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Employees' Use of Work-Family Policies and the Workplace Social Context*

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Abstract

This article analyzes the effects of workplace social context on managers' and professionals' use of work-family policies in a financial services corporation. These official policies are ambiguous and contested and, as institutional theory implies, may fail to become fully implemented. We use a multilevel model to determine the individual-level and work group-level factors that affect respondents' policy use. In addition to individual-level factors, the social context of the work group affects employees' decisions to use work-family policies. We find support for our hypotheses stressing the social resource of power and protection: employees are more likely to use these policies if they work with powerful supervisors and colleagues, who can buffer them from perceived negative effects on their careers.

Sociologists have long recognized that groups within organizations influence their members' behaviors and beliefs and that these influences can mediate the impact of organizational-level initiatives or run counter to those desired by organizational leaders (Blau & Scott 1962; Roethlisberger & Dickson 1939). Despite this history, sociologists of work and organization often overlook "the behavior of flesh-and-blood workers at the level of the face-to-face work group" (Simpson 1989:564).¹ However, attention to the social relational features of work and organizations has

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increased in recent years, as many scholars have adopted approaches consistent with a “social model of behavior” (Pfeffer 1997; see also Baron & Pfeffer 1994). These approaches emphasize social context and relations as causal explanations for behavior, in contrast to explanations that focus on the preferences and characteristics of atomized individuals (Granovetter 1985; Pfeffer 1997; Wharton, Rotolo & Bird 2000).

This article uses a social relational approach to address issues central to institutional perspectives on organizations. Institutional research has been especially useful for explaining organizational responses to the external environment (Pfeffer 1997). For example, it has shown how a desire for external legitimacy can lead organizations to adopt some policies primarily for their symbolic value (Meyer & Rowan 1977). These policies often remain decoupled from the actual workings of the organization and fail to produce any real substantive changes in organizational structure or behavior (e.g., Edelman, Uggen & Erlanger 1999; Westphal & Zajac 1994). Because their primary goal has been to explain organizational-level behavior, however, institutional researchers have devoted little attention to how social contexts inside the organization shape the fate of policies after adoption.

In contrast, this article studies how the *intraorganizational* social context shapes employees’ responses to organizational policies. It explores the fate of one set of work-family policies adopted by a large, global financial services company we call International Finance. Our research is premised on the institutional insight that some policies may fail to become fully implemented. Yet we go further to examine how particular aspects of the workplace context encourage or discourage employees’ use of work-family policies.

The data come from our own survey of managerial and professional workers at International Finance, supplemented by a confidential personnel database from the company and by our qualitative interviews of key informants. Our unit of analysis is the employee, nested within a work group within one large company. As Blau and Scott (1962) argue, “Work groups should not be studied in isolation but in the context of the larger organization of which they are a part” (111). We expect that policy use will vary across individuals and work groups. Understanding the sources of this variation will help us begin to understand how work-family policies diffuse within organizations and do or do not become institutionalized as organizational practices.

Work-family policies and their use by professionals and managers are particularly appropriate foci for this research. Work-family policies are controversial and are not well-established organizational practices (Lobel 1999; Osterman 1995), probably especially so in large, decentralized companies like International Finance. Hence, these policies may be particularly susceptible to having symbolic effects on organizations (Westphal & Zajac 1994). We strategically chose a sample of professional and managerial employees because work-family policy use may be particularly contested and ambiguous for this occupational group.

Managerial and professional workers are more likely than other workers to have access to work-family policies and to take advantage of them (Glass & Estes 1997; Glass & Fujimoto 1995; Jacobs & Gerson 1997). Moreover, they may have more power than lower-status workers to promote change in organizational culture by embracing these policies. At the same time, working hours for managers and professionals in the U.S. have increased in recent years, and a large minority now work fifty hours a week or more in addition to commuting time (Jacobs & Gerson 1997). The financial services industry demands particularly long hours, as it faces competitive pressures from globalization, consolidation, and new technologies (Blair-Loy 1997). Because productivity is often difficult to measure, hours spent at work may be used as a proxy for managers' and professionals' work output. In addition, managers and professionals are expected to demonstrate commitment by working long hours and making work the central focus of their lives (Blair-Loy 2001; Fried 1998; Kanter 1977; Schor 1991). These demands place managers and professionals in a crucible of work-family conflict. Their long days may make work-family policies seem indispensable, but the demands of organizational commitment might discourage them from using these policies.

Theoretical Perspectives and Hypotheses

Large employers face considerable pressure to respond to employees' work-family concerns (Goodstein 1994; Ingram & Simons 1995; Osterman 1995), and this pressure may be especially great today, when competition for qualified workers is keen. A growing number of companies (including International Finance) have responded by providing employees with an array of work-family benefits, such as flexibility policies or child-care services (Mitchell 1997). Employers who provide these benefits often gain favorable press and a reputation as a desirable employer. Researchers, too, have generally regarded employers' provision of work-family policies as an indicator of their responsiveness to employees' work-family concerns (Glass & Estes 1997; Glass & Fujimoto 1995; Goodstein 1994; Milliken, Dutton & Beyer 1990; Osterman 1995).

Institutional researchers have studied how and why employers decide to provide work-family benefits to their employees (Goodstein 1994; Guthrie & Roth 1999b; Ingram & Simons 1995; Kelly 1999; Kelly & Dobbin 1999). This research has yielded important insights but has not told us much about workers' use of work-family benefits once they have been officially adopted by a company. Nor has the work-family literature fully examined this issue. As Lambert (1998) notes: "Assessments of preferences for certain programs and policies are rarely followed by assessments of actual use. This is especially true in the work and family field, in which few data exist as to who actually uses available benefits" (297).

As institutional theory reminds us, however, policies may be adopted for symbolic rather than substantive reasons and thus fail to produce any real changes in organizational structure or behavior (Edelman, Uggen & Erlanger 1999; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Scott 1995). For example, Westphal and Zajac (1994) found that many companies adopted long-term incentive plans for CEOs to gain legitimacy with stockholders but failed to use them at all or used them in only limited ways. Similarly, companies who provide work-family benefits may gain external legitimacy as desirable employers but may also intentionally or unintentionally discourage employees from ever using these benefits.

Westphal and Zajac (1994) suggest that “controversial or ambiguous” policies are especially likely to have merely symbolic effects on organizations. Unlike many other employee benefits and policies, work-family policies fall into the “controversial or ambiguous” category. Compared to employment practices such as sick leave or health insurance, work-family benefits are in the early and not yet taken-for-granted stages of adoption (Osterman 1995). Although it has become legitimate for employers to *offer* work-family policies, these policies are not yet embedded within other corporate structures, and it is not self-evident that good employees will actually use them (Kelly 1999). Further, although employers may view these policies as tools for recruiting and retaining employees, they often conflict with more entrenched organizational norms, such as an “overtime culture” (Fried 1998), “work devotion” (Blair-Loy 2001), and a belief in the value of “face time” (Perlow 1997). Thus, employees may conclude that using work-family benefits will be costly for their careers.

Professionals and managers at International Finance receive ambiguous and contradictory messages about using these policies. For example, International Finance offers a generous array of official work-family policies and has been listed in the business press as among the most family-friendly companies in the U.S. Among the company’s official publicized values are “Respect & Balance: We treat people fairly and with dignity and keep a healthy perspective about life and work. . . . [We] encourage balance by showing flexibility in how, when and where work gets done.” Nevertheless, as we will see, the company expects high levels of dedication and long work hours from its managerial and professional employees, and many employees are worried that using work-family policies will hurt their careers.

When organizational policies are controversial or ambiguous, *intra*organizational interests and politics may shape policy outcomes. Whether contested policies are actually used thus may depend upon the political power of interested actors, “core constituencies,” trying to encourage or discourage their institutionalization (DiMaggio 1988; see also Westphal & Zajac 1994). This implies that meanings and expectations surrounding policy use may vary widely across the organization and be constructed locally by supervisors and work groups.

HYPOTHESES

Institutional researchers such as Edelman, Uggen, and Erlanger (1999) and Westphal and Zajac (1994) treat policy use and implementation as organizational decisions. In contrast, we are studying *individuals'* use of work-family policies (see also the argument in Guthrie & Roth 1999a for extending institutional theory to the study of individual outcomes in organizations). We expect that the probability of an employee using work-family policies depends upon individual-level and work group-level factors.

Research suggests that the successful institutionalization of contested policies generally depends upon the political action and relative power of "core constituencies," interested actors who stand to gain from whether or not a policy is fully implemented (DiMaggio 1988). Similarly, researchers studying corporate adoption of work-family policies and programs argue that "critical constituents" can exert considerable influence on employers (Goodstein 1994; see also Ingram & Simons 1995; Osterman 1995; Powell 1999). In these studies, the critical constituents for work-family benefits are mothers (and sometimes fathers) with family responsibilities, especially those without a homemaking spouse.

Implicit in this argument is the belief that people with family responsibilities most need and desire alternative work arrangements. Women are likely to be critical constituents because they generally shoulder more responsibility for domestic work than men in addition to their market work (Spain & Bianchi 1996). Previous research has found that, on average, women are more likely than men to use various policies and parents of young children are more likely to use them than nonparents (Flack & Reskin 1998; Fried 1998; Jacobs & Gerson 1997; Sandberg 1999; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness 1999). This research leads us to posit that the use of work-family policies depends partly on workers' individual characteristics, particularly their gender and family circumstances. Specifically, we expect that individuals with more family responsibilities will be more likely to use these policies. This leads us to hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1: Women will be more likely than men to use work-family policies. Net of other factors, we expect that married and cohabiting employees will be more likely than single ones to use work-family policies. We further hypothesize that parents of young or school-age children will be more likely than other employees to use them. We also expect that the probability of policy use will be higher for single parents, for workers without a homemaking spouse, and for respondents who provide care for someone elderly, ill, or disabled.

However, individual preferences alone are insufficient in understanding employees' behavior. Behavior is embedded within a social context, which not only shapes preferences and perceptions directly but also may shape people's willingness and capacity to act on them (Pfeffer 1997; Salancik & Pfeffer 1978).² Pfeffer (1982) argues that "for most people working in organizations, the most potent and relevant

contextual effect is that of the group with which they work" (103). Consistent with this view, our research defines the "social context" of work in terms of an employee's work group.

Work group social context is a multifaceted phenomenon. The demographic composition of work groups is the feature of social context emphasized here. A large literature documents the effects of demographic composition on work attitudes and behavior (e.g., Levine & Moreland 1990; Pfeffer 1983; Tsui & Gutek 1999). We view the demographic composition of work groups as a source of opportunities and constraints on people's willingness and ability to use work-life policies (Mowday & Sutton 1993). Hence, we expect that work group demographic composition will affect employees' policy use, net of the effects of employees' individual characteristics.

Consistent with social network approaches that treat ties to others as important social resources that can be used to achieve particular goals (Lin 1999; Portes 1998), we view various aspects of work group demographic composition as resources that can facilitate employees' use of work-life policies. The social resources derived from work group demographic composition may be activated in many types of situations. However, these resources — and thus the importance of work group demography — should be especially powerful in explaining employees' use of policies that are not fully institutionalized within the larger organization. As previous studies show, social influence of all kinds is more likely when the circumstances are ambiguous (Rice & Aydin 1991), as is likely true of work-family policies.

Which demographic features of work groups do we expect to matter and why? We present two sets of competing hypotheses. Each specifies a different set of demographic characteristics and a different kind of social resource that may enable use of work-life policies.

The first set of hypotheses posits that work groups are more supportive of their members' use of work-life policies when the group contains members who need and want to use these policies. Having coworkers with families may help create norms that support taking advantage of work-life policies and encourage greater policy use. Hence, coworkers should be more supportive of employees' use of work-family policies if they have personally experienced the challenges of balancing work with primary responsibilities for family care. Specifically, work groups containing higher percentages of critical constituencies should be more likely than other groups to encourage their members' use of work-life policies. This leads us to hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2a: Members of work groups with higher concentrations of women, married people, and parents will be more likely to use work-family policies than other employees, net of individual factors.

If the fate of contested policies depends not just on the *presence* of interested actors but also on their *authority* to act on their interests (DiMaggio 1988; Westphal & Zajac 1994), the characteristics of supervisors should also shape workers' policy

use. Indeed, previous research indicates that supervisors' support of work-family policies affects whether employees actually use them (Flack & Reskin 1998; Fried 1998; Glass & Estes 1997). Supervisors who themselves juggle family responsibilities may be more likely than other supervisors to be critical constituents who promote these policies and facilitate their use by subordinates. This suggests hypothesis 2b.

Hypothesis 2b: Employees with female or married supervisors will be more likely to use work-family policies than employees with male or unmarried supervisors, net of individual factors.

Social support from people who themselves need or want to use work-life policies is the primary social resource supplied by work groups in hypotheses 2a and 2b. However, International Finance sends contradictory messages about work-family policy use, and, as we will see, many employees fear the career costs of using them (see also Fried 1998; Hays 1998). Because work-life policy use is contested, power and protection from negative consequences may be more useful social resources than social support. People may be reluctant to take advantage of these policies unless they are surrounded by powerful coworkers or supervisors who can facilitate this risky practice or protect them from perceived negative consequences.

Being immersed in a more powerful work group may provide employees with social resources for knowing how to successfully use work-family policies or may inoculate them against career costs of using these policies. Similarly, policy use may depend less on whether one's supervisor has family responsibilities than on whether the supervisor has the power or resources to protect one from perceived career costs. Though work group and supervisor power can be measured in many different ways, we rely here on three objective indicators of power: gender, tenure, and salary.

Men generally enjoy more power in the workplace than women owing to a variety of well-documented mechanisms (e.g., Kanter 1977; Maume 1999; Reskin & McBrier 2000; Reskin & Ross 1995; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). In particular, studies suggest that women in organizations have more difficulty than men forming ties with others who are influential and instrumentally useful (Brass 1985; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra & Smith-Lovin 1997). Similarly, research shows that groups containing higher proportions of men command more resources and prestige and exercise more power and influence than those containing larger numbers of women (Reskin, McBrier & Kmec 1999). This literature implies that work groups having male supervisors and containing a higher proportion of men are more powerful work groups.

Two other indicators of work group and supervisor power are organizational tenure and salary. Workers with more seniority are likely to have developed more extensive networks (cf. Davies-Netzley 1998) and to be more socially involved with coworkers than those with less organizational tenure. Workers with longer tenure may also have greater access to more desirable jobs and work assignments and to positions involving more autonomy and discretion (Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982).

Within organizations, more powerful individuals and groups generally receive more of the organization's resources, including a higher salary (cf. Mowday 1978; Pfeffer 1997; Reskin & Ross 1995). This research suggests that work groups with higher mean salaries and longer average tenures are more powerful. Similarly, supervisors with longer organizational tenure are assumed to be more powerful than those having less tenure with the firm.

The research literature thus gives rise to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Members of work groups with a higher percentage of men, longer average organizational tenure, or higher average salaries will be more likely to use work-family policies than other employees, net of individual factors.

Hypothesis 3b: Employees with male supervisors or supervisors with longer average organizational tenure will be more likely to use work-family policies than other employees, net of individual factors.

In sum, the above hypotheses offer alternative ways in which the demographic composition of work groups may shape employees' use of work-life policies. Coworkers and supervisors may provide social support for policy use, or they may encourage use through their ability to protect users from perceived negative consequences.

Data and Methods

DATA

In 1998, International Finance gave us permission to study work-family policies in its organization and provided us with a confidential personnel database, from which we constructed variables measuring supervisor characteristics and aggregate characteristics of work groups. We constructed another data set based on our own survey of managerial and professional employees' characteristics and their use of and attitudes toward work-family policies at International Finance.

In 1999, after first pretesting our survey at another organization, we administered it in three divisions at International Finance.³ One division in the sample provides professional staff services to the organization, and the other two serve customers in core line functions. We sent the U.S. survey analyzed here to all U.S.-based managerial and professional employees of two of these divisions and to a subset of the third division.⁴ Because we are interested in the social context of work, we kept track of work group membership and surveyed all work group members, including the supervisor. The number of employees in these work groups ranges from 2 to 73, with a median of 13. Each work group works on a common portion of business and shares one supervisor.

The total number of usable surveys completed was 519, 52% of our original survey population.⁵ These 519 professionals and managers are nested within 78

work groups. Because of missing data, the present analysis includes 459 professionals and managers nested within 76 work groups. Our individual-level variables are derived from the 459 survey responses, but our aggregate work group variables are constructed from the personnel database provided by the company, which had information on over 90% of our original survey population.⁶

We did extensive tests for selection bias. First, we compared several demographic features of the employees who received the questionnaire with those of our survey respondents. Our information on survey recipients is from the company's personnel database. Two-sample *t*-tests revealed no statistically significant differences between this population and our respondents for the individual-level variables of gender, organizational tenure, and age, nor for the work group-level variables of supervisor gender, work group size, and percentage of women in the work group. The only statistically significant difference between survey recipients and respondents is a slight overrepresentation of whites among the latter group (69% of survey recipients identified themselves as white, as compared to 74% of survey respondents).

We also conducted additional tests for sample selection bias at the work group level. We used OLS to compute the predicted rate of nonresponse for each work group as a function of work group characteristics, including log size, percentage female, mean tenure, and so on.⁷ Using procedures developed by Berk (1983), we then included these predicted probabilities in our models as a work group-level variable. The selection variable was not statistically significant in our models, nor did its inclusion affect any of the other coefficients. Following previous researchers (e.g., Podolny & Baron 1997), we do not include the selection variable in our final analyses.

The survey includes a wide range of closed-ended items on respondents' attitudes and behaviors regarding balancing work and their other responsibilities. Approximately one-quarter of respondents answered an optional, completely open-ended question that asked them to write in any additional comments about the issues raised in the questionnaire. We do not know how widely these responses were shared across the rest of the sample, so we use them only for illustrative purposes.

We also conducted semistructured interviews with thirteen key informants at International Finance. These informants included seven human resources managers. One was responsible for implementing International Finance's family-responsive policies, and another was in charge of conveying International Finance's official set of values, including a professed concern for employees' work-family balance. Four interviews were with managerial and professional employees in the divisions surveyed. Two interviews were with line managers in other divisions who had conducted an internal survey for International Finance on employees' attitudes toward work-family issues.

METHODS

Because our data consist of individuals nested within work groups, we used HLM4.0 to estimate a two-level multilevel model (Bryk & Raudenbush 1992; Bryk, Raudenbush & Congdon 1996; see also DiPrete & Forristal 1994). Multilevel models are useful when data are arranged hierarchically (e.g., workers within work groups). These models are superior to traditional OLS models, which require the assumption of independence between observations, and they are superior to group-level models, which typically have low power to detect effects (Bryk & Raudenbush 1992). In particular, multilevel models make it possible to model the social dependence that exists between members of the same social unit.

Our two-level model differentiates between individual-level data and data collected at the work group level. Separate regression models are estimated for each level, and these submodels specify how variables at one level affect relations occurring at another. Multilevel analyses can take many forms; we use a nonlinear random-intercept model. As described below, our dependent variables — employees' uses of family-responsive policies — are binary. Hence, our models estimate the log-odds of using a particular policy as a function of individual and work group characteristics.

At level 1 (individuals), the models we estimate take the form

$$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{qj} \mathcal{X}_{qij} + r_{ij},$$

where η_{ij} is the log-odds of using a policy for individual i in work group j , β_{0j} is the intercept for work group j , β_{qj} ($q = 1, 2, \dots, Q$) are level-1 coefficients, \mathcal{X}_{qij} is level-1 predictor q for case i in work group j , and r_{ij} is the level-1 random effect. All individual-level variables are grand mean centered; hence, the intercept represents the adjusted average log-odds of policy use for work group j , after controlling for all covariates.

Each level-1 coefficient, including the intercept, is an outcome variable at level 2 (work groups). Except for the intercept, however, we model all level-1 coefficients as fixed effects (i.e., $\beta_{qj} = \gamma_{q0}$).⁸ The intercept is modeled as

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} W_{1j} + \gamma_{02} W_{2j} \dots + \mu_{qj},$$

where γ_{00} represents the average log-odds of using a policy; γ_{01}, γ_{02} , and so on are level-2 coefficients; W_{1j}, W_{2j} , and so on are level-2 predictors; and μ_{qj} is a level-2 random effect. Hence, we use work group-level variables to explain variation in the average log-odds of policy use across work groups. The intercept for any given work group is a function of the average log-odds of using a policy, several work group-level covariates, and a random error term.

We supplement these quantitative models with responses to the open-ended questionnaire item and with our interviews with nine key informants.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

All our respondents have official access to a uniform menu of policies at International Finance. We used employee handbooks, official brochures on work-family policies, and interviews with human resources personnel to determine the eight primary work-family policies officially available to managers and professionals at this company.⁹

Forty-one percent of the sample was currently using or had used at least one of the work-family policies we asked about. Through factor analysis of employee use patterns, we found that these policies could be grouped into three main categories.¹⁰

(1) Family-care policies

- Child-care or elder-care referral services or educational materials
- Dependent sick time: Employees use own paid sick time to care for a dependent
- Paid or unpaid leave lasting more than two weeks to care for a dependent

(2) Flexibility policies

- Flextime: Employees determine the hours at which they stop and start working
- Flexplace/telecommuting: Employees work part of the time away from the office
- Compressed workweek: Employees work a full-time schedule in fewer than five days

(3) Policies on cutting back paid work hours

- Job sharing: Two employees share the responsibility of one full-time job
- Part-time: Employees are allowed to shift to part-time work

There is little overlap in the employees who use these three types of policies.¹¹

Twenty-one percent of our respondents were currently using or had used family-care policies, while 26% were currently using or had used policies enabling flexibility. Only 2% of respondents, however, have ever used job sharing or voluntary part-time policies, and two-thirds or more of the sample reported having no need or interest in policies to cut back on paid hours. Because of the small numbers of respondents who have used the policies on cutting back hours, we do not examine these policies in this article. Instead, we created two binary dependent variables: use family-care policies (1 = use) and use flexibility policies (1 = use) (see Table 1).¹²

MAJOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND WORK GROUP LEVELS

Individual Level

Our key independent variables at the individual level measure respondents' demographic characteristics and family status. The following dichotomous variables are included: gender (1 = female), marital status (1 = married or cohabiting), being a single parent (1 = is a single parent), having children younger than six in the home (1 = has children younger than six in the home), having children aged six to fifteen in the home (1 = has children between six and fifteen in the home), having a full-time homemaker spouse (1 = has full-time homemaker spouse), and providing special care to someone who is elderly, ill, or disabled (1 = provides special care).

Work Group Level

We calculated the work group-level variables from the company's confidential personnel database; these measures of work group composition are derived from data on all members of the work group, regardless of whether they were survey respondents. To test our hypothesis regarding the impact of social support on work-life policy use (hypothesis 2a), we measured the following aspects of work group composition: percentage of women in the work group, percentage of the work group currently married or cohabiting, and percentage of the work group with children. Our data on supervisor support (hypothesis 2b) also came from this database. Supervisor characteristics include two dichotomous variables: supervisor gender (1 = female) and supervisor marital status (1 = married).

Hypotheses 3a and 3b require data on the relative power of work group members and supervisors, as indicated by gender, tenure, and salary. In addition to measures of the percentage of women in the work group and supervisor gender, our models include measures of average log work group tenure, average log work group salary, and supervisor organizational tenure (measured in years). (Because supervisor salary is highly correlated with the salary of the work group, we do not include a separate measure of it.)

CONTROLS

Bryk and Raudenbush (1992) urge multilevel researchers to build models using what they call a "step-up" strategy, rather than starting with all potentially relevant predictors and eliminating those that are not significant. With this advice in mind, our models include only a small number of control variables. Variables were included as controls if their absence significantly changed the impact of a theoretically relevant variable or if their inclusion enhanced the fit of the model.¹³ A slightly different set of control variables is used for each dependent variable.

TABLE 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Individual- and Work Group-Level Variables

	Mean	S.D.
<i>Dependent variables</i>		
Uses family-care policies	.21	
Uses flexibility policies	.26	
<i>Individual-level variables</i>		
<i>Independent variables</i>		
Female	.40	
Married or cohabiting	.73	
Single parent	.02	
Has young children	.19	
Has school-age children	.29	
Spouse is full-time homemaker	.14	
Provides someone special care	.22	
<i>Control variables</i>		
Average weekly hours worked	52.30	9.17
Salary	101,939	52,861
Job autonomy	2.55	.70
(N = 459)		
<i>Work group-level variables</i>		
<i>Independent variables</i>		
Percentage female	.48	.28
Percentage married or cohabiting	.56	.20
Percentage with children	.76	23.52
Female supervisor	.34	
Supervisor married or cohabiting	.82	
Average log organizational tenure	1.85	.63
Supervisor organizational tenure	14.24	9.09
Average log salary	11.35	.34
<i>Control variables</i>		
Percentage nonwhite, U.S.-born	.22	.18
Percentage nonwhite, non-U.S.-born	.08	.11
Percentage white, non-U.S.-born	.03	.06
Average age	41.70	4.23
Staff function	.53	
Supervisor white, U.S.-born	.76	
(N = 76)		

At the individual level, control variables include individual income (salary plus bonus, measured in dollars as the midpoint of a ten-category variable),¹⁴ average number of hours worked per week (measured in hours), and job autonomy

(measured as the average of three items).¹⁵ At the work group level, we included controls for supervisor race and citizenship (1 = supervisor white, U.S.-born); whether the work group was staff or line (1 = staff); average age of work group members; percentage of work group that was nonwhite, U.S.-born; percentage of work group nonwhite, non-U.S.-born; and percentage of work group that was white, non-U.S.-born.

Descriptive Results

We first present descriptive results (see Table 1). In the firm Hochschild (1997) studied, employees had virtually no interest in flexibility policies and more interest in child-care policies. In contrast, we found moderate levels of use and very high levels of interest in both types of policies. Twenty-one percent of the sample had used or were currently using one or more family-care policies (and only 16% reported no need or interest in them; finding not shown). Twenty-six percent of respondents were using or had used flexibility policies (and only 6% expressed no need or interest in these policies; finding not shown). Policy use varied widely across work groups, however: participation rates for family-care policies ranged from 0% to 100%, and participation rates for flexibility policies ranged from 0% to 86%.

At the time of the survey, the average respondent was 42 years old (finding not shown). Sixty percent of our respondents were men. Almost three-quarters were currently married or living with a partner. Only 14% of these partners were full-time homemakers, and all respondents with a full-time homemaking partner were men. About 19% of all respondents had at least one child under six living with them, and roughly 29% had at least one child between six and fifteen living with them. Our respondents were well paid, with an average annual salary of just over \$100,000, and worked long hours, averaging 52 a week.

Additional survey data (not reported) and our open-ended responses provide a fuller picture of respondents' working conditions and, for some, sense of overwork. For example, 62% of the sample said they often worked late. In the three-month period before the survey was conducted, respondents had spent an average of seven nights away from home on work-related travel. At the high end, some had been away from home as many as eighty nights during the previous three months.

These long hours were worked in a stressful, fast-changing work environment. Between 83% and 90% of respondents answered "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" to questions about whether they often came in to work early or stayed late, worked under tight deadlines, responded to unpredictable events, and found things changing rapidly in their work group.

The most common open-ended comment (32 responses, or 20% of the qualitative answers) was a comment about intense work pressure and long hours. The following statements are typical:

The pressure is affecting my health. Lack of staff is causing us to rush, leaving room for errors.

I am bombarded with new emergencies that force me to put aside all else to deal with this new one. So, everything else must be done after hours or not done at all. If it isn't done after hours, then the next day's emergency cannot be managed.

I and some of my staff have an excessive workload and are consequently missing milestones. This is resulting in heavy job stresses.

Given the work load, consistently reduced headcount, and increasing our pressure, working shorter hours is no way possible. All employees are exhausted.

[International Finance] is an extremely stressful place to work. Especially in the past few years during downsizing. . . . I am doing the work of two or three people, with an intensive work load with no lull. Saturdays and Sundays are catch-up days, but I never catch up. The past few years are characterized by lost vacations, working during vacation and holidays including Christmas Day, late nights, being routinely exhausted. . . . The phone never stops ringing, and the number of e-mails is impossible to handle. Once when I went to see my [child play sports], I received five cell phone calls. When my [spouse] was undergoing major surgery, I was paged to call in [to work].

Respondents also worry that their work lives have harmful effects on their family and personal lives. Just over half the sample said they wished they could "cut down on the hours at work," and half were concerned about the impact their work has on their family and personal lives and felt overloaded by all their responsibilities. For example, in the open-ended question, one employee commented:

The number one reason I would leave [International Finance] is because the demands are incredible. I have always worked very hard and received the top rating on my evaluation each year, but the harder I work, the more that is expected. I have a young family, and it is very difficult to spend time with them. I travel a lot, and it is expected that whenever the hat drops, I'll go wherever [I am asked].

Another respondent echoed this concern:

My child's school refers to me as the "absentee parent" because I can never get to their open evenings. I did not see my youngest child from Sunday evenings until Saturday morning until he was five years old. My kids, when asked why I am not at their school or their concerts, etc., just explain: "our dad works for International Finance."

Our respondents work long, stressful days. Most have families. Half are concerned about the impact their work has on their family and personal lives. So they should be eager to take advantage of the generous work-family policies offered by a company publicly recognized as family-friendly. After all, the company's official value statement promotes keeping a "healthy perspective about life and work" and

encouraging “balance by showing flexibility in how, when and where work gets done.”

However, the use of work-family policies is far from taken for granted. Many employees believe that using work-family policies would hinder career advancement and success. For example, almost two-thirds of our sample said that taking an extended parental leave or setting limits on hours spent at work would hurt their career advancement. Moreover, almost one-quarter of respondents believed that starting a family would negatively affect career advancement, while over half believed that consistently spending long hours at work would have a positive effect on career progress. In contrast, other employment practices — even those that reduce work time, such as paid vacation — are more taken for granted and seen as compatible with career progress. For instance, 87% of employees in our sample reported that taking their full vacation allotment would have no effect (57%) or a positive effect (30%) on “a person’s chances of doing well at this level in the company.”

There is a wide range of responses to these ambiguous and contested policies. For example, one manager reported in response to our open-ended question: “These policies are probably here and in place. But to avail oneself of them would probably interfere with career advancement.” Yet someone else in the same division said: “[I work] at home . . . on a flex schedule. I go into the office for meetings, etc., approximately one to two days a month. I applaud the company for making these types of situations possible.” Given this variation in responses to work-family policies, what determines whether an employee actually uses them? We now turn to analytic models of these factors.

Multilevel Models

BASELINE ANALYSES

Before estimating the full models (containing both individual and work group characteristics), we examined baseline models (containing only individual-level predictors) for each dependent variable. The results from these baseline models allow us to examine the effects of individual-level characteristics and to assess whether there is significant work group variation in employees’ policy use.

We turn first to the baseline model for the log-odds of using family-care policies. For ease of interpretation, we centered all individual-level variables around their grand mean. The results, reported in Table 2, column 1, indicate that several individual-level characteristics affect the log-odds of using family-care policies. As hypothesized, use of these policies is greater among women, those with young or school-age children, and people who provide special care to someone elderly, ill, or disabled. The effects for two other family-status variables — being a single parent

TABLE 2: Baseline Model Predicting Log-Odds of Using Family-Care and Flexibility Policies

Individual-Level Variables	Log-Odds of Using Family-Care Policies	Log-Odds of Using Flexibility Policies
<i>Fixed Effects</i>		
Intercept, γ_{00}	-1.695***	-1.350***
Independent variables		
Female, γ_{10}	.754***	.098
Married or cohabiting, γ_{20}	.399	.258
Single parent, γ_{30}	1.375	-.020
Has young children, γ_{40}	1.586***	-.120
Has school-age children, γ_{50}	1.696***	.308
Spouse is full-time homemaker, γ_{60}	-.982	-.049
Provides someone special care, γ_{70}	.985***	.108
Control variables		
Job autonomy	—	.864***
Average weekly hours worked	-.037***	—
Salary	-.03E-05	—
<i>Random Effect</i>		
Intercept, μ_{0j}	.172	1.006***
χ^2	69.542	148.535***
df	75	75
(N = 459)		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .005$ (two-tailed tests)

and having a full-time homemaker spouse — are in the predicted direction but do not quite reach statistical significance. By contrast, marital status does not affect the log-odds of using family-care policies.

The coefficient for one control variable in the model is also significant: working shorter hours also increases the log-odds of using family-care policies. Decreasing the number of hours worked may be one way people with family responsibilities manage these demands.

The variance component for the intercept, shown at the bottom of column 1, shows that, after accounting for the effects of the individual-level characteristics described above, the log-odds of using family-care policies do not vary significantly across work groups ($\chi^2 = 69.542$, $df = 75$, $p > .500$). These findings imply that use of these policies is shaped *mainly* by individual-level factors. In particular, use of family-care policies seems to depend primarily on need for these policies, with critical constituents (women, parents, and those providing special care to someone elderly, disabled or ill) more likely to use them than other employees.

The baseline model for our second dependent variable, the log-odds of using flexibility policies, yields quite different results. As seen in Table 2, column 2, use of flexibility policies depends much less on individual-level characteristics than does the use of family-care policies. In fact, only one individual-level characteristic affects the log-odds of using flexibility policies: these odds are greater for those with more job autonomy. Counter to our hypotheses, the use of flexibility policies was unrelated to having young or school-age children at home, being a single parent, being female, providing special care to someone, or having a spouse who is a full-time homemaker.

In contrast to the results for the first dependent variable, the variance component for the intercept reported at the bottom of column 2 is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 148.535$, $df = 75$, $p < .000$). This indicates that there remains significant work group variation in the dependent variable. Hence, these baseline results suggest that individual-level characteristics are much less important for employees' use of flexibility policies than for their use of family-care policies.¹⁶

FULL MODELS

Family-Care Policies

Table 3 shows results for our full models, those containing both individual- and work group-level predictors. At the individual level, we included only those predictors that were (or closely approached) statistical significance in the baseline models.

Column 1 reports the findings for the first dependent variable, the log-odds of using family-care policies. The effects of the individual-level variables included in the baseline model do not change substantially with the inclusion of work group characteristics, though the effect of being a single parent becomes statistically significant in this model. Several work group characteristics are also significant in the full model. These effects represent the expected difference in the log-odds of using family-care policies for respondents with similar individual-level characteristics who are in work groups differing by one unit on a given work group-level variable.

The work group-level results in column 1 show modest support for hypotheses 3a and 3b (regarding coworker and supervisor power) and are directly contrary to hypotheses 2a and 2b (regarding coworker and supervisor social support). The log-odds of using family-care policies are higher for members of work groups containing higher percentages of men and for those with a male supervisor. Hence, women are more likely than men to use family-care policies, but employees in work groups with high percentages of women or with female supervisors report less family-care policy use. Employees in work groups with longer average organizational tenure are also more likely to use these policies than

TABLE 3: Full Model Predicting Log-Odds of Using Family-Care and Flexibility Policies

	Log-Odds of Using Family-Care Policies	Log-Odds of Using Flexibility Policies
<i>Fixed Effects</i>		
Intercept, γ_{00}	-5.429	1.954
<i>Work group-level variables</i>		
Independent variables		
Percentage married or cohabiting, γ_{01}	-.874	-2.305**
Percentage with children, γ_{02}	-.004	-.002
Percentage female, γ_{03}	-2.237***	-.381
Female supervisor, γ_{04}	-.564**	-1.773***
Supervisor married or cohabiting, γ_{05}	-.672**	-.668**
Average log organizational tenure, γ_{06}	1.027***	1.560***
Supervisor organizational tenure, γ_{07}	.000	-.065***
Average log salary, γ_{08}	.176	.340
Control variables		
Percentage nonwhite, U.S.-born	1.133	—
Percentage nonwhite, non-U.S.-born	-4.303**	—
Percentage white, non-U.S.-born	-2.288	—
Average age	.063	-.112**
Staff function	—	2.902***
Supervisor white, U.S.-born	-.310	—
<i>Individual-level variables</i>		
Independent variables		
Female, γ_{10}	1.071***	—
Married or cohabiting, γ_{20}	—	—
Single parent, γ_{30}	1.596**	—
Has young children, γ_{40}	1.689***	—
Has school-age children, γ_{50}	1.833***	—
Spouse is full-time homemaker, γ_{60}	-1.000	—
Provides someone special care, γ_{70}	.937***	—
Control variables		
Job autonomy	—	1.080***
Average weekly hours worked	-.035**	—
Salary	-.03E-05	—
<i>Random Effect</i>		
<i>Variance Component</i>		
Intercept, μ_{0j}	.052	.180
χ^2	50.171	56.363
df	62	65
* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .005 (two-tailed tests)		

members of work groups with shorter average tenure. Contrary to hypotheses 3a and 3b, however, use of family-care policies is not higher among members of more highly paid work groups, nor is use shaped by the organizational tenure of supervisors.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while use of family-care policies is driven by individual need, having powerful coworkers and supervisors facilitates policy use. We find no support for hypotheses 2a and 2b: there is no evidence that having coworkers or a supervisor with family responsibilities increases an employee's odds of using family-care policies. One control variable in the model is also statistically significant: employees in work groups containing larger percentages of nonwhite, non-U.S.-born workers are less likely to use family-care policies than those in work groups containing a larger percentage of white, U.S.-born workers (the reference category).

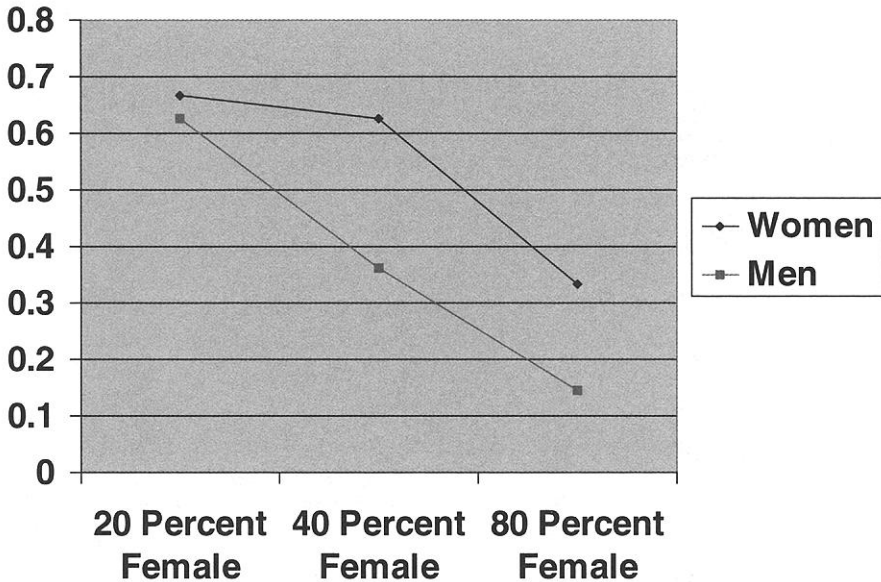
To further explore some of these findings, we calculated the differences in the probabilities of using family-care policies for female workers with young children in work groups with varying proportions of women. Computations drawn from our baseline results show that the average female employee with young children in our sample has roughly a 50% chance of using family-care policies. However, these probabilities change as the percentage of women in the work group rises or falls.

As Figure 1 shows, women with young children who work in mostly male work groups (i.e., 20% female) are more likely to use family-care policies than the average woman with young children (67% chance vs. 51% chance), whereas women with young children working in mostly female work groups (i.e., 80% female) are less likely to use these policies than the average woman in the sample with young children (33% chance vs. 51%). These findings underscore the importance of work group characteristics in explaining the use of family-care policies. Although being female and having young children are significant predictors of use at the individual level of analysis, use *also* depends upon the social context of work in ways that are not the mere aggregation of individual effects. Instead, the results in Figure 1 suggest that the percentage of women in the work group mediates the individual-level effects of being female and having young children.

We performed similar calculations to compare female and male respondents having male versus female supervisors, with all other individual- and work group-level variables estimated at their mean. These estimates are displayed in Figure 2. Of the four groups shown here, women with male supervisors have the highest probability of using family-care policies (.24), while men with female supervisors are least likely to use these policies (.06). This figure shows that having a male supervisor increases the probability of both women's and men's use of family-care policies, although women's overall use of these policies is higher than men's overall use.

In sum, while individual-level factors have the most influence on the log-odds of using family-care policies, work group characteristics are modestly important as well. The net effect of these work group characteristics can be seen in their impact

FIGURE 1: Probability of Using Family-Care Policies for Women and Men with Young Children



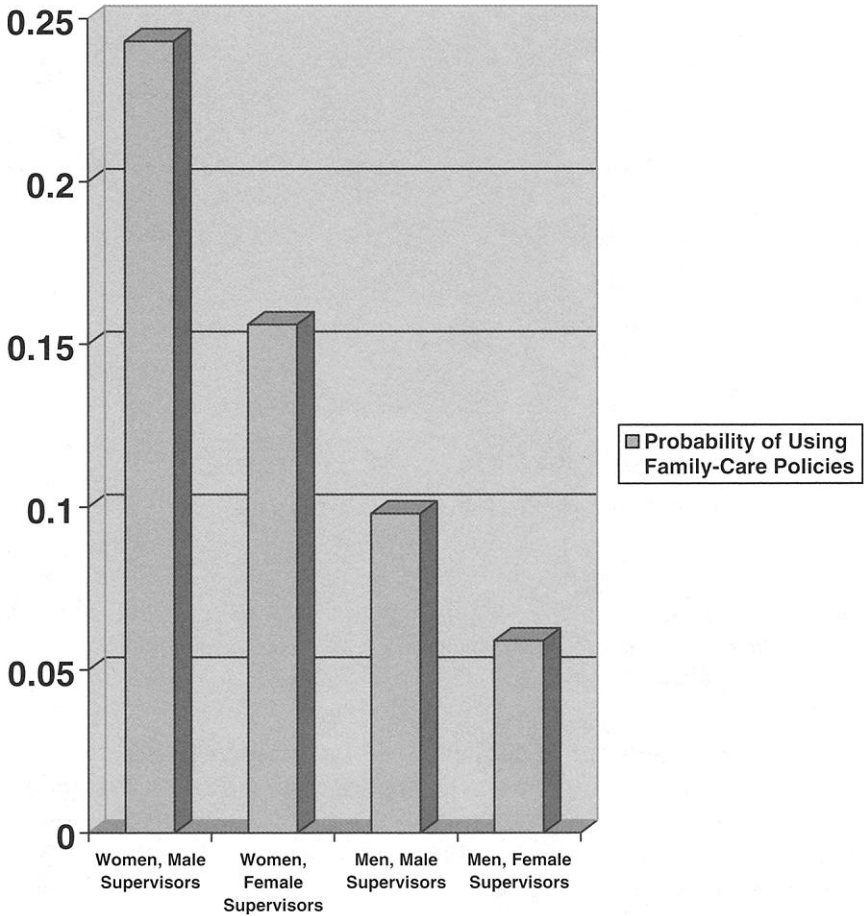
Note: Raw score coefficients (not those based on centered values) are used to calculate probabilities for gender and young children. All variables other than percentage of women in the work group are calculated at their mean.

on the variance component. Inclusion of the work group characteristics reduces the variance component estimated in the baseline model. Using Bryk and Raudenbush's (1992) formula, we find that the variance in the baseline model is reduced by 70% when work group-level variables are included, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis that no residual variance remains to be explained ($\chi^2 = 50.171$, $df = 62$, $p > .500$). Thus, our most general work group-level hypothesis is modestly supported. Although respondents' use of family-care policy is primarily due to individual-level characteristics, work group-level factors also influence use.

Flexibility Policies

We now turn to the full model for our second dependent variable, the log-odds of using flexibility policies. These results are shown in column 2 of Table 3. The effect for job autonomy, the only statistically significant individual-level variable in the

FIGURE 2: Probability of Using Family-Care Policies As a Function of Gender and Supervisor Gender



Note: Raw score coefficients (not those based on centered values) are used to calculate probabilities for gender. All variables other than gender and supervisor gender are calculated at their mean.

baseline model, does not change substantially with the inclusion of work group characteristics.

Several work group-level characteristics affect the log-odds of using flexibility policies. These effects provide some support for hypotheses 3a and 3b and directly

contradict hypotheses 2a and 2b. For example, as we saw for family-care policy use, flexibility policy use is increased in work groups with longer average organizational tenure and in those having male supervisors. Regardless of the employee's own tenure, having coworkers with longer organizational tenure increases the odds that employees will take advantage of work-family policies. Coworkers with longer organizational tenure may be more influential, politically savvy, and knowledgeable about corporate culture and policies than colleagues with a shorter corporate history.

However, not all of our indicators of work group and supervisor power encourage flexibility policy use. Neither the percentage of men in the work group nor average work group salary was associated with flexibility policy use. Moreover, members of work groups supervised by people with less organizational tenure were more, rather than less, likely to use flexibility policies. This latter finding contradicts our suggestion that supervisors with more firm seniority would be better able to facilitate workers' use of flexibility policies than those with weaker organizational ties. However, perhaps supervisors with less organizational tenure are more open to change and innovation than those with longer tenure and thus are more willing to encourage flexibility policy use (cf. Pfeffer 1997).

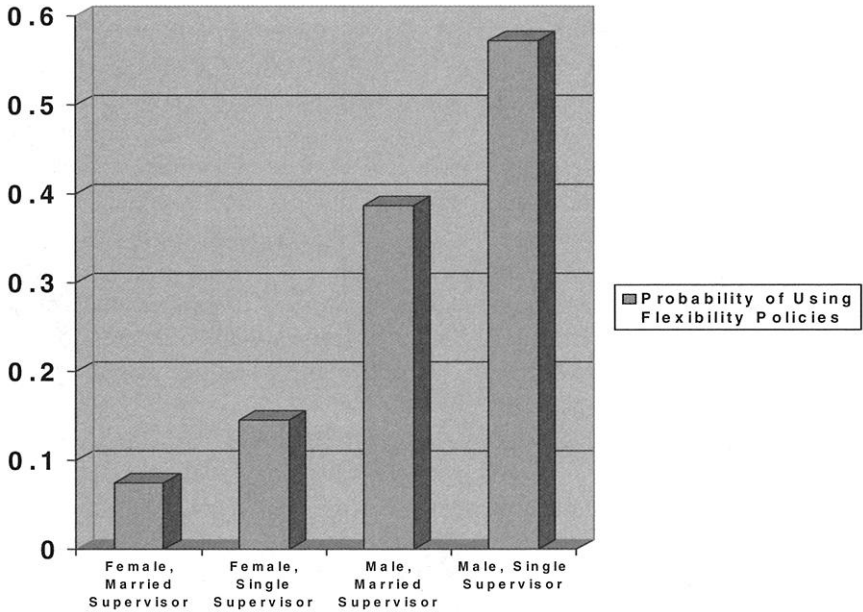
As in the case of family-care policies, having coworkers and supervisors with family responsibilities decreases, rather than increases, flexibility policy use. Flexibility policy use is significantly lower in work groups containing higher percentages of married people and managed by married supervisors. These results are directly contrary to hypotheses 2a and 2b.

We show the combined effects of supervisor gender and supervisor marital status on the probability of using flexibility policies in Figure 3.¹⁷ Employees with female, married supervisors are the least likely to use flexibility policies, while those with male, unmarried supervisors are the most likely to use them. Having a male, unmarried supervisor as compared to a female, married supervisor increases the probability of using flexibility policies by 50 percentage points.

The log-odds of using flexibility policies are also influenced by two other work group-level factors (Table 3, column 2). Employees working in a staff division providing internal services to the company are more likely to use flexibility policies than those in line divisions serving external customers. This effect may capture unmeasured differences in job characteristics or work group culture. In addition, the log-odds of using flexibility policies are higher in work groups containing employees whose average ages are lower.

There is a substantial reduction in the variance component from the baseline to the full model. Inclusion of work group characteristics reduces the variance in the intercept by 82%, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis that no residual variance remains to be explained ($\chi^2 = 56.363$, $df = 65$, $p > .500$). Clearly, work group characteristics play an important and independent role in shaping respondents' log-odds of using flexibility policies.

FIGURE 3: Probability of Using Flexibility Policies As a Function of Supervisor Gender and Supervisor Marital Status



Note: All variables other than supervisor gender and supervisor marital status are calculated at their mean.

Discussion

Managers and professionals in our sample work long, stressful hours. Most are interested in work-family policies, and a minority has used at least one official policy. Our findings caution against treating different policy types as if they were similar or interchangeable. Even in our fairly homogeneous sample of managers and professionals in one firm, family-care and flexibility policies were mostly used by different people with different individual and work group features.

The use of family-care policies is largely driven by family need and only modestly affected by work group characteristics. For example, if an employee's child is too ill to go to day care, the employee is likely to take a sick day to care for this child regardless of the characteristics of the supervisor or work group. This is particularly true for employees likely to have primary responsibility for family care — women, single parents, workers who care for someone who is ill, elderly, or disabled, and workers without a full-time homemaking spouse.

In contrast, individual-level characteristics have minimal impact on whether managers and professionals at International Finance take advantage of flexibility policies. Contrary to our hypotheses, none of our measures of family need were associated with flexibility policy use.

At the most general level, we expected that work group-level factors would influence respondents' policy use, independent of individual-level factors. This expectation was supported modestly for family-care policies and powerfully for flexibility policies. What accounts for this difference in the relative impact of individual- versus work group-level characteristics? One possibility is that use of flexibility policies may require more schedule adjustments and cooperation from other work group members than use of family-care policies. Missing work occasionally to care for a sick child or even taking parental leave may impact others less than switching to a more flexible work schedule. Work group characteristics thus may have a greater effect on employees' policy use when use depends upon coworkers' cooperation.

A second explanation for this difference is that the conditions under which employees may use family-care policies are less ambiguous than those surrounding flexibility policy use. This implies that the greater the degree of consensus at the organizational or societal level over who may use these policies and for what purposes, the less the impact of local, work group characteristics. While work-family policies *in general* may be ambiguous and contested, family-care policies may be less so than those relating to flexibility. Family-care policies are to be used specifically to care for a dependent or relative. In addition, these policies and their uses have been shaped by federal legislation, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act, as well as by the involvement of the courts and legal system (Guthrie & Roth 1999b; Kelly 1999). Flexibility policies, on the other hand, have not been the target of national legislation, and their purposes are less clearly defined. Though they are often packaged as part of a work-family initiative, flexibility policies may meet a variety of other organizational and individual needs, including helping workers handle long workdays or manage commutes (Gottlieb, Kelloway & Barham 1998). Thus, the particular ways that flexibility policies come to be understood and used should be highly sensitive to work group-level characteristics and dynamics, as our results indicate.

How do work group characteristics shape policy use? Our findings offer some support for our hypotheses stressing the social resource of power and protection.

More powerful supervisors and coworkers may provide social resources for knowing how to successfully take advantage of work-family policies or inoculate workers against some of the negative effects that policy use may have on their careers.¹⁸

As noted earlier, there are many possible reasons why male supervisors and coworkers could have, in general, amassed more workplace power than female supervisors and coworkers. Being unmarried may also increase one's power in the organization. For example, perhaps professional and managerial employees with fewer family responsibilities can focus more single-mindedly on their careers, spend more energy cultivating critical networks, and thus ascend higher or more quickly through the organizational ranks. Moreover, simply having family obligations may signal that one is less committed to the firm than employees without family obligations and thus slow individual advancement (Blair-Loy 2001). In support of this argument, recall our finding that almost a quarter of respondents believed that starting a family would have a negative effect on their chance of advancement in the company. Thirteen percent felt the same way about being a member of a dual-career household.

Our qualitative interviews lend support to our findings on the importance of supervisor and work group power in enabling the use of risky work-family policies. One of the line managers who had conducted an internal survey on employees' work-family balance described the company as having a "tough, macho culture" that encouraged people to brag about their long hours. The other line manager echoed that "the culture here is to dedicate your life and soul to the bank. That's how people at the top got there." She added that there "are perceptions that using these policies is costly to them, to their success at the bank, to moving up. . . . If you ask for time off or flexible hours, you're considered a wimp, and you won't make your way to the top." She argued further that in order for individuals to take the countercultural step of using work-family policies, one needed a supervisor strong enough "to buffer that strong culture, [strong enough] to protect workers."

Another informant explained that more powerful supervisors and coworkers (or those believed to be more powerful) may provide "air cover" for employees who use work-family policies, thereby protecting them from any negative career consequences. Hence, professional and managerial employees may find in work groups dominated by senior, male, and unmarried colleagues and in male and unmarried supervisors the resources that buffer them from the real or perceived threats that using work-family policies pose to their career advancement.

This argument is broadly consistent with Glass and Camarigg's (1992) findings that jobs typically held by women have less authority and are thus less compatible with the demands of parenthood than those typically held by men. These researchers found that the jobs *most* compatible with combining work and family life are those *least* likely to be filled by people who need this compatibility. Similarly, we show that employees' opportunities to take advantage of work-family policies are greatest

when they have supervisors and coworkers with fewer family responsibilities. Workers who attain the kind of jobs where they are protected by powerful supervisors and coworkers are better able to take advantage of work-family policies than other workers. Ironically, having family responsibilities could hinder access to these very jobs, as family responsibilities may signal less than complete dedication to one's work. While many employees may desire to use work-family policies, only some will have access to the kinds of positions that are compatible with policy use with minimal career costs. Workers with family responsibilities may find these positions particularly difficult to obtain.

Conclusion

This article has extended institutional research in new ways by focusing on the intraorganizational processes shaping the potential institutionalization of work-family policies. We show that the formal existence of a policy does not guarantee its use and that policy use is shaped by more than individual need. While individual-level factors are important, the social context of work also affects workers' decision to use officially available work-family policies. Social context may be especially salient when policies are controversial and ambiguous, as are work-family policies. The social context effects uncovered here suggest that coworkers' and supervisors' workplace power, rather than their own family caregiving obligations, may be crucial determinants of managerial and professional employees' use of work-family policies.

More research is needed to fully assess the roles that coworker and supervisor power and resources play in shaping employees' use of work-family policies. More attention to the mechanisms through which social context shapes individual behavior is also necessary. We hope that our article will be useful for researchers studying the impact of social context on other organizational issues. In particular, future research should explore whether our findings also characterize lower-status workers and whether other types of contested policies are also more likely to diffuse among individuals under the patronage of powerful actors. Work-family policies are incompletely institutionalized, and their substantive effects unfold in unintended and surprising ways.

Notes

1. This neglect of work group context is related to the broader discipline's movement away from social context and process (Abbott 1997) and to many work and organization scholars' preoccupation with macrolevel effects and atomistic perspectives borrowed from economics (Simpson 1989). This neglect may also reflect difficulties researchers face in gaining access to organizational members (Jackall 1988).

2. The argument that people use information from their social environment to form attitudes and behavior expectations is also supported by research on social information processing and social networks and by studies of organizational climate (Rentsch 1990; Rice & Aydin 1991; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly 1998; Salancik & Pfeffer 1978; Schneider 1990).
3. The U.S. sample analyzed here is a part of a larger international sample. The surveys were confidential, and they were anonymous in the sense that we knew what work group a response came from but not what individual.
4. For the third division, the survey was sent to U.S.-based professional and managerial employees in three major geographical centers.
5. It is extremely challenging for researchers to penetrate organizations (cf. Jackall 1988). Nevertheless, our response rate is comparable to the 52.9% response rate for the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce, a telephone survey of individuals using random-digit-dialing methods (see also Bond, Galinsky & Swanberg 1998).
6. We could not detect any pattern to the small amount of data missing from the personnel database.
7. These models were very poor predictors of work group-level nonresponse, explaining only 5% of the variance in nonresponse. Log work group size was the only significant predictor of nonresponse; larger work groups had higher levels of nonresponse. As Berk (1983) notes, low explained variance, coupled with a nonsignificant effect of the selection variable in the substantive equation, suggests that nonresponse is random.
8. Because many of our work groups are relatively small (e.g., fewer than 10 employees), we use a random intercept model. In this type of model, the intercept is allowed to vary randomly across groups, but the slopes are fixed. Models containing large numbers of random effects are impossible to estimate when there are few observations per group (see Bryk & Raudenbush 1992). We report results from "population-average" models with robust standard error estimates (Bryk, Raudenbush & Congdon 1996).
9. These policies are also available to nonexempt workers. We are currently conducting research on nonexempt employees.
10. Factor loadings for the three family-care policies range from .55 to .66; factor loadings for the three flexibility policies range from .48 to .81.
11. The Pearson correlation between respondents who used at least one family-care policy and at least one flexibility policy is only .145. The Pearson correlation between those who used at least one family-care policy and at least one policy to cut hours is .184. And the correlation between respondents who used one or more flexibility policies and one or more policies to cut hours is .145.
12. Respondents reported that they were currently using or had used the following family-care policies: referral services or materials (13%), dependent sick time (13%), and dependent leave (1.5%). They reported that they were currently using or had used the following flexibility policies: flextime (23%), flexplace (12%), and compressed workweek (.6%). Parents of young or school-age children (41% of the total sample) were about

twice as likely to use each of the family-care policies than was the sample as a whole but were not more likely to use the flexibility policies than the overall sample. A limitation to our dependent variables is that, for employees who have used a work-family policy, we do not know exactly when this use occurred. Our models assume that employees' current individual and work group characteristics were the same when they actually used the policies.

13. We estimated models containing several different control variables. In addition to the control variables described in the text, we estimated models that controlled for age, log job tenure, and log organizational tenure at the individual level and for supervisor age at the work group level.

14. Our income categories were (1) under \$40,000; (2) \$40,000-59,999; (3) \$60,000-79,999; (4) \$80,000-99,999; (5) \$100,000-129,999; (6) \$130,000-159,999; (7) \$160,000-189,999; (8) \$190,000-229,999; (9) \$230,000-259,999; and (10) over \$260,000.

15. The three items were "I have a lot of control over how I balance my work and personal life"; "It's easy for me to arrange my work schedule when I need time off for work or personal obligations"; and "All things considered, I have a lot of control over how I do my work" ($\alpha = .76$).

16. When individual-level predictors are centered, as in our models, the intercept can be used to calculate the average likelihood of using a particular set of policies across the entire sample, using the equation $\hat{\mu}_{ij} = \frac{1}{1 + \exp\{-\gamma_{00}\}}$. We performed these calculations for both dependent variables and found that the average likelihood of using either family-care or flexibility policies is modest. The average probability of using flexibility policies is .20, while the average probability of using family-care policies is .14; the typical respondent has a 1 in 5 chance of utilizing flexibility policies and only a 1 in 7 chance of taking advantage of programs relating to family care.

17. In this figure, all variables other than supervisor gender and supervisor marital status are calculated at their mean. Since 60% of the sample is male, the modal respondent is male.

18. Are supervisors in work groups with high levels of policy use perceived as more supportive of work-life issues than other supervisors? In supplemental analyses (not reported), we found that net of individual and work group characteristics, perceived supervisor supportiveness had no effect on respondents' use of family-care policies. In the case of flexibility policy use, the effect of perceived supervisor supportiveness was positive and significant when individual characteristics alone were included in the model, but this effect was virtually eliminated ($p = .11$) with the inclusion of supervisor characteristics. This latter finding suggests that perceived supervisor supportiveness may mediate the relations between supervisors' demographic characteristics and respondents' use of flexibility policies. In our ongoing work, we are further examining the relations between supervisor power, perceived supervisor supportiveness, and respondents' ability to use work-life policies.

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