

rency: What does it mean to be a mother today? Drawing on extensive ethnographic data and analysis of popular culture, the authors weave intergenerational narratives of mothering within families together with an innovative sociological and feminist frame to probe their question from a variety of angles. This is an approach concerned with the relationship between individual biography and difference, and a common culture of motherhood. What arises through the project are provocative questions about the temporality of shifting maternal identities, the key role of popular culture in identity formation, differences between mothers, and pressing questions about a new politics of motherhood.

Beginning with conception narratives, the authors work in temporal sequence through key and common issues bound up with the experience of mothering and identity formation: the embodiedness of pregnancy, changing relationships generationally within families, the shifting role of expert advice (*vis-à-vis* heightening marketization that demands we consume and self-fashion our identities), women's complex and classed relationship to work, the centrality of commodification in mother's lives, as well as birth stories and beyond. This organizational strategy makes for a highly readable book, as the authors share narratives that represent the diverse ways women are situated and the ways they negotiate common yet diverse terrain. Through the organizing category of age, we meet teenaged and older mothers, as well as single and coupled, lesbian and straight, middle and working class, employed and unemployed, surrounded by, as well as estranged from, family. What emerges through these stories is not only the trend toward later motherhood and the inextricable link between age, class, and gender, but also women's active and creative role in fashioning maternal identities out of diverse biographical situations and shifting relations between the family, state, and market that entail heightening responsibility for motherhood in women's lives.

Given this, a significant contribution made by this book is its creative use of a phenomenologically informed theoretical frame that links individual narratives of difference to these larger cultural configurations. This is important work. Simone de Beauvoir's notion of women as a bodily 'situation', for example, helps the authors explore individual biographies in depth as ones that are also positioned within larger cultural and institutional processes. In addition, the idea of 'configuration' highlights the ways in which relationships between individual situations and self-understandings shift and change within family configurations and in relation to larger social realities over time. Finally, the authors employ a narrative approach to explore maternal identity formation. This not only brings individual situations alive, but provides a way for the authors to link individual narratives to larger family and cultural configurations.