



# The Time Divide (The Family and Public Policy)

*Jerry A. JACOBS, Kathleen Gerson*

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In a panoramic study that draws on diverse sources, Jerry Jacobs and Kathleen Gerson explain why and how time pressures have emerged and what we can do to alleviate them. In contrast to the conventional wisdom that all Americans are overworked, they show that time itself has become a form of social inequality that is dividing Americans in new ways--between the overworked and the underemployed, women and men, parents and non-parents. They piece together a compelling story of the increasing mismatch between our economic system and the needs of American families, sorting out important trends such as the rise of demanding jobs and the emergence of new pressures on dual earner families and single parents.

Comparing American workers with their European peers, Jacobs and Gerson also find that policies that are simultaneously family-friendly and gender equitable are not fully realized in any of the countries they examine. As a consequence, they argue that the United States needs to forge a new set of solutions that offer American workers new ways to integrate work and family life.

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Jacobs and Gerson present the most fine-grained analysis yet offered of working time and its impacts on

families. They successfully combine sophisticated analyses of quantitative data with breakthroughs in the conceptualization of work time. Their focus on household work time and their incorporation of subjective aspects of work-family conflict are welcome additions to the study of work time. As a result of their nuanced treatment, they avoid making simplistic generalizations that have marked many previous treatments of this topic.

--Rosalind Chait Barnett, Brandeis University, and co-author of *Same Difference: How Myths About Gender Differences Are Hurting Our Relationships, Our Children, and Our Jobs*

This is an outstanding book. It offers powerful arguments in the debates over work-family conflict going on in academia and society. The data the authors bring to bear on the subject offer new insights that support their analysis and policy recommendations. Scholars of the workplace and of contemporary American society as well as public policy advocates must read this book!

--Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, City University of New York, and co-author of *The Part-time Paradox: Time Norms, Professional Life, Family and Gender*

*The Time Divide* makes a substantial contribution to the work-family literature and will be cited often by those with an interest in women's employment, children's well-being, family functioning, and work in America. Its appeal will be broad and capture the attention of policy makers along with academics in a number of disciplines including sociology, family studies, and public policy. The book is engagingly written and the logic of the analysis is sound.

--Suzanne Bianchi, University of Maryland, and co-author of *Continuity and Change in the American Family*

The main thesis is original and important: that Americans are not, in general, overworked; rather, they can be divided into both the overworked and the underworked. The former are usually found in the upper half of the occupational distribution, the latter in the lower half. The overworked wish they could work...

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