

Claudia Goldin, *Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey toward Equity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), pp. xiv + 325, \$27.95 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780691201788.

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This important book follows from Claudia Goldin's decades of research on gender differences in earnings, labor force participation, and education. She presents a comprehensive view of the life options of college-educated women in the United States who were born between 1878 and 1978, showing how their ability to achieve the dual goal of family (having or adopting children) and a career (long-term employment with good pay) shifted across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She then uses this historical analysis to understand the causes of the continuing gender pay gap and couple inequity. The book weaves stories of famous American women who pioneered work in professional fields with extensive use of longitudinal data. The style, which shifts between analytical social science and biography, will appeal to academics and lay readers alike.

To understand how opportunities for college-educated American women have changed, Goldin divides them into five groups. The first group were born in the late nineteenth century and almost all of them had to choose between having a family and having a career. The second group (born 1898 to 1923) were more likely to have a job, though not what Goldin defines as a "career," followed by family. Like the first group, they usually married later than the population average. The third group graduated from college in the aftermath of the Second World War and worked immediately after graduation, but many of them were forced out of the paid labor force by marriage bars. These women married earlier than their predecessors and had larger families, in line with broader shifts in the US population. Most of them returned to the paid workforce when their children were older, but employment gaps hindered their career progress.

Goldin's Group Four, who were born from 1944 to 1957, aimed to have careers first and then families. More women in this group had careers than those in the third group, and their average marriage age was higher. However, some of these women were not able to have children because of the extended time required to establish a career. The final group were born from the late 1950s up to 1978. These women have been able to have careers and families, although they still face competing demands on their time at work and at home.

The main argument of the book is clear and well-articulated: for much of the twentieth century, women were prevented from having both a career and a family by legal, technological, and social barriers. In recent decades, most overt discrimination has been abolished, contraceptive and reproductive technologies have allowed women to delay childbirth, household technology has reduced the time demands of non-market labor, and heterosexual couples have begun to divide caring labor more equitably. However, there is still a gender gap in mid-career earnings and in promotion to top managerial roles.

Goldin argues that most of the remaining gap is the result of "greedy work." Occupations that have less flexibility or predictability also have hourly earnings that rise non-linearly with hours worked, and workers in "greedy jobs" are more likely to be promoted. These "greedy jobs" have also seen rising rewards as income inequality has increased since the 1980s. Women are still expected to do more caring labor than men, so

they are likely to shift out of “greedy jobs” and into work that is compatible with such responsibilities. This allows a family to maximize total income with one partner in a “greedy job” that requires being “on-call at work” while the other partner is employed in flexible work and “on-call at home” in case, for example, a sick child needs to be picked up from school. In heterosexual couples, the husband is usually “on-call at work” and the wife is “on-call at home.”

One of the strongest elements of the book is Goldin’s analysis of jobs that have been designed or redesigned—usually unintentionally—to promote gender equality through substitutability. Goldin clearly lays out the differences between lawyers and pharmacists and how these distinctions produce different gender gap trajectories. Pharmacists, like lawyers, used to work on-call and produced medicines to order. In the mid-twentieth century, they ran their own practices, and higher rewards accrued to pharmacists who put in exceptionally long or unsocial hours. In recent decades a large share of the retail pharmacy sector in the United States has been taken over by large drugstore chains. Combined with centralized production of medicines, corporatization has made pharmacists more substitutable and limited “on-call” hours. These changes have compressed, although not eliminated, the gender earnings gap in this sector.

In the epilogue, Goldin deals admirably with a challenge that appeared in the final stages of writing: incorporating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. She first discusses how its effects fit with pre-existing trends. While women in the US had been comparatively sheltered from automation and global competition in manufacturing, their higher employment share in the services sector meant they were hit harder during the pandemic. Although the gender division of caring time has become more equal over recent decades, home schooling during the pandemic has placed greater demands on women in heterosexual couples, at the expense of their professional advancement. The one silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it may have proved the viability of remote and flexible work, which could make jobs less “greedy” in the future.


There are two main limitations to Goldin’s trenchant historical analysis. First, the book makes little use of evidence from outside the United States. Gender inequity has been dealt with differently in other nations, with varying degrees of success. Countries with stronger welfare states, gender quotas for public office or corporate boards, and subsidized childcare have reduced gender gaps on some dimensions. However, low birth rates in relatively gender-equal countries in northern and western Europe suggest either that these remedies are insufficient to ensure that women can have both career and family, or that women in such countries are no longer aiming for a career-and-family life. There is only one paragraph that considers approaches outside the United States, discussing childcare policy, in Chapter 10.

The second, perhaps more important, limitation of *Career and Family* is that while the proximate causes of improved gender equity are well explained, the book provides little discussion of the underlying mechanisms and how they might be encouraged in the future. For example, technological progress is a proximate cause in the form of household white goods, the contraceptive pill, and *in vitro* fertilization. Goldin explains the implications of each technology for women’s opportunities well, but the book provides scant analysis of their origins. Chapter 6 describes the scientific process of developing the contraceptive pill, but there is little role for or explanation of the incentives for innovation except the perseverance of Margaret Sanger and the funds

of Katharine McCormick. Technological change appears as a *deus ex machina* that promotes equity.

In a similar way, Goldin's description of how pharmacy work has been reorganized is lucid and comprehensive, but the underlying mechanisms are opaque. Corporatization emerges to transform these jobs in Chapter 9 without a discussion of its origins. The book shows that technology may broaden women's options and that corporatization may discourage "greedy work," but it does not explain why these shifts emerged. Without analysis of background causes, readers interested in using economic history to inform policymaking are left with little sense of how to build on past improvements in gender equity.

Career and Family is an excellent survey based on extensive longitudinal research. The characteristics of each cohort and the immediate causal factors (technology, legal changes, and job reorganization) are explained well. Goldin's book shows that college-educated American women have made significant steps towards gender equity in the last 120 years, but some readers may be frustrated by the absence of policy approaches to finally achieve this goal. The book is nonetheless a very significant contribution to US economic history that should have a wide scholarly and popular audience.

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Keith Tribe, *Constructing Economic Science: The Invention of a Discipline 1850–1950*, Oxford Studies in the History of Economics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 440, \$99 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780190491741.

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Keith Tribe is one of the foremost experts of German Cameralism, so it was with some surprise that I found *Constructing Economic Science* to be a story about the institutionalization of economic education in Britain rather than a global or comparative history writ large. It is, however, a remarkably detailed history, so much so that a reader might be easily overwhelmed with the length necessary for a volume covering the trajectories of two nations with similar granularity.

Tribe charts the rise of the economics department, accounting for both its creation and the particular character it takes on over the course of the twentieth century: scientific inquiry based largely on abstract and formal principles. One of the remarkable elements of the story relayed is what appears to be the extremely contingent nature of the trajectory of the development of economics, influenced by institutional structures but largely the product of specific individuals, their personalities, vision, and, in some cases, shortcomings. Part II documents the process by which Alfred Marshall carved out a space for economics as a subject at Cambridge. Part III engages in counterfactual reasoning. First Tribe explores the mainly institutional factors as to why Oxford did not forge ahead in establishing a new economics curriculum. The answer here is a combination of factors that includes the absence of Alfred Marshall or a comparable figure, the conservative nature of a system based on familiarity with classics, and the lack of separation between economics, politics, and philosophy, which led the economics that was practiced and