

**WORK-FAMILY POLICIES: LINKING NATIONAL CONTEXTS,
ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE AND PEOPLE FOR MULTI-LEVEL CHANGE**

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INTRODUCTION

A growing area of societal concern across the globe pertains to family-responsive employment policies and practices that are designed to improve individuals' ability to effectively carry out work and family demands over the career span (Kamerman, 2005). Work-family policies and practices are adopted by employers and governments to help employees jointly manage work and nonwork roles; enable successful participation in labor market activity, family and personal life; and enhance quality of life (Kossek, 2005; 2006). They are ostensibly designed to reduce work-family conflicts, and foster positive engagement in work, family and personal life over a career. These policies facilitate employees' involvement in caregiving for children, elders, or other family members; and many nonwork pursuits such as education, volunteering, leisure, and self-care (health, exercise) (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Common policies include flexible work arrangements providing control over the time, timing, continuity, and amount of work; direct dependent care supports such as child and elder care services and employee assistance plans; and information and social support for managing work-family stress and health such as network groups and seminars (Kossek & Freide, 2006).

Despite the growth in work-family policies, more theoretical and empirical development is needed to enable improved in-depth research on their adoption and effectiveness across cultures. Most research today is generally descriptive comparing the availability of policies (and to a lesser extent use) across nations. Sometimes, it is not clear if the same policies are designed similarly when being compared as different cultures and stakeholder groups within cultures frame their intent differently.

To address this gap, the goal of our chapter is to help develop a future research agenda on work-family policies. Our chapter is motivated by a series of international work-family conferences held at IESE business school in Spain starting after the new millennium. The

conference highlighted that many different conceptualizations of work-family policies exist across societies. Our objectives are to identify the wide variation in prevailing social constructions that continue to vary within and across cultural contexts, and discuss the measurement and theoretical implications of these conceptualizations for future research. We argue that scholars and policymakers should first identify work-family policy design elements and goals, and link these views to systematic measurement and theory. We see the need for improved theoretical applications of strategic intent, as policies are often conceived to address several goals simultaneously. This could be achieved through improved construct measurement, and multi-level analysis examining nested contextual relationships. Research should identify and measure not only formal objectives but unexpected developments from policy availability and use such as discrimination backlash, gender role rigidity, labor market barriers and successes.

Our chapter begins with 1) a brief discussion on the movement to study work-family policies under the work-life umbrella with examples of the breadth of issues across contexts and 2) delineation of some of the research challenges in cross-cultural policy work. Then we focus the bulk of our discussion on four main frameworks that have been used to understand the goals and design of work-family policies and future research implications. We conclude the paper with examples of illustrative multilevel frameworks that would allow more cross-national measurement of issues and variables studied. We see multi-level work as critical to better assess the contextualization of the environment and nested relationships shaping work-family policies within and across nations.

From Work-Family to Work-Life across Cultures

In the past few decades, the field has broadened to use the term work-life policies often interchangeably with work-family policies as a way to include all employees, even those without

children or families in the work-family agenda (Kossek, Baltes & Mathews, 2011). For example, Ollier-Malaterre (2009: p.160) “defines organizational work-life initiatives as formal policies and informal arrangements allowing employees to manage their roles, responsibilities, and interests in their life as whole persons, engaged in work and nonwork domains. Nonwork notably encompasses the family, the community, friendships, personal development and life-long training projects, political, associative, spiritual and sports activities, and leisure (Thévenet, 2001).”

This conceptual expansion in the field from work-family to work-life policies has occurred partly to reduce political backlash and views of inequities from employees and members of society who did not necessarily have immediate needs for public or private support to reconcile work and family involvement (Kossek, Baltes, & Matthews, 2011). The movement to refer to work-life policies started in U.S. multinationals as a way to mainstream work-family policies as a benefit. This trend began to transfer to overseas locations as the global economy heated up in the 1990s. Overall, societies and employers are evolving to increasingly recognize the importance of adapting employment settings to support not only women with salient work-family and domestic demands, but all employees’ personal lives outside work (Kossek et al, 2010; Lewis et al, 2007). The rising stress of 24-7 demands of the global economy is growing across many nations and workforces, popularized most recently by the suicides and negative publicity in China at Foxcom, an Apple iPad supplier (New York Times, 2012). Global interest in work-family policies broadens their conceptualization to include not only dependent care, but increasing work hours, intensification, workloads, and job and family strain.

While the type of issues defined as “work-family policies” is generally expanding, what is considered a “work-family” or “work-life” issue can vary greatly from country to country. For

example, in India, a growing work-family policy is night transport for women from the workplace to home to ensure public safety (Rajan & Tomlinson, 2009). In Chile, some women prefer to work from or close to home as they want to not be too far away from their children in case violence breaks out in their communities. Some Chilean mothers also are deterred from greater labor market participation because they chose not to use public-supported child care, as they don't trust institutions such as the government to provide care of high quality (Lagos, 2009). In Scandinavia, work-family policies are more normalized as part of national cultural values, and therefore not considered as hot a topic as in other some developed countries such as the U.S. Since both men and women are assumed to spend time working and caring for dependents, use of work-life policies is culturally mainstreamed into the organization of work and society as a whole (Linden, 2007). In Greece, immigration laws making it easy for immigrant caregivers to cross borders has created a global caregiving chain. It is not uncommon for women from Georgia to immigrate to Greece to provide eldercare or women from the Philippines to provide childcare and house cleaning (Apospori, 2009). In the U.S., growing numbers of professionals telework around the clock from home and must learn how to re-socialize their families to recognize when it would be acceptable to interrupt them (Kossek & Lautsch, 2008). Their constant physical presence while working creates ongoing confusion over their psychological availability for family needs. Also in the U.S., work-family policies can relate to increasing schedule predictability for low income retail workers who are often single mothers moving from welfare to work, and have difficulty arranging child care and commutes for last minute schedules (Henly & Lambert, 2009). These examples illustrate the wide range and uniqueness of work-family policy issues across cultures that are not being fully captured in current research.

RESEARCH CHALLENGES

Despite growing interest in work-family policies, many challenges remain that must be addressed to advance future study. Because this topic is so broad, this chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive review, but rather to identify some illustrative challenges and future research areas.

Work-Family Policy Context and Framing

The first challenge is that although the social construction of work-family policies and the context in which they are embedded matters for the measurement and understanding of work-family policies, context and framing are often overlooked in studies. A key challenge is that common conceptualizations, definitions and measures do not readily exist, making it difficult to assess the impact of policies within and across organizational and national contexts. We also lack comprehensive frameworks to allow for measurement of the relative influence of the state and employers in work-family adoption and implementation. In some countries such as the U.S., the government provides relatively little support and engages in minimal regulation of employers on work-family issues. Yet in Scandinavia and France, for example, the government offers far more policies than do employers, and actively protects workers' rights to have paid time off from work for family needs. Few studies consider these contextual influences on employees' work-family experiences, and use of policies.

Need for Better Measures and Theory

Unintended discriminatory consequences from using policies. Additional challenges are that rather than reducing work force discrimination, increasing work force inclusion, and enhancing the reconciliation of work and personal life, work-family policies can sometimes have unintended and even negative consequences that often are not fully assessed. For example, work-family policies can foster work intensification and reinforce images of ideal workers who do not

need to use work-family policies. In some countries with developed economies and very generous work-family policies and women are heaviest users. At the same time, few women have risen to be leaders and heads of corporations. Many leave the labor market for long periods and never catch up with wages, and some never return full time, if at all (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Yet many scholars take a rational view, assuming that using policies necessarily leads to positive results pertaining to their stated purpose. This utilitarian approach taking policies goals at face value can be naïve. The societal level of discrimination emanating from policy use varies across nations. Further, different demographic user groups depending on their status in the labor market and organizational and economic hierarchies may also experience varying levels of discrimination or ability to access policies. These are examples of the need for improved measures assessing design intent and impact.

Theoretical conceptualization of work-family policies. We also lack conceptual frameworks to classify different types of supports being offered, which also exacerbates cross-national study of work-family policies and practices. Offering direct support such as child care that increases the supply of quality child care is a very different type of assistance than offering flexibility in work hours, yet few studies have considered the differential effects of different types of policies (Kossek, 2005; 2006). Researchers also still conceptually confound the mere availability of policies with their use in studies, which are clearly different (Kossek, 2005). Both use and availability are valuable antecedents of work-family well being, but must be studied separately as they may lead to different outcomes. Who has access to work-family support in a society is a vastly different question than who can and is likely to use these supports with positive outcomes?

Differentiating work-family policy, job design, and cultural support. Research should also differentiate between formal policies such as a telework policy (access or use of formal policy permitting employees to work from home) to job design, (the extent to which a job designed with a lot of autonomy to control, where when and how one works) and culture (a supervisor or results-oriented organizational climate who informally allows an employee to work at home when they need to without asking permission.) These are examples of research issues that are not being fully captured in studies, but could be if formal policy, job structures, and work-family practice and cultural support were simultaneously examined in cross-national studies. One avenue to address these issues is to examine the different conceptual frameworks underlying work-family policies design and goals, and then consider their measurement implications for processes and outcomes.

SHIFTING CONCEPTUALIZATIONS IN CONTEXT: MEASUREMENT LINKAGES

Definitions and social constructions and objectives of organizational work-family policies have shifted in meaning over time and across cultural contexts. Scholars need to more carefully identify objectives for the adoption and use of work-family policies, and clarify how the contexts in which the studies are being conducted are defining work-family policies. Many meanings and objectives are prevalent and overlap across and within organizational and societal cultural contexts. In this section, we identify four prevailing conceptualizations of work-family policies and consider future research implications including measurement needs. These include:

- 1) Multi-level cultural and structural support for work, family and personal life;
- 2) Gender equality and diversity inclusion initiatives;
- 3) State social policy or business issue;
- and 4) Organizational change initiatives to foster employee health, resiliency, and engagement.

Definition: Multi-Level Cultural and Structural Support for Work and Family Roles

Multi-level cultural and structural support. We build on Kossek, Lewis and Hammer's (2010) definition and refer to work-family policies and practices as those designed to enhance organizational structural and cultural support for work, family and personal life. *Structural work-life support* refers to human resource policies and practices and job structures designed to increase employee job flexibility to control the location, place or amount of work, as well as to provide resources (e.g., information, services) to facilitate the joint enactment of the work with meaningful caregiving and nonwork identities. *Cultural work-life support* is defined as informal workplace social and relational support, for example, from supervisors and co-workers together with organizational and societal cultural values regarding the degree to which employees who have joint involvement in work and family roles are fully valued, and feel they can use available work-life supports without jeopardy to their jobs.

Given organizations reflect and are the synthesis of surrounding cultures, cultural support can cross many levels such as *national, occupational, ethnic* (Bardoel & De Cieri, 2006) the latter of which often covaries with class and workforce gender, age, and racial demography. It is important to examine each of these cultural lenses separately and then one can begin to understand how they interact across levels. For example, some national cultures (e.g., U.S.) prefer little government and institutional regulation of work-family policies, while others value government regulation (e.g., France) (Ollier- Malaterre, 2009). Regarding occupational cultures, some such as professional and managerial cultures often have problems with overwork and having too much flexibility where with cell phones and lap top use can induce professionals to electronically work at any time 24-7. Other occupational cultures such as blue collar and hourly workers, or employees with customer facing jobs, may have the opposite cultural problem of having too much separation between work and family. Unlike many professionals, these

occupations cannot work at home. Teleworking is a practice that may support involvement in family caregiving, since one may be able to have an easier time coordinating child care as often children are cared for in neighbourhoods close to home or at home. Blue collar and direct service workers may assume they are not able to make a phone call or receive a text or email from a family members unless on break.

Class and income cultural influences on work-family policy use and need are also important to include in cross-national studies. For example, low income employees in the U.S. face the problem of under-work and what is referred to as “precarious employment” (Kalleberg, 2009). Such occupational cultures, involve acceptance of scheduling practices typically used in key service sectors such as retail, food and hotels, in the U.S. economy that use “just in time scheduling” and labor cost minimization of work hours (Henly & Lambert, 2008). Employer-driven flexibility is used in a way that hinders employees’ abilities to care for their families (Henly & Lambert, 2008). Low income occupational cultures exist where U.S. workers (and employers) assume it is acceptable *modus operandi* for workers to lack policies ensuring they get sufficient hours to be able to economically provide for themselves and their families. Workers are socialized to not expect to be able to take paid sick days. They know they can lose their job if they are absent when they or a child is ill.

An example of ethnic cultural influences refers to the powerful sway of religious institutions socializing members on how family life should be structured, and the role of men and women in society. Women for example, such as in some Muslim countries may not be encouraged to work outside of the home, or go to school. Their main role is to be primary caregivers. All of these examples suggest different cultural influences at the state, occupational and ethnic levels the nature of work-family policies needed and enacted around the globe. Yet

these influences are rarely studied as part of “culture” in work family studies except sometimes in comparative case studies (e.g., Ollier- Malaterre, 2009).

Even when societal “culture” is considered, the focus is on cultural values such as Hofstede’s (1991) measures of collectivism and individualism and femininity and those of the GLOBE project (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). Studies rarely consider the effects of national employment systems and labor markets, institutions, or the role of the state, unions, government or industry leaders. As Peters and den Dulk (2005; later published as Peters, den Dulk & Ruijter, 2009) explained in their paper at an early conference on cross-national cultural support of telework citing Tregaskis (2000), “Since the focus is on national culture, other national characteristics, such as the information society and the role of government, industrial relations and trade unions [are not examined].”

We now turn to examples of cultural support at the workplace level. These include social support of supervisors and co-workers for employees’ non-work demands, and values fostering positive group and organizational norms (see Hammer et al., 2009; Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). Within the firm, cultural support operates at two interactive levels: the work group level, where one receives relational support from managers or co-workers; and the organizational level where resources and overarching cultural values and norms are engendered. The integration of these systems within an organization is critical in moving work– life supports into the mainstream of organizational functioning.

Cultural and relational support is proving to be a critical factor influencing whether or not workers make use of work–life policies (Allen, 2001). Informal supervisor support for family is a critical determinant in whether or not workers have access to formal work–life policies (Kossek, Barber & Winters, 1999; Hammer et al., 2009b). Cultural supports also include culture change

initiatives that support the legitimacy of ‘good employees’ being seen as dually involved in caregiving and other non-work roles while sustaining employment and pursuing a career. Support can also include enabling one to slow down a career for non-work needs, such as reducing hours, taking a job leave, or allowing opportunities to re-enter the workforce without a career penalty.

Kossek and colleagues (2010) argued that work-family policies are likely to be most effective when structural and cultural supports are aligned and linked to organizational (and societal) social systems. When work-family policies and their cultural support are not well – integrated, structural support is perceived as an entitlement and a privileged accommodation (Holt and Lewis, 2011). When use is not seen as a normal way of doing business, work-family policies have the unintended consequences of promoting in- and out-group dynamics between those who value and need work-family supports and those who do use the policies (Lautsch et al., 2010).

Multiple levels of work-family policies. As shown in Table 1’s depiction of the work-family policy assessment spaces shows, cultural and structural support via work-family policies and practices operate up to six levels of analysis. The first level is that of the individual employee and his or her degree of need for work-family policy use. The next level is supervisor support, as supervisors are often the main gatekeepers to work-family policy access and use (Kossek, Ollier-Malaterre, Lee, Hall & Pichler, 2011). Further there is wide variation regarding the family-supportive behaviors demonstrated by supervisors (Hammer et al, 2010). The third level is a combination of work group and type of job being carried out in the work group. Workgroup can refer to teams, departments or business units within the firm, as there is often a lot of within firm availability and use of policies. For example, professional managers may be

able to telework but employees working in the plant may not. Job type is not the only determinant of policy availability, as subcultures may exist between departments. For instance, one department may have a manager and /or coworkers who support virtual work but another may not. Work-group can also reflect job demographic access to flexibility as in some groups access is widely available while in others access is constructed as an idiosyncratic deal (Kossek, Berg, & Pizecek, 2011). The fourth level is the organizational level, where leaders transmit organizational cultural values and norms and allocate resources toward policy adoption to support work and nonwork relationships. At the fifth level is the industry and occupation. Industries also may vary widely in employment policy views and how human capital is viewed: such as a creative value added resource or a labor cost to be minimized. Such cultural views may be linked to the formal availability and cultural support for work-family policies. Labor market demography may also be an influence in availability. For example, hospitals were early adopters of on-site child care centers as the large female labor pool normalized the industry institutional awareness of the need for and interest in adopting work-family policies (Kossek, 2006). In contrast, manufacturing has always been slower to provide direct on site care or flexibility. The sixth level refers to society and institutional cultural support at the country level. This level captures the national cultural values regarding the importance of work-life balance and well-being is culturally shared and may vary as a societal value and a public policy investment issue (Ollier- Malaterre, 2011b).

Insert Table 1 about here.

Measurement and construct implications: Cultural and structural multi-level view.

Studies should include measures of antecedents and/ or outcomes, where relevant from at least two levels consider the influence of nested relationships. Examples of levels include: individual employee needs and values, the work- group level (supervisor or coworker views) reflecting the degree to which policies have been locally adopted, the organizational level, the industry and occupational level, and the societal level. Research should include measures of both structural support and cultural support of work-family policies and the degree to which they are aligned. An example of alignment might be the degree to which a telework policy that exists as a formal policy is culturally supported by the organizational culture. Structural support at the national level might relate to measuring the degree to which broadband internet is available to low income neighborhoods. Zoning that would allow the use of private space for enterprise would also be an example of structural societal support. A multi-level study might look at an individual worker's behavior and attitudes regarding the use of teleworking, and the degree to which the organizational or national cultures and structures support working from home as a main economic activity for individuals who also have active daily involvement with caregiving. Constructs need to continue to be validated measuring cultural influences from the national level, occupational level, ethnic and class levels, and work group or supervisors on formal policy and informal practice.

Work-Family Policies as Gender Equality and Workforce Inclusion Initiatives

The term work-family policies emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in Anglo-Saxon nations to refer to employer or governmental support of child care and flexible working time for employees with visible work-family conflicts (e.g., women with young children) (Kossek, 2006; Ollier-Malaterre 2009). Such policies began appearing in many societies to foster improved

integration of women into the labor force as part of equal employment opportunity measures (Kossek, Lewis & Hammer, 2010), to manage national fertility rates (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004) and spur economic growth (European Commission, 2010) , or as social welfare for low income mothers (Kossek, 2006).

Much of this early research focused on employer adoption and prevalence (but not necessarily effectiveness of policies and was descriptive. Studies typically assessed the prevalence of formal policies such as flextime or on-site child care centers that were offered to help provide resources supporting family care or flexibility in the timing of work to enable women's participation in both work and family roles. Many studies simply analyzed how the availability of policies related to employee attitudes (Lambert, 2000). Scholars and employers argued that the prevalence of policies showed a symbolic caring role that provided added benefits to employees even if they didn't use them (Lambert, 2000) These historical roots are very important as many countries and companies today still include workforce inclusion as one of the goals and foci of work-family policies.

Measurement and construct implications: Gender equality and inclusion. To assess gender equity objectives, studies may want to include evaluation of the degree to which work-family policies are effective in enhancing gender equality between men and women in employing organizations and in society. Such studies should also look at how caregiving demands and the equality of men's involvement in domestic life and women's involvement in public life may be influenced as a result of these policies. For example, what are the labor force participation rates of men and women in companies and society according the prevalence and use of work-family policies? What are gender differences between policy utilization and pay and career progression? Is there a significant motherhood or fatherhood penalty for time out of the

labor market? How do women and men from different racial and socioeconomic classes have varying access to these policies and what are the consequences of using them in terms of equal employment outcomes?

W-F Policies Defined as Social Policy Lever or Business Initiative

Employer innovation and work-family social policy prioritization. Although cross-national contexts vary widely in the degree to which work-family policies are defined as primarily social policy or business initiatives, relatively few comparative studies are published on work-family policies (Ollier- Malaterre, 2005). (See Gornick & Heron, 2006 for an exception). Certainly a critical issue in studying employer-work-family policies pertains to the national context in which they are situated (Kossek et al, 2010). Few work family studies consider this influence on breadth and innovation. When work-family policies are defined as important to national social policy effectiveness, the state tends to be much more active in supporting public welfare policies- particularly paid leaves of absence.

Paid leaves of absence for maternity or paternity leave and child care is where most government innovation has occurred. The State employment policy and level of activism in regulating employer and employee activity can have a tremendous influence on the length of the maternity leave, whether men or women or both parents can take leaves, and length of pay. Across nations, leave policies differ markedly in length, levels of benefits, eligibility standards, and take-up (Kamerman, 2005). More research needs to be done on the causes and consequences of this variation. Some studies are beginning to link leave length and use to child well-being (Berger, Hill & Waldfogel, 2005). And even within social policy lenses, it is important to identify which social policy agenda is being advanced in measurement. For example, Kamerman (2005) points out leaves vary in design depending on whether their goal is to such women's

domestic involvement in child rearing and serve as an incentive to stay home and care for young children, to help reduce work-family conflicts and promote the well-being of children while parents work, or to enable more choices over when and how long to work or stay home when children are young. Each of these different goals and designs would suggest different outcome measures of policy effectiveness and different factors may influence policy take up.

Figures 1 and 2 draw on United Nations data and show the U.S. government provides much less support for work and family leaves and paid time off after childbirth than most other nations (Canada, EU countries, Latin America). Public government supported child care (often of good quality for all economic classes) is also more readily available for working parents in many other countries than in the U.S., which primarily focuses public care supports (e.g. Head Start), on low income mothers as a welfare to work strategy

Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here.

Despite lagging (and perhaps in reaction to) limited U.S. social policy support of work and family issues, the U.S., has been seen as a pioneer for employer private sector lead work-life issues (Ollier-Malaterre, 2007). It was one of the first nations to define work-family issues as a business prerogative. When work-family issues are not defined as social policy issues, some scholars argue this conceptualization fosters far greater experimentation of employers in the breadth and strength of supports for work and family (Kossek et al, 2010). Conversely, when work and family is defined more as a social policy lever, and resources are available to encourage labor market participation of working caregivers, governments and the welfare state can take a much more activist role. If there is limited or weak public policy support, work-family

policies typically are not framed strongly as a government social policy goal, and employers are

This argument may be more universally relevant to developed economies. It is unclear in some developing economies, whether lack of state support will foster employer innovation for local firms. International HRM research suggests that for international HR practices, when both national and corporate culture come into place for global practices, the parent company culture of the organization sometimes is starting to trump national culture. For example, a U.S. multinational parent company's practices may be followed in non U.S. subsidiaries due to convergence in international HR strategy overruling national culture (Briscoe et al, 2012).

Recently, there are signs that some governments are beginning to frame work-family support issues as an economic issue as well and seek to spur private sectors action to fill the weakening social safety net as economic public resources become reduced. Greater activism is occurring in some nations on work-family issues that focus on the labor market participation of women and flexible work arrangements to increase national economic growth. The Netherlands government held an international conference recently called "24 and More" as a way to develop policy to encourage women to work more than 24 hours a week. The Netherlands has the highest number of part time workers, and the Dutch government sees growing female labor market participation as an economic lever. Similarly, the Singapore government, which has the fastest growing economy in the world, recently started holding annual national work-family conferences. The government sees flexibility and work-family supports as a way to add economic value to the economy and has started giving out annual best employer awards to companies that offer work –family supports. Interest in work-family flexibility as a business issue or social policy is a relatively recent development. Legislation supporting a workers right

to request flexible arrangements has also been passed in the U.K. and Australia among nations (Ollier-Malaterre, 2011a).

Unintended consequences of defining work-family as business or economic issue.

Defining work-family issues as mainly the purview of business has some several unintended consequences that are ripe for future research. First, there is greater unevenness in societies in the degree to which employees in different occupations and industries have access to support. There is no minimum floor or protection for worker's needs for work-family policies.

Secondly, when employers have free reign in whether and how they respond to work-family needs of the workforce, these firms can co-opt work-family policies and use them for public relations. Employers can posture that they have work-family policies as signs of being progressive and family friendly, sometimes without having to actually change the way business is done. The early diffusion of organizational work-family policies in the U.S. is an example of this. Early on, W-F policies served a symbolic role reflecting growing awareness of the need for these policies in response to institutional isomorphic responses (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) such as adapting to Equal Employment Opportunity laws. Work-family policies emerged as bureaucratic structures showing initial recognition of work-family support as an important business issue. Organizations either copied other leading employers mimicking the actions of best employers or only responded to labor market pressures when it was profitable to do so (Ingram, & Simons, 1995; Kossek, Dass, & DeMarr, 1994).

Konrad and Linnehan (1995) went so far as to critically argue that formalized HR policies such as work family policies, served as identity –conscious concealing structures to make it appear as if employing organizations had adapted to the growing gender diversity in the labor force, without really changing the embedded organizational structures reinforcing

separation of work and family roles. Thus, when businesses have the ability to define what is work-family policy responsiveness, these policies in some firms served as “window dressing.” A company could appear to be family friendly, but the cultural reality of organizational life may not support this. One article entitled “If you can use them” (Eaton, 2003) aptly discussed the issue of employees being frustrated with policies being on the books at the organizational level, and companies could even win awards as progressive employers but employees within the firm did not experience their company as family friendly and could not readily access policies.

Perhaps this gap is because the business press has often given more publicity to the adoption but not necessarily the implementation of work-family policies, which has made work-family policies sometimes viewed as an HR fad for “corporate progressivism’ (Kanter, 1977).

Adopting these policies in hopes of being nominated to *Working Mother* best employer lists is seen as employee branding and a recruitment strategy more than a way to support employee’s personal lives.

Global economic influences on framing work-family policies as either a social policy or business issue. The global economy now has also results in the economies of nations being more interdependent as well as have large (often U.S. employers) play a role in growing convergence of the adoption and diffusion of the U.S. voluntary employer approach to work-family policies worldwide. As leading multinationals began to globalize human resource systems in the 1980s and 1990s, these included diversity and work-family policies (Bardoel & de Cieri, 2006). Work-family concepts based on a U.S. market minimalist approach to supporting workers did not fully travel well to other cultural contexts. Global employers developed international HR policies reflecting common corporate strategies of multinationals’ parent company cultures regarding work –life issues where for professional and managerial workers, there was surprisingly global

convergence with less customization to local national contexts (Bardoel & de Cieri, 2006). The U.S. firms focus on voluntary employer support of work-family roles made it easier for developing economies such as China, India and Brazil and Russia to make choices to place fewer resources into work and family supports and save them to promote other aspects of the economic engine. Now the global economy is in the doldrums and the Euro in the EU is facing economic challenges, what could occur is both the state and business could divert significant resources or even withdraw from strong support of work-family policies.

Yet cultures vary in the degree to which employers are trusted to be supportive of family lives and not use these policies to abuse employees such as giving flexibility during the day for no pay in split shifts (Ollier-Malaterre, 2005). Thus even with the growing convergence of HR practices in global firm, study show very low take up of work life policies in countries where employee prefer the state and not employers to respond to work life issues. Such countries might include countries that sociologist Esping-Andersen (1990) labeled “socio-democrat” welfare state regimes, such as Scandinavian countries, as well as some “corporatist” welfare state regimes characterized by strong family policies at governmental level such as France and more recently Germany, as well as some Eastern Europe countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovenia.

There is a risk, however, when countries define work-family policies as the purview of governments or business but not in partnership. In those cases, the cracks in the national and global economies could result in a decline in the overall availability of these policies to workers in general. Overall, the economic demands of the global economy could result in an overall lack of availability of support for families from either the state or the business. For example, over the last decade, as the U.S. economy has slowed, there has been a decrease in public and private

sector direct support in the supply of quality infant care. In such cases only professionals with extra income to be able to afford to hire nannies (often from other lower wage immigrant countries) are able to do so to fill the overall decrease in care supply.

Other examples of the link national work-family policy and economic context links come from France. The 35 hour workweek in France was implemented to reduce unemployment (share the work) and enable employers to organize production and work more flexibly. In exchange for reduced hours, employers gained more leeway in terms of how they schedule work hours within the week and the year. As a result, whole categories of employees saw their work-life balance actually decrease, because their work hours were scattered during the day and the week: employees in grocery stores for instance would work during peak hours for shopping, thus early in the morning, then during lunch time and then again late afternoon and in the evening. They would work less hours, but these hours were precisely the hours where those with family responsibilities would have needed time off. For professional workers, the 35 hours workweek was negotiated such that professionals and managers still worked the long days that are typical of France but had one or two additional weeks of vacation. This resulted in an immediate intensification of work as workloads kept rising and few additional hires were made. In fact, the classic divide that is often observed within teams and workplaces, and also within countries, between an over-worked population on the one hand, in this case professionals and managers who continue working 50 or 60 hours workweeks, and an under worked population on the other hand, in this case the numerous unemployed educated professionals (Ollier-Malaterre, 2011b), is still observed. As these examples suggest, researchers across countries need to develop better common definitions of policies and practices. There also needs to be more transparency in identifying their social intent across societal and organizational contexts.

Measurement and construct implications: Defining W-F Policy as either Social Policy or a Business Imperative. Studies need to include some cross-national measure similar to the GLOBE studies of cross-cultural variation in leadership and management values regarding the degree to which work-family issues are seen as a business or social policy responsibility or both (House, et al, 2004). This might allow studies to assess cultural variation in the degree to which leaders see organizations or the state as responsible for work-family policies. Such measures are likely correlated with House's measures of Humane Orientation, the degree that leaders value caring for others as well as with measures of masculinity and femininity of culture. Measures might also be developed on the degree to which citizens prefer and see government, business, communities, or individuals as responsible for work-family policies. Such measures could then be used as moderators to examine the linkages between the availability of work-family policies, use and positive employee outcomes.

Scholars also need to come up with indexes of total work-family demands and supports in a society. Such measures might examine the percent to which the state provides these policies and the extent to which employers in general do as a business prerogative to include in studies of policy effectiveness. Outcome measures should be included having both social policy and business measures. For example, to what extent are low birth weights minimized, what percent of children finish school, what are measures of family and parent and couple well-being? Are elders being cared for and are retirements a positive experience. Some work is emerging on this topic, for instance the work of Chen, Schaffer, Westman, Chen & Lazarova (2011) on family role performance, i.e. indicators of performance in the family domain.

Business measures linking organizational profitability and value add to the state profitability related to work-family issues such as the hours employees are willing to work and

the extent of participation in the labor force might be developed. Productivity measures related to worker quality, engagements, well-being and identification with work, and the role work-family policies play in how this variation relates to selectiveness in the hiring and qualifications of workers could be created.

Behaviorial measures related to productivity such as turnover and absenteeism, and extra-role behaviors are often mentioned as key outcomes to include in studies. Yet research is rarely conducted in a rigorous randomized longitudinal manner so that these effects that can be attributed to the use and availability of work-family policies (Kossek and Ozeki, 1999.)

Studies need to include employer measures of not only the availability of work-family policies on paper but on employee measures of their positive experiences with policies and the ease of access across many types of citizen groups in society to avoid the problems in lack of implementation of policies. We also recommend researchers move away from the tendency to study policies either in isolation or in counts of offerings .We suggest studies should ideally measure several aspects of policy availability and effectiveness to assess cultural implications of these policies. For example, what percent of the workforce truly wants and values these policies and are they able to use them without jeopardy across gender, societies, and borders. How are breadth and strength of employer policies linked to the breadth and strength of public policies? Researchers could also come up with assessments of a best nation for business effectiveness and social policy index, rather than measuring these issues separately which is often done. One way to measure effectiveness would be to assess how the organization, employees, or government has framed the objectives and construction of the policies and then compare the design of policies.

Organizational Change Initiatives to Foster Employee Health, Resiliency, Engagement.

A movement has started in some developed economies (e.g., U.S, Finland, U.K. and Sweden) to leverage work family policies to actually change organizations. Since work-family policies broadened to work-life, employer interest in how the structure of work has implications for the health and wellbeing of employees, and their overall resilience and engagement in work and life.

A new body of work has started (cf Kelly et al, 2008; Kossek et al, 2012) as examining work family initiatives as deliberate organizational changes – in policies, practices, or the target culture – to reduce work-family conflict and/or support employees’ health and resiliency on and off the job. Researchers are now beginning to not only study familiar work-life policies and benefits, but look at work redesign. Employees and managers are asked to question assumptions regarding how work is managed organized and performed to move to a results oriented workplace and foster a dual agenda that jointly improves productivity on the job and off the job.(e.g., Perlow, 1997; Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002).

Work -family interventions are now in some studies being used to replacing the use of the term “work-family policies.” When this occurs, work-family policies are seen as conscious organizational changes designed to alter the workplace to improve resiliency on and off the job and improve worker and organizational health. The goal is to either improve the current structure of work to create a more healthy psychosocial work context as well as shift the power from managers to employees to give workers increased support and control over how when and where work is done. The intervention view broadens definitions of work-family policies to take an integrative look at the joint effects of 1) formal policies supporting the juggling of work and family/nonwork roles; and 2) informal cultural support and management practice regarding face time and the hegemony of personal and family life in relation to work, and 3) job design conditions and human resource

policies, that give workers control over where when and how they do their work (Kossek, 2006, Kossek and Distelberg, 2009).

Measurement implications of organizational change conceptualization. Intervention perspectives promote improved research designs that are longitudinal, randomized or at least quasi experimental and with control and treatment groups. Some promising new research is coming out using randomized group samples and site level random assignment of work-family change policies which allows scholars to isolate the effects of interventions (Hammer et al, 2011, Kelly & Moen, 2011).

The term “intervention” implies organizational change and development and the creation of healthy positive workplaces that foster resiliency. Future research studies need to reframe conceptualization of work-family policies as societal and/or organizational interventions designed to improve relationships between work and family roles (Kelly, Kossek et al, 2008). In this way, their effectiveness in fostering and sustaining change and the adaptation of employment settings to global and national social and labor market developments that can be evaluated over time. We also suggest that outcomes and effectiveness measures might be broadened to include multiple indicators of effectiveness reflecting divergence and convergence across cultures and stakeholder groups (e.g. children, families, workers, employers, and nation). Such an approach might suggest that families be included in the design and delivery of the change efforts and may have different views on the effectiveness of interventions. Dual agenda outcome measures of healthy employees, and organizational health, resilient and sustainable workplaces and sustainable and resilient families would be included in such studies.

The Need for Multi Level Research

Having discussed the many levels and frames used to conceptualize work-family policies, we close the chapter with further discussion of multi-level research implications. There is the tendency to study work-family policies in organizational or national contextual silos, a lack of linkage between micro and macros views of policies, or between employer and employee views. We see a need for multilevel research bridging each perspective and using institutional, cross-cultural, and systems theory to assess policies at different levels (country, civil society, employer, work group, supervisor, employee and family). Although there are numerous calls for multilevel research (Ollier-Malaterre, 2005), such research is scarce on work-family policies, partly because of the conceptual and methodological difficulties noted in this chapter. The preceding review suggests a multi-level research agenda is needed not only because the effects of work-family policies cascade across levels shown in Table 1 on the assessment space, but more importantly, they are not just a private responsibility, a matter for public policy, or just an issue for business.

The need for multi-level linkages. Current work-life research tends to be Anglo-Saxon centric, single country or cluster of country centric (e.g. the U.S and Canada) and quantitative centric. As Poelmans (2003) has pointed out, most studies have been conducted in Anglo-Saxon countries, or Asian countries. Therefore, data are missing for Eastern and Latin countries, even though work-life conflict may be high because of the salience of the family as an institution. More qualitative designs are needed to understand the interactions between the macro, meso and micro levels (Poelmans, O'Driscoll & Beham, 2005).

An important gap in work-family research is the lack of linkages between micro and macros views of policies, or between employer and employee views. For example, what are the pros and cons of the state or the private sector providing work-family policies? How do these

entities interface in policy delivery activities? What are the implications of these policies for employee, family, and society well-being?

Macro level context does however strongly impact work-life phenomena. For instance, work-life emerged as a domain of interest for HR practitioners and a field of research in the late 1970's in the U.S. (Kamerman & Kahn, 1987), in the late 1980's in the UK (Brannen & Lewis, 2000) and in the late 2000's in France (Ollier-Malaterre, 2007). This delayed interest in France cannot be explained by lesser needs for work-life support. We expound on France here as exemplar. Demographical trends in France and in the U.S. are quite similar, with women massively participating in the workforce and dual-career couples as well as steadily rising in single parent families. French workers spend less days at work, but then the days are longer and more intensive, which makes sense if we recall that French productivity per day worked is quite high (Ollier-Malaterre, 2007). Rather, the reasons why French employers have been less responsive in terms of work-life support pertain to socio-institutional factors. Roughly put, French employers have been offering less work-life programs and practices because French employees' expectations are geared towards government support more than employer support for a host of reasons rooted in the 1789 revolution and some Marxist reminiscences. There are also considerable public provisions and services such as parental leaves, child care infrastructure and allowances, free or affordable education for children and adults that societal members are socialized to expect from the government (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009).

Interestingly, the socio-institutional differences between France and the U.S. are reflected in the way work-life research is structured in both countries. Work-life research in France is more developed among sociologists, political scientists and demographers because public policy is the most developed area for work-life support in France. On the other hand work-life research

in North America is very developed among management, industrial organizational psychologists and industrial relations scholars because HR policies and supervisor and co-worker support at the workplace are the primary vectors of work-life support.

Review of existing frameworks providing multi-level linkages. Multi- and cross-level models are particularly relevant in the work-life field where social policies at the macro level, corporate practices at the meso level and individual needs and expectations at the micro level are closely interlinked (Bardoel & De Cieri, 2006). From an epistemological standpoint, three main approaches to international comparisons can be distinguished (Maurice, 1989). The first is the functionalist, or universalistic view, which assumes a convergence between national societies and seeks to compare them over time (e.g. research from the Aston group). The second is the culturalistic, or particularistic view, which assumes that societies are culturally different from one another (e.g. Hofstede, 1991). The third approach for comparative work: the "societal" view (Maurice, Sellier & Silvestre, 1979), puts the emphasis on the interactions between the macro, meso and micro levels of each society and considers them as a whole. The third stance is compatible with a contextualist approach of HRM that considers the embeddedness of HR practices in their societal context (Brewster, 1999). This in particular holds a great deal of promise for understanding the implementation of work-family policies within corporations.

We close the chapter examining two integrative cross-national frameworks discussed during the IESE conferences that open new avenues for research. The first one is the conceptual framework developed by Poelmans & Sahibzada (2004). This framework differentiates the macro, meso and micro levels of contexts. It points out how these levels interact and together contribute to the effectiveness of such policies and practices in reducing work-life conflict for individuals at the micro level. At the macro level, Poelmans & Sahibzada (2004) identify factors

influencing organizations' decisions to adopt or not adopt work-life programs. These include the legislative/cultural context which refers to the extent to which there is extensive family-friendly government-supported policies and the prevalence of egalitarian genre-role ideology. The latter may be assessed via cultural traits such as those outlined by Hofstede (2005) on low power distance, high individualism and low masculinity. Another set of factors relate to the labor market context. To what extent are there tight external labor markets, markets with high diffusion of work-family programs, and internal labor markets with a high percentage of women in the internal labor markets). These factors at the macro level combine with the nature of the work at the meso level (e.g., scarce talent, knowledge work, customer service) to create pressures to adopt work-life programs. Macro factors can also interact with micro factors. For instance, extensive family-friendly government-supported policies nurture individuals' sense of entitlement towards support (Lewis & Smithson, 2001) and tight external labor markets provide employees and unions with increased negotiation power.

While Poelmans & Sahibzada (2004)'s framework was one of the first of the kind in the work-life research field, and has the great merit of integrating the cultural and the socio-institutional paradigms, it lacks clarity because it fails to clearly distinguish cultural factors on the one hand (such as egalitarian genre-role ideology and Hofstede's cultural traits) and institutional factors on the other hand (such as public policy). Ollier-Malaterre (2007) proposed another framework that extended Poelmans & Sahibzada (2004)'s work. This framework examined how factors at the macro levels influences the adoption of work-life practices at the meso level, and how, in turn, the diffusion of work-life programs and practices at organizational level in turn contribute to shape the national context.

Ollier-Malaterre proposed three sets of factors at the macro level: (1) the social context (which includes cultural factors) (2) the institutional context and (3) the economic context. Taken together, the social, institutional and economic contexts impact (1) the salience of work-life issues for policy-makers, employers, unions and employees, (2) the adoption of work-life policies by employers and (3) their effectiveness. Figure 3 illustrates this model. Each of these three sets is detailed into variables that can be used in future research and either captured based on socio-economic indicators at the country level, such as indicators provided by the World Economic Forum (see for instance den Dulk, Groeneveld, Ollier-Malaterre & Valcour, 2012), or coded by teams of researchers based on extensive desk research, as was done for instance by den Dulk & Groeneveld (2012) to document the variable ‘state support’ representing public childcare provisions, parental leave arrangements and support for flexible work arrangements. We present the framework as a whole so as to offer a comprehensive theoretical perspective that can be applied in qualitative examinations of national contexts for work-family policies (see for instance Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). Future quantitative research using indicators at the national level as predictors of work-family policies adoption or of employee response to work-family initiatives (such as awareness, access, use and outcomes) may need to select some of the variables within the framework.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The framework is built around three sets of factors. The first, social context, captures the degree to which society in a country (citizens, associations, lobbies, unions, political parties, and so forth) considers that supporting work-life integration is legitimate and worthy of effort. Social

context in this framework is comprised of five factors. The first is *demographics*: the extent to which family structures, the aging of the population and women's and older workers' participation to the labor market create needs for work-life support and/or restrict the size of the workforce for employers such that they try hard to attract and retain employees. The second is *gender roles*: the extent to which gender roles shape the way women and men participate to the labor market (full-time, part-time, leaves, etc.) regarding family demands. The third factor measures *legitimacy of nonwork roles*, that is, the salience of family, community and leisure compared to work, and the extent to which it is socially acceptable to not work full-time or take leaves of absence. The fourth is *geographical mobility*: the extent to which mobility cuts employees from their family and community support and thus increases expectations for support on the part of employers (Zedeck, 1992). Lastly, social context might be shaped by the degree of *globalization*, which may increase knowledge about work-life programs abroad, and prompt interest for best practices in countries where these programs are more widely spread.

The second set of factors in the framework illustrated in figure 3 is the institutional context. It is comprised of five factors. These include the *welfare state regime*, which draw on Esping-Andersen (1990)'s analysis of the distribution of responsibilities between the state, employers and families. Ollier-Malaterre argues that employers are more likely to develop extensive work-life programs and practices in a context of low or incomplete public provisions. This runs counter to Poelmans & Sahibzada (2004)'s hypothesis yet is in line with recent work by den Dulk, Peters, Poutsma, & Ligthart (2010). The second factor relates to *employer versus state legitimacy* as a work-family provider. This pertains to the extent to which employees expect and welcome work-life support rather from their employer (as is the case in the U.S for instance) or from the government (as is the case in France). The third factor is the quality of *industrial*

relations: the extent to which industrial relations in a country are collaborative and to which unions consider work-life integration to be an important issue. One must also look at the legal context as well: the extent to which *legal framework* in a country encourages the adoption of innovative HR policies and practices, or, as is the case in France, tends to overburden HR officers with compliance issues. Lastly, the *education system* may impact adoption of work-family programs in a country, since education systems varies in the extent that they produce diversity in executive profiles (vs. elitism) and thus encourages creativity and openness with regards to innovative HR.

Lastly, the *economic context* in the framework reflects labor market factors as identified in Poelmans & Sahibzada (2004). In particular, unemployment rate at the country level, and women's unemployment rate may undermine companies' adoption of work-life policies (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995).

Ollier-Malaterre tested her framework empirically to compare the adoption of work-life programs and practices in the U.S, the U.K and France and a set of five main factors were identified to explain the lesser adoption of work-life initiatives by employers in France. Three factors at the macro level: (1) Employers versus state's legitimacy in the nonwork sphere of life (2) industrial relations and unions' stance towards work-life practices and (3) the complexity of the legal framework. The other two factors were at the meso level: (1) the awareness of work-life issues within HR departments and (2) the framing of work-life as a business or a social issue (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009).

Summary. Future studies need to systematically discuss 1) the organizational culture and cross-national context in which the work-family policies are embedded; 2) the specific types of work-family policies and cultural practices examined and how they relate to underlying

theories of their mechanisms of their processes and outcomes; 3) differentiate between access, use, and extent of implementation over time; 4) identify variation in the types of occupations, industries, economies and institutions, and work force characteristics of employees studied, and 5) use multi-level analysis to link individuals to organizations across national cultures and social institutions.

In order to advance theory on work-family policies, we need to integrate theories from organizational behavior with human resource policy to link to these different levels of analysis. .

Examples of theories might be E-O-R or employee- organizational relationship theory which examines whether the work-life relationship is a fair deal in the social exchange of time and labor from the employee and employer perspective (cf Kossek & Ruderman, 2011). Social construction theory (Berger & Luckman, 1967) would examine differences in how societies socially construct work-family issues and policies across organizations and cultures.

Boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000) might examine the growing blurring between work and family life across institutions, cultures and organizations. International and strategic HR research might examine the degree to which work- family policies vary in convergence and divergence across contexts and nations and labor markets. This chapter has identified multi-level analysis needs and linking these measurement issues to such theoretical perspectives would improve the quality of research.

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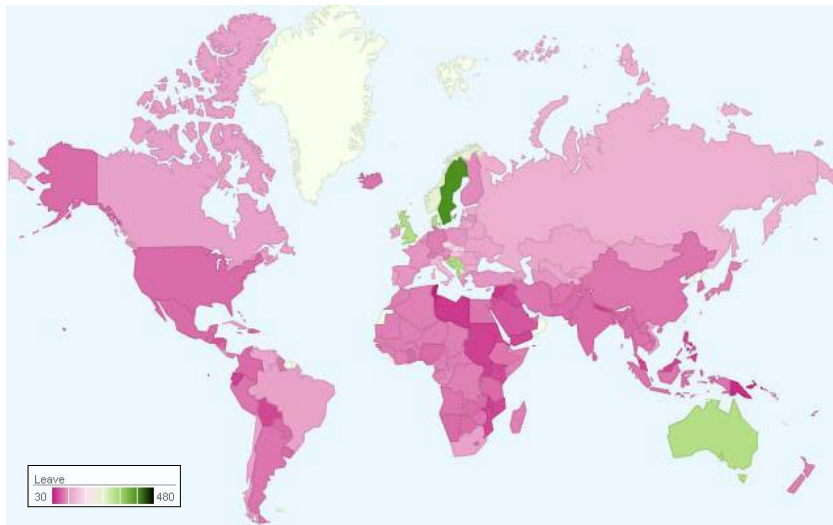
Table 1: Map of the Multi-Level Work-Family Policy Assessment Space

Map of the Assessment Space

| | Work | Family |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Data source | Focal point | Content |
| <u>Perspective</u> | <u>Level</u> | <u>Specificity</u> |
| Employee Organization | Country Occupation/Industry Organization Workgroup/Job Supervisor | Molar/global Molecular |
| Objective Subjective | Individual/Family | Atomistic |

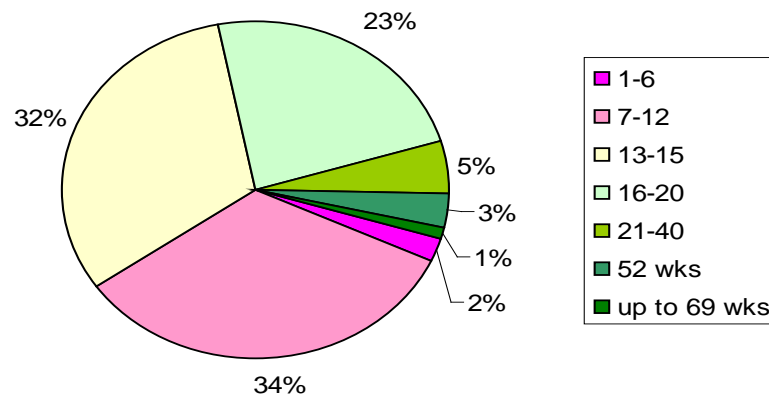
Figure 1 Maternity Leave Policies Around the World: Length in Days and Weeks

Maternity leave: Length in days



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Indicators on Women and Men, Maternity leave benefits, United Nations, New York, 2009.

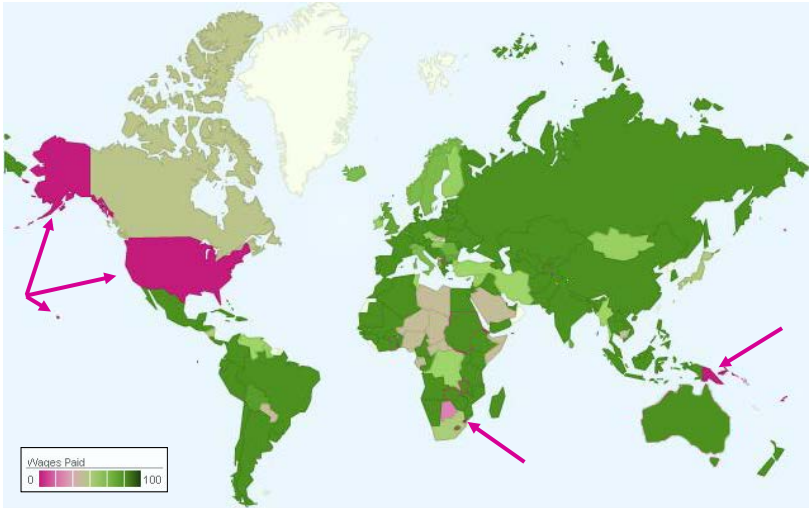
Maternity leave around the world: Length in weeks



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Indicators on Women and Men, Maternity leave benefits, United Nations, New York, 2009.

Figure 2: Comparison of Percent of Wages Paid during Maternity Leave around the World by Public Policy Sources

Maternity leave: Percent wages paid during the leave



Source: International Labour Organization report: "Maternity At Work: A Review of National Legislation, Second Edition"; United Nations Statistics Division, United Nations, New York, 2010.

Figure 3 – A multi-level model to investigate work-life programs and practices

