



The Road Winds Uphill All the Way: Gender, Work, and Family in the United States and Japan

Myra Strober, Agnes Miling Kaneko Chan

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In a time of societal transition, women and men around the globe struggle to combine careers and family in new ways. However, conventional work and family structures and power imbalances between women and men often reinforce traditional gender stereotypes in both home and office.

In an effort to understand the roots of gender inequality, Myra Strober and Agnes Miling Kaneko Chan conducted an extensive survey of the 1981 graduates of Stanford and Tokyo Universities -- parallel populations in historically very different cultures. First-hand comments from the graduates are combined with quantitative analyses for a lively examination of the career and family choices of these highly educated women and men. Contrasting the realities of household responsibilities, childcare, and discrimination in the workplace with the graduates' original expectations, the authors find that the road to more egalitarian work and family arrangements winds uphill all the way.

The authors take a fresh look at the widespread belief that U.S. gender equity is light years ahead of Japan's. The elite group of Japanese and Americans in their study describe surprisingly similar experiences as they faced the job market and began raising families. In both countries, more balanced gender roles will require improved public and business policies, individual strategies, and collective action.



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