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0521840910 - Employment and the Family: The Reconfiguration of Work and Family Life in Contemporary Societies

Rosemary Crompton

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Employment and the Family

Rates of employment amongst mothers of young children have risen rapidly in recent years. Attitudes to gender roles have changed, and both employers and governments have had to adjust to new realities. But some argue that recent changes in employment relations are making work more family 'unfriendly'. What are the real consequences of change? Rosemary Crompton explores the origins and background of this radical shift in the gendered division of labour. Topics covered include the changing attitudes to gender roles and family life, the gendered organisational context, and recent changes in employment relations and their impact on work-life articulation. A comparative analysis of Britain, France, Norway, Finland, the United States and Portugal provides an assessment of the varying impact of state policies, and the changing domestic division of labour. Crompton draws on original research and situates her findings within contemporary theoretical and empirical debates.

ROSEMARY CROMPTON is Professor of Sociology at City University, London. Her previous publications include *Restructuring Gender Relations and Employment* (1999), *Class and Stratification* (1998), *Women and Work in Modern Britain* (1997) and *Gendered Jobs and Social Change* (1990). She is a past editor of *Work, Employment and Society*.

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Preface

This book has been written with the aim of being accessible (and useful) to as wide an audience as possible – that is, undergraduate and post-graduate students, as well as academics and policy-makers interested in the diverse fields under study.

Thus concepts and issues are not introduced without definition and explanation, and efforts have been made to contextualise and provide a historical background to the debates and issues discussed. This means there will be parts of the text that may be rather familiar to experts in the field, who would be advised to skip these sections. Conversely, some students may prefer to gloss the sections where original empirical analyses are developed.

Each chapter has been designed to stand alone – that is, it may be read without necessarily being familiar with the previous chapter. This has inevitably involved some repetition, which has been kept to a minimum.

The empirical data reported in this book are the outcome of a series of research projects that included two projects funded under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Work and Family Life Programme ('Employers, Communities and Family-Friendly Employment Policies', and 'Organisations, Careers and Caring'). I worked with Sue Yeandle, Jane Dennett and Andrea Wigfield on the first project, and with Jane Dennett and Andrea Wigfield on the second. My thanks to them all. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of all of those who agreed to be interviewed on the JRF projects, as well as the cooperation offered by 'Shopwell', 'Cellbank' and the two Local Authorities.

The book also draws on two projects funded by the ESRC: R000239727: 'Employment and the Family', and R000220106: 'Families, Employment and Work-Life Integration'. Carolyn Vogler and Dick Wiggins were co-applicants on R000239727. Michaela Brockmann was a Research Officer on R000239727, and Clare Lyonette has been a Research Officer on both ESRC projects. Especial thanks go to Clare Lyonette, who has made invaluable suggestions relating to quantitative

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data analysis, carried out all of the regressions, and read the first drafts of several chapters.

The ESRC projects would not have been possible were it not for the help of a network of academics who provided advance copies of ISSP data sets, as well as agreeing to a small number of extra questions and participating in project-related workshops. So thanks to Gunn Birkelund, Al Simkus, Ligia Amancio, Karin Wall, Maria Cermakova, Hanna Haskova, Yannick Lemel, Clothilde Lemarchant, Anneli Annttonen, Jorma Sipila, Zsolt Speder and Zsuzsa Blasko. Thanks as always to Nicky Le Feuvre.

In large part, this book has a focus on aggregate trends. Recent changes have brought about increasing diversity in family arrangements, of which I am well aware. However, these are not addressed in any depth in this book.

It was something of a shock when I realised that I have been researching and/or writing this book for six years or more. Thanks to the Department of Sociology, City University, for two terms of study leave, as well as a small grant from the pump-priming fund. Many others, too numerous to mention, have contributed to the critique and development of my ideas as a consequence of the presentations I have made drawing upon the various projects. However, I would like to conclude with the usual disclaimer – many, many, thanks for all the help I have been given but any errors or omissions are entirely my responsibility.