

**The Double Shift and Policy Implementation:
A Gendered Analysis of the
Supply End of Social Capital**

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Abstract

It has been argued that the women's movement has been successful in opening doors for women to participate in paid employment. While few would disagree that occupational segregation endures for a range of structural reasons, it is clear that women have won the right to engage in fulltime paid employment. Australian Bureau of statistics latest information shows that 66.2% of women participate in the paid workforce in some way [despite earning 84.6% of the earnings of their male counterparts].

Social capital has been variously defined, but most theorists agree that there is at least an economically fungible aspect to social capital in reality. Recent explorations of social capital have identified differences in access to resources and how they are used. A significant theorist and researcher of social capital, Robert Putnam identifies a decline in social capital in the United States of America. He attributes this, at least in part, to the return of women to the labour market. What does this say about the role of women? Is it appropriate for them to withdraw from the development of social capital for material gain?

This paper links theories about the need for economic empowerment of women through workforce participation with theories of egalitarian participation in civil society and third sector activity. The double shift of paid labour and reproductive labour is considered in relation to the limits this imposes on access to opportunities for civic engagement and accrual of social capital and networking. This is indicative of the differing experiences of women and men who endeavour to use the benefits of social capital in entrepreneurial activity.

Introduction

Social capital is a powerful and widely used term, having gained prominence recently from the popular works of Robert D. Putnam. It has its origins in the US education system, and has been used by many to mean a number of different things. The term 'capital' is an economic one, and Bordieu in his treatment does not shy away from this: for him social capital is always a transformed economic resource. Later uses of the term do not examine the economic and fundamentally market oriented origins of 'capital'. Putnam speculates about the impact of women entering the labour market on social capital. Although damaging in the US case he describes, this is not so clear in Australia. What has been the impact of the women's 'double shift' on levels of social capital? Far from abating, this phenomenon of women managing two workloads, in the paid workforce and in the home, continues to be identified by researchers. Volunteering is identified as an indicator of levels of social capital. For the purposes of this paper, volunteering will be used as an example of an indicator of levels of social capital. Australian Bureau of Statistics data is revealing,

showing interesting and unanticipated variations in levels of volunteering between men and women, particularly in full and part time employment. It is apparent that women's performance of voluntary work is in most cases related to stereo-types of women's roles, and indicative of similar barriers in the labour market. The expectation that women will be active in this sector arises from their dependence on men. As women have increasingly entered the paid workforce, equal pay for work of equal value has been sought. While this campaign has not been entirely successful, it has nevertheless been sufficient to see an increase in the numbers employed to work as carers and cleaners. The pay rates for these occupations will remain depressed as long as women remain in lower paid occupations and more marginally attached positions in the labour market.

The double shift: women and men in the paid workforce in Australia

The double shift emerged conceptually in Australia in the 1970s and is related to the sexual differentiation in the types and amounts of paid and unpaid work undertaken by women and men in Australia. As women achieved the long-sought goal of access to paid employment, their traditional pre-existing workloads did not diminish.

Women engaged in paid work, and also continued to be responsible for and perform most of the unpaid work in the home. This trend continued into the 1980s. Some identified the change as an improvement in the range of choices available to women, but it became clear that this choice was severely circumscribed, a choice in which social factors in many instances gave women little alternative. Baxter et al identified the following factors as driving the necessity to provide an 'expansion in opportunities' for women at this time:

- The necessity of two incomes for the survival of many households
- A decline in the level of stability and security provided by marriage
- An expansion in workplace opportunities
- Women's increased economic self- sufficiency

- A decline in support for female domesticity (Baxter, Gibson and Lynch-Blosse, 1990: 9)

This double shift also included volunteering and other community service activities such as caring for aged parents and relatives. In other words, women had the burden of a third shift to contend with. Furthermore, the changes in women's lives as they move into paid work have not been matched by changes to the amounts of unpaid work done by men. Western and Baxter's research supports this assertion, as they explain:

Most men tend to be in full time employment and to do only small and unchanging amounts of unpaid work regardless of institutional arrangements, life-course stage, or socio-economic characteristics...While men are able to keep the boundaries between work and home relatively distinct, women experience much more overlap. (Western and Baxter, 2001, 81).

ABS surveys in 1995 and 2000 are illuminating. In contrast to the decline in social capital identified in the United States (Putnam, 1995, 1998), there is every appearance of growth in at least one important indicator: that of volunteering.

Table 1: Male and female Volunteering in Australia 1995 & 2000

(based on ABS data: ABS, 4441.0, 2001)

	Males %		Females %		Persons %	
	1995	2000	1995	2000	1995	2000
Parents	32.2	37.6	30.8	45.4	31.4	41.6
Husband/wife/ partner (no children)	22.1	29.4	21.6	27.5	21.9	28.5
Employed F/T	25.6	33.9	21.0	30.5	24.1	32.8
Employed P/T	29.2	31.3	32.6	44.4	31.7	40.9

Table 1 illustrates a dramatic increase in the level of volunteering, and this is greatest among women. In 1995 37.6% of mothers volunteered, increasing to 45.4% in 2000, an increase of 7.8%, while male volunteering actually decreased. While the numbers of both males and females in part-time employment who volunteered increased between 1995 and 2000, the variation was 2.1% for males, but a significant 11.8% for females. (ABS, 4441.0, 2001) There is an indication from this report then that for whatever reason the women are mobilising. There are a number of possible explanations for this, including an increased demand for parent support and contribution in schools and children's activities in the case of mothers, and the promotion of volunteering opportunities as a means to address the marginalisation faced by the under-employed.

In 2000, 704.1 million hours were contributed by volunteers in Australia. (ABS, 4441.0, 2001a) Male volunteers contributed on average 64 hours a year each, while each woman volunteer contributed 74 hours a year. The types of activities showed some polarisation: volunteering men dominated in management, maintenance, coaching and refereeing, and media, while women were more likely to be involved in fundraising, providing information, preparation and serving of food, supportive listening and counselling, and personal care. It is interesting to note how the stereotypical roles for men and women are reflected in these volunteering activities. (ABS, 4441.0, 2001a) This is also supported by data and studies conducted in Europe (for example, Wilson, 2000: 228).

So contrary to what might have been expected, volunteering in Australia is increasing, particularly among women, and their types of contribution mirror traditional gender roles. What is also apparent is a more moderate increase in volunteering among individuals in full time work: 8.3% for males and 9.5% for females. It is this effect which has been evident to Putnam in his US research, and to a much greater degree. Full time employment, for either sex, clearly has a detrimental impact on capacity to undertake volunteering activity. Australians have

still maintained a steady increase. For women, their volunteering is greater when in part-time employment, whereas surprisingly for men the increase in volunteering between 1995 and 2000 has been greater for those in employment.

How has this impacted on our stocks of social capital? Before this can be considered, a working definition of social capital needs to be established. The Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Family Studies have both been exploring the concept as a basis of developing a reliable means of measuring it. (ABS, 2001b, ABS 2002b, Stone, 2001, Stone and Hughes, 2002). These definitions hinge on social well-being, interconnectedness and networks of relationships.

What is social capital?

There has been a tendency both in practice and in the literature to assume a definition, a common understanding of what is meant by the term 'social capital'. One of the first known adoptions of the term was by a United States educationalist, Lyda Judson Hanifan, Bordieu used the term much later in 1977 in a more rigorous way. He and Coleman laid the foundations for The earliest use of the term was in 1916, by Lyda Judson Hanifan who described 'goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse' in a report concerning community involvement in education. (Smith and Kulynych 2002: 154) Bordieu subsequently developed the concept, imposing rigid aspects to the definition. Bordieu's fungible social capital:

[i]s the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. (Bordieu quoted in Smith and Kulynych, 2002: 155).

Despite the appearance of being a social phenomenon, Bordieu explains that this, like all other types of capital, is no more or less than a 'transformed, disguised [form] of economic capital'. (Bordieu quoted in Smith and Kulynych, 2002: 156). So any

measurement of social capital must finally be reduced to a calculation converting the goods or services into a currency value.

Coleman however expands the definition to include networks and relationships. In his view social capital is not a characteristic of individuals but of social structure, and dependent on context. What might constitute social capital in one instance might well be damaging and result in disadvantage in another. Coleman's view is essentially structural functionalist, and his particular structural indicators are 'closure of social networks and appropriate social organisation. (Hogan and Owen,2000: 77). Coleman's conception in moving away from the individual and away from the definitive characteristic of fungibility makes it more negotiable and certainly more difficult to directly measure.

Robert D. Putnam provides an influential and widely accepted definition of social capital. He describes it as 'connections among individuals- social networks and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. (Putnam, 2000: 19). Putnam in particular laments the decline in social capital that he has identified in his field research. He speculates about the possible causes for this, and identifies a major statistical correlation between declining social capital and the changing role of women. 'The movement of women out of the home and into the paid labour force is probably the most portentous social change in the last half century'.(Putnam: 1996: 7). While he eventually concedes that the evidence 'is at best circumstantial' he does not resile in his assessment of the impact of declining rates of marriage and unstable family structures. He is adamant that 'successful marriage, especially if the family includes children, is statistically associated with greater social trust and civic engagement'. (Putnam: 1996: 9). He subsequently concedes however that the decline of trust is evident to the same degree among apparently happily married people. Putnam eventually proposes that the decline in social capital can be attributed to the advent of television.

Using the language of the market, social capital functions well on the demand side, but what of supply? Smith and Kulynych (2002: 149) identify a number of weaknesses in the concept of social capital. These include the unintended associations that arise from using the term 'capital', generally reserved for economic discourse and carrying with it normatively positive associations. There is an immediate assumption built in that this phenomenon is desirable and its loss to be mourned. In addition, the concept is used to embrace a range of related but not similar types of social interaction.

There is also little recognition of the detrimental impacts of social capital in action. Social capital can as easily be interpreted to include networks that are not positive in orientation, accruing benefit to network members but damaging society in general. There are several obvious examples, such as the Mafia and the Ku Klux Klan. These organizations function extremely well, with effective networking, mutual support and shared views that enable them to achieve goals.

Predictions of the demise of society and the devastating decline of civic engagement do not account for the emerging trend of virtual engagement. It can be argued that this cannot replace face to face engagement and interaction. In these time poor days however it is reasonable to assume that such speedy and convenient interaction and avenues for participation certainly go some way to enabling empowerment communication and dissemination, and is frequently used as an adjunct to traditional forms of social interaction.

A feminist perspective on social capital

From the perspective of a socialist feminist, social capital as a concept is problematic. If we consider the unpaid labour of women to maintain the workforce and raise new workers to enter the labour market, 'the reproduction of labour power', conducted in the private sphere as opposed to the market, it is clear that such work which occurs within the home and is directed principally at the family is regarded as labour.

(Jaggar, 1983: 70-71) In this sense then it falls on the side of labour for the benefit of the owners of the means of production, rather than capital accumulation for the benefit of the individual performing the work. How does this then relate to voluntary associations and community activity, the other arenas of social capital?

Voluntary work, now widely regarded as natural and indeed essential to the successful functioning of society, has more recent origins than you might suppose. Prior to capitalism most work was based in the home with the primary objective being the direct sustenance and support of the family unit. (Pateman, 1988: 116). All work was unpaid. The separation of paid and unpaid work, and by extension the public and private spheres, occurred as a result of capitalism. Three types of unpaid work are identified: housework (for which women shoulder most of the burden), two-person-single-career (when a wife but rarely a husband is expected to participate in her husband's work role as an executive or diplomat for example) and voluntary work. (Lupton, Short and Whip, 1992: 174-5). Voluntary work as a charitable duty emerged in the early nineteenth century as a result of industrialisation and the 'breadwinner' model of household arrangements. While working class women were typically engaged in supplementing their husbands incomes, many middle and upper class women became involved in charities and service organisations. Hence women have been involved in social welfare problems and their alleviation for over one hundred and fifty years. (Lupton, Short and Whip, 1992: 174). Obviously men too are involved in these activities to a degree, but this is primarily the domain of women. It is women who have performed this caring work in most instances, both through formal organisations and informal networks. These activities have been vital to sustain the community and 'furthermore women are expected to do this, to the extent that many government policies are based on the expectation that the contribution of this unpaid band of workers will continue'. (Lupton, Short and Whip, 1992: 175).

Volunteerism has been dominated by women because of the traditional economic dependence of women and their differential attachment to the labour market. This workforce 'intermittency' is the result of the gendered life paths of men and women. (Curthoys, 1986: 322). This structural factor has developed as a result of the realisation on the part of women that their working lives will inevitably be interrupted by child birth, child rearing, and the provision of care for other family members.

Women's economic activities have been routinely underestimated, with little consideration of the 'subsistence' and domestic work performed. (Beneria, 1988: 373). When it is identified its economic value is depressed and the skills required overlooked or denigrated. The dominance of women in the household work and subsistence activities, as well as in volunteering activities is attributed to a lack of access to the labour market. When the women are in paid employment, they are more likely to be under employed. Taking a global perspective, Beneria is of the view that it is a human right to expect to participate in the labour market, to the extent that work performed outside the labour market is a final resort:

...[there is a] proportion of women that are 'taking refuge' in domestic and subsistence production because there is no employment elsewhere available to them. (Beneria, 1988: 385).

This leads to a consideration of the economic dependence of women. This is a key indication of the subordination of women overall, and perhaps voluntary work performed by women should be considered in this context. Beneria goes on to say that the definition of labour force participation is itself biased against women. She maintains that work outside the labour market as currently defined should be regarded as contributing to the economic prosperity of the community and the country, and should be defined as contributing in a secondary but essential way to the economy, and therefore be valued. Such individuals should be classified as

participating in the labour market, rather than labelled as idle or performing work of little value. While this proposition is directed primarily at domestic workers, it clearly has application in the area of volunteering and community work, which by and large ensures the gaps in public sector service provision are met. A contentious issue is the criterion applied to voluntary work as opposed to leisure. It is interesting to consider an ABS report of ten years ago on this subject:

Some commentators have raised the issue of whether volunteer and community work is indeed 'work' or whether it is leisure...[H]elping to care for sick, frail or disabled adults would be more like unpaid work ie it can be done by a third person. On the other hand, spending time doing community activities... contains a strong leisure component and in practice one would not hire someone else to undertake these activities on their behalf. (Castles, 1994: 6)

Women have typically been seen in unpaid community support roles, often replicating in the community the roles they have had in the home. Women's voluntary work is unlikely to be status-based or to involve the exertion of authority: it is much more likely that it will simply reflect the types of work the women volunteers perform either in the home or in their paid employment.

One author explains it this way:

For hundreds of years now many tasks have been passing from what the economists call 'customary' work, done without pay, to wage work. Canning, clothes making, and the care of the sick are now jobs not unpaid chores. The hired hand has replaced the farmer's son, the paid babysitter has replaced neighbourly child-watching... (Bird quoted in Jaggar, 1983: 185)

In other words, the work that was performed by women marginalised from the paid workforce has now become the basis of several important industries. Because

women have been able to enter the labour market, albeit still at lower rates of pay than their male counterparts, it has now become more financially worthwhile to the household to have a skilled mother in the paid labour market and outsource the domestic work. This seems deceptively simple and obvious, and it is. An examination of the ABS data on household work is illuminating. In many households women are continuing to take responsibility for and perform cleaning and caring chores in the home, as well as when time permits in the wider community. This has contributed to the depressed rates of pay experienced by workers performing traditional 'women's work' of for example cleaning and child care: demand for these services is reduced.

So while there might be a case to assume an association between a decline in the level of traditional measures of social capital and increased women's participation in the labour market, to settle for this would be a superficial analysis, and in at least one indicator, volunteering, is not born out. Perhaps the real issue lies in the normative assumption that this voluntary work would be undertaken by a team of marginalised workers- women- in the first place. This 'reserve army of the welfare system' is normatively assumed to be ever-ready to step to the fore and fill the gaps in the welfare net. The current perceived decline in social capital should not be mourned but celebrated, as one of the final hidden barriers to women's equality is confronted.

One author explains that:

Not only does women's work fill the gaps in available resources within an unequal and fragmented society, the ideology that women are by nature destined to provide servicing is daily reinforced by their concrete experience. (Bolbo in Ackelsberg, 1992).

Conclusion

It can be argued that social capital is nothing new, that it is a revision and regrouping of social phenomena in which social scientists have always had an interest. If this is so, it can perhaps be regarded as a feminist advance that its importance has now been recognised.

While voluntary work is obviously not the definitive indicator of social capital, it is indicative, and it demonstrates powerfully that the concept of social capital is a gendered one. It is clear that a double shift exists and is largely the domain of women. The ABS data cited show this and the explanations provided by Baxter et al are persuasive. Although the number of men doing voluntary work is comparable to the number of women, women's voluntary hours significantly exceed those of men. Social capital remains an essentially contested concept and it is interesting that many researchers have simply accepted that a definition is unlikely to be agreed upon and so have begun to explore ways of measuring its strength, through a range of indicators. The definitions of Bourdieu and Putnam are polarised, Bourdieu proposing a rigorous economically based concept, while Putnam's is based on networks of support and mutuality.

The use of the term 'social capital' then links this traditional unpaid work of women with the formal labour market. The definition of social capital that is adopted is crucial here: Bourdieu's view that it is all economic capital in disguise is perhaps the most appropriate from a feminist perspective. It allows for the largely invisible and unrecognised contribution of men and women in the voluntary sector to be accounted for in terms that have relevance for the policy community.

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