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Gender, The Private/Public Divide, and Care: Not *What*, but *How*

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Janet M. Phillips  
Department of Political Science  
University of Alberta  
jmp3@ualberta.ca

Within Political Science, the field of Gender and Politics occupies a precarious position. As its own field of study, it is still fairly new, as evidenced by the dearth of Political Science PhD programs within Canada that count it as a field of study. Indeed, the field is still very much working to establish itself. However, the importance of gender to studies of governance has been made clear by the work of feminist political scientists, and feminist political action more broadly, in pressing governments to live up to their commitments to liberal equality by acknowledging and addressing gender inequality. That said, much work within the Gender and Politics field has been focused on debate around the conceptualization of gender in the first instance: is gender a biological given or is it socially produced? And, more recently, what are the opportunities and limits of embracing gender as an identity category that has been used in the service of subjection? Stalled on this debate, it has taken the field some time to jump into discussions of intersectionality. At this point within the discipline, discussions are moving from ‘what is gender?’ to ‘how does it operate in relation to other identity categories?’

At present, the primacy of the private/public divide, including its repercussions for the marriage contract, the family, and care, are central to the field. Much first wave and second wave feminist activism and scholarship surrounded the subordination of women within the private sphere. Thus, it may seem odd that the theme of the family is still being labeled as central to the field so many years later. However, the family and the place of care work are still so relevant because in practice, the private/public divide has not adequately been called into question. This paper will begin by examining this divide using the marriage contract as an example (Pateman 1988; Wollstonecraft 1967; Fineman 2006; Shanley 2006). It will then examine what this split means for the politics of the family (Barrett and McIntosh 1982; Polikoff 2009; Collins 1998; Butler 2002). Finally, it will take up care work as an example of how debate surrounding the gendered being has evolved into how it functions in tandem with other identity categories (Ruddick 1990; Kershaw 2005; Waring 1996; Armstrong 2008). Ultimately, political analyses of care work cannot stop at an analysis of gender, but must account for the relation of gender to other salient categories of subjectivity and subjection. It is not until this intersectionality is accounted for that we can employ a concept such as care to move beyond debates *about* gender to identify how it operates in relation to other categories of subjection. The identification of the operation of gender with these other categories allows insight into the productive, rather than oppressive, operation of power, especially regarding its repercussions for identity. By understanding the operation of power, we can then begin to analyze (the sometimes contradictory) forms of resistance to it.

### *The Private/Public Divide and the Production of Gender Identity*

The private/public divide is essential to the field. The ‘contracting in’ to a shared public sphere has been a central theme of foundational theoretical texts (Hobbes 1985; Locke 1997; Rousseau 1987). However, feminist literature has revealed another side to the private/public split that this egalitarian public sphere implies. As thinkers such as Carole Pateman highlight, the notion of ‘the consent of the governed’ as a social contract between male heads of households and the state naturalizes a private/public divide between the private and political realms. However, as Jacqueline Stevens points out, one does not consent to be governed. One becomes a member of a political society when the circumstances of one’s birth conform to the membership criteria of that political society.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the survival of the public sphere – that is, the state, depends upon the maintenance of kinship rules that promote intergenerationality.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline Stevens, *Reproducing the State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 51-52.

We refer to these kinship rules as the ‘family.’ Central to the family as an ideology is the marriage contract.

Observation of implications of the marriage contract for women have prompted calls for its reform, ranging from recognizing alternative status relationships such as civil unions, the possibility of de-gendering marriage by extending marriage rights to same-sex partners, and claims that the legal status of marriage *itself* be abolished. Anita Bernstein identifies two main movements centered on marriage: first, the same-sex marriage movement that argues same-sex couples be granted the right to legally marry; and second, the marriage movement, which privileges a more traditional understanding of marriage and the importance of the government in pressing citizens to marry.<sup>2</sup> Yet despite seemingly contrary agendas, both these movements privilege the marriage institution without reflecting on the incredible status accorded to it.<sup>3</sup> Whether one argues that marriage should be de-gendered or that it should retain its traditional definition to remain between a man and woman, the high status accorded to marriage as a legal category is less often called into question.

Martha Fineman argues that the legal status of marriage should be abolished altogether.<sup>4</sup> With the changing nature of relationships and families within the private sphere, she asks, “why should marriage be the price of entry into state support and subsidy? Why define the family through this connection?”<sup>5</sup> Rather, Fineman argues that the social and economic privileges accorded to the marriage contract should be transferred “to a new family core connection – that of the caretaker-dependent.”<sup>6</sup> Historically, it has been the marital family that has been responsible for the production of citizens.<sup>7</sup> If marriage rates are dwindling, its legal status might as well be replaced by one that protects the caregiver-dependent relationship. Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller agree with Fineman’s position, suggesting that “disconnecting marriage from civil law would be a reform to historical norms, and a wise approach to the ethical obligation to define and support families fairly and inclusively.”<sup>8</sup> They note that the meaning of ‘family’ in today’s terms means much more than blood and marriage relationships, and is more centered on relationships of care. Because of an inadequate social safety net with neoliberal rollbacks in state services, we need to broaden the definition of the family to include all caregiving relationships so that they can be granted the resources and privileges necessary to provide the care that the state cannot.<sup>9</sup> As Lois Harder explains, because neoliberal practices rely on the family to provide support and care services, “the fact that more kinds of relationships are legitimated simultaneously destabilizes prevailing norms and provides the state with more sites of regulation and more opportunities to off-load social obligations.”<sup>10</sup> Extending marriage as a legal status to different types of families does not mean less neoliberalism by way of less state

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<sup>2</sup> Anita Bernstein, “Questioning Marriage,” introduction to *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006a), 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Martha A. Fineman, “The Meaning of Marriage,” in *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006), 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller, “Taking Government out of the Marriage Business: Families Would Benefit,” in *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006), 71.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>10</sup> Lois Harder, “The State and the Friendships of the Nation: The Case of Nonconjugal Relationships in the United States and Canada.” *Signs* 34, no. 3 (2009): 633-658, accessed January 25, 2012, doi: 10.1086/593331.

interference in private relationships. Rather, it signals more neoliberalism because the more families that are legally recognized, the more sites there are within the private sphere that are available for the provision of services.

Mary Shanley agrees with Fineman and Solot and Miller that the changing nature of the family requires a reevaluation of state subsidies and supports, but disagrees that the state should have no place in the creation of contracts among individual relationships.<sup>11</sup> For Shanley, “the state, that is, the civic community, must be instrumental in promoting the values of liberty and equality that are central to justice in both political and familial life.”<sup>12</sup> No, support for *all* families need not depend upon the marriage contract per se, but this does not mean that the state should not have a role in protecting the relationships that people do contract into. According to Shanley, the state plays an important role in maintaining these relationships, especially when it comes to “promoting the values of liberty and equality that are central to justice in both political and familial life.”<sup>13</sup> However, Shanley’s argument is less clear because of her equation of the ‘state’ with ‘civic community.’ Is it the state as government that must help maintain these relationships, or, any aspect of the public sphere more generally? Bernstein acknowledges Fineman’s proposal that the state could abolish marriage as a legal status, but disagrees that this should give way to individual relationship contracts.<sup>14</sup> If it is not up to the state to legally recognize these individual contracts, Bernstein worries that the market will step in to regulate them: “[...] without marriage, the force that would expand to control citizens’ private lives is either the state or capital, an unrelenting press of the market.”<sup>15</sup>

However, calls for the abolition of marriage as a legal category overlook the fact that not everyone was/is permitted to marry in the first place. Solot and Miller highlight that the divide between those who marry and those who do not “roughly follows the class divide.”<sup>16</sup> The abolishment of marriage as a legal category is not just about ensuring gender equality, but class equality as well. Indeed, gender identity may have been produced by the private/public split, but class identities have been equally produced by exclusion from entering the marriage contract in the first place. Peggy Cooper Davis argues “that the right to choose to participate in the culture through marriage should be protected.”<sup>17</sup> Historically in the United States, slaves were not allowed to marry as this would contradict and compromise their status as property to White slaveholders.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, while Fineman and Solot and Miller are suggesting that abolishing marriage as a legal status would increase the rights of all families to receive state benefits, they overlook that Black and mixed-race couples have not always had the right to marry in the first place. This is a result of state benefits being tied to relationship status rather than other factors, such as residency – hence, the primacy accorded the marriage relationship. This ties back to Fineman’s argument that social entitlements should be accorded based on caregiver-dependent

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Lyndon Shanley, “The State of Marriage and the State in Marriage: What Must be Done,” in *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006), 202.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Anita Bernstein, “Narrowing the Status of Marriage,” afterword in *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006), 228.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>16</sup> Solot and Miller, “Taking Government Out of the Marriage Business,” 89.

<sup>17</sup> Davis, Peggy Cooper, “Marriage as a ‘Badge and Incident’ of Democratic Freedom,” in *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006), 172.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

relationships, and not just marriage relationships.<sup>19</sup> Complications such as these are why intersectional analysis is so important to Gender and Politics.

Therefore, the attainment of true gender equality is not as easy as bringing women out of the private sphere and placing them in the public sphere. Rather, it is the identification of how gender is produced in the first place, as well as the location of its production in these processes. Dhamoon's assertion that "*identity is difference*" highlights the complications in overcoming this private status.<sup>20</sup> Yes, women can be granted access to the public sphere to engage in political activities. However, this depends on someone stepping in to reproduce members for political society in the private realm they leave behind so that the public sphere they now partake in can exist in the first place. Without questioning the very private/public structural divide itself, the identities accorded to these other groups, who step in to fill this gap, will in turn be produced by the exploitative nature of this domain. Yet, this observation in turn assumes that the private/public divide is a given, and does not challenge the assumption that the reproduction of the state *has* to occur in the private sphere.

### *Still All About the Family*

Patricia Hill Collins defines intersectionality as "particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation. Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice."<sup>21</sup> At the same time, and as Dhamoon points out, the differences upon which such oppressions are based produce identities as difference.<sup>22</sup> Difference operates within and across various social institutions, one of which, she points out, is the family.<sup>23</sup> She explains that "in each of these social divisions, meanings of difference are not constituted unidimensionally (that is, primarily through culture) but through multiple interactions between distinct but mutually constituted modalities of difference."<sup>24</sup> A helpful way to understand intersectionality is by using Collins's "matrix of domination," which "refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression."<sup>25</sup> More specifically, using the matrix of domination as an analytic tool, one sees how intersecting oppressions are socially organized across various social institutions.<sup>26</sup> As described above, Dhamoon highlights that these social institutions, and oppressions within them, then produce the subject as different. This paper highlights one particular social institution – that is, the family.

Contemporary debates surrounding the role of the family are centered on same-sex marriage (briefly introduced in the previous section), the role of the family in social reproduction in the face of neoliberal cuts to state welfare spending, and the implications of globalization for the family, as seen in the phrase 'global householding.' At the root of these seemingly distinct issues is the value accorded to the family, both socially and politically. Michèle Barrett and Mary

<sup>19</sup> Fineman, "The Meaning of Marriage," 30.

<sup>20</sup> Dhamoon, *Identity/Difference Politics*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York; London: Routledge, 2009), 21.

<sup>22</sup> Rita Dhamoon, *Identity/Difference Politics: How Difference is Produced, and Why it Matters* (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2009), 11.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

McIntosh dissected the family in *The Anti-Social Family* (1982). They define the family as both “a social and economic institution,” as well as an ideology.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Collins notes that the “family ideal” is so powerful throughout society because it is an ideology as well as “a fundamental principle of social organization.”<sup>28</sup> For Barrett and McIntosh, the family is structured in the household according to kinship ties, and is organized economically around a male/female “division of labour.”<sup>29</sup> But at the same time, the family is an ideology.<sup>30</sup> Although the family form as an organization in reality comprises only a minority of Western households, it is its idealization that underlies the ideology of the family.<sup>31</sup> For Collins, this ‘ideal’ includes five dimensions: “heterosexual couples that produce their own biological children”; “emotional bonds”; “specific authority structure”; “fixed sexual division of labour”; and, a “natural or biological arrangement.”<sup>32</sup>

Barrett and McIntosh explain that “far from speaking of the decline of the family, we should be speaking of the familial character of society.”<sup>33</sup> That is to say, while a declining number of households reflect this nuclear family model, the idealization of this model has become increasingly prevalent throughout Western society. The family is relevant because “everything from single-parent families to gay marriages is a family, and so all social issues can be presented in relation to ‘the family.’”<sup>34</sup> It is because it is defined as an ideology that the family is entwined with so many social and political issues. The significance of the family serving as an ideology, as Fineman suggests, is that it “allows us to privatize individual dependency and pretend that it is not a public problem.”<sup>35</sup> The private/public divide permits the state to ignore what goes on in the private sphere.

As Barrett and McIntosh and Collins highlight, the family is idealized. However, as seen in the case of same-sex marriage, global householding, and literature on social reproduction, often this idealization is desired in itself, as a mark of both social and political legitimacy, and thus as a means to garner state support. In “Is Kinship Always Heterosexual?” (2002), Judith Butler pinpoints the predicament for those seeking the right for same-sex couples to marry: “[...] the state is sought for the recognition it might confer on same-sex couples and countered for the regulatory control on normative kinship that it continues to exercise.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the danger in seeking state legitimacy for same-sex unions is the risk of being normalized by that traditional history, and by that family ‘ideal.’ Harder notes that “while legal bonds may certainly be useful for people who want them, legitimation can also include the power of normalization.”<sup>37</sup> Jeffrey

<sup>27</sup> Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh, *The Anti-social Family* (London: Verso, 1982), 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, “It’s All In The Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation,” *Hypatia* 13, no. 3 (1998): 63, accessed January 25, 2012, <http://web.ebscohost.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&hid=108&sid=1c188f41-730e-4a2f-81d6-f8d04c9c1332%40sessionmgr115>.

<sup>29</sup> Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-social Family*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Collins, “It’s All in the Family,” 62-63.

<sup>33</sup> Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-social Family*, 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Martha A. Fineman, “Cracking the Foundational Myths: Independence, Autonomy, and Self-Sufficiency,” in *American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy, & the Law* 13 (2000): 14, accessed January 17, 2012, [http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ajgsp8&div=8&g\\_sent=1&collection=journals](http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ajgsp8&div=8&g_sent=1&collection=journals).

<sup>36</sup> Butler, Judith, “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no.1 (2002): 16, accessed January 24, 2012, <http://web.ebscohost.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&hid=108&sid=b03ac9d5-d207-431a-b038-8aa4bd647abc%40sessionmgr111>.

<sup>37</sup> Harder, “The State and the Friendships of the Nation,” 639.

Weeks, Brian Hemphy and Catherine Donovan suggest that the appropriation of language associated with ‘family’ by non-heterosexual couples “can be seen as both a challenge to conventional definitions, and an attempt to broaden these; as a hankering for legitimacy and an attempt to build something new; as an identification with existing patterns, and a more or less conscious effort to subvert them.”<sup>38</sup> The position that same-sex marriage occupies among acquiring state approval for non-traditional relationships, redefining what constitutes a ‘family,’ and the risk of normalization, demonstrates the power of the family ideal as ideology.

However, Butler observes that the problem with the legitimate/illegitimate split is that illegitimate relationships are understood in relation to legitimate ones, and thus, still rely on legitimacy to exist.<sup>39</sup> Both legitimate and illegitimate relationships seek the state’s approval, and thus, for Butler this comes down to “*who may desire the state’s desire?*”<sup>40</sup> The problem with this legitimate/illegitimate binary is that it obscures “a field that is less thinkable, one not figured in light of its ultimate convertibility into legitimacy.”<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, however, “how can one think politics without considering these sites of unrepresentability?”<sup>42</sup> For Butler, the same-sex marriage debate comes down to a major dilemma: if a couple lives without state recognition, it is at risk of “forms of disenfranchisement,” while if it receives state recognition by way of the right to marry, it is subject “to new and invidious forms of social hierarchy, to a precipitous foreclosure of the sexual field, and to new ways of supporting and extending state power [...]”<sup>43</sup> The task is to remain critical of both sides of the debate, and to look at how the debate is itself structured.<sup>44</sup>

Butler’s dilemma raises another point. At stake in the same-sex marriage debate is not only the family ideal, but also the benefits that accrue to it. Indeed, many families seeking recognition may not even put much stock in the family ideal, but rather, seek the subsidies that are granted with the privilege of the family label. This unit is so privileged because, as Stevens suggests, it is the location for the reproduction of the state.<sup>45</sup> Harder explains that “the family has undertaken the work of social reproduction and hence many of the welfare functions that nation-states (and their precursors) require in order to perpetuate themselves.”<sup>46</sup> The state needs the family, hence the importance granted to the latter. Angelia Wilson contends that while arguments for same-sex marriage are cloaked in liberal terms of “justice, rights, and equality,” ultimately, “the possible inclusion of gay men and lesbians has less to do with liberal arguments of equality and much more to do with the rising economic cost of care provision.”<sup>47</sup> Because of the “care crunch,” it is more likely that there will be inclusion of a greater array of family forms, not because of matters of equality, but because the state needs to fill this care gap.<sup>48</sup> Nancy Polikoff introduces a “valuing all families” approach, the point of which is to overcome the

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<sup>38</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, Brian Heaphy, and Catherine Donovan, *Same Sex Intimacies: Families of Choice and Other Life Experiments* (New York; London: Routledge, 2001), 11.

<sup>39</sup> Butler, “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?” 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, italics in original.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>45</sup> Stevens, *Reproducing the State*, 51-52.

<sup>46</sup> Harder, “The State and the Friendships of the Nation,” 637.

<sup>47</sup> Angelia R. Wilson, “Feminism and Same-Sex Marriage: Who Cares?” *Politics and Gender* 6, no. 1 (2010): 135, accessed January 25, 2012, doi: 10.1017/S1743923X09990560.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

requirement of marriage in the state's allocation of rights to families.<sup>49</sup> Most notably, however, is her assertion that "the most important element in implementing this approach is identifying the purpose of a law that now grants marriage unique legal consequences."<sup>50</sup> These scholars illustrate the importance of understanding *how* the family functions within the state to contemporary challenges to the traditional family form. Ultimately, while the same-sex marriage debate may appear to come down to a liberal rights-based discourse, at stake is also the maintenance of the family unit itself in order to guarantee the good health of the state.

Another contemporary issue involving the family is global householding. Suzanne Bergeron defines this as "the reconfiguration of household and family arrangements as people move across national boundaries."<sup>51</sup> V. Spike Peterson identifies it as "the many ways in which these [household] processes increasingly occur across national boundaries, for example, through transborder marriages, overseas education, labour migration, and war displacements."<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, global householding refers to the way households respond to globalization, both in terms of their organization and processes, as their members and functions are increasingly dispersed across national boundaries. Bergeron notes that the United Nations' 2009 *Human Development Report* sees transnational migrant labour as a positive, contributing towards the enhancement of "market efficiency defined in largely neoclassical terms."<sup>53</sup> However, what this analysis fails to recognize, according to Bergeron, are the consequences of the displacement of over 100 million women migrant workers from their reproductive roles within their home countries.<sup>54</sup> This means that there is a considerable amount of unpaid care work traditionally undertaken by women that is left undone in the families they leave behind.<sup>55</sup>

However, as Peterson notes, it is not all women who are leaving families behind to work in other countries. The women who migrate mostly come from the global south to work in the global north in order to fill in for a "care deficit" that manifests when women in the global north leave the private sphere to work in the public sphere. Peterson points out that, "we might first note that the re-positioning of women with respect to economic activities does not constitute a reconfiguration of gender coding."<sup>56</sup> That is to say, while it would appear that more and more women are, on a global scale, 'entering the workforce', they are still performing domestic labour. As Barrett and McIntosh explain, "many feminists have remarked that the work that women do for wages is, by and large, nothing other than domestic labour in a different context."<sup>57</sup> Pat and Hugh Armstrong observe that, "the division of labour by sex has changed little over the last forty years. In Canada today, there is still men's work and women's work."<sup>58</sup> The phrase "women's

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<sup>49</sup> Nancy D. Polikoff, "Law that Values All Families: Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage," *Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers* 22 (2009): 90, accessed February 8, 2012, <http://www.heinonline.org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/jaaml22&id=91&collection=journals&index=>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Suzanne Bergeron, "Gender Development and Global Householding," *Politics and Gender* 6, no. 2 (2010): 281, accessed January 25, 2012, doi:10.1017/S1743923X10000085.

<sup>52</sup> V. Spike Peterson, "Global Householding amid Global Crises," *Politics and Gender* 6: 271, accessed January 24, 2012, doi: 10.1017/S1743923X10000073.

<sup>53</sup> Bergeron, "Gender Development and Global Householding," 283.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 281-282.

<sup>56</sup> Peterson, "Global Householding amid Global Crises," 279.

<sup>57</sup> Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-social Family*, 27.

<sup>58</sup> Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13.



work going global” suggests that women’s participation in the work force has increased on a global scale.<sup>59</sup> On the one hand, women are now entitled to a wage and the benefits that accompany it, but at the same time, this does not necessarily equate to well-paid work, nor does it mean that these women have control over any or all of the money they make through their labour.<sup>60</sup> From an intersectional perspective, it is women from the global south who are disproportionately negatively affected by this reorganization of labour. In terms of class lines, on a global scale, these women are less affluent than the northern women who employ them. In terms of age, these are mostly younger women. As Bergeron highlights, when these women leave their home countries to serve as caregivers for these more affluent women, a “care deficit” ensues in their home countries when they must leave their own families behind to earn a wage abroad.<sup>61</sup>

At the root of both the same-sex marriage debate and global householding is the role the family plays in carrying out tasks associated with social reproduction – that is, care. Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill define social reproduction as “both biological reproduction of the species (and indeed its ecological framework) and ongoing reproduction of the commodity labour power.”<sup>62</sup> It is “both a productive potential and a condition of existence for the expanded reproduction of capital and social formation.”<sup>63</sup> Cindi Katz defines it as “daily and long term reproduction, both of the means of production and the labour power to make them work.”<sup>64</sup> Peterson defines it as “the array of activities that are sited primarily in (physical) households and are necessary for ensuring daily and generational continuity of families and communities.”<sup>65</sup> For the purposes of this paper, social reproduction refers to the activities undertaken in the private sphere that are necessary for the continuance of the public sphere. Social reproduction is very significant to contemporary debates surrounding the role of the family. On the question of marriage raised in the previous section of this paper, Linda McClain identifies the role of families in carrying out social reproductive tasks as an acceptable area of “governmental support and regulation.”<sup>66</sup> For McClain, marriage should receive state support partly because it is an organization that can foster social reproduction.<sup>67</sup> So, social reproduction figures very highly in debate surrounding the place of the family and the state. However, also at stake is the changing nature of gender relations in relation to social reproduction, and its repercussions for carrying out the tasks associated with the latter. Rianne Mahon argues that “changes in gender relations have destabilized the form of social reproduction sustained by post-war welfare states, giving rise to a ‘care crisis’ across the OECD.”<sup>68</sup> We are witnessing “the disappearance of the male

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<sup>59</sup> Peterson, “Global Householding amid Global Crises,” 275.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>61</sup> Bergeron, “Gender Development and Global Householding,” 281-282.

<sup>62</sup> Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill, “Ontology, Method, and Hypotheses,” in *Power, Production and Social Reproduction*, edited by Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill (Toronto: York University, 2003), 17-18.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>64</sup> Cindi Katz, “Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction.” *Antipode* 33, no. 4 (2001): 709-728, accessed October 13, 2010, [http://web.gc.cuny.edu/Psychology/environmental/ckatz/downloadablefiles/Katz-Vagabond\\_Capitalism.pdf](http://web.gc.cuny.edu/Psychology/environmental/ckatz/downloadablefiles/Katz-Vagabond_Capitalism.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> Peterson, “Global Householding amid Global Crises,” 272.

<sup>66</sup> Linda C. McClain, “What Place for Marriage (E)quality in Marriage Promotion?” in *Marriage Proposals: Questioning a Legal Status*, edited by Anita Bernstein (New York; London: New York University Press, 2006), 107.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Rianne Mahon, “Rescaling Social Reproduction: Childcare in Toronto/Canada and Stockholm/Sweden,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 2 (2005): 353, accessed February 7, 2012, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2005.00588.x.

breadwinner/female caregiver family form.”<sup>69</sup> Because states can no longer rely on “the unpaid care of the mother-housewife,” the state is starting to feel increased responsibilities for the provision of tasks associated with social reproduction.<sup>70</sup> With this, we see debates about childcare provision, health care, old age security, as well as a plethora of other debates surrounding state involvement in providing for the tasks traditionally carried out in the private realm while women are encouraged, and in many cases financially required, to participate in the work force.

After examining contemporary debates regarding the family, including same-sex marriage and global householding, it is clear that at the root of these issues is the role of the family in carrying out tasks associated with social reproduction. Indeed, Wollstonecraft’s middle-class housewife has left the private sphere, but the private/public divide has not been called into question, and a care gap remains in the private, familial realm. Literature on global householding suggests that this gap is being filled by women from the global south, whose families, in turn, go without their care work. Other literature on social reproduction suggests that there is more pressure put on the state to pick up these tasks. However, neither of these approaches calls into question the nature of care, and how it is structured along the private/public divide discussed in the previous section of this paper. In response to this binary, Barrett and McIntosh argue that “caring, sharing and loving would be more wide-spread if the family did not claim them for its own.”<sup>71</sup> This is an argument also advanced by Paul Kershaw.<sup>72</sup> The anti-social nature of the family has meant that support and care have been limited to the private sphere. The question at hand is whether these values need to be injected into the public sphere in order that we might have a more caring and supportive society? If everyone took responsibility for care work, would it still be left to the most marginalized groups within society? Moreover, if everyone did care work, would it continue to produce, or at least reinforce, the identities of those carrying out its tasks as ‘other?’ As Kershaw highlights, this would also provide an opportunity to overcome the androcentrism inherent within the public sphere.<sup>73</sup> If care is brought into the public sphere, it would challenge the relegation of care to the private sphere, and thus, the private/public divide itself. Calling this split into question also means questioning the production of subjugated identities within the family as a social institution that hosts a particular matrix of oppression. The argument should not surround how these different identities are being produced but should examine how the structural divides that produce these identities can be called into question as sites of oppression.

### *Who Cares and Why?*

The Gender and Politics field is host to a plethora of literature on care. Care is a prime example of how debates over the nature of gender have been transcended to include its intersections with other identity categories. The significance of the proliferation of ethics of care literature within the field can be seen in the movement away from first generation care theory to second generation care theory, particularly in work that looks at the injection of care into the public sphere. Prior to defining an ethics of care and delving into this topic, however, it is necessary to first define ‘care.’ Care involves helping to meet the needs of others, and is thus

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 341.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-Social Family*, 80.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Kershaw, *Carefair: Rethinking the Responsibilities and Rights of Citizenship* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 124.

fundamentally concerned with the ‘other.’ Guy Standing defines care work “as the work of looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people.”<sup>74</sup> As Carol Gilligan explains, “as a framework for moral decision, care is grounded in the assumption that self and other are interdependent [...]”<sup>75</sup> One cares for the ‘other’ because one is connected to him or her. While concerned with the needs of an ‘other,’ however, the act of caring itself comes from the caregiver. From the perspective of the caregiver, care includes aspects of time, effort, technique, social skills, emotional input, and stress.<sup>76</sup> In terms of the act itself, as elaborated upon by Fisher and Tronto, care includes “caring about,” “taking care of,” “caregiving,” and “care-receiving.”<sup>77</sup> It is through delving into these four aspects of care that a connection begins to be drawn between the act of care itself and its ethic.

The ethics of care refers to a morality grounded in meeting the needs of others. To employ Fisher and Tronto’s work, while care acts include “caring about,” “taking care of,” “caregiving,” and “care-receiving,” an ethic of care is the moral imperative associated with each of these acts.<sup>78</sup> This is a more specific understanding of care ethics. Many thinkers refer to the ethics of care as a broader attitude. Virginia Held identifies it as a broader attitude that stresses values such as “empathy, sensitivity, trust, and responding to need.”<sup>79</sup> Alison Jaggar identifies care as “a practice of moral thinking,” as “a distinctive moral orientation toward another person or persons” wherein “the caring individual is simultaneously concerned about the other’s welfare and perceives acutely and insightfully how it is with the other.”<sup>80</sup> Olena Hankivsky contends that an ethics of care is grounded in “networks of human interdependencies,” and that out of this network “emerges a set of distinct values for guiding our social lives and understanding the entire spectrum of human experiences and human needs.”<sup>81</sup> Likewise, Fiona Robinson explains that an “ethic of care is guided by a fully relational moral ontology. What this means is that the notion of the self is incoherent unless it is understood as constructed and existing through a series of complex and ever-changing networks of relations with others.”<sup>82</sup>

In sum, an ethics of care depends upon an understanding of oneself as connected to an ‘other’, and care acts stem from this relational understanding. But, why does an ethics of care matter to Political Science? The importance of Gender and Politics to the field more broadly is that those operating within it have undertaken work that shows that even though acts of care are relegated to the private sphere, they are indeed political. Equally political is the way in which these care acts produce identities. At the same time, debates surrounding the being of gender have fundamentally structured how work on care has been approached within the field. As

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<sup>74</sup> Guy Standing, “Care Work: Overcoming Insecurity and Neglect,” in *Care Work: The Quest for Security*, edited by Mary Daly (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2001), 17.

<sup>75</sup> Carole Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development,” in *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held (Boulder, CO; Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1995), 36.

<sup>76</sup> Standing, “Care Work,” 18.

<sup>77</sup> Berenice Fisher and Joan C. Tronto, “Chapter 2: Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring,” in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women’s Lives*, edited by Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 41-44.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Virginia Held, “Can the Ethics of Care Handle Violence?” *Ethics and Social Welfare* 4 (2010): 117, accessed April 1, 2011, doi: 10.1080/17496535.2010.484256.

<sup>80</sup> Alison M. Jaggar, “Caring as a Feminist Practice of Moral Reason,” in *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held (Boulder, CO; Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1995), 180.

<sup>81</sup> Olena Hankivsky, *Social Policy and the Ethic of Care* (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>82</sup> Fiona Robinson, “Care, Gender and Global Social Justice: Rethinking ‘Ethical Globalization,’” *Journal of Global Ethics* 2 (2006): 13, accessed November 16, 2011, doi: 10.1080/17449620600677213.

Hankivsky identifies, there are two approaches, or what she calls “generations,” to care. The first generation “linked an ethic of care [...] to gender.”<sup>83</sup> In contrast to this approach, for the second generation, “care is central to all human life.”<sup>84</sup> This division between these two generations of studies on care work reflects the broader debate within Gender and Politics as to whether gender is given or whether it is socially produced.

As identified above, first-generation care theorists connected care with women, gendering an ethics of care.<sup>85</sup> Carol Gilligan argues for the importance of “joining women and moral theory.”<sup>86</sup> More specifically, she contends that, “the promise in joining women and moral theory lies in the fact that human survival, in the late-twentieth century, may depend less on formal agreement than on human connection.”<sup>87</sup> This contention is important in a political context of conflict, climate change, and issues of wealth and poverty. For Gilligan, if care were to be elaborated upon as an ethic, women would be better able “to speak about their experiences and perceptions [...]”<sup>88</sup> That is to say, an ethics of care is needed so that the experiences of women, as primary caregivers, may be better understood and represented. However, implicit in this argument is the assumption that women are responsible for care on the basis of being women. Gilligan genders care.

However, as Rita Dhamoon observes, identity needs to be understood through power, not culture.<sup>89</sup> She suggests that subjects are produced with understandings of difference.<sup>90</sup> It is not until we highlight that which produces difference that we can interrupt the way that certain groups are rendered as ‘other.’<sup>91</sup> When it comes to care then, women are not by nature the best caregivers. Rather, this identity is produced with their relegation to the private sphere made possible by the private/public split, and subsequent patriarchal relations and gendered division of labour. This is why simply bringing women out of the private sphere is not a sufficient means to end their oppression as caregivers. If they leave the private sphere, then other marginalized groups, such as the transnational migrant working women identified by Peterson (2010), will fill this space and will be as produced as ‘other’ as the women who previously resided there.

Like Gilligan, Nel Noddings identifies care as a “feminine ethic.”<sup>92</sup> She argues that morality is comprised of “two feelings”: first, “natural caring,” an “enabling sentiment,” and second, the actual “ethical sentiment.”<sup>93</sup> Noddings does not intend to exclude men from care. Indeed, she clarifies “that [her] description of an ethic of caring as a feminine ethic does not imply a claim to speak for all women or to exclude men.”<sup>94</sup> She does not mean to use her argument to force women into caregiving roles or to exclude men from those positions. Yet at the same time, she continues by suggesting that “there is reason to believe that women are somewhat better equipped for caring than men are. This is partly a result of the construction of

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<sup>83</sup> Hankivsky, *Social Policy and the Ethic of Care*, 11.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Carole Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development,” in *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held (Boulder, CO; Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1995), 45.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Dhamoon, *Identity/Difference Politics*, 2.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>92</sup> Nel Noddings, “Caring,” in *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held (Boulder, CO; Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1995), 18, 24.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 9, 13.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 24.

psychological deep structures in the mother-child relationship.”<sup>95</sup> Like Gilligan, Noddings does end up excluding men from a dialogue on care by relying upon a discourse of psychological essentialism. In terms of the field of Gender and Politics, it is very significant that these first-generation care theorists took care to be naturally gendered. If care as women’s work is a given, this leads very little room for scholars working within the field to address the inequities that result from this gendered division of labour. However, by understanding the association of women with care work as socially produced, there is room to reevaluate who it is doing this care work, and how care can be taken up by society in a way that does not have to lead to the marginalization of *anyone*.

Marilyn Friedman sets out to question the “moralization” of genders.<sup>96</sup> By “moralization,” Friedman means “that specific moral ideals, values, virtues, and practices are culturally conceived as the special projects or domains of specific genders.”<sup>97</sup> Hence, for Friedman there is no scientifically measurable difference between the levels of care work performed by women as distinct from men, but there is a social difference.<sup>98</sup> This means that care and justice are not fundamentally opposed.<sup>99</sup> Rather, justice can be used to determine how best to care for others.<sup>100</sup>

Sara Ruddick is critical of this association of care work with women. In *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (1990), Ruddick equates the social construction of mothering with the social construction of gender, arguing that “as it is with women so it is with mothers. Neither a woman nor a man is born a mother; people become mothers in particular historical and social circumstances.”<sup>101</sup> Ruddick identifies maternal work as a practice that responds to “three demands – for *preservation, growth, and social acceptability*” with “works of preservative love, nurturance, and training.”<sup>102</sup> Because it is a practice, and not a biological destiny, both men and women can mother.<sup>103</sup>

Yet, not all men and not all women *do* mother. As demonstrated by John Bowman and Alyson Cole in their examination of the Swedish *pigdebatt* – that is, the debate that surrounded whether or not it was appropriate for working women to hire maids to subsidize their right to work outside the home, “it is typically women, not men, who are hiring surrogates, and women, not men, who seek such employment.”<sup>104</sup> They suggest that, “arguably, it is men’s failure to assume their share of domestic duties that creates the need for outside help.”<sup>105</sup> Equally important, they question, “why has this battle against commodifying housework been fought exclusively over those tasks that most persistently remain defined as women’s work?” - men do not have to defend their hiring someone to mow their lawns while they are at work.<sup>106</sup> Ruddick

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Marilyn Friedman, “Beyond Caring: The De-Moralization of Gender,” in *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held (Boulder, CO; Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1995), 64.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990), 52.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 17, italics in original.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>104</sup> John R. Bowman and Alyson M. Cole, “Do Working Mothers Oppress Other Women? The Swedish ‘Maid Debate’ and the Welfare State Politics of Gender Equality,” *Signs* 35, no. 1 (2009): 165, accessed January 25, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/599289>.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 172.

suggests that technically men and women can fulfill care work, but as evidenced in scholarly work produced almost twenty years after Ruddick's influential text, care work is still taken to be the primary responsibility of women.

Pat Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong, and Krista Scott-Dixon acknowledge that in addition to gender binaries, care work is also divided amongst other identity categories: "The boundaries between male and female labour vary historically and with class, physical location, racialization, immigration status, and age, among other social locations. Although the boundaries change, what persists is a division of labour between women and men."<sup>107</sup> They acknowledge that care work does cut across these other categories, but maintain that the most fundamental of these categories to care work is gender. In addition, although care work is starting to be taken up by men, it is still gendered: "Despite significant changes in attitudes, care is still primarily understood as women's work, and it is still the case in practice."<sup>108</sup> Because care work has been traditionally associated with the private realm, "the skills involved are hidden and undervalued, in large measure because the work is done by women."<sup>109</sup> Although care work has in many ways entered the public realm, gender divisions amongst those who perform it remain strong.

In second generation care theory there is a clear critique of the gendering of care work. What is more, within this work there is a considerable importance placed upon bringing feminized care out of the private and into the public sphere so as to benefit society as a whole. Mary Daly and Guy Standing contend "that there can be no 'decent work' agenda in any country of the world where the needs of those providing care to their fellow human beings are neither recognized nor protected."<sup>110</sup> Moreover, they argue that "care work [...] deserves to be fully integrated into the analysis of work. Its neglect in mainstream statistics, economic analysis and social policy in the twentieth century was deplorable."<sup>111</sup> Within this work, the absence of recognition of care work within the public sphere of social policy is found to be very problematic, as it is recognized that it is foundational to the building blocks of a well-functioning society. This leads Daly and Standing to suggest first that "there is [...] a human right to receive care," a right, therefore, to provide it, and equally important, a right to be reimbursed for providing care.<sup>112</sup> With this latter provision, Daly and Standing identify what they label a "time squeeze" – that is, the considerable strain placed on women who traditionally served as primary caregivers, yet since joining the labour force, still occupy these caregiver positions.<sup>113</sup>

However, who is it that steps in to do the care work that was traditionally assigned to women who are increasingly entering the public labour force? Collins points to the historic and contemporary role of some African-American women in maintaining some American households.<sup>114</sup> As Peterson highlights, women from the global south also step in to complete this care work.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, is a call for the right to enter the public workforce a call made by all

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<sup>107</sup> Pat Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong, and Krista Scott-Dixon, *Critical to Care: The Invisible Women in Health Services* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ualberta/Doc?id=10383427&ppg=101>, 88.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>110</sup> Mary Daly and Guy Standing, introduction to *Care Work: The Quest for Security*, edited by Mary Daly (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2001), 1.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>114</sup> Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 51-75.

<sup>115</sup> Peterson, "Global Householding amid Global Crises," 278.

women? As Kershaw outlines, it is not. He contends that “the assumption that women must transcend domesticity to achieve gender equality fails to engage with the racial and classist social dynamics that mediate the experience of domestic caregiving for diverse groups of women.”<sup>116</sup> This transcending implies “barriers that limit the access of some poor, ethnic minority, and immigrant women to their own domestic spaces.”<sup>117</sup> At the same time that Wollstonecraft’s middle-class woman desired access to the public sphere, the woman who was hired to clean her house and care for her children when she entered that sphere is restricted from devoting the time she might like to caring for her own family.

Jane Lewis observes that because it was traditionally women who provided care in the domestic sphere, “governments tended to assume that care would be provided by women in families and legislated accordingly.”<sup>118</sup> Governments have failed to create policy that effectively manages care work because historically it was provided for within the household. Thus, the private/public split and subsequent gendered division of labour that structures the provision of that care has still not been called into question. As a result, when women move into the public sphere, what is left behind in the private sphere is a “crisis of care.”<sup>119</sup> Now that care work is beginning to be recognized at the state level, there are complications surrounding provisions for its recipients and providers. Lewis explains that “care is complicated: it is both formal and informal and may therefore involve paid and unpaid work; formal provision may be in the public or independent sector and may be made in the form of cash or services.”<sup>120</sup> Because of the ongoing nature of care work, it is difficult to legislate for it according to other forms of labour. For Lewis, it is precisely because families are increasingly becoming dual earning, and because care is “relational,” that it is time for care to be valued, which means “[treating] [it] as work.”<sup>121</sup> In valuing care, it is time to recognize that it is not strictly women’s work, but everyone’s work: “[...] the development of an ethic of care does not have to depend on an elaboration of gender difference.”<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, an ethic of care “should become the property of men as well as women.”<sup>123</sup>

Care belongs to everyone, irrespective of gender, racial, or class differences. An example of this is seen in Kershaw when he suggests that care should be implemented “as an obligation of citizenship that equally binds men and women.”<sup>124</sup> The significance of this more socialized conception of care is that it provides an opportunity to “[redefine] cultural metaphors of masculinity and fatherhood so that women and men alike can increasingly embrace time for informal care and the social belonging that is available among family and fictive kin.”<sup>125</sup> By sharing care, a set of tasks traditionally divided by gender, race, and class, debate surrounding these identity categorizations within the field can morph into a more collaborative project to inject principles of care into the public sphere. This latter step will in turn call into question the private/public divide that is so problematic to feminist theorists who are critical of it.

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<sup>116</sup> Kershaw, *Carefair*, 106.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Jane Lewis, “Legitimizing Care Work and the Issue of Gender Equality,” in *Care Work: The Quest for Security*, edited by Mary Daly (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2001), 57.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>124</sup> Kershaw, *Carefair*, 126.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

Like Standing and Lewis, Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau also note the changing dynamic of care in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, particularly as it relates to the increasing participation of women in the labour force and the repercussions of this participation for public policy regarding childcare. Childcare is linked to employment policy in two senses: first, the provision of childcare by the state can generate more jobs; second, its provision addresses the unemployment faced by those forced to take parental leave so as to care for their children.<sup>126</sup> This leaves the state faced with what Rianne Mahon refers to as “the ‘defamilialization’ of care.”<sup>127</sup> Hence, care is coming to be valued at the state level. Yet despite this revaluing of care at the state level, there is still a chasm between the types of work being performed by men and women.<sup>128</sup>

As evidenced in second-generation care theory, care has become a public issue. This trend is incredibly significant. As Marilyn Waring observes, “household work” is quite often omitted from “economic measurement.”<sup>129</sup> Notably, household-related activities, such as care, are counted if provided by the state but overlooked when provided by women within the private sphere.<sup>130</sup> Because this work is not accounted for at policy level, Waring contends that it leads to even more costs for the state long-term.<sup>131</sup> As Nancy Folbre stresses, care needs to be accounted for within public policy because the privileging of the “competitive pressures required for success in professions like law, medicine, and management” have led to the creation of “a new strain of super rats emerging – one that has reduced needs for giving or receiving care.”<sup>132</sup> Because care has been unacknowledged at the level of the state for so long, individuals have become less concerned with care so as to focus on indicators of success that have been valued.

However, keeping in mind the level of importance of an ethics of care, it is important to be mindful of the way in which discussion surrounding it is approached along gender, racial, and class lines. As seen in the first generation care theory explored in this paper, when approaching the question of whether women are caregivers because they are women or because of social norms as necessarily either/or, it is easy to overlook the centrality of care to all of society. Properly accounting for care at the level of the state does not necessitate ‘solving’ this debate. Rather, as stressed within second-generation care theory, it does require recognizing the constraints placed upon individuals who have traditionally been assigned to the role of caregivers, and legislating so as to best provide for care as a fundamental need of all humans. This means that we need to go beyond arguing for the right of women caregivers to leave the private sphere, to call into question the very private/public split that relegates care to the private sphere in the first place. By calling this split into question we can ensure that other groups will not be produced as undervalued caregivers, and rather, share the responsibility to care throughout all of the public sphere.

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<sup>126</sup> Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau, “New Contexts, New Policies,” in *Who Cares? Women’s Work, Childcare, and Welfare State Redesign*, edited by Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 20.

<sup>127</sup> Rianne Mahon, “Child Care: Toward What Kind of ‘Social Europe’?” *Social Politics* 9, no. 3 (2002): 343, accessed January 17, 2012, doi: 10.1093/sp/9.3.343.

<sup>128</sup> Jenson and Sineau, “New Contexts, New Policies,” 29; Armstrong and Armstrong.

<sup>129</sup> Marilyn Waring, *Three Masquerades: Essays on Equality, Work and Human Rights* (Auckland, NZ: Auckland University Press, 1996), 47.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>132</sup> Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*. New York: The New Press (2001), 44.



*Conclusion: Not What, but How*

Upon examination of the marriage contract, the family, and the ethics of care, it is clear that much time has been devoted to debates that try to define gender – that is, to the *what is?* However, when looking at gender through the lens of intersectionality, one sees that the *what* of gender is not as critical as *how* it functions. By employing care work as a case study, it becomes clear that the role of care within politics can only be fully understood when contextualizing gender in light of the oppression that is compounded by its intersection with a plethora of other identity categories. Intersectional analysis enables us to see the operation of power in its complicated and contradictory forms, and it enriches our understanding of subjectivity and subjection. As we see in a critical engagement with an issue like care, the nuances that result from the intertwining of gender, class, and race deepen our understanding of politics. The importance of Gender and Politics as a field lies in its utility to look for this complexity when undertaking political analyses across the discipline.

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