# The Sociology of Work

## CONCEPTS AND CASES

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# 6 Combining Work and Family

A couple in Philadelphia has been married 2 years. One spouse is offered a wonderful job opportunity in a suburb of Chicago. The other has recently changed jobs in the Philadelphia area to take advantage of an equally wonderful job opportunity. After long discussions, they decide that he will live in Chicago and she will remain in Philadelphia. They decide to try a commuting relationship so that they can still spend time with one another.

A small group of women have gathered in a neighbor's front yard on a pleasant summer evening. Their conversation turns to discussions of how they each feel about their current child-care arrangements. One woman explains that although she is glad she decided to stay home with her children, she is frazzled at the end of each day. Another woman enjoys the home child care provided by a woman in the neighborhood, but complains that the woman occasionally has other obligations that interfere with a regular schedule of child care. She also talks of the difficulty she has getting her husband to help with the housework.

The third woman is afraid to say anything. Her children happily go to an on-site child-care center run by her employer. She and her husband share household tasks. She mows the lawn; he does the laundry. She takes the children to the child-care center more often than he does, but he usually makes the lunches for the kids. Any comments she makes will sound like boasting or whining to her frazzled peers. Nevertheless, both she and her husband feel that there are time constraints imposed on their family by work demands.

Many families fail to balance work and family in a way that satisfies everyone involved. These families may feel that their dilemmas and difficulties are a result of their individual situation. To better understand the many societal and organizational variables that affect the situations of the men and women described above, we

must look at the structure of the relationship between work and family. We begin by looking at the history of the relationship between work and family.

## Societal Changes

A number of economic and demographic shifts and changes have had a large impact on the relationship between family and work. If employers want to be able to hire their most qualified job applicants, they need to recognize the implications of societal changes and provide new benefits to meet the changing needs and desires of workers.

### *Economic Shifts*

Although the media would have us believe that families in which both husbands and wives work are a relatively new phenomenon, this is not the case. A century ago, however, it is unlikely that a family would have discussed the tensions between work and family. Although both husband and wife worked hard, they did not leave the family property to do their work; they worked side by side on a farm. As soon as children were old enough, they took part in the work on the farm. Families who did not farm were likely to own small businesses, which often were located in or near the home. As soon as children were able, they worked in the family business. Entire families worked together in an agricultural economy. Farm families often worked from dawn to dusk just to sustain themselves, and everyone collapsed exhausted at the end of a day. If children had talents better used in another type of work, those talents went untapped. If the intense relationship with their family as a result of both working and playing together was undesirable to them, there was no escape.

Because the home and the workplace were typically co-located, many of the tensions between work and family that both adults and children now experience were eliminated. Men and women did not need to live in two different cities, look for affordable high-quality child care, or negotiate domestic tasks. As you read Case Study 6.1, Elise Boulding's "The Labor of U.S. Farm Women: A Knowledge Gap," you will find that the description from the early part of this century still holds in some respects but that these women's lives are also affected by current societal trends.

In the last century, our society shifted from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing economy and then to a service economy. These economic shifts led men and women to jobs in factories and companies, sometimes only minutes but often an hour or more from

the family domicile. This separation of work and family led to many dilemmas for families.

### *Social and Demographic Trends*

The most notable trend affecting work and family is that women's labor force participation has increased dramatically over the last several decades. Currently, 58.7 percent of women 16 years and over are a part of the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995b: Table A1-13). Over 60 million women and 71 million men are in the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995b: Table A-2). Despite the increase in labor force participation for all women, the most dramatic changes have occurred for married women and married women with children. The labor force participation rate of married women with children increased from 27.6 percent to 69.0 percent in the last 35 years. More than 55 percent of married women with children under 1 year of age are part of the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995c: Table 47). The labor force participation rate of divorced women, particularly those with children 6 to 17 years of age, has been high for the last several decades, now reaching nearly 85 percent, which is higher than the overall labor force participation rate for men (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995c: Table 15). More women than ever before are part of the labor force. That has many implications for the relationship between work and family, since women traditionally have been full-time caretakers of the children and the home.

A second trend is that individuals are more geographically mobile than ever before, often moving to take advantage of job opportunities. Sometimes geographic mobility means that couples, whether married or not, need to live in different places for job-related reasons. Commuter couples may live 300 or even 3,000 miles apart. They may see each other every weekend or every holiday. The couple may talk often on the telephone or choose to save their conversations for when they see each other in person. Case Study 6.2, "Commuter Marriage: Deciding to Commute," by Naomi Gerstel and Harriet Gross, considers what causes couples committed to both their marriages and their careers to make the decision to set up homes in two different locales. In addition, as a result of increased geographic mobility, workers with children are less likely to be living near the relatives who might have served as caregivers for their children.

Two demographic trends are increased life expectancy and a lower birth rate. Both men and women are living longer than ever before, and couples are having fewer children. Even women who stay home with their children devote fewer years to childbearing and childrearing. Women's interest in and need to work have increased

the likelihood that women who are wives and mothers are a part of the labor force. Moreover, increased life expectancy and changing expectations about the years after retirement have caused grandparents in better health to devote their later years to activities of their choice rather than obligatory care of their grandchildren.

In addition, the increase of jobs in the service sector has resulted in more white-collar workers than in the past. The nature of white-collar work requires that they be at their place of work during "normal" working hours. This, of course, makes it impossible for white-collar workers to institute the two-shift child-care schedule of some blue-collar families. A couple engaged in blue-collar work might be able to choose among three shifts (morning, evening, and night) and arrange their work schedules so that one parent is always available to care for young children or provide after-school care for older children. White-collar workers are less likely to have that choice.

Another societal trend is the increased number of single-parent families. Single parents have even fewer choices than either white-collar or blue-collar two-parent families. For single-parent families, the heightened tensions between work and family, especially with regard to income and child-care issues, have brought needed media attention. The difficulty in balancing work schedules and family needs has also attracted more attention as high-powered, white-collar, dual-career couples confront work and family issues. Some dual-career couples in high-powered careers may find that their needs for child care far exceed the traditional 40-hour work week, further compounding child-care problems. This has brought additional media and corporate attention to child-care issues.

Although the relationship between work and family receives a lot of media attention, our society has not yet adapted to either dual-worker households or single-parent families. Few employers provide the family services or flexibility needed and desired by both their male and female employees to nurture their children.

## Family Priorities and Preferences

Family priorities and preferences may have an impact on the choice to work, the choice of occupation, and the selection of an employer. When individuals consider family factors, they weigh them in different ways. Whereas one person may choose nursing because the demand is high in nearly every part of the country, another may choose farming because work and family are co-located. While early family experiences may affect the initial choice, individuals may

choose employers on the basis of fringe benefits, such as health insurance, retirement contributions, or work scheduling flexibility. Consideration of such criteria by potential employees should encourage employers to examine their policies carefully.

### *Impact of Early Family Experiences*

A family's position in the social stratification hierarchy is determined by the occupation and income of its adult members. The family of the elementary school custodian is located lower in the stratification hierarchy than the family of the school district's superintendent of schools. The social position of the family of the owner of five car dealerships is higher than that of the mechanic who fixes the Mercedes for his boss. The occupations of adult family members can determine the social position of the family and have a dramatic future effect on the social position of children as a result of influence on occupational aspirations and choice.

In addition, fathers' and mothers' choices about the relationship between work and family and children's perceptions of their parents' feelings about those choices can influence children's later choices. In Case Study 6.3, "Elizabeth: I Was Raised To Do Everything," by Michele Hoffnung, you will see how one woman made and implemented her decisions about work, marriage, and motherhood.

### *Job Security and Fringe Benefits*

Men and women consider family in their choice of work, but sometimes in different ways. Because of the persistent stereotype of father as provider, some men feel a special obligation to choose a higher paying job when presented with a number of occupational options. They will not necessarily weigh the salary over everything else, but the income and security a job provides may play a greater role in their choice than it does for some women. As families have changed, however, with more women remaining single longer, becoming divorced, or finding themselves as the primary or single economic provider, women are more likely than before to make pay and job security their first priority.

Other women and men may choose jobs that give them geographic mobility so that they can relocate with a spouse or move to a place they have always dreamed of, knowing that they are highly employable. When looking at potential employers, some individuals want to be assured that the company they work for has relocation services that will help them and their spouse if they are transferred. These relocation services may not only cover relocation expenses, but

also help in finding new housing for the family and a new job for a currently employed spouse.

Employees are increasingly interested in benefits that affect their families in the present and in the future. One immediate concern is that of health insurance. In this era of spiraling health costs, it is increasingly important that individuals have adequate medical coverage. Employees who can choose among job offers may sacrifice a higher salary for better health care benefits. Potential employees may be looking for health care coverage not only for themselves but also for children, a spouse, and other legal dependents. In New York City, heterosexual and homosexual domestic partners are using the new registry for unmarried couples to officially acknowledge their commitment to each other. The purpose is to provide these committed couples, a majority of whom are gay and lesbian, with the same rights accorded married couples. This has helped some couples secure the health insurance coverage available to other families and their dependents (Richardson, 1993). The Lotus Development Corporation began offering medical benefits to gay and lesbian employees in 1991 and joined the ranks of other companies such as Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream that provide such benefits (Noble, 1993b). Nevertheless, benefits offered by domestic partner plans are taxable because the Internal Revenue Service does not recognize such partners as official dependents. And residents of Austin, Texas, recently voted to repeal a law that gave city employees the possibility of extending their health insurance benefits to domestic partners (Rowland, 1994). Although many employers include health insurance among the fringe benefits they provide for their full-time employees, those working less than full-time and for smaller companies are less likely to receive health care benefits. For example, about 25 percent of those who work 25 to 34 hours a week have employer-provided health insurance compared to over 60 percent of those who work 35 hours a week or more. While 78 percent of men and 64 percent of women who work at companies with over 100 employees are insured through their employer, this is true for only 35 percent of men and 23 percent of women at companies with less than 25 employees. And 75 percent of the uninsured women are, in fact, employed (Noble, 1994b). Provision of adequate health care benefits was at the center of the reform of the health care system proposed by President Clinton.

Although health insurance is one of the more immediate concerns of workers, long-term retirement benefits are also of increasing interest. Retirement benefits that accrue to a worker's spouse and children are even more attractive. Some employers provide life insurance of

one and a half times the employee's salary as an additional enticement. To retain such benefits, a worker might stay in a job that he or she might otherwise leave, or a worker may change jobs to obtain retirement benefits.

### *Care of Children and Other Dependents*

Although the media occasionally reduce the cause of a dual-worker couple's need for child care to the fact that the mother works, it is more accurate to say that the need for child care arises from the fact that both father and mother work or that the single parent works. Some parents can take care of their children and aged relatives if their job provides the appropriate flexibility, while most will need to seek the help of others to deal with these responsibilities.

***Time and Flexibility.*** Although pay and job security are top priorities for some, job flexibility is becoming a higher priority for others. Computer networks, electronic mail, voice mail, and fax machines provide some workers with the flexibility to do their work in a variety of locations, including their own home. This **telecommuting** is one way individuals can combine work and family responsibilities. A vice president at Banker's Trust in New York City works in the office 3 days a week and out of her home 2 days a week. Telecommuting allows her to work with the bank accounts of those as far away as New Zealand. This vice president's productivity is higher than that of many of her colleagues who spend their entire week in their offices at Banker's Trust (Calem, 1993).

Others report choosing particular occupations because of the work schedule. Some women and men suggest that one of their many reasons for choosing teaching was so that they could be with their children after school and during the summer vacation months (Lortie, 1975). Women are more likely than men to work part-time and may choose occupations in which many part-time jobs are readily available. In addition, women and men with children may choose to be employed by organizations that offer a flexible schedule for full-time workers. For example, the National Treasury Employees Union, which acts as the collective bargaining agent for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, successfully negotiated for an Alternative Work Schedules program. The program offers two compressed work schedule options: four 10-hour days per week, or eight 9-hour days and one 8-hour day and one day off during each 2-week period. Employees can also now vary their starting and ending time from day to day as long as it is within an established time range. It is an employee's option to work and accumulate credit hours that can

be used to take time off. This is similar to compensatory ("comp") time, but it is a right and is largely at the employee's discretion rather than that of the manager.

Couples may also be interested in jobs that offer shift work. Studies consistently show that although mothers still do more child care than fathers, it is often a shared responsibility. A U.S. Census Bureau survey found that 20 percent of preschool children are cared for by their fathers, the greatest increase in the last decade (Chira, 1993). As you read Case Study 6.4, "Beating Time/Making Time: The Impact of Work Scheduling on Men's Family Roles," by Jane Hood and Susan Golden, you will see the impact that work scheduling had on the lives of two families. Employment that offers job sharing so that two unrelated individuals can share a job may be appealing to some as a solution to their child-care difficulties. The schedule for two clerical workers sharing a job might be such that one woman works in the morning and the other works in the afternoon, providing their company with the services of a full-time clerical worker. This schedule may allow the two women to more easily balance their work and family responsibilities. The most liberal of these is offered by some colleges and universities. On occasion, a husband and wife in the same academic field may share one full-time teaching position. Couples may make this choice to both accommodate family needs and increase the time available to pursue research.

Some workers choose employers who can provide particular family-related benefits not because of their current needs, but rather because of anticipated family needs. A couple committed to having children might choose an employer who would provide maternity or paternity leave. Although a man may choose an organization even though there is no paternity leave, a woman may feel that she must choose an organization that at least provides a partially paid maternity leave.

***Child-Care Arrangements.*** Some parents prefer full-time, on-site child care. The convenience, price, and possibility of visiting one's children during the work day have tremendous appeal. Where on-site child care is not available, a company may provide vouchers or a referral service for child care. Child-care centers are typically open from early morning to early evening. Some child-care centers offer a night shift that allows working parents to bring children to the center in the midafternoon and pick up their children after midnight, but this is relatively rare.

Working parents panic when a child is sick, when the usual child-care center is closed, or when the babysitter gets sick. Although

coworkers and supervisors may tolerate a 3-year-old in the office once because of its novelty, a second time would be unacceptable. Goldman, Sachs and Company, a noted investment banking firm, opened an emergency child-care center on their premises in 1993 (Lawson, 1993). Emergency child-care centers are intended to provide care when the usual child-care arrangements break down. A number of large employers realized that when child-care arrangements break down, one parent is absent from work. Goldman, Sachs evaluated their situation and decided that it was more effective to provide free on-site emergency child care than to have parents losing work days. Other companies provide child-care workers who can go to the employees' home.

Ethnic background also may have an impact on child-care preferences. Researchers at Harvard's Graduate School of Education found that Hispanic families had a stronger preference for family-like care than black or white families. There are some mediating factors, however. Two-parent families and families with relatives living with them of any race are more likely to use family-like child care, and Hispanic families are more likely than black families to be two-parent households and to have relatives living with them (Chira, 1994: A-19). Perhaps, then, Hispanic families are using the child care that is both convenient and cost-effective—care by relatives who are willing to take on the responsibility. In addition, Hispanic families reported that they wanted their children in a situation where Spanish was spoken. Thus, cultural background plays an important role in child-care issues.

Children are not the only dependents who may need care. People are living longer than ever before, and the proportion of our population that is older rather than younger is increasing. Although many older people live independently until their death, some working couples may find themselves in the position of having to care for aging relatives. Some families opt for nursing home care, but for other families, this may not be the best choice. Most working couples cannot afford to curtail work to care for an aged parent. These families may choose an employer who either offers or assists with elder care or adult day care. When on-site care for either children or adults is not available, some organizations and corporations may provide relief from the burden of dependent care by offering subsidies or reimbursements.

***Societal Comparisons.*** Because increasing numbers of women and men with children are in the work force, young children need all-day care and school-age children need after-school care. This points

to the need for affordable, accessible, high-quality child care. In contrast to the United States, preschoolers in France attend full-day public preschool that is free and most parents want collective child care (Greenhouse, 1993). In Sweden, parents can care for young infants under the provisions of one of the most extensive parental leave policies in the world. Fathers and mothers are entitled to share a leave of 270 days at 90 percent of their regular pay (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1985).

Compared to other industrialized nations, the United States is notably lagging in paid maternity and paternity leaves and lacking in high-quality care that is accessible to all. This leaves some workers individually negotiating with their employer for flexible schedules and family leave. Some men may take sick days rather than using their company's formal parental leave policy (Kimmel, 1993). Some employees fight for broader policy changes at their place of employment. Other white-collar workers feel, rightly or not, that opportunities for promotion may be jeopardized if they complain too loudly about the tensions between work and family schedules. They wonder if their employer will underestimate their commitment to their work and career.

Today, women and men are likely to take the benefit package and flexibility a company offers into account in making their job decisions. The benefit packages offered by employers may determine their chances of attracting their first-choice employees, particularly those who are seeking to accommodate the needs of their families. Employers who involve themselves in family issues will find that it is good business, that it is economically profitable. Two recent studies of the benefits of "family-friendly" or "family-supportive" corporate policies indicate that companies offering such policies could expect increased loyalty, higher job satisfaction, and lower turnover (Noble, 1993a).

## Role Overload

Although basic financial benefits are important, workers with responsibility for their children or aging parents know that time is an important issue, too. Although both dual-worker and single-parent families experience daily role overload, dual-career workers experience an additional set of difficulties.

### *Career Obligations*

Individuals pursuing careers typically find that the primary years for building their careers begin in their late twenties and continue

through their thirties and early forties. These are typically the same years that couples begin to raise a family. In Case Study 6.3, by Michele Hoffnung, you will see how Elizabeth resolves some of these issues. As a result of concern about these career and family issues, business schools, such as the prestigious Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, have introduced work and family topics into their courses as a part of the required curriculum (Noble, 1994a).

One cause of the potential overload is the simultaneous building of both a career and a family in the same decade. The assumption that both can be built simultaneously seemed predicated on the notion that there is one person in a family pursuing a career and another supporting that career and taking care of family needs.

***The Two-Person Career.*** Traditional gender roles are at the heart of the expectations associated with a two-person career. In the past, a man who was a top executive, president of a college, or even president of the United States could depend on his wife to be a full-time adjunct to his career. The executive wife kept up the social end of the career, hosting parties, remembering important dates, and spreading an aura of feminine good will around the rising leader. This is reminiscent of *emotional labor* (Hochschild, 1983) described earlier in this book. This emotional labor is expected, but nevertheless unpaid. Several members of one college community were alarmed when they learned that the next president of their college was married but that his wife would continue to teach at a college in the midwest, commuting to Pennsylvania on the weekends. Even James Buchanan, the only bachelor president of the United States, found it necessary to have his sister serve in the traditional role of First Lady.

In 1992, Hillary Rodham Clinton's career as an attorney caused some to doubt her ability to serve as First Lady. These traditional expectations obscure the full contributions of both husband and wife. The wife is usually the unofficial part of the political, corporate, or university hierarchy. She cannot get a bonus or merit increase for doing a great job in any particular year. These traditional expectations may cause corporate boards to overlook potential leaders who do not fit the mold: a married man who has a wife with a career of her own; a married woman who has a husband with a career of his own; a single man; a single woman; or a homosexual or lesbian couple.

***The "Mommy Track."*** Several years ago, the possibility of a "mommy track" (Schwartz, 1989) at top law firms was a hot topic. The name itself, of course, reflects gender expectations. The idea was that women who chose to do so could pursue careers that did not require as much of them as of those who were pursuing the fast track

toward partner. The downside for women or men who chose the "mommy track" was that they could not expect to be either promoted or paid the same way as others. The idea was criticized for many reasons (Ehrenreich and English, 1989). Some pointed out that the "mommy track" would be lower in prestige. Others said the mere existence of a "mommy track" that would be predominantly occupied by women would hurt the careers even of women who did not choose this track. All women would be regarded as lacking full commitment to their jobs and careers. Others were quick to point out that the "mommy track" label would further inhibit men from this track even though it might be compatible with their family life and interests outside work. Despite these criticisms, the idea of a "mommy track" pointed to the necessity of accommodating the reality that both women and men may want to have careers and to be involved in their children's lives.

### *Daily Obligations*

Daily overload takes place as a couple or a single parent tries to juggle the demands of both work and family. The typical single parent needs to take care of all his or her family needs, including work responsibilities, children's needs, and the needs of a household. White-collar, dual-career couples may be able to diminish the impact of the overload by buying the services of others. A couple may choose to have their house cleaned, groceries delivered, and meals prepared by others. Nevertheless, the couple still needs to develop a division of labor within the household.

Case Study 6.5, "The Second Shift," by Arlie Hochschild with Anne Machung, describes the plight of working parents. More often than not, women complete their full day at work only to arrive home to the next shift, the second shift of child care and household tasks. Hochschild argues that this second shift stems from the traditional roles of women and men. Although society is adjusting to women's participation in the labor force, stereotypical images continue to influence the expectations of women and men at home. Couples often inadvertently expect women to continue in their traditional role as chief cook and child caregiver. Because women in dual-worker and dual-career families are working the same long, hard hours as men, they understandably expect their spouses to participate in the second shift. Many women complain, however, that their husbands do not take responsibility for the tasks.

In November of 1993, the United States Roman Catholic bishops wrote a letter entitled "Follow the Way of Love" as their official contribution to the International Year of the Family announced by the

United Nations for 1994. In this unanimously approved document, the bishops recognize the many difficulties caused by economic pressures and family problems. *The New York Times* describes the letter as "a message to families that tells husbands and wives to treat one another as equals and urges men to share fully in child rearing and household duties" (Steinfels, 1993). This was a ground-breaking statement given that the Catholic church has traditionally taken a more conservative stance on women's and men's roles in the economic and domestic spheres.

In the best situations, husbands and wives have worked out a division of labor that both are happy with. It may mean that they follow more traditional *lines; she* does more of the inside work, he does more of the outside work, and they share child-care responsi*bilities*. Others forgo traditional roles. She likes being outside, so she mows the lawn. He likes to watch car racing, so he folds laundry while he watches. He works longer hours than she does, so he chooses the somewhat shorter but less desirable tasks to be responsible for such as changing the cat litter or cleaning old food out of the refrigerator. In Case Study 6.3, "Elizabeth," by Michele Hoffnung, consider how Walter and Elizabeth mutually support each other in their efforts to pursue careers, raise children, and run a household.

Historically, when work and home were separated, women were primarily responsible for the private sphere—taking care of the home and children—while men were primarily responsible for bringing in income from the outside. As more women enter the labor force, families and society must redistribute the tasks that formerly were the sole responsibility of women.

## Legal Progress

Over the last several decades, a number of statutes have been passed that have an impact on the relationship between work and family. Title VII, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In 1978, Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act related to Title VII. This made discrimination on the basis of conditions related to pregnancy illegal. Prior to this, employers could dismiss employees for becoming pregnant, regardless of the employee's own preferences concerning how long she planned to work and whether she planned to return to work after the birth of her child.

Although a number of state family leave acts have been on the books, the federally mandated Family and Medical Leave Act went into effect in 1993. This measure requires that employers with 50 or

more employees grant up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave annually for the birth of a child or for adoption; for the care of a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition; or for the worker's own serious health condition that makes it impossible to perform a job. Employers covered by the law are required to maintain any pre-existing health coverage during the leave period and, once the leave period is concluded, to reinstate the employee to the same or an equivalent job. The employee must have worked for the employing organization for at least 12 months and at least 1,250 hours before applying for the leave. Strong supporters of the Family and Medical Leave Act regretted that the leave would typically be unpaid, making it economically unavailable for many workers. Others rejoice in the fact that even the unpaid leave is now available not as a benefit but as a right of employees, both men and women alike.

In addition, the current tax rules in the United States allow families to take a dependent care tax credit. Some employers also provide a dependent care plan that allows employees to receive some of their salary tax free to help defray dependent care expenses. The employee agrees to have the employer put aside a specified amount of his or her salary tax free for dependent care. The employee is then reimbursed from that tax-free account as he or she turns in monthly receipts for child care. The federally mandated limit on such reimbursements is $5,000 for two children. Such a plan provides substantial savings (Bernstein, 1993: 149). Without this plan, a family would have to earn $6,000 to $7,000 to have $5,000 after taxes to pay for dependent care. The complication for some families is that their dependent care provider is paid "under the table." The only way one can get a tax credit or be a part of a dependent care reimbursement plan is to be able to produce receipts for the care received. Whether the caregiver is an immigrant nanny or a neighborhood babysitter, if that individual is unwilling to declare that income and provide the family with a receipt, these tax programs are not useful. On the other hand, corporate or organizational child-care centers routinely provide receipts for money collected.

Despite the legal advancements and the possibility of employers offering the benefits mentioned above, many workers are employed by organizations that do not provide benefits that help with family responsibilities.

## Conclusion

Both work and family life are important to a majority of women and men. A full-time homemaker may lament her lack of achievement

outside the home, but men often talk about not spending enough time with their families, particularly their children. For both women and men to feel they have real choices about the balance between work and family, societal norms must continue to change. Although men are increasingly involved in the care of their children, societal norms still make it difficult for a man to feel that refusing a promotion or being a full-time househusband is an acceptable option.

The remedies needed to resolve some of the conflicts between work and family were not necessary when work and family were colocated on the farm. But now, flextime, flexplace, on-site day care, financial assistance for child care, extended maternity/paternity leave, and eldercare are all programs that would help reduce the tensions between work and family. We also need to change our values such that using these programs does not interfere with others' assumptions about an individual's commitment to his or her work.

Individual families experience the tensions between work and family, but the best solutions to these difficulties lie in the hands of employers and society. For work and family to mesh in a manageable way, employers must take care of families. Role overload is not a result of an individual's psychological inability to deal with work and family, but rather is a result of a lack of appropriate structures and support being available for families and workers. Implementing policies that help employees cope with their work and family responsibilities will increase workers' job satisfaction. Although implementation of such policies would help companies look socially responsible, the most significant result for companies is the increased productivity of their workers. That result should motivate companies to deal with family issues in this era of increasing competition.

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