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Work and Family Employment Policy for a Transformed Labor Force:

Current Trends and Themes

Ellen Ernst Kossek
School of Labor & Industrial Relations
433 South Kedzie
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824
Phone: 517 353-9040
kossek@msu.edu

Brian Distelberg
Family & Child Ecology
MSU Family & Child Clinic
329 Olin Health Center
East Lansing, Michigan 48824
Michigan State University
bdistelberg@earthlink.net

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Over three decades ago, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (now Health and Human Services [DHHS]) commissioned a report on the state of *Work in America* (Work and Health 1973). The report identified the competing trends of growing numbers of employed mothers with prevailing societal ambivalence over whether to increase employer support of child care (Kossek 2006). At about the same time, sociologist Kanter (1977) noted the cultural myth of separate worlds between work and home. Her critical observation implied that the workplace continues to be designed with a storybook assumption that workers do not have families competing for energy, identity, and time.

Now we are well into the first decade of the 21st century, yet workplaces really have not changed all that much in how they are designed even though workers and families have. What has changed dramatically is the emergence of “work and family” as a defined and mainstreamed employment issue. “Work and family” is no longer seen as an issue limited to individuals who have no choice but to combine breadwinning with caregiving, such as single working mothers in the 1950s. Most employed individuals in the United States will cope with managing caregiving for elders, children, family, or for themselves at various points during their working lifetime. The societal problem of conflicts between employment and family demands has not been remedied, and is rising in scope and intensity for virtually every demographic and occupational group (Kossek 2006). We face a growing structural mismatch between the design of jobs and career systems and a transformed workforce. In order to begin closing this gap, it is important to understand current trends and themes to facilitate the development of change strategies for employment policy innovation.

Chapter Goals

The goal of this chapter is to give an overview of current United States trends in employer supports for the work and family interface upon which a future agenda for research and policy can be built. Toward this end, the following questions are explored: What does the overall approach to employer support for work and family look like in the United States? What are key work and family developments in the labor force and implications for the employment relationship? What kinds of supports are most likely to be available and by which employers? What kinds of occupations and jobs are likely to have access? What are worker experiences with these policies and practices?

This paper addresses these questions, and in each section a summary theme is provided. The authors' review leads to an ultimate argument that the United States needs to develop more effective and wide-reaching coordinated work-family policy through federal and state, public and private partnerships. If it does not, the failure to move our country toward some new collective cultural solutions for work-family conflicts could eventually impact United States economic competitiveness and the workforce and family resilience of our nation (Kossek 2006).

Employer Work and Family Supports

From an organizational perspective, "Work and Family" includes a three-legged stool of employer supports that shape the degree to which the workplace is designed to reduce work-family conflicts (Kossek 2006). These include: (1) formal human resource policies related to work and family; (2) informal occupational and organizational culture and norms; and (3) job conditions and the structure of work, namely job design, work hours, and terms and conditions of employment. Overall, this review will show that despite increased employer interest in work and family policies, formal workplace policy support is uneven in availability and implementation.

Further, linkages between these policies and job design, working conditions, and cultural norms are often ineffective. Without systematic integration between formal policies and the actual work context (e.g. job conditions and informal practices, organizational and department culture), policies available on paper either go underutilized or result in negative consequences for users.

To date, most policy makers have focused on employer adoption of formal human resource policies to enhance the ability to engage in paid employment while managing family demands. Such policies may include, but are not restricted to, those providing flexibility in working time, place, or load; information and resource and referrals; and employer provision of direct or subsidized services for child care, eldercare, illness or self-care. Yet adopting policies is just a first step. They will not necessarily reduce work-family conflict, if they are not supported by organizational cultural norms or if supervisors do not support the use. Or worse, policies will not be helpful if they are not linked to other employment policies such as discipline for absenteeism, job security, pay and promotions, or core work hours.

Theme 1: Employer support of work and family involves a three-legged stool of formal policies, informal culture, and favorable job conditions. These areas often are not well linked in research or practice, and more study is needed on their inter-relationships and connections to worker, family, and organizational effectiveness.

A Minimalist Market-Based Approach to Employer Work and Family Policy

Over recent decades the United States has gradually become more supportive of women's participation in paid employment and of fathers' involvement in early child care (Lewis and Haas 2005). Yet its overall approach to work and family policy remains much more limited and private-employer centered than other major industrialized countries. The United States is the

only industrialized country that does not provide federal paid leave or public child care support for the general population (Stebbins 2001). Yet, for example, in Canada, workers can now go on leave with full or partial pay for up to a year and have job protection. In the European Union (EU), mothers typically receive 14 weeks paid leave with additional partial paid parental leave available if fathers share in caregiving. Provision of child care for children under three is considered a public service in many EU countries where the government can be in the business of training, employing, and subsidizing child care workers (Kelly 2006).

In contrast, the United States employment policy regarding work and family is predominately voluntary and private-based. Scholars refer to this as “a minimalist market-based employer approach,” where employers have wide latitude to voluntarily determine the manner and extent to which they will choose to financially support workers’ family needs (Block, Berg and Belman 2004). This policy approach emanates from leanings toward an individualistic societal culture. The United States values a limited role for government regulation, with caregiving decisions left up to the discretion of individual employees and employers (Kossek 2006). Some see this cultural proclivity and wariness of publicly funded work and family mandates as a barrier to policy innovation (Block, Berg, and Bellman. 2004). After all, the United States eventually mandated innovative Civil Rights protections in employment, such as the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, which many countries have mirrored as a model. Why not follow this employer progressiveness for work and family policy? Yet currently, most United States employers have no policy requirements to support work and family other than the Family Medical Leave Act’s (FMLA) minimal requirement that employers must provide up to 12 weeks of *unpaid leave* to care for a child, elder or self in any calendar year. (It should be noted that a few states, such as Washington and California, now have mandated employer paid leave to

dovetail with FMLA.) Even with the good intentions of FMLA, policy gaps remain. For example, low- and middle-income workers may not be able to afford to take unpaid leave of absence or may not have the resources to sue if employers are not supportive (Kossek 2006). Also, employers with fewer than 50 employees do not need to provide unpaid leave. They also can exempt senior employees in key jobs from leave authorization. With restrictions such as these, in practice FMLA covers only 58 percent of workers (U.S. Department of Labor 2000). The Employee Income Retirement Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), which regulates voluntary pensions, is another example of a policy gap. ERISA has a threshold of at least 1,000 hours per year for coverage. This prevents many part-timers from receiving pensions. Only 21 percent have pensions (<http://www.mothersandmore.org/>). For another example, take the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which regulates work hours and pay. It recently was revised to redefine of what is considered an exempt employee to increase the number of exempt workers. The end result is that more workers do not have to be paid overtime for working more than a standard work week, vacations, or holiday.

It should also be noted that Americans work the longest hours of any industrialized country. Dual-earner families in the United States work much longer hours than similar families in Europe (Curry 2003). In the United States, full-time work is commonly considered to be at least 40 hours per week, with full-time in professional jobs often stretching 60 hours a week or more (Williams and Calvert 2002). In some European countries, full-time work ranges from 35 to 39 hours per week, with a European Union policy limiting maximum weekly hours to 48 (European Union Council Directive 93/104, 1993; Crosby, Williams, and Biernat 2004). Thus, United States working hour cultural norms about what is considered full- and part-time are also distinctive and have implications for work and family policy development.

Theme 2: The United States minimalist free market approach to work and family policy is distinctive compared to other industrialized countries. United States employers generally have far more latitude to determine work and family policy, few requirements to even offer policy support, and have work cultures where employers often control work hours.

Insert table 1, 2, 3 about here.

Surveys of Availability of Work and Family Policies

Most of the research in the literature has been on the availability of policies, and not necessarily on effectiveness. We researched the literature on the access and availability of several key policies to support work and family: flexibility policies, child and elder care, and leave for family reasons. One challenge we found was there is no longitudinal in-depth study of work-family policies that includes common measures of policies or workplaces. Notwithstanding the fact that surveys used different measures and widely different samples, we went to several sources and pulled data to identify trends from national studies (see tables 1, 2 and 3). Table 1 shows summary data from four large national studies on work-family policies based on several years of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics *National Compensation Survey* (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS] 1999, 2000, 2003 and 2007). Table 2 summarizes results over 10 years from the Families and Work Institute's *National Study of the Changing Workforce* (Bond et al. 2002). During the review below, we also will pull data periodically from the companion survey of the *National Study of the Changing Workforce* NSCW, the *National Study of Employers*, (Bond et al. 2005). Table 3 presents results from the

Total Rewards Professional Census (WorldatWork 2007a). This survey reflects the view that some companies see access to work and family policies as another form of compensation in a “Total Rewards approach.” Comparing these surveys over the next sections, we will first discuss general trends and then turn to results for specific policies such as flexibility policies, child and elder care, and leaves. Although these studies all address the same issue (availability of employer supports for work and family), they vary significantly in their findings. Some of this variance can be accounted for by the sampling procedures used.

The National Compensation Survey from the BLS is a representative survey of employees and employers which uses a three-staged, stratified sample procedure. The first stage is identifying regional sectors. The second stage is identifying organizations within the sector (with an over sampling for larger organizations), and the final stage is obtaining a job list from the organization. Probability sampling is used to identify respondents.

The National Study of Employers (NSE) is conducted through the Families and Work Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting work and family policy. It draws on a representative national sample of 1,092 for- and not-for-profit companies with 50 or more employees. The employers were selected from the Dunn & Bradstreet lists. The study used stratified random sampling to ensure an equal representation of employees across companies, and to control for larger companies. Only one person, a company identified representative, participates in the survey.

The National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) was also conducted by the Families and Work Institute in 1992, 1997 and 2002. This is telephone-based, random-digit dial method survey of employees. It was structured as a regionally stratified, unclustered random

probability sampling. Respondents were salaried or wage (2,810) and self-employed (694) employees.

The *Total Rewards Professional Census* is a web-based survey of 3,863 (mostly United States) respondents. Most (81 percent) of respondents were members of WorldatWork, a compensation and benefit consulting association. WorldatWork members are “human resources professionals focused on attracting, motivating and retaining employees” (WorldatWork 2007a p. 2). The vast majority of respondents (93 percent) had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Two-thirds or 63 percent were women and 60 percent had a professional designation, such as the CCP (Certified Compensation Professional). It should also be noted that WorldatWork recently merged with the Association of Work Life Professionals.

Another reason for variation in findings is that some studies only measure actual access to specific policies such as the BLS survey; while others, such as the NSCW, may also measure job design characteristics such as job control and ability to change start and stopping times without necessarily measuring linkages to formal policy. Also the NSCW measures elder care access while the BLS survey does not. In sum, these national surveys are all measuring different aspects of work and family supports.

Few surveys measure employee and employer views on access and use at the same time. Some of the surveys reported here, such as National Survey of Employers (NSE) or the Total Rewards survey, sample either organizational leaders or human resource representatives to report on their organization’s characteristics. A drawback to this approach is these self-reports may not represent most employees’ experiences. Such approaches over-measure policy availability on paper without assessing cultural support and informal practices that affect use.

Still another problem is that some surveys ask whether a policy is generally available to all, while others simply measure whether it exists. Also most surveys ask whether *any* employee can use a policy, while others ask whether workers *in general* can use a policy. Some surveys use a very restrictive definition of the policies, as we will illustrate below in discussing flexiplace, while others do not.

Such lack of comparability on survey data can lead to a popular cultural view that can be a little misleading on the availability of work and family policies. Writings on United States employer support for work and family via policies in particular may have been overstated in the popular media. Most studies are done at large employers, yet 80 percent of United States firms have fewer than 100 employees (U.S. Census Bureau 2001), which are far less likely to have formal supports. Or even when a policy is available, it doesn't mean that the workplace culture or the job demands and conditions of employment facilitate actual use.

After reading the business press or even research articles, one might assume that the mere existence of employer work-family policies leads to positive outcomes for employers and employees (Ryan and Kossek In Press). Perhaps this is partly because many articles have the problem that the studies they are reporting do not always clarify whether they are based on employer self-report of available policies. This reinforces the public relations adoption value of these policies without scrutinizing use, access, and effectiveness from worker's views. Even when articles are based on workers' responses, studies may self-report on perceived availability without reporting on users' actual experiences with policies or delve into why policies may not be used at all (Kossek, Berg and Misra 2007).

Brief Overview of General Trends

The BLS data in table 1 shows that only 15 percent of all workers have access to any form of child care assistance including onsite care, subsidies, or resource and referrals. This is up from 9 percent in 1999. However, this increase is somewhat misleading in the degree of support actually being provided. The most common type of assistance is simply information: resource and referral offered by 11 percent of firms, which does little to increase the availability of quality child care or help with the expenses. Only 5 percent have actual onsite or near site employer-sponsored child care access with only 3 percent receiving subsidies. Telecommuting is also somewhat stagnant. Only 4 percent of all workers had access to telecommuting in 2006, down from 5 percent in 2000. So for these areas, there has been little growth in the diffusion of employer adoption of these policies over the past few years. An exception to this trend is that increases can be seen in the diffusion of policies from 2000 to 2006 in adoption assistance, which is currently at 10 percent (up from 5 percent), and long-term care insurance (12 percent up from 7 percent). Turning to another survey, the NSCW, elder care assistance has increased over the past 10 years where nearly 24 percent of employee respondents have access compared to only 11 percent a decade ago.

Theme 3: Although national data on work and family policies is uneven and somewhat lacking, a review of available surveys over the last several years, shows flat or only modest increases in employer support for family (child care assistance or flexible workplace, such as telecommuting). The vast majority of United States workers (85 percent) lack access to any formal paid work-family policies. Small increases in policy adoption are being seen in the availability of elder care, adoption assistance, and access to long-term health insurance, which is now available to about one in ten workers.

What Predicts Employer Adoption

The NSE (Bond et al. 2005) showed that the nearly half of the companies (47 percent) report that the main reason for implementing work life policies and programs is to recruit and retain employees. Next, one-fourth (25 percent) report productivity and job commitment as the main rationale for policy adoption and 6 percent also mentioned other specific reasons, such as meeting organizational needs for flexible scheduling, reducing absenteeism, and lower costs to the organization.

Although most NSE subjects report implementing these programs, policies, and practices for business reasons, about two-fifths (39 percent) of companies also claim to implement these policies and programs to help employees and their families. Another one-fifth (19 percent) gave altruistic organizational culture reasons—“We are a caring organization,” “It’s the right thing to do,” and “We are a family organization, and it’s the way we do things.”

Theme 4: Half of all employers with work and family policies note recruitment and retention as the main reason for adoption.

Discussion of Trends Based on Specific Policies

Flexibility Policies

Employer Perspective of Flexibility Availability

Many of the surveys we examined did not make the definitions of flexibility as clear as would have been helpful for this review. This term has many meanings. For example, flexibility policies can range from having different start times, to working from home, to telecommuting. Thus, what we are reporting as the availability of flexibility policies can vary greatly depending

on how one defines flexibility. We would like to see national standard definitions on flexible workplace policies and work and family benefits developed.

The 2006 BLS uses the most restrictive definition of the surveys we reviewed. The use of a flexible work-site locations policy is the BLS's only measure of "Flexible Workplace." The specific definition is "Arrangements permitting employees to work at home several days of the workweek. Such arrangements are especially compatible with work requiring the use of computers linking home to the central office." Such a definition suggests that the current state of access to flexible work locations has hovered between 3 to 5 percent since 1999 (U.S. BLS 1999, 2000, 2003 and 2007).

Similar to the BLS findings, only 3 percent of NSE employers allow most or all of their employees the option of working offsite occasionally (Bond et al. 2005). While the option to work from home or another location can be considered a *flexibility option*, it is not the only option available for a flexible workplace. The NSE provides additional measures for measuring worker access to flexibility. The NSE offers a different perspective due to including more basic forms of flexibility on the survey, such as vacation time and starting and quitting times, in addition to measuring the availability of alternative work schedules. In addition, the NSE survey also includes larger, more progressive employers than the BLS. NSE statistics show that over two-thirds (68 percent) of employers allow some of their employees the option to change starting and quitting times *periodically*. One-third (34 percent) of employers allow employees to change starting and quitting times on a *daily* basis. The NSE also reports one-third (34 percent) of employers allow some of their employees the option of working either at home or another location occasionally, with 31 percent providing this option on a regular basis. It is also important to assess frequency of access. For example, NSE reports that 33 percent offer a

periodic change in schedule, while 13 percent offer a daily change in schedules to all of their employees. This availability of the ability to change schedules is stagnant. It has not significantly increased in prevalence since 1998.

Regarding compressed work weeks, the NSE reports that 39 percent of employers allow some of their employees to work a compressed work week for a part of the year, and 39 percent allow some employees to work a compressed work week occasionally. Again, very few employers offer this option to all of their employees. Three percent allow all employees to work a compressed work week occasionally.

There are also many other options presented by employers that may be considered a form of flexibility but are often left out of national studies on flexibility. The NSE has a number of interesting measures. It reports that employers offer the following forms of flexibility to *most or all* of their employees:

- Over half (53 percent) allow employees to have control over when they take breaks
- Over one-fourth (28 percent) offer a phased retirement
- More than a quarter (28 percent) offer a sabbatical of six months or more with a return to a comparable job
- Over one-fifth (21 percent) offer employees the ability to move from full-time to part-time and back again while remaining in the same position or level
- One-fifth (20 percent) give employees control over which shifts they work
- 14 percent offer control over paid and unpaid overtime hours
- 13 percent allow job sharing
- 10 percent work a compressed workweek for at least part of the year.

We appreciated the wording on the NSE survey, which focused on policies being available to most or all workers as a measure of the extent of policy availability across the workforce. For nearly all flexibility categories, significant increases in access to flexibility were shown over a 10-year period.

Theme 5: We often lack common definitions and standards of employer policies and practices, which makes measurement of availability on a national level difficult. Flexibility, in particular, needs much more fine-grained measurement ranging from basic forms, such as control over breaks, to teleworking.

Employee Perspective on Flexibility Availability

Below is data from two of the surveys highlighting several other trends found when employee surveys are added into the review. One trend is that there is often a gap between what employers say and what employees say when it comes to work and family policy access. Another is that samples of workers in occupations such as human resources (HR) may “bias report” much higher access to flexibility forms than surveys based on the general population.

For example, the Telework Trendlines for 2006 (WorldatWork 2007b) defines telework as “To perform all of one’s work from any remote location--either for an outside employer or through self-employment.” The definition implies access to resources to do this work, such as computers and the Internet.

Based on this survey definition, nearly half (44.8 percent) of HR experts who are members of WorldatWork report some use of telework (WorldatWork 2007a/b). It is estimated that the total number of employees allowed to work at least one day a month from home jumped from 9.9 million in 2005 to 12.4 million in 2006 (WorldatWork 2007b). This represents a 25 percent increase in 2006, which was preceded by a 63 percent increase from 2004 to 2005.

Furthermore, this study found that when we include contracted and self-employed individuals together with employees working full- or part-time, the percentage of individuals without access to telework options has decreased 24 percent since 2005. The number of individuals who use a telework option almost every day is currently estimated at 14.7 percent, which is an increase of 20 percent since 2005 (WorldatWork 2007b). Only 10.3 percent of employees surveyed by the WorldatWork do not use telework options at all. The percentages stated here do not even take into account those employees who do work from home as a spillover effect associated with increased technology availability. For example, more than one-third of all employees from the NSCW use computers to check work emails or to do work-related tasks outside of what they consider “work hours” (Bond et al. 2002).

Based on these surveys, employees are reporting much higher use of teleworking than the employer surveys. We are unsure if this is because employees are informally logging into email after hours, taking work home, or many supervisors are permitting this but HR departments do not formally know the actual extent of use. It is also difficult to ascertain whether telework is occurring as part of one’s job demands that is employer driven or whether employees are working in this way by choice.

A second example of a gap between employee and employer views is that employees are much less likely than employers to believe they can change starting and quitting times. For example, although 68 percent of employers report in NSE that employees have the option to change starting and quitting times periodically, only 42 percent of workers believe they can. While these are different samples, it difficult to reconcile a finding where 68 percent of employers say they have this specific flexibility policy and only 42 percent of employees say they can use it.

Theme 6: Employers tend to report higher access to flexibility, such as control over starting and stopping times, than employees. An exception may be use of e-mail and Internet while not on the job, but it is unclear if this is by worker "choice" or employer driven.

Demographics Associated with Availability and Access

Access to flexibility varied systematically by organizational size, occupation, and other demographics. As the summary of BLS survey data shows in table 1, employers with less than 100 people offer significantly greater access to flexibility options when compared to organizations that employ more than 100 people. The percentage of these smaller organizations that offer flexibility options has moved from 2 percent in 2000 to 10 percent in 2006, whereas larger organizations have dropped access from 7 percent in 2000 to 5 percent in 2006. Surprisingly there were no significant differences between employers in goods producing or service industries in whether they provided telecommuting

BLS data also showed that white-collar workers are far more likely than blue-collar or even service workers to have access to flexibility. For example, 7 percent of all white-collar workers have access to a telecommuting compared to only 1 percent of blue-collar workers. Full-time employees and employees who earn more than \$15 an hour are more than two or three times as likely to have access to a flexible workplace. Union workers are more likely to have child care benefits than nonunion workers (19 percent compared to 14 percent).

Employee hierarchical status is also related to flexibility access. Turning to table 3, the Total Rewards Professional Census, there is a curvilinear relationship. Executive and entry-level positions have the least access to flexibility options and mid- and senior-level employers fair better (WorldatWork, 2007a). For example, top-level executives are more likely to report no

access to flexibility options (33 percent) when compared to senior-level (25.7 percent), and mid-level (20 percent) employees. Mid-level employees seem to have the greatest access to flexibility options such as the compressed work week (17.6 percent) job sharing (6.2 percent), part-time work (14.9 percent), and phased retirement (10.2 percent) compared to lower levels. Then availability downshifts again at the senior or top executive levels, suggesting it is more difficult to have flexibility access at these higher levels. For telecommuting, only a quarter of new hires have access compared to one-third or more of mid- and senior-level employees. This suggests employers are more likely to grant telecommuting access to employees with a proven track record.

Theme 7: Access to flexibility systematically varies depending on who you work for and the nature of your job and occupation or level. For example, small employers appear to be more willing to give access to flexible workplace than larger firms. Mid-level employees have more flexibility access than many other levels. Full-time workers, white collar workers, and workers earning more than \$15 an hour have greater flexibility access than comparison groups.

Employer Benefits of Providing Flexibility

The research on the use of flexibility policies, while at least 30 years old, is still unclear about the benefits and costs of policies such as employee control over hours worked, compressed work week, and telecommuting. Whole books could be written on each of these topics.

Therefore, this section will highlight only a few broad costs and benefits for employees with the assumption that much more can be said about this topic.

First, there seem to be some benefits to organizations for providing flexibility access. As table 2 shows, the NSCW did find that employees with higher access to flexibility policies had

higher levels of job satisfaction (Bond et al. 2002). Specifically, less than one-third (30 percent) of employees who reported low levels of flexibility also reported a high level of job satisfaction. In contrast, two-thirds (65 percent) of employees who reported high levels of flexibility reported high levels of job satisfaction. Employees with higher levels of flexibility also had higher commitment to their employers and were less likely to turnover than those with lower access to flexibility.

Similarly, a meta-analysis found similar results. The use of flexible schedules was positively associated with job satisfaction (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, and Neuman 1999). The literature also suggests that flexible policies, such as compressed workweek and flexible start and stop times, are often used to supplement or as a tradeoff for higher wages (Baughmen, DiMardi, and Holtz-Eakin 2003). Thus, flexibility policies can be used not only for recruitment but, also, as a way for employers to reduce overhead costs. Access to flexibility is significantly related to reduced absenteeism (Dalton and Mesch 1990), and increased retention (Pavalko and Henderson 2006), and can have a positive effect on productivity such as willingness to help out at work (Eaton 2003).

The costs and benefits of offering flexibility clearly require more research focusing on the employee and family side of the equation. The NSCW found that flexibility is associated with lower levels of interference between job and family (Bond et al. 2002). Only 19 percent of employees with low access to flexibility policies report no interference, compared to 32 percent of employees with high access to flexibility policies reporting no interference. The study also found flexibility access was associated with lower negative spillover from job to home, lower levels of mental health problems, and overall higher levels of life satisfaction.

More research needs to be done on flexibility in terms of effects in the direction on the family as results have been mixed. For example, Christensen and Staines (1990) found that flextime did not increase employees' satisfaction with their family lives. Similarly, Baltes and colleagues' 1999 review found that flexibility access did not necessarily reduced work-family conflict for professionals. This is because policies were ineffective for professionals because they have strong occupational cultures to work as long as needed to get the job done, or they already have some autonomy already built into their jobs making the policies irrelevant. Clark (2000) suggests that flextime may result in porous borders between work and home that allow work to spill into the home, more than home spills into work, which could explain the lack of improvement in satisfaction.

Other important effects of the outcomes of flextime for employees and family life need to be studied further. These include the distribution of household work and/or caretaking responsibilities within families (Rau 2003). One recent study has taken a step in this direction. Noonan, Estes, and Glass (2007) found that the use of flexibility policies has a *net* effect. This means that that mothers who work part-time spend more time in domestic labor, while their husbands spend less. Similarly, mothers who telecommuted spent more time in child care tasks. But women who used flextime, which changed only starting and stopping times, did less household tasks than their spouse. Thus, more research is needed on the costs and benefits of specific types of flexibility and other work family policies.

One way to consider the benefit of flexibility policies is through The Alternative Work Schedules Act (AWSA), (formally known as the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act), which is a federal law that applies to all employees of federal agencies (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2007). This allows federal agency employees the

opportunity to use flexible or compressed work schedules as long as the use of these policies does not interfere with efficient operations of the organization. This law is an older sibling of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Many governmental reports over the last decades have documented many beneficial aspects of the AWSA for employees and their families. These benefits include: decreased commuter stress, accommodation of religious observations, flexibility to attend children's needs and medical appointments, improved worker moral, increased productivity, increased ability to recruit and retain high-quality employees, diversity in workforce, and increased hours of operation (U.S. General Accounting Office 1994; Gore 1997; U.S. General Accounting Office Personnel Appeals Board 2001; U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2003)

The success of this legislation can be seen as a road map for implementing controversial policies. The history of this legislation shows the importance of family advocacy, time, persistent effort, and links to boarder support (Liechty and Anderson 2007). Liechty and Anderson outline the history of this legislation from its beginning as an energy conservation act to decrease the amount of traffic and gasoline use in the downtown D.C. area to a family friendly advocacy act. It shows a historical example of highlighting the importance of providing arguments that are broad and systemic in their benefits, just as this act gained support from conservationist as well as work-life advocates.

Theme 8: Demonstrating broad and systemic benefits of providing increased access to work and family policies, such as flexibility, is more likely to result in policy adoption.

Child Care Assistance

Employer Perspective on Availability

Previously noted is the fact that the BLS reports that 15 percent of employers offer some form of assistance for child care up from 9 percent in 1999. This 15 percent is divided into three categories, with most of the support given in terms of information for resources or referrals (11 percent) (BLS 2006). Only 3 percent of employers actually provide funds to employees for child care, and 5 percent provide either on-site or off-site child care.

Turning to the NSE, employers are more likely to provide low- or no-cost child care options (Bond et al. 2005). This includes dependent care assistance plans (45 percent), which are programs for employees to pay into with pretax dollars, or child care resources and referrals (34 percent). Among employers with 50 or more employees, only 7 percent provide child care at or near the worksite.

Employee Perspective on Availability

The NSCW reports that there has been little change in employee perceptions of access to child care policies since 1992 (Bond et al. 2002). Currently, employees with children under 13-years-of-age (and, therefore, most likely to know about child care services) report that only 10 percent of employers offer any child care service. In 2002, only .3 percent of parents with preschool age children report using an employer sponsored/operated child care center as their main arrangement for their youngest preschool children while at work.

Demographics Associated with Availability and Access

According to the NSE, large employers are significantly more likely to offer child care options. They are significantly more likely to offer child care resources and referrals, dependent care assistance plans, and on or near-site child care services (Bond et al. 2005). Only the latter option (on or near-site child care) has significant direct costs for employers, which might be expected to be more common among large employers that have greater resources and enough

employee demand to justify an investment in on or near-site child care. There are few differences between large and small employers in the likelihood of offering financial assistance for child care and vacation child care for school-age children, the incidence of which is very low (Bond et al. 2005). According to the BLS, employees who are white-collar, full-time workers, and make more than \$15 dollars an hour are more likely to have access to any child care options (BLS 2006).

Employer Benefits of Child Care Assistance

Baughman, DiNardi, and Holtz-Eakin (2003) found that child care assistance does decrease turnover. The study also found that these programs were traded off for the cost of higher wages for entry-level workers. Studies also show child care increases retention (Lee 2004) and women's workforce attachment (Henry, Werschkul, and Rao 2003). Some studies based on over 40 years of studies found that child care program with preschool services benefit the larger society by reducing crime rate and increasing education, housing quality, and earnings of children in these programs versus those not in these programs (Schweinhart 2004).

Theme 9: Employer interest in increasing direct or financial support of child care has not risen substantially in recent years. Most activity has been in the area of information and referral.

Elder Care

Elder care can range from providing paid assistance to employees who are caring for elderly family members to providing access to information about resources. Elder care leave for some family members (e.g. in laws) is not required by FMLA.

Employer Perspective on Availability

According to the NSE, a vast majority (79 percent) of employers say that they provide paid or unpaid time off for employees to provide elder care without jeopardizing their jobs (Bond et al. 2005). Another 29 percent provide employees with information about elder care services. Only 6 percent provide direct financial support for local elder care programs. Employers in 2005 were more likely (34 percent) to report that they offered Elder Care Resource and Referral services than employers in 1998 (23 percent). While unpaid leave for elder care is the norm, Pavalko and Henderson (2006) found that unpaid leave does have a large positive effect on the psychological well-being of employees with eldercare needs.

Employee Perspective

According to the NSCW, 35 percent of employees have provided “special attention or care for a relative or in-law 65 years-old or older, helping them with things that were difficult or impossible for them to do themselves”. This study found that 13 percent of all employees take time off to care for a relative over the age of 65. In stark contrast to the employer survey, only 24 percent of those employees report any form of elder care resources at work, which is up from 11 percent in 1992.

Demographics Associated with Availability and Access

Based on the NSE, small and large employers are equally likely (81 percent) to allow employees time off to provide elder care without jeopardizing their jobs (Bond et al. 2005). Similar to the trend for the provision of child care resource and referral services, small employers are significantly less likely (25 percent) than large employers (50 percent) to provide these services. Fewer employers in general provide information about elder care (29 percent) than child care (34 percent). Perhaps this trend is because sometimes the same community agencies or vendors provide both child care and elder care resource and referral services. However, small

employers may not have the additional staff to add on this service or even be aware of the existence of such community services or government services (such as area agencies on aging). Perhaps they are also less likely to use national vendors to purchase these services as a package.

Theme 10: There is a perceptual gap between employees and employers regarding the availability of elder care, with employers reporting much higher availability than employees.

Employer Perspective on Availability

We have noted that the United States is unusual, also, because the government does not either pay employees itself or require employers to pay workers while they are on leave (Waldfogel 1998, Williams and Calvert 2002). As a result, fewer than half of all employed women received any paid leave during the first 12 weeks of their children's lives and only 7 percent of employers offered any paid paternity leave (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2001). The issue of paid or unpaid leave policies has a direct tie to FMLA (U.S. Department of Labor 1993). Studies of employment leave often reflect the guidelines of this law. For example the NSE has the following categories on four types of leave (maternity, paternity, adoption, foster care, and leave for a seriously ill child) offer less than 12 weeks, 12 weeks, and more than 12 weeks of leave. This type of categorization directly reflects the tenets of FMLA.

In 2006, the U.S. Department of Labor conducted an inductive study of the progress of this federal policy. The result was a large (N=15,000) qualitative study of employer and employee experience of the FMLA (U.S. Department of Labor 2007). Responses substantiated that many employees and employers are not having noteworthy FMLA-related problems. According to this study the "FMLA is working as intended...the FMLA has succeeded in allowing working parents to take leave for birth or adoption of a child, and in allowing

employees to care for family members with serious health conditions.” However, employers voiced concern about their ability to manage business operations and attendance control issues, particularly when unscheduled, intermittent leave is needed for *chronic* health conditions. It appears that some gaps still remain in implementation. The NSE (Bond et al. 2005) survey reports 22 percent of organizations offer less than 12 weeks of unpaid leave for maternity leave, 29 percent for paternity leave, 22 percent for adoption or foster care leave, and 21 percent to care for a child with a serious illness. Interestingly, 30 percent of organizations that have between 50 to 99 employees at one location (and, therefore, fall under FMLA), do not offer the federally mandated 12 weeks of leave. Few organizations go above and beyond the FMLA by offering more than 12 weeks of leave even if unpaid for a family or medical related case. Only 29 percent do so for maternity leave, 19 percent for paternity, 19 percent for adoption or foster care, and 19 percent for care of a seriously ill child. There has been one significant change in the use of employment leave since 1998. The average maximum job-guaranteed leave for men following the birth of their child has increased from 13.1 weeks in 1998 to 14.5 weeks in 2005. Yet the fact that some studies still show many fathers may not take parental leave is a lack of knowledge and clear communication of their right to use the policy (Powell 1999).

Other issues that are not directly tied to the FMLA, but fall under the leave practices are important to look at, also. For example the NSE found that two-third (67 percent) of employers allow employees a gradually return to work after childbirth or adoption, 60 percent offer time off for important personal and family needs without loss of pay, 57 percent offer extended career breaks for caregiving or other family/personal responsibilities, and 55 percent take time for education/training to improve skills.

It is important to note that, according to the NSE, nearly half (46 percent) of employers offer some form of replacement pay for maternity leave. Replacement pay is pay that does not count against vacation or sick leave. Yet only 13 percent provided replacement pay for paternity leave. Also, very few (7 percent) employers offer replacement pay for women taking leave following maternity leave for maternity related disabilities (Bond et al. 2005). Over half of employers (51 percent) report providing replacement pay for a few days to care for a mildly ill child. While the prevalence of replacement pay has remained unchanged since 1998, the number of individuals who receive their full pay during a period of maternity-related leave has decreased from 27 percent in 1998 to 18 percent in 2005. The authors of this study associate this decrease to the increasing cost of healthcare, as the majority of replacement pay reported by employers comes from a general temporary disability insurance plan (79 percent).

Employee Perspective of Availability

According to the National Compensation Survey (BLS 2006), only 8 percent of employees report that they receive some form of paid family leave. Over half (57 percent) report availability of paid sick leave, and over three-fourths (77 percent) report paid vacations. Additionally, half (50 percent) received paid leave for childbirth, 43 percent for adoption or foster care, and 55 percent for the care of family member with a serious health condition (BLS 2000).

Many employees try to align their paid leave, if available, with use of FMLA so they are able to have some financial support, even if partial, during leaves. According to the 2006 U.S. Department of Labor Request for Information qualitative study (BLS 2007), most employees are not having noteworthy FMLA-related problems. However, the report did identify some key areas for future study. Some employees expressed a desire for a greater leave entitlement. Secondly, it

appears that the single most serious area of friction between employers and employees seeking the use of FMLA is the prevalence with which unscheduled intermittent FMLA leave would be taken in certain workplaces or work settings by individuals, such as those with chronic health conditions. These “certain” workplaces include work settings where business operations have a highly time-sensitive component, *e.g.* delivery, transportation, transit, telecommunication, health care, assembly-line manufacturing, and public safety sectors.

The study also found a lack of education for employees regarding their rights in the FMLA (BLS 2007). Many employees (even employees that possessed a general awareness of the FMLA) did not know how the FMLA applied to their certain situation.

This points to the need for informal practices fostering greater employer support of FMLA. The NSE reports only 27 percent of employers report supervisors make real and ongoing effort to inform employees about assistance for balancing work and family (Bond et al. 2005). It is likely that employees are left to research the FLMA on their own and advocate for their rights based on information available from the government. This situation is further substantiated by the 30 percent of employers in noncompliance of the FMLA (Bond et al. 2005) and the overall confusion of employee rights found in the Request for Information on the FMLA (BLS 2007). The gap between employee access and availability is supported by a study by Baum (2006). The study found that while the FMLA does not have an effect on wages and leave taking practices of employees, it does increase the portion of employers offering family leave. This suggests that while FMLA has changed employers’ policies, many employees may not be taking advantage of it.

Finally, many employees express a desire to expand the FMLA beyond its current boundaries (U.S. Department of Labor 2007). The most frequently addressed expansions include:

paid time off, more time off, coverage of additional family members, lowering the 50 employee threshold, and increasing the 75-mile radius test for defining employer size. These revisions have also been suggested by Baum (2006).

Demographics Associated with Availability and Access

The most important trends for the availability of leaves in general, whether FMLA related or not, is the difference between full- and part-time employment and whether one works for a small or large employer. According to the BLS statistics in Table 1, part-time employees have significantly lower access to all forms of leave including family leave. Employees who work for larger employers are also significantly more likely to have access than those who work for small firms. This variation could be partly tied to the FMLA requirement that all organizations which employ more than 50 employees must comply with the FMLA (U.S. Department of Labor 1993). Although larger organizations are more likely to offer leave, the rate of replacement pay for that leave is very similar in small organizations (6 percent) and larger organizations (10 percent) (BLS 2006).

Overall, the rate of replacement pay for leave is low regardless of demographics. White collar-workers report the highest levels of access to paid (11 percent) and unpaid (86 percent) family leave (BLS 2006). Geography also matters. Employees in metropolitan areas are more likely to have access to paid leave than those in non-metropolitan areas. Even the state in which the worker lives accounts for a great deal of the variance in access to paid leave. Currently, only five states offer short-term disability programs for maternity leave (California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Hawaii, and New York) (Grant, Hatcher and Patel 2005). Employees in these states have better access to paid leave options. The National Partnership for Women and Families has issued a report card for every state (Grant et al. 2005). The report has given 19

states a failing grade on parental leave policies as there is generally less employee access to leaves.

Employer Benefits

The gold standard for leaves has been California's passage of the Unemployment Insurance Code (2002.) The California law amends the State Disability Insurance Program to pay for up to six weeks of wage replacement (55 percent of salary up to \$882 in 2007) to bond with a new child or to care for a seriously ill family member. The program is entirely funded by contributions from employees. This costs the employer very little as this program is funded between the employee and the state. Other states such as Washington, New Jersey, and Massachusetts are examining this policy, as well (Gault and Lovell 2006).

Research suggests maternity leaves offer an alternative to quitting and, thereby, reduce turnover (Glass and Riley 1998; Waldfogel 1998). An economic analysis of potential consequences of introducing paid family leave in California predicts reduction in turnover costs benefiting employers (Dube and Kaplan 2002; Commission on Leave 1996). Some studies go as far as to note that fathers on parental leave may learn skills that make them better managers (Haas Allard and Hwang 2002; Haas 2003).

Regarding the effects of leave policies on health and well being of family members, some studies conclude that taking leaves benefits the health of mothers and newborn children (Hyde, Essex, Clark, Klein, and Byrd 1996; Smolensky and Gootman 2003). A few studies have shown that the availability of leave policies increases the father's involvement in household and child care duties (Heymann 2002; Seward, Yeatts, and Zottarelli 2002). The later may not necessarily benefit employers in the short term, but may have long-term health cost and mental health benefits.

Theme 11: More research is needed to untangle the interaction between FMLA and employee access to employer policies on paid and unpaid family leave.

Informal Support: Supervisor Practice and Cultures Regarding Ideal Workers

Having addressed policies, we need to briefly examine informal supports at the workplace for policies. Eaton (2003) defined informal supports as “flexible policies that are not official and not written down but are still available to some employees even on a discretionary basis.” This is often a direct result of supervisor support. We expand her definition by specifically focusing on any work-life action, behavior or culture norms, values and rules that are not official policies, but work directly to affect the work-life domain.

Considerable research has indicated that supervisor support plays a key role in the experience of work-family conflict (Allen 2001; Barrah, Shultz, Baltes, and Stoltz 2004; Casper and Buffardi 2004; Casper, Fox, Sitzmann, and Landy 2004; McManus, Korabik, Rosin, and Kelloway 2002; O’Driscoll et al. 2003). Supervisors are the gatekeepers to effective implementation of work and family policies. Supervisors: (a) often have final approval as to whether employees can use an optional work-life policy such as reduced work load, telework, and flextime; (b) influence whether employees are cross-trained and able to back-up each other during absences or periods of heavy workload; (c) affect whether policies are well publicized and well understood; and (d) lead in the creation of norms supporting use of existing policies (Hopkins 2005). Supervisor’s support of an employee’s efforts to manage multiple roles may be directly related to whether a policy helps reduce strain (see Hopkins 2005 for a review). The following section will review what we know about the effects of supervisor support and related work culture support taken from large national studies.

Supervisor Support

Supervisor support can be defined as the supervisor's willingness or accessibility in adapting the organizational structure and policies to fit the unique demands of employees' lives outside of their employment. Research consistently shows that supervisor support is linked to reduced work-family conflict (O'Driscoll et al. 2003; Thomas and Ganster 1995). Reviews show that many studies have found that when employees have supervisors who support work-family balance, job satisfaction is higher and work-family conflict is lower (Kossek and Ozeki 1998; Thomas and Ganster 1995). Eaton (2000) found that work-family policies affected organizational commitment, but only to the extent that employees felt free to use them without negative consequences to their work lives (e.g., damage to career-development opportunities or workplace relations). Any assessment of the effectiveness of policies must measure how proactive a supervisor is in providing resources or advice to employees regarding these policies.

Employer Perspective on Availability

The NSE (Bond et al. 2005) reports that a majority (63 percent) of employers believe supervisors are supportive of employees with family needs. A majority (53 percent) also encourage employees to openly discuss their needs for flexibility with their supervisors and treat men and women equally in regards to flexibility (76 percent). Two-thirds (62 percent) of employers believe that their supervisors assess requests for flexible work arrangements equitably.

Yet, only one-fourth (27 percent) of employers report that their supervisors/organizations make a real and ongoing effort to inform employees of available assistance for managing work and family responsibilities. Less than half (46 percent) of employers believe the importance of working and managing flexibly is clearly communicated throughout the organization.

Employee Perspective on Availability of Supervisor Support for Policies

We noted some discrepancies between perceived supervisor support by employees and employers. Comparing the NSE (Bond et al. 2005), which surveys employers, and the NSCW (Bond et al. 2002), which surveys employees directly, we found some perceptual gaps. From the NSE, only 9 percent of company representatives feel that the use of flexible time and leave policies jeopardizes employees' opportunities for advancement. In contrast, based on the NSCW, 39 percent of employees felt somewhat or strongly that using flexible schedules and taking time off for family reasons would impede their job advancement. Although the questions are not exactly identical in the two surveys, they are substantively the same, and the difference between employers' and employees' views is large enough to suggest that there is a perceptual gap.

The researchers behind the NSE (Bond et al. 2005), saw the discrepancy between the supervisor support in the NSE and the NSCW (Bond et al. 2002), and decided to go back to the NSCW and pull apart some demographic issues that may help explain the discrepancy. What they found was that employees in smaller organizations were significantly more likely to report the presence of both a supportive supervisor and a supportive work life culture (Bond et al. 2005).

Employer Benefits

Based on the NSCW, employees who report having a supportive supervisor also report much higher levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of loyalty, which was defined as a

willingness to work harder than required to help their employers succeed (Bond et al. 2002). Supervisor support was related to reduced interference between job and family. For example, one-fifth (20 percent) of employees with lower supervisor support had no interference between job and family, while 37 percent of employees with higher supervisor support reported no interference between job and family. Higher supervisor support was also significantly related to lower mental health problems, reduced negative spillover from job to home, and higher levels of general life satisfaction. These results were also mirrored in measures of having a positive work-life culture, which supervisors help shape. Employees who report a high supportive culture in their organizations, also report higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment and retention, lower levels of mental health problems, less interference between job and family, less spillover from job to home, and higher levels of general life satisfaction.

Cultural Images of Ideal Workers: Growing Gender and Societal Tensions

A recent article in *The American Prospect* reads, “Women aren’t forsaking careers for domestic life. The ground rules just make it impossible to have both” (Williams 2007). Williams (2007) argues that the United States labor force has an outdated image of the *ideal worker*. The ideal worker has been defined as a worker “...who starts to work in early adulthood and works full time and full force for 40 years straight, taking no time off for childbearing and child rearing” (Crosby et al. 2004). Good jobs are still defined around an ideal worker who tends to be male, in Williams’ view, pointing to gender inequity. Workplace ideals are still defined around men’s bodies and life patterns since men need no time off for childbirth and American women still do 70 percent to 80 percent of the child rearing (Williams 2007).

She sees many policy solutions as not being culturally supported. “Part-time work is often seen as part committed and sometimes as part competent” (Williams and Calvert 2004).

The most desirable jobs are not part time, essentially keeping mothers who are involved in child rearing from access. Defining workplace ideals in such a way, in William's view, is tantamount to sex discrimination. Williams (2004) argues, "Is it not discriminatory, for example, to refuse benefits to part-time workers while giving them to full-time workers? What can justify a refusal to prorate benefits? Isn't this form of economic disenfranchisement sex discriminatory?"

Bianchi (2000) reports that most mothers in the United States (95 percent) work less than the long work week required in higher paying jobs. Among mothers aged 25 to 44, 95 percent work less than 50 hours a week year round (Bianchi 2000). Pollit (2003) reports that in the United States, most mothers who work outside the home do so for an average of 30 to 35 hours per week. The discrepancy between their hours and the 40-plus hours required by most professional jobs demonstrates the urgent need for more jobs in the 30 to 35 hours per week range. Kossek and Lee (2005) have identified many employer benefits from offering reduced or customized workloads as a retention tool for high performing employees, but to date these arrangements are not widely available at all levels of the firm. Increased availability of such jobs could result in increased maternal well being, since employment has been shown to benefit women's health and well-being (Barnett and Rivers 1996), but not if long hours and inflexibility about when and where those hours are worked reduce employee control over work (Thomas and Ganster 1995).

Some argue that mothers' disadvantaged workplace position is due to the fact some mothers opt out for the good of their families (Belkin 2003). Echoing Williams statistics noted above, other studies report women still do 65 to 80 percent of child care (Sayer 2001), an average of 3.5 hours of child care per workday compared with 2.7 hours per workday for fathers

(Bond et al. 2002). Women also conduct more than 70 percent of elder care (National Alliance for Caregiving and American Association of Retired Persons [AARP] 1997).

Men are not free from gender discrimination from their use of work and family policies. Almer, Cohen, and Single (2004) conducted a study that originally was focused on the interaction effect between gender and the use of family policies. The researchers found that when given a vignette about flexible work arrangements, unlike women, men with children who use flexible work arrangements were rated the highest for a lack of commitment to the organization and likely to leave the organization. More socialization is needed to support access to policies for family needs by both men and women and the differential meanings and outcomes from policy access.

Davis, Crouter, and McHale (2006) found that mothers who worked irregular shifts reported more intimacy with adolescents, while fathers who worked the same shifts knew less about their adolescent children. Maume (2006) found that men equate the use of vacation as a negative factor in career success. In contrast, mothers equate unused vacation time as a detriment to their family roles. The most significant predictor of unused vacation time was commitment to coworkers and commitment to organization.

Theme 12: Supervisory and societal cultures regarding ideal workers continue to be barriers to policy use and gender differences in policy experiences.

Closing and A Future Agenda

This chapter has demonstrated the following main themes:

- Compared to other industrialized countries, the United States is unique in providing very limited public supports for the overall labor forces' work and family demands (Kossek 2006).
- Many workers lack access to policies and many improvements can be made in implementation.
- Access to policies systematically varies by employer and worker characteristics.
- Employee views of access systematically vary compared to views of employers.

We should avoid one-size-fits-all solutions. Policy workplace solutions and research need to not only be broad-brushed and comprehensive, but also implemented in ways that can be customized to empower and meet the special needs of individuals and particular labor market sectors. Perhaps the first step is to broaden the United States policy work-family agenda.

Broaden Policy Discourse to Reconnect with a Transforming Workforce

Kossek (2005) notes that early on in the life stage of organizational development of work and family policies, many employers define work-family very narrowly, usually starting out by adopting policies focused on the most visible family needs such as parental roles. Over time, as employers become more experienced they typically widen the range of policies to support participation in many non-work roles (e.g. eldercare, community service, school age children's extracurricular activities and supervision, personal healthcare and fitness, military, political and religious activities, domestic partners, and household care).

Some of the most effective companies define work and family issues broadly as this helps them develop a performance rather than a police culture on monitoring access to flexibility and other supports. A greater focus on results and equality of access is more likely to ensue when

employers define work and family broadly to support many key non-work roles. We see public policy in some ways being stifled by this similar narrow view of work and family.

Gerstel, Clawson, and Zussman (2002) echo this sentiment for a broader discourse on what is considered a “work and family issue”:

“The relatively little attention that policymakers and researchers have given to diverse family forms and class issues has had a significant effect on both families and workplaces...[A] restricted focus severely limits the effectiveness of policy and contributes to the rejection of underrepresented and diverse family forms.... Higher minimum wage is family policy. Immigration, welfare policy, and health benefits are family policy, but we don’t talk about them that way.... We need to reshape public discourse.... Instead of advocating minor reforms, which often serve employers more than employees, researchers need to broaden the discussion. We need to look at job hours, living wage, family leave, and elder care as work-family issues. We need to think more broadly about what is family and what families need, and ask broader questions.”

-Naomi Gerstel, Dan Clawson, Robert Zussman (2002), Selected comments from Sloan Work-Family Network News, *Conversations with the Experts*.4(2), p.1-3

And, indeed, as table 4 shows, the problem of effectively managing breadwinning with caregiving has become a critical concern that addresses many broad employment issues across the entire United States workforce. Kossek (2006) notes the workforce transformation where many segments are simultaneously facing cross-cutting and distinct issues. Common workforce issues include: (1) the cultural mainstreaming of work-family tensions for a majority of workers, (2) growing financial costs of child and elder caregiving, (3) perceptions of time shortages and schedule conflict, (4) increasing workloads on the job and at home, and (5) blurring boundaries between work and non-work life. Distinctive issues focused on specific labor-market segments are: (1) the degree to which workers experience control over work hours and schedules, and diversity needs, (2) disparities in access to work-family supports, and (3) the widening effects of

these discrepancies on physical and mental health, employment market readiness and participation, and effectiveness on and off the job.

Theme 13. The discourse and framing of United States work and family research and policy generally has been narrow and overly simplified. Yet, most labor market segments are simultaneously facing complex issues requiring both cross-cutting and customized solutions. This disconnect has generally resulted in policy that often is neither broad enough to serve mainstream worker issues, nor tailored enough to address the needs of unique workforce segments.

Improve Policy Research

Many studies focused on these policies have the limitation that they wrap numerous policies into one variable or do not use common definitions, fail to use group randomization, or use misleading simplistic methods that do not account for complex relationships in policy implementation. Weak research hurts policy innovation and the study of the costs and benefits of new initiatives.

Another method that is important to consider is the use of structural models or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). By using SEM, Frye and Breugh (2004) found that the use of family-friendly policies, hours worked per week, and a supportive supervisor were predictive of work-family conflict. This study demonstrates ways to account for multiple dimensions in their model and to examine interactions. Another example of how to look at complex models is the use of Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM). Using HLM, Fuwa and Cohen (2007) studied household labor across 33 countries and found having policies that promote gender equality does have an effect on the division of labor. They also found that countries with longer parental leaves

have a more egalitarian gender division of housework. The researchers concluded that while family policies do allow more women to enter the labor force, these policies may increase the gender wage gap. By controlling for between-country differences, the researcher found that a level of gender wage inequity does exist even in the presence of family policies. This notion is also supported by Mandel and Semyonov (2005). Others such as Premeaux, Adkins, and Mossholder (2007) also have offered more complex models for studying the relationship between work and family.

Move to Focus on Policy Implementation and Effectiveness

In particular, there needs to be better research on how to improve the practice of policy implementation. Overall this paper shows that, although many employers have adopted policies to support the integration of work with personal and family life, expected positive gains due to enhanced workplace inclusion are not always realized. Ryan and Kossek (forthcoming) argue that one reason for this gap is that practitioners and researchers often overlook how variations in policy implementation and use by different employee stakeholder groups foster a culture of inclusiveness. It is clear that the existence of a policy does not guarantee employee recruitment, satisfaction, or retention. As Sutton and Noe (2005) concluded in a review of family-friendly program effectiveness, many policies had either no relationship or a negative relationship to attraction of new employees, improvement of retention rates, reduction of stress, and enhancement of productivity. This gap may be related to the fact that more research is needed on how to develop standards for effective policy implementation.

Ryan and Kossek (forthcoming) suggest that implementation should be looked at through four areas of inclusion: the level of supervisor support, universality of availability, negotiability, and quality of communication. These tenets could be used to develop training and best practices

in policy implementation. For example, how supervisor support refers to actual social and instrumental support of a work-life policy. Organizations could also measure whether supervisors encourage and support employees when they seek to use a specific policy, or if they remove any obstacles to policy implementation.

Employers could also measure universalism. Universalism refers to the degree to which policies are perceived as readily available for use by everyone in all levels and jobs, in contrast to availability. For example, if policies are seen as limited to specific employee groups (e.g., partners, but not associates; managers and professionals, but not clerical workers) or geographic locations (e.g., corporate headquarters, but not at plants; United States compared to non-United States locations) (Ryan and Kossek forthcoming). Measuring universalism would tap into the availability-versus-use gap we have identified.

Employers could also develop clearer standards on which policies should be negotiable and which should be available to all workers. Negotiability reflects both the degree to which an individual's policy use or practice can be negotiated with an organizational agent (e.g., supervisor, HR department, coworkers, and senior management) and the perceived fairness of the negotiation process. Some policies, like the ability to telecommute, may be negotiable and available based on good performance. However, control over when to take breaks or whether workers should work when they or a family member are seriously sick, perhaps, should not be negotiable.

Lastly, benchmarks and training could be developed to assess the quality of policy communication. Employers could assess the degree to which policies are effectively communicated to employees, which is critical in the effective implementation of policies. Studies have also shown variability exists within organizations in the degree to which formal written

work-life policies exist for different organizational units (Kropf 1999). Not having a written policy could be a key barrier to effective policy implementation. It impedes employee awareness and limits guidance on different possibilities in implementation. And, as shown in the earlier discussion of FMLA, even written policies are sometimes poorly communicated, which also limits cognizance of the policy's availability and/or a lack of understanding of policy applicability to individual situations (Christensen 1999). Studies show employees are not always aware of the availability of government policies like the FMLA (Baird and Reynolds 2004). Indeed, one of the major tensions identified between employers and employees re FMLA regulations related to communication of the policy (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL] 2007). The DOL survey showed employees and employers were not sure how FMLA affected their individual situations. More communication from the United States government and from employers would limit a considerable amount of tension between the United States government, employers, and employees around FMLA and many other work and family policies.

Consider Advocacy Research

Joan Williams argues that more policy research focused on advocacy should be done (Williams, Calvert, and Cooper 2003). She offers 19 proposed measures based on the view that parents (men and women alike) should be supported in their attempts to access current policies. Her "Program on WorkLife Law" has identified between 20 and 30 cases where plaintiffs have won or been allowed to proceed to trial in cases involving family caregiving. Some cases have yielded substantial awards and settlements: roughly \$625,000 in one case (*Walsh v. Nat'l Computer Sys., Inc.* 2002); \$495,000 in another tentative settlement (*Knussman v Maryland* 2001); and \$667,000 in a third (Williams and Segal 2003).

In addition to the suggestions above and the policy implications integrated throughout the paper, we close with some final policy suggestions. In the United States there is limited quality national research and standards on the availability of work and family policies or on workers' actual experiences with policies even when they have access. We would like to see national standard definitions on work and family policies developed, broadened, and more in depth; and studies shown that demonstrate effectiveness to employers, the economy, and workers. Academic and practitioner research on policies needs to be better classified to allow for critical analysis of differential results, samples, and levels of analysis. Just as we saw great differences in the policy surveys we reviewed in tables 1 through 3, we see similar problems in how the research is reported and measured at different levels and from different sources. Overall, there is a lack of linked research on multiple stakeholder views on work and family policies (e.g. workers, employers, families, society) or on effective relationships between policies, culture, job conditions, and legislation, which creates policy gaps.

Toward this end, we need higher quality state and national databases and research on work and family policies and effectiveness. We also saw a gap at the state level of analysis in the academic literature. While we know a handful of state-level studies are available, given the patchwork United States system, more research is needed comparing leaves and other working conditions relevant to work and family, such as in states like California and Washington, which are beginning to innovate and set national examples. Measurement of access to and effectiveness of these policies conducted in national surveys from worker and employer perspectives needs to be conducted at the same firm and across occupations, jobs, and industries. Until steps such as these are taken, our knowledge will remain limited on how to overcome challenges in

implementing policies to foster organizational change toward individual and organizational effectiveness.

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Table 1: Percent of Workers with Access to Selected Work-Family Benefits: Trends from

Characteristics	Employer assistance for child care				Adoption assistance (2000) 2006	Long-term care insurance (2000) 2006	flexible workplace (2000) 2006
	Total (2003) 2006	Employer provided funds (2003) 2006	Onsite and off-site child care (2003) 2006	Child care resource and referral services (2003) 2006			
All workers	(14) 15	(3) 3	(5) 5	(10) 11	(5) 10	(7) 12	(5) 4
Worker Characteristics							
White-collar	(20) 20	(5) 4	(7) 7	(15) 15	(13)* 15	(16)* 17	(6)* 7
Blue-collar	(8) 8	(1) 1	(2) 2	(6) 7	(2) 7	(4) 7	(1) 1
Service	(8) 10	(2) 2	(4) 5	(5) 5	(2) 2	4	1
Full-time	(16) 16	(4) 4	(5) 6	(12) 12	(6) 12	(8) 13	(5) 5
Part-time	(8) 10	(2) 2	(4) 4	(5) 6	(2) 5	(2) 6	(2) 2
Union	(17) 19	(3) 3	(5) 6	(15) 17	(5) 14	(15) 15	(3) 3
Nonunion	(14) 14	(3) 3	(5) 5	(10) 10	(5) 10	(6) 11	(5) 4
Average wage less than \$15/hour	(9) 9	(2) 2	(3) 3	(5) 5	(5)* 5	(6)* 7	(2)* 2
Average wage \$15+/hour	(22) 22	(5) 4	(8) 8	(18) 17	(16)* 16	(19)* 18	(7)* 7
Establishment Characteristics							
Goods producing	(13) 13	(3) 2	(2) 3	(11) 10	(6) 11	(5) 10	(4) 4
Service producing	(14) 15	(3) 3	(6) 6	(10) 11	(4) 10	(8) 12	(5) 4
1-99 workers	(5) 5	(2) 1	(2) 2	(3) 3	(1) 10	(5) 11	(2) 10
100 workers or more	(25) 26	(5) 5	(8) 9	(19) 19	(9) 17	(10) 20	(7) 5

Bureau of Labor Statistics Surveys 2003-2006

*Data from 2003 was used, due to a lack of inclusion or change in classification from 2000 to 2003 that would not allow for an appropriate comparison between the 2000 and 2006 values. Source: BLS, National Compensation Survey, Survey of Employee

Benefits, 2000, 2003 and 2006.

Table 2

Trends from National Study of the Changing Workforce: 1992 to 2002

Items on the national study of the changing workforce	1992	2002
Access to elder care resources (or referral)	11%	24%
Flex time		
Able to set start and quit times periodically	29%	43%
Able to change start and quit times daily	18%	23%
Control over work hours		
Little control	44%	39%
Some control	27%	25%
Complete control	30%	36%
Supervisor support		
Supervisor is fair and does not show favoritism in responding to employees' personal and family needs.	78.5%	82%
Employees feel comfortable bring up personal and family issues.	65%	73%
There is an unwritten rule at my workplace that employees could not take care of family needs on company time.	36%	32%

Reported high levels of:	Level of flexibility access		
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Mid</u>	<u>High</u>
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	30%	49%	65%
<i>Commitment to employer</i>	24%	27%	39%
<i>Retention</i>	54%	62%	73%
	Supervisor support		
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Mid</u>	<u>High</u>
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	19%	48%	70%
<i>Commitment to employer</i>	13%	26%	47%
<i>Retention</i>	42%	65%	75%
	Supportive work-life culture		
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Mid</u>	<u>High</u>
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	23%	45%	70%
<i>Commitment to employer</i>	18%	27%	42%
<i>Retention</i>	41%	63%	77%

Work-life effectiveness options	Executive/officer/ top level	Senior level	Mid level	Emerging level	All compensation
Flexible work schedule	44.4%	62.4%	67.0%	57.4%	64.3%
Telecommuting/telework	33.3%	39.0%	38.8%	24.6%	37.1%
Compressed work week	11.1%	10.0%	17.6%	17.5%	15.4%
Part-time schedule	5.6%	9.1%	14.9%	13.1%	13.0%
Phased return from leave	5.6%	6.3%	10.2%	8.2%	8.8%
Job sharing	0.0%	3.3%	6.2%	3.8%	5.0%
Other not specified	16.7%	4.0%	2.6%	1.6%	3.0%
Flexibility options not available to me	33.3%	25.7%	20.0%	33.3%	23.3%

Table 3: Compensation Data on Availability of Work-Life Policies as a Total Reward by Job Level

WorldatWork. (2007) *Total Rewards Professional Census*. Mercer Human Resource Consulting, 2006 Mercer Benchmark Database, Human Resources Module. Retrieved from <http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adimLink?id=19980> June 2007.

Table 4 Summary of Transforming Labor Force: Demographic, Legal, and Social Trends Increasing Work-Family Tensions

Trend	Supporting statistics
1. Transformation of family economic household configuration: Dual earner family is modal American family	<p>Employment status of parents with children under 18 (rounded):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two parent dual earner (41%), single mother employed (16%) ▪ Two parent, husband sole earner (21%); two parent, mother sole earner (4%) ▪ Single father employed (5%), unemployed single mother (7%), unemployed two parent (4%), unemployed single father (1%) (CPS, Bianchi, and Raley 2005)
2. Growth in nontraditional families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A majority of adults will cohabitate with another adult for some life period. ▪ One-third of all births now occur outside of marriage ▪ 40% of children will live in a cohabitating family and 50% of all children will live in a single parent household (usually female) before reaching 18 years old (Cohen 2002) ▪ 15% of the workforce between 40–65 years are “sandwich generation” employees, who must manage care for both aging parents and financially dependent children or grandchildren (Ingersoll-Dayton et al. 2001; Nichols and Junk 1997)
3. Increase in employee care-giving responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 80% of U.S. wage and salaried workers live with family members and have immediate day-to-day family responsibilities when away from the workplace (Bond et al., 2002) ▪ Child care: 43% workers report they have a child under 18 years living at home at least half the year ▪ Elder Care: A third (35%) had significant elder care demands in the past year (reported by equal proportions of men and women) (Bond et al. 2002)
4. Population decline in replacement workers: From pyramids to pillars	<p>One of the fastest growing U.S. population segments is individuals over 55 years old, and a workforce shortage is also predicted as baby boomers are reaching retirement. A 2003 SHRM report indicates that over the 10 years leading up to 2010, the number of workers between 25 and 54 will increase by 5%, and the number of workers over 55 years will increase by 46.6 %; 2003 fertility rates declined to 1.9 children in U.S. compared to 3.1 in 1976 (Riche 2006)</p>
5. Rise in work hours and loads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Couples in dual-earner households averaged of 3,932 hours in 2000, an increase of 300 hours (7.5 additional work weeks per year) since 1989 and equal to more than two full-time EU jobs

and work-family conflicts and intensification

(Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushley 2003)

- U.S. workers worked an average of 1,978 hours per year in 2001 (Berg et al. 2004). Americans work the longest work hours in the world except Korea (OECD 2004)
- 38% NSCW respondents state they must choose between advancing in their jobs or devoting attention to their families (Bond et al. 2002)

6. Growth in participation of women in labor force and key occupations, but varying by age of children and marital status

- Since 1975, labor force participation of U.S. women with children under age 18 has increased from 47% to 78% (U.S. Department of Labor 2004)
- Changing occupational profile of women in workforce; 39% of professional and managerial positions were held by women compared to 24% in 1977 (Bond et al. 2002)
- One-third of mothers with working husbands and children under age 6 did not work at all in 2002 compared to 80% of married women with children between 5–18 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003; Riche 2006)

7. Increase in new work and career structures

- Growth in preferences for part-time or reduced load work for some segments, e.g., NSCW shows that 25% of working women held part-time jobs or jobs with reduced schedules as their main job compared to 9% of men. About two-thirds of women work part-time and half of men do so by choice, even though 61% of part-time jobs *often* received pro-rated health care and lower pay (Bond et al. 2002, 10)
- Growing numbers of workers are delaying retirement or working part-time in second career until their 60s or 70s as opposed to an up-and-out-in-30-year career (Moen 2003)

8. Changing beliefs about gender roles and work-home relationships

- A Radcliffe Center and Harris poll (2000) stated that over four-fifths of men in their 20s and 30s believed that a work schedule that allowed for family time was more important to them than a challenging or high-paying job, a dramatic shift from earlier generations
- In 1977, 74% of NSCW men believed that men should earn the money and women should stay home to take care of the children and the house compared to only 42% in 2002
- In 1977, barely half (49%) of men surveyed in the NSCW believed that employed mothers could have just as good relationships with their children as mothers who only work in the home. In 2002 that number had risen to nearly two-thirds of men surveyed (Bond et al. 2002)
- Men do between 38% and 40% of the domestic chores, if the statistic counts child care and not just housework (Lee and Waite, forthcoming)

9. Technology and 24/7 global work blurring boundaries between work and home

- 15% of employed workers work or telework from home at least once a week (U.S. Census Bureau 2002)
- Increase in major U.S. companies operating work sites overseas (e.g., India, China)

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