



For Love or Money

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As women moved into the formal labor force in large numbers over the last forty years, care work – traditionally provided primarily by women – has increasingly shifted from the family arena to the market. Child care, elder care, care for the disabled, and home care now account for a growing segment of low-wage work in the United States, and demand for such work will only increase as the baby boom generation ages. But the expanding market provision of care has created new economic anxieties and raised pointed questions: Why do women continue to do most care work, both paid and unpaid? Why does care work remain low paid when the quality of care is so highly valued? How effective and equitable are public policies toward dependents in the United States? In *For Love and Money*, an interdisciplinary team of experts explores the theoretical dilemmas of care provision and provides an unprecedented empirical overview of the looming problems for the care sector in the United States.

Drawing on diverse disciplines and areas of expertise, *For Love and Money* develops an innovative framework to analyze existing care policies and suggest potential directions for care policy and future research. Contributors Paula England, Nancy Folbre, and Carrie Leana explore the range of motivations for caregiving, such as familial responsibility or limited job prospects, and why both love and money can be efficient motivators. They also examine why women tend to specialize in the provision of care, citing factors like job discrimination, social pressure, or the personal motivation to provide care reported by many women. Suzanne Bianchi, Nancy Folbre, and Douglas Wolf estimate how much unpaid care is being provided in the United States and show that low-income families rely more on unpaid family members for their child and for elder care than do affluent families. With low wages and little savings, these families often find it difficult to provide care and earn enough money to stay afloat. Candace Howes, Carrie Leana and Kristin Smith investigate the dynamics within the paid care sector and find problematic wages and working conditions, including high turnover, inadequate training and a “pay penalty” for workers who enter care jobs. These conditions have consequences: poor job quality in child care and adult care also leads to poor care quality. In their chapters, Janet Gornick, Candace Howes and Laura Braslow provide a systematic inventory of public policies that directly shape the provision of care for children or for adults who need personal assistance, such as family leave, child care tax credits and Medicaid-funded long-term care. They conclude that income and variations in states’ policies are the greatest factors determining how well, and for whom, the current system works. Despite the demand for care work, very little public policy attention has been devoted to it. Only three states, for example, have enacted paid family leave programs.

Paid or unpaid, care costs those who provide it. At the heart of *For Love and Money* is the understanding that the quality of care work in the United States matters not only for those who receive care but also for society at large, which benefits from the nurturance and maintenance of human capabilities. As care work gravitates from the family to the formal economy, this volume clarifies the pressing need for America to fundamentally rethink its care policies and increase public investment in this increasingly crucial sector.

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