

Family and Home Management Resources

DeVault, Marjorie. *Feeding the Family: The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work*

Housework—often trivialized or simply overlooked in public discourse—contributes in a complex and essential way to the form that families and societies assume. In this innovative study, Marjorie L. DeVault explores the implications of "feeding the family" from the perspective of those who do that work. Along the way, DeVault offers a new vocabulary for discussing nurturance as a basis of group life and sociability.

Drawing from interviews conducted in 1982-83 in a diverse group of American households, DeVault reveals the effort and skill behind the "invisible" work of shopping, cooking, and serving meals. She then shows how this work can become oppressive for women, drawing them into social relations that construct and maintain their subordinate position in household life.

Schwartz, Ruth Cowan. *More Work for Mother*

This book is history of housework and household technology in America. Cowan's thesis is that American women have paradoxically been required to take on more and more work as "labor-saving" technologies have been adopted. At the outset of the book, Cowan seems to state that she will show that developments in technology have not really made women's lives easier, but have served to bind women ever more tightly to the home. But by the end of the book, the message seems to be slightly different: that household technology has raised society's expectations of what women should be able to accomplish in the home, and that women must now work harder because of double duty- -doing the housework in addition to holding down fulltime jobs.

The book is organized along chronological lines, starting with pre-industrial conditions, moving on to industrialization, and finishing with the years following the Second World War. Food and laundry are two topics that receive heavy focus throughout the book. Cowan points out that in the pre-industrial times, food preparation required considerable help from men, for such things as butchering animals. But once meat was available in tins, men were released from such food preparation chores, while women's work increased, since new stove technologies made it possible for women to undertake more complicated methods of food preparation. Cowan argues that laundry duties also increased following industrialization, since when fabric was homespun, people only owned a few items of clothing that were hardly ever washed, but once cheap factory-made fabric became

available, people got in the habit of changing clothes quite often, resulting in mounds of items to be laundered.

Strasser, Susan. *Never Done*

Beginning with a description of household chores in the 19th century -- cooking at fireplaces & on cast-iron stoves, laundry done with wash boilers & flatirons, spring housecleaning that had to purge the home of soot & grime, endless water hauling & fire tending -- Strasser demonstrates how industrialization transformed the nature of women's work. Lightening some tasks & eliminating the need for others, new commercial processes altered women's daily lives & relationships -- with each other & with the people they served. This book weaves together the history of material advances & domestic service, the development of "women's separate sphere," & the impact of advertising, home economics, & women's entry into the workforce.

Mintz, Steven and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History Of American Family Life*

This clear and comprehensive synthesis of recent scholarship shows that the American family, influenced by circumstance, has undergone great transformations and served various social and economic roles over the years from 1620 to the 1980s. The book is exceptionally valuable for its attention to Native American, Afro-American, and ethnic family organization, and childrearing customs and their influence. Extensive footnotes compensate for the lack of a bibliography, reviewing the literature of the field. A useful text for history and sociology courses, this is also valuable as an overview of a relatively new field.

Bentley, Amy. *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*

Mandatory food rationing during World War II significantly challenged the image of the United States as a land of plenty and collapsed the boundaries between women's public and private lives by declaring home production and consumption to be political activities. Examining the food-related propaganda surrounding rationing, *Eating for Victory* decodes the dual message purveyed by the government and the media: while mandatory rationing was necessary to provide food for U.S. and Allied troops overseas, women on the home front were also "required" to provide their families with nutritious food. Amy Bentley reveals the role of the Wartime Homemaker as a pivotal component not only of World War II but also of the development of the United States into a superpower.

Rollins, Judith. *Between Women*

Between Women is the result of forty in-depth interviews, interviews enhanced by the author's own experience as a domestic worker for ten employers in the greater Boston area. The reader is quickly drawn into the world of domestic workers as the author allows the women to speak for themselves whenever possible. Clearly relevant to labor studies, women's studies and black studies, at its essence this book is a study of the social psychology of relationships of domination. Yet, while focusing on these relationships, the author never loses sight of the larger social structure and how it affects and is affected by employer-domestic dyads. The opening chapter provides an overview of domestic service in the Western tradition, most notably a detailed history of servitude in the South and northeastern United States, with brief attention to a few non-Western locales. Then, what follows is a description of the conditions of work-the physical labor, hours, compensation, and problems-with the focus on the women and the major dynamics of their relationships. Unlike many works on domination, this book gives as much attention to the effects on the minds and lives of the employers as it does to the effects on the domestics

Walzer, Susan. *Thinking about the Baby*

Susan Walzer's interviews explore the tendency for men and women to experience their transitions into parenthood in different ways - a pattern that has been linked to marital stress. How do new mothers and fathers think about babies, and what is the influence of parental consciousness in reproducing motherhood and fatherhood as different experiences? The reports of new parents in this book illustrate the power of gendered cultural imagery in how women and men think about their roles and negotiate their parenting arrangements. New parents talk about what it means to them to be a 'good' mother or father and how this plays out in their working arrangements and their everyday interactions over child care. The author carefully unravels the effects of social norms, personal relationships, and social institutions in channeling parents toward gender-differentiated approaches to parenting.

Murray, Harry. *Do not Neglect Hospitality*

As a participant/observer at several Catholic Worker houses, Harry Murray witnessed firsthand the response of Workers to the needs of the homeless. In this book, he examines the significance of the Catholic Worker movement's practice of hospitality to the homeless and contrasts it with professional rehabilitation as an approach to aiding the poor. Defining hospitality as a voluntary, noncommercial relationship between host and guest, Murray traces the notion in various societies throughout history, in myth, and especially in Christian tradition. He recounts the origins of the Catholic Worker and portrays the practice of hospitality at three Worker houses: St. Joseph's House in New York City, St. Joseph's House in Rochester, New York, and the Mustard Seed in Worcester, Massachusetts. Weaving together personal experiences with sociological analysis, Murray describes the practical difficulties of providing hospitality to anyone who needs it. He characterizes each organization's institutionalized anarchy, the decision-making processes, the philosophy of personalism in action, as well as the daily challenge to recognize the

importance, the divinity, within each guest. While acknowledging some of the realities of voluntary poverty-vermin, filth, crowded quarters, and the potential for danger Murray compares the project of 'doing the Works of Mercy' to the rehabilitation model set up by the state. The trained professional aims to change the individual for the benefit of society and effectively allows society to remain unexamined and unchanged. Murray argues that hospitality is a model for empowering ourselves in the face of trends toward bureaucratization and professionalization of human relationships.

Avakian, Arlene and Barbara Haber. *From Betty Crocker To Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives On Women And Food*

College-level students of culinary and feminist studies won't want to miss the unusual history in *From Betty Crocker To Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives On Women And Food*: it gathers scholarly essays from a range of disciplines to address issues of economics, society and culture in food history, using gender as its foundation. Thirteen essays are arranged under four headings by history, representations, marketplace and resistances, following the history of scholarly food writing and feminist food studies. From studies on the influence of large corporations in determining what made up a proper meal in this country to surveys on how women have kept families nourished, essays consider race, gender, and social identity as it relates to food.

Thistle, Susan. *From Marriage to the Market*

A social transformation of profound proportions has been unfolding over the second half of the twentieth century as women have turned from household work to wages as the key source of their livelihood. This timely study, a broad comparative analysis of African American women's and white women's changing relationships to home and work over the past forty years, at last provides a wide-ranging overview of how this shift is influencing the shape of families and the American economy. Susan Thistle brings together diverse issues and statistics--the plight of single mothers; the time crunch faced by many parents; the problem of housework; patterns of work, employment and marriage; and much more--in a rich and engaging analysis that draws from history, economics, political science, sociology, government documents, and census data to put gender at the center of the social and economic changes of the past decades. With its broad historical and theoretical sweep, clear charts and tables, and accessible writing, *From Marriage to the Market* will be an essential resource for understanding the tumultuous changes currently transforming American society.

Flammang, Janet. *The Taste for Civilization*

This book explores the idea that table activities - the mealtime rituals of food preparation, serving, and dining - lay the foundation for a proper education on the value of civility, the importance of the common good, and what it means to be a good citizen. The arts of

conversation and diplomatic speech are learned and practiced at tables, and a political history of food practices recasts thoughtfulness and generosity as virtues that enhance civil society and democracy. In our industrialized and profit-centered culture, however, foodwork is devalued and civility is eroding.

“Hospitality and its discontents: Beyond bowling alone”, Julier, Alice.

According to Georg Simmel, commensality, the act of eating together, is fundamentally about the affirmation of social relations, where sharing food becomes a means of cementing ties. Food operates as a discursive field through which people construct boundaries of similarities and difference, and becomes an extraordinarily versatile vehicle for examining people's ambivalences about modernity, as well as the persistence of class and gender inequality. In my research on people's domestic hospitality, I explored the pleasures and burdens of feeding work in contexts beyond the family. What does food work look like when people invite friends, neighbors, and others into their homes for a meal? Potlucks, dinner parties, and barbecues operate as sites where the oppressive and liberating aspects of food labor come together in interesting ways. Quite simply, people invite folks into their homes and offer them food. They cook for them. These occasions are both pleasurable and problematic, for it is with no small effort that appropriate foods and social arrangements be constructed. The effort of hosting and feeding non-kin is considerable. While the outcomes are often pleasurable, many events provoke difficulties and conflicts, revealing people's fears about close social relations. Indeed, cohesion often involves a certain amount of coercion, manifest through menu, manners, and reciprocity. In my research on people's sociability beyond family meals, I found a consistent undercurrent of discomfort. This cultural tension between civilized behavior and comfort is not new to American culture but it has a particular configuration in contemporary times.

Elias, Megan. *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture*

Elias's account of the home economics movement focuses on its academic roots, its relationship to broader national policies, and the evolution of consumerism in the twentieth century. She does a marvelous job of demonstrating that what is now perceived as an obscure relic of an antique era was at its inception solidly mainstream, progressive, and pro-woman.

Boris, Eileen. *Home to Work: Motherhood and the politics of Industrial Homework in the United States.*

In the minds of most people, the home has stood apart from the world of work. Bringing the factory or office into the home challenges this division. From the 1870s, when New York cigarmakers attempted to end tenement competition, to New Deal prohibitions in

the 1930s, gender ideologies shaped the battle over homework. But by the 1980s, the middle-class mother at the keyboard replaced the victimized immigrant as the symbol of homework. *Home to Work* restores the voices of homeworking women to the century-long debate over their labor. The book also provides a historical context to the Reaganite lifting of New Deal bans. Where once men's right to contract precluded regulation, now women's right to employment undermined prohibition. Whether empowerment comes from rights to homework or rights as workers depends on whether homeworkers become visible as workers who happen to mother.

The sociology of care work

Care work is done in the home as well as in markets for pay. Five theoretical frameworks have been developed to conceptualize care work; the frameworks sometimes offer competing answers to the same questions, and other times address distinct questions.

- 1) The “devaluation” perspective argues that care work is badly rewarded because care is associated with women, and often women of color.
- 2) The “public good” framework points out that care work provides benefits far beyond those to the direct recipient and suggests that the low pay of care work is a special case of the failure of markets to reward public goods.
- 3) The “prisoner of love” framework argues that the intrinsic caring motives of care workers allow employers to more easily get away with paying care workers less. Instead of seeing the emotional satisfactions of giving care as its own reward.
- 4) The “commodification of emotion” framework focuses on emotional harm to workers when they have to sell services that use an intimate part of themselves.
- 5) The “love *and* money” framework argues against dichotomous views in which markets are seen as antithetical to true care.