Epilogue

Elizabeth M. Dolan¹

Accepted: 30 October 2020 / Published online: 10 November 2020
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2020

We have learned a lot about family and economic issues over the last ten years. Changes in families, family needs, and the economy are found in the shifting of foci of research over these past 10 years compared with the previous 20 years of papers published in *JFEI*. This is as it should be. Research should evolve and reflect what is important when it is important. As many of the authors in this Special Issue pointed out, the novel coronavirus pandemic offers researchers an opportunity to delve into how families are coping with this singular health and economic shock.

A number of the authors of the papers in this Special Issue commented on the need for researchers to expand their repertoire of research methods. Now may be the time to use interviews and focus groups to discover the ways that individuals and families are reacting to the sudden changes precipitated by the pandemic. The work/family nexus has shifted during the pandemic: For many, the separation between work and family disappeared, indeed, the separation between school/education and family disappeared. The recession has increased the reliance on public benefits. Many workers, women most particularly, are having to remain out of the labor force to care for children when childcare disappears, or schooling continues fully or partially on-line.

Further, as the authors here have pointed out, the “great American melting pot” does not really exist anymore, if it ever did. While the phrase tended to imply a melding of ethnicities, it can also be applied to family structures. We

should be paying more attention to the diversity that exists in the US. In the US, we have tended to record only very broad racial/ethnic identities, as well as limited types of family structures. We may be missing important differences by not parsing out more completely the distinctions in race, ethnicity, and family constellations.

Families are not static, and neither are their financial needs and/or behaviors. Our reliance on cross-sectional data does not allow us to find changes over time. And if longitudinal data cover only 2 or 3 years, we do not capture a complete picture of change.

This Decade in Review has provided a summation of the literature in *JFEI*. And the authors have pointed us in new and exciting directions. As was stated in the Introduction, we are indebted to the authors who embraced this project with enthusiasm.

Elizabeth M. Dolan

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Elizabeth M. Dolan is retired from the University of New Hampshire and the former Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*. Her research has focused on family economic issues, especially remarried family and low-income rural families. She received her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech.

This is one of several papers published together in Journal of Family and Economic Issues on the “Special Issue on Virtual Decade in Review”.

✉ Elizabeth M. Dolan
e.dolan@unh.edu

¹ 1 Firefly Circle, Somersworth, NH 03878, USA