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2006 Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Work-Family Research Publication

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Best of the Best

2006



Summaries of the Top Twenty Nominees for the
Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in
Work-Family Research

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Best of the Best

The 2006 Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence
in Work-Family Research

Shelley M. MacDermid, Colleen Pagnan, Karen Ruprecht, and Julia Becerra

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Biography of Rosabeth Moss Kanter	6
Excerpts from <i>Work and Family in the United States</i>	8
Commentary	9
The Winning Article: Author Biographies and Summary	17
Family Policies, Wage Structures, and Gender Gaps	
Summaries of Finalist Articles	20
Mothers' Time with Infant and Time in Employment	
Family Roles and Work Values	
Time Strains and Psychological Well-being	
The Structure of Women's Employment	
Summaries of the Remaining Articles in the Kanter Top 20	25
Relocation Decision-Making and Couple Relationships	
Linking Technology Use, Spillover, Individual Distress and Family Satisfaction	
Why Emotion Work Matters	
The Longitudinal Effects of Work-Family Conflict and Positive Spillover	
Women's Employment Patterns During Early Parenthood	
Does Work-Family Conflict Mediate the Relationship	
Migration and Gender among Mexican Women	
Managing Multiple Roles	
Parenting Strains, Distress, and Paid Family Labor	
Transitions on the Margins of Work and Family Life	
Instability in Patchworks of Child Care	
The Effect of a Family Policy Reform on Mothers' Pay	
The Moderating Influence of Procedural Fairness	
Switching Off Mentally	
Flexible Work Bundles	
Award Procedures	41
Kanter Award Committee	42
Journals Reviewed	43
Award Partners and Sponsor	44

Introduction

Welcome to the 2006 volume of “Best of the Best.” This publication makes it possible for work-life practitioners to quickly become familiar with the best that the world of scientific research has to offer them.

Over the past few decades there has been an explosion of research on the relationships between work and nonwork life. Researchers studying these issues come from many disciplines and professions, resulting in fragmented awareness of one another’s work. In addition, exchanges of research information among scholars, consultants and corporate practitioners are limited. Some excellent studies have failed to have impact because of lack of awareness.

The Kanter Award raises awareness of high quality work-family research among the scholar, consultant and practitioner communities. It fosters debate about what the standards of quality for work-family research should be, and ultimately will raise those standards. And it identifies the “best of the best” on which to base future research.

The award is named for Rosabeth Moss Kanter, who has been identified by leading scholars as the person having the most influence on the modern research literature on work and family. The proposals contained in her 1977 monograph *“Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy”* remain timely a quarter-century later.

In this report you will find summaries of the 20 best scientific research articles published during the year 2005 and nominated for the 2006 Kanter award. These articles were selected after reviewing more than 2500 studies published in peer-reviewed journals. You also will find a list of all the articles nominated, email addresses for the authors, and a commentary giving an overview of the nominees. We appreciate very much the work of the authors and the reviewers who produced and selected these wonderful studies – hopefully you will too. Enjoy!

Rosabeth Moss Kanter Biography

Rosabeth Moss Kanter is the Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, specializing in strategy, innovation, and leadership for change. She advises major corporations and governments worldwide, and is the author or co-author of 16 books, including her newest book, *Confidence: How Winning Streaks and Losing Streaks Begin and End and Evolve!: Succeeding in the Digital Culture of Tomorrow*. Other award-winning bestsellers include *Men & Women of the Corporation*, *The Change Masters*, *When Giants Learn to Dance*, and *World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy*, and *Rosabeth Moss Kanter on the Frontiers of Management*. In 2001 she received the Academy of Management's Distinguished Career Award, its highest award for scholarly contributions, for her impact on management thought, and in 2002 received the World Teleport Association's *Intelligent Community Visionary of the Year Award*.

Professor Kanter's current work focuses on leadership of turnarounds – how winning streaks and losing streaks begin and end – which she is examining in businesses across a variety of industries, major league sports, inner-city schools, and countries whose economic fortunes have changed. She is also interested in the development of new leadership for the digital age – how to guide the transformation of large corporations, small and mid-sized businesses, health care, government, and education as they incorporate new technology, create new kinds of alliances and partnerships, work across boundaries and borders, respond to accountability demands, and take on new social responsibilities. She serves as a senior adviser to IBM's award-winning Reinventing Education initiative, currently active in 21 sites in the U.S. and in 8 other countries and is partnering with IBM to bring her leadership models to K-12 education reform (www.reinventingeducation.org). In 1997-1998 she conceived and led the Business Leadership in the Social Sector (BLSS) project at Harvard Business School including CEOs, Senators, and Governors in dialogue and a call to action about public-private partnerships for change. From 1989-1992 she also served as Editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, which was a finalist for a National Magazine Award for General Excellence in 1991. She joined the Harvard Business School faculty in 1986 from Yale University, where she held a tenured professorship from 1977 to 1986; previously, she was a Fellow in Law and Social Science at Harvard Law School.

Professor Kanter has received 22 honorary doctoral degrees and over a dozen leadership awards, and has been named to lists of the “50 most influential business thinkers in the world” (ranked in the top 10), the “100 most important women in America” and the “50 most powerful women in the world.” Her public service activities span local and global interests. She has been a judge for the Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership given at the White House, a member of the Board of Overseers for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, is a Fellow of the World Economic Forum, served on the U.S. Secretary of Labor's Committee on Skills Gap of the 21st Century Work Force Council and the Massachusetts Governor's Economic Council (for which she was co-chaired the International Trade Task Force), led the effort to establish a Year 2000 Commission for legacy projects

for Boston, and currently serves on the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority board. She has been a corporate and pension fund director and sits on many civic and non-profit boards, including City Year, the national urban youth service corps that was the model for Americorps and is now expanding internationally, to South Africa and other countries.

She co-founded Goodmeasure Inc., a consulting group, and also serves as a director or adviser for other companies. Her consulting clients include some of the world's most prominent companies, and she has delivered keynote addresses for major events in the U.S. and dozens of other countries, sharing the platform with Prime Ministers and Presidents. Goodmeasure has developed Web-based versions of her leadership and change tools (www.changetoolkit.com), to help embed them in the daily work of organizations everywhere.

(excerpted from www.goodmeasure.com)

Excerpts from

Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy

by Rosabeth Moss Kanter
Russell Sage Foundation, 1977

Whatever one's definition of "normal" family life and optimal individual development, it is at least clear that poor economic position places undue stress on personal relations. There would seem to be little need to further document this association. However, it would be valuable in an area, such as this, to specify the conditions under which people cope most effectively with stresses introduced into their lives by work conditions, so that people can be supported in their own attempts to create satisfying lives. An emphasis on coping mechanisms, rather than only documenting statistical associations, would help alleviate the assumption of "pathology" introduced into discussions of the family life of the disadvantaged in the 1960s. We would learn about the sources of personal strength which social policy can help reinforce. Research, in short, should not contribute to foreclosing the options for people's private arrangements by assuming only a limited number of "healthy" or permissible life-styles.

(P. 91)

I have argued throughout this report that work and family are connected in many subtle and unsubtle, social, economic, and psychological ways belying the simplified version of the myth of separate worlds with which I began. If anything, the literature surveyed here makes evident the fact that separateness itself might be seen as a variable and a dimension, rather than a fixed aspect of social structure. We need to pay attention to the variety of patterns of separateness and connectedness between working and loving, occupations and families, in the United States. And we need to examine the consequences of these patterns of work-family association for the lives of American men, women, and children.

(P. 89)

Commentary

This report describes the top 20 research studies nominated for the 2006 Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Work-Family Research, given for the best research article published during a given year. A large panel of scientists did the “heavy lifting,” wading through over 2500 published articles to find the best of the best (the full process is described at the end of the report). This report is a crib sheet – an hour’s worth of reading will tell you about an entire year’s worth of the best scientific research about work-life from all over the world. Following this commentary, you will find summaries of each of the top 20 articles, contact information for their authors in case you have questions, and a description of the award process and its sponsors.

The review committee has become more diverse with each competition. The 2006 committee included scientists from nine countries: the U.S., India, Australia, Canada, the UK, Austria, Singapore, Israel, and Spain. The list of scientific journals reviewed for the competition has continued to expand, now including 74 journals from the fields of management, family studies, sociology, psychology, economics, human resources, demography, social work, and gerontology. A chart at the end of this commentary documents the popularity of specific topics in this year’s competition. The most popular topics this year included wives’ and mothers’ employment, and the duration and timing of work.

The globalization of work-family research continues in this year’s competition, with six of the top 20 articles, including the winner, featuring data or authors from overseas, including Scandinavia, Europe, Israel, Canada, and Cypress. Several of these studies compare countries that have adopted different policy strategies to address similar goals, providing valuable insights about what works -- and what only appears to work.

Attracting and Retaining Mothers in the Workforce

Industrialized countries around the world will soon confront severe labor shortages as small cohorts of young workers struggle to replace millions of new retirees. In Europe, many countries have implemented policies to encourage women to both have babies and be employed, and also to encourage gender equality in wages. Norway, for example, added a one-year subsidy for child care to two years of existing parental leave (one paid, one unpaid). **Top 20** author **Schone** conducted research to see whether the subsidy reduced women’s employment or wages and found that while being a mother of young children reduces both labor force participation and wage growth, the new reform did not.

This year, two studies compared large numbers of countries. **Finalists Pettit and Hook** studied 19 OECD nations to compare the effects of personal factors like age, children, education, and marital status, and policies like parental leave and subsidized child care on mothers’ labor force participation. Results showed that children reduced labor force participation, while parental leave and publicly funded childcare increased it -- so long as the parental leaves were not too long. **Winners Mandel and Semyonov** focused on the relationship between supportive policies and the gender gap in wages. They questioned the common assumption that policies like parental leave, which are intended to make it easier to combine work and family, also will improve women’s wages relative to those of men. And in fact,

“Industrialized countries around the world will soon confront severe labor shortages as small cohorts of young workers struggle to replace millions of new retirees.”

“Supportive policies like lengthy leaves can widen the wage gap by marginalizing women workers, encouraging them to stay out of the labor force, segregating them into low-level jobs, or discouraging employers from hiring them.”

countries with more family-supportive policies do tend to have smaller gender gaps in wages. But the shocking finding is that it is NOT the supportive policies that reduce the wage gap. The reductions come because these countries have more egalitarian wage structures overall, regardless of whether or not workers have children. Supportive policies like lengthy leaves can widen the wage gap by marginalizing women workers, encouraging them to stay out of the labor force, segregating them into low-level jobs, or discouraging employers from hiring them. Policies supporting access to childcare may support women’s wages without carrying these penalties.

Moving to the U.S., **Top 20** authors **Hynes and Clarkberg** studied 20 years of data to understand the patterns of women’s employment over time. A strength of their study was the opportunity to observe mothers’ decisions following first and second births – and the finding that mothers tend to make similar decisions about labor force involvement on both occasions. The first-birth decision is thus especially important. In general, older and more educated women were more likely to stay in the workforce with less interruption.

Gender Differences Persist

One of the most popular topics for Kanter-nominated researchers is the persistent imbalance in the division of unpaid or family work. So long as this imbalance exists, it will be difficult to achieve equality at work or in society. As explained in previous *Best of the Best* reports, two of the primary explanations for time allocations are the ‘Time Availability’ hypothesis, which says that men and women do different amounts of family work because they do different amounts of paid work, and the ‘Gender Ideology’ hypothesis, which says that the real explanation is differences in cultural expectations for men and women.

Finalist Nomaguchi and colleagues compared these two explanations in a nationally-representative sample of U.S. workers with children. They looked at how men and women felt about the amount of time they had for themselves, their spouse, and their children in relation to the number of hours they spent at work and with one another. Not surprisingly according to the time availability perspective, fathers were more likely than mothers to report that they didn’t spend enough time with their families. But consistent with the gender ideology hypothesis, fathers were less bothered than mothers when they couldn’t spend enough time with their children – fathers’ satisfaction was more compromised when they didn’t have enough time for themselves. These findings were reinforced by those of **Top 20** author **Erickson**, who focused on ‘emotion work,’ a sometimes invisible component of family work that occurs when someone monitors the emotional needs of others and reaches out with support and encouragement. Consistent with traditional cultural expectations, wives did the bulk of emotion work, especially when their husbands described themselves in traditionally masculine ways. Husbands who were more economically dependent on their wives were more likely to share the load, however. Erickson cautions that emotion work must be taken into account when considering the division of labor within families if the true family workload is to be accurately understood.

One of the reasons that gender differences in work and family are such popular topics of research is that there is a gender gap in psychological distress, with women experiencing greater distress and higher rates of depression than men.

“...fathers were less bothered than mothers when they couldn’t spend enough time with their children.”

Responsibilities at work and at home are the primary suspects. Studies have not generated consistent findings about the degree to which parenting responsibilities explain this difference. **Top 20** author **Roxburgh** studied the relationship between psychological distress and responsibilities for work and parenting in a sample of dual-earner families, finding that when responsibilities were more equally shared, so too were strains. Together with the studies described above, these findings suggest that cultural gender norms are very powerful but also that biology is not destiny. When men and women share paid and unpaid work, and when they believe in doing so, they also tend to share both the rewards and the challenges.

Despite persistent cultural norms about the unique roles of men and women, **finalist Huston** and colleagues found a result that will surprise many – that the amount of time spent with their mothers was not related to children’s emotional or cognitive development. Although employed mothers spent less time with their infants than non-employed mothers, the difference was much smaller than what might be expected given their work hours. These findings suggest that worries that infants suffer when mothers are employed may be unfounded.

How Does It All Work?

Another group of this year’s Kanter studies focuses on how the connections between work and family operate for individual workers. Diverging from the dominant focus on negative influences between work and family, **Top 20** author **Hammer** and colleagues examined how positive spillover from work affected depressive symptoms a year later for workers and their spouses. Results showed that depressive symptoms were significantly reduced, not just for workers but also for their spouses. This is good news for corporate work-life practitioners, who can work to reduce distress not just by trying to minimize work-family conflict but also by increasing the spillover of positive emotions, constructive skills, and other resources.

Decades ago, few of us could have imagined the degree to which technology would pervade our lives. Today’s college students have never known a world without voice mail, cable TV, Instant Messaging, and ATM machines. We can multi-task like never before, but we don’t know whether or not this is good for us in the long term. Three of this year’s studies address this issue. **Top 20** author **Chesley** studied negative spillover between work and family as a function of communication (e.g., cell phones) and computer (e.g., email, internet) technology. She found that men who made greater use of cell phones were more likely to experience negative spillover from work to family, and that women who did so experienced more spillover in both directions – from work to family and from family to work. Use of computer technology was not related to spillover. Chesley’s research suggests that we may need to be concerned about the blurred boundaries technology has produced.

Research by **top 20** authors **Sonnentag and Bayer** helps to explain why blurred boundaries are problematic. They focused on ‘psychological detachment,’ or the ability to engage in activities away from work without interference by thoughts or feelings about it, predicting that detachment is an important component of recovery from the work day. They found that the ability to psychologically detach after work improved well-being at bedtime and the next day. Unfortunately, detachment was hardest to achieve when it was most needed -- after work days characterized by high time pressure. Long hours did not generate as much difficulty, perhaps because workers were able to adapt to them.

“...amount of time spent with mothers was not related to children’s emotional or cognitive development.”

Top 20 author **Rothbard** and colleagues dug even deeper to examine variations among workers in their comfort with integrating or segmenting their work and family roles. Based on ‘boundary theory,’ they predicted that workers’ satisfaction and commitment would be improved only by policies that matched their personal tendency. On-site childcare, for example, encourages integration by bringing parental responsibilities to work. Flextime policies, in contrast, are a good fit for workers who want to maintain strong boundaries between work and family. Results showed that ‘segmentors’ were more satisfied and committed when segmenting policies were in place and less satisfied and committed when integrating policies were in place – even if segmenting policies were also in place. ‘Integrators’ were more satisfied and committed when integrating policies were in place, regardless of whether segmenting policies were also present.

Evidence from this year’s Kanter research suggests that blurred boundaries between work and nonwork life may be problematic. They are associated with increased spillover, decreased ability to rest and recover from work that day, and reduced well-being the next day. Particularly for workers who desire segmentation, workplace policies that encourage integration may not help. Corporate practitioners might be well-advised to pay attention to workers’ preferences for integration and segmentation, and consider the degree to which available policies are a good fit. A piece of good news is that policies or practices that promote positive spillover may be even more powerful than policies that combat conflict.

“... ‘segmentors’ were ..
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menting policies were
also in place.”

Special Populations

As the work-life discipline has evolved, it has merged in many workplaces with diversity initiatives. Maximizing the contribution of every worker requires dealing with this diversity. Several of this year’s Kanter nominees focused on diverse sub-populations within the workforce.

Finalist Johnson focused on how the work and family values of young workers change over time. Directly addressing the issue of generational differences so prominent in work-life circles today, the results of this study remind us that workers’ values change as they age, marry, and bear children. Thus, generational differences also will shift over time, perhaps shrinking as workers grow to share life experiences.

Top 20 authors **Parrado and Flippen** studied Mexican migrant women, finding that participation in the labor force gave them more power and access to equality. Access to friends appeared to carry a variety of benefits, including more influence on family financial decision-making and greater participation by husbands in family work. Workplace-based affinity groups thus might be especially important for this group of workers.

In two qualitative studies, **Top 20** authors **Scott and Roy** focused on low-income women and men, respectively. Scott and colleagues examined the child care arrangements constructed by women who had made the transition from welfare to work. Even though child care subsidies were provided, care was often difficult to find or maintain and vouchers were sometimes difficult to obtain. The result was complex and unstable patchworks of child care with compromised quality of care. Policies that support stability of child care will not only improve quality for children but also make it more possible for workers to sustain employment.

Roy studied poor African American men to understand their values, goals, and their sometimes intermittent involvement in family life. While most of these men expressed a desire for employment, committed marriage and parenting, these goals proved very difficult to achieve. Many employers had moved out of the neighborhoods where these men lived, reducing the accessibility of good jobs. Family needs were often complex -- sometimes both the men's mothers and their children and partners had needs for financial assistance. Younger men appeared to find it especially difficult to pursue their goals of home, marriage and family.

Workplace Policies

The most immediate lessons of the Kanter competition for corporate work-life practitioners often come from the studies that focus directly on workplace policies and practices. **Top 20** nominee **Stavrou** studied bundles of flexible work arrangements and their impact on turnover, performance, and absenteeism in Europe, finding that different arrangements had different outcomes. Some forms of flexibility appeared to primarily benefit employers, such as outsourced work -- these tended to increase turnover. Other forms of flexibility appeared to have greater benefits for workers, such as flextime. These tended to have more positive outcomes such as reduced absenteeism or improved performance.

Top 20 nominee **Challiol** studied relocation among French workers, many of whom signed relocation agreements as a condition of their employment. Because most married workers are members of two-earner families, spouses' perspectives have become increasingly important for understanding workers' career decisions. Results showed that relocation decisions were explained not only by the perspectives of the worker and the spouse, but also their shared priorities for the family. Increasingly, spouses are partners in workers' careers and employers will be called upon to treat them as such.

Top 20 nominee **Mauno** studied the relationship between workers' perceptions of the supportiveness of workplace cultures, and their work-family conflict and distress. One of the main questions of the study was whether organizational culture operated through work-family conflict, or was related to well-being directly. Results showed that both organizational culture and work-family conflict were directly related to well-being. The good news is that increasing the supportiveness of organizational cultures has implications for multiple aspects of well-being, regardless of whether or not work-family conflict is also reduced.

Top 20 nominee **Siegel** zeroed in on decision-making within organizations, speculating that fairness might offset some of the negative effects of work-life conflict. The specific prediction was that workers' commitment would be less harmed by work-life conflict when employees perceived that consistent standards were used to make decisions, felt treated with respect and dignity, and felt that they had a voice in decision-making. And the data showed that the prediction was right -- higher levels of work-life conflict led to lower organizational commitment only when procedural fairness was low. The researchers speculated that procedural fairness is interpreted by employees as a signal that they can trust their employer, and that employees who trust their employers are less likely to respond negatively when negative conditions occur.

"...higher levels of work-life conflict led to lower organizational commitment only when procedural fairness was low."

Lessons for Practitioners

- Policies that weaken women’s attachment to and position in the labor force may have the unintended consequence of slowing wage growth and marginalizing female workers.
- Although work-life challenges are not just women’s issues, men’s and women’s experiences of them are distinct – unless men and women are sharing responsibilities for both paid and unpaid work.
- Although women appear to be more distressed than men when work negatively affects family life, concerns about negative effects on infants due to reduced time with mothers caused by employment appear to be unfounded.
- Blurred boundaries between work and nonwork life may be problematic, leading to increased spillover and diminished opportunities to rest and recover from time pressure at work.
- Workers vary in the degree to which they are comfortable segmenting or integrating work and nonwork life, and policies that are a poor fit for workers’ priorities may compromise job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.
- Generational differences between workers may shift over time. Young workers’ values will change as they marry and become parents.
- Low-income and migrant workers face unique challenges in trying to secure and maintain employment.
- Forms of flexibility that primarily benefit employers may have negative organizational results in the form of increased turnover. Forms of flexibility that benefit workers may have more positive organizational results.
- Supportive organizational cultures are related to lower work-family conflict AND other indicators of distress.
- When workers perceive procedures in their organization as fair, their organizational commitment is less vulnerable to work-family conflict.

In the remainder of this report, the symbol  indicates the likely relevance of a particular article for work-life practitioners:

-  Somewhat relevant
-   Relevant
-    Very relevant

Name of First Author	Wives' and mothers' employment	Duration and timing of work	International	Stress	Work-family conflict, balance	Government policies	Corporate work-family policies	Gender and earnings	Care for children	Alternative work arrangements	Low-income families	Unpaid work	Health and well-being	Organizational culture	Fathers	Immigrants	Flexibility	Bottom Line	Technology
Winner																			
Mandel & Semyonov	X		X			X	X	X		X									
Finalists																			
Huston	X	X							X										
Johnson	X																		
Nomaguchi et al.		X		X	X										X				
Pettit & Hook	X	X				X		X											
Top 20																			
Challiol	X		X					X											
Chesley				X	X														X
Erickson											X								
Hammer et al.				X	X								X						
Hynes & Clarkberg	X																		
Mauno et al.			X		X								X	X					
Parrado & Flippen	X										X					X			
Rothbard et al.				X	X		X			X									
Roxburgh		X		X								X							
Roy		X									X				X				
Scott et al.	X				X	X	X		X		X								
Schone	X	X	X			X		X	X										
Siegel et al.					X									X					
Sonntag & Bayer		X	X																
Stavrou		X	X				X			X							X	X	
COUNTS	9	8	6	6	6	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

The Winning Article

Author Biographies and Summary

Author Biographies

Hadas Mandel is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University. She received a B.A. in Philosophy and a PhD in Labor Studies from Tel Aviv University. Her current research focuses on cross-country variations in gender inequality and their relationship to class inequality and the role of the welfare state. Her articles with Moshe Semyonov on the impact of family policy on gender segregation and earnings inequality recently appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review*.

Moshe Semyonov is the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Chair Professor of the Sociology of Labor at Tel Aviv University and the director of the University Institute for Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation. He is also Professor of Sociology at The University of Illinois at Chicago. Moshe Semyonov received B.A. and M.A. from Tel Aviv University, Israel and M.A. and Ph.D. from State University of New York at Stony Brook. His main research interests lie in the areas of comparative stratification and global labor migration (with special focus on labor market inequality). Throughout the years he has authored and co-authored books and published research papers in a variety of sociological journals.



Family Policies, Wage Structures, and Gender Gaps: Sources of Earning Inequality in 20 Countries

Hadas Mandel & Moshe Semyonov

American Sociological Review
Volume 70, 2005, pp. 949-967
hadasm@post.tau.ac.il

Women around the world are economically disadvantaged relative to men. In general, the earnings gap between men and women is larger in the market economies of English-speaking countries than in the economies of Continental Europe and Scandinavia, which tend to be characterized by more generous social and family policies and by more comprehensive coverage of collective agreements.

Although supportive policies are thought to shrink the wage gap between men and women, the authors wondered whether this is really true. They analyzed data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), which includes data about 70,000 workers aged 25 to 60 in 20 countries.

An index was created to measure the supportiveness of each country according to the number of weeks of fully paid maternity leave, the percent of preschool children in publicly funded child care facilities, and the percent of the total work force employed in the public sector.

Countries with high index scores, such as Scandinavian countries, had high female labor force participation, but also high occupational segregation (i.e., women tending to be employed in low-level jobs). Countries with low index scores such as Canada, the U.S. and Switzerland had lower labor force participation but more managerial opportunities for women. Very long maternity leave (i.e., multiple years) in high index countries was the factor most responsible for this difference.

The gender gap in wages was reduced by egalitarian wage systems but not family friendly policies. Family policies widen the gender gap in wages when they concentrate women in low-level jobs, encourage long absences from the labor force, or discourage employers from hiring them and giving them good opportunities. Access to child care may be a supportive policy that does not widen the wage gap.

“State interventions that support women’s employment are associated with high levels of female labor force participation, as well as a greater concentration of women in female-typed jobs and men in managerial positions. These characteristics, in turn, all are likely to increase the gender pay gap.”

(P. 962)

Summary prepared by Julia Becerra and Shelley M. MacDermid

Summaries of Finalists



Mothers' Time with Infant and Time in Employment as Predictors of Mother-Child Relationships and Children's Early Development

A. Huston & A. Rosenkrantz Aronson

Child Development

Volume 76, 2005, pp. 467-482

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As mothers of young children continue to increase their involvement in paid work, there are persistent concerns about the possible negative effects on children's development when they spend less time with their mothers. These researchers studied how much time employed and non-employed mothers spent with their infants and how that quantity was related to the quality of the mother-child relationship, the home environment, and children's early social and cognitive development.

Data were obtained from one of the largest studies ever conducted of early childhood development -- the National Institute of Child Health and Development's (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care. Over 1,000 children and their parents were studied over a three-year period using a variety of methods including time use diaries that were completed when the infant was seven months old.

Findings indicated that employed mothers spent less time with their infants than non-employed mothers -- about 100 minutes on average across the two days for which time diaries were completed (about 500 minutes were spent in paid work during those two days). Employed mothers also spent less time on housework and leisure activities than non-employed mothers.

The amount of time mothers spent at work did not predict the quality of their relationship with their infant, the home environment, or children's early social and cognitive development. The amount of time mothers spent with their infants was positively related to their sensitivity and the quality of the home environment, but not to children's social or cognitive development.

Summary prepared by Karen Ruprecht and Shelley M. MacDermid

"...there is no evidence in our findings that time with the infant increases the infant's engagement with his or her mother or contributes to the child's social or cognitive development. ...The economic and social benefits of maternal employment outweigh any losses that may result in from the time spent away from the child...."

(P. 478, 479)



Family Roles and Work Values: Processes of Selection and Change

Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson

Journal of Marriage and Family

Volume 67, 2005, pp. 352-369

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“The view that employment conditions shape work values that then shape parenting values and behavior, and ultimately child outcomes, should be extended to include key feedback loops. This study indicates the potential for family behavior to affect work values, forming one such feedback loop. A growing body of research indicates that family behaviors affect job conditions, forming a second feedback loop.”

(P. 367)

There is considerable ‘buzz’ today about generational differences among workers, but it is difficult to know which differences will stay with workers throughout their careers and which will disappear as young workers grow older and establish families. This study examined how experiences and values at work and in family life change over time, and how changes in one domain affect changes in the other. Family experiences like marriage and parenthood have been shown to affect values at work, such as the importance of extrinsic rewards like pay, benefits and job stability (as opposed to intrinsic rewards like interesting or challenging work tasks).

Data came from the Youth Development Study, a longitudinal study of randomly-selected ninth-graders in Minnesota. Data were gathered from 1991 when the 709 participants were seniors in high school, through 2000, when they were 26-27 years old. About one third had married by this time, most of whom had children. About 10% were single parents.

During adolescence, the top work values were steady, advancement, pay, using skills, and decision making. Work values were only moderately stable from adolescence to early adulthood, but achieving rewards (e.g., raises) increased their importance later. Adolescents who especially valued extrinsic rewards tended toward earlier marriage and parenthood. Women valued intrinsic rewards more than men, but intrinsic rewards were less important to both wives and husbands relative to unmarried men and women. After marriage, extrinsic rewards became less important to wives but not husbands. Parenthood appeared to increase the importance of extrinsic rewards for fathers, and for mothers who were not married.

Results from this study remind us that workers’ values and priorities will shift as they age and their family circumstances change. Generational differences that are obvious when workers first enter the labor force may fade or shift later on.

Summary prepared by Shelley M. MacDermid



Time Strains and Psychological Well-Being Do Dual-Earner Mothers and Fathers Differ?

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Journal of Family Issues
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Two differing views offer possible explanations of time pressures that mothers and fathers face in spending time with each other, their children, and on their own. The time availability perspective suggests that if men and women devote different amounts of time to their jobs, child care, and leisure time, their time pressures will differ. The gender perspective suggests cultural expectations for parents and spouses are different for men than women, and that women will have different views of time pressures than men.

Controlling for the time devoted to paid work, domestic work, child care, and their own leisure activities, this study compared these two perspectives by assessing dual-earner parents' feelings of time strains and whether the link between time strains and psychological well-being differed for mothers and fathers.

The authors used data from the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce. Participants were dual-earner parents who had children under the age of 18. One adult per household was interviewed, so mothers and fathers in this study came from separate households.

The study found that the time availability perspective accurately predicted that fathers would be more likely than mothers to report feeling that they did not spend sufficient time with their spouse and children – fathers work more paid hours and thus have less time available. However, gender ideologies were more useful in explaining why mothers were more bothered than fathers by lack of time with children while fathers were more bothered by lack of time for themselves.

These findings offer hints for work-life practitioners about workers' possible motivations for seeking flexible work arrangements or other supportive resources. Mothers and fathers may have quite different motivations, which might lead to different preferences and different outcomes.

Summary prepared by Karen Ruprecht and Shelley M. MacDermid

“...regardless of gender, not being available for their family because of economic activities is strongly related to dual-earner parents' feelings of work-family conflict.”

(P. 784)



The Structure of Women's Employment in Comparative Perspective

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Social Forces

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*“Public provision of
childcare socializes the
costs of children by
shifting the financial
burden of childcare
from individual moth-
ers to all workers.”*

(P. 784)

One of the most dramatic transformations of the 20th century has been the massive number of women – particularly mothers of young children -- who have entered the workforce. Why do they do it? The ‘structural’ argument proposes that women’s labor force participation is determined by economic necessity, the supply and demand for female workers and the costs and benefits of wage work. The ‘comparative approach’ compares nations to examine national ideologies and family policy initiatives. Coupled together, these two perspectives open the door to examine the factors that shape the structure of women’s employment.

The study was based on data from national surveys in the 19 OECD countries, among them Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Structural factors examined included the age, education, marital status, and number and age of children. The comparative factors were the institutions that encourage women’s employment, such as maternity/parental leave policies and publicly funded childcare.

Results supported the structural explanations for women’s employment. Childbearing was typically associated with declines in participation in the labor force: the number and age of children was negatively associated with the probability of employment across all 19 countries. Parental leave policies and publicly funded childcare were positively associated with women’s employment. However, extended parental leave policies (longer than three years) tended to decrease women’s employment and reinforce traditional male-breadwinner family structures. This research suggests that the employment decisions of mothers can be influenced by the policy context. To the extent that policies encourage mothers to give priority to childbearing and rearing, employment will be lower. When policies support mothers’ employment, mothers’ labor force participation is higher.

Summary prepared by Colleen Pagnan and Shelley M. MacDermid

Summaries of the Remaining Articles
in the Top 20:

The Kanter 20



Relocation Decision-Making and Couple Relationships: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study of Dual-Earner Couples

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Journal of Organizational Behavior

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Globalization has created a press for companies to relocate workers. Despite numerous studies on the topic of relocation, however, much remains to be understood. The purpose of this French study was to understand the couple processes involved in workers' decisions about whether or not to accept a relocation assignment.

Although prior studies have shown that spouses play an important role in relocation decisions, several questions remain unanswered. For example, given that most married couples have two earners, the relative roles of each partner's gender, career commitment, earnings, and alternative job opportunities are unknown.

Researchers conducted two studies, a quantitative survey of 155 business school alumni from a French university, and a qualitative interview study of 11 dual-earner couples in which at least one partner had been asked to make a relocation decision. Participants were asked to estimate the likelihood that they would accept a transfer. Over 40% had a relocation clause in their employment agreement.

Employees with lower career priorities for themselves were more influenced by the spouse's willingness to relocate, regardless of the gender of worker, the worker's relative contribution to household income, or marital quality.

The qualitative study showed that simply taking each partner's views into account wasn't enough; the couple's priorities for family life also had to be considered. When compromises had to be made, they often resulted in a decision that was consistent with the couple's priorities even if it violated the preferences of one member of the couple. Increasingly, employers will need to deal with both members of a working couple every time a major work relocation decision needs to be made.

Summary prepared by Shelley M. MacDermid

"...any model that fails to take into account the two partners and their relationship with each other is surely highly limited in its capacity to predict relocation decision-making in dual-earner couples."

(P. 268)



Blurring Boundaries? Linking Technology Use, Spillover, Individual Distress, and Family Satisfaction

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Journal of Marriage and Family
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Although new technologies pervade our lives, few studies have examined the relationship between technology use and individual or family well-being. Some work-life advocates worry that computers, cell phones, and pagers promote overwork and cause strain for individuals and families. Others argue that new technologies promote flexibility for both workers and workplaces.

This study examined linkages among technology use, work-family spillover, and changes in individual distress and family satisfaction in dual-earner couples. Data from the Cornell Couples and Careers Study were used, which included a sample of over 1,300 individuals. Information was gathered from workers employed at one of seven organizations and their spouses during 1998-1999 and again in 2000-2001. Data were collected through telephone surveys, and spouses and partners were interviewed separately. The researchers paid attention to two specific kinds of technology: communication technologies such as cell phones and pagers, and computer technology such as email and internet.

The findings indicated that persistent use of communication technology, such as cell phones and pagers, was associated with decreased family satisfaction, and increased distress and negative spillover between work and family. This was not the case for use of computer technology. Men who used cell phones more experienced higher levels of negative spillover from work to family than men who did not, but women who used cell phones more experienced more negative spillover in both directions – from work to family and from family to work.

Summary prepared by Karen Ruprecht and Shelley M. MacDermid

“Overall, the evidence suggests that technology use may be blurring work/family boundaries with negative consequences for working people.”

(P. 1237)



Why Emotion Work Matters: Sex, Gender, and the Division of Household Labor

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Journal of Marriage and Family

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Although women spend fewer hours working for pay than men, many women also bear responsibility for the 'second shift' of unpaid family work. Arlie Hochschild and others have emphasized that family work must be understood as real work, and that its components should be recognized and studied. This study is an analysis of a component of family work called 'emotion work,' which involves taking action to recognize the needs of others and express concern for them, such as talking things over, offering encouragement, and doing favors without being asked.

The researcher examined workers' performance of emotion work, housework, and child care as a function of economic resources, time constraints, gender ideology and sex. Data came from the 1995-1996 wave of a community-based sample of dual-earner, married parents within one county in northeastern Ohio. The sample for this study included 335 married parents who were employed full-time.

Consistent with earlier research, wives did more housework and men spent more hours in paid employment, even when controlling for the effects of resources, time constraints, and gender ideology. In addition, when husbands spent more time at work, wives did more child care and emotion work. When men were more economically dependent on their wives, however, they tended to do more housework, child care, and emotion work.

Women were more likely to perform emotion work when they rated themselves as having both feminine and masculine expressive traits. Men were more likely to perform emotion work when they rated themselves as having feminine expressive traits. Men who advocate a more traditional gender ideology performed less emotion work.

The author suggests that the time and energy required to provide emotional support should be seen as an important part of the work that takes place in families.

Summary prepared by Julia Becerra and Shelley M. MacDermid

"The time and energy required to provide emotional support to others must be reconceptualized as an important aspect of the work that takes place in families. ... [women] are held accountable for the performance of this work in ways that men are not."

(P. 349)



The Longitudinal Effects of Work-Family Conflict and Positive Spillover on Depressive Symptoms Among Dual Earner Couples

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Journal of Occupational Health Psychology

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Workers who experience high work-family conflict (i.e., work commitments interfering with family life) are more likely to report a mental health problem than workers with low conflict, and mental health problems can have serious consequences. Conversely, positive spillover between work and family, such as positive emotions, useful skills or other resources, may improve mental health.

The current study examined the effects of work-family conflict and positive spillover on symptoms of depression. A national sample of 234 dual-earner couples who were caring for both children and aging parents (referred to as the sandwich generation) were examined twice over a 1-year period. In addition, the authors examined spouses' depressive symptoms so that they could assess the effects of work-family conflict and work-family positive spillover that cross over from one spouse to the other.

A key finding from this study was that positive spillover from work-to-family was a more powerful influence than work-family conflict. Positive spillover from work to family reduced later depressive symptoms in not only workers but also their spouses. In fact, the effects on spouses' symptoms were stronger than the effects for workers themselves.

These results suggest that workplace policies may have the potential to increase their beneficial effects on depression by focusing on increasing positive spillover in addition to reducing conflict between work and family.

“As people experience more positive emotions in the family domain, which result in more positive emotions at work, they are likely to experience a decrease in depressive symptoms.”

(P. 149)

Summary prepared by Julia Becerra and Shelley M. MacDermid



Women's Employment Patterns During Early Parenthood: A Group-Based Trajectory Analysis

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Journal of Marriage and Family

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"Women who have higher levels of education and higher wages, and who otherwise have good jobs are more likely to be employed at various points in time before and after the birth of a child than their younger and less advantaged counterparts."
(P. 223)

In the last several decades, opportunities for women in the labor force have improved, families have gotten smaller, workers have become more educated, and childbearing has occurred later in life. However, women are still less likely than men to be in the labor force. Scholars assume this is because of women's family responsibilities. The authors of this study set out to understand patterns of women's employment over time, focusing specifically employment before and after the births of first and second children.

Analyses were based upon the employment histories of a sample of women from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Individuals were approximately 14-22 years of age when they began participating and were between 33-40 years of age when the study concluded. The subsample selected for this study included 2,093 women.

Women displayed six different employment patterns: continuously employed, continuously out of the work force, hiatus from employment at the time of a birth, exit from employment at the time of a birth, declining employment, and low intermittent employment. The largest proportion of women at both times of interest were continuously employed, suggesting that women have a strong attachment to the labor force. Women who belong to the trajectory groups that are distinguished by declines in labor force participation after birth included fewer than 25% of first time mothers and 20% of second time mothers. Patterns of employment over time were also relatively stable, suggesting that decisions made at first birth shape decisions made at second birth.

Educational attainment and age at first birth were strong predictors of women's employment trajectories – older or more educated women were more consistently employed than younger or less educated women. In addition, across all trajectories, there were few differences in husbands' income levels.

Summary prepared by Colleen Pagnan and Shelley M. MacDermid



Does Work-Family Conflict Mediate the Relationship Between Work-Family Culture and Self-Reported Distress? Evidence from Five Finnish Organizations

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Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology

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Many studies have found that supportive organizational cultures matter, but why is this so? One possible explanation is that supportive cultures make organizations more pleasant places to work, convey to workers that the organization cares about their well-being, and thus promote their health and well-being. In contrast, non-supportive cultures may aggravate work-family conflict and reduce well-being.

Participants in this study included 1,297 workers from five public and private work organizations in Finland. Most of the workers were between 35 and 54 years of age and were diverse in terms of education.

Workers who perceived the organizational culture as supportive in terms of work hours, management culture, and support for career development reported not only less work-family conflict but also less distress in the form of physical symptoms, exhaustion, and negative mood.

One of the main questions of the study was whether organizational culture operated through work-family conflict, or was related to well-being directly. Results showed that both organizational culture and work-family conflict were directly related to well-being.

Good news for corporate practitioners is that increasing the supportiveness of organizational cultures has implications for multiple aspects of well-being, regardless of whether or not work-family conflict is reduced.

Summary prepared by Shelley M. MacDermid

“...a family-friendly organizational culture was associated with employees’ well-being in terms of lower levels of self-reported symptoms of distress”

(P. 522)



Migration and Gender among Mexican Women

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American Sociological Review
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“The difficulties migrant women encounter in rebuilding social networks and reconstructing their lives outside the home could be exacerbated in new areas of migrant settlement ... to the absence of a sizable Hispanic community, relative underdevelopment of most Hispanic organizations, and dramatic male overrepresentation in the migrant population .”
(P. 628)

Studies on gender and migration have presented migration as an experience that empowers women by providing better opportunities and exposure to more egalitarian gender norms. Yet, studies have also questioned the equalizing effect of migration on gender relations.

The authors used surveys and interviews to gather quantitative and qualitative data in order to compare Mexican migrant women in Durham, NC and their counterparts in four communities in Michoacán, Guerrero, and Veracruz, Mexico.

Findings indicated that the effect of migration on gender relations was mixed, with both gains and losses for migrant women. Although women were more likely to be employed in the United States, women in Mexico who were employed were more likely to be educated.

Participation in the labor force increased the likelihood of husbands sharing household duties in Mexico more than in the United States. Overall, in areas such as division of labor within the household, relationship control, sexual negotiations, and symbolic differentiation, migrant women in the United States exhibited higher compliance with traditional gender roles than their peers in Mexico.

Results also indicated an important interaction between social support and migration. For migrant women, contact with friends was associated with higher male involvement in household chores, greater female participation in household finances, and more egalitarian symbolic representations. However, regular contact with family for these women reduced male involvement in housework, and undermined female participation in finances, perceived relationship control, and sexual negotiation power, as well as leading to more unequal symbolic representations.

Social isolation is a potential problem for anyone, but especially for immigrants who must construct new networks in their host country. For these migrant women, isolation from friends and family carried a variety of consequences. Opportunities for women appeared to be fostered by greater access to friends.

Summary prepared by Julia Becerra and Shelley M. MacDermid



Managing Multiple Roles: Work-Family Policies and Individuals' Desires for Segmentation

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Organization Science

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Many organizations recognize work-family balance as a crucial component in obtaining and maintaining a productive and committed work force. 'Boundary theory' suggests that workers vary in their desire to keep their roles separate or to integrate them. The authors of this study examined the relationship between employees' job satisfaction and commitment, and their desire to integrate or segment their work and family roles. Workplace policies also were examined for their fit with workers' priorities. For example, onsite childcare was thought to be most compatible with integration, while flextime was more compatible with segmentation. The key question was what happened to workers' satisfaction or commitment when they were faced with policies that were or were not a good match?

Data were collected via a survey from 460 employees at a public university. Researchers controlled for demographic factors such as age, number of children and marital status. Statistical models were created to examine the relationship between desire for segmentation or integration, perceived access to on-site child care and flextime, and job satisfaction and commitment.

Results indicated that workplace policies must be congruent with the values and desires of the employee in order to contribute to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This was particularly true for individuals who desired segmentation. When both segmenting and integrating policies were present, individuals who desired segmentation exhibited less job satisfaction and organizational commitment than when only segmenting policies were present.

The findings of this study suggest that employers would do well to ask questions about integrating vs. segmenting tendencies in employee surveys and to consider these priorities in designing, implementing, and communicating about workplace policies.

Summary prepared by Colleen Pagnan and Shelley M. MacDermid

"To manage the diversity of employee desires, organizations must foster a culture of respect where diversity of work-family desires are recognized and organizational representatives strive to help each employee meet their individual needs."

(P.255)



Parenting Strains, Distress, and Paid Family Labor: A Modification of the Cost-of-Caring Hypothesis

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Journal of Family Issues

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Although women experience greater psychological distress than men overall, existing studies have not generated consistent findings about whether mothers feel more parenting strains. As the number of dual-earner couples has risen, some research has suggested that the distribution of parenting responsibilities – and strains -- between mothers and fathers is becoming more equitable. The current study examined how paid employment was related to parenting strains and distress among mothers and fathers in two-parent families.

The sample was drawn from a larger community-wide study in Toronto between 1990 and 1991, and consisted of 324 women and 248 men. Data were collected in interviews with families who had at least one child.

The findings indicated that depression symptoms and anxiety related to the parenting role depended on how roles were distributed. In dual-earner families where both parents worked full-time, distress and parenting strains were equally shared. In couples where the father worked full-time and the mother either worked part-time or was at home full-time, distress was more apparent among mothers.

Although women in dual-earner families were more likely to share the stress of parenting with their partner, they still had higher rates of distress than their male counterparts. This may suggest that women who work full-time may experience multiple role demands that may contribute to their higher levels of distress.

“...although dual-earner men and women may be converging in some ways, there are other conditions – of both work and home – that need to be taken into account to explain gender differences in depression among dual-earner couples.”

(P. 1075)

Summary prepared by Karen Ruprecht and Shelley M. MacDermid



Transitions on the Margins of Work and Family Life for Low-Income African-American Fathers

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Journal of Family and Economic Issues

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Social changes have reduced opportunities for work and family for low-income African-American households. Researchers have theorized about how the resulting sporadic employment might reduce family involvement for low-income African American men.

The current study compared linkages between work and family life transitions in three different age cohorts. It examined how mothers of children and extended kin helped to negotiate men's roles as providers and caregivers in these families, and how these fathers secured a 'package deal' as workers and parents. Data were collected from fathers in a community-based program in Chicago using a life history interview that included calendar grids and other methods of gathering information. Participants were typically unemployed and looking for work, with an average of 2.3 children.

Findings indicated that most fathers endorsed the goals of career, marriage, fatherhood, financial security, and a home. Fathers' work histories, however, contained consistent turnover among all levels of jobs, and life history calendars showed that only half of the fathers had resided in a household with a partner and a child for 6 months or more. Long-term residential relationships had been set up by most of the oldest men (those over 35), but one fifth were involved only in transitional or short-term live-in relationships and one third had never resided with partners. Many fathers had contributed to the financial support of their parents, however.

The fathers in this study clearly understood that employment and financial resources were pathways to home, marriage, and family life, and they expressed desire to pursue these goals. Nonetheless, their inability to find and keep steady work and their complex family situations presented daunting challenges to their progress, especially for younger men.

"Many fathers distinguished their intimate relationships from the parenting of their children, and likewise they carved out a way to be involved with their children apart from providing, although failure as a provider could keep them out of relationships and households altogether."

(P. 90)

Summary prepared by Julia Becerra and Shelley M. MacDermid



Instability in Patchworks of Child Care When Moving From Welfare to Work

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Journal of Marriage and Family

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Central to the reformed welfare system is the requirement that recipients seek and maintain employment. Child care subsidies were provided to ease the transition from welfare to work for families with children, but their effectiveness is unclear.

The current study examined the child care arrangements of children whose mothers had moved from welfare to work. The data were part of a larger ethnographic study on Devolution and Urban Change in Cleveland, Ohio. Participants lived in low-income neighborhoods and had limited economic support from outside sources. In-depth interviews were conducted between 1997 and 2001 with 38 women who lived in two low-income neighborhoods. Women were asked questions regarding a broad range of experiences from moving to welfare to work and regarding their child care arrangements.

Findings indicated that women pieced together multiple care arrangements for their children because they were dissatisfied with their provider, they experienced difficulties obtaining their child care vouchers, and they faced changing and multiple work schedules. Many relied more on family child care homes than center-based care because of the flexibility of family child care and the scarce supply of center-based care that accommodated their schedules. When women had to piece together care to meet changing and demanding work schedules, they often used relative care even though these arrangements were frequently characterized by instability.

Existing welfare policies do not address the instability of childcare arrangements, which numerous studies have shown compromises child care quality. The researchers recommend that adequate resources are needed to expand the access to higher quality, flexible, and affordable child care for low-income working families.

Summary prepared by Colleen Pagnan & Shelley M. MacDermid

“When care arrangements are unstable, children’s emotional well-being and behavior can be negatively affected.”

(P. 373)



The Effect of a Family Policy Reform on Mothers' Pay: A Natural Experiment Approach

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Review of Economics of the Household

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Norway has a long tradition of having generous family policies. Since January 1999, parents with one- and two-year old children who do not use publicly subsidized day care are entitled to a "cash-for-care"-subsidy (CFC). This subsidy entitles parents to a flat rate, tax-free subsidy that is paid monthly up until the child is 36 months old. The main purpose of this reform was to encourage parents to spend more time with their children. However, critics wonder if the reform has negatively affected women's wages and labor force involvement.

Because parental leave in Norway already provides parents with one paid and one unpaid year of leave, the CFC reform means that parents (almost always mothers) can be out of the workforce for 3 years. Absence from the workplace for such a long time could slow skill development and reduce earning capacity.

The researchers examined the effect of CFC reform by comparing wage growth for mothers who were affected by the reform with those who were not. Differences in child age were controlled.

Overall, wages increased for both groups. Compared to mothers who were not eligible, CFC-eligible mothers were out of the labor market longer, and mothers with younger children spent longer periods of time out of the labor market than their counterparts with older children. When child age was controlled, CFC eligibility had no significant effect on mothers' wage growth, although wage growth was 3% smaller among CFC-eligible mothers when child age was not taken into consideration. Thus, while having young children depressed women's labor force participation and wage growth, the CFC policy did not appear to have an impact on wage growth.

"... [parental leave policies]...may give [women] a stronger attachment to the labour market and a specific job, and facilitate their subsequent re-entry into the labour market."

(P. 145)

Summary prepared by Colleen Pagnan and Shelley M. MacDermid



The Moderating Influence of Procedural Fairness on the Relationship Between Work-Life Conflict and Organizational Commitment

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Journal of Applied Psychology

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“... the financial costs associated with implementing decisions in procedurally fair ways are low, certainly in relation to the financial costs associated with implementing many content-based initiatives.”

(P. 22)

Work-life conflict occurs when work responsibilities complicate attending to other life activities. Work-life conflict is a problem not just because it compromises employees' personal well-being, but also because it reduces commitment to the employer.

The researchers hypothesized that fairness in implementing policies might offset some of the negative effects of work-life conflict. Specifically, they predicted that commitment would be less harmed by work-life conflict when employees perceived that consistent standards were used to make decisions, felt treated with respect and dignity, and felt that they had a voice in decision-making.

Three studies were conducted, two field surveys and one experiment. One field survey was conducted with 132 MBA students who were employed full time and enrolled in a part-time evening graduate business program, while the second surveyed 121 individuals who were employed in a financial services institution. In both surveys, higher levels of procedural fairness eradicated the negative relationship between work-life conflict and organizational commitment.

The third study was experimental, and used stories or vignettes constructed by the researchers to test the reactions of 42 full-time employees who were enrolled part-time in an evening MBA program in the northeastern United States. Each participant was assigned to one of four conditions: high or low work-life conflict and high or low procedural fairness. Consistent with the first two studies, higher levels of work-life conflict led to lower organizational commitment only when procedural fairness was low.

The researchers speculated that procedural fairness is interpreted by employees as a signal that they can trust their employer, and that employees who trust their employers are less likely to respond negatively when adverse conditions occur.

Summary prepared by Julia Becerra and Shelley M. MacDermid



Switching Off Mentally: Predictors and Consequences of Psychological Detachment from Work during Off-Job Time

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Journal of Organizational Health Psychology

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‘Employee engagement’ seems to be one of the buzzwords of the day in the work-life movement. As we all have recognized that face time is a poor indication of quantity or quality of work, focus has increased on the degree to which workers are focused on and mindful of the task at hand. On the flip side, as technology has blurred the boundaries between activities on and off the job, concerns have risen about the implications for workers when they never truly ‘shut off.’

These German researchers asked a question that should interest all of us: does it matter whether workers get an opportunity to detach from work during non-work time? A small sample of 87 workers from 10 public and private organizations provided data six times over a three-day period. Most participants were college-educated, lived with a spouse or partner, and had children.

Asked about five different types of activities that may have been engaged in after work (e.g., household and child care activities), and the degree to which thoughts about work had been absent during each activity.

Workers who were able to psychologically detach after work reported better well-being at bedtime, which in turn predicted better well-being the following day. High workload and time pressure, whether chronic or just that day, reduced the likelihood that workers would psychologically detach after work and in turn reduced well-being at bedtime. Long hours did not have the same effect, reducing detachment but not well-being.

Although reductions in time pressure would be an ideal method for promoting well-being, they are not always possible. As an alternative, it may be possible to teach employees how to become more skilled at psychologically disengaging after work.

Summary prepared by Shelley M. MacDermid

“The results of this study point to a paradoxical situation. ...when workload is high, need for recovery increases – but at the same time this high need for recovery is less likely to be satisfied.”

(P. 408)



Flexible Work Bundles and Organizational Competitiveness: A Cross-National Study of the European Work Context

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Journal of Organizational Behavior

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“... [flexible work arrangements] are predicted to be among the major issues facing the human resources profession in the coming years.”

(P. 926)

Employers around the world are using flexible work arrangements to attract and retain talented personnel. This study examined “bundles” of flexibility -- groups of interrelated human resource policies intended to help employees manage their work and non-work roles –in the European Union. The study also examined the relationships between flexibility and organizational competitiveness, including performance, absenteeism and turnover rates, and how that relationship varied depending on industry sector, organization size and supportiveness of the organization for women.

Data were collected from 14 of the 15 countries in the European Union using the “CRANET” questionnaire, a comprehensive human resources survey. Organizations were selected from lists provided by national federations, such as the Chamber of Commerce. Analyses included 2811 organizations with an average of 1546 employees.

The most commonly used flexible work arrangements were overtime, part-time work, fixed-term contracts, and temporary employment. There were four common bundles, which were linked to organizational effectiveness in the following ways:

Non-Standard Work Patterns (part-time, job sharing, flextime and fixed term contracts)	Decreased turnover in the private sector
Non-Standard Work Hours (weekend work, shift work and overtime)	Increased turnover
Work Away from the Office (home-based work and telecommuting)	Improved performance and reduced absenteeism
Outsourced Work (temporary employment and subcontracting)	Increased turnover

Not all forms of flexibility have the same outcomes, and employers need to take this into account when designing policies. Furthermore, flexibility policies differ in the degree to which they cater to the needs of workers vs. employers. Policies that fail to achieve the right balance may backfire in the form of increased turnover.

Summary prepared by Colleen Pagnan and Shelley M. MacDermid

Award Procedures

Structure of the Review Committee

The committee is chaired by Shelley M. MacDermid, Professor and Director of the Center for Families at Purdue University, and Director of the Midwestern Work-Family Association. During 2006, 41 reviewers from 9 countries participated in selecting the Kanter winners. Reviewers are invited to serve by the committee chair, using a variety of criteria. For example, reviewers are selected to represent a variety of scientific fields and institutions. International representation is desirable. Each year, nominees and winners from the prior year are invited to serve on the committee. Volunteers are invited to apply to join the committee via work-family networks and listservs. Both junior and advanced scholars are invited to serve, but most members are senior scholars with long publication records. Membership on the committee rotates on a staggered cycle of approximately three years.

Journals Reviewed

Articles in 74 journals were reviewed. The selection of journals was guided using four sources: an empirical study by Bob Drago, Professor of Labor Studies and Women's Studies at Penn State University, identifying where most of the work-family literature appears, the journals most frequently appearing in the citation database developed by the Sloan Work-Family Researchers' Network, and an informal survey of leading researchers about the journals they regularly read. Finally, members of the review panel are surveyed each year about journals they recommend adding to the list.

Qualifying Articles

The Kanter award is given to the authors of the best work-family research article published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal during a calendar year. No external nominations are accepted for the award. Instead, every article published in a large number of peer-reviewed scientific journals is scrutinized. The articles must be data-based and innovative (i.e., not summaries of existing research). Both qualitative and quantitative analyses are eligible.

Initial Pool of Nominees

Each reviewer was responsible for examining all articles published during the 2005 calendar year in 3-5 scientific journals. Each journal was examined by at least 2 reviewers, who nominated the articles they felt were deserving candidates for the Kanter award. Reviewers also were encouraged to nominate articles that they knew about through other sources.

Second Round

Each of the 67 nominated articles was sent to 2 reviewers, who scored it according to several standard criteria. The total scores were used to select the Kanter Top 20; the top 5 articles became finalists for the award.

Final Round

In the final round, all reviewers scored each of the 5 finalist articles to determine the winner. After the winners were chosen, reviewers were asked (as they are each year) to recommend revisions to the award process for the 2006 award.

Members of the Kanter Award Committee — 2006

Shelley M. MacDermid, Chair

The Center for Families at Purdue University

Tammy Allen	University of South Florida
Stella Anderson	Appalachian State University
Manfred Auer	University of Innsbruck, Austria
Anne Bardoel	Monash University, Australia
Peter Berg	Michigan State University
Deepti Bhatnagar	Indian Institute of Management, India
Forrest Briscoe	Pennsylvania State University
Michelle Budig	University of Massachusetts
Patrice Buzzanell	Purdue University
Gordon Cleveland	University of Toronto, Canada
Terri Cooney	University of Missouri
Emma Dentinger	Cornell University
Stew Friedman	Wharton University
Karen Gareis	Brandeis University
J.G. Grzywacz	Wake Forest University of Medicine
Tove Hammer	Cornell University
Eileen White Jahn	St. Joseph's College - Suffolk Campus
Jacquelyn James	Boston College
Ellen Kossek	Michigan State University
Liat Kulik	Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Vivien Lim	National University of Singapore
Karen Mumford	University of York, United Kingdom
Robert Orrange	Eastern Michigan University
Maureen Perry-Jenkins	University of Massachusetts
Steven Poelmans	University of Navarra, Spain
Patricia Roos	Rutgers University
Theresa Rothausen-Vange	University of St. Thomas
Nancy Rothbard	Wharton University
Susan Roxburgh	Kent State University
Graeme Russell	Macquarie University, Australia
Tara Saathoff-Wells	Central Michigan University
Brenda Seery	Penn State Worthington Scranton
Connie Shehan	University of Florida
Jennifer Swanberg	University of Kentucky
Stephen Sweet	Ithaca College
Jane Waldfogel	Columbia University
Mina Westman	Tel Aviv University, Israel
Marieke Van Willigen	East Carolina University
Stephen Wood	University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
Carrie Yodanis	University of British Columbia, Canada

Journals Reviewed

Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review
Administrative Science Quarterly
American Behavioral Scientist
American Journal of Sociology
American Psychologist
American Sociological Review
British Journal of Industrial Relations
British Journal of Sociology
Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences
Canadian Journal of Sociology
Canadian Journal on Aging
Canadian Psychology
Child Development
Community, Work, and Family
Demography
Developmental Psychology
Early Childhood Research Quarterly
Families in Society
Family Relations
Feminist Economics
Gender and Society
Gender, Work, & Organizations
Human Relations
Human Resource Management
Industrial and Labor Relations Review
Industrial Relations
International Journal of Stress Management
Journal of Aging Studies
Journal of Applied Psychology
Journal of Comparative Family Studies
Journal of Family and Economic Issues
Journal of Family Issues
Journal of Health and Social Behavior
Journal of Human Resources
Journal of Labor Economics
Journal of Management
Journal of Marriage and Family
Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psych.
Journal of Occupational Health Psychology
Journal of Organizational Behavior
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
Journal of Population Economics
Journal of Vocational Behavior
Journal of Women and Aging
Marriage and Family Review
Monthly Labor Review
Organization Behavior and Human Decision Making
Organization Science
Parenting: Science and Practice
Personnel Psychology
Psychology of Women Quarterly
Qualitative Sociology
Research on Aging
Research on Social Work Practice
Review of Economics of the Household
Sex Roles
Signs
Sloan Management Review
Social Forces
Social Problems
Social Psychology Quarterly
Social Science Quarterly
Social Science Research
Social Service Review
Social Work
Social Work Research
Sociological Forum
Sociology
The Gerontologist
Work and Occupations
Work and Stress
Journal of Gerontology: Psychological and Social Sciences

The Center for Families at Purdue University

The Center for Families works to strengthen the capacity of families to provide nurturing environments for their members. The center promotes decision-making that is both informed by rigorous research and responsive to families' needs, and works to make such research available, accessible, and understandable. It develops innovative ways to enhance the quality of life of children and families, and it creates and nurtures collaborations for change to improve the quality of life for families and children. Primary audiences for the center's work are educators, human service professionals, employers, and policy makers. The Center is home to **The Midwestern Work-Family Association**, a membership organization interested in family issues that offers employers of all sizes opportunities to address – individually and collectively – challenges confronting today's workplaces around issues of work and family.

The Boston College Center for Work & Family

Founded in 1990, the Boston College Center for Work & Family (www.bc.edu/cwf) is committed to enhancing the quality of life of today's work force by providing leadership for the integration of work and life, an essential for individual, organizational and community success. The Center strives to accomplish this goal through its research and education initiatives and through the Center's three corporate partnership organizations. The **Work & Family Roundtable** is a national membership organization of 45 employers committed to excellence in work/life with the mission to provide leadership to shape responses to the demands of work, home, and community in order to enhance employee effectiveness. **The New England Work & Family Association (NEWFA)** is our New England partnership group established in 1992 to help employers understand and address the complex work/life challenges facing today's workforce. In 2005, the Center formally expanded its work beyond the boundaries of the United States, with the launch of the Global Workforce Roundtable. The **Global Workforce Roundtable** provides a dynamic forum for a multicultural exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learned among leading corporations seeking to enhance their global workforce strategies.

Alliance for Work-Life Progress

Alliance for Work-Life Progress (www.awlp.org) is a global network of professionals committed to advancing work-life effectiveness. Founded in 1996, AWLP® facilitates work-life thought leadership, research and practical strategies to influence better integration of work, family and community. AWLP is part of WorldatWork (www.worldatwork.org), the total rewards association.

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