

**Frontiers in Child Care Research**  
**Annual Meeting of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium**  
**Radisson Lord Baltimore Hotel**  
**March 8–11, 2005**

**The Intersection of Child Care and Low-Wage Employment**  
**Plenary Panel Summary**

**Moderator:**

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**Panelists:**

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**Shelley Waters Boots, Moderator**

I'm happy to kick off this plenary session on work, family, child care and how these pieces intersect. Our distinguished panel is at the forefront of thinking about frontiers and linkages in this arena. Today, they will be helping us think comprehensively about work, about family life under changing economic and employment conditions, and about how all of this affects the lives of children. We are concerned with families and children in all walks of life but particularly low-income families. What does working life look like for low-income parents today? How is the structure of the low-wage labor market changing? How is child care being affected? What ultimately is the impact of these changes on the children and families that we're all trying to serve?

First of all we're delighted to have with us today professor Harriet Presser, from the University of Maryland. She's a Distinguished University Professor in the Department of Sociology, a founding director of the Center for Population, Gender and Social Inequality. She is a past president of the Population Association of America and was recently elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in recognition of her outstanding work on population, labor force, gender and social inequality.

Harriet has just completed a book called *Working in a 24/7 Economy: Challenges for American Families*. It really helps define some of the instability and challenges that families are facing, not only from the complexities of their child care situations (we all know that inside and out), but also from the complexities of the low-wage labor market and what's going on in parents' working lives. And as Art Emlen from the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership has shown, parents are constantly managing and juggling these pieces of employment, child care, and their home and family environment trying to make the best choices for their kids. And so I think that's an important work to help us in our thinking about the many trade-offs and stresses that families face today.

Our second panelist is Wen-Jui Han, who is an assistant professor at the Columbia School of Social Work where she also earned her PhD. Wen has been doing a lot of interesting work with Jane Waldfogel on maternal employment, child care, and child well-being. She has a new study out on child development that looks at certain characteristics of work and how they relate to child well-being. Wen is going to help tie this discussion about work and the labor market to some of these child outcome pieces.

Our third panelist was to have been Professor Marcia Meyers from the University of Washington. Unfortunately, she is ill with the flu and unable to be with us. So we have asked Lucy Jordan to pinch hit and present Marcia's slides. Lucy is a doctoral candidate working with Marcia in the School of Social Work. She is doing some fascinating research that we heard about in an earlier breakout session about the connections between child care subsidy use and the mothers return to work. This work gives us another pivotal time frame for looking at the intersections between labor market conditions, mothers being involved in the labor market, and the child care decisions they make. So Lucy and all of us will look at Marsha's slides, Lucy will interpret, and we will all learn from Marsha and Lucy's experience in these issues.

So again, let me set the stage briefly. This is a different conversation than we typically have when we're talking about child care research because we're now looking at child care through the lens of labor markets and of work place policies. I'd like to highlight a few points about the kinds of labor market situations that many families now face. Our economy is rapidly changing from a traditional goods-producing economy to a service-producing economy, much of it characterized by the rapid growth of low-paying industries. And I think Harriet lays out quite nicely in her presentation what we're seeing in job growth trends and the high number of positions being created that really demand non-traditional working hours, especially among mothers with young children.

The New America Foundation where I work has a new study coming out. This research looked at relationship between married couple's incomes, earnings, and work hours. What we're seeing is

that especially in the lower two quintiles of the economic bracket, moms have been working more and more hours simply to maintain income. And over the last 20 years that increase in hours has given them only a slight increase in family income. Most of that family income was lost in the 2000 recession. And so between 2000 and 2002 we actually saw declining real income even with these increased work hours. I want to make sure that we continue to remind ourselves that we should be looking at these trends from the employment of both parents, to the child care choices, the child care decisions, and ultimately what ends up being the implications for children and families.

### **Harriet B. Presser**

Thank you very much for inviting me... I'm really delighted to come here and talk to a different audience than I usually speak to about my research on the 24/7 economy and families. As Shelley mentioned, I'm just going to highlight some selected findings from my new book and it shouldn't take more than 15 minutes to do a succinct job of this, but essentially I have three major points.

The first is that the movement toward a 24/7 service economy has created a demand for millions of Americans - including parents with children - to work evening, night or rotating shifts as well as weekends. Second, this demand for late-hour employment has profound consequences for individual well-being, the nature and stability of family life, the way we care for children, and child well-being. And third is that our failure to take into account the temporal complexity of work time and the consequences for family life compromises the effectiveness of work and family policies, including child care policies for low-income women.

Now we're going to treat each of these issues very briefly. First, let me just give some background as to why we have this 24/7 economy. It relates to considerations external to the family. First, we have the growth of the service economy. And by the way the service economy has a higher proportion of people working late hours and weekends than does manufacturing.

If you look at this as the trend, and these are just selected services in the United States since 1945, you can see that they are notably on the rise while manufacturing - all of manufacturing - is on the decline. And you get this picture just by looking at selected services; if you looked at all of them you'd see a more dramatic rise. So we clearly have a rise in services which means a rise in 24/7 employment. And this is related to the increased employment of women, actually, during the day time which then creates a demand for services in the evenings and nights. Women are also engaged in employment at night so it's a feed back mechanism that continues and not going to stop in the decades ahead.

The other major trend is changing demography. We have an aging population which means more 24/7 health care. We have the postponement of marriage and child bearing, leaving more money in the household which means more discretionary income which is often expressed in more travel and entertainment which is 24/7. We have changing technology. We're able to be on call at all hours and also the cost of technology has been significantly reduced so that businesses are increasingly demanding that we be on call.

So how does this affect what's going on for American workers as a whole? I emphasize *as a whole* because all of these statistics are much more striking at lower incomes than for high-income populations, but it is still astounding how high the prevalence, overall, is. I don't have time to go into details about the samples, but these figures are from fifty thousand households in the May 1997 Current Population Survey and I'll also be reporting on data from the National Survey of Families and Households, which includes over ten thousand households. So these are pretty good estimates of what's going on for all employed Americans.

One in five work most of their hours in evenings or nights or on a rotating schedule. I emphasize "most" because we're not talking about people like many of us who work occasionally in the evenings or at night. These are people who work mostly late hours and one-third of this one-fifth are people who rotate, who are changing their hours around the clock on a regular basis.

One-in-three Americans work Saturdays or Sundays. If you put these two patterns together, because some people work both weekends and non-day time, two-in-five Americans either work non-day shifts or weekends or both. Now for this group, people with children become highly relevant for child care issues. If you look at all two-earner couples with children, one-in-three are couples with a spouse who works mostly in the evening, nights, or on a rotating basis. This ratio is higher for lower-income Americans.

If you take for example, young couples who married early, who tend to be of lower income, and who have children under five, about one half of such couples in the United States are split-shift couples—that is, couples in which spouses are working very different hours. Very rarely do spouses both work at non-standard times. So for the most part, one spouse is working in the day and the other evenings or nights. It might seem that they are doing this for child care reasons. I'll address this shortly, but most parents do not give child care as one of the reasons for working late shifts.

Now, single mothers are more likely to work non-standard hours than married mothers. Just to briefly give you some figures on this: The slide shows women with children under age 14, the percentages are higher for women with children under five: twenty percent of single mothers work at non-standard times and 16.4 percent of the married mothers. Now some of the husbands of the married mothers also work non-standard times when the mothers work standard day time schedules.

As for weekends, you can see really high levels of employment – more weekend employment for single mothers compared to married mothers. A third of all single mothers have weekend employment.

What are the occupations of Americans who work non-standard hours? The slide shows the occupations they concentrate in: cashiers, truck drivers, waiters and waitresses, cooks, and so forth. The nurses show up both as registered nurses and nurses aides. If we put them together nursing would be the top occupation. But I broke them down into two parts.

These ten occupations represent one-third of all people who work non-standard hours. Two things: first, these occupations are on the rise according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in

reports on what occupations are likely to show the most growth in the near future; and secondly, this is not a globalization phenomenon, although people talk about 24/7 as though it is about globalization. It's partly that but you look at these occupations and they are all local services. So it's really local rather than global.

What does it mean for family life? I have a chapter in my book on each of these topics:

- Poor quality of marriages for people who work evenings and nights – and great marital instability. In the NSFH (National Survey of Families and Households), a longitudinal study, I found, for example, that the divorce rate (that we know is high among all Americans) is three-to-five times higher when one of the spouses works a night shift compared to the day shift.
- Greater participation of men in household chores. This can be seen as positive in some ways but there are better ways to bring out gender equality than to not be present when your spouse is home - not be home so your husband will do the household tasks!
- Less time together as a family. There's less parent-child interaction. One of the things I examined in the book is that there are fewer dinners spent together as a family, which I think is the most important family daily ritual that we have--and it's on the decline. It's on the decline for those who work standard hours, too, but it's even less frequent when parents work the evening shift.
- Greater participation of fathers and grand mothers in child care. You hear people say, well what's the problem then if the family is doing the child care when mothers are employed? But one third of grandmothers who provide child care have other jobs and these fathers who provide child care are also employed, so this is not a stress-free situation.

I've also shown that there's greater complexity in child care arrangements for people who work non-standard hours. There is, for example, more reliance on child care, there are more providers used. We know there are a lot of providers used for day care generally, but evening or night care requires even more providers. There's greater instability and we know that instability for children is not good in general and then it's increased for evening and night care.

And then there is the unsupervised care. This is something that we really don't look at in our studies. When you ask parents who's watching the child when you are employed, and they say the mother or the father, it may be that this parent is typically sleeping - having just returned from a late shift. We don't have data on sleep time - one piece of data I would like to see included in such studies - because with these split-shift couples you have a husband who, for example, is a policeman coming home in the morning when the wife goes off to work. People say this is great! They don't have to pay for child care. But when does he sleep - and the reverse - when does the wife sleep when she comes home from her night shift?

So the children are either unsupervised or parents are extremely tired, often leading to chronic physical problems, which I don't have a chance to go into but which interacts with family functioning.

I'll give you just a few statistics of the extent to which married fathers in the United States are taking care of children while mothers are employed. Again these figures would be higher if you looked specifically at low-income men. It's the high-income men who are more likely to have the ideology of gender equality and the low-income men who are doing the child care! When mothers work evenings or nights, 80.9% of fathers are the primary caregivers of the children while the mothers are working. With rotating shifts it goes down a bit because the men can't cover mot hours - you know their schedule may be fixed and the wife's is changing. That's one of the reasons you need the multiple arrangements.

Now let's look at grandmother care of single employed mothers. We know for day shifts it's big: 30.9%. For evening or night shifts it goes up to 36.5% and when mom works rotating shifts the grandmothers really pitch in - as one of the many people who pitch in for rotating shifts.

So there's very strong need for more public discourse. I would argue that we need to re-conceptualize the family, what home time is, what's going on in labor force scheduling that trickles down, as we'll hear from Wen, to child outcomes. There are these macro factors at the societal level that are affecting family functioning and we have very little discourse on this issue.

In terms of child care we have the very substantial unmet need for evening and night care for children of low-income single mothers, but we know - and you all know better than I - just how difficult it is to provide late care for single mothers who do not have a spouse to care for the kids at home. Consequently, many young children are left unsupervised either by themselves or with older siblings. There are the occasional stories of disasters in the paper, for example children killed in fires when left alone because of a child care breakdown, but I feel this only touches on some of the extreme outcomes among the many unsupervised children left alone at night.

We need to expand the availability of evening and night care. We need to provide more child care subsidies to low-income mothers so they can afford to work during the day time. One of the chapters in my book deals specifically with low-income mothers and shows that 50% of them have jobs that require working most hours in the evening, night or weekends - 50%! So we really need to address the late care issue, especially in the context of welfare reform. I estimate that half of the women transitioning from welfare to work are going need evening, night or weekend child care, often some combination of the three.

We have the problem also of conflicting issues because as consumers we want 24/7. We want health care open 24 hours; we want our air controllers working 24/7. It's not just low-income jobs, but we want the services 24/7. We've really gotten accustomed to it. Just go to Europe! You'll see that when the stores close at six o'clock you're really unhappy!

And so we really do have a problem. We need to be concerned about the people who are providing these services and what this means for families. We do create new jobs when we have more 24/7 services and those new jobs are disproportionately in low-wage occupations. The

workers are also disproportionately minorities. I have shown that in a separate paper. So you can't really say it's all terrible but it really is something that merits more public discourse and we need to think about policies that would alleviate some of the stresses that the families of shift workers are undergoing. Thank you.

### **Wen-Jui Han**

It is my great pleasure today to be here I just started studying the relationship between non-standard work schedules and children's well-being so I have much, much to learn. Today I would like to share with you what I have found so far and what I have learned, but again we still have much to learn in this field.

Let me first provide a little bit of background. A large body of literature has documented that there are negative consequences for people when they're working odd hours, nights and evenings. These negative consequences are related to their physical, psychological and marital stress that Professor Harriet Presser just mentioned.

These kinds of negative consequences do raise the question of what can we expect when mothers and fathers interact with their kids under such negative physical and psychological conditions. It is likely that parents who work non-standard schedules may translate their negative physical and psychological well-being into their interactions with their kids. Such interactions may then have a certain degree of either direct or indirect impact on children's well-being. And as Professor Presser just highlighted, we are not going to see any reversal of the trend toward a 24/7 economy. So for many years to come we will see these jobs increasing, and more mothers and fathers are likely to work at all hours of the day and night.

This issue becomes even more pressing when we know nothing about the relationship between non-standard work schedules and children's well-being. We do not know if the effect of parents working non-standard hours is a positive or negative one for children. For some mothers who work nights voluntarily, this work schedule may not be a negative experience for their children, particularly if the reason is that they can spend the day time with their children. For other women who work such hours involuntarily – some occupations require it or perhaps the women could only find jobs with the worst shifts – the negative physical and psychological effects may be more pronounced. In that case, mothers' stress may be more likely to be translated into interactions with children and that in turn might affect the children's well-being.

If this choice of working nights is voluntary, mothers may be much more satisfied with the overall arrangement. And that can translate into a positive impact on the kids. But then we all know that the majority of people who are working such hours really do so because it is the requirement of the job; so if this is the case and the situation has negative consequences for the parents, then maybe they will be much more likely to translate these negative consequences into their interactions with their kids. So basically, from this point of view, we don't know empirically if there are negative or positive consequences.

What my study has found thus far is that when I look at kids under the age of three, (which is the paper just published in *Child Development*), the answer is yes that there are some negative

relationships between mothers' working non-standard schedules and their children's development. This is particularly true if mothers start working at such hours during the first year of their child's life or work these schedules continuously. In these situations, their kids may have worse cognitive scores on their expressive language.

For the school-age kids, for whom I'm using a different longitudinal survey, what I found is that mothers' working non-standard schedules will not necessarily have a negative impact on kids' cognitive or academic achievement. But there may be some negative effects on kids' behavior in this case. This is particularly true in single-mother families, in families with low-incomes, or in welfare families.

How can we make sense of this? Why are there cognitive effects for the young kids and behavioral effects for the school-age kids? In reading through the literature on employment, child psychology and child development – and just looking at daily life experience, there may be two hypotheses that we can use to understand what is going on.

The first hypothesis is related to the care that children receive at home - which is pretty much the interaction they have with their mothers or fathers. How sensitive the mothers are to the kids when it is likely to be the case that they may be too tired to be awake during the daytime. Professor Presser mentioned that even though they are awake in the daytime maybe they are so sleepy that they cannot focus or pay attention to the kids. The second hypothesis has to do with the care that children receive from other caregivers that are either at home or not. This is related to the type of care they receive, the kind of quality they receive and all of these would make a difference in a child's daily experience.

So what I found was that there are some potential mediating factors that may explain the relationship between mothers working non-standard schedules and the kids' cognitive outcomes. In these families, the mothers are much more likely to be depressed; they may have lower scores on the HOME Environment Scale. Most importantly, the type of child care can largely explain the negative relationship between work schedule and children's cognitive outcomes. Professor Presser mentioned that these kids are much more likely to be taken care for by fathers or center-based care. But we also know a very good quality center can provide a stimulating environment that would promote children's cognitive outcomes. And children whose mothers work non-standard schedules may miss out on this important opportunity to prepare them for school. So this is one thing that we should look at further. Of course, in this case I'm not saying that father care is not good; I'm just saying that these kids are less likely to be put in center-based care and that good quality center care may promote children's cognitive outcomes.

One thing I want to highlight is that by age three kids are much more likely to be in center-based care when their mother is working standard hours. Even three-year-olds whose mothers are not working are more likely to be in center-based care compared to kids whose mothers are working non-standard hours.

So quality of the care that children receive at home and in child care may help explain what's going on in terms of why there's a negative relationship between mothers' work schedules and children's cognitive outcomes.



At the same time, I would like to highlight that how to provide the best arrangements and care for children whose parent(s) work such schedules is really a complicated issue, for they are trying to juggle between family and work responsibilities. For example, it may be the case that families cannot afford a good quality center-based care. This may be particularly true for low-income and single-mother families, who also are more likely to have non-standard work schedules. Thus I think we should have a conversation about the policies that we can provide to support these families. Of course, we cannot expect that these policies would be in place overnight; so in the meantime, these families cannot really depend on this solution to help them. In the meantime, I think we should focus on what these mothers can do. If there really are negative consequences from their work schedules, I do not want the mothers to think their kids are going to be doomed. We should have a conversation about what kind of approaches, what suggestions we could give to these mothers. And I think employers can really pitch in to help.

And then might I also say we don't have much research in terms of understanding the overall issue, so we don't really have a theory or much research that helps us understand this issue. I have hypotheses, but those are very, very raw preliminary hypotheses drawing from the child development literature. But just by looking at the results for young kids and for school-age kids, there are a few implications we may be able to draw that are related to age and developmental status. For young kids, it appears to be cognitive consequences; for school age kids there seem to be behavior consequences. From this we may infer that mothers' work schedules may mean different things when kids are different ages and this in turn may have some implication for theory development. In addition, the time of the day -- the evenings, the nights, the early mornings, the rotating shifts -- all may mean different things to the kids; people working night schedules or rotating shifts are more likely to experience negative physical and psychological well-being and thus their non-standard work schedules may have stronger effects on children's well-being. Of course there should be more research devoted to this issue, given that we are just starting to understand the relationships between parental work schedules and child outcomes.

And finally I really want to acknowledge all of the things that parents do; they're trying their best to provide the best for their kids, and yet their children may still not benefit the most. I agree with Professor Presser's point that we really need much more public discussion about what we can do for these families.

### **Lucy Jordan for Marcia Meyers**

Well hello, I'm going to do my best to walk through these slides and help share this information with you. Most of this information is from a recent book that Marcia Meyers and Janet Gornick published which is called *Families at Work*. Their book talks about policies for reconciling parenthood and employment. One of the topics that the book covers is the changing conditions of work and family life, looking at areas of increasing parental employment across the board and then also growing inequalities.

We know that rates of maternal employment have risen steadily for decades and we also know that the proportion of families headed by single parents has grown dramatically. For example in 1980, 55% of children lived in two parent families with their bread-winner father and home-

maker mother; by 2002 most children lived in families with a single-working parent or where both parents were employed.

We also know that parents are spending long hours in the work place. For example, the American work force reports the longest annual working hours of any in the industrialized world. Between 1967 and 1998, the share of dual-earner couples with children working very long hours - a hundred plus per week - grew from 8 to 13%.

In addition, many are working non-standard schedules - as we heard a lot about in the previous two presentations. At least one adult in 35% of couples with a child under the age of 5 works non-standard hours and/or weekends.

Mothers continue to reduce employment to care for children, while most fathers do not. On average, employment hours for fathers exceed those of mothers. Depending on the age of the child, the mothers of young children are working less and as the children grow older they are working more but they are still working less than the fathers.

And mothers are also spending more time in unpaid care work than the fathers. I think it was Harriet who mentioned it, but in talking about fathers doing more domestic work, we have to ask is there some transition in the value of sharing or are dads helping more just because there is nobody else there to do it?

Inequalities in wages and conditions of work between more and less advantaged workers continue to grow. This graph shows here a trend from 1975 to 2002 and how the growth in real hourly wages was much steeper for earners in the top of the earnings distribution.

Concurrently more children are spending time in child care. And the type of care that they receive continues to be highly unequal. This graph here comes from some work done by Jane Bainbridge, Marcia Meyers and Jane Waldfogel. You can see here that from 1968 to 2000 income gaps persisted in the enrollment of four-year-olds in school-type programs which include pre-school, early education and center care. What stands out to me in this graph is the difference between the highest quartile of the incomes earnings and the other three below and how the trends are pretty similar over time.

Additionally the burden of child care costs is unequal. And it may be growing more unequal between the more- and less- advantaged families. You can see here from 1985 to 2000 that families' child care cost burden grew more unequal. And we're looking at this here, on the horizontal axis, the different colored lines reflect different levels of maternal education and then on the vertical axis we're looking at the child care cost as the share of the family earnings. So what is the problem here? As parents commit more hours to work how can we care for children without increasing inequalities is one way to think about the problem. You could look at it as a work and family conflict - that women are overwhelmed by double shifts in the market and in the home. You can also think about it as a form of gender inequality. Women are continuing to lag men in the market and are also assuming a disproportionate share of unpaid work in the home. Another way to think about it is from the perspective of welfare reform. Here you'd be thinking

that poor, less-educated and less-skilled parents need to increase their labor market commitments.

What might be solutions to the problem? This dilemma highlights one of the things that I've heard come up in a lot of the sessions here during this conference. What you see as the problem, and therefore what change you might potentially want to target through policy levers, will determine which of many possible solutions you seek.

- If you think about it exclusively from a well-being perspective, then you might want to think about advocating longer periods of parental leave and other policies that could increase parental care in the home along with more generous and refundable tax credits, so that the actual income would be available for families to use. A potential solution for the work/family conflict from this perspective might combine maternity leave and other family friendly work place policies that allow women to combine labor force and home responsibilities.
- If you think about the problem as a framing of gender and equality you might then consider a solution such as universal child care and other policies to increase women's employment options by moving more caregiving work outside the home.
- If you think about it purely from the welfare perspective, then you might want to advocate for means-tested, targeted child care and other policies to increase employment hours among the poor and particularly among single parents.

One of the issues here is conceptualization of the problem as a private concern that is primarily affecting women. Another is the suggestion that we need to make trade-offs between such things as families' economic security and caregiving time or between the needs of children and the interests of parents. Again, this is something that I've heard come up over and over at sessions here this year. And we also talk about making trade-offs between men and women. Another problem is that work and family policies may exacerbate inequalities between men and women and between more- and less-advantaged families and children.

In their book, Jane and Marcia set forth a new way of understanding and thinking about the problem. They frame it as a problem of money *and* time for parents, as a problem of women's *and* men's choices about work and caregiving, as affecting the well-being of both parents *and* children's well-being, and as demanding both private *and* public solutions.

So what can the government do to help working families? Their book outlines some ideas about a potential policy agenda and we're going to be looking specifically at time for family caregiving, quality care for children, and flexibility for families. In current U.S. policy there is no national program for paid maternity, paternity or parental leave. There are mostly private systems of child care and early education partially subsidized by means-tested subsidies, tax credits and public pre-school programs. And there are also minimal protections for working time.

What would a policy agenda for protecting caregiving look like? Some ideas include:

- Paid leave following childbirth as an individual non-transferable entitlement for both fathers and mothers.
- Wage replacement up to some kind of earnings cap funded through a social insurance plan such as FICA.
- A right to take leave in increments and a right to paid time to care for a sick child during each working year.

What might a policy agenda look like to improve care for children? One way to think about this is as a comprehensive set of policies including:

- An integrated national system of universal subsidized child care;
- A full day pre-school combined with options for non-standard hour care;
- Uniform national standards for quality program content, staffing and compensation; and
- Public financing of costs with income adjusted parental co-payments.

A potential policy agenda to increase flexibility for caregiving might include:

- Working time regulations to shorten the regular work week;
- The right to shift between full- and part-time employment with pro-rated wages and benefits; and
- The right to refuse mandatory overtime, non-standard hours, and rotating hour schedules.

It seems like a question that just naturally emerges from those suggestions is not only why think big but why think so big because what is suggested in the book is radically different than what we currently do have in the US. What Marcia and Janet suggest is to change, to really change the conversation, to avoid facing things from a trade-off and scarcity perspective, to think about building coalitions, and to set goals for US policy that are as ambitious as those of other rich industrialized countries.

### **Shelley Waters Boots:**

Thank you, that was great and it was a bit to wrap our heads around. Do we have any questions from you out there in the audience?

Audience Member: Do you feel there is anything to learn from the Lanham Act in the Second World War that established child care centers across the United States so mothers could work while the men were off fighting?

Harriet Presser: I think of that and I think of what the military is doing now. When there is a real perceived need, the government comes in and offers evening and night care - which is really difficult to find - in order to get more workers at a time of need. This is also relevant to the fact that one of the few industries that really have been responsive to the need for evening and night care is the hospitals which have had child care centers. Not all hospitals but more than any other industry. This industry has been responsive. So I think when we perceive an unmet need that is of a societal nature and not just perceive it as a problem for individual families and women that we do act.

Audience Member. I know you've talked about this elsewhere but nobody specifically pointed out the difficulty that you have with school-age children who have a schedule of their own. The child has to be at school all day and if the parent has to be gone in the evenings that's particularly difficult because of the lack of supervision. I thought you might want to comment on the fact that this poses a different kind of problem than the pre-school problem.

Harriet Presser: Right, most of my data on family consequences in the book came from the National Household Survey of Families and Households. This survey didn't ask about child care after school but it did ask if there was a parent home when children went off to school and when they came back. And one could say that an advantage of late-hour care is that there are more parents home when children leave for school and come home. The problem is that the survey didn't ask whether the parents were awake or not. And again, that's always missing. I think we have far more latch-key children than we estimate in our surveys because we don't take that into account.

Shelley Waters Boots: I think your point brings up another. It's a "cuts-across-systems" issue of the K-12 system interplay with all of these pieces that we are trying to pull together here in this discussion. We bump into it especially if we talk about after-school issues but also, I think, in our discussion about child outcomes. I think of Wen's work that looks at the behavior problems that you see in school age kids and also of Harriet's point about the loss of rituals and how we know that some of these family rituals really tie to child outcomes. As we bring those bodies of work together, thinking about both preschool and school-age kids is really important.

Audience Member: This is a great series of presentations and I think what Dr. Presser most put before us - and the others reinforced - is that we have a disjunction between traditional society and the new economy and our institutional structures to serve them. One way to look at that is to bemoan this fact and ask whether we can change these social and economic trends. That may or may not be possible but there's not a lot of evidence of anybody doing such a thing.

The other way to look at it then - and I think some of the other presentations especially Lucy's presentation of Marcia's work do - is to say, well can we change the institutional structures to be more consistent with society and the economy? In the K-12 public education system people are asking whether we can break down some of the rigidities that are no longer in touch with what's happening. Similarly in early care and education we've built our structures around a nine-to-five Monday-through-Friday world that doesn't exist any more. Should we be simply bemoan the fact that we are moving into a 24/7 economy, or should we be thinking about ways to create more flexibility and quality? Is evening care *per se* in and of its nature of worse quality or worse for children than nine-to-five care? I'm not the developmental person. I'd love to hear developmental people address that. Or do we need to re-think our whole service structure to be in tune with society and the economy?

Lucy Jordan: Well, one thing came up in a session yesterday afternoon that to me was really a different way to think about it, is that the whole package of social insurance programs in this country came from an era that is no more. Those programs were created out of need to deal with things that were important at that time. It struck me that we need

to be thinking more about the changing social insurance needs of our current society, say the needs of a population that has increasingly higher numbers of aged persons. Many working families are also trying to provide care for their aging parents as well as for their children. I just think that it is very interesting to think about the child care component as being just one part of a larger package of family insurance programs.

Harriet Presser: I think what you said is right on and I think there are lots of problems in trying to implement such a concept, but we really need public discourse on it to try to work it out. The Women's Bureau in 1995 published a special bulletin on evening and night care - just talking to people, exploring a few companies and communities that were trying to be responsive. I think that was a great start and they actually called it the "Sleeper Issue". They said "it would take a champion either from management, labor, or the community to make the issue a priority". To date there has been no such champion. And you know the only public speaker, the only prominent speaker, who ever addressed this issue was Hillary Clinton in 1996 when she was introducing her husband for nomination for re-election at the Democratic Convention. She was speaking in the evening and she said some people are coming home from work now and some people are leaving for work. And I thought wow, that's the first time I heard anyone mention that. We didn't hear anything about late work shifts during the last election from either party. If you consider that this involves one third of all two-earner couples and a lot of single women with children, then we need to talk about it.

Audience Member: I enjoyed all of your presentations and I have two questions mostly for Wen and for Harriet. The over-arching question is, why shift work? Why do parents engage in shift work? It strikes me that the processes and dynamics behind that decision vary considerably for single-mother families versus the dual-earner couples, that both of you hinted at but didn't quite delve into during your presentations.

For single mother families it's probably more likely a requirement of the kinds of jobs that they have access to and can maintain over time. For dual-earner couples, how much of this is a choice - a deliberate choice versus a constrained choice? And I'm also wondering how much of the non-standard work schedules are predictable versus unpredictable rotating shifts, which probably tracks quite closely with what we're seeing with children's development.

And then my final question is about child care in the evening. Harriet, have you learned anything about whether parents are open to that option? I have some skepticism, I guess, about utilization of these center-based arrangements where centers are being kept open all night. Would parents actually use that or are you thinking more broadly about options within homes or other possibilities.

Harriet Presser: You have to realize that in order to get estimates that are really reliable I'm working with large-scale data sets with questions that have already been asked. Now I've had some role in encouraging survey designers to include the hours and days that people work on questions in national surveys and my job has been to analyze these data. So we don't have answers to some of your questions, but to some I do. The CPS (Current Population Survey) is the only national data set that asks people why they're working

non-standard hours. And most people, including most mothers of young children, do not give child-related reasons. Only one third of mothers with young children say that it's for child care. There are some that give "other family reasons" that I suspect relate to needs of the aged, as you mentioned. But most of respondents are reporting that it's the nature of the job, that's the only job that they could find; so most people work non-standard hours for job-related rather than personal reasons.

Now a substantial minority of young people are likely to say school. They work in the evenings because they go to school during the day but those aren't people with children for the most part.

I mentioned that a third of all non-standard shift workers are rotators. That's pretty big. And then there's the question of how parents feel about evening care at child care centers. I wish I had survey data on this and it would be nice to get more qualitative data as well. I'm a sociologist and in my field we do a lot of qualitative work on the family. Only by chance do we study the shift workers in these qualitative surveys, such as in Arlie Hochschild's book the *Second Shift*. Because it's so prevalent they'll find in their small samples a few cases of people who are working non-standard hours, but nobody's done an in-depth qualitative survey focusing on non-standard hours. And that would be interesting.

Shelley Waters Boots: Yes, and I think the last data that I found just on the availability of odd hour, non-standard care suggested that in most places the supply of that care is low. Once again, I think you bring up the question of whether or not low supply is a product of low demand because parents might not want to take their child to a more formal or non-home based setting in the evenings or over night. You know, the weekends are another question but when I think of the availability of weekend care and the demand for it, I think we have a lot of work yet to do to understand how that interplays.

But then I think, as Rick Brandon pointed out on the developmental side, what does that mean for child outcomes and school readiness? What are the implications then for kids, since this is presumably a large part of the population that needs care at these different times? What does that mean then as we're starting to think about things like a pre-K program, school readiness program, and child outcomes around research-based curricula? How do you integrate this discussion with others that seem to be suggesting that kids either need more parental and family care or care outside of the home with hours that are different? I think we have a lot of work and thinking to do to bring those conversations together with the research.

Audience Member: There's another boundary between the child care patterns, the work patterns, and family life. And that's children's physical health. We had a presentation earlier about mental health but one of the issues that arose here is when and where and for how long are parents (and to some extent their children) sleeping? Some of the qualitative work that I and a number of others have been involved in indicates that parents in particular are not sleeping as much and they often are sleeping in two or more spells rather than through the night. This has all kinds of

implications. And so I was interested in whether there has been any work looking at these kinds of changes in sleep patterns and the physical health of the families involved.

Wen-Jui Han: I think that is a very good point. As far as I know, we don't have anything and I don't know of anyone doing such work. No answer in this case, but we do need more research in this area and I know there is much more - relatively speaking much more - research that actually happens in health care setting and hospitals. There are surveys of nurses regarding their work schedules and how they manage it. And I know there's more new research coming out as well in that they also want to extend research to the family life of these nurses. So that's one research that we can look forward to.

Shelley Waters Boots: Yes, and I'm thinking too of a new initiative of the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety. They are looking at some of these work place, work hours issues. We should check with them and see if they'll be delving into some of our issues because a lot of the existing information about the mental health of workers and their work places has come out of NIOASHA-funded research. We need to think about whether or not there are some lessons to learn as we're starting to look at this from a broader perspective. Then we need to think about how we can play into some of those new studies by possibly adding a child care component, because there certainly are relational effects between parents' mental health and children's outcomes.

Another question I have is do children end up on the same sleep schedules as parents or do they have a more normal sleep schedule? Are they not in child care centers during the day when their moms are sleeping because they're also sleeping? Or how does it interact with the child's schedule as well? I think there are maybe some places to collaborate there.

Harriet Presser: I just wanted to say that I was at the conference and we did have a subgroup of people who were shift work experts speaking there, but they were not talking about it in terms of the effect on children. It was the impact on the shift worker which was the typical focus. But there is a large body of research, very good research, on what chronic sleep deprivation means for the health of shift workers. It leads to cardiovascular disease. It leads to a lot of gastrointestinal problems, and so forth. This is not a case of just occasionally not having sleep; this is chronic sleep deprivation which is really bad for you, and that came out of the meeting.

Shelley Waters Boots: I think we'll wrap it up right there. I hope we've given you some new things to chew on and I want to acknowledge the work of our consortium's Families and Work Theme leaders in putting this session together. It has been extremely enriching.