

Aging and Caring at the Intersection of Work and Home Life



Blurring the Boundaries

Edited by

Anne Martin-Matthews • Judith E. Phillips

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Edited by

Anne Martin-Matthews
*Canadian Institute of Health and
University of British Columbia, Vancouver*

Judith E. Phillips
Swansea University, Wales, UK



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For Anne Martin-Matthews:

*To Max and Tess Martin,
Adam and Leah Matthews*

For Judith E. Phillips:

To the memory of Bridget Phillips

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Foreword

Megatrends That Affect Caregiving Boundaries

Michael A. Creedon

This text brings together research, policy, and program perspectives from various countries on the broad topic of *Aging at the Intersection of Work and Home Life: Blurring the Boundaries*. It should be welcomed by all those concerned with the massive phenomenon of growing life expectancy throughout the world. We all hope for longer, healthier lives, but the sheer numbers of older adults, and their accompanying needs, can place a major strain on tax systems, pension programs, health systems, and of course the family support structures of society. On the family level there can be intense pressures that come from coping with work and caregiving. This text explores the shifting boundaries of caregiving in families. The advent of public sector financial support for caregiving by family members will also affect caregiving patterns, as noted in the text. The changing nature of pension benefits can affect the freedom to rely on that source of income.

In the following paragraphs the growth in demand for older workers in the United States is noted, and the apparent growth among them of willingness to work part-time or full-time, or to establish a microbusiness. So the boundary between work and retirement is likely to blur also, and this may in turn affect caregiving patterns. Another issue that affects the United States and other societies is the growth of legal and illegal immigration to the United States and

the European Union and the massive migration from rural to urban areas in China, India, and other countries. Some of these topics are addressed in chapters in this text; others may suggest areas for future work by academic colleagues throughout the world.

A Growing Demand for Older Workers

On November 28, 2006, the chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, Ben Bernanke, addressed the National Italian American Foundation in New York (Bernanke, 2006). One of his more notable statements was the declaration that the proportion of women available to enter the American workforce has reached a peak, and therefore the demand for retired workers will grow substantially in the years ahead. This suggests that the United States has optimized the use of women workers, at least in the sense that the great majority of women who want jobs now have them (though not always in their preferred fields). This in itself is a major milestone in the United States. But the subsequent statement was also notable: The demand for older workers to stay in the workforce, and for retirees to reenter it on a full-time or part-time basis, is likely to grow in the years ahead. These statements were made in the context of a national 4.4% unemployment rate—in other words, a full employment society. The implications of these trends for work and home life are subjects central to this volume. Bill Novelli, CEO of AARP, in the October 2007 *AARP Bulletin*, cites Bureau of Labor statistics data: in 2006 some 29% of people in the U.S. between 60 and 69 years of age were active in the workforce as were 17% of those 70–74 years of age.

The current average age for retirement in the United States is 61.9, not unrelated to the availability of Social Security at age 62! The leading edge of the U.S. baby boom will reach 62 within 2 years, and this can be expected to substantially increase the number of retirees per year. But it will also increase the number of older workers. Rutgers University, in a 2006 national survey on retirement and work, found that 70% of their respondents want some level of work, for months or for years, full-time or part-time, during their retirement (Reynolds, Ridley, & Van Horn, 2005). Merrill Lynch, in a similar study, found that 75% of their respondents had the same desire (Merrill Lynch, 2005). Quinn and Burkhauser (1990) state that the majority of older adults who work in retirement do so for financial reasons. These

studies suggest that, in future, the issue may not be “work or retire,” but cycles of work and leisure or the attainment of a balance of work and leisure activities that may shift over time, depending on health, family finances and obligations, and economic opportunity.

Caregiving for Elders

Many of these baby boomers will become caregivers for frail parents, and many will care for frail spouses over time. However, the demand for retiree workers, full-time or part-time, will likely impact on the caregiving availability of many. One possible outcome of increased work participation by retirees, and continued work into later years, may be greater workplace emphasis on eldercare benefits. Another outcome may be a more limited supply of informal caregivers. A recent study conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving examined the role of children in caring for adult family members. The authors reported that some 1.4 million children are providers of care to adult members of their families, and some of them are the primary caregivers (Hunt, Levine, & Naiditch, 2005). Most studies of working caregivers have focused on adult workers, but one of the by-products of maximization of female participation in the formal workforce is an inevitable increase in caregiving demands on other family members. Several chapters in this text explore the range of caregiving roles that can be carried by family members, relatives, and friends.

I am currently engaged in a project in Appalachia to use high school teenagers as trainers of Alzheimer’s caregivers in the use of computers to reach other caregivers, to use chat rooms with other caregivers, and to use Internet search tools for Alzheimer’s care information (Maxwell & Creedon, 2003; Mountain Empire Older Citizens, 2006–2007). That project links the local high school, the Area Agency on Aging, the Wired Community Project in the county, and the local campus of the University of Virginia to bring together local teen tutors and older adult caregivers. Teenagers and even younger children can do much to enhance our community care of elders. Of course, there is also a potential for burdening young people and even abusing them. One wonders whether heavy caregiving demands are depriving some youth of the time for study, or of the opportunity to earn pocket money or gather money for college tuition. Previous

research on working caregivers found that some 10% of them quit work to provide care—an obvious financial loss. Perhaps we need to quantify the financial impact on youth and the opportunity costs that care of a parent can impose. Thus, Joanie Sims-Gould, Anne Martin-Matthews, and Carolyn Rosenthal's contribution to this text (chapter 4) is very timely, because it calls attention to the variety of caregiving roles within families and broadens the focus to the family as a caring system.

In this society, and in others, caregiving duties may prevent children from leaving home, getting an education, or having a life and a career of their own. Growing up in rural Ireland, I was personally aware of parents refusing to let a daughter marry because they wanted her help with the family farm. On a visit to Japan, I became aware of the caregiving expectations placed on the wife of the oldest son. In Pakistan I visited the only publicly sponsored nursing home for men in Punjab at that time (1984) and realized that their society expected families to be the sole caregivers for elders. This text includes aging studies in various societies. Thus it should heighten the reader's awareness of diversity in cultural expectations regarding retirement and work, but also regarding care-giving roles.

Changing Pension Policies and Business Opportunities

The changing demographics of the United States and the growth plans of American companies may offer more work opportunities to older persons. However, there is also a decreasing likelihood of "defined benefit" pensions that guarantee a pension for life from the company to American workers. More and more workers are being offered "defined contribution" programs (where contributions are made by the company and also the worker to stock funds, only during the years of work for that organization). Such programs transfer the risk of retirement financing to the worker-retiree, and may cause many to delay retirement or to work part-time in retirement. Thus pension policies may contribute to the blurring of the boundary between retirement and work in the United States, and impact particularly on the availability of spouses and siblings for care-giving tasks.

Societies such as Japan, whose baby boom occurred earlier (before World War II), may offer different lessons. Japan has just come out

of a decade-long recession that provided little workplace demand for older workers. I was very impressed during a 2-year Dialogue Between U.S. and Japanese Legislators on Policies for Aging Societies (sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislators) by the number of older Japanese who started a microbusiness in retirement. In the United States, currently it is estimated that 8.4% of the workforce are self-employed and that self-employment increases with age (Blanchflower, 1998). In the Merrill Lynch survey on work and retirement (2005) some 13% of respondents said they wanted to have a business of some kind in retirement. There are indications that the rate of entrepreneurship among older Americans is going up. For example, at Johns Hopkins University (with which I am associated), 50% of the current participants in an entrepreneurship program are midlife and older women. Likewise, retirement workshops that I have conducted for federal employees consistently reveal that a number of participants already have a microbusiness. Self-employment offers greater opportunities to control the use of time than does employment by public or private sector organizations. The present text does not explore the relationship between self-employment roles and caregiving, but the future is likely to witness a substantial growth in self-employment among retirees.

Rural-Urban Migration and International Migration

Another worldwide trend, of enormous consequence for work-family dynamics, is the massive migration of peasant populations from rural areas to major urban communities. In China this migration is affecting many millions of families. As the teenagers and young adults leave for work opportunities far from home, inevitably the availability of caregivers for the family elders weakens. Perhaps the financial contributions of such migrant workers can enable elderly relatives to survive and even to hire caregivers. The huge transfers of money to relatives in Mexico, Honduras, and other Caribbean and Central American nations, by the millions of both documented and undocumented workers in the United States, have been widely recognized (Sura, 2002). Similar large waves of immigration within Europe (Eastern Europeans migrating to countries in Western Europe, Turks migrating to Germany, and people from African nations going to France, Spain, Ireland, etc.) are causing similar

financial transfers to parents, spouses, and others back in the home country. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has released a report in October 2007 stating that 150 million migrants are sending more than \$300 billion home to their families each year in more than 1.5 billion separate transactions. Such migration patterns, and related financial flows, suggest that a massive shift in caregiving patterns may be occurring in some developing countries: from informal family care to paid caregivers. Mehta and Thang's chapter in this text (chapter 3), on multigenerational care, discusses the increasing presence of paid foreign domestic workers in Singapore. Likewise, Neal, Wagner, Bonn, and Niles-Yokum (chapter 5) discuss the growth of long-distance care in the United States and even inter-country care. The growing demand for retiree workers in the United States, along with the aging of the baby boomers, the massive migration from rural to urban areas in countries like India, China, and Brazil, and the migration of workers from developing countries to more advanced economies, are all affecting work-family dynamics around the world. Much work needs to be done to help us grasp the impact of migration on caregiving.

The Role of Technology in Independent Living and Caregiving

But there are other developments that can also affect work-family and caregiving patterns. One of these is the rapid rise of technologies for the home and technologies for communication. Japan's baby boom occurred in the 1930s. Today Japan has an enormous number of retirees and a dynamic "silver industry" dedicated to meeting the needs of older Japanese. In the United States, "smart houses" are proliferating, offering educational opportunities for professionals and for families, and demonstrating the use of wireless communications in the home, electronically controlled home security, bathrooms with supportive devices, and other supportive features. Family caregivers and professional services can be immediately informed, via the press of a button, if intervention is needed. Neal et al. in their chapter also reflect on the positive contribution of communications technology to the work-caregiving nexus. Dr. Bill Mann and colleagues at the State University of New York at Buffalo tested the use of two-way audiovisual technology between nurses and home-based frail elders. They found that the nurses could provide service to 19 patients per

day rather than 6 per day. They also found that the elderly patients were quite happy to receive more frequent contacts of this kind, rather than the traditional weekly home visit, with the assurance that immediate personal visits would occur when necessary (Mann et al., 1999). Such applications could provide similar reassurance to elders and their working caregivers. Research in the workplace has indicated that telephone calls to or from frail family members are a staple of caregiving by workers. But we can expect a burgeoning of such technology applications that provide continued independence for elders and improved monitoring capacity for working caregivers in the coming decade.

Workplace Eldercare Programs

The aging of the United States has increased workplace management awareness of the care-giving responsibilities of workers. Studies on working caregivers have indicated that their average age is 47, just about midcareer for many workers. Back in the 1980s the initial phase of workplace response to eldercare burdens on employees by companies like PepsiCo, IBM, and Stride Rite included handbooks for employee caregivers, workplace workshops on caregiving provided by professionals, and telephone-based counseling on eldercare issues. In the early 1990s the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Family Policy developed an eldercare resource manual for military families along with a briefing book on eldercare for counselors and chaplains (U.S. Department of Defense, 1992). Today, the number of companies offering such resources has reached at least 25% of American companies. Studies undertaken by some of the authors of this text have helped to provide the economic justification for such workplace programs. For example, the fact that 10% of working caregivers leave the workforce because of care-giving duties, and that many others are tardy to work or make excessive use of the phone during work hours, translates into significant impacts on productivity (Creedon, 1995).

Public Policies

Of course, public policies on retirement, on older workers' rights and protections, on childcare and eldercare support, and on housing and transportation have an enormous impact on aging societies. In the United States, for example, there has been little or no federal government activity regarding low- and moderate-income housing in recent years. This surely affects the options for lower-income elders. About 75% of older Americans own their own homes. Approximately one third of these houses are recent structures, one third are 20–40 years old, and one third are older—some quite old. Because of the increase in housing values in the past decade, particularly on the East and West coasts, many elders have substantial assets locked up in their houses. Older Americans, seeing the home as something to be handed on to their heirs, have been very reluctant to embark on such ways of releasing the value of their homes as reverse mortgages. But a reverse mortgage can provide the cash that allows an older person or couple to repair a home, pay for ordinary expenses, and remain independent in their own home longer. The house is sold after they leave, or after death, and the loan is repaid at that point. In the United States and in many other countries, the public policies on housing can have a major impact on the ability of elders to carry on with satisfying lives in the homes and neighborhoods they know and prefer. Keefe, Glendinning, and Fancey, in chapter 10, discuss a number of approaches to financial compensation of family caregivers by government, adopted in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Germany. Public services for frail elders vary greatly in both availability and intensity in different societies. One of the significant contributions of this text is the exploration of the relationships that can emerge between family caregivers and both professional and paraprofessional providers of care.

This foreword has focused on a few issues that currently affect the quality of life for older Americans as well as elders in other societies: the blurring of the line between retirement and work; the massive migration of workers from rural to urban areas, and from developing to developed countries; and the reality that children and teenagers as well as adults may be heavily engaged in caregiving. Other dynamics may offer very positive perspectives for an aging world, such as the increasing availability of communications technologies and home electronic technologies, the boom in housing values in the United

States and elsewhere, and the rise in microbusiness involvement by older workers and retirees. The changing policies, technologies, and labor force configurations, discussed in this text, offer much hope for elders and will surely result in enhanced care-giving strategies for families.

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National and international workshops and conferences over the past decade have also furthered the connections amongst the coauthors of this book, and provided opportunities for us to hear from and learn from one another and thereby refine and advance our thinking about these issues. A preconference workshop at the annual meetings of the British Society of Gerontology in Stirling in 2001 was particularly catalytic. More recently, a symposium organized by the coeditors at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in Orlando, Florida, in 2005 enabled us to invite other

authors and our PhD students to share methodologies and explore ideas on the issues discussed in these pages. Over the course of time, the boundaries between our professional and personal relationships with one another have become blurred as well, and that too has been important to the development of this book!

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Introduction

Anne Martin-Matthews and Judith E. Phillips

The 30 years since Rosabeth Moss Kanter wrote *Work and Family in the United States* (1977), a pioneering book that challenged the sociological myth of “separate worlds” of work and family life, have seen the development of “the sociology of work and family ... as a major subfield within the discipline” (Hood, 1993). Although much of the early work on the intersection of work and family roles focused on issues of a single family member (typically a woman) balancing or “juggling” these two life spheres, more recent research has examined the complex interplay of multiple roles and multiple players in the dynamics of aging lives at the intersection of work and home life.

This book aims to capture and conceptualize the complexity of the intersection of work and home life as it relates to the provision of assistance and support to older relatives in a variety of “carework” contexts. It explores these issues within a critical framework, rather than from an assumed stress or burden perspective, which dominates current texts on the topic. Throughout the book we challenge such traditional ways of seeing the care world. Such a critical lens, for example, challenges both policies and practices in the workplace and in society that are directed at ameliorating role stress in balancing work and care. As Phillips (2007) noted, care is not a single concept but is characterized by its diversity and “multiple discourses” drawing on feminism, disability studies, legislation, and different organizational interests. It is also socially constructed by all these

groups. At the heart of care are relationships, and these are central to our understanding of work and family life; care is an interdependent and connected concept, one that coexists with numerous other roles in an individual's life.

The connections and tensions between work and home life typically involve intersections between the private and the public spheres, between professional and personal responsibilities, and between paid and unpaid work. Each chapter addresses some aspect of these intersections, and the blurring of the boundaries at these points of intersection between work and home life. Viewed through the lens of boundaries that are sometimes (although not necessarily always) blurred, we gain further insight into the management and negotiation of caring and carework at the margins and the intersections between the private and the public, professional and personal, and the paid and unpaid. These include the intersection of home and work life, the limits of a professional care role or geographical constraints on the provision of care.

Readers of this volume will gain a deeper understanding of issues of care provision amongst “networks” of carers and helpers, and of the particular dynamics of care when it is episodic or framed by constraints of space and time as a result of geography. They will become familiar with how intersections and boundaries are viewed and, at times, managed in the process of seeking to attain a work–life balance. They will learn the significance of “locale” in relation to boundaries and intersections, as when “home” is the site of care or when care provision is bounded by proximity or distributed by distance. The notion of geographic context is further underscored here by the range of studies from around the world: from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand. This book addresses current thinking in different cultural, social, and economic contexts on issues of work life, family responsibilities, and relationships and carework in aging societies.

In addition, in each chapter the authors address issues of diversity with sensitivity to gender, race, and ethnicity. A critical gerontological perspective is taken throughout the chapters, challenging assumptions, stereotypes, and constructions of aging and care. Although the focus of this discussion is on issues of aging at the intersection of work and home life, some chapters adopt a life course perspective by considering the interconnection between different parts of the life course as well as the intersection of individual, family, and historical

time and intergenerational issues. Other chapters address work and care in the context of “space” and “place.”

About the Book

In chapter 1, Catherine Ward-Griffin examines the intersections of the public and the private, the professional and the personal, and the paid and the unpaid caring work of female health professionals in Canada. Her focus is on the ways in which nurses, physiotherapists, physicians, and social workers caring for aging relatives negotiate the boundaries between their professional and personal care-giving roles within the context of changes to Canada’s health care system. This chapter calls attention to the invisibility of this unique group of unpaid professional caregivers among their employers and their professional associations.

In chapter 2, Atiya Mahmood and Anne Martin-Matthews draw on qualitative data from Canada to examine the development and negotiation of relationships between home care workers and elderly clients, family members of clients, and employer agencies. The focus is primarily on women employed in the “nonprofessional” end of home care, providing services often described as *social care*. The isolation, variability, and invisibility of their work are challenges to boundary management for workers. For elderly clients, boundary management is challenged by the entry of a public service into the private sphere of the home. This chapter develops a conceptual model of the social, spatial, temporal, and organizational contexts of the home care experience for elderly clients, family caregivers, and paid care workers.

In chapter 3, Kalyani K. Mehta and Leng Leng Thang argue that the principle of “interdependence” permeates the multigenerational family care system in Singapore, with the roles of caregivers and care recipients changing over the life course of the family. Care for older members not only involves the immediate family but sometimes includes a foreign domestic worker as well. The paid worker lives within the family home, and provides many services traditionally performed by women in the family. Filial piety beliefs drive adult children to continue caring for elder relatives within the family home, resulting in a juggling of care of dependents within the fam-

ily, bound by the spatial and economic constraints and boundaries drawn by national ideology and policies.

In chapter 4, Joanie Sims-Gould, Anne Martin-Matthews, and Carolyn J. Rosenthal stress the relational nature of family caregiving, viewing carework as a group effort typically involving family members in a variety of roles. They examine the intersections and overlaps between and within helping and caregiving. The chapter highlights the importance of not only the number of individuals involved in family caregiving and the nature of their contributions to the care of their older relative, but also the ways in which they care for one another. The authors examine the distinction between direct help provided to the older person(s) requiring care and assistive help provided to other helpers and caregivers.

In chapter 5, Judith E. Phillips and Miriam Bernard build from the premise that the “spatial context” in which care is provided has become an important issue for many families juggling work with caring responsibilities. They argue that, as more dual-income families juggle work and care and often commute in different directions, the spatial dimensions of caregiving and work location are increasingly complex issues to be considered. This chapter makes the case that despite developments of postmodernity and globalization, geography remains important. Distance and space still have to be considered in geographically bounded, absolute, and relative terms and lead to a distinct form of caring. In bringing the social and the spatial together, Phillips and Bernard argue that “the feminist ethic of care” should provide a guiding framework.

In chapter 6, Margaret B. Neal, Donna L. Wagner, Kathleen J.B. Bonn, and Kelly Niles-Yokum examine patterns of long-distance caregiving among U.S. employees and the distinct challenges that arise as a result of the separation between the older person in need of assistance and his or her family carer. This chapter explores the factors that may result in spatial or temporal separation between older adults and their carers; differences in the nature of care provided depending on the amount of separation; the issues involved in providing long-distance care in families of different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds; and strategies used by families to manage the separation. Contemporary support options, such as the use of assistive technology and professional care, are reviewed and discussed as to their effect on family ties.

In chapter 7, Sally Keeling and Judith Davey explore how employees of two large city councils in New Zealand manage their roles as working carers of older people. This chapter discusses their negotiations within and between several boundary areas: boundaries between their working (public) lives and their eldercare (private) roles, boundaries relating to their family networks, and those with the older family member. And, finally, these workers' eldercare roles can be placed at the boundary of informal care and public sector service delivery in their local communities. This chapter offers comparative insights on the intersection of formal and informal care, and on the definitions of local zones of care, and it applies a sociological analysis of public and private to research on care and support systems for older people.

In chapter 8, Jane Mears and Elizabeth A. Watson reanalyze data from 20 years of studies in Australia to examine carers' constructions of care and caring. They argue that, in theorizing about care and in developing good policies, it is important to consider whether theory and policy responses resonate with those doing the caring. They consider how carers and care workers construct the various parts of their lives and the meaning they attach to what they do: their responsibilities to family and to employers and work colleagues, their notions of what constitutes good care and good professional care practice, the place of empathy and personal connectedness in care, and how caring changes over time and with what impact. The chapter addresses how, where, and why carers construct boundaries around their care and the rest of their lives and the nature of those constructs.

In chapter 9, Norah Keating, Donna Dosman, Jennifer Swindle, and Janet Fast outline how work is shared among family members and friends through the development of profiles of care networks illustrating patterns of paid and unpaid work among groups of people providing care. The understanding of network types that may be typified by high labor force demands moves us beyond a focus limited to care dyads toward a more comprehensive view of the complexity of ways in which paid and unpaid work are shared. The chapter discusses the caring capacity of these networks in light of the small size of most networks and the competing demands of employment.

In chapter 10, Canadian researchers Janice Keefe and Pamela Fancey collaborate with UK researcher Caroline Glendinning to examine the various forms of financial compensation initiatives as a public policy option in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and

Germany. Each country's approach is embedded in its traditions, ideologies, and social policy debates that change over time. This chapter examines each country's respective approach to financial compensation initiatives for family caregivers and the impact of such changes on caregivers in each national context. The drivers of these changes are discussed, as are current issues and debates surrounding payment of family members within each of the countries.

In chapter 11, Maria Evandrou and Karen Glaser move to a more macro focus on issues of aging at the intersection of work and home life. They examine changes in the extent of economic and social role occupancy across the life course between cohorts in Britain, through a focus on the factors associated with multiple role occupancy amongst women and men in midlife. This chapter sheds light on the socioeconomic circumstances of individuals who try to manage family care responsibilities with paid employment, and the constraints they face.

In chapter 12, Julia Twigg makes a considered shift to move the analysis of social care away from its current primary location at the level of organizations and policies, toward the front line of provision. She frames the analysis around themes of time and the rival temporal orderings of body, home, and service delivery. She argues that homecare cannot be seen as separated from the world in which it is embedded—that of home, the body, and domesticity. Home and body are enmeshed in complex interpenetrating time frames, so that the coming of care potentially disrupts and disorders these in ways that parallel and intersect with spatiality.

In the final chapter, Judith E. Phillips and Anne Martin-Matthews reflect on the concepts, issues, and themes that cross-cut the chapters of this book, linking personal and professional interests for the editors. We draw on policy perspectives and consider new directions for research in this area.

Intersections of Work and Home Life: Speaking From Experience

For many of the contributors to this volume, the writing of this book has in itself been a journey of negotiation and management of the intersections of work and home life. In the course of writing, several authors have experienced the serious illness, disability, or death of one or more elderly parents and relatives. Others of us have relocated

elderly parents to be closer to our places of employment, or have ourselves changed work and home to be closer to our frail elderly kin. In the provision of assistance to our family members, some of us have come to now utilize the very same employee assistance plans or community-based support services that we had previously studied. Although some authors have, elsewhere, noted how “personal struggles and experiences offer an important touchstone for academic theorizing” (Twigg, 2004, p. 62), or used the process of writing collectively to be more conscious of our own journey of aging (Phillips and Bernard, 2000), or adopted a self-reflexive, autobiographical stance in an explicit examination of the relationship between our scholarly enquiry and our personal biographies of care (Martin-Matthews, 2007), we do not do so in this volume. Although these experiences are not foregrounded in our chapters, we do recognize the implications of our individual efforts to manage the combination of our paid professional work and eldercare work, the challenges of long-distance caring, and the challenges of providing care framed by family dynamics and in conjunction with paid carers in the formal care system. With our perspectives grounded in the realities of individuals and families aging at the intersections of work and home life, the experiences about which we write are far more than “mere” conceptual abstractions or empirical data-derived “observations.” They are very real issues that constitute highly salient aspects of our own personal and family biographies. As such, they inevitably and implicitly frame our interpretations and shape our scholarship.

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Contributors

Miriam Bernard is professor of social gerontology and director of the recently established Research Institute for Life Course Studies at Keele University, United Kingdom. She is also a long-standing member of Keele's internationally known Centre for Social Gerontology—one of the largest groupings specializing in gerontology in the United Kingdom. Building on a background of innovative work with older people in the voluntary sector (as research officer with the Beth Johnson Foundation), she has 25 years' experience of research and teaching about aging and older people. Her research interests focus primarily on the development of new and healthy lifestyles in later life, and she has a long-standing interest in women's lives as they age. She is the author or editor of 16 books and monographs, over 70 book chapters and journal articles, and many research reports. With Judith E. Phillips, she carried out the first British study of working carers of older adults that explored the use, relevance, and effectiveness of a range of workplace policies and practices operating in one Social Services Department and one National Health Service (NHS) Health Trust. Funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation between 2000 and 2002, the resulting publication, *Juggling Work and Care: The Experiences of Working Carers of Older Adults* (Policy Press), won the 2002 Work-Life Balance Trust Award for nonfiction.

Kathleen J.B. Bonn has a master's degree from Lewis and Clark College in counseling psychology and has been a doctoral student in the Urban Studies Program at Portland State University, Oregon, United States, since September 2001. Her interests focus on seniors' support systems, the effects of social interactions on well-being, and the health impacts of social justice. For the past 16 years, she has worked with the elderly in intensive case management. She has served as a graduate research and teaching assistant at the Institute