

Work, Family, and Personality: Transition to Adulthood.

By Jeylan T. Mortimer, Jon Lorence, and Donald S. Kumka. Ablex. 267 pp. \$37.50.

Reviewer: DAVID H. DEMO, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

It is perhaps too common and conventional to praise a monograph as an invaluable contribution to a particular research area, but *Work, Family, and Personality* is indeed worthy of such praise. This book presents a unique study of the two most important socialization contexts for adults — work and family — and specifies their intricate linkages. It is important reading for scholars interested in work and family, those concerned with stability and change in personality through the life course, and those studying the interplay of social structure and personality.

Mortimer and her colleagues follow a panel of 512 male graduates of the University of Michigan through the transition to early adulthood, collecting extensive data in their senior year and again 10 years after graduation (1976). Unlike most status attainment research, the authors trace the effects of the family of origin by showing the *processes* through which early family characteristics influence subsequent attainment. In addition to replicating the finding that socioeconomic status in the family of origin has direct effects on sons' work involvement, the authors empirically document the influence of parent-child (father-son) relations on later outcomes. Paternal support is shown to have an important influence on children's sense of competence, values, and orientation to work, all of which serve as mediating variables directly affecting occupational attainment. In this manner the book also illustrates the influence of family on work, usually neglected by investigators more concerned with the effects of work on family and socialization processes.

Studying psychological development in the decade following college graduation, the authors find that social structure exerts its strongest influence not through family, but through work experience, particularly work autonomy. Although values and attitudes are shown to be very stable during this 10-year period of early adulthood, work autonomy facilitates the development of intrinsic reward values and feelings of competence. Mortimer and her colleagues also demonstrate that adolescent values and attitudes are important in shaping early adult work experiences, and that work-related values and experiences in early adulthood are crucial to psychological stability and the course of adult development. In short, individuals actively create their social environments, environments which in turn influence human development. These findings should serve the useful function of urging socialization researchers to study human agency, personal efficacy, and change and stability in personality as they relate to life circumstances in the years beyond childhood and adolescence.

Importantly, occupational attainment and career stability cannot be considered the ultimate dependent variables. The authors broaden the focus to show that high occupational achievement is associated with negative family outcomes, including work-related strain in the family and low levels of marital satisfaction.

Unfortunately, as with any study there are sampling restrictions that limit possible generalizations from the findings, and the authors are very careful and detailed in explaining the limitations of the sample. The respondents represent one cohort of male graduates of a selective public university. More than half of the respondents' fathers and more than a third of their mothers graduated from college, producing a highly advantaged sample. In other respects, the research is exemplary. Most of the analyses involve carefully specified models developed through

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confirmatory factor analysis and tested using structural equation models with maximum likelihood estimates. Other analyses, presented in chapter 4, are more exploratory in character, and rely on conventional path analytic techniques with ordinary least squares regression.

This book signals an important advance in the investigation of life course processes, work and family careers, and the dynamics of psychological stability and change. The stage has been set for researchers to extend this brilliant work to later stages in the life course, broadening our understanding of socialization and development as lifelong processes of change and redirection, continuities and discontinuities.

Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual.

By George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, and John Boli. Sage. 368 pp. \$29.95.

Reviewer: KENNETH DAUBER, *University of Arizona*

This book draws its strength from a simple observation: states everywhere are remarkably similar in their structures and stated goals. Most states portray themselves as the guarantors of civil, social, and political rights, providers of education and welfare, and regulators of economic life. This fact holds true even for countries that do not have the resources to deliver on these promises. The authors propose that underlying this uniformity is a common conception of the state and its relation to society, part of an ideology rooted in the history of the West and now accepted around the globe. This ideology results in the progressive definition of individuals as citizens, bound to the state through ties of obligation and membership.

More concretely, this central myth of Western culture sees the state as responsible for rationally directing society in a way that produces progress and justice, defined in terms of individual wealth and equality. The focus on individuals and the state, to the exclusion of intermediate-level corporate groups, increases the importance of citizenship as the substantive link between individuals and the larger whole. While the treatment of the historical process that produced this result is sketchy, the authors locate its roots in both the universalism of the Catholic Church and the emphasis on individual value of the Reformation.

This argument is grounded in a more general perspective, increasingly common in organizational sociology, that sees action flowing from culturally legitimated prescriptions rather than from task requirements. It goes beyond work with a more narrow focus, however, in locating these prescriptions within the broader historical context of rationalization and the expansion of Western cultural hegemony through trade and conquest. State structures are thus exogenous to particular societies, reflecting instead of particular social and economic conditions the immersion of new nations in a larger world order.

Most of the book's fifteen chapters (eight of which have been published elsewhere) are devoted to investigating these general themes empirically. Ramirez and Boli, for example, show that the growth of educational systems and the drive toward universal education since World War II cannot be explained by the level of economic development or other factors internal to various societies. Instead, they argue that education has acquired value in its own right, as a sign of a government's