Kathleen Christensen, Ph.D. is the Program Director for the Workplace, Workforce and Working Families Program at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Dr. Christensen has articulated strategies designed to have an impact on our understandings of work and family issues and to promote innovative approaches to research. Over the past six years, Dr. Christensen has continued to refine these strategies so that they continue to challenge research, practice, teaching, and policy.

In each issue of the Work-Family Research On-line Newsletter, Dr. Christensen shares her insights about research trends and emergent work and family challenges. In addition, her column discusses the cutting-edge strategies developed by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to enhance well-being of today’s working families.

There exists in work-family research – as in all research – a tension between the micro and macro contexts from which we gather and analyze our information. By concentrating our studies at the individual level, are we overlooking the interplay between family and broader society? When expanding our research internationally, are we incorporating into our understanding of work-family issues the diversity of cultural dimensions of a nation? What implications does increasing globalization have on work-family issues? How is globalization impacting the work-family experiences of people around the world? How do various cultural dimensions of a nation affect work-family issues? Should policy be seen as the “answer” to work-family dilemmas?
standing the differences in culture, public policy, economics and national history? Might we lose sight of the forest by focusing too narrowly on the trees?

I do not believe that a single researcher can be expert in all areas, including theory, methodology, as well as public policy, history and culture of a country, yet these macro areas are salient for interpreting findings. Therefore, cross-national work often argues for team-based research, whereby diverse interpretive strengths can be brought to the table by the different members of the team. One example of such team-based research funded by Sloan is a comparative study of working families in the US, Sweden and Italy that was conceived by Elinor Ochs of the Sloan UCLA Center on Ethnography of Everyday Life, but that has teams at the University of Rome and Linkoping University doing the research in their respective countries. These three teams are able to interpret their own findings within their countries’ cultural, economic and historic contexts and to examine similarities and differences across countries. We include an update on this project in the pages to follow.

Such team-based, cross-national research provides us with a perspective that informs our understanding of the structural mismatch that is fundamental to the work-family dilemma in the U.S and other countries. In most industrialized nations, the state has played an important role in aligning some of the mismatches, such as state-sponsored health care, which insures that contingent workers are not left without a safety net, or the range of part-time positions that the Scandinavian government has provided for working mothers. Although not a perfect solution in that the private sector has not altered the structure of work, it is a means of rethinking work to meet the needs of a significant percentage of workers. The experiences of other countries provide insights into possible solutions elsewhere, although rarely can their experiences be duplicated in an exact fashion.

One of my earliest trips after I joined the Sloan Foundation provides another example of one nation’s attempt to narrow the gap between what families need and what the workplace offers. I traveled to Australia where Grahame Russell and Rohan Squirchuck were helpful in arranging a series of meetings for me with Australian business leaders and were just as insightful as to what the country was doing regarding work and family. I realized that although Australia entered this arena later than the US did, it seemed to have moved more quickly, in part because there was less ambivalence there than in the United States about framing the dilemmas as women’s issues and about tying work and family to affirmative action. Moreover, many of the Australian corporate leaders on work and family
were coming out of line, not staff positions.

The insights from Australia led to our research focus on the design and operations of work, with less emphasis on policies around work and family. This can be seen in a number of work-related grants that the Sloan Foundation has made. Shelley MacDermid and Bob Perucci of Purdue, for instance, have a grant, co-sponsored by labor and management, at a packaging plant in Indiana that is intended to rethink the current rigid 12-hour shift structure. As another example, Lotte Bailyn and Tom Kochan, co-directors, of the MIT Workplace Center, have engaged several Boston area hospitals and health care facilities in work redesign projects, including two focused on rethinking the work schedules of nurses and medical residents, to provide more flexibility.

All of these efforts are directed to changing the structure of work in order to provide more control and choice over work conditions and ultimately to allow for more flexibility.

In the end, our cross-national research will be best utilized by governments and multinational employers when there is a recognized demand for it. If employers or governments decide a priori that they need to understand work-family issues, then the likelihood of the research having an impact is higher than if the research is presented to them after the fact. This argues for partnerships early in the process. At the Sloan Foundation, we do not see employers as sites for research, but as partners in research. We seek to partner with them on projects, because if they have a vested interest in a project and its outcomes, they will be more likely to care about the results.
Moving Forward: Researchers Look Back at Work-Life Movement to Chart a Path into the Future

Suzan Lewis, Ph.D. is Professor of Organisational and Work-Life Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University, Visiting Professor at the School of Management, UMIST and a director of the virtual Work-Life Research Centre (W-LRC) in the UK. She has been researching and writing about work and family issues for many years, with a particular focus on workplace culture, workplace flexibility and organisational change and has directed a range of national and international work-life research projects. She is the author of European Perspectives on Work and Family Issues in the Boston College Work-Family Policy Paper Series and author or co-author of numerous other publications including The Work-Family Challenge: Rethinking Employment (Sage, 1996) and Young European, Work and Family (Sage, 2002). She is founding editor of the international journal Community, Work and Family. She also undertakes consultancy and training on work-life issues, which has included, for example, the development of a UK government sponsored Work-Life Manual.

Rhona Rapoport, Ph.D. is director of the Institute of Family and Environmental Research, a nonprofit educational trust located in London. She received her doctorate in sociology at the London School of Economics and subsequently completed training as a psychoanalyst at the London Institute of Psychoanalysis. For twenty years, she has been a consultant to the Ford Foundation working on affirmative action programs in the United States and in developing countries and on work and family issues. In 1994-95 she was a scholar in residence at the Ford Foundation, and in recent years she has been a Distinguished Fellow and adviser at the Center for Gender in Organizations at the Simmons Graduate School of Management in Boston. She has collaborated with action research projects in the United States and England, as well as on the development of a training program on organizational change and work-family issues for advancing diverse groups in the new South Africa. She has written numerous publications, many with her late husband, Robert, including such pioneering work-family literature as “Work and family in contemporary society” (American Sociological Review 30); Dual Career Families (1971, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books). In 2002, she published Beyond Work-Family Balance: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance (Jossey-Bass; co-authored with, L. Bailyn, J.K. Fletcher & B. Pruitt.)

Richenda Gambles is currently working as a research associate with Rhona Rapoport and Suzan Lewis on the work-personal life integration project. Richenda is also editor of Towards Equality, the magazine of the Fawcett Society – the UK’s campaign for equality between women and men. She completed an MSc in Gender and Social Policy at the London School of Economics last year and prior to this she worked as a journalist, with articles published in a number of national UK newspapers and magazines. She has also worked for the Daily Mirror and the Daily Graphic, Ghana’s best selling national newspaper.

Editor’s Note: In today’s global economy it is becoming increasingly necessary to look at work-family issues on an international level. The ongoing, trans-national project, “Looking Backwards to Go Forward” (funded by the Ford Foundation and led by Rhona Rapoport) understands this need and aims to capture the learning that has occurred in different countries in order to find optimal ways of linking paid work with the rest of life both for individual men and women, for families and for communities.

The current article discusses one product of this international project, a paper entitled, “Reflections on the integration of paid work and the rest of life,” by Suzan Lewis, Rhona Rapoport, and Richenda Gambles. While emphasizing the need to look globally at work-family issues, this paper examines why work-personal life integration continues to be such an important concern and reflects on the implications for working towards more fundamental changes.


Paid work increasingly consumes people’s time across many different societies today. But the complex tasks of how to help people better integrate their paid employment with their personal lives have not yet been resolved. In fact, if anything, integrating these aspects of life has become more difficult. Complicating matters is a 24-hour global economy that requires unconventional work hours, a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, outdated assumptions about work and personal behaviors, as well as the widely held belief that work-personal life integration is a side issue that affects only certain individuals.

A multi-year, international project has identified the “sticking points” to work-personal life integration in an effort to leverage these seemingly intractable problems toward change. “Looking Backwards to Go Forward: The Integration of Paid Work and Personal Life,” is a three-year study supported by the Ford Foundation, which looks at the way men, women, families and communities have linked paid work with the rest of life in the UK, the US, Norway, the Netherlands, India, Japan and possibly South Africa.

The principal researchers are Dr. Rhona Rapoport of London’s Institute of Family & Environmental Research; Professor Suzan Lewis, Manchester Metropolitan University; Richenda Gambles, Institute of Family and Environmental Research, London; and Dr. Bettye Pruitt of Pruitt and Company Inc., in New Hampshire. In their interim report, Reflections on the Integration of Paid Work and the Rest of Life, Rapoport, Lewis and Gambles broaden the issue’s frame by using the term ‘work-personal life integration,’ rather than the more common ‘work-life balance,’ a term they feel ignores the distinction between paid and unpaid work, suggests unpaid care work is just a part of the non-work part of life and ignores, and implies the skills are not transferable between the two. Using language that makes clear the interrelation between paid work and the rest of life is a first step toward bringing the conversation into a broader context, they say.

“Outdated assumptions about the separation of paid work from

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the rest of life persist. But paid work is not antithetical to other time demands and responsibilities. In reality, the many different parts of people’s lives feed into and enhance each other. Yet the skills, abilities and perspectives developed within domestic and care work, and/or other interactions with family and friends remain undervalued and largely unrecognized in the workplace. This fuels inequities between people who are not able to operate in workplace environments that continue to assume employees have wives at home. And as working hours increase across many different societies, issues of burn-out or relationship breakdowns mean these assumptions have become increasingly unsatisfying for many women and men and unsustainable for societies. Work-personal life integration has become a central issue in today’s global economy”.

The study’s aims are to:

• Engage people who are familiar with and committed to the issues of work-personal life integration in a process of reflecting on past experience and considering implications for the future.
• Understand what the problems are in a range of developing countries, how the issues differ from those in more “developed” countries, and what has been going on informally to deal with them.
• Achieve the clarity needed to move beyond the current situation by capturing, synthesizing, and disseminating insightful and creative thinking in the field of work-personal life integration.

Levers of Change

In the Reflections report, the authors note that people are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their inability to integrate their paid work with their personal lives. Despite the changing composition in the workforce and new technologies that allow work to happen outside the office, most workplaces hold fast to the belief that employees who spend long hours in the office are the most committed and competent. Men and women who feel pressure to prove themselves valuable employees, especially given the uncertainties of the economy, are spending more time at work, yet end up resenting their loss of personal time. As a result of time spent at work, intimate and close friendships break down. Women, who manage the bulk of domestic responsibilities, including raising children or caring for elderly relatives, are often forced to sacrifice their career growth because companies don’t offer attractive alternatives to working long hours in the office. In this culture, paid work is valued above all else. The implications for society, communities, individuals and workplaces cannot be ignored.

“With paid work being valued above all else, unpaid care work by implication is increasingly devalued. But the emerging global crises of care are particularly challenging because while the demand for care is rising due to demographic factors, the supply of care is falling due to people’s financial needs and/or desires and the growing sense of identity and esteem people increasingly derive from paid work. The prioritization of paid work and working practices that assume personal needs can not be equitably incorporated into ways in which work gets done are also being exported to ‘developing’ countries where the care needs are often even higher. And this has critical global social consequences”.

In past years, these issues have prompted legislative initiatives and workplace policies, at least in the ‘developed’ world, which have aimed at helping people manage their work and family responsibilities. But these have not addressed the real challenge, which is to help people achieve an equitable, satisfactory, and sustainable integration of paid work and personal life. In fact, these policies absolve the business of doing the real work of looking inward at its own outdated assumptions and practices that don’t recognize the changing needs of its workforce.

The authors of Reflections say that turning many current sticking points into levers of change requires creative thinking and a willingness to bring work-life integration into discussions about the global economy. Certain questions need to be asked at all levels of society: the family; within organizations that want to improve employee recruitment and retention; in communities that want to increase civic participation; and in entire societies that feel the backlash of an overworked, stressed-out populace.

Across the societies the study is looking at, the researchers found what they call “generic” levers of change:

• The large influx of women into paid workforce.
• Concerns of equality, equity and diversity.
• The evolution of recruitment and retention as organizations recognize the need to employ more people, overwhelmingly women with child or elder-care concerns.
• The rise of technology, enabling more people to work at home. Technology has also fueled 24-hour globalization and the need for atypical working hours, and the need to create more flexible working arrangements.
• Changes in the desires of men, who by working harder and longer, realize they are missing out.
• Increase in certain types of sickliness and diseases, leading to increased absences.

The Sticking Points

The major impediment to change is that nobody has asked the fundamental questions, according to the authors. Instead,
quick fixes and short-term solutions have been proposed, diverting attention away from the conversations that can lead to systemic, sustainable change. Preventing these conversations is a culture of “busyness,” that demands instant solutions and leaves little time to reflect on the broader issues that keeps the status quo intact. Issues around identity and diversity have been largely ignored, as well. Women have been forced to adjust to change as they have entered the workforce, but little attention has been paid to men, and their reciprocal roles at home and at work. Also, issues of class have been ignored, with most of the work-life research centering on circumstances particular to professionals and white-collar workers. There has also been little attention paid to the ways the changing relationship to work has affected different areas of our lives, such as family, community and other institutions. Finally, the circumstances present in other societies have been overlooked, despite the global nature of our economy.

The fundamental questions that could help change these sticking points into levers for change include:

- Why should societies get beyond the rhetoric of changing men-women relationships? Outdated gender assumptions allow associated inequities to persist. The needs and desires of men and women must be thoroughly aired, along with how these needs and desires affect one another.

- Why do societies need to rethink working structures, cultures and practices? Policies alone leave basic organizational structures unchanged and focus on the individual, rather than systemic issues. Real change won’t happen unless long-held beliefs and systems are probed.

- Is economic growth all that matters beyond an ‘optimal’ level? Economic growth has become a dominant philosophy and is perceived as enhancing people’s lives. However, the time economic growth takes away from other areas of life can negatively affect emotional well-being.

- How can diverse diversities be valued and respected? Little attention has been paid to identity issues in the workplace, including gender, age, social class, birthplace, nationality and ethnicity, faith, sexuality and disability. Yet individual circumstances affect how successfully people integrate paid work with their personal lives.

- How do these issues link with transnational solidarity in a globalized world? The global nature of the economy raises issues around work hours, pay, and the impact of western influences on non-western societies. Conversation about work-personal life integration should take place within the broader global context.

Causing Change
As social pressures mount, changes will happen to the way we integrate work and personal life. However, a proactive approach is required if these changes are to be equitable and sustainable.

The researchers recommend action research as a method toward influencing change. A team of researchers, including Rapoport, went into organizations to explore how efficiency or equity issues were fueled by outdated working practices that failed to take into account the changing needs of business and people. The process of thinking collaboratively about these issues with people in the workplace could lead to positive and effective change, they found. Because assumptions holding back change occur at all levels of society, similar action research should take place with individuals, families, communities and in wider societal settings.

The authors argue that “change cannot be resolved individually. Instead, it has to be systemic. Workplace teams or units need to come together and work collaboratively to find new ways in which work can get done that enables tasks to be done more productively and for personal life needs to be sufficiently accommodated. Research in workplaces has shown this can lead to positive results for both efficiency and equity. This approach is vital if societies are to move forwards with equitable, sustainable and satisfying integrations of paid work and personal lives”.

They say four basic principles should guide all attempts to influence change:

1. Tackle deep identity issues. Rather than focus solely on legislative or policy change, people must be willing to examine assumptions that may hold back progress.

2. Encourage men and women to address gender issues. Many of the assumptions that prevent change from happening are about gender roles and expectations. To get beyond these, both men and women need to examine whether gender roles are outdated.

3. Recognize multiple agendas and ways of integrating. Consider both business and social imperatives while discussing work-personal life integration. Efficiency and equity must be addressed if change is to be sustainable.

4. Make time and space for multiple solutions. Work-personal life integration is a complex process. Both time and space to work collaboratively are needed if real solutions are to emerge.

Long-held assumptions and expectations about the way we live and work must be challenged if real progress is to be made toward integrating paid work and personal time. As work increasingly interferes with other aspects of life, relationships, communities and society suffer. By “looking backward, to look forward,” we can achieve the clarity needed to move beyond the current situation towards lasting change.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RHONA RAPPOPORT’S “LOOKING BACKWARDS TO GO FORWARD” PROJECT PLEASE VISIT THE SLOAN NETWORK’S RESEARCH PROFILES:
HTTP://WWW.BC.EDU/BC_ORC/AVP/WFNETWORK/PROFILES/RAPAPORT.HTML
OR
VISIT THE WORK-LIFE RESEARCH CENTRE’S WEBSITE AT:
HTTP://WWW.WORKLIFERESEARCH.ORG/R_08.ASP
Striving for Flexibility, Diversity, and Balance: A Glance at Work-Life Issues in Norway

An Interview with Ragnhild Sohlberg, Ph.D.

Ragnhild Sohlberg, Ph.D. is Vice President, Corporate Center, Norsk Hydro ASA in Oslo, Norway (Norway's largest industrial, multinational company), as well as an Adjunct Professor at the Norwegian School of Management. Though originally from Norway, Dr. Sohlberg obtained most of her education in the United States. She got her B.A. and M.A. in Economics at The University of Wisconsin and her M.Phil. and Ph.D. at The Rand Graduate School of Policy Sciences in California, where she studied NATO manpower issues and wrote her dissertation on NATO ground forces. In the late 70s and early 80s, Dr. Sohlberg was a Professor at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA where she did research for the Pentagon. Before returning to Europe in 1982, she worked for a year and a half in Sweden at the National Defense Research Institute. She then came to Norway to work in industry at A/S Norsk Elektrisk & Brown Boveri and later, at The Royal Norwegian Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NTNF). In 1985, she joined Norsk Hydro, where she became the 1st woman to reach the level of Vice President in the company's history. Since 1988, she has had 60 different appointments in Norway and abroad, including serving on the Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee, 1990-1994.

Editor's Note: Dr. Sohlberg has been described as "worldly and reflective"; her perspective "shaped by her U.S. education, by motherhood and grand-motherhood, and by impressive careers in both academia and business."1

As the first women to have reached the level of Vice President at a major Norwegian company, she has been quite influential in the promotion of flexibility, diversity, and balance in workplaces in both Norway and the European Union. We had the pleasure of talking with Dr. Sohlberg about some of the work-family issues that Norwegians are currently facing.

Dr. Sohlberg views the world in terms of balance and in terms of the optimum allocation over time of scarce, valuable resources. Flexibility, diversity, and balance, she says, all serve a business purpose. Ultimately, they are strategies to make workplaces more effective.

Norwegian workers enjoy progressive work/life benefits, but because the culture rewards long working hours and has developed a lifestyle of hectic “free” time with multiple activities for all family members, many parents find it difficult to achieve sustainable balance in their lives.

One significant barrier to change is the drive among Norwegians to maintain their material living standard that has resulted from the lucrative offshore oil and gas sector. In many families, both fathers and mothers are in the workforce, bringing two incomes into the household. Their jobs tend to consume much of their personal time as companies striving to compete in a 24-hour global economy require their employees to put in long hours, says Dr. Ragnhild Sohlberg.

“Families have gotten used to the high material living standard which is difficult to give up,” Sohlberg says. “Along with other industrialized nations, we are thing-rich and time-poor.”

Women began entering the paid workforce in large numbers during the 1970s, when the women’s rights movement led to a higher proportion of women in colleges and universities and in all sectors of employment, in particular in government and Parliament. As a group, Norwegian women are now on the average slightly higher educated than men, with 60 percent of university students being female. However, there has been a cost to these professional and educational gains, Sohlberg says, noting that women still tend to be “triple-workers – husband, children, paid work.” As the population ages, an increasing proportion may have to spend time taking care of elderly relatives as well.

As a result of the time pressure, a greater number of women are choosing to work part time. However, men tend to work longer hours.

Sohlberg, who for more than 20 years has followed the changing age distribution in Norway, Europe and the US, says she is concerned that young people who see their parents laboring long hours will choose other, less demanding careers. When the baby-boomers retire, there won’t be enough workers in their fields to replace them. Young people are showing signs that they crave greater work/life balance in their lives. The majority say they prefer time off from the job instead of paid overtime. When looking for a job, many query potential employers about their family-friendly policies, and 80 percent of new fathers take at least the four weeks of paternity leaves.

“Another barrier lies with companies that interpret what is needed to compete in a 24-hour globalized world, is to ‘exploit’ their employees at the expense of families and personal time,” says Sohlberg. “This is clearly an unsustainable practice and not profitable in the longer run.”

One solution to the time bind is for companies to institute flex-time in what Sohlberg calls a “win-win” framework, one that will result in a more effective workplace and a better work/personal life balance for all.

As a whole, Norway is far ahead of other countries in terms of flexible work time and family welfare benefits. Unlike in some European countries where women are reluctant to take time away from their careers to bear children, Norwegian women have up to one year paid maternity leave and can extend this on an unpaid basis and thereafter continue their career, normally without repercussions. Also, when a child is sick in Norway, a parent can stay home. Many people have home offices, allowing them to fit work in between family time.

“A lot of people have complete home offices in addition to the ‘office-office’, which I also do. It is also part of the reason why I don’t get so tired because I can schedule my day more according to the tasks at hand and how inspired I feel,” Sohlberg says. “The

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young people can schedule it according to their family. I spoke to some men who are now fathers and they go to work in the morning when their kids go to school and then they come home when the children come home. They are with their family for awhile and then continue working at home, from the home office—something many women certainly also do. This type of flexibility is healthy for the person and it is also very good for the children. Then you can have a win-win situation. However, this requires self-discipline to avoid working too much!"

Not every worker has the same degree of job flexibility because it is up to individual units within companies to set their own policies. Sohlberg points out that heavy morning traffic suggests that too many people still work traditional hours at their workplace.

Toward reducing working hours, she recommends organizations identify the “time thieves,” including too many and unproductive meetings, ineffective use or application of technology and the associated de-professionalization of work, ineffective organization of work, and unproductive time in traffic jams to and from work.

Looking ahead, companies should do what they can to ease the pace of work, otherwise they risk losing good workers who opt to retire before the official age of 67. There is talk of raising the retirement age to stave off an expected labor shortage, but Sohlberg says that won’t help the situation if those senior employees are unmotivated and unproductive. Instead, industry, companies in general and the public sector should investigate restructuring career patterns, or ladders, to include time-limited leadership assignments combined with time for reflection and for updating of skills and knowledge. This will help ensure that people remain enthusiastic about their jobs and effective throughout their working lives.

Sohlberg, 66, says she herself hopefully is an example of the importance of allowing ample time for each phase of life, including family, education and career. She stayed home in her 20s, was a student and single mother of two in her 30s, and began her career while in her 40s.

“I have been ‘out there’ for maybe 25 years. So, why shouldn’t I still be going strong?” she says.  


The Dutch Situation: Work-Family Issues in The Netherlands
An Interview with Bram Peper, Ph.D. and Laura den Dulk, Ph.D.

Dr. Bram Peper is a researcher at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Department of the Social Sciences. He studied sociology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) and the University of Maryland at College Park (USA). In 1998, Dr. Peper completed his Ph.D-thesis, entitled, Sociale Problemen en de Moderne Samenleving. Een Cultuursociologische Beschouwing [Social Problems and Modern Society. A Treatise in the Sociology of Culture] at the Erasmus University. He is a member of the board (secretary) of the Dutch professional association of the Social Sciences (NVMC) and Editor of the Tijdschrift voor Herstelrecht [Journal for Restorative Justice].

Dr. Peper’s most recent research [with Laura den Dulk] is on “Changes in Work and Life: The implementation of work/life policies in the European workplace”. He also works together with Dr. Laura den Dulk and Professor Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes in the “TRANSITIONS” project. More information: see below.

Dr. Laura den Dulk got her Ph.D. in sociology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. She studied sociology at the EUR and Manchester Metropolitan University (UK). Her Ph.D. project was a cross-national study in the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom and Sweden on the presence of work-family arrangements in organizations. The research project was partly funded by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO). During her Ph.D. project, Dr. den Dulk co-edited (together with Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes and Joop Schippers) a book on work-family arrangements in Europe. In 2001, she completed her Ph.D. in Social Sciences on work-family arrangements in organizations.

Presently, Dr. den Dulk works as a postdoctoral researcher at Utrecht University (sociology department), on an international research project regarding implementation, utilization of work/life policies and the integration of work and private life. In this project “Changes in Work and Life”, Dr. den Dulk works with Dr. Bram Peper from the Erasmus University, to collect data in nine organizations located in three different countries and with Dr. Judith de Ruijter to conduct a vignette study on managerial decision-making regarding the use of work/life policies. She also participates, together with Professor Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes and Dr. Bram Peper, in an EC research project on “Gender, Parenthood and the Changing European Workplace: young adults negotiating the work-family boundary” (TRANSITIONS coordinated by professor Sue Lewis (MMU, UK)).

Editor’s Note: Since 2000, Dr. Bram Peper has been working in the work/family field. Before this, he wrote his dissertation on theories of social problems (completed in 1998), and he conducted with others a large scale evaluation study on experiments with community mediation in the Netherlands. Dr. den Dulk has been working in the work/family field since
the early nineties. Her dissertation (completed in 2001), was a cross-national study in the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom and Sweden on the presence of work-family arrangements in organizations. Presently, the two are working as postdoctoral researchers on an international research project regarding implementation, utilization of work-life policies and the integration of work and private life. They are collecting data in 9 organizations located in three different countries, the Netherlands, the UK, and Sweden. Dr. Peper and Dr. den Dulk graciously took the time to comment on the Dutch situation in regard to work-family issues.

The number of dual-earner families in the Netherlands is increasing rapidly, with the percentage of mothers in the labor market having doubled to 57 percent between 1990 and 2001. However, debate about whether child care is good for children continues and most people in the country feel strongly that children should spend no more than three days per week in a day care center. To accommodate this, the majority of mothers in the labor force work part time (70 percent). Dutch culture holds a strong norm that parents (mostly mothers) assume full care of their children. Therefore, most dual-earner families in the Netherlands are in fact one-and-a-half earner families with the man working full time and the woman part time, says Dr. Bram Peper and Dr. Laura den Dulk.

While there has been an increase in available child care in the last decade, it is still in short supply and, according to Peper and den Dulk, is expensive. Instead of leading to a large degree of externalization and commercialization of day care, the rise of women in the labor force has led to a shortening of working hours. The Dutch government has improved the position of part-timers by removing the working hours threshold for minimum wage, and by requiring employers to give part-timers the same benefits, bonuses and training as full-time employees. Dutch people have been given the right to either reduce or increase their working hours when it does not interfere with business needs. Additionally, the last decade has seen a tremendous increase in flexible working time, especially in the service and knowledge sectors. Like in other European countries, employers increasingly introduce work-life policies in order to facilitate the integration of paid work and personal life. Most popular are flexible work arrangements such as flexible start and finishing times. Dutch employers are, compared to other countries, also active in the field of childcare. In particular large employers and public sector organizations offer financial support for childcare costs or hire childcare places in day care centers for their employees. This is related to the Dutch system in which a tripartite responsibility (i.e. government, employers and parents) is advocated. Also in the new Basic Act on Childcare (which should come into force in January 2005) employers are again stimulated (but not forced) to contribute to the costs.

Discussions are prevalent in the Netherlands about how to fit managerial and higher staff positions into a four-day work week, or into work weeks of about 30 hours. Government organizations and banks have already introduced a 36-hour work week, making possible a four, nine-hour day scheme or one day off every two weeks. Whether these four-day, full-time jobs will become more common in the future is uncertain because of the current negative economic climate in the Netherlands.

Peper and den Dulk note that an important condition for the part-time-friendly culture in the Netherlands is the lack of economic pressure in many households to earn two full-time incomes. But because it is typically men who hold the full-time jobs while women work part time, the economic and social inequality between the two genders persists. In the Netherlands, the number of women in important and visible positions is very low, both in the public and private sectors. Additionally, women do the majority of unpaid work of caring for children and the household. On average, Dutch women have their first child at age 29. Consequently, working parents with young children are becoming older on average and as a result are more likely to have elderly parents who need care. Because more mothers are in the work force, working parents are experiencing more time pressures and the stress of trying to work while caring for children or elderly parents. The Socio-Economic Council, a Dutch governmental advisory board of employers, union representatives and government officials, is discussing ways to ease the stress, including increasing the number of childcare facilities and shifting the intensity of work to other, less demanding times of employee’s lives.

Peper and den Dulk say it will be a challenge to maintain the provisions and policies of this so-called “life course perspective” of employment given the economy and the fact that the Netherlands is facing major social restructuring, as are other European welfare states.

“It will be very challenging to see if and how the life course perspective in social policy will work out,” Peper and den Dulk wrote. “Will this provide the solutions it seems to promise? If the workload is more spread across the life course, will this create possibilities for women to increase their working hours?” If so, this may lead to greater equality between men and women in pay and positions, enabling more women to be economically independent. Directly related is the increased attention to fatherhood in the Netherlands. The government and other non-profit organizations are encouraging fathers to spend more time with their children and there’s a growing body of literature about fatherhood. However, there has been no significant increase in the last decade in the amount of care fathers give to their children.

“As long as men in practice will not actively participate in caring tasks and/or part time work, the one-and-a-half-earners family model will persist in favor of the dual-earner model,” Peper and den Dulk wrote.

Another work/life challenge in the Netherlands is the risk among women to experience disability. Research shows that women of all ages are at higher risk than men for psychological disability, with women between 25 and 40 being three to four times more likely than men of this age group to be psychologically disabled.
Women have longer work absences due to illness; have more difficulties returning to work after an absence; and find their integration into work more complicated after a period of disability.

Work-Life Debate at a Crossroads: Perspectives in the United Kingdom

An Interview with Lisa Harker, Chair of the UK’s Daycare Trust

Lisa Harker has been Chair of Daycare Trust, the National Childcare Campaign in the UK, since 2001 and currently works as a policy advisor/consultant for number of organisations, including the UK government. Lisa has a first class honours degree in Psychology from Bristol University and an MSc in Social Policy and Planning with distinction from the London School of Economics. Until April 2003 Lisa was Deputy Director at the Institute for Public Policy Research, Britain’s leading think tank. Lisa previously worked for Save the Children, BBC News and Child Poverty Action Group. Her publications include The Family-Friendly Employer: Examples from Europe (with Christine Hogg), Poverty: the Facts (with Carey Oppenheim), An Equal Start: improving the policies and practice of individual companies towards a far bigger challenge: the need to re-think the place of work in society. The focus of the debate is now shifting from a primary preoccupation with improving the policies and practice of individual companies towards a far bigger challenge: the need to re-think the place of work in society.

“We have moved from recognizing the need for work to be more ‘family friendly,’ towards a greater understanding of the predominance of work in our culture and its negative effects,” according to Lisa Harker, chair of Daycare Trust, (www.daycaretrust.org.uk), a campaign promoting the need for universal childcare.

As in other counties, work-life campaigners in the UK have witnessed the persistence of the overwork culture, despite growing awareness of the importance of work-life balance. Many workers in the UK are labouring in an environment that seems to place a higher value on paid employment than on other parts of life. Few UK companies offer support such as subsidized childcare or paid parental leave. But even in companies that have policies and practices in place to support those with dependants, workers feel pressured to work long hours in the office at the expense of personal time. The value that society places on work means that the culture of the workplace remains implicitly hostile to notions that people should lead full and productive lives outside the workplace.

Despite increasing public recognition of the value of work-life balance, work-life issues are still largely perceived to be an individual’s responsibility. Men and women in the UK see work-family issues as something they must resolve themselves. The individualization of work-life problems means that there has been little challenge to the overwork culture. Harker notes: “As a society we continue to place higher value on work and achievements related to paid employment than on our varied roles in our families and local communities. There is weak recognition of the importance of caring for one another and consequently we are required to fit our caring roles around the demands of the workplace rather than seeing them to be of equal value.”

Harker has worked to highlight the different approaches that other countries take to work-life issues in order to inform debates in the UK. She notes that a generation of women in the UK have come to motherhood late, or decided that it is not for them. With fertility rates on the decline in the UK, other parts of life. Few UK companies offer support such as subsidized childcare or paid parental leave. But even in companies that have policies and practices in place to support those with dependants, workers feel pressured to work long hours in the office at the expense of personal time. The value that society places on work means that the culture of the workplace remains implicitly hostile to notions that people should lead full and productive lives outside the workplace.

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This is no easy task and one that requires a global debate, since so much of what is influencing modern society is now traceable across the globe. However, Harker sees this as an opportunity to recast the debate about the relationship between work and

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family so that it is no longer seen only as a pertinent issue for parents, but one that lies at the very heart of any vision of a progressive society.

“Very long working hours are just a part of the challenge we face,” she says. “Work and material consumption are now so dominant in our individual identities of how we measure success in ourselves and in society that the familial and social pursuits that make us happy and healthy and which enrich society are evermore squeezed out. We need to develop a more rounded sense of what the ‘good society’ looks like.”

Daycare Trust
The UK’s National Childcare Campaign

Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality affordable childcare for all children aged 0-14 and raising the voices of children, parents and carers. The Trust advises parents and carers, providers, employers, trade unions and policymakers on childcare issues.

Childcare gives children a good start in life and enables their parents to work, study or train. It is a key part of social and economic policy to create a better Britain. But there is still a big childcare gap in the UK, with access to quality childcare services dependent on families’ income and where they live.

Currently there is only one childcare place for every five children under the age of eight in the UK and British parents pay the highest childcare bills in Europe. Daycare Trust works to ensure that the National Childcare Strategy creates more affordable quality childcare to meet the needs of all children and parents.

A few of the Daycare Trust’s many publications currently available through the website include:

**Men’s Work - Changing the gender mix of the childcare and early years workforce**
Sixth policy paper in the “Facing the Future” series. This paper argues for a national strategy to increase the number of men working in childcare, addressing issues of pay, image, training, recruitment and support to encourage more men into childcare.

**Beyond Caring: The case for reforming the childcare and early years workforce**
Fifth policy paper in the ‘Facing the Future’ series. This paper investigates the workforce required to staff the growing number of integrated services that combine education and care for children.

**Universal Pre-school Childcare Provision: Towards a cost-benefit analysis for the UK (Facing the Future Policy Paper No.7)**
This paper provides an analysis of the costs and benefits of introducing universal childcare to the UK.

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Parents’ Eye project report
This report follows a study of the childcare needs of black and minority ethnic families and calls for a new vision of equality and inclusion in childcare services.

This report is free and available on the Daycare Trust website:

Informal Childcare: Bridging the childcare gap for families
This paper examines the use of informal childcare and how it bridges the gap for many parents who can’t access formal childcare services.

To see more of the Daycare Trust’s publications and/or to order a publication, please visit:

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Work-Life Challenges in Australia: Changes in Demography and Social Values Not Matched by Changes in the Workplace
A Conversation with Anne Bardoel, Ph.D.


Editor’s Note: Demographic changes in Australia have resulted in increasing numbers of women in the workforce. However, a widespread viewpoint in the country is that mothers should stay home to care for their young children. Many workplaces do not offer family friendly benefits, leading to stress among working parents.

Anne Bardoel is involved with several projects aimed at raising awareness of these issues and ultimately improving the work-life balance in Australia. Here Dr. Bardoel shares with the Sloan Research Network Newsletter her insights into the challenges faced by working families in Australia.

Sloan Research Network Newsletter: What do you think are the most important work-family priorities/issues that are currently facing working people in Australia?
Anne Bardoel: There are a number of important work-family priorities and issues that working people in Australia are facing and they are similar to those faced by many in other developed nations. They revolve around the fact that there have been major changes to the demography and social values that have not necessarily been matched by changes in the way workplaces, institutions and government work.

For example, like the United States, Australia has experienced a dramatic increase in the participation of women in the labor market in the last 30 years. Australia also has a high rate of women’s participation, with 65 percent of women in the paid workforce, compared to the OECD average of 61 percent. However, the reality is that many workplaces are built on the traditional family model of the husband as the breadwinner and the wife as the homemaker and child caregiver - a model that applies to fewer and fewer Australian families and households. Although there are companies who are very innovative in the way they support their employees to balance their work and personal lives, “family friendly” workplaces are a rarity.

According to a recent study, Australian employees identify pressures of more unpaid overtime, less job security, and more financial pressures now than they did five years ago. A pressing issue for many Australians is that they are working longer hours than they did a decade ago. The weekly hours of full-time employees increased from an average of 38.2 hours per week in 1982, to 41.3 hours in 2001, and this trend is rising. Australian employees report that not only are they working longer hours, but the work itself is becoming more intense and they are feeling more stressed. The paid labor market sphere is becoming increasingly demanding of employees, often at the expense of peoples’ time to care for their children, elderly parents, friends, and neighbors. Several social commentators have argued that the “greedy labor market” is leading to a decline of local communities. Australia has historically been home-centered, neighborhood-based, and has placed importance on the extended family. However the increasing trend for many paid workers to spend time away from home has led to this form of community being replaced at the workplace. Barbara Pocock, a leading Australian social commentator, calls this the reconfiguration of community “from street to workplace,” which has had a number of effects including the decline in street-based networks and less opportunity for social connection for those who spend time at home.

SRNN: What do you see as some of the challenges and opportunities that Australia faces in regard to the relationship between work and family?
AB: In my opinion, there are three major issues that Australia faces in relation to work and family and they involve coming to terms with the fundamental changes in the workplace.

The first is to provide access for families to affordable childcare. A great deal of childcare is informal and undertaken by family members and neighbors. Access to formal childcare is relatively limited in Australia, particularly for children aged 0-2. Australian mothers no longer automatically withdraw from the labor force to look after children and obviously the availability of quality, affordable childcare is critical in enabling parents to choose paid work. The cost of childcare contributes to the decision by many to not return to work.

The second involves providing paid maternity leave. Australian employees with more than 12 months continuous service are entitled to 52 weeks unpaid leave on a shared basis for the care of a newborn or adopted child. Currently, only one-third of Australian women have access to paid maternity leave, and most of these women will receive less than 12 weeks paid leave. Maternity leave is also more likely to be available to women in professional jobs and not to women in non-professional or female-dominated industries. A national policy would have the potential to broaden the availability to all groups of women. Most advanced countries have compulsory paid maternity leave. Australia and the US are the only two OECD members not providing some form of national maternity leave scheme. Many people are beginning to recognize the transformation of family

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structures and the need develop sensible social policies that reflect the real situation. Recently the issue of paid maternity leave has been the subject of much public debate in the community. The current Liberal Government has chosen not to implement the recommendations of the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner to introduce a national paid maternity leave scheme funded from general taxation revenue where the cost is spread across all taxpayers. There are also calls that any scheme implemented should be a paid parental leave scheme available to both men and women similar to the New Zealand model. The New Zealand plan provides 12 weeks of paid leave to women and men currently eligible for parental leave.

The third issue involves increasing the status, security and conditions of part-time and “casual” work by implementing national and state legislative change, amendments to awards and enterprise initiatives. In particular this should entail ensuring part-time and casual employees are not discriminated against in terms of work conditions and rights compared to full-time employees. This is particularly relevant in an Australian context because most of the increase in women’s participation in the labor market has occurred in the part-time sector. Parents, particularly mothers with dependent children, are more likely to work part time. Currently, almost a third of women with children under 5 years old are in part-time work, while only 16 percent work full time. In the 61 years from 1933 to 1994, the total increase in employment on a full-time basis of Australian women over the age of 15 was just 1.9 percent. Two thirds of part-time workers in Australia are employed as “casuals,” which means they have restricted labor market rights and entitlements. These employees do not receive any paid holiday or sick pay entitlements and are often not eligible for other work-family programs. Women account for 55 percent of casual employees.

**SRNN: What are some of the unique perspectives that working men and women in Australia have about their work-family experiences?**

**AB:** Australia is an individualistic society and therefore work-family conflicts are perceived as the individual’s responsibility to solve. Measured using Hofstede’s Index, Australia has the highest ‘Masculinity Index’ within the Southeast Asia and Pan-Pacific, and women are more likely to be concerned with issues such as the quality of life and childcare than men. According to a recent OECD report, despite the dramatic increase in female employment rates over the last 30 years, a considerable part of the population believe that mothers with young children should work part time or not work at all. Australians have a conservative attitude about what role mothers of young children should have, which is confirmed by a recent survey of Australian attitudes that found 69 percent of Australian women surveyed felt they should stay at home when there children are under school age. This creates a dissonance about what mothers “should do” and what more mothers are actually doing (being involved in paid employment), which leads to much stress and guilt.

**SRNN: What has been the focus of your own work and practice in this area?**

**AB:** I am currently involved in two major projects involving international collaboration and the establishment of research links. The first is as the Australian member of a nine-country international team researching cross-cultural perspectives in work-family conflict. The second major international research collaboration is with Bob Drago and involves a web-based survey assessing the ways academics balance (or do not balance) commitments to work and family. The project will enable universities to benchmark against other universities in Australia and the US.

I am also the president of the Work/Life Association (Victoria) which is the premier Australian non-profit organization dedicated to working with the business community to improve the work-life balance of their employees. The Association actively promotes discussion among business leaders and policy makers about the kinds of changes that are required to sustain high levels of productivity in a changing workforce. Some of our achievements include:

- Preparing a formal submission on Paid Maternity Leave to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia.
- Chairing meetings with OECD representatives to discuss Australia’s approach to family friendly policies.
- Organizing three national conferences on work-life issues.
- Organizing, facilitating and/or presenting at 10 Roundtables on topics relevant to work-life.

However, one of the things I get the most professional sense of enjoyment and satisfaction is teaching an elective unit called Work, Family and Life for postgraduate students. (To view a syllabi for Anne Bardoe’s course “Work, Family, and Life,” please visit the Sloan Network website and go to: Resources for Teaching/Work and Family Syllabi and click on Anne Bardoe, or go to: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/wfnetwork/rtf/syllabi/index.html).

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE WORK/LIFE ASSOCIATION (AUSTRALIA), PLEASE VISIT:**


**FOR A RELEVANT GOVERNMENT WEBSITE, PLEASE VISIT:**


*(Click on Workplace Relations, Click on Work and Family)*

**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS WEBSITE, PLEASE VISIT:**


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**INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT WORK/LIFE ISSUES IN AN AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT?**

**BARBARA POCOCK (2003). THE WORK/LIFE COLLISION.**

**LEICHHARDT, NSW: THE FEDERATION PRESS.**
Work-Family Conflict in India: An Emerging Concept?
An Interview with Tripti Pande Desai, Ph.D.

Tripti Pande Desai, Ph.D. attained a master’s degree in industrial psychology from the University of Delhi, the premier university of India, followed by an M.Phil in the same area wherein she specialized in the area of organizational behavior. Subsequently she also earned her doctorate in psychology from the same university. Dr. Desai’s additional professional qualifications include a bachelor’s degree in education and a diploma in training and development. She has 18 years of work experience in teaching and research, and in the corporate sector where she worked in the managerial cadre for five years in marketing and advertising. Currently she is associate professor and head of the Organizational Behavior Area at the Institute for Integrated Learning in Management (IILM) in New Delhi, which is ranked among the top business schools in India.

Editor's note: Dr. Desai’s area of specialization is organizational stress, with special reference to dual career couples. En route to earning her doctorate, she became interested in the area of work-family conflict. In this area, Dr. Desai has conducted a one-day workshop (as part of the Ford Foundation-USA study headed by Dr. Rhona Rapoport and Dr. Suzan Lewis) wherein a cross section of Indian professionals came together to discuss issues of relevance to work-family conflict in the Indian context. She is currently a part of an international team of researchers across 20 countries involved in a cross-cultural study in the same area. We had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Desai recently about work-family issues in India.

Issues around work-family conflict are just emerging in India, where women are relative newcomers to the urban workforce. Tripti Pande Desai, Ph.D., is working to raise awareness in this area at all levels, including individual, government and corporate. She is also researching the impact of the entry of women in the workforce on men. “The impact on male professionals, in their family and work domain needs to be studied,” says Desai, “till now, men have been largely ignored in the inquiry of work-family conflict.”

“Work-family conflict is actually a very newly recognized conflict in India,” Desai says. “Women actually need family support and they don’t get it.” Ironically, at a period in the 21st century when professional women need extended families for support, the nuclearization of families leaves them without psychological and physical family support. Alienation and isolation have increased considerably which brings in added conflict for a society which was hitherto collectivist and supportive.

It has been only within the last two or three years that people in India have begun to talk about the strain dual-earner families experience. In fact, Desai says, “many women who are experiencing work-family conflict in their own lives fail to recognize this as a problem that can be resolved. A lot of women are still fulfilling multiple roles as caregiver, employee, spouse and homemaker without realizing that they are assuming a greater burden than necessary. “They work on the assumption of ‘no-choice’,” says Desai. Perhaps as a result of the greater strain couples are experiencing, the divorce rate in India has risen, especially in urban areas. The number of divorced couples in the country remains low compared to other developing countries. But Desai says she believes that work-family priorities are creating conflict for dual-earner couples.

There exists little formal research in India’s work-family field, and very few organizations in the country have family-friendly policies, such as flextime, etc. Complicating matters for some families are the work schedules. Many people are employed in the business profit outsourcing sector (Business Process Outsourcing), doing work for western companies. This sector includes voice and non-voice centers, some of which require people to work all night handling customer service calls from the western countries, with their primary advantage being the time differential.

“Basically, we have a lot of young people who have the advantage of knowing the English language. This sector is really growing in India. On the one hand it is very good because there is employment and money coming in, but on the other hand there are a lot of people basically working the night shift. They work at night and sleep during the day,” says Desai. “Honestly as a psychologist I do not think this is good for the biological clock.” It also deters some of our youngsters from studying further and thus not be able to take advantage of funded college education. However BPO is a reality which cannot be ignored and is here to stay for at least another 2 decades. This is a sector which needs to be addressed and researched. ☞

“IT HAS BEEN ONLY WITHIN THE LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS THAT PEOPLE IN INDIA HAVE BEGUN TO TALK ABOUT THE STRAIN DUAL-EARNER FAMILIES EXPERIENCE. IN FACT, MANY WOMEN WHO ARE EXPERIENCING WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT IN THEIR OWN LIVES FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THIS AS A PROBLEM THAT CAN BE RESOLVED.”

-Tripti Desai
A research project capturing a week in the lives of US middle-class dual-earner families has branched out internationally to households in Italy and Sweden.

The Sloan Center on Working Families Center on Everyday Lives of Families (CELF) at the University of California-Los Angeles is documenting through videotape and interviews how parents and children manage to be a family in the face of the pressures of work, school and other obligations. The Università di Roma and Linköping University in Sweden are extending CELF’s research in an international direction by examining the everyday challenges that face working middle-class families in Italy and Sweden.

Elinor Ochs, director of the Center on the Ethnography of Everyday Life at UCLA, conceived of and coordinated the three-culture study with colleagues Clotilde Pontecorvo of University of Roma who directs Italian-CELF and Karin Aronsson who directs Swedish CELF.

The work will allow for some very rich comparative cultural studies of US, Italian and Swedish working families. The international comparison will illuminate commonalities in how families across three cultures handle the complex demands of home and work. It will reveal unique patterns characteristic of each culture. And the contrast of Italian and Swedish patterns continued on page 16
to the US may well shed new light on US patterns. In addition, the study will present much needed documentation of home and work as actually lived in Italy and Sweden, in contrast to idealized scenarios of family life in contemporary European welfare states.

Early analysis, for instance, demonstrates the extent that family life in Sweden has changed during the past decade. Parents are willing to spend much time and family resources taking care of their children’s educational needs, according to Karin Aronsson. Until recently, the norm in Sweden was for parents to leave their children’s schooling to the teachers without becoming involved themselves in their children’s education. Now parents not only will carefully choose the best school for their children, they are willing to fulfill requirements among some that they volunteer their own time and talents to the school. Also, new and expectant parents will shop around for the best daycare centers and preschools, especially in major cities such as Stockholm.

“Thus far, the videos of our first families seem to show that Swedish middle-class families are quite child-centered,” says Aronsson. “A striking finding in our data thus far has indeed been that family life revolves around the children. The children are to a high extent the center of family life.”

Swedish parents will rise extremely early to take on morning shifts at work, or sign on for tough evening assignments in order to be with their children in the afternoon, Aronsson says. Family activities are also largely geared to children’s interests with families playing games together and adults explaining matters to their children so they can take part in family discussions.

Aronsson is also expecting that the study will provide information how families handle restructuring that occurs after divorce. A common arrangement in Sweden is for children to alternate weeks with each parent. The study will look at the ways these families do parenting on the level of everyday routines and social interactions.

In Italy, researchers will delve into the evolving role of fathers within the family and their relationship with children, while mothers have maintained their central role in childcare and socialization, fathers are significantly more involved than they were in the past.

In Italy, researchers will thus focus, in the comparison with the US and Sweden, on the strategies and solutions brought about by fathers in order to achieve a meaningful participation and a good level of competence as concerns the life world of their children,” says Clotilde Pontecorvo.

Sweden and Italy were selected for the study because they represent Northern and Southern Europe. Both feature state-subsidized childcare, parental leave, medical insurance, and other family-oriented benefits. The Scandinavian system, which emerged in the 1930s, is epitomized by the notion of the State as a fólkhem, “all people’s home,” in which all citizens receive care and protection. Social engineering over the course of the 20th century has produced a series of family-oriented reforms, ranging from school lunches to housing subsidies.

Nonetheless, contemporary Swedish dual-earner middle-class families are under considerable stress, trying to keep up with the demands of work and family.

Italian working parents similarly have extensive family benefits, but they mainly apply to early childhood care. In addition, Italian home and family life has been supported through extended intergenerational family involvement. Grandparents have traditionally been a key resource in the day-to-day household management and financial well being of families. Moreover, until recently school ended at mid-day and the working day was divided into two parts so that parents and children could return home to eat their lunch meal together.

In short, both countries have experienced in the last two to three decades far-ranging social changes in work-family patterns, yet there are no documented detailed ethnographic of how actual, individual families cope with the dual demands of work and family obligations in their day-to-day lives.

Researchers in Italy and Sweden will model their research on that being done at CELF. They will interview and ethnographically video-record dual-earner, middle-class families, focusing on how parents and children coordinate and carry out tasks and activities before they leave for work and school and after they return. These videos of the lives of Italian and Swedish working middle-class families over the course of a week will form the basis of a large digital video archive – the first of its magnitude to document the domestic worlds of working families.
The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Launches the Sloan Workplace Flexibility Initiative

In an effort to make workplace flexibility a compelling national issue, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has launched an initiative aimed at creating the change workers need. The first phase of the Sloan Workplace Flexibility Initiative will focus on the need for a more flexible workplace that provides employees with genuine choice and control over their work life including:

- Scheduling of full-time work hours, including flextime.
- Amount of time spent working, including part-time, part-year, or job-sharing.
- Career flexibility with multiple points for entry, exit, and re-entry over the course of a career, including formal leaves and sabbaticals, as well as taking time out of the paid labor market, with the ability to re-enter.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has been instrumental in developing the new field of work-family scholarship through its Centers on Working Families and the Workplace and many other interdisciplinary research grantees. Through their research, it has become clear that a profound structural workplace/workforce mismatch exists. The full-time, full-year workplace, with minimal time off and rigid career paths does not fit the needs of today’s workforce. Rather than the traditional arrangement of breadwinner and homemaker, most families have two adults in the workforce while the workload at home has grown exponentially, particularly for professionals, for whom the paying jobs demand longer and longer hours. While the family continues to try and accommodate this explosion of work, the results of this mismatch can be seen in research findings.

- Working mothers lose approximately a night’s worth of sleep a week, due to the combined demands of work and family.
- Husbands whose wives work 40 or more hours a week are in poorer health than are husbands whose wives work shorter hours.
- Men over the age of 70 who retire abruptly from full-time employment incur greater health risks than do men who phase into retirement.
- American firms that would like to offer older workers the possibility of phased retirement often face unintended obstacles to doing so from decades old regulations and laws governing pension plans.
- Our country incurs a major loss of social capital as educated, talented mothers leave the workforce because they cannot find career-continuous part-time arrangements.

Sloan Foundation-funded research shows that a statistically significant percentage of working Americans, across age, income, and stage in life, want more flexibility at work. Toward the goal of raising the public profile of workplace flexibility, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation trustees approved grants to New America Foundation and Georgetown University; The Families and Work Institute; and The BOLD Initiative. Although these projects will constitute the core organizational group of the Sloan Workplace Flexibility Initiative, other organizations will be awarded grants over time.

Georgetown University and the New America Foundation will work in Washington, D.C. to engage leaders from business and labor, as well as national constituency groups, members of Congress and their staffs, administration officials and academics in a three pronged nonpartisan effort, involving: (1) education on issues relevant to workplace flexibility; (2) policy and legal research; and (3) outreach and engagement.

The Families and Work Institute will partner with local Chambers of Commerce to launch the first Sloan Workplace Flexibility Awards, which will be awarded to businesses in eight cities.

Through the Sloan Workplace Flexibility Initiative, these grants can set in motion the change processes necessary to create more flexible workplaces.

Families and Work Institute

Highlights of the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) Released

Large-scale transformations are taking place in the work and home lives of the nation’s men and women, according to a study released on September 30, 2003 by the Families and Work Institute.

The report, “Highlights of the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce,” used 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce; dual earner couples, the role of technology in employees’ lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else. A summary of results is available free of charge at www.familiesandwork.org.

Among the study’s key findings are that women are more likely to work as managers or professionals than men (38 percent of women versus 28 percent of men), and are better educated, with 62 percent of women versus 56 percent of men having completed four-year college or some post-secondary education.

The study also found that fathers in dual-earner couples today spend 42 minutes more doing household chores on workdays than fathers in 1977 while mothers have reduced their time by approximately the same amount. Also, employees with families report significantly higher levels of interference between their jobs and their family lives than employees 25 years ago (45 percent vs. 34 percent report this “some” or “a lot”). Men with families report higher levels of interference between their jobs and their family lives than women in the same situation. Workers
who have more access to flexible work arrangements reported significantly better mental health than other employees, and are more likely to be committed to their employers and to plan to stay at their current company.

“U.S. employers are changing in response to the new demographics of the workplace, but families are changing even more, especially men,” says Ellen Galinsky, president of Families and Work Institute and a co-author of the National Study of the Changing Workforce. “Today, men are spending more time on housework and on the care of children-and both men and women are spending much less time on themselves.”

The National Study of the Changing Workforce is authored with Galinsky by James T. Bond of Families and Work Institute and Cynthia Thompson and David Prottas of the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College, CUNY. The study surveys representative samples of the U.S. workforce every five years. The National Study of the Changing Workforce is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the IBM Corporation, Johnson & Johnson, Motorola, Inc., The Ford Foundation, KPMG LLP, Ceridian Corporation, Citigroup Inc., Xerox Corporation and Salt River Project.

To read the Executive Summary, the press release, and to purchase the full report as a PDF E-product, please visit http://www.familiesandwork.org/announce/2002NSCW.html.

Purdue University

Researchers Explore Labor and Management Issues at a Local Packaging Plant

Shelley M. MacDermid, Ph.D. and Robert Perrucci, Ph.D., both at Purdue University, are project directors of the Sloan-funded research project, "Expanding Options for the Time and Timing of Work in a Continuous-Operations Environment: A Labor-Management-Research Partnership". This project studies the impact of shift work on workers, their families, and their community activities. This plant employs 700 production workers, using multiple shift work combinations, involving 12-hour shifts with one weekend day always included. The Purdue project team was invited by both plant management and labor leaders to assess the relationships between existing work schedules and the quality of work and family life. They will then design and implement a cooperative effort of labor and management to develop new schedule options. Baseline data collection has included focus groups, questionnaires to hourly employees, supervisors, and spouse/partners, and over 300 hours of direct observation in the plant.

For more information, please contact Robert Perrucci at perruccir@soc.purdue.edu or Shelley MacDermid at shelley@cfs.purdue.edu.

The MIT Workplace Center


The MIT Workplace Center recently released the report, “Labor-Management Partnerships for Working Families”. The Center asked representatives of three leading examples of labor-management partnerships to discuss their approaches in the Center’s Fall 2002 Seminar Series. In the report, Susan C. Cass, editor, presents and summarizes the activities and accomplishments of these three cases to encourage other companies and unions to develop similar programs and to highlight how addressing work-family issues might help revitalize America’s labor movement.

Carol Joyner presents the case of the Local 1199 Employer Child Care Fund, Bill Corey and Richard Freeman describes the history and activities of the United Auto Workers-Ford Family Service and Learning Centers, and Kris Rondeau chronicles the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers initiatives at Harvard University and University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

To view the full-text of this report, please visit, http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/.
Recent Conferences

Sponsored by the National Council on Family Relations
November 19-22, 2003
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

The National Council on Family Relations held its 65th annual conference on November 19-22, 2003 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia. Paul Amato, Ph.D. of Penn State University was the Program Chair. In recognition of the changing nature of marriage, this year’s conference theme was: “What is the Future of Marriage?” A series of plenary and special sessions addressed new research on the current status of marriage, the causes of marital change, the likely future of marriage, and the consequences of marital change for the lives of men, women, and children.

In the opening plenary session, Andrew Cherlin discussed demographic trends in marriage and the implications of these changes for social policy. Other panel sessions included: Judith Seltzer, Celine Le Bourdais and Jan Trost on the relationship between cohabitation and marriage; Thomas Bradbury on current research on marital dysfunction and marital interventions; and Larry Kurdek, Charlotte Patterson, and Danielle Julien on research on marriage and marriage-like relationships among gay men and lesbians.

The purpose of the NCFR Annual Conference is to provide a forum for professional development and discussion through plenary sessions, presentations of research and practice models, and dialogue among conference attendees. Approximately 1,200 - 1,300 professionals and graduate students attend the NCFR conference each year. The goals of this year’s conference included:

• To understand how the institution of marriage has changed in recent decades and how these changes vary across racial and ethnic groups in the United States and Canada.

• To assess the implications of recent changes in marriage for social policy, including welfare reform, pro-marriage initiatives, divorce legislation, covenant marriage, domestic partnerships, and family poverty.

• To review recent evidence on the causes of marital dysfunction and to assess the effectiveness of various marital interventions, such as premarital education and marital therapy.

For more information, please go to:
http://www.ncfr.org/conference_info/index.asp

2003 Panel Convenings, “Workplace Flexibility: Moving from Research to Policy and Practice Innovations”
Sloan Work and Family Research Network in collaboration with The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
November 21, 2003
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, New York City, NY

This year’s Panel Meeting was organized in collaboration with The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and focused on the issue of workplace flexibility. The meetings goals were to: 1) to begin a conversation among research, business, and public policy experts about the state of the science with regard to workplace flexibility, and 2) to begin to frame the ‘case’ for workplace flexibility for business and policy leaders based on research.
Call for Papers

The Forth International Conference on Diversity in Organisations, Communities, and Nations

Deadline for submission: December 15, 2003

The Forth International Conference on Diversity in Organisations, Communities, and Nations will be held at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), July 6-9, 2004. Papers submitted for the conference proceedings will be fully peer-refereed and published in print and electronic formats in the International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations. If you are unable to attend the conference, virtual registrations are also available allowing access to the electronic versions of the conference proceedings, as well as virtual presentations which mean that your paper can be included in the refereeing process and published with the conference proceedings (For more details about the conference itself, see the conference description under the “Year 2004” heading below).

The deadline for the first round call for papers is December 15, 2003.

For the closing dates of subsequent rounds and for more information, please visit the conference website at: http://www.Diversity-Conference.com.

3rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences

Submission Deadline: January 27, 2004

Sponsored by the East West Council for Education and the Center of Asian Pacific Studies of Peking University

The 3rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences will be held from June 16 (Wednesday) to June 19 (Saturday), 2004 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii. The conference will provide many opportunities for academics and professionals from the social sciences fields to interact with members inside and outside their own particular disciplines.

Topic Areas in all areas of the social sciences are invited, including:
- Anthropology; Area Studies (African, American, Asian, European, Hispanic, Islamic, Jewish, Middle Eastern, Russian, Women’s and all other cultural and ethnic studies); Communication; Economics; Education; Energy Alternatives; Ethnic Studies/International Studies; Geography; History; International Relations; Journalism; New Urbanism; Political Science; Preservation and Green Urbanism; Psychology; Public Administration; Sociology; Sustainable Development; Urban and Regional Planning; and Women’s studies. Cross-disciplinary submissions with other fields are welcome as well.

For more information, please go to http://www.hicsocial.org or email social@hicsocial.org

The European Academy of Management's (EURAM) 4th Annual Conference on Governance in Managerial Life

Special Conference Track on Governmentality of Work-Life Balance and Organizational Performance

Deadline for submission: February 15th 2004

Within EURAM’s 4th annual conference (May 5-8, 2004, St. Andrew’s University, Scotland), there will be a Special Conference Track on work-life balance and organizational performance (for more info on the EURAM conference as a whole, please see the “Year 2004” conferences section below, or go to: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~euramo4/).

The Chair of this special track is Steven Poelmans, Ph.D., IESE Business School, Barcelona, Spain.

The organizers specially welcome papers that in the European research tradition use approaches and methods that allow for in-depth analysis of phenomena and underlying processes, such as qualitative and longitudinal research, theoretical papers, studies combining different levels of analysis (individual, couple, organizational, social, cultural, legal), and comparing different cultural contexts.

Themes the organizers are especially interested in include:
- Importance of family-friendly policies for different stakeholders of the company
- Impact of family-friendly polices on organizational performance
- Role of managers in creating a family-friendly environment
- Ways to manage managers in adopting these policies and applying them in their company
- Links with other managerial sub-disciplines, such as human resource management, change management, and corporate governance.
- Work redesign in function of work-life balance

To present a paper, please send 1,500 words, double-spaced, with font Times New Roman 12. Mention on a separate page the name, affiliation, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail of the co-authors to guarantee blind reviews. The deadline for submission is February 15th, 2004. Papers are to be sent to: Barbara Beham, e-mail: bbeham@iese.edu, Phone: +34 93 253 44 44.

Call for Proposals

Missy Carter Dissertation Award
Community, Families & Work Program at Brandeis University

Proposal deadline: February 15, 2004

The Community, Families, and Work Program at Brandeis University encourages the development of outstanding researchers through the Annual Missy Carter Doctoral Dissertation Award. This $2,500 award is offered annually to any student currently enrolled in a doctoral program in a field relevant to communities, family, and work. The Dissertation proposal must be approved by an advisor or committee before the grant application is submitted.
A letter of intent must be sent by December 15, 2003 and the proposal by February 15, 2004. The winner is announced in May at the Annual Invitational Journalism-Work/Family Conference.

Please visit www.bcfwp.org for more details.

5th Path to Full Employment Conference and the 10th National Conference on Unemployment
December 10-12, 2003
University of Newcastle, Australia

The 5th Path to Full Employment Conference and the 10th National Conference on Unemployment will be hosted by the Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CoFEE) at the University of Newcastle December 10-12, 2003.

For this year’s conference, a number of broad themes relating to unemployment and labour underutilisation have been identified, including:

- welfare to work issues
- macroeconomic policy and full employment
- regional and environmental issues
- long-term, youth and indigenous unemployment
- the future of work
- globalisation
- policy responses to unemployment

Professor Barry Bluestone, Ph.D., Stearns Trustee Professor of Political Economy and director of the Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts and The Rev. Tim Costello, Minister at Collins St Baptist Church in Melbourne, Australia and the Director of Urban Seed are the scheduled keynote speakers for this event.

For more information, please visit, http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/conferences/2003/index.cfm

8th Annual AWLP Conference, “Progress in Motion”
The Alliance for Work-Life Progress
February 18-20, 2004
Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa, Phoenix, AZ

Presentations scheduled for the AWLP Conference will address a variety of work-life issues including child care, eldercare, and wellness along with strategies for integrating work-life programs into organizations. The Innovative Excellence Award will be presented and attendees will have plenty of opportunities to network.

To download a conference program or to nominate an organization for the 2003 Innovative Excellence award, please go to http://www.awlp.org/events.

Women Work! 2004 National Conference
Celebrating 25 Years of Transitions & Triumphs
February 18-20, 2004
Wyndham Washington, Washington, DC

The 2004 Women Work! National Conference, Celebrating 25 Years of Transitions & Triumphs, will be held February 18-20, 2004 in Washington DC. The conference will include three days of intensive trainings, workshops, a Congressional forum and special events.

This year’s keynote speaker is Susan Stamberg of National Public Radio (NPR), the first woman to anchor a national nightly news program, “All Things Considered”. She is an author, TV commentator and winner of numerous broadcasting awards. Other speakers include Teresa Benitez, founder of the Nevada Empowered Women’s Project (NEW) and Miss Nevada; Kathryn Brown, Senior Vice President of Public Policy Development & International Government Relations for Verizon; and more.

Women Work! is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering women from diverse backgrounds and helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency through job readiness, education, training and employment.


To register for this conference, and for more details, please visit: www.womenwork.org or http://www.womenwork.org/projects/conferences.htm.

For conference questions, please contact Women Work! By phone: (202) 467-6146 or email: conference@womenwork.org.

The College and University Work/Family Association (CUWFA)’s 10th Annual Conference
February 20-22, 2004
Phoenix, Arizona

The College and University Work/Family Association (CUWFA) will hold its 10th annual conference and 10th anniversary celebration in Phoenix, Arizona, February 20-22, 2004 (The timing and the location of the conference allows those who are able to do so to attend the AWLP conference, which ends on Friday, February 20). The conference theme is “Work Life, Now More than Ever: Impact and opportunities of budgetary constraints on work/life progress.”

CUWFA’s mission is to provide leadership in facilitating the integration of work and study with family/personal life at institutions of higher learning. As such, it functions to provide professional support, to gather and disseminate information about emerging issues on campuses, and to contribute the understanding and development of benchmarking and leading research in the work/life field. Its membership is made up of individuals from over 80 institutions, mostly 4-year and beyond [masters and doctoral] universities.

For more information on this conference, please visit, http://cuwfa.org/index.html.
47th Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society, Theme: “Rethinking Careers for a Changing Society”
February 19-22, 2004
The Roosevelt Hotel, New York, NY
The 47th Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society will be held February 19-22, 2004 at The Roosevelt Hotel in New York City. The theme is: Rethinking Careers for a Changing Society.

For an ESS 2004 Preliminary Program, please visit http://www.essnet.org/annualmeeting.htm.

“The Sustainable Careers: New Options for a New Workplace: An Interdisciplinary and International Research Policy Forum”
February 19-22, 2004
New York, NY
This academic conference is sponsored by Cornell Careers Institute, an Alfred P. Sloan Working Families Center in cooperation with Cornell University, University of Minnesota, and Eastern Sociological Society.

For more information, please go to http://www.blcc.cornell.edu/cci/default.html.

The American Council on Consumer Interests’ 50th Annual Conference
March 31-April 3, 2004
Wyndham City Center, Washington, DC
The 50th Annual Conference will be held in Washington, DC at the Wyndham City Center March 31 - April 3, 2004. This will be ACCI’s 50th anniversary as an organization!


“Globalisation, Families and Work: Meeting the Policy Challenges of the Next Two Decades”
April 1-2, 2004
Brisbane, Qld, Australia
Families Australia will convene this conference that will focus on issues of work and family. This conference will help to carry valuable information between the Australian government and the community on a range of social policy issues such as women in the workforce, child care issues, welfare reform and work, ageing population and declining fertility.

For more information, please visit, http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au or e-mail, conference@familiesaustralia.org.au.

The European Academy of Management’s (EURAM) 4th Annual Conference on “Governance in Managerial Life”
May 5-8, 2004
St. Andrews University, Scotland
The fourth annual EURAM conference will be convened at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, May 5-8, 2004. Building on the success of EURAM’s previous conferences, and within the EURAM tradition of innovation, the 2004 meeting aims to provide a challenging intellectual forum for the further development of European management studies.

The European Academy of Management (EURAM) is an open, international and multicultural European Forum for networking and research in management. EURAM emphasizes multidisciplinary theoretical perspectives and methodological pluralism as well as critical examinations of the historical and philosophical roots of management theory and praxis.

Within EURAM, there will be a Special Conference Track of work-life balance and organizational performance, Chaired by Steven Poelmans, Ph.D., IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain (for more information on this “Special Track” and the Call for Papers, please see the “Call for Papers” section above or e-mail Barbara Beham at bbeham@iese.edu)

For more information about the conference, please go to: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~euramo4/.

3rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences
June 16-19, 2004
Honolulu, Hawaii
Sponsored by the East West Council for Education and the Center of Asian Pacific Studies of Peking University
The 3rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences will be held from June 16 (Wednesday) to June 19 (Saturday), 2004 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii. The conference will provide many opportunities for academics and professionals from the social sciences fields to interact with members inside and outside their own particular disciplines.

For more information, please go to http://www.hicsocial.org or email social@hicsocial.org.

The Forth International Conference on Diversity in Organisations, Communities, and Nations
July 6-9, 2004
University of California, Los Angeles
The conference will include both major keynote addresses by internationally renowned speakers and numerous small-group workshop and paper presentation sessions. In all sessions, conference organizers are encouraging people to bring an active sense of the world today, from the global to the local, and to engage with the possibilities for positive change. The conference themes indicate the range of issues which the conference will be addressing, and you may like to speak to these from a variety of perspectives - engaged scholarly interest in diversity; governmental and non-governmental involvement in community building; interest in diversity management, your research on aspects of culture and diversity... whatever you do or whatever moves you to speak. This is very much a partici-
Papers submitted for the conference proceedings will be fully peer-refereed and published in print and electronic formats in the International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations (see “Call for Papers” above for more details).

For more information, please visit the conference website: http://www.Diversity-Conference.com.

The 2004 Work-Life Conference
The Roosevelt Hotel, New York, NY
June 15-16, 2004
Sponsored by the Conference Board and the Families and Work Institute
The Conference Board’s 2004 Work-Life Conference, presented in collaboration with the Families and Work Institute, will address today’s work-life challenges and the impact they will have on culture within our workplace. How can work-life professionals thrive in today’s changed world?

Prestigious awards will also be presented to the media, for research, and for ahead of the curve policies and programs in the work-life field. This conference is for human resource professionals concerned with work-life, diversity, and women’s leadership.

Visit the following website for more information as it becomes available: http://www.conference-board.org/conferences/conference.cfm?id=627, or contact Ellen Galinsky at ellen.galinsky@conference-board.org.

Parent Child 2004 - International Conference on the Family
June 17-18, 2004
London, UK
Organised by the National Family and Parenting Institute, the Parenting Education and Support Forum, One Parent Families, the Open University, Trust for the Study of Adolescence and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), this conference celebrates the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. It will address a range of research, policy and practice issues relating to the current and future state of the family in the UK and across the world.

For more information, please visit, http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/ja120

American Psychological Association’s (APA) 2004 Annual Convention
July 28- August 1, 2004
Honolulu, Hawaii
APA President-elect Dr. Diane Halpern is in the process of planning diverse and interesting programming for the 2004 APA convention, including a session by Developmental psychologist Emmy Werner, PhD, who will discuss her now-famous 1950s longitudinal study of resilience in Hawaiian children with multiple risk factors and a child-care debate featuring psychologists Sandra Wood Scarr, PhD, former CEO of KinderCare Learning Centers, and Nora Newcombe, PhD, of Temple University. In addition, Stanford university psychologist Albert Bandura, PhD, will accept the Lifetime Achievement Award from APA.

In the next few months, the APA Monitor will include more specific information on these sessions, including suggested advance readings. Visit the following website for more information as it becomes available: http://www.apa.org/conf.html.