater to people with time-consuming schedules, but there is only so much educational institutions can do to make completing a degree a flexible time commitment. There will always be some degree paths and classes that require students to attend traditional classes. However, universities can use the same technology that facilitates distance education to make alternative study options more visible and support students who must miss class because of other time commitments. For example, in one graduate class I attended, the professor used technology already available on campus to establish a class website and post recorded videos of each class session so that students who had to miss class could watch the lectures. This is a great resource for all students, but student parents and working students in particular.

Aside from the issue of time, there are several ways in which colleges can provide more access and resources to student parents while still providing a comprehensive and valuable education. The resource that has the potential to have the greatest impact on removing barriers to education is establishing childcare centers on college campuses. The fact that I have personally witnessed other students bringing children to class, and all three of the participants have as well, reflects the need for childcare resources. The University of Washington Tacoma campus is a good model for other colleges, but there is still room for more improvement. The planned on-campus childcare center will be a great resource, but information about the cost of the program and hours of operation is still lacking and could change the effectiveness of this resource for some students. In the most basic sense, on-campus childcare centers create a flexible barrier between educational institutions and family commitments. Children are brought to class as a last resort, which can be disrupting to other students and the faculty member teaching the class. Providing a childcare resource eliminates this situation and eliminates one barrier to education.

However, providing a childcare resource is not wholly effective unless it is affordable for all student parents. The childcare grant at UWT is a great resource for student parents, although as participant three stated, extending the grant for summer quarter would help students complete degrees sooner should they wish to do so. In Washington State, the price of full-time childcare at a licensed childcare center ranges from \$12,343 for an infant to \$6,557 for a school-aged child annually (Washington State Department of Early Learning, 2012). Working Connections, the childcare subsidy available to low-income workers, does not provide childcare for school attendance, so the financial burden of childcare costs falls on the student if no resource is provided by a university.

Another basic need not met by all of the universities discussed in the content analysis is family housing. On-campus housing tends to be more affordable than other options, so extending this resource to student parents is a valuable resource. However, like establishing on-campus childcare centers, this resource would place a financial burden on colleges lacking appropriate space for this type of housing. One thing that can be done that does not impact a university financially is removing the requirement for students to live on campus. This policy, present at two of the private universities, may prevent some women from enrolling as a student. In addition, family housing needs to be more visible on university websites when it is available.

Ultimately, each university has its own financial needs, revenue and method of allocating resources. The previous list of possible resources are suggestions that all have the potential to be effective, yet some of the resources proposed may of course be financially impractical for some institutions. However, there are also several other resources that have a minimal cost or are even free. For example, making current and newly-established resources available to student parents more visible on university websites would be very helpful to prospective students. The one thing all universities discussed in the content analysis section had in a common was a great deal of information directed at parents of potential and current students. If a fraction of the effort put in to informing parents of students was directed at student parents, current resources would be far more visible. As an example, there was a wealth of information about student housing on university websites, some of which was dedicated specifically to parents of college students. However, information on *family* housing often took a great deal of searching to find.

Additionally, the UWT survey sent to graduate and professional students with the aim of counting the number of student parents on campus and assessing which resources are needed the most is something all universities should do. Effective resources cannot be put in place or even

considered without knowing the needs of students and how many students need specific resources. Along the same lines, student demographic information published on university websites is largely lacking vital information. Most of the universities provide very few relevant details about the student body specifically, and instead focus on where students live, the amount of students that received financial aid and other facts that do not reveal the actual student body identity when it comes to things like race, ethnicity, age and parental status.

Lastly, University of Washington's Seattle campus "The Whole You and Your Kids Too" campaign is an excellent way to recognize and welcome student parents to campus. All three of the interview participants mentioned how their children do not understand the time commitment of school and why earning a degree is important. Perhaps having the opportunity to bring their children to campus and attend an event welcoming the children of students would alleviate this problem. As an example of just how stressful the dichotomy between home and school is to students in the absence of the university welcoming student parents, one participant stated she was actually scared to bring her child to campus outside of class time because of the reception she felt she would receive, and another participant hid the fact that she was a parent from her professors for over a year because she perceived she would be looked at differently than students without children. Certainly, bringing children to campus is not the answer. However, there are many things universities can do to facilitate keeping family commitments and school commitments separate, while leaving a flexible boundary that allows for parents to accommodate the unplanned commitments and time demands that come with parenting.

The bottom line is today's college student is much different than in past decades, and there is a need for universities to recognize and adapt to this change. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, 4.8 million students, or 26 percent of all undergraduate students,

are mothers to dependent children. 43 percent of student parents are single mothers, and 71 percent of all student parents are female (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2014).

However, as the enrollment of women and student parents has increased dramatically in the past two decades, the availability of on-campus childcare has actually decreased. In 2003, 53 percent of community colleges provided on-campus childcare (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2014). In 2013, that number had dropped to 46 percent (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2014). The same trend is present at four-year institutions. In 2003, 54 percent of universities provided on-campus childcare, but in 2013, that number declined to 51 percent (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2014).

Ultimately, attending college presents a "third shift" to women already managing paid and unpaid labor. Although it is temporary, many potential student parents may perceive the attainment of a college degree as impossible, and for good reason. Providing adequate support to the growing population of student parents is extremely important. Using education as a tool to reduce poverty, expand employment options and increase the lifetime earnings of women is one of the few feasible solutions in the absence of universal pay equality and the elimination of workplace discrimination.

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Five important takeaways from an analysis of the extent to which colleges provide resources to student parents and how education can impact women's economic status:

1. Paid and unpaid labor are interrelated and result in economic disadvantage for women. Wage penalties and parental discrimination result in reduced earnings for women, while the fact that women continue to do more household labor than men, on average, means things such as childcare responsibilities further limit women's wages.

2. Changes to policy and law can increase women's economic status. However, sufficient changes remain to be seen. Education is a proven way to increase women's earnings and lower the poverty rate that disproportionately affects women.

3. To be effective, universities need to provide support for student parents. However, of the 10 universities reviewed for this paper, only five provide childcare resources to student parents. Only four universities provide financial support for childcare costs.

4. In general, universities tend to concentrate on making resources available to parents of college students, rather than student parents, more visible in promotional and informational material. The student parent identity is virtually invisible on university websites. This discrepancy is important, since, in 2014, 4.8 million undergraduate students were student parents.

5. UW's "The Whole You and Your Kids Too" campaign and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate survey provide a great model for other universities to adopt and shows promise that more resources will be established in the future, providing improved access to education for student parents.