

Family-to-Work Conflict: Gender, Equity and Workplace Policies

Jia Zhao*
Barbara H. Settles**
Xuewen Sheng***

INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, as the increase in working mothers and changes in the role of "traditional fathers," working couples are faced with allocating and dividing family and work responsibilities. A large body of research has examined how couples create a sense of balance in the midst of enormous family and work-related responsibilities, trade-offs, and sacrifices (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Hakim, 2002; Maume, 2006; McElwain, Korabik & Rosin, 2005). Work-Family conflict (WFC) is a type of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Research suggests that WFC is reciprocal in nature due to the influences between work and family (e.g., Frone, Yardley, Markel, 1997, McElwain, et al., 2005; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). That is, work can interfere with family (WIF) and family can interfere with work (FIW) too. WIF and FIW are generally considered distinct but related constructs. The general demands of each role include the responsibility requirements, duties, commitments, and expectations related to performance in the given domain (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley, 2005).

For several decades, work-family research has attempted to understand the causes and consequences of work-family interface. Numerous studies link work-family conflict to job satisfaction (McElwain et al., 2005; Saginak & Saginak, 2005; Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002; Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000), suggesting that work-family conflict becomes one of the most important predictors on life satisfaction.

However, it is still not clear whether there are important moderators of the relationship between work and family demands, WIF/FIW and job satisfaction and how they affect this relationship; gender is the only moderator that has been studied, with inconsistent findings (Bedeian et al., 1988; Lamber, 1991; McElwain et al., 2005; Maume, 2006). In the United States, the culture of individualism espouses the value of gender equality and promotes egalitarianism between working couples. At the same time, there are few governmental or work place supports for families with dual employment. Examination of gender differences might support interest in family-supportive policy.

* Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 111 Alison Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, U.S.A.

** Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 111 Alison Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716 U.S.A.

*** Kansas State Department of Education, 120 SE 10th Avenue, Topeka, KS 66612-1182 U.S.A.

Work Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction

There are some universal findings across regions in the work-family literature. For example, the level of participation on the job is positively related to work-family conflict. Role overload and job responsibilities have been found as an antecedent of work-family conflict for both Hong Kong Chinese, Singaporean, and Western employees (Luk, 2002; Aryee, et al., 1999; Reynolds & Aletraris, 2007). The positive link between flexible work arrangement and work-family fit has also been documented by research conducted in China and the United States (Lo, 2003; Bond, et al., 2002). The model that job flexibility related to reduced work-family conflict increased job satisfaction has also been testified as transportable across four cultural groups based on a 48-country sample study (Hill, et al., 2004).

Theoretical models of work-family conflict also suggest domain-specific outcomes associated with WFC. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) found that the relationship between WIF and job satisfaction was stronger than the relationship between FIW and job satisfaction. Anderson, Coffey and Byerly (2002) developed and tested their model of relationship between various aspects of support, family structure, WIF/FIW, and employee outcomes, suggesting that a less flexible schedule, lower managerial support and the negative perception of family predicted WIF which led to lower job satisfaction, while FIW was predicted by family responsibilities, which in turn related to higher stress and frequent absence. Frone, Russell & Coope (1992) and Frone et al. (1997) asserted that WIF would predict only family stress while FIW is predictive of work dissatisfaction. McElwain, Korabik, and Rosin's (2005) integrative model of WFC further indicated that WIF and FIW, resulted from work demands and family demands, would result in low level of family satisfaction and job satisfaction, respectively.

Compared to a large proportion of studies focusing on the work demands and work-to-family conflict, responsibilities in family domain and family-to-work conflict have not been studied thoroughly. Work domain variables are more strongly represented than family domain variables (Eby, et al., 2005). With regard to the disagreement in previous studies and the limited research on family-related factors, the first purpose of this study is to examine the FIW's linking mechanism between family demands and job satisfaction.

Gender Issues in Work-Family Conflict

Gender difference is one of the most frequently tested moderators in WFC. Mixed evidence shows that men and women have different levels of WFC due to the unequal distribution of family responsibilities, although the boundary between work and family has become permeable for both men and women in recent decades (Dilworth, 2004) and contemporary men are believed to be involved more in housework and child care than their past counterparts (Bianchi, et al., 2000).

Generally speaking, in the United States, women's career development is still more subject to the family needs than men's. Research has indicated that men's employment status was generally unrelated to their fatherhood, and childless women were more likely to hold a paid job than mothers (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 2000). Maume (2006) provided evidence based on the samples of full-time married workers from 1992 National Study of the Changing Workforce

that women had more job trade-offs in response to husband's work efforts, whereas men's work restrictions were largely unresponsive to familial characteristics. Since men's contributions to household labor have not fully compensated for the increased time women spend away from home (Hochschild, 1989), many working women express their commitment to family life by opting for part-time work (Hakim, 2002).

Gender difference is not only found in terms of the experiences on work and family conflict but also in the ways that men and women balance the conflict. In other words, sex and gender role ideology moderates the relationship between coping style and WFC. Women achieve balance through giving priority to family and meeting the expectations at home, while men's feeling of balance rely more on the personal time out of work and scheduled changes due to family affairs (Keene & Quadagno, 2004; Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2007). These gendered ways to balance work and family are coherent with the social norms on gender roles in most societies.

There is no clear pattern in terms of the relative importance of work or family domain predictors for men and women's WFC, however, the relationship between WFC and outcomes does vary by gender, and gender moderates the enriching and depleting effects of work-family interactions. Traditional thinking assumes that women should do a greater share of household labor and childcare, and mothers may be particularly overloaded compared to fathers and women without children. Support for this assertion comes from the studies which find more role-related tensions and conflicts and higher subjective spillover among working mothers compared to other workers (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Eagle, Icenogle, Maes & Miles, 1998). Recent studies indicate that fathers play increasingly active role in family life (Bianchi et al., 2000; Townsend, 2002; Presser, 2003), and suggest that managing work and family commitments is a salient issue for all parents, regardless of sex. Changes in norms regarding fatherhood with expectations on more father involvement even created higher work-family conflict for fathers and reduced their job satisfaction (Roxburgh, 1999).

The division of labor becomes a key negotiation that couples experience as part of balancing work and family. "Who does what" and "how much" are two common questions that challenge couples in their attempts to fairly share in the division of labor. Studies have demonstrated that couples' perception of fairness is a critical factor in predicting family satisfaction and marital success, both for men and women, although they may have different perceptions as to what is fair and unfair (Burley, 1995; Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Stevens, Kiger and Riley, 2001). Achieving a sense of shared parenting led to success and happiness, even though wives tended to be more involved in parenting. Men and women tend to divide household and domestic labor based on what they perceive to be gender appropriate (Saginak & Saginak, 2005).

Gender differences in the impact of job conditions on job satisfaction have not been completely explored. Men and women maintain comparable levels of job satisfaction even though women's jobs are less gratifying in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Lambert, 1991). Internationally, the field of work and family has often been defined by the American scene in which very limited social and economic services and supports exist for families and work places are demanding in terms of time, energy and commitment. In other developed countries different work place supports and family benefits have been thought to cushion the interface

between work and family especially for women (Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, Hook, 2006). Even within the European Union's much more generous support systems there are large variations. For example such Nordic countries as Sweden have generous parental leave plans and attempt to involve fathers in the leave scheme, but still find that the part time and full time jobs to which women return are not so likely to be career oriented (Moen, 1989; Hass, 2003). Great Britain is rather similar to the USA in leaving most of the managing to the couple and having few services (Lewis, 2006). In the south of the EU government services and leave schemes are more limited and extended family play a major role in child care and support (Gallie & Russell, 2009). In the panel in which this paper was originally presented in Portugal the discussion suggested that when couples were able, in these less supportive countries to manage, that women's jobs were more on track in terms of careers and salary. Thus, we assume that family roles may contribute more to gender differences in job satisfaction. It's necessary to explore the family demands and FIW's effect on job satisfaction.

The second purpose of this study is to explore the influence of gender roles on FIW model as the moderator. Given by the discussions about the gender differences in the FIW's mediation effect which suggest that men are less likely than women to allow their employment to be interfered by family demands and FIW, we assume that the whole assumption about FIW's mediation roles may only hold true women but not for men.

The following two hypotheses are proposed based on the purposes of the current study and the findings from literature review:

H1: FIW mediates the relationship between family demands and job satisfaction. That is, greater family demands are associated with higher FIW, and in turn, higher FIW lead to lower job satisfaction.

H2: The mediating roles of FIW in the effects of family demands on job satisfaction are only hold true for women but not for men, because of the gender role differences in the FIW model. That is, family demands, in the form of childcare and household labor, cause FIW of mothers, but not of fathers.

METHOD

The 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) is selected as the source of data for analysis due to its representative of the U.S. national sample. A total of 3,504 interviews were completed with a nationwide cross-section of dual employed adults between October 2002 and June 2003. Telephone calls were made to a stratified (by region) non-clustered random probability sample generated by random-digit-dial methods.

Population

After limiting the sample of waged and salaried workers to those who reported that their partner worked for pay, the total sample size for current analysis was 1,744. Among these 1,744 respondents, 1,326 reported as parents who had at least one child and 895 of them had at least one child live with them for at least half of year and under 18 years of age. In order to

control the job status, the data from 711 respondents who had full-time jobs were analyzed in this study.

Summary data are shown in Table 1, the overall sample had a mean age of 40, fathers (average age 41.2) were slightly older than mothers (average age 38.6). Majority of respondents were white with 80.7 percent, 9.4 percent of them were black or African American, and 9.9 percent were from other ethnicity groups More than 70 percent of respondents had a college degree or above, representing a group of well-educated workers. The average number of children was 2.4. Chi-square and t-test indicated that fathers and mothers in this sample had no significant difference in education and number of children.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents as Fathers and Mothers.

Demographic characteristics	Overall N = 711	Father N = 338	Mother N = 373
Age	39.92(8.4)	41.20(8.2)	38.63(8.4)
Ethnicity			
White	80.7	77.5	81.8
Black or African American	9.4	10.1	8.6
Other ethnicities	9.9	12.4	9.6
Education			
Less than high school	3.2	4.1	2.4
High school, GED, or beyond	25.7	27.2	24.4
Some college(post-secondary), college, or professional degree	59.8	57.5	61.9
Master or Doctorate	11.3	11.2	11.3
Number of children (1-11)	2.44(1.3)	2.50(1.3)	2.38(1.4)

Dependent Variable

Job Satisfaction

Four Likert scale items are used to assess job satisfaction: (1) "All in all, how satisfied are you with your job?" (2) "Knowing what you know now, if you had to decide all over again whether to enter the same line of work you are in now or take the job you now have, what would you decide?," (3) "How true is the following statement about your job: I have the opportunity to develop my own special abilities." (4) "How satisfied are you with how much you earn in your job?" Total scores from the questions were used as measure of job satisfaction. Higher score means higher job satisfaction (Cronbach's alpha of 0.71).

Independent Variables

Demographic Information.

Gender roles and paid working hours per week are two key demographic variables involved in this analysis. Gender has been hypothesized as a moderator of the relationship among family demands, FIW and job satisfaction. Paid working hours is another important covariate

which is used to control the effect of job demand. Paid working hours per week was measured by the number of weekly work hours.

Family Demand

Family demand was a latent variable and was assessed from two main aspects: home chores and child care. Three items were used to measure the relative amount of housework (cooking and cleaning) and childcare respondents contribute. Housework part included two items: "In your household, who takes the greatest responsibility for cooking;" "In your household, who takes the greatest responsibility for cleaning." The item for responsibility of child care was "In your household, who takes the greatest responsibility for routine care of children." The sum scores (alpha of 0.72) of these two items measures the responsibility of home chore.

Family Interferes with Work (FIW)

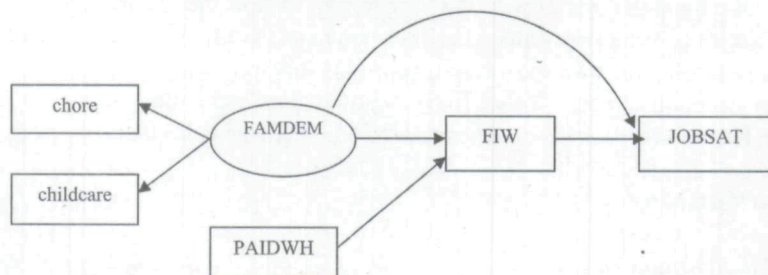
Five items in 2002 NSCW assessed how personal and family life interferes with work, including (1) "how often have you not been in as good a mood as you would like to be at work because of your personal and family life?" (2) "How often has your family or personal life kept you from doing as good a job at work as you could?" (3) "In the past three months, how often has your family or personal life drained you of the energy you needed to do your job?" (4) "How often has your family or personal life kept you from concentrating on your job?" (5) "How often have you not had enough time for your job because of your family?" This scale had an alpha of 0.82.

STRATEGIES OF DATA ANALYSIS

To test the two conceptual hypotheses, a structure equation model was proposed as illustrated in Figure 1. This model states that, as paid weekly work hours are controlled, family demand measured by responsibility of family chore and responsibility of child care affect job satisfaction indirectly through FIW. A direct effect line was also added to detect possible direct effects of family demand on job satisfaction.

Figure 1.

An Illustration of Proposed Structure Equation Model on Family Demands



Note. "chore" refers to responsibility on family chores; "childcare" refers to responsibility on child care; "FAMDEM" refers to family demands; "FIW" refers to family-to-work interference; "JOBSAT" refers to job satisfaction; "PAIDWH" refers to paid work hours.

This model was examined in two steps. In the first step, an overall model containing both male and female samples was estimated to test hypothesis 1. In the second step, two separate models for men and for women were estimated to test hypothesis 2. Data analysis was conducted using *Mplus*.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

As reported in Table 2, mothers took significantly more responsibility of both family chore and child care than fathers did ($p < .001$). These results indicated that mothers carried more family responsibilities than did fathers. Fathers were shown to work more hours weekly (48 hours) than did mothers (44 hours). The gender differences on family interfere with work (FIW) and job satisfaction (PAIDWH) were not significant.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables Significantly.

Variables	Sample	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	t-test (df=664)
RESPCHORE	Overall	666	4	1	4	2.25	1.53	
	Father	322	4	1	4	1.09	1.08	-27.72***
	Mother	344	4	1	4	3.33	1.00	
RESPCHILD	Overall	666	3	0	2	1.12	0.81	
	Father	322	3	0	2	0.57	0.64	-22.59***
	Mother	344	3	0	2	1.63	0.58	
FIW	Overall	666	20	7	27	16.24	3.92	
	Father	322	20	7	27	15.96	3.85	1.72
	Mother	344	20	7	27	16.50	3.97	
JOBSAT	Overall	666	9	6	15	12.23	1.97	
	Father	322	8	7	15	12.09	1.93	-1.70
	Mother	344	9	6	15	12.35	2.00	
PAIDWH	Overall	666	55	20	75	46.28	8.22	
	Father	322	48	27	75	48.39	8.24	6.63***
	Mother	344	55	20	75	44.30	7.91	

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$.

Model Estimation

As reported in the second column of Table 3, as well as illustrated Figure 2, the overall model presented a very good model fit with an insignificant Chi-square value of 5.54 (df=3), a CFI value of 0.99, a TLI value of 0.98, a RMSEA value of 0.036, and a ARMR value of 0.017. The model estimates of family demand measures showed that family chore took a large part of the total weight (1.000) in measuring family demand, in comparison to that of child care (0.543). The model's estimates of parameters indicated that, although no direct effect of family demand on job satisfaction ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.114$) was found, there was a statistically significant positive effect of family demand on FIW ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.453^{**}$), which in turn has a sizable negative effect on job satisfaction ($\hat{\alpha} = -0.075^{***}$). These results suggested that, as total paid work hour(s) was

controlled, family demand have no direct effect on job satisfaction, but affect it indirectly through FIW. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 3.

		Estimates of Statistical Models.		
		Model 1 (Overall)	Model 2 (Father) ^a	Model 3 (Mother) ^a
<i>Tests of model fit</i>				
	Chi-square test	5.54 (df = 3)		11.21(df = 8)
	CFI	0.99		0.93
	TLI	0.98		0.83
	RMSEA	0.036		0.035
	SRMR	0.017		0.028
<i>Estimates of Parameters</i>				
JOBSAT on				
	FIW	-0.075*** ^b	-0.086**	-0.064*
	FAMDEM	0.114	0.048	0.028
FIW on				
	FAMDEM	0.453**	1.221	1.272*
	PAIDWH	0.019	-0.001	0.041
<i>Estimates of Measures</i>				
FAMDEM by				
	CHORE	1.000 ^c	1.000 ^c	1.000 ^c
	CHILD	0.543	0.478	0.478

Note. (a) Model 2 and model 3 were estimated in a multi-group model, so that they share a single set of model fit measures. (b) * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$. (c) This value equals to 1 because Mplus set the first variable as reference variable by default.

Similar results were found in model 2 and model 3, as explicitly presented in the third and fourth columns of Table 3 and also illustrated by Figure 3-4. There was a good model fit of the data with a non-significant Chi-square value of 11.21 (CFI=0.93, TLI=0.83, RMSEA = 0.035, and SRMR = 0.028). The estimated results of parameters for Model 2 and Model 3 reported in Table 3 showed a strong consistence with that of model 1, except for the insignificant effect of the family demand on FIW for fathers in Model 2 ($\hat{a} = 1.221$). Because of this exception, the model failed to hold true for fathers. While mothers' FIW was highly affected by their family demands, fathers' FIW was not associated with the increase of their family demands, resulting in a disconnected link between family demands and job satisfaction in fathers' model. One of the possible explanations for this gender difference is that fathers carried less housework duties than do mothers, according to this data, so that their work is less like to be interfered by their family demands. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is supported.

In conclusion, by showing the mediating role of FIW in the effect of family demands on job satisfaction and the gender differences involved in the process, this study supports current discussion about effect of family demands on job satisfaction in general. This study suggests that greater family demands are associated with higher FIW, and in turn, higher FIW lead to lower job satisfaction. However, this study proved that the model is only valid for mothers but not for fathers. Family demands measured by childcare and household labor may cause

Figure 2.

Parameter Estimates for Model 1 (Overall).

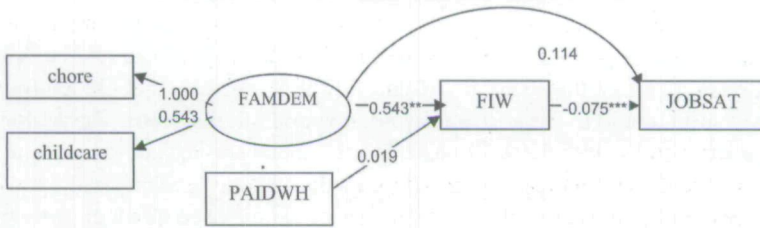


Figure 3.

Parameter Estimates for Model 2 (Fathers).

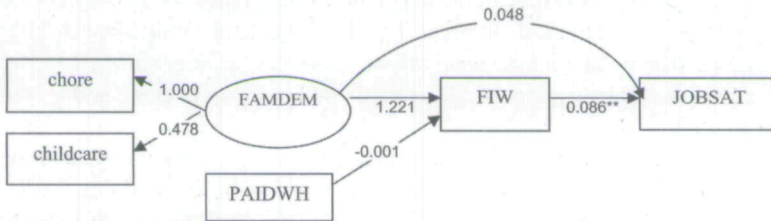
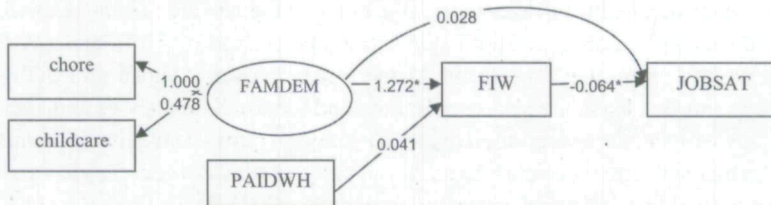


Figure 4.

Parameter Estimates for Model 3 (Mothers).



an increase in family interference among mothers rather than fathers, probably because fathers take less family responsibilities than mothers do.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study developed a gender model to assess gender role differences in family-work interface. Results were generally consistent with previous research, indicating an asymmetry between fathers and mothers in their work and family roles (Bielby & Bielby, 1989; Roxburg, 1999; Spain & Bianchi, 1996). The current model fits well in the subsample of mothers, which indicates that those who shoulder higher level family demands will also experience higher level of FIW, and thus have a relative lower job satisfaction. But for fathers, the model needs to be modified as family demands do not influence job satisfaction in the same way.

The simple gender work-family model shown here does not address all the nuances of the relationships between family and work stress and adaptation. However, this model does fit the way this problem has been conceptualized and measured in the USA and elsewhere in the world. The emphasis on there being a different dynamic for men and women in adapting to stress in both domains often comes out sounding like this is personal choice or a couple's decision alone outside of the society. Voydanoff (2005) suggests that the analysis of work and family should attend to the community context and microsystem. The options couples face are constrained by both the workplace and the social services of the particular society and their own locale within the society. Although the attitudes and behaviors towards work and family responsibilities are still changing, it is not at the pace in which the workforce is evolving. Programs, policies, and interventions for organizations that will best address the needs of the employees still need to be developed.

Working parents with flexible time demands in the United States show more job satisfaction, better job retention, and increased initiative. The flexibility to accommodate children's school schedules, participate in their educational activities, supervise older children and adolescents can play a significant role in supporting parental and family well-being and helping parents retain their jobs (Williams, 2006). Some U.S. employers have experimented with approaches to implementing greater workplace flexibility for low-wage workers. Related approaches include recruiting to specific shifts so workers can plan for these schedules, "shift bidding," cross-training staff for greater organizational flexibility, and investment in technology to support work at home (Levin-Epstein, 2007; WFD Consulting, 2006).

However, only a small sector of the labor market is covered by collective bargaining representation (Hollister, 2004) and family issues have been less a focus of those contracts than other benefits. Health insurance and retirement schemes are regularly available only through full time employment for both men and women (Grunow, Hofmeister & Buchholz, 2006). Light (2004) notes that almost half of American employers do not offer health insurance. Family leave and sick leave are also very limited and the small businesses and agencies, that employ many women, are not required to meet the federal family leave requirements and may not have formal sick leave policies. In addition, couples may not feel free to exercise these policies because of fears about job security (Voydanoff, 2004). At the federal level, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) was enacted to give workers the right to job-protected leaves of absence from work for family or medical reasons on a gender neutral basis. Five states, including California, Hawaii, New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, provide paid leave at the birth of a child through temporary disability insurance (TDI) programs or through paid family leave insurance. The eligibility requirements, which generally include minimum past earnings or work hours, and the fact that wage replacement is only partial, may limit use by low-income parents (Brusentsev & Vroman, 2007).

Vacation and overtime (out of the regulate work hours) policies are also not quite well developed in the USA and more erratic in terms of timing with considerable fewer days of vacation and holidays than in other developed countries. Overtime is often required even in industries that are in collective bargaining with unions. Shift work frequently rotates more often than is recommended for employee adjustment. Among dual earner couples one in three have shift work for at least one partner. Parents who work alternating shifts have many stresses, with night shifts being most difficult for young mothers (Presser, 2000, Perry-

Jenkins, Goldberg, Pierce & Sayer, 2007). Child care arrangements are often unstable in the USA especially as parents rely on informal caregivers. The mismatch between parents' ideals, planning and the available services often leads to changing arrangements and instability (Gordon & Hognäs, 2006). Part time work may allow more hours for a parent to care for children and other family members, but usually at great cost in terms of wage rates for time worked and loss of most or all benefits. In fact motherhood itself has often correlated with lower wages (Avellar & Smock, 2003).

The literature on occupational attainment suggests that the women's careers are constrained if they take time out for child rearing or reduce hours and that even those who remain in the labor market face discrimination and gender segregation (Warren, Hauser & Sheridan, 2002), specifically in terms of promotion where their supervisors are male (Elliot & Smith, 2004). In addition to straight forward gender based stresses, there are many less obvious stereotypes that have little to do with "animus or conscious prejudice" that influence work place outcomes (Gorman, 2005, 725) i.e., hiring, promotion, and work place atmosphere.

Mothers who have re-entered the work force through public assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) legislation are likely to be working at jobs with low wages and little or no benefits. They cannot drop out of the work force without endangering any eligibility for government programs. While they are eligible for child care assistance the number of places is limited in most locales especially for quality care, so many have to patch together care from several sources, and they are not relieved of the obligation to be in the work force when child care is not available (Scott, London & Hurst, 2005). Public and private subsidies are in short supply in the USA. The largest public program, the federal-state Child Care and Development Fund, serves only about 14 percent of federally eligible children (NACCRRRA, 2006). The most common employer strategies are creating pretax dependent care assistance plans and providing information about care options and a small proportion of employers provide on- or near-site care, subsidized or emergency.

In terms of careers and work expectations the early years of employment have the least flexibility, vacation, and leave options, with strong expectations in white collar jobs, professions, and management to work more than the agreed work week. This phenomenon is the "exempt from fair labor practices" clause which allows for no overtime to be paid for such extra work. Restructuring work for both men and women to require less burden would be helpful (Mandel & Semyonov, 2005). While the dramatic shift toward a major contribution of women's wage work to family income and even some increase in them being a-primary, there is not a similar dramatic change in family responsibilities (Raley, Mattingly & Bianchi, 2006). The division of household labor between each couple has altered only gradually toward equity (mostly by women reducing their hours of housework) and leads to some stark alternatives for a woman who sees it as a burden: tolerate it, leave the labor market, leave their husbands, or renegotiate the domestic division of labor (Gershuny, Bittman & Brice, 2005).

The market economy in the USA and the local government has made some supportive services in the USA. After-school programs are commonly available in most communities providing for elementary school children, help with home work and supervised play. Some communities are now subsidizing adult day care for the disabled and the frail elderly which allows them to stay with their families who can then have regular employment. Camps and

day programs are widely available to cover the long summer school break. Because these services are delivered by a multitude of not-for-profit organizations, small businesses and local governmental entities, the knowledge about availability, eligibility and possible subsidies requires families to do a lot of comparison shopping and coordination. Managing the interfaces among services and dealing with the primarily personal system of automobile transportation of family members by family members are other sources of stress when transitions are not coordinated with work schedules.

In the USA we tend to see work and family balancing as each family's problem and not a societal challenge. Work places primarily set up referral services rather than provide services or subsidies. Government tends to vest the smallest units of local government with responsibility for providing or encouraging specialize services or support. Even when there is shared federal funding the state or local governmental unit may craft diverse offerings and requirements. In addition to whatever stresses occur in the specific job demands of dual employed couples, the families face a culture that expects them to handle any other problems on their own.

Dual employment is itself a strategy for dealing with the uncertainties of jobs in a constantly changing global work demand. Life time employment or even long term employment in one company is now more an exception than a rule. The likelihood that the couple's two jobs will together supply a better mix of compensation and benefits helps to cover the underlying lack of a societal safety net. The finding that women make most of the accommodations to family stresses by curtailing number of hours in the work place or going in and out of jobs has a least two rationales. One reason is that the gendered wage differences still prevail and that less compensation is lost by her curtailing work place participation. Secondly, her job is less likely to have the health care benefit and his job may be more critical to maintaining coverage. If couples operated as "economic men" in the traditional economic sense, they might be influenced by long term benefits of a woman's employment and the demography that suggests her own long term financial independence is more likely to be served by maintaining a working career (Vartanian & McNamara, 2002). However, the stressors are immediate and the rewards are far down the road and the family and the culture is still favoring a gendered response. Women are more influenced than men by their children's needs and their spouse's job requirements in cutting back hours or leaving employment (Maume, 2006). It is also true that women's access to the labor force is shaped by current economic opportunities and constraints. What was seen for the last three years as women responding to family demands by leaving employment and having cutting hours is now being recast as the beginning of the current recession layoffs outsources, etc. and lower raises and wages (Uchitelle, 2008).

This American example-suggests that dual employment is the strategy for hedging global economic change most likely to affect families throughout the economy. Even when few social supports are provided, families struggle to maintain this strategy. Emergencies and family transitions push hard on this strategy, leading to some curtailment of participation, but often to a return to the job market.

Looking at the situation in other countries where more supports for families and secure medical care are available, women still seem to have a less secure attachment to the workplace and often less opportunity for advancement. Family care responsibilities for the young, the

old, and the disabled may be mitigated by services and in home outreach of programs, but the coordination and much of the direct care still is seen as a woman's role. Gendered differences in family responsibilities continue even when there are egalitarian ideologies and so-called family friendly policies although not as extreme as in more traditional societies (Fuwa, 2004). The very family friendly policies of "parental or child care leaves can disadvantage women by reducing current resources and long term alternatives" (Hook, 2006, 644). In contrast expansion of public sector employment and making available services such as subsidized child care do less harm to women's work and pay (Mandel & Semyonov, 2005). Those services that make it easier for couple employment such as respite care, day care, after-school care, and health care in non standard hours have not been as widely developed as they are needed. Looking at gender differences in response to managing the work family interface, the lack of equivalent response by men and women across cultures, policies and development suggests a certain circularity in work place relationships. Expectations for women to make the adaptations to home demands and provide the balance are also fed by the continuing differentials in wages, opportunities, hostile work environments and policies that make exit easier than entry to the workforce. Men seem still to be isolated from family needs in structuring their work experience and tend to react to increased needs by increasing work hours or taking second jobs. The complexity of developing work family policies and programs that promote a wholesome relationship of the two institutions and real opportunity remains a challenge everywhere. Still the extra flexibility and security of two paychecks is critical to young families in a world of global economic troubles and frequent job losses.

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