THE GENDER TRAP

PARENTING AND THE PITFALLS OF RAISING BOYS AND GIRLS

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

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"With insight and compassion, Kane shows how today's parents—even those with egalitarian intentions—too often nudge their children toward narrow binary conceptions of gender... she shows how parents variously understand, navigate, and even sometimes resist the gender trap, pointing the way to a more humane world for all of our children."

–Michael A. Messner,
author of *It's All for the Kids*

From the selection of toys, clothes, and activities to styles of play and emotional expression, the family is ground zero for where children learn about gender. Despite recent awareness that girls are not too fragile to play sports and that boys can benefit from learning to cook, we still find ourselves surrounded by limited gender expectations and persistent gender inequalities. Through the lively and engaging stories of parents from a wide range of backgrounds, *The Gender Trap* provides a detailed account of how today's parents understand, enforce, and resist the gendering of their children. Emily W. Kane shows how most parents make efforts to loosen gendered constraints for their children, while also engaging in a variety of behaviors that reproduce traditionally gendered childhoods, ultimately arguing that conventional gender expectations are deeply entrenched and that there is great tension in attempting to undo them while letting "boys be boys" and "girls be girls."

"Glamour Babies" and "Little Toughies"

SUMMARY

The introductory chapter of *The Gender Trap* takes us to a key birthplace of conceptions about gender—parents. Drawing upon in-depth, qualitative interviews with parents of preschool aged children, Kane grounds her analysis in three main arguments. First, gender is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Yet this is *not* to say that parents and children are the passive repositories of society but that gender is a dynamic development highly influenced by parental reinforcement, discouragement, and modeling of social expectations. In other words, when parents embrace their agency as active participants of childhood gendering, the social construction of binary genders is capable of admitting change. Navigating the gender trap for both their children and themselves, parents actively create opportunities essential to the fulfillment of their child's growing sense of gender. Second, gender is not merely the source of difference but moreover, is a source of power and inequality. As researchers have often identified, the social construction of gender takes place at three social levels: individual, interactional, and institutional. Third, gender is inextricably linked with other social categorizations, including race, class, and sexual orientation, which operate simultaneously within a child and parent's lived experience. In many cases, gendered expectations vary amongst different social groups and as a result, foster different social environments within which parents raise their children.

Kane provides an overview of the five configurations of parenting practice that she addresses throughout *The Gender Trap*. They include:

1. "Naturalizers" interpret gendered childhoods as biological in origin and, though occasionally acting to adjust gendered structures, primarily reproduce them. Their concern about other's judgment partly depends on whether their children display any gender nonconformity that makes the parents uncomfortable.

2. "Cultivators" act in a way that promotes gendered childhoods for their sons and daughters. They interpret the origins of gender patterns as largely social and express little concern about the judgment of others. For them, reproducing gender is a routine part of parenting, not something that evokes anxiety or concern.

3. "Refiners" highlight both biological and social forces in explaining gendered outcomes and act with roughly equal measures of resistance and conformity, always attentive to the actual and potential judgments of others.

4. "Innovators" resist gendered structures for their children and are unconcerned about the judgment of others.

"Glamour Babies" and "Little Toughies"

5. "Resisters," while even more opposed to gendered patterns for their children, display significant concern about being judged by others.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is the difference between the word gender as a noun ("I am a gender") and the word gender as a verb ("to gender" or "to be gendered")?
- How are race, class, gender, and sexuality interrelated? What are real-life examples of intersectionality? Besides those that Kane mentions, are there other social categories that may influence gender?
- How do you think your gender has developed throughout your life? Have you ever felt trapped by your gender?
- Think back to a favorite toy or article of clothing from your own childhood, and consider it in relation to various claims from this introductory chapter.
- If our "gendered selves" are the "individual internalization of gendered social expectations" (16), what is gender before "internalization?" Would there be any genders?

NOTE: In her foundational idea of intersectionality, Kane does not state that certain social characteristics (e.g. race, class, and sexual orientation) cause particular gendered or non-gendered outcomes. Rather, the theory of intersectionality holds that these factors cannot be studied independently. Intersectionality is a holistic examination—not a causal explanation—of a person's lived experience in which multiple axes of inequality operate, interact, and reinforce each other on often simultaneous levels.

CHAPTER 1
PAGES 27-52

Wanting a Girl, Wanting a Boy: Conceptual Building Blocks

SUMMARY

Even before the birth or adoption of a child, prospective parents have often already constructed gendered images of their future child. These images emerge from: gendered anticipation; beliefs about the origins of gendered childhoods; and the actions and motivations for such actions that reproduce or resist gendered outcomes.

All interviews began by asking parents if in their pre-parenthood they recalled having a preference for sons or daughters. Most parents offered highly genderized images of the future children they anticipated raising, indicating that parents often assume that a child will develop according to a gender. Fathers recalled iconic images of wanting to play catch with sons, and mothers, shopping with daughters. Kane notes three themes for a father's preference for sons: continuation of the patriarchal family name, shared masculine activities, and the belief that having a son expresses something essential to manhood. A mother's preference for daughters followed comparable themes: close emotional relationships, shared feminine activities, and objects associated with femininity. Kane argues that when parents eventually have children, these anticipations can become self-fulfilling prophecies as parents assume what their children will or will not enjoy based on their gender.

These gendered anticipations were commonly explained by conceptions about biological determinism and social constructionism. Often, parents who invoked biological origins offered explanations of anatomy, hormones, or brain physiology. Others offered more elaborate beliefs of divine or evolutionary purpose. Of parents who invoked social origins, explanations frequently cited interactional sources (peers, family, etc.) closely linked with tradition and history, and institutional sources (mass media, advertising, etc.) centered on power.

Parental actions that reproduce gendered outcomes—that is, "do gender"—are identified with parents who encourage traditional gendered tendencies and by those who discourage and even attempt to forbid gender-atypical tendencies. These actions often contribute to the hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity of society and are largely motivated by personal preference, following their child's lead even if they are perhaps influenced by societal expectations and accountability to others.

Wanting a Girl, Wanting a Boy: Conceptual Building Blocks

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

• Think about media representations with which you are familiar and consider how conceptions about childhood gender relate to hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, including reference to intersectional factors such as race, class, and sexual orientation.

• Many parents recognize and fear the risk of being "called to account" for their parental actions. Can you think of examples in your own life experiences? And, if so, do you think the accountability was felt for the parents or the children (both)?

• Why are the social costs of crossing gender lines higher for sons and fathers than for daughters and mothers?

• What do you think about parents encouraging their girls to enter male-dominated careers, play traditionally male activities (e.g. sports), and develop "masculine" characteristics such as being more independent, athletic, and authoritative?

CHAPTER 2
PAGES 53-81

"It's in Their Nature": Naturalizers

SUMMARY

Throughout Kane's interviews, a particular theme resonated among parents who believed their child's gender was determined by biology: that differentiation between genders is a natural and positive outcome. When describing their children, these parents used phrases that demonstrated a clear division between genders. "Girls are just much nicer than boys," one mother commented. "Boys are more aggressive and destructive… I think it's the way they are born" (54). For Naturalizers, this divide is "the inevitable unfolding of natural, internal differences between the sexes" (74). Gender differences are embraced as having positive benefits unique to each gender. From this belief, these parents are twice as likely discourage gender-atypical tendencies, express the highest level of personal preference for traditionally gendered outcomes, and are least likely to condone preference for undoing gendered differentiation. In some cases, parents may tolerate gender atypical behavior but are careful to permit such behavior with particular restrictions and only for a limited time in a child's youth.

Kane argues that these parental actions reproduce gender differences, although from their perspective, Naturalizers do not see themselves as falling into a social trap but as simply following a preexisting natural tendency. Predictably, because Naturalizers predominately use biological explanations, they often deny that they as parents are the source for gendered childhoods. Less predictably, however, this same parent group is most likely to invoke concerns about accountability. Gender nonconformity not only makes Naturalizers uncomfortable with respect to their biological, religious, or traditional beliefs but moreover, for fear of the social costs of defying gender expectations for their children and themselves.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- If Naturalizers perceive gender as inevitably determined by biological origins, why do they feel the need to encourage gendered activities and/or discourage gender nonconforming activities?

- What is the "stalled revolution"? Discuss this with reference to heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity.

- What are some "real highlights" of your gender? Do you consider these highlights to be biological or social? Should these highlights be acknowledged not only at the family level but also at interactional and institutional levels? For example, what are the advantages and disadvanges of single-sex education?

“It’s in Their Nature”: Naturalizers

- What is the significance of gendered language? Is there a difference between the denotation and connotation of terms like “boys” and “girls”? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a gender-neutral language?

CHAPTER 3
PAGES 82-111

"I Think a Lot of It Is Us, Parents and Society": Cultivators

SUMMARY

In many ways, the parental actions of Cultivators and their motivations for these actions resemble those of Naturalizers. Like the previously described parent group, Cultivators participate in the highest report of direct reproduction of gender and a significant report of indirect gendering when they allow their children to follow gendered interests. Cultivators, however, believe gendered childhoods originate from social determinism, which they view as healthy and positive.

Most Cultivators acknowledged some biological factors but primarily cited social explanations for gendered childhoods. These parents often emphasized interactional (parents and relatives) and institutional (media and tradition) sources. Cultivators interpret the teaching, modeling, and reinforcement of gendered expectations as a routine part of their parenting. During Kane's interviews, it became clear that these parents more often viewed their son's nature as "fixed"—that is, that their son's masculine behavior was simply an expression of his nature. Cultivators celebrate and reinforce this expression. For daughters, however, Messner states that "girls [are] viewed as malleable, their softer natures reformable" (90). In their reports, Cultivators followed this belief. Messner calls this "soft essentialism," a perspective which allows girls to participate in masculine activities, such as sports and traditionally male-dominated careers, while still enforcing that domestic pursuits are first and fore mostly appropriate for women. For Cultivators, this division is merely a difference of genders and has no connection to power. Gendering does not feel like a trap to these parents. Instead, cultivating genders is a process these parents engage in consciously and actively.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Is gendering a "healthy" and "positive" parenting practice if it better prepares children for a predominantly gendered society?

- Pyke claims that "marital processes vary across social class in ways that reflect and (re)construct larger structures of inequality" (108). Do you think that marriage reflects society? Discuss the implications of this with reference to heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity.

“I Think a Lot of It Is Us, Parents and Society”: Cultivators

- Part I: Children’s toys are highly indicative of gender differences. Have students separate a number of mainstream toys (e.g. Barbie Dolls, Legos, Lincoln Logs, and Hot Wheels) into categories students have designated themselves. By what standards did students decide to separate the toys? Students may offer explanations based on the toys’ appearance (e.g. color) or playtime activity based on standards of their own childhood experience, tradition, or media .

Part II: Have students design a gender-neutral toy. Ask students why they have chosen to design their toy as such and how they think it could be marketed in a society that demonstrates a bias toward the division of binary genders?

CHAPTER 4
PAGES 112-140

"We Try Not to Encourage It, but I Know It Gets in There": Refiners

SUMMARY

Caught at the center of tension between biological determinism and social constructionism, Refiners strike a particular middle ground: they believe that some typical gendered behaviors are acceptable but also that gender differentiation constricts a child's individual development of skills, capacities, and choice. These parents directly encourage gender atypical behaviors, which they believe are critical to a child's personal growth, such as having "feeling talks" with sons and engaging in outdoor activities with daughters. At other times, Refiners indirectly allow gender atypical behaviors by not discouraging children when they express interest in activities traditionally associated with the opposite gender.

Yet when children express gender typical behaviors—moreover, stereotypical behaviors—despite parents' refinement efforts, Refiners often invoked biological explanations as a "fallback position." Like Naturalizers, these parents are most likely to cite intention or purpose behind natural gender differences. In seeking a middle ground, Refiners often reported gender-neutral parenting. Neither identifying set genders to parent within nor attempting to break free of gender limitations, Refiners focus on trying to ignore gender differences. Throughout their interviews, many parents reported, "I comfort and discipline my son and daughter exactly the same way" (121) or "I don't take gender into account at all" (121). By assuming a "gender blind" stance, these parents advocate individualism by teaching their children that they can achieve anything. Individual choice is especially important to Refiners, who emphasize the healthiness of a well-rounded child.

Kane argues, however, that gender blind ideologies cannot ultimately redress the inequality of gendered power at interactional and institutional levels. Perhaps this inability to affect significant change originates in the simple fact that Refiners do not view gender as a source of power. Yet by ignoring this inequality, parents unknowingly allow heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity to continue unabated. Lorber describes the paradox of degendering: "A period of self-conscious attention to gendering has to come first. You have to be aware of gendering to degender" (122). Thus, the parenting approach of Refiners, Kane argues, contains inherent limitations in their modest goals for gender refinement and a lack of recognition of interactional and institutional gendering.

"We Try Not to Encourage It, but I Know It Gets in There": Refiners

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you think there are advantages of a "gender blind" approach? Discuss the ways in which parents avoid the gender trap by ignoring gender boundaries.

- What about disadvantages? Discuss Bonilla-Silva and Mackinnon's theories of the insufficiencies of inequality blindness. Moreover, on a practical parenting basis, how far can the gender blind approach continue past preschool age?

- How does Lorber's statement that "you have to be aware of gendering to degender" (122) apply to parenting: Should parents resist gendering from the moment of their child's birth or adoption? Or should parents allow gendered childhoods for a period of time only to encourage degendering later?

- While Refiners teach their children that they "can be, or do, anything they want" (130), how might interactional and/or institutional factors inhibit the aspirations of children even though they have support from parents?

- Besides Barbie Dolls, no single brand-name product was mentioned as often as Disney princesses. Screen scenes from Disney movies. What are some gender stereotypes of the male and female characters (appearence, personality, etc.)? How might intersectional factors affect the portrayal of a character?

CHAPTER 5
PAGES 141-171

"You Applaud All the Other Stuff": Innovators

SUMMARY

While interviewing Innovators, Kane noted a particular optimism, lack of concern for accountability, and relaxed tone about resisting gendered outcomes. Like Refiners, this parent group believed that children should be raised in less gendered childhoods. Yet because of their optimism, Innovators are more confident to push the boundaries of gender rather than simply ignoring them.

Innovators largely focused on social sources for gendered childhoods. In fact, among the all interviewees, Innovators were the least likely to express a belief in biological determinism. Kane points out that the dismissal of biological explanations avoids legitimizing gender inequality and as such, reduces interactional accountability pressures. Their parenting practice is an adaptive case by case approach of resisting gendered outcomes, following their children's preferences, and acknowledging some inevitable gendering by interactional and institutional influences. Innovators also are unique in that none of them mentioned believing that boys face particular social pressures to stay within normative gender boundaries. Innovators may recognize accountability pressures on boys but claimed that they are no greater than those on girls. Their responses are particularly framed with reference to power and structure. As such, Innovators believe that it takes multiple social forces to converge and reduce gendered patterns, a process they stress takes work and concentrated effort. Perhaps indicative of their beliefs, this group laregely identified as working class. This parent group also included two fathers of color who directly linked their racial identity with their views on gendered childhoods. In addition to the previously mentioned social class characteristic, these racial patterns are consistent with the intersectionality theory.

Innovators are optimistic that their efforts will create "'a small ripple' effect down the generational chain" (183) and moreover, that it is their responsibility to do so for their children and for others. Kane suggests, however, that while downplaying an accountability to others allows Innovators to avoid the gender trap for their family, this also limits their recognition that the accountability others feel often grows into greater pressures of hegemonic masculinity. The parenting practice of Innovators may not fully address broader, more complex institutional influences. Nonetheless, Innovators are making important contributions to resisting the gender trap in their acceptance of social constructionism, attention to intersectional inequalities, and actions to undo gendering for both their daughters and sons.

"You Applaud All the Other Stuff": Innovators

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

• While Kane's *The Gender Trap* examines the social gendering of children, Anthony's recounting of his role as being the primary caregiver of his son is an intriguing vignette about the gendering of parents. How does gender change during parenthood? Discuss Risman and Walzer's theories that men can developing "mothering" skills and that "women's apparently essential nurturance is a product, not a cause, of their daily work as parents" (146).

• In the United States, few states offer paternity leave. What are the stigmas against allowing fathers to take time off to raise their children? Pregnant women, however, are commonly offered unpaid leave, but also face difficulties combining child care and paid employment after pregnancy. Discuss the ways in which gender differences between parents are enforced by workplace (institutional) support or lack of support for parents.

• Does the belief that boys face no particular social pressures to stay within normative gender boundaries—or at least no more than girls—have limitations similar to the parenting approach of "gender blindness"?

• Many Innovators identify tradition as a powerful influence of gendering and are hopeful that with time and effort, "outmoded gender patterns will fade away" (165). Do you think that will happen? Why or why not?

• Try to think of examples of times when you have witnessed or participated in "applauding" gender nonconformity among young children, and consider whether there are any particular patterns to the examples you came up with.

CHAPTER 6
PAGES 172-198

"Surviving in a Gendered Culture": Resisters

SUMMARY

Just as Naturalizers form one extremity of the gender trap in their belief of biological determinism, Resisters form the other in their predominate belief of social constructionism. These parents are guided not only by a desire to avoid the gender trap but moreover, to actively resist its gender-typical limitations. In their interviews, Resisters emphasized the importance of attention to power, societal structure, and intersectionality. Even when some parents acknowledged gender differentiation rooted in nature, they chose not to encourage traditionally gendered childhoods. At times, Resisters even reported reacting negatively toward gender typicality. When hearing that her daughter claimed that she was not smart, only beautiful, one alarmed mother particularly stressed that "you can be smart *and* beautiful" (178).

Resisters uniquely stand out as the only parent group in which heteronormativity was nearly absent. Kane argues that perhaps this fact is more easily achieved as three of the five interviewed Resisters were gay or lesbian. In this respect, they are not trapped in the "stalled revolution" of traditional household labor-division and other constraints that often accompany heteronormativity. It is also intriguing to note that all Resisters, those most likely to cite institutional sources, were individuals of at least one subordinated social group on the basis of sexual orientation, race, class, and/or gender. Because of this, many parents report that their own experience growing up as a subordinated individual has directly influenced their parenting practice. At the same time, however, Resisters also expressed the most concern for accountability to others. Whether reporting stories of teaching their sons to cultivate culinary skills or daughters to practice car repair, these parents often spoke with fear and anxiety over the judgment they have received for their parental decisions. These concerns were also increased with regard to facing homophobia.

Unlike Innovators, Resisters are less optimistic that change is achievable and cited challenges inhibiting women such as male-dominated occupations, gender stereotyping advertisements in media, homophobia, hegemonic masculinity, right-leaning political ideologies, and conservative religious groups. These challenges did not stem from tradition but power structures that Resisters felt could not be immediately overcome by individuals. Yet in seeking to free their children from the gender trap, they encourage their children to become "agents of social change... hoping that their efforts will spread across their immediate social networks and down through their family lines" (184).

"Surviving in a Gendered Culture": Resisters

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Discuss Tanya's intersectional metaphor of power and gender: "It's one thing to be locked out of the building and looking in, wanting like anything to get inside, and it's another thing to be stuck in that building and you can't get out" (182-3). What disadvantages do white, upper-middle class, heterosexual males face? And what obligations do you think they have?

- Think back to your own experiences on school playgrounds, whether as a child or as an adult witnessing children's play. Discuss instances of gender-related bullying you have seen. Then consider how the social costs children face from such bullying complicate parents' attempts to resist gendered expectations. Do you consider it worth those costs to seek this kind of social change?

- Make a list of some categories of people whom the Resisters reported feeling accountable. How do you think they should respond to the kinds of accountability associated with those various categories and how effective do you think those responses might be?

"A Better World": Dismantling the Gender Trap

SUMMARY

Gender as a social construct pervades our daily lives at multiple and simultaneous individual, interactional, and institutional levels. Whether parents choose to engage in gendering, resist gendering, or believe they do not partake in gendering at all, every parent must navigate the social construction of gender. This truth continues to limit opportunities for children and ultimately, leads to a disproportionate distribution of social resources.

During each interview, parents clearly demonstrated that parenthood was a careful and conscious process of weighing the social costs and benefits of raising gender-typical or gender-atypical children. Change was an appealing notion to most parents and challenges to this reformation were largely social factors. Parents cited factors such as media, marketing, bureaucratic institutions, peer pressure, tradition, homophobia, lack of information, and social interests supporting conventional gender differences. Constrained by these institutional structures and gendered accountability, parents are further limited by the ways their parenting practice overlaps intersectional identities, including race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Yet when parents realize their critical involvement in gendering and seek to shift gendered expectations at the individual level, frameworks of accountability are readjusted at interactional levels. When combined with the support of families and communities, these efforts are beginning to shake the institutional reinforcement of femininity, heteronormativity, and hegemonic masculinity. As Kane states at the end of *The Gender Trap*, "Gendered childhoods are not fixed in nature or inevitable in society. With concerted effort, we can reduce the force of the gender trap and open up the possibility for a better, less constrained, and more equitable world for our children and ourselves" (218).

NOTE: Kane acknowledges that child's self-agency is crucial to keep in mind when analyzing childhood gendering processes and that children do manage to resist and refine gendered messages in creative ways. Her focus here, however, is how parents guide their children along gendered pathways, and from that perspective it is important to keep in mind the risk of parents mistaking an interactionally or institutionally structured path for an individual preference or a natural dictate.

"A Better World": Dismantling the Gender Trap

In her conclusion, Kane briefly summarizes each chapter of *The Gender Trap* and reasserts the harm of refined femininity, hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, and homophobia. She reviews the tensions between biological determinism and social constructionism and the beliefs about origins of gendered childhood, parents' motivations, and actions these tensions create. Parental agency, Kane argues, can achieve its full effect when framed by a well-informed, intersectional analysis and strengthened with combined efforts on individual, interactional, and institutional levels.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What does a "better world" for children look like to you in relation to gender?
- Reflect on your own childhoods and consider whether you think your parent(s) or guardian(s) tended to be Naturalizers, Cultivators, Refiners, Innovators, or Resisters. Are you content with whatever approach you experienced, and do you/will you perpetuate that practice if you are or become a parent or guardian yourself?
- Search for a recent news story related to gender and childhood, and analyze it in relation to key themes from the book.
- Identify a specific organization or initiative that seeks to disrupt gendered childhoods and consider its potential effectiveness in terms of key themes and arguments offered in Kane's concluding chapter.

APPENDIX
PAGES 219-231

Research Methods

SUMMARY

Forty-two interviews were conducted in Kane's qualitative study for *The Gender Trap*. Drawn from a diverse selection of racial identities, social classes, sexual orientations, education, and family types, these parents all had at least one child between three and five years of age. "This is the period when most children begin to develop a clear understanding of society's gender expectations," Kane states, "and thus when they develop gender identity and begin to engage in more gender-typed behavioral patterns" (219). Parents were recruited through various local child care centers, parents' resource organizations, community colleges, libraries, local businesses, and public-housing projects. Interviews continued until Kane reached "saturation," which she defines as "the point at which each additional unit of data collection yields little new information" (219). Given the limitations of travel in order to conduct these interviews, all parents were residents of New England, predominantly Maine.

Each interview began with a question asking parents to recall a time before they had any specific plans to have children and whether they remember having any preference for sons or daughters. Other pre-parenthood questions sparked conversation about memories when learning the child's sex, decorating baby rooms, and shopping for baby clothes before the birth or arrival of a child. Kane encouraged parents to carry the conversation where they thought it should go, elaborate on their thoughts, offer examples, and raise any issues they thought were important to the conversation. The rest of the interview focused on the current childhood experience of the focal child. Parents discussed their child's activities, toys, clothes, behaviors, and gender awareness. They also discussed their thoughts on the origins of these outcomes and feelings about their child's characteristics in relation to gendered expectations. Kane asked follow-up questions that further elaborated on gender-typical and gender-atypical parenting but was careful not to use gendered terms and allow parents to volunteer their own terms. For parents who had children of both sexes, Kane asked parents whether they noticed a difference between their children and whether their children also seemed to notice a difference. At the end of the interview, Kane asked parents if and how their parenting practice reflected their desire for more or less gendered childhoods.

Kane's interview style sought to create open-ended and relaxed conversations. Like many qualitative researchers, Kane believes that this approach improves the quality of the interview data. After each interview was transcribed verbatim, the data was coded into a qualitative data analysis software program called NVivo. Once particular themes about parental beliefs, actions, and motivations were

Research Methods

identified throughout the interviews, five parenting practices emerged as "Naturalizers," "Cultivators," "Refiners," "Innovators," and "Resisters."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research for this particular topic? And how might you design a quantitative study to follow-up on or test some of the key claims Kane makes in her book?

- Qualitative research is primarily subjective in approach as it seeks to understand human behavior and reasons that govern such behavior. In in-depth, conversational interviews, researchers may also become subjectively immersed in the subject matter. How does Kane seek to navigate that subjectivity and what questions or concerns do you have about her approach?

- How did intersectionality shape Kane's development of the sample of parents who participated in her study?

- Kane's research focuses on parents. What would you want to ask if you designed a related study focused on children's views of the same topics?

NOTE: Kane provides a detailed chart of the five parenting practice on pages 232-235. Students may find the chart helpful when identifying factors of intersectionality.