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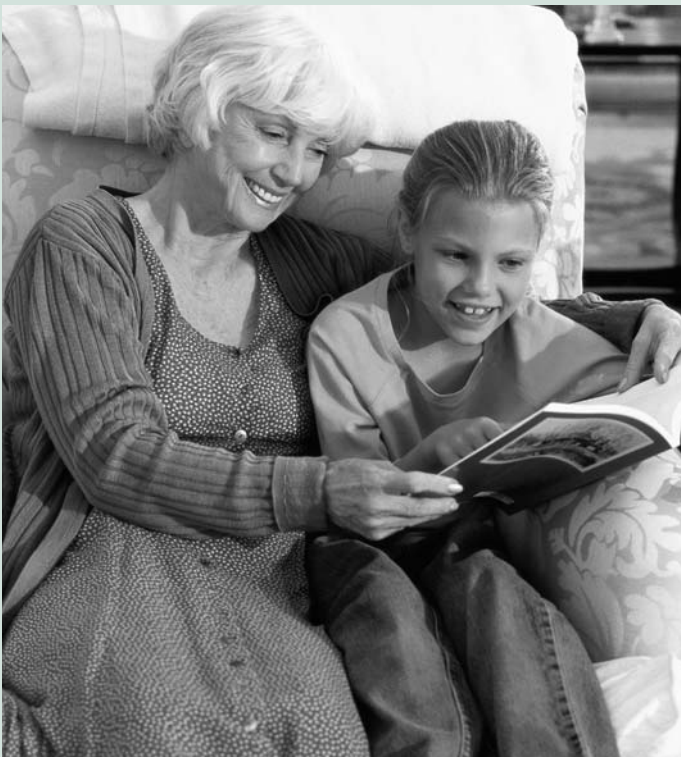
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# Best of the Best 2002

Nominees for the Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award  
for Excellence in Work-Family Research



A partnership of  
The Center for Families  
at Purdue University  
The Center for Work and Family  
at Boston College

**Best of the Best:  
The 2002 Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award  
for Excellence in Work-Family Research**

by

Shelley M. MacDermid

with

Andrew Behnke, Abigail Christiansen, Anthony Faber, and Young In Kwon

*A partnership of*

The Center for Families at Purdue University  
The Center for Work and Family at Boston College

MacDermid, S. M., with Andrew Behnke, Abigail Christiansen, Anthony Faber, and Young In Kwon. (2003). Best of the best: The 2002 Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for excellence in work-family research. West Lafayette, IN: Center for Families at Purdue University.

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## **Introduction**

**Welcome to the 2002 volume of “Best of the Best.” This publication makes it possible for work-life practitioners to quickly become familiar with the best 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. Many research studies are not well-grounded in theory, slowing the generation of new knowledge. As a result, it has been difficult to develop shared standards for research quality and to avoid redundancy in the research literature. 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 2001 and nominated for the 2002 Kanter award. These articles were selected after reviewing more than 2000 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 an internationally known business leader, award-winning author, and expert on strategy, innovation, and the management of change. She holds a chaired professorship at the Harvard Business School, advises major corporations and governments worldwide, and is the author or co-author of over 200 articles and professional published papers, and 13 books, including such bestsellers as *The Change Masters*, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, *When Giants Learn to Dance*, *The Challenge of Organizational Change*, and *World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy*. Her latest books are Rosabeth Moss Kanter on the *Frontiers of Management* and the co-edited collection *Innovation*.

At Harvard Business School, in addition to her teaching and administrative responsibilities, she conceived and leads the Business Leadership in the Social Sector (BLSS) project, involving to date over a hundred national leaders (including U.S. Senators, Governors, corporate CEOs, national association heads, and the First Lady) in dialogue about public-private partnerships, and resulting in the launch of a BLSS video series initiated with 9 new products and the pilot for a national television series. She also served as Editor of Harvard Business Review from 1989-1992, which was a finalist for a National Magazine Award for General Excellence in 1991.

Named one of the 100 most important women in America by the Ladies Home Journal and one of the 50 most powerful women in the world by The Times of London, she has received 19 honorary doctoral degrees and over a dozen leadership awards. She has served on many corporate boards, is a Fellow of the World Economic Forum, and serves on the Massachusetts Governor's Economic Council (for which she was co-chair of the International Trade Task Force).

Her public service activities span local and global interests. She is a judge for the Ron Brown Award for corporate leadership in the community (established by President Clinton to honor the late Secretary of Commerce), has served on the Board of Overseers for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, co-chaired the Youth Service Advisory Board for General Colin Powell's America's Promise organization, and led the effort to establish a Year 2000 Commission for legacy projects for Boston (on which board she serves, along with numerous other national and civic boards such as City Year, the national urban youth service corps).

(excerpted from [www.goodmeasure.com](http://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 comes from the 2002 competition for the 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 close to 1000 published articles to find the best of the best. This report is a “cribsheet” for practitioners – an hour’s worth of reading will tell you about an entire year’s worth of scientific research all over the world. In this commentary, I’ll do my best to explain what I see as the significance of the top 20 articles – the Kanter 20 -- for practitioners.

### What Are the “Hot” Topics for Researchers?

Just as in popular culture, the attention of academic researchers gets grabbed by different topics from year to year. The chart at the end of this section classifies the Kanter top 20 by topic. Once again, the number #1 topic was the employment of women and mothers, the most popular work-family research topic for the past 50 years or more. The next-most popular topics were marriage/divorce, family structure and work-family conflict.

#### Employed Wives and Mothers

Several studies on this topic appear in the Kanter Top 20, each adding a new “twist” to existing knowledge. For example, in a twist on the perennially popular “gender gap” in men’s and women’s wages, **finalists** *Budig* and *England* looked into why women who have children earn less than women who don’t. Mothers experienced a wage penalty of 7% per child, only about a third of which was explained by job experience and seniority. There was no evidence that women intentionally give up earnings by seeking more ‘family-friendly’ jobs.

Ironically, though the average woman earns quite a bit less than the average man per hour of work, wives earn more than their husbands in a sizeable minority of families. In another twist on a traditional topic, *Brennan* and colleagues wondered how husbands and wives feel about their marriage when wives earn more. The earnings gap didn’t matter for wives, but husbands felt better about their marriages when they were the ones with the higher income – even husbands with egalitarian ideas about gender roles.

Another favorite focus of researchers is the impact of wives’ employment on the quality and stability of marriage, regardless of their wages. *South* tackled this question in a **finalist** article by examining data gathered over a period of 35 years. Surprisingly, marriages appear to be more at risk from wives’ employment today than they were in 1960. Although the overall risk of divorce goes down over the course of a marriage, the risk posed by wives’ employment grows. Wives working 20 hours per week had a 13% greater risk of divorce; wives working full-time had a 27% greater risk of divorce. Unfortunately, we don’t know why wives in this study went to work, which is exactly the focus of *Edwards*’ research.

#### *This Year’s Hottest Topics:*

- *Mothers’ employment*
- *Marriage & divorce*
- *Family structure*
- *Work-family conflict*

#### *Last Year’s Hottest Topics:*

- *Mothers’ employment*
- *Work hours & schedules*
- *Fathers*

Using data from 1969-1987, Edwards found that a significant percentage of families were experiencing dramatic declines in their economic circumstances, with adequate incomes becoming much less certain. Although the chances of becoming a single mother via divorce increased rapidly in the 1970's and 1980's, it was married mothers who rapidly increased their involvement in paid work, a move Edwards interpreted as defensive economic behavior.

Finally, the 1996 overhaul of welfare has stimulated many studies of mothers at the bottom of the economic spectrum, who welfare reform was designed to propel into the labor force. *Lerman and Ratcliffe* investigated whether single mothers could find jobs without displacing other workers. Analyses in 20 metropolitan areas showed that the labor force participation of single mothers rose rapidly but with no evidence of any increase in unemployment among comparable unmarried women without children, married women, or unmarried men.

## **Marriage, Divorce, and Family Structure**

Like other members of society, researchers have recently been asking many questions about marriage and family structure. We have known for a long time that workers' experiences on the job affect their lives at home with spouses and children. Two studies this year took careful looks inside families to 'unpack' these processes. *Roberts and Levenson* invited police officers and their wives to interact with each other in a laboratory while measurements were being made by videotape and physiological tracking. The results showed that husbands' feelings of stress were more harmful than physical exhaustion to interactions with their wives. When husbands were tired, interactions had a more positive emotional tone. When husbands were stressed, their

***Fathers who felt more overloaded were seen by their children as less accepting and less understanding.***

communication was more likely to show destructive patterns. Similarly, in a **finalist** article, *Crouter* and her colleagues examined the impact of fathers' work hours and role overload on their relationships with wives and adolescent children. Wives whose husbands reported high overload felt less loving, reported more conflict, and felt that both they and their spouses were less able to take one another's perspective. Fathers who reported more overload were seen by their children as less accepting and less effective in understanding their children's perspective.

*Drago* was curious about where parents find the time to be parents. Comparing teachers with and without children, he found that time for child care and housework was carved from personal time, passive leisure and exercise. In addition, parents were at the workplace 9.9 minutes less per day than non parents, but worked a total of 45 minutes less per day (although both groups worked many more hours than required by their contracts). Teachers spent slightly more time with their own children when coworkers were more supportive.

*Marks* and colleagues looked within married couples to find out how partners find a sense of balance. Unfortunately, results suggested that balance was to some extent a financial luxury. Traditional gender roles seemed to bring balance to many of these couples, but with exceptions. For example, husbands reported more balance when their wives worked more hours and when they spent more leisure time with their wives and children. Wives reported more balance when they spent less leisure time alone with their children and their husbands were more involved with the children.

Several nominees focused explicitly on children. *Szinovacz* examined the connections between parents and children following parents' retirement. She found that retirement did not affect contact with children or feelings of closeness. Visits occurred less frequently for parents and children who lived far apart, but this was less true if the children were themselves parents (for

mothers) or the children were childless (fathers). When children lived close by, mothers saw them less often and fathers more often.

*Sun* was curious about children whose parents would later divorce, wondering whether the negative effects observed after divorce actually might be visible before the breakup. Results from a sample of 10,000 children showed that even before marital disruption, both boys and girls from families that subsequently dissolved performed less well in school than peers whose parents remained married. In fact, families headed for divorce showed deficits in almost all measures of financial, cultural, human and social resources prior to the disruption.

*Brandon* and *Bumpass* focused on the children of unmarried mothers, asking whether the presence of an adult male in their home would have any effect on their access to public assistance. Children living with adult males were less likely to receive public assistance such as Medicaid, food stamps or WIC than children living with only unmarried mothers. Unexpectedly, children living with cohabiting biological parents were more likely to receive assistance than those living with married parents.

Finally, changing the way we think about workers and families was the main goal of **award winners** *Jacobs* and *Gerson*, who argue that we need to do a much better job of thinking about workers as part of family systems that include multiple work, school, and other schedules. They persuasively use data to show how system-level thinking helps us to understand trends in work hours.

## **Work-Family Conflict and...**

More studies in the work-family literature have focused on work-family conflict than any other variable. Several Kanter nominees are within this group.

### **... Gender**

Asking whether female managers are more likely than males to quit, *Lyness* found that they were actually slightly less likely to leave. Recently promoted managers, both male and female, were less likely to resign than managers who were not promoted. Managers who took leaves of absence were more likely to resign than those who did not, but less than one fourth of those who took leaves resigned. **Finalist** *Greenhaus* used work-family conflict to try to predict which workers would leave the accounting profession during a two year period. It turned out that work-family conflict predicted departures only for those workers – male or female -- who felt relatively uninvolved in their careers.

*Female managers were less likely than males to quit.*

### **... Characteristics of Organizations and Industries**

*MacDermid\** and her colleagues compared the experiences of employees in small and large workplaces, and in different industries. Employees in the smallest firms reported less discrimination, more supportive workplaces, less interference between work and family life, less burnout and less commuting time than employees at the largest firms. Employees in the retail industry worked hours close to their ideal and reported low travel times but also low compensation relative to employees in other industries. Employees in the service industry worked long hours for low pay, but found their work stimulating, marketable and less stressful than other workers. Manufacturing workers brought less work home and had more benefits, but also had less schedule control and felt that their skills were less marketable.

### ... Parenthood

Using a creative research method, *Drago* set out to determine how much teachers would be willing to pay for specific work-life programs or policies. Regardless of how likely they were to use such programs, teachers were willing to pay, from under \$1 per week for child care referral to \$6-7 toward either paid child birth leave, one week of paid family care leave, or free childcare.

### ... International Variation

Focusing specifically on the spouses of expatriate workers, *Shaffer* found that spouses were better-adjusted when the expatriate worker was better-adjusted, when they faced more demands as a parent, when they had access to more types and sources of social support, more favorable living conditions and when the host culture was less novel. Support from family at home did not appear to help spouses adjust.

*Lewis* studied patterns across Europe in workers' feelings of entitlement to 'family-friendly' programs and policies. Workers felt most entitled in countries that explicitly support equality, such as Norway and Sweden. In contrast, workers in countries like Britain and Portugal emphasized individual responsibility and personal choice. In general, men felt less entitled than women.

## Hallmarks of Excellence

What are the hallmarks of excellence? Why were these studies and not others nominated for this award? One feature of the studies we see here is new twists on old questions – new ways of examining an issue that tell us something new. Another feature they share is strong methods. Detailed data are gathered using rigorous, often multiple, methods, often involving multiple sources of information. Samples are large or when small, theoretically important. The research questions are precise. The analyses are creative. Most important, these studies think “big” – they push for new ways to think about and study phenomena that we all care about.

***These studies “think big.”***

There is no such thing as the perfect study. Every method carries both strengths and weaknesses because of tradeoffs researchers must make. In a world of scarce resources, the more information a researcher gathers from any one family or organization, the smaller the number of families or organizations the researcher will be able to include. Creative ways of navigating this dilemma are a hallmark of Kanter nominees.

Among the nominees are several examples of studies that include relatively small numbers of families, but gather very detailed data. In addition, many of these studies used multiple methods and informants, which are important strategies for reducing bias in the results. For example, *Roberts* not only used experts observers to rate videotaped interactions between police officers and their wives, but also monitored the physiological responses of the couples. *Crouter* used both face-to-face interviews and daily telephone interviews. *Drago* used structured daily diaries. Studies like these are particularly useful in helping us to understand the processes through which work and nonwork life affect one another, answering questions about “how” and “why.”

At the other end of the spectrum are surveys of large numbers of individuals, usually representative of some national population. Studies like these are very helpful in trying to determine levels of a particular issue or problem, addressing questions of “how much” and “who.” Several such surveys have been regularly conducted by the federal government for several decades and are available for public use, sometimes even downloadable from the internet. Three Kanter nominees used various waves of the Current Population Survey (*Jacobs, Edwards, Lerman*). Other government data sets used by Kanter nominees are the:

- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY for short; used by *Budig*),
- Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP; *Brandon*),
- Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID; *South*),
- National Early Learning Study (NELS, *Sun*), and the
- National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH, *Szinovacz*).

Each of these data sets include longitudinal data on specific individuals, which is essential for discovering cause-and-effect relationships. *Lyness* was able to obtain longitudinal data on 26,000 managers from a corporation, which is probably much more unusual than it should be. A relative newcomer to large-scale data collection is the Families and Work Institute, which now is gathering data every five years for the National Study of the Changing Workforce, used by *MacDermid*\*.

Several of the nominated articles use creative ways to gather information, such as *Drago's* method of measuring willingness to pay for programs. Other studies use cutting-edge ways of analyzing data, such as the “what-if” analyses used by *Jacobs* and *Gerson* to determine the impact of changes in family structure on family work hours. Finally, new statistical techniques are making it possible to separate the impact of unique experiences of individual workers like supervisor supportiveness from the impact of organizational characteristics like a supportive culture.

### **Research Challenges**

As our understanding of the relationships between work and nonwork life becomes more precise, it becomes increasingly important to be sure that we are considering all relevant variables. When we exclude some factors, we can overestimate the power of others. For example, commitment to an organization has been shown to be related to many factors, but it is not yet clear how much of a difference each factor makes when all the others are taken into account – probably less than when considered by itself. Finally, the effects of work and nonwork life on each other unfold over time. Only longitudinal data will allow us to untangle the chains of causal effects.

***Excluding  
some factors  
can lead us to  
overestimate  
the power of  
others.***

### **Conclusions: Lessons for Practitioners**

What are the lessons of the 2002 Kanter competition? Of course readers are the ultimate authorities on the lessons they learn, but here are some possibilities.

Put together, the studies here suggest that women may seek employment as a hedge against economic uncertainty, but they may pay for doing so in wage penalties for mothers and in their partners' marital happiness, especially when they are economically successful relative to their husbands. This is more information for work-life practitioners about how work-life issues are unique for men and women, and about the obstacles women face in pursuing careers.

A second lesson is the importance of workers' perceptions of overload at work. While there is considerable discussion today about cultures of long hours in workplaces, the data here suggest that feeling overloaded is just as important. Feelings of overload corrode not only workers' own well-being, but their marriages and relationships with children.

***Job demands are imposed not only on workers but also on their families, with measurable consequences both good and bad.***

In many work environments, flexibility and other supportive mechanisms are used to reward high performers. Some of the Kanter data suggest that the commitment of “go-getters” may be impervious to threats from work-family conflict, and the greatest payoff of reducing conflict may come from other workers.

These studies also offer insights about diversity among workers – domestic vs. international, low-wage vs. high wage, parents vs. nonparents. Corporate practitioners always try to be attentive to the diversity of needs within their workforces; these data can help by revealing the unique interests and priorities of diverse groups of workers.

Most important, the 2002 Kanter 20 repeatedly remind us that most workers are members of family systems containing spouses, children, parents, or other family members. Workers’ abilities to respond to work demands, to find a sense of balance in their lives, to take advantage of career opportunities, and to be effective at home and at work depend not only on what happens at work but what happens at home. Job demands are imposed not only on workers but also on their families, with measurable consequences both good and bad.

***\* As chair of the Kanter award committee, it causes me some ethical discomfort to include my own work among the top 20. I do not wish to disqualify my co-authors from consideration, however, so the policy I follow is to withdraw articles on which I am an author from the competition after the second round. Members of the committee are also often authors of nominated articles; no reviewer is ever sent their own article for review.***

In the remainder of this report, the symbol **4** indicates the likely relevance of a particular article for work-life practitioners.

## Overview of Article Topics

Name of First Author	Mothers' employment	Marriage and divorce	Family structure	Work-family conflict, balance	Alternative work arrangements	Duration and timing of work	Fathers	Parenthood	Multiple roles	Time with children	Gender and earnings	Small workplaces	Job stress	Corporate work-family policies	Paid leave	International	Gender role attitudes	Children's well-being	Retirement	Working-class families	Coworkers	Supervisors	Job performance	Unions	Health care	Government policies	Family strategies
<b>Winner</b>																											
Jacobs & Gerson	X		X			X																					
<b>Finalists</b>																											
Budig...	X					X		X			X																
Crouter..		X		X		X	X	X		X			X														
Greenhaus...		X		X			X	X															X				
<b>Top 20</b>																											
Brandon...		X	X				X					X															
Brennan...	X	X							X		X						X										
Drago (Time)	X		X			X		X													X						
Drago... (Pay)				X	X									X													
Edwards	X		X																								
Gerstel...					X									X	X					X	X			X	X		
Lerman...	X	X	X			X		X																		X	
Lewis...	X			X	X							X				X											
Lyness...					X											X						X					
MacDermid...				X	X							X	X	X	X												
Marks...		X		X			X		X	X							X										
Roberts...		X							X				X					X									
Shaffer...																X											X
South...	X	X							X		X																
Sun...		X	X															X									
Szinovac...	X						X			X									X								
<b>COUNTS</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>





**The Winning Article**

**Summary and Author Biographies**

## Author Biography

**Jerry A. Jacobs** is Merriam Term Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he has taught since earning his PhD in Sociology from Harvard University in 1983. He has been an active member of the American Sociological Association and Sociologists for Women in Society. He is currently President of the Eastern Sociological Society and Chair of the Organizations, Occupations and Work Section of the American Sociological Association. He served as chair of the Graduate Program in Sociology at Penn for much of the 1990s.

He has written extensively on opportunities for working women over the last two decades. His research has addressed a number of aspects of women's employment, including authority, earnings, working conditions, part-time work, and entry into male-dominated occupations. Jacobs is the author of three books, *Revolving Doors: Sex Segregation and Women's Careers* (Stanford University Press, 1989), and *Gender Inequality at Work* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), and *The Time Divide: Work, Family and Policy in Post-Industrial America*, with Kathleen Gerson (forthcoming, Harvard University Press). His current research projects include a study of women in higher education, funded by the Spencer Foundation, and a study of working time and work-family conflict, funded by the Sloan Foundation.

**Kathleen Gerson** is Professor and Chair of Sociology at New York University, where she has taught since earning her Ph.D. at Berkeley in 1981. She has been an active participant in numerous organizations and working groups focusing on work-family issues, including the Ford Foundation Project on the Integration of Work, Family, and Community and the Sloan Foundation Research Network on Work Redesign and Work-Family. She served as the 1998 Feminist Lecturer on Women and Social Change for the Sociologists for Women and Society, is the outgoing chair of the Family Section of the American Sociological Association, and currently sits on the board of the Council on Contemporary Families.

Her research and writing have centered on the social structuring of gender inequality, changing family structures and practices, work-family connections, and the link between social and individual change processes. Her books include *Hard Choices: How Women Decide About Work, Career, and Motherhood* (University of California Press, 1985), *No Man's Land: Men's Changing Commitments to Family and Work* (Basic Books, 1993), and a forthcoming book with Jerry Jacobs, *The Time Divide: Work, Family, and Social Policy in the 21st Century* (Harvard University Press). She is at work on a project examining the experiences and strategies of young women and men who came of age during the last several decades of tumultuous change in family life and work arrangements. A book on the transformations of this generation, entitled *Children of the Gender Revolution: Growing Up in an Age of Work and Family Change*, is in progress.



## **Overworked Individuals or Overworked Families? Explaining Trends in Work, Leisure, and Family Time**

J. A. Jacobs and K. Gerson

*Work and Occupations*

Volume 28, 2001, pp. 40-63

jjacobs@sas.upenn.edu

A growing debate has risen over the issue of whether and how work commitments are increasing their encroachment on family life. One perspective is that American workers are devoting more time to work, producing a decline in leisure time and a time squeeze. Others argue that the average workweek has changed very little and does not account for the decline in leisure time. Jacobs and Gerson observe that the workforce is divided, with one large group of workers putting in long work hours and another group finding it difficult to get work hour. Moreover, analyses need to be redirected from the working time of individuals to the working time of families because of the large social shift from male-breadwinner to dual earner and single-parent households.

Data came from the 1970 and 1997 March Annual Demographic Files of the U.S. government's Current Population Survey. The sample contained 27,494 married couples in 1970 and 32,676 married couples in 1997. Couples were classified as dual-earner, male-breadwinner, female-breadwinner, and neither spouse employed.

*The problem of family time deficits cannot be solved by chastising parents for working too much.*

(p. 61)

From 1970 to 1997, work hours increased by less than one hour in each group except for the dual earner group, which increased by three hours per week. In addition, the proportion of dual earner couples reporting working 100 hours or more per week rose sharply, from 8.7% to 14.4% and was concentrated among highly educated workers. This increase in work hours for dual earner couples is mainly due to the couples being slightly older than their counterparts in 1970, having a college degree and being in managerial occupations, along with having fewer children. Further analysis revealed that 77.7% of the growth in work time among married couples is due to the growth of dual-earner households; the remaining 22.3% results from an increase in work time.

The authors comment, "In our article, we try to show how the transformation of American families – from the breadwinner-homemaker model that predominated in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the current predominance of dual-earner and single-parent households – is a major engine of change that is reshaping the lives of workers and posing inescapable challenges to the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Our research also shows that most Americans are not fleeing the family for the workplace, but rather aspire to achieve a better balance between their work and family responsibilities. We hope that our focus on the irreversible changes in family and gender arrangements will prompt scholars and policy makers to stop blaming individual women and men and instead create workplaces and communities that better support the needs and wishes of new, more diverse, and more egalitarian families in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

## **Summaries of Finalists**

## The Wage Penalty for Motherhood

M.G. Budig & P. England

*American Sociological Review*

Volume 66, 2001, pp. 204-225

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The authors provide five possible explanations for the observed difference in wages between women who have children and those who do not: 1) women interrupt their career paths to care for children at home; 2) women trade off higher wages for more family friendly jobs; 3) in meeting the needs of children, mothers suffer exhaustion and are less productive at their paid work; 4) employers discriminate against mothers; and 5) there is a spurious correlation between wages and motherhood that is explained by other unmeasured factors.

The authors examined data from the 1982 to 1993 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, a national probability sample of individuals aged 14 to 21 in 1979. Survey participants have been interviewed annually since. The authors limited the sample to the 5,287 women employed part- or full-time during at least two years between 1982 and 1993.

Women's hourly wages were examined as a function of marital status, number of children, education, total years of full- and part-time work, seniority, number of breaks in employment, and other job characteristics.

Mothers experienced an average wage penalty of 7 percent per child. One third of the penalty was explained by job experience and seniority, but two thirds of the penalty could not be explained.

The researchers speculated that mothers might earn less than other women because they lose job experience, are less productive, they give up wages for more family-friendly jobs, or they are discriminated against by their employers. They find little or no evidence that mothers trade higher wages for family-friendly jobs. Missing work experience by interrupting one's career explained a significant portion of mothers' wage penalty. The explanations that mothers are left exhausted or are discriminated against are possible explanations of the remaining four percent wage penalty.

*...the gross penalty is 2 percent for one child, 13 percent for two children, and 22 percent for three or more children.*

*(p 217)*



**Implications of Overwork and Overload for the  
Quality of Men's Family Relationships**

A.C. Crouter, M. F. Bumpus, M. R. Head, & S. M. McHale

*Journal of Marriage and Family*

Volume, 63, 2001, pp.404-416

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The implications of time spent working for family relationships remain important unresolved issues in work-family research. To date, few studies have focused simultaneously on marital and parent-child relationships. This study examined connections among high work hours for fathers, their feelings of role overload, and the quality of their relationships with wives and adolescent children. Both wives' and children's assessments of family relationships were taken into account.

*“Employer practices such as mandatory overtime represent potential risks for families, especially when parents are employed in stressful work circumstances.”*

(p. 415)

The sample consisted of 190 dual-earner families who were recruited by letter through the adolescent's school. Data were gathered through home interviews, and unique telephone interviews on 7 different evenings that assessed the time spent by family members in household work and leisure activities. Family relationships were assessed in the areas of (a) time spent together; (b) love or warmth and acceptance; and (c) conflict.

Within the marital relationship, husbands who spent more than 60 hours a week in work-related activities spent less time in shared activities with their wives. Despite fathers' long hours, couples did not evaluate their relationships less positively than couples in which husbands worked less. In contrast, wives whose husbands reported high role overload reported feeling less loving, saw themselves as less able to take their spouse's perspective, saw the spouse as less able to take their perspective, and reported more conflict.

In father-adolescent relationships, fathers who worked long hours and felt high role overload were seen as less accepting and less effective in perspective-taking. However, relationships with fathers who worked long hours but reported low role overload were seen just as positively as those of fathers who worked less.

The findings of this study suggest that role overload may be more corrosive than long hours for both marital and parent-child relationships. The combination of role overload with long hours appears to be especially important for the quality of fathers' relationships with adolescent children.



## **Career Involvement and Family Involvement as Moderators of Relationships Between Work-Family Conflict and Withdrawal From the Profession**

J. H. Greenhaus, S Parasuraman, & K. M. Collins

*Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*

**Volume 6, 2001, pp. 91-100**

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Turnover among accountants has exceeded 20% per year, a result of departures not only from employers but also the profession. This study examined the effects of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict on withdrawal from public accounting. The researchers hypothesized that conflict would be more strongly related to departure among workers for whom family was very salient; and less strongly related to departure among workers for whom career was very salient. A strength of the study was it measured both intended and actual withdrawal (which were not perfectly related: a 10% increase in intention raised by 3.8% the chance of actual withdrawal).

The longitudinal study involved 199 certified public accountants who were married and had on average one or two children. The sample included 135 men and 64 women. Participants were asked to complete questions based on time-based and strain-based interference with work and home life. Perceptions of conflict emanating from work and from family were measured separately. Career and family involvement was also assessed, along with whether or not the participant actually withdrew from the profession during the 22 months after participation. Analyses did not check for differences between men and women or among different family types in links to withdrawal.

***“Career-involved professionals are not overly disturbed by the interference of work with family life and are willing to tolerate the interference for the sake of their careers.”***

*(p. 96)*

Results showed that work-to-family conflict had a more substantial impact on withdrawal than family-to-work conflict, but only for accountants who were uninvolved in their careers. Those individuals whose work or career was not a salient part of their lives had less reason to put up with work-to-family conflict and consequently chose to leave the profession. These patterns did not change when the salience of family was taken into account. This study provides firm evidence of attrition caused by perceived work-to-family conflict.



## **Are Female Managers Quitters? The Relationships of Gender, Promotions, and Family Leaves of Absence to Voluntary Turnover**

K.S. Lyness & M.K. Judiesch  
*Journal of Applied Psychology*  
 Volume 86(6), 2001, pp. 1167-1178  
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Previous research has shown that women have higher turnover rates -- generally and in management positions -- than men. One theory is that this difference is due to women's desire to raise families or to women's limited advancement in career paths. To test this theory, the authors of this study examined actual voluntary turnover rates among male and female managers.

A statistical technique called "event history analysis" was used to estimate the impact of specific events on the chances that a manager would resign. Analyses addressed these questions:

- 1) Are voluntary turnover rates higher for female than male managers?
- 2) Are managers who get promoted less likely to resign than managers who don't?
- 3) Are female managers who receive promotions less likely to resign than male managers who receive promotions?
- 4) Are managers who take family leaves more likely to resign than other managers?

Company records for 26,359 managers working full-time for a large multinational financial services organization were examined for three years. Managers held diverse jobs across departments (sales, accounting, customer service, etc) at several company locations. Of the sampled managers, 11,013 were women and 15,283 were men. For each manager several pieces of information were gathered, including voluntary and involuntary turnover, leaves of absence, promotion, and personal information such as age, educational attainment, salary, organizational level, percent of women in the department, and marital status.

***"We began this article by asking whether female managers are more likely than their male counterparts to be quitters .... With or without controls for human capital, we found that contrary to our prediction, female managers' actual voluntary turnover rates were slightly lower than those of male managers."***

*(p.1174)*

Results showed that female managers actually had a slightly lower voluntary turnover rate than males. Promoted managers, both men and women, were less likely to resign than managers who were not promoted, if the promotion had occurred in the last 11 months. Managers who took leaves of absence were more likely to resign than those who did not, but less than one fourth of those taking leaves of absence resigned. Those who took leaves of absence and held graduate degrees were less likely to resign than those with less education.

## Time-Dependent Effects of Wives' Employment on Marital Dissolution

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*American Sociological Review*

Volume 66, 2001, pp. 226-245

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This study explores the impact of wives' employment on the risk of divorce over the course of marriage and through historical time. The researcher hypothesized that the impact of wives' employment on the risk of divorce may have decreased over time as gender roles have been redefined and working parents have received more support. On the other hand, the impact may have increased because women's incomes have increased, gender roles have become more liberal, and women have more opportunity to form alternative romantic relationships.

Data came from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a nationally representative longitudinal survey. In 1968 the survey started with 5,000 families. These families were interviewed annually about aspects of family relationships and employment. Over time, new families were added to the study. By 1993, the sample contained 50,000 individuals representing 8,700 families.

The risk of divorce was examined in relation to the weekly number of hours wives spent per week in paid employment. Analyses also took into account husbands' and wives' age, race, education, and income; husbands' weekly work hours; length of (re)marriage; housing location and tenure; number of children; and the historical trend in divorce.

The impact of wives' employment on the risk of divorce has become increasingly positive over the last 25 years, and also increases with duration of marriage. Wives working 20 hours a week had a 13% greater risk of divorce than wives who did not work outside the home. Wives who worked full-time had a 27% greater risk of divorce than wives who do not work outside the home. These differences in risk are significant, but not overwhelming in magnitude. Risk of divorce declines with marital duration, husband's education level, and husband's annual income. The negative impact of wives' education on divorce weakens over the course of a marriage.

***Between 1960 and 1995 married women's labor force participation nearly doubled, increasing from 31.9 percent to 61.0 percent. This increase was especially pronounced for those at the most divorce prone-ages: Among married women ages 25 to 34, the labor force participation rate rose from 28.8 percent to 72.0 percent in 1995.***

(p. 228)



**Summaries of the Remaining Articles in the Top 20:**

**The Kanter 20**

**Children's Living Arrangements, Coresidence of Unmarried Fathers,  
and Welfare Receipt**

R. D. Brandon & L. Bumpass

*Journal of Family Issues*

Volume 22, 2001, pp. 3-26

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The increase in the number of children living with unmarried mothers has captured the attention of researchers, who have focused on possible consequences for children, such as poverty or academic failure. Researchers have generally overlooked the role of coresident fathers, however. This study hypothesized that patterns of welfare receipt among children living with unmarried mothers would vary due to the presence of cohabiting fathers, who would reduce the need for public assistance. Biological coresident fathers were predicted to offer more protection than men who simply lived with unmarried mothers and their children.

*“Not only is there more diversity in children’s living arrangements than previously thought, but it is also evident that cohabiting fathers reduce vulnerability to welfare dependence among children living with unmarried mothers. Overall, the presence of cohabiting fathers produces greater variation in children’s exposure to the U.S. welfare system than has been reported.”*

(p. 22)

Data came from an ongoing U.S. government survey (Survey of Income and Program Participation or SIPP), collected between 1985 and 1994. Five living arrangements were compared: cohabiting and married biological parents; cohabiting and married stepfamilies, and single mothers.

Results showed that children living with adult males were less likely to receive public assistance, such as Medicaid, food stamps, or WIC, than children living only with unmarried mothers. Unexpectedly, children living with cohabiting biological parents were more likely to receive assistance than those living with married parents.

**When She Earns More Than He Does:  
A Longitudinal Study of Dual-Earner Couples**

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*Journal of Marriage and Family*

Volume 63, 2001, pp. 168-182

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Dual-earner couples have become a large part of the American workforce, with an estimated 78% of workers married to employed spouses. In three-quarters of these dual-earner couples, both spouses work full-time, and in a significant minority wives earn more than husbands. This study tested three competing hypotheses about the impact of wives earning more than their husbands in couples where both partners work full-time: a) each partner's marital role quality will decrease, as predicted by functionalist theory; b) husband's marital role quality will increase, while the impact on wife's marital role quality will be mixed, as revised independence theory would predict; and c) the impact of wives' higher earnings will depend on the couples' gender role beliefs and the degree to which they perceive salary as rewarding.

Data were gathered from a random sample of 268 full-time employed couples three times over a two-year period. The sample was diverse in parental status, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status, but not in ethnicity: 97% of the participants were Caucasian. Spouses were interviewed separately.

Results of the statistical analyses showed that husbands' evaluations of marriage became less positive as the within-couple salary gap favoring their wives increased, and more positive as a gap favoring them increased. Wives' assessments of marriage were not sensitive to salary gaps. Increasing subjective rewards associated with salary over time were associated with increased satisfaction with the marital role. Neither husbands' nor wives' assessments were sensitive to gender role attitudes.

*As women increasingly work full-time and for the full year and men's earnings continue to stagnate or decline, women's earnings are catching up to men's, albeit slowly.*

(p. 179)



**Time on the Job and Time with Their Kids:  
Cultures of Teaching and Parenthood in the U.S.**

**R. Drago**

*Feminist Economics*  
Volume 7, 2001, pp. 1-31  
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Teachers are expected to be both dedicated and nurturing. As a result, their occupation brings pressure to be both the “ideal worker” (for their school) and the “ideal parent” (to their students). The goal of this study was to understand how workers in particularly demanding circumstances allocate time so that they can parent their own children. In particular, the researchers wanted to see if they could find any evidence of “time transfer,” where non-parents spent more time working as a result of parents working less.

Data came from time diaries and telephone surveys from 310 US public, elementary school teachers in 46 schools. The time diaries were completed for a 24-hour day on a working Tuesday, with additional information shared about what was done during the various time segments. The telephone surveys were used to generate information about variables relevant to workplace sources of parenting time.

Compared to non-parents, parents spent significantly more time on child care and housework, and significantly less time on paid work, personal time, passive leisure, and exercise. Even though they spent 45 minutes less per day at work than their non-parent peers, parents were physically present at school only 9.9 minutes less per day. On average, both parents and non-parents worked far longer than required by their employment contract.

There was modest evidence that teachers spent slightly more time with their children when coworkers were more supportive. Time transfer was slightly higher in schools with higher proportions of women teachers, but in general, the increase in non-parents’ work time was smaller than parents’ increases in parenting time.

***“... levels of face time – for both parents and non parents – average over one-and-one-half hours beyond the working hours stipulated in the contract.***

***... parents will strive to minimize the public appearance of commitment to their own children and maximize the appearance and reality of commitment to their students.”***

*(p.24)*

### **The Willingness-to-Pay for Work/Family Policies: A Study of Teachers**

R. Drago, D. Costanza, R. Caplan, T. Brubaker, D. Cloud,  
N. Harris, R. Kashian, & T. L. Riggs

*Industrial and Labor Relations Review*

Volume 55, Number 1, 2001, pp. 22-41

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Historically, work/family programs have been presumed to be the responsibility of employers or government entities. This study examined the willingness of employees to help pay for such programs. Responses of 343 public, elementary school teachers were examined to determine their willingness to pay for seven distinct work/family programs.

The authors used a creative research strategy to avoid the possibility that respondents would inflate or deflate the amount they would be willing to pay in an effort to increase the likelihood that a particular program would or would not be offered. Using the “median voter model,” each teacher was asked whether s/he would be willing to pay a specific amount for each program. The amounts were randomly assigned to each teacher from a list of amounts compiled by the researchers. The “contingent valuation method” then was used to find the dollar amount above which half the respondents would refuse to pay for the program.

Results showed that the median teacher would be willing to provide, per week, under \$1 for childcare referral services; around \$1.50 for counseling or EAP services; over \$2.50 for elder care referral services; over \$4.50 for after-school childcare; and \$6-7 towards either paid childbirth leave, one week per year of paid family care leave, or free childcare.

Further examination into whether the teacher would benefit from the various policies revealed that even teachers with no expectations of benefit would support such deductions for work/family policies. The authors concluded that these policies generate not only “use” values, those values received by those that use the policies, but also “need” values, those values received by all individuals whether they receive direct benefit or not.

***“Teachers more likely to use after-school care for their children exhibited a willingness-to-pay at over twice the level of those less likely to use the benefit.”***

***“However, even the teachers with low or no probability of using such policies exhibited a positive willingness-to-pay for after-school care and paid childbirth leave.”***

(pp. 36-37)



## Uncertainty and the Rise of the Work-Family Dilemma

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*Journal of Marriage and Family*

Volume, 63, 2001, pp.183-196

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The acceleration of young mothers' employment in the 1970's and 1980's and the concurrent "demise of the male-breadwinner system" gave rise to much debate. Three motivations have been proposed for mothers' behavior: a) consumption - they wanted to enhance their economic standing; b) stability - they wanted to ensure that their families had adequate incomes despite economic declines; and c) attitudes - they saw employment as a path to self-fulfillment.

Analyses concentrated on white women with preschool children from 1969-1987, where most of the change occurred. Data came from the Current Population Survey, which began in the late 1960's to gather data biennially from 50,000 households. An interesting statistical method called "demographic standardization" was used, whereby old and new employment and earnings rates were combined to calculate the effect of changes in the composition of the labor force.

Results revealed that the chances of becoming a single mother of a preschooler (via divorce) tripled during the 1970's and 1980's. But the rapid increase in mothers' employment occurred among married mothers. It is possible that young mothers were calculating the possibility of eventual divorce when they decided to remain employed.

Growth in mothers' employment was pervasive across all income categories, especially among middle-income families. At the same time the ranks of the middle class were shrinking and those of lower-income families were swelling, largely due to declines in husbands' earnings. Thus, a significant fraction of families were experiencing dramatic declines in their economic circumstances. In general, income adequacy became much less stable and predictable.

The researchers that many young mothers embraced employment in the 1970's out of economic uncertainty and as a defensive economic behavior in order to retain their class standing.

***“Many young mothers of all income classes could realistically anticipate single parenthood, a slide into lower income and adequacy categories, or both. Hence, young mothers in the 1970s and 1980s did not necessarily have to be crafting a justification for their work. Neither did they need to be acquisitive or occupationally ambitious to embrace early material employment and the consequent work-family dilemma.”***

(p.195)

## Unions' Responses to Family Concerns

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*Social Problems*

Volume 48, 2001, pp 277-297

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The goal of this study was to bring the role of unions in work-family issues into sharper focus. The researchers tried to develop more nuanced understandings of unions, their circumstances, and their stances. Finally, the study explored the conditions under which unions have either neglected or served work and family benefits. By focusing on unions, the authors provided information about both middle- and working-class issues across racial groups. In addition, while most existing studies of family benefits focus on women, unions contain both men and women.

Interviews were conducted with 23 key informants. These informants were in unions that collectively represent 68.0% of all U.S. union members. Additionally, the informants completed a questionnaire about the basic characteristics of their unions.

Findings showed, first, that many union officials insisted that work-family issues should include not only the benefits traditionally considered by work-family researchers (such as alternative work schedules, child care, and family leave), but also a broad range of issues that researchers have excluded (such as health care, pension, and vacation).

***“By now it is not news that issues look different depending on the standpoint of the observer. But despite frequent references to “race, class, gender” analysts frequently neglect class, and rarely remember unions, workers’ most important collective organizations and voice.”***

Second, the authors found a wide range of responses among unions, indicating that variation among unions should be studied rather than thinking them as monolithic.

Finally, the authors found that member’ expectations and gender, the gender of leaders, and union strength verses employer resistance seem to explain why some unions have been more successful than others in winning work and family benefits.

This study provides fresh insights about how union involvement with work-family issues can be understood. In addition, it offers food for thought about the factors that impact the ways that unions win the benefits.

## Are Single Mothers Finding Jobs Without Displacing Other Workers?

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*Monthly Labor Review*

July 2001, pp 3- 12

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Despite large gains in the employment of single mothers generated by the 1996 welfare reform, three serious concerns have emerged. First, single mothers in large metropolitan areas may not be faring as well as those in the rest of the nation. Second, increases in jobs for former welfare recipients may be coming at the expense of jobs for other low-skilled workers. Third, even if low-skilled jobseekers actually find employment, the enormous flow of low-skilled single mothers into the job market may be depressing the wages of all low-skilled workers. This study explored the labor market outcomes of single mothers and other low-skilled workers.

Data from the monthly Current Population Survey 12 months prior to the passage welfare reform and the same measures 3 years later were compared. Analyses focused on single mothers and other workers between the ages of 20 and 45 who lived in 20 metropolitan areas around the country.

Metropolitan job markets seemed to have been able to absorb the labor force growth induced by changes in the welfare system. Although there was wide variation, the labor force participation rates of single mothers with high school diplomas rose rapidly from about 59% to about 72%. Metropolitan areas with high initial labor force activity had slower rates of growth than areas with low initial activity.

*“Despite a large influx of single mothers into the labor force following the passage of welfare reform in 1996, metropolitan areas generated more than enough jobs to employ these new entrants without deleterious effects on competing groups of workers.”*

(p. 3)

While the employment rate increased for single mothers, there was no evidence that unemployment increased among groups of less-educated workers: unmarried women without children, married women, and unmarried men.

The researchers also found no evidence of wage depression. In fact, both single mothers and less educated workers experienced wage increases. Moreover, there was no relationship between the labor force inflows and wage changes among these groups.

This study shows that the changes in the national welfare system apparently did not lead to deleterious consequences for the labor market position of either single mothers or less educated workers as a whole.

## Sense of Entitlement to Support for the Reconciliation of Employment and Family Life

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*Human Relations*

Volume 54(11), 2001, pp. 1455-1481

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Countries differ in their policy stances about reconciling paid work and family life. The focus of this study was to examine differences in young men and women's expectations in five European countries: Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

A total of 70 focus groups were held in the five countries. Participants were young and their occupational experiences were diverse; most did not yet have family responsibilities. Discussions focused on current and future employment, career paths, and relationships. Feelings of entitlement to support from both employers and government were also discussed.

Results found that participants from countries with an 'equality contract,' such as Norway and Sweden, expressed the highest sense of entitlement to support. (An 'equality contract' means the state assumes men and women will both serve as caregivers and paid workers.) These respondents tended to report that employers should be supportive because it is morally correct.

Other participants appeared to be guided by a business case, taking the position that employers should be supportive if it is in their best interest. Participants from Britain and Portugal stressed individual responsibility and personal choice. Having a child was not seen as an entitlement to support outside the family. Irish participants assigned greater responsibility to mothers, with external support considered a last resort. State provision of childcare was considered unfair, but some respondents endorsed the popular and controversial idea of paying women who stay home to look after their family.

Across the five countries, men reported a weaker sense of entitlement to support than did women. Unlike women, men did not consider part-time work to be a feasible option. Respondents in all countries also expressed some cynicism about employers' motives, wondering whether temporary work arrangements are used to undermine statutory requirements.

*The municipality should (be responsible for running nurseries), . . . there is lots of private day-care too, but I don't really think individuals should be responsible for these things . . . you must pay to have a kid in the nursery . . . but the public authorities should be responsible for building and funding them.*

**Norwegian woman, aged 19, in vocational training**

*(pp. 1464-65)*

**The Role of Organizational Size and Industry in  
Job Quality and Work-Family Relationships**

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*Journal of Family and Economic Issues*

Volume 22(2), 2001, pp. 191-216

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The goal of this study was to assess the role of industry and organizational size in workers' reports of job quality. More specifically, the goal was to assess how much of the variation in a wide variety of work-related outcomes is a function of the characteristics of individuals, organizations, or industries.

*Today, seemingly constant stories about global corporations and mergers of corporate giants all belie a central fact about the U.S. economy: 98 percent of U.S. firms employ fewer than 100 workers. Although the best-known companies employ many thousands of workers, fewer than 700 of the 6.6 million firms in the nation have 10,000 or more employees. All together, 55 percent of U.S. employees-over 54 million workers-toil in firms of fewer than 100 workers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998, 1999).*

(p. 192)

The authors examined the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce, a nationally representative sample of adults in the civilian labor force. The final sample used included 2477 participants: 52% were women, 61% were married, 45% had children under the age of 18, 80% were white, 77% lived in suburban areas, 86% were dual-earners, and 67% were hourly workers.

The authors found that 90% of the variation in job experience is at the individual level, but job experiences are also related to the size and industry of the firms in which workers are employed. Employees in the smallest firms report less discrimination, less commuting time, more supportive workplaces, less interference between work and family life, and less burnout than employees at the largest firms. Employees in the largest firms reported higher compensation, more traditional benefits, and more dependent care benefits than did employees at the smallest companies.

There were also differences across industries. Employees in the retail industry reported less experience, poor compensation, less travel time, and worked hours close to their ideal. Employees in the service industry experienced longer hours, and somewhat less compensation, but found work stimulating, less stressful, and more marketable. Those in the manufacturing industry reported less marketable skills, less schedule control, more benefits, and brought less work home.

### Role Balance among White Married Couples

S. R. Marks, T. L. Huston, E. M. Johnson, S. M. MacDermid

*Journal of Marriage and Family*

Volume 63, 2001, pp.1083-1098

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Married adults are often faced with fulfilling multiple roles such as parenting, paid, work, housework, kinship, friendship, and leisure interests. The juggling of these roles has been found to create stress in many people, but others seem to manage the complexity more easily. One possible explanation is that individuals who see their role systems more holistically and have a more balanced approach find it easier to manage their role responsibilities despite being just as busy as others.

*“We found substantial differences between wives’ and husband’s models of role balance in this data because the realities of daily life that each is attempting to balance are simply not the same.”*

(p. 1096)

Participants in the study were 80 couples married for 13 years, all with children. Data were gathered using a creative combination of separate face-to-face interviews with mothers and fathers in their homes, followed by a series of telephone interviews, 3 on weekday and 3 on weekend evenings, that recorded all activities during the preceding 24 hours.

Husbands and wives both reported greater role balance when they were more invested in their role as parents and when they were more satisfied with their marriages. Wives, however, experienced slightly more role balance than did husbands. There were substantial differences between wives’ and husbands’ models of role balance that seemed connected to traditional prescriptions for gender roles.

Wives who reported more balance also tended to report more traditional gender role attitudes, more paid work hours through the week but not on weekends, less financial strain, less leisure time alone with their children and more with their husbands, and more involvement with their social network. Wives also reported more role balance when their husbands devoted more effort to maintaining their relationship and spent more time alone with the children.

Husbands reported more balance when they worked fewer hours, earned more income, and when their wives worked more hours. In addition, balance was higher for husbands who spent more leisure time with their wives and children and less leisure time alone.

These husbands and wives seemed to achieve balance by pursuing traditional roles, where wives “specialized” in relationships and husbands in providing for their families. Their experiences were also highly interdependent – wives’ balance in particular was very influenced by their husbands’ behavior. To some extent, balance was a financial luxury for both, severely undermined when incomes were low or financial strain was high.

**The Remains of the Workday: Impact of Job Stress and Exhaustion  
on Marital Interaction in Police Couples**

N. A. Roberts & R. W. Levenson

*Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*

Volume 63, 2001, pp. 1052-1067

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As the two major activities in most peoples' lives, it is not uncommon for work and family to affect one other. The impact of work-family spillover on the marital relationship has received little attention from researchers. This study examined the ways in which work-related stress and exhaustion affect physiological well-being and interaction between marital partners. Stress may cause a state of arousal that makes it difficult to solve problems effectively, while exhaustion can leave workers feeling drained and unable to interact in a positive way.

Police officers were studied because of the stressful nature of their occupation. Nineteen couples participated; in all cases the police officer was the husband. Work strain was measured using daily reports of job stress and physical exhaustion every day for one month. The impact of stress and exhaustion on the emotional life of a marriage was assessed through direct observation of marital interaction and physiological measures and self-reports.

***When husbands reported experiencing more job stress, there were fewer moments when they and their wives reported feeling positive affect, and fewer moments when they reciprocated one another's positive affect.***

(p. 1064)

The findings revealed that job stress is far more harmful for marital interaction than physical exhaustion. In this study, husbands' job stress produced a physiological and affective atmosphere in which both spouses demonstrated signs associated with marital distress and dissolution. In contrast, husbands' physical exhaustion was associated with a more positive affective climate within the marriage on the days observed.

**Forgotten Partners of International Assignments:  
Development and Test of a Model of Spouse Adjustment**

M. A. Shaffer & D. A. Harrison

*Journal of Applied Psychology*

Volume 86, 2001, pp 238-254

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As business operations become ever more global, international assignments are becoming more common. Although there are no official records, approximately 1.3 million U.S. employees have overseas assignments. Approximately 80% of expatriate employees are married, meaning that more than 1 million spouses may be taking part in international relocations. The purpose of this study was to understand the adjustment of spouses to international assignments.

*“...skills and behavioral repertoires that might have served spouses well in their native countries have either null or negative effects on adapting to an international relocation. ... Redefining one’s identity by gaining fluency in the host location’s language, as well as developing a large and varying set of social connections...are all helpful to adjustment.”*

(p. 252)

In-depth interviews lasting 3-4 hours were conducted with 10 expatriate spouses, half of whom were having negative and half of whom were having positive experiences. Data from the interviews were used to discover themes in respondents’ answers, which were coded using multiple raters who achieved good levels of agreement. Then, quantitative survey data were gathered to verify the prevalence of the themes among 221 expatriate couples stationed in 37 countries all over the world.

In their interviews, spouses made it clear that their adjustment depended upon reestablishing their identity. Their identities, in turn, seemed to depend upon personal, relationship, and cultural factors.

Statistical analyses showed that spouses’ adjustment was related to two personal factors. Adjustment was better when spouses were more fluent in the host language. Surprisingly, adjustment was worse for spouses who were more socially self-confident.

In general, relationship factors were positively related to adjustment. For example, spouses’ adjustment was better when the expatriate employee was also better adjusted, when parental demands were greater, and when the spouse had access to more types and sources social network. Surprisingly – and contrary to the interview data -- family support was negatively related to spouses’ adjustment. Finally, spouses’ adjustment was better when their living conditions were more favorable and the host culture was less novel.

Unfortunately, this study was cross-sectional, so it is not possible to know whether the factors *cause* the levels of adjustment the researchers observed.



**Marital Disruption, Parental Investment,  
and Children's Academic Achievement**

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*Journal of Family Issues*

Volume 22, 2001, pp. 27-62

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Previous research has shown that marital disruption interferes with children's school performance, but much less is known about whether these negative effects are evident even before the actual disruption.

*... the negative impact of marital disruption on performance can be either largely or completely predicted by [youth's school] performance and [parental] investment differences at the predisruption stage.*

(pp.56-57)

This study was based on a sample of 10,288 8<sup>th</sup> grade students surveyed in the 1988 and 1990 waves of the National Education Longitudinal Study. Results showed that even before marital disruption, both boys and girls from families that subsequently dissolved performed less well in school than peers whose parents remained married, by a small but significant margin.

Even after controlling for demographic differences, families that would dissolve in the future showed deficits in almost all measures of financial, cultural, human, and social resources prior to the marital disruption. For example, such families had fewer financial resources, less saving for college, fewer education objects in the home and were less likely to have a home computer. These parents also had lower expectations of their children, discussed things less frequently with their children and were less likely to attend school events. Girls and boys were equally disadvantaged.

A major implication of this study is that children – both boys and girls – need just as much support and assistance during predisruption as postdisruption stages.

## Retirement Effects on Parent-Adult Child Contacts

*M. E. Szinovacz & A. Davey*

*The Gerontologist*

Volume 41, 2001, pp. 191-200

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This study examined the impact of retirement on parents' contact with their adult children, and the role of distance, children's employment, and family size in that relationship. Data came from the 1998 and 1994 waves of the National Survey of Families and Households.

A subsample of 792 respondents, aged 55-75 in 1998 (wave 2 of data collection) and thus likely to have retired since 1994 (wave 1), was created for analysis. These parents reported on the frequency of face-to-face visits and telephone/letter contacts with the 2,153 adult children who resided outside their household at both waves.

Retirement did not affect the frequency of telephone or letter contacts with children, or parents' feelings of closeness to their children. Retirement did, however, affect the frequency of visits. For parents and children who did not live close to each other, visits occurred less frequently for both mothers and fathers, although mothers were likely to increase visits with children who themselves were parents and fathers were likely to increase visits to childless children.

*... retirement planners and family counselors need not be concerned that retirees will "abandon" their children. Rather, concern should be directed toward the implementation of realistic plans for post-retirement kin relationships and toward both generations' ability to compromise on a level of contact that meets parents' and children's expectations and needs.*

*(p. 199)*

Among parents and children who lived within 10 miles of each other, retired mothers saw their children less frequently than employed mothers. The reverse was true for fathers: retired fathers saw their children more frequently than employed fathers. Both mothers and fathers were more likely to increase visits with daughters than with sons. Employment status of the children was not related to the frequency of visits.

These results suggest that both men and women stay involved in their children's lives after entering retirement. They also imply that gender stereotyped expectations about men and women's lives in retirement, (that women will be involved with kids and men will just go fishing) are not well-justified.

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# **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 2002, 43 reviewers from 5 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 47 journals were reviewed. The selection of journals was guided using four sources: an empirical study by Bob Drago 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. Members of the review panel are also 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 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 2001 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 56 nominated articles was sent to 3 or 4 reviewers, who scored it according to several standard criteria. The total scores were used to select the Kanter Top 20; the top 6 articles became finalists for the award.

## **Final Round**

In the final round, all reviewers scored each of the 6 finalist articles. Two articles were declared co-winners. After the winners were chosen, reviewers were asked (as they are each year) to recommend revisions to the award process for the 2002 award.

**Members of the Kanter Award Committee  
2002**

**Committee Chair**

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Mark Wardell	Pennsylvania State University

## Journals Reviewed

Academy of Management Journal	The Gerontologist
Academy of Management Review	Journal of Health and Social Behavior
Administrative Science Quarterly	Journal of Management
American Journal of Sociology	Journal of Marriage and Family
American Sociological Review	Journal of Occupational and...
Canadian Journal of Administrative ...	Organizational Psychology
Sciences	Journal of Occupational Health ...
Canadian Journal on Aging	Psychology
Canadian Journal of Sociology	Journal of Organizational Behavior
Canadian Psychology	Journal of Personality and Social ...
Community, Work, and Family	Psychology
Demography	Journal of Vocational Behavior
Family Relations	Marriage and Family Review
Feminist Economics	Monthly Labor Review
Gender and Society	Personnel Psychology
Gender, Work and Organizations	Psychology of Women Quarterly
Human Relations	Qualitative Sociology
Human Resource Management	Research on Aging
Industrial and Labor Relations Review	Sex Roles
Industrial Relations	Signs
Journal of Aging Studies	Social Forces
Journal of Applied Psychology	Social Problems
Journal of Family and Economic Issues	Sociological Forum
Journal of Family Issues	Work and Occupations
Journals of Gerontology	Work and Stress



## ***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; develops innovative ways to enhance the quality of life of children and families; and 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 Midwestern Work-Family Association*** is a membership organization of employers interested in family issues. MWFA offers employers of all sizes opportunities to address -- individually and collectively -- challenges confronting today's workplaces around issues of work and family. The association is committed to creating high quality work environments that are consistent with business objectives, and serves as a catalyst for change to make the midwest a more family-friendly place to work and live. Members of the association interact through leadership network meetings, conferences, training sessions, and electronic media.

***The Initiative for Families in Business*** at Purdue University supports the long-term viability of families in business by advancing knowledge and understanding of the unique dynamics, challenges and rewards of combining the dynamics of family life with owning and running a business. The initiative brings together faculty members from many disciplines, including small business management, consumer sciences, marketing, marriage and family therapy, and family studies to collaborate with families who own and run businesses. Initiative activities include conducting research, developing educational opportunities, and strengthening connections between students and family businesses.

## ***The Boston College Center for Work & Family***

The Boston College Center for Work & Family is a research organization within the Carroll School of Management that promotes employer responsiveness to families. The Center's guiding vision is to serve as the bridge linking the academic research community to the workplace. To gain increased understanding of the challenges faced by both employees and employers in meeting the goals of the individual and the enterprise, the Center conducts basic and applied research studies and analyzes secondary information sources. The Center's initiatives fall into three broad categories: research, employer partnerships, and information services.

***The Work & Family Roundtable***, founded in 1990, is a business partnership providing leadership to shape corporate and public responses to the demands of work, home, and community in order to enhance employee effectiveness. Throughout its ten years, the Roundtable has focused on activities that enable members companies to think more strategically in the area of work/life and to strive for higher standards. Looking to the future, the center is committed to pursuing new opportunities that strengthen the Roundtable as a true learning alliance.

***The New England Work & Family Association*** (NEWFA) was established in 1992 to help employers understand and address the complex work/life challenges facing today's workforce. NEWFA provides a forum and resource base for organizations in any phase of work/life planning and policy development. Through the offered publications, web site, and quarterly meetings, NEWFA members benefit from up-to-the-minute information and research on a wide range of work/life issues, including work force effectiveness, global strategies, and flexible work arrangements.

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