

Gender, Career and Family at Yale Report Summary

On September 20th, 2005, the *New York Times* ran a front-page article ("*Many Women at Elite Colleges Set Career Path to Motherhood*,") alleging that undergraduate women at elite colleges such as Yale plan to choose motherhood over their careers. Dr. Victoria Brescoll and the Yale Women's Center set out to test this claim with a comprehensive study. Nearly a tenth of the student body (469 male and female undergraduates) participated.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that both women and men at Yale value career and family to the same extent. However, women believe that they will encounter greater barriers to balancing career and family. In short, men and women at Yale share the same life goals, but women believe that society will make it more difficult to achieve those goals.

The study's findings include the following:

- * A higher percentage of men than women plan on becoming a parent, and Yale men and women want roughly the same number of children**
- * Yale women plan to take more time off than Yale men after having children. However, only 4.1% of Yale women plan to stop working entirely once they have children. The large majority (71.8%) plan to take less than one year off from work.**
- * Men and women are equally likely to continue to work full-time if their partner could financially support them.**
- * Men and women are equally likely to continue to work full-time if they were able to get high-quality daycare for their children.**
- * Women are more likely than men to believe that if they work full-time, they will be looked down upon. In contrast, men are more likely than women to believe that if they stayed home full-time to care for their children, society will look down on them. Thus, we see that Yale men and women believe that society will look down on them if they perform "out of role" behavior.**
- * Both Yale men and women value career and family to the same extent.**
- * But, Yale women believe more strongly than Yale men that they will encounter barriers to work-family balance. Yale women are more likely to believe that it will be difficult for them to work full-time, that they will have a hard time finding daycare, and that it will be hard to support their family on one salary.**

Dr. Victoria Brescoll is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University.

The Yale Women's Center is an umbrella organization for women's rights groups on Yale's campus.

***Yale College Survey Results
April 14, 2006***

Demographics

Total participants who completed survey = 469

Average age = 20.02 (SD = 1.47)

135 Freshmen 110 Sophomores 95 Juniors 122 Seniors

Gender: 153 men, 315 women (1 person did not indicate gender)

Ethnicity: 301 (60.3%) White, 26 (5.2%) Hispanic, 28 (5.6%) Asian, 84 (16.8%) African-American, 26 (5.2%) "Other"

Sexual Orientation: 431 (86.4%) Heterosexual, 21 (4.2%) Gay or lesbian, 17 (3.4%) Bisexual

Political Orientation: Mean was 2.93 (SD = 1.41) on 7-point scale where 1 = *very liberal* and 7 = *very conservative*

Future Plans

At some point in my life after graduating from Yale, I plan to:

301 (64.3%)	Be in a long term relationship or marriage with a male
130 (27.8%)	Be in a long term relationship or marriage with a female
9 (1.9%)	Probably not be in a long term relationship
21 (4.5%)	Not sure
6 (1.3%)	Be in a long term relationship with a male and/or a female

At some point in my life, I plan to:

381 (81.4%)	Become a parent
19 (4.1%)	Not become a parent
67 (14.3%)	I'm not sure
0 (0%)	I already am a parent

For males

134 (87.6%)	Become a parent
3 (2.0%)	Not become a parent
15 (9.8%)	I'm not sure

For females

247 (78.4%)	Become a parent
16 (5.1%)	Not become a parent
52 (16.5%)	I'm not sure

*** A higher percentage of men than women plan on becoming a parent.**

How many children do you plan on having?

Overall average = 2.43 (SD = .88)

For women, average = 2.41 (SD = .85)

For men, average = 2.47 (SD = .90)

*** Yale men and women want roughly the same number of children**

How old would you like to be when you have your first child?

Overall average = 29.59 (SD = 2.67)

For women, average = 29.35 (SD = 2.55)

For men, average = 30.05 (SD = 2.88)

*** Yale men would prefer to be slightly older than Yale women when they have their first child. This difference was small, but statistically significant.**

How much time, if any, do you think you'll take off from your job when you have children?

53 (11.3%)	none
73 (15.6%)	less than a month
100 (21.4%)	1-3 months
71 (15.2%)	3-6 months
73 (15.6%)	6 months-1 year
40 (8.5%)	1-3 years
16 (3.2%)	3-5 years
7 (1.4%)	5-10 years
0 (0%)	more than 10 years
14 (2.8%)	I plan to stop working outside the home while raising my children

For males:

48 (31.4%)	none
49 (32%)	less than a month
30 (19.6%)	1-3 months
10 (6.5%)	3-6 months
7 (4.6%)	6 months-1 year
3 (2%)	1-3 years
0 (0%)	3-5 years
1 (0.7%)	5-10 years
0 (0%)	more than 10 years
1 (.7%)	I plan to stop working outside the home while raising my children

For females:

5 (1.6%)	none
24 (7.6%)	less than a month
70 (22.2%)	1-3 months
61 (19.4%)	3-6 months
66 (21%)	6 months-1 year
37 (11.7%)	1-3 years

16 (5.1%)	3-5 years
6 (1.9%)	5-10 years
0 (0%)	more than 10 years
13 (4.1%)	I plan to stop working outside the home while raising my children

*** Yale women plan to take more time off than Yale men after having children. However, only 4.1% of Yale women plan to stop working entirely once they have children. The large majority (71.8%) plan to take less than one year off from work.**

Plans for Career and Family

If you had the opportunity to take time off from work to spend time with your newborn child while still earning a portion of your salary, how likely is it that you would do this? (1=not at all likely, 7 = extremely likely)

Males = 5.40
Females = 6.20*

*** Women are significantly more likely to take paid leave than fathers.**

If you had a spouse or partner whose income fully supported you and your family, would you continue to work full-time if you have children? (1=not at all likely, 7 = extremely likely)

Males = 4.57
Females = 4.81

*** Men and women are equally likely to continue to work full-time if their partner could financially support them.**

If you were able to get high-quality daycare for your child(ren), would you continue to work full-time? (1=not at all likely, 7 = extremely likely)

Males = 5.15
Females = 5.05

*** Men and women are equally likely to continue to work full-time if they were able to get high-quality daycare for their children.**

If you have children someday, how comfortable would you feel working outside the home solely for your own personal fulfillment of your career goals (as opposed to working out of financial necessity)? (1=not at all comfortable, 7 = extremely comfortable)

Males = 5.16
Females = 5.67*

*** Interestingly, Yale women report that they would feel more comfortable than Yale men working outside the home for their own personal fulfillment of their career goals.**

When you think about raising your child with your partner, who do you think will take more time off from

work to raise your child? (1=definitely my partner, 5=equal, 9=definitely me)

Males = 2.91

Females = 4.95*

*** Men believe that their partner will take off significantly more time off from work to raise their child than women do. However, note that the mean for women is 4.95—which is right around “equal.” This means that, on average, Yale women believe that they will take off the same amount of time from work as their partners!**

Perceptions of What Others Think

I think society would look down on me if I chose to work full-time if I have children. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 2.49

Females = 3.27*

I think society would look down on me if I chose to stay home full-time if I have children. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 4.41

Females = 3.98*

*** Women are more likely than men to believe that if they work full-time, they will be looked down upon. In contrast, men are more likely than women to believe that if they stay home full-time to care for their children, society will look down on them. Together, these two questions show that Yale men and women believe that society will look down on them if they perform “out of role” behavior.**

My Goals and Priorities

Having a career is important to me. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 6.27

Females = 6.40

Working hard and having success in my career is important to me. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 6.25

Females = 6.38

Becoming a parent someday is important to me. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 6.07

Females = 5.87

Spending quality time with my children someday is important to me. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 6.51

Females = 6.34

*** These set of questions show that both Yale men and women value career and family to the same extent. If anything, Yale women value having a successful career slightly more than men and Yale men value becoming a parent slightly more than women (although these differences aren't statistically significant).**

Perceptions of Barriers to Work-Family Balance

In today's society, it's difficult to have a family and work full-time. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 4.47

Females = 5.35*

Finding high-quality daycare is difficult for parents. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 4.64

Females = 5.25*

It's financially difficult to support a family with one salary. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 4.50

Females = 5.02*

*** This set of questions reveal that Yale women are more likely than Yale men to perceive a host of barriers to work-family balance. Women are more likely than men to think that it's difficult to have a family and work full-time, that finding high-quality daycare is difficult, and that it's financially difficult to support a family with one salary.**

Barriers I Might Encounter Personally

If I have children someday, I think it will be difficult for me to work full-time. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 3.37

Females = 4.44*

If I have children someday, I think I will have a relatively hard time finding high-quality daycare. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

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Males = 3.92

Females = 4.41*

If I have children someday, I think it will be hard to financially support my family on one salary (either mine or my spouse's). (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 3.90
Females = 4.47*

*** These questions all demonstrate that Yale women believe more strongly than Yale men that they will encounter barriers to work-family balance. Yale women are more likely to believe that it will be difficult for them to work full-time, that they will have a hard time finding daycare, and that it will be hard to support their family on one salary.**

Miscellaneous Questions

I believe that if a person gets a Yale education, he or she has a responsibility to pursue a career. (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Males = 3.82
Females = 3.97

*** Yale men and women do not differ in their belief about the responsibility associated with getting a Yale education: they are both roughly neutral on the topic.**

Do you plan to change your name (either take your spouse's name, hyphenate your name, etc) if you get married someday? (1=definitely not, 9=yes, definitely)

Males = 1.69
Females = 4.40*

Do you consider yourself a feminist? (1=definitely not, 9=yes, definitely)

Males = 3.58
Females = 5.00*

*** Yale women are significantly more likely than Yale men to identify as a feminist. But women are also more likely than men to report that they plan on changing their name if they get married.**

Family Background

When you were growing up, who was your primary caretaker?

Mother (60.9%)
Father (2.8%)
Mother/Father Equally (30.1%)
Other relative (2.4%)
Other (3.2%)

On average, how many hours per week did your primary caretaker (e.g., mother) work at a full-time job outside the home while you were growing up?

Average = 19.58 hours

How many adults lived in the home while you were growing up?

0 adults (0.2%)
1 adult (6.8%)
2 adults (83.3%)
more than 2 adults (9.2%)

When participants indicated a range (e.g., 2-3 or 1-2), rather than an absolute value, in the number of children they wanted to have, these responses were averaged. So, for example, if a participant indicated that he or she wanted 3-5 children, we gave this person an estimated value of 4.

* indicates a statistically significant gender difference.