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Work-Family Culture: Current Research and Future Directions

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"…our society is just about at the breaking point, especially for families who are raising children. The ones who are most likely to have a high quality of life are those without children. It's not only because of a mismatch between the old and new realities, but it's also the global economy… as well as today's technology where you're available 24/7." Phyllis Moen

The pressures facing workers today have been well documented. Long commutes, last minute overtime requests, early morning meetings, the need to be available at a moment's notice, and the need to be in touch with co-workers, clients, suppliers in different time zones-all wreak havoc on employees' personal lives. And often there is no one at home to pick up the slack. The number of employees in dual-career or dual-earner couples has increased dramatically in the last 25 years, as has the number of employees caring for elderly parents. More than 35% of the U.S. workforce are parents of minor children. Not surprisingly, a recently released report estimates the over 50 million parents in the U.S. are stressed because they worry about their child's welfare during the hours after school (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). Children are concerned that their parents are working too hard (Galinsky, 2004), and a recent *Wall Street Journal* article described "BlackBerry orphans," children who resent the intrusion of their parent's hand-held, go everywhere email device (December 11, 2006).

Further evidence that workers are struggling can be seen in the increasing number of employees who say they experience a great deal of conflict between work and family. The National Study of the Changing Workforce, a study that assesses U.S. workers' attitudes about their jobs and family lives, found that 27% of employees felt that they did not have enough time for their family or other important people in their lives because of their jobs, and 32% felt that

they did not have enough time for themselves (Bond et al., 1998). It is likely that workers in other countries are experiencing conflict as well. In fact, women account for an increasing proportion of the labor force in the European Union, with 50% of the female population now working (van Doorne-Huiskes , den Dulk, & Schippers, 1999).

To help employees cope with the competing demands of work and family, many organizations have attempted to create a "family-friendly" or "life-friendly" workplace for their employees (see Kossek, Ch. 17, this book; Lobel & Kossek, 1996) To create a such a workplace, they develop benefits, programs, and policies designed to give employees flexibility (e.g., telecommuting options), dependent care support (e.g., on-site child care centers), information (e.g., resource and referral programs), financial support (e.g., adoption assistance), and direct services (e.g., concierge services). According to the results of a national study, 55% of medium-size workplaces allow employees to periodically work from home, 36% provide access to information to help locate childcare in the community, and 9% offer childcare on or near site (Galinsky & Bond, 1998). Of the workers interviewed for the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond et al., 2003), 43% reported that they were allowed to use flextime, and 23% reported that they were able to change start and quit times on a daily basis.

Despite the increased availability of work-life programs, employees are often reluctant to take advantage of these programs, especially programs that reduce their visibility to co-workers and managers. Many of these programs conflict with entrenched organizational norms such as "face time," and as a result, employees who reduce their work hours are often stigmatized (Epstein, Seron, Oglensky, & Saute, 1999; Fried, 1998; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002). Even in Sweden, which is arguably the most advanced nation in terms of governmental work-family

support, women and men have reported being discriminated against when they returned from parental leave (Nasman, 1999). In the U.S., researchers have found that employees who perceived unsupportive family-friendly cultures were less likely to use their employer's work-life programs, at least partly because they feared negative career consequences for using them (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). Evidence that their fears are not unfounded comes from a study of over 11,000 managers in a financial services firm. Judiesch and Lyness (1999) found that taking a leave of absence was associated with fewer subsequent promotions and smaller salary increases. They argued that their findings support a "gendered organizational culture" in that managers who take a leave of absence do not conform to expectations of prioritizing work over family and therefore are perceived to be less deserving of organizational rewards.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the role of the work environment---specifically, the culture of support for work-family balance---in understanding employees' work attitudes and behaviors, as well as their stress levels and general well-being. We will first define work-family culture and related constructs such as perceived organizational family support. We will then describe various dimensions of work-family culture that have been proposed in the literature, as well as how work-family culture has been measured. We will describe the latest research on work-family culture, including recent research using international samples, as well as provide several examples of what organizations are doing to create a more supportive culture. We will conclude with thoughts about future research directions and implications for practice.

What is Work-family Culture?

Work-family culture has been defined as the "shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees'

work and family lives" (Thompson et al., 1999; p. 394). Allen (2001) described a related

construct, family supportive organization perceptions, as the "global perceptions that employees

form regarding the extent to which the organization is family supportive," (p.414). Jahn et al

(2003) described another related construct, perceived organizational family support, which taps

employees' perceptions of tangible support (i.e., instrumental and informational support) and

intangible support (i.e., emotional support). Finally, Lewis (1997) defined work-family culture in

terms of Schein's (1985) theory of organizational culture, which distinguishes between three

levels of culture (i.e., artifacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions). Lewis argued that

work-life policies and programs are "artifacts," or surface level indicators of an organization's

intentions to be supportive. Values underlie artifacts, and might include, for example, prioritizing

work over family or family over work. Basic assumptions underlie values. For example, it is

often assumed that time spent at work is indicative of productivity, despite policies to the

contrary (e.g., flexplace, telecommuting). According to Lewis (1997), it is the values and

assumptions that get at the heart of workplace culture. Because values and assumptions are

difficult to examine, much less change, it is usually easier for organizations to focus on surface-

level change such as implementing an on-site childcare center, rather than deeper cultural

changes like decreasing the importance of facetime by focusing on an employee's output rather

input (e.g., the number of hours logged per week).

Some definitions and operationalizations of work-family culture have included both

formal (e.g., actual benefits offered, degree of schedule flexibility) and informal (e.g.,

perceptions of support) elements (e.g., Clark, 2001; Warren & Johnson, 1995). Jahn, Thompson,

and Kopelman (2003) focused on perceptions of both tangible and intangible support. Others

have focused on informal or intangible aspects of culture only (e.g., Allen, 2001; Kossek,

Colquitt, & Noe, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). As organizational culture has been defined in terms of employees' *perceptions* of expectations and norms for behavior at work, or what some authors have referred to as "the internal social psychological environment" (Denison, 1996), in this chapter we will focus on employees' perceptions of the informal, intangible aspects of work-family culture, while recognizing that this culture is influenced, in part, by the formal benefits offered by the organization.

Dimensionality of Work-Family Culture

Most researchers have considered work-family culture to be comprised of multiple dimensions. Research by Thompson et al. (1999) suggests that work-family culture is comprised of three components: organizational time demands, career consequences for using work-family benefits, and managerial support. O*rganizational time demands* refers to the extent to which there are expectations for long hours of work and for prioritizing work over family. Advertising agencies, start-up software companies, and investment banks, for example, are known for excessive time demands, with employees often working nights and weekends. *Perceived career consequences* refers to the degree to which employees perceive positive or negative career consequences for using work-family benefits. Because of norms for "face time," employees often believe that participating in work-family programs such as flexplace may damage their career progress as they will be less visible at work (Bailyn, 1993; Fried, 1998). The third component, *managerial support*, captures the extent to which individual managers are sensitive to and accommodating of employees' family needs.

Other researchers have also included managerial support as a component of a supportive culture. Galinsky and Stein (1990), for example, described a supportive supervisor as someone

who feels that handling family issues is a legitimate part of their role, is knowledgeable about company policies, is flexible when work-family problems arise, and handles work-family problems fairly and without favoritism. Bailyn (1997) also argued that supervisor support for family needs is critical in establishing a family-friendly work culture. On the other hand, Allen (2001) found that perceptions of family-supportive work environments mediated the relationship between supervisor support and work-family conflict, suggesting that supervisor support may be a precursor to a supportive work-family culture rather than an aspect of culture itself.

In addition to the dimensions described above, there are most likely other relevant dimensions important for fully understanding the nature of work-family culture. For example, Kossek, Colquitt, and Noe (2001), who prefer the term "climate" to "culture," proposed that two dimensions of work climate are related to an employee's ability to balance work and family. A *work climate for sharing concerns* encourages employees to discuss family concerns with supervisors and co-workers, while a *work climate for sacrifices* entails making sacrifices in the family role to support work role performance. Kossek, Noe, and DeMarr (1999) proposed that organizations have a *climate for boundary separation*: some have loose boundaries between work and family (e.g., employees can bring children to work) and some have tight boundaries (e.g., employees are not allowed to take personal calls at work). In addition, Kirchmeyer (1995) suggested that *respect* for an employee's nonwork life is an important component of a supportive organization.

Finally, there are aspects of an organization's culture that may be related to but distinct from work-family culture as currently conceptualized. In a study of Swedish working fathers, Haas, Allard, and Hwang (2002) viewed culture in terms of how supportive it was of men's

active participation in fatherhood, and operationalized it in terms of five company-level dimensions (e.g., a masculine ethic, caring ethic, equal opportunity ethic) and three work-group level dimensions (e.g., supervisor support for men's participation in childcare, work group norms of visibility). For example, an equal opportunity ethic captures an organization's commitment to improving the status of women in the company, which is likely related to---but not the same as--- the level of organizational support for work-life balance. However, their other proposed dimensions appear similar to dimensions described earlier (e.g., the caring ethic includes respect for others).

Measurement of Work-family Culture

For many years, work-life experts, journalists, and HR professionals lamented the difficulty of creating a truly family-friendly workplace, citing entrenched corporate cultures as the major barrier to real change (e.g., Kofodimos, 1995; Solomon, 1994). Early efforts to document the strength of the culture in facilitating or hindering the acceptance of work-life programs were qualitative in nature, and yielded powerful stories about the difficulties individual employees had in their attempts to create a balanced life (e.g., Lewis & Taylor, 1996). While qualitative research is highly useful for developing a deep understanding of an organization's culture, it is limited in that it is time-consuming, labor intensive, and not usually generalizable. Further, qualitative research does not allow the researcher to test hypotheses about the nature of relationships between culture and its potential antecedents, consequences, moderators, and mediators. A quantifiable, psychometrically sound measure of work-family culture would benefit researchers who want to study the relationship between, for example, work-family culture and outcomes important to employees (e.g.. stress, life satisfaction, physical health) and employers

(e.g., absenteeism, turnover, performance), as well as the extent to which these relationships are moderated by gender and mediated by work-family conflict. In addition, a quantifiable measure would enable organizations to survey its employees to get a sense of how the culture is perceived.

To facilitate research on work and family culture, several researchers have developed quantitative measures of work-family culture or related concepts (e.g., perceived organizational family support). As shown in Table 1, there are five measures that have been developed and used in research to date. All of these measures focus on individual perceptions of organizational culture; as such, they do not attempt to measure the degree to which these perceptions are shared among work groups or organizations as a whole (see Thompson, Jahn, Kopelman, & Prottas, 2004 for an exception). Because these scales have not been used to measure shared culture, researchers must be careful to clarify the distinction between shared versus individual perceptions of culture.

The measure most frequently used in research is a 20-item scale developed in 1999 by Thompson et al. As described above, this measure assesses three dimensions of work-family culture (i.e., organizational time demands, negative career consequences, and managerial support). Allen (2001) measured organizational work-family supportiveness by a 14-item unidimensional scale she named "Family Supportive Organization Perceptions." Her scale measures global perceptions of the degree to which the employee's organization is supportive of families, although Kinnunen et al., (2005) argued that the scale seems to tap multiple dimensions (e.g., time demands, importance of separating work and family). Nevertheless, Allen's analyses did not support a multidimensional scale. Importantly, Allen (2001) did not include supervisory

support in her scale as she considers organizational supportiveness and supervisory/managerial supportiveness to be separate concepts. Clark (2001) developed a 13-item measure of work culture based on Bailyn's (1997) description of the characteristics of a family-supportive work culture: flexible work processes (what Clark called "operational flexibility"), flexible work scheduling ("temporal flexibility"), and supervisors' support for family ("supportive supervision"). However, as noted by Kinnunen et al., neither flexibility scale taps family supportiveness, although both are most likely related to an employee's ability to balance work and family.

Jahn et al. (2003) developed a measure grounded in social support theory (House, 1981) and perceived organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Their measure, which they labeled "Perceived Organizational Family Support," is comprised of nine items which assess two dimensions: tangible support, which includes perceptions of instrumental and informational support, and intangible support, which includes perceptions of emotional support. A tenth item assesses overall family friendliness of the organization.

Finally, in its National Survey of the Changing Workforce, the Families and Work Institute includes four or five items (depending on the year of the survey) to measure perceptions of work-family culture (Bond et al., 1998; Bond et al, 2003). These items appear to tap two aspects of culture: perceptions of potential negative career consequences for tending to family needs, and the perceived importance of prioritizing work over family. Table 1 includes a list of researchers who have used each of these scales.

Research on Outcomes Related to Work-Family Culture

Outcomes Related to Overall Supportiveness of the Work-Family Culture

Although research investigating the impact of work-life benefits on employee attitudes and behavior has shown mixed results (see Kossek's chapter in this book), research on the impact of supportive work-family cultures has been consistently positive. For example, the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond et al., 2003) found that employees who worked in supportive cultures were more committed to their employer, more satisfied with their jobs, and less likely to be thinking about quitting. In addition, these employees experienced less negative spillover from their jobs to their home, had better mental health, and were more satisfied with their lives.

Similarly, other research has demonstrated that perceptions of a family-supportive work environment were associated with greater job satisfaction (Allen, 2001; Sahibzida, Hammer, Neal, & Kuang, 2005), positive spillover between work and family (Thompson & Prottas, 2006) and commitment to the organization (Allen, 2001; Dikkers, den Dulk, & Peper, 2004; Lyness, Thompson, Francesco, & Judiesch, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999; Thompson, Jahn, Kopelman, & Prottas, 2004). In addition, perceptions of a supportive work-family culture were related to lower levels of work stress or strain (Mauno, Kinnunen and Pyykko, 2005; Thompson & Prottas, 2006; Warren & Johnson, 1995), work-family conflict (Allen, 2001; Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Behson, 2002; Mauno et al, 2005; Thompson & Prottas, 2006), and turnover intentions (Allen, 2001; Bond et al., 2003; Thompson et al., 1999). The results of a recent meta-analysis found that of five types of support (dependent care availability, work schedule and location flexibility, supervisor support, co-worker support, and work-family culture), work-family culture, followed

by supervisor support, had the strongest relationship with work-family conflict (Mesmer-Magnus, J.R. & Viswesvaran, 2006).

The relationship between a supportive work-family culture and positive outcomes (e.g., lower work-family conflict, commitment, lower turnover intentions) were found even when controlling for benefit availability (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 2004). When both benefit use and work-family culture were examined together, only work-family culture was related to work-family balance (Lyness & Kropf, 2005) and work-family conflict (O'Driscoll et al., 2003). Finally, Wayne, Randel, and Stevens (2006) examined the role of individual (i.e., work and family identities), family (emotional and instrumental support), and organizational (benefit use and work-family culture) antecedents of work-family enrichment, which they defined as the positive affect that results when one role enhances the quality of life in another role. The strength of an individual's identity and informal or emotional support within a domain, rather than formal or instrumental support, were associated with greater enrichment, which, in turn was associated with higher commitment and lower turnover intentions. Together, these results suggest that a supportive culture is more powerful than either benefit availability or usage in terms of work-related outcomes.

Outcomes Related to Organizational Time Demands

The unsupportiveness of an organization's culture is at least partially reflected in the perception that long hours are required of employees. Because the productivity of managerial and professional employees is often difficult to measure, the hours that an employee spends at work is often used as an indicator of output as well as commitment to the organization (Bailyn, 1993; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002). Norms regarding "face time" (i.e., being physically present

at the workplace) create pressures for employees to work longer hours than are necessary, just to prove their dedication and commitment (Bailyn, 1993; Fried, 1998).

Research suggests that working long hours has implications for employee health and well-being (Beauregard, 2006; Major, Klein & Ehrhart, 2002; Sparks, Cooper, Fried, & Shirom, 1997). For example, Major et al. (2002) found that organizational norms for how much time should be spent at work were, in fact, predictive of hours worked, which in turn were related to work-family conflict. Work time was indirectly related to psychological distress (e.g., depression) through its effect on work-family conflict. Beauregard (2006) examined potential antecedents of work-family conflict, including situational antecedents (e.g., presence of young children, perceived work-family culture, including perceived time demands) and dispositional antecedents (e.g., self-esteem, perfectionism). She found that perceived organizational time demands had the strongest relationship to work-to-family conflict. Thompson et al. (1999) also found that employees who perceived heavy organizational time demands were more likely to report higher levels of work-family conflict; this relationship held even after controlling for actual hours worked. As suggested by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), the additional variance explained by perceptions of time demands may be due to mental preoccupation with work while at home, thus adding to the level of work-family conflict experienced. Finally, Brett and Stroh (2003) found that employees who worked the longest hours felt the most alienated from their families, and Wayne et al. (2006) found that employees who perceived heavy time demands were less likely to experience work-family enrichment.

Outcomes Related to Perceived Negative Career Consequences

Anecdotal as well as empirical evidence suggests that in unsupportive work-family

cultures, employees expect negative career consequences for participating in work-family programs (Soloman, 1994; Thompson et al.,1999). In the Thompson et al. study, when employees perceived fewer negative career consequences for using work-family benefits, they were less likely to think about quitting and had less work-to-family conflict. Similarly, Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly (2002) found that employees who expected negative career consequences for putting their family first reported more work-to-family conflict, lower job satisfaction, and higher turnover intentions. On the other hand, Beauregard (2006) did not find any relationship between perceived negative career consequences and work-family conflict. Taken together, however, these results suggest that even though organizations implement work-life programs to help employees balance work and family, unsupportive cultures lead employees to fear their careers will be damaged if they participate in these programs or allow their family to be a priority in their lives. These negative perceptions have consequences for the individual as well as the organization in terms of conflict experienced and intentions to quit.

Outcomes Related to Supervisory and Managerial Support

Not surprisingly, an employee's relationship with his or her supervisor is a powerful predictor of work-family balance (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). Supportive supervisors and managers likely enhance employees' sense of control, which in turn may increase employees' ability to cope with conflicting work and family demands (Major & Cleveland, 2007; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). In fact, research suggests that employees who have supportive supervisors have higher levels of "employee fulfillment" (Tay, Quazi, & Kelly, 2006), lower levels of work-family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002; Frone, Yardley & Markel,1997; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; McManus, Korabik, Rosin, & Kelloway, 2002; Thompson & Prottas, 2006), lower rates of

depression, role strain, and other health symptoms (Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil, & Payne, 1989; O'Driscoll et al., 2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Supportive supervision has also been linked to increased commitment (Allen, 2001; Greenberger et al., 1989; Thompson et al., 2004), higher job satisfaction (Allen, 2001; McManus et al., 2002; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), higher career satisfaction (Aryee & Luk, 1996), less intention to quit (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999), and lower absenteeism (Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990). Surprisingly, in the study of Swedish fathers mentioned earlier, neither supervisor support nor top management support was related to men's decision to use parental leave, although top management support was related to actual number of days taken (Haas et al., 2002).

Allen (2001) examined the process through which supervisor support decreases work-family conflict. She found that supervisor support was directly related to employees' perceptions of organizational family support, which in turn were related to lower levels of work-family conflict. As Allen (2001) and others have noted, supervisors play a key role in determining whether or not employees are able to use work-life policies, and their willingness to be supportive influences employees' attitudes and well being.

Additional Dimensions of Work-Family Culture

As noted earlier, Kossek et al. (2001) suggested that work climate for sharing family concerns and for sacrificing family for work might be important dimensions of the overall climate that affect employee attitudes as well as decisions about how much time and energy to devote to work. They found a climate for sharing family concerns at work was positively related to an employee's well-being and self reports of work performance, whereas a climate for sacrificing family for work was negatively related to well-being and positively related to work-

family conflict.

Kossek et al. (1999) proposed but did not test the idea that organizations might have a climate for boundary separation. Kirchmeyer (1995) examined a similar idea by investigating the effectiveness of three different organizational responses to managing work and non-work roles: integration (organization supports combining work and family spheres), separation (the organization treats the domains as separate), and respect (the organization provides the support necessary for the individual to handle work-family demands themselves). In a sample of Canadian managers, "separation" was rated as the most common policy and was related to lower levels of organizational commitment. Integration and respect policies, although less common, were positively related to employee commitment (Kirchmeyer, 1995).

In their study of Swedish fathers, Haas et al. (2002) found that several aspects of organizational and work group culture were related to men's use of parental leave. At the organizational level, male employees who perceived that their company's values included a caring ethic (i.e., the company values empathy, helpfulness, interpersonal sensitivity) and an equal opportunity ethic (e.g., the advancement of women is valued by the company) were more likely to take parental leave. At the work group level, leave usage was related to perceptions that the culture was flexible and adaptive in responding to fathers' desire to take time off to care for children, and that performance was evaluated based on results rather than time at work. However, because individual and family factors accounted for significant amounts of variance in usage of parental leave compared to organizational culture factors, the authors suggested that the Swedish national context may render company factors less important.

Work-Family Culture and Benefit Usage

Researchers have begun to investigate the relationship between supportiveness of work-family culture and the extent to which employees actually *use* the work-life benefits offered. As noted earlier, even if benefits are available, they often are not used in cultures that send mixed messages about whether it is acceptable to use them (Perlow, 1995). Several recent studies found that employees were more likely to use work-life benefits when they perceived that their organizations and supervisors provided a family-supportive work environment (Allen, 2001; Dikkers et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 1999). For example, Dikkers et al. (2004) found that Dutch employees in a consulting firm who perceived a more supportive work culture (i.e., in terms of collegial and managerial support) were more likely to use flextime and to work from home. Interestingly, these employees also perceived negative career consequences and high time demands (two dimensions they combined and called "hindrance" factors), suggesting that they were using work-family benefits despite the possible detriment to their career. Dikkers suggested that "high support and high hindrance [might not be] two ends of the same continuum" (p. 340) and are separate factors that may co-exist.

Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002) examined possible contextual factors that may influence whether employees use work-family policies and programs. In particular, they examined whether having powerful supervisors or co-workers would increase the utilization of family-care programs and flexible work policies. They argued that a social context with powerful individuals (e.g., with men being more powerful than women in many workplaces) would provide the support necessary to reduce the potential negative career consequences associated with using work-family programs. They found that use of family-care policies (e.g., day care and paid/unpaid leave) was influenced solely by individual factors, with women, single individuals, and those with dependent care responsibilities more likely to use them. However, use of flexible

policies (e.g., flextime, telecommuting) was affected by the amount of power that one's co-workers and supervisors had. For example, having a male, unmarried supervisor as compared to a female, married supervisor increased the probability of using flexible policies by 50%.

Other researchers have determined that employees who actually use work-family benefits tend to be more committed to their organization and have lower intentions to quit (Allen, 2001; Eaton, 2003; Grover & Crooker, 1995). In one study, use of work-life policies were related to increased perceptions of control, which in turn were directly related to a reduction in personal stressors and indirectly related to improved mental and physical health of employees (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). These findings highlight again the benefits of creating a supportive work culture in which employees feel comfortable using work-life benefits offered.

International Perspective on Work-family Culture

It is increasingly recognized that national context is important for understanding work-family culture (Lewis, 1996; Korabik, Lero, & Ayman, 2003). With so many organizations operating in multiple countries, it is important to understand how the culture of a country, its social norms, social policies and programs, influence formal and informal workplace support for employees with families. Research examining organizational work-family culture using international samples is limited, although the literature is growing (e.g., Beauregard, 2006; Dikkers et al., 2004; Lyness & Kropf, 2005). However, with the exception of Lyness and Kropf's (2005) study, all have been single-country studies, thus making country comparisons difficult. In the next section, we will briefly discuss findings from recent research that shed light on the relationships between country culture, organizational work-family culture, and outcomes important to individual employees and their employers.

National Culture and Organizational Time Demands

In a recent cross-national study, Wharton and Blair-Loy (2002) found that Hong Kong employees were more interested in working part-time than their American and British counterparts. They attributed this finding to the Confucian culture prevalent in Hong Kong, which places family above all other concerns, including work. Americans were less likely than British or Hong Kong employees to indicate a desire to work fewer hours. The authors suggested that this finding might be due to the American tendency to equate long hours with achievement and identity. Although societal norms for working long hours likely translates into corporate norms for heavy time demands, future researchers should examine the strength of this relationship and how it varies across national cultures and across firms within these cultures.

Gender Equality and Work-family Supportiveness

Although the United States is seen as a relatively gender equality based society, the public support for gender equality is much lower than that of other nations, such as Sweden, which has nationally funded day care and elder care. In countries where there is more support for gender equality, workers may have greater expectations for support from the government. To test this idea, Lewis and Smithson (2001) explored the relationship between type of welfare state in the country and sense of entitlement for governmental work-family support. They conducted a qualitative study of employees from five countries (Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Ireland, and the UK), and found that employees in countries with social policies that were supportive of equality had a stronger sense of entitlement to state support for combining work and family responsibilities, compared to employees in countries with policies that were influenced by traditional gender roles. For example, in Sweden and Norway there is high gender equality, and

state support was expected and taken for granted. In contrast, in Britain, Portugal and Ireland, where gender roles are more traditional, employees were more likely to assume individual responsibility for the caring of children and did not expect state support. This sense of entitlement extended to corporations: individuals in countries with more traditional gender roles were less likely to expect corporate support for balancing work and family. Interestingly, even in countries with traditional gender roles, beliefs that one was entitled to employer work-family support increased if individuals perceived that offering work-family benefits was in the employer's economic interests. In contrast, individuals in Sweden and Norway were likely to believe that organizations should support employees' attempts to balance work and family because it was "the right thing to do." However, because the sense of entitlement to receive government support was so strong, expectations for help from employers was low.

Lyness and Kropf (2005) examined whether national gender equality would be related to the work-family supportiveness of organizations, and in turn, managers' reported ability to balance work and family. In their survey of 505 managers from 20 European countries, they found that national gender equality (measured by the United Nations' Gender Development Index) was related to higher levels of perceived organizational work-family support (measured in terms of supportiveness of work-family culture and flexible benefit availability). In turn, perceived organizational work-family support was related positively to managers' perceived work-family balance. The authors claimed the findings "highlighted the importance of the larger context – a nation's standing in terms of its gender equality in life expectancy, education, and standard of living – to the whole issue of work-family balance" (Lyness & Kropf, 2005, p. 54).

Examples of Corporate Attempts to Change the Culture

Because of the persistence of an overtime culture in many Western cultures, solutions have been aimed at changing the perception that presence at work (including "face time") equals productivity. For example, a company in the United Kingdom implemented a "Go Home on Time Days" campaign, with employees being encouraged to work smarter, not harder. The campaign was designed to challenge the notion that time at the office is an indicator of commitment, and included management training on how to facilitate work-life balance (Brannen & Lewis, 2000). In Sweden, one firm implemented a more direct solution by instituting a policy to measure productivity via outputs (work completed) as opposed to inputs (time at work) (Hass & Hwang, 2000). Nasman (1999) described another organization in Sweden where men take full advantage of "daddy days." Time off for children is openly promoted by men in the firm and accepted at the highest levels of the organization. In fact, company policy states that men, as well as women, have the right to take parental leave, and it stresses the company's commitment to no negative consequences for the use of these benefits.

Ernst & Young's efforts to create a more balanced work-life culture have landed it in *Working Mother* magazine's top ten list of best companies for working mothers. Instead of simply offering work-life programs and policies such as flextime or job sharing, they attempted to change the culture by, for example, changing expectations about the need to check emails on weekends and vacation, creating deployment committees to track employee work loads, and creating a travel schedule that allows employees to spend fewer nights at the clients site and more nights at home with family (Casner-Lotto, 2000; Friedman, Thompson, Carpenter, & Marcel, 2001). E&Y is also trying to change deep cultural assumptions that work-life balance is only for women. A recent article described a new campaign to depict flexible work schedules as "macho" by showing pictures of men and by framing flexible schedules as a quality of life issue

(Badal, December, 2006).

Changing a culture is not easy. Even with all the success that E&Y has had in changing its culture, there is still resistance among many senior managers and partners. These leaders, who often rose through the ranks by sacrificing their own personal lives, find it difficult to believe that making employees happy will pay off in client satisfaction and firm growth. One of the change initiatives was to create solutions around leaders as role models, but the team in charge of this initiative gave up. While the leaders were able to improve work-life balance for their employees, they perceived that their own heavy work loads made it impossible for them to enjoy greater balance (Casner-Lotto, 2000).

Implications for Future Research and Practice

That a supportive work-family culture is related to important organizational outcomes is well documented. However, what is not clear is the relative importance of the various dimensions of culture for predicting these outcomes. Further, it is not entirely clear that managerial or supervisor support is a component of work-family culture or a precursor. What we do know is that the dimensions examined to date are differentially related to outcomes (e.g., Beauregard, 2006; Dikkers et al., 2004; Lyness et al., 1999; Thompson et al., 1999). To advance our understanding of work-family culture, we must first conduct a comprehensive study to expand our knowledge of its dimensionality. The results of such a study would enable researchers and practitioners to speak more confidently about the nature of work-family culture, as well as the aspects of culture that are most likely to impact important individual and organizational outcomes. Once the relevant dimensions have been determined, we should then invest time in developing a psychometrically sound, inclusive measure of work-life rather than

work-family culture.   Finally, by determining which dimensions are most predictive of positive (and negative) outcomes, organizations will be better able to focus their change efforts on aspects of culture that matter.

In addition to examining the various dimensions of culture, our knowledge would be enhanced by taking a multi-level perspective of culture (Korabik et al., 2003). To understand subcultures within an organization, for example, we need to consider how subcultures are embedded in and influenced by the larger organizational culture, which in turn is embedded in and influenced by the larger societal culture. As recommended by Gelfand and Knight (2005), we need to move beyond our individual-level focus to a more complex focus on "the multi-level terrain in which work-family issues exist" (p. 405).

Another gap in research on work-family culture is the lack of attention to how variations across organizations, occupations, and industries may impact the supportiveness of the culture. It is likely that factors such as organizational size, technology, business strategy, top management support, and national context affect the degree to which an organization's culture is supportive (Thompson & Prottas, 2005). Not surprisingly, research by the Families and Work Institute found that the extent to which an organization offered flexible work arrangements varied significantly by company size, industry, and percentage of executive positions held by women and minorities (Galinsky & Bond, 1998). There are probably similar predictors of a supportive culture, as well as additional job or work group factors such as degree of task interdependence, compensation interdependence, analyzability of the job, and level of client demand. For example, it seems likely that when an employee's compensation is highly dependent on team members, group norms for work primacy would develop (Thompson & Prottas, 2005).

Research on work-family culture would also benefit from expanding its focus beyond managerial and professional employees to blue-collar or pink-collar employees, who often work in occupations where they have little control or autonomy and are required to work overtime. These employees are often given little advance warning that they must work late, and under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, employers can fire or demote workers who refuse (Perry-Jenkins, 2003). In an analysis of the 2002 General Social Survey, Golden and Wiens-Tuers (2005) found that 21 percent of full-time employees worked extra hours because it was required by their employer, an increase of approximately 5% since 1977. Only seven U.S. states have passed some form of legal ban and/or right to refuse overtime.

Work-family culture studies have long excluded single employees and employees without children or elder care responsibilities. To begin to rectify this gap, Casper, Weltman, and Kweisga (2006) examined how single employees with no children viewed their organization's treatment of them. They defined a single's friendly organizational culture as "the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of work and nonwork that is *unrelated to family*, and the degree to which equity is perceived in the support the organization provides for employees' nonwork lives, irrespective of family status" (p. 6). They developed a measure of a single's friendly work-life culture that included five dimensions: social inclusion, equal work opportunities, equal access to benefits, equal responsibility for nonwork, and equal work expectations. Their results suggest that single employees who perceived more social inclusion had higher levels of organizational commitment. Overall, employees who worked in a more single's friendly culture were more likely to be committed to their organization, were less likely to be thinking about quitting, and perceived their organization as supportive.

Finally, more cross-cultural research on work-life culture is needed, as many companies are growing beyond domestic borders. It is important for multi-national corporations to understand how the national context might affect not only the type of work-life benefits they should offer, but the nature of the support that would be acceptable or expected. The implications for employee satisfaction, motivation and performance are potentially great. Should companies rely on a consistent set of work-family policies, or should they be tailored to the subsidiary level? Should national context be taken into consideration? It seems likely that work-family culture in subsidiary foreign locations would differ, and yet some research suggests otherwise. Researchers at IBM (Hill, Yang, Hawkins, & Ferris, 2004) demonstrated that national culture, based on degree of individualism/collectivism, did not affect the way in which work and family was viewed in different countries. However, they noted that the culture at IBM may be so strong that it diluted the effect of national context on work-family outcomes. Nevertheless, it seems likely that societal cultures and state ideologies would influence the nature of work-family culture within most organizations (Gelfand & Knight, 2005).

In summary, research on work-family or work-life culture has progressed to the point that we can say with confidence that culture matters. It matters in terms of employees' ability to balance work and family, and it matters in terms of an organization's ability to recruit and retain valued employees. Researchers must now focus on expanding our knowledge of the link between national culture, type of welfare state regime, organizational work-family culture, and outcomes such as organizational commitment, benefit usage, job performance, and employee health and well being. In addition, we must begin studying the sources or antecedents of a supportive culture versus one that requires employees to prioritize work over family. We must also broaden our focus to include a wider range of employees, including those with and without children. We

should attempt to examine which dimensions of an unsupportive culture are most amenable to

change, and as well study ways to increase the success of culture change efforts.

As reported in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article:

"Like the previous generation of grads, today's recruits still rate work-life balance as the No. 1 employer attribute they seek, according to Universum. But 'they've taken it a step further,' says Davie Huddleston, a recruiting executive at PNC Financial Services Group. Grads seem to expect flexibility without the career sacrifices that usually come with it. 'This generation is pushing the envelope. They're making us re-think what it takes to be successful,' says Laurie Tortorella, a recruiting executive for Intel" (Shellenbarger, February 16, 2006, pg. D1)"

With younger generations demanding radical change, the time is ripe for organizations to

confront the difficult task of changing their unsupportive, workaholic cultures. It is our hope that

researchers will continue exploring the nature of work-family culture so that we can provide

managers with the information they need to create more supportive and productive work

environments.

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Table 1. Measures of Organizational Support for Work-Life Balance

Author	Measure	Dimensions	Studies Using This Measure
Allen (2001)	Family Supportive Organizational Perceptions (FSOP)	One overall dimension (14 items; α = .91)	Behson, 2002; Kikta & Tetrick, 2005; O'Driscoll et al., 2003
Bond et al., 1997; Bond et al., 2003; Reports of the National Study of the Changing Workforce	Work-family culture, 4-5 items	Items tap perceptions of negative career consequences and prioritizing work over family (α = .71 to .75)	Anderson et al., 2002; Behson, 2004; Hill, 2005; Sahibzada et al., 2005; Thompson & Prottas, 2006
Campbell Clark (2001)	Work Culture	• temporal flexibility (5 items; α = .84) • operational flexibility (5 items; α = .83) • supportive supervision (3 items; α = .86)	Dikkers et al., 2004; Lapierre & Allen, 2006
Jahn, Thompson, & Kopelman (2003)	Perceived Organizational Family Support (POFS); 10 items, including one item measuring overall family-friendliness; α = .94	• tangible support (6 items) • intangible support (3 items)	Thompson et al., 2004; Kikta & Tetrick, 2005
Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness (1999)	Work-family Culture (WFCult); 21 items, including one item that measures overall supportiveness for balancing work and family; α = .92	• career consequences (5 items; α = .74) • organizational time demands (4 items; α = .80) • managerial support (11 items; α = .91)	Beauregard, 2006; Behson, 2002; Bragger et al., 2005; Dikkers et al., 2004; Lyness & Kropf, 2005; Lyness et al., 1999; Mauno et al., (2005); Tay et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2006